

The Rt Rev. Munib A. Younan
President of The Lutheran World Federation
[The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land - ELCJHL]

Bishop Munib A. Younan was elected to the presidency of The Lutheran World Federation by the LWF Eleventh Assembly in Stuttgart, Germany, on 24 July 2010. As president, he also chairs the LWF Council, Executive Committee and Board of Trustees.

Bishop Younan was born on 18 September 1950 in Jerusalem. Both his parents were Palestinian refugees, and he holds United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNWRA) refugee status.

A high-profile lecturer and speaker, Younan is sought after for his perspective on just peace as a Palestinian Christian. Younan is also active in interreligious encounter, ecumenism and reconciliation in his own region and internationally. His work has been recognized with a number of awards and prizes.

After completing his primary and secondary education in Palestine, Bishop Younan studied diaconry at Luther Opisto College in Järvenpää, Finland (1969 to 1972), and theology at the University of Helsinki (1972 to 1976), obtaining a Master's degree with a thesis on "Election in Deutero Isaiah." He also undertook study and research at the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago, Illinois (USA), in 1988, and was awarded an honorary Doctorate of Divinity by Wartburg College, Iowa (USA), in 2001.

In 1976, Younan was ordained at the Church of the Redeemer, Jerusalem. Over the next twelve years he served the ELCJHL in various capacities in areas of pastoral leadership, youth leadership and Christian education. In 1990 Younan was appointed president of the ELCJHL Synod, a position he held until his election and consecration as bishop in January 1998. As bishop, he also chairs several boards and committees within the ELCJHL.

Younan's involvement with the LWF dates back to 1981. It includes membership of its Youth Committee (1981-1984); adviser to the Council (1990-1997); Council member, vice-chair of the Board of Trustees of the Institute for Ecumenical Research in Strasbourg and vice-chair of the LWF Program Committee for Mission and Development from 1997 to 2003. From 2003 to July 2010 Younan served as LWF vice-president for the Asia region, Council member and member of the LWF Executive Committee and Board of Trustees.

Younan continues to make a substantial contribution to the life of the churches and ecumenism in the Middle East. Younan has been an active member of the Middle East Council of Churches, serving in various capacities since 1985, and presently serves as President for the Evangelical Family. From 2004 to 2010, Younan served as president of the Fellowship of the Middle East Evangelical Churches (FMEEC), leading them to a unanimous vote in favor of women's ordination in January 2010. A founding member of the Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme for Palestine and Israel (EAPPI), Younan has chaired its Local Reference Group since 2002.

In the field of interreligious encounter, Younan has been active since his work as co-founder of the Al-Liqa' Center for Religious Studies in Jerusalem in 1982. Since 1991, with the Jonah

Group, Younan has launched several long-running, informal dialogues providing space for joint reflection by local Christians and Jews. Younan is also a founding member of the Council for Religious Institutions in the Holy Land (CRIHL), an organization of interfaith dialogue with membership including the Heads of Churches in the Holy Land, the Chief Rabbinate of Israel, the Ministry of Waqf and Religious Affairs, and the Islamic Shari'a Courts of the Palestinian Authority.

Younan helped bring about a Mutual Recognition Agreement between Middle East Evangelical churches in 2006 for full communion between churches of the Reformed and Lutheran traditions. It established the mutual recognition of baptism, Eucharist, ministry and ordination. A participant in Anglican-Lutheran dialogue in Jerusalem since 1984, Younan was named the Lutheran patron of the Anglican Lutheran Society in 2010. He was a member of the World Council of Churches' Orthodox Study Group from 1998-2006.

The author of *Witnessing for Peace: In Jerusalem and the World* (Augsburg Fortress, USA, 2003) and of *The Augsburg Confession in Arabic* (Emerenzian Est., Jerusalem, 1993), Younan has also written numerous articles, lectures and presentations relating to the life of Palestinian Lutherans in the Middle East.

Bishop Younan is married to Suad Yacoub; the couple has a son, two daughters and a granddaughter.

Prepared by the LWF Office for Communication Services - November 2010