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FEATURE: A Refuge from Domestic Violence

SANTIAGO DE CHILE, Chile/GENEVA (LWI) – Between 2001 and 2009, Chile registered 392 cases of murdered women. Most of the victims were killed by men with whom they had a close, intimate relationship. Only a small number of the deaths could be attributed to unfamiliar perpetrators.

Although some of the victims had obtained court orders for protection, such measures did not work. The police often lacked sufficient powers to protect the women, making it impossible to prevent the murders.

In the face of this crisis, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Chile (IELCH) is providing a safe place for women and their children who are threatened by domestic violence.

The Vida Plena (“life in fullness”) shelter in Providencia, a suburb of the Chilean capital Santiago de Chile, offers a way out of this situation, giving protection to women and children in life-threatening situations due to domestic violence. The refuge run by the IELCH in cooperation with the Chilean Ministry for Women (Servicio Nacional de la Mujer – SERNAM) is a safe place where women can live for a period of time.

At Vida Plena, a shelter run by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Chile, women and children seeking refuge from domestic violence receive support through legal accompaniment, healing programs, psychosocial and spiritual care. © IELCH

Continues on page 7
Leaders of the Christian Lutheran Church of Honduras (ICLH) sharply criticized the military coup that took place in Honduras at the end of June. In a public statement made in early July, they denounced both the coup itself and the way in which President Manuel Zelaya was “driven from office and forced into exile through coercion and intimidation.”

The church further declared, “We denounce the violation of human rights through the military’s take over and demand that it come to an end.” According to the church, the military, in its efforts to stop demonstrations against injustices committed since the coup took place, had resorted to violence, resulting in human injury and arrests. The coup, said the ICLH, had been led by “a sector that controls the country’s economic forces.”

The president of the Central American country Manuel Zelaya was toppled on 28 June by military forces and fled to neighboring Costa Rica. He was accused of violating the Honduran constitution by attempting to obtain an illegal second term of office.

The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) reacted to the situation in Honduras in the wake of the coup with great concern. In a statement in early July, the general secretary Rev. Dr Ishmael Noko condemned the use of armed violence and anti-constitutional means to resolve political conflicts, and called for the reestabishment of the democratically elected Honduran government, as well as resumption of political processes in the country in accordance with the constitution.

The Honduran church leaders also criticized the violation of freedom of the press and restrictions imposed on freedom of movement through curfews and nationwide power cuts. Many media businesses have been shut down and their facilities destroyed by the military.

The church leaders clearly emphasized in their statement that their decision to speak out in no way implied support for Zelaya, but rather was aimed at “denouncing the means by which the president had been removed from office and the usurpation of power that resulted.” If Zelaya has committed errors, they noted, “he must be tried according to due process, which entitles him to a full defense.”

The Christian Lutheran Church of Honduras has around 1,200 members and joined the LWF in 1994.

The full text of the general secretary’s statement on the situation in Honduras is available on the LWF web site at: www.lutheranworld.org/News/LWI/EN/2466.EN.html
GENEVA (LWI) — The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) has expressed great concern about the situation in Honduras following the military coup d’etat on Sunday, 28 June. LWF General Secretary Rev. Dr Ishmael Noko said in a statement on 2 July that the communion of 140 member churches feared the “instability and polarization of society provoked by these events” would undermine “hard-won development gains, fostering widespread social upheaval and worsening conflict in the country.”

The LWF joined all those around the world who have called for the restoration of the democratically-elected government of Honduras, and the resumption of the constitutional and political process in Honduras, Noko declared.

“The LWF condemns the use of armed force and unconstitutional means to resolve political disputes,” the LWF general secretary stressed. The people of Honduras and the region have suffered enough from military arrogations of power in the past. Such actions, he said, could not resolve underlying disputes and competing claims, and must not be allowed to be part of Honduras’ future.

Noko called, moreover, for the cessation of all police and military action against the civilian population of Honduras, and the release of all those detained in the protests over the last few days.

The LWF general secretary urged the international community—and especially the Organization of American States (OAS)—“to establish mechanisms to help mediate the current crisis, to support the democratic process leading to elections scheduled for 29 November this year and to oversee the transition to a new government following those elections.”

Referring to the unanimous resolution of the United Nations General Assembly on 30 June 2009 condemning the coup d’etat and demanding the immediate and unconditional reinstatement of toppled president Manuel Zelaya and restoration of the democratically-elected government, the LWF general secretary said that it was imperative that the international community, particularly the governments of the Latin American region and the OAS, took appropriate actions to give practical effect to these expressions.

Noko expressed particular concern that the political confrontation could turn to violent conflict after the announced return of President Zelaya to Honduras. He therefore called upon all parties and their supporters to choose the path of political dialogue, rather than violence.

The OAS on Wednesday gave interim Honduran president Roberto

“More putchists! COPINH” — This is the message displayed on this poster by a Honduran demanding return to democratic rule. COPINH, the Council of Indigenous Peoples in Honduras, joined in the protests against the ouster of President Manuel Zelaya. © LWF/DWS Honduras
LWF General Secretary Challenges Faith Communities to Reject Islamophobia

World Religious Leaders Meet at Kazakhstan Summit

ASTANA, Kazakhstan/GENEVA (LWI) – Rev. Dr Ishmael Noko, general secretary of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF), has urged the world’s religious communities to reject Islamophobia.

Speaking at the opening ceremony of the Third Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions held 1-2 July in Astana, Kazakhstan, Noko acknowledged that “unhealed memories caused by ignorance, prejudice, injustice, domination and oppression continue to trouble relations between even some of us in this room.”

He noted, however, that each gathering of the Congress brought the religious leaders deeper into relationship with one another and sent a message to the world of the potential of interreligious dialogue and cooperation for peace.

United States President Barack Obama’s outreach to the Muslim world, moving away from the language of the “war against terror,” was “a hopeful sign towards the healing of memories,” Noko said. “I hope that it will be met with openness and affirmation by political and religious leaders of Muslim communities.”

But Obama’s overture “also challenges other religious communities to reject Islamophobia,” he emphasized. “We need to move from speeches to action.”

Over 400 people in 77 delegations from 35 countries representing all the world’s main religions attended the Congress. Special guests and representatives from international organizations such as the United Nations, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) and United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) also participated. During Noko’s weeklong stay in Kazakhstan, he held talks with Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev.

Opening the summit, Nazarbayev said interfaith dialogue is an important instrument to counter religiously inspired violence, and urged participants to unite to create a non-nuclear world.

The Congress addressed the question of moral and spiritual values, world ethics, dialogue and cooperation, and solidarity in times of crisis.

“In today’s world, [humankind] is left with no other option but to engage in dialogue and interaction,” said Dr Mahdi Mostafavi, leader of the Iranian...
The Eleventh Assembly of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) will meet in less than a year in Stuttgart, Germany, hosted by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Württemberg.

The LWF’s highest decision-making body convenes normally every six years to deliberate and decide policy for the organization’s activities.

Assemblies are milestones in the life of the LWF and reflect the understanding and views of the entire Federation. “Give Us Today Our Daily Bread” is the theme for the upcoming assembly, to be held from 20 to 27 July 2010.

The assembly participants will include 418 delegates from the 138 full LWF member churches around the world. Representatives of associate member churches, recognized councils and congregations, observers from the LWF National Committees and related agencies will also attend. Others include local, co-opted and LWF staff, interpreters, translators, stewards and accredited media persons.

Every Assembly elects a President and Council to lead the Federation through its governing bodies’ meetings. The Assembly is also responsible for the LWF Constitution, and acts on the address of the President and reports of the General Secretary and Treasurer.
Dear Sisters and Brothers,

“Give Us Today Our Daily Bread” is the theme of the Eleventh Assembly of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF). This petition reverberates not only our prayer, hope and sadness, but also our collective lament.

As Christians we believe that God’s creation is meant for all so that all may have life in its fullness. This abundance begins with life-sustaining daily bread. However, every time we say the Lord’s Prayer, “Give us this day our daily bread” (Matthew 6:11), we are reminded of the deep gulf between our petition and the realities that deprive millions across the world of a nourishing meal each day. They struggle with endemic poverty, starvation, landlessness and lack of access to the bounty of creation.

While our theological deliberations include deep ethical dimensions, we are also faced with spiritual and moral challenges. Undoubtedly, the myriad diaconal initiatives that include response to climate change and care for creation are an expression of our spirituality. However, the manifestation of flourishing greed that endangers humanity and the earth also signifies the erosion of our spirituality. As a communion of churches, do we have the courage to turn Jesus’ prayer into acts of justice that challenge powers bent on creating profit-oriented systems for the short-term gain of a few?

In July 2010 the LWF gatherings for its next assembly in Stuttgart, Germany, hosted by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Württemberg and the United Evangelical Lutheran Church of Germany (VELKD). This is an opportunity for representatives from every LWF member church to recognize significant life-giving and hope-restoring moments in our journey together as a communion. As the top legislative and policy-making body of the Federation, the assembly will also provide general direction for the future work coordinated by the Geneva-based communion office.

As we prepare for this milestone event of the Lutheran communion, let us turn Jesus’ prayer from a lament into a hopeful declaration for justice in solidarity with the most vulnerable in our communities.

Rev. Dr Ishmael Noko
LWF General Secretary

Botschaft des Generalsekretärs

Unser tägliches Brot: Von der Klage zum aktiven Einsatz für Gerechtigkeit

Liebe Schwestern und Brüder,

„Unser tägliches Brot gibt uns heute“ lautet das Thema der elften Vollversammlung des Lutherischen Weltbundes (LWB). Diese Bitte reflektiert als Gebet nicht nur unsere Hoffnung und Traurigkeit, sondern ist auch Ausdruck unserer kollektiven Klage.


Während unsere theologische Diskussion ethische Aspekte vertieft mit einbezieht, sehen wir uns dennoch spirituellen und moralischen Herausforderungen gegenüber. Zweifellos ist die grosse Anzahl diaconischer Initiativen, die auf den Klimawandel reagieren und die Schöpfung bewahren wollen, ein Ausdruck unserer Spiritualität. Die Manifestation ungezügelter Habgier jedoch, die die Menschheit und die Erde in Gefahr bringt, signalisiert auch die Aushöhlung unserer Spiritualität. Haben wir als Gemeinschaft von Kirchen den Mut, das Gebet Jesu in ein Handeln für Gerechtigkeit umzusetzen, das jene Mächte herausfordert, die nur darauf aus sind, profitorientierte Systeme für den kurzfristigen Gewinn einer verschwindenden Minderheit zu schaffen?


Pfr. Dr. Ishmael Noko
LWB-Generalsekretär
Gentiles hermanos y hermanas:

“Danos hoy nuestro pan de cada día” es el tema de la Undécima Asamblea de la Federación Luterana Mundial (FLM). Esta petición no solo reverbera nuestra oración, esperanza y tristeza, sino también nuestro lamento colectivo.

Como cristianos/as, creemos que la Creación de Dios es para todos/as así todos/as pueden tener vida en plenitud. Esa abundancia comienza con el pan cotidiano que sustenta la vida. Ahora bien, cada vez que decimos el Padrenuestro “El pan nuestro de cada día, dáoselo hoy” (Mateo 6.11), nos recuerda el profundo abismo que existe entre nuestra petición y las realidades que cada día privan de comida nutritiva a millones de personas en el mundo entero. Todas ellas luchan contra la pobreza endémica, la inanición, la carencia de tierras y la falta de acceso a la munificencia de la Creación.

Nuestras deliberaciones teológicas incluyen profundas dimensiones éticas, pero al mismo tiempo, afrontamos retos espirituales y morales. Indudablemente, la mirada de inicios pastorales que abarcan la intervención frente al cambio climático y el cuidado de la Creación son expresión de nuestra espiritualidad; no obstante, la codicia floreciente que pone en peligro la humanidad y la Tierra también implica la erosión de nuestra espiritualidad. Avancemos, en tanto que comunidad de iglesias, para crear sistemas axiados en el uso del profito, enteramente dedicados a los intereses a la vez de la multitud de iniciativas pastorales que abarcan la intervención frente al cambio climático y el cuidado de la Creación.

Menos la recaudación de los acuerdos decisiomos importantes que auron jalonado nuestra trayectoria común de nuestra comunidad. Órgano supremo de reglamentación y formulación de políticas de la Federación, la Asamblea también definirá la orientación general de la futura labor coordinada por la oficina de la comunidad con sede en Ginebra.

Mientras nos preparamos para este hito de la comunidad luterana, hagamos que la oración de Jesús se transforme de lamento en declaración esperanzadora de justicia en solidaridad con los seres más vulnerables de nuestras comunidades.

Rev. Dr. Ishmael Noko
Secretario General de la FLM
The simple design of the Assembly logo combines two graphic elements in a single image.

Drawn in one brushstroke, the green bud represents the life and growth of God’s creation as well as the growing and spreading of God’s reign. It likewise evokes the “daily bread” of the Assembly theme. The petition for “daily bread” is a reminder that all human beings share the same basic needs, and are called to a commitment to life in dignity for all.

The logo’s central cross affirms that Jesus Christ, the Crucified One, is Lord of the Church. Its upward curve suggests that it is a living entity, symbolizing Christians’ hope in the Resurrection.

Designed by the Leonhardt & Kern Agency in Germany, the logo may be downloaded from the LWF Web site.
Who Are the Delegates?

Guidelines for allocating delegates to the Eleventh Assembly allow for at least one representative from each full member church. The 418 delegates will include 50 percent women and 20 percent youth (under the age of 30 years).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Number</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>North America</td>
<td>21</td>
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<td>Latin America</td>
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<td>Caribbean</td>
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<td>Africa</td>
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<tr>
<td>Europe</td>
<td>183</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asia</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Wer sind die Delegierten?


¿Quiénes son los/as delegados/as?

Las directrices sobre la asignación de delegados/as ante la Undécima Asamblea estipulan que hay al menos un/a representante de cada iglesia miembro de pleno derecho. De los/as 418 delegados/as, el 50 por ciento serán mujeres y el 20 por ciento, jóvenes (menores de 30 años).

Previous Assemblies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Theme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1947</td>
<td>Lund, Sweden</td>
<td>The Lutheran Church in the World Today</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1952</td>
<td>Hanover, Germany</td>
<td>The Living Word in a Responsible Church</td>
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<tr>
<td>1957</td>
<td>Minneapolis, USA</td>
<td>Christ Frees and Unites</td>
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<tr>
<td>1963</td>
<td>Helsinki, Finland</td>
<td>Christ Today</td>
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<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>Evian, France</td>
<td>Sent into the World</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1977</td>
<td>Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania</td>
<td>Daressalam, Tanzania</td>
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<tr>
<td>1984</td>
<td>Budapest, Hungary</td>
<td>Budapest, Ungarn</td>
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<td>1990</td>
<td>Curitiba, Brazil</td>
<td>Curitiba, Brasil</td>
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<td>1997</td>
<td>Hong Kong, China</td>
<td>In Christ—Called to Witness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>Winnipeg, Kanada</td>
<td>In Christ—Healing of the World</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2003 Assembly participants © LWF/D. Zimmermann

2003 Assembly participants © LWF/D. Zimmermann
Assembly Planning Committee

The General Secretary ensures that all the LWF constitutional mandates and Council resolutions are implemented in organizing this important event. The Council-appointed Assembly Planning Committee (APC), comprising representatives from the different LWF regions, meets regularly to plan the assembly. The APC chairperson is Ms Angelene Swart, former president of the Moravian Church in South Africa. There are other coordinators with specific terms of reference for worship, communication, finances, content, logistics and pre-assemblies. The Deputy General Secretary is responsible for coordinating Council-related matters. The assembly host church has appointed a Local Planning Committee which continues with the local preparations under the leadership of Rev. Klaus Rieth. Mr Reinhard Gradmann serves as the Assembly Logistics Coordinator based in Stuttgart.

January 2008 Assembly Planning Committee meeting in Stuttgart, Germany © LWF
Gastgebende Kirche
Die Evangelische Landeskirche in Württemberg


Heute umfasst die württembergische Landeskirche das Gebiet des ehemaligen Königreiches Württemberg und einige Gemeinden, die bis 1945 preußisch waren. Sie hat knapp 2,3 Millionen Mitglieder, die in 1,441 Kirchengemeinden und 48 Dekanaten (Kirchenkreisen) leben. Sie beschäftigt rund 2,500 PfarrerInnen. Die Landessynode, als einzige in Deutschland direkt gewählt, besteht aus 60 nichtordinierten und 30 ordinierten Mitgliedern. Landesbischof ist seit 2005 Dr. h.c. Frank Otfried July.

Wichtige Themen in der Landeskirche sind die Bildung und die Diakonie. Ein theologischer Schwerpunkt liegt derzeit auf Fragen der Taufe in Theorie und Praxis sowie auf dem Thema „Gottesdienst“.

Assembly Host Church: Evangelical Lutheran Church in Württemberg

Established in 1534, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Württemberg is one of the oldest churches of the Reformation. It has the historical and theological particularity of being geographically located between the Lutheran and Zwinglian spheres of influence and therefore, from the very beginning, had a role as mediator between the two. To this very day, this is recognizable in the simple “service of the word” in Upper German and in a unique catechism that is Lutheran-based but markedly influenced by Württemberg reformer Johannes Brenz. An important element of the church’s spiritual identity is the right of residence of Pietists within the church. It was guaranteed by the general Pietist rescript of 1743 and renewed in 1992.

Today, the Württemberg church encompasses the former Kingdom of Württemberg and several congregations that had been Prussian until 1945. It has nearly 2.3 million members in 1,441 congregations and 48 “deaneries” (church districts), served by around 2,500 pastors. The church synod, the only one in Germany that is elected directly, consists of 60 lay people and 30 ordained pastors. Bishop Dr Frank Otfried July has led the church since 2005.

Formation and diaconia are important concerns for the regional church. The present theological focus is on questions about baptism and the council of the word in high German and in a catechism that is Lutheran-oriented but markedly influenced by Württemberg reformer Johannes Brenz. An important element of the church’s spiritual identity is the right of residence of Pietists within the church. It was guaranteed by the general Pietist rescript of 1743 and renewed in 1992.

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Assembly Theme Resources: Food Security and Sovereignty


Contributing authors share their views on food security, education, climate change, land rights and advocacy.

The publication includes the *LWF Sunday 2009* liturgical material in all four LWF languages.

**Material zum Thema der Vollversammlung: Ernährungssicherheit – Ernährungssouveränität**


Die AutorInnen der Sonderausgabe aus verschiedenen Teilen der Welt legen ihre Ansichten zu Themen dar wie: Ernährungssicherheit, Ausbildung, Klimawandel, Landrechte und Anwaltschaft.

**Ressources autour du thème de l’Assemblée : Sécurité et souveraineté alimentaires**


Les auteurs expriment leurs opinions sur la sécurité alimentaire, l’éducation, les changements climatiques, les droits fonciers et les campagnes de sensibilisation.

On trouvera dans cette publication le matériel liturgique du *Dimanche de la FLM 2009* dans les quatre langues de la FLM.

**Recursos para el tema de la Asamblea: Seguridad alimentaria y soberanía**

El número especial de *LWI* titulado, *What Is Enough? Perspectives on Food Security and Sovereignty* recoge reflexiones sobre el tema de la Undécima Asamblea de la FLM: “Danos hoy nuestros pan de cada día”. En ese número (*LWI* No. 05/2009) también se consideran preocupaciones de orden moral y práctico en torno a la crisis mundial de seguridad alimentaria y los consiguientes retos que plantean a los ministros luteranos del mundo entero.

En sus artículos, los colaboradores/as comparten opiniones sobre seguridad alimentaria, educación, cambio climático, derechos a la tierra y sensibilización.

La publicación incluye material litúrgico para el *Domingo de la FLM 2009* en los cuatro idiomas de trabajo de la FLM.

**Link between Lutheran Tradition and Human Rights Principles**

“Give Us This Day Our Human Rights” is the title of *LWI* No. 10/2008, published in anticipation of the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and World Human Rights Day, observed on 10 December.

The content, including liturgical material, features the close connection between the UDHR and Martin Luther’s elaboration of the fourth petition of the Lord’s Prayer.

**Vínculo entre la tradición luterana y los principios de derechos humanos**

*Give Us This Day Our Human Rights* [Danos hoy nuestros derechos humanos] es el título del número *LWI* No. 10/2008, publicado en vísperas del 60º aniversario de la Declaración Universal de Derechos Humanos y en ocasión del Día Mundial de los Derechos Humanos que se celebra el 10 de diciembre. El contenido, que incluye material litúrgico, trata del estrecho vínculo que existe entre dicha declaración y la elaboración de Martin Lutero sobre la cuarta petición del Padre Nuestro.

**Parallelen zwischen lutherischen Lehren und Menschenrechterklärung**


Einige Beiträge dieser Sonderausgabe wie auch die enthaltenen liturgischen Materialien beleuchten erstaunliche Parallelen zwischen Martin Luthers Ausführungen zur vierten Bitte des Vaterunser und der Menschenrechtserklärung.

**Lien entre la tradition luthérienne et les principes des droits humains**

*Give Us This Day Our Human Rights* (Donne-nous nos droits humains de ce jour) est le titre du no. 10/2008 de *LWI*, publié en vue du 60e anniversaire de la Déclaration universelle des droits de l’homme (DUDH) et de la Journée mondiale des droits de l’homme, célébrée le 10 décembre.

Son contenu, y compris le matériel liturgique, traite du lien étroit qui existe entre la DUDH et les explications de Martin Luther, au sujet de la quatrième supplication du Notre Père.
Understanding Humanitarian Crises in a Changing World

LWF World Service Director Says Role of Church-Based Organizations Must be Reassessed

MONTREUX, Switzerland/GENEVA (LWI) – The changing contexts of humanitarian crises today provided a common ground for joint reflection on the future of church-based humanitarian and development initiatives at this year’s Annual Forum of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) Department for World Service (DWS).

“The understanding of humanitarian crises has changed in recent decades,” said Rev. Eberhard Hitzler, LWF/DWS director. “Failed states, recurring drought and climate change have turned disasters from exceptional events to chronic crises. In this context, the role and identity of faith and church-based humanitarian organizations has to be reassessed.”

The 2009 Annual Forum, held 4-6 May, in Montreux, Switzerland, brought together over 50 participants from churches and church-based development and humanitarian agencies. Case studies on DWS field program work in various countries offered perspectives on localization and partnership, and the role of the Lutheran communion in humanitarian aid.

DWS is the internationally recognized humanitarian arm of the LWF, with field programs in 36 countries in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, and Europe.

Localization

Localization is a key element in the DWS strategy, since the engagement
of an international humanitarian and development organization is inherently time-limited. The LWF department works actively toward sustainable local solutions for country programs, transferring them to local ownership wherever circumstances permit.

The Tanzanian program, Tanganyika Christian Refugee Service (TCRS), was cited as one of the positive examples of transition from a DWS country program to a locally-managed organization. TCRS started providing assistance to refugees in the 1960s as a DWS country program. It gained national non-governmental organization (NGO) status, becoming a DWS associate program in 2006. The program is governed by a national board of trustees, of which the majority of members are appointed by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania. This allows the program to continue and empowers the church to share Lutheran values in its diaconal work. “TCRS, under the guidance and leadership of the church, maintains its historical reputation as a major and long-standing partner of the UNHCR [United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees] in refugee operations,” TCRS director Mr Mark Leveri told the forum.

Emergency response was the subject of a case study from Brazil. In November 2008 over 400,000 people lost their homes after devastating floods covered the Itajaí valley in eastern Brazil. The Lutheran communion raised national and international awareness about the emergency. Through the Evangelical Church of the Lutheran Confession in Brazil (IECLB) it distributed 140 tons of food, clothing, health and hygiene products in the main towns affected. Working through local parishes and congregations, it also reconstructed 200 homes for affected families.

“The churches acted on immediate social assistance, spiritual assistance and personal needs,” said IECLB synodal pastor Rev. Mariane Beyer Ehrat. “The state responded to the macro problems—infrastructure, rehabilitation of roads, emergency healthcare and food distribution, as well as restoring water, electricity and telephone services.”

**Refugee Camps**

Ms Sofia Malmqvist, who coordinates the DWS Kenya Somali refugee program, gave a presentation on managing refugee camps in partnership with the UN.

The camps receive refugees from Somalia, distribute food and water, and serve as transit centers. They also provide training opportunities within community development, including peace-building and conflict resolution, gender equity and human rights, child development and empowerment, and youth protection and development.

Malmqvist is one of five Church of Sweden workers seconded to DWS field programs in a two-year initiative. “In the various protection and operational management training materials, it is clear there is a need to build effective partnerships,” she said, “but projects need their independence.”

(Ms Tsiry Rakoto from Madagascar, an intern in the LWF Office for Communication Services wrote this article.)

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

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The church explains that the victims often have no means of availing themselves of protective measures. If the abusive men receive summons to appear before the family court or public prosecutor to face charges of domestic violence, the situation often escalates. The men assault and abuse the women all over again. In the more extreme cases, the women lose their lives. Neighbors often do not dare to intervene, acting on the principle: “Do not get involved in a couple’s squabbles.” Since many women are isolated, they find it difficult to get assistance. Their children are often used as a means of control and blackmail. The psychological effect of years of violence diminishes the women’s self-esteem and drains them of the strength they need to change their lives. In addition, the women remain economically dependent on their abusers.

**Psychosocial and Spiritual Care**

Vida Plena provides accommodation for three months, which also includes healing programs, psychosocial and spiritual care, legal accompaniment and assistance in devising new life goals for the women and children suffering family violence. The refuge is currently home to 12 women and 18 children between the ages of one and 17. The staff includes social workers, a psychologist, an accountant, five kindergarten teachers and a woman pastor.

The IELCH currently has five cooperation agreements with SERNAM for three women shelters—two within the capital, and one in Concepción, the capital of Region VIII, as well as two contact centers for the prevention of violence. The church shelter is so far the only organization in the country to have signed an official agreement with the government for this kind of work.

IELCH president Rev. Dr Gloria Rojas attributes this cooperation to government recognition of the church’s commitment to defend human rights from its prophetic ministry during the period of Chile’s dictatorship.

The church is committed to equal rights for men and women, and opposes discrimination, she stresses. “In a society debating women’s abilities and the defense of equal opportunity, this stance is highly valued,” according to Rojas. She also cites the practical, firm dedication of the church to diaconal work, which is a response to the gospel of Jesus Christ. Here words and actions are closely intertwined, she adds.

“Violence against women is a sin,” states Rev. Dr Elaine G. Neuenfeldt, secretary for Women in Church and Society at the Lutheran World Federation (LWF). Overcoming it requires a holistic, collective effort, she says, emphasizing that the church is called to be a safe place for women living and suffering in violent relations.

As a global communion, the LWF calls for affirmative policies for women and for missional, diaconal and pro-
The book, *One Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church* offers some perspectives on how Lutheran churches, within an ecumenical horizon, understand and live out the marks of the church from the Nicene Creed. Produced in the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) Studies series (Studies 01/2009), the publication brings together papers from the first of two consultations organized by the Department for Theology and Studies (DTS) as part of a study program on ecclesiology. The first consultation was held near Geneva in June 2008, and the second will be held in Münster, Germany in June 2010.

For further information on this program, please contact Rev. Dr Martin L. Sinaga, DTS study secretary for Theology and the Church, at: msi@lutheranworld.org

### Reflections on Interfaith Perspectives for Economic Life

“Interfaith Perspectives for Economic Life” is the topic covered in the latest pamphlet of the LWF/DTS *Thinking it over ...* series of theological reflections on timely challenges facing churches of the Lutheran communion.

The online booklet points out that the prescription for “healing” this crisis has concentrated mostly on the large corporations and other major players in the global market who have applied approaches that overlook the many ways in which common people have been coping and surviving for long. What other kinds of wisdom can be found in Luther and in other faith traditions that suggest a different orientation for economic life?

Read more about this topic and previous ones at: www.lutheranworld.org/What_We_Do/Dts/DTS-Thinking_it_over.html

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### Regional Lutheran Bishops Lead HIV Testing Initiative

Lutheran church leaders from Southern Africa recently demonstrated their commitment to promoting HIV and AIDS awareness by being tested for the virus.

Bishops from the Lutheran Communion in Southern Africa (LUCSA) member churches agreed to the presence of AIDS counselors to conduct voluntary counseling and testing at LUCSA’s Theological Seminar and Council Meeting in early July at Kempton Park, near Johannesburg, South Africa.

“It is important that everyone get tested because, for us to beat HIV, we need to know our status,” said Rt Rev. Dr Ambrose Moyo, LUCSA’s outgoing executive director. Newly-elected executive director Presiding Bishop Dr Johannes Ramashapa of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Southern Africa (ELCSA) said he considered the voluntary counseling and testing as “good news.”

On the churches’ commitment to fighting the AIDS epidemic, Ramashapa said, “We do embrace people living with HIV and AIDS. As church leaders, we are doing our best to break the stigma surrounding the disease by encouraging all people to know their status through getting tested.”

LUCSA is one of the three sub-regional bodies of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) in Africa. It represents 17 Lutheran churches in 10 Southern African countries, including 13 LWF member churches.

(By Daisy Dube, LUCSA communications officer)