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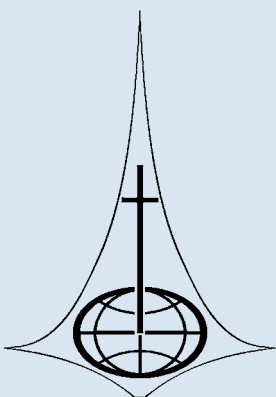
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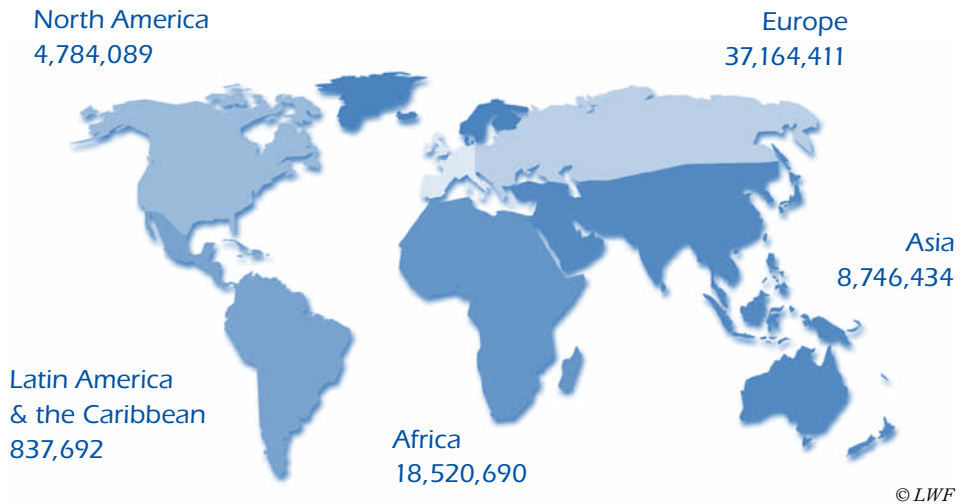
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Membership of Churches Belonging to the LWF Tops 70 Million for the First Time



LWF 2009 Membership Figures

Over 1.2 Million New Members in African Lutheran Churches

GENEVA (LWI) – The total number of members in churches belonging to the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) last year rose by 1,589,225 to just over 70 million (70,053,316). While membership of Lutheran churches in Africa and Asia increased, churches in Latin America and the Caribbean as well as North America once again experienced a slight decline.

Extension of LWF membership to the newly formed Evangelical Church in Central Germany, resulting from the January 2009 merger of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Thuringia and the Evangelical Church of the Church Province of Saxony, led to a slight increase in the membership of LWF churches in Europe also.

According to the 2009 annual statistical survey conducted by the LWF Office for Communication Services (OCS), the Federation's 140 member churches, 10 rec-

ognized congregations and one recognized council in 79 countries, had a combined membership increase of approximately 2.3 percent in 2009. In 2008, LWF affiliated churches had some 68.5 million members worldwide, up from 68.3 million in 2007.

The total membership of Lutheran churches worldwide rose over the past year by 1,784,556 to just under 73.8 million (73,758,126), representing an increase of 2.5 percent. In 2008, all Lutheran churches worldwide counted some 72 million members, compared to 71.8 million in 2007. The number of Lutherans belonging to non-LWF Lutheran churches rose by 195,331 to reach 3,704,810, an increase of 5.6 percent. This increase is principally due to the inclusion of Lutheran churches worldwide that

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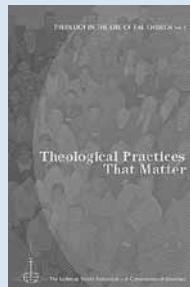
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Assembly Update No. 6I-IV

Two New Volumes Conclude LWF Studies’ Series

With the publication of the last two books, *Theological Practices That Matter* (volume 5) and *Transformative Theological Perspectives* (volume 6), the “Theology in the Life of the Church” (TLC) series of the LWF Department for Theology and Studies (DTS) is now complete. Begun in 2004, the TLC program under which the series falls, has encouraged critical, constructive theological reflections



in relation to the questions and challenges confronting churches in different parts of the world. “Churches need to discern what it means to live out the faith in the midst of dominating powers such as those associated with ‘empire,’ or surrounded by people of other faiths, or in minority situations, or where neo-Pentecostal churches may feel like rivals,” remarked DTS director, Rev. Dr Karen Bloomquist.

Germany, and include (in vol. 5) articles discussing practices and understandings related to baptism and the Eucharist, church discipline and spiritual care among others. Volume 6 considers how Scripture and Lutheran theological understandings can be reinterpreted in an increasingly inter-religious and threatened world.

Content in the first books is mainly focused on local contextual issues, with some perspectives from beyond. The new volumes are from the 2009 concluding global consultation in Augsburg,

To order the TLC books in North America, contact: Lutheran University Press, www.lutheranupress.org (USD 15 for each volume, plus handling). Orders from other parts of the world should be addressed to, liesch@lutheranworld.org (EUR 10 or CHF 16 plus handling.)

More information about DTS’ work is available at: www.lutheranworld.org/What_We_Do/Dts/DTS-Current_Focus.html

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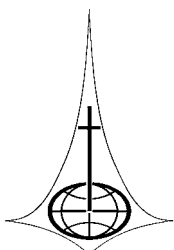
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Includes Assembly Update No. 6



Membership of Churches Belonging to the LWF Tops 70 Million for the First Time

Continued from p. 1

had not previously been taken into account. The OCS survey identified an additional seven Lutheran churches in Africa and one in Europe.

Africa: Tanzanian Church Ranked Second Among Lutherans Globally

Membership in churches belonging to the LWF in Africa over the past year rose by 1,233,413 or 7.1 percent to a total of 18,520,690. The membership of non-LWF Lutheran churches on the continent was 196,989, an increase of around 142,774 due to the inclusion of data from the seven churches.

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania (ELCT) is now the largest LWF member church on the continent with an increase of around 670,247 members (14.5 percent) recorded last year bringing the current total to 5,302,727. The ELCT thus becomes the second largest Lutheran church in the world after Church of Sweden, which has 6.75 million members.

The third largest LWF member church is the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus, whose figures increased by 267,336 or 5.3 percent to 5,279,822.

The highest percentage increase among non-LWF Lutheran churches in Africa was reported by the Church of the Lutheran Brethren of Chad, up by 92,379 or approximately 434 percent, to a total of 113,684.

Other LWF member churches reporting substantial increases included the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Mozambique (up by 6,124 or 94.5 percent to 12,606 total), the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Angola (up by 11,000 or around 38 percent to 40,000) and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Republic of Namibia (ELCRN), which added 70,000 new members for a present total of 420,000, an increase of 20 percent.

The fourth largest Lutheran church in Africa, the Lutheran Church of Christ in Nigeria, drew 154,950 new members, representing a growth of 8.9 percent for a total of 1.9 million. The other Lutheran church in the country, the Lutheran Church of Nigeria, reported 150,000 members, an increase of 15,000 or 11.1 percent.

The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Cameroon expanded its membership by 30,020 (13.6 percent) to attain a total of 250,035. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Zambia, meanwhile, suffered a sharp decrease in membership of around 64.2 percent or 3,650 persons, to reach 2,033.

With its unchanged membership of 3 million people, the Malagasy Lutheran Church remains the third largest LWF member church in Africa.

Asia: Number of Lutherans Up by 200,000

The total number of Lutherans in Asia rose by 200,955 in 2009 to 8,746,434, representing an increase of 2.35 percent. Lutheran churches in Asia that do not belong to the LWF reported 189,653 new members, corresponding to an increase of 6,732 or 3.68 percent.

The continent's largest Lutheran church, the Protestant Christian Batak Church (Indonesia), reported 4,178,256 members last year, an increase of 178,256 or approximately 4.5 percent.

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Malaysia reported the proportionately largest membership increase in Asia over the past year, with some 650 new members pushing the total by 21.7 percent, to the current figure of 3,650.

Other Asian churches reporting significant increases were the Arcot Lutheran Church (India), with an additional 5,000 members or 14.3 percent to reach 40,000, the Jeypore Evangelical Lutheran Church (In-

dia) with 16,500 new members, an increase of 12.4 percent for a total of 150,000, and the Christian Communion of Indonesia Church in Nias (Gereja AMIN), up by 1,564 members or 8.4 percent to 20,125.

The Lutheran Church in Singapore reported a membership decrease of 351 or 10.1 to reach 3,134.

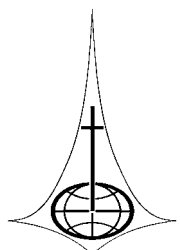
Europe: Membership Increase of 250,000

Last year the total membership of LWF member churches in Europe grew slightly, by 250,062, or approximately 0.7 percent, to a current total of 37,164,411. Inclusion in the data of the 40,450 members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church on the Faroe Islands, which formerly belonged to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Denmark, doubled the membership figure of non-LWF member churches in Europe, which now stands at 79,778.

Membership in the world's largest Lutheran church, Church of Sweden, declined further in the course of 2009, falling by 68,209 (1.0 percent) to 6,751,952. The fifth largest LWF member church worldwide, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Denmark, experienced a relatively small decline of 2,468 members or 0.05 percent to 4,492,121.

The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland, the sixth largest LWF member church with 4,478,994 members, recorded a drop in membership of 35,365 or 0.8 percent. The Church of Norway saw an increase of 122,602 members or 3.2 percent, to reach 3,991,545.

The Lutheran Council of Great Britain reported an increase of 33.5 percent representing 43,700 additional members for a total of 174,300. The Federation of Evangelical Lutheran Churches in Switzerland and in the Principality of Liechtenstein registered a 27 percent increase for



1,448 members making a total of 6,818. The Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren, Czech Republic, grew by 12,834 members or 12.6 percent, for a total of 115,000.

The highest percentage of membership loss in Europe was recorded by the Silesian Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession, Czech Republic; its membership totaled 15,632, a decline of 14,368 or 47.9 percent. The Protestant Church in the Netherlands also experienced a significant drop of 200,000 members or 8.7 percent, recording a total of 2.1 million in 2009.

Germany: Merger Adds Nearly 400,000 Members

The total number of Lutheran Christians in Germany in 2009 was 12,900,794, reflecting an increase of 394,727 or 3.2 percent. This resulted from the merger of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Thuringia and the Evangelical Church of the Church Province of Saxony to form the Evangelical Church in Central Germany (910,527 members). Germany continues to be the country with the largest number of Lutheran Christians in the world. The number of Lutherans belonging to non-LWF member churches there dropped by 496 (1.3 percent) to 36,616.

Membership in Germany's largest Lutheran church, the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Hanover, remained stable at 2,981,313. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Bavaria reported 2.6 million members, reflecting a 1.2 percent decrease or 32,000. The membership of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Württemberg remained relatively stable, with 90 new members pushing the total to 2,286,983. Membership in the North Elbian Evangelical Lutheran Church decreased by 26,033 or 1.2 percent to reach 2,050,595.

The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Saxony recorded 798,930 members, reflecting a decrease of 11,628 or 1.4 percent. Membership in the Evangelical Lutheran Church of

Mecklenburg also fell by 835 or 0.4 percent to 200,905, while that of the Evangelical Church of Pomerania remained unchanged at 100,385.

The membership of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Brunswick declined by 5,315 or 1.3 percent to 395,000, that of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Oldenburg by 8,112 or 1.8 percent to 455,336, that of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Schaumburg-Lippe by 200 or 0.3 percent to 60,600 and that of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Baden by 300 or 8.6 percent to 3,200.

The membership of the Church of Lippe (Lutheran Section) remained stable at 32,000; similarly for the Germany-based Latvian Evangelical Lutheran Church Abroad, at 25,020 members.

The Independent Evangelical Lutheran Church, a non-LWF member church, recorded a decrease of 373 or 1.0 percent, to 35,269. Membership in the Evangelical Lutheran Free Church in Germany, likewise a non-LWF church, also dropped by 123 or 8.4 percent to 1,347.

Membership Remains Stable in Latin America

The total membership in LWF member churches in Latin America and the Caribbean decreased by a mere 198 to a total of 837,692. Membership in non-LWF churches in the region counted 285,331, a decline of 49.

Like most Lutheran churches in Latin America and the Caribbean, the region's largest Lutheran church, the Evangelical Church of the Lutheran Confession in Brazil, reported no change in its total membership, which remains at 717,000.

North America: Nearly 100,000 Fewer Members in LWF Churches

In 2009, total membership in LWF member churches in North America fell by 95,007 or 1.95 percent to 4,784,089. Membership in non-LWF

Lutheran churches rose by 5,963 or 0.2 percent to 2,953,059.

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the LWF's fourth largest member church, had 4,623,301 members last year, a decrease of 86,653 or 1.8 percent.

The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod (USA and Canada), not an LWF member, reported 2.4 million members, an increase of 16,916 or 0.7 percent.

The Lutheran Churches of the Reformation, also LWF non-members, reported a loss of 700 or 35 percent, to the current total of 1,300. The Apostolic Lutheran Church of America lost 1,707 members, or 22.2 percent to a total of 6,000.

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada reported a decline of 8,354 or 5.2 percent, recording 152,788 members. Membership in the Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church Abroad (Canada) remained unchanged at 8,000.

The LWF membership statistics are based on information received from the LWF member churches, recognized churches and congregations and council, as well as from other Lutheran churches, organizations, mission bodies and congregations. The figures recorded for the year ending 2008 were used for churches that did not indicate any changes by the end of February 2010.

For further information, please contact the LWF Office for Communication Services at:

Tel.: +41/22-791 63 69

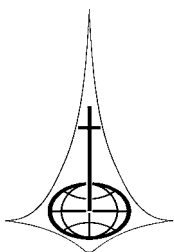
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A one-page summary of the 2009 LWF statistics is posted in a PDF file at: www.lutheranworld.org/LWF_Documents/LWF-Statistics-01-2009.pdf

Full details can be found at: www.lutheranworld.org/LWF_Documents/LWF-Statistics-2009.pdf

11 March 2010



The Lutheran World Federation

2009 Membership Figures (updated October 2010)

Summary

The following figures give the membership of the 145 LWF member churches (M), including two associate member churches (AM), 10 recognized churches and congregations and one recognized council (R), as well as other Lutheran churches, bodies or congregations (C).

General Summary 2009 (updated October 2010)

145 LWF member churches, 10 recognized churches and congregations and one recognized council **70,094,735**
 Lutherans outside LWF constituency..... 3,704,810
Total **73,799,545**

Continent	All Lutherans	LWF Membership	Other Churches
Africa	18,717,679	18,520,690	196,989
Asia	8,936,087	8,787,853	189,653
Europe	37,244,189	37,164,411	79,778
Latin America & the Caribbean	1,123,023	837,692	285,331
North America	7,737,148	4,784,089	2,953,059
Total	73,799,545	70,094,735	3,704,810

Countries with more than half a million Lutherans

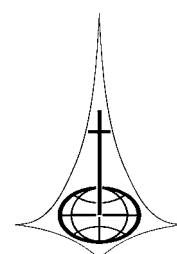
Germany*	12,937,410	Madagascar	3,000,000
USA	7,504,244	Netherlands	2,100,000
Sweden	6,751,952	Nigeria	2,050,000
Indonesia	5,630,968	India	1,918,639
Tanzania	5,302,727	Namibia	1,111,093
Ethiopia	5,299,822	Papua New Guinea	1,049,455
Finland	4,493,994	Brazil	951,466
Denmark	4,492,216	South Africa	666,636
Norway	4,013,362		

* This figure includes the membership of the Latvian Evangelical Lutheran Church Abroad.

Lutheran churches with more than half a million members

Church of Sweden	6,751,952	Protestant Church in the Netherlands	2,100,000
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania	5,302,727	North Elbian Evangelical Lutheran Church	2,050,595
The Ethiopian Evangelical Church	5,279,822	The Lutheran Church of Christ in Nigeria	1,900,000
Mekane Yesus		Evangelical Church in Central Germany	910,527
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America	4,623,301	Evangelical Lutheran Church of Papua	900,000
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Denmark	4,492,121	New Guinea	
Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland	4,478,994	Andhra Evangelical Lutheran Church	800,000
Protestant Christian Batak Church	4,178,256	Evangelical Lutheran Church of Saxony	798,930
Church of Norway	3,991,545	Evangelical Church of the Lutheran	717,000
Malagasy Lutheran Church	3,000,000	Confession in Brazil	
Evangelical Lutheran Church of Hanover	2,981,313	The Evangelical Lutheran Church in	685,893
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Bavaria	2,600,000	Namibia (ELCIN)	
The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod**	2,400,000	Evangelical Lutheran Church in	580,000
Evangelical Lutheran Church in	2,286,983	Southern Africa	
Württemberg			

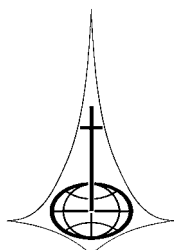
** Not an LWF member church



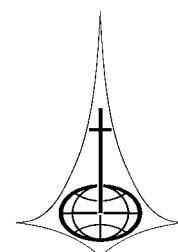
2009 World Lutheran Membership Details

- (M) Member Church
- (AM) Associate Member Church
- (R) Recognized Church, Congregation or Recognized Council
- (C) Other Lutheran churches, bodies or congregations

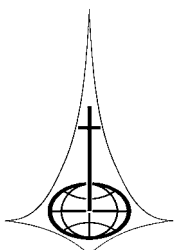
Africa	Individual Churches	National Total
Angola		40,000
Evangelical Lutheran Church of Angola (M)	40,000	
Botswana		18,650
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Botswana (M)	18,650	
Burundi		1,850
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Burundi (C)	1,850	
Cameroon		360,387
Church of the Lutheran Brethren of Cameroon (M)	105,994	
Evangelical Lutheran Church of Cameroon (M)	250,035	
The Lutheran Church of Cameroon (C)	4,358	
Central African Republic		55,000
Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Central African Republic (M)	55,000	
Chad		113,684
Church of the Lutheran Brethren of Chad (C)	113,684	
Congo, Democratic Republic		136,000
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Congo (M)	136,000	
Congo, Republic		1,828
Evangelical Lutheran Church of Congo (M)	1,828	
Eritrea		11,000
The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Eritrea (M)	11,000	
Ethiopia		5,299,822
The Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus (M)	5,279,822	
The Lutheran Church in Ethiopia (C)	20,000	
Gambia		2,000
Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Gambia (C)	2,000	
Ghana		27,521
Evangelical Lutheran Church of Ghana (M)	27,521	
Guinea		789
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Guinea (C)	789	
Kenya		144,000
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Kenya (M)	100,000	
Kenya Evangelical Lutheran Church (M)	44,000	
Liberia		71,196
Lutheran Church in Liberia (M)	71,196	
Madagascar		3,000,000
Malagasy Lutheran Church (M)	3,000,000	
Malawi		60,000
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Malawi (M)	60,000	



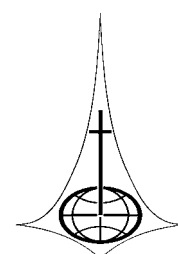
Individual Churches	National Total
Mozambique	12,606
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Mozambique (M)	12,606
Namibia	1,111,093
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia (ELCIN-GELC) (M)	5,200
Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Republic of Namibia (ELCRN) (M)	420,000
The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia (ELCIN) (M)	685,893
Nigeria	2,050,000
The Lutheran Church of Christ in Nigeria (M)	1,900,000
The Lutheran Church of Nigeria (M)	150,000
Rwanda	40,000
Lutheran Church of Rwanda (M)	40,000
Senegal	4,053
Evangelical Lutheran Church of Senegal (C)	no data
The Lutheran Church of Senegal (M)	4,053
Sierra Leone	3,150
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Sierra Leone (M)	3,150
South Africa	666,636
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Southern Africa (M)	580,000
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Southern Africa (Cape Church) (M)	4,223
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Southern Africa (Natal-Transvaal) (M)	9,759
Free Evangelical Lutheran Synod in South Africa (C)	2,654
Lutheran Church in Southern Africa (C)	20,000
Moravian Church in South Africa (M)	50,000
Sudan	16,650
Sudan Evangelical Lutheran Church (C)	6,000
The Lutheran Church of Sudan (C)	10,650
Tanzania	5,302,727
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania (M)	5,302,727
Togo	5,920
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Togo (C)	5,920
Uganda	9,084
Uganda Lutheran Church Foundation (C)	9,084
Zambia	2,033
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Zambia (M)	2,033
Zimbabwe	150,000
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Zimbabwe (M)	150,000
 Asia	
Australia	70,000
Lutheran Church of Australia (AM)	70,000
Bangladesh	14,800
Bangladesh Lutheran Church (M)	4,800
Bangladesh Northern Evangelical Lutheran Church (M)	10,000
Georgia	
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Russia and Other States (M) <i>(see Russian Federation)</i>	



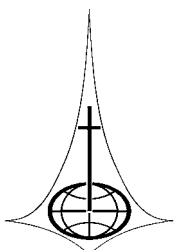
Hong Kong, China	50,135
Hong Kong and Macau Lutheran Church (M)	2,120
Lutheran Church – Hong Kong Synod (C)	8,300
The Chinese Rhenish Church Hong Kong Synod (M)	14,000
The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Hong Kong (M)	15,800
Tsung Tsin Mission of Hong Kong (M)	9,915
India	1,918,639
Andhra Evangelical Lutheran Church (M)	800,000
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Madhya Pradesh (M)	17,500
Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Himalayan States (M)	24,750
Good Samaritan Evangelical Lutheran Church (C)	50,233
Gossner Evangelical Lutheran Church in Chotanagpur and Assam (M)	400,503
India Evangelical Lutheran Church (M)	80,000
Jeypore Evangelical Lutheran Church (M)	150,000
North Western Gossner Evangelical Lutheran Church (C)	116,903
Northern Evangelical Lutheran Church (M)	85,000
<i>(see Nepal)</i>	
South Andhra Lutheran Church (M)	45,500
The Arcot Lutheran Church (M)	40,000
The Tamil Evangelical Lutheran Church (M)	108,250
Indonesia	5,630,968
Batak Christian Community Church (M)	20,000
Christian Communion of Indonesia Church in Nias (Gereja AMIN) (M)	20,125
Christian Protestant Angkola Church (M)	27,810
Christian Protestant Church in Indonesia (M)	360,000
Indonesian Christian Lutheran Church (M)	23,000
Pakpak Dairi Christian Protestant Church (M)	35,798
Protestant Christian Batak Church (M)	4,178,256
Protestant Christian Church in Mentawai (M)	38,907
Simalungun Protestant Christian Church (M)	211,383
The Indonesian Christian Church (M)	355,000
The Protestant Christian Church (M)	348,689
The United Protestant Church (M)	12,000
Israel	140
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land (M) <i>(see Jordan and Palestinian Territories)</i>	
Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission – Shalhevetyah Christian Center & Cong. (C)	80
Immanuel Lutheran Church (C)	60
Japan	32,449
Japan Evangelical Lutheran Church (M)	21,990
Japan Lutheran Brethren Church (C)	1,219
Japan Lutheran Church (AM)	2,645
Kinki Evangelical Lutheran Church (M)	2,759
West Japan Evangelical Lutheran Church (C)	3,836
Jordan	3,000
The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan & the Holy Land (M)	3,000
<i>(see Israel and Palestinian Territories)</i>	
Kazakhstan	
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Russia and Other States (M) <i>(see Russian Federation)</i>	
Korea, Republic	4,856
Lutheran Church in Korea (M)	4,856
Kyrgyzstan	
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Russia and Other States (M) <i>(see Russian Federation)</i>	



Individual Churches	National Total
Malaysia	103,603
Basel Christian Church of Malaysia (M)	59,500
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Malaysia (M)	3,650
Lutheran Church in Malaysia and Singapore (M)	8,453
The Protestant Church in Sabah (M)	32,000
Myanmar	1,900
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Myanmar (Lutheran Bethlehem Church) (M)	1,900
Nepal	
Northern Evangelical Lutheran Church (M) (<i>see India</i>)	
New Zealand	1,130
Lutheran Church of New Zealand (C)	1,130
<i>(a district of the Lutheran Church of Australia)</i>	
Palestinian Territories	
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land (M) (<i>see Israel and Jordan</i>)	
Papua New Guinea	1,049,455
Evangelical Lutheran Church of Papua New Guinea (M)	900,000
Gutnius Lutheran Church – Papua New Guinea (M)	149,455
Philippines	18,000
Lutheran Church in the Philippines (M)	18,000
Singapore	3,134
Lutheran Church in Singapore (M)	3,134
Sri Lanka	5,324
Lanka Lutheran Church (M)	5,324
Taiwan	25,454
China Evangelical Lutheran Church (C)	2,621
China Lutheran Gospel Church (C)	225
Chinese Lutheran Brethren Victory Church (C)	3,846
Taiwan Lutheran Church (M)	15,948
The Lutheran Church of Taiwan (Republic of China) (M)	1,614
The Lutheran Church of the Republic of China (C)	1,200
Thailand	3,100
The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Thailand (M)	3,100
<i>(including the Lutheran Mission in Thailand)</i>	
Uzbekistan	
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Russia and Other States (M) (<i>see Russian Federation</i>)	
Europe	
Austria	318,442
Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in Austria (M)	318,442
Belarus	
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Russia and Other States (M) (<i>see Russian Federation</i>)	
Belgium	974
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Belgium (C)	160
Lutheran Church of Belgium: Arlon and Christian Mission (R)	814
Croatia	3,329
Evangelical Church in the Republic of Croatia (M)	3,329



Czech Republic	130,632
Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren (M)	115,000
Silesian Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession (M)	15,632
Denmark (including Greenland)	4,492,216
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Denmark (M)	4,492,121
The Evangelical Lutheran Free Church in Denmark (C)	95
Estonia	160,000
Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church (M)	160,000
Faroe Islands	40,450
The Evangelical Lutheran Church on the Faeroe Islands (C)	40,450
Finland	4,478,994
Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland (M)	4,478,994
<i>(including ELCF members abroad)</i>	
France	229,857
Evangelical Lutheran Church – Synod of France (C)	957
Evangelical Lutheran Church of France (M)	10,400
Malagasy Protestant Church in France (M)	8,500
Union of Protestant Churches of Alsace and Lorraine (M)	210,000
Germany	12,937,410
Church of Lippe (Lutheran Section) (M)	32,000
Evangelical Church in Central Germany (M)	910,527
Evangelical Church of Pomerania (M)	100,385
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Baden (M)	3,200
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Bavaria (M)	2,600,000
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Brunswick (M)	395,000
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Oldenburg (M)	455,336
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Württemberg (M)	2,286,983
Evangelical Lutheran Church of Hanover (M)	2,981,313
Evangelical Lutheran Church of Mecklenburg (M)	200,905
Evangelical Lutheran Church of Saxony (M)	798,930
Evangelical Lutheran Church of Schaumburg-Lippe (M)	60,600
Evangelical Lutheran Free Church in Germany (C)	1,347
Independent Evangelical Lutheran Church (C)	35,269
Latvian Evangelical Lutheran Church Abroad (M)	25,020
North Elbian Evangelical Lutheran Church (M)	2,050,595
Greenland	
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Denmark (M) <i>(see Denmark)</i>	
Hungary	213,125
The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Hungary (M)	213,125
Iceland	252,948
The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Iceland (M)	252,948
Ireland	300
The Lutheran Church in Ireland (R)	300
Italy	7,000
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Italy (M)	7,000
Latvia	250,000
Evangelical Lutheran Church of Latvia (M)	250,000



Individual Churches National Total

Liechtenstein

Federation of Evangelical Lutheran Churches in Switzerland and the Principality of Liechtenstein (M)
(see Switzerland)

Lithuania 20,000

Evangelical Lutheran Church of Lithuania (M) 20,000

Netherlands 2,100,000

Protestant Church in the Netherlands (M) 2,100,000

Norway 4,013,362

Church of Norway (M) 3,991,545

The Evangelical Lutheran Free Church of Norway (M) 21,817

Poland 75,000

Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in Poland (M) 75,000

Romania 45,977

Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in Romania (M) 13,477

Evangelical Lutheran Church in Romania (M) 32,500

Russian Federation 95,000

Evangelical Lutheran Church in Russia and Other States (M) 80,000

(see Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan)

The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Ingria in Russia (M) 15,000

Serbia 49,000

Slovak Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in Serbia (M) 49,000

Slovak Republic 372,858

Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in The Slovak Republic (M) 372,858

Slovenia 20,000

Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in Slovenia (M) 20,000

Sweden 6,751,952

Church of Sweden (M) 6,751,952

Switzerland 6,818

Fed. of Evang. Luth. Churches in Switzerland & in the Principality of Liechtenstein (M) 6,818

(see Liechtenstein)

Ukraine

Evangelical Lutheran Church in Russia and Other States (M) *(see Russian Federation)*

United Kingdom 178,545

Lutheran Church in Great Britain (M) 2,745

The Evangelical Lutheran Church of England (C) 1,500

The Lutheran Council of Great Britain (R) 174,300

Latin America & the Caribbean

Argentina 71,960

Evangelical Church of the River Plate (M) 25,000

(see Paraguay, Uruguay)

Evangelical Lutheran Church of Argentina (C) 30,000

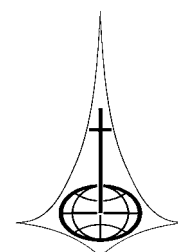
(see Chile, Uruguay)

Protestant Congregation in Tandil (C) 160

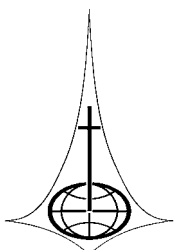
Protestant Society in Southern Argentina – Lutheran Church (C) 3,800

Protestant Society of the South-East (C) 2,000

United Evangelical Lutheran Church (M) 11,000



Bolivia	24,400
Bolivian Evangelical Lutheran Church (M)	22,000
Christian Evangelical Lutheran Church of Bolivia (C)	700
German-Speaking Evangelical Lutheran Congregation in Bolivia (R)	1,000
Norwegian Lutheran Mission in Bolivia (C)	700
Brazil	951,466
Association of Free Lutheran Congregations (C)	1,050
Evangelical Church of the Lutheran Confession in Brazil (M)	717,000
Evangelical Lutheran Church of Brazil (C)	233,416
Chile	13,450
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Chile (M)	3,000
Evangelical Lutheran Church of Argentina (C) (<i>see Argentina</i>)	
Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Republic of Chile (C)	170
Lutheran Church in Chile (M)	10,280
Colombia	3,497
Evangelical Lutheran Church of Colombia (M)	3,000
St Martin's Congregation (R)	160
St Matthew's Lutheran Church (R)	337
Costa Rica	1,547
Evangelical Lutheran Church of Costa Rica (R)	220
Lutheran Costa Rican Church (M)	1,327
Ecuador	2,020
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Ecuador (R)	520
<i>(including the El Adviento Evangelical Lutheran Church in Quito, and The Savior Church in Guayaquil)</i>	
Evangelical Lutheran Indigenous Church of Ecuador (C)	1,500
El Salvador	12,000
Salvadoran Lutheran Church (M)	12,000
Guatemala	211
Evangelical Lutheran Congregation "La Epifania" (R)	211
Lutheran Church of Guatemala (C)	no data
Guyana	13,000
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Guyana (M)	13,000
Haiti	no data
The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Haiti (C)	no data
Honduras	1,200
Christian Lutheran Church of Honduras (M)	1,200
Mexico	6,486
All Saints' Lutheran Church (C)	191
Evangelical Lutheran Church of Mexico (C)	3,000
German-Speaking Evangelical Congregation in Mexico (R)	417
Lutheran Synod of Mexico (C)	1,211
Mexican Lutheran Church (M)	1,500
The Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd (C)	167
Nicaragua	7,050
The Nicaraguan Lutheran Church of Faith and Hope (M)	7,050
Panama	no data
Brotherhood of Popular Pastoral Action – Lutheran Coordination (C)	no data



	Individual Churches	National Total
Paraguay		3,981
Evangelical Church of the River Plate (M) <i>(see Argentina)</i>		
Evangelical Lutheran Church of Paraguay (C)	3,981	
Peru		3,631
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Peru (R)	220	
Evangelical Lutheran Congregation Cristo Rey (C)	51	
Norwegian Lutheran Mission (C)	2,060	
Peruvian Lutheran Evangelical Church (M)	1,300	
Suriname		4,000
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Suriname (M)	4,000	
Uruguay		190
Evangelical Church of the River Plate (M) <i>(see Argentina)</i>		
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Uruguay (C)	190	
Evangelical Lutheran Church of Argentina (C) <i>(see Argentina)</i>		
Venezuela		2,934
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Venezuela (M)	1,950	
Lutheran Church of Venezuela (C)	984	
 North America		
Canada		232,904
Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church Abroad (M)	8,000	
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (M)	152,788	
Lutheran Church – Canada (C)	72,116	
USA		7,504,244
Apostolic Lutheran Church of America (C)	6,000	
Association of Free Lutheran Congregations (C)	44,000	
Church of the Lutheran Brethren of America (C)	8,860	
Church of the Lutheran Confession (C)	8,631	
Conservative Lutheran Association (C)	994	
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (M)	4,623,301	
Evangelical Lutheran Synod (C)	19,945	
Lutheran Churches of the Reformation (C)	1,300	
The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod (C)	2,400,000	
The Protestant Conference [Lutheran] (C)	1,000	
Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (C)	390,213	

These statistics are based on data received by 28 February 2010.

Compiled by Colette Muanda (LWF/OCS)

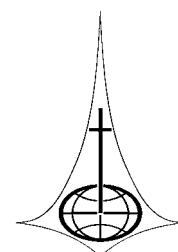
A one-page summary of the 2008 LWF statistics is posted in a PDF file at:

www.lutheranworld.org/LWF_Documents/LWF-Statistics-01-2009.pdf

Full details can be found at:

www.lutheranworld.org/LWF_Documents/LWF-Statistics-2009.pdf

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**LWF ASIA PRE-ASSEMBLY CONSULTATION
AND ASIA CHURCH LEADERSHIP CONSULTATION**
6-9 December 2009, Bangkok, Thailand

**Lutheran Leader Urges Asian Churches
to Expose Systemic Causes of Hunger**

LWF Churches Meet in Bangkok for First Regional Pre-Assembly

BANGKOK, Thailand/GENEVA (LWI) – As the ancient prophets challenged the powerful who ignored the cries of the needy, so too must the church today act to dismantle systems that prevent people from getting their daily bread.

the theme “Give Us Today Our Daily Bread.” Participants drawn from 15 countries in Asia included delegates to the Assembly, LWF Council members and advisers, the Lutheran Council in Asia (LUCAS—comprising bishops

2010 Eleventh Assembly theme, “Give Us Today Our Daily Bread.”

Poverty amid Affluence

Out of the estimated 1 billion people in the world who go hungry each day, more than 60 percent (642 million) are in the Asian and Pacific region, said Younan, citing statistics of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). This figure, he noted, includes a disproportionately high number of women and children in a continent where some 800 million people live in poverty. But it is also against a background of “significant gains made in the past three years in per capita income and calorie consumption,” remarked the ELCJHL bishop.

“These increasingly affluent Asians are able to diversify their diets and create an explosion in the demand for livestock, products, fruits, vegetables and feed grains,” he emphasized. He stressed the need for a more equitable and environmentally sustainable agricultural growth to complete the economic transformation of rural Asia. “It must support small farmers. It must also capitalize on changing food consumption patterns in the region and a growing global demand for diverse products,” he explained.

Prophetic Diakonia

Citing colonialism, debt, militarization, climate change and occupation as some of the issues that create the conditions for widespread hunger, the LWF vice president called the church to engage in prophetic diakonia—service that confronts injustice in the world. He illustrated the meaning of prophetic diakonia with an example from his own context. Lands traditionally



The LWF Asian region vice president Bishop Dr. Munib A. Younan (left) listens to a plenary remark to his December 2009 APAC/ACLIC key note address in Bangkok, Thailand. LWF Council member Ms. Nakei Siloi (right) from Papua New Guinea, moderated the session. LWF/S. Lim

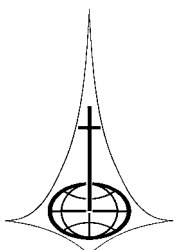
This was the central message of the keynote address from Palestinian Bishop Dr. Munib A. Younan at the opening of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) Asia Pre-Assembly Consultation (APAC) and Asia Church Leadership Consultation (ACLIC), held from 6-9 December in Bangkok, Thailand. “Give Us Today Our Daily Bread: A Holy Call to Justice” was the title of Younan’s presentation.

Hosted by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Thailand the APAC and ACLIC, brought together around 100 delegates from the 47 LWF member churches in Asia. It was the region’s preparatory meeting for the July 2010 LWF Eleventh Assembly, to be held in Stuttgart, Germany, under

and presidents of the region’s churches), women and youth representatives, mission partners and ecumenical guests.

Noting the communal language of the LWF assembly theme, Younan said that “a sincere prayer will seek daily bread for all and will be lived out in ministry to the poor and needy.” Jesus, in continuity with the prophets, called for redistributive justice that earned them no favors with political leaders, he remarked.

Younan is bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land (ELCJHL). He was elected LWF vice president at the July 2003 Tenth Assembly in Winnipeg, Canada. LWF pre-assembly deliberations are guided by the July





Um Hani, a Palestinian mother, bakes bread (taboun), the main sustenance for her family. Israeli-installed checkpoints and settlements around her village in northern West Bank, restricts access to farmland and markets, compelling many families to produce minimal amounts of wheat, milk and olives for household consumption. © LWF/ Karin Brown

inhabited by his Palestinian people have been taken over illegally by the state of Israel; houses are demolished; movement is restricted and families are separated. Retributive violence creates fear among Palestinians and Israelis. In the midst of the suffering, prophetic diakonia names the injustice of occupation, he said, while offering a vision for peaceful coexistence based on justice and security for both peoples.

Prophetic diakonia, he added, “speaks for justice despite personal inconvenience or cost; opposes entrenched means of exploiting others such as class or caste; openly criticizes any violation of human rights; and resists blaming the victim and exposes underlying systemic causes.”

Younan laid out an agenda for the Asian churches, calling them to such tasks as demanding just sharing

of resources, holding world leaders accountable for promises regarding climate change and pressing employers to pay wages that allow workers to live in dignity. He challenged the church to enable the full empowerment and participation of women, and to join hands with other faith leaders to tackle common problems.

The Lutheran understanding of “daily bread” is that it includes all that is needed for life. Ultimately, the church’s task is to seek daily bread for all, “not bread for some and crumbs for the rest,” added the LWF vice president.

The Asia Pre-Assembly was the first of five regional gatherings and two international meetings that precede the assembly. The pre-assemblies prepare delegates for effective participation in the forthcoming assembly, and deliberate the assembly theme implications in the various LWF contexts.

The Asian region desk at the LWF Department for Mission and Development coordinated the APAC and ACLC meetings.

10 December 2009

Women Seek Structures That Ensure Visible Inclusion in the LWF

Women delegates attending the LWF Asian region Pre-Assembly and Church Leadership Consultation commended the LWF’s far-reaching advocacy for marginalized groups in church and society, but called for urgent changes to structures and traditions that further perpetuate exclusion.

“Making women visible is the first step in reducing their vulnerability,” said Ms Dora R. Hemalatha, when she presented the women’s perspectives on the keynote address by LWF vice president Bishop Dr Munib A. Younan.

Among other issues in his keynote address, the ELCJHL bishop called the church to take a strong stand “against the feminization of hunger by educating, empowering and enabling women for full membership in all spheres of society.”

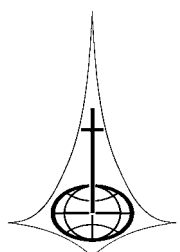
The keynote address, said Hemalatha, highlighted how the church could work against hunger and

related issues, but it would “be strengthened by adding ways in which women in the church in particular can be empowered to overcome these challenges.” The women’s

response underlined the need to provide opportunities “for women to participate, speak, act and take a lead in their own churches starting from the grassroots level.”



The Rangpur Dinajpur Rural Service (RDRS) associate program of the LWF Department for World Service (DWS) in Bangladesh, provides development education and micro-credit finance to improve the social and economic status of marginalized tribal people in the northwestern part of the country. © LWF/ RDRS/D. Shibly





Ms Dora R. Hemalatha from the Arcot Lutheran Church (India) presents the women's message to the APAC/ACLCLC participants. © LWF/Allison Schmitt

Cultural, traditional and social restrictions often mean that women are more affected by hunger and poverty than men, reported Hemalatha, women's secretary at the Arcot Lutheran Church (ALC) in India. "Women are deprived of their status in church and society," she added.

"During hard times, the women are the first to give something up: With less food to go around, it is invariably the woman who gives up her food to feed the family," Hemalatha said. This situation also has an impact on women's health, she noted, citing the example of India, where more than 50 percent of women are anemic. "Out of 15 women giving birth, eight deliver premature babies with a low birth weight," said the ALC women's leader.

Objects of Entertainment

The Asian region women also pointed out the need for the church to become more involved in efforts to counter human trafficking, of which a majority of the victims are women and girls. "Trafficking of girls is at an all time high. Women are being portrayed as objects of entertainment, bonded labor, slave trade and feudalism. Men feel that women [have an obligation] to bring money to the family to support the family needs. We should especially talk about how churches can help women to change this situation."

On climate change, the women delegates emphasized that the "impact of our energy-hungry lifestyles are affecting people across the world." They said Dalit and Adivasi (tribal) women were among the most af-

ected as they lack the capacity to deal with climate change.

While the women welcomed Younan's invitation to Asian churches to join the 13 December "bell ringing" to support the global climate change campaign, they urged more serious action beyond this important symbolic expression of solidarity. "What should we do to change people's life styles in a context in which women and children are the victims of this social issue? What as a church is our response to this alarming issue?" they asked.

The women delegates said there were some LWF member churches that still did not recognize women's ordination. "We believe that women bring an essential perspective to all types of ministry—ordained and lay—in an increasingly fractured and fractious world," they stated in their response.

"We strongly protest that just doing things to fulfill the policy of the LWF and not giving [a] chance to work in their respective places is not just. For example, just giving women ordination and not giving them a real chance in the churches to obtain higher positions in the church council and equal status in the church like the male pastors," said Hemalatha on behalf of the women delegates attending the pre-assembly.

The pre-assembly participants continued deliberations in small group discussions on climate change, human trafficking, and diakonia reaction to exclusion and religious diapraxis.

Faced with Disillusionment, Youth Plead for Spiritual Guidance

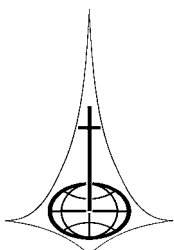
Young adults in Asia faced with the disillusionment of a good education that no longer guarantees employment opportunities need spiritual guidance from the church on how to get their daily material bread and meet their spiritual needs.

"What does a job mean? What does work mean?" asked Rev. Kazuhiro Sekino from the Japan Evangelical Lutheran Church, presenting the LWF Asian region youth response to the APAC/ACLCLC keynote address.

"Today, many young people are crying of physical hunger and of spiritual hunger," said Sekino, underlining the importance of gainful employment. "However, many young people cannot get a job; the unemployment rate is too high," he noted, citing the unemployment crises in countries such as Hong Kong (China), India, Indonesia, Philippines, Japan and Thailand. "Sometimes they have to choose a job that is lower than what they are trained for

and sometimes they don't get a job at all," noted Sekino, who is a member of the LWF Council.

The keynote address included biblical and daily life anecdotes as well as regional examples on the abundance and lack of food. The prayer for daily bread "speaks to a deep existential fear that still plagues humanity today, as millions of mothers and fathers do not know how they will feed their children tomorrow. It is a fear confirmed by the fact that



16,000 children die of hunger every day,” Bishop Dr Munib A. Younan had underlined in his presentation.

The Asian youth affirmed Younan’s call to the region’s churches to speak out boldly about the underlying causes of hunger. The alarming statistics of children dying from hunger and others feeding from garbage bins in Gaza “express the pain of young people and of the next generation,” Sekino reported. Their message emphasized the need “to have compassion and to take action.” Even when such initiatives are very small, they are important, “because without such action, our communion would be meaningless,” the youth added.

Make Worship More Relevant to Youth Needs

The youth cited some of the urgent issues that impede their spirituality, and suggested ways in which the church could enhance the inclusion and participation of young people.

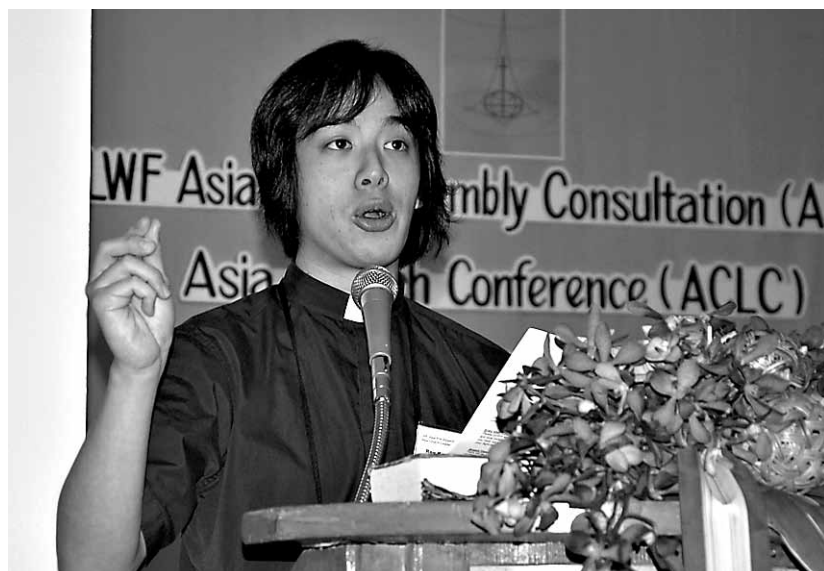
“Youth are drifting away from their parent churches to charismatic churches,” as the latter offer worship styles that fit the young generation, said Ms Sofia M. Samuel from the India Evangelical Lutheran Church on behalf of the group. This is a burning issue for the churches in the region, Samuel emphasized. The youth group pointed out that Lutheran churches have a rich heritage to offer,

and urged further reflection on ways in which worship and other church life could be made more relevant also to young people’s needs.

On participation in church work, the group noted that many young people were interested in being more actively involved, but they lacked initiative and encouragement from church leadership. They called for orientation and training in church administration and management to prepare them for such responsibilities.

The youth expressed appreciation for LWF’s support toward theological and non-theological scholarships, which also benefit the rest of society. They underlined the importance of educational support in secular subjects such as business administration, as this allows Christians to also take up jobs in administration outside the church.

Their concluding appeal for young people’s inclusion in the Lutheran communion was an interpretation of the topics of good soil, sowing, harvest and processing, which will guide Village Group discussions at the July 2010 LWF Assembly in Stuttgart, Germany. “The youth are the soil, the seeds of training need to be sowed in us. Then definitely, a rich harvest of good leaders can be reaped who will change society and share their potentials with all humankind,” added the APAC youth delegates.



Rev. Kazuhiro Sekino, Japan Evangelical Lutheran Church, presents the youth message to the December 2009 LWF pre-Assembly gathering and church leadership consultation in Bangkok, Thailand. © LWF/Allison Schmitt

Minority Churches Seek Global Solidarity in Climate Change Response

Representatives of LWF member churches in Asia are asking the LWF, its ecumenical and interfaith partners to provide and share appropriate resources and expertise to enable churches respond effectively to the issue of climate change.

Whether it is catastrophic flooding or drought, deforestation or mining, the social, economic and political problems emanating from climate change are interrelated, stated the report of a group discussion on this topic during the APAC/ACLIC.

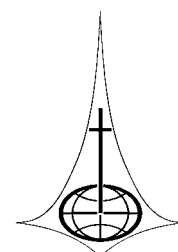
The group members underlined that with a few exceptions, churches in the

region are in a minority situation, and therefore “so small and so powerless” to take concerted effort in effectively responding to the impact of climate change. They emphasized “the need to start where we are, with the empowerment of families, women and children.”

While “it is difficult to know where to start in solving them, we all realize that these problems affect not only our countries and the lives of our citizens, but also the work of our churches in evangelism and mission,” stated the group’s report.

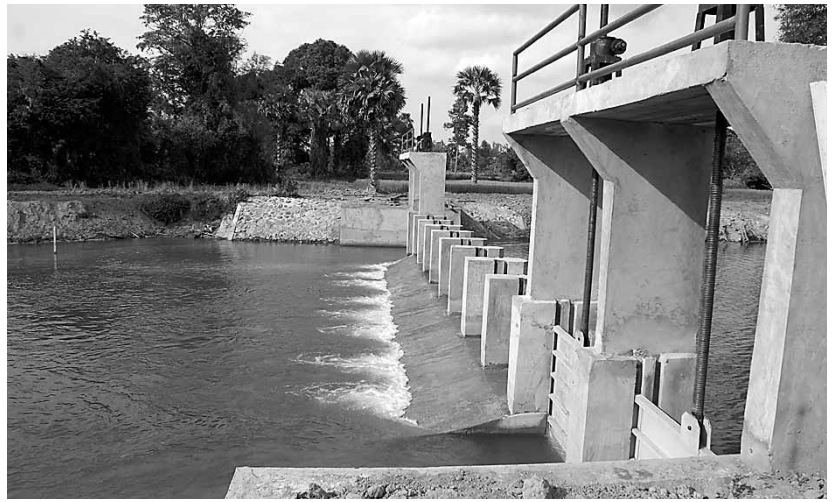
During their group discussion, members had recounted stories

from their respective contexts that portrayed “human sin in its many forms—greed, corruption, deception and outright theft.” In Papua New Guinea people feel helpless against the onslaught of multinational companies robbing them of their natural resources—their birthright. In India and Bangladesh, the adverse effects of climate change on people’s lives and livelihoods are immeasurable, whereas people in Japan and Hong Kong are confronted with “the poverty of the human spirit in the face of yesterday’s economic success that has gone sour today.”



Suggestions in the plenary discussion on the group's report underlined the need to seek solutions and synergies in collaboration with the existing LWF structures such as the LWF Council, LUCAS and ecumenical networks.

It was underlined that the quest for justice with respect to climate change was urgent, calling for clear, biblical thinking that is sensitive to local settings and needs. "Work for the dignity, justice, and peace of our creation should start now," remarked LWF Council member Rev. Dr Jubil R. Hutauruk from the Protestant Christian Batak Church, Indonesia.



APAC/ACLC delegates underlined the need for synergies when seeking solutions to the impact of climate change. In Cambodia, the DWS country program facilitated construction of an irrigation system comprising a water gate, dam and canal, under the Climate Change Adaptation Project supported by Finn Church Aid. © LWF/DWS Cambodia

Lutherans in Asia Encouraged to Lead in Diakonia and Diapraxis

Diakonia is the gospel in action. Diapraxis is interfaith diakonia. But, as participants at the LWF Asia Pre-Assembly Consultation and Asia Church Leadership Conference deliberated further, they agreed these expressions of church mission encompassed much more.

Members of a group discussion on "Diakonia as Reaction to Exclusion" concluded that diakonia is service that reconciles, empowers and accompanies. Diakonia, they agreed, is prophetic when it announces an alternative way of being or denounces injustice in defense of marginalized people.

Another group discussed diapraxis, based on a report about local

communities' response to the devastating impact of the 2004 tsunami in southeastern Asia. Participants heard that people who were previously separated by religion, Muslims and Christians in the region, found themselves working side-by-side to help each other. They discovered compassionate human beings behind religious stereotypes. The friendships and mutual cooperation that resulted inspired subsequent LWF seminars on a "dialogue for life." The discussion group concluded that diapraxis provides a platform from which co-religionists can jointly address common goals such as poverty, unemployment, corruption, human

trafficking, HIV and AIDS, and domestic violence, among others.

The diakonia discussion group members drew from previous LWF statements and shared experiences from nine Asian countries. In response to the challenges identified, they suggested that education, resources and awareness are needed for Asian Lutherans to become more engaged in diakonia.

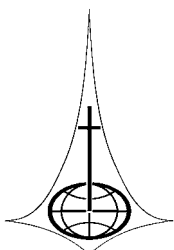
Promote Harmony

Bishop Terry Kee, Lutheran Church in Singapore, explained some of the initiatives taken by the Inter-Racial and Religious Confidence Circles (IRCC), established by the government as an interfaith platform to promote racial and religious harmony in Singapore.

"Recently, when the government proposed that casinos would be allowed to open, the religious leaders were able to discuss how they can present their case. We separately make our representations to the relevant authority at the local level," Kee explained. He said the objective of the IRCC is to build familiarity and strengthen relationships among and between ethnic and religious leaders, promote mutual understanding and appreciation of the different religions, cultures and practices among Singa-



Malaysian Bishop Dr Solomon Rajah makes a point during a plenary presentation at the LWF Asian region gatherings. © LWF/Allison Schmitt



poreans, and facilitate collaboration on social and community causes.

Malaysian Bishop Dr Solomon Rajah, who led the diapraxis discussion, emphasized the urgent need for additional education on the subject. If Christians lead the way in diapraxis,

“this is one area (where) we can make our presence known,” he added.

In the plenary session following the group work reports, questions were asked about the risk of “speaking about our faith” in diapraxis. “Lutherans should not be afraid of

interfaith dialogue, because our theology of grace is so wide that it allows for the role of mediator on many issues,” said Bishop Dr Munib A. Younan, LWF vice president for the Asian region and head of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land.

Younan encouraged LWF member churches in Asia to speak out about their faith in the respective contexts. “What we try to do in dialogue is to find the common values of living together, coexisting, and working across faith traditions” to alleviate suffering, eradicate poverty and resolve other shared concerns. It is natural for people of faith to be engaged in diakonia and diapraxis. “If we love God fully, we must love the neighbor,” he added.

ELCJHL communication assistant Ms Allison K. Schmitt supported the LWF Office for Communication Services by contributing to the LWI articles in this section, and through photography.



Delegates exchange views during a plenary session at of the APAC/ACLC. © LWF/ Allison Schmitt

Lutheran Communion Urged to Strengthen Advocacy on Responsible Stewardship

The LWF member churches in Asia concluded their preparatory meeting for the forthcoming LWF Eleventh Assembly with an appeal to the global Lutheran communion to strengthen advocacy on responsible stewardship over God-given resources.

“Hunger in Asia is not the result of insufficient food production in the region but rather human-made crises” such as corruption, unjust distribution, militarization, colonialism, occupation and overwhelming national debt among others, participants in the APAC/ACLC said in a final message.

The delegates identified human trafficking, climate change, diakonia and diapraxis as the main challenges for churches in the region that hosts more than 60 percent of the world’s population. Asia also accounts for nearly 90 percent of all people exposed to the risk of natural disasters worldwide.

As residents of a region already adversely affected by global climate

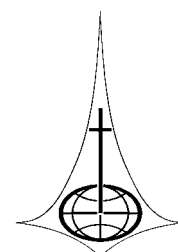


Bishop Visanukorn Upama of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Thailand addresses the APAC/ACLC participants during the closing worship session. © LWF/ Allison Schmitt

change, also the focus of the 7–18 December United Nations Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen, Denmark, the Asian church representatives urged all LWF member

churches to appeal to their governments to seek to achieve a fair agreement to succeed the Kyoto protocol.

They urged the region’s countries to take responsibility for their CO₂



emissions and to encourage the development of alternative energy sources that would not further burden the poor.

Simple Food and Lifestyle

They pointed out that while countless women and children starve in Asia, “food consumption and waste is on the rise.” They affirmed the need to evaluate consumption patterns, and urged the Stuttgart assembly planners to minimize costs by emphasizing simple food and life style. “We ask that participants be encouraged to give up a meal to support a hunger-related initiative of the member churches. This is a tangible way in which we can stand in solidarity with those who are hungry,” the final message stated.

The LWF assembly will take place from 20–27 July 2010 in Stuttgart Germany, hosted by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Württemberg.

The Asian region message also called for greater attention to human trafficking, and especially the need to adopt and enforce the Palermo Protocol, which criminalizes human trafficking, in the hope of preventing more people from being lured into virtual slavery for want of daily bread.



The final message from the LWF regional gathering emphasized that Asia accounts for nearly 90 percent of all people exposed to the risk of natural disasters worldwide. In the photo, a woman tries to retrieve whatever is left after the May 2009 “Cyclone Aila” in eastern India. © LWF/DWS/LWSI

Churches were urged to respect and trust “your young people and invite, encourage and train them to participate in all aspects of your church’s life.” The participants also called for greater support for Asian women’s initiatives “by advocating for and setting up justice mechanisms within your church which will help to promote and build a culture of gender equality.”

They affirmed the religious and cultural diversity that enables Asian churches to bring to the Lutheran communion the experiences of dialogue and diapraxis. They

appealed to other LWF regions to join in deepening commitment to conversations and actions with people of other faiths. The Asian delegates emphasized that such interreligious engagement “does not detract from our primary call to preach the gospel and administer the sacraments.”

The APAC/ACLC message is available on the LWF Assembly Web site, where you can also read more about the Pre-Assemblies under the “Journey” section:

www.lwf-assembly.org

North American Church Leaders Must Become “Communion Ambassadors”

LWF Region Plays Key Role in Lutheran-Mennonite Relationships

GENEVA, 12 December 2009 (LWI) – Lutheran leaders from North America explored what it means to be a communion of communities in a globalizing world at a Lutheran World Federation (LWF) regional seminar 1-12 December in Geneva, Switzerland.

The course was aimed s at equipping North American synodical staff as “multipliers in deepening and widening ecumenical and communion relationships in their respective communities,” stated LWF Regional

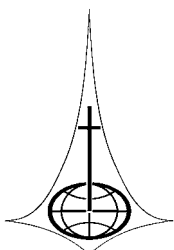
Officer for North America Rev. Tere-sita C. Valeriano.

“We in the North American region have a tendency to see ourselves as self-sufficient,” said Rev. Paul N. Johnson, Assistant to the National Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCIC). He expressed his hope that this group of church leaders would become “communion ambassadors” to help the region to be connected more strongly to the wider LWF communion.

Organized in conjunction with LWF member churches the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) and the ELCIC, the seminar brought together 22 church leaders as part of a communion formation program.

Communion-Defining Ecumenism

Ecumenism figured centrally on the seminar’s syllabus as participants



learned about developments in dialogues between church communions and pondered the interface of these conversations with realities at the synodical and local level.

Inter-denominational cooperation is routine for Rev. Larry Ulrich in his youth ministry and mission work as Assistant to the Bishop of the ELCIC Manitoba/Northwest Ontario Synod. However, learning about what the LWF has accomplished in formal bilateral dialogues “gives an official context for what we do for practical reasons.”

LWF Assistant General Secretary for Ecumenical Affairs Dr Kathryn Johnson emphasized this mutual dependence of all levels of ecumenical engagement.

She highlighted the “communion building” role of ecumenical agreements such as the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification and the action on the legacy of Lutheran persecution of Anabaptists to be taken up by the LWF Eleventh Assembly in July 2010.

Mennonites, who consider Anabaptists their spiritual forerunners.

“There is a sort of amnesia among US Lutherans regarding the history [of persecution],” noted Rev. Michael Trice, Director of Ecumenical Formation and Inter-Religious Relations of the ELCA. He said the ELCA has learned that it is critical to address the role of memory in shaping current relationships.

There is a need to feel accountable for the tradition one bears, agreed Rev. Dr Maria Erling, Associate Professor of the History of Christianity in North America and Global Mission at Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg (USA). In this regard, the proposed action is a “teaching moment.”

“Ecumenism is a mission story,” she affirmed, and the Lutheran-Mennonite reconciliation process is an invitation to extend discussion to a wider circle.

A key challenge for seminar participants is to live out this reconciliation in an intentional, congregational

Dr Johnson seconded the need for seminar participants to facilitate local reception of the action: “Look for the process, help it in your own communities.”

Diaconal Church

The seminar also took a closer look at the diaconal calling of the church, seeking to uncover realities underlying response strategies to natural disaster, hunger, poverty, climate change or illegitimate debt.

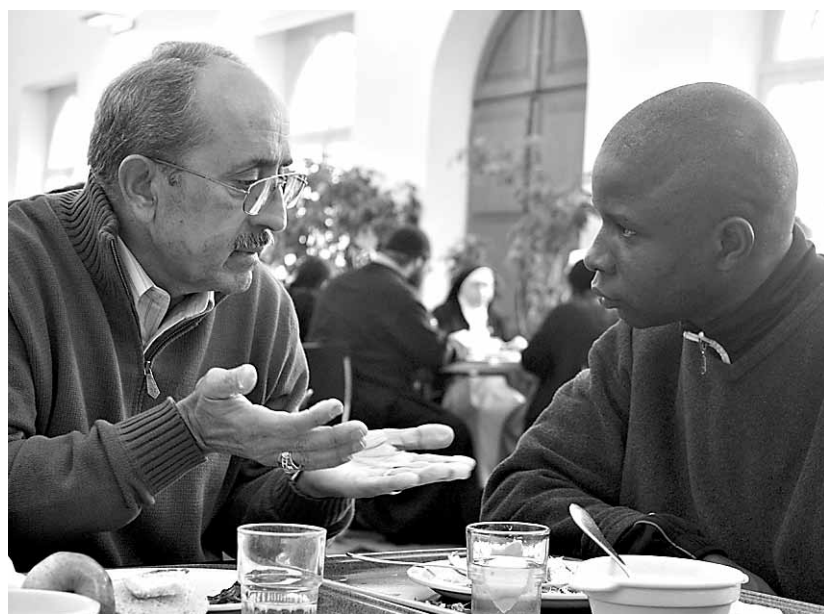
Walking daily with people in their pain and struggles has “strong potential to transform churches into listening and compassionate communities,” remarked Rev. Martin Junge, LWF Area Secretary for Latin America and the Caribbean, during a session under the theme of the Eleventh Assembly, “Give Us Today Our Daily Bread.”

Junge, who was elected in October 2009 to succeed Rev. Dr Ishmael Noko as the next LWF general secretary, underlined that a missional church is a diaconal church. He invited the North America region to contribute actively to ongoing LWF discussion on diakonia.

During the remainder of the seminar, participants contemplated what it means to be Lutheran Christians in an interreligious world; heard about the joys and challenges facing churches today in the different LWF regions; and engaged questions of ecology and economy.

The program also included worship in the Ecumenical Center; sessions with the director, dean and students of the Ecumenical Institute at Bossey; a trip to the Taizé Community in France; a visit to the United Nations and dialogue with staff from the World Council of Churches and the World Alliance of Reformed Churches.

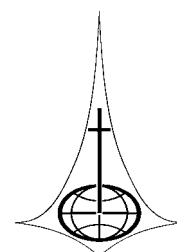
According to Valeriano, the participants will be looking to “bring home” what they have learned. “We will find ways to support each other,” she promised, so that the church leaders can give back what they have learned to their communities.



Participants in the December 2009 North American regional seminar included Rev. Jose L. Garcia, JR; (left) Bishop's Associate & Director for Evangelical Mission for the ELCA Southwestern Texas Synod. At the Bossey institute, a table discussion with Mr Adekunle Benjamin Adeniyi (right), a student from Nigeria © Christopher Weidner

The Anabaptist action will have particular implications for North America, a region where the principal LWF member churches live closely and already are in relationship with

way. “The heart of ecumenism is that we get engaged at a local level,” emphasized Trice. “You are on the front line,” he told the North American synodical staff.



Ordinary Shepherds Bear Good News at the Dawn of a New Era

2010 New Year Message from LWF General Secretary

GENEVA (LWI) – The message of hope celebrated during Christmas is equally relevant for the entire human family as people focus on the beginning of a new year and on changed relationships, says Rev. Dr Ishmael Noko, general secretary of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) in his New Year message issued today.

“The birth of Jesus Christ marks the beginning of a new dispensation in the history of the human family,” notes Noko. Jesus’ birth therefore becomes a basis and source of strength, pointing beyond Bethlehem, “to a new beginning that heralds trans-

formative hope and expectation for all people.”

The 2010 LWF New Year message is based on Luke 2:9-11, a biblical passage traditionally read during Christmas celebrations.

“The very historic fact that shepherds who occupied a low social position in society were the recipients and messengers of such an important announcement marks the beginning of changed relationships,” says Noko.

The general secretary points out that the fearful manner in which the shepherds received the announcement was representative of the human condition

then and presently. The entire community shared this fear—generated by oppressive conditions, including lack of trust in the structure of governance, and in those who are elected to public office. “It is a sign of subordination and helplessness,” he notes.

Ordinary shepherds become the chief bearers of the good news at the dawning of a new era, adds Noko.

The full text of the 2010 LWF New Year message is available on the LWF Web site at: www.lutheranworld.org/LWF_Documents/LWF-New_Year_Message-2010.pdf

2010 New Year Message from the LWF General Secretary

Luke 2: 9-11

Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord.

While this text is traditionally read during Christmas celebrations, it nonetheless bears a relevant message

when we reflect about the beginning of a new year.

As announced by the angels, the birth of Jesus Christ marks the beginning of a new dispensation in the history of the human family. However, the fearful manner in which the shepherds received the announcement is representative of the human condition then and now. It is fear that is shared by the entire community.

Such fear is always generated by oppressive conditions, including lack of trust in the structure of

governance, and in those who are elected to public office; it is a sign of subordination and helplessness.

The birth of Jesus Christ in the town of Bethlehem therefore becomes a basis and source of strength. It points beyond Bethlehem, the home of King David, to a new beginning that heralds transformative hope and expectation for all people.

The very historic fact that shepherds who occupied a low social position in society were the recipients and messengers of such an important announcement marks the beginning of changed relationships.

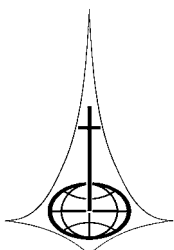
The shepherds become the chief bearers of the good news at the dawning of a new era. Jesus’ ministry of “care giving” is imbedded in the mandate of ordinary shepherds for the sake of the healing of the world.

May the year 2010 be a year during which you experience the concreteness of healing.



Shepherds from Babir Dar near Lake Tana, northern Ethiopia, carrying sheep.
© Charles Roffey / <http://charlesfred.blogspot.com>

Rev. Dr Ishmael Noko
General Secretary,
The Lutheran World Federation
January 2009



FEATURE: From a Disaster Graveyard into a Thriving Community

Indian Villagers Focus on New Hope, Five Years after the Tsunami

NAGAPATTINAM, Tamil Nadu, India/ GENEVA – Mr Anjappan Kumar remembers the day five years ago when the devastating tsunami that killed thousands in southern Asia and Africa hit his village.

“The 26 December tsunami claimed 86 lives in our village, destroyed nearly 500 houses and 200 boats were destroyed. The village looked like a graveyard,” Kumar, 33, recalled, his voice breaking.

Prior to the tsunami, the residents of Thirumullaivasal in the southern district of Nagapattinam in India’s Tamil Nadu state, worked as laborers handling catamarans and trawlers for their employers for a small wage. They lived in mud huts without toilets or other sanitary facilities. Their homes situated in low-lying areas were prone to flooding and subsequent destruction, which necessitated repairs costing nearly USD 100 annually. They could hardly afford such sums, and used to borrow from the money lenders to restore their houses.

Today, with the help of the Lutheran World Service India (LWSI), the community and six other vil-



Left to right: Fishermen Anjappan Kumar, Govindhan Veeramani and Nadukattan Kumar are members of an LWF-supported boat group in Thirumullaivasal village. The December 2004 tsunami destroyed their houses and livelihoods as daily-wage laborers on other people’s fishing boats. Thanks to LWF’s post-tsunami rehabilitation work, they are now self-employed and their families live in disaster-resistant permanent houses. © LWF/DWS/LWSI/Thangavelu Prabu

lages in the district are thriving. Villagers are catching and marketing fish, sharing income, saving money, maintaining their boats and nets, and enjoying life with their families and friends. “The last five years of

our life [has been] really better and prosperous,” says Kumar, who heads an LWSI-supported boat group.

LWSI, an associate program of the LWF Department for World Service (DWS) started operating as a DWS country program in India in 1974, responding at the time to refugee needs after the Bangladesh war of independence.

Its current work with the ever-growing population of rural and urban poor is focused on mainly empowering disadvantaged communities to enhance their quality of life and attain self-reliance. It responds to disaster across the country and implements long-term integrated development projects in eastern India.

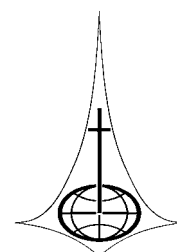
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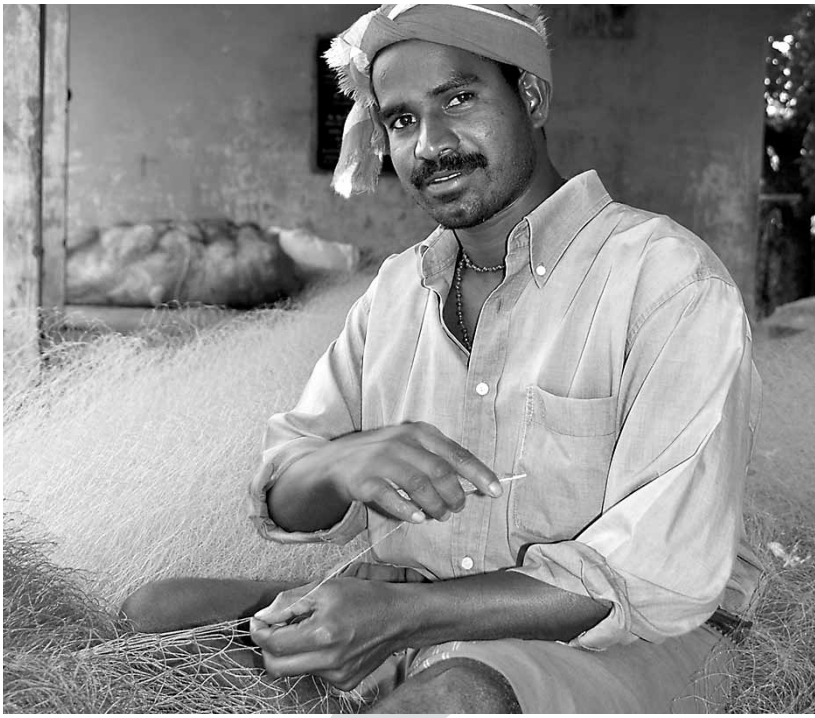
In Thirumullaivasal the LWF program worked with the villagers through organized groups of five,



A complex of 525 disaster-resistant houses built with DWS/LWSI support, targeting fishermen and other marginalized communities including Dalits and members of scheduled tribes.

© LWF/DWS/LWSI/Thangavelu Prabu





Mr Ealakudiyar Kavimani, a fisherman from Thirumullaivasal village, mends a fishing net.
© Linda Macqueen

providing each with a mechanized fiberglass boat with engines and nets. "LWSI has given 35 boats for the 175 families in this village. We are now employed; we are not dependent on anybody. We catch and sell fish ourselves, share our profits and save some money for our future and to maintain the boats. We are free from exploitation," says Kumar.

Working together with the global church emergency body, Action by Churches Together (ACT) International, LWSI assisted communities with immediate relief following the 2004 tsunami and helped with rehabilitation programs in 18 villages in the districts of Cuddalore, Villupuram and Nagapattinam.

The assistance provided included emergency food and housing, and long-term projects to help villagers

return to a normal life. In some cases, the people's living conditions are even better than they were before the tsunami.

As Kumar says, "My income has increased; being a member of the group, I am able to save money for my children's future. I will send my children for higher studies." He has even purchased some gold in preparation for his daughter's marriage.

Improved, Hygienic Standards

The quality of life has significantly improved for the entire village. The villagers now live in permanent houses built with LWSI support. They no longer use kerosene or firewood for cooking and basic lighting as their new homes are equipped with gas

ovens and electricity. Sanitation too has improved, with clean water readily available and sanitary toilets.

Some of the residents have used their savings to equip the houses with television sets, amenities that were unheard of in this community before the tsunami. Kumar for example, has installed an overhead water tank fitted with a pump to ensure running water in his house. He has also put up a wall around his home for added security.

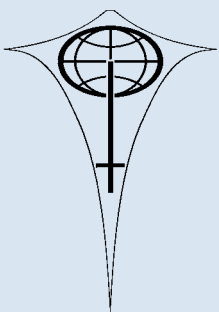
Kumar and his group view life differently—with new hope. Villagers attend community meetings to decide on development issues; women have formed self help groups; and their children are going to school regularly.

To ensure future sustainability of the local communities, LWSI continues to work with villagers on community-based institutions that will help maintain their improved living conditions, including micro-credit, village development committees, community-based disaster preparedness groups and programs on gender sensitization, health and leadership training.

Today these villages in Nagapattinam no longer resemble the graveyards that Kumar described. Instead, they are thriving communities, thanks to the partnership forged with Lutheran World Service India.

20 February 2010

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



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