



THE LUTHERAN WORLD FEDERATION

A COMMUNION OF CHURCHES – EINE KIRCHENGEMEINSCHAFT – UNA COMUNIÓN DE IGLESIAS – UNE COMMUNION D'ÉGLISES
LUTHERISCHER WELTBUND – FEDERACIÓN LUTERANA MUNDIAL – FÉDÉRATION LUTHÉRIENNE MONDIALE

2007 Christmas Message from the LWF President

Dear sisters and brothers within our Lutheran communion:

Holy Child within the manger, long ago yet ever near,
Come as friend to every stranger, come as hope for every fear.
As you lived to heal the broken, greet the outcast, free the bound,
As you taught us love unspoken, teach us now where you are found. *



© Aleida Quintero Valdés **

“Holy Child within the manger, long ago yet ever near...”

The Holy Child, born of Mary in a manger, is an image that is both familiar and heartwarming. Yet Jesus cannot be confined to a long-ago time and place, for Jesus is alive in the world and present for us, with us, and through us.

“Come as friend to every stranger, come as hope for every fear...”

The Holy Child, born of Mary in a manger, is also the crucified one, now risen. The manger is shadowed by the cross and illumined by the power and promise of Christ's resurrection. In this Holy Child, God is entwined forever in the mystery and brokenness of our humanity, drawing us graciously and mercifully into the wonder of God's divinity.



“As you lived to heal the broken, greet the outcast, free the bound...”

The Holy Child, born of Mary in a manger, is the Good News. Because God is present in the world, there is no person so lowly, no place so forsaken, no enemy so despised, no conflict so intense, no sin so grievous, no relationship so severed that God cannot offer forgiveness and faith, reconciliation and resurrection, justice and mercy, healing and hope.

“As you taught us love unspoken, teach us now where you are found.”

Christ meets us where humanity struggles for justice, mercy, and peace. Christ meets us where the creation groans in travail under the weight of our consumptive living. Christ meets us where the Word is read, the gospel proclaimed, and the sacraments shared.

May the wonder and joy of Christ’s presence fill you with hope in believing.

In God’s grace,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mark S. Hanson". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Bishop Mark S. Hanson
President, The Lutheran World Federation

November 2007

** Quote from “Holy Child Within the Manger” by Marty Haugen. © GIA Publications, Inc.*

*** Ms Aleida Quintero Valdés, an internally displaced woman in Colombia, used dried flowers to design the image for this year’s LWF Christmas card. In a country with an estimated 1.8 million to 3.8 million internally displaced persons (IDPs), the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Colombia (IELCO) and the LWF Department for World Service country program work together in the prevention of further displacements, the accompaniment and protection of already displaced populations. The IELCO-run “Caracolí workshop school and capacity building house” (Escuela Taller y Casa de Capacitación Caracolí) in Ciudad Bolívar near the capital, Bogotá, is one of the many projects where youth and women IDPs receive support to help them cope with their new situation through activities such as handicraft making.*