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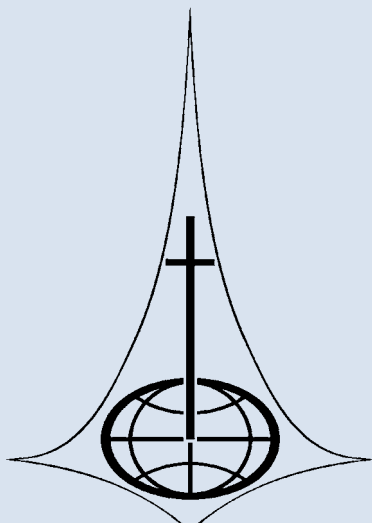
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Lutherans Return to Lund for LWF's 60th Anniversary Celebrations



The March 2007 Council meeting of the Lutheran World Federation included events to mark the organization's 60th anniversary, attended by over 500 representatives of the LWF's member churches and partner organizations. (Above) Worshippers during the festive Sunday eucharistic service in the Lund Cathedral on 25 March.

Photo: © LWF/D. Jusaitis

Highlights

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LWF 60th Anniversary Celebrations Webcast Live from Lund, Sweden . 11

Live transmission of the festive celebrations to mark the 60th anniversary of the Lutheran World Federation in Lund, Sweden, were made available on the Internet.

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This is how it all started: "Listen boys, I have received a message from Geneva." George Posfay, then an assistant pastor in Hungary, got the word shortly after World War II ended. European governments were being re-organized. Families were rebuilding their lives. Churches were re-examining their priorities.

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LWI Editorial Team during the 2007 Council Meeting

During the LWF Council meeting, church leadership consultation and 60th anniversary celebrations the *LWI* English writing team was supported by **Ms Trina Gallop**, editor of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada information service; **Ms**

Elizabeth Lobulu, communication co-ordinator, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania; and the LWF young communicators' writing team, led by **Ms Linda Macqueen**, editor of *The Lutheran* magazine, Lutheran Church of Australia.

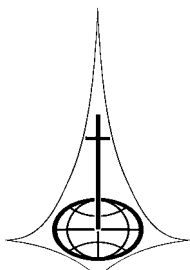
LWF General Secretary Receives Church of Sweden Award

LWF General Secretary Rev. Dr Ishmael Noko (right) receives the St Erik Award from Church of Sweden Archbishop Anders Wejryd. Established by the Swedish church in 1996, the award honors representatives or leaders of foreign churches in their ecumenical work for the unity of churches, for peace or against discrimination.

The award's citation reads: "Rev. Dr Ishmael Noko, General Secretary of the Lutheran World Federation is awarded The Plaque of St Erik for his continuous commitment to make the Lutheran World Federation instrumental for a widened and deepened ecumenism."



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Church Leaders Debate Proposed Guidelines on Marriage, Family and Sexuality

Call for Deeper Reflection on Theological Understanding

LUND, Sweden/GENEVA, 24 March 2007 (LWI) – Participants in the 20-27 March Council meeting of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) and Church Leadership Consultation discussed in plenary session a report on proposed guidelines and processes for respectful dialogue on marriage, family and sexuality.

Prof. Jan-Olav Henriksen from the Church of Norway, a member of the LWF Task Force on Family, Marriage and Sexuality, presented the report on behalf of the team established in 2004 to guide the discussion. He said the aim of the guidelines was not to give a common position on the subject matter, but rather to enable member churches to discuss the changing realities in relation to family, gender and sexuality in today's world.

Henriksen said that the mandate of the task force was to reflect on biblical, historical and ethical practices and attitudes in order to give specific attention to whether and how different hermeneutical approaches to Scripture, and different ethical attitudes, practices and policies affecting the unity of the Church could be dealt with.

The issues discussed by the task force were raised by the LWF member churches as their input to the dialogue, Henriksen reported. The 16-page report was discussed by the Executive Committee at its meeting in Geneva, Switzerland in November 2006.

The guidelines, among other things, invite the member churches to read Scripture in the light of its central message of salvation in Jesus Christ and justification by faith alone, and to address the issues and potential disagreements from that perspective.



Prof. Jan-Olav Henriksen, Church of Norway, listens to a response to the report of the LWF Task Force on Marriage, Family and Sexuality. © LWF/J. H. Rakotoniaina

The document urges the member churches to consider that within the subject under discussion, there could be incompatibilities, differences and disagreements because issues related to family, marriage and sexuality are perceived in different ways in different contexts.

Bishop Dr Eero Huovinen, vice president for the LWF Nordic region, and bishop of Helsinki Diocese, Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland, noted that the question of sexuality was not a light question. He said he was expecting a much deeper reflection on the theological understanding about marriage and the underlying biblical background.

“We need not have the same opinion on marriage, family and sexuality, but should, nevertheless, respect each other,” noted Rev. Hedwig Partaj of the Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in Austria.

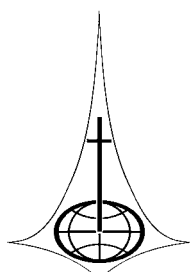
Bishop Dr Steven Munga of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania said he appreciated the report as “good and fair,” but pointed out that the issues being considered were not just a matter of biblical interpretation but also about cultural traditions. Discussion must be conducted in mutual respect, and involve the congregations.

Ms Abigail Zang Hoffman, a youth Council member from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, expressed appreciation for the document put pointed out that, given the different levels at which members were engaged on the subject, there was need for “*dialogue to see how the dialogue*” should be conducted effectively.

Ms Satou Marte Hamadou of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Cameroon said God created a woman for a purpose. God could have created a world where women and men lead separate lives, but they were created together so that women could bear children.



Bishop Harlen Simangunsong, Indonesia, comments on the task force report during plenary. © LWF/J. H. Rakotoniaina



She said that she opposed the idea of having the discussion on marriage, family and sexuality.

Bishop Joseph P. Bvumbwe from Malawi said the report was about a “potentially church-dividing issue. Certain churches have already taken a decision on the matter. Why have the dialogue then?” he asked.

Archbishop Janis Vanags of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Latvia said his church did not find the report helpful. According to him, the guidelines had come too late as some of the member churches had already decided on the issue. “In my church, homosexuality is regarded as a sin. When some churches have a different opinion, then it means division,” he said.

Rev. Susan Johnson of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada said the issues in the guidelines were not the only set of challenges before the LWF communion. The guidelines could be used to address other issues, she pointed out. “They show a way of talking with each other with respect,” she said.

Bishop Harlen Simangunsong, chairperson of the LWF National Committee in Indonesia, said the



*Ms Satou Marte Hamadou, Cameroon, shares her perspective.
© LWF/J. H. Rakotoniatina*

discussion might trigger a division in his church. He reported that it is taboo and impossible to discuss human sexuality in his country. However, he welcomed the process as a learning experience.

Rev. Iteffa Gobena, president of the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus, said that the document was one-sided with respect to theological arguments, and that its development should not have been based only on the debate in the member churches. He pleaded for orientation about the guidelines.

The LWF vice president for the Asia region, **Bishop Dr Munib A. Younan**, reminded the LWF member churches that they belonged to a wider community. He urged them to consider their respective ecumenical context in their discussion about marriage, family and sexuality.

Delegates continued to deliberate on the guidelines in regional meetings on 23 March. On 24 March, the Council received the report of the task force, including responses from the regional discussions. It is to be sent to the member churches for further discussion.

Former Finnish President Ahtisaari Asks Europe to Guard History Against Abuse

LWF Council Participants Discuss Challenges Facing “House of Europe”

LUND, Sweden/GENEVA, 24 March 2007 – Former Finnish President Martti Ahtisaari has emphasized the common responsibility of Europeans to ensure that history is not abused for inciting conflicts, but used as a bridge to foster understanding in the region.

“Some conflicts within Europe re-emerge because their history was never fully told or accepted,” Ahtisaari told participants in a plenary session of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) Council Meeting.

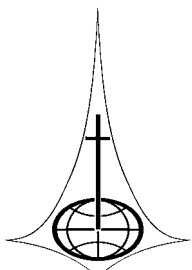
Ahtisaari’s 24 March presentation on the “House of Europe” focused on trends that have the potential to



Former Finnish President Martti Ahtisaari delivers his presentation on the “House of Europe.” © LWF/D. Jusaitis

weaken the continent. He described Europe today as “a success story” with fewer conflicts within its borders, but noted also that the region had not reached its maximum potential, and that “peace and freedom are still put to test by hate and violence.”

“The past lives for generations in the human memory and in societal structures. When it is manipulated, it fuels prejudices, conspiracy theories and enmity,” said Ahtisaari, who is the Special Envoy of the United Nations Secretary-General for the political process to determine Kosovo’s future status. He called for openness



and acceptance that people's familiar versions of history might not be the only versions existing, and suggested that "We have to listen to what others might tell us about our history." The church, he told the LWF gathering, has an important role to play in ensuring that history is not abused by being utilized as an ideological weapon.

are not for the applicant countries only. "Like any growing family, the challenge is to adapt the house, and make it fit for every family member," he said.

The prospect of EU admission for Turkey has implications not only for the country's legislative and economic development but also for the geopolitics of the Middle East and Caucasus. Ahtisaari said that putting an end to the Turkish hope of joining the EU might lead to a falling out between the West and the Islamic countries. It might also frus-



Among those who formally responded to Ahtisaari's presentation were, from left to right: WCC General Secretary Rev. Dr Samuel Kobia; former LWF General Secretary, Bishop em. Dr Gunnar J. Stålsett; WARC General Secretary Rev. Dr Setri Nyomi; and Rev. Glorias Rojas, Chile. © LWF/J. Elfström

Kosovo

Ahtisaari cited Kosovo as one important example of how a history of intolerance could have a devastating effect on people's lives. He regretted that despite intensive negotiations over the past year with the leadership of Serbia and Kosovo, there appeared to be no common ground on which to achieve an agreement on Kosovo's status. No amount of additional negotiation would change the respective parties' positions, he said, reporting that Belgrade insists that Kosovo should remain an autonomous province within Serbia, while Pristina insists on independence.

After chairing a 10 March high-level meeting in Vienna, Austria, that concluded the negotiations for Kosovo's future, the UN Special Envoy sent a settlement proposal to the UN Secretary-General. "I hope that the international community will end this conflict by closing a chapter where history was manipulated and used to fuel violence and hatred," he told the LWF gathering. He underscored that "A strong and united European position will be especially important in the next months."

Ahtisaari drew attention to a special chapter in his proposal that deals with the protection of religious heritage as particularly important. He explained, however, that such guarantees come with responsibility.

EU Challenges

Concerning the European Union (EU), Ahtisaari pointed out that the most obvious EU foreign policy had been its expansion from six to 27 members. But one should always remember that the benefits of the enlargement

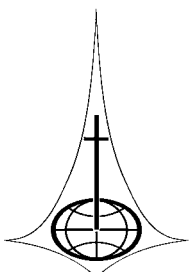
trate millions of Muslims who currently live in the EU, and would have serious implications for settling the Cyprus issue.

Integration

In a plenary response to Ahtisaari's presentation, **Rev. Dr Samuel Kobia**, general secretary of the World Council of Churches (WCC) said the "House of Europe" needed to give space to the different economic, cultural and political aspects in the region, instead of becoming like a house under siege where Europeans lived in fear of immigrants especially from Africa, Asia and South America. He pointed out that the religious and ethnic minorities were not integrated and Muslims were especially perceived as a threat.

The Orthodox **Metropolitan Ambrosius of Helsinki** (Finland), suggested that in order to strengthen the "House of Europe" church leadership should carry the responsibility to demonstrate openness, enlightened mind and willingness to learn from other religions, also as a way of preventing cultural conflicts.

Former LWF general secretary, Bishop emeritus Dr Gunnar J. Stålsett from Norway, called on churches to increase their engagement in dialogue and practical cooperation, also as a way of preventing conflict. He noted that the issues at stake in Europe were not merely about the political aspects but also about acknowledging religious identity, and particularly cautioned against the demonization of Islamic culture. On Turkey's anticipated entry into the European Union, Stålsett stressed that this would strengthen the EU, especially with respect to the inclusion of Islam.



Inclusion

Chilean church leader, **Rev. Glorias Rojas**, president of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Chile (IELCH), said in order to keep the European house in better order, there was need for an open space for participation of the South especially by opening up European markets.

Rev. Dr Setri Nyomi, general secretary of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC) spoke

strongly against the new form of slavery through economic globalization. He urged the EU to take greater responsibility in global affairs and speak out on global issues, instead of mainly taking action to foster the “fortress” in which Europe is perceived today.

Representing the Anglican Communion, **Rev. Canon Gregory K. Cameron**, director of Ecumenical Affairs and Studies, stressed the significant role of faith in building the “House of Europe.”

FEATURE: It’s About Diverse Gifts and Witness

Women Church Leaders Present Message to LWF Council

LUND, Sweden/GENEVA, 24 March 2007 (LWI) – In 1947, five women were present as delegates at the First Lutheran World Federation (LWF) Assembly held in Lund, Sweden. Sixty years later, in Lund again, almost 150 women participants attended LWF Council and associated gatherings, including a Conference of Women Bishops and Presidents and regional coordinators of the LWF desk for Women in Church and Society (WICAS) 20–21 March 2007.

WICAS secretary in the LWF Department for Mission and Development, **Ms Priscilla Singh**, said that the Communion had come a long way in implementing women’s participation and leadership, and in including gender in the agenda of member churches: “Many people are committed to LWF being an inclusive communion, where women, men and youth not only come together in respect for each other but also live out the gospel more fully.”

“This is not only about equality; it is about God’s call to all women and men to take part in the building of God’s reign,” Singh noted. “This includes accepting the diverse gifts and witness that women bring as lay leaders, pastors and bishops. We are called to fully live the gospel as the priesthood of all believers—men and women, youth and children.”



Ms Linda Macqueen, editor of The Lutheran, Australia, in discussion with WICAS secretary, Ms Priscilla Singh. © LWF/D. Jusaitis

However, despite the significant milestones reached, including an increasing number of women leaders in the church, there is still much work to be done, according to a message released by the conference participants on 21 March.

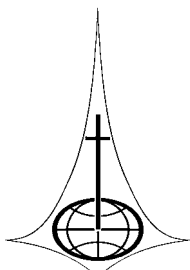
The message recommended to the LWF Council that women, including bishops, be involved in inter-confessional and inter-Lutheran dialogues in accordance with the LWF commitment to at least a 40 percent representation of women.

The message also called for all LWF member churches to approve the ordination of women, and that, under full communion agreements, the rights and privileges of women bishops be fully supported. The importance of member churches continuing to publicly condemn violence against women was reiterated in the message, with particular attention being drawn to the LWF document “Churches Say No to Violence Against Women.” The document has been translated into 27 languages, and has been used in training sessions in churches and secular organizations in various parts of the world.

According to the conference participants, however, some member churches in the LWF Communion have yet to put these principles into practice. **Rev Dr Barbara Rossing**, Chair of the Program Committee for



Left to right: Participants in the WICAS-coordinated meetings in Lund included Marte Hamadou, Cameroon; Colleen Cunningham, South Africa; and Iniobong Akpan, Nigeria. © LWF/J. Elfström





LWF women leaders during a session of the 20-21 March Conference of Women Bishops and Presidents and WICAS regional coordinators in Lund, Sweden. © LWF/J. Latva-Hakuni

the LWF Department of Theology and Studies, said that the commitment to 40 percent representation of women in LWF leadership was not new. “It is just that it has to be applied more firmly. We need to do a better job to fulfill our commitment,” Rossing said.

She expressed concern that 37 LWF member churches have yet to approve the ordination of women, but also confidence that progress is being made. “Changes can and do happen. Jesus is calling women into mission. But women have to be persistent and keep making their case over and over again, with the help of the brothers who support them,” she said.

According to **Rev Gloria Rojas**, president of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Chile, barriers to the full acceptance of women in the ministry of the church are usually culturally based. She said that women in the church have to work harder than men in order to demonstrate what they are capable of achieving. Ten years ago, it was hard to find women leaders in Chilean society, but that is changing now. The church, too, is giving greater recognition to women, and church leaders are openly talking about it, Rojas reported.

Marie Barnett, pastor and women’s coordinator of Faith Community Lutheran Church in Freetown, Sierra Leone, said that in Africa, resistance towards women in leadership is connected to the cultural understanding of a woman’s place in society. “Women are property; they are owned—like chairs or tables. In the minds of many people (both men and women), their voices should not be heard in public.”

Barnett endorsed the message from the women’s meeting. The challenge, however, will be to turn the principles into practice. In Africa, out of 30 Lutheran churches, only one has a woman president.

Ms Vidhya Rani from India, a WICAS regional desk, shared



Among the almost 150 women participants attending the LWF Council meeting and 60th anniversary events, was Ms Vidhya Rani from India. © LWF/J. Latva-Hakuni

Barnett’s concern for turning words into actions. “As a faith-based organization, we must do what we say we will do. Across the communion, churches do not necessarily practice what they preach.”

Rani reported that in India, girls are born into submission to men. A “good Indian woman” will be quiet and not overstep a man, either in church and society. “We learn this from the time we are born. By the time a woman is 20 years old, this traditional view of the roles of women and men is so deeply imprinted that it is very difficult for her to change.”

But Rani was optimistic that the goals that women leaders pursue will eventually be achieved. “In India, we say that if you want to knock mangoes off a tree with a stone, you probably won’t succeed with the first throw. It might take ten stones, but eventually, you will get that mango. We won’t give up.”

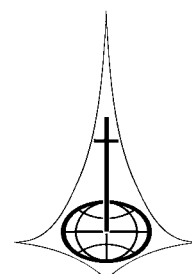
Bishop Caroline Krook of the Stockholm Diocese of the Church of Sweden agreed with Rani, urging women to “continue to raise strong voices” about gender balance and about women in leadership. “We cannot just sit in a corner saying nothing. We have to keep fanning the flame, lest the fire grow cold and die.”

Krook recognized that in Sweden, there is much greater equality between men and women, both in church and society, than in many other places. The church approved the ordination of women in 1958, and the first three women were ordained in 1960. In Stockholm, of 425 pastors, half are women. “In the church, we talk about the fullness of creation, and that includes men and women working together as equal partners,” she said.

Krook is mindful of places where women are not recognized as equals. “We have a responsibility to encourage and support women in other countries,” she said. “Women can look at me and other female bishops and be encouraged that it is indeed possible: ‘If it can happen in Sweden, it can happen in my own country.’ It is important to help and encourage others to continue the struggle.”

Generally optimistic about the future of women in the church, Krook also admitted to becoming impatient with the slow progress. “But then, I remember how much has happened in such a short space of time, relative to the long history of the church. My grandmother was not even allowed to vote—and now her granddaughter is the bishop of Stockholm. So much progress has been achieved in a very short time, so we can be optimistic about the future.”

A contribution of the LWF young communicators’ writing team.



Churches Urged to Recognize Diversity in Building Ecumenical Unity

Lutheran Church Representatives Discuss
Preliminary Report on LWF's Renewal

LUND, Sweden/GENEVA, 25 March 2007(LWI) – “To build ecumenical unity,” said the National Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada, Raymond L. Schultz, “we need not seek convergence, but rather seek to allow divergences to exist and recognize the riches they have to offer.”



Canadian National Bishop Raymond L. Schultz presents the report of the LWF Renewal Committee © LWF/D. Jusaitis

As chairperson of the LWF Renewal Committee, Schultz was presenting the preliminary report of the Committee, which held its first meeting in January 2007, to delegates and church leaders at the 20–27 March Lutheran World Federation (LWF) Council Meeting.

At the 2005 LWF Council meeting, LWF General Secretary Rev. Dr Ishmael Noko had urged Council members to consider putting “a new LWF” in place by the year 2010, and asked the Council to authorize the Executive Committee to appoint a Renewal Committee to deal with this issue.

Recommendations from the report focused on an inclusive process to determine the direction of restructuring within the LWF, including the distribution of questionnaires to all LWF members, partners and related agencies with the invitation “to respond from their perspectives on the process and methodology on the LWF’s renewal, and to outline the possible LWF future.”

Schultz noted that renewal within the context of the LWF is, “not just structural, it is ecclesial.” Vision for the future of the LWF “is not just a question of what we do, it’s a question of why we do it and who we are,” he said.

As discussed at various sessions at the current LWF Council meeting, the role and degree of ecumenism in relation to renewal was noted in the report. “To be Lutheran is to be ecumenical, and that is intrinsic to our identity,” Schultz said. The report raised a number of questions for the Council and member churches to consider regarding whether the LWF can remain a communion of Lutheran churches in the future, given the “ecumenically open interpretation of the Lutheran confession.”

Council members generally voiced a positive response to the preliminary report, although concerns regarding overall acceptance of change in general were noted. During the Report of the General Secretary, presented earlier in the day, Rev. Dr Ishmael Noko acknowledged the impact of change, and stated that “renewal requires accepting a certain degree of vulnerability and [letting] go of what is wanted and retain[ing] what is needed.”

The next meeting of the Renewal Committee is scheduled for 2008. At that meeting, committee members will compile the findings from the survey of LWF members. It is anticipated that recommendations on the LWF’s renewal will be ready to be brought forward and deliberated on at the 11th Assembly in 2010.

Regional Meetings Say Child Prostitution, Family Violence Also Merit Mention

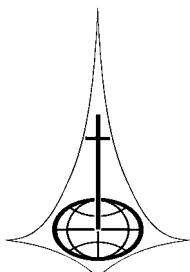
Call to Increase Percentage of Women Serving in Positions of Responsibility

LUND, Sweden/GENEVA, 25 March 2007(LWI) – All five regional meetings of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) at this year’s Council meeting accepted the invitation of the General Secretary, Rev. Dr Ishmael Noko, to discuss issues relating to marriage, family and sexuality in their member churches.

While there was approval of the guidelines proposed by the task force on Marriage, Family and

Sexuality appointed by the LWF Council in 2004, the African and Asian regions felt that there was too much emphasis on issues of sexuality and not enough on family and marriage.

Related issues, such as pornography, child prostitution, and violence in the marriage and family also merit attention, according to the Latin American and Asian conferences.



A number of regions reflected on the need to address the sensitive issues of marriage, family and sexuality with respect for the differing cultural backgrounds within the Lutheran communion. The North American conference noted the need to “identify social, political, cultural and interfaith factors” that shape perspectives on these issues, while the European region called for a “profound theological study on marriage, family and biblical hermeneutics.”

Across the regions, there was wide support for the message from a consultation of women bishops and presidents of LWF member churches that called for LWF commitment of 40 percent representation of women in leadership positions to be fully realized. The North American meeting drew the Council’s attention to the fact that the 1984 Assembly in Budapest, Hungary, had resolved to increase the percentage of women serving in positions of responsibility to 50 percent, and noted with “great concern” the LWF’s failure to honor this commitment. “From our perspective, this composition as well as follow-up commitments on gender representation have failed to be honored in the employment decisions of the Secretariat, as well as in the composition of ecumenical dialogues and delegations,” the North American meeting report stated.

Regarding the 500th Anniversary of the Reformation in 2017, the European regional meeting considered whether it might be possible for the celebrations to be held in Wittenberg, Germany, the birthplace of the Reformation, despite the difficulties presented in hosting such a large event in a small town. The Latin American conference asked the LWF to consider including other churches which also have their roots in the Reformation in the celebrations.

The North American regional meeting spent time considering aspects of LWF governance as it relates to the role and function of the Council and Executive Committee. Defining the four functions



A section of participants in the Asia regional meeting follow a discussion.
© LWF/J. H. Rakotoniaina

of governance as “strategic thinking, relationships, oversight and representation,” participants in the regional meeting recommended that the Council at its next meeting “consider appropriate forms for fulfilling its governance responsibilities” and whether the four functions of governance can realistically be fulfilled when the Council meets only every 12 to 18 months. The region also encouraged the Council to give further attention to the articulation of the LWF’s mission and vision.

Arising from its discussions on the report of the Renewal Committee, participants in the Latin American meeting said that the Council should give “greater importance to regional expressions of the Communion,” and questioned whether the time had come to analyze the functions of national committees “as tools and expressions of the LWF.” The Asian region report urged that the renewal of the LWF structure should not be driven by financial issues.

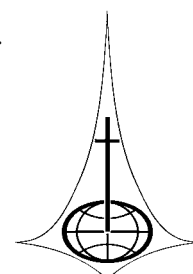
Responding to the text *Episcopal Ministry Within the Apostolicity of the Church*, a number of regions called for the title to be changed to *Ministry of Episcopé* in order to make clear that the document is concerned with the ministry of oversight exercised by a group and not only with that exercised by a bishop.

The Latin American region reported that confusion among members of church and society is created when both terms, bishop and president, are used. There can be a perception that one role has higher status than the other and, therefore, it would be wise if the Council investigate how this situation could be remedied.

During discussions about the Eleventh Assembly, to be held in Stuttgart, Germany, in 2010, the Asian region said that it was “deeply troubled” that the region’s representation to the Assembly had been reduced from 108 to 96 delegates. The region requested the Council that all churches be represented by at least two voting delegates.



Representatives of LWF member churches from Latin America and the Caribbean during the regional meeting. © LWF/J. H. Rakotoniaina



Theologians Call for Critical Engagement with, Countering of Fundamentalism

Open Letter to Churches and Theological Institutions

HÖÖR, Sweden/GENEVA, 18 April 2007 (LWI) – “Fundamentalism provides an overarching narrative, in which people find meaning for their lives. Our challenge is to counter this with a compelling counter-narrative of how God is at work in the world, fostering justice, inclusivity and peace,” urged Rev. Dr Barbara Rossing, who teaches New Testament at the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago, USA. She was speaking at a theological seminar in Höör, Sweden, that was held prior to the March 2007 Lutheran World Federation (LWF) Council meeting and 60th anniversary celebrations in Lund.



Left to right: Theologians Nicholas Tai, Wanda Deifelt and Günter Thomas, during the DTS seminar in Höör. © LWF/K. Bloomquist

Rossing chairs the Program Committee of the LWF Department for Theology and Studies (DTS), which organized the March 18–20 seminar in cooperation with the Church of Sweden Research Department.

The seminar brought together 27 participants, including LWF Council members, church leaders and teaching theologians, to discuss “Fundamentals for a Lutheran Communion in the Face of Fundamentalism.” It was the third seminar in the ongoing LWF/DTS program, “Theology in the Life of the Church.”

“Our hope is that we can clarify who we are and what we as Lutherans stand for in the face of militant expressions of the Christian faith that threaten peace,” commented Rev. Dr Reinhard Böttcher, outgoing LWF/DTS Study Secretary for Theology and the Church, who coordinated the seminar.

What quickly became apparent was that perspectives and reactions to fundamentalism varied in different contexts. For some it was a threatening reality “out there,” especially when associated with the dominance and militancy of other faiths, whereas for others it was to some degree present within Lutheran churches. Bishop Julius Paul of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in

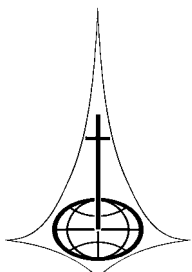
Malaysia observed, “the perception is that, in contrast to the Muslims in my country, Lutherans don’t have a sense of urgency about any core convictions.” The seminar provided an opportunity to lift up a number of Lutheran theological fundamentals against the backdrop of the increasing fundamentalism in many spheres of life.

Bishop Dr Nicholas Tai of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Hong Kong, China, affirmed Chinese Christians’ strong belief in the Bible. “We need to sit together with fundamentalists and dialogue with them how to read the Bible,” suggested Rev. Dr Jubil Hutauruk, former bishop of the Protestant Christian Batak Church in Indonesia. Mr Girma Mohammed from Ethiopia, who is pursuing doctoral studies at the Free University of Amsterdam, Netherlands, cautioned that the “categories of fundamentalism against liberalism don’t fit in Africa. They take on a new meaning in the inculturation debate.” Bishop Dr Stephen Munga of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania pleaded for more attention to African perspectives on fundamentalism.

Professor Günter Thomas, who teaches ethics and fundamental theology and at Ruhr-University in Bochum, Germany, insisted that what was needed, were theological responses to Christian fundamentalism. “Fundamentalist theology tends to keep God apart from the ambiguities and complexities inherent in human history. We are challenged to spell out what it means that God is incarnated in the history of a human being, including in suffering and death.” Rev. Dr David Pfrimmer, dean of Waterloo Lutheran Seminary, Canada, advocated the theology of the cross as the center of Lutheran theology. “It helps us to recognize God in the midst of suffering and guards against militant triumphalism,” he said.

According to Rev. Dr Wanda Deifelt, Brazil, who teaches at Luther College, Decorah, Iowa, USA, “Fundamentalism is not simply a matter of showing why and how one’s own beliefs are correct, but primarily in proving that the others are wrong,” with important power struggles at stake. She described significant differences between US and Latin American versions of fundamentalism, and deplored the fact that 90 percent of abused women in shelters in Brazil are from fundamentalist churches.

An open letter from the seminar’s participants, to be forwarded by the LWF General Secretary to the member churches and related theological institutions is posted on the LWF Web site at: www.lutheranworld.org/What_We_Do/DTS/DTS-Fundamentalism-Letter-2007.pdf The papers presented will soon be posted on the special DTS section “Theology in the Life of the Church” www.luthersem.edu/lwfdiscuss



LWF 60th Anniversary Celebrations Webcast Live from Lund, Sweden

News, Audio and Video Articles, and Photos on LWF Web Site

LUND, Sweden/GENEVA, 23 March 2007 (LWI) – Live transmission of the festive celebrations to mark the 60th anniversary of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) in Lund, Sweden, were available on the Internet. The celebrations began with a festive eucharistic service at 11:00 hrs on Sunday, 25 March in the Lund Cathedral, and continued in the afternoon at the campus of the Lund University, where the LWF was founded in 1947. A live web-streaming and later video-streaming of the events was made available.

The director of the LWF Office for Communication Services (OCS), Ms Karin Achtelstetter, said that live transmission offers many people in the 140 LWF member churches an opportunity to participate in the anniversary celebrations. “There are nearly 66.7 million Christians in the worldwide communion of LWF churches. Making it possible for them to follow an important event like the LWF’s 60th anniversary celebrations is a way of living out communion,” she said.

An estimated 500 people attended the LWF events, including over 100 church leaders participating in a Church Leadership Consultation and the anniversary celebrations taking place in conjunction with the regular LWF Council meeting.

LWF General Secretary, Rev. Dr Ishmael Noko, emphasized the significance of a symbolic ceremony at the Sunday festivities, during which the leadership

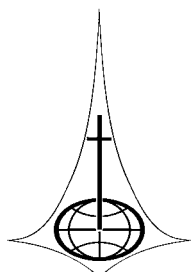
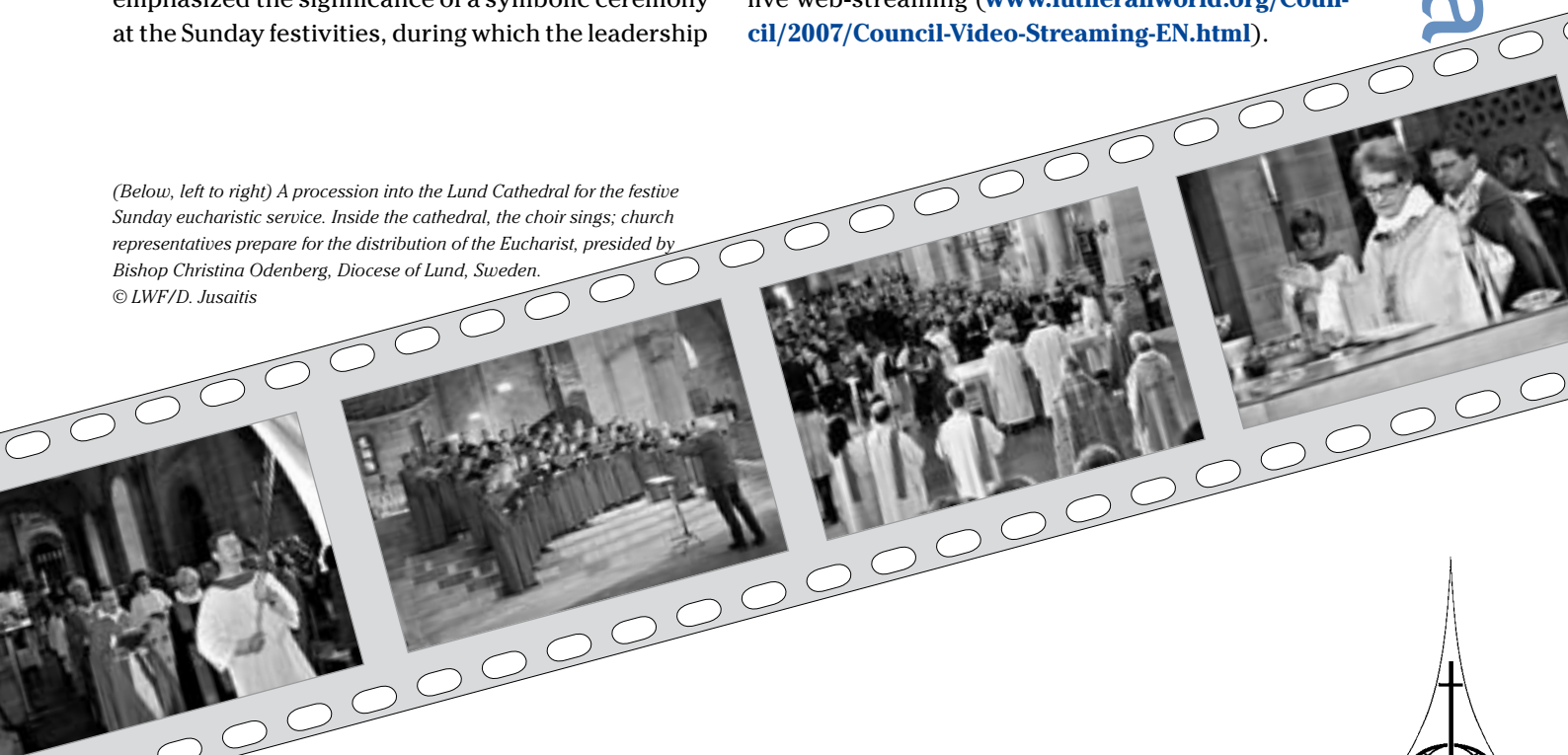


Inside the Lund Cathedral, video screens allowed worshippers unable to see the main altar and nave to follow the liturgy of the 60th anniversary festive eucharistic service.
© LWF/J. H. Rakotoniaina

of elders who were present 60 years ago in Lund, was passed on to the youth representatives at the Council events. This was to be an important ritual in recognizing the role of the younger generation in the leadership of the Lutheran communion, Noko said.

A multi-media presentation on the LWF Web site (www.lutheranworld.org/Welcome.EN.html) included discussions from the Church Leadership Consultation and Council Meeting. Also available were press releases in English and German, photos, audio and video feature articles, as well as links to the live web-streaming (www.lutheranworld.org/Council/2007/Council-Video-Streaming-EN.html).

(Below, left to right) A procession into the Lund Cathedral for the festive Sunday eucharistic service. Inside the cathedral, the choir sings; church representatives prepare for the distribution of the Eucharist, presided by Bishop Christina Odenberg, Diocese of Lund, Sweden.
© LWF/D. Jusaitis





Ms Ingrid Andersson © LWF/J. Elfström



Prof. Carl-Gustav Andrén © LWF/D. Jusaitis



Prof. Göran Bexell © LWF/D. Jusaitis

In the afternoon of Sunday 25 March, the LWF 60th anniversary celebrations took place at the Lund University auditorium, where the inaugural assembly of the LWF had convened from 30 June to 6 July 1947. Officiated by Church of Sweden staff, Ms Ingrid Andersson and Rev. Christofer Lundgren, the program included a welcome from the university's vice-chancellor Prof. Göran Bexell; reflections from Prof. Carl-Gustav Andrén, who was a student delegate at the First Assembly; choirs' display of Swedish folk songs; documentary on the Church of Sweden's decades-long involvement with the LWF; and the LWF logo construction. Photos: © LWF/J. Elfström, J.H. Rakotoniaina & D. Jusaitis

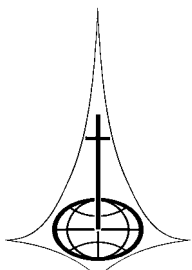
A symbolic recommitment of the LWF to the future generations (facing page) included the passing on of gifts—a Bible, water, Luther's Catechism, a key, bottle of olive oil, collection box/bag and a symbolic exchange of dialogue with other confessions and faiths—from so-called seven "seniors" to seven "juniors." Photos: © LWF/J. H. Rakotoniaina



Youth delegates to the LWF 60th anniversary celebrations display the seven candles representing the LWF regions. © LWF/J.H. Rakotoniaina



Building the LWF logo © LWF/J. H. Rakotoniaina





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"Towards a Communicating Communion – A Youth Vision" The program concluded with a multi-media display by a group of young communicators from the LWF member churches, who had completed a three-year communication training program jointly coordinated by the LWF Department for Mission and Development and the Office for Communication Services. © ELCA/F. Imhoff

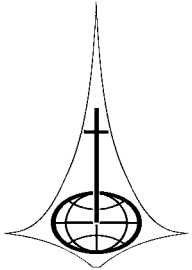
World Information



LWF General Secretary Rev. Dr Ishmael Noko (right) gives a vote of thanks, left is Rev. Christofer Lundgren, Church of Sweden. © LWF/J. Elfström



Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson, president of the LWF, addresses participants. © LWF/J. H. Rakotoniaina



Swedish Archbishop Wejryd Tells Churches Their Different Practices Need Not Threaten Communion

Eucharistic Worship Service Marks LWF's 60th Anniversary in Lund Cathedral

LUND, Sweden/GENEVA, 25 March 2007 (LWI) – Church of Sweden Archbishop Anders Wejryd said that churches' different practices do not necessarily threaten the communion of Lutheran churches as long as people are clear about the center of their faith.



Procession into the Lund Cathedral for the festive eucharistic service on Sunday 25 March. © LWF/J. H. Rakotoniaina

“All we do in our churches and in our entire lives can and should be related to justification as a gift from God that is to be humbly received and lived by, in faith,” Wejryd told worshippers in a sermon delivered at a 25 March Sunday eucharistic service marking the 60th anniversary of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) at the Lund Cathedral.

“A true interpretation of the Bible not only brings people to understand the rules and contents of the Bible, but it brings them to Jesus,” Wejryd said in a sermon based on Luke 1:26–38. He suggested that although Jesus had shed light on Scriptures, it was up to the members of the communion to interpret them, based on hermeneutical principles and “looking to Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of our faith.”

His sermon emphasized how unexpected, overlooked or even down-trodden people like Jesus Christ and his mother Mary turned out to be the ones “that give us a future.”

Drawing a parallel between the challenges confronting the LWF at its founding after World War II and the current issues in 2007, Wejryd noted that the ethical issues, although not identical, were “still” very similar. Church representatives attending the first LWF Assembly in Lund in 1947 came from a context marked by the horrors of war, suffering, starvation, loss of self-esteem and also by repentance and by victory that was hard to carry, he said. Today, we can “still see suffering,

practices and mal-practices that hardly anyone was conscious about 60 years ago.”

The archbishop noted that violation of human rights exists today even in countries purporting to champion such ideals. Some churches also have remained silent and embraced superficial peace at the expense of justice, hence condoning oppressors.

“Human rights are not opposed to theology, they *are* theology,” he said in reference to capital punishment, discrimination against sexual minorities, suffering, mal-practices, persecution of Christians in the Middle East, discrimination against women, ethnicity/ethno-centrism and regionalism, among other issues.

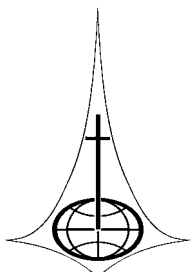
Wejryd said that “Christians are obliged to look deeper, to respect life,” that is given by God, with the conviction that nothing is impossible to change. “If revenge or just/even human justice had been the tone in Lund in 1947, we would never have been here in 2007,” he said.

The Church of Sweden archbishop mused over whether the established churches had opposed the idea of slave trade before it was abolished 200 years ago by the passing of the British Slave Trade Act. And answering his own question, “No, no, not very often,” he said. Churches had seen many reasons why the status quo should continue, and plenty of biblical backing for slavery, he said.

The Church of Sweden and its Diocese of Lund hosted the LWF Council meeting and 60th anniversary celebrations.



Church of Sweden Archbishop Anders Wejryd delivers the sermon in the Lund Cathedral. © LWF/D. Jusaitis



Pope Benedict XVI Pays Tribute to Fruitful Lutheran-Roman Catholic Dialogue

Greeting on LWF 60th Anniversary Stresses Call to Common Witness

LUND, Sweden/GENEVA, 26 March 2007 (LWI) – In a congratulatory greeting to the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) on the occasion of its 60th anniversary, Pope Benedict XVI paid tribute to the “always fruitful” dialogue between the LWF and the Roman Catholic Church and the major progress in ecumenical relations after the Second Vatican Council.

“Ecumenical fellowship has [grown] all over the world through numerous encounters between Lutherans and Catholics,” said the Pope in his greeting, read to worshippers at LWF’s 60th anniversary eucharistic worship service at Lund Cathedral on 25 March.

Walter Cardinal Kasper, President of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity (PCPCU) delivered the greeting, which was addressed to LWF President, Bishop Mark S. Hanson.

In it, the Pope expressed his great joy and wishes for blessing of the celebrations and deliberations around the LWF’s 60th anniversary. He described the relations between the two communions as “a gift of the Holy Spirit” which, at the same time, “commits us not to slacken in our ecumenical endeavors in the spirit of our Lord’s prayer ‘that they may all be one’” (John 17:21).

“We are called in common witness to proclaim the saving message of the Gospel of Jesus Christ to a world suffering distress and seeking orientation at so many points. After all, ‘we boast in our hope of sharing the glory of God’” (Romans 5:2b).

“With best wishes for your Council meeting, I pray for God’s blessing on you and all participants,” said the message, read by Cardinal Kasper during a church service to mark the 60th anniversary of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF).

Amongst the major signs of progress in ecumenical relations since the 1960s, Pope Benedict singled out the solemn signing of the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification on 31 October 1999 in Augsburg, Germany. He noted that the questions currently calling for further clarification include, above all, the understanding of the Church, its sacraments and its ministries.



PCPCU president, Walter Cardinal Kasper, delivers the pope’s congratulatory greeting to the LWF on the occasion of its 60th anniversary. © LWF/D. Jusaitis

Church Leaders Underline LWF’s Leading Ecumenical Role

Mutual Respect, a Learning Process

LUND, Sweden/GENEVA, 26 March 2007 (LWI) – On the occasion of the 60th anniversary of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF), the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity (PCPCU) expressed appreciation for the partnership and friendship between Lutherans and Roman Catholics.

In his greeting to worshippers attending the 25 March festive eucharistic service in Lund Cathedral marking the anniversary, PCPCU President **Walter Cardinal Kasper** said the Council had followed “with interest” the LWF’s “steady growth and development from Federation to Communion.” But, more

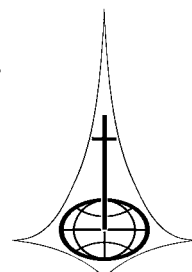


His Eminence Metropolitan Ambrosius of Helsinki delivers greetings from the Ecumenical Patriarchate. © LWF/J. Elfström

than that, he noted, “we have also participated in the slow but steadfast growth and maturation of the communion between Lutherans and Catholics. ... Today we can even say that we are living together in some way as a communion in the world.”

Today’s world, searching for justice and peace, living in fear and lacking hope, “needs our common witness in order to become ... a communion and a family,” added the PCPCU president.

His Eminence **Metropolitan Ambrosius of Helsinki**, representing the Ecumenical Patriarchate, expressed



deep gratitude to the Lutheran churches for all their ecumenical openness and fraternal [and] sisterly love towards the Orthodox Church.

He described the dialogue with the LWF as one of the most promising theological dialogues of the Orthodox Church. "Mutual respect and a learning process, deepening understanding of our sacramental and liturgical heritage, gradually lead to fuller recognition of the mystery of the Church in our common tradition and spirituality."

Presenting greetings from the World Council of Churches (WCC), its Central Committee Moderator **Rev. Dr Walter Altmann** expressed appreciation for the "tireless efforts

of the LWF to foster throughout the whole Communion a Lutheran identity that is ecumenically committed and open to sharing generously its gifts of spirit and resources." He singled out the LWF's support for a new style of WCC assemblies that offer an expanded space in which to nurture the coherence of the ecumenical movement as one such sign of commitment and vision.

The WCC moderator said greater cooperation was anticipated in responding to the urgent issues facing the church such as in an ecumenical response to globalization and HIV and AIDS, and to the violation of human rights, among other issues.

Congratulatory Greetings from Global, Regional Church Bodies

Tribute to LWF's Commitment to Building Ecumenical Relations

LUND, Sweden/GENEVA, 26 March 2007 (LWI) – During the March 2007 meeting of the Council of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) and events to mark the 60th anniversary of the Federation, representatives of global and regional church bodies offered congratulatory messages. On behalf of the Archbishop of Canterbury and of the Anglican Communion, **Rev. Canon Gregory Cameron**, congratulated the LWF on achieving its diamond jubilee and remarked on its vitality and commitment to looking outward in mission and in diakonia, which is the hallmark of the true Christian spirit.

Cameron gave thanks to God for all that had been achieved through the LWF's participation and encouragement in the ecumenical movement. He cited the signing of the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification (JDDJ) with the Roman Catholics and the JDDJ's affirmation by the Methodists, the reality of schemes of relationship and union between Evangelical and Reformed churches, and the "hugely welcome" development of agreements of full communion between Lutheran churches and churches of the Anglican Communion.

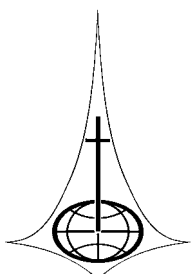
Rev. Dr Risto Cantell conveyed greetings on behalf of the Conference of European Churches (CEC) and its general secretary Venerable Colin Williams. The CEC general secretary expressed appreciation for the European Lutheran churches' support toward the continental body of churches. Cantell referred to William's letter concerning the September 2007 Third European Ecumenical Assembly to be convened



WCC Central Committee Moderator Rev. Dr Walter Altmann delivers the council's greeting.
© LWF/D. Jusaitis

jointly by CEC and the Council of European Bishops' Conferences in Sibiu, Romania. "Our prayer is that the Third European Ecumenical Assembly will lay its part in reanimating the cause of ecumenism on our continent. Beyond Sibiu we need to continue to work hard on that. I am delighted that CEC and LWF are learning to work ever more closely in Europe. ... For our part we are glad to see the LWF as keys partners in all that the coming years will bring."

The executive secretary of the International Lutheran Council (ILC) **Rev. Dr Samuel Nafzger** brought greetings from the 30 member-church confessional Lutheran body. He noted that ILC and LWF were bound together in ways which made it impossible for either of the two organizations to ignore that they were related "as brothers and sisters in Christ." He noted the official meetings between the ILC and LWF and the mutual commitment to keeping the lines of





Congratulatory greetings to the LWF on its 60th anniversary were also received from, left to right: WARC General Secretary Rev. Dr Setri Nyomi; Rev. Dr Samuel Nafziger, executive secretary of the International Lutheran Council; Rev. Canon Gregory Cameron on behalf of the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Anglican Communion; and Rev. Dr Risto Cantell for the Conference of European Churches. © LWF/D. Jusaitis & LWF/E. Heck

communication open between them. Nafziger said it was the prayer of the ILC that both organizations may address the issues that divide them, and expressed his anticipation for the day when “our unity in Christ can be given full expression.”

The World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC) general secretary, **Rev. Dr Setri Nyomi** congratulated the LWF for its faithfulness in mission and service over the last 60 years. “Living in communion in the world today” calls on us to continue the path of seeking

visible Christian unity. He mentioned ongoing cooperation between both organizations, noting that the LWF and WARC had articulated their commitment to a reconfiguration of the ecumenical movement with challenging implications on their own structures and how they engaged in assemblies. It was WARC’s hope, Nyomi concluded, that beyond the LWF’s 11th Assembly in 2010, the ecumenical family would be able to hold a common ecumenical assembly under the leadership of the World Council of Churches (WCC) beginning in the second decade of the 21st century.

Rev. Dr Walter Altmann, president of the Evangelical Church of the Lutheran Confession in Brazil (IECLB) and moderator of the WCC, read a message from Rev. Dr Gottfried Brakemeier, former president of the IECLB and LWF, who greeted participants with the words: “I will extol you, my God and King, and bless your name forever and ever” (Psalm 145:1). Sixty years were a long time in the life of a global institution, Brakemeier wrote. He noted that the LWF had brought Lutheran churches together, given them voice, and built a community, which went beyond cultural and national borders. It had provided assistance to those in need and tried to promote the unity of Christians and of humankind.



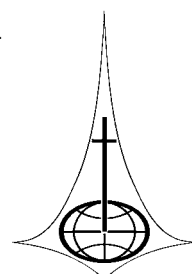
LWF Council participants follow discussions in plenary. © LWF/J. H. Rakotoniaina

LWF General Secretary Noko Envisages Eucharistic Sharing in 60 Years

Discussion on Marriage, Family and Sexuality Will Not Divide LWF

LUND, Sweden/GENEVA, 27 March 2007 (LWI) – The General Secretary of the Lutheran World Federation, (LWF) Rev. Dr Ishmael Noko, says he is convinced that current ecumenical relations will lead to concrete visible signs of church unity in the future, including eucharistic sharing.

Addressing the closing press conference of the 20–27 March meeting of the LWF Council, Noko said one would not have envisioned the current LWF communion of churches 60 years ago when the Federation was founded in the Swedish city of Lund. The agenda dwelt on the place of the Lutheran church in the world





At the Council's closing press conference, left to right, LWF General Secretary Rev. Dr Ishmael Noko; Ms Karin Achtelstetter, director of the LWF Office for Communication Services; and Archbishop Anders Wejryd, Church of Sweden. © LWF/D. Jusaitis

then, after the end of World War II. Today, the focus is on the place of the LWF in the ecumenical movement, something that was not envisaged in 1947, he said in response to a question about his vision for the LWF in the next six decades.

The LWF general secretary and Church of Sweden Archbishop Anders Wejryd addressed the joint press conference at the end of the Council meeting.

On the controversial debate on marriage, family and sexuality, Wejryd said this was not an issue that should divide the Lutheran communion. He noted that issues of cultural ethics, fidelity, moral responsibility and social identity have always been a challenge for the church. But, he emphasized, the unity of the church depends on agreement on the teaching of the gospel and the administration of sacraments.

The Swedish archbishop challenged the churches and the ecumenical movement to uphold principles and responsibility and to make ethical judgments on

the social and theological issues of the day in order to shape the future. "Christians have to interpret the fundamental message of love and salvation not just by translating it into whether we are good or bad Christians," he remarked.

For Noko, the issue of marriage, family and sexuality should not threaten church unity, because Jesus Christ is the host [of the church] and the rest are simply guests invited to partake of the one Holy Communion. He likened this to people invited to a party, who may not like each other, but would tolerate each other for the sake of their host.

On the question of youth delegates to LWF events including the Assembly,

the general secretary said plans were underway to ensure that the LWF secretariat enters into discussion with government authorities to ease visa procedures to facilitate youth participation in the 11th Assembly in 2010 in Stuttgart, Germany.



Eucharistic table during the festive Sunday worship in the Lund Cathedral. © LWF/D. Jusaitis

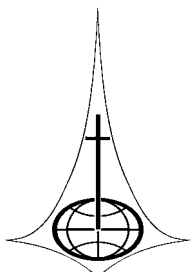
Cardinal Kasper: Lutherans and Catholics Now Enjoy Significant Friendship

In his remarks this past March at the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) Council meeting in Lund, Sweden, **Walter Cardinal Kasper** stressed that there was no reason to speak of an "ice age" in relations between Protestants and Roman Catholics. In an interview with *Lutheran World Information (LWI)*, the president of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity (PCPCU) said that he "felt much human and personal warmth," right there in Lund. He said the past few years had seen a great amount of friendship arise between Lutherans and Roman Catholics, and that they could work together in "an unlimited number of areas."

The former bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Rottenburg-Stuttgart, Germany, emphasized there was no alternative to ecumenism. He pointed to new challenges such as the rapid growth of numerous evangelical and Pentecostal

churches. Kasper sees the primary ecumenical task to be "searching for what we have in common," with a focus on the common message. He adds the need to work together for peace, a healthy environment, and developmental aid. It is of particular importance to act together in crisis regions such as the Sudan, he told *LWI*.

Regarding eucharistic fellowship, Kasper cautioned against protesting or forcing matters. He noted that a common foundation was laid with the 1999 signing of the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification by representatives of LWF and the Roman Catholic Church. The signing in Augsburg, Germany was a "qualitative leap," Kasper said. He said the next issue to be discussed was that of ministry and church. "After that, we can move forward with eucharistic fellowship," he added.



FEATURE: Learning in an International Ecumenical Setting

General Secretaries in the Making

LUND, Sweden/GENEVA 22 June 2007 (LWI) – Consider the Friday night options of the average 20-something in Lund, Sweden. Dinner and a movie? A night at the club? Or maybe long hours at an international Lutheran convention? For 14 Lutherans from around the world, the answer is the latter, with no hesitation. The small group served as stewards for the March 2007 meeting of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) Council in Lund, Sweden.

Job duties at LWF Council meetings, held every 12 to 18 months, are complex and often vague. Stewards photocopy documents, help church delegates make connections with each other, deliver reports into waiting hands, and assist with passing on microphones during press conferences.

The meetings run as smoothly as the young people's hands and feet can go.

Much is expected of the stewards, aged between 18 and 26. They must stand by for duty in shifts from 8.00 a.m. until Council sessions close normally in the evenings. But some free time still remains, which the young men and women are happy to use. Some meet late in the evening to share their experiences in a meeting room. While one plays guitar, others talk about the events of the day. Others make use of a swimming pool and sauna. There was even enough time for a night out dancing in Lund's old town, which is well frequented by students.

An Opportunity

When asked what is so appealing about a council meeting despite the amount of work it entails, Timmy Ullhag, 18, from the Church of Sweden responded: "I see this as a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to meet other people in the church." He spoke to *Lutheran World Information (LWI)* when taking a much-needed break at the lobby of Lund's Scandic Star Hotel, the venue of the 20–27 March Council meeting, which also included the LWF's 60th anniversary celebrations. Ullhag is pursuing a diaconal year of church work in Umeå, Sweden.

His church's youth organization invited him to apply for the assignment of Council-steward. Most stewards for LWF Council meetings come from the local area, said program supervisor Rev. Mia Wrang,



(Left to right) LWF Council stewards Maria Wingård (Sweden), Ellen Forström (Sweden), Rebekka Hørmark Jensen (Denmark), Simon Schmidt (Denmark), Tiina Mällinen (Finland), Timmy Ullhag (Sweden) during a working session. © LWF/ J. Lipponen

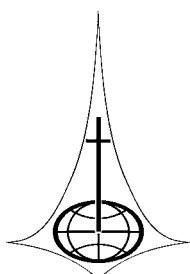
consultant for the LWF's Youth in Church and Society desk, who has since completed her two-year assignment with the LWF. This year the LWF invited stewards from other countries.

Awareness

Tanzanian Ombeni Ngowo, 26, happened to be in the neighborhood. He was on a three-month exchange program through the Church of Sweden. Ngowo said he enjoyed attending the different meeting sessions in Lund. "This is a very memorable thing for me," he said.

Ngowo, a graduate teacher, said he was surprised to learn about the considerably few youth members of churches outside Africa. "This is something I didn't expect," he said.

Rebekka Hørmark Jensen, 27, was also on hand. Just under a year ago, the church council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Denmark asked whether she would be interested in working as a steward at the LWF council meeting in Lund. Rebekka was indeed interested and was able to work it into her theological studies' schedule. She was very impressed by the presence of so many bishops at the meeting, and fascinated by the international context. The meeting, was also her first encounter per se with the LWF, prior to that, she didn't know the organization even existed. Now she certainly does, and hopes that her experiences in Lund can prove useful in her future parish work.



Other stewards came from across the Atlantic. Karen Melville, 21, was on her first trip outside Guyana. She said she was surprised when her church's council elected her for the assignment. Melville likes meeting Lutherans from across the world. "It builds your faith. I see I'm not alone. It encourages you," she told *LWI*.

Hearing the assembled Lutherans pray in different languages was also a highlight. "There are so many ways you can praise God," she remarked.

Working as a steward opens doors, too. Meeting church leaders and learning about the LWF structure makes these young people "general secretaries in the making," said LWF Deputy General Secretary, Rev. Chandran Paul Martin. The Indian theologian should know: he was a steward in 1983 for the World Council of Church's Central Committee meeting in Geneva. He was 23 and had just graduated from seminary. Serving as a steward was an absolute adventure, Martin said. A highlight of his experience was "meeting

young people from different parts of the world with different passions."

Communication

Wrang said the stewardship program goals are to enhance communication, develop leadership and facilitate a smooth-running conference. "I hope that this experience would shape the way the stewards see themselves as part of the worldwide communion," Wrang added. "They are important to the LWF."

The steward adventure has few downsides, participants said. Well, maybe one: there's little time for rest. "I didn't expect so much work and little sleep," said Melville. Ullhag admitted sleeping time is short. But no matter. "You get little sleep," he said.

(Lisa Smith, a member of the LWF young communicators' group and Klaus Rieth, press officer of the Evangelical Church in Württemberg, Germany, contributed to this article.)

FEATURE: The Accidental Participant

Hungarian Pastor George Posfay Looks Back 60 Years

LUND, Sweden/GENEVA, 11 May 2007 (*LWI*) – This is how it all started: "Listen boys, I have received a message from Geneva."

George Posfay, then an assistant pastor in Hungary, got the word shortly after World War II ended. European governments were being re-organized. Families were rebuilding their lives. Churches were re-examining their priorities.

A group of Lutherans in Geneva had invited Hungarian pastors to go to Sweden for post-graduate study. He went first to Uppsala, then to Lund.

Lutherans in Geneva were talking, too. From 30 June to 6 July 1947, representatives of Lutheran churches gathered in Lund, Sweden, for the founding Assembly of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF), with headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland. At the assembly, Posfay represented his native Hungary. He adds, he attended the Lund meeting by accident.

The initial plan was to spend one and a half years in Sweden and then return home. "But this idea never materialized," Posfay says. The reason? The Communist



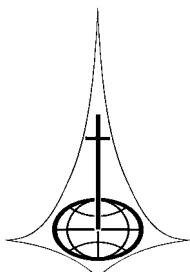
Hungarian pastor George Posfay, after the LWI interview in Lund, Sweden. © LWF/D. Jusaitis

regime was in control in Hungary. The Hungarian Lutheran Bishop Lajos Ordass upon his return to Budapest after the First LWF assembly, was arrested and subsequently dismissed from episcopal office. Even when he was allowed to reassume those duties, new trials and dismissals awaited him. Posfay himself was not allowed back into Hungary even to visit, for another 18 years.

Today, the LWF has 140 member churches in 78 countries all over the world, with a total membership of more than 66 million. As it celebrated its 60th anniversary in Lund during the 20-27 March 2007 Council meeting and Church Leadership Consultation, Posfay was one of the few people present at both events, 60 years apart.

Isolation

Barely 26, Posfay was one of the youngest delegates at the assembly. The mood in Lund was hopeful, he recalls, despite a Europe in which millions of people were homeless. He hoped "the LWF would represent



a continual development of the world, especially the spiritual side." Many places in Europe, Hungary for instance, were "isolated theologically." Connecting Lutherans across the world would allow for resource sharing.

Relationship building was crucial, Posfay says. Germany had sat on the "seat of sinners," and welcoming them into the LWF was important. "The LWF was something new, fresh, no discriminations," he says. "We started anew. We didn't ask, 'What did you do during the war?'"

Like a Thread

Since that first meeting in Lund, the LWF has run through Posfay's life like a thread, weaving a tapestry of a life of church service.

Unable to return to Hungary, Posfay stayed in Sweden, waiting for news from home. "Not even our parents dared to write," he recalls. He was open to other options and when an offer came from the United States he took it, and went on to serve three years with a Hungarian congregation in Cleveland, Ohio.

He took the next offer, too, and developed a Hungarian-Lutheran congregation in Venezuela, where he met and married his wife Emese Ava, a Hungarian-born Argentine. While in Central America he took a sabbatical in Lund and finished a doctoral thesis on Luther's Small Catechism and the Holy Spirit. He worked in Venezuela until the next offer, which launched him back into the LWF, some 24 years after Lund.

It was 1971. Posfay was attending an LWF conference in Tokyo as an observer from Latin America when he received an offer: would he work as the Latin American secretary for the LWF, based in Geneva? He had until noon the following day to decide.

Unable to contact his wife by phone, Posfay agonized over the decision. "I went back to my hotel and prayed and read the Bible," he says. Then this epipha-

ny: he remembered that some nine years before, while traveling in Geneva, his wife exclaiming she loved it so much she could live there. And so they did.

Posfay worked 15 years in the then LWF Department of Church Cooperation [now Department for Mission and Development], so-called because "we didn't want to use the word 'mission.' It had a very negative connotation," he says. "The Russian government was using the word 'mission.'"

Optimistic

Posfay retired at the age of 65. He and his wife still live in Geneva, where he does volunteer work with a Hungarian congregation.

Sixty years after that first LWF meeting in Lund, he remains optimistic about the LWF. Simply, "it is still a good organization." He believes that the challenge for the LWF now is to remain focused on congregations and supporting that strong foundation.

Posfay's advice for the individual is simple: "Get acquainted with people in other countries. Learn [another] language," he says. Many gathered in Lund from 20 to 27 March 2007 for the LWF Council meeting and 60th anniversary celebrations hopefully did just that.

Rev. Lisa A. Smith (USA) interviewed George Posfay during the LWF Council meeting in Lund. Smith is a participant in the LWF young communicators' training program, "Towards a Communicating Communion – A Youth Vision."

***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.**

FEATURE: Tranquil Setting of LWF's Founding Is Now a Major Economic Center

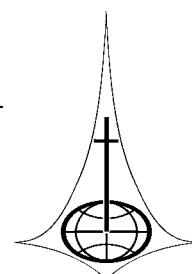
Lund: A Rapidly Changing Context for the Swedish Church

LUND, Sweden/GENEVA, 22 June 2007 (LWI) – In March 2007, some 500 people traveled to Lund, Sweden, to take part in the regular Council meeting of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF), which comprised this time a church leadership consultation, and celebrations marking the organization's 60th anniversary. The LWF had returned to the city where it was founded in 1947. Participants who were present at the first meeting in 1947 recall a somewhat sleepy small town in the south. This has, however, changed completely since, and Lund is now part of a booming economic region in

Scandinavia, cutting across national boundaries as is now common in an increasingly integrated Europe.

The construction of the Øresund Bridge between Denmark and Sweden has led to the creation of a population center with 3.5 million inhabitants, stretching from the Danish capital of Copenhagen to Malmö and Lund in Sweden. A reported 10,000 Danes travel to work in Sweden each day.

Lund's population has nearly tripled from some 35,000 in 1947. The town is home to the country's largest university with 30,000 students, accounting for a



third of its inhabitants. The Lund Cathedral, which was also a central meeting place for the LWF's founders, is situated in the university's immediate vicinity.

A House of Worship

The imposing sandstone structure served as Sweden's main church center from the very beginning. Construction on the church, consecrated in 1145, already began in 1104; the bishops at the time were the leading church officials for all of Scandinavia. With the 16th century Reformation, however, Lund's Catholic church lost its position of primacy.

Until then, the city had 27 churches, the largest number anywhere in northern Europe. While nearly all were dismantled in the course of the Reformation, the cathedral remained a symbol of the city. Most



The Lund Cathedral was an important meeting place for LWF's founding in 1947, and for the 60th anniversary celebrations in March 2007. © LWF/R. Lang

recently, six decades after the founding of the LWF, Lutherans met again at the cathedral to sing and pray. Visitors now come from the world over to see the church, which is famous for its astronomical clock dating back to 1425.

In accordance with the plans of local Lutheran officials, the cathedral is not to be turned into a museum. "We are trying to make it into a living house of worship," officials said. The number of worshipers there proves that this is in fact the case, with 80,000 attending cathedral services each year. Some two dozen church services are held each week.

Lund has always continued to maintain its quiet character when compared with the vibrant Malmö, a city of 280,000. And all the while, Sweden's Lutheran church is attempting to find



Lund Bishop Christina Odenberg (left) 1997-March 2007, and her successor Bishop Antje Jackelén (right). © LWF/R. Lang

answers to the challenges of a rapidly changing society. There are, for example, a large number of immigrants in Malmö, who live in their own neighborhoods with little contact with Swedish society.

Integrating Immigrants

Christina Odenberg, bishop of the Lund Diocese, describes Malmö as a difficult region for the church, with special challenges that include the problems of newly-arrived immigrants from Africa and the Balkans. She criticizes Swedish settlement policy, in which new arrivals stay in own areas, as this can lead to a process of ghettoization.

The church must contribute toward their integration, the bishop said. In one such initiative, the church sent social workers to these areas for three years with the aim of bringing together young immigrants and their Swedish counterparts. They also developed relations with local mosques.

On the other hand, many have indeed benefited from the regional boom. Malmö's Western Harbor district has, in a most striking example similar to that of London's Docklands, now developed into an exclusive residential area.

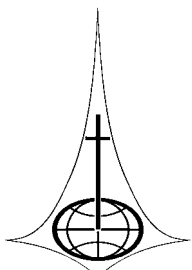
The former industrial area had been in a period of continual decline following a crisis in the shipyard industry. Only 1,000 workers are now active in a local industry that was once able to employ 5,000.



The imposing "Turning Torso" in Malmö. © LWF/R. Lang

Reaching Out

Many new companies, both from the information technology industry and others, have now, however, settled in the area, creating 15,000 jobs within the district, with a similar number of residents expected in the future.



A church has, however, yet to be constructed there, making it hard to reach out to the local inhabitants.

A new symbol of affluence now stands in the midst of the Western Harbor district – the “Turning Torso,” a futuristic construction completed in 2005. With its 54 storeys, the lean tower twists into the sky. Above the

offices on the lower floors, 147 apartments with a view were quickly rented out, according to the building’s owners. Up to 400 people are now on the waiting list to move in—reflecting the attractiveness of the area.

(A contribution by Stuttgart (Germany)-based journalist Rainer Lang.)

CHF 13.3 Million for LWF Geneva Coordination Budget

At its meeting in March, the Council of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) approved an amount of CHF 13,303,603 for the LWF Geneva Coordination Budget (so-called A-Budget) for the year 2007, with a surplus of CHF 107,157. Eighty percent of the A-Budget are staff related costs, projected at CHF 3.04 million for the coordination activities of the General Secretariat and its Offices for Communication Services (OCS), Ecumenical Affairs (OEA), International Affairs and Human Rights (OIAHR), Finance and Administration, Personnel, and Planning.

The expenditure projections for this year include CHF 4.26 million for the Departments for Mission and Development (DMD); CHF 1.07 million for Theology and Studies (DTS); and CHF 4.1 million for World Service (DWS). Some CHF 838,000 is planned for the LWF’s governing bodies.

The Program Committee for Finance and Administration presents the LWF finances to the Council for approval.

The Council approved a budget of over USD 77.6 million for programs of the LWF departments and offices for the year 2008.

Personnel and administration costs for the Lutheran Foundation for Inter-confessional Research in Strasbourg, France, are budgeted at USD 350,000 in 2008.

Next year’s total budget for the proposed LWF programs (Summary of Needs) including the Geneva Coordination Budget is projected at USD 89.06 million.

The budget breakdown is USD 623,400 for OCS, USD 153,500 for OEA and USD 385,000 for OIAHR.

Some USD 237,600 is budgeted for DTS programs and projects, USD 4,089,920 for DMD and USD 72,120,157 for DWS.

In May 2007, the Project Committee approved USD 3,464,700 for DMD projects, which are agreed in consultation with the LWF member churches.

The LWF Summary of Needs is sent to the member churches, National Committees, related agencies and mission agencies for funding requests through designated and undesignated contributions.

USD 7.6 Million for LWF Mission and Development Projects

At its March 2007 meeting, the LWF Council received projects of the LWF Department for Mission and Development (DMD) approved by the DMD Project Committee. The DMD projects amount to USD 7.6 million, for the period 2007 to 2009. The amount includes some USD 2.8 million in 2007, USD 2.6 million in 2008 and USD 2.2 million in 2009.

In his report to this year’s Council meeting, then Project Committee chairperson, Archbishop Anders Wejryd from Sweden, explained the budgeted amounts were for 39 projects—9 in Africa, 10 in Asia, 4 in Europe and 16 in the Latin America and Caribbean region.

In the context of the department’s overall mission to foster communion within and among the LWF member churches, DMD’s projects extend the churches’ holistic ministries of evangelism, diakonia, advocacy, sustainable

development, communication, and HIV and AIDS. The department ensures fund raising from the LWF partner organizations and churches to support the approved projects, as well as coordination and assessment of project applications and accompaniment and monitoring during implementation.

DMD’s funding requests in 2007 include USD 1,134,600 for projects in Africa; USD 719,500 for Asia; USD 109,200 for Europe and USD 850,500 for the Latin America and Caribbean region. In 2008 the department aims to raise USD 1,135,800 for Africa; USD 556,700 for Asia; USD 98,100 for Europe and USD 828,700 for Latin America and the Caribbean. In 2009 DMD will be seeking USD 957,300 for projects in Africa; USD 388,600 for Asia; USD 10,400 for Europe and USD 833,800 for Latin America and the Caribbean.

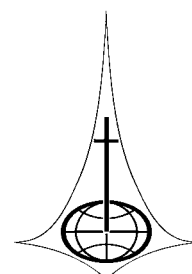
Dates for 2008 Council Meeting

On the recommendation of the Executive Committee, the Council voted to hold its next meeting **from 24 June to 1 July 2008**, with the venue still to be decided. The LWF Council meets once every 12 to 18 months and

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.

LWI special issue on “60 Years” of the LWF is available online at

www.lutheranworld.org/What_We_Do/OCS/OCS-LWI_PDF.html



Rev. Roger Schmidt New LWF/DMD Youth Secretary

Rev. Roger Schmidt from Germany assumed the position of youth secretary in the LWF Department for Mission and Development in April. The LWF Executive Committee appointed Schmidt, 31, to a four-year term at its November 2006 meeting in Chavannes-de-Bogis near Geneva. He succeeds Rev. Mia Wrang from Finland, consultant to the LWF Youth in Church and Society (YICAS) desk from January 2005 to March 2007.



LWF Youth secretary, Rev. Roger Schmidt.
© LWF/D-M. Grötzsch

At its meeting in March, the LWF Council changed the name of the youth desk from YICAS to LWF Youth. The LWF governing body also resolved that the LWF youth desk should increase focus on its advocacy work.

Schmidt studied theology in Neuendettelsau and Erlangen in Germany, and at the Wartburg Theological Seminary in Dubuque, Iowa, USA from 1996 to 2003. Following his first theological examination, he served as a vicar from 2003 to 2006 with the Lutheran congregation in Nuremberg-Mögeldorf, Germany.

In July 2006, Schmidt was ordained as a pastor in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Bavaria. He served from March 2006 to February 2007 as an assistant pastor in a special appointment for the creation of a youth church in Nuremberg, Germany.

Schmidt took on numerous volunteer roles and positions in the course of his theological training. He was, for example, the part-time managing director of the Ecumenical Youth Council in

Bavaria, a deputy member of the synod of Bavarian Lutheran church, and chairperson of the youth chamber of *Evangelische Jugend in Bayern* (Protestant Youth in Bavaria). From 2001 through 2003, he participated in the international LWF/DMD youth program "Transformation through Participation."

In July 2003, Schmidt represented the Bavarian church as a delegate to the LWF Tenth Assembly in Winnipeg, Canada.

Rev. Schmidt is married.

LWF North American Region Commissions Hymn for LWF Anniversary

The LWF North American Regional Office commissioned the hymn **By Grace God Calls** for the LWF 60th anniversary.

The writer, Susan Cherwien, USA, has based it on Isaiah 61:1-2 and Luke 4:18, and referenced words from LWF General Secretary Rev. Dr Ishmael Noko, "By grace God calls us into the communion of divine life." The hymn uses the tune of *Nun Danket All Und Bringet Ehr* (Johann Cruger). In 2007, it will be

used in North America during the National Convention of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada in June.

Sung at the 60th anniversary in Lund, it will also be used at many events of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) including the Global Mission Event in July, the ELCA Assembly in August and during LWF Sunday celebrations in October.

Message from the LWF Archives

The LWF Archives is looking for copies of the following to complete its holdings. If you can help, please contact the archivist at: lwf-archives@lutheranworld.org.

1952: 4, 10, 19, 22, 61, 70
1953: 18, 23, 39, 45
1954: 21, 22
1955: 12

LWB Pressedienst
1958: 14

English language:

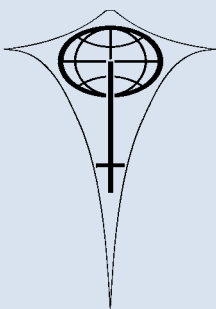
LWF News Bulletin
1947: Supplement I

LWF News Releases
1951: 16, 29, 49, 50, 51, 52, 54, 62, 65, 71, 109

German language:

LWB Bericht
1951: 2, 7, 15, 16, 19, 29, 30, 35, 47, 83, 95, 107
1952: 47, 54
1953: 30, 44, 45, 54
1955: 18

In addition, a limited number of **spare copies of Lutheran World Information (LWI) and its predecessor publications from the period 1947-1999 (English) and 1947-1998 (German)** are available from the Archives on a first come-first served basis for those who wish to complete their holdings. Please contact the archivist at lwf-archives@lutheranworld.org.



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