

Highlights

48 New Council Members Will Lead the Federation until the Next Assembly4

Forty-eight nominees representing the seven regions of The Lutheran World Federation were elected to the Council at the Eleventh LWF Assembly in Stuttgart, Germany...

FEATURE: Assembly Participants Savor "World Cuisine"8

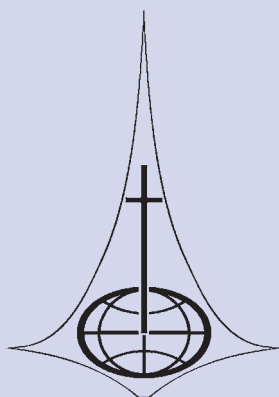
An outdoor supper during the Eleventh Assembly of The Lutheran World Federation brought home the communal meaning of Jesus' prayer "Give Us Today Our Daily Bread" and underscored the universal right of all peoples to food security...

Growing Up Under Dictatorship Shaped General Secretary-Elect's Vision11

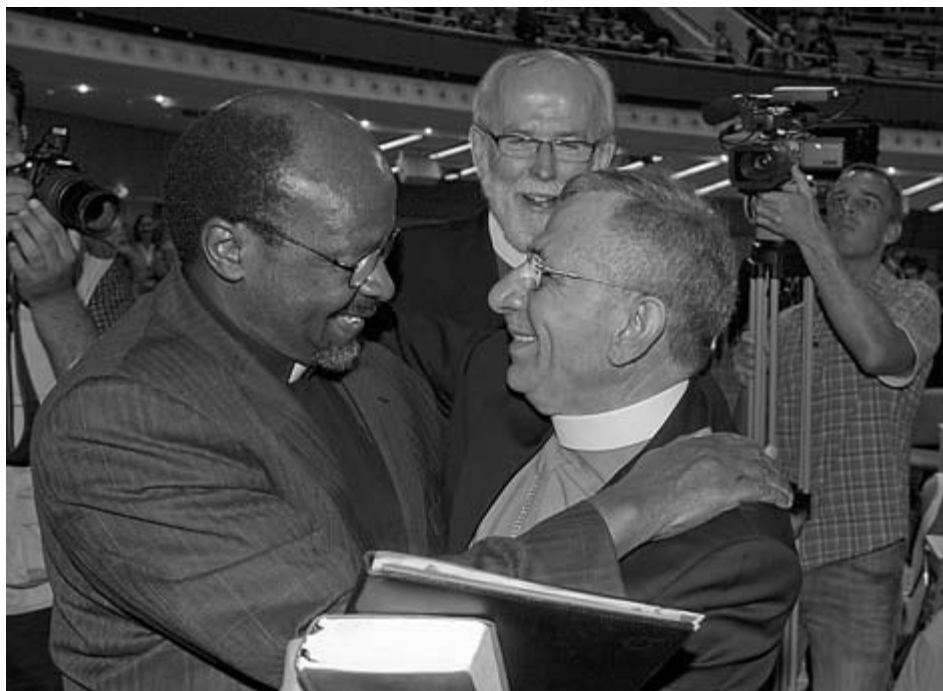
Growing up in Chile under the rule of a military dictatorship and suffering the resulting losses of freedom "profoundly shaped" the values of LWF General Secretary-elect Martin Junge...

Call to Advocate for Fairer Resource Distribution and Fight Against Corruption..... 13

LWF Eleventh Assembly delegates adopted a resolution calling for greater transparency in the mining industry and a fair distribution of resources, and to support the fight against corruption...



Palestinian Bishop Munib Younan Elected LWF President



LWF General Secretary Rev. Dr. Ishmael Noko [right] and outgoing LWF President Bishop Mark S. Hanson [center] congratulate Bishop Dr. Munib A. Younan following his election as the new president of the global Lutheran body. © LWF/Erick Coll

A Passionate Campaigner for Peace and Interfaith Dialogue in the Middle East

STUTTGART, Germany/GENEVA, 24 July 2010 (LWI) – Bishop Munib A. Younan of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land (ELCJHL) was elected President of The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) by the Eleventh Assembly in Stuttgart, a gathering of delegates and others from the LWF member churches.

Three hundred and sixty registered delegates voted, representing 140 member churches from 79 countries. Bishop Younan received 300 votes affirming his election, 23 against; there were 37 abstentions. There were no other nominees.

Younan, 59, succeeds Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, who has been

LWF President since the organization's last Assembly in Winnipeg, Canada, in 2003.

Ordained in 1976 after study in Palestine and gaining a degree from the University of Helsinki [Finland], Younan was a youth pastor and teacher in his homeland. From 1976 to 1979 he was pastor of the Church of the Redeemer in Jerusalem and he has also served parishes in Beit Jala and Ramallah. He studied at the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago and he holds an honorary doctorate, granted by Wartburg College in Waverly, Iowa.

Continues on page 3

Contents

Elections

- 1, 3Palestinian Bishop Munib Younan Elected LWF President
- 3.....LWF President-Elect’s Personal History Shapes His Vision For Peace and Justice
- 4.....48 New Council Members Will Lead the Federation until the Next Assembly

6-7Farewell to Rev. Dr Ishmael Noko

Saturday Evening, Sunday Worship and General Secretary-elect

- 8.....FEATURE: Assembly Participants Savor “World Cuisine”
- 9.....Württemberg Bishop July Delighted at Fellowship in Faith
- 10.....Pray That Christians Don’t Flee the Holy Land, Says LWF President-Elect
- 11Growing Up Under Chilean Dictatorship Shaped General Secretary-Elect’s Vision for LWF

Statements and Resolutions

- 13..... Call to Advocate for Fairer Resource Distribution and Fight Against Corruption
- 13Assembly Denounces Human Trafficking
- 13LWF Shocked and Saddened by Deaths at Duisburg “Love Parade”
- 13Social and Educational Programs Recommended
- 14Lutherans Commit to People’s Right to Food
- 14Assembly Addresses Gender, Generational and Laity/Clergy Balance
- 14Member Churches Urged to Participate in Global Priorities Campaign
- 15 Call to Assume Ethical Guidance Role on Foreign Debt and Economic Governance
- 15 “Window of Opportunity” for Climate Change is Closing, Assembly Warns
- 15Delegates Call for Further Reduction of Carbon Footprint
- 16Pain of Exclusion Means Suffering and Loss for Whole Church
- 16Proposal to Develop Online Resource Center
- 16LWF Speaks Up for Dalits
- 16Assembly Reaffirms Commitments to Indigenous People
- 16Emphasis on Advocacy Work for People with Disabilities

Assembly Closing

- 17Assembly Message: “True Humanity” Is Found in Giving and Receiving
- 18Lutherans “Instruments of God’s Answer to the Prayer of Others”
- 19LWF Eleventh Assembly Concludes in Joyful Worship

News in Brief

- 20Council Approves 2011 Budget

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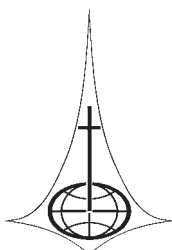
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Palestinian Bishop Munib Younan Elected LWF President

A Passionate Campaigner for Peace
and Inter-Faith Dialogue in the Middle East

Continued from p. 1

The president-elect has headed his church body since 1998 and was the third Palestinian bishop of the church founded by Germans in the 19th century and previously led by clergy from Germany. A member of the LWF since 1974, the ELCJHL has about 3,000 members.

The bishop was the first to translate the Augsburg Confession, a key document of the Lutheran Church, into Arabic.

Younan is the former LWF vice-president for the Asia region and is a recent past president of the Fellowship of the Middle East Evangelical Churches. He is also a co-founder of the Council of Religious Institutions in the Holy Land, made up of the two chief rabbis of Israel, heads of the local churches, the Chief Judge of the Islamic Court in Palestine and other Muslim leaders.

He is the author of *Witnessing for Peace*, a book about the search for



Assembly delegates cast their ballots for the president's election. © LWF/Erick Coll

peace in his homeland and numerous articles on churches and the search for peace in the Holy Land.

His wife, Suad, is director of the Helen Keller School in the Jerusalem suburb of Beit Hanina,

which educates visually-impaired children. She is also the chairperson of the women's committee of the ELCJHL. The couple has three children and one grandchild.

LWF President-Elect's Personal History Shapes His Vision For Peace and Justice

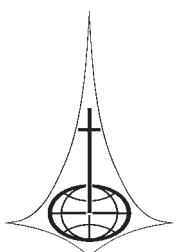
Chocolate milk was the young Munib Younan's first contact with The Lutheran World Federation (LWF). Prior to his election as the next LWF President, Younan told the Eleventh Assembly that, in the 1950s, chocolate milk was offered daily to students in the Martin Luther School in Jerusalem. It was a gift from the LWF.

He explained, "The chocolate milk physically nourished us refugees and was the answer to our prayer, 'Give Us Today Our Daily Bread.' It also nurtured in us knowledge of the theology of the Lutheran communion; it taught us about God's love."

Reflecting on his personal history as a recipient of "daily bread" from the hands of others, Younan said that "we [the LWF] must be boldly prophetic." He urged the communion to shape policies that will address the world's pressing concerns, including climate change, illegitimate debt, gender discrimination in church and society and governmental corruption. In this way, he said, the communion "carries her pulpit out into the street and introduces to the world the God of love." The LWF must continue to focus on shared values "in order to oppose extremism and xenophobia, especially anti-Semitism and Islamophobia."

As bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land, Younan said that living in the midst of conflict motivates him to work with all churches for justice, peace and reconciliation in their own contexts. "It has taught me how to keep hope alive in hopeless situations."

Because he lives in a land of conflict and tension, his election as LWF President would be an encouragement to minority churches in countries with other religious majorities, he said. It would also give Arab Christians "new courage." At the press conference following his





Bishop Dr. Munib A. Younan of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land following his election as LWF President. © LWF/Erick Coll

election, he told journalists that “we should encourage Arab Christians to stay in Arab countries. For what is the Holy Land without Christians?”

Whether or not the state of Israel has “theological meaning,” Younan said in reply to a journalist’s question, is not a pressing concern for him.

Today “our concern in the Middle East is fear of Israelis and fear of Palestinians.” It is essential, he said, that whatever theological view is adopted, “it does not impede the progress of justice. I want justice for Israel and justice for Palestine.”

He noted that both the general secretary-elect—Rev. Martin Junge from Chile—and the president-elect come from two of the smallest Lutheran churches in the world. “In our communion,” he said, “there is no large or small, no majority or minority, no South or North, for we are all servants, sharing the resources and gifts that God has given to us.”

As long as there is poverty, HIV/AIDS, oppression and injustice our Lutheran communion cannot rest, the president-elect said. “It will always be a struggling communion in serving its God-given purpose.”

48 New Council Members Will Lead the Federation until the Next Assembly

Forty-eight nominees representing the seven regions of The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) were elected to the Council at the Eleventh LWF Assembly in Stuttgart, Germany on 24 July.

The new LWF Council consists of 26 female and 22 male members. Ten members are under 30 years and belong to the youth category. Twenty-eight members of the Council are ordained, 20 are lay. Bishop Dr. Munib A. Younan from the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Jordan and the Holy Land, elected as the next LWF President, is also a member of the Council.

The Council is responsible for the business of the LWF between Assemblies. It decides on the structure of the LWF Secretariat, sets the budgets of the LWF and presents an annual report to the member churches.

The new LWF Council gathered for its first meeting on 28 and 29 July 2010, immediately following the Assembly.

The following is a list of those elected.

Africa

Ordained:

Rev. Dr. Wakseyoum Idosa, Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus
 Bishop Alex G. Malasusa, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania
 Bishop Zephania Kameeta, Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Republic of Namibia (ELCRN)
 Bishop Dr. Ndanganane P. Phaswana, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Southern Africa
 Rev. Samuel Dawai, Church of the Lutheran Brethren of Cameroon

Lay:

Ms Mami Brunah Aro Sandaniaina, Malagasy Lutheran Church, Madagascar
 Ms Pamela Akinyi Oyieyo, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Kenya
 Ms Colleen Elizabeth Cunningham, Moravian Church in South Africa
 Ms Titi Malik, Lutheran Church of Christ in Nigeria

Mr A. Elijah Zina, Lutheran Church in Liberia

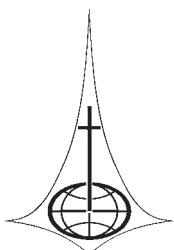
Asia

Ordained:

Rev. Naoki Asano, Japan Evangelical Lutheran Church
 Rev. Jenny Chan, Evangelical Lutheran Church of Hong Kong
 Rev. Dr. A. G. Augustine Jeyakumar, The Arcot Lutheran Church (India)
 Bishop Oi-Peng Lok, Lutheran Church in Malaysia and Singapore
 Bishop Dr. Mangisi Simorangkir, Christian Protestant Church in Indonesia

Lay:

Ms Eun Hae Kwon, Lutheran Church in Korea
 Ms Christina Soren, Northern Evangelical Lutheran Church (India)
 Ms Rani Bormon Dipti, Bangladesh Lutheran Church



Mr Guti Warime, Evangelical Lutheran Church of Papua New Guinea
 Ms Jenette A. L. Purba, The Indonesian Christian Church

Central Eastern Europe

Ordained:

Bishop Tamás Fabiny, The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Hungary (Northern Diocese)
 Bishop Geza Erniša, Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in Slovenia
 Bishop Janis Vanags, Evangelical Lutheran Church of Latvia
 Bishop Miloš Klátik, Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in the Slovak Republic

Lay:

Ms Iwona Baraniec, Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in Poland

Central Western Europe

Ordained:

Rev. Dagmar Magold, Federation of Evangelical Lutheran Churches in Switzerland & in the Principality of Liechtenstein

Prof. Bernd Oberdorfer, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Bavaria (Germany)
 Rev. Rainer Kiefer, Evangelical Lutheran Church of Hanover (Germany)
 Rev. Martina Berlich, Evangelical Church in Central Germany
 Rev. Frauke Eiben, North Elbian Evangelical Lutheran Church (Germany)
 Bishop Frank O. July, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Württemberg (Germany)

Lay:

Ms Danielle C. Leker, Protestant Church in the Netherlands
 Ms Anna-Maria Tetzlaff, Evangelical Church of Pomerania (Germany)

Nordic Europe

Ordained:

Bishop Antje Jackélen, Church of Sweden
 Bishop Helga Haugland Byfuglien, Church of Norway
 Bishop Niels Henrik Ahrend, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Denmark

Lay:

Ms Maria Immonen, Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland

Ms Jenny Skumsnes-Moe, Church of Norway
 Ms Magnea Sverrisdottir, The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Iceland

Latin America and the Caribbean

Ordained:

Rev. Dr Gloria Rojas Vargas, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Chile
 Bishop Melvin Jiménez, Lutheran Costa Rican Church

Lay:

Dr Carlos Bock, Evangelical Church of the Lutheran Confession in Brazil
 Ms Danielle Dokman, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Suriname

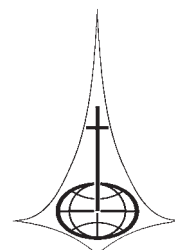
North America

Ordained:

Bishop Mark S. Hanson, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
 Rev. Dr Robin Steinke, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
 Bishop Susan C. Johnson, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada



Members of the new LWF Council pose together after their election by the Assembly. © LWF/J. Latva-Hakuni



Farewell to Rev. Dr Ishmael Noko

At a festive dinner on the evening of 23 July, Assembly participants honored LWF General Secretary Rev. Dr Ishmael Noko, who has served the Federation in this capacity since November 1994. Noko, a pastor of the Evangelical

Lutheran Church in Zimbabwe, was praised for his ecumenical leadership and his direction of the staff in the LWF headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland.

Representatives from LWF staff and from the seven regions expressed

gratitude through greetings, musical performances and gifts.

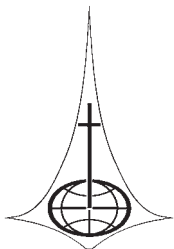
Noko leaves office at the end of October 2010, and will be succeeded by Chilean theologian Rev. Martin Junge.



LWF General Secretary Noko listens as his wife, Gladys Noko addresses LWF staff, Assembly delegates and guests during a farewell evening organized in his honor. © LWF/Hans Kasch



Representatives from LWF regions express their gratitude with gifts and music. © LWF/Erick Coll





The 20-voice Zimbabwean Betseranai Choir sing and dance during the slide-show depicting Dr Noko's life and career at the LWF. © LWF/Erick Coll



Bishop Dr Victoria Cortéz Rodríguez (Nicaragua), LWF vice president for Latin America and the Caribbean gives a tribute from the region. © LWF/ Erick Coll



Bishop Susan C. Johnson brings greetings from North America. © LWF/Erick Coll



Ms Margaret Grape speaks on behalf of the Nordic countries. © LWF/ Erick Coll



Bishop Dr Zephania Kameeta reads greetings from Africa. © LWF/Ratna Leak



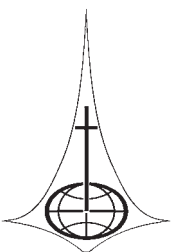
Mr Peter Stoll brings greetings from Central and Western Europe. © LWF/Erick Coll



Rev. Karin Achtelstetter delivers greetings on behalf of the LWF Secretariat. © LWF/ Erick Coll



Mr Peter Prove, former Assistant to the General Secretary for International Affairs and Human Rights, speaking as master of ceremonies at the farewell evening dedicated to Rev. Dr Ishmael Noko. © LWF/Erick Coll



FEATURE: Assembly Participants Savor “World Cuisine”

Open-air Fellowship Highlights Food as Universal Right

STUTTGART, Germany/GENEVA, 2 August 2010 (LWI) – An outdoor supper during the Eleventh Assembly of The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) brought home the communal meaning of Jesus’ prayer “Give Us Today Our Daily Bread” and underscored the universal right of all peoples to food security.

On the evening of Saturday, 24 July, delegates, guests and other participants gathered for an evening get-together in Schiller Square, in the heart of Stuttgart. There, in the warm summer air, the host church treated its guests to an outdoor supper.

The dishes were prepared from original recipes collected by the LWF Office for Communication Services in countries in which the Department for World Service is present and published in the cookbook *Food for Life*. The volume, a rich assortment of “world cuisine,” contains over 100 recipes accompanied by life stories and religious references to the right to food.

During the social evening, various organizations offered homemade traditional biscuits and breads, and shared,



Falafel sandwiches, prepared from a recipe in the LWF cookbook, Food for Life – Recipes and Stories on the Right to Food are among the homemade traditional dishes offered to Assembly participants at a social evening in Stuttgart’s Schiller Square. © LWF/Luis E. Ramirez

through conversations and brochures, stories of care-giving, spirituality, love and sustainable food strategies.

One of the healthiest dishes, couscous, was offered in one of the varieties typical of Morocco. Another dish, prepared with slices of cooked chicken, rice and vegetables, was

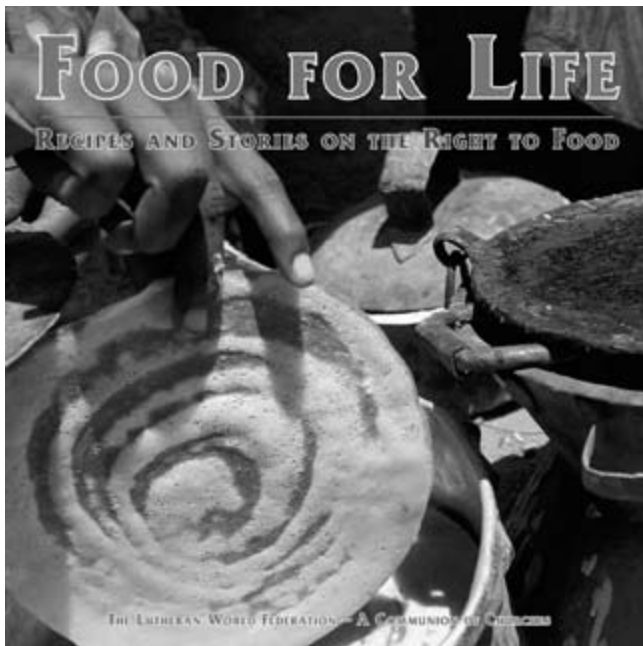
served with the instruction that it was customarily taken into the hand and eaten using one’s fingers. The bowl containing the food, prepared from wheat flour, was edible.

Meals are vital, but they are also an excuse for having fun together and experiencing the great diversity of the world.

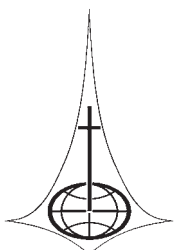
Variety of Music

Various types of music could be heard throughout the evening. The magnificent voices of brothers and sisters from Africa, the lively interpretation of traditional German tunes, followed by internationally known themes and inspirational hymns resounded in the square under the benevolent gaze of a large statue of the poet Frederick Schiller.

The famous German literary figure seemed to also appreciate the gathering’s mood and rhythm while listening to the interpretation of his most well-known verses, which Beethoven set to music in his “Ode to Joy.”



© LWF





Assembly participants and local congregation members enjoy music from many parts of the world during the social evening. © LWF/Luis E. Ramirez

Outgoing LWF President Bishop Mark S. Hanson thanked the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Württemberg for its hospitality, remarking

that he was certain that God was happy that evening since God liked to see people dancing and playing music and persons from all corners

of the earth singing and dancing together. Hanson said the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Württemberg represents the LWF in Stuttgart.

He went on to note that being part of the LWF meant to praise God, to engage in diaconal work, to strive for justice and peace, to take care of God's creation. The retiring president reminded those gathered that the theme guiding the Assembly was the petition that God give daily bread to all God's peoples and creatures. He asserted that God promised to give daily bread to everyone.

As the evening was coming to a close, the feeling of fellowship that reigned led to a spontaneous joining of hands to form a large circle filling the square from whence a song of praise was lifted up.

Württemberg Bishop July Delighted at Fellowship in Faith

The bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Württemberg, Frank Otfried July, expressed heartfelt joy about the fellowship in faith perceptible at the Eleventh Assembly of The Lutheran World Federation (LWF).

In his sermon at a televised service on Sunday, 25 July, in Stuttgart's Stiftskirche (collegiate church), Bishop July underlined that it was wonderful to see Lutheran Christians from East and West, North and South coming together. "There are differences in culture and language, also in individual questions of faith. But our bonds in common confession sustain us."

The LWF Assembly with its approximately 1,000 participants took place at the invitation of the Württemberg church from 20 to 27 July in Stuttgart, the capital of the state of Baden-Württemberg.

With respect to climate change and the financial crisis, people tended to say, "We are all in the same boat," remarked the Bishop of Württemberg. Yet this feeling of community was deceptive. How quickly the phrase could turn into "the boat is full," he exclaimed.

Through globalization people felt themselves to share a common des-

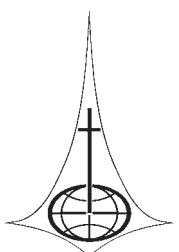


Bishop Frank O. July of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Württemberg greets congregants after Sunday worship in Stuttgart's historic Stiftskirche. © LWF/Luis E. Ramirez

tiny everywhere in the world and not just in the church. "We are linked by being at the mercy of external, apparently uncontrollable powers."

Many groups were discussing food security and what the churches could

do about hunger and economic exploitation. "Hunger and under-nourishment signify a violation of fundamental human rights. But they also distort the face of Christ, whose likeness is found in every person," said the bishop.



The LWF's Department for World Service works through its projects so that people can live in the dignity

inalienably endowed on them by God. "But also within the church there is hunger for justice, and a hunger for letting

women and young people participate in church structures. It is about participation for all!" stated Bishop July.

Pray That Christians Don't Flee the Holy Land, Says LWF President-Elect

In his first sermon as president-elect of The Lutheran World Federation (LWF), Bishop Dr Munib A. Younan told a congregation that Christians should be "children of the light," and urged them to "pray that Palestinian Christians may not lose faith and leave the country." He was preaching at the Andreaskirche in Uhlbach, a suburb of Stuttgart.

Christ walked in the Holy Land, the bishop said. "Who could imagine the Holy Land ... without Christians?" he asked. "We as Christians and especially as Lutherans have a role to play in the Middle East in reconciliation and interfaith dialogue," the president-elect said.

"I sometimes ponder the fact that there have been Christians in Palestine since the first Pentecost," he said, and added, "Now we Palestinian Christians are less than 1.5 percent of the population." Palestinian Christians leave their homeland for three reasons: "the difficulties caused by the political conflict, a lack of jobs and growing political and religious extremism."

"Even so," he continued, "Palestinian Christianity has survived 2,000 years. We have never ruled the country, nor were we ever in



LWF President-elect Bishop Dr Munib A. Younan delivers the Sunday morning sermon at the Andreaskirche in Uhlbach, Stuttgart, 25 July. © LWF/Martin Eisele-Remppis

the majority. We do not have much property, power, money or influence. Yet we have survived."

That survival, he said, is because "we have carried the death and resurrection of our Lord in our bodies, souls and minds." Palestinian Christians should be "brokers of justice, instruments of peace, ministers of reconciliation, defenders of human rights including women's rights, and apostles of love," he said. The bishop has been active in a variety of interreligious

activities in his homeland and has held high positions in local ecumenical and interreligious groups.

Christian love reaches across religious and ethnic boundaries, Younan told the congregation. He recalled being asked about a Christian woman who had been seen caring for a Muslim child. He had responded, "As Christians we are called to serve every human being regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, religion or political affiliation."

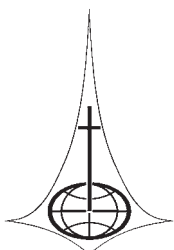
Younan said that as "children of the light," a phrase from the biblical book of Ephesians, Christians should work to promote justice, peace and reconciliation and "to eliminate Islamophobia, xenophobia and anti-semitism."

The bishop and several other visitors from the LWF Assembly were introduced to the congregation by Rev. Margarete Goth, pastor of the church situated amid Uhlbach's famous vineyards and not far from the burial chapel with tombs of Württemberg royalty from previous centuries.

Younan's term as LWF President began as the Eleventh Assembly ended on 27 July.



Left, Bishop Dr Munib A. Younan on his way to Andreaskirche in Uhlbach to give his first sermon as President-elect of The Lutheran World Federation. © LWF/M. Brown



Growing Up Under Chilean Dictatorship Shaped General Secretary-Elect's Vision for LWF

Growing up in Chile under the rule of a military dictatorship and suffering the resulting losses of freedom “profoundly shaped” the values of the LWF General Secretary-elect, Rev. Martin Junge.

In an address to the LWF Eleventh Assembly on 26 July, Junge said that during his formative years he “learnt to hold on to values—justice, human dignity, non-violence, tolerance—which the political and social contexts were belying almost daily.”

Junge said that words from the pulpit affirmed these values in the people of his home church, inspired them to have hope, to develop “that evangelical stubbornness that leads to creative resistance,” and liberated in them the energy “to turn to their neighbors who were suffering from persecution, hunger, illness and from the loss of their rights.”

The story of his faith journey reveals that he understands the mission of the church holistically, the general secretary-elect said. “I believe that proclamation, diakonia and prophetic presence in society (advocacy) belong intrinsically together. They all influence each other in a process of transformation.”

Solidarity and Compassion

Illustrating this point he challenged the Assembly to ask what sense it would make to engage in advocacy, defending the rights of people, if at the same time the proclamation from Lutheran pulpits is the bad news that people are dirty sinners, worth nothing but harsh punishment.

“What sense would it make,” he added, “if we feed people in need through diakonia but build fences around the table of the Lord, making it an exclusive event for a few? What sense would it make to proclaim the liberating Gospel of Jesus Christ, who became one of us in order to



LWF General Secretary-elect Rev. Martin Junge addresses the Assembly. © LWF/Erick Coll

show God’s solidarity and compassion, if this gospel does not move us to solidarity with and compassion for others?”

There needs to be coherence, and also sound balance, between these three dimensions of holistic mission, Junge said. Achieving this coherence and balance “is going to be a task for the LWF in the years to come.”

Three Aspects

He told the Assembly there were three aspects of the LWF’s nature that will be orientation points for his service as general secretary.

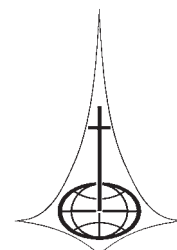
Firstly, there is the LWF’s polycentric nature, meaning that it does not have one center but many. “The LWF is globally present,” he said. Each member church brings something valuable to the table. “There is no church in this communion which doesn’t have something to give. There is no church in this communion which isn’t in need to receive.” He urged member churches to “circulate

and share” their capacities, experience and knowledge.

A second concept is that of trans-contextual dialogue. Junge said that although churches need to be “contextual, responding to conversations, challenges, needs and questions, which are identified locally,” there is a risk that their own context will become a “refuge” or an “excuse” to exclude others. He said that one of the “most challenging tasks for the future” will be to affirm “the contextuality of churches,” while at the same time, we “engage ... in a dialogue, cooperation and collaborative work across contexts.”

This sort of active engagement with and contribution to “the wider questions of our neighborhood” is also an excellent entry point for interreligious conversation, with a particular emphasis on diapraxis, he said.

Inclusiveness is the last concept that “will shape the way” in which he will serve the communion, Junge said. Noting that advances have been



made over the years to more actively and intentionally include women and youth in the life and decision-making processes of the LWF, he said that “there is homework left for us.”

“We have quotas but often we have difficulties reaching them,” he said, noting that decisions made in an Assembly might not be enacted locally. But even if quotas are reached, this is not sufficient, he said.

Reaching quotas “might ensure presence, but not necessarily participation.”

The LWF needs to be transformed by the power that women and youth bring to the global communion, the general secretary-elect said. “It is time for us men to get involved in making our churches and the communion more inclusive.”

Two Dimensions of Grace

Junge stressed that grace has two dimensions—vertical and horizontal. The vertical dimension is grace coming to us as a gift from God, “similar to the rising sun.” The horizontal dimension of grace compels us to serve others.

“Grace doesn’t live enshrined in individual lives,” the general secretary-elect said. “Grace will

always find its way to the neighbor. A self-confined grace, a grace that is egoistically stocked and jealously fenced off from others, will vanish like the manna in the desert.”

“There is an economic order that is absolutely unfair, unjust and a deep expression of sin, depriving millions of human beings of their rights and even their lives.”

Citing hunger, child soldiers, HIV and climate change as just some of the world’s sorrows the LWF is called to address, Junge said that the sorts of change required to care for

our neighbors is “of a deeply spiritual nature.”

We Lutherans hold to this theological emphasis on grace, as revealed in Jesus Christ, in the incarnation, he said. “Jesus Christ came right into the midst of this world . . . and we are caught by God’s movement toward the world.”

Because God through Jesus Christ gives such a strong witness to God’s love for the world, “we too understand that we are called to not only live in this world, but also to love it and to love our neighbor.”



A cross-section of participants listen to Rev. Martin Junge’s presentation. © LWF/Erick Coll



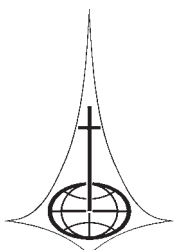
A standing ovation for Rev. Martin Junge at the Assembly. © LWF/Erick Coll

Reformation Belongs to the Entire Body of Christ

The general secretary-elect foreshadowed that he will be proposing that the LWF should hold its next Assembly in 2017, thus making it an event marking the 500th anniversary of the Reformation.

“The LWF needs to mark this anniversary,” he said, adding that it needs to be an ecumenical event. “The Lutheran Reformation is not the exclusive property of Lutheran churches. It belongs to many other churches.”

It is meant to be a contribution to the entire Body of Christ, “and, as such, we should be commemorating it,” he added.



Call to Advocate for Fairer Resource Distribution and Fight Against Corruption

Delegates of the Eleventh Assembly of The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) adopted a resolution calling for greater transparency in the mining industry and a fair distribution of resources, and to support the fight against corruption.

In passing the resolution, the Assembly called on member churches to strengthen and widen their advocacy work and demand from mining and processing industries more accountability and corporate social responsibility.

The LWF General Secretary was asked to encourage and support member churches to seek in their respective countries legislation that secures public income from natural resources, good environment standards, the public participation of stakeholders and fair distribution of resources

Furthermore, the resolution asked member churches to support a fair democratic and transparent global finance system and new in-

ternational accounting standards, in which profits, expenditure, taxes, fees and company grants are made public in order to avoid price-fixing and tax evasion.

The LWF should support the further development of specialist knowledge in the areas of resources and financing in the member churches, so that their advocacy role for transparency and accountability about income and national resources can be strengthened, the resolution said.

Assembly Denounces Human Trafficking

The Eleventh Assembly adopted a resolution denouncing the degrading practice of human trafficking. It called for the communion to provide leadership through preaching, teaching and other forms of “public witness” that clearly opposes “the commercial exploitation of human beings.”

The LWF and its member churches should also support and provide comprehensive sex education programs

which empower women and men to take responsibility for their bodies and sexuality, the resolution said.

Furthermore, the communion should counter the negative devaluation of female bodies by developing resources and materials in local languages. The media’s commercialization of the human body, especially the bodies of women and children, was denounced in the resolution.

The Assembly also said that the communion should seek to construct “partnerships and cooperation” between religious and other agencies which are working for legislation that protects those freed from human trafficking and which are playing roles in bringing about “cultural transformation and the elimination of trafficking.”

LWF Shocked and Saddened by Deaths at Duisburg “Love Parade”

In a declaration adopted on 26 July, the LWF Eleventh Assembly expressed “profound sympathy” to the families of those who died on 24 July in Duisburg at the entrance to the “Love Parade” dance and music festival.

In the declaration, Assembly delegates assured the survivors and their

families of their prayers, saying, “We continue to pray for the consolation of the bereaved families of those who died, and for the swift recovery of those who were injured—physically and psychologically—in Duisburg.”

The text mentions the support of the members of the Assembly to not only the victims in the incident,

but also to those who are caring for them. The declaration ends with the hope that “the tragic lessons of that day will be studied and learned from, so that future tragedies might be avoided.”

Duisburg is approximately 350 kilometers from Stuttgart, where the Assembly was meeting.

Social and Educational Programs Recommended

Delegates to the Eleventh Assembly asked the LWF to consider as a priority the inclusion of socially disadvantaged groups and ethnic minorities in the society and church.

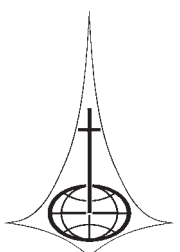
The resolution specifically mentioned the Roma people, a minority group in Central Eastern Europe whose members suffer from food

insecurity, lack of resources, unsupportive structures and marginalization. “Social tensions resulting from this situation have the potential to destabilize the whole continent,” noted the motion’s backgrounder.

While ministry among Roma people has already been established, it was felt that more effort is needed

if the problem is to be effectively addressed.

The Assembly recommended that the LWF initiate social and educational programs that would be aimed at the development and facilitation of such groups at the regional level.



Lutherans Commit to People's Right to Food

"Poverty has a woman's face. We acknowledge daily the chasm that separates those who suffer from famine and deprivation, and those who consume too much. When we pray, we acknowledge that food is a gift from God, and ask that it continues to sustain our daily life," said Ms Praxedis Bouwman, delegate from the Protestant Church in The Netherlands, and member of the Assembly Policy and Reference Committee. She presented the resolution on poverty and food justice to the Eleventh Assembly of The Lutheran World Federation (LWF).

Churches should engage in advocacy campaigns with governments at all levels, the resolution said. These campaigns should challenge their actions, commitments and attitudes on food and economic justice as it relates to women and children and strengthen their response. Delegates also directed the LWF to help churches by sharing information and helping to form strategic partnerships in working on this issue.

Further, delegates told the LWF to work globally in order to alleviate pov-



Ms Praxedis Bouwman, Protestant Church in The Netherlands © LWF/Ratna Leak

erty and see that people have the food that is their right. This would involve member churches working together with one another and with civil society, particularly on common acts toward long-term sustainable change. "We ask the LWF to assist in the information-sharing and targeting of these strategic partnerships," the resolution stated.

"Overall, we call for the raising up of gender justice in the church and society, food and economic justice, and the struggle against human trafficking from this point onwards, and particularly during the 2017 Reformation commemorations as a sign of the ongoing reformation we are called to today," the resolution continued.

Assembly Addresses Gender, Generational and Laity/Clergy Balance

The Eleventh Assembly adopted a resolution detailing "principles of inclusive representation" and has called on member churches to adopt similar measures to ensure full participation in their respective contexts.

The resolution addresses gender, generational and laity/clergy balance among the LWF Assembly, Council, offices and all other committees and taskforces, including all regional levels. The motion calls for these groups to be comprised of: at least 40 percent women and at least 40 percent men (including among youth representatives); at least 20 percent young people

under the age of 30 at the time of the first meeting of the body to which they have been appointed; and at least 40 percent lay persons.

"The current quota system has proven to be an important tool that enables participation of women in all decision-making bodies, bringing the diversity which enriches our communion," noted the motion.

Furthermore, it called on the General Secretary to undertake an evaluation of the quota system since its introduction; review commitment to, and implementation of, the quota system across all groups; report on the quota

system to the LWF Council about the implementation of the principles of inclusive representation by the LWF as well as the member churches.

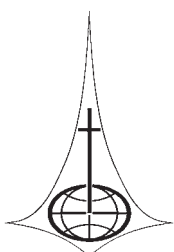
The LWF has a long history of including women and young people in its work and structures. In 1984, landmark decisions on the participation of women and lay persons were made by the Seventh Assembly at Budapest, Hungary. Twenty-six years after implementing the Budapest resolutions, further clarifications were needed, said Ms Praxedis Bouwman, delegate from the Protestant Church in The Netherlands, and member of the Assembly Policy and Reference Committee.

Member Churches Urged to Participate in Global Priorities Campaign

The Assembly adopted a resolution calling on member churches to assist in the global reduction of military spending,

and to increase spending to meet human needs through participation in the Global Priorities Campaign.

The resolution commends "the bold leadership shown by the Global Priorities Campaign" and calls on member



churches of the LWF to co-sponsor and otherwise assist the campaign efforts.

The Global Priorities Campaign is a new international, interreligious initiative. "Though our beliefs and traditions may differ," states the campaign's website, it brings together shared common values and commitments to justice, peace and human security. The Global Priorities Campaign promotes human security worldwide. It advocates "with all nations to increase the proportion of

their resources used to meet human needs by means that include reducing military spending."

To achieve this, the Global Priorities Campaign advocates: securing the common good of all people by reducing global military spending and redirecting resources to unmet human needs, particularly those of the most vulnerable and marginalized people in society, within the next ten years; securing the common good of all people through the develop-

ment of new and innovative sources of revenue; and meeting human needs domestically and internationally by influencing budget priorities and creating greater equity in income and opportunities, including the fulfilment of internationally agreed development goals.

The resolution approved by the Assembly also calls on member churches to consider additional ways to sustain the efforts to the Global Priorities Campaign.

Call to Assume Ethical Guidance Role on Foreign Debt and Economic Governance

Member churches of The Lutheran World Federation were urged to promote "mechanisms to help expose and obtain the annulment of all illegal or illegitimate debts" of developing countries, and to advocate for a "new international financial architecture" that favors justice, human rights and the environment.

In a public statement adopted by the Eleventh Assembly in Stuttgart, delegates addressed the issue of illegitimate debt, that is, debts accumulated by developing countries to international creditors, often in times of dictatorships or when financial organizations considered only profits.

For over three decades the servicing of developing countries' external debts has forced millions of people into poverty by reducing their access to food and opportunity.

The LWF Assembly urged its member churches to assume with "courage and decision" their role in giving "ethical and moral guidance" on issues such as foreign debt and economic governance. They should challenge governments and public and private lenders "to accept and implement the principle of shared responsibility."

According to the public statement on "Illegitimate debt and the interna-

tional financial crisis" adopted by the LWF Assembly, the civil society has an "indispensable" role in "mobilizing political will and in the proposal and supporting of legal interventions" related to the issue.

The 145 LWF member churches were urged to promote the "request for an advisory opinion from the International Court of Justice about debt and its regulatory framework in international law."

Regarding the current financial crisis, the members of the communion were invited to incorporate "reflection and analysis" on its effects and causes.

"Window of Opportunity" for Climate Change is Closing, Assembly Warns

The LWF Eleventh Assembly took action today to reduce the impacts of climate change. Delegates asked the LWF General Secretary, member churches and LWF country programs to work together to address the effects of climate change, alleviate its impact on those most vulnerable, and to elevate the perspectives of

indigenous people on environmental ethics.

The motion recognized the "diminishing window of opportunity" for such action. It also acknowledged the "grave impacts on food security" witnessed daily by the LWF and its members churches.

Expressing regret at the failure of the Copenhagen Climate Change

Conference in December 2009 to establish a fair, equitable and legally-binding and verifiable agreement to succeed the Kyoto Protocol, Assembly delegates called on the international community to achieve such an agreement at the 2010 UN Climate Change in Mexico later this year.

Delegates Call for Further Reduction of Carbon Footprint

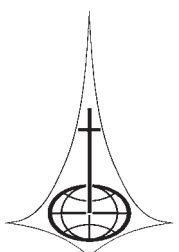
Eleventh Assembly delegates adopted on 26 July a full environmental policy for its work and meetings.

The policy incorporates measures already taken regarding the reduction of the carbon footprint of the LWF. Presently the LWF has a CO₂ emis-

sion compensation system in place and has worked to reduce the number of printed documents.

Delegates also called on the LWF to prepare for certification under an international eco-certification system and audit scheme by 2012.

It was recommended that the LWF consider the experiences of the German Evangelical Kirchentag "in the environmentally-friendly planning" of future meetings and assemblies.



Pain of Exclusion Means Suffering and Loss for Whole Church

Delegates to the LWF Eleventh Assembly urged member churches to re-commit to “genuine, practical and effective implementation” of LWF policies and decision regarding the full participation of women in the life of the church—and of the LWF communion—as well as in society.

Delegates called on the LWF member churches to establish appropriate legislation and regulatory policies to enable and ensure the participation of women in ordained and lay leadership positions, and opportunities for them to pursue theological education.

They also asked churches that currently do not ordain women to prayerfully consider the effect that

inaction and refusal on this matter has on those who are precluded from exercising their God-given calling because they are women. “The pain of this exclusion and the loss of their gifts mean suffering and loss for the whole church,” says the declaration.

Support of women leaders, lay and ordained, and particularly women bishops and presidents, as vital members of the communion, was called for in the resolution. Delegates asked for “a clear action plan for the development of contextualized gender policies that may be implemented on all levels in the member churches,” and which would be mandatory for the LWF Secretariat. The LWF Council was called on to

develop and approve such a guiding process.

Furthermore, the LWF Council should take the topic of gender justice as a continuous point on the agenda. The delegates called on the member churches and the LWF Secretariat to include gender analyses, as biblical and theological tools, in all aspects of the life of member churches in the communion, including diaconal and advocacy work.

The Assembly also called for the LWF and its member churches to take a clear stand against domestic violence, “acknowledging every person’s right to feel safe and respectfully treated, also when they are in their own homes.”

Proposal to Develop Online Resource Center

The Lutheran World Federation will consider the development of a virtual resource center or bank, accessible to all web-users through the internet, following the adoption of a resolution at its Eleventh Assembly.

The LWF has long been committed to sharing resources, talents and abilities to assist and empower member churches all over the world, the backgrounder said. The virtual resource center would further assist in this area.

“Many churches have educational materials which, by sharing them with one another, can be of inspiration and thus be helpful for others,” notes the resolution.

LWF Speaks Up for Dalits

Delegates to the Eleventh Assembly committed the communion to make the liberation and restoration of the dignity of Dalits a priority in its mission, action and testimony of

the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Formerly known as “untouchables,” Dalits are oppressed and discriminated against in India, Nepal and other regions in south-east Asia. Reference was made

to the vote taken on this issue in July 2003, during the last LWF Assembly in Winnipeg, Canada.

Assembly Reaffirms Commitments to Indigenous People

The Assembly took action to reaffirm the commitments made to the indigenous peoples at the Tenth Assembly in 2003 and the LWF’s consultation on indigenous people in Norway in 2006.

Delegates agreed to ask the Secretariat and member churches to follow up on these proposals.

“A great majority of indigenous people live in ancestral lands, mostly rural, but a series of factors—such as poverty, soil degradation, colonization and the interests of national and international companies—are resulting in the loss of their lands, languages and traditions and their right to a dignified life,” noted the motion’s backgrounder.

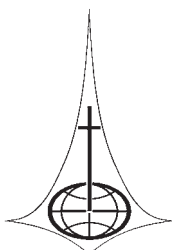
With the adoption of a resolution on indigenous people, the 2003 Assembly of the LWF had recognized the contribution of native peoples. Following a consultation in Karasjok, Norway, in September 2006, which met under the theme, “An Indigenous Communion,” a series of supporting actions to be developed in the coming years was adopted.

Emphasis on Advocacy Work for People with Disabilities

The Lutheran World Federation pledged to reaffirm its advocacy work for the inclusion, participation and involvement of persons with disabilities. In a motion approved at the Eleventh Assembly, delegates

called on the LWF to strengthen its work in this area through a renewed commitment to the cooperation with the World Council of Churches and the Ecumenical Disabilities Advocates Network (EDAN).

“True fellowship, both in society and church, consists of all kinds of people,” noted the background information. “This is not only a matter of theology, but also human rights.”



Assembly Message: “True Humanity” Is Found in Giving and Receiving

When Christians pray “Give Us Today Our Daily Bread,” the words are addressed to God. But Lutherans attending the Eleventh Assembly of The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) turned those words also toward each other in a message to the 145 churches in 70 countries that are members of the global Lutheran communion.

“True humanity” is found in receiving and giving, said the message. While the whole of creation is a gift from God, neighbors depend upon the gifts they give each other. The message reminded Christians that they should give thanks to God, give the gospel message to others, give their knowledge and material goods to those in need, and care for the environment so that future generations “may enjoy the fruits of creation and lead wholesome lives.”

Lutherans are part of a worldwide community with other Christians and people of other faiths or people who have no faith, said the section of the message focusing on the word “us.” Because religious and social differences can fracture the community, the message urged Lutherans to seek the “reconciliation that is possible in Christ,” citing as an example the Assembly’s repentance for past injustices committed by Lutherans against Mennonites. The statement urged continuing dialogue



Bins of bread and other goods in the Liederhalle conference center remind participants of the Assembly theme, “Give Us Today Our Daily Bread.” © LWF/Ratna Leak

with Mennonites, Protestants who were once denounced by Lutherans.

The message said that acknowledging the worldwide community means

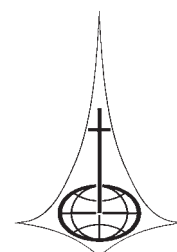
seeking “gender justice” for men and women, opposing commercialization of the human body and trafficking in human beings, and acknowledging the needs and rights of children and those with disabilities.

Churches should give more visibility to women pastors and women in lay leadership, and commit themselves to seeking equal rights for women in society. Welfare of children should also be a “priority for future theology and action,” the message said. “When we put the rights, needs and welfare of children at the center ... we have a future much brighter than we can imagine.”

The issues of “today”—the next word in the petition from the Lord’s Prayer—include concern for the world’s food supply, global climate change, the plight of indigenous people, and the



Ms Rosa Elisa Figueroa Torres (left), a delegate from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Chile, speaks on behalf of youth delegates and stewards. © LWF/J. Latva-Hakuni



effects of HIV and AIDS, the LWF message said. Lutherans should also welcome into their countries migrants who left their countries for “political, economic or climate reasons.”

Several resolutions on those issues had been approved earlier by delegates to the Assembly.

“Daily” concern for the environment, sustainable development, “illegitimate debts incurred by unscrupulous lenders and borrowers” and greed should impel Christians to work for ethical economic policies and ecologically responsible activities, the message said. It called upon the

LWF and its member churches to advocate for the cancellation of “illegitimate debts” that are burdening some countries, to promote development that is “sustainable” and to raise awareness of environmental issues. The message said, “We anticipate a time when we no longer need to speak about such issues each day.”

The “bread” sought in the petition of the Lord’s Prayer is “everything that has to do with the support and needs of the body,” the message said, quoting from the Small Catechism of Martin Luther. This includes such things as shoes, health, devout

children, good government, a good reputation and good friends, Luther’s catechism declares. Lutherans provide “bread” for the world, therefore, by preaching the gospel, providing education and social development and advocating for the needs of others, the message continued.

In today’s complex world, this means working together across the entire human community. The message encouraged Lutherans to steep themselves in their own faith. “Being well-grounded in our faith tradition enables us to be open, receptive and hospitable to others.”

Lutherans “Instruments of God’s Answer to the Prayer of Others”

“The message from this Assembly, which grew out of the petition, ‘Give Us Today Our Daily Bread,’ is that we are not asking for bread alone,” Bishop Mark S. Hanson said at the closing press conference of the LWF Eleventh Assembly. As Luther wrote in his explanation of this petition, “we are praying for everything that people need to sustain life each day,” said Hanson.

As they examined the fuller meaning of the Fourth Petition during the eight-day Assembly, delegates started to speak of “daily bread” in terms of food, environment, illegitimate debt, climate

change and gender justice. Hanson, who completes his term as LWF President at the close of this Assembly, added, “To have all that we collectively need does not mean only having food in our stomachs but also that there will be justice for all people and sustainability of our environment.”

He said that the meeting had been a “praying Assembly” and had been centered on worship, “where we experienced unity.” Hanson said that during the Assembly he had experienced “a deepening sense” that we belong to each other, and not just to each other but also to the world that cries out

“Give Us Today Our Daily Bread.” We also belong to the church, which is “more than Lutherans,” the bishop said. In this Assembly we did not look inward toward ourselves but outward toward others, because “we believe that God frees us in Christ to serve and love our neighbor in the world.”

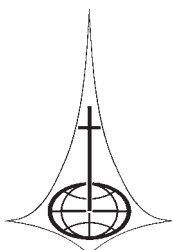
LWF General Secretary Rev. Dr. Ishmael Noko said that the meeting had been very significant because the act of repentance and forgiveness between the Lutherans and Mennonites had taken place in the land of Martin Luther and Philipp Melancthon. “This is the best place I could have ended my responsibilities,” he said, referring to the fact that he will retire as LWF General Secretary in October.

Bishop Dr. Frank O. July of the host church, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Württemberg, echoed similar sentiments, saying that local church members were eager to see the reconciliation between the Lutherans and Mennonites taking place in their city. The action was indicative of the “Stuttgart spirit,” July said.

The LWF has been renewed in its spirit and commitment, Hanson said. “I came to Stuttgart hopeful, and I will be leaving hopeful and grateful. So long as we feed the hungry, clothe the naked, house the homeless and provide tents for refugees, we will be instruments of God’s answer to the prayer of others, ‘Give Us Today Our Daily Bread.’”



With the Assembly officially closed LWF General Secretary Rev. Dr. Ishmael Noko, outgoing President Bishop Mark S. Hanson, Ms Iona Hanson [seated] and President-elect Bishop Dr. Muniib A. Younan exchange impressions before proceeding to the closing worship in the Stiftskirche. © LWF/J. Latva-Hakuna



LWF Eleventh Assembly Concludes in Joyful Worship



Standing in a circle around the altar, LWF President Bishop Dr Munib A. Younan and 48 other newly-elected Council members are installed during the Assembly's closing eucharistic service. © LWF/J. Latva-Hakuni

Participants in the Eleventh Assembly of The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) celebrated the end of the meeting in a closing eucharistic service in Stuttgart's Stiftskirche.

In her sermon based on John 6:48-51, Rev. Shu-Chen (Selma) Chen, The Lutheran Church of Taiwan (Republic of China), focused on "the manna which our forebears ate."

She described how, for her, the manna describes the simple relationship between God, creation and humans. "God gave the manna, and people were able to sustain themselves without exploiting others or depriving them of their basic food."

"Jesus says, 'I am the bread of life,'" said Chen. "He is our abundant God. He wants us to share the abundance we have with those who are in need. He wants us to trust him in his faithfulness."

"With our faithful, abundant God we can make this world a different

one," she continued. "A world with more justice, more life."

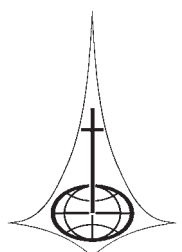
Departing from the Assembly, participants were encouraged to take this message back into their own contexts and challenges. The table needs to be set for everyone, said Chen.

"Let us be good stewards, sharing the table with everyone around us."

In keeping with the Assembly theme, worshippers held bowls of grain high as the LWF leaders asked God's help in leading the communion in the years to come.



Rev. Shu-Chen (Selma) Chen of the Lutheran Church of Taiwan (Republic of China) delivers her sermon at the Assembly closing worship. © LWF/Luis E. Ramirez



Music during the service included hymns in different languages from around the world, some accompanied by drums and the jubilant ululation often heard in African churches. The Lord's Prayer, like during other worship services at the Assembly, was prayed in as many languages as are spoken by the participants.

New Council Members Installed

During the closing worship service, Younan and the 48 other newly-elected Council members drawn from the seven LWF regions were installed. The new Council members include ten representatives each from Africa and Asia; eight from Central Western Europe; six from the Nordic



LWF Department for World Service Director Rev. Eberhard Hitzler [left] and three youth participants at the altar during the closing eucharistic service. © LWF/Luis E. Ramirez

Countries; five each from Central Eastern Europe and North America and four from the Latin American and Caribbean region.

Council Approves 2011 Budget

The budget of The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) for 2011 will be EUR 87.6 million or about USD 113 million, following action by the LWF Council which met in Stuttgart, Germany, just after the LWF Eleventh Assembly closed on 27 July.

That amount is about the same as the 2010 budget, according to Mr Pauli Rantanen, director for finance and administration for the LWF, which has its headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland. Rantanen said that in approving the budget, the governing body also authorized adjustments to accommodate fluctuations in the exchange rate and other variables.

Next year the organization, which has 145 member churches in 79 countries, will operate with an "integrated" budget, consolidating program costs, management expenses and other costs previously budgeted separately, Rantanen said.

About two-thirds of the monies will come from membership fees and other contributions from member churches and

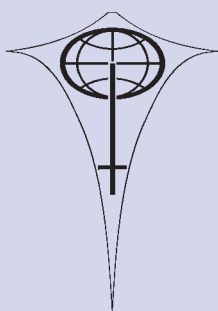


LWF Treasurer Ms Christina Jackson-Skelton from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America will also chair the Finance and Administration Committee. © LWF/J. Latva-Hakuni

related agencies. The rest comes from various partners in LWF projects, such as the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

The 2011 budget includes EUR 11 million for the Department for Mission and Development (DMD), EUR 72.6 million for the Department for World Service (DWS), EUR 1 million for the Department for Theology and Studies and the Office of Ecumenical Affairs (OEA), and EUR 2.8 million for the General Secretariat.

DMD manages or oversees hundreds of projects around the world. DWS is the humanitarian arm of the LWF, working in some 30 countries around the world. In addition to the general secretary's office, the General Secretariat includes OEA, the Office for Communication Services, International Affairs and Human Rights, Finance, Personnel and Planning.



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