

Highlights

LWF Global Training for Young Leaders Launched in Africa3

Young adults representing the Lutheran World Federation member churches in Africa launched the region's process to explore the relevance of the LWF Eleventh Assembly theme, "Give Us Today Our Daily Bread"...

Climate Change Is Changing Theology.....4

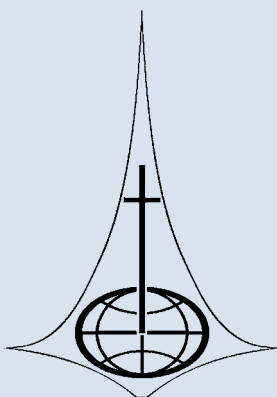
"Climate change is opening up horizons that are deeply spiritual, theological and cosmic in scope," according to an LWF Theology and Studies background paper...

LWF Concerned about Proposed Religious Law in Kazakhstan9

The LWF General Secretary appealed to Kazakhstan's President Nursultan Nazarbayev to ensure the review of a draft legislation which, if signed into law, would place harsh restrictions on religious freedom in the predominantly Muslim country...

FEATURE: Returnees Anticipate Bountiful Harvest... 11

Martina Ikanga lives in Momoria village, about eight kilometers from the project site of the LWF Department for World Service country program in Ikotos county, Southern Sudan...



Interdependence of Human Beings Calls for Mutual Sharing of Burdens



Thomas O. Allam from Southern Sudan drew this picture as a student at one of the schools in the northern Kenya-based Kakuma Refugee Camp, where the LWF Department for World Service is responsible for education programs. "Our burdens, however heavy, are bearable in the community of Christ," says LWF General Secretary Rev. Dr Ishmael Noko in his 2009 New Year message. © LWF/Thomas O. Allam/DWS Kenya-Sudan

2009 New Year Message from LWF General Secretary

GENEVA (LWI) – The interdependence of human beings in bearing each other's burdens, whether as nations or members of the Christian community, is the focus of the traditional New Year message from the Lutheran World Federation (LWF).

In the 2009 message released on 14 January, LWF General Secretary Rev. Dr Ishmael Noko invites the Lutheran communion to reflect on the Apostle Paul's calling to churches to bear one another's burden in order to fulfill the law of Christ.

Noko points out that while all human beings carry burdens irrespective of the nature or size, society admires the "do-it-yourself" approach to life, prizing independence, and educating its members for self-reliance. Nations similarly aspire for security within their own borders and walls.

However, notes Noko, Paul's pastoral message to the Galatians challenges the way the kingdom of this world functions, and contradicts its culture and spirit with that of God's kingdom in which 'independence' and 'dependency' are brought together into 'interdependence'. The general secretary underscores the apostle's insistence on interdependence as the hallmark of the church. "In this context, burdens are never borne in isolation, but rather in mutuality, as we are an integral part of the one body of Christ. Paul maintains that the law of Christ makes foolish the wisdom of this world, which sees independence as a strength and dependency as a weakness," Noko adds.

Continues on page 5

Contents

Communio

- 3.....LWF Global Training for Young Leaders Launched in Africa
- 4.....Climate Change Is Changing Theology
- 5.....LWF Affirms Support for Ecuador's Decision to Challenge Illegitimate Debt
- 1, 5New Year Message: Interdependence of Human Beings Calls for Mutual Sharing of Burdens

LWF Secretariat

- 8.....Tribute to a Leader of Great Faithfulness During Significant Change in Russian Society and Church
- 8.....LWF General Secretary Speaks of Anguish and Outrage over Zimbabweans' Suffering
- 9.....LWF General Secretary Expresses Concern about Proposed Religious Law in Kazakhstan

Features & Themes

- 11FEATURE: Returnees Anticipate Bountiful Harvest

News in Brief

- 2.....LWF Youth Resource Guides Action on Climate Change
- 6.....Lutheran Office Director Acknowledges Recognition for "Peacemakers" Award
- 6.....Call to Extend Interfaith Water Initiative to More African Countries
- 6.....Former LWF Radio Producer Eberhard Dies
- 7.....New LWF Regional Representative in Central America
- 7.....Aantjes Heads LWF Mauritania Program
- 10Swedish Hernander Leads LWF Uganda Program
- 10Namibian Pastor Munyika Assumes AIDS Coordination Post at LWF
- 12.....Country Supervisor for DWS Work in Chad

LWF Youth Resource Guides Action on Climate Change

LWF Youth, the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) youth desk has produced a toolkit to encourage youth groups and leaders working with young adults to actively engage in climate changes issues in their respective contexts. Published by the LWF Department for Mission and Development (DMD) the *LWF Youth Toolkit on Climate Change* documents a variety of activities by young adult representatives of LWF member churches, participating in a workshop prior to the June 2008 LWF Council meeting in Arusha, Tanzania. The workshop included Bible studies, role playing and field exposure trips.



- Organize Bible studies, role plays and other activities on the topic of climate change in various setting such as youth workshops, confirmation classes, etc.
- Provide guidelines for youth to design local projects that fight climate change

Copies of the 36-page publication can be requested from the LWF Youth desk at: lwfyouth@lutheranworld.org. Individual orders are free of charge, but postage reimbursement would be requested for bulk orders.

The new toolkit can be used to:

- Equip youth with knowledge about the impact of climate change

An online version is available at:

http://lwfyouth.files.wordpress.com/2008/12/dmd-youth-climate_toolkit-web.pdf

The Lutheran World Federation

– A Communion of Churches
150, route de Ferney
P.O. Box 2100
CH-1211 Geneva 2,
Switzerland

Telephone +41/22-791 61 11
Fax +41/22-791 66 30
E-mail: info@lutheranworld.org
www.lutheranworld.org

Editor-in-Chief
Karin Achtelstetter
ka@lutheranworld.org

English Editor

Pauline Mumia
pmu@lutheranworld.org

German Editor

Dirk-Michael Gröttsch
dmg@lutheranworld.org

Layout

Stéphane Gallay
sga@lutheranworld.org

Circulation/subscription

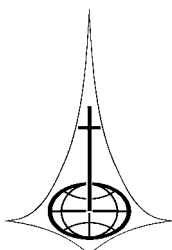
Colette Muanda
cmu@lutheranworld.org

Lutheran World Information (LWI)

is the information service of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF).

Unless specifically noted, material presented does not represent positions or opinions of the LWF or of its various units.

Where the dateline of an article contains the notation (LWI), the material may be freely reproduced with acknowledgement.



LWF Global Training for Young Leaders Launched in Africa

'Daily Bread' Is About Creating Hope and Justice



From left to right, participants Agnes Katsabola (Malawi), Tsion Alemayahu (Ethiopia) and Anthony M. Tucker (Sierra Leone), exchange ideas at the October 2008 LWF/DMD global training program for young leaders. © LWF/F. Chan

NAIROBI, Kenya/ GENEVA (LWI) – Young adults representing the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) member churches in Africa launched the region's process to explore the relevance of the LWF Eleventh Assembly theme, "Give Us Today Our Daily Bread" during a training workshop from 1 to 8 October in the Kenyan capital, Nairobi.

"To us as young people, the meaning of 'daily bread' is not just about what we eat, it also includes many things such as our spiritual needs, our hopes for a better world and our hunger for justice," said Ms Lydia Lasco Lawan, Lutheran Church of Christ in Nigeria. She was among the 14 young adults from 12 countries participating in the regional launch of the three-year program 'Engage: LWF Global Training for Young Leaders' located in LWF Department for Mission and Development (DMD) and its youth desk, LWF Youth. The Assembly theme provides the basis for deliberations of the 2008-2010 training program.

One of the program's major foci is to empower young church leaders to develop and implement small-scale activities that respond to a particular problem in church and society. The training in Nairobi included a series

of Bible studies, though which participants explored the meaning of 'daily bread' in their own contexts.

Ms Heidrun Tobler, a theology student from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Southern Africa spoke of plans together with her classmates to start a children's church with support from their local congregation. Besides providing a worshipping space for children, one of the project's aims will be to counsel children who had been sexually abused. "We want to help the children to realize that a non-abusive relationship with male adults is possible," she said.

Mr Anthony Mustapha Tucker, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Sierra Leone (ELCSL), envisions an initiative to tackle widespread drug abuse in the West Africa country. In collaboration with one of the ELCSL programs, he hopes to use a series of workshops to provide the relevant information about the adverse effects of drug abuse. He targets at least 100 young adults by the end of 2009, who can then multiply the knowledge they will have acquired.

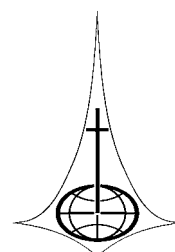
Like Tobler, he appreciates the LWF program's focus on sharing creative solutions. "What impressed me most [during this training] is

the strong sense of cohesiveness as Africans. Even though we come from diverse cultures and traditions, we almost share the same problems. This program reinforces our beliefs that as youth we have a stake in our future. Therefore, we must be actively involved in the decision-making processes and in the life of the church and society," remarked Tucker.

LWF Youth secretary Rev. Roger Schmidt commended the participants for their willingness and ability to strategically respond to the pressing problems facing church and society. "I am optimistic that they will make some meaningful changes on the issues they focus on."

Africa's was the second "Engage" regional event after the March 2008 Asian inauguration in Bangkok, Thailand. The workshops will continue in Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean and North America over the next two years, providing opportunities for young church leaders to practice their leadership skills through the implementation of small-scale projects. The international group will share their experiences and knowledge during the July 2010 Pre-Assembly Youth Meeting in Dresden, Germany.

28 October 2008



Climate Change Is Changing Theology

Theologians Consider the Shifts Needed in Thinking and Action

GENEVA (LWI) – “Climate change is opening up horizons that are deeply spiritual, theological and cosmic in scope. [It] may literally be melting icebergs but it also exposes metaphorical icebergs of how God, human beings and the rest of creation have been conceptualized in ways that contribute to the injustices that have only increased under climate change.” This observation from a background paper prepared by the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) Department for Theology and Studies (DTS) set the stage for a consultation of biblical scholars, theologians and ethicists working in this area, 2-4 October, in Geneva.

Background information for the consultation included the grassroots survey initiated by DTS to get response to ordinary people’s theological questions about climate change, and the related extensive adaptation and mitigation work that the LWF Department for World Service (DWS) field programs have long been pursuing with local communities. (*The LWF survey is presented in the LWI special edition titled, Climate Change - Facing Our Vulnerability, LWI No. 05/2008. To order copies, see address on the back cover page.*)

Dr Sigurd Bergmann who teaches at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology in Trondheim, Norway, emphasized the need for a “spatial turn” in theology, taking Earth seriously as “our home where the Holy Spirit takes place.”

Such a spatial turn resonates with how indigenous people view the sacred manifesting itself in space, added Rev. Tore Johnsen from his own Sami perspective as a pastor in the Church of Norway. He noted that indigenous people worldwide were the most vulnerable to climate changes, and they do not separate nature and

human beings as in much of Western theology. Johnsen advocated pursuing theology within a “circle of life” that includes God, human beings and the rest of creation, proposing how this both relates to and revises traditional Christian understandings.

Spiritual Resources

Giving an account of what his students heard when they went out to local communities using the LWF survey, Dr George Zachariah, who teaches at the Gurukul Lutheran Theological College and Research Institute in Chennai, India, focused on the spirituality of those displaced from their land and livelihood because of climate change. He argued that many prevailing climate change discourses were an attempt to “absolve the sins of neo-liberal capitalist plunder,” and called for attention to the spiritual resources of subaltern communities that can “decolonize our minds, our faiths, our communities, and our planet.”

Awareness raising and advocacy are crucial at grassroots level as pointed out in two presentations. Dr Colette Bouka Coula, DWS program officer for Central and Francophone Africa, spoke of how logging companies in her home village in Cameroon, select and cut down trees without consulting with the local people who have managed the forests for centuries. Deserts result from such corporate greed, she argued. Dr Chiropafadzo Moyo from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Zimbabwe said the desperation resulting from the bleak economic and political situation in her country was driving people to cut down trees, thus destroying nature.

Re-reading the Bible is essential in times of climate change, as

a source for wisdom and survival rather than for Christian doctrine, insisted Dr Christof Hardmeier, a retired professor of Old Testament who has worked on the upcoming climate change declaration of the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD). He noted similarities between indigenous views today and the early chapters of Genesis.

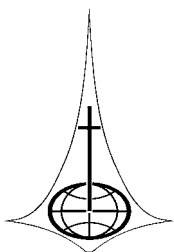
LWF Executive Committee member Rev. Dr Barbara Rossing, who teaches New Testament at the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago, USA, spoke of the need to re-interpret apocalyptic passages in Revelation and II Peter 3, to counter scriptural interpretation of climate changes as God’s punishment. What needs emphasizing instead is healing a world that is ill due to climate change, she said.

Ethical criteria and guidelines for policy advocacy related to climate change were set forth by Dr Christoph Stückelberger of the Geneva-based global network on applied ethics, Globethics, and by Dr James Martin-Schramm of Luther College, Decorah, Iowa, USA, who emphasized the importance of moving beyond cynicism and despair to effective action, especially with regard to energy policies.

Papers presented at the consultation and other related resources are being developed for a book to be published in the Theology in the Life of the Church series in early 2009, as well as a discussion resource for use in local communities.

For further information, contact DTS director Rev. Dr Karen Bloomquist at: Bloomquist@lutheranworld.org or DTS intern Rev. Rolita Machila at: Machila@lutheranworld.org

30 October 2008



More LWI News at
www.lutheranworld.org/News/Welcome.EN.html

LWF Affirms Support for Ecuador's Decision to Challenge Illegitimate Debt

Noko Cites Significance for Global Community

GENEVA (LWI) – The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) expressed its support for Ecuador's recent decision to cease certain of its foreign debt service payments until it had determined the legitimacy of the country's external debts, estimated at USD 10 billion.

In a letter to Ecuadorian President Rafael Correa Delgado, LWF General Secretary Rev. Dr. Ishmael Noko congratulated the president for his exemplary and courageous decision, "which may be the catalyst for liberating all of us—debtors and creditors, poor and rich—from the burden of illegitimate and unjust debt."

Noko noted the mid-December announcement by Correa that his country would now exercise its right to use all available national and international legal means to determine the legitimacy of its external debts, has already attracted strong criticism from the international economic mainstream and from those with a vested interest in preserving the current unjust system. "But I write to offer the

LWF's support for your decision, and our prayers that you will be granted fortitude and wisdom in carrying it through in the face of such criticism," he added, saying the initiative serves the global common good.

Correa's decision followed the release of the November 2008 report of the Commission for the Complete Auditing of Public Debt (Comisión para la Auditoría Integral del Crédito Público – CAIC). The report, according to Noko's letter, contains important findings and recommendations, including the conclusion that "a proportion—though by no means all—of Ecuador's debts may be regarded as illegitimate, and that legal means should be used to challenge them."

In his letter, Noko affirmed the significance and importance of President Correa's decision not only for Ecuador but also "for the entire global village." He wrote, "You are not merely seeking to avoid payment of debt service obligations, or addressing the issue from a purely economic

perspective. You are, for the first time, insisting on a moral, ethical and legal approach to the issue of external debt, and seeking to resolve questions of the legitimacy of specific debts through independent legal instruments."

The general secretary recalled Correa's participation, before he became president, in a September 2005 LWF consultation on illegitimate debt, which elaborated the issue from biblical, theological, pastoral, historical, economic and juridical perspectives. The meeting and its outcome laid the basis for the LWF's subsequent work especially its Buenos Aires (Argentina)-based Program on Illegitimate Debt.

The general secretary pointed out that in the context of the current global financial crisis and the underlying practices that have now been exposed, Ecuador's initiative "may help move us toward the reconstruction of an international financial architecture in which transparency, accountability and justice are fully respected by all."

23 December 2008

Interdependence of Human Beings Calls for Mutual Sharing of Burdens

Continued from p. 1

Injustices of various forms such as slavery and human trafficking would be overcome in a society shaped by the values of God's kingdom, Noko argues. He says recognition of human beings' interdependence "would also imply that one cannot throw bombs

at another without destroying oneself. Similarly, denying any human being access to basic rights such as food, shelter and a life in dignity would find no place in the kingdom of God."

The LWF general secretary appeals for concerted effort in healing the wounds created by all kinds of

unshared burdens, and in building bridges across visible and invisible lines of division and separation walls.

In this New Year, he adds, "as Christ's disciples, we are called again to love our neighbors as ourselves."

The full text of the 2009 New Year message follows:

2009 New Year Message from the LWF General Secretary

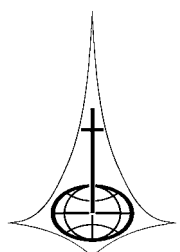
Each New Year is a time for reflection and recommitment. As the year 2009 dawns upon us, I greet you and invite you to that reflection and recommitment with the words of the Apostle Paul to the Galatians:

Bear one another's burdens, and in this way, you will fulfill the law of Christ. *Galatians 6:2*

We all have burdens to carry—some heavier, some lighter. Some burdens are physical, while others weigh upon the soul rather than the shoulders. But no one is without a burden. In most of our societies we prize independence, in other words the "do-it-yourself" approach to life. We admire those who carry their burdens on their own without requiring help

from others, without the support of government or society. We are educated for independence, for making our own living, and for self-reliance. Nations aspire to this same independence, for security within their borders and walls. This is how the kingdom of this world functions.

But in his pastoral message to the church in Galatia, Paul raises a funda-



mental challenge to this way of being and of doing things. He contradicts the culture and the spirit of the kingdom of this world with that of God's. He points out that in the kingdom of God *independence* and *dependency* are brought together into *interdependence*. Indeed, he insists that interdependence is the hallmark of the church. In this context, burdens are never borne in isolation, but rather in mutuality, as we are an integral part of the one body of Christ. Paul maintains that the law of Christ makes foolish the wisdom of this world, which sees independence as a strength and dependency as a weakness.

As this New Year unfolds, we are and shall be confronted with countless situations in which the desire—or the imposed obligation—to live indepen-

dently of one another is expressed with negative or even tragic consequences. There is less and less practical manifestation of the true interdependence of human society. Injustices of various forms such as slavery and human trafficking would be overcome in a society shaped by the values of the kingdom of God. Recognition of the interdependence of human beings would also imply that one cannot throw bombs at another without destroying oneself. Similarly, denying any human being access to basic rights such as food, shelter and a life in dignity would find no place in the kingdom of God.

Our burdens, however heavy, are bearable in the community of Christ. The church, family, community, nation and world in which we live

should be places in which we find the strength and solidarity to bear each other's burdens. The Church—*ecclesia*—is called into being to act with justice and in service to others.

In this New Year, let us work to build bridges across the lines of division and to break down the walls of separation, whether visible or invisible. Let us work for the healing of the wounds created by all kinds of unshared burdens. Bearing one another's burdens is fulfilling the law of Christ. In this New Year, as Christ's disciples, we are called again to love our neighbors as ourselves.

Rev. Dr Ishmael Noko
General Secretary
The Lutheran World Federation

14 January 2009

Lutheran Office Director Acknowledges Recognition for "Peacemakers" Award

The Global Priorities Campaign, an interreligious initiative to combat poverty by mobilizing communities to alter national and global budget priorities, received the 2008 "Blessed Are the Peacemakers" award from the United States Conference for the World Council of Churches (WCC).

Campaign member Mr Dennis W. Frado, director of the Lutheran Office for World Community (LOWC), accepted the award on behalf of Global Priorities. The LOWC represents the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the Lutheran World Federation at the United Nations headquarters in New York

"My colleagues and I are very grateful for this recognition and hope that it will lead to the expansion of our network as

we seek to reduce military spending and increase funding for social and economic development in our national budget, and with respect to other national budgets," said Frado upon receiving the award last December. It was presented by Rev. Phil Jones, Church of the Brethren and co-chairperson of the US Conference Decade to Overcome Violence Committee.

The "Blessed Are the Peacemakers" awards are an annual tradition of the US Conference to recognize the contributions of local, national and international peacemakers.

More information about Global Priorities Campaign at: www.globalpriorities.org

Call to Extend Interfaith Water Initiative to More African Countries

At their meeting last November in Kampala, Uganda, representatives of the Inter-Faith Action for Peace in Africa (IFAPA) underlined the success of an interfaith community water project in Rwanda's eastern district of Kirehe, saying the model should be extended to other communities in Africa.

"Today [we] are celebrating a water project, which has increased girls' enrollment in schools by 10 percent," Rwanda's Mufti Sheikh Swaleh Habimana told the IFAPA Commission

meeting, chaired by its president Rev. Dr Ishmael Noko, also general secretary of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF).

Started in 2007, the project serves a community of over 21,000 people with filtered clean water collected into concrete reservoirs, and distributed through several pipelines and water points. The LWF Department for World Service (DWS) Rwanda program coordinates the project's implementation within its integrated rural development work.

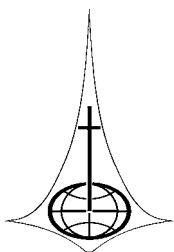
Former LWF Radio Producer Eberhard Dies

French journalist **Paul Eberhard**, who worked in the mid-1970s with the then Lutheran World Federation (LWF)-run Radio Voice of the Gospel (RVOG) died in November 2008, at the age of 88.

Eberhard was the RVOG French program producer from August 1973 until March 1977 when the Provisional Military Governing Council of Ethiopia nationalized the Addis Ababa-

based station, forcing all foreign staff to leave the country. Regular transmissions from the RVOG French program started toward the end of 1966, with five daily newscasts on shortwave and two on medium wave during Eberhard's period of service.

After leaving the RVOG offices, Eberhard undertook communication-related missions in Africa on behalf of the then LWF Communications Department.



New LWF Regional Representative in Central America

Pastor Philip G. Anderson from the USA is the new representative of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) in Central America, leading the LWF Department for World Service (DWS) operations in El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua. He took up this position in December 2008, succeeding Dr Alois Möller who had led DWS work there since 2004.



Rev. Philip G. Anderson
© LWF/B. Waddell

Anderson, 61, an ordained pastor of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, worked with DWS in the mid-1980s, and has several years' experience in community development work, advocacy for peace and human rights-related issues both in the United States of America and Central America. He was based in Washington DC, USA, for several years, working from 2007 to 2008 as a consultant for the Save Darfur Coalition, an alliance of faith-based, advocacy and humanitarian organizations, seeking action on behalf of the people affected by the crisis in Darfur, western Sudan. Between 2004 and 2005, he was interim director for education and advocacy at the Partners for Peace non-governmental organization, which advocates key issues for peace and justice among Israelis and Palestinians.

He worked as executive director of the Guatemala Human Rights Commission, USA, 2002 to 2004, and as a public policy representative for governmental affairs at the Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service, 1996 to 2000. He was a regional organizer, 1990 to 1994, for the Minneapolis (Minnesota)-based Bread for the World network, advocating an end

to hunger at home and abroad. From 1985 to 1990, he was a senior program officer for the LWF/DWS El Salvador program. He was a missionary pastor and director for community development with the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Colombia (IELCO), 1978 to 1982, in Ibagué, in the south-western region of Tolima.

Anderson holds a master of divinity from the Luther Northwestern Theological Seminary, St Paul, Minnesota, USA, and a bachelor of arts in social psychology from St Olaf College, Northfield, Minnesota. He also studied conflict management and leadership development at the

Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs at the University of Minnesota, Minneapolis.

Anderson and his wife Mavis have two adult daughters.

The various activities of the Central American DWS regional program entail a holistic approach encompassing the integrated dimensions of sustainable development. Promoting social-economic equality is one of the major objectives, aimed at developing an alternative model to free trade systems, in order to among others, ensure dignified living for communities which are socially excluded.

DWS is the LWF's relief and development arm, with field programs in 36 countries in Africa, Asia, Latin and Central America, and Europe.

More about DWS work globally at: www.lutheranworld.org/What_We_Do/DWS/DWS-Welcome.html

Aantjes Heads LWF Mauritania Program

Mr Jacob Huibert Aantjes from the Netherlands is the new representative of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) in Mauritania. He succeeds Dr Colette Bouka Coula who led the program for three and-a-half years before joining DWS Geneva in early 2008.



Mr Jacob H. Aantjes
© LWF/H. Putsman

Prior to taking up his new LWF responsibilities mid-2008, Aantjes, 56, held various positions with other DWS field offices including Mauritania, over a period of 18 years.

He worked as a senior emergency officer at the Utrecht (Netherlands)-based interchurch organization for development cooperation, ICCO, 2005-2008, with responsibility for the Africa and Middle East region. In 2007 he headed the LWF operations in Chad, as regional supervisor for new DWS programs in Central Africa. As a mine action program officer with the Danish church agency, DanChurchAid, 2003 to 2004 in the Democratic Republic of Congo, he helped set up a program that among others, initiated small-scale income generating activities for war victims in collaboration with churches and other partners. From 2001 to 2002 he coordinated DCA's mine action and mine risk education program in the Eritrean capital, Asmara, and a similar program in Gjacova, western Kosovo, 2000 to 2001.

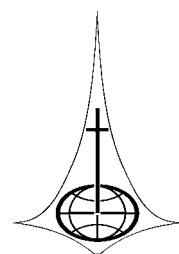
He previously worked with the LWF as country representative for the DWS Rwanda program, 1997 to 2000, prior to which he was a senior emergency coordinator for the Tanganyika Christian Refugee Service (TCRS), the DWS associate program in Tanzania, for three years. From 1990 to 1994, he was the resident representative for the Nouakchott-based DWS Mauritania program, which he joined from the then DWS Zimbabwe, where he held the positions of project coordinator and advisor between 1982 and 1990. While working for two Den Haag (Netherlands)-based

companies between 1975 and 1982, he coordinated farmers' training locally and in Ndiang, Cameroon.

Aantjes holds a bachelor of science from the Larenstein International Agricultural College in the Netherlands, where he also pursued studies in crop production and animal husbandry.

He is married to Riekje Aantjes.

At its establishment in 1974, DWS Mauritania focused on emergency relief. It currently provides assistance toward several rural community development activities, supports local NGOs, and is actively engaged in raising awareness about HIV and AIDS.



Tribute to a Leader of Great Faithfulness During Significant Change in Russian Society and Church

LWF General Secretary Underlines Good Relations with Russian
Orthodox Church under Patriarch Alexei II

GENEVA (LWI) – His Holiness Patriarch Alexei II of the Russian Orthodox Church “was a rock of great faithfulness and stability” during years of great challenge and change in his country and church, said Rev. Dr Ishmael Noko, general secretary of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) in a letter of condolence to the church’s Moscow Patriarchate, following the patriarch’s death on 5 December.

Noko paid tribute to Alexei II, patriarch since 1990 until his death at the age of 79, for providing crucial leadership for both the Russian Orthodox Church and the country through difficult times. “As Lutherans, we have a special gratitude for his encouragement of good relations between our churches in your country,” he said in the letter addressed to the Chairman of the Department for External Relations Metropolitan Kirill of Smolensk and Kaliningrad, acting head of the church.

Noko made reference to his 1996 meeting with the patriarch in Mos-



This photo of His Holiness Patriarch Alexei II (1929–2008) was taken during his first official visit to the Geneva-based World Council of Churches in June 1995. © WCC/Peter Williams

cow, during which “we could celebrate these good relations and look together toward a common future.” He said he held Alexei II in “high respect for the honesty and courage with which [he]

faced the complicated and fast-changing realities in which the Church found itself during his patriarchate.” That the Russian Orthodox Church had in recent years shown such resilient strength in rebuilding public structures for Christian life, he noted, “is surely due significantly to his leadership.”

While affirming the LWF’s continued cooperation with the Russian Orthodox Church toward common witness in the world, Noko pointed out that the world Christian family “needs a vital and confident Russian Orthodox Church.” He underlined the anticipation for a church which would continue both to nurture the Russian people in their faith and also reach out to other Christians and people of faith to work together for a world of peace.

Noko promised the LWF’s prayers that that the “next Patriarch will be a person of faithful vision to continue all the good for which Patriarch Alexei gave his life’s energy.”

9 December 2008

LWF General Secretary Speaks of Anguish and Outrage over Zimbabweans’ Suffering

Letter to SADC Lutheran Church Leaders Seeks Unwavering
Political Intervention to End People’s Suffering

GENEVA (LWI) – Expressing a sense of anguish and outrage over the increasingly worsening humanitarian, economic and political crisis in Zimbabwe, the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) General Secretary Rev. Dr Ishmael Noko appealed to heads of LWF member churches in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) to work with their ecumenical partners to push the region’s governments “to take the further steps necessary to bring an end to the suffering of the people

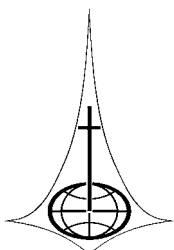
of Zimbabwe, which is also the suffering of the whole region.”

Building on actions requested by the LWF Council at its June 2008 meeting in Arusha, Tanzania, Noko, in a letter addressed to the SADC churches, urged advocacy to the region’s governments and leaders “to act in the most responsible—but determined and unwavering—manner to relieve Zimbabweans of the burden they have already carried for far too long.”

On President Robert Mugabe’s current leadership of the country,

Noko noted that while many Zimbabweans paid the ultimate price during the struggle for freedom from colonial rule, the “independent government that they fought for has turned liberation into repression, and finally into calamity.

“It is not acceptable that President Mugabe continues to blame others for Zimbabwe’s plight, while he demonstrates no regard for the agonies of ordinary Zimbabweans. Indeed, he acts against his own people as if they were enemies. He has destroyed





Children play with stagnant raw sewage at the Machipisa suburb in the Zimbabwean capital, Harare, last November. According to the World Health Organization, Zimbabwe's health ministry had by 1 December reported over 11,700 cholera cases with 484 deaths since August 2008, affecting all provinces in the country. © Philimon Bulawayo/Reuters

Zimbabwe's reputation and relationships internationally and regionally," insisted Noko. He urged the SADC LWF member churches to send pastoral letters to their parishes and congregations, indicating the region's Lutheran churches and throughout the world do not accept the intolerable situation in Zimbabwe.

"Without even clean water to drink, now hundreds are dying of cholera in an epidemic that is becoming a source of infection for neighboring countries," said Noko, of the deteriorating situation for fellow Zimbabweans. He underscored the role of the church in such a situation—to be a witness of the Lord

who pleads the cause of the poor (Proverbs 22:22-23)—pointing out it is unconscionable to permit the current suffering to continue.

Noko, an ordained pastor of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Zimbabwe (ELCZ), reiterated the LWF's deep gratitude for the region's hospitality and generosity toward so many desperate people fleeing the political and economic chaos. (See *LWI No. 07/2008, page 16, for the June 2008 LWF Council actions on Zimbabwe*). The LWF is also grateful for the efforts of SADC and some individual political leaders in the region to promote a peaceful resolution of the political crisis, which tragically, "have so far foundered on the obstacle of Mr Mugabe's determination to retain power at all costs," he added.

The LWF has 16 member churches in the SADC region, including the 150,000-member ELCZ. It also works in the country through the Department for World Service associate program, Lutheran Development Service – Zimbabwe.

16 December 2008

LWF General Secretary Expresses Concern about Proposed Religious Law in Kazakhstan

Noko Urges President Nazarbayev to Ensure Review of Draft Legislation

GENEVA (LWI) – The General Secretary of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) Rev. Dr Ishmael Noko appealed to Kazakhstan's President Nursultan Nazarbayev to ensure the review a draft legislation which, if signed into law, would place harsh restrictions on religious freedom in the predominantly Muslim country.

In a letter to Nazarbayev, Noko expressed his concern about reports of the Parliament's passage at the end of November of a new law on religion, widely reported as containing harsher restrictions on freedom of religion and belief than previously obtained in the country.

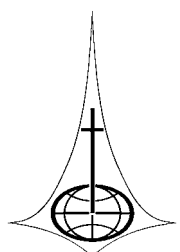
The general secretary said he was aware of expressions of alarm and concern being voiced by leaders of several minority religious communities in Ka-

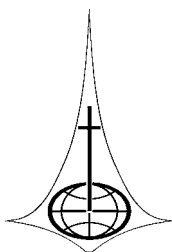
zakhstan, and by representatives of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. He noted such alarm and concern might in part have been fueled by a certain lack of community participation and transparency in the process of formulating the new legislation.

According to media reports, religious communities and human rights activists in Kazakhstan are particularly concerned about the legislation which would place restrictions on missionary activities and on religious beliefs of registered communities, including a compulsory censorship of all imported religious literature. The law would reportedly also put severe restrictions on smaller religious groups and would include a requirement that children obtain written permission to participate in any religious youth event.

The head of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Republic of Kazakhstan (ELCRK) Bishop Yuri Novgorodov has reportedly criticized the draft legislation saying, "If adopted, this would be a law on non-freedom of conscience." Media sources quoted him saying the new law "would destroy our whole organization and our seminary, and the bishop would no longer be able to function as such." The ELCRK is a regional church of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Russia and Other States, which has been an LWF member church since 1989.

Noko in his letter referred to the 2003 and 2006 First and Second Congresses of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions in the capital, Astana, convened by President Nazarbayev. The general secre-





tary pointed out that at the second congress, Nazarbayev emphasized the experience of Kazakhstan as a predominantly Muslim country but with exceptional religious diversity. On this occasion, he affirmed that “Our model of international and inter-confessional dialogue is Kazakhstan’s

contribution to the global process of interaction between different confessions,” the general secretary wrote.

Paying tribute to Nazarbayev’s personal and political commitment to equality among religious communities in the country, and to peace and inter-religious harmony at home and

globally, Noko said he was convinced the Kazakhstan president would act in a way that would demonstrate this commitment, and that he would address concerns about transparency and participation in the process of formulating this legislation.

23 December 2008

Swedish Hernander Leads LWF Uganda Program

Mr **Lennart Hernander** from Sweden is the new representative of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) in Uganda. He heads the LWF Department for World Service (DWS) Uganda program effective January 2009, succeeding Mr Craig Kippels from the USA, who has led DWS work there since early 2004.

Hernander, 47, joins the LWF from the Church of Sweden where he was director for international finance from 2003 until 2008. He worked for the umbrella body, Swedish NGO Center for Development Cooperation, from 1989 to 2003, where he held various senior positions including director for administration, finance, planning and international development cooperation, as well as responsibility for projects in the East African region. Between 1985 and 1988 he was a budget and finance officer for the Östergötland County in southeastern Sweden, and the Lycele Town Council in the north.

Hernander holds a bachelor of arts in economics and business administration from the Linköping University, Sweden, in addition to various short-term management training. He is



Mr Lennart Hernander
© LWF/B. Waddell

a board member of the Geneva-based Ecumenical Loan Fund (ECLOF) since 2007, and since 2006, chairperson of the Fair Trade Sweden initiative, which seeks access to markets under better trade conditions for producers and workers who are economically marginalized by conventional trading systems worldwide.

Hernander and Heléne Wikström have two children.

DWS work in Uganda began in 1981, in response to the needs of poor and marginalized communities in high-risk environments. In addition to emergency response, the focus today includes comprehensive efforts to promote sustainable development. Against the background of the conflict in the northern part of the country, LWF assists internally displaced people in Kitgum, Katakwi and Amuria districts through an emergency preparedness and response program. It is also engaged in HIV and AIDS projects in southwestern Uganda, in community-based environmental conservation initiatives in the northwest, and support to returnees to Southern Sudan.

Namibian Pastor Munyika Assumes AIDS Coordination Post at LWF

Namibian pastor **Dr Veikko Munyika** is the new coordinator of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) HIV and AIDS desk at the Department for Mission and Development (DMD).

Prior to joining the LWF at the end of October 2008, Munyika, 55, served for over one year as general secretary of the ecumenical Churches United Against HIV and AIDS in Eastern and Southern Africa (CUAHA) network, coordinating church response to the AIDS pandemic in 13 African countries. In 2000, he helped establish an AIDS action plan for his church, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia (ELCIN). He currently serves on the board of a network of teachers living with HIV in Namibia, and on the HIV advisory program of the Lutheran Communion in Southern Africa (LUCSA), an LWF sub-regional body.

He was CUAHA co-chairperson, 2002 to 2006. From 2001 to 2006, Munyika was ELCIN general secretary, prior to which he served for eight years on the governing board of the Paulinum Theological Seminary, owned by the three Lutheran churches in Namibia. He served on the ELCIN Church Council, 1998 to 2002, and was the church’s secretary for education and capacity building, 1997 to 2000. Between 1982 and 1992, he served as a high school and teachers’ college chaplain, and



Rev. Dr Veikko Munyika
© LWF/H. Putsman

as organizing secretary for the Students’ Christian Movement of Namibia.

In 1997, Munyika earned his PhD in systematic theology from the University of Kwazulu-Natal in Pietermaritzburg, South Africa, where he pursued his master’s degree studies between 1992 and 1993. He undertook his bachelor of theology studies at the University of South Africa, 1983 to 1989. He pursued his theological and pastoral training at the Lutheran Theological College, Mapumulo, Natal, South Africa, 1977 to 1980, and was ordained as an ELCIN pastor in 1980.

Veikko and his wife Lovisa N. Munyika have three adult sons.

Established in May 2002 and until now served by consultants, the LWF HIV and AIDS desk, coordinates the member churches’ response to the AIDS pandemic in their respective contexts. It includes a global LWF campaign, aimed at breaking the silence around AIDS, and building the churches’ capacity to respond effectively. The DMD desk works collaboratively with the other LWF units in Geneva, LWF regional and sub-regional offices, Department for World Service field offices and with various ecumenical partners.

More information about LWF HIV and AIDS is available on the LWF Web site at: www.lutheranworld.org

FEATURE: Returnees Anticipate Bountiful Harvest

LWF Sudan Program Assists Families with Seeds and Tools

IKOTOS, Southern Sudan/GENEVA (LWI)

– Martina Ikanga lives in Momoria village, about eight kilometers from the project site of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) Department for World Service (DWS) country program in Ikotos county, Southern Sudan. She is among thousands of refugees who decided to return to their original homes after the 2005 signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement between the Sudan Government and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army. Ikanga spent 19 years in a refugee camp in Adjumani district, northern Uganda. At home, she takes care of her family comprising seven members including five grandchildren, left behind by her late daughter. The 53 year-old was identified as one of the 4,000 household representatives benefiting from the Australian Lutheran World Service (ALWS)-funded project providing seeds and agricultural hand tools.

During a recent visit with the family, and asked about the LWF-donated seeds, Ikanga responded with extreme happiness pointing at the gardens planted with sorghum, cowpeas and groundnuts. She mentioned that when the first rains came in April, the family had neither adequate food, nor did they imagine they would have seeds for planting.

Life as returnees was also very difficult—the conditions at the refugee camp were far better compared to life in the village. Ikanga narrated how she found new hope and optimism when she unexpectedly received the seeds from LWF/DWS Sudan office toward the end of June 2008. The seeds were planted in late July through early August and the performance of the crops she is preparing to start harvesting makes her confident that she will soon have enough food for her household. The cowpeas, a fast growing vegetable, did very well and rescued her family from famine which hit her village during the cultivation period.



Martina Ikanga shows a sample of groundnuts from one of her gardens. © LWF/DWS Sudan/Andrew Odong

She plans to preserve some seeds from whatever she will harvest for the next planting season.

Sabina: Answer to Prayers

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees-organized repatriation program carried out in April 2008 from Bweyale camp, northern Uganda, included Naboi Sabina and her family—husband, six children and two dependents. Like many other Southern Sudan families, Naboi fled her village in 1992 to take refuge in Uganda. After 16 years in exile, the family decided to resettle in Lotome village in Ikotos.

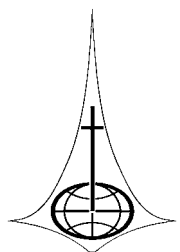
They envisaged a different lifestyle as returnees after closing the chapters of hardships in refugee camps but they encountered new challenges. Most of the relatives and friends whom Sabina counted on for assistance with planting seeds did not even have enough for themselves. And if they could have accessed the seeds from elsewhere, the months of May and June were unusually dry for planting.

According to Sabina, her prayers bore fruits when God sent LWF/

DWS Sudan staff to Lotome village at the beginning of July. Every returnee household in the village, including Sabina's was provided with five kilograms each of maize and groundnut seeds, two kilograms each of sorghum and cowpeas, and a kilogram of sesame.

Sabina planted all the seeds she received and she is extremely happy with the crops' progress. But she is worried about the excessive rainfall. She says too much rain is not good for sorghum especially at flowering stage, similarly for groundnuts when they are ready for harvest. In addition, there are many monkeys in the area, which can also be a menace to food crops.

Sabina's family first relied on the cowpeas because they grow very fast and the vegetables are more palatable when tender. Looking back, she says she does not know what she would have done to sustain her family without the seeds provided by LWF/ALWS. Hoping that nature wouldn't turn her face against the villagers by extending the inconvenient rains, Sabina was confident that she would soon harvest most of the crops in the field.





Naboi Sabina anticipates a good harvest from her sorghum crop. © LWF/DWS Sudan/Andrew Odong

“Thanks to the response to my prayers through ALWS and LWF,” Sabina concluded, “I don’t think I’ll have to worry about feeding ten mouths including myself until the next planting season.”

ALWS, a partner organization of LWF/DWS, serves as the relief and

development arm of the Lutheran Church of Australia.

The current DWS Sudan office was re-established in October 2007, with the objective to facilitate the smooth reintegration of returnees to their home areas. Work with community

members includes rehabilitation and reconstruction, building up sustainable livelihoods, fostering peace and reconciliation, gender issues, sustaining the environment, HIV and AIDS, and community capacity building.

(This feature was written by Andrew Odong, DWS/South Sudan Ikotos project manager.)

More information on DWS work in Sudan is available at:

[www.lutheranworld.org/
What_We_Do/DWS/
Country_Programs/DWS-Sudan.html](http://www.lutheranworld.org/What_We_Do/DWS/Country_Programs/DWS-Sudan.html)

Donations to LWF/DWS work globally can be made online at:

<http://donations.lutheranworld.org>

***The article is in a new LWI series focusing on the topic “Give Us Today Our Daily Bread,” the theme of the LWF Eleventh Assembly, which will take place 20–27 July 2010 in Stuttgart, Germany.**

23 December 2008

Country Supervisor for DWS Work in Chad

Mr Jones Agaba Gatangulia from Uganda is the country supervisor for the LWF Department for World Service (DWS) in Chad. He took up the position mid-2008, succeeding Mr Jacob Huibert Aantjes from the Netherlands, who had led the DWS operations in Chad since the program was started in mid-2007.

Gatangulia, 46, has worked for nearly 20 years in the field of capacity building and community development in several African countries. Prior to joining DWS Chad, he worked with Niger’s community development ministry as a capacity building advisor for non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in the south central province of Maradi. From 2005 to 2007, he was the Niger country program manager for the humanitarian NGO, Armut International. As a consultant for the Christian Organizations Research and Advisory Trust



*Mr Jones A. Gatangulia
© LWF/DWS Chad*

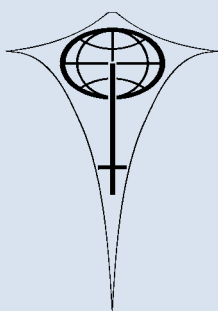
of Africa (CORAT Africa), 2002 to 2005, he assisted in developing and implementing church community-based projects mainly for Francophone African countries, and conducted capacity building workshops for the continental ecumenical body, All Africa Conference of Churches. He was an agricultural extension officer with Uganda’s agricultural development ministry, 1980 to 1994.

Gatangulia holds a master’s in rural sociology and development from the University of Nairobi, Kenya. In 1999, he earned a bachelor of arts in community development from Daystar University in Nairobi.

Jones Agaba and his wife Jackline Gatangulia have three children.

More information about DWS work in Chad is available at:

www.lutheranworld.org/News/LWI/EN/2108.EN.html



Published and distributed by:
The Lutheran World Federation
150, route de Ferney
P.O. Box 2100
CH-1211 Geneva 2, Switzerland
Tel. +41/22-791 61 11
Fax +41/22-791 66 30
E-mail info@lutheranworld.org
www.lutheranworld.org