

**... and forgive us**

**Lutherans Repent  
Anabaptist Persecution**



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Service of Repentance ..... I-VIII

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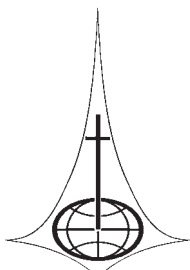
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# Forgiveness and the Healing of Memories

From Condemnation to Reconciliation



LWF President Bishop Mark S. Hanson © ELCA

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

At the heart of our Christian life is our affirmation that we are justified by God's grace through faith and reconciled with God through the life, death, and resurrection of our Savior, Jesus Christ. Forgiven by God's grace and living by faith, we participate in the life of the new creation in Christ.

In this new life God calls us to serve the ministry of reconciliation as ambassadors for Christ. Just as we are reconciled to God in Christ, God calls us to be reconciled to those we have sinned against and to seek a new life together in God's love.

The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) is expected to take an historic action in July 2010. Since the 16<sup>th</sup> century, many Christians, including many Lutherans, supported the persecution of Anabaptists and their

religious successors, partly by supplying theological justifications for this persecution that brought property loss, prison, violence, and even death to many.

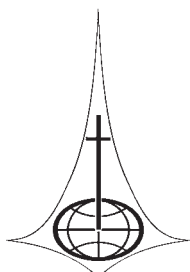
In recent years Lutherans and Mennonites began a dialogue leading to a closer and more respectful relationship. An honest acknowledgment of Lutheran participation in past condemnations and persecutions has permitted a truer remembering of what actually happened and has set the stage for Mennonites and Lutherans to view their history and their relationship more faithfully.

At the LWF Assembly in Stuttgart, Germany, delegates are expected to adopt a statement concerning the legacy of Lutheran persecution of Anabaptists. This statement expresses deep regret and sorrow for the violent persecutions of the past. Even more, it asks for forgiveness from God

and from our Mennonite sisters and brothers and for the Spirit's blessings for our shared future in Christ.

This year on LWF Sunday, members of the LWF—a communion of churches in 79 countries, 140 member churches, and with over 70 million members—give thanks for our Mennonite and Anabaptist neighbors, for the forgiveness and healing of memories that has been accomplished, and for the ministry of reconciliation in our continuing dialogue and in our shared witness and service.

In God's grace,  
Bishop Mark S. Hanson  
LWF President



## THE BEGINNINGS...

*In this section Lutheran and Mennonite leaders reflect, not only from an institutional viewpoint but also on a personal level, on the significance of LWF's action to ask for forgiveness from the Mennonites. While first and principally a Lutheran action, the seeking forgiveness expresses a spirit of honest self-examination and prayer for renewal—and so, finally, also has a mutual dimension.*

### Reconciliation Looks into a Common Future

One of the most sacred moments of the 15<sup>th</sup> Assembly of the Mennonite World Conference (MWC) was when Rev. Dr Ishmael Noko addressed us from his heart. His penitential and conciliatory spirit, and his articulation of the hope that we walk together on a path of reconciliation, so moved the 6,000 participants from around the world that they rose in a standing ovation.

A leading Mennonite historian sought me out to say, “I don’t cry easily, but today I wept.” And he was not alone.

I report this to show how significant it is for Mennonites that Lutherans address the persecution of Anabaptists and Mennonites and the memory of that painful history still very much alive in Anabaptist-Mennonite communities.

We receive the commitments from Lutherans about “right remembering” of this history and the healing of the fractured body of Christ as a gift from God. The Lutheran World Federation is not the first church body to address the execution of Anabaptists by Christian authorities—which was sometimes with support from theologians. But the honesty, carefulness, and compassion



*MWC General Secretary Rev. Dr Larry Miller brings ecumenical greetings to the October 2009 LWF Council meeting near Geneva. © LWF/H. Putsman Penet*

with which Lutherans do so seems to touch the Mennonite heart in a way I have not previously seen.

The forgiveness we seek will be “mutual.” We Mennonites are clear that we are not without sin in this relationship.

We deal with holy histories, both Lutheran and ours. We are dealing with our most basic self-understandings.

For Lutherans, the witness of the Augsburg Confession shapes

Lutheran identity. For us, the witness of the Anabaptist martyrs is a living and vital story, retold in our global community of churches to build identity.

How can Lutherans distance themselves from the condemnations and their consequences while still honoring their history and identity? How can we distance ourselves from the use of the martyr tradition which perpetuates a sense of victimization and marginalization? Lutherans reaching out for forgiveness pushes us to do precisely that.

Surely these things will happen if we walk together in the way of Jesus Christ, our Reconciler and the Source of our common history and identity.

Our study said: “The past cannot be changed, but we can change the way the past is remembered in the present. This is our hope. Reconciliation does not look back into the past: rather it looks into a common future.”

May this indeed be the case for Lutherans and Mennonites.

*Rev. Dr Larry Miller has been MWC general secretary since July 1990. He is a member of the Église Évangélique Mennonite in Strasbourg, France.*

### An Honest Self-Examination and Prayer for Renewal

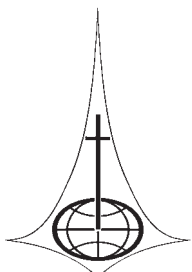
I cannot remember a time before Mennonites entered my consciousness. While I was growing up in present-day Zimbabwe, they were among my relatives, since my mother was raised in the Mennonite-related Brethren in Christ Church and became Lutheran only upon marrying my father. Both the ties binding our

two communities and the lines separating them ran through my family.

Later, as a young pastor at St Paul’s Lutheran Church in Brunkild, Manitoba, Canada, our small Lutheran congregation was swimming in an ocean of Mennonites on the Canadian prairies, and we shared many aspects of church life. Still later, as I worked

with Lutherans around the globe, I saw many places where Lutherans and Mennonites collaborate in common mission. Through different routes, our histories have brought us to a shared passion for the care of refugees, and we find other places also for diaconal cooperation.

But we have worked together without truly knowing our partners.



We Lutherans could be unmindful of the violent history of persecution of Anabaptists which lurked in our past, and today's Mennonites, especially in the global South, often were unaware that their Lutheran colleagues, if instructed by the Augsburg Confession, had been taught to condemn them.

At the LWF Eleventh Assembly in July, we have the opportunity to build upon this collaboration and move beyond it. Through the excellent work of the Lutheran–Mennonite International Study Commission, we can now look afresh at the painful history from the 16<sup>th</sup> century and its ever since unaddressed legacies. Then we ask God's help to begin a new life of reconciliation. This action will express the spirit of honest self-examination and prayer for renewal



*LWF General Secretary Rev. Dr Ishmael Noko © LWF/H. Putsman Penet*

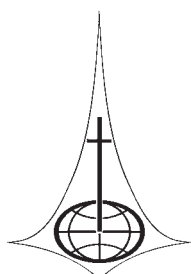
with which we Lutherans want to approach the 2017 anniversaries.

A year ago, I attended the Mennonite World Conference Assembly in Paraguay to describe our planned prayer for forgiveness. It has been a joy for me, in my final months as LWF general secretary, to see the ways in which this “Mennonite action” has spoken to the hearts of so many people on every continent—in our pre-Assemblies, among our ecumenical partners, within our member churches. As St Paul said to the Philippians (Phil 1:6), I am confident that the one who began this good work among us will bring it to completion by the day of Jesus Christ!

*Rev. Dr Ishmael Noko has been LWF general secretary since November 1994. He is an ordained pastor of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Zimbabwe.*



*For a number of churches including the Mennonite church, the ritual of foot-washing signifies repentance. © [www.stift-heiligenkreuz.at](http://www.stift-heiligenkreuz.at)*



READING AND RE-READING THE REPORT

*The LWF's action toward the Mennonite World Conference reverberates beyond the two church bodies. Voices from different Christian traditions share their perceptions about a step which they say helps overcome "a stumbling block" in church relations; it is a gift to the ecumenical movement that confronts violent legacies and fosters reconciliation.*

Overcoming a Stumbling Block in Our Church Relations

We Lutheran members of the International Lutheran–Mennonite Study Commission were prepared for a thorough discussion of controversial topics like baptism and the relation between Christians and the state. But we met a stumbling block: the fact that Lutheran princes persecuted Anabaptists in the 16<sup>th</sup> century and that some Lutheran reformers (including Martin Luther and Philipp Melancthon) supported the persecution, even when it meant putting some Anabaptists to death. We had to focus on this dark part of our history because we felt how deep painful these events were in the hearts and minds of our Mennonite brothers and sisters. How could we deal with such history?

We chose the following ways:

1) We described precisely what happened in the 16<sup>th</sup>



Rev. Dr Theodor Dieter © Private

century in a fair way, taking into account the perspectives of both Anabaptists and Lutherans.

In doing that, we learned (a) that in Lutheran territories persecution was not as sharp as in Reformed or Roman-Catholic territories. But it took place. We also learned (b) that Luther himself had developed theological arguments about temporal authority that could have prevented him from theologically supporting Anabaptist persecution. Unfortunately, he—unlike reformers like Johannes Brenz—did not persist with his better insights. This increases Luther's responsibility, but it also allows one to hold to his basic theological insights and, at the same time, strictly oppose persecution of Anabaptists.

2) We reacted. We Lutherans are ashamed of, and we

deeply regret what our theologians did in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, and we wish to ask for forgiveness, being aware of the difficulties: How can we who do not persecute Anabaptists ask forgiveness for what our ancestors did 500 years ago? And how can Mennonites offer forgiveness for what happened to their ancestors but not to them? Nevertheless, in our conversations, we experienced a deep sense of communion with the founding figures of each church. We Lutherans, being convinced that it is Jesus Christ who forgives sins, dare to ask for forgiveness, both from Christ and from our Mennonite brothers and sisters.

Thus we hope that we can overcome that stumbling block in our relations and look into a future of deeper communion between our churches.

*Rev. Dr Theodor Dieter was a consultant on the Lutheran–Mennonite International Study Commission (2005–2008). He is director of the Institute for Ecumenical Research in Strasbourg, France.*

A Hunger for the Daily Bread of Reconciliation

“To be Lutheran is to be ecumenical.” I have heard this assertion often since coming from a peace church network to The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) secretariat two years ago.

During this time I have been struck by the importance for the Lutheran communion of sincere, faithful relationships with other members of the global church. However, as a Mennonite, for me the proposed Eleventh Assembly action addressing the legacy of Lutheran persecution of Anabaptists is a particularly significant sign of the LWF's commitment to holistic ecumenism.

As a member of a church family whose very identity has been shaped by continually retelling this history of persecution, the mutual journey of reconciliation undertaken by the LWF

and the Mennonite World Conference is indeed daily bread, with the potential to nourish and sustain our fellowship in new—and perhaps unexpected—ways.

The International Study Commission's joint telling of the history between Lutherans and Mennonites can change how we remember this past today in our churches. It can correct misconceptions and inform our respective confessional understandings.

I also hope that the dialogue's open, servant-like spirit will flavor ongoing cooperation between Lutherans and Mennonites in humanitarian, development and peace work

and give birth to new expressions of partnership.

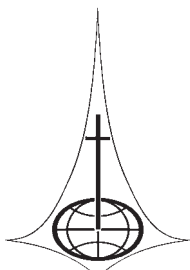
I believe this process of healing memories could push us, Lutherans and Mennonites alike, to take a new look at how we address other human rights and justice issues. The Statement's call to advocate for freedom of religion and conscience is just one example of this.

May we continue to hunger for the daily bread of reconciling in Christ.

*Ms Terri Miller is the English Web editor in the LWF Office for Communication Services. She is a member of the Mennonite Church USA, and attends the Église Évangélique Mennonite de Saint-Genis-Pouilly in France.*



Ms Terri Miller © LWF/H. Putsman Penet



## Bringing Down the Walls: A Cause for Joyous Celebration

The walls that divide the church of Jesus Christ are hard to bring down. When that happens, it is a cause for joyous celebration, a special Christian spiritual event. It is deeper than the outward symbols we use to express the realities of coming closer and embracing one another with the love of Christ.

The Lutheran-Mennonite dialogue and the resulting reconciliation that we are witnessing, means we can



Rev. Danisa Ndlovu  
© MWC

now look each other in the eye and not be ashamed and haunted by the sins and theological mistakes that created the walls which have divided us for centuries.

It takes courage, humility and above all love from above to bring to the surface what has been seemingly buried but kept alive by history and our faith confessions, and to seek together forgiveness from God and each other. We stand ready

together to open a new chapter, to rewrite our history, to walk together and to listen together to what God has to say about our future. Today the history that has pulled us both down smiles as it launches us into the future because the wall that divided us crumbles.

Together we can now see the face of Christ in each other's face. It is indeed the best and right thing to do!

*Rev. Danisa Ndlovu is leader of the Brethren in Christ Church in Zimbabwe. He assumed the position of MWC President in July 2009.*

## A Priceless Gift to the Ecumenical Movement

The courageous decision of the Lutheran World Federation to reach out in reconciliation to the Mennonite World Conference (MWC) should be celebrated by the wider ecumenical movement as a visible sign of the success of dialogue among Christians.

This gesture may evoke painful memories and legacies of violence and persecution of the past, but it serves as an honest remembrance of the truths of history. Its significance lies in its healing potential and the vision of a future of reconciliation and peace. At the heart of the ecumenical movement, it shines as an exemplary moment of deep spiritual courage, aiming at build-

ing a world in which peace, rather than conflict, is given a chance to succeed.

All people of goodwill should welcome this event as a new beginning in human relations and a visible expression of Christian unity. It is truly an example of humility and it is a priceless gift to the ecumenical movement, fanning the flames of renewal, replenishment and transformation. While the ecumenical task remains difficult, this gesture plants a seed of opportunity in the face of adversity—a sign to the world that even a painful

history can become a chance for a new beginning. The ecumenical movement can only celebrate this defining moment with gratitude to God, trusting that it will lead to an ever-deeper commitment

to our common journey of faith and hope toward the full *koinonia* or fellowship of the whole people of God, so that the world may believe.

*Fr. Gosbert Byamungu is a Roman Catholic priest from Tanzania, working with the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity at the Vatican.*



Fr Gosbert Byamungu  
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## Christians Confront Violent Legacies

As we turn the pages of church history and search through archives we encounter bloody hands of Christians and violent legacies of the faith. By God's grace and in the fullness of time, some of these violent legacies are confronted, addressed and confessed and future generations seek forgiveness.

Then some Christians decide to become channels of God's healing power, peacemakers and faithful witnesses. Seeking a path of repentance, forgiveness and healing of violent experiences is a costly, hard and long journey, both personally and as a community of faith. It requires a broken



Rev. Dr Nyambura Njoroge  
© WCC/Peter Williams

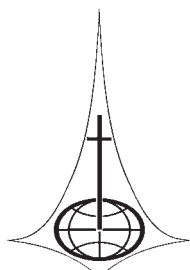
and a contrite heart and a broken spirit at the foot of the cross of Christ.

As an ecumenical African theologian nurtured in the Presbyterian tradition in post-colonial Kenya, I am deeply humbled and encouraged by the action taken by the LWF to confront one such violent legacy of the persecution and execution of the Anabaptists (Mennonites) during the Reformation. This action could not have come at a better time as we seek visible unity of the Church of Christ. Indeed, Christians the world over are called to deeply reflect on, understand and ponder the legacy

of the missionary movement—which is not without violent legacies—and a century of the ecumenical movement.

Taking a cue from the Lutherans and Mennonites, “coming to reason together” requires profound leadership, deep perception and wisdom as well as self-introspection and prophetic vision. May the spirit of reconciliation enacted by these two Christian traditions inspire more churches as we prepare for the “The International Ecumenical Peace Convocation” (IEPC) to be held from 17 to 25 May 2011 in Kingston, Jamaica under the leadership of the World Council of Churches (WCC).

*Rev. Dr Nyambura Njoroge is WCC program executive for the Ecumenical HIV and AIDS Initiative in Africa (EHAlA).*



... AND FORGIVE US ...  
 Historical and theological reflections

*Healing Memories: Reconciling in Christ, the report written by the Lutheran–Mennonite International Study Commission, provides the first narrative of Lutheran–Anabaptist relations during the Reformation written together by both parties. A member of this dialogue group writes that the report was in itself a step toward reconciliation.*

## Healing Memories: Reconciling in Christ

### The Work of the Lutheran–Mennonite International Study Commission

It began with a memory lapse.

In 1980, Lutherans invited ecumenical guests to join in celebrating the 450<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Augsburg Confession. Mennonites replied that it was difficult to celebrate a document which condemned them! Many Lutherans had forgotten this aspect of their confessional heritage, the persecutions which accompanied the condemnations. This reminder brought about a series of regional dialogues between the two Christian families.

(LWF) and the Mennonite World Conference. Building on that Commission’s work, at the 2010 LWF Assembly in Stuttgart, Germany, Lutherans will ask forgiveness “from God and from our Mennonite sisters and brothers” for the persecutions and their continuing legacies.

#### Claiming the Heritage

As the Commission began, both sides had learning to do. Lutherans needed to appreciate how contemporary

ans prevents simply revising the text—even when historical research questions its condemnations. More important, all realized that remaining theological differences could not be constructively engaged without direct confrontation of the painful history of Lutheran persecutions of Anabaptists.

The Commission’s report, *Healing Memories: Reconciling in Christ*, provides the first narrative of Lutheran–Anabaptist relations during the Reformation compiled by both parties. This is in itself a step toward reconciliation. We could each remember our stories differently when telling them only to ourselves! We hope that this history may be useful for theological students, local dialogues, congregational reading groups, individual Christians.



*MWC President Rev. Danisa Ndlovu and LWF General Secretary Rev. Dr Ishmael Noko embrace at the Mennonite World Conference World Assembly in Asunción, Paraguay in July 2009.*  
 © Lowell Brown

#### Findings

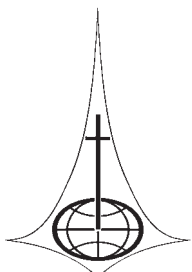
Our findings were not always comfortable for Lutherans. We had to recognize that our most revered teachers, including both Martin Luther and Philip Melancthon, gave theological support for executing Anabaptists.

On the one hand, our work highlighted their often-neglected colleague Johannes Brenz, who opposed executing Anabaptists on grounds that governments lack this authority in matters of faith. His stand demonstrates that defense of persecution is not a necessary conclusion from Lutheran theology or, specifically, from the Augsburg Confession.

But this reassurance comes at a price: Brenz’s opposition shows that his opin-

Substantial agreements in France, Germany and the United States helped prepare for the 2005–2008 Lutheran–Mennonite International Study Commission, established by The Lutheran World Federation

Mennonites claim the heritage of 16<sup>th</sup> century “Anabaptists” (literally, “re-baptizers,” a name first given by opponents). Mennonites came to understand that the Augsburg Confession’s authority for Luther-





ions were options in 16<sup>th</sup> century debate. Luther and others cannot be excused by saying that theirs was a violent age or that repudiating religious persecution was a later idea. Lutherans saw the need to do more than examine our tradition. We became convinced that repentance was our only possible response. We decided to recommend to the LWF that the communion find a way to seek forgiveness for this violent past.

But what does it mean to ask forgiveness for acts committed so long ago? While simply asking forgiveness for regrettable past acts is empty for those unconnected to them, we do have a living relation to the Anabaptist persecutions.



*Youth delegates at the 2009 MWC World Assembly in Asunción, Paraguay*  
© Marc Pasques



*October 2009: LWF Council members respond with a standing ovation to the greeting by MWC General Secretary Rev. Dr. Larry Miller.* © LWF/H. Putsman Penet

Lutherans have gratefully received many gifts from the reformers' theology—and so have an obligation also to recognize its deficiencies and failures. We continue to affirm the authority of the Augsburg Confession—and so must also address the persecution which its condemnations could seem to justify, and our own willingness to forget it.

While we found that many condemnations in the Augsburg Confession no longer apply because they were based on misunderstandings, or not directed to typical Anabaptist teaching, or not applicable to that

tradition today, there are of course significant differences remaining between our two Christian families.

Prominent issues are our understandings of baptism and the relation of the Christian and of Church to civil authority. We hope that dialogues on these subjects can continue with new energy and depth now that the painful subject of the persecutions does not lie unspoken between us.

Our Mennonite colleagues also approached

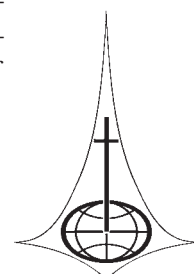
the dialogue in a spirit of searching self-examination and repentance. Although the violent persecutions were not reciprocal, Anabaptists also engaged in caricature and harsh language. Moreover, Anabaptist-related Christians have honored the martyr tradition in ways which could foster an identity rooted in victimization or suggest a “badge of Christian superiority.”

For all on this Commission, the experience of working together has been full of grace. We have seen our academic disciplines bear fruit in ways that promise to be of direct help to our churches. In the company of those who became our friends, each of us came to see our own tradition more clearly—still appreciatively but more honestly. We hope our churches have a future freed from burdens of the past and open to God's healing mercy.

*Rev. Dr. Timothy J. Wengert served on the Lutheran–Mennonite International Study Commission, 2005–2008, and was acting chairperson in its final years. He is Ministerium of Pennsylvania professor of Reformation History at the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia, USA, and a pastor of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.*



*Rev. Dr. Timothy Wengert*  
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## PERSPECTIVES FROM THE REGIONS

*Despite the painful stories marking Lutheran–Mennonite history, there are stories of hope in the ongoing collaboration globally between members and institutions of both church bodies. Such partnerships provide treatment and care to people affected by HIV and AIDS; support returning refugees and local residents with food aid; welcome young people to confirmation classes; develop together a “Lutheran diary”; share in each other’s worship; and establish peace sanctuaries for internally displaced persons.*

### Africa

#### A Partnership to Restore Health and Improve Quality of Life

It was 2004 when a team from the Selian Lutheran Hospital in Arusha, Tanzania, first encountered Glory (not her real name). She had just been widowed and diagnosed with HIV. She survived until the widespread availability of anti-retroviral drugs (ARVs) in 2005, enduring one crisis after another while deeply concerned about her two children and their upbringing.

#### Glory’s Story

Thanks to ongoing care by the hospital’s team of nurses, chaplain, clinician and social worker, Glory’s life and home have been transformed. She has been restored to good health, and sponsors have been found to provide her children with education and the family with a new home.

She went on to become educated as a community volunteer, caring for people living with HIV and AIDS, and is now a leader and spokesperson in her area. Although not every pa-

tient does as well as Glory, her story and passion for life constitute what inspires our teams as they work in very challenging environments.

Since 2004 we have been working in Tanzania to develop palliative care in particular for people living with HIV and AIDS. In the 1990s, we had worked with the Mennonites in rural Tanzania. When the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) was looking to fill this new medical position, and needing more support to make it come together, the Tanzania Mennonite Church (through the Mennonite Central Committee – MCC) became a logical linkage.

The fruits of this partnership have been the development of palliative care services based out of more than 20 sites throughout Tanzania. Four of these sites are Mennonite, while the rest, including the Selian hospital, are affiliated to

the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania (ELCT).

By adding palliative care, which is often excluded in the usual manner of services, an orientation toward quality of life and care is ensured. To date, nearly 15,000 people have received palliative care, about 80 percent of whom are HIV positive. Although many of these people have died, many more have recovered to have a new possibility of life due to the now widespread availability of ARVs. Additionally, over 10,000 “vulnerable children” have received supportive assistance through related funding.

*Kristopher Hartwig is a medical doctor, working as the palliative care coordinator at the Selian Lutheran Hospital in Arusha, Tanzania. Kristopher and his wife Rebecca serve as ELCA missionaries in the ELCT with support from the MCC.*



Dr Kristopher Hartwig  
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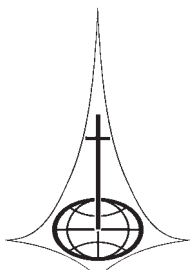
#### Lutherans and Mennonites, Already in Touch around the World

The MCC has assisted Lutheran relief programs in **Angola** and **Ethiopia**, supporting help to returning refugees and water projects.

In **Eritrea**, the LWF’s aid and development programs have received Mennonite-related assistance from the Canadian Foodgrains Bank (CFGFB) for the 2003-2005 drought affecting more than 150,000 people. The aid included 150,000 kgs of lentils and 90,000 liters of vegetable oil as well as supplementary food for new mothers with children under five years of age. Other assistance from the Mennonite Central Committee included 3,147 tons of wheat. The LWF Department

for World Service program (DWS) in cooperation with the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Eritrea stresses emergency aid, community development, women’s and children’s rights, and combating HIV and AIDS.

The United States’ relief agency Lutheran World Relief and the MCC Mennonite Central Committee are partnered with other church organization in the Nairobi-based Sudan Working Group, dealing with issues relating to peace between **North** and **South Sudan**, which culminated in the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement. Canadian Lutheran World Relief (CLWR) also provided support for the MCC’s work in Sudan.



Asia

Reconciliation in Indonesia's Mission Field

The growth of the Lutheran churches in Indonesia (today, more than 5.6 million members) was not the result of the work of one missionary society. A Dutch-German Mennonite from the Ukraine, Heinrich Dirks, began missionary work when he landed in Tapanuli in 1870.

Dirks studied at the Missionshaus at Barmen, Germany, where he learned not only theology but the language and culture of the Batak people. When he arrived in Batak land (North Sumatra), he turned the land into an agricultural area on which members of the congregation could grow crops. He saw large-scale coffee plantations as a way of generating income for mission work. This gained him the reputation of being a "realistic" missionary. As Dirks wrote to the Dutch Mennonite Mission Association (DZV), "Our friends in Europe should not think that a missionary in a heathen country can establish a congregation without spot or wrinkle right away..."

For Dirks, the gospel was closely linked to the livelihood and social problems of the people.

At the time, Islam was spreading steadily in this



*The Lutheran Angkola Batak Church in Mandailing, North Sumatra (Indonesia), was a Mennonite church before a unity agreement in 1976. © Ramly Harahap*



*Rev. Dr Martin L. Sinaga  
© LWF/H. Putsman Penet*

area, while his missionary society was faced with decreasing financial support.

This raised the question as to whether there should be an exclusively Mennonite mission or a united mission. Following a meeting between Mennonite, Lutheran and Reformed missionaries, DZV representative A. K. Kuiper convinced them to work together so that the Europeans would not export their differences

and tensions to Indonesia. "The world is too strong for a divided Christianity," Kuiper said. "Unity is needed. Jesus Christ will himself constitute a community for himself there."

This ecumenical concept a century ago marked a small step toward reconciliation in Indonesia.

*Rev. Dr Martin L. Sinaga is study secretary for Theology and Church in the LWF Department for Theology and Studies. He is a member of the Simalungun Protestant Christian Church in North Sumatra, Indonesia.*

**Lutherans and Mennonites, Already in Touch around the World**

Twenty-seven years ago, **Canada's** Mennonites helped found the CFGB, so that Canadians could take part in the fight against world hunger, and form partnerships with similar agencies.

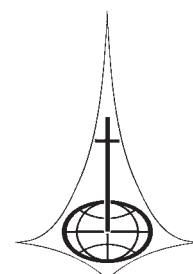
CLWR became one of those partners, linking Lutherans and Mennonites in Canada in a way that was to foreshadow the new relationship now developing around the world.

For more than 15 years, the Mennonite-Lutheran partnership in CFGB has reached into **India**. There, aid from the Canadian program reaches the Church's Auxiliary for Social Action (CASA), where eight Lutheran churches take part in wide-ranging social service programs. The Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) also gives support to the core program of CASA, said Nirmal Singh, head of CASA's emergency programs. MCC also helps the organization's rehabilitation programs, he added.

The Mennonite involvement in CFGB has supported CASA's work in Bihar, eastern India, helping 7,500 families in community development activities like de-silting land, building embankments and roads, and raising houses above flood level.

In **Jerusalem**, the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) shares office space with the LWF Department for World Service, and has joined the LWF in providing humanitarian assistance in the region.

In Washington, D.C., **USA**, Lutheran World Relief, MCC and the Lutheran Office for Governmental Affairs of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America cooperate on issues such as global food security, Middle East peace and immigration. A former staff of the Mennonite office now works for LWR.



## Europe

### After Confirmation Classes Comes Baptism – Lutheran-Mennonite Cooperation in the Italian Diaspora

Protestants are a tiny minority in Italy and they live scattered over a large territory. Church services and groups are usually hard to organize. However, good cooperation occurs time and again between the different Protestant denominations.

Last autumn saw an interesting example of Lutheran-Mennonite

cooperation in our small Turin Lutheran congregation, which has around 90 German and Italian-speaking members.

We had just begun a new program preparing for confirmation, when a Mennonite family turned up with three teenage children. I learned that the oldest boy, Moritz\*, was soon to

be baptized. Prior to that, however, he was to receive a solid grounding in religious education in his German mother tongue from a Protestant church. “Could you include him in your confirmation classes?” asked Moritz’s mother, Clara\*.

She herself had a German Protestant background but on becoming a Mennonite had not needed to be rebaptized. Here I discovered that Mennonites have long recognized infant baptism and that the term “Anabaptist” is no longer appropriate for them.

And so Moritz started regularly attending our confirmation classes. While the course ends with confirmation for the other confirmands, Moritz will be baptized by a Mennonite pastor coming from Germany. I look forward to being present on that occasion as the pastor of the Evangelical Lutheran congregation of Turin.

The Lutheran congregation in Turin is part of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Italy (ELCI). The ELCI joined the LWF in 1947 and has about 7000 members.

*Pastor em. Thomas E. Fuchs is currently serving the Evangelical Lutheran congregation of Turin (Italy).*

\*The family’s real names have been changed at their request.



*Confirmation group from Turin, Italy with Rev. Thomas E. Fuchs and a mother in front of the Torre Pellice Waldensian Church. © ELCI*

### Decades of Lutheran-Mennonite Cooperation in the Netherlands

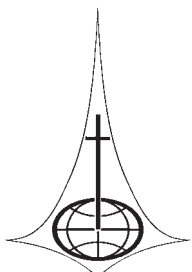
The oldest Lutheran church in Amsterdam is hidden away on a cross-roads in the old part of the city. A stone’s throw across a canal from the Lutheran *Spuikerkerk*, built in 1639, is another church, disguised as a residence.

It is the *Singelkerk*, also built in 1639, the oldest Mennonite church in the Netherlands’ capital, Amsterdam.

Both are almost hidden, barely visible, because when they were built, neither was in conformity with the Reformed state church.

The physical proximity of both neighbors represents the natural relationship between Lutherans and Mennonites (*Doopsgezinden*) in the Netherlands. By the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century both Lutherans and Menno-

nites had seminaries at the University of Amsterdam. Emeritus professor Joop Boendermaker remembers in 1946: “Although we did not share courses, we studied together and therefore shared our lives.” In 1968 the education of pastors and church workers became a joint effort; catechism was taught by Mennonites, liturgy by Lutherans. The academic



collaboration ended with the Lutherans' merger into the Protestant Church in the Netherlands (PCN) in 2004.

At the local level, congregations from the two traditions continued to help each other throughout summer times, as collaboration ensured that the small congregations could offer services.

It appears that no official document ever mandated any cooperation between Lutherans and Mennonites. Pragmatism was the basis for this cooperation. Theological differences were not burdens, but were respected and accepted. This is apparent in a hymnal used until 1955, in which both traditions were represented. With this bit of Dutch history in mind, the LWF's act of seeking forgiveness "from God and from our Mennonite sisters and brothers



*A Lutheran magazine and an annual book (or "Lutheran diary") published by the Protestant Church in the Netherlands. © Praxedis Bouwman*



*The Doopsgezinde Singelkerk (in Dutch) or Mennonite Church, Amsterdam. The original name of the church is kerk bij 't lam which is translated as "church near the lamb". © Stadsarchief Amsterdam 2009/Martin Alberts*

for the harm that our forebears in the 16<sup>th</sup> century committed to Anabaptists" is a puzzling one: we in the Netherlands had forgotten!

## Lutheran Diary

One of the tasks of the Evangelical Lutheran synod in the PCN is to keep its tradition alive, develop it and bring it to serve the whole church. There are two projects aimed at fulfill-

ing this task—a Lutheran magazine and an annual book on the liturgical year. This so-called Lutheran diary is a compilation of the Lutheran and ecumenical Dutch lectionary complete with daily meditations, written by Lutheran, and other theologians.

To make the LWF's gesture of asking forgive-



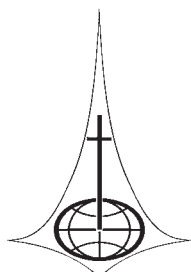
*Ms Praxedis Bouwman © Reind Loggen*

ness from the Mennonites visible within the PCN, the next diary will focus on the Mennonites and on the LWF's ecumenical relations.

Several Mennonite theologians will write meditations on important themes of the tradition such as baptism together with the personal profession of faith on Palm Sunday; the strength of the local congregation focusing on Pentecost; and peace education.

A rare coincidence occurs in 2011 as the Dutch Mennonites (*Doopsgezinden*) celebrate the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of their national society; the inauguration of the first female pastor 100 years ago; the start of the seminary 275 years ago; and the death of Anabaptist leader Menno Simons 450 years ago.

*Ms Praxedis Bouwman is president of the Communication Committee of Lutheran Minority Churches in Europe (KALME) and vice president of the Toronto (Canada)-based World Association for Christian Communication.*



## Americas

### Washing with the Mennonites

My wife Lois grew up on a dairy farm just north of Elmira Ontario. Her family, most of her extended family and her neighbors belonged to a Mennonite congregation in the nearby village of Floradale.

On Good Friday this year, my recently widowed father-in-law Ervin and I went to church at Floradale Mennonite Church. Lois and some of the kids were out of the county. Others had other obligations and commitments for the day. It was just the two of us.

It was a lovely service, beautifully led. The music and preaching were inspired. The hospitality of the congregation was exceptional. But most moving to me was our participation in the ritual of foot washing that most Mennonite congregations share each Good Friday.

Large basins and towels were brought forward. Men and women moved to different parts of the church. Lines formed and congregants paired up, each in turn kneeling to wash and then dry one another's feet. The partners then rose and exchanged an embrace of God's peace.

How moving it was for me to share such a tender and holy moment with this man who I have come to love so deeply over the past 30 plus years. How humbling to see him drop to his 81 year-old knees before me. Our exchange of peace included a kiss and the heartfelt blessing, "I love you."

At the Latin America and Caribbean Pre-Assembly LWF General Secretary-elect Rev. Martin Junge spoke of the sometimes troubled history between Lutherans and Mennonites and the intent to create new relationships at the LWF Assembly in Stuttgart this July. "This history can't be erased," he said, "But we must take our responsibility for it and ensure that it is not repeated."

One way to do that is to identify lessons learned from the past as we engage the challenging theological differences in the church today. Hurling anathemas between Lutherans and Mennonites is no way to engage theological differences no matter how significant we think they are. No good can come from that.

And—thank God!—we don't need to wait 500 years to claim the healing and reconciliation waters of Christ's peace. It is always there and it is ours, right now, for the asking!

Thank you God for giving us that gift, and thank you Ervin for believing it!

*By Bishop Michael J. Pryse, Eastern Synod, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada*



*Bishop Michael J. Pryse. © ELCIC*

### Deepening a Fruitful Ecumenical Bond

The Lutheran World Federation's gracious gesture of asking forgiveness for the historic persecution of Mennonites is a significant step in ecumenical relationships with the Anabaptist faith communion. I would like to express my personal appreciation for that gesture of Christian reconciliation.

The LWF statement is an important one for Mennonites and lays the foundation for an even deeper ecumenical bond in the future.

At the same time, it is also a recognition of the healing and restoration that has already characterized the relationship between Mennonites and Lutherans in Ontario over the past 100 years.

In the 16<sup>th</sup> century, our faith traditions went their separate ways until our paths crossed again

in North America. In the Waterloo Region of Ontario, Mennonites and Lutherans were the pioneers and founders of the community. We learned new appreciation for each other's spiritual journey as we farmed side by side and even shared our sons and daughters in marriage.

Today we often sit beside each other in the same seminary classroom, share in recreation together on the same clergy curling rink, and are partners in advocating for

social justice. Here in Ontario, the LWF statement of reconciliation will deepen and extend the already fruitful ecumenical bond that we share.

For that I am most grateful. Thanks be to God!

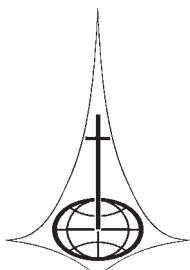
*By David Martin, executive officer, Mennonite Church of Eastern Canada, Kitchener, Ontario.*



*David T. Martin © Private*

### Lutherans and Mennonites, in Touch around the World

**Canadian** Lutheran World Relief (CLWR) is one of nine members of Canadian Churches in Action, where the Mennonites contributed USD 50,000 toward a USD 1.9 million earthquake relief project in **Haiti**, where CLWR was the lead agency.



## Colombia: Churches as Peace Sanctuaries

The Christian Center for Justice, Peace and Nonviolent Action (JUSTAPAZ) was created in 1990 by the Mennonite Church of Colombia (IMCOL) to respond to the violence and social injustice affecting communities in Colombia. Its establishment was based on the values rooted in the historic pacifist and egalitarian tradition of the 16<sup>th</sup> century social movements, which gave life to the Mennonite church.

Lutherans and JUSTAPAZ have been working together on human rights issues in Colombia. As a ministry of IMCOL, JUSTAPAZ runs four programs:

- Churches as peace sanctuaries
- Analysis and transformation of conflicts
- Non-violence and objection of conscience
- Documentation and political advocacy

Violence in Colombia directly affects the life of faith communities. For 20 years, JUSTAPAZ has worked with congregations and churches of different denominations. JUSTAPAZ identified a need to accompany and support congregations, initially by praying together and offering information on non-violence and on conflict resolution initiatives to congregational leaders. During a period of study, different church leaders and members of various denominations engaged in common prayers, read and reflected on the Bible and on situations of violence experienced by the congregations.

These experiences led to the vision of “churches as peace sanctuaries,” an



Participants at a Christian Center for Justice, Peace and Nonviolent Action (JUSTAPAZ) congress in Bogotá, Colombia in April 2010 © Justapaz

active response to people living amid conflict. Colombia’s chaotic situation leads us to reflect upon our role as churches, not only in order to find strength as congregations but also to understand what it means to be the salt and light for all people and communities.

We recognize that people in Colombia are experiencing difficult times, and Christians are not exempt from it (Jeremiah 45:1-5, John 16:33). The challenge is to recognize that God has settled us here in order to help, and give testimony and actions of salvation (Esther 4:12-14).

Three aspects guide churches’ actions as peace sanctuaries:

- 1) One people full of the Holy Spirit carrying out their gifts, talents and ministries welcome persons affected by the spiritual and material conflict in the country.
- 2) One message of non-violence that discerns the times from the gospel and calls for repentance.



Ms Jenny Neme © Private

3) A physical space or a peace territory is publicly announced, thereby demanding respect against violation by force. This allows face-to-face meetings between opponents, debates and public discussions, moments of prayer and reflection where all can feel secure and protected; it is a refuge for persecuted persons for their convictions or those affected by violence and injustice. Churches have been asked to consider what it means to be a sanctuary of peace.

In ten years, around 100 local congregations have declared themselves as sanctuaries of peace or are developing peace-oriented ministries. JUSTAPAZ has also produced “A Prophetic Call,” documentation on human rights violations against people of Christian evangelical churches in Colombia (see [www.justapaz.org/spip.php?article149](http://www.justapaz.org/spip.php?article149)).

*Ms Jenny Neme is director of JUSTAPAZ, and a member of the Mennonite Church of Colombia.*

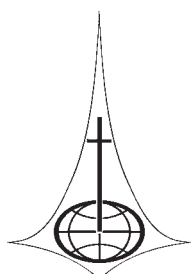
## What If Our Memories of Suffering and Persecution Were Healed?

### How has our history shaped our identity?

As we tell our story, Anabaptists were earnest followers of Jesus inspired by a fresh reading of scripture and the movement of the Holy Spirit to live

according to Christ’s teachings, as we believe the early Christians had done. But in the 16<sup>th</sup> Century their distinctive practices—believer’s bap-

tism, separation of church and state, rejection of the oath and the sword, sharing of earthly possessions—were seen as so threatening that church



and civil authorities responded with violent persecution. Several thousand Anabaptists were executed, and many more tortured, imprisoned, or forced from their homes. For centuries, Anabaptists and their Mennonite/Amish descendents lived at the margins of European society, suffering under many restrictions.

This experience of continuing persecution confirmed the Anabaptist-Mennonite understanding of faithful Christian discipleship. Followers of Christ, it seemed, should expect such opposition from the world. Anabaptists frequently described baptism as a three-stage process: an inner baptism of the spirit, followed by an outer baptism of water, and then sealed, for the true Christian, by a baptism of blood.

The stories of faithful suffering—passed on in pamphlets, hymns, and pictures—became a vital part of Anabaptist-Mennonite identity. In the seventeenth century, many of these accounts were compiled

**True Christians are sheep among wolves ... and must be baptized in anguish and affliction, tribulation and persecution, suffering and death.**

—Conrad Grebel, “Father of Anabaptists,” 1524

into a massive volume known as *The Martyrs Mirror*, illustrated with memorable engravings.

Mennonites today, of course, live in much different contexts. Yet the martyr stories continue to be a living source of identity for many Mennonites. In North America, where I live, the etching of Dirk Willems is the most popular image among contemporary Mennonites. Willems, who escaped from prison, is shown rescuing the man who was pursuing



An etching of “The Martyrs’ Mirror” pictures a celebrated 16<sup>th</sup> century Dutch Anabaptist martyr Dirk Willems who, after escaping from prison, turned around to rescue his pursuer who had fallen through thin ice. © Mennonite Library and Archives

him, who had fallen through the ice of a lake. This image appears on church bulletins, books, coffee mugs, posters and even a microbrew. A traveling exhibit on the often-reprinted *Martyrs Mirror* circulates widely among our communities. A recent collection of Anabaptist martyr stories, published in nine languages, finds eager readership in Mennonite churches around the world.

### How do we honor this heritage now?

These stories, as a vital element of our identity, remind contemporary Mennonites that we have a faith worth dying for. They caution us against our temptation to justify violence in the name of Christ; they witness to the possibility of non-violence and “enemy love” even in extreme circumstances; and they call us to a life of compassion and humility, even while reminding us that non-resistant love is unlikely to be rewarded.

I say all this with conviction. Yet I am keenly

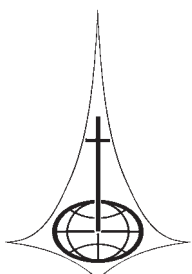
aware that there are dangers also in honoring these stories. As the prevalence of Willems’ image suggests, our focus on martyr stories can blur into sentimentality and consumerism. Moreover, these accounts can reduce the complexities of the 16<sup>th</sup> century to a simple morality tale of good and evil, with actors who are either Christ-like or violent. Furthermore, cultivating a memory of victimhood can foster a self-righteousness and arrogance blinding us to the human frailties that are deeply woven also into our own tradition.

So what does “healing of memories” mean for Mennonites? What does it mean for a people, separated from the events by more than four centuries, to forgive or be reconciled with those speaking for the former persecutors? And, perhaps most haunting, what will happen to our story—to Mennonite identity—if the memories of past persecution and suffering are indeed “healed?”

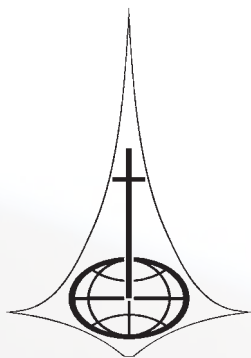
*Prof. John D. Roth teaches history at, Goshen College, Goshen Indiana, USA.*



Prof. John D. Roth  
© Goshen College Public







# LWF Sunday

## Service of Repentance

*The altar space will be marked by the liturgical color purple (repentance), during the liturgy, the liturgical color white (Christ) will be brought in and placed over it.*

*Responses of the congregation are in **bold** type.*

### Instrumental Prelude

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### Greeting

---

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,  
the love of God,  
and the communion of the Holy Spirit be  
with you all.

#### **And also with you.**

Today we come to look together at our  
painful past, which has divided us. We

remember how Anabaptist Christians  
knew suffering and persecution, and we  
remember how some of our most honored  
Reformation leaders defended this per-  
secution in the name of faithfulness. We  
come with a deep sense of regret and pain.  
We turn our hearts to God and to one  
another to confess the wrongdoing. We  
hunger and thirst for a new beginning.

#### **Hymn *Come Holy Spirit* (Agape No. 13)**

## Opening Responses

---

Hunger and thirst for righteousness!  
Hunger and thirst for peace!  
Meek and merciful ones

**Blessed are you.**

Hunger und Durst nach Gerechtigkeit!  
Faim et soif de la paix!  
Los humildes y misericordiosos

**Selig seid ihr.**

Hambre y sed de justicia !  
Hunger und Durst nach Frieden !  
Les doux et miséricordieux

**Bienaventurados son**

**Gracious God,  
Nourish us with your word,  
and fill us with your Spirit,  
Renew our hearts and minds,  
transform our communities,  
and heal your world  
through Jesus Christ. Amen.**

## Part I

### Remember the past together: Listen to experiences of persecution and suffering

---

#### Anabaptist Martyr Ballad *Als Christus mit sein wahren Lehr*

*[The earliest accounts of the Anabaptist martyrs circulated as hymns, often shaped by Psalms or the suffering of Christ. Sung as expressions of worship and commemoration, these martyr ballads continue today to be favorites in Mennonite worship around the world. They remind us that following Christ is likely to exact a cost; but they also testify to the conviction that love is more powerful than fear, and that life in Christ is victorious over the forces of violence and death.]*

*This hymn goes back to Michael Sattler, a leader of the first generation of Anabaptists and probable drafter of the “Schleitheim Confession,” an important statement of Anabaptist beliefs; who was put to death in 1527.]*

#### Testimonies: The Cost of Persecution and Its Legacies

---

Barbara Unger was a young mother of four children. With others, she chose to be baptized in 1529. That was her YES to following Jesus and her YES to living with brothers and sisters in visible community. They wanted to be a community incarnating the Body of Christ – where daily life demonstrated the practical effects of justice, non-violence and love of their neighbor.

She and the others who were baptized were prepared for what might come.

“Anyone who wants to be a proper Christian must leave behind all they possess and suffer persecution until death,” they were warned.

No, martyrdom was neither sought nor glorified at the time.

It was only lived and accepted as the unavoidable consequence of their witness. That was rooted in the confidence: “Who will separate us from the love of Christ?” (Rom 8:35)

Barbara Unger was executed, with others, in Reinhardsbrunn, Thuringia, on 18 January 1530, barely 18 months after her baptism.

There is plenty of documentation that those persecuted had already forgiven their tormentors. They did so in the spirit of the Lord’s Prayer and that Jesus had prayed, “Forgive them, for they know not what they are doing.”

And yet the blood witnesses in those times also remind us of Jesus’ words: “See, I am sending you out like sheep into the midst of wolves.” (Mt 10:16)

Today we see ourselves seriously confronted with the awkward question:

“What would I be ready to die for?”

What are we willing to give up—for heaven’s sake? What do we live and work for to the last?

The witness of Anabaptist and other martyrs challenges us today—in our post-Christian or non-Christian societies—to live as the Body of Christ. They point us to Jesus.

He exhorts and encourages us to live in the community of God’s shalom, to speak prophetically in this world, to be non-violent in our actions, to serve others and to bring about reconciliation.

And not least to invite others to join us and accompany them as we follow Jesus together.

*Frieder Boller, Chairperson, Association of Mennonite Assemblies in Germany*

**What have we done?**

# IV

## Part II Act now: Ask for forgiveness

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### Prayer of confession

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God of grace,  
you have reconciled us to yourself through  
Jesus Christ and given us the ministry of  
reconciliation.  
Today we confess that we in the Lutheran  
tradition have betrayed this ministry  
and sinned against you and our  
Anabaptist sisters and brothers in Christ.

God of truth,  
we confess that we have not been true to  
your Word.  
When our teachers like Martin Luther  
used theological reasoning to justify state  
violence against religious dissidents, we  
have not repudiated this abuse of teaching  
authority.  
We have continued to teach ungenerously  
and unworthily about others who seek to  
follow your gospel.

Our minds have been clouded by sin; and  
so persecution and murder have been done  
in your name.

**Take away our tortured readings of your  
Word;  
turn us and renew our minds.**

God of love,  
We confess that we have betrayed your love.  
We have not seen in the Anabaptist wit-  
nesses your beloved children, whose  
lives challenge us with another vision of  
Christian discipleship.  
We have looked away from our painful  
complicity in the history of persecution.  
We have not seen how power seeks to  
defend itself, and we have forgotten the  
cost to those who suffered.  
In our disdain for the discipleship of  
Anabaptist Christians, we have scorned  
your Spirit.

**Take away our arrogance and hardness of heart;  
turn us and renew our hearts.**

God of peace,  
We confess that we have not followed your call to be peacemakers.  
We have too easily accepted violence for the sake of order.  
We have trampled on the radical witness of Anabaptist men, women and children when we could better have found our own ways to walk with them in seeking the ways of peace.

**Take away our trust in violence,  
turn us, guide our feet into the way of peace.**

**Silence**

**Hymn *Our Father, we have wandered*** (ELW No. 606) [ELCA hymn book]

**Reading: Ezekiel 36:26-36**

**Reading: The Beatitudes (Matthew 5:3-12)**

[During this reading, a white cloth and olive

*branches are brought to the altar.]*

**Hymn *Friedensstifter wollen wir sein***  
(*Mennonitisches Gesangbuch No. 488*)

## Receiving the sign of the cross

---

The sign of the cross makes present to us the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

It touches the wounds of sin, heals our brokenness and restores our lives.

We receive a new heart and a new spirit.

This process of healing, enabled through God's grace, finds its tangible expression through the oil of healing and peace.

*[Olive oil from the Holy Land is passed through the congregation, with each person receiving from a neighbor the sign of the cross on the hand and then marking a cross with oil into the hand of the next person.]*

*As you make the sign of the cross say:*

**God gives you a new heart and a new spirit.**

Response: **Thanks be to God.**

# VI

## Hymns

---

*During this action hymns are sung. These may include:*

***Wahrer christlicher Glaube***

*[This hymn goes back to Menno Simons.]*

***El cielo canta alegría*** (*Thuma Mina Nr. 54*)

***Like the murmur of the dove's song*** (*ELW No. 403*) [*ELCA hymn book*]

***What wounds would heal?***

*[This hymn is written especially for this service by Terry MacArthur.]*

## Part III Envision the future together: Let your feet be guided into the way of peace

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### Testimonies: Seeds of reconciliation and peace

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Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

During the LWF Pre-Assembly for the Latin American and Caribbean region, we met with the Mennonite church brothers and sisters in Colombia, and while we expressed our wish to ask them for forgiveness for the religious intolerance of Lutherans in the past, I realized the meaning of this act of reconciliation between churches in the context and situation we are living in our country.

Colombians have long suffered violence, largely due to the inability of many to tolerate ideological, political or religious differences.

The act of reconciliation of two churches which recognize the importance of healing wounds of the past in order to be able to live in peace in the present gives a message of vital importance to our society. In order to advance firmly in the construction of a sustainable peace, we need to reconcile ourselves departing from the recognition of the errors we have made as society in the past and in the present.

*Bishop Eduardo Martinez, Evangelical Lutheran Church of Colombia*

### **What have we done?**

# What wounds would heal?

adapting The Church's One Foundation

Terry MacArthur

1. What wounds would heal the long-held hurt, the broken heart? What pain can  
 2. What sor-row reach-es from dis-tress to ap-pre-hend the trou-bling  
 4. With time the riv-er smoothes all edg-es but too late, for man-y

1. What wounds  
 sor - row  
 time the

mend to- geth- er that which pulled a- part? Can bend- ed knee and sor-ried lips re  
 dis- a- gree- ments ar- gued with- out end? What word would still the shrill of scorn, the  
 souls keep down- ing from the weight of hate? More wounds can't heal the long-held hurt but

1. Can bend - ed  
 2. What word would  
 4. More wounds can't

store the sev-ered dreams drowned in di- vi- sion's tear- filled streams?  
 cy- cle of a- buse, to halt the an- ger fears un- loose? 3. The  
 curse the steps to claim a new be- gin- ning, a new aim. 5. So

verse 1 | verses 2 and 4

2. What

Wound- ed One still bleeds and seeks for hu- man- kind the cour- age of for-  
 Je- sus puts hurt hands up- on his nail- scarred feet where peace from wound- ed

give- ness, with jus- tice en- twined. He speaks to ven- geance deaf- ened ears to love the en- e-  
 mer- cy re- peats a new beat. He touch- es ev- ery sor- rowed nerve so love can find its

my and rise up blessed as God's own child with heal- ing's lib- er- ty.  
 chance to bridge the stream of bur- ied dreams with res- sur- rec- tion's dance.

D.S.

4. With

## Intercessions

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With the whole people of God,  
let us pray for the church and all of God's  
creation.

We pray for the church universal, that  
through God's living presence it is a place  
of reconciliation where ruined places are  
rebuilt. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

We pray for leaders and teachers of the  
church, that as mutual honor is nourished  
among Christian traditions, the under-  
standing of God's grace and truth receive  
new strength. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

We pray for the healing of memories in  
local communities, that in Christ conflicts  
are transformed and renewed relationships  
grow. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

We pray for the whole creation, that jus-  
tice and peace extend to all God's crea-  
tures. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

We pray for all those sowing seeds of  
peace that their work bears abundant  
fruits. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

**Lord's Prayer** (*in our many languages*)

**Hymn Bless and keep us Lord** (*Agape No. 45*)

## Blessing

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The God of healing and reconciliation  
grant you to live in peace with one anoth-  
er in accordance with Jesus Christ.

The God of abundance meet your hunger  
and thirst for righteousness so that you  
may abound in hope by the power of the  
Holy Spirit.

The God of all grace bless you now and  
forever.

**Amen.**



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