

## FEATURE: A Plot to Settle Down

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Returnees to South Sudan show their LWF-donated gardening tools.  
© LWF/ALWS/C. Mattner

### LWF Sudan Program Supports Returnees’ Resettlement

**IKOTOS, South Sudan/GENEVA (LWI)** – Four dusty four-wheel drive trucks packed with people and their belongings pull up at the “Freedom Square” open place in the small remote town of Ikotos, South Sudan. In the compound opposite, a Lutheran World Federation (LWF) Department for World Service (DWS) water drilling team is busy setting up a fresh water supply system.

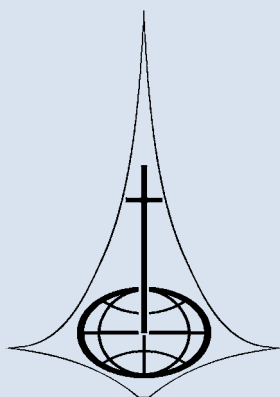
These are new arrivals of the first organized repatriation to Ikotos at the foot of the mountains separating South Sudan and Uganda. There is no official reception committee, but relatives and former neighbors from years or even decades back are mixing with curious children and teenagers.

Although some Southerners returned soon after the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement between the North and South, 2007

and 2008 have marked the highest numbers of Sudanese returnees. Some organized independently their own travel from refugee camps in Kenya and Uganda, and many more came from within Sudan. Numbering hundreds of thousands, they are all returnees, although some are labeled as refugees and others as IDPs (Internally Displaced Persons).

Some 3-4 million Southern Sudanese were displaced during the war started in the 1980s between the Khartoum government and armed groups in the South seeking the region’s political and economic autonomy from the North. Exact figures are hard to get but the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) reported

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### Editorial Team During the 2008 Council Meeting

We would like to express our appreciation to those who supported the *LWI* English-language editorial team during the LWF Council meeting in Arusha: Ms Elizabeth Lobulu, Communication Coordinator of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania and LWI Regional Production Coordinator; Nairobi (Kenya)-based LWI correspondent Mr Fredrick Nzwili;

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We are grateful as well to Ms Daranne Harris, Director of Communications and Education of Canadian Lutheran World Relief (CLWR), for her assistance in the Web team.

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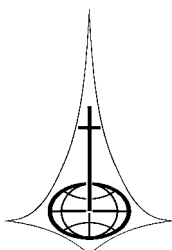
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## Tanzanian Leader Criticizes Carbon Credit Solution to Global Environmental Pollution

### Former Premier Sumaye Warns of More Serious Food Shortages

ARUSHA, Tanzania/GENEVA (LWI) – Addressing the “Plenary on Africa” at the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) Council meeting in Arusha, Tanzania, the country’s former Prime Minister Frederick T. Sumaye criticized the buying of carbon credit to balance global environmental pollution as disgraceful, cautioning poverty and environmental degradation could create a vicious circle, which would deepen each other’s effects on poor communities.



Former Tanzanian Prime Minister Frederick T. Sumaye delivers the keynote address at the Council’s “Plenary on Africa.” © LWF/F. Nzwilli

“While the industrialized countries have their huge share in environmental pollution, they also have their share in environmental degradation. Developed countries are now attempting to correct the problem by buying what is called carbon credit,” Sumaye told representatives of LWF member churches and partner organizations attending the 25-30 June meeting hosted by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania (ELCT).

In the carbon credit approach, he explained, poor countries were being enticed to create huge farms for bio-fuel plants, whose crops would be exported to offset shares of environmental pollution in industrialized nations. It means one rich country can pollute the environment as long as it can finance land clearing and planting of bio-fuel crop in poor countries. “This is very sad, unfortunate and even shameful,” Sumaye concluded.

### Consequences

The consequences of the carbon credit approach, according to Sumaye, was

that poor countries would be forced to clear their lands for the production of bio-fuels, leading not only to serious environmental destruction, but also a conflict of interests about whether to grow the bio-fuel plants or food crops.

“You can collect carbon credit from Kenya or Tanzania, for example, which have not polluted the atmosphere. You can engage the fuels to be collected by a company. That fuel is registered as fuel credit for that company, not Kenya and Tanzania,” he said. “If we are not careful, we are going to face even more serious [food] problems than the environmental destruction. So countries must have a policy on these issues. We must learn from those who have started.”

Global environmental pollution is leading to negative climate change, resulting in floods, droughts, hunger and desertification, said Sumaye, pointing out that these effects are more pronounced in poor countries since most livelihood there is dependent on natural climatic cycles.

Asked how the LWF and other faith communions could contribute to environmental renewal, the Tanzanian leader said the groups are working well in the Inter-Faith Action for Peace in Africa (IFAPA), of which he is a commissioner.

Sumaye elaborated the interconnectedness between environment and poverty, saying each affected the other, sometimes deepening the impact of the other on communities. Poor people cut down forests for firewood or charcoal. They also clear forest for new farms for cultivation, since the old fields had become unproductive and the farmers could not afford to replenish the land by applying fertilizers. The effect was that land productivity dropped over time, with the communities becoming poorer and environmental degradation increasing.

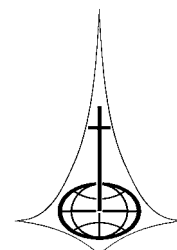
He cited the lack of competent technology as one of the factors that hindered the continent’s competitiveness at the international level. Even with independence, Africa continues to face a scramble for natural resources—a rush for oil, minerals, gemstones, timber, fertile lands, fisheries and the like—which seems to have picked up momentum, according to Sumaye, with the emergence of China as a player in the region.

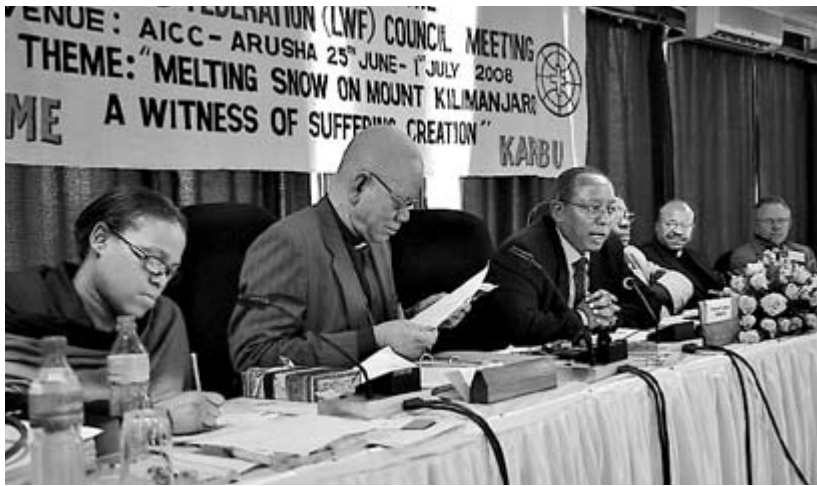
Responding to Archbishop Nemuel Babba, Lutheran Church of Christ in Nigeria, who had wanted to know the potential impact of China’s presence in Africa in the next 40 years, the Tanzanian leader said China’s entry on the African scene was a blessing, as it provided for “positive competition.”

Sumaye said there was an urgent need to review all policies and laws governing development, with a view to having new ones



Archbishop Nemuel A. Babba, Lutheran Church of Christ in Nigeria © LWF/F. Nzwilli





Panelists at the "Africa Plenary" included (left to right) Ms Sindisiwe Ndelu, South Africa; Namibian Bishop Dr Zephania Kameeta, LWF Vice-President for the African region; keynote speaker Frederick T. Sumaye; (partly hidden) Bishop Thomas O. Laiser, ELCT Arusha Diocese; LWF General Secretary Rev. Dr Ishmael Noko; and Church of Sweden Archbishop Anders Wejryd. © LWF/F. Nzwili

that support and encourage private sector investment and development.

Responding to Sumaye's paper, Church of Sweden Archbishop An-

ders Wejryd expressed the need to build a society "which has room for reflection, joint action, and questions and discussions."

He said it was important that those who come from more affluent societies realize that the talk about environmental degradation and climate change must not be used against those who have not contributed much to the deterioration.

Respondent Sindisiwe Ndelu, Evangelical Lutheran Church in South Africa, acting chairperson of the Program Committee for Communication Services, spoke of the need to deliberate further on the emerging market opportunities in Africa.

1 July 2008

## Ecumenical Greetings to LWF Council

### Emphasize Joint Responsibility for Creation

**ARUSHA, Tanzania/GENEVA (LWI)** – At its meeting in Arusha, northern Tanzania, the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) Council received greetings from the World Council of Churches (WCC), the Anglicans, Mennonites, Orthodox, Roman Catholics, and from the Government of the Republic of Tanzania.

In his greeting delivered by Bishop Dr Owdenburg M. Mdegella of the ELCT Iringa diocese, WCC General Secretary Rev. Dr Samuel Kobia told the representatives of the LWF member churches that they had gathered for a real talk addressing the concerns of their community and its relationship with others.

"You could also add: the melting ice cap of the Mount Kilimanjaro is also witness of a suffering people who are increasingly confronted with lack of fresh water for themselves, their livestock and their [garden] fields," said Kobia.



Bishop Dr Owdenburg M. Mdegella, ELCT Iringa Diocese, represented the WCC. © LWF/D.-M. Grötzsch



Botswana's Anglican Bishop Musonda T. S. Mwamba © LWF/D.-M. Grötzsch

Kobia, a Kenyan, said Mount Kilimanjaro and Mount Kenya were both glittering mountains covered with snow some 15 years ago. "Today, Mount Kenya has lost almost all of its ice cap, and the glacier covering Mount Kilimanjaro is rapidly retreating," he said. "Now that the ice is gone, the riverbeds are empty and dry from September to March, leading to competition for water, pasture and farmland."

### Unity

The Orthodox representative Metropolitan Dr Isaias from Cyprus described the LWF Council theme as current and important.

"It was true that ecological destruction of the earth, with all its conse-

quences as a result of the unbalanced and extreme over consuming of goods and the misuse and abuse of earth's resources, cannot leave us as Christians in indifference," he said.

He referred to the recent meeting of the Lutheran – Orthodox Joint Commission in Cyprus, during which both sides affirmed their strong wish to continue the search for Christian unity.

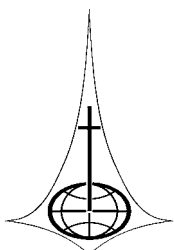
"This creates among us an [alliance] in Christ that is so much needed between Christians in today's collapsing spiritual and ecological environment," he said.

On behalf of the Anglican Communion, Bishop Musonda T. S. Mwamba of Botswana greeted the Council as

one who felt "at home" in this Lutheran gathering. He described the progress in mutual understanding and cooperation being made by both the international Anglican-Lutheran dialogue and by the All Africa Anglican – Lutheran Commission, of which he is co-chair. In both these settings,



Orthodox representative Metropolitan Dr Isaias of Cyprus © LWF/D.-M. Grötzsch



and in local churches, the two traditions are discovering that they have much in common and desire to move toward greater visible unity, for their own sakes and for the sake of their common mission, he said.

On behalf of the Mennonite World Conference, Rev. Matiku T. Nyitambe from Musoma, Tanzania, described the excellent relations between Mennonites and Lutherans in Africa and expressed his hopes that the current international conversations can bring the two communities even closer.

**New Hope**

A representative of the Vatican's Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, Msgr. Dr Matthias Türk, delivered the Roman Catholic greetings. He assured the LWF Council of the Roman Catholic Church's deep solidarity in the struggle against the destruction of climate, natural resources, humankind and the earth, as well as against poverty and illness. The beauty and health of nature "[is] melting away



*Msgr. Dr Matthias Türk, represented the Roman Catholic Church. © LWF/D.-M. Gröttsch*

so fast and without any chance to return in the near future," he said.

He spoke of the "need to work intensely together as Christians to give new hope to this endangered and suffering world, following truly the example of our Lord Jesus Christ."

On the Lutheran-Roman Catholic dialogue, Türk said both partners could look back joyfully on more than 40 years of fruitful ecumenical dialogue, including the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification,

whose 10th signing anniversary will be commemorated jointly in 2009.

"It is time to harvest the fruits of these intense years of dialogue. We have to watch out that they will not be forgotten or that old anti-ecumenical ideas rise again like the talk of 'ba-



*Rev. Matiku T. Nyitambe brought greetings from the Mennonite World Conference. © LWF/D.-M. Gröttsch*

sic differences', which we thought would have long been overcome," he said.

**Praise for ELCT**

Delivering the Tanzanian government greeting, community development officer Mr Meshack Ndaskoi, commended LWF's role in advocating for alternative and friendly sources

of energy, and for calling on developed countries to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Ndaskoi praised the ELCT for being at the "forefront in making a significant contribution in the provision of social services to Tanzanians and Arusha's people, especially in the areas of education, health, water and roads."

He affirmed the government's continued support in creating "an enabling environment where the church and other stakeholders will contribute more to helping [the] people."

*1 July 2008*



*Mr Meshack Ndaskoi greeted the LWF Council on behalf of the Tanzanian government. © LWF/D.-M. Gröttsch*

**FEATURE: 'When You Hear Our Songs, Promise to Take Action'**

**LWF Youth Seek Active Engagement in Climate Change Issues**

**ARUSHA, Tanzania/GENEVA, (LWI)** – "Climate change is threatening our future!" chanted young adults from member churches of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) during a role-play session at the 2008 Pre-Council Youth workshop in Arusha, northern Tanzania.

"Mount Kilimanjaro is no longer as attractive as it used to be. Probably my children will not see any snow on it," said Namsifu Aminiel, a participant from the LWF Council host church, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania (ELCT).

"I remember not so long ago, when I was 13, the snow on the peak was still so beautiful. Now, I am 20. The

snows are nearly gone!" remarked Aminiel, recalling her childhood memories of Africa's highest mountain, which, she said, future generations in Tanzania may not experience, or may only see in pictures.

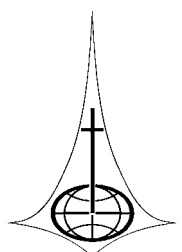
Working under the theme of the 25–30 June Council meeting, "Melting Snow on Mount Kilimanjaro – A Witness of a Suffering Creation," the workshop brought together 17 young church leaders from LWF member churches around the globe, with the aim to empower them to act as multipliers in the response to the issue of climate change.

Organized by LWF Youth of the Department for Mission and Devel-

opment (DMD), the 20–24 June event incorporated a variety of activities including Bible studies, role-playing and field exposure trips. Participants also formulated a youth message on climate change, which was presented to the Council delegates.

**UN Conference Delegates**

The 2009 United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNCCC) meeting to be held in Copenhagen, Denmark, was the focus of the young adults' role-play as country delegates. The aim was to deepen their understanding of climate change issues at a global





*Left to right: Youth participants Mr Anza Amen Lema, Tanzania; Ms Nembris Geoffrey, Tanzania; Mr Hasimiaina Robelson Fabian Andriatiana, Madagascar; and Ms Namsifu Aminiel, Tanzania, stage a performance during a morning devotion of the Pre-Council Youth workshop. © LWF/F. C. M. Chan*

level, said LWF Youth Secretary Rev. Roger Schmidt.

“It was really terrible to witness the nasty politics and selfishness of each country. The delegates from the United States of America, Europe and the emerging powers keep shirking their responsibility throughout the debates,” said Aminiel, assuming the role of UN Secretary-General.

Evariste Mamadou, 23, Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Central African Republic (ELCCAR), shared his thoughts after the UNCCC session. “We tend to think that only those developed economies with factories and many cars are causing the problems. But it is not the case. For example, it is common to see people in my country burning forests in order to create more farmland. I now realize I should stop them, because these kinds of activities also contribute to climate change.”

The workshop participants from the Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Germany, Hong Kong (China), Lithuania, Madagascar, South Africa, Tanzania, USA and Zambia, also visited some of the ELCT’s diaconal work outside Arusha.

Mamadou was particularly impressed by a renewable energy project in a remote village, where a household beneficiary of a small loan had installed a solar panel, allowing the children to finish their schoolwork after dark.

“I can feel the impact of a micro-credit project. It certainly can make a difference in people’s lives. I am very interested to introduce this kind of project in my country. Besides bringing renewable energy to the village, it would also be very meaningful to grant people small loans to buy seeds or start small businesses,” said Mamadou, who audits ELCCAR-coordinated projects in his home country.

## Leadership and Action

During a Bible study session on creation and climate change, the youth reflected on what could be done in their church and society. “My brother

from Tanzania told me that each of them has to plant two trees during their confirmation classes. It symbolizes our role as stewards of God’s creation. That is indeed a wonderful idea. Perhaps we could not plant many trees in Hong Kong, but certainly we should take visible action to give back to nature,” said LWF/DMD youth intern Francis Chan from the Tsung Tsin Mission of Hong Kong, China.

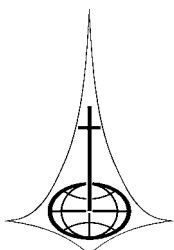
Chan said he felt inspired to develop similar activities for the confirmation class and youth groups in his church. “Facing the life-threatening change in weather patterns, churches certainly have to put more emphasis on leading us to be good stewards of creation so as to fight against climate change,” he noted.

Nineteen-year-old Hanitriniaina Nathalie Rahelimalala from the Malagasy Lutheran Church expressed her enthusiasm for more active engagement. “When I go back home, the very first thing I will do is write a song about climate change. A youth group is currently [working] with me to produce a music album on CD. Now, I have decided to add one more song! It will depict the problems facing us and urge people to take action,” she said.

Rahelimalala, the youngest workshop participant continued, “I remember when I was a child, normally we had around four to five cyclones a year, but last year there were nearly



*Left to right: Mr Michel Ngoy Mulunda, Democratic Republic of Congo; Mr Thomas Jensch, Germany; and Ms Hanitriniaina Nathalie Rahelimalala, Madagascar, role-play delegates’ negotiations at the 2009 United Nations Climate Change Conference. © LWF/F. C. M. Chan*



10! One cyclone that hit the northern coast was particularly destructive, and many people lost their family members, friends and homes. I am afraid one day my home will be hit by cyclones like that.”

In addition to sharing the climate change song with youth groups, Ra-

helimalala plans to promote the songs through radio stations. “Perhaps one day you turn on the radio, you can listen to our songs carrying messages about climate change. If we make it, promise me you will take action!” she added.

*(A contribution by LWF/DMD youth intern, Francis Cheong Mun Chan.)*

The message from the 2008 LWF Pre-Council Youth workshop is available on the LWF Web site at: [www.lutheranworld.org/LWF\\_Documents/2008\\_Council/YOUTH\\_Message\\_Arusha\\_2008.pdf](http://www.lutheranworld.org/LWF_Documents/2008_Council/YOUTH_Message_Arusha_2008.pdf)

11 July 2008

## FEATURE: A Chance to Encounter New People and Topics

### Supporting the LWF Council as a Steward

**ARUSHA, Tanzania/GENEVA (LWI)** – Hanitriniaina Nathalie Rabelimalala from Madagascar simply laughs at attempts to pronounce her name correctly. It is better to stick with “Nathalie,” says the 19-year-old, who served as a steward at the June 2008 Council meeting of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) in Arusha, northern Tanzania. Together with seven other stewards, the young adults provided additional administrative support toward the smooth running of the meeting, attended by 170 participants.

The marketing and finance student in Malagasy’s capital, Antananarivo, received a call from her church over a year ago asking her if she would be interested in serving as a steward in Arusha for two weeks. The LWF Youth Secretary Rev. Roger Schmidt had requested leaders of various Lutheran churches to propose young people to provide support for the Council meeting. Nathalie accepted immediately. Her excellent knowledge of English and French was probably one of the reasons why the Malagasy Lutheran Church nominated her.

Working days in Arusha were long and busy—from morning until sometimes well into the evening—supplying delegates with meeting materials; photocopying documents; running errands for Council officials and helping out whenever needed. Nathalie enjoyed sharing breakfast every day with the other stewards staying at the Arusha Lutheran Church guesthouse, where she and Tanzanian colleague Nembris Geofrey were roommates.



*LWF Council steward Hanitriniaina Nathalie Rabelimalala, from Madagascar, placing documents in participants’ pigeon holes. © LWF/D.-M. Grötzsch*

One of Nathalie’s most vivid memories was the personal greeting she received from LWF General Secretary Rev. Dr. Ishmael Noko, who approached each steward personally and shook their hands.

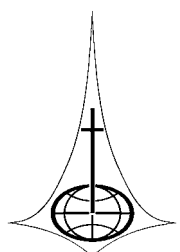
What Nathalie found particularly interesting outside her group’s busy schedule was the opportunity to sit in on the plenary meetings, where she learned many new things. One such subject was climate change and the possible responses by churches to the issue. Already at the Pre-Council Youth Conference, the stewards together with youth Council members had prepared themselves by discussing the Council theme, “Melting Snow on Mount Kilimanjaro – A Witness of a Suffering Creation.”

Nathalie looked forward to returning home and telling especially her younger brother and parents about her time in Tanzania. Her father is an artist and her mother travels around the country selling clothes.

Soon her regular daily routine resumes, studying at a private university in Antananarivo. She contributes to her educational costs from income earned in her part-time job, distributing advertising materials in the Malagasy capital.

*(Kirchenrat Klaus Rieth, Evangelical Church in Württemberg, Germany, interviewed Hanitriniaina Nathalie Rabelimalala in Arusha.)*

13 August 2008



## USD 7.5 Million for Mission and Development Projects

50 Projects Approved for 2009–2011

**ARUSHA (Tanzania)/GENEVA (LWI)** – At its meeting in June this year in Arusha, Tanzania, the Council of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) received budget proposals for projects of the Department for Mission and Development (DMD) amounting to USD 7.48 million for the period 2009–2011. The amount for DMD projects includes some USD 2.99 million for 2009, USD 2.35 million for 2010, and around USD 2.14 million for 2011.

In his report to this year's Council meeting, Project Committee chairperson Bishop em. Július Filo of the Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in the Slovak Republic (ECAC-SR) stated that the committee at its May 2008 meeting in Riga, Latvia had approved 40 projects. Ten other projects worth a total of USD 253,700 had already been approved by the LWF Interdepartmental Project Screening Committee (ISPC). The ISPC may approve projects with a budget of up to USD 50,000.

A project from Cambodia was deferred for further consideration. The Project Committee will act on this project by mail vote in the course of the year, Filo indicated.

Of the 51 projects submitted, 22 will be implemented in 12 African



*The LWF Project Committee group together at Riga's "Roku Roka" support center for children and families, a diaconal project of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Latvia. © LWF/DMD*

countries, 13 in five countries in Asia, four in two European countries and 12 projects in seven countries in Latin America and the Caribbean.

LWF/DMD project work encompasses pastoral ministry, diakonia, communication and development projects as a means of carrying out the church's holistic, participatory mission.

Support for planned projects co-sponsored by partner churches and organizations for 2009 amounted to USD 1,759,900 for projects in Africa; USD 556,100 for Asia; USD 214,400

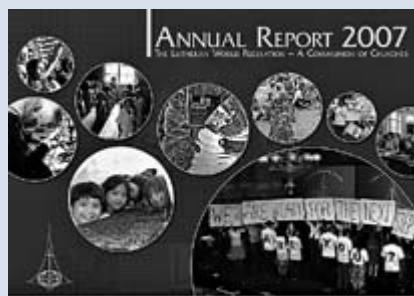
for Europe and USD 454,900 for Latin America and the Caribbean. In 2010 additional expenditures for project activities amount to USD 1,390,600 for Africa; USD 429,800 for Asia; USD 105,900 for Europe and USD 424,600 for Latin America and the Caribbean. In 2011 DMD will be seeking USD 1,214,500 for projects in Africa; USD 398,600 for Asia; USD 102,500 for Europe and USD 424,800 for Latin America and the Caribbean.

12 August 2008

### 2007 LWF Annual Report

"A Transforming Communion" is the underlying theme of the 2007 Annual Report of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF). Produced in July 2008, it highlights the work of the LWF through its Geneva Secretariat departments and units and field offices, especially in relation to the organization's 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary officially celebrated in March 2007 in Lund, Sweden.

"Efforts of Lutheran churches in the aftermath of World War II to mobilize relief assistance for millions displaced in Europe, especially those within the Lutheran family, remain a hallmark of LWF's work globally, mainly through World Service," writes LWF General Secretary Rev. Dr Ishmael Noko in the report's introduction. He points to anniversaries as milestones "of our journey together, affirming our common faith in God and to the body of Christ, of which we are a part."



The report's cross-cutting subjects that portray LWF's work in 2007 include ecumenical diakonia; creation and climate change; illegitimate debt; living in diversity; and theological reflection.

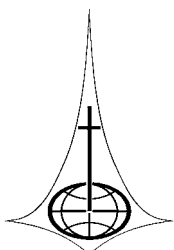
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A low PDF version of the 2007 Annual Report can be downloaded from the LWF Web site at:

[www.lutheranworld.org/LWF\\_Documents/LWF-Annual\\_Report\\_2007-low.pdf](http://www.lutheranworld.org/LWF_Documents/LWF-Annual_Report_2007-low.pdf)





## Lutheran Leaders Stress Unity During Visit with Kenyan Churches

LWF President and General Secretary Meet with Bishops and Pastors

**NAIROBI, Kenya/GENEVA (LWI)** – During a visit with leaders and staff of the two Lutheran World Federation (LWF) member churches in Kenya, LWF President Bishop Mark S. Hanson and General Secretary Rev. Dr Ishmael Noko emphasized the importance of unity and cooperation among all Lutherans in the country.

Hanson, presiding bishop, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), and Noko met 18 June with co-hosts Bishops Zachariah W. Kahuthu, Kenya Evangelical Lutheran Church (KELC), and Walter E. Obare Omwanza, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Kenya (ELCK), and pastors of both churches.

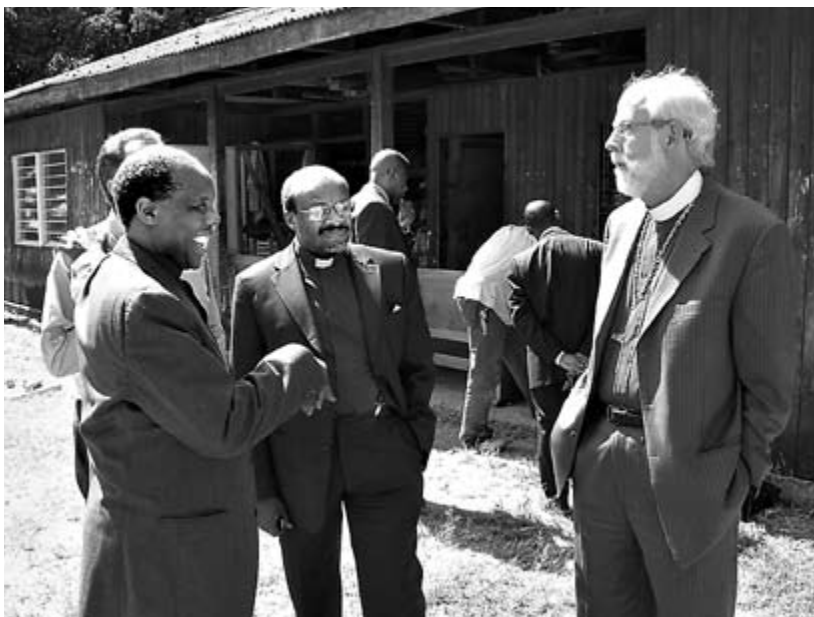
This is an important time to be Lutherans in the world, Hanson told the pastors. “We have gifts to bring to the Church catholic. To be evangelical, confessional, ecumenical and missional is what it means to be Lutheran,” he said.

### Partnerships

The partnership between LWF member churches ELCA and KELC includes support toward various ministries of the Kenyan church, including literacy programs, school tuition support, Christian-Muslim relations, communication, Christian education, and youth and leadership development. The ELCK and Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod (LCMS)—not an LWF member church—are partner churches.

Noting that the ELCA and LCMS—like the two Kenyan Lutheran churches—have theological differences, Hanson said, “We have to have honest conversations about our differences but maintain our diversity.”

The LWF president said the two churches in Kenya were good examples of the global relationship networks that the ELCA and LCMS are building. “It is through the global relationships we have that we are being transformed,” he said.



*LWF President Mark S. Hanson (right) and General Secretary Rev. Dr. Ishmael Noko (center) listen to Bishop Zachariah W. Kahuthu (left) of the Kenya Evangelical Lutheran Church during their 18 June visit to the church's headquarters. © LWF/ELCA/J. Brooks*

Noko stressed that the LWF needs a united Lutheran church in Kenya. “Unity is not a choice. It’s a gift. It’s not an option,” he stressed. He also spoke briefly about the 2010 LWF Assembly in Stuttgart, Germany, with the theme, “Give Us Today Our Daily Bread.”

The ELCK has about 85,000 members and joined the LWF in 1970, while the 44,000-member KELC has been an LWF member church since 1992.

During the meeting with the Kenyan Lutheran church leadership, Hanson spoke of his mid-June meeting with US Senator Barack Obama (Democrat/Illinois), the presumed Democratic Party nominee for US president. He said he had emphasized to Obama that “Lutherans are on the ground” globally and domestically, providing a variety of vital ministries.

The LWF president said he hoped the US government could be a strong partner with the churches. Obama has family roots in Kenya.

### AIDS Commitment

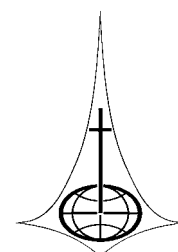
Hanson also praised US President George W. Bush’s commitment to

fund global HIV and AIDS response programs, and his focus on the related United Nations Millennium Development Goals, which among others target the reduction of poverty by 50 percent by the year 2015.

Christian churches in the Southern Hemisphere have been growing significantly in recent years, Noko told the Kenyan church leaders. With this shift to greater growth in the Southern versus Northern Hemisphere churches, Noko said, a key question for churches in the South was how they were planning to prepare theologians and ecumenists.

In a discussion with the pastors, concern was raised about churches’ inclusion in capacity building with respect to the work of international church relief and development agencies.

Both the LWF president and general secretary said this was “a very critical issue” for the LWF and ELCA. No church agency can develop capacity and do development work without the churches, said Hanson, pointing out that he was encouraged and convinced that Lutheran World Relief (LWR)—the international relief and development ministry of the ELCA



and LCMS—was committed to improving working relationships with churches. He said he would discuss the concern with LWR leaders.

## Church Capacity

“You can’t put capacity in the society and [de-capacitate] the church,” Noko remarked.

“It is our challenge” and “a concern that must be dealt with in a careful way,” Kahuthu told the LWF leaders.

In Nairobi, Hanson and Noko visited the ELCK and KELC church offices including the ELCK’s new offices under construction in downtown Nairobi; Springs of Hope Lutheran Church, Kibera, burned down during civil unrest that followed the disputed presidential election last December; and the Nairobi International Lutheran Congregation.

The visit to Kenya was part of a similar one by the LWF leaders



LWF President Mark S. Hanson presents a gift to ELCK Bishop Walter Obare Omwanza (left) in Nairobi, Kenya. The “Savior of the World Cross” is made of 50 different wooden pieces from throughout the world. © LWF/ELCA/J. Brooks

with ELCT leaders and congregation members prior to the 25–30 June Council meeting hosted by the Tanzanian church in Arusha.

(A Contribution by John Brooks, ELCA News.)

24 June 2008

## LWF President Hanson Assures Zimbabwean Churches of Lutheran Solidarity

### General Secretary Noko Urges Increased Action from Regional Political Leaders

**GENEVA (LWI)** – In a pastoral letter addressed to the heads of churches in Zimbabwe, the President of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) Bishop Mark S. Hanson expressed the Lutheran communion’s solidarity and support toward Zimbabweans in their current difficult political and economic situation.

“Through the participation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Zimbabwe (ELCZ), the entire worldwide Lutheran communion is standing and working together with you in this struggle,” wrote Hanson in the mid-July letter to all heads of churches in the country.

At its recent meeting in Arusha, Tanzania, the LWF Council requested the president’s pastoral letter to the churches as an expression of the “LWF’s hope and trust that God cares for and would save the suffering people of Zimbabwe.”

Hanson is presiding bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

### Economic Crisis

His pastoral letter affirmed the churches’ efforts in helping people whose livelihoods had been undermined by the economic crisis, and who have faced violence and intimidation. “I applaud your initiatives to promote peace and to advocate for justice, especially where such initiatives have been taken ecumenically, as the common position of the churches in Zimbabwe.”

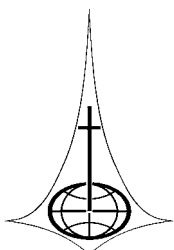
The LWF president cited the Council’s public statement on Zimbabwe, and final resolutions, through which it called “for an immediate end to political violence and repression” and the restoration of democracy. The LWF governing body also condemned “the attacks on Zimba-

bweans for exercising their right of democratic choice” as contrary to the purpose of the nation’s struggle for liberation from colonial rule. It urged the establishment of a peace building process involving all actors at national, regional and international level.

“The LWF stands ready to support the people of Zimbabwe in rebuilding their nation and in restoring their hopes of a life in dignity and justice,” added Hanson.

### African Union, SADC

In related advocacy also requested by the Council, LWF General Secretary Rev. Dr Ishmael Noko urged Africa’s political leaders to take a more active role in promoting human security in Zimbabwe and “in encouraging a political transition back to the democracy that the people of Zimbabwe have a right to expect.”



In letters addressed separately to the African Union (AU), the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and to South Africa, Noko recalled the Council's affirmation of the crucial role of regional responses to Zimbabwe's crisis. He urged the AU chairperson, Tanzanian President Jakaya Kikwete, and his SADC counterpart, Zambian President Levy P. Mwanawasa, to further increase their efforts "to promote a return to genuine democracy in Zimbabwe and to avoid even worse suffering for its people."

Noko said the situation in Zimbabwe "is a moral challenge to all

Africans and presents a critical test of the effectiveness of the institutions that have been created to promote peace, democracy, political stability and economic prosperity in Africa." The history of institutions such as the AU and SADC would be "indelibly stained" if they were unable to act quickly and effectively "to confront the obvious crisis in Zimbabwe," he wrote.

In the letter to South African President Thabo Mbeki, the LWF general secretary said he recognized "the exceptional sensitivity, complexity and risk involved" in South Africa's mediation role between the parties in Zimbabwe. "But ultimately,

your priority—and the priority of all Africans and the whole international community—is for the welfare of the people of Zimbabwe rather than the rivalries and ambitions of its leaders," added Noko.

The LWF is present in Zimbabwe through the ELCZ and through the Department for World Service associate program, Lutheran Development Service – Zimbabwe.

The 2008 LWF Council actions are available on the LWF Web site at: [www.lutheranworld.org/News/Welcome.EN.html](http://www.lutheranworld.org/News/Welcome.EN.html)

18 July 2008

## Call for Increased Focus on Burundi

Reporting on the work of the recently established Department for World Service (DWS) country program in Burundi, the LWF/DWS representative there said the East African country faces a largely ignored crisis of steadily declining food production. Because of the situation in neighboring Rwanda, the problem in Burundi has escaped the world's attention and has been neglected, Mr Jesse Klaas H. Kamstra told the Program Committee for World Service during the June 2008 LWF Council meeting in Arusha, Tanzania.

Kamstra pointed out that the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization had designated Burundi as the developing country with the worst prospects in terms of agricultural growth and poverty reduction.

"Chronic undernourishment, child malnutrition, poor harvests and poverty have seriously affected the local people," said Kamstra who has led the DWS program since it was started in October 2007. He said around 300,000 refugees had returned from border regions

in neighboring Tanzania. To facilitate the return from camps in Tanzania, DWS Burundi in collaboration with the National Council of Churches of Burundi and other partner organizations of Action by Churches Together (ACT) International launched an ambitious program of reconciliation and support to the population.

"Our desire is that people in this African country once again can live safely and enjoy food autonomy, and that they are able to return to their homes," added DWS Director Rev. Eberhard Hitzler.

The World Service committee also heard from LWF representative Ms Hermine Nikolaisen about the activities of the DWS country programs in Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

More about DWS Burundi at

[www.lutheranworld.org/What\\_We\\_Do/DWS/Country\\_Programs/DWS-Burundi.html](http://www.lutheranworld.org/What_We_Do/DWS/Country_Programs/DWS-Burundi.html)

## Kenyan Churches to Establish LWF National Committee After Unity Talks

The two Lutheran World Federation (LWF) member churches in Kenya, separated for decades by historical divisions and different theological views, held a historic meeting that outlined steps to cooperate in their various ministries, including the establishment of an LWF National Committee in the country.

At the 8 July meeting in Nairobi coordinated by the sub-regional office of the Lutheran Communion in Central and Eastern Africa (LUCCEA), to which both churches belong, Bishops Walter E. Obare Omwanza, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Kenya (ELCK), and Zachariah W. Kahuthu, Kenya Evangelical Lutheran Church (KELC), endorsed modalities for a future unification process.

"We face similar challenges and the same Lutheran identity. We have been miraculously chosen to work together for the benefit of the two churches," remarked Kahuthu.

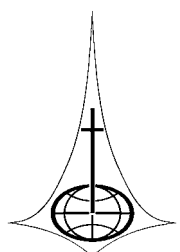
"It is God's will to be together. We need to go back and find where we fell from unity," noted Obare. He said the national committee would help the LWF serve Kenyans better and in unity.

Representing the LWF, Rev. Dr Fredrick O. Shoo, assistant bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania (ELCT) Northern Diocese, termed as "historic" the vision for the national committee. "I believe that united we will always be strong," he added.

At meetings with KELC and ELCK leadership in June 2008 in Nairobi, visiting LWF President Bishop Mark S. Hanson and General Secretary Rev. Dr Ishmael Noko had stressed the need for Lutheran unity in the country.

Started in 1948 by Swedish missionaries, the 85,000-member ELCK joined the LWF in 1970. The 44,000-member KELC has its early origins in German and Swedish Lutheran missionaries, and the ELCT mission work in the mid-1960s. It was first registered in the country in 1968 as the ELCT-Kenya Synod, and inaugurated as KELC in 1992, the same year it joined the LWF. Both churches are members of the National Council of Churches of Kenya.

*(A contribution by George Arende, KELC communications coordinator.)*



# Lutheran Theologians Reflect on Pentecostal Influences in Africa

## Churches Urged to Relate to People's Actual Needs

**SOWETO, South Africa/GENEVA (LWI)** – There is much diversity among Lutheran churches in Africa with regard to healing, exorcism, testifying, speaking in tongues and other practices associated with Pentecostal churches, yet there are Lutheran theological convictions, such as the priority of God's grace, that are key for assessing such practices.

This became evident at a 6–11 July theological seminar of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) of 30 theologians from different parts of Africa and beyond, deliberating on the theme, "Critical Lutheran Beliefs and Practices in Relation to Neo-Pentecostalism." Organized by the LWF Department for Theology and Studies (DTS), the seminar hosted by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Southern Africa (ELCSA) in Soweto, South Africa, was the sixth in the DTS Theology in the Life of the Church (TLC) study series.

In his keynote address, Prof. J. Kwabena Asomoah-Gyadu, Trinity Theological Seminary in Accra, Ghana, distinguished between classical Pentecostalism and more recent neo-Pentecostal emphases on a

theology of prosperity and upward mobility. "The accessibility to and democratization of charisma is a key factor bringing life into churches perceived to have turned spiritually stagnant and overly cerebral," he said.

Asomoah-Gyadu pointed out that churches in the New Testament were "thoroughly charismatic," in how they experienced God's empowering presence. He underlined the diverse, multifaceted nature of Pentecostalism and charismatic renewal movements, saying, "Every such renewal movement is potentially a new church, depending on how it is managed."

### Biblical Interpretations

Dr Sarojini Nadar, University of Kwazulu-Natal in Pietermaritzburg, South Africa, cautioned that *sola scriptura* (by Scripture alone) as un-



Bishop Dr Musawenkosi D. Biyela, ELCSA Eastern Diocese © LWF/K. Bloomquist

derstood by many neo-Pentecostals leads to a "four I's" approach that views the Bible as inerrant, infallible, inspired and immediate, rather than the Christological hermeneutic of Luther. She advocated approaches to biblical interpretations that take seriously the transforming work of the Holy Spirit and that affirm

rather than deny life, for example, for women in abusive relationships.

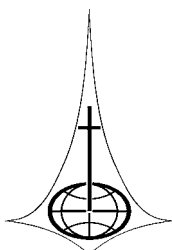
Argentine theologian Dr Guillermo Hansen, drawing on Latin American experiences of Pentecostalism critiqued its emphasis on sanctifying all that is profane. For Luther, in contrast, sanctification is "a matter of faith and love through the created orders" of politics, economics and family life. The Holy Spirit "fulfills through our bodies and minds the commandments of the second table," affirming and fulfilling all of creation, he noted.

### Participatory Worship

Emphasizing liturgy as a drama that moves from Good Friday to Easter, Bishop Musawenkosi D. Biyela, ELCSA Eastern Diocese, pointed out that Pentecostals focus mostly just on Easter, rather than on how the Cross transforms suffering today. "There is need for a good balance between structure (order, dignity) and ecstasy. Worship needs to be participatory, not just a one-person show by the pastor." He also cautioned against so-called miracle crusades. "Did Jesus ever advertise his miracles?" Rev. Gertrud Tönsing, Lutheran Theological Institute in Pietermaritzburg, provided a critical analysis of theology in popular Pentecostal praise songs, which increasingly are used in many Lutheran churches.



Participants in the DTS seminar included (left) Mr Bitrus Ibrahim, Bronnum Lutheran Seminary, Nigeria; and Ms Colette Ranarivony, Malagasy Lutheran Church, Madagascar. © LWF/K. Bloomquist



In group discussions throughout the seminar, participants underscored the church's important role in addressing people's actual needs, developing more participatory worship, and honoring the diverse gifts and fruits of the Holy Spirit. "A lot of people have left Lutheran churches because they feel they were not allowed to exercise their gifts of the Spirit," remarked Grace Ufan Friday, an evangelist in the Lutheran Church of Nigeria.

While some of the African Lutheran churches have regular healing services and other charismatic practices, such as in Madagascar and Ethiopia, others are more hesitant. "We need to change our churches," insisted Rev. Faith Lugazia, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania. For Rev. Yako Galana Babusa, Kenya Evangelical Lutheran Church, "It's the false testifying that I have problems with; how can this be managed?"

Namibian theologian Dr Paul John Isaak, currently teaching at the Ecumenical Institute in Bossey, Switzerland, pointed out that right belief and practice are not sufficient, but need to also include "right-heart-



Participants in the DTS seminar in Soweto, South Africa.  
© LWF/K. Bloomquist

edness" toward God and others. All agreed that more attention should be given to teaching especially laity about the Holy Spirit and the wide array of the gifts of the Spirit.

Other participants came from Ethiopia, Central African Republic, Cameroon, Germany, Madagascar, Swaziland, the United States of America,

Zambia and Zimbabwe. LWF/DTS will publish later this year the seminar's presentations and discussions in the fourth volume of the TLC series.

For more information about the TLC volumes, see

[www.lutheranworld.org](http://www.lutheranworld.org)

17 July 2008

## LWF Welcomes Ecumenical Consequences of Church of England Vote for Women Bishops

### General Secretary Noko Commends "Fuller Recognition of the Gifts of Women Called to Ministry"

**GENEVA (LWI)** – The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) welcomes the recent decision by the Church of England General Synod to consecrate women as bishops, for its potential to enrich the life of the Church and, in particular, "for its immediate consequences in ecumenical relations" among Lutheran and Anglican churches.

In a statement issued on 21 July, LWF General Secretary Rev. Dr Ishmael Noko commended the Church of England for opening the way to "the fuller recognition and celebration of the gifts of women called to ministry." Pointing to the experience of Lutheran churches with women bishops, he expressed the hope that women who would become bishops in

the Church of England would "bring gifts of leadership for the enrichment of the entire Anglican Communion."

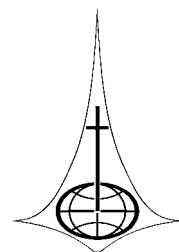
At its General Synod in early July, the Church of England voted to consecrate women as bishops. Some of the provinces of the Anglican Communion, including churches in Scotland, the United States of America, Canada, New Zealand and more recently Australia, have already approved the ordination of women as bishops.

Noko noted that involvement of women bishops within the LWF is relatively recent: the first women bishops in the Lutheran communion were elected only in 1992. It is, he said, "already clear that the leadership of women in all the roles of ordained

ministry has been a blessing to those churches which have experienced it."

The general secretary reiterated the LWF's own affirmation of women's ordination and service in the episcopal ministry through formal statements of its governing bodies. He cited the statement "Episcopal Ministry within the Apostolicity of the Church," from the March 2007 Council meeting in Lund, Sweden, which built upon the action of the 1990 Eighth Assembly in Curitiba, Brazil.

However, he noted that, as is the case in the Anglican Communion, some members of the Lutheran communion are not convinced on grounds of faith that God calls women as well as men to be bishops.



“Discerning the ways of faithfulness is a road we must walk together. On this issue, as on others which remain controversial in our communions, no one has yet articulated the insights which can be convincing to all other positions. We accompany prayerfully the Church of England as she seeks pastoral means to embrace those who remain of an opinion different than the synod’s decision,” added Noko.

He also pointed to the immediate consequences of this decision for ecumenical relations between Anglican and Lutheran churches. He cited the potential impact on the Porvoo Communion, which links Nordic and Baltic Lutheran churches and Anglican churches in Britain and Ireland as signatories to the 1993 *Porvoo Common Statement*. This agreement allows mutual recognition

of ordained ministry, including at the episcopal level, and opens up closer church relations and cooperation.

Noko noted that there had been limits to the implementation of the *Porvoo Common Statement* because the Church of England did not recognize the ministry of women bishops in the Lutheran churches. “The Porvoo Communion is an inspiration for relations between Lutherans and Anglicans in many places around the globe, and we are very pleased that this obstacle to the fullness of its life in communion can now be removed,” he said.

The LWF statement echoed the affirmation of a number of member churches, including the Church of Norway. A statement issued by Rev. Dr Olav Fykse Tveit, general secretary of its Council on Ecumenical and

International Relations, praised the “significant step in the consolidation of the Porvoo Communion.” Tveit described the Church of England vote as a “bold and mature action, knowing well the immediate costs involved.” He noted that the Norwegian church, having already experienced a similar process some years ago and “having been much blessed by its fruits,” would accompany the Church of England with prayers for God’s blessing and guidance in the time to come.

The LWF statement is available on the LWF Web site at:

[www.lutheranworld.org/  
LWF\\_Documents/  
LWF-Church\\_of\\_England\\_  
Women\\_bishops.pdf](http://www.lutheranworld.org/LWF_Documents/LWF-Church_of_England_Women_bishops.pdf)

25 July 2008

## Worship and Mission Are Church’s Central Tasks

### Common Forms of Expression Strengthen Christian Unity

**BOSSEY, Switzerland/GENEVA (LWI)**

– “Church is first and foremost worship,” and every understanding of the Church has worship as its point of departure. This emphasis on the central role of worship for the Church was made at a recent international ecumenical conference of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF), which ushered a new LWF study program that seeks to interpret, from a Lutheran perspective, the ecclesiological formulation of the Nicene Creed.

Theologians from different Christian traditions attending the conference affirmed that all other church activities and social services, as well as organizational structures and staffing were subordinated to the celebration of worship. Church is worship whenever people gather in the name and presence of the Triune God and celebrate together, noted participants in the meeting, focusing on the “one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church—the Protestant understanding of the Church in an ecumenical horizon.”

The LWF Department for Theology and Studies (DTS) organized the

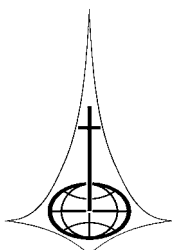


*Prof. Eberhard Jüngel from Tübingen, Germany, makes his presentation.*  
© LWF/D.-M. Gröttsch

12–16 June meeting at the Ecumenical Institute in Bossey, attended by 20 theologians from Protestant, Orthodox and Roman Catholic traditions. Worship, they concurred, was the yardstick against which every other church activity was measured.

However, as pointed out by Prof. Eberhard Jüngel from Tübingen,

Germany, worship in the Protestant understanding has a dual nature. On the one hand “we have worship in its liturgical form and on the other we have worship in everyday life (cf. Rom 12:1). What defines an individual church in terms of its confession is how it worships God and serves the world,” he explained.



## A Church on Earth

“The church is needed on earth so that Christ’s work of salvation and the Holy Spirit’s action can take concrete shape and change the world,” said Rev. Dr Hans-Peter Grosshans, DTS study secretary for Theology and the Church. Serving God and serving the world, therefore, are the general tasks of the Church, he noted.



Namibian Lutheran theologian Prof. Paul J. Isaak, (front row, second left) currently teaching at the Ecumenical Institute in Bossey, contributes to a discussion during the DTS meeting. © LWF/D.-M. Grätzsch

Participants agreed that Reformation theology should place more emphasis on the visible realization of the salvation promised to humankind than was generally assumed. They stressed the need to counter any false identification with Jesus Christ as belonging to any individual church. They insisted emphasis must be placed on the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church in the many Christian churches.

## Church’s Missionary Task Continues

Rev. Dr Cheryl Peterson from the United States pointed out that the Church’s mission was not fulfilled, but still continues. This mission affords churches the sole means by which they can look toward the future rather than merely perpetuating traditions. Mission together with worship, she explained, are what essentially defines the church’s profile.

Participants also discussed the diverse ways in which churches carry out their missionary tasks—dialogue

with other faiths; diakonia through assistance to persons in emergency situations and development-related activities; and in the prophetic denunciation of injustice and falsehood in a specific local context or at international level.

The mission of the Church—and its means of achieving holiness—includes being “a divine instrument of peace and justice in society,” said

ment to ecumenism in the specific cultural and religious contexts of the LWF member churches. In order to ensure that existing expressions of unity were not neglected, the international group of theologians urged that congregations recite more often the commonly shared Nicene Creed, as it can be a visible and audible sign of communion with Christians from other confessions.

“Lutheran ecclesiology must not seek to assert itself in opposition to other Christian confessions, but with them,” said Grosshans, pointing also to the participation of Baptist, Orthodox, Reformed and Roman Catholic theologians in the LWF consultation.

The theologians affirmed the “one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church” confessed in the Nicene Creed contains the seeds for the future critical development of Lutheran ecclesiology.

Follow up meetings of the DTS study program will explore the four hallmarks of the Church—oneness, holiness, catholicity and apostolicity—and their meaning and relevance for the life of Lutheran churches within their diverse cultural, religious and social contexts.

For more information on the new LWF/DTS study program, see [www.lutheranworld.org/What\\_We\\_Do/Dts/Programs/DTS-Theology-Church.html](http://www.lutheranworld.org/What_We_Do/Dts/Programs/DTS-Theology-Church.html)

20 August 2008

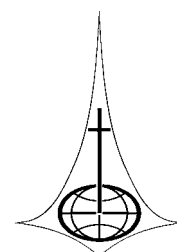
Zambian theologian Rev. Rolita Machila. One criticism raised was that this aspect of mission was seldom addressed in ecumenical dialogues.

## More of the Nicene Creed

Participants also deliberated the visibility and profiling of Lutheran commit-



Prof. Samuel Ngun Ling (right), Myanmar Institute of Theology, speaking at the DTS conference. © LWF/D.-M. Grätzsch



## FEATURE: Awar Is Ready to Return Home

### A Major Transition at LWF-Run Refugee Camp in Kenya

**KAKUMA, Northwest Kenya/GENEVA (LWI)** – In the hot, remote and rugged areas of Lokichoggio in northwestern Kenya, where the Kakuma Refugee Camp is located, it is with mixed feelings of joy and sadness that South Sudanese who took refuge there prepare to leave a place that has been home to many for more than a decade.

This is where *Lutheran World Information (LWI)* found Ms Kuei Awar preparing to return home after 16 years in exile.

“I think South Sudan is safe. I am ready to go,” she told *LWI*, during a visit by some members of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) Council, prior to their 25-30 June meeting in Arusha, Tanzania.

“I arrived here when I was 15 years old, as a single girl, but now I am returning as a mother of six children,” she noted.

Like other refugees, Awar received education and professional skills, which, she said she capped “with another feather, a ‘husband.’”

“I should now be settling back home but I have just been blessed with twins.



*Somali refugee children at the Kakuma Refugee Camp in northwestern Kenya. The building in the background is the repatriation point for Sudanese refugees. © LWF/F. Nzwili*



*Ms Kuei Awar nurses one of her twin babies, while the other sleeps under a mosquito net. © LWF/F. Nzwili*

I will wait a little longer, and leave as soon as I can carry the babies,” she said at the camp’s repatriation unit.

### Peace Agreement

Three years ago, the announcement of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement signed between the former rebels, the Sudan People’s Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A) and the Government of Sudan, was received as good news at Kakuma, located some 100 kilometers from Kenya’s border with Sudan and Uganda and almost 1,000 kilometers from the capital Nairobi. Sudanese nationals, who had fled the impact of 21 years of civil war between the two adversaries started returning home in large numbers, either on their own or through the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)-coordinated repatriation.

At the camp where the LWF Department for World Service (DWS) Kenya program is the lead implementing agency for UNHCR and the Government of Kenya, officials say the organization facilitated the return of 4,686 refugees, while 14,475 left on their own in 2007.

In collaboration with its partners such as Action by Churches Together

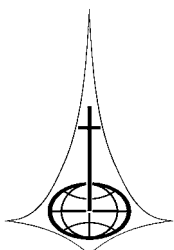
(ACT) International, a global alliance of churches and related agencies, DWS provided the displaced Sudanese with water, shelter, food and non-food items, and set up schools to ensure continued education.

The Sudanese departure is expected to tilt the demography of the camp covering an area of some 25 square kilometers. *On the Move*, the 2007 LWF/DWS annual report for Kenya and Sudan, states that the camp had 60,842 refugees by the end of last year, a significant decrease from the 87,086 at the beginning of the year.

“Donors continued to reduce their levels of support for refugees, causing concern among the refugees that forced repatriation was being undertaken and their basic need and rights are not being met,” the report stated.

“The Sudanese are the majority here. Now that they are going back, there is a big gap,” said William Tembu, camp project coordinator. He noted the number of returnees had accelerated by early this year, with 8,500 people going back to South Sudan between March and May.

“They (locals) are complaining a bit about all the Sudanese leaving because of the fringe benefits associated with camp’s location,” said Philip Wijmans, DWS Kenya representative. He how-





ever noted, there would still be a core group of around 30,000 from other countries that will remain in the camp.

## Preparation

George Omondi, the camp's youth and development officer, explained how the potential returnees are prepared for the situations back home.



*LWF Treasurer Peter Stoll listens to members of the Turkana community during the pre-Council visit to Kakuma. © LWF/F. Nzswili*

“The Sudanese people are basically agriculturalists and livestock [owners]. We are talking about a people who have been away from that kind of lifestyle for 16 years. A child born in the camp is bound to find the lifestyle in Sudan quite different,” he said.

Some of the children would be returning home without the slightest idea of the cultural practices of the people who would be receiving them, Omondi noted, as he explained the LWF's involvement in cultural orientation sessions that included display of traditional regalia.

“We asked the Sudanese elders in the community to share with them life stories about traditional heroes as a way of connecting them with the realities on the ground,” he said.

Still, the camp is welcoming new residents, although in relatively fewer numbers. In 2007, nearly 2,000 mainly Somali refugees arrived from

the Dadaab refugee camp in north-eastern Kenya. Others came from Burundi, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Rwanda, and from Sudan's Darfur region.

Wijmans noted there were already about 14,000 Somali refugees in Kakuma, which would increase slightly with the arrival of the numbers from Dadaab.

## Camp Conflicts

Turkana district is classified under the arid and semi-arid lands (ASAL), experiencing extremely high temperatures, erratic rainfall and extended drought seasons. Livestock production including camels, cattle and donkeys is the mainstay of the region's nomadic pastoralists. Since the 1992 arrival of the first 300 refugees in Kakuma, the host Turkana community found itself in conflict with the camp's residents on day-to-day relationships, and over scarce resources such as water, grazing pastures and basic health facilities. Community peace committees formed through LWF's intervention have helped to influence positive attitudes between refugees from eight nationalities, each with their own religion, culture and traditions, and in their relationship to the host community.

“In the past, there were incidents of insecurity, but that has been stopped through the use of the peace com-

mittees,” said area councilor, Patrick Losike. Still, he noted, the increasingly serious water shortages and limited or few health centers may disturb the harmony that has been achieved.

“The most pressing problem now is lack of water. There are two boreholes, a water mill and river borehole, but all are underutilized because of frequent break downs and lack of diesel. Water rationing is a norm here. This is unacceptable,” stressed area chief, Cosmas Nakaya.

Responding to the local leaders' call for continued DWS assistance, LWF Treasurer Peter Stoll, a member of the LWF Council delegation to Kakuma, said, “What brings us here is to make us understand the problems and the things that need to be done better. Therefore, working together, we can make peace,” he said to the cheers of dancing women.

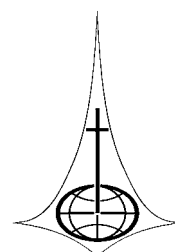
Amid the major transition for the different stakeholders in Kakuma, ordinary life continues—a football or basketball game by girls or boys, with a sizeable crowd of spectators cheering on. Also, LWF-supported income-generating activities for women and skills training such as carpentry for men, open opportunities to supplement refugees' family income.

*By Nairobi (Kenya)-based LWI correspondent Fredrick Nzswili, accompanying the LWF Council delegation to Kakuma in June 2008.*

17 July 2008



*It was a traditional Turkana song and dance welcome for the LWF delegation. © LWF/F. Nzswili*



**FEATURE: A Plot to Settle Down**

*Continued from p. 1*

that it had assisted the repatriation of 24,000 refugees by April 2008.

For the group of 16 newly arrived families—some 90 people—it is the end of a five-day-long journey from a refugee camp in northern Uganda, and the beginning of a new life at home. “I feel really good to be back home,” says Margaret Abou, 45, accompanied by her husband and six children. “I have seen others going back, and now we are finally here. I left 25 years ago,” she remarks.

She met her husband Mario Jamo Abou in the refugee camp in Uganda and they married there. They now have five children and a grandchild as they return to Ikotos.

“We want to believe there is real peace now,” says Margaret, anxiously scanning the dusty field for relatives or anyone she might recognize. The couple’s immediate plan is to find a plot and settle down, hopefully near a school.

Most of the returnee families are assisted by locals, but the Abous are still unsure where to spend the first night. Although the expected contact person has not turned up, eventually things work out and someone offers accommodation for the night and something to eat. It is definitely going



*Locals welcome returnees to Ikotos, South Sudan. © LWF/T. Samuelsson*

to be many more nights before the local government commission can allocate them plots to build houses. Their old land is gone, taken over by others during the two-decade-long civil war.

**LWF Support**

The UN provides basic food items for the initial period, while the LWF South Sudan program distributes non-food items such as blankets, mosquito nets, laundry soap, jerry cans and hoes.

At the outskirts of Ikotos, John Lokanyum, 21, is busy constructing the traditional *tukul* house for

himself, his brother and sister-in-law. He left in 1999 and returned on his own voluntarily in January 2008 from Kyradongo camp in Uganda.

“I was eager to get back and did not want to wait for the organized repatriation. I longed to see my mother after such a long time,” says Lokanyum with a smile. “She was displaced around here in the mountains but is back here in Ikotos. She has a new family and I now have three new sisters and brothers,” he summarizes the changes over the years.

The only assistance Lokanyum has received since he came back is a piece of land. He and a cousin Dominique, also a returnee, have been helping each other with the *tukul* construction, but they say they require some tools and farming implements as the rains are approaching.

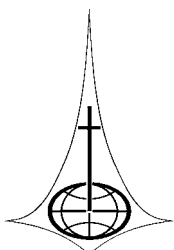
Godfrey Anyanzo, LWF/DWS Sudan relief coordinator at Ikotos, has good news for John: up to 4,000 families in the locality will receive seeds and tools through support from Australian Lutheran World Service (ALWS). Dominique and the families who returned from Uganda will be among the ALWS-supported returnees.



*John Lokanyum (left) and his cousin Dominique Lobiala (right) stand next to bundles of straw that will be used to construct their traditional huts. LWF/DWS will provide them with seeds and tools for the first planting season. © LWF/T. Samuelsson*

**Pressure on Basic Services**

Summing up the challenge of working in South Sudan, LWF representative



Dr Messeret Lejebo underlines the need for good and improved coordination with the Government of South Sudan, the UN agencies, non-governmental organizations, churches and the civil society in Sudan. “It is hardly a matter of reconstruction as the table in South Sudan is virtually empty after several decades of war,” he notes.

He especially points to the increasing pressure on scarce basic services within the host communities, with the daily arrival of hundreds, sometimes

thousands of returnees. “We have witnessed communities expressing concern about current tensions and the potential for conflict arising over the lack of basic social services such as schools for returning children, water, basic health facilities, and non-food items such as farm tools, mosquito nets and jerry cans,” he adds.

LWF/DWS assisted part of South Sudan from the mid-1970s to mid-1980s out of the program office in Malakal. Following decades of hu-

manitarian aid, as well as refugee work in neighboring Kenya and Uganda, a Sudan program was restarted in November 2007. The current program is based in Torit, the regional capital of Eastern Equatoria.

*(A contribution by Tore Samuelson, DWS program officer for Eastern Africa.)*

More about LWF/DWS Sudan at: [www.lwfkenyasudan.org](http://www.lwfkenyasudan.org)

17 July 2008

## FEATURE: Companionship in Education, Health Care and Children’s Center

### LWF President Hanson’s Return Visit to Iringa Diocese

**IRINGA, Tanzania/GENEVA (LWI)** – Returning to Iringa, southern Tanzania, for the first time in 10 years, Bishop Mark S. Hanson, president of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) and presiding bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), said much progress had been made in higher education, health care and social services provided by Lutherans. But there are still many needs, local church and church-related organization leaders explained during Hanson’s 21–22 June visit.

Hanson first visited the Iringa Diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania (ELCT) in 1998 when he was bishop of the ELCA St Paul Area Synod, which has a longstanding companion synod with the ELCT synod led by Bishop Dr Owdenburg M. Mdegella. Companion synod partners pledge to pray for and provide support for each other.

Hanson’s visit to Iringa preceded the 25-30 June LWF Council meeting in the northern town of Arusha. In the Ilula locality, the LWF president was met by several hundred people, singing traditional Tanzanian songs while escorting him into the village and to the Lutheran church. “When I come to Iringa, my spirits are lifted because the Holy Spirit is alive in you,” he told the congregation of about 600. Lutherans in the global South are “teachers and missionaries” for Lutherans in the North, because Lutherans here freely share their faith in Jesus



*ELCT Iringa Diocese Bishop Dr Owdenburg M. Mdegella (left) and LWF President Mark S. Hanson, led a celebratory worship and dedicated a cornerstone plaque at the foundational site of a new ecumenical chapel—“Lutheran Chest Chapel”—at the Tumaini University campus, Iringa. © LWF/ELCA/J. Brooks*

Christ, and live out the gospel through the services they provide, he said.

#### Lutheran Hospital

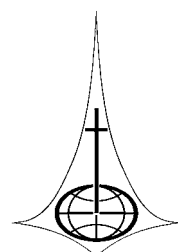
The ELCT Iringa Diocese owns and operates Ilula Lutheran Hospital, which was started as a health care dispensary in 1938, becoming a health center in 1992 and a 70-bed hospital in 2007. The hospital served more than 24,000 patients in 2007, most of them as outpatients. In a report presented to Hanson, hospital management explained it has 74 staff, but needs another 80—physicians, nurses, medical technical staff and other professional staff—to meet minimum

hospital standards. Future plans call for construction of dormitories, a nursing school and new staff housing as well as renovation of existing staff quarters.

#### Orphans

The LWF president visited the Huruma Lutheran Diaconal Center (HLDC), established in 1994 with support from local and international partners, including the ELCA St Paul Area Synod.

HLDC accommodates homeless orphans and other neglected children between five and 17 years of age, many of whom had been living on the streets. Some 40 resident and nine non-resi-





A large crowd greeted LWF President Mark S. Hanson on the roadside as he arrived in Iringa, Tanzania, on 21 June. © LWF/ELCA/J. Brooks

dent children currently receive education and other training at the center, which plans to expand its services and increase capacity to 60 children.

At the ELCT's Tumaini University campus, whose chaplaincy provides regular morning devotions and Sunday services for Protestants and Roman Catholics, Hanson laid a cornerstone plaque at the foundational site for a new ecumenical chapel—Luther Chest Chapel.

(A contribution by John Brooks, ELCA News Service.)

More information about the Tumaini University is available at:

[www.tumaini.ac.tz](http://www.tumaini.ac.tz)

25 July 2008

## Bishop-Elect Gerhard Ulrich to Lead North Elbian Schleswig-Holstein Region

Effective 1 October 2008, **Propst Gerhard Ulrich** will be the new bishop of the Schleswig-Holstein region of the North Elbian Evangelical Lutheran Church in Germany.

Members of the North Elbian Synod elected Ulrich, 57, during their 12 July meeting at the Schleswig Cathedral, Schleswig, Germany. He received 77 out of the 136 ballots cast in the first round of voting, while Horst Gorski, propst of Hamburg Altona, received 56 votes. There were three abstentions

In discussions preceding the election, the question of the rival candidate's homosexuality was raised, but, according to church officials, the issue had no significant impact on the election outcome.

Ulrich, who has been propst of Angeln since 1996, will succeed Bishop Dr Hans Christian Knuth, who retired after 17 years in office. Knuth was also presiding bishop of the United Evangelical Lutheran Church of Germany (Vereinigten Evangelisch-Lutherischen Kirche Deutschlands-VELKD) from 1999 to 2005, and chairperson of the German National Committee of the Lutheran World Federation (GNC/LWF). Prior to his election as bishop, Knuth was *Oberkirchenrat* for



Schleswig-Holstein Bishop-elect Gerhard Ulrich © epd-bild/F. Molter

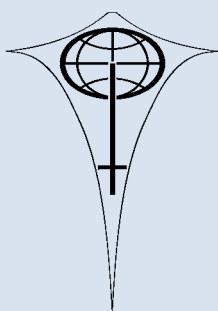
fundamental theology at VELKD from 1981 to 1984. He served as propst of the Eckernförde district from 1985 to 1991.

Bishop-designate Ulrich was born in March 1951 in Hamburg. In 1972, he began his studies in German language and literature, drama and acting in Hamburg, before shifting to theology in 1974. He was ordained in 1981 after completing his studies and vicarage, and then served in various parishes until 1986. In 1987 he took up the position of mentor for the Schleswig area vicars, and was director of the Protestant Theological Seminary of the North Elbian Evangelical Lutheran Church in Preetz from 1991 to 1996.

Ulrich is married, with four children.

As of 1 October, the North Elbian Church will have a new structure. The former three episcopates will be replaced by two. Ulrich will sit in Schleswig and will have charge of the Schleswig-Holstein region—the entire northern church territory including the capital city Kiel, while Bishop Maria Jepsen will head the Hamburg-Lübeck region.

The North Elbian Evangelical Lutheran Church has over 2 million members. It joined the LWF in 1977.



Published and distributed by:  
The Lutheran World Federation  
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