

Building for the Future...

Lutheran Peace Fellowship

LPF's board and staff are devoting time to assess and plan in order to grow in our discipleship, summarized below around several biblical themes. We invite your comments, questions, and suggestions. (Use the enclosed form if you wish.)

"...and gave us the ministry of reconciliation." (2 Cor. 5: 19) Our goal is to be faithful to the gospel call to seek *Shalom* in all its fullness – peace, justice, community, wholeness.... Doing so has meant continually listening to that call ourselves and experimenting with ways to support more effectively our members – and church – in their response.

"Let us be guided by the Spirit..." (Gal. 5:25) LPF's logo reminds us that our strength lies in the work of the Spirit in and through all parts of LPF: "Many members...One call to be peacemakers."



"Seek peace, and pursue it." (Ps. 34:14, 1 Pet. 3:11) We have sought to do this in congregations, synods, and events. We have focused especially on crafting activities, workshops, and resources that help Christians explore and act on biblical peacemaking, alleviating world hunger, nonviolence, racial and economic justice, etc. National LPF leaders lead an average of a hundred workshops annually. An even larger number are led by LPF members around the US and world. We've adapted materials from many sources and created several dozen well-regarded group discussion, print, and computer activities.

"Inasmuch..." (Matt. 25:45) We are called to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, and aid those at risk. In our time that means not only food banks and relief work but also advocating for social and political change to make fewer people at risk from poverty, militarism, racism, and other systemic threats. Much of such activity is in coalition with groups like Bread for the World. Every year or so we have found it possible to influence Lutheran and/or policy arenas in ways that have had much broader impact.



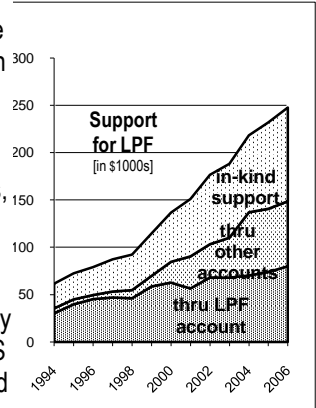
"Speak to others for their upbuilding..." (1 Cor. 14:3) Leadership training has been a major LPF focus, including over 60 intensive (e.g. weekend) workshops. In 2001 we expanded our youth activities into a fully-staffed program leading workshops for dozens of youth and young adult events annually, offering leadership, and developing needed resources.

"That we may be mutually encouraged..." (Rom. 1:12) LPF has been blessed with committed, energetic, and skilled board members, staff, and leadership across the country for decades. LPF *Peace Partners* are an especially important resource: people who make particular contributions and take on leadership in advocacy, hosting workshops, organizing, and strengthening LPF resources – human, program, and financial.

"...ready to proclaim the gospel of peace." (Eph. 6:15) While we're very much aware of the limitations of LPF's being a small organization in a large church and larger world, we've invested serious effort into reaching out with a fresh vision of *Shalom* in congregations, workshops, events, and print/electronic media.

One result: LPF is among the fastest growing religious-based peace and justice groups in the country. Our membership has doubled and our program has quadrupled in the past 8 years. Thousands of adults and youth have been trained in peace leadership and advocacy – a huge investment for the future.

Similarly, our budget has more than doubled in the past dozen years. If you include programs like trainings operated through the budgets of LPF chapters, churches, colleges, and events, it has tripled. Including in-kind support, it has increased more than fourfold. And this is just LPF's national budget. If activity of our members around the US and world were added, it would of course be far larger.



While we are encouraged by the above, we are also intensely aware of what we have *not* been able to do. We are humbled by our mistakes and limits and the challenge of being faithful in a world desperately in need of healing and help. Which leads us back to our task as we see it, and the ways we've begun:

Renew... refocus... grow in the Spirit

Our national coordinator took an overdue break last summer, spending two months being with his family, relaxing, living in 'non-scheduled' mode, and nourishing his spirit. He returned refreshed and energized (*a brief report is available to members*).

This fall, we have stepped back somewhat from program work to refocus and strengthen our core capacities. Instead of a full-time youth staff person, we've hired several part-time people to support refocusing and rebuilding in four areas of our work:

With help from Alan Forsberg, a long-time LPF leader, we are re-building our general web site and blog to be more inviting and visual, and have even more dramatic plans for our youth web site and youth blog. We are re-structuring our office and peace resource center in a larger space and are expanding our computer capacity, mostly with in-kind resources. We have re-hired Monica Fisk, our superb LVC youth coordinator from 2002-03, to refocus and strengthen our youth program.



We will begin 2008 with renewed efforts to strengthen LPF's leadership and to learn from and better support LPF members and LPF groups across the U.S. We invite your prayers, ideas, and support as we seek to be faithful to the gospel call of *Shalom!*