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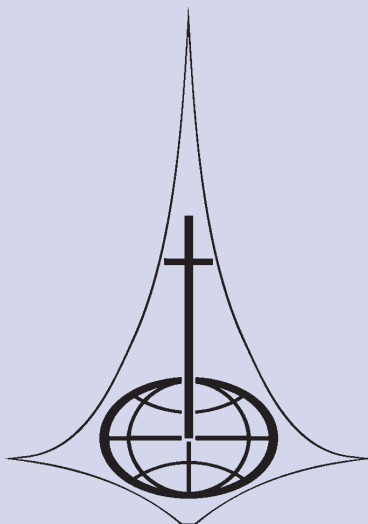
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“The Peace Will Take Us Back to School”—“When?” Others Ask

When the scorching midday sun strikes Rumbek in southern Sudan, it often finds seven-year-old Ayen Chol drawing water from a well drilled next to shells of destroyed brick buildings.

Since the January 2005 comprehensive peace agreement, signed in neighboring Kenya between the Sudan People’s Liberation Movement /Army (SPLM/A) and the Khartoum government, these children have found the freedom to move and play in the open. It is hoped that the accords, reached after nearly three years of negotiations, will end the two-decade long war, Africa’s most protracted

“The peace is good,” says Chol speaking through an interpreter, as other children and women at the well observe. “It will take back us to school. It will bring clothes and books. We shall now eat well.”

Born during the war, and growing to this age as soldiers from both sides fought each other, forcing populations to move from battlegrounds, she receives the new developments with optimism, just like Rebecca Ajok, a mother of four who survived the 21 years of war.



Seven-year-old Ayen Chol. © Fredrick Nzwili

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Rev. Frank Otfried July New Bishop in Württemberg, Germany

On March 10, the synod of the Evangelical Church in Württemberg, Germany, elected Rev. Frank Otfried July as its new bishop. The director of German diakonia organization Schwäbisch Hall, obtained the required two-thirds majority during the first round of elections. He received 65 votes from a total of 96 votes cast. Contender Dean Dr Marie-Luise Kling-de-Lazzer, 57, the first woman to stand for the highest position in the church, garnered 31 votes.

Rev. July, 50, will succeed Bishop Dr Gerhard Maier, 68, who will be retiring at the end of July 2005. The bishop-elect will be consecrated in the Stiftskirche, Stuttgart's city church, on July 23.



Newly-elected Württemberg Bishop Frank Otfried July.

July will be the tenth and youngest bishop in the history of the church. The election went considerably fast, compared to 1993 and 2000, when several ballot rounds were needed before a new bishop could be ascertained.

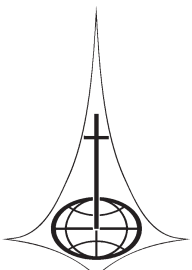
July studied Protestant theology in Tübingen, Germany, and in Vienna, Austria. Between 1980–1983, he was an assistant pastor in Reutlingen-Betzingen, and subsequently worked as a research assistant at the Faculty of Protestant Theology, University of Heidelberg. July is married and has four children.

The Württemberg church is one of the 14 Lutheran World Federation (LWF) member churches in Germany. It has around 2.3 million members, and joined the LWF in 1947. (222 words)

LWF Directory Part II Now Available

Part II of the Directory of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) has been printed. This section includes the LWF organigram, constitution & bylaws in both English and German; information on the LWF Endowment Fund; Geneva secretariat units and staff; and the Department for World Service field programs. A list of member churches in their local and the Federation's four official languages is also included.

Additional copies of the Directory (both Parts I & II) are available at the normal price of CHF 22, EUR 15 or USD 18 (incl. binder) or CHF 18, EUR 12 or USD 15 (minus binder). To order, please contact: The LWF Office for Communication Services, 150 Route de Ferney, P.O. Box 2100, CH-1211 Geneva 2, Switzerland, Tel. +41/22-791 6111, Fax +41/22-791 6630, E-mail, info@lutheranworld.org (135 words)



LWF Executive Committee Recommends Termination of Kenyan Bishop's Tenure as Council Adviser

Critical Stance on Bishop's Consecration of Pastor in Sweden

GENEVA, 22 February 2005 (LWI) – The Executive Committee of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) has recommended the termination of the tenure of Kenyan Bishop Walter E. Obare Omwanza as Council adviser after he consecrated a Swedish pastor as bishop of the Mission Province in Sweden.

At its February 19-21 meeting near Geneva, the Executive Committee recommended to the Council “on the basis of the appropriate provisions in the LWF Constitution to terminate the service of Bishop Obare as adviser to the Council.” Obare heads the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Kenya (ELCK), one of two LWF member churches in Kenya.

The 13-member committee confirmed it had received the news that Obare consecrated Rev. Arne Olsson as bishop of the Mission Province in Sweden on Saturday, 5 February 2005 in the auditorium of a high school in Gothenburg, Sweden. Olsson is a pastor of Karlstad Diocese, Church of Sweden.

“The consecration took place outside all regulations in the Church of Sweden. This action by Bishop Obare, together with those who assisted him, must be considered as inappropriate interference in the life of a sister church, with negative consequences for the unity of the LWF as a communion of churches as a whole,” the committee stated in its recommendation to the Council.



ELCK Bishop Walter E. Obare Omwanza, during the September 2003 LWF Council at Chavannes-de-Bogis near Geneva. © LWF/H. Putsman

The Executive Committee said the ELCK bishop's action was inconsistent with his role as “adviser to the Council, entrusted with the responsibility to uphold and further the unity of the Lutheran communion.” The Council is expected to make a decision on the committee's recommendation at this year's meeting, August 31—September 6 in Jerusalem.

LWF General Secretary Rev. Dr Ishmael Noko told *Lutheran World Information (LWI)*, “Bishop Obare will be invited to attend the Council meeting, which will make the final decision. He may avail himself to address the Council if he so wishes.”

Obare, a member of the Program Committee for Theology and Studies, is among 22 representatives from

LWF member churches worldwide appointed to serve as advisers to the current Council. Advisers provide professional competence and expertise to the seven Program Committees of the Council. They are full members, with vote in their respective committees. They have voice but no vote in Council plenary sessions.

The Council is LWF's governing body, meeting annually. It consists of the President, who is elected by the Assembly, the Treasurer, who can be elected from among the membership or from outside, and 48 people elected by the Assembly. (428 words)

Suspect Arrested in 2004 Murder of Brazilian Lutheran Missionary

Noko: “Cause of Further Distress” that Accused Is a Pastor

GENEVA, 2 March 2005 (LWI) – The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) has welcomed the Mozambican authorities' arrest of a suspect in the murder of a Brazilian Lutheran missionary a year ago.

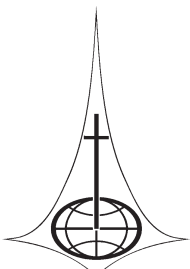
Deaconess Doraci J. Edinger, a missionary from the Evangelical Church of the Lutheran Confession in Brazil (IECLB) to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Mozambique (ELCM) was murdered on 21 February 2004 in Nampula, Mozambique. (See *LWI* No. 03/2004, pg 3–4.)

In a letter addressed to Mozambique's Minister of Justice, Dr José Ibraimo Abudo on March 2, LWF Gen-

eral Secretary, Rev. Dr Ishmael Noko expressed “appreciation for the progress reflected” in the February 25 arrest of the accused, who is a pastor of the ELCM.

Noko however stressed the LWF's great concern about the duration of the investigation and progress toward a conclusion. “The LWF trusts that the prosecution will now proceed expeditiously and with all proper legal protections for the accused,” he wrote to the justice minister.

Talking to *Lutheran World Information (LWI)*, Noko reiterated that Edinger's murder over a year ago was a shock and a cause of grief for many in the worldwide



LWF family. At certain points the LWF had voiced concerns about apparent delays in the investigation, he explained. "While the evident progress reflected in the arrest on February 25 is therefore something to be appreciated, the fact that the person arrested is a pastor of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Mozambique is itself the cause of further grief and distress," he said.

The general secretary pointed out that "the question of guilt or innocence is now a matter for determination by the courts in Mozambique, and we all must await the outcome. In the meantime, we pray for the families both of Sister Doraci and of the pas-

tor arrested in Mozambique in this acutely difficult and painful time."

The LWF member churches in both Mozambique and Brazil have been and continue to be in close cooperation with the investigating authorities, Noko added.

From 1998 until the time of her death last year, 53-year-old Edinger worked at the ELCM within an LWF-supported partnership program. She was reportedly found dead on 23 February 2004 in her apartment in Nampula, 700 km north of the capital Maputo. Police could not clarify the murder at the time. (398 words)

Rwandan Lutheran Church Calls for Preventive Measures against Genocide

LWF's Contribution to UN Thematic Discussion on Early Prevention of Genocide

GENEVA, 18 March 2005 (LWI) – Eleven years after the genocide in Rwanda, an official of the Lutheran church there has called upon the United Nations (UN) to "learn from our mistakes of the past and to determine what approaches work in the prevention of genocide" in the future.

Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) from 28 February to 1 March 2005 in Geneva, Switzerland. The UN Committee is the body of independent experts that monitors implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination by its state parties.



A group of suspected genocide perpetrators appear before a Gacaca (community court) at Mugina, Gitarama Province, in 2003. © LWF/DWS Rwanda/T. Lohnes

Rutsindintwarane described malicious government propaganda directed against ethnic minorities, religions or race as a clear sign of an impending genocide. This was how the looming genocide in Rwanda became apparent two years before it actually occurred. The LCR official urged the UN to "send warnings to states which sponsor or generate such propaganda" in due time.

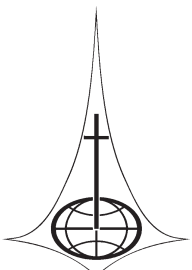
In order to prevent genocide, it was necessary to work on "trust building with people who are both perpetrators and victims of [hatred]," he said. Rutsindintwarane asked the UN to support such an approach, pointing out that international

Based on what he experienced during the 1994 killings in his country, Rev. John Rutsindintwarane, general secretary of the Lutheran Church of Rwanda (LCR), appealed to the community of nations to take seriously all warning signals that suggest an impending genocide.

His statement formed the basis of a Lutheran World Federation (LWF) contribution to a UN thematic discussion on genocide prevention that took place in the context of a meeting of the UN Committee on the

assistance was essential for local communities in crisis to reconstruct and engage in conflict transformation successfully.

The LCR general secretary urged that warnings expressed by UN staff members be heeded, as they were best able to assess the looming conflict situation. General Roméo Dallaire, Commander of UN peacekeeping troops, who was sent to Rwanda in 1993, had repeatedly sent warnings to the UN headquarters. Radical Hutu militias in the Central African nation



killed at least 800,000 Tutsis and moderate members of their own ethnic group between April and July 1994.

Mr Peter Prove, LWF Assistant to the General Secretary in the Office for International Affairs and Human Rights (OIAHR) emphasized that to prevent genocide before it happens, the LWF has been increasing its level of active cooperation with CERD and other human rights treaty bodies. These treaty bodies rely to a significant extent on information provided by civil society sources, in order to get a true picture of the situation in any given country.



Sustaining long-term peace is crucial to community development and self-reliance.
© LWF/DWS Rwanda/T. Lohnes

According to Prove, “The LWF wishes to encourage the further development of international mechanisms to prevent genocide and other forms of human rights violations.” The CERD has developed an early warning mechanism that has an obvious role in this regard.

The LWF Geneva secretariat affirmed its role as a bridge between the LCR and CERD in order to convey perspectives from the LWF constituency in Rwanda on steps that could be taken by the international community to better guard against genocide recurrence.

Rutsindintwarane is a Tutsi who survived the genocide in a refugee camp near the Tanzanian border. He is a leading figure in the 20,000-member LCR, which was officially registered in the country in 2001. It joined the LWF in 2002. Among other activities in Rwanda, the LWF runs a project for the reintegration of former genocide perpetrators in society, with the aim to sustaining long-term peace. (593 words)

FEATURE: Liberian, Sierra Leonean Religious Communities Advocate Hope Amidst Ruins

LWF Asked to Seek More Support to Consolidate Fragile Peace

MONROVIA, Liberia/GENEVA, 30 March 2005 (LWI) – As Liberians prepare for general and presidential elections in October this year, Lutheran Bishop Sumoward E. Harris is determined to see the country’s churches’ fully engaged in ensuring all eligible citizens participate in the process.

For various reasons, Liberians have “never fully utilized the power of the vote properly,” he says.

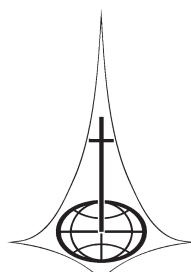
“Through ignorance and misuse, this [the vote] very important powerful tool had led Liberia into a state of backwardness, underdevelopment and self-destruction. Selfishness, greed for power, wealth, and nepotism had led into bloodshed and the suffering of the sovereign people from whom power derives,” according to the head of the Lutheran Church of Liberia (LCL), and president of the Liberian Council of Churches (LCC).



Liberian Bishop Sumoward E. Harris, addressing journalists when the LCN hosted the LWF delegation visiting West Africa. © LWF/M. Filibus

“Experience had taught the church during the crisis,” Harris says. “Church leaders remained to tend the sheep and suffered along with them while many politicians fled the country. [They] were faced with the burden of ministering and caring for their members just as other religious leaders,” the LCL bishop told a voter education workshop in Monrovia mid-February.

It is barely two years since the August 2003 comprehensive peace agreement was signed between warring parties in Lomé, ending 14 years of civil war. This also led to the resignation of former president Charles Taylor, who was exiled to Nigeria. The National Transitional Government of Liberia (NTGL) headed by Chairperson Gyude Bryant, and drawn from former rebel groups, government, and civil society groups was given a





Destroyed several times during the war, LCL Phebe hospital was rededicated during the LWF delegation visit. © LWF/M. Filibus

two-year mandate effective October the same year, to oversee efforts to rebuild the war devastated country, and hold elections.

Call to International Community to Support Electoral Process

“[We] have decided to fully participate in the electoral process by working along with the National Elections Commission (NEC) in preparing pastors, lay leaders, members of our congregations and other people to fully participate in the forthcoming elections,” Harris, said.

On behalf of the LCC, he urged the NTGL “to do all within its power to ensure that the necessary support is given to the NEC to prepare the Liberian population for the conduct of free, fair and transparent elections.”

He also appealed to the international community headed by the United Nations to provide the pre-requisite financial, material and other logistical support to NEC and the Liberian people.

Good governance, says Harris, begins with proper voter’s registration and civic education on the responsibility and right of all citizens to know their voting right and power. “[It] also begins when citizens refuse to sell their votes for rice or money or false and empty promise for future positions. [It] begins when citizens vote into offices qualified citizens who love Liberia above all other things and are willing to sacrifice their very best for the common good of all the citizens,” he adds.

One of the ways to make the forthcoming elections credible is for both the NTGL and the global community to ensure that internally displaced persons (IDPs) willing to return to their places of

origin are given all the necessary support for repatriation including the provision of building materials, transportation, safe drinking water, basic health and educational facilities.

When the LCL hosted a high-ranking delegation of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) visiting the country in February, Harris voiced similar concerns. He appealed to the top leadership of the body of which his church has been a member since 1966 to be “Liberia’s good will ambassadors to the international community in pleading for the reconstruction of the civil-war ravaged West African country.” Liberia has over 300,000 people living in camps, some of which are operated by the LWF Department

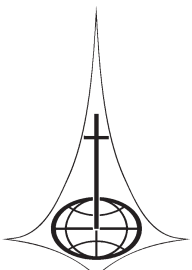
for World Service (DWS). He called for special focus to youth rehabilitation programs in a country where the young constituted 80 percent of the fighting forces in the conflict.

Liberia’s Stability Impacts on Neighboring Sierra Leone

The LWF delegation visited neighboring Sierra Leone, where the 1991–2002 civil war between government and rebel forces left tens of thousands dead and more than two million, over one-third of the population, displaced internally or as refugees. Relative peace has returned since the 2002 national elections, and the government continues to consolidate itself. However, the gradual withdrawal of most of the United Nations



Giving hope amidst the gruesome marks of Sierra Leone’s civil war: (Far left) LWF General Secretary Rev. Dr Ishmael Noko and Bishop Thomas J. Barnett (second left) talk with community members involved in an ELCSL income-generating project for war amputees. © LWF/M. Filibus



peacekeepers last year and early 2005, the worrying political and economic conditions in Guinea, and the security situation in neighboring Liberia pose some challenges to overall stability.

Near Freetown, the LWF delegation visited an amputee resettlement camp hosting Sierra Leonean families and a refugee camp with 7,000 Liberians. An indelible mark of the fight over control of the capital city was the rebel factions' tactic of chopping off civilians' limbs.

Through the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Sierra Leone (ELCSL) and DWS program there, LWF partners including the ELCA are assisting with the resettlement of families and the setting up of income-generating projects such as bakeries and handicrafts. Other support includes water provision, health and education facilities.

But there are also other pressing concerns in Sierra Leone, according to ELCSL Bishop Rev. Thomas J. Barnett. "The war is over, we have held elections, but we have a very big enemy—HIV/AIDS." He stressed the church's active involvement in awareness raising about HIV transmission.

There are, however, positive signs. Christians and Muslims in Sierra Leone have very good relations, a



LWF President, Bishop Mark S. Hanson (fourth left) with a group of ELCSL pastors including LWF Council member, Rev. Marie J. Barnett (second from right), during the delegation's visit to Sierra Leone. © LWF/M. Filibus

fact stressed by Barnett, who is also president of the Inter-Religious Council of Sierra Leone (IRCSL), which played a major mediation role in the peace process. The IRCSL continues to encourage interfaith dialogue and various other activities to promote this peaceful co-existence.

(940 words)

(Monrovia (Liberia)-based LWI correspondent Philip Sandi, contributed to this article.)

Ole Christian M. Kvarme New Bishop of Oslo

April 3 Installation of Gunnar Stålsett's Successor

OSLO, Norway/GENEVA, 29 March 2005 (LWI) – On March 11, Norway's King Harald V together with the Council of State appointed Rt Rev. Ole Christian Mælen Kvarme as the new bishop of Oslo Diocese, Church of Norway.

Kvarme will be installed into his new position on April 3 during a service in the Oslo Cathedral. He succeeds Rev. Dr Gunnar J. Stålsett who headed the diocese from 1998 until his retirement on March 1. Stålsett, who turned 70 on February 10, was general secretary of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) between 1985-1994.

The Oslo bishop-elect has been head of the Borg diocese since 1998.

Bishop Finn Wagle, president of the Bishops' Conference congratulated Kvarme on his appointment as Oslo bishop. "We have seen a strong involvement of both church and society in the election process. This says a great deal about the significance of the ministry into which Bishop Kvarme now enters. Now it is time to gather around the bishop-elect who has been ap-



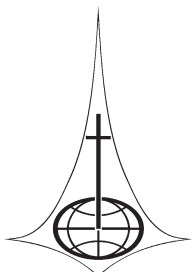
New Oslo Bishop Ole Christian Mælen Kvarme. © Church of Norway

pointed in the light of a strong church vote. As the president of the Bishops' Conference, I look forward to continue the good cooperation with Bishop Ole Christian M. Kvarme," Wagle said.

In August 2004, the Oslo diocesan council nominated seven candidates for Stålsett's successor. One more candidate was included after a vote by the Oslo Diocese parish councils and pastors. There were four eligible candidates in the final round, three men and one woman: Dean Trond Bakkevig; General Secretary Helen Bjørnøy; Bishop Kvarme; and Erling J. Pettersen, Director of the Church of Norway National Council.

The bishop of Norway's capital city, Oslo, traditionally has a prominent position in society, because of the close proximity to the government, parliament and royal family.

Ole Christian M. Kvarme was born on 11 November 1948 in Molde. He obtained his theological education at the Free Faculty of Theology in Oslo, and addition-



ally studied Hebrew, rabbinism and judaistics. He served as a missionary pastor in Haifa, Israel. He was General Secretary of the Norwegian Bible Society between 1986-96, prior to which he managed the Caspari Center for Biblical and Jewish Studies in Jerusalem. Before his appointment as Bishop of Borg in 1998, Kvarme was Dean of Oslo.

Kvarme was the leader of the national ecumenical committee for the Jubilee 2000 celebrations in Norway. He has served on several management boards

including the Free Faculty of Theology in Oslo and Christian daily, *Vårt Land*. He was a member of the Lutheran-Adventist Conversations group, a dialogue group of the LWF and General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. He has written several books on the Jewish roots of the church.

The Church of Norway has 3.9 million members, representing around 86 percent of the national population. It has been an LWF member church since 1947. (475 words)

ELCA Bishops, Church Boards, Comment about Recommendations on Homosexuality

Church Council to Prepare Resolution for 2005 Assembly Action

CHICAGO, United States of America/GENEVA, 29 March 2004 (ELCA NEWS/LWI)—Ahead of the April 8–11 meeting of the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), the Conference of Bishops and two church boards have issued separate statements concerning three recommendations on homosexuality released by a task force for the ELCA Studies on Sexuality this year.

The Council, ELCA's board of directors and its legislative authority between biennial churchwide assemblies, will, at its meeting next month, prepare a resolution for action on the task force's recommendations by the 2005 Churchwide Assembly, meeting August 8–14, in Orlando, Florida.

On January 13, the task force for ELCA Studies on Sexuality released a report on its first three years of work. The report included three recommendations for the assembly to review at this year's meeting, when it is expected to answer two key questions on homosexuality: Should the church bless same-gender relationships? Should the church allow people in such relationships to serve the church as professional lay and ordained ministers?

The task force recommended that the ELCA:

- concentrate on finding ways to live together faithfully in the midst of disagreements.
- continue to respect the pastoral guidance of a 1993 statement of the ELCA Conference of Bishops opposing the blessing of homosexual relationships but remaining open to pastors wanting to provide pastoral care for gay and lesbian Lutherans.
- continue under current standards that expect unmarried ministers to abstain from sexual relations—defining marriage as being between a man and a woman—but, respecting the consciences of those who find these standards in

conflict with the mission of the church, the ELCA may choose to refrain from disciplining gay and lesbian ministers in committed relationships and from disciplining those who call or approve partnered gay or lesbian people for ministry.

Division for Church in Society, Ministry Boards Consider Recommendations

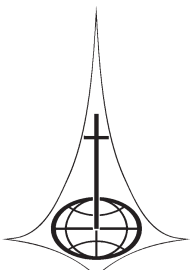
At their meetings March 10–12 in Chicago, the Division for Church in Society (DCS) and Division for Ministry (DM) drafted a joint response to the report and the three recommendations. The boards met in small groups and in plenary sessions, together and separately, to consider what to do with the task force report and recommendations on homosexuality.

In their joint statement, the DCS and DM boards said they were supportive of the first recommendation. While the DCS board appreciated the second recommendation's "allowance for prayerful support for couples in same-sex committed relationships," the DM board's response was "more mixed."

"Although both boards voted in a straw poll against adopting recommendation three as presented by the task force, many expressed a desire to 'create space,' picking up a phrase from the task force report," the boards said. Some board members were concerned that "create space" was not defined, while others "welcomed the term as a means to express their desire to allow exception for those who, as a matter of conscience, would act contrary to churchwide policy."

Conference of Bishops Acknowledge Members Are "Not of One Mind"

Following its March 3–7 meeting, the ELCA Conference of Bishops, acknowledging its members were "not of one mind" on issues related to homosexuality, sent a message to the church urging the affirmation of two



recommendations of the task force, but could offer no definitive advice on the most controversial of the three recommendations.

The ELCA Conference of Bishops is an advisory body of the church, consisting of the 65 ELCA synod bishops, ELCA secretary and ELCA presiding bishop. Their message was intended to advise the DCS and DM boards, and the ELCA Church Council, as each considers what to do with the task force report and recommendations on homosexuality.

“We acknowledge that as a conference we are unable to offer a definitive word of advice on recommendation three,” the Conference of Bishops said. “Some bishops are convinced there should be no change in the practice and policy of our church. Other bishops favor changes both in policy and in practice, although there is no consensus as to how such changes should take place.”

Information about the Studies on Sexuality is at www.elca.org/faithfuljourney on the ELCA Web site. Additional information is available from the

ELCA News Service at www.elca.org/scriptlib/CO/ELCA_News/encArticleList.asp

The ELCA has nearly 5 million members, and joined the Lutheran World Federation in 1988. Its presiding bishop, Rev. Mark S. Hanson is LWF President.

LWF Task Force Meets in April

Meanwhile, the LWF Task Force for Discussion on Family, Marriage and Sexuality, will hold its first meeting from April 4 to 7 in Geneva. The team of eight persons drawn from the seven LWF regions is expected to propose guidelines and processes by which “respectful discussion might be pursued among member churches on issues of family, marriage and human sexuality where there are agreements and disagreements,” its terms of reference state.

The task force was appointed by the LWF Council at its meeting last September. (*See LWI No. 09/2004 pg 19*)

(837 words)

Synod Discusses Structural Reform of Russian Regional Church Body

New Leadership Structure Proposed for ELCROS

MOSCOW, Russia/GENEVA, 29 March 2005 (LWI) – Structural reforms of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Russia and Other States (ELCROS) was the main subject of the recent synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of European Russia (ELCER), an independent regional member church of ELCROS.

Discussions at the Twelfth Synod of ELCER, February 22–25, centered on the transformation of ELCROS into an alliance of churches with a new leadership structure. The position of archbishop would subsequently no longer exist within the church body that brings together Lutheran churches in the former Soviet Republic.

Synod members adopted a document developed by the ELCER Conference of Deans in February this year, which will be submitted to the ELCROS General Synod in St Petersburg, Russia, at the end of April.

The synod members elected a new presidential committee headed by Dr Ludmila Pankratova, a solicitor from Nischnekamsk (Tatarstan Deanery). This was necessary because the Russian Ministry of Justice invalidated the committee elected in September 2002, citing irregularities in the process. The head of the church and his deputy were appointed in accordance with the

ELCER constitution, thus Bishop Siegfried Springer and Dean Rerich were confirmed in their positions.

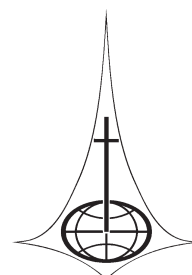
According to the ELCROS church office, Archbishop Georg D. Kretschmar had tried to gain the support of synod members for the alliance of regional churches to be continued in its current form.

ELCROS church office director, Hans Schwahn, had pointed out that the implementation of the working paper at the general synod assembly in April would no longer be possible. Indeed, this would require fundamental amendments of the current church constitution. The suggested changes would first have to be clarified with the Russian Ministry of Justice to ascertain their legal status. The ELCROS constitution had been registered as an exceptional case with the Ministry of Justice in 1999 after lengthy negotiations, as Russian law does not provide for alliances of regions located beyond Russian borders within a single church, he explained.

ELCROS comprises 170 congregations and congregational groups that are part of twelve deaneries. Springer has been head of the Moscow-based ELCER since 1992. The ELCROS has 250,000 members and has been a member of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) since 1989.

(381 words)

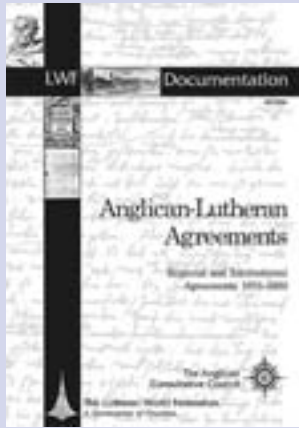
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New Anglican-Lutheran Publication on Ecumenical Agreements over Three Decades

The Anglican Communion and Lutheran World Federation (LWF) have jointly produced "Anglican-Lutheran Agreements – Regional and International Agreements 1972–2002," as LWF Documentation No. 49. The joint publication is a comprehensive volume that brings together in one place the texts of all the major Anglican-Lutheran ecumenical agreements between 1972 and 2002.

The 338-page book includes not only the international agreements such as the *Niagara Report* on Episcopate, and the recent *Growth in Communion* report by the Anglican-Lutheran International Working Group, but also regional agreements such as *Porvoo* and *Meissen* (Europe); *Called to Common Mission* and *Waterloo* (North America); and *Common Ground* from



Australia. Anglican-Lutheran relations across the globe have taken major strides forward in the period covered by the publication, leading to relations of "full communion" in North America, and significant progress elsewhere.

Documentation 49 is available also in German titled: "Anglikanisch-lutherische Übereinkommen – Internationale und regionale Übereinkommen 1972-2002."

Orders can be placed with the LWF Office for Communication Services, 150 Route de Ferney, P.O. Box 2100, CH-1211 Geneva 2, Switzerland, Tel. +41/22-791 6111, Fax +41/22-

791 6630, E-mail, info@lutheranworld.org.

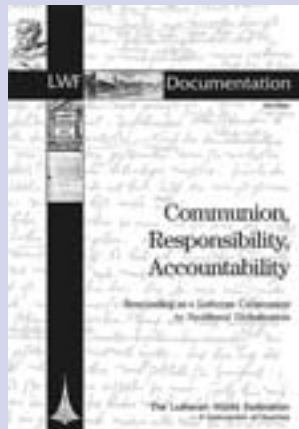
Price: CHF 15, EUR 10 or USD 13, plus postage.

(196 words)

Economic Globalization Focus of New LWF Publication

Since 2000, the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) has had a programmatic focus on the challenges posed today by economic globalization, as part of the wider ecumenical family and civil society. The LWF has now published "Communion, Responsibility, Accountability – Responding as a Lutheran Communion to Neoliberal Globalization" – LWF Documentation No. 50.

The first part of this book brings together the publications, processes, events and select responses that have been a part of this work, including commitments made at the 2003 LWF Tenth Assembly. Also presented are diverse perspectives from LWF member churches, field programs of the Department for World Service, and from youth, and an indication of what has been said ecumenically.



The second part contains articles that deepen the theological, pastoral and ethical reflections that are evoked by economic globalization, but are much wider in their implications. The book is edited by Rev. Dr Karen L. Bloomquist, director of the LWF Department for Theology and Studies, and study secretary, Office for the Church and Social Issues.

Copies of the 290-page English version are available from: The LWF Department for Theology and Studies, 150 Route de Ferney, P.O. Box 2100, CH-1211 Geneva 2, Switzerland, Tel. +41 22 791 6111, Fax +41/22-

791 6630, E-mail liesch@lutheranworld.org. Price CHF 15, EUR 10 or USD 13, plus postage. The German version, being published by Kreuz Verlag, will be available later in 2005.

(235 words)

Romanian Church, Evangelical Church in Germany Sign Partnership Agreement

The Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in Romania and Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD) have signed a partnership agreement. Romanian Bishop Dr Christoph Klein and EKD Council Chairperson, Bishop Dr Wolfgang Huber signed the agreement, February 25 in Hanover, Germany.

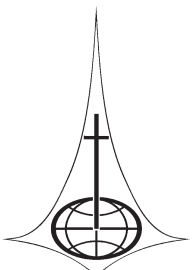
According to an EKD press release, both sides emphasized during the signing that this was a step in the right direction, and should be seen as a "visible sign of a partnership with equal rights." Among others, the agreement covers "encounters and consultations at church leadership level, as well as meetings between specialized staff," and

the "promotion of mutual exchanges of ministers, staff members, and students."

The Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in Romania has radically changed with developments in recent years. During the past two decades, a large number of German congregation members have migrated abroad, mainly to Germany. Subsequently, membership has plummeted from 120,000 in 1987 to 14,600 presently. The church has meanwhile strengthened, and has undergone a major restructuring process, resulting in an ecumenically open church in diaspora.

The Romanian church joined the Lutheran World Federation in 1964.

(193 words)



African Religious Leaders to Convene in Second Inter-Faith Action for Peace Summit

LWF General Secretary Noko Stresses Forum's Role in Addressing Conflict

GENEVA, 29 March 2005 (LWI) – Over 200 representatives of different faith traditions in Africa will gather between April 18–25 in Benoni near Johannesburg, South Africa, to review their plan of action adopted over two years ago, calling for the active engagement of religious leaders in conflict resolution and peace building initiatives on the continent.

The Second Inter-Faith Action for Peace in Africa (IFAPA) Summit is being coordinated by the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) and hosted by the National Religious Leaders Forum in South Africa (NRLFSA). Delegates, around 40 percent of whom are women, are drawn from more than 30 countries, and represent major religions including African Traditional Religion, the Baha'i faith, Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam and Judaism. The theme of the summit is "Working Together for Peace in Africa."

"Mothers and Daughters of Africa" Pre-Summit

The overarching goal of the Second Summit, the first three days of which will be devoted to a "Consultation of Mothers and Daughters of Africa," will be to broaden and strengthen inter-faith collaboration and action for peace in Africa. Delegates will also evaluate the Johannesburg Declaration and Plan of Action adopted at the first summit in October 2002, under the theme "Embracing the Gift of Peace."

While encouraging trends and signs of peace are emerging in some parts of the continent, the prevailing potential for war and conflict in many areas, is still a matter of concern, says IFAPA convenor, LWF

General Secretary Rev. Dr Ishmael Noko. Flash points include Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Ivory Coast; Liberia, Nigeria, Northern Uganda, Sierra Leone and Sudan.

Use and Abuse of Holy Scriptures

Against this backdrop, discussion topics will include the use and abuse of holy scriptures with respect to conflict; racism, religion and dialogue; the impact of conflict on children in Africa; and the threats of international terrorism and the need to focus on its root causes. Highlights from the women's pre-summit which will be attended by some of Africa's First Ladies, will be presented in an official launch of "A Mother's Cry for Reconciliation."

The media will also play an important role not only in spreading the message and vision of the second summit, but also in active participation. A group of international and local journalists will take part in a panel discussion on the role of media in the context of interfaith action for peace. "We seek ways of working together with the media to advance the cause of peace in this continent," Noko says.

It is further expected that the Summit shall strengthen the interfaith forum as a viable pan-Africa instrument in addressing the state of war and conflict in Africa and, that it shall forge appropriate mechanisms to strengthen the existing sub-regional and national interfaith structures in different parts of Africa.

In terms of both geographical and inter-religious scope, "IFAPA is a contribution to the African renaissance that we all hope and pray for," Noko adds.

(510 words)

Christians, Muslims Discuss Shariah Implications in Northern Nigeria

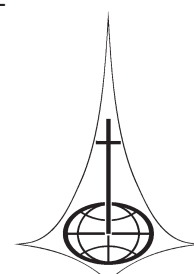
Grassroots' Involvement Crucial in Reconciliation, LWF Study Team Told

JOS, Nigeria/GENEVA 29 March 2005 (LWI) – "Muslims will always demand *Shariah* (Islamic law) wherever they find themselves, but it will never apply to Christians." A Muslim scholar from southern Nigeria made these remarks during a conference on Christian-Muslim relations held in Gusau, the capital of Zamfara State, the first state to introduce *Shariah* in northern Nigeria in 1999. Later, eleven other states followed the Zamfara example and applied *Shariah* criminal laws.

"*Shariah* and Christian-Muslim Relations in Nigeria: The Way Forward" was the theme of the meeting, the sixth in a series organized by the Association of Chris-

tian-Muslim Mutual Relations in Nigeria, in conjunction with the Nigerian Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs and the Zamfara State Government. Rev. Dr David L. Windibiziri, retired archbishop of the Lutheran Church of Christ in Nigeria (LCCN) is president of the association that was established in 1992.

The March 1–5 conference was the first to be co-hosted by the state, an indication of increasing engagement of politicians and religious leaders in issues that relate to religious co-existence. Over 80 Christians and Muslims including imams, bishops and pastors from different Christian denominations, scholars from several



universities, representatives of religious organizations and media workers from all over Nigeria attended the conference. Also participating were five members of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) Christian-Muslim study team on the role of religion in conflicts.

There were presentations by theologians from both religions. Members of the “Christian-Muslim Dialogue: Conflict and Peace” study team also listened and learned from a variety of discussions and interviews with participants from areas in Northern Nigeria that had been affected by conflicts and crises between Christians and Muslims since 1990.

After the conference until March 13, the team comprising a Christian and Muslim representative each from Denmark, Indonesia, Nigeria and the United States of America, was also able to gain insight into the problems connected with the implementation of Shari’ah, especially in the northern states of Sokoto, Zamfara and Bauchi, and the concern this had created among Christians. Some Christians feared that an Islamic state would eventually be declared, resulting in the elimination of Christianity.



From left to right: Bauchi State Governor, Mr Adami Muazan; and LWF study team members, Rev. Dr David Windibiziri (Nigeria); Rev. Dr Ingo Wulthorst (LWF Geneva); Prof. Lissi Rasmussen (Denmark); and Barrister Nafisatu (Nigeria). © LWF

The study team’s meetings with politicians, Christian and Muslim leaders and community members in Abuja, Bauchi, Gusau, Jos and in Adamawa State where the Lutheran church is widespread, somewhat explained

the complexity of the situation. The violent conflicts that had taken place in northern Nigeria in recent years were not spontaneous as earlier conflicts, but had been well prepared, often with support from outside the country. Poverty, unemployment, corruption and feelings of neglect and exclusion from power and decision-making positions appeared to be the primary causes, while ethnicity and religion were used to fuel the conflicts.

Grassroots’ Involvement Crucial for Reconciliation Processes

Christian and Muslim organizations have often been involved in several initiatives aimed at securing peace and harmony in the country, and the two LWF member churches in Nigeria, the LCCN and Lutheran Church of Nigeria have played a central role in such processes. But there is concern about political involvement.

“The process of reconciliation and peace building has been stolen by politicians and media from the people who are suffering. It must be given back to the grassroots,” said Rev. Gopar Barnabas Topkida, director of the Mennonite Central Committee local peace program. Topkida who works with community groups and organizations to create bridges of understanding and develop peace building skills especially in and around the Jos area, particularly criticized televised peace conferences involving politicians, that started and ended with a Christian and Muslim prayer.

Reconciliation and healing of deep wounds in Christian-Muslim relations, the causes of conflicts and overcoming conflicts have been the focus of the LWF Christian Muslim study process not only in Nigeria but also in Indonesia and Denmark, and later this year in two workshops in the United States of America. The findings of the process carried out through

the LWF Department for Theology and Studies will be published at the beginning of 2006. *(688 words)*

(Contributed by LWF study team member, Danish theologian Prof. Lissi Rasmussen.)

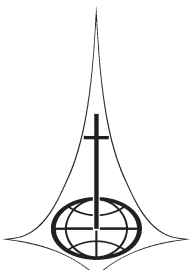
Ecumenical Research Institute Celebrates 40 Years

On April 3, the Institute for Ecumenical Research in Strasbourg, France, will be marking its 40th anniversary. Inaugurated on 1 February 1965, the institute brings together scholarly research and service to the churches in theological research; ecumenical dialogues; and in the communication and reception of such dialogues. It was established under the Lutheran Foundation for Inter-confessional Research, called for by the Fourth Assembly of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) in Helsinki, Finland, in 1963. The foundation was set up to assist Lutheran churches in fulfilling their ecumenical ministry in the area of theology.

Staffed by six research professors, two doctoral students and two administrative assistants, the Strasbourg institute plays a central role in Lutheran ecumenism. Research done there has made significant contributions to contemporary ecumenical thought introducing such key notions as “unity in reconciled diversity” and “differentiated consensus,” thus laying the conceptual foundation for much of Lutheran ecumenical dialogue.

Danish theologian Dr Niels H. Gregersen is chairperson of the institute’s board of trustees.

(168 words)



Partnership, Cooperation Mark LWF Communion Response to Disaster in India

Canadian Seminary Students' Experience
with "Putting Theology into Action"

SASKATOON, Canada/GENEVA, 23 March 2005 (LWI)

– On a recent study tour to southeastern India, students from the Lutheran Theological Seminary in Saskatoon, Canada, witnessed first hand the strength of partnership and cooperation between members of the Lutheran communion during a time of great loss. The group, accompanied by Dr Ruth E. Jensen, executive director of Canadian Lutheran World Relief (CLWR), spent time with several of the organization's partners responding to the devastation wrought on India's southeastern coastline by the tidal waves (*tsunamis*) after an undersea earthquake struck South East Asia last December.

During initial encounters with fishing communities in the Pulicat Lake area, some 60 kilometers north of Chennai, women revealed strong feelings of betrayal by the sea. This source of life, leisure and livelihood had destroyed their homes, boats and fishing nets, and killed family and friends. One student observed that the women's desire to share their personal experiences and stories appeared therapeutic as though lessening their burden of pain.

In Pulicat area, CLWR has a longstanding relationship with CReNIEO, a local development organization that distributed emergency relief supplies when the *tsunamis* struck, provided trauma care, and assisted with rehabilitation.

CLWR is the service delivery arm for development programming and overseas relief for the Evangelical



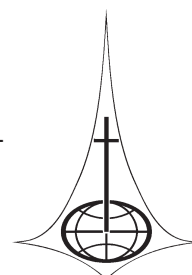
Saskatoon Lutheran Theological Seminary student, Roland Schoepf, assists with UELCI/ACT distribution of relief supplies in a coastal community near Cuddalore, Tamil Nadu, India. © Daranne Mills

Lutheran Church in Canada and Lutheran Church-Canada. It facilitates and supports development programs in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Middle East, where it also collaborates with member churches of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF).

A desire to ease the suffering and put theology into action was a common objective shared by students and CLWR partners, the United Evangelical Lutheran Church in India (UELCI), a body of 12 Lutheran churches, nine of which are LWF member churches. In communities around the town of Cuddalore, students, volunteers from local churches, and UELCI staff persons distributed aid packages containing stoves and cooking utensils. With most of their belongings swept away by the *tsunamis*, villagers, who were dependent on the delivery of pre-prepared meals, are gradually moving toward re-empowerment and self-sufficiency. The UELCI continues to be actively engaged beyond emergency relief, and is currently focussing on livelihood res-



Earning a regular income again: A crew member of new fishing boats provided by DWS India displays his catch. © DWS India/Act International



toration and rehabilitation efforts in collaboration with the local government.

Equipping Community Members to Provide Long-term Care

At the Bishop Peter Teachers Training Institute in Cuddalore, now turned into a mini hospital, the UELCI National Lutheran Health and Medical Board (NLHMB) is providing medical and trauma care to the surrounding communities. Staff highlight an acute need for psychosocial rehabilitation with reports of insomnia and flashbacks from many of those seeking care. NLHMB professionals are training local volunteers to provide counseling and psychological assistance. Long after the immediate need for water, food and shelter has been met, the impact of fear and loss will undoubtedly linger, and local people require the capacity to serve their communities after the field hospital is no longer in operation.

The need to address psychosocial concerns and provide trauma counseling was also echoed by Mr Howard Jost, director of the Kolkata-based LWF Department for World Service (DWS) program in India, which is providing strategic support to the Chennai-based UELCI. DWS India is utilizing trauma

counseling resources drawn from Church of Sweden to train and enable local people in other operational areas to respond effectively.

Rev. Chandran Paul Martin, UELCI executive secretary, stressed livelihood issues as a major concern. A fear of the sea, the loss or destruction of boats and nets for fishing and the salinization of agricultural lands pose long-term challenges as relief operations shift to the post-crisis phase. In the meantime, DWS India is providing new boats to fishermen in villages on the eastern coast. (See LWI No. 02/2005, pg. 9) The LWF program plans to purchase and deliver at least 90 boats, each of which will also come with a power engine and two sets of fishing nets.

Continued partnership and cooperation among members of the LWF communion will be crucial to ensure the accompaniment and empowerment of survivors as they face such challenges. Other partners providing support in India include, Action by Churches Together (ACT) International, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Lutheran World Relief and several of the UELCI member churches. (720 words)

(Daranne Mills, a student at the Lutheran Theological Seminary in Saskatoon contributed this article. Mills served as a youth intern with the LWF Office for Communication Services between 2002 and 2003.)

“The Peace Will Take Us Back to School”—“When?” Others Ask

Religious Delegation to Southern Sudan Pleads for People’s Basic Needs

RUMBEK, Southern Sudan/GENEVA, 23 March 2004 (LWI) – When the scorching midday sun strikes Rumbek in southern Sudan, it often finds seven-year-old Ayen Chol drawing water from a well drilled next to shells of destroyed brick buildings.

Since the January 2005 comprehensive peace agreement, signed in neighboring Kenya between the Sudan People’s Liberation Movement /Army (SPLM/A) and the Khartoum government, these children have found the freedom to move and play in the open. It is hoped that the accords, reached after nearly three years of negotiations, will end the two-decade long war, Africa’s most protracted

“The peace is good,” says Chol speaking through an interpreter, as other children and women at the well observe. “It will take back us to school. It will bring clothes and books. We shall now eat well.”



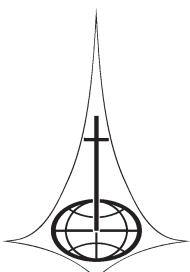
Seven-year-old Ayen Chol. © Fredrick Nzwili

Born during the war, and growing to this age as soldiers from both sides fought each other, forcing populations to move from battlegrounds, she receives the new developments with optimism, just like Rebecca Ajok, a mother of four who survived the 21 years of war.

Ajok delights at the knowledge that government planes will no longer drop bombs from the sky. She hopes to start a small business and attend church without fear with her husband, who has since signed up for adult education.

“You can see what has been happening to us. It was difficult to do anything with war,” she says, pointing out at what was once the residence of the Anglican Bishop of Rumbek, which was reduced to a shell in past

aerial bombardment campaigns by Sudanese government forces.



However, expectations such as these, which have since accompanied the signing of the peace accord are proving larger than the scarce resources available for Sudan.

In towns across the Rumbek region visited by a team of religious leaders drawn from Kenya, Senegal, Tanzania, Uganda, and from southern and northern Sudan, March 14–19, local communities, church leaders and SPLM representatives express their frustration as they try to confront the new challenges brought about by the agreement.

“We have seen and heard from the people. The needs of the local citizens are overwhelming. Support has to come quickly,” says Rev. Mcleord Baker

Ochola II, retired Anglican Bishop of Kitgum, northern Uganda, who led the Inter-Faith Action for Peace in Africa (IFAPA) delegation on the solidarity visit to Sudan.

The IFAPA process was initiated by the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) in 2002, with the goal to actively engage African religious leaders in conflict resolution and peace building efforts on the continent. Under the mandate of its October 2002 constituting summit of religious leaders in Johannesburg, South Africa, and plan of action, the Nairobi (Kenya)-based secretariat has organized similar visits to the Democratic Republic of Congo and Liberia. An exchange visit between landmine survivors is planned in Northern Uganda at the end of March.

Southern Sudanese expectations, as expressed to the delegation, range from the most basic such as food, water and clothing to infrastructure construction, including roads and schools. Already some officials of



Women and children fetch water at a borehole in Rumbek town, southern Sudan. © Fredrick Nzwilli

non-governmental organizations (NGOs) caution that these expectations could easily turn into disappointment if the returning refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) find no humanitarian response on the ground.

“They could easily work against the peace. If they find nothing at home, they could start regretting why they returned,” says Taban Emmanuel, a program officer with the Catholic Relief Services in Rumbek.

Needs Are Greater Than Resources

Southern Sudan had indicated it would need about USD 500 million, for immediate humanitarian needs, but only USD 24 million had been received by the start of March.

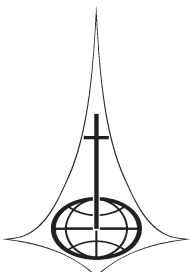
The war in Sudan has killed an estimated two million people. Humanitarian organizations estimate that four million Sudanese have been displaced internally or were forced to leave the country. Mary Biba, Secretary of Yambio County in the south, explains that some returning refugees from Uganda lost their children to disease.

“We tried to help where we could, but with the limited resources, we had to bear this sight. It wasn’t pleasant,” she adds.

On 9 March in Nairobi, the Sudanese government and SPLM/A released a recovery and development plan entitled “*Framework for Sustained Peace, Development and Poverty Eradication*”, an outcome of the Joint Assessment Mission organized by the United Nations and World Bank, in which they indicated they needed USD 7.8 billion to fund an initial post-war recovery and development plan for the country. The international community would be asked to contribute about a third of the total funds required. The Sudanese parties indicated most of the local money would come



The interfaith delegation in Yei, southern Sudan: From left to right, Fr Martin Lamba, Yei Roman Catholic diocese; Ms Rukiya Bakari, Interfaith Youth Peace Initiative, Kenya; Mr Moses Telar Cindut, SPLM/A Secretariat for Religious Affairs; Rt Rev. Macleord Baker Ochola II, Acholi Religious Leaders Peace Initiative, Uganda; Sheikh Saliou Mbacké, IFAPA coordinator; Sheikh Sidding Hamoda, Sudan Inter-religious Council; Mr John Malith, South Sudan Civil Society movement; Sheikh Al Haji Kundy from Tanzania; and Rev. Moses Ador, Sudan Council of Churches. © Fredrick Nzwilli





Typical sight: A newly constructed hut stands against a destroyed brick building in Rumbek town.
© Fredrick Nzwilli

from domestic oil revenues, but some leaders in the south are opposed to this idea.

“The support cannot come from oil revenues only, because our needs are greater than what we are going to get from the oil,” says Kauc Nak, secretary of the Rumbek County.

Administrators in the south say there is an acute shortage of medicines, water and food, and a possible strain on education resources, due to the huge numbers of children expected to return to school now that there is peace.

Schools under Trees the Best Option?

“The good thing is that these schools are under trees, so they can admit as many children as possible.” But, as Nak asks, “is it the best way of doing it?”

Muyek Makoi a teacher in Rumbek Secondary School struggles with thoughts about classes under

trees. “It’s usually windy and you can imagine the suffering of these children,” he adds.

Nak is categorical: southern Sudan cannot even talk of development before meeting the people’s most urgent needs. “We are talking of the provision of basic services. If we have such necessities, I don’t think anybody would take the option of going to war,” he says.

The local administration says one out of every three injury-related cases at the hospital in Rumbek occurred during conflict over water.

However, in a country where the life expectancy is 42 years and only a quarter of the population is literate,

the southerners are telling visitors to “tell the world that your brothers and sisters in Sudan are suffering and they need support.”

They urgently need healthcare, food, water, shelter, clothing and education. (1,029 words)

***This article is part of the ongoing LWI Features on Healing focusing on the LWF Tenth Assembly theme, “For the Healing of the World.” The series highlights the relevance of the Assembly theme in the different contexts of the worldwide Lutheran communion by presenting projects and activities aimed at promoting reconciliation and healing. This theme continues to be an important aspect of LWF’s work even after the 21–31 July 2003 Assembly in Winnipeg, Canada.**

(Contributed by Nairobi (Kenya)-based journalist Fredrick Nzwilli, who traveled with the IFAPA delegation to Southern Sudan.)

Canadian Lutheran Delegates to Vote on Same Sex Blessings

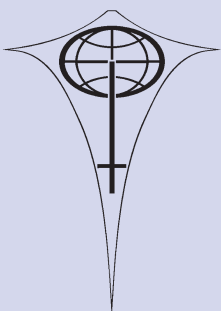
The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCIC) National Convention being held in Winnipeg from July 21–24 this year will be considering a three-part resolution that would allow local congregations to decide if they will authorize the blessing of same sex relationships.

The ELCIC National Church Council (NCC) has been asked to provide guidance for the pastoral practice of its synods, congregations, and pastors on this issue that has been a part of public discourse for some time, says a press release from

the church. “The NCC has acknowledged the diversity of opinion within our church on this contentious issue,” ELCIC National Bishop Raymond L. Schultz is quoted saying.

The NCC conducted an extensive study of important issues surrounding a local option for same sex blessings seeking the guidance of theologians, pastors and lay leaders through essays which are also available to the public on the ELCIC Web site www.elcic.ca (157 words)

(ELCIC Information)



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