

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
 dm@lutheranworld.org

Layout

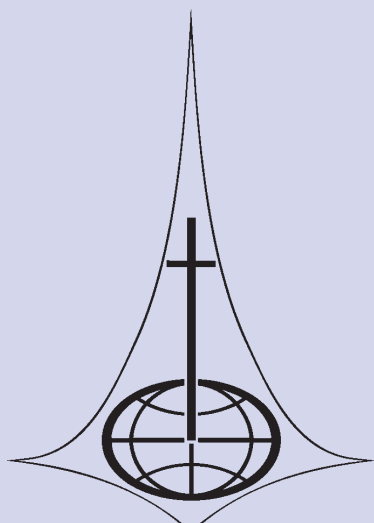
Stéphane Gallay
 sga@lutheranworld.org

Circulation/Subscription

Janet Bond-Nash
 jbn@lutheranworld.org

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LWF New Year Message – Call to Equitable Resource Sharing



Fifteen-year old An Srey Chen from Cambodia drew this picture titled "A Farmer Feeds Fish." Fish, together with rice make up the staple diet in rural parts of the Southeast Asian country. Raising fish is part of a food security project of the LWF Department for World Service program in Cambodia, aimed at empowering the poor to lead a more dignified life.
 © LWF/An Srey Chen

In his 2006 New Year Message, the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) General Secretary, Rev. Dr Ishmael Noko calls for reflection on the spirit of giving and what it means to be a communion of churches seeking to serve Christ by serving each other, especially the poor and vulnerable.

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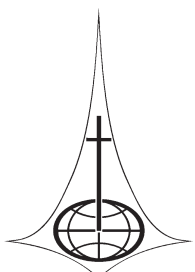
Lutheran World Information Subscription 2006

In 2006, *Lutheran World Information* will continue to provide information about the various activities of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF), member churches in the communion and their ecumenical involvement worldwide. Subscriptions will be automatically renewed unless indicated otherwise, and will be invoiced in the first quarter of

2006. The subscription rates including mailing remain the same at CHF 75 per year. As printing and mailing costs are based on the Swiss franc, the equivalent in Euros and US dollars for next year will be EUR 50 or USD 65.



The staff of the LWF Office for Communication Services wish all LWI readers a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.



LWF New Year Message: A Call to Equitable Sharing of Material and Spiritual Resources

Noko Criticizes Progress Notion in “Bigger” and “More”

GENEVA, 22 December 2005 (LWI) – In his 2006 New Year Message, the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) General Secretary, Rev. Dr Ishmael Noko calls for reflection on the spirit of giving and what it means to be a communion of churches seeking to serve Christ by serving each other, especially the poor and vulnerable.

The LWF general secretary counters the assumption that “bigger” and “more” signal progress by citing the environmental danger of global warming, and the growing social gap between the rich and the poor, threatening both the health and stability of communities. “God has blessed us with enough material resources and spiritual insights for all. We are called again to reflect on how we share these blessings with one another,” he says.

Turning to the recently concluded World Trade Organization Ministerial Conference in Hong Kong, China, he likens the debates and negotiations on international trade there to the global struggles to find a balance between the “economic value of pure

unconstrained competition and the social and ethical necessity of solidarity.”

The LWF has been monitoring the WTO process for several months now including its meetings in Geneva earlier this year. In the December 13-18 talks in Hong Kong, a staff person monitored the process with the aim to keep the LWF constituency informed of negotiations on world trade rules and their direct impact on human development around the world. Of specific interests were issues on agriculture and subsidies, trade in services, and trade-related aspects of intellectual property rights and public health.

Noko evokes the spirit of the New Year and Season of Epiphany, and invites LWF member churches, national committees, related and supporting agencies to seek out new ways to effectively serve as God’s faithful witnesses to the gospel, bearing Christ’s mission on earth.

(317 words)

The full text of the New Year Message from the LWF General Secretary follows:

New Year Message from the LWF General Secretary

To:
LWF Member Churches
LWF National Committees
Related and supporting agencies

“He is called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.” This is the one of whom the prophet spoke and who the three magi were seeking on their journey toward that bright star. They journeyed with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh for that tiny baby, our Savior. As we move into the New Year and the Season of Epiphany, we too find ourselves on a similar journey, each bearing our own gifts. We recall our achievements and failures, joys and sorrows, and seek new ways to effectively serve as God’s faithful witnesses to the gospel, bearing Christ’s mission on earth.

One of the recent stops on our journey was in the island city of Hong Kong, China, where government representatives from around the world met to discuss and resolve issues related to international trade. The struggles in that meeting were reflective of the world’s own struggles to find a balance between the economic value of pure and unconstrained competition, and the social and ethical necessity of solidarity.

The false presumptions that “bigger” and “more” are signs of development has led us to the environ-

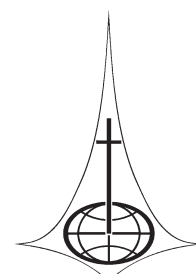
mental precipice of global warming, and similarly to the social chasm of unprecedented inequality between rich and poor. This threatens both the health and stability of our communities. God has blessed us with enough material resources and spiritual insights for all. We are called again to reflect on how we share these blessings with one another.

As we continue our journey in 2006, we seek to serve the Christ toward whom we travel by serving each other, especially the poor and most vulnerable. During this Season of Epiphany, I invite us all, sisters and brothers in Christ, to reflect upon the spirit of giving and upon what it means to be a communion of churches. May our lives and service be true expressions of our desire to follow Christ’s example.

In Christ,



Rev. Dr Ishmael Noko
General Secretary
The Lutheran World Federation
Geneva, 21 December 2005



LWF President Praises Pope Benedict XVI for Personal Contribution to Joint Declaration

Doctrine of Justification Belongs to the Whole Church

GENEVA, 7 November 2005 (LWI) – The president of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF), Bishop Mark S. Hanson has commended Pope Benedict XVI for his personal involvement in the Lutheran-Roman Catholic Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification.

“We are aware of how you yourself, with the support of Pope John Paul II, actively contributed to the fulfillment of this ecumenical landmark,” Hanson said in his greeting during an audience with His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI on November 7. Hanson, presiding bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) led an LWF delegation in the Federation’s first private audience with the current pope.

Other members of the LWF delegation included General Secretary, Rev. Dr Ishmael Noko; LWF Executive Committee member, Rev. Dr Joachim Track (Germany), also chairperson of the Program Committee for Ecumenical Affairs; LWF Deputy General Secretary, Ms Karin Achtelstetter; LWF Assistant General Secretary for Ecumenical Affairs Rev. Sven Oppegaard; Rev. Dr Theodor Dieter (Institute for Ecumenical Research, Strasbourg); and Mr Frank Imhoff (ELCA Department for Communication).

The Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification (JDDJ) was signed by the Roman Catholic Church and the LWF in Augsburg, Germany, in 1999. It is regarded as a significant milestone in Roman Catholic-Lutheran bilateral relations.

Ethics and Social Justice

Hanson drew attention to various follow-up processes of the JDDJ, particularly preparations by the World



LWF President, Bishop Mark S. Hanson (left) presents Pope Benedict XVI with “Luther’s Morning Prayer.” © L’Osservatore Romano

Methodist Council to formally affirm support of the JDDJ in July 2006. “This development gives us great joy and shows to all that the biblical doctrine of justification is not seen as belonging to Catholics and Lutherans alone, but belongs to the whole church,” the LWF president noted.

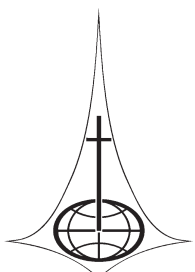
“There should be no doubt that Lutherans and Roman Catholics, together with others, also see issues of ethics and social justice in the light of the doctrine of justification,” Hanson continued. He drew special attention to the message of justification as providing “important perspectives for the church’s involvement with the poor and those suffering from political oppression and abuse.” In this context, he underlined the LWF’s commitment “to ecumenical cooperation in the area of human rights.”

Looking back at the current fourth phase of the international Lutheran-Roman Catholic dialogue, Hanson drew attention to the work on a final report on “Apostolicity of the Church,” concluding the ten-year dialogue of the Lutheran – Roman Catholic Commission on Unity. “Although this report will undoubtedly show the differences between traditions in the area of its topic, it will certainly also show the richness of shared apostolic faith, which we treasure together,” Hanson stressed.

With reference to 2005 as the special year dedicated to the Eucharist in the Roman Catholic Church, Hanson said that although Lutherans have “historically used different forms of language to express the mystery of



Pope Benedict XVI (middle) receives a framed facsimile of the Official Common Statement of the Joint Declaration from LWF President Mark S. Hanson (left) and General Secretary Ishmael Noko. © L’Osservatore Romano



Christ's presence in bread and wine, Lutherans believe, with Roman Catholics, that Christ himself is present at the Holy Eucharist in the consecrated bread and wine "truly and in substance" ... and that the baptized believer receives the gift of salvation.

During the private audience, Noko made reference to the JDDJ as a "living letter," recalling that the Official Common Statement to the Joint Declaration challenges both churches to make the doctrine of justification understandable to contemporary men and women.

He also urged the pope to use his pastoral office to address issues of human rights in a world which is marked by so many violations.

The pope described the JDDJ as an important achievement, and underlined the need to accept the remaining differences regarding the central question of justification, and to find a common language to address these issues together. (615 words)

The greetings of LWF President Mark S. Hanson and Pope Benedict XVI during the private audience can be found at:

www.lutheranworld.org/LWF_Documents/LWF_Greeting_Pope_Benedict_XVI_2005.pdf
www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/speeches/2005/November/documents/hf_ben_xvi_spe_20051107_lutheran-federation_en.html

Indian Lutherans Affirm Greater Involvement in Poverty and Development Issues

Call for 'Church-based Sensitivity' in PEAD Discussion

DUMKA, India/GENEVA, 16 December 2005 (LWI) – The 26th Triennial Conference of the United Evangelical Lutheran Church in India (UELCI) concluded in the north-eastern town of Dumka, Jharkhand State, with a commitment to greater involvement in the contextual challenges of the Indian Lutheran churches.



Bishop Gideon D. Rajagembeeram, UELCI president. © LWF/H. Putsman

"The Indian Lutheran communion will continue to be prophetic and proactive in addressing key issues like poverty, development, HIV/AIDS, capacity building, gender justice and empowerment," delegates attending the UELCI governing body said in a final statement.

One of the subjects discussed at the UELCI conference was the Proposed Ecumenical Alliance for Development (PEAD), a topic that was also on the agenda of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) Council meeting last September. The Indian Lutheran churches called for more "church-based sensitivity" in ongoing ecumenical discussions about PEAD, in order to protect the diaconal theology, challenges and responsibilities of churches in the South.

While the Indian Lutheran churches welcomed all forms of coordination for proper use of resources by the proposed global alliance for development, they appealed for a greater role of the churches in shaping the process. (See LWI No. 09/2005, page 23, for the LWF Council discussion on PEAD.)

Some 120 delegates, visitors and guests attended the November 20-22 conference hosted jointly by the Northern Evangelical Lutheran Church (NELC) and Gossner Evangelical Lutheran Church in Chotanagpur and Assam (GELC), both in Jharkhand State. Under the theme "Growing Together with God," representatives of the Indian Lutheran churches discussed their respective areas of work and concerns as presented in reports

of the UELCI Executive Secretary, Rev. Dr Chandran Paul Martin and other officers.

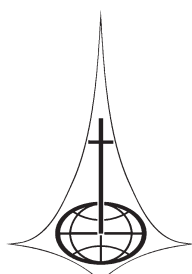
Delivering the keynote address, Rev. Dr Kjell Nordstokke, director of the LWF Department for Mission and Development encouraged the UELCI churches to be purpose-driven churches. Basing his presentation on the LWF mission document, "Mission in Context: Transformation, Reconciliation, Empowerment - An LWF Contribution to the Understanding and Practice of Mission," he emphasized the need for new models of mission and partnership that affirm good governance and holistic mission as central to the churches' work."

A significant event of the gathering was the ordination of NELC's women's leader, Rev. Lucia Tudu, the second woman to be ordained as a pastor in the church in a period of 25 years. Also ordained was Rev. Ram Chandra Singh, the first convert from the Mal Paharia tribe. He translated the New Testament into Paharia language, the first translation of the Bible into that language. The NELC is led by a moderator, Rev. Shiblal Soren.

During the triennial conference, Martin was re-elected UELCI executive secretary. The president is Bishop Gideon Devanesan Rajagembeeram, Arcot Lutheran Church.

The Chennai-based UELCI is a communion of eleven member churches, ten of which belong to the LWF. The churches with a combined membership of nearly two million Christians are spread out mostly in eastern and central India, and the northeastern states.

The Lutheran communion in India is predominantly Dalit and Adivasi. Each member church has its own unique cultural and historical context, with different mission histories. It was founded in 1926 as the Federation of Evangelical Lutheran Churches in India,



and went through various changes before adapting its current name in the mid-1990s. (541 words)

(Mr Mrinal Srikanth Lankapalli and Rev. Raj Bharath Patta reported on the UELCI conference.)

Norway's Lutheran Free Church to Ordain First Female Pastor in 2006

Constitutional Amendment Opens Way for Women's Participation in Ordained Ministry

OSLO, Norway/GENEVA, 16 December 2005 (LWI) – In January 2006 Bjørg Rødland and Caroline Vesterberg will be ordained in the Evangelical Lutheran Free Church of Norway, marking the first women's ordination in the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) member church.

The ordinations follow a July 2005 synod decision to change the Free Church's constitution to include women in the church's ordained ministry. On January 8, Rødland, 45, will be ordained as an elder of the Vaagsbygd congregation, near Kristiansand in the south. Vesterberg, 28, originally from Sweden, will be ordained as a children and youth pastor on January 29 in Oslo.

The Free Church congregations are led by pastors and a board of elders. Until this year's constitutional amendment, the elder's board has comprised only of men called by the congregations and ordained for this ministry.

In an interview with *Lutheran World Information (LWI)*, the Free Church synod secretary, Mr Terje Solberg, said the amended constitution allows for women's ordination as pastors and elders, but states

that until 2011, a woman pastor cannot head the board of elders in a congregation or become church president. Several congregations have ongoing processes of calling elders, and four to five female elders will be ordained in the first half of 2006.

Solberg noted women have held key posts in the church including heading the mission department and theological center over the past ten years. The position of synod secretary, he added, is open also to women.

The Free Church was established in 1877 after it left the majority (Lutheran) Church of Norway over disagreement about the country's church-state system. The 21,000-member church has one synod and five presbyteries with 82 congregations all over the country. It has 70 ordained male pastors, and several deacons and deaconesses. Rev. Arnfinn Løyning is the church's president.

The Free Church became a full member of the LWF in September 2005, changing from associate membership held since 1997. Church of Norway, with over 3.9 million members joined the LWF in 1947. (353 words)

Holger Milkau Is New Dean of Italian Church

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Italy (ELCI) has a new dean, **Rev. Holger Milkau**. He was elected in a special ELCI synod session, October 22. Milkau, 43, succeeds Rev. Jürgen Astfalk, who announced his resignation from office in September 2005.

Astfalk's departure was linked to the limited secondment period that the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD) allows its pastors for service abroad. Consequently, the ELCI leadership is currently analyzing a synod request to develop a scheme that would allow pastors from abroad to serve the church for an unlimited period.



Dean Holger Milkau, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Italy. ©ELCI

Milkau studied theology in Marburg, Hamburg (Germany) and at the Waldesian faculty of theology in Rome (Italy). In 1993 he was ordained as a pastor in Schmalkalden (Germany). He served as a pastor in the Evangelical Church of Kurhessen-Waldeck, as director of theological studies in the Fulda church district, and as regional officer for the church's adult education services. Since 2002, he has been pastor to a congregation in Naples (Italy).

Milkau is married, and has two daughters.

The 7,000-member ELCI has been a Lutheran World Federation (LWF) member church since 1949. (190 words)

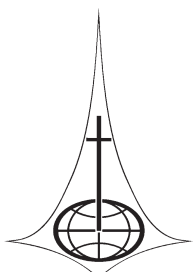
Italy's Waldensians Have First Woman Moderator

For the first time, Italy's Waldensian Church has a woman moderator. The **Rev. Maria Bonafede** was elected with a majority vote by the 180-member synod at its meeting last August. It was the first time in the 800-year history of the Waldensians that a woman leader had been chosen.

Bonafede, 51, described her election as a "call and a mission." Her predecessor Rev. Gianni Genre, who did not stand for re-

election, emphasized "the time was ripe for a woman" in this position. Her election was strongly symbolic and brought "a new sensitivity" to the church in its internal and external relations.

Bonafede studied philosophy and theology. From 1988 she was a pastor of the Waldensian Church at Piazza Cavour in Rome, and prior to that pastor in Milan. She is married and has one son. (141 words)



New Editor for ELCA Magazine "The Lutheran"

The Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) elected **Mr Daniel J. Lehmann** to a four-year term as editor of the ELCA magazine, *The Lutheran*. Effective 1 January 2006, Lehmann succeeds, Rev. David L. Miller, who had served in that position for six years.

Lehmann, 54, is the first lay person named editor of the denomination's magazine in more than 40 years, including the ELCA and predecessor Lutheran church bodies. Since 1999, he has served as public information officer, United States' District Court, Northern District of Illinois. He studied journalism and political science at the University of Missouri, Columbia, and began his media



Mr Daniel J. Lehmann, editor, *The Lutheran*. © ELCA

career in 1974 at *The Mining Journal*, Marquette, Michigan, where he was a reporter for two years. From 1976 to 1983 he was an editor at *The Journal-Gazette*, Fort Wayne, Indiana. From 1983 to 1999, he was a reporter, and later editor, with the *Chicago Sun-Times* newspaper.

Daniel J. Lehmann and his wife, Julia Schmidt Lehmann are parents of two adult children.

His November 11 appointment marked the first election of the magazine's editor by the Church Council, the ELCA board of directors and legislative authority between biennial assemblies. Previous editors were elected by the Churchwide Assembly, the ELCA's highest decision-making body. (214 words)

Bishop Friedrich Weber Elected VELKD Catholica Commissioner

Bishop Dr Friedrich Weber, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Brunswick, Germany is the new Catholica Commissioner for the United Evangelical Lutheran Church of Germany (VELKD).

Weber, 56, was appointed by the VELKD Bishops' Conference at its November 18 meeting in Hanover, Germany. The Brunswick bishop succeeds Bishop Dr Johannes Friedrich, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Bavaria, who was recently elected as the new VELKD presiding bishop. Friedrich had served as Catholica Commissioner since 2000.

In his new tasks at VELKD, Weber will be responsible for relations with the Roman Catholic Church.



Bishop Dr Friedrich Weber. © Susanne Hübner

Weber assumed the position of Brunswick bishop in 2002. He studied Protestant theology, history and educational theory and methodology in Wuppertal, Göttingen and Oldenburg, receiving his doctorate in church history from the University of Frankfurt in 1997. From 1984 to 1991, he served as pastor and dean of a sub-district in Oppenheim/Rhein, and was vicar and then pastor in the town of Greetsiel on the North Sea from 1972 to 1984, among other tasks.

The VELKD is an association of eight Lutheran churches in Bavaria, Brunswick, Hanover, Mecklenburg, North Elbia, Saxony, Schaumburg-Lippe and Thuringia. It represents about 10.4 million Lutherans. (201 words)

Hermine Nikolaisen Moves from LWF Balkans Program to Rwanda

Ms Hermine Nikolaisen, former representative of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) Department for World Service (DWS) in the Balkan region, has taken up a new position as LWF representative and director for the DWS program in Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

Effective November 2005, Nikolaisen, 60, replaced Ms Anne Masterson, who in 2005 was appointed director of the Darfur Emergency Relief Operation, a joint humanitarian initiative by Action by Churches Together (ACT) International and Caritas Internationalis in Darfur, western Sudan. Masterson joined the Rwanda program in 1998 as development project advisor, and was country director from 2000 until her resignation in August 2005.

Nikolaisen, of German nationality, has worked with LWF/DWS for over 16 years—in Africa and the Balkan region—Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo, and Vojvodina [Serbia and Montenegro]. She was the LWF/DWS Balkans regional

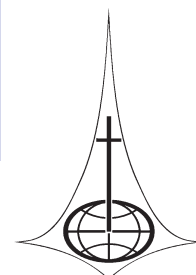


Ms Hermine Nikolaisen, LWF/DWS Rwanda-DRC representative. © Private

representative and director of the Kosovo program from 2000 until early October 2005. From 1992 to 1998, she worked in various capacities in the DWS Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina operations, including program director. In 1999, she served as country director of the DWS program in Kenya and Southern Sudan. Between 1989 and 1992, she worked as a volunteer with the DWS Mauritania program, later on as an administration and finance officer based in Namibia, and as acting director of the DWS Malawi program.

Prior to joining the LWF, Nikolaisen worked in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, with the overseas department of the German company, Josef Riepl Construction, 1983–1988. From 1968 to 1978 she worked with the German Airlines, Lufthansa. She pursued higher education in France and Switzerland, and development studies in the United Kingdom.

She is married to Niels Nikolaisen. (284 words)



**AFRICA CHURCH LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE,
NOVEMBER 9-14, WINDHOEK, NAMIBIA**

**Africa Church Leadership Conference
Celebrates 50th Anniversary in Windhoek**

WINDHOEK, Namibia/GENEVA, 10 November 2005 (LWI) – “From Isolation to Communion: For the Healing of Africa,” was the theme of a Lutheran World Federation (LWF) Africa Church Leadership Conference November 9-14 in the Namibian capital, Windhoek.

The culmination of the conference, attended by more than 80 representatives of African Lutheran churches as well as partner churches and organizations, was the 50th anniversary celebrations of the All Africa Lutheran Conference (AALC), November 13. The first joint conference of African Lutheran churches took place in Marangu, Tanzania in 1955.

For Bishop Dr Zephania Kameeta of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Republic of Namibia (ELCRN), the AALC 50th anniversary celebrations was a dream come true. The Marangu conference 50 years ago was aimed at leading African Lutheran churches out of isolation, particularly those in Namibia. As the last colony in Southern Africa, Namibia had suffered the longest

Kameeta hoped that the conference would give direction as to how African churches can maintain sustainable development in the mission of proclaiming the gospel and work closer together. He encouraged Lutheran churches on the continent to look into ways of addressing the difficult situation in their respective countries courageously and unambiguously. He urged the churches to leave their back seats and speak loud and clear as the early prophets did to end Africa’s spiral of violence, civil conflict and HIV/AIDS, among other concerns.

Inner Lutheran Understanding

LWF General Secretary, Rev. Dr Ishmael Noko, explained prior to the meeting that this conference gave the Lutheran churches in Africa an opportunity to review progress that had been made in terms of inner Lutheran self understanding and ecumenical priorities over several decades. The Lutheran churches in Africa have a high profile in the area of diakonia and mission, he noted.

The LWF Department for Mission and Development Area Secretary for Africa, Rev. Dr Musa P. Filibus, saw the gathering in Namibia as a unique opportunity for the Lutheran churches in Africa to reflect on their growth from isolation by cultural, geographical, ethnic and political barriers to being in communion.

If as it is said, the “center of gravity,” meaning the growth of the church is shifting to the Southern hemisphere, then the churches in the South must deal with the challenge of also providing leadership to the global ecclesia. Such leadership must be relevant and applicable to local contexts. Growth must permit all aspects of what it means to be a church. This requires an ongoing understanding of the priesthood of all believers, where all are players in Christ’s mission, Filibus said.

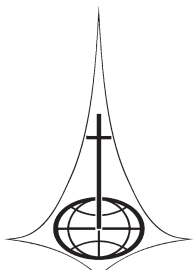
The conference would focus on how the African churches can ensure the sustainability of their domestic budgets and acceptable working conditions and salaries. Representatives from the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland, church workers’ unions in Finland, and the Finnish Evangelical Mission would share their experiences on this subject and assist the conference in formulating a clear plan of action on improving the rights and working conditions of church workers.



LWF General Secretary, Rev. Dr Ishmael Noko (right); Bishop Dr Zephania Kameeta (middle); and Rev. Jason Amakutuwa (left), who participated in the African Lutheran churches’ first joint conference in Marangu, Tanzania in 1955. © LWF/D.-M. Grötzsche

under isolation, said Kameeta, who is also chairperson of the LWF National Committee in Namibia, and LWF Vice-President for the Africa region.

The three Lutheran churches in Namibia—the ELCRN with 300,000 members; Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia (ELCIN) with over 640,000 members; and the German-speaking Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia (ELCIN-GELC) with 6,500 members jointly with the LWF hosted the Africa Church Leadership Conference. Around half of Namibia’s population is affiliated to one of the Lutheran churches.



The Africa region consists of 36 Lutheran churches, 30 of which belong to the LWF. These churches have a total membership of 14.08 million in 22 countries in Central, Eastern, Southern and Western Africa.

The more recently-formed three sub-regional expressions—Lutheran Communion in Central and Eastern Africa (LUCCEA); Lutheran Communion in Southern Africa (LUCSA); and Lutheran Communion in Western Africa (LUCWA) aim at bringing the member churches closer together, and promote mutual understanding, trust, and inter-dependence. (675 words)

African Lutheran Communion Considers the Past and Future at Historic Gathering

WINDHOEK, Namibia/GENEVA, 10 November 2005 (LWI) – “For the Lutheran World Federation (LWF), this gathering is a highly emotional experience that cannot be described with words, only tears of joy.” This was the reply of LWF General Secretary Rev. Dr Ishmael Noko when asked what the 50th anniversary celebrations of the All Africa Lutheran Conference meant to the LWF. He was speaking at a November 9 press conference in the Namibian capital, Windhoek, where the celebrations are taking place.

Bishop Dr Zephania Kameeta of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Republic of Namibia (ELCRN) reminded the press of the Namibian delegation 50 years ago: “We went to Marangu as colonized people. Today, we welcome you in an independent country.”

Rev. Asfaha Mehari, president of the Evangelical Church of Eritrea, also looked back 50 years to when delegates from Eritrea had participated in the

The full statement of the November 9-14 Africa Lutheran Church Leadership Conference is posted on the LWF Web site at:

www.lutheranworld.org/What_We_Do/DMD/Regional_Programs/DMD-Windhoek-2005.html

and at:

www.lutheranworld.org/News/LWI/EN/1791.EN.html

**Some of the LWI articles are included in this section in full, or as a summary, with a link to the entire story on the LWF Web site.*

historical meeting. “It is therefore important for my church to be part and parcel of the Lutheran family gathered here in Windhoek and to reflect on the past and the future,” Mehari said. He expressed hope that the meeting of African Lutheran churches would “give more strength to the unity of our various sub-regions of Africa”.

LWF Department for Mission and Development area secretary for Africa, Rev. Dr Musa P. Filibus, thanked the Namibian government, and the three Namibian host churches, in relation to visa applications, not a single one of which had been refused. From the conference, he said he expected lively discussion on major issues such as HIV/AIDS, poverty and violence.

(266 words)

More at: www.lutheranworld.org/News/LWI/EN/1785.EN.html

LWF Vice-President Urges African Churches to Take Up Responsibility

WINDHOEK, Namibia/GENEVA, 10 November 2005 (LWI) – Namibian Lutheran Bishop Dr Zephania Kameeta has called on African Lutheran churches to shake off the chains of spiritual colonization, and the fear of losing favor, in face of those in power. He challenged them, instead, to courageously take up their socio-political, ethical and spiritual responsibility.

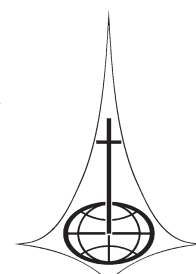
Kameeta made these remarks when he preached at the opening service of the African Lutheran Church Leadership Conference in the oldest Lutheran church in the Namibian capital Windhoek, on November 9. The bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Republic of Namibia (ELCRN) also reminded members of African Lutheran churches, as citizens of their respective countries, also of their obligation to act in critical solidarity with their governments and non-governmental organizations.

More than 80 participants from African Lutheran churches, partner churches and organizations world-



ELCRN Bishop Dr Zephania Kameeta during the opening worship of the Africa Lutheran Church Leadership Conference. The LWF Vice-President described the 50th anniversary celebrations of the Marangu conference as a dream come true. © LWF/D.-M. Gröttsch

wide attended the conference, which was jointly organized by the Lutheran World Federation (LWF)





An ELCRN brass choir during the opening worship of the church leadership conference in the Namibian capital, Windhoek. © LWF/D.-M. Grötzsch

and the three Lutheran churches in Namibia, under the theme “From Isolation to Communion: For the Healing of Africa.” The church leadership conference coincides with the 50th anniversary celebrations of the All Africa Lutheran Conference, which gathered for the first time in Marangu, Tanzania, in 1955.

The churches in Africa respond to the spiritual needs of their people and contribute, substantially and practically, to their material and spiritual growth, development, unity, justice and peace, said Kameeta, who is chairperson of the LWF National Committee in Namibia. In July 2003, he became LWF Vice-President for the Africa region.

Call to Renewal Process

Kameeta said it was “God’s call and the mission of the church in Africa today,” to enter a dynamic process that would include renewal, repentance, and healing from fear and being neutral. In this process, that should focus also on working against the high infectious and destructive diseases of division, corruption, tribalism, violence, especially against women and children, and the idolization of human beings, among other concerns, the church should begin with itself, the ELCRN bishop said.

Based on Ezekiel 37:1-14, Kameeta described Africa as a continent of unending civil wars, destruc-

tion of the infrastructure of cities, towns, roads, water and electricity supplies, education and health systems in shambles, crippled democracies, ruling and opposition parties at war with each other, [and] economies destroyed by dictatorships and corruption. “And, to add insult to injury: HIV/AIDS [is] killing more [people] than the civil wars!” he added.

He reminded the audience of the high hopes that the African Union (AU), the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD), and the idea of the African Renaissance brought to Africans. “However, we have to concede to the terrible reality: Africa is dead!” he declared. “The church is not anymore the salt of the earth and light of the world but the mirror of what is happening in this world.”

But the Lord does not forsake the church, Kameeta stressed, God’s strength is revealed in her precisely when she is wounded and weak. The fate of Africa lies in the hands of the African churches. African church leaders are prophets for Africa today, as Ezekiel was for Israel. “You are the salt of the old earth of Africa and the light of the continent, which has suffered for too long!”

(554 words)



Worshippers during the opening service at the “Friedenskirche” in Windhoek. © LWF/D.-M. Grötzsch

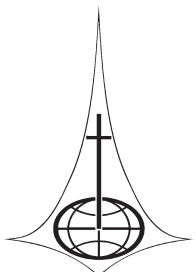
LWF General Secretary Noko Calls for Pan-African Lutheran Council

WINDHOEK, Namibia/GENEVA, 13 November 2005 (LWI) – The general secretary of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF), Rev. Dr Ishmael Noko, has called for the establishment of a Pan-African Lutheran council to promote inner Lutheran unity. As an instrument of the African Lutheran communion, it would also enhance ecumenical engagement and inter-faith dialogue.

In his November 9 key note address to participants in the Africa Lutheran Church Leadership Conference

taking place in Namibia’s capital Windhoek, Noko said the strengthening of inner Lutheran unity was a priority for Lutheran churches in the future. “To be Lutheran is to be ecumenical,” he said, and cited the October 1999 signing of the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification by the LWF and Roman Catholic Church in Augsburg, Germany.

More at: www.lutheranworld.org/News/LWI/EN/1787.EN.html



“We Need the Prophetic Voice of Africa”

WINDHOEK, Namibia/GENEVA, 14 November 2005 (LWI) – “We need the prophetic voice of Africa. Africa’s spirituality is a gift to the world,” said Rev. Dr Kjell Nordstokke, director of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) Department for Mission and Development (DMD). He was presenting the LWF Mission Document, *Mission in Context: Transformation, Reconciliation, Empowerment – An LWF Contribution to the Understanding and Practice of Mission to the Africa Lutheran Church Leadership Conference*, taking place November 9–14 in Windhoek, Namibia, under the theme “From Isolation to Communion: For the Healing of Africa.”



*DMD Director, Rev. Dr Kjell Nordstokke.
© LWF/D.-M. Gröttsch*

European and North American churches are losing 6,000 members a day, while African churches are receiving 23,000 new Christian members a day. The growing strength of African Christianity means Africans are becoming more and more prominent within the worldwide Christian community, Nordstokke said. Africa already is playing a leading role in inter-faith dialogue. Africans have assumed important church leadership positions, as exemplified by LWF General Secretary Rev. Dr Ishmael Noko from Zimbabwe.

More at: www.lutheranworld.org/News/LWI/EN/1788.EN.html

www.lutheranworld.org/News/LWI/EN/1788.EN.html

FEATURE: “You Sometimes Feel Lonely and Forgotten”

WINDHOEK, Namibia/GENEVA, 14 November 2005 (LWI) – “All our life we were used to the church paying for our rent, our electricity and our water bills. Our car was church property and the church paid for the petrol. But when retirement came, we faced many changes. We had to leave the church house in which we had lived for many years. And we had to look for our own accommodation and also pay all the bills.”



*Ms Lissie Diergaardt.
© LWF/D.-M. Gröttsch*

Lissie Diergaardt does not complain, she is just describing a situation experienced by the majority of pastors and their spouses upon retirement. Their small pensions, if they are lucky enough to receive one, usually do not even cover the basic cost of living.

Lissie and her retired husband Petrus Diergaardt, bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Republic of Namibia (ELCRN) from 1995 to 2001, have to make ends meet with NAD 500 (about EUR 63) per month. There are, of course, pastors in Namibia who manage with their small pension, Lissie points out. But if one has the additional responsibility of children, grandchildren or great grandchildren, then the situation is quite difficult.

The couple takes care of five grandchildren, whose parents are either divorced

or have passed away. “You sometimes feel lonely and forgotten,” Lissie told participants in the Africa Lutheran Church Leadership Conference, taking place November 9–14 in Windhoek, Namibia.

Church Workers Often Live Under Difficult Conditions

Rev. Dr Ambrose Moyo, executive director of the Lutheran Communion in Southern Africa (LUCSA), described how he, the son of an evangelist in Zimbabwe, (formerly Rhodesia), was sent home from school because his father was unable to pay the school fees.

Sometimes, his father’s bishop would help out by paying the fees from his own pocket, he said.

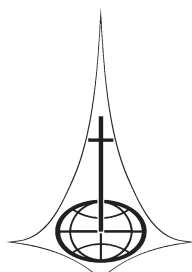
He spoke of how he tried to fix his shoes himself, even when already at high school, because of a

continuous lack of money. But the state of his shoes had just become worse, Moyo remembered. His shoes and their gaping soles resembled, more than anything else, a fish. This led to prolonged teasing and, eventually, his nickname “Fish.” Today, he and his siblings take care of their widowed mother, who receives no financial support from the church.

As a pastor in Zimbabwe, he was often confronted with similar



LUCSA Executive Director, Rev. Dr Ambrose Moyo. © LWF/D.-M. Gröttsch



problems, and many times did not know how to support himself and his family. Later, as a bishop, one of his most painful experiences was to witness the difficult living conditions of the church employees. He had even seen some families sleeping on the floor.

One of his first projects as bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Zimbabwe (ELCZ) therefore, with assistance from the Church of Sweden, was to create an endowment fund to sustainably secure the ELCZ's financial situation. The fund is currently being built up.

LWF General Secretary Rev. Dr Ishmael Noko called on the African church leaders to do everything in their power to secure the financial situation of Lutheran churches. To improve the living and working conditions of church workers in Africa in a sustainable way, required studying the level of sustainability in relation to the national economy, he said.

Churches Should Practice What They Preach

It takes a long time to improve the quality of working life in the church, said the General Secretary of the Union of Church Employees in Finland, Ms Ritva Rasila. But churches should do everything to practice what they preach: justice, social security, and adherence to human rights. The union, founded in 1957, is rooted in an early 1930s initiative dealing with the political and social instability, lack of social legislation, inadequate health service and living conditions of employees in Finland.

Rasila, who represents about 8,500 Finnish trade union members, stressed the advantage of collective agreements. If every employee had to negotiate conditions individually, the situation was much more difficult. Unions were specialists in the field of labor laws, and could negotiate as united and competent partners at the same level with employers.

Rev. Dr Esko Jossas, general secretary of the Union of Finnish Clergy, reported that in 1973



Rev. Dr Esko Jossas.
© LWF/D.-M. Grötzsch



Mr Lauri Haavisto.
© LWF/D.-M. Grötzsch



Ms Ritva Rasila.
© LWF/D.-M. Grötzsch



Rev. Dr Seppo Rissanen.
© LWF/D.-M. Grötzsch

the council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland had accepted the current system just short of a consensus. There had only been a very low profile discussion about pastors' right to strike, he said. The church was never an island in society, he continued. Today, churches and all local parishes negotiated collective agreements with the unions representing the employees, with the understanding that unions would not make unreasonable demands. The Union of Finnish Clergy has 3,500 members, representing 90 percent of all Finnish pastors.

The Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission

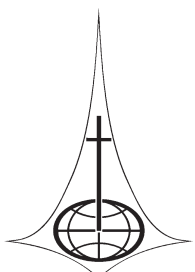
The Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission (FELM) does not see itself as a harmonious Christian communion in which everyone feels "deep togetherness with everybody else," said Lauri Haavisto, FELM Director for Finance and Administration. The FELM strives merely to be an ordinary and acceptable employer, with employer and

employees respecting each other without any patronizing. "People, basically, should be responsible for themselves and for their lives, not the FELM. But it is our responsibility to keep conditions reasonable so that they can take care of themselves," Haavisto noted.

Churches have an obligation to look after the working conditions of those who, together with us, serve the Lord in the church, FELM Executive Director Rev. Dr Seppo Rissanen stressed. Decent work, he noted, was an integral part of good governance and should come naturally to the church.

Referring to 1 Corinthians 1:9, Rissanen pointed out that neither did St Paul claim that the right to preach the gospel was enough salary for the one who was preaching. Work for the church should be recognized as ordinary work. The underlying issue, before salaries can be paid, is organization of the church's economic life, so it is able to support evangelism in a sustainable way, he added. (1,029 words)

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



Marangu Dream Became a Common Vision for Africa's Future

WINDHOEK, Namibia/GENEVA, 18 November 2005 (LWI) – When delegates of African Lutheran churches gathered for their first conference in 1955, they shared a dream. “This dream became a common vision about the future of Africa.” Rev. Dr Ishmael Noko, general secretary of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF), made these remarks during celebrations to mark the 50th anniversary of the All Africa Lutheran Conference (AALC) in Marangu, Tanzania [then Tanganyika].

The November 13 commemoration took place in Windhoek, Namibia, in the context of a regular meeting of the Africa Church Leadership Conference under the theme, “From Isolation to Communion: For the Healing of Africa.”

Namibian Prime Minister Nahas Angula brought greetings from President Hifikepunye Pohamba, and thanked the church representatives for their respective countries’ joint contribution to Namibia’s struggle for independence.



Namibian Prime Minister, Nahas Angula addresses participants during the AALC commemoration. In his left hand, he has a cross made from spent bullets—a symbol of suffering, resistance and peace from Liberia. © LWF/D.-M. Gröttsch

This meeting has a great symbolism, Angula said. “The liberation of Namibia was a joint effort by all of us, and we are indebted to you and your support and encouragement. We in Namibia can proudly say that our birth was conceived through the support of Tanzania. Your coming here has to prick our conscience: what are our next challenges in Africa?” When the Marangu

conference took place, the winds of change were starting to blow in Africa, and in 1961 Tanganyika became independent and the home of the struggle for Africa’s liberation, he recalled.

Preaching at the AALC commemorative worship service, Bishop Martin F. Shao, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania (ELCT), Northern Diocese, said halting and reversing the spread of HIV, and addressing related issues of malaria and tuberculosis remained among the highest priorities of churches on a continent where nearly 75 percent of the total population lived in poverty.

The ELCT bishop challenged African Lutherans to speak out with one voice on



Blessing of participants during the AALC 50th anniversary celebration. © LWF/D.-M. Gröttsch

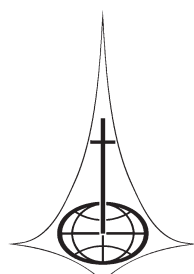
critical issues at home, and globally. “We must be the conscience of Africa and the world,” Shao said, reminding them that the AALC’s 50th anniversary had provided a second chance for the churches.

(336 words)

More at: www.lutheranworld.org/News/LWI/EN/1790.EN.html



“Passing on the Story and Ministry – The Journey Goes On.” African Lutheran church leaders pass on symbols of faith and witness to the younger generation. © LWF/D.-M. Gröttsch



Church Leaders Resolve to Establish Lutheran Council in Africa

WINDHOEK, Namibia/GENEVA, 18 November 2005 (LWI) – Participants in the Africa Lutheran Church Leadership Conference have agreed to establish a Lutheran Council in Africa to strengthen cooperation and enhance efforts in addressing challenges faced by the churches there. The historic conference took place 9–14 November in Windhoek, Namibia, under the theme, “From Isolation to Communion: For the Healing of Africa.”

The leaders of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) member churches in Africa also committed themselves, in a final statement, to actively engage in renewal of the whole Lutheran communion. ...

The new council would guide and ensure the participation and input of all member churches in the Africa region in relation to the proposed LWF renewal process (See LWF Council (See LWI No. 09/2005, page 8–9), and serve as a monitoring mechanism in the implementation of the conference commitments. It would also ensure good governance, transparency, and equitable power sharing in the



Participants in a plenary session of the Africa Lutheran Church Leadership Conference in Namibia. © LWF/D.-M. Grötzsch

churches, including the involvement of women, youth and people with disabilities. (172 words)

More at: www.lutheranworld.org/News/LWI/EN/1791.EN.html

Zimbabwean Church to Consecrate Three New Bishops after Restructuring

On 1 January 2006, the **Evangelical Lutheran Church in Zimbabwe** (ELCZ) will consecrate three new bishops, one of whom will become the church’s first presiding bishop. This follows a process that has led to the reconstitution of the church from deaneries into three dioceses.

During its 3 December 2005 meeting in the southwestern city of Bulawayo, the ELCZ church-wide Assembly elected three bishops for the newly-created dioceses. Eastern Diocese (Harare) will be led by Rev John S. Moyo, currently working with the Zimbabwe Council of Churches in its Mission, Youth and Child Survival Office. Central Diocese (Mberengwa) will be led by bishop-elect Naison Shava, presently dean of the ELCZ Eastern Deanery and coordi-

nator of the Lutheran Development Service cooperative societies. Bishop-elect Stephen M. Dube, currently head of the Western Deanery and principal of Manama Bible School, will lead the Western Diocese (Matabeleland).

Shava will also become the ELCZ presiding bishop.

Incumbent ELCZ Bishop Litsietsi Maqethuka Dube told *Lutheran World Information (LWI)* that re-structuring the church into dioceses was one of the priorities when he assumed his five-year term in December 2001. Dube, 62, was the fourth black bishop to head the Zimbabwean church since its 1903 establishment by Swedish missionaries.

The 130,000-member ELCZ joined the LWF in 1963.

(217 words)

Shafer Concludes Service as ELCA Communication Director

In November 2005, **Rev. Eric C. Shafer** concluded his service as director of the former Department for Communication of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA).

Shafer, 55, was first appointed the department’s acting director in 1992. The ELCA Church Council formally elected him to a four-year term as director in 1993, re-electing him in 1997 and in 2001.

He has been involved in many ecumenical and interfaith activities including chairperson of the National Council of Churches USA (NCC) Communication Commission and the



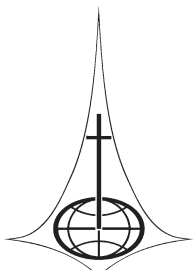
Rev. Eric C. Shafer. © ELCA

NCC board of directors, and vice-president of Religion Communicators Council Inc. (RCC), New York.

Shafer currently serves as a consultant to the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) Program Committee for Communication Services. He has been part of several LWF consultations and events including the July 2003 LWF Tenth Assembly in Winnipeg, Canada.

Ms Kristi S. Bangert currently serves as interim executive director for the ELCA Communication Services.

(156 words)



Lutheran Churches Urged to Fully Recognize Diaconal Ministry of Deacons and Deaconesses

Participants of LWF International Consultation in Brazil Identify Common Concerns

SÃO LEOPOLDO, Brazil/GENEVA, 29 November 2005 (LWI) – Member churches of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) have been challenged to recognize the diaconal ministry of deacons and deaconesses as an integral part of the one public ministry of the church, charged to proclaim, teach and bear witness to the gospel.

In a statement following a November 2-7 consultation in São Leopoldo, Brazil, representatives of 16 LWF member churches from Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America and North America, called upon churches in the global Lutheran communion to reexamine the ways in which they “have ordered the ecclesial ministry and, in particular, to do so in such a way that the diaconal responsibility of their mission is adequately expressed.”

The consultation was organized by the LWF Department for Theology and Studies (DTS) under the theme, “The Diaconal Ministry in the Lutheran Churches.” The aim was to identify key elements of an understanding of the diaconal ministry of deacons and deaconesses that is solidly grounded in the Bible, in line with the Lutheran Reformation and open to different contexts.

Participants came from Argentina, Botswana, Brazil, Canada, El Salvador, Finland, Germany, India, Indonesia, Japan, Lithuania, Malaysia, Norway, Sweden, United States of America and Zimbabwe.

“The consultation has helped me a lot to think more thoroughly about the diaconal work in which I am myself involved and I encourage my church to

do likewise,” said a young woman from Japan. A dean from Zimbabwe pledged to “do what I can” to get the diaconal ministry fully recognized on an equal level with the pastoral ministry in his church.

“We have discussed the theological issues over and over again. I want something practical achieved,” a Swedish deacon commented impatiently. “My church has taken bold steps to recognize the deacons’ ministry as equally important as the pastors’. I am happy to share this experience with other churches which are still on the sidelines,” said an Argentinean deacon.

In order to ensure broad discussion, the participants had shared advance reports on their churches’ experience with this subject. Four major presentations from Brazil, India, Norway and the USA provided in-depth studies of the situation within these churches as well as significant theological substance for reflection and discussion.

The statement from the consultation will be sent to the LWF member churches with the request to disseminate and discuss it on various levels, and share feedback with DTS. Whenever appropriate, the member churches should translate the document into local languages.

The LWF/DTS Study Secretary for Theology and the Church, Rev. Dr Reinhard Böttcher coordinated the consultation. It was hosted by the Casa Matriz, the motherhouse of the community of deaconesses in São Leopoldo. *(462 words)*

LWF Regional Coordinators Focus on Challenges Facing Women in Church and Society

WICAS Regional Coordinators Meet in Chennai, India

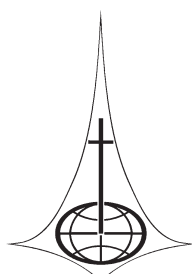
CHENNAI, India/GENEVA, 5 December 2005 (LWI) – Economic globalization, HIV/AIDS, violence against women and ordination of women were among topics discussed at a meeting of regional coordinators of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) Office for Women in Church and Society (WICAS) in Chennai, India.

Twelve regional coordinators from Botswana, Canada, Chile, Iceland, India, Korea, Madagascar, Malaysia, the Netherlands, Peru, Sierra Leone, and the Slovak Republic, and Ms Priscilla Singh, LWF Department for Mission in Development (DMD) WICAS secretary, discussed their work with regard to strengthening the role of women in church and society, November 23–27.

“The LWF needs to give space to women’s issues and women’s leadership, not for liberal or democratic

reasons but for theological reasons. A church without the support and participation of women would be a reduced church,” LWF/DMD Director, Rev. Dr Kjell Nordstokke told participants in the women’s conference. He expressed appreciation for the regional coordinators’ work and reaffirmed LWF’s commitment to supporting the ordination of women pastors.

Women’s ordination is not yet common practice in all LWF member churches, and where it is done, women pastors are not always accepted as congregation leaders, Ms Ruth Vince from the Evangelical Lutheran Women Inc. in Canada remarked. For Rev. Magdalena Sevcikova-Forgacova, Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in the Slovak Republic, the issue “lies not in the fact of who is being ordained. Ordination of women means



that we believe in the equality of men and women. It is a manifestation of the equality of creation.”

The concept of mission as accompaniment relates directly to the WICAS coordinators as they support and educate other women. “We see women suffering physically and psychologically every day and try to help them, for example through counseling or training. I see it in my work that mission and diakonia belong together,” Rev. Ken Phin Pang, regional coordinator for the South East Asia Lutheran Communion commented.

During a meeting with staff members of the Chennai-based Gurukul Lutheran Theological College and Research Institute, the church representatives discussed mission and diakonia, and referred to the LWF mission document, “Mission in Context: Transformation, Reconciliation, Empowerment - An LWF Contribution to the Understanding and Practice of Mission,” published in December 2004. Gurukul is one of the premier theological institutions in India. The ecumenical college offers a Master of Theology in Women’s Studies.

The WICAS coordinators’ work in the past three years concentrated mainly on leadership development training programs, capacity building, gender mainstreaming, economic empowerment, and wom-

en’s ordination. Ms Hélène Ralivao from the Malagasy Lutheran Church, and coordinator for the Lutheran Communion in Central and Eastern Africa (LUCCEA) reported on a regional workshop, during which participants produced a liturgy on rape to be used on a designated Sunday in all LUCCEA churches.

The regional coordinators also discussed future plans. Canadian Vince is planning in cooperation with the Women of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America a consultation titled “Consider This... Take Counsel... Speak Out! A Consultation against Commercial Sexual Exploitation.” The event is part of an ongoing focus on the LWF Tenth Assembly theme, “For the Healing of the World.”

The WICAS network is a model of sharing and building up leadership in the Lutheran communion. Its coordinators are nominated in women’s regional gatherings and appointed for a maximum period of three years. They work voluntarily for at least six weeks annually, planning their activities on the understanding and analysis of the church contexts in their respective region.

(589 words)

(By LWI correspondent Julia Heyde, who attended the WICAS consultation.)

LWF Monitors World Trade Organization Ministerial Conference

Agricultural Subsidies and Public Health among Key Concerns

GENEVA, 9 December 2005 (LWI) – The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) is monitoring negotiations among the World Trade Organization (WTO) members during the WTO Ministerial Conference in Hong Kong, China, 13–18 December 2005.

The LWF is represented by a staff person of the Office for International Affairs and Human Rights (OIAHR), which has been following WTO events for several months now. The objective of the LWF’s presence in the WTO process is to keep the LWF constituency informed of the ongoing negotiations that may have direct impacts on human development around the world.

A resolution of the July 2003 LWF Tenth Assembly mandated the LWF to “advocate for trade and development policies, which uphold the objective of enhancing human well-being.” The LWF has also been a longstanding and active member of the Geneva-based Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance “Trade for People” global campaign.

Among the many issues of concern regarding the agenda of the WTO negotiations, the LWF is focusing on three issues—agriculture and subsidies, trade in services, and trade-related aspects of intellectual property rights [TRIPS] and public health.

While these WTO issues have emerged as the most relevant for LWF member churches and field programs of the Department for World Service, they also carry

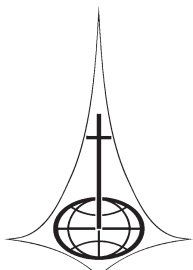
specific implications for human rights. A paper on these subjects is available on the LWF Web site at: www.lwf-humanrights.org/lwf-and-the-wto.php.

In the context of the WTO Ministerial Conference, LWF/OIAHR will be gathering and analyzing information on the trade negotiations themselves, and participating in parallel events organized by civil society organizations including church-related bodies from all over the world on issues such as trade and human rights, globalization and economic justice, food security, and access to health.

The ministerial conference is WTO’s highest decision-making body, bringing together trade ministers of member nations every two years, to debate the implementation of the present international trade agreements. This sixth conference will be crucial in enabling the Doha Development Agenda negotiations (agreed at the 2001 meeting in Doha, Qatar) move forward sufficiently to conclude the round in 2006.

LWF/OIAHR updates of the evolution of these negotiations directly from Hong Kong can be found at: www.lwf-humanrights.org/lwf-and-the-wto.php

Further information may be requested at: 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 or E-mail info@lutheranworld.org (404 words)



LWF Regional Consultant Urges Youth Participation in Fight against HIV/AIDS

Youth, Women from West African Lutheran Churches Discuss Human Sexuality

FREETOWN, Sierra Leone/GENEVA, 16 December 2005 (LWI) – The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) Africa Regional Consultant on HIV/AIDS, Dr Mamy J. Ranaivoson, has stressed the importance of equipping youth with proper knowledge about HIV/AIDS prevention for their effective participation in the fight against the pandemic. “Many young people still lack access to appropriate information and services, coupled with a reluctance to address sensitive issues such as sex and sexuality,” Ranaivoson told *Lutheran World Information (LWI)*, following a workshop he co-facilitated in Sierra Leone.

“Our hopes after this workshop are that youth and women would go back home and start trickle down

programs in their respective churches,” he said of the October 14–19 seminar attended by 22 young adults and women leaders representing member churches of the Lutheran Communion in Western Africa (LUCWA). The theme of the meeting was “Human Sexuality, Women, Youth and HIV/AIDS.”

LUCWA comprises 12 Lutheran churches, nine of which are LWF member churches.

Through presentations and daily Bible studies, participants from Ghana, Liberia, Nigeria and Sierra Leone focused on subjects such as HIV prevention, voluntary testing and counseling, confidentiality, stigma and discrimination. Co-facilitator Rev. Marie Barnett, Evangelical Lutheran Church of Sierra Leone HIV/AIDS coordinator and LWF Executive Committee member, presented a series of biblical reflections on human sexuality and sex. Polygamy among other African cultures related to HIV/AIDS were discussed in depth during the workshop along with homosexuality.

The LWF Department for Mission and Development and the Stand with Africa campaign of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) World Hunger program supported the workshop financially. Ranaivoson is on part-time secondment from the ELCA to assist with the implementation of the LWF HIV/AIDS campaign. (297 words)

(Edited from a report by LWF Africa Regional HIV/AIDS consultant, Dr Mamy J. Ranaivoson.)



Participants in a role play to interpret the theme of the LWF HIV/AIDS campaign “Compassion, Conversion and Care: Responding as Churches to the HIV/AIDS Pandemic.” © LWF/M. Ranaivoson

LWF Protests against Attacks on Freedom of Expression at Information Society Summit

NGOs Urge UN to Review Process of Choosing Host Country

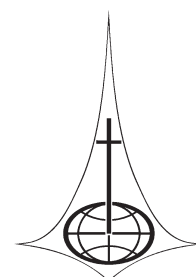
GENEVA, 19 December 2005 (LWI) – The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) has joined national and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) protesting against attacks on human rights and the right to freedom of expression during the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS), held in Tunis, Tunisia, 16–18 November 2005.

“... at the World Summit on the Information Society, both inside and outside the official Summit, we have witnessed serious attacks on human rights and the right to freedom of expression,” the NGO representatives state in their open letter to United Nations (UN) Secretary General, Kofi A. Annan. They also call upon the UN Secretary General to “undertake a thorough-going review of procedures leading up to the choice of host country, the protocols for host country agreements with UN agencies and the commitments required of the host country.”



A journalist interviews a participant at the November 2005 WSIS Summit in Tunis, Tunisia. © LWF/M. Broström

There are also requests for the revision of UN rules for civil society accreditation to the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and to UN conferences “in



order to end the exclusion of civil society organizations where the basis for that exclusion is a decision of an individual government with no right of appeal to any independent commission.”

The LWF Deputy General Secretary and Office for Communication Services Director, Ms Karin Achtelstetter, and Ms Malin Broström from the Church of Sweden represented the Federation at the Tunis Summit.

Harassment of Summit Delegates

Prior to the Summit, civil society organizations had already expressed concern about the suitability of Tunisia as a host country. The November 24 letter to Annan draws attention to the harassment of WSIS delegates, assaults on Tunisian and international journalists, and human rights defenders. It also cites denial of entry to the country, the blocking of Web sites, censorship of documents and speeches, as well as the prevention and disruption of meetings. In reaction to the situation in Tunisia, many civil society organizations jointly decided to cancel their side-events planned for November 15, the day before the Summit’s official opening.

“The holding of the Summit in Tunisia, under the auspices of the Tunisian government has not only put the spotlight on the host country’s poor human rights record, it has also brought into question the adequacy of the United Nation’s mechanisms for

civil society participation,” says the letter to the UN Secretary General.

The Summit in Tunis was the second part of a process that was initiated by a 1998 International Telecommunication Union resolution to hold a WSIS. In 2001 it was decided to have a two-phase process—the first Summit, 10–12 December 2003 in Geneva, Switzerland, and the second, 16–18 November 2005 in Tunis, Tunisia. This year’s marked the end of the official WSIS process, and the starting point for implementation, in which civil society is expected to play a crucial role as a partner to governments and the private sector.

The LWF has been involved in the WSIS since the process began. In 2004 and 2005, the Council called upon the LWF and its member churches to actively engage in the Summit process and its related issues including communication rights. Since June this year, Broström, seconded by the Church of Sweden, has been monitoring the process on behalf of the LWF. (*See LWI No. 10/2005, page 11.*)

Achtelstetter affirms the LWF’s continuing involvement in WSIS-related issues: “The Council gave us the task to develop a policy on the Information Society with a specific focus on communication rights. In this process we highly depend on support from our member churches, their expertise and experience.” (606 words)

The full article is posted on the LWF Web site at: www.lutheranworld.org/News/LWI/EN/1802.EN.html

LWF Invites International Lutheran Council Observer to Biblical Study Process

2005 Joint ILC-LWF Meeting Discusses 500th Reformation Anniversary

GENEVA, 20 December 2005 (LWI) – A representative of the International Lutheran Council (ILC) will be invited as an observer to the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) study processes on the authority of the Bible and biblical hermeneutics. This was agreed at the December 8-10 meeting between representatives of both Lutheran world bodies, hosted by the LWF in Geneva, Switzerland.

The decision to invite an ILC observer to such study processes follows an agreement of the 2003 joint meeting that both church bodies invite observers to each other’s official meetings and consultations. At this month’s meeting, the challenges related to biblical hermeneutics concerning such matters as anthropology, human sexuality and homosexuality were discussed. Currently a study process conducted by the LWF Department for Theology and Studies, probes, among other issues, how meaningful communication can occur within a communion of churches despite the different ways of understanding the Bible.

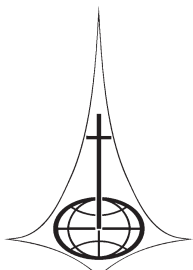
Representatives at this year’s meeting were informed about preparations for the 2017 events regarding the 500th anniversary of Martin Luther’s nailing of 95 theses to the door of the Castle Church in Wittenberg, ef-

fectively starting the Lutheran Reformation and its wider ramifications. The need was expressed for information sharing between the ILC and LWF and their respective member churches on planning these events.

Co-chairperson, LWF General Secretary, Rev. Dr Ishmael Noko responded to questions about the handling of the issue of homosexuality in the LWF and its member churches. Other concerns included relations between the LWF and World Council of Churches, and the September 2005 Council decision to hold the LWF Tenth Assembly in Stuttgart, Germany in 2010.

Co-chairperson, ILC Executive Secretary, Rev. Dr Samuel H. Nafzger, drew attention to the ILC’s development from an ad hoc confessional Lutheran gathering into an International Lutheran Conference (1973) and the current ILC in 1993. The ILC does not aim at becoming a tightly organized global body or communion of churches, rather it works to nurture Lutheran confessional theology and relationships, he explained. (509 words)

The full LWI article and statement of the joint ILC and LWF meeting in Geneva is posted on the LWF Web site at: www.lutheranworld.org/News/LWI/EN/1801.EN.html



FEATURE: Liberia – Signs of Hope at Home, Dire Needs at Refugee Camps

LWF Provides Basic Needs for Liberian Refugees in Sierra Leone

KENEMA, Sierra Leone/GENEVA, 16 December 2005 (LWI) – Mamusu Greye, a single mother with four dependants recalls the day her family arrived at Tobanda refugee camp in 2003. She received a kitchen set—cooking utensils, plates, cups and spoons—and a lantern, blankets, jerry cans, plastic buckets and mats. However, after almost three years of constant use and repair, little remains of the non-food items (NFIs).

Greye is now forced to borrow basic items like cooking pots from neighbors. When it rains, her family, like many others in the camp cannot enjoy decent sleep because the shelter leaks so badly. The May to November rainy season is heaviest between July and September. Its last stages usher in the harmattan period, which is characterized by severe cold and dry winds lasting through February, exposing families to further harsh weather conditions.

Unlike food items, which are distributed every month to refugees, NFIs are supplied only once, upon arrival in a camp. There is growing concern among the refugees over the need for NFIs replenishment.

Easy to Assemble but Potential Danger

The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) Department for World Service (DWS) regional program in West Africa (Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone) has been managing the Tobanda camp since its establishment by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in March 2003. Located some 24 kilometers west of the eastern town of Kenema, it is among eight such camps in the eastern and southern provinces of Sierra Leone. By November 2005, the camp had some 4,780 Liberian refugees.

Mr Morris T. Kulabengu, the food and NFI committee chairperson, a refugee himself, said “many of our people



A typical family house at the LWF-run Tobanda refugee camp, in Kenema, Sierra Leone, where thousands of Liberians are residing. The rundown shelters expose families to severe weather conditions. © LWF/DWS Sierra Leone

are in such dire need of NFIs to the extent that some have resulted to using the ‘Charles Taylor lantern’ at the camp.” Possibly coined after the hardships Liberians encountered at the hands of former rebel group leader, now exiled ex-president Charles Taylor, the lantern is easy to assemble—a piece of cotton in a metal plate or cup filled with oil when lit burns slowly, providing enough light to a household. However, the lamps are a potential danger, particularly in a crowded camp, where negligence could lead to a major fire outbreak.

It is several months now since concerns about the NFIs were raised, and the LWF office continues to seek ways to provide replacements, especially to the most vulnerable families. Back home in Liberia, the political situation has progressed significantly with the peaceful conclusion of general elections and the anticipated January 2006 takeover by the newly-elected government led by president-elect Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, Africa’s first woman head of state.

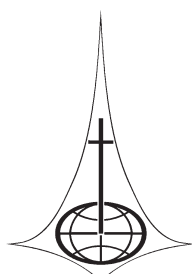
There is hope for peace and stability, and many of the refugees here have expressed their willingness for voluntary repatriation being facilitated by the UNHCR, in collaboration with LWF/DWS-Sierra Leone. Nevertheless, many still, despite readiness to return home and contribute to rebuilding a nation devastated by 14 years of civil war, are cautious about their security. It may be quite some time before many of the Liberians at Tobanda refugee camp return to face further challenges of resettlement. (552 words)

(By Alfred Gorvie, LWF/DWS Sierra Leone information assistant, Tobanda refugee camp.)



Over a decade of civil war has left hundreds of thousands of Liberians, such as this family, displaced inside the country. The LWF/DWS program in Liberia takes care of internally displaced persons in camps. © LWF/DWS Liberia

***This article is part of the ongoing LWI Features on Healing focusing on the LWF Tenth Assembly theme, “For the Healing of the World.”**



LWF World Service Director Granke to Head Canadian Church Development Agency

Mr Robert Granke, director of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) Department for World Service (DWS), has been appointed executive director of Canadian Lutheran World Relief (CLWR).

Granke, 51, begins his new tasks in March 2006, succeeding Dr Ruth E. Jensen, who resigned at the end of 2005 after serving nine years.

Prior to joining the LWF in March 2002, Granke, a Canadian, was secretary of the Winnipeg-based Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCIC). He had previously worked in the international department of CLWR, the service delivery arm for overseas development programming and relief for the ELCIC and Lutheran Church-Canada.



*DWS Director, Mr Robert Granke.
© LWF/H. Putsman*

As DWS director, he leads the work of the LWF's humanitarian and development agency comprising the department's Geneva secretariat's offices, and field programs in 37 countries in Africa, Asia, Latin and Central America and Europe.

Granke holds a Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Manitoba, Canada, and has taken various courses in international management. He served as program manager with the Canadian Hunger Foundation, an Ottawa-based non-profit international development organization.

Robert Granke and his wife, Rev. Lynn Granke have three children. (191 words)

Lutheran Church in Korea Elects New President

Delegates to the October 2005 annual convention of the Lutheran Church in Korea (LCK) elected **Rev. Dr Hyun-Sup Um** to a four-year term as LCK president. A professor of Old Testament, Um, 59 has been teaching at the Lutheran Theological University in Korea and Seminary for 25 years. He succeeds Rev. Hong-Yeol Lee.

In the mid-70s Um pursued undergraduate and post-graduate studies at Korea's Yonsei University College of Theology and the Lutheran Theological Academy. In 1977 he was ordained as a pastor. He undertook post-graduate studies at the Concordia Seminary, St Louis, Missouri, LWF in 1972.



*Rev. Dr Hyun-Sup Um, president,
Lutheran Church in Korea. © LCK*

USA, in 1991; a summer term at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem in 1992; and doctoral studies at Concordia Seminary, St Louis, 1994-1996. He has served academic associations and participated in ecumenical projects such as the Old Testament Translation Committee of the Korean Bible Society. From 1997 until 2003, he was a member of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) Advisory Committee for Theological Education in Asia (ACTEAS).

Rev. Dr Hyun-Sup Um and his wife Jong-Sook Lee have two adult sons.

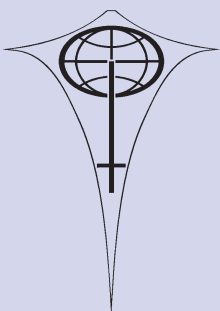
The LCK has 4,698 members. It joined the (195 words)

Rhineland Präses Nikolaus Schneider Heads German Development Body

The head of Germany's Evangelical Church of the Rhineland, Präses **Nikolaus Schneider**, has been elected chairperson the Governing Board of the Church Development Service (EED). Schneider, 58, takes over from former Brunswick Bishop Dr Christian Krause, who was president of the Lutheran World Federation from 1997 to 2003.

Established in 1999, EED is an association of Protestant churches in Germany, promoting development programs in over 80 countries around the world, with a commitment to establish more just societies. EED partners include churches, ecumenical organizations and non-governmental organizations in Africa, Asia, Latin America, and southeastern Europe. (103 words)

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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

