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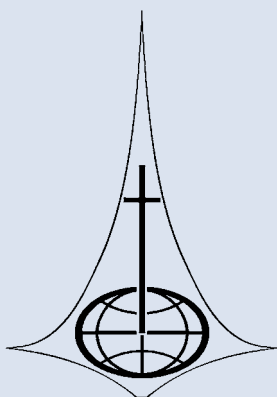
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LWF Council Meets in Geneva to Consider Plans for the Future



The newly-elected Council is installed during the Eleventh Assembly closing worship service. ©LWF/Luis E. Ramirez

Keynote Address by UNHCR Representative

GENEVA (LWI) – The Council of The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) holds its meeting 9-14 June at the Ecumenical Center in Geneva, Switzerland.

This is the first full annual session of the governing body appointed at the July 2010 Eleventh Assembly in Stuttgart, Germany. The Council is responsible for the business of the LWF between Assemblies, the highest decision-making body, held normally every six years.

A key agenda item for this year's meeting is discussion and adoption of an LWF Strategy 2012-2017, outlining future directions and priorities for the communion's work. The proposed strategy is based on a broad, participatory consultation process that included input from member churches and their related organizations, as well as ecumenical bodies that collaborate with the LWF.

The Council comprises 50 ordained and lay persons from LWF member churches

around the world, under the leadership of LWF President Bishop Dr Munib A. Younan from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land (ELCJHL).

The president's address is followed by reports from LWF General Secretary Rev. Martin Junge, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Chile, and Treasurer Ms Christina Jackson-Skelton, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

The Council's keynote address is by Dr Volker Türk, director of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Division of International Protection.

At its meeting, the LWF governing body is considering a budget frame for 2012, deciding on a proposed framework for a reconfigured secretariat or communion office for Geneva, agreeing on reconfiguration of Council com-

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Final Message from the Africa Lutheran Church Leadership Consultation

The final message of The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) Africa Lutheran Church Leadership Consultation (ALCLC) "Toward Re-visioning LWF Africa Regional Expression for a Holistic Mission" is now available on the LWF Web site.

Sixty delegates from the LWF member churches in the region pledged to help shape a renewed global Lutheran communion, saying they are spurred by the growing membership there but still challenged by poverty, political instability, gender injustice and effects of climate change. They affirmed their crucial role in areas of diakonia, proclamation, advocacy work and theological education and ecumenical relations.

Meeting at Johannesburg 4-8 April, they called on African political leaders to work for democracy and economic justice for all, "overcoming poverty in all its manifestations."

The church representatives urged LWF member churches on the continent to share their talents and resources in support of God's holistic mission and keep *diakonia* at the heart of the church in Africa. The delegates urged that youth be given opportunities for leadership in the African churches, and called for women to be fully embraced as leaders.

Organized by the LWF Department for Mission and Development, the ALCLC was hosted by the Lutheran Communion in Southern Africa (LUCSA), the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Southern Africa (ELCSA) and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Southern Africa (ELCSA N-T).

Download the message at <http://www.lutheranworld.org/lwf/index.php/alclc-2011-final-message.html>

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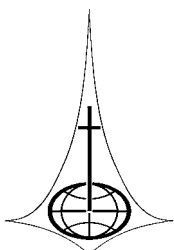
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LWF Council Meets in Geneva to Consider Plans for the Future

Continued from p. 1

mittees, and taking actions on other issues emerging from plenary and smaller committee discussions.

Speaking ahead of the Council meeting, Junge said the planning process around the draft strategy had revealed the rich diversity of the LWF and its member churches, its complexity as an organization and its willingness to adapt to new world realities.

The draft strategy is based on recommendations from the LWF Renewal process, and on commit-

ments and actions from the Eleventh Assembly, under the theme “Give Us Today Our Daily Bread.”

The petition for bread in the Lord’s Prayer, said Junge, mirrored the LWF communion’s vision to work for a just, peaceful and reconciled world in close collaboration with other partners who promote a holistic response to human need.

He underlined the LWF’s long-standing practical partnership with the UNHCR in humanitarian work through the Department for World Service, particularly support for refu-

gees and protection of other displaced persons.

The governing body meeting “also offers us a valuable opportunity to come together to *express* the communion of churches,” said Junge. “That is why, in addition to the important decisions of the Council, we also have time for worship and prayer, Eucharist and shared reading of the Bible on our schedule,” he added.

The meeting includes a eucharistic service at the Ecumenical Center on Sunday, 12 June.

1 June 2011

Ethiopian Church Expresses Both Diversity and Unity

LWF General Secretary Junge Visits Ethiopia

ADDIS ABABA, Ethiopia/GENEVA (LWI)

– During his first visit with the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus (EECMY), The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) General Secretary Rev. Martin Junge commended the EECMY for expressing its diversity within the unity of its life.

“The EECMY has succeeded in giving shape to this diversity and in seeing it as a unified whole,” Junge said of his 29 April to 2 May visit. He urged the EECMY to continue to nurture these gifts and also to share them with the global LWF.

The LWF general secretary held discussions with the EECMY president, Rev. Dr Wakseyoum Idosa, and took part in an executive committee meeting of the church’s leadership. He also held discussions with Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles Zenawi, as well as the head of the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church Patriarch Aboune Paulos, and with the president of the Ethiopian Islamic Affairs Supreme Council, Sheikh Ahmedin Abdulahi.

According to Junge, this visit sprang from his desire to establish direct contact with this rapidly growing member church that has participated so actively in the life of the LWF.

Junge recalled the discussion with the Ethiopian church concerning the holistic understanding of mission that left such a deep mark on the entire LWF in the 1970s. He also highlighted the church’s diaconal work, through which numerous LWF Department for World Service (DWS) projects have been implemented.

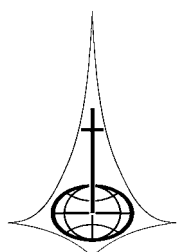
In an intensive dialogue with the church’s executive board about current issues as well as the EECMY’s self-understanding and mission involvement, the significant contribution made by the church was affirmed.

“I am impressed by the diverse confessional currents that have come together in this church,” Junge remarked. The EECMY had made space in its midst for diverse Ethiopian ethnic groups, giving them a forum in which to express themselves, he added. He said he was equally encouraged by the EECMY’s efforts to promote peaceful coexistence with Muslims.

While visiting with Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles Zenawi, Junge emphasized the LWF’s strong commitment to climate change issues. He told the prime minister about the LWF De-



EECMY President Rev. Dr Wakseyoum Idosa (right) with the El Salvadoran cross he received from LWF General Secretary Rev. Martin Junge. © LWF/S. Larsson



partment for Mission and Development youth initiative on environmental concerns—“LWF together”—and the growing concern for climate justice including numerous DWS projects. He noted that in Ethiopia, the LWF had implemented 115 irrigation projects, bringing water to 30,000 hectares of land, benefiting some 500,000 persons and assuring them of better food security.

“At our last Assembly in 2010 in Stuttgart,” Junge told the prime minister, “we made it clear that climate

change is not something theoretical, but rather, is an extremely relevant issue today that concretely impacts the poorest and most vulnerable populations. And we want to and can do something about it.”

Zenawi co-leads a United Nations-appointed high level panel on climate change.

In an interview with *LWI*, Junge expressed his gratitude toward the EECMY for the intensive dialogues and exchanges he enjoyed during his visit.

“This visit was important in affirming and acknowledging the EECMY’s strong commitment and contribution to the LWF. We look forward to their continuing role in the global journey of the communion in holistic mission, which embraces proclamation, diakonia and advocacy,” Junge added.

The EECMY is the third-largest LWF member church with over 5.5 million members.

6 May 2011

Lutherans and Anglicans Mark Decade of Full Communion in North America

LWF General Secretary Congratulates Churches for Growing Together in Mission

CHICAGO, USA/GENEVA (LWI) – Epiphany Lutheran and Episcopal Church in Marina, California, stands as a testament to the depth of shared ministry between Lutherans and Anglicans, a decade after full communion was declared between the traditions in separate agreements in the United States and Canada.

On 1 May the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) and the US-based Episcopal (Anglican) Church celebrated the signing of “Called to Common Mission” (CCM), while the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCIC) and the Anglican Church of Canada marked the 10th anniversary of the signing of the “Waterloo

Declaration.” The full communion agreements allow the sharing of clergy when needed and indicate agreement on the Eucharist and baptism.

Simultaneous celebrations of the agreements were held at St Paul’s Anglican Church in Fort Erie, Ontario, where ELCIC National Bishop Susan C. Johnson presided and Bishop Katharine Jefferts Schori preached. Across the border at Trinity Lutheran Church in Fort Erie, New York, ELCA Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson presided and Archbishop Fred Hiltz of the Anglican Church of Canada delivered the sermon.

The ELCA and ELCI are member churches of The Lutheran World Federation (LWF).

For the 53 families of Epiphany Lutheran and Episcopal Church, CCM offered a sense of validation of their ministry in the ethnically diverse and transient community it serves with worship, faith formation and outreach programs.

Epiphany Lutheran and Episcopal Church is one of many joint ministries that have evolved as a result of CCM. At least 31 ELCA pastors are serving congregations of the Episcopal Church and about 20 Episcopal priests are serving in ELCA congregations.

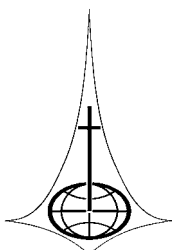
Lutherans and Episcopalians work together on a wide range of efforts throughout the US including affordable housing, disaster response and campus ministries. They collaborate on advocacy work, federal chaplaincies, theological education and HIV and AIDS ministries, and train missionaries together.

“Called to Common Mission” gave us legitimacy,” said Rev. John A. Perez, an Episcopalian priest who serves the congregation. “We were no longer just an experiment of two little churches doing a nice thing—this was a legitimate way of doing ministry. It took [the ministry] from a novelty to a tool that we have.”

In a letter congratulating the leaders of the four churches, LWF General Secretary Rev. Martin Junge



(L/r) ELCA Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson, Archbishop Fred Hiltz of the Anglican Church of Canada
© ELCA/John Brooks



said the two agreements had inspired the ecumenical movement worldwide.

“The importance of your growth in relationship is not simply institutional. Like all good theological affirmations, your agreements have enabled you to grow in mission,” Junge wrote. “Because your churches are in full communion, you are able to bear full witness and act together in ways which care for the earth and for its vulnerable people.”

In a pastoral letter issued by the Lutheran and Anglican leaders prior to the anniversary celebrations, they urged greater collaboration on justice

issues on both sides of the US-Canada border, including the environment, poverty, First Nations concerns and immigration. “Principles of justice call us to live more sustainably as individuals and in community, and to work for systemic changes that support care for God’s creation and for our neighbors.”

They added: “On the basis of ‘Called to Common Mission’ and the ‘Waterloo Declaration,’ we look forward to the development of fuller relationships that will lead to a common mission, ministry, and witness in the world.”

Jefferts Schori said in her 1 May sermon that while there was a great deal of history to overcome between the two Christian traditions, “The reign of God lies in the direction of more porous borders. The world around us is in urgent need of our shared gifts.”

In his homily, Hiltz noted that Lutherans and Anglicans globally were working on a host of humanitarian issues, including global poverty, peace and reconciliation in the Middle East and HIV and AIDS in Africa.

(ELCA News Service)

9 May 2011

LWF Praise for Munich Bishop Friedrich as Ecumenical Bridge Builder

General Secretary Underlines Commitment to Dialogue

STRASBOURG/HANOVER (LWI) – During a farewell ceremony for Bishop Dr Johannes Friedrich, outgoing chairperson of The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) German National Committee (GNC), LWF General Secretary Rev. Martin Junge, praised the Munich bishop for promoting dialogue and being “a bridge builder.”

Friedrich has consistently “striven for considerate dialogue, understanding and solidarity” and proven a “reliable, untiring and most committed champion” of the ecumenical movement, Junge said in marking Friedrich’s last session at the helm of the GNC, during its 12-13 May session in Strasbourg, France.

Friedrich is also presiding bishop of the United Evangelical Lutheran Church of Germany (VELKD) and concludes his term as Bavarian bishop in October 2011.

He has shown “personally, but also as chairperson of the GNC/LWF, that Lutheran identity is closely linked with ecumenical openness,” added Bishop Dr Frank O. July, LWF vice-president for Central Western Europe. July, bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Württemberg, Germany, said Friedrich was concerned about not promoting “an inward-looking confessionalism, but the ability to dialogue from a solid foundation.”



LWF General Secretary Rev. Martin Junge (left) expressing gratitude to Bishop Dr Johannes Friedrich, outgoing GNC/LWF chairperson, during the meeting in Strasbourg, France. © GNC/LWF/F. Hübner

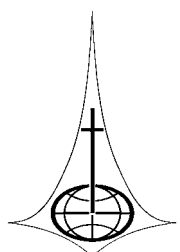
The GNC/LWF meeting was held at the Institute for Ecumenical Research in Strasbourg, which it has supported for many years. The research institute works closely with the LWF office for Ecumenical Affairs in providing theological assistance to all international dialogues, and with the LWF Department for Theology and Studies.

Besides having an opportunity to learn about the institute’s work in greater depth, the delegates also grappled with issues such as relations with LWF churches in Central and Western Europe, and restructuring press and public relations activities in Germany.

GNC/LWF comprises 13 Lutheran churches representing an estimated 12.6 million members. They include the eight VELKD member churches—in Bavaria, Brunswick, Hanover, Mecklenburg, North Elbia, Saxony, Schaumburg-Lippe and the Evangelical Church in Central Germany—and the Evangelical Lutheran churches in Baden, Oldenburg and Württemberg, the Evangelical Church of Pomerania and the Church of Lippe [Lutheran Section].

(Original German article by Gundolf Holfert, GNC/LWF deputy press officer, with additional information from LWI)

16 May 2011



Christians Are Called to Live and Celebrate in Communion

Lutheran Leaders from Latin American and the Caribbean Meet in Buenos Aires

BUENOS AIRES, Argentina/GENEVA (LWI) – God calls Christians to be in communion with one another and in solidarity with society’s disenfranchised, Rev. Annedore Venhaus, vice president of the Evangelical Church of the River Plate (IERP), in Argentina, told Lutheran leaders from Latin America and the Caribbean.

“God’s call is essential. It demands a complete redemption of our souls and our lives. God calls us and provides us with what we need to reach out to those who are excluded, even if they are not Lutherans. We are called to be part of God’s Kingdom, to live and celebrate in communion,” Venhaus said in Buenos Aires on 30 May.

She was speaking at the opening worship of The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) Latin America and Caribbean region Church Leadership Conference held in the Argentine capital until 3 June. The two LWF member churches in Argentina, IERP and the United Evangelical Lutheran Church co-hosted the meeting.

The 50 participants included the leadership of LWF member churches in the region and staff from the Geneva secretariat. The meeting was coordinated by the LWF Department for Mission and Development.

Delegates reported on their churches’ activities, and reflected on experiences of being part of the worldwide Lutheran communion. Their agenda also included discussion on the LWF’s strategic plan for 2012 to 2017,

and resolutions passed at the Eleventh Assembly held in Stuttgart, Germany, in July 2010. They also deliberated on sustainability in mission, illegitimate external debt, gender justice, and HIV and AIDS, among other topics.

Preaching at the opening service on Acts 2: 44-47, Venhaus said she had great admiration for the love, solidarity and understanding the first Christians demonstrated by sharing their possessions with one another and giving to the poor.

Yet, she noted, the early Christians “didn’t have the structures and rules our churches and modern organizations have.”

The IERP vice president said she was ashamed about the gap that has developed between the way the

first Christians lived and witnessed in the world and the way Christians demonstrate their faith today. “What are 2,000 years of experience worth if we are so far from the simplicity of those first communities?” she asked.

The difference between the witness of the first Christians and today’s Christian outreach, Venhaus said, was that the early Christians had certainty that God was calling them. Today, she added, “We suppose we also make a contribution.”

The opening liturgy was led by Rev. Wilma Rommel of the United Evangelical Lutheran Church (Argentina).

The LWF Latin American and Caribbean region includes 16 churches with around 847,000 members.

1 June 2011



Participants in a group discussion during the Latin America and Caribbean region Church Leadership Conference. © IELU

Creating a Vision of Right Relationships between Women and Men in Church

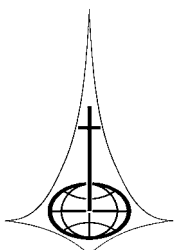
LWF European Gatherings Call for Renewed Commitment to Gender Justice

GENEVA (LWI) – Lutheran women from across Europe have expressed the need to recognize and acknowledge women’s contribution to the 16th century church reform movement, particularly

as preparations get underway to commemorate the 500th anniversary of the Protestant Reformation in 2017.

A meeting of Lutheran coordinators of women’s ministries from

Central Eastern Europe at Kovačica, Serbia was challenged to create a vision of right relationships between women and men in church and society.



In Hamburg, Germany, women church activists from Lutheran churches in Central Western Europe were urged to increase their knowledge of women who were active during the Reformation era and to broadcast their findings.

Jesus represented a breakthrough in the patriarchal order and a revolution in relationships between women and men, theologian Daniela Horínková of Bratislava, Slovak Republic, said in her keynote address to the Central Eastern European regional meeting of The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) Women in Church and Society (WICAS) desk in April.

“The righteous balancing between the responsibility of man and woman in church has always been a consequence of the faithfulness to the gospel in all levels of life. It is a permanent and general calling to unity between the male and female parts of the church and the world,” Horínková said.

“This calling is based on faith, mutual love and commands, such as Paul’s: ‘In humility, regard others as better than yourselves (Phil. 2:3).’”

In her address, “Theology from the Gender Perspective in a Protestant Country,” Horínková said that while Christians may call God, ‘Creator, Lord and Father,’ God is not man. She added that the growth of the mariological cult in both Ro-



(l/r) Rev. Anna Petrak, Slovak Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in Serbia, and Rev. Daniela Horínková, Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in the Slovak Republic, at the May 2011 WICAS regional women’s meeting in Serbia. © LWF/E. Neuenfeldt

man Catholicism and in Orthodox churches testifies to a lack of female images for God.

Participants from Croatia, Hungary, Latvia, Poland, Serbia and the Slovak Republic exchanged viewpoints and renewed their commitment to women’s ministry in their churches and to networking throughout the region.

Common Problems

Lena Bondarenko of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Russia and Other States (ELCROS) said the meeting was important in helping Russian church members better un-

derstand the wider European context for Lutheran women.

“It is particularly important to strengthen the women’s ministry network,” she said. “The church of European Russia will try to be one of the pivots of women’s ministry in Russia, since it has always actively participated in it through Bible seminars for women, by implementing the World Day of Prayer in Lutheran congregations and in the ecumenical milieu, by consulting the *au pair* workers from Russia and [by] organizing different forums.”

There were many common problems in Central Eastern Europe, remarked the ELCROS representative, including loss of the older generation, a complicated attitude to women’s ordination in some churches and difficult relations between Lutheran churches.

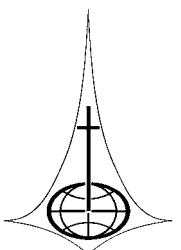
Bozena Vincetic of Croatia said she expected the WICAS regional meeting to lead to an intensification of her church’s engagement with women’s work.

At the WICAS gathering in Hamburg in May, Dr Cornelia Schlarb of the Association of Protestant Female Theologians of Germany said Lutheran schools had long taught a male-oriented version of the history of the Reformation.

“Always the Reformation, the church-state relations and conflicts



Women’s ministry coordinators in Europe have underlined the Pre-Assembly message to the LWF communion to bake the daily bread of gender justice. © LWF/T. Rakoto



occurred as concerted actions of men only: the reformers, counterparts, humanist scholars, territorial rulers, council men in the cities, book printers or artists. Although in the Reformation time—like today—half of humankind were women,” Schlarb noted.

She said that during the Reformation decade (2008-2017) Lutheran churches should give church buildings and institutions the names of important women who were active in the Reformation, and they should found trusts and institute prizes under the names of important women

who have contributed to Lutheran churches.

“During the Reformation Decade we have the chance to increase the public awareness about women of the Reformation on a European and worldwide scale,” Schlarb concluded.

6 June 2011

Communion and Fellowship on Equal Footing

LWF General Secretary Junge Speaks at 33rd German Protestant Kirchentag

DRESDEN & HANOVER, Germany/GENEVA (LWI) – “We are a global church community that is on a common path of Christian witness, service, and mutual support.” The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) General Secretary Rev. Martin Junge used these words to describe the LWF, when he spoke at the 33rd German Protestant *Kirchentag* (church convention) taking place in Dresden, Germany, 1-5 June.

Speaking at the *Kirchentag*’s “Marketplace of Possibilities,” Junge expanded on the Lutheran communion’s goals and work. He explained, for instance, how the common work of the 145 member churches was characterized by mutual trust and equal footing.

The *Kirchentag* was established in 1949 as an independent Protestant lay movement. Its biennial conventions

offer forums for critical debate about a variety of topical subjects. This year’s theme was “...there your heart will be also,” taken from the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 6:21).

During the discussion hosted by Florian Hübner, public relations officer for the LWF German National Committee (GNC), Junge said it was encouraging to see how relations among the churches had proven so fruitful.

“The division between ‘giving’ churches and ‘receiving’ churches has long been obsolete,” the general secretary explained. This is borne out by the concept of holistic mission, which encompasses diakonia, proclamation and advocacy—including political advocacy. This model, originally developed in the LWF Africa region,

had since become a foundation of the communion’s self-image, Junge added.

He also spoke about the years of the military regime in his home country Chile, where he said he came to experience first-hand how the LWF is not an anonymous construction but a real and pragmatic source of help and support.

“I experience the LWF as a communion of siblings who share with and stand by one another,” he said. “And this is enriching for us all. No church is so small that it has nothing to contribute to the LWF communion. And none is so important that it cannot benefit from these contributions.”

(By Gundolf Holfert, GNC/LWF deputy press officer, with additional information from LWI)

6 June 2011

Uncoordinated Humanitarian Assistance Impedes Effective Response for Haiti

LWF Round Table Reviews Lessons Learned and Future Strategies

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti/GENEVA (LWI) – A round table organized in the Haitian capital Port-au-Prince to review strategies for international aid underlined the need for better coordination of relief assistance, particularly after the January 2010 earthquake.

“The biggest problem facing continuing aid to Haiti is the lack of coordination between the estimated 10,000 aid agencies working in the country after the earthquake,” said Mr Rudelmar Bueno de Faria, program coordinator for The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) Department for World Service (DWS), which organized the round table in mid-May.

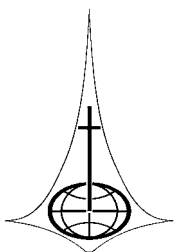
In addition to humanitarian assistance, DWS program work in the Caribbean region and Haiti since 1983 has focused on reduction of disaster risks; supporting local communities to secure sustainable livelihoods; environmental protection; and development of civil society organizations.

De Faria pointed out that while every organization wants autonomy, better coordination would also mean that “it becomes clear who is responsible for what.” The round table was attended by LWF’s related partners from Europe and North America, and international and local members of ACT Alliance, the global network

of church and church-related organizations engaged in humanitarian assistance and development.

Mr Jouni Hemberg, director of International Cooperation at FinnChurchAid, the aid agency for the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland (ELCF), said the Haiti disaster relief was testing ground for the ACT Alliance forums. “We still have a job to do. We have succeeded in many issues but we still need to learn. There are already some very good signs on the ground when we combine our efforts,” he noted.

ACT Alliance, of which the LWF is a founding member, was formed





New structures in the Gressier area will replace temporary classrooms under the trees. © LWF/Anli Serfontein

in January 2010, bringing together the efforts, resources, people and organizations of over 100 churches and church-related organizations. It works through national forums of local implementing partners.

Addressing the round table, the president of the Haitian Senate Senator Bastien Kely spoke about the lack of coordination between the humanitarian aid organizations and a weak Haiti government in 2010. With a newly-elected president inaugurated in mid-May, he urged the church-related organizations to register with the government agencies in order to coordinate a more

effective distribution of humanitarian assistance.

Dr Louis Dorvilier, the LWF representative in Haiti, said, “The international community and the NGOs [non-governmental organizations] are animated with good intentions. But we all need to admit; Haiti is not a problem that you can simply ‘fix’. Haiti is a country founded on [a] dream, hope and the potential of many men and women that want to live free and walk tall. Haiti needs friends that would understand these paradigms and accompany the country on the road of Emmaus where we can all hear, listen, see and be transformed.”

Dorvilier, who is of Haitian origin, said the fundamental issue was to define the intervention of NGOs. “If it seems complicated to answer this question, however, an essential balance is needed to find a link between public intervention and civic organizations, in partnership with a society which was destroyed. The task for [the] Lutheran World Federation and its officers is to get people to listen so they can establish a partnership based on complementing each other, with accountability and with mutual respect,” he noted.

Stressing that the country would need major investments in key sectors, he invited the international guests to see, discover, experience and be open to the new realities “as we seek to embark as guests and invitees in the transformation of this nation. The opportunities for this country are greater than the misses, the lacks and deficiencies that we often see. No matter what we decide at the end of this round table, Haitians will reach down and draw from an endless well of determination and find a way to move forward.”

By LWI correspondent Anli Serfontein

Read more about DWS Haiti at:

www.lutheranworld.org/lwf/index.php/themes/dws-country-programs/dws-caribbean-haiti

To Mark International Workers’ Day, LWF Looks at ‘Theology of Work’

Symposium Participants Say Work Has not Always Promoted Human Dignity

GENEVA, (LWI) – The Protestant Reformer Martin Luther developed a new understanding of the meaning of work but churches have had a mixed record in dealing with labor movements, a symposium of The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) held in Geneva heard.

Luther, said Rev. Dr Martin Robra, a German theologian, questioned the value given to contempla-

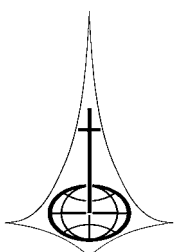
tive monastic life in the church of his era and instead underlined the importance of manual labor for the community.

Robra, director of the “WCC and the ecumenical movement in the 21st century” program at the World Council of Churches, was delivering the opening address to the 2 May symposium at Geneva’s Ecumenical Center. It was organized

by the LWF Department for Theology and Studies (DTS), with focus on the question of work and labor as a theological issue.

The International Workers’ Day (or May Day) is observed in many parts of the world on 1 May.

The WCC program director pointed out that in the 19th century, German philosopher and sociologist Karl Marx highlighted the central



role of labor in producing wealth, while workers themselves were disempowered.

Churches, however, did not always respond positively to this “social question,” noted Robra, who once worked as a pastor among steel workers in Germany’s industrial Ruhr region.

At an opening worship service prior to the symposium, LWF assistant general secretary for Ecumenical Affairs Dr Kathryn Johnson noted that the first reference to the word “work” in the Bible appears in the account of how God rested from “all the work” of the six days of creation.



Dr Fulata Mbano-Moyo (right), WCC, underlines the need for analysis of gender-based employment inequalities. Left is symposium moderator Rev. Dr Kenneth Mtata. © LWF/I. Benesch

“But this is also the first time we hear the verb to rest,” said Johnson, reflecting on one of the readings (Gen 2:1-3). “And so if working is an aspect of life in the image of God, so is the succession of working and rest,” she added.

Still, the way in which work has evolved over time has not always promoted human dignity, participants at the symposium noted.

Slavery and Colonialism

The symposium’s organizer Rev. Dr Kenneth Mtata, DTS study secretary for Lutheran Theology and Practice, described how African understandings of work were disrupted by slavery and colonialism, which imposed

new ideas about land and property ownership.

In pre-colonial Africa, “work was part and parcel of the ritually-organized life around the cycles of agricultural seasons,” said Mtata, an ordained pastor of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Zimbabwe.

Work also formed part of a system of “relationship building,” organized around households, which pulled together within communities to work in each other’s fields in rotation.

Despite the experience of colonialism, work in Africa “is still conceived and done in cooperation

with others and the spiritual world,” Mtata explained.

Such a “communitarian understanding of relationship,” while not necessarily meaning egalitarianism, is “more amenable to the biblical God of work,” said the DTS study secretary.

He suggested this could contribute to a theology of work in which contemporary African perspectives on work within a global context are connected to aspects of traditional thinking.

The assumption that all material things have “levels of sacredness” makes work a holy engagement in which one treats fellow workers and raw materials with respect, Mtata added.

Disparities

WCC’s program executive for Women in Church and Society Dr Fulata Mbano-Moyo, a Reformed theologian from Malawi, spoke of the need for an “extensive gender analysis” of disparities in access to employment, decent work and pay between women and men.

She questioned how such experiences are related to the theological conviction that women and men have “equal human dignity as the image of God.”

Rev. Pierre Martinot-Lagarde, a Jesuit priest who is a special advisor on social and religious affairs to the director general of the International Labour Organization (ILO), highlighted the need to respond to an increase in inequalities, within and between nations, as a result of globalization.

He suggested that the traditional concerns for human dignity and solidarity in work needed to be complemented by a “third pillar” focusing on equality.

Martinot-Lagarde also spoke of the experience of interacting with faith groups about the ILO, the United Nations agency that promotes labor rights.

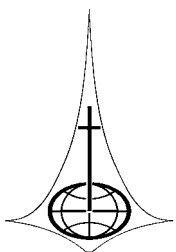
Such dialogue, he said, needed to get beyond an “institutionalized debate” about general ethical values such as human dignity, solidarity and social protection, and address how members of faith groups experience God in the work place.

Other presenters included Swiss specialist in economic ethics Prof. Edward Dommen and Ms Cynthia Salim from Indonesia, who works in advocacy for vulnerable migrants through the Geneva-based International Catholic Migration Commission.

The presentations from this symposium will be put together for publication in the LWF Documentation series later this year.

(Written for LWI by Stephen Brown.)

4 May 2011



Proclamation, Diakonia and Advocacy Make Holistic Mission

Lutheran Church Representatives Share Good Practices on Mission

MONTREUX, Switzerland/GENEVA (LWI)

– When representatives of Lutheran churches from around the world gathered to discuss how concrete church intervention is needed in today’s world, the first person to tell her story was Kyioe Narita of the Japan Lutheran Church.

Her moving thank you for the humanitarian support her church received from the global Lutheran family following the March 2011 devastating earthquake and tsunami in Japan seemed a fitting starting point for the stories that followed from Asia, Latin America and Africa.

The seminar on holistic mission, which was organized by The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) Department for Mission and Development (DMD) 23-24 May, highlighted good practices concerning mission in a variety of contexts, and illustrated how holistic mission knits together proclamation, diakonia (church social service) and advocacy.

Rev. Dr William Chang from Singapore, DMD area secretary for Asia, another panelist at the meeting, spoke about his experience as a missionary in Cambodia for the Mekong Mission Forum, a partnership of different mission organizations.



Food and non-food relief items are offloaded for distribution in affected areas following the March 2011 earthquake and tsunami in Japan. © KELC

“I was acting in one of the poorest regions of Cambodia. My first task was to buy a piece of land and to build on it both a church and a diaconal center so that children of the neighborhood could get at least one free meal per day,” he said.

“It is also my own experience of church and Christian faith. Singapore has known an incredible economic development. But as I was a child it was still a poor country. I had my first chocolate in church, where I went because of my friends. We had chocolate for Christmas and Easter. So I first believed in God because of chocolate! I was a chocolate Chris-

tian, before I discovered what God could do for my entire life.

“The gospel gives shape to diakonia,” Chang observed.

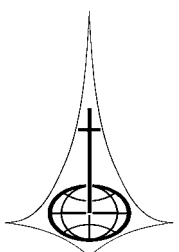
The concrete, spiritual and humanitarian work illustrated echoed LWF General Secretary Rev. Martin Junge’s welcoming words to the meeting. “The Good News does not only need to be translated into vernacular language. But it has to be translated in a concrete way, where suffering people understand what the Good News is for their own life and situation,” the Chilean theologian said.

Raquel Kleber, who works with youth in the Evangelical Church of the Lutheran Confession in Brazil (IECLB), described the projects supported by a national campaign called Month of the Youth Mission, which has been run by the church since 2006. The annual campaign focuses on a particular national project which is both for young people and supported by young people.

The 2010 campaign focused on a poor state in northern Brazil, Piauí. “The project’s goal was to help lift up a community in Teresina and make it sustainable within 10 years. A big national fundraising campaign helped to start this project, creating a position for a pastoral minister, who is now also working in the diaconal



(l) Raquel Kleber describes youth mission work in the Evangelical Church of the Lutheran Confession in Brazil. Right is Maria Elena Parras, United Evangelical Lutheran Church in Argentina. © LWF/H. Putsman Penet





Theology students graduation in Colombia. © IELCO/Luis E. Ramirez

field. The community teaches the local people to grow healthy food and has opened a health care center," Kleber said.

For 2011, the Month of the Youth Mission focuses on the theme of "Care for the Creation." IECLB local youth groups work together to create an educational resource for children on environmental conservation.

Most of the speakers at the seminar emphasized the necessity of in-

volving local people and communities to develop a concrete holistic mission.

Maria Elena Parras of the United Evangelical Lutheran Church (IELU) in Argentina noted the importance of "including all voices, especially voices that are excluded or forgotten." For Parras, "Diakonia challenges the traditional ways to be Church."

Rev. Dr Elieshi Mungure, DMD area secretary for Africa, said lis-

tening to the voices of local people in Tanzania helped develop new programs that fit the needs of communities. "Work on HIV and AIDS or on facing power would not have existed if only people at the head of the church were able to speak. Holistic mission is a spiral method from practice to theory and back to practice again."

Rev. Dr Musa P. Filibus, DMD director, spoke of the importance of both storytelling and academic thinking on the question of holistic mission in the church. "We are thankful to those who have accepted to bring case studies with insights, experiences and ideas from local contexts, ongoing engagements or processes," he concluded.

By LWI correspondent Gérard Machabert

6 June 2011

***The article is in the continuing LWI features' series focusing on the topic "Give Us Today Our Daily Bread," the theme of the LWF Eleventh Assembly, held 20-27 July 2010 in Stuttgart, Germany.**

"Give Us Today Our daily Bread" Eleventh Assembly Official Report

The eleventh gathering of the LWF's highest decision-making body was held 20-27 July 2010 in Stuttgart, Germany, at the invitation of host church the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Württemberg.

The report is the official record of the milestone Eleventh Assembly. It contains the final message, adopted resolutions, public statements, reports and the keynote address and responses. Particular focus is given to a key Assembly moment, the action on the legacy of Lutheran persecution of Anabaptists.

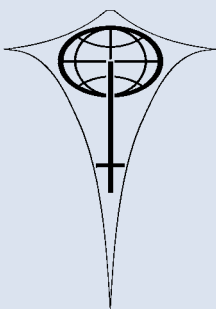
It also includes public hearing briefs, Pre-Assembly messages, addresses of the president-elect and general secretary-elect, sermons, ecumenical greetings and participant lists.



The report is available in all four languages in PDF format on the LWF web site

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or on the Assembly web site at www.lwf-assembly.org



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