

**The Lutheran World Federation
– A Communion of Churches**

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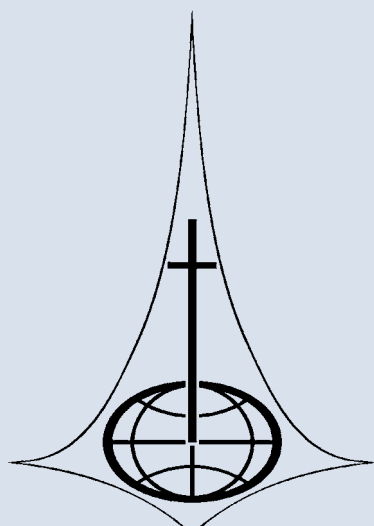
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Messages of Hope, Solidarity Through Multi-Colored Crosses



Salvadoran artist Christian Chavarría has painted around 250,000 crosses of different sizes and colors to raise awareness on issues such as poverty, water, globalization and peaceful co-existence. The crosses are the “best therapy to cope with difficult moments,” says the young man who survived the 1980–1992 civil war in his country, but lost three close relatives during an attack on the family home when he was a child.

(Photo) A selection of crosses from a youth workshop Chavarría led at the May 2007 Kirchentag in Turku, Finland. © Kirkkopalvelut/M. Pihlaja

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Update on LWF/DWS Operations in Chad

The LWF Department for World Service (DWS) has intensified its response to internally displaced persons (IDPs) in eastern Chad. The decision to start operations there followed the May/June 2007 Action by Churches Together (ACT) International joint assessment mission. The IDPs mainly include people who fled cross-border violence spilling over from Darfur, western Sudan.

From its operational base in Koukou, DWS intervention includes site planning, community services, protection and psychosocial support. As the June-September rainy season ended, the Koukou evacuation site was relocated to Habile 1, with vulnerable individuals and female-headed households receiving additional support. But the flood-prone site at Habile 3 were a major concern, to which alternative relocations were being considered.

Awareness raising sessions continue with various focus groups including sheikhs, youth and women committees. The World Service staff in Koukou has participated in training by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) on sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), and community-based animators have been engaged to assist in many activities.

Further site planning includes meetings with community members, representatives of government, non-governmental organizations and UN agencies, among others, to address challenges such as haphazard layout and inappropriate access routes. As site management coordinator and facilitator, DWS also advocates transparent communication

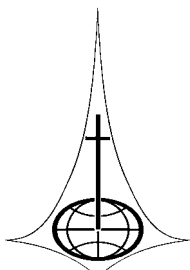


Availability of clean water is a major concern. A young IDP woman waits her turn to draw water from a common point in the eastern Chad campsites. © ACT International

between all parties to ensure joint planning, implementation and action. So far, discussions have been held with stakeholders to identify plots for a community center and school within the sites.

Since the beginning of October, a team comprising a water and sanitation engineer has been in the country carrying out further assessments into the scope of the ACT team's work in eastern Chad. A revised ACT appeal was sent out mid-November.

The Chad operations are headed by Dutch citizen **Mr Jaap Aantjes**, the regional supervisor for new DWS programs in East Africa.



Costa Rican Lutheran Church Leader Speaks Out Against Free Trade Agreement with USA

Interview with Rev. Melvin Jiménez on FTA Implications for Ordinary People

SAN JOSÉ, Costa Rica/GENEVA, 4 October 2007 (LWI)

– Ahead of Costa Rica’s 7 October vote in a national referendum to decide whether the Central American country should sign a free trade agreement (FTA) with the United States of America, *Lutheran World Information* (LWI) interviewed Rev. Melvin Jiménez, president of the Lutheran Costarican Church (ILCO), which has been an active participant in a civil society coalition advocating against the FTA endorsement.

* See p. 5 for referendum results, and ILCO’s follow up action.

LWI: Could you explain some of the potential implications on ordinary people if the Costa Rican government would sign to the FTA, and why it is important to fight its ratification?

Rev. Melvin Jiménez: The FTA with the United States will have deep repercussions for ordinary people in Costa Rica at different fronts:

Agriculture—Imports of subsidized agricultural products from the USA will threaten the very survival of subsistence farmers. Not only will small-scale farming disappear, a source of employment and income for the rural sectors will be cut off, as well as the traditional family farming units, to which every member contributes.

Health—Social health care relies on generic products for its medical supplies. With the planned extension of the patent protection period, the costs of generics in the FTA zone will go up by 300 to 1000 per cent. The prohibitive costs of any new drugs at trademark prices will further squeeze an already tight national health budget, thus making it even more dif-



ILCO president Rev. Melvin Jiménez predicted a successful demonstration against the FTA. © ILCO

ficult for the State to buy the needed generic products to cover domestic needs.

Communications—In Costa Rica telecommunications and insurance services have until now been operated on a system based on solidarity, whereby those who can afford pay more, in order to subsidize insurance cover, the supply of electricity and telephones to the rural areas. With a FTA in place, all these essential services will be at stake because companies will only be interested in products and niche markets that are profitable.

Labor force—For the labor force to be competitive in Central America, it will have to become cheaper. The so-called labor “flexibility” will be strongly emphasized, eventually putting at risk working standards such as the eight-hour day, payment of one additional wage (to 13 in a year), freedom of association, paid leave, etc. Workers and their organizations could lose historically fought-for labor rights.

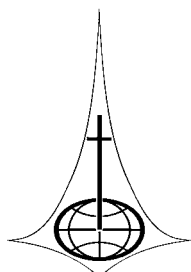
Natural resources—Costa Rica’s vast water and sea resources are not protected in this free trade agreement. Many transnational companies have already shown a major interest in the privatization of these common goods.

What has it meant for other local partners in the coalition to see a church joining it and participating in the advocacy campaign?

Given the neutrality of the Roman Catholic Church and the clear “YES” to the FTA by some of the leaders of mostly Pentecostal churches, the presence and



“NO to the FTA” demonstrators including Rev. Katarina Hedqvist (center) prepare for ILCO’s so-called “concentration of strength” march on 30 September 2007. © ILCO





A participant in the ILCO march shouts slogans, as others follow. © ILCO

voice of a Protestant church in the civil society coalition has been a much-appreciated contribution for an important sector of evangelical churches, and also for the civic movement opposing the FTA signature. Some people have described the ILCO's support as "spiritual-militancy," thereby reaffirming the commitment of the Lutheran church to the paths of justice as announced first by the Prophets and then by Jesus.

Any lessons learned by the ILCO from its participation in the coalition?

The Lutheran church has already been active for two years in the advocacy against the FTA, using various types of educational material aimed at women, youth and congregations in general. For example, in September, we organized special sessions involving visits to the communities and Bible studies on relevant topics. During Sunday worship in many of our congregations, a FTA-related issue is addressed, which requires due preparation in terms of content for the sermons. ILCO congregation members including pastors and other leaders have participated in demonstrations and many of them are active in the coalition. They continue to carry out civic education activities using pamphlets and round table sessions at community level.

What do you anticipate from the nationwide referendum – victory or defeat for the coalition?

The umbrella national coalition includes over 200 local committees in the most diverse and remote communities of Costa Rica, working around the clock to raise public awareness at literally all places—bus stops, visiting households, organizing round tables, cultural festivals and so on. In addition, income-generating events have been organized to finance the publicity materials, administrative costs, the actual mobilization of people to vote on 7 October, and the monitoring of the

referendum itself. There is a great deal of optimism that things will go well. Nevertheless, effective monitoring is needed as there are concerns about potential fraud in some of the regions due to the desperate actions of the industrial sector which favors a "YES" to the FTA, a situation which is creating a climate of violence and intolerance. We are therefore encouraging all Christians to be vigilant in monitoring the events surrounding the referendum, and to relentlessly fight corruption in order to ensure a transparent process.

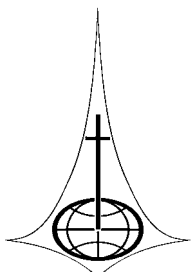
The Latin American Lutheran churches have sustained a significant struggle for the cancellation of all illegitimate foreign debt. Any co-relation to the free trade issue?

Both struggles focus on people as the first priority. Ordinary people should be able to enjoy abundant life in dignity and to fight against all financial or trading systems that exercise control over our societies and prevent them from exerting their right to development. Therefore, denouncing all illegitimate debt that was not used for the development of our people or trade agreements that aim to achieve the most benefits for the rich, are issues that form part of the same struggle. As for the way this should be tackled, it should be left individually to each country, according to the national context, to use their own methods to make people aware and mobilize them to defend their rights. The biblical dimension is therefore important—to encourage Christians to commit



Supporters of the ILCO demonstration listen to speeches and music at the end of the march. © ILCO

themselves to the struggle and make it a central part of their Christian life. As church leaders in the region, we have the responsibility to make people understand that there is no contradiction between prayer and struggle, biblical study and fighting for justice; that these things are all integral parts of Christian life.



What do you see as the role of the global ecumenical family in the fight against unjust trade systems and policies?

The global churches are doing something. However, I believe there is still a huge vacuum and a lot of work is still required in linking the contribution of regional and international networks in order to facilitate systematic action on these issues. What our churches here have to say, regardless of their size, is usually heard in our countries. Their message could reverberate even further if our partner churches in the North would speak out on the same issues to their governments. This normally has an important impact on our governments. But some of the churches in the Lutheran communion in the North are not always committed enough to a struggle that goes beyond development cooperation because the issues touch on the political situation of certain countries and the relation between the church and state. A more

prophetic and evangelical, more sympathetic, and more “belligerent” attitude needs to be fostered. This cannot be done by a small church alone. It needs to be planned, managed, financed and defended also by the ecumenical family, as we have been doing locally.

There is an imminent new challenge—the negotiation for a comprehensive Association Agreement between the European Union and Central America—which will include political as well as trade and investment dimensions. I consider this as a perfect moment to take on some of the challenges that we are facing. It is the time to test the communion of churches that we claim to be.

The Lutheran Costarican Church has over 1,300 members, and joined the Lutheran World Federation in 2002. Its diakonia activities include work with the indigenous population, migrant population (mainly from Nicaragua) and street children.

Call for Further Resistance to FTA Bills

SAN JOSÉ, Costa Rica/GENEVA, 22 November 2007 (LWI) – While supporters of Costa Rica’s Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with the USA celebrated the 51.5 percent win by the “YES” coalition in the 7 October referendum in the Central American country, the Lutheran Costarican Church (ILCO) appealed to the “NO” groups to stay together and build up resistance against the FTA-related bills scheduled for parliamentary approval by 29 February 2008.

In a 10 October statement signed by ILCO president Rev. Melvin Jiménez, the church called for investigations into alleged irregularities during the voting process including use of public funds for the campaign three days prior to the poll.

Jiménez whose church actively participated in the “NO” coalition criticized the pro-FTA “campaign of lies and fear [which] scared the nation into believing that not endorsing the Free Trade Agreement would send the country into chaos, with massive job losses and crippling of the economy.” The statement was addressed to ILCO members, churches and national and international organizations supporting the “NO” coalition, and to Costa Ricans in general.

The Lutheran leader described the referendum as a great achievement especially in the build-up to the

voting process. “A diverse social movement of farmers, workers, women, environmentalists, businesses, trade unions, Christians and others, with energy, passion and creativity, succeeded in awakening the consciences of the over 700,000 Costa Ricans who voted “NO” to the Free Trade Agreement,” he said. “This country is no longer the same after 7 October, because this movement of thousands upon thousands of Costa Ricans has earned the right to be seen as a legitimate member of any national discussion on how to improve the living conditions of the people,” Jiménez added.

The church encouraged the “NO” coalition to consolidate its organizational structure to keep fighting for the most disadvantaged persons so that Costa Rica can progress as “a country of solidarity, justice and true democracy.”

The ILCO president affirmed the church’s continued solidarity with the “most excluded people in this new stage of life for Costa Rican people,” including further biblical reflection on the core issues of the FTA.

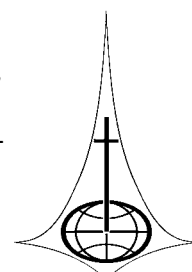
Costa Rica is the only country in the region to hold a referendum on the Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA), already ratified by El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and the Dominican Republic.

LWF President Hanson Responds to Letter from Muslim Leaders

Call to Work More Closely for Peace

CHICAGO, USA/GENEVA, 15 October 2007 (LWI) – The Rev. Mark S. Hanson, presiding bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) and

president of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF), responded to an 11 October letter sent to him and several global Christian leaders by 138 Muslim lead-



ers from throughout the world. The 29-page open letter, "A Common Word Between You and Us," calls for Muslims and Christians to work more closely together for peace.

The complete contents of the letter is available at: www.divinity.cam.ac.uk/cip/documents/COMMONWORDFINAL091007.pdf

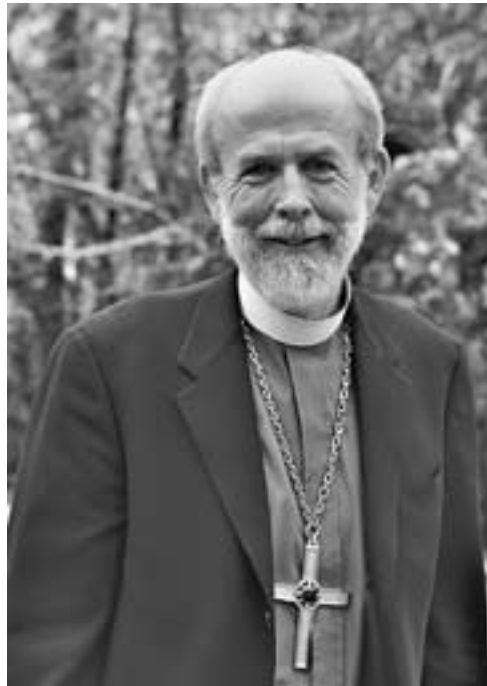
The full text of Bishop Hanson's response follows:

Response by Bishop Mark S. Hanson, President, The Lutheran World Federation

"Greetings to you in the name of Almighty God, our Creator and Sustainer.

On October 11, a copy of a letter was delivered to me from Muslim scholars and religious leaders addressed to Christian religious leaders around the world. As presiding bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, and president of the Lutheran World Federation, I receive this letter in the sincere expression of faithfulness intended by its drafters, and with the hopeful expectation for peace that calls to us from the origins of our sacred texts and professions of faith. I encourage prayer and planning for communities of justice, peace, and security where Muslims, Jews, and Christians draw from these origins as from essential wells of living water.

The letter attests to both the love of God and our shared heritage of true hospitality to one's neighbor. These commandments convey prophetic witness for mutual and vital co-existence that Christians and Muslims must embrace in one another. The letter further references how the commands to love God and neighbor are linked 'between the Qur'an, the Torah and the New Testament.' I encourage everyone everywhere to read the beauty of these passages found in the sacred texts of the Abrahamic faiths, which signify God's vision for how and whom we love in a broken world. This common vision for Jews, Muslims, and Christians signifies fidelity and fellowship in a world where conflict



LWF President Bishop Mark S. Hanson
© LWF/H. Putsman

offends our common heritage as children of God.

In 2005 I, along with an LWF delegation that included General Secretary Ishmael Noko, met with His Royal Highness Prince Ghazi, personal envoy and special advisor to King Abdullah II of Jordan. Our delegation was grateful for the sincere hospitality and friendship that were so freely displayed in our conversation. The delegation spoke at length with Prince Ghazi about the origins of the Abrahamic faiths in that region of the world. In another meeting, Akel Biltaji, advisor to His Majesty the King, stated, 'We are honored to be servants and custodians of the Holy sites.'

I acknowledge this letter in gratitude and recognition of the need for its further study

and consideration. I likewise accept it in the belief that Jews, Muslims, and Christians are called to one another as to a holy site, where God's living revelation in the world is received in reverence among the faithful and not in fear of our neighbors.

I pray for God's continued blessings among Muslims, Jews, and Christians alike, and thank God for such displays of wisdom and humility from their leaders."

The Rev. Mark S. Hanson
Presiding Bishop, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
President, The Lutheran World Federation.
(ELCA News Service)

LWF Directory, Member Church Lists Are Available Online

The previously printed version of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) Directory is available online in a Portable Document Format (PDF).

The Directory includes information on the LWF, its 140 member churches, recognized churches, congregations and council, as well as national committees, and other directly or indirectly related contacts. Information is also provided on the Federation's governing bodies, Geneva secretariat and the Institute for Ecumenical Research in Strasbourg, France.

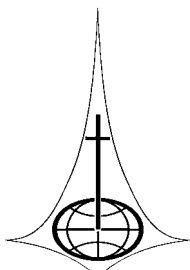
Internet access to the complete PDF edition of the 2007 LWF Directory, is offered (2.3 MB) upon re-

quest to the LWF Office for Communication Services: cmu@lutheranworld.org

A global list of the member churches, recognized churches, councils and congregations, is also available on the LWF Web site at: www.lutheranworld.org

Both documents are updated regularly, and can be downloaded for ready reference.

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Ethiopian Yohannes Saketa Joins LWF Mission and Development

In mid-October **Mr Abebe Yohannes Saketa** from Ethiopia assumed the position of Secretary for Human Resources Development at the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) Department for Mission and Development (DMD). Saketa, 54, has nearly 30-years' experience in education and development work, mainly with his home church, the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus (EECMY). He succeeds Ms Kristin Roaldseth Moyer from Norway who left the LWF in May 2007.



Mr Abebe Y. Saketa
© LWF/H. Putsman

Prior to joining LWF/DMD, he was EECMY associate general secretary for 21 years, responsible overall for planning, coordination and human resource development. Before his employment at the EECMY head office in 1986, he had worked for four years as director of the Lalo Aira Senior Secondary in the Western Synod. He first joined the EECMY in 1971 as assistant head of

the Western Synod's education department, a position he held until 1973 when he proceeded for further education.

Saketa served as chairperson of an EECMY-LWF joint management committee mainly dealing with rehabilitation and development of the church's integrated rural development work. From 1991 to 1997 he was an LWF Council adviser on the Program Committee for Communication Service. He represented the EECMY on the board of the public Ethiopian News Agency from 1998 to 2004.

Saketa earned his master's in communication from Wheaton College, Wheaton, Illinois, USA, (1992), and his bachelor's in social science and history from the University of Addis Ababa, Ethiopia in 1982.

Saketa and his wife Aberash Dinsa have one son.

German Theologian Grosshans Is LWF Study Secretary

Rev. Dr Hans-Peter Grosshans from Württemberg, Germany, is the new Study Secretary for Theology and the Church in the LWF Department for Theology and Studies (DTS). Grosshans, 49, assumed his new responsibilities at the LWF's Geneva secretariat in September 2007, succeeding German theologian Rev. Dr Reinhard Böttcher, who served in this position from April 2003 until March 2007.



Rev. Dr Hans-Peter Grosshans
© Private

Grosshans studied Protestant theology and philosophy at the Eberhard Karls University, Tübingen, Germany, and at Keble College, University of Oxford in the United Kingdom between 1979 and 1986. He subsequently served as a vicar (pastor-in-training), and was ordained as a pastor of the Evangelical Church in Württemberg in 1989.

He worked as an assistant to Dr Eberhard Jüngel at the University of Tübingen from 1989 to 1994, before attaining his doctorate there in Protestant theology in 1995. He was a postdoctoral research fellow at the university's department

for Systematic Theology and Philosophy of Religion as well as the Institute for Hermeneutics, where he served as deputy director until 2003. Grosshans completed his post-doctoral thesis (*Habilitation*) in systematic theology at the university in 2002.

Between 2002 and 2005 Grosshans worked as a non-tenured professor of systematic theology at the universities of Giessen, Hamburg and Munich, all in Germany, and at the University of Zurich, Switzerland.

From April 2004 to August 2007 he worked in a research project, "The understanding of the church in the Eastern Orthodox, Protestant and Roman Catholic theology," funded by the German Research Foundation. During this period, he also conducted research with the Protestant Institute for Interdisciplinary Research (FEST) in Heidelberg, Germany.

Grosshans is married with two children.

Two Reformed Church Bodies to Merge

The World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC) agreed on 20 October to unite with the Reformed Ecumenical Council (REC) to create a new global body representing over 80 million Reformed Christians.

The historic decision took place at WARC's Executive Committee held 18–28 October 2007 in Trinidad and Tobago, following detailed discussions on aspects of the proposed merger. The committee agreed to recommend to REC that the new global entity be called the World Communion of Reformed Churches. It also approved terms of reference for a merger implementation working group to be responsible for a constitution, budget, staffing and structure details, the Uniting General Council (likely in 2010), as well as fundraising and communication plans.

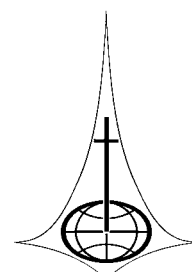
The meeting's theme was "Called to Communion: From Elmina to Port of Spain," and it focused largely on justice issues and church unity at large and within the Reformed family.

At its Executive Committee in March, REC had approved in principle a new Reformed body.

WARC is a worldwide fellowship of 75 million Reformed Christians in 214 churches in 107 countries. REC represents 12 million Reformed Christians in 39 churches in 25 countries, with 27 of the churches also belonging to WARC.

Some of the member churches of the Lutheran World Federation also belong to WARC.

(WARC News)



LWF General Secretary Lauds Nobel Laureates' Focus on Climate Change Challenges

Noko Underlines LWF Assembly Commitment to Further Action

GENEVA, 15 October 2007 (LWI) – The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) congratulated former US Vice President Al Gore and the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) for being jointly awarded the 2007 Nobel Peace Prize.

In a statement issued on 15 October, LWF General Secretary Rev. Dr Ishmael Noko, commended both the IPCC and Gore for “increasing public awareness about

the gravity of climate change and promoting political commitment to addressing the challenge it represents.”

On 12 October, the Norwegian Nobel Committee named the IPCC and the former US vice-president as co-recipients of the Nobel Peace Prize “for their efforts to build up and disseminate greater knowledge about man-made climate change, and to lay the foundations for the measures that are needed to counteract such change.”

In his statement, Noko mentioned the role of religious leaders in responding to the climate crisis, and cited the LWF’s commitment, as underlined by the Assembly, its highest governing body. “The LWF made the commitment to ‘work against climate change and the greenhouse effect, by acting to decrease the consumption of fossil fuel and use renewable energy resources,’” the general secretary noted, referring to commitments of the July 2003 LWF Tenth Assembly in Winnipeg, Canada.

Noko pointed out that the 11th Assembly, to be held in July 2010 in Stuttgart, Germany, would provide a forum to deepen these commitments and further such actions.

The full text of Dr Noko’s statement follows:



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

Statement by Rev. Dr Ishmael Noko General Secretary, The Lutheran World Federation

The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) warmly congratulates former US Vice President Al Gore and the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change on the award of the 2007 Nobel Peace Prize. Mr Gore and the Panel have taken a leading role in increasing public awareness about the gravity of climate change and promoting political commitment to addressing the challenge it represents. They richly deserve the recognition they have received.

I agree wholeheartedly with Mr Gore when he says that “the climate crisis is not a political issue, it is a moral and spiritual challenge to all of humanity.” The dimensions of this crisis transcend politics. It calls for engagement at the most fundamental ethical level. Religious leaders have essential roles to play in responding to the crisis, alongside political and other community leaders.

At its Tenth Assembly in 2003, the LWF made the commitment to “work against climate change and the greenhouse effect, by acting to decrease the consumption of fossil fuel and use renewable energy resources.” The Lutheran communion has repeatedly supported “international agreements [such as the Kyoto Protocol] that seek to preserve the environment and the integrity of creation.” The 11th Assembly to take place in 2010, in Stuttgart, Germany, will provide a forum to deepen these commitments and further such actions.

All faith traditions acknowledge the sacredness of creation. The threat of climate change demands that our common respect for creation be recognized as a basis for interfaith cooperation to protect and preserve the earth and to assure just, sustainable life for all.

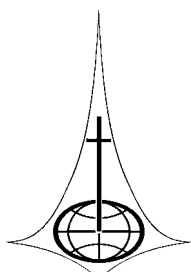
Geneva, 15 October 2007

André Appel, Former LWF General Secretary Dies

LWF Mourns a Leader Who Laid a Strong Ecumenical Foundation

GENEVA, 2 November 2007 (LWI) – The Rev. Dr André Appel, general secretary of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) from 1965 to 1974, died on 1 November. He was 85.

In a tribute to his predecessor, LWF General Secretary Rev. Dr Ishmael Noko said, “Appel was indeed a concrete demonstration and embodiment of what small churches can contribute to the common life of



small and big churches in communion.

“He served at a critical time when the LWF made the decision to hold its first ever Assembly in the Southern Hemisphere. Although Porto Alegre, Brazil, would have been the venue of the Fifth Assembly in 1970, it was relocated to Evian, France, due to political difficulties and circumstances,” Noko continued.

“Appel’s resourcefulness also laid a strong ecumenical foundation for the LWF’s engagement with the Roman Catholic Church during and immediately after the Second Vatican Council,” Noko noted. He added that it was also during Appel’s tenure that “for the first time non-European/American executive staff” were appointed to the LWF Geneva secretariat.

Appel was born on 20 December 1921 in Saverne, Alsace, France. He first studied theology at the universities of Leipzig and Tübingen in Germany. Drafted against his will into the German army in 1942, he later escaped to the free French forces. He eventually resumed studies in Paris, France, completing his training in 1946 at the theological faculty in Strasbourg, France. He taught and took additional studies at St Olaf College in Northfield, Minnesota, USA, from 1946 to 1948.

Ordained as a pastor of the Church of the Augsburg Confession of Alsace and Lorraine in 1949, he served the Wissembourg (Alsace) parish for five years, before returning to Paris in 1955 as a university chaplain until 1957. Appel was general secretary of the French Protestant Federation from 1957 to 1964, after which he served as a pastor at one of the Lutheran churches in



Former LWF General Secretary Rev. Dr André Appel (1921–2007) © A. Huber

Strasbourg. In June 1965, the LWF Executive Committee elected him to the post of general secretary, succeeding Rev. Dr Kurt Schmidt-Clausen from Germany. After serving the LWF for nine years, Appel resigned upon his appointment as president of the Church of the Augsburg Confession of Alsace and Lorraine, a position he held until his retirement in 1987. He also served as president of the Conference of European Churches from 1974 to 1986.

He recently contributed an article for the *Lutheran World Information (LWI)* special edition on the LWF’s 60th anniversary this year, in which he recounts his “story with the LWF.” He highlights some key

challenges he faced as general secretary, including having to deal with the impact of the then tense East-West divide. “Looking back . . . I can only thank God for using me in shaping the LWF, and letting the voices of the minority [to] be heard. The challenge on the ecumenical scene has not really changed but it needs a great deal of honesty and humility on the part of the present leaders. We also need more courage and faith in order to overcome the many barriers on the road to unity,” he states. (*LWI* No. 02/2007 p. 28 www.lutheranworld.org/What_We_Do/OCS/LWI-2007-PDF/LWI-200702-EN-low.pdf)

Appel’s wife Marjorie died in March 2003. The couple is survived by four children and several grandchildren.

The funeral for Rev. Dr André Appel was on 8 November. During a 9 November memorial service at St Matthew Lutheran Church in Strasbourg, LWF Deputy General Secretary Rev. Chandran Paul Martin delivered Dr Noko’s tribute.

Hove from Zimbabwe Takes Up Project Coordination Position at LWF

On 1 November, **Ms Simangaliso Hove** from Zimbabwe assumed the position of Secretary for Program and Project Coordination in the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) Department for Mission and Development. Hove, 45, succeeds Ms Margret Stasius from Switzerland, who left the LWF at the end of May 2007.

A member of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Zimbabwe (ELCZ), Hove headed the finance unit of the Zimbabwe Council of Churches (ZCC) from 1994 until 2007. She was the ZCC finance officer from 1987 to 1993, prior to which she was a bursar at Cranborne Boys’ High School in the Zimbabwean capital, Harare for four years.



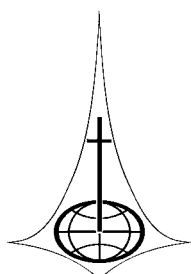
Ms Simangaliso Hove © LWF/H. Putzman

Hove has served on the board of Lutheran Development Service (LDS), the LWF Department for World Service associate program in Zimbabwe.

She was a member of the personnel and recruitment standing committee of Christian Care, an ecumenical organization comprising churches and church-related organizations, and served on the ELCZ finance committee for several years.

She holds a bachelor of commerce from the Pretoria (South Africa)-based University of South Africa.

Hove is married with three children.



Latvia Now Has Three Bishops

The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Latvia (ELCL) now has three bishops following the consecration of **Bishops Einārs Alpe** and **Pāvils Brūvers** early October. Archbishop Janis Vanags currently heads the ELCL.

Until then the ELCL had only one bishop—the archbishop. Consecrated on 13 October at the Lutheran Cathedral of Rega, Alpe and Brūvers serve the newly created dioceses of Daugavpils and Liepāja respectively. The ELCL synod elected the new bishops at its meeting in June this year. The Riga archdiocese will be under the jurisdiction of the ELCL Archbishop.

The need for more dioceses and bishops was predicted by Archbishop Teodors Grīnbergs (1933–1944) in the First Republic of Latvia, but this could not be realized at that time due to the start of the Second World War, followed by the Soviet occupation.

Vanags explained the need for additional bishops: “If the church has only one bishop with many international, interchurch, church-state, and other responsibilities, then it is not possible to meet regularly and intensively with all the pastors, talk with them, and help establish a pastors’ fellowship within a smaller setting that could be realized within a diocese.”



From left to right: Bishop Pāvils Brūvers (ELCL Liepāja diocese), Latvian Archbishop Janis Vanags and Einārs Alpe (Daugavpils diocese).

© I. Briede

The 250,000-member ELCL has 297 congregations, served by over 130 ordained pastors and around 70 evangelists.

It joined the Lutheran World Federation in 1963.

(*KALME News)

*Communication Committee for Lutheran Minority Churches in Europe)

Lutheran-Orthodox Commission Members Prepare for 2008 Plenary Meeting

The preparatory meeting for the 14th Session of the Lutheran-Orthodox Joint Commission was held from 3 to 8 October in Joensuu, eastern Finland, hosted by the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople.

Participants in the meeting held at the Orthodox seminary in Joensuu discussed papers that provided theological expositions of Orthodox and Lutheran teaching on “The Mystery of the Church: The Holy Eucharist in the Life of the Church,” the theme currently being studied by the Joint Commission. They also deliberated specifications of the common attributes and differences between the teachings of both Christian traditions.

A draft Common Statement developed by the preparatory group and the papers presented will be discussed

during the 14th Plenary Meeting of the Lutheran-Orthodox Joint Commission scheduled for 30 May to 7 June 2008, hosted by the Orthodox.

The Commission’s co-presidents are Metropolitan Gennadios of Sassima (Orthodox), representing the Ecumenical Patriarchate, and Rev. Donald McCoid (Lutheran), former bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod, and currently head of the ELCA’s Ecumenical and Inter-Religious Relations section.

More information about the Lutheran-Orthodox dialogue is available on the LWF web site at: www.lutheranworld.org/What_We_Do/OEA/Bilateral_Relations/OEA-Lutheran-Orthodox.html

Tanzanian Bishop Bomani Dies

Bishop Nehemia Bomani of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania (ELCT) East of Lake Victoria diocese died on 1 November following an accident at his home in Mwanza, northwest Tanzania.

Bomani, 49, had led the Mwanza-based diocese since 2001.

He held a master’s degree from the Concordia University in St Paul, Minnesota, USA, and a bachelor of divinity from the ELCT’s Makumira University College in Arusha, Tanzania.

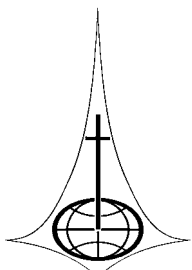


ELCT Bishop Nehemia Bomani © ELCT

He served as a pastor in the East of Lake Victoria diocese from 1988 to 1995, and assistant to the diocesan bishop from 1996 to 2000. He is survived by his wife Neema Bomani and seven children.

The 57,000-member East of Lake Victoria diocese is one of the ELCT’s 20 dioceses. The ELCT has a combined membership of 3.5 million members.

(ELCT News)



FEATURE: Messages of Hope, Solidarity Through Multi-Colored Crosses

Salvadoran Artist Traces His Journey from Hostility to Reconciliation

SAN SALVADOR, *El Salvador*/GENEVA, 22 November 2007 (LWI) – Christian Chavarría was just four years old when civil war broke out in El Salvador in 1980. It lasted 12 years during which some 80,000 people died, millions were left homeless, while thousands more simply disappeared.

The 31 year-old Salvadoran remembers clearly the day a group of armed soldiers entered his home, fired shots at his brothers then aged seven and nine, and uncle, and pushed the younger boy against a wall, leaving him unconscious. He came to only to find his relatives' corpses beside him, and spent the next two days in the house until his parents rescued him. The armed men had apparently been looking for his mother, one of the principal leaders of the insurgency movement at that time.

The conflict predominantly fought between the government forces and the then revolutionary Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN) coalition was infamous for its so-called death squads targeting civilians, nuns and priests among others.

Gifted Artist

Like many of their compatriots, Chavarría and the surviving family members eventually fled into neighboring Honduras, where they lived for several years. He learned informally to read and write in the refugee camp, always encouraged by his mother to take advantage of whatever opportunity arose in the difficult situation. He was a gifted artist, and she encouraged him to develop this skill.



Christián Chavarría shows the cross he painted for the September 2007 LWF "Stirring the Waters" regional consultation in El Salvador. © WCC/M. Gorsboth

He returned to his native country as an adolescent, and was admitted to secondary school. But by the age of 15, he had already seen two of his best friends—among thousands of young people—felled in the battles in which he was also involved as a liberation army member. His memories of the following years are marked with the harsh reality of the civil war—death, massacres, accumulated hatred and thirst for revenge.

Chavarría still wonders how he managed to escape ambushes that could have led to his death. In view of the imminent danger to his life, he embarked for Sweden as a refugee. Away from home again, the talented artist turned his energies into drawing and painting, and slowly learned to survive without weapons or hostility for the next two-and-a-half years. But he yearned to return home to a peaceful country.

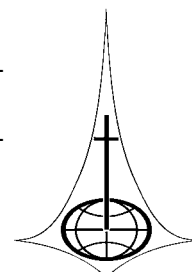
Global Crosses

In 1992 the FMLN and the right-wing government of then president Alfredo Cristiani signed the peace treaty that ended the war. Chavarría returned to his birthplace, El Salvador's capital San Salvador with one goal—to advance his education and develop his artwork.

His main focus all along has been hand-made wooden crosses, which he paints with images that raise awareness about subjects such as poverty, water, globalization and peaceful co-existence, among others. He has painted around 250,000 crosses of dif-



Chavarría (standing at the back of the room) during a cross-painting workshop for youth, which he led at the May 2007 Finnish Kirchentag in Turku, Finland. © Kirkkopalvelut/M. Pihlaja



ferent sizes, which he says have traveled right around the world, including one he presented to Finnish President Tarja K. Halonen in May 2007.

The proceeds from painting and selling crosses and other handicrafts are his main source of income and financial upkeep toward his family members. But the crosses are more than a livelihood for the young member of the Salvadoran Lutheran Synod (SLS). He enjoys “making them and it is the best therapy to cope with difficult moments,” he says.

At home and during visits abroad, Chavarría also conducts cross-painting workshops for young people to raise awareness especially about the needs of the poor. He recently participated in a consultation on water organized by the Women in Church and Society (WICAS) desk of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) Department for Mission and Development (DMD) near the Salvadoran capital. Standing out among other items on display was a multi-colored cross, depicting the problems associated with inaccessibility to clean water in El Salvador such as children’s death from water-borne diseases.



A Kirchentag painting workshop participant concentrates on her work. © Kirkkopalvelut/M. Pihlaja

SLS and attended by representatives of LWF member churches from 12 Latin American countries was in a series of DMD/WICAS consultations toward developing an LWF action plan on water.

Chavarría continues to share his messages through the multi-colored crosses, which he says are an expression of his deep commitment to the creation and his unshakable Christian faith. He also

carries out voluntary work for the SLS, and still hopes to realize his dream—study theology and put up a new building for his church.

During the civil war in the Central American country, the SLS played a crucial role advocating justice and assisting the internally displaced and poor population. Its holistic ministry through proclamation and service continues to focus on social justice issues.

The 12,000-member Salvadoran Lutheran Synod joined the LWF in 1986.

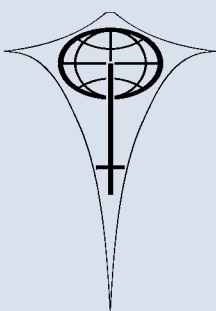
(Ms Verónica Flachier from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Ecuador [an LWF-recognized congregation] interviewed Christian Chavarría at the September 2007 LWF “Stirring the Waters” regional consultation in El Salvador.)

Water Privatization

The SLS Bishop Medardo Gómez stated during the 4 to 8 September 2007 “Stirring the Waters” LWF regional consultation, “The crisis of water is a sign of the crisis of life. ...It is an issue which belongs to the church because it is part of God’s *kairos* in his church.” He was referring to the current difficult situation for ordinary Salvadorans following the government’s attempts to privatize water, as well as the consequences suffered by many people from the irresponsible management of natural resources. The workshop hosted by the

***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.**

More LWI News at
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