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– A Communion of Churches**

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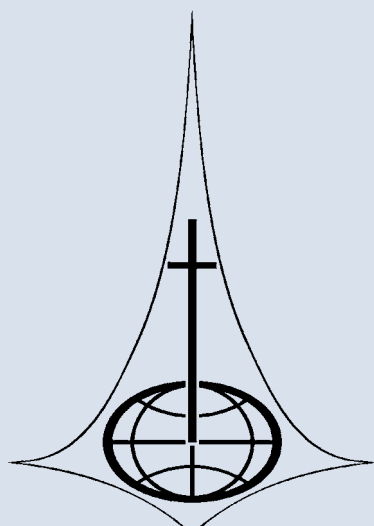
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## Wittenberg Plans a Luther Garden



The symbolic groundbreaking of a “Luther Garden” on 31 October 2008 in Wittenberg, Germany, will mark a major preparatory step toward the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Protestant Reformation in 2017. The Wittenberg mayor announced the initiative on 16 November at the Lutheran World Federation Geneva secretariat.

(Photo) Presenting the Luther Garden project, left to right: Oberkirchenrat Norbert Denecke, LWF National Committee in Germany; landscape architect Dr Andreas Kipar; Wittenberg Mayor Eckhard Naumann; from the LWF—General Secretary Rev. Dr Ishmael Noko; Deputy General Secretary Rev. Chandran Paul Martin; and Office for Communication Services director, Ms Karin Achtelstetter. © LWF/D.-M. Grötzsch

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Jekaterina Manko comes from a well-to-do family in Estonia’s northeastern city of Narva.

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### Saxon Church Leader Bohl Is New VELKD Deputy Bishop

The head of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Saxony **Bishop Jochen Bohl** has been named deputy to the presiding bishop of the United Evangelical Lutheran Church of Germany (VELKD). The VELKD Bishops' Conference appointed Bohl to succeed Mecklenburg Bishop Hermann Beste who retired on 31 July, having held the position since 2001.

The VELKD is an association of eight Lutheran churches in Bavaria, Brunswick, Hanover, Mecklenburg, North Elbia, Saxony, Schaumburg-Lippe and Thuringia, representing nearly 9.8 million Lutherans. It is headed by presiding Bishop Dr Johannes Friedrich (Evangelical Lutheran Church in Bavaria).

### New VELKD Web Site

Since mid-October the web site of the United Evangelical Lutheran Church of Germany (VELKD) has a completely new look and feel. According to VELKD spokesperson Oberkirchenrat Udo Hahn, [www.velkd.de](http://www.velkd.de) now offers users a broader range of topics and services. This includes

information about worship, liturgical matters, and the ecclesiastical year. According to Hahn, the site [www.velkd.de](http://www.velkd.de) receives around 250,000 visits per month.

The new VELKD web site was developed and deployed by the Munich firm "church up" ([www.church-up.de](http://www.church-up.de)).

### Lutheran World Information Subscription 2008

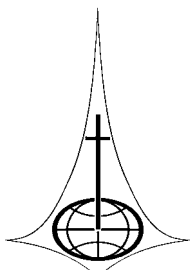
Throughout 2008, *Lutheran World Information* will provide news and feature articles about the various activities of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF), its member churches and related partners and organizations globally. Annual subscriptions will be automatically renewed unless otherwise indicated, and will be invoiced in the first quarter of 2008.

As printing and mailing costs are based on the Swiss franc (CHF), there will be a slight modification to the US dollar amount. Starting January 2008, the annual LWI subscription price will be USD 68 (up from USD 65), while corresponding costs in Swiss francs and Euros remain unchanged at CHF 75 or EUR 50 respectively.



**The staff of the LWF Office for Communication Services wish all LWI readers a Merry Christmas and a peaceful New Year.**

**More LWI News at**  
[www.lutheranworld.org/News/Welcome.EN.html](http://www.lutheranworld.org/News/Welcome.EN.html)



## Lutheran Holy Land Bishop and Other Faith Leaders Make Peace Commitments

### Advancing Trust and Reconciliation in Israel and Palestine

WASHINGTON DC, USA/GENEVA, 14 November 2007 (LWI) – Bishop Dr Munib A. Younan of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land (ELCJHL) was among Israeli and Palestinian religious leaders who announced early November in Washington DC, new efforts toward limiting violence, protecting holy sites and opening dialogue for peace in the Holy Land.

During the 5–8 November visit by representatives of the Council of Religious Institutions of the Holy Land, Younan and other leaders of the body that groups Christian, Jewish and Muslim faith organizations held meetings with US Congress members and officials of President George W. Bush’s administration to discuss support for their peace initiatives.

“I am very convinced that the only way to combat extremism is by prophetic interfaith dialogue and by education,” said Younan, who is also vice president of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) Asian region.

A 5 November communiqué released by the council members highlighted agreed actions toward peace in the Holy Land. They include monitoring media for derogatory representation of any religion and issuing group statements in response, working toward protection of holy sites and securing open access to the Old City of Jerusalem for all communities. They are also actively working to promote education for mutual respect and acceptance in schools and the media, and to provide ongoing consultation to government leaders.

“Religion is now part of the solution and not part of the problem,” Younan said of the communiqué to which he is a signatory. (See communiqué on the ELCJHL web site at: [www.elcjh.org/resources/statements/CouncilPublicStatement131007\(4\)\[1\].doc](http://www.elcjh.org/resources/statements/CouncilPublicStatement131007(4)[1].doc))

The council grew out of the January 2002 Alexandria Declaration in which the region’s religious leaders made a “commitment to ending the violence and bloodshed that denies the right to life and dignity” in



Lutheran Bishop Dr. Munib A. Younan (third from right) and other Holy Land religious leaders during the visit to Washington DC. © A. Lynsen

the Holy Land. It is one of the first of its kind in the region, representing the three Abrahamic faiths and bridging the Israeli and Palestinian peoples.

“As a US religious leader, I welcome as a sign of hope the creation of the Council of Religious Institutions in the Holy Land and their visit to the United States,” said LWF president Rev. Mark S. Hanson, presiding bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

“I think as they engage US elected leaders both in Congress and this administration, it will strengthen the resolve of the US government to play a helpful role in convening Israeli-Palestinian negotiations that would also include a broader representation of Middle Eastern governments,” said Hanson, who had participated in some of the council’s meetings.

Bishop Younan also traveled to Atlanta, Georgia, to meet with former US President Jimmy Carter and visit congregations and communities there.

The Holy Land religious leaders were in the US at the invitation of the Interfaith Cooperation Initiative (IFCI), part of a broader effort that seeks to advance trust and reconciliation in Israel and Palestine.

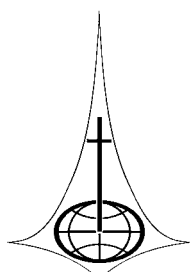
(ELCA News Service & ELCJHL News)

## Wittenberg Plans a Luther Garden – 500 Trees for an Interactive Reformation Monument

### LWF General Secretary Noko Confirms Lutheran Communion Support

WITTENBERG/HANOVER, Germany/GENEVA, 19 November 2007 – The symbolic groundbreaking of a “Luther Garden” on 31 October 2008 in Wittenberg, Germany, will mark a major preparatory step toward the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Protestant Reformation

in 2017. Announcing the initiative on 16 November at the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) Geneva (Switzerland) secretariat, Wittenberg [City of Martin Luther] Mayor Eckard Naumann said the city saw itself as the venue of a vital process, and a meeting



and communication place that is open to the global community in view of the Reformation jubilee.

An approximately 230-meter-long Luther Garden will be developed in Wittenberg as a symbol of the global magnitude of the Reformation, and of the interconnectedness, interaction, and reconciliation between Christian churches. Churches throughout the world will be invited to sponsor one of the 500 trees to be planted in the garden, said Oberkirchenrat Norbert Denecke, executive secretary of the Hanover-based LWF National Committee in Germany (LWF/GNC). A plaque on each tree will describe the sponsorship.

During the project's presentation, LWF General Secretary Rev. Dr Ishmael Noko affirmed the Lutheran communion's support and LWF's leadership role. "It is important that the Wittenberg mayor and churches in Germany through the LWF German National Committee have demonstrated a strong desire to have the commemoration of the 500 years of the nailing of the 95 theses as an ecumenical and international event," he remarked. "The visit to the LWF as well as discussions held on the [project's] content demonstrate a seriousness of moving into the future as inclusively as possible. The LWF supports the initiative and sees itself in the leadership of this initiative," Noko added.



Luther Garden II—current design. © KLA milano-duisburg/ [www.kiparland.com](http://www.kiparland.com)

## Luther Rose

Internationally renowned landscape architect Dr Andreas Kipar commissioned with the project, plans a public square shaped around a Luther Rose created from a variety of cobblestones. He said outdoor worship services and other events could be held at the site. The landscape architect with offices in Milan, Italy and Duisburg, Germany has offered the project concept on a complimentary basis.

The plan is to have an oval shape from a group of 500 trees surround the Luther Rose by 31 Octo-

ber 2017. The garden will serve to connect the town center and the River Elbe, with the garden pointing southward to the river, thus symbolically opening itself to the world.

A triangle will connect Wittenberg's Castle Church, City Church and Luther Garden as part of the town's green belt. The outdoor garden will add another Luther symbol to city in addition to the Luther House and Luther Monument.

Kipar said the trees would represent the events in Wittenberg 500 years ago that fundamentally changed the world, providing people today with the opportunity to reflect on these developments.

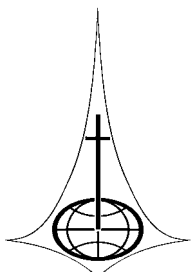
## Tree Sponsorship

Denecke explained that possible tree-sponsorship partners could include, in addition to the LWF member churches, churches of the Anglican Communion, World Methodist Council, World Alliance of Reformed Churches, and all churches and dioceses that have been shaped or influenced by the Lutheran Reformation, including dioceses of the Roman Catholic Church. The churches involved in the project are to be asked to plant a tree at a central location with a reference to Wittenberg as the Reformation's place of origin, giving voice to a sense of a worldwide inter-relatedness of spirit and theology in the central concerns of the Christian faith. This would make it possible to turn the Luther Garden into an interactive Reformation monument.

The conference of bishops and church leadership of the United Evangelical Lutheran Church of Germany (VELKD) and the GNC have placed great importance in the 2017 Reformation jubilee, as both a celebration of the global Lutheran communion and an ecumenical and international event. In this context, the LWF is the natural choice when it comes to opening the doors to other global communities.

During the Geneva visit, Naumann confirmed the city's responsibility for the garden's development and maintenance, while the churches would provide the trees. He said Wittenberg's bid to host the 2015 Saxony-Anhalt state garden exhibition includes the Luther Garden as a potential part of the comprehensive concept.

The mayor observed that while only around 20 percent of the city's population belong to a church or religious community, since 1990, there had been an openness among non-religious inhabitants in view





of Wittenberg's international significance as the origin of the Reformation. He also pointed to the informal positive support for the Luther Garden project by the city council and the construction committee, saying he anticipates a formal vote for the initiative.

An innovative financial plan is expected to be in place by 2008. While Denecke does not expect financial difficulties in view of the tree sponsorship program, he said an alternative option would be to cover costs with the help of German churches, congregations and other sponsors.

Further information on the Luther Garden including photos and project's presentation can be accessed on the LWF website at: [www.lutheranworld.org/Luthergarden.html](http://www.lutheranworld.org/Luthergarden.html)



Meeting with the press, left to right: Landscape architect Dr Andreas Kipar; Wittenberg Mayor Eckhard Naumann; LWI German editor, Dirk-Michael Grötzsch; and Oberkirchenrat Norbert Denecke, executive secretary, LWF National Committee in Germany. © LWF/IP. Mumia

## A Watershed in the Search for Christian Unity

### Lutherans' Sustained Ecumenical Engagement Is a Major Contribution to Global Process

NAIROBI, Kenya/GENEVA, 29 November 2007 (LWI) – In her evening prayer, Rev. Dr Gloria Rojas Vargas, president of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Chile (IELCH) led others in floating in a clear bowl of water flowers representing the world's continents—flowers which would open to their full beauty in their own time.

The IELCH leader offered her symbolic prayer for the work of the Global Christian Forum (GCF), held 6–9 November 2007 at Limuru, near Nairobi, Kenya. Describing itself as the most diverse gathering in Christian history, the GCF assembled 245 representatives of Christian communities from 72 nations and six continents under the theme "Our Journey with Jesus Christ, the Reconciler."

Rojas joined a nine-person Lutheran World Federation (LWF) delegation to the GCF led by General Secretary Rev. Dr Ishmael Noko. The representatives of LWF member churches participated in the forum's plenary and regional group meetings, and in a session designated for gathering "by tradition." The latter was attended by almost two dozen Lutherans, including representatives from a wide range of ecumenical organizations.

Overlapping groups of Evangelicals, Pentecostals, and African Instituted Churches joined with Roman Catholics, Orthodox, and members of what were called "historic Protestant" churches like those of the LWF in the forum process, which included open encounters centered around sharing of personal testimonies of participants' encounters with Christ.

#### Mutual Recognition

Mealtime conversation added to the enthusiastic accounts of shedding stereotypes and recognizing Christ's presence in an expanded range of faithful

living. As one member of the LWF delegation said, the spirit in Limuru went beyond "tolerance"—there was an open "spirit of curiosity" about one another and recognition of "our mutual interdependence."

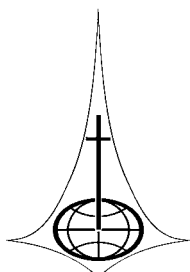
One of the observations made among the Lutheran participants was the need for a deep understanding of the many communities whose rapid growth was changing the world's face of Christianity "as we seek our own paths of faithful witness to Christ in our contexts."

At the same time, however, a number of Lutheran participants noted that honest conversation about issues of disagreement was also essential to growth in respectful relationship. They hoped future GCF meetings could include such difficult topics as the understandings of evangelism—not with the aim to seek consensus or a common statement but in order to deepen understanding.

There was much discussion about the forum's future at regional and local levels, and a committee will explore additional international events. In a final "message," (See Message from the Global Christian Forum at [www.oikoumene.org/fileadmin/files/wcc-main/2007pdfs/GCF\\_Message.pdf](http://www.oikoumene.org/fileadmin/files/wcc-main/2007pdfs/GCF_Message.pdf)) participants agreed on the value of an "open space" to foster mutual respect and address common challenges.

"This is a forum that we had hoped and prayed for without being sure what it would turn out to be," Noko noted. He described the result of the GCF as historic and a watershed in the search for Christian unity. "I have no doubt that this will have positive impact on the reception of ecumenical agreements and on ongoing bilateral discussions. The test of it all will be what happens at the national and regional levels thereafter," he said.

"Lutherans bring to the GCF a significant contribution from their sustained ecumenical engagement with



other faith communities around the world,” added LWF delegation member Prof. Kathryn Johnson, currently interim ecumenical officer at the LWF Office for Ecumenical Affairs.

In preparation since the 1990s, the GCF aims to bring “into conversation with one another Christians and churches from very different traditions who have little [in common] or never talked to each other,” the organization’s Web site states. Regional gatherings have been held in Asia, Africa, Europe and Latin America.

(\*Prof. Kathryn L. Johnson prepared the GCF analysis for *Lutheran World Information*. The other LWF delegation members to the forum included Bishop Jessica R. Crist (United States), Rev. Itessa Gobena (Ethiopia), Dr Chiropafadzo Moyo (Zimbabwe), Bishop Dr Bonar Napitupulu (Indonesia), Rev. Dr Joachim Track (Germany) and Archbishop Anders H. Wejryd (Sweden).

\* Johnson, a member of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) assumed her tasks as in-



Prof. Kathryn L. Johnson © LWF/H. Putsman

terim ecumenical officer at the LWF in July 2007.

The position of LWF Assistant General Secretary for Ecumenical Affairs has not been filled since the departure of Church of Norway pastor Rev. Sven Oppegaard, who held the post from 1997 until mid-December 2006.

Internationally, Johnson has been a member of the Lutheran-Reformed Joint Commission, and locally, a member of the ELCA bilateral dialogue with the United Methodist Church. She has been active in local ecumenism in her home state, Kentucky, serving on many regional dialogues, and as president of the Kentucky Council of Churches.

Since 1984, Johnson has taught on the faculty of Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky, where she is Paul Tudor Jones Professor of Church History. She holds a doctorate in the history of Christianity from Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut, and a Master’s Degree in theology from Cambridge University, Cambridge, England.

## How Is the Church Called to Counter Empire?

### LWF Publication Develops Theological Insights to Resist the Domination of Empire Today

SAN DIEGO, California, USA/GENEVA, 5 December 2007 (LWI) – The venue and host of their meeting was strategic—a downtown congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) surrounded by corporate high-rise buildings that symbolize \*empire, but gathering, around a meal prepared by a formerly homeless person who currently feeds the poor, elderly and those without shelter.

The group comprising seven authors of a recently published book of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) gathered on 16 November at the First Lutheran Church in San Diego, California’s second largest city, and United States’ eighth largest. The city of 1.3 million people largely reflects a military-industrial complex of empire, with an economy largely composed of electronics and defense-related manufacturing, telecommunications and tourism, among others.

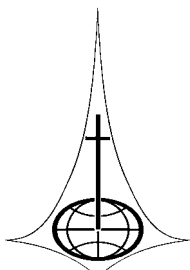
The ELCA congregation has a 115-year history in downtown San Diego, with a ministry that is well known for its service to the city’s poor and homeless. Its commu-



Left to right: Theologians John Hoffmeyer, Deanna Thompson and Joy Philip during a June 2007 preparatory meeting of the LWF publication co-authors, held at Luther Seminary, St Paul, Minnesota, USA. © Luther Seminary/A. K. Schmitt

nity outreach activities include free meals and a medical and dental clinic provided by volunteer teams.

After the writers summarized what they had written for the LWF book, *Being the Church in the Midst of Empire: Trinitarian Reflections*, the local pastors and Bishop Murray Finck, ELCA Pacifica Synod, began to describe the urgency and relevance of the publication



for clergy whether ministering among the military, or among poor immigrants.

As pointed out by Rev. Gloria Espeseth, pastor of Gethsemane Lutheran Church, “Both undocumented immigrants and missile builders are in our congregations. Here (near the US/Mexican border), discussions on immigration often generate more tensions than do those over sexuality.”

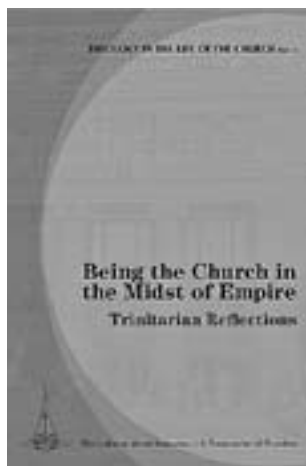
Some also noted the globalized entertainment industry, long associated with southern California, conveys “all that is wrong with empire, and needs to be critiqued theologically.”

### The Relevance of Theology

“I’m so glad to see a Lutheran theological book on this topic,” commented Rev. George Johnson, a retired ELCA pastor in San Marcos, California. “I’ve been trying to urge pastors to think theologically about empire. Lutherans are too often co-opted by the culture in which they live.” Added Deanna Thompson, one of the book’s authors, “yet there is always a theological surplus that is not co-opted. That’s what we need to get at.”

Contributing author John Hoffmeyer pointed out that “theological thinking helps preserve the independence of the church from special interests. Theology raises questions, rather than necessarily providing answers.” One of the pastors noted that “more sermons need to end with questions.”

A recently ordained ELCA pastor Rev. Karla Jacobson, who was previously active in the 2000 jubilee debt cancellation initiatives stressed the importance



of taking first steps to change things, “with joy, and with hope.”

The LWF publication features seven aspects: how empire is entwined in our history and faith, what and where is the church, criteria and power for confessing today, Trinitarian resistance to empire, theology of the cross, the public vocation of the church, and fundamentalism and democracy.

“It was heartening to hear how this group of pastors identified with many of the emphases in the book,” commented Rev. Dr Karen Bloomquist, the book’s editor, and director of the LWF Department for Theology and Studies (DTS). The group met prior to the annual meeting of the American Academy of Religion and Society of Biblical Literature in San Diego, where empire is a frequent topic, but usually without attention to its implications for the life of the church.

*Being the Church in the Midst of Empire: Trinitarian Reflections* is the first book published in the LWF/DTS Theology in the Life of the Church series. It is available at USD 18 through: Lutheran University Press, P. O. Box 390759 Minneapolis, MN 55439 or [publisher@lutheranupress.org](mailto:publisher@lutheranupress.org) or through DTS.

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\* *Empire refers to massive concentrations or networks of power that impose order and control through dominant political, economic and cultural institutions, with overpowering and oppressive effects.*

## Church of Norway Synod Agrees Procedure for Clergy in Same-Sex Partnerships

The Church [Lutheran] of Norway general synod has agreed that appointment to ordained ministry of persons living in registered same-sex partnerships is the responsibility of individual bishops and appointing bodies.

According to a Church of Norway news release, a majority of delegates at the 16–17 November general synod meeting in the southern city of Øyer voted to change the synod’s 1995 and 1997 general guidelines that allowed persons living in registered, same-sex partnerships to hold some positions in the church, but not positions of ordained ministry.

Under the recent agreement, the ecclesial bodies responsible for appointments can either appoint, or not appoint, persons living in same-sex partnerships, without violating Norwegian law or general synod guidelines.

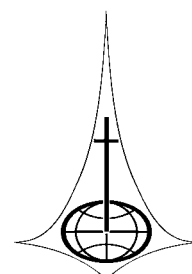
The synod stressed the need for continued dialogue on the issue within the Church of Norway and ecumenically, in keeping with statements of both the church’s Doctrinal

Commission and the Bishops’ Conference. It noted its decision took into account the recommendation of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) Council at its March 2007 meeting in Lund, Sweden, on the subject of respectful communication in the churches on this matter. The LWF guidelines, among other things, invite the member churches to read Scripture in light of its central message of salvation in Jesus Christ and justification by faith alone, and to address the issues and potential disagreements in question from that perspective.

(See [www.lutheranworld.org/LWF\\_Documents/2007\\_Council/Task\\_Force\\_Report-EN.pdf](http://www.lutheranworld.org/LWF_Documents/2007_Council/Task_Force_Report-EN.pdf) for LWF Council report on proposed guidelines and processes for respectful dialogue on marriage, family and human sexuality.)

The full text of the Church of Norway synod decision is available at:

[www.kirken.no/english/doc/engelsk/KM07\\_vedtak\\_vigsl\\_homol\\_eng.pdf](http://www.kirken.no/english/doc/engelsk/KM07_vedtak_vigsl_homol_eng.pdf)





# LWF Scales Down Eastern Chad Operations Because of Insecurity

## LWF/ACT “Remains Committed” to Humanitarian Response

KOUKOU, Eastern Chad/GENEVA, 28 November 2007 (LWI) – The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) Department for World Service (DWS) has scaled down to minimal levels its humanitarian operations in eastern Chad, because of insecurity following renewed fighting between the government forces and rebels.



Ms Esther Isaak (middle, wearing cap) psychosocial coordinator for the LWF/DWS work in eastern Chad, assessing community service needs at Habile camp in Koukou. © NCA/ACT International/B. Rödland

The head of LWF/DWS Chad operations Mr Jaap Aantjes reported during the last week of November that local coordination meetings on security indicated “increased insecurity for humanitarian agencies in the area.” He expressed concern that “the clashes between the army and rebels [are] causing general insecurity and could lead to civil war.”

According to media reports, government and rebel forces claimed scores of military personnel and rebel soldiers had been killed in the clashes, although no actual figures had been confirmed.

The fighting near the border with Sudan’s western region of Darfur region ended a month-long cease fire, and could also push back the deployment to the area of a European Union peacekeeping force, which was initially scheduled to start in November.

Since August 2007, LWF/DWS heads the operations in eastern Chad, set up after a joint Action by Churches Together (ACT) International assessment mission earlier in the year. The focus is mainly on internally displaced persons (IDPs), including people who fled cross-border violence spilling over from Darfur.

LWF/ACT continues to carry out some activities and “remains committed to responding to the humanitarian needs despite the security situation,” Aantjes emphasized.

The LWF is a founding member of the Geneva-based ACT International, the global alliance of churches and related agencies working to save lives and support communities in humanitarian emergencies worldwide.

Speaking to *Lutheran World Information (LWI)*, DWS director Rev. Eberhard Hitzler underscored the LWF’s hope for an end to the fighting that puts at further risk the lives of thousands of already vulnerable people. “Under the current circumstances it will be very difficult for us to care for thousands of refugees and IDPs, who urgently need assistance in order to get access to water, food, health care and shelter,” he said.

He explained that recent attacks targeting humanitarian agencies and their staff and the increased fighting in the area “have now forced us to reduce our operations to a minimum.”

The DWS director affirmed the deep commitment of the staff to help and take some risks while working in a highly insecure environment, but noted some limits have to be set. “We are responsible for our own staff and their security too. When humanitarian agencies are purposefully attacked and their neutrality is disrespected, we have an obligation to seriously consider the

staff’s security situation,” he said.

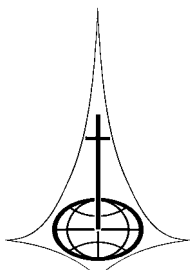
The LWF will monitor the developments in eastern Chad constantly in consultation with other agencies operating there, and would then decide the next steps, Hitzler added.

The LWF Department for World Service is the internationally recognized humanitarian and development agency of the LWF, with field programs in 36 countries in Africa, Asia, Latin and Central America and Europe.

To support LWF’s work, please see the LWF donation tool at: <http://donations.lutheranworld.org>



Setting up tents to accommodate staff while permanent houses are under construction in the LWF/ACT compound in Koukou. © NCA/ACT International/B. Rödland





# Religious Leaders Play Fundamental Role in Confronting Climate Change Challenges

## LWF Statement on UN Climate Change Conference in Indonesia

GENEVA, 5 December 2007 (LWI) – Ahead of the United Nations conference on climate change in Indonesia, the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) appealed to religious leaders to play their essential role in building the requisite “community commitment and political will” for fundamental behavioral shifts with regard to climate change.

In a 5 December statement on the occasion of the United Nations Climate Change Conference taking place in Bali, Indonesia, LWF General Secretary Rev. Dr Ishmael Noko reiterated that the dimensions of the climate crisis transcend politics and call for “engagement at the most fundamental ethical level.”

The 3–14 December meeting attended by representatives of over 180 countries and observers from intergovernmental and nongovernmental organizations is expected to result in negotiations on a climate change deal after 2012, the year the first phase of the Kyoto Protocol expires. The first phase is aimed at reducing greenhouse gases that lead to climate change. Noko urged the Bali conference to take concrete steps toward consensus on the necessary steps including “radical and far-reaching” actions if the trends already underway are to be stabilized and reversed.

### Statement by the General Secretary of the Lutheran World Federation on the UN Climate Change Conference

The United Nations Climate Change Conference presently taking place in Bali, Indonesia, brings together representatives of over 180 countries as well as observers from intergovernmental and nongovernmental organizations, and the media. The two-week conference comprises the 13<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the 3<sup>rd</sup> Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol.

This conference comes at the end of a year in which climate change, its consequences, and the need for an urgent and effective response, have received greater attention than ever before. It is now clear that human-induced climate change has been occurring for some time and that we face a future threat of unprecedented proportions. The work of the Inter-Governmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), recognized in the award of the 2007 Nobel Peace Prize, has been particularly important in highlighting the gravity of the threat. We realize that climate change has very wide implications for the protection and preservation of God’s creation, and for human development and survival. We are confronted by the real prospect of much more serious and frequent extreme weather events, substantial loss of productive agricultural land, the extinction of numerous species and the concomitant loss of biodiversity, and the disappearance of low-lying island nations and coastal areas. Moreover, the brunt of the impacts of

He noted that global average surface temperature could still be limited to a sub-catastrophic increase of 2° C above the pre-industrial level, “but only if global greenhouse gas emissions are reduced by at least 30% of the 1990 level by 2020 and 80% by 2050.”

Referring to an LWF statement at the time of the 2007 Nobel Peace Prize award to former US Vice President Al Gore and the Inter-Governmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), Noko underlined the need to recognize the common respect for creation as a basis for interfaith cooperation to protect and preserve the earth and assure sustainable life for all.

He stressed the contribution of indigenous people “in relating to and living in God’s creation” and called attention to their environmental wisdom with regard to climate change and the necessary responses.

“As a global communion of churches, we are called to take concerted actions that will be effective in mitigating the impacts of climate change, especially on the poorest and most vulnerable communities,” he added.

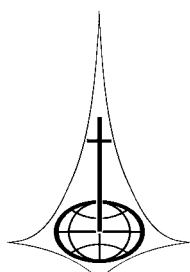
*The full text of the LWF statement on the climate change conference follows:*

climate change—caused mostly by the emissions of the industrialized world—will fall most heavily on those living in the poorest communities in developing countries.

The Lutheran World Federation directly experiences and increasingly understands the dramatic impact of climate change in its member churches and field programs, many of them in areas most vulnerable to climate change. As a global communion of churches, we suffer with those affected in different parts of the world and are called to take concerted actions that will be effective in mitigating the impacts of climate change, especially on the poorest and most vulnerable communities.

Former US Vice President Al Gore has said that “the climate crisis is not a political issue, it is a moral and spiritual challenge to all of humanity.” I agree with him. As I remarked on the occasion of the award of the 2007 Nobel Peace Prize to the IPCC and Mr Gore, “The dimensions of this crisis transcend politics. It calls for engagement at the most fundamental ethical level.”

The government representatives meeting at the Bali Conference must take concrete steps towards consensus on the necessary actions required after the end of the Kyoto Protocol’s first commitment period in 2012. And those actions must be radical and far-reaching if the trends already underway are to be stabilized and reversed. Global average surface temperature can still



be limited to a sub-catastrophic increase of 2° C above the pre-industrial level, but only if global greenhouse gas emissions are reduced by at least 30% of the 1990 level by 2020 and 80% by 2050. This is a gargantuan political, scientific and ethical challenge.

Religious leaders have an essential role to play in meeting this challenge. Our resources of theological and ethical reflection and moral leadership will be of critical importance in building the community commitment, and the political will, to make the fundamental behavioral shifts that will be necessary if the required targets are to be met. Only when we come to appreciate much more practically the nature of our relationship with each other and with God's creation can such radical changes in behavior be expected. The 'pastoral infrastructure' of religious communities gives us an important capacity and responsibility in awareness-raising and education regarding climate change and the necessary responses. It will be our role to inspire change and to reconnect communities with cultural and traditional wisdom regarding ways of relating to and living in God's creation. Our indigenous sisters and brothers have much to share with us in this regard, if only we will listen and learn from them. Indeed, humanity as a whole can no longer afford to ignore the environmental wisdom of Indigenous Peoples.

## **LWF Calls Israeli, Palestinian Leaders to Urgently Pursue Annapolis Objective**

### **Noko Encourages Cooperation with Regional Interfaith Initiative**

GENEVA, 5 December 2007 (LWI) – The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) General Secretary Rev. Dr Ishmael Noko has called on Israeli and Palestinian leaders to urgently pursue their objective to conclude a peace treaty between both sides, as agreed at the recent Middle East peace conference held in Annapolis, Maryland, United States.

In letters addressed to Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert and Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas respectively on 4 December, Noko said the LWF and its member churches worldwide welcomed “wholeheartedly ... the revival of the fresh hopes for peace in the Holy Land” following the 27 November US-sponsored talks in Annapolis. “We urge you to the haste that you have appropriately committed to in Annapolis, since in this case, time is not on the side of peace,” he wrote.

Quoting an open letter from Palestinian Lutheran Bishop Dr Munib A. Younan to the world leaders ahead of the Annapolis meeting, Noko said churches were “called to be a people of hope and choose not only to see the cup as half full [rather than half empty] but to commit ourselves to whatever it takes to make the cup overflow.”

The general secretary noted that although the end 2008 deadline for a conclusion of the Israeli-Palestinian peace negotiations was short and “incredibly ambitious, [it] is entirely necessary.” He urged both sides to take urgent measures to build bridges of trust

This challenge is also a challenge to inter-faith cooperation, to our capacity to live together in this world and to respond together to common problems. As I also noted at the time of the award of the 2007 Nobel Peace Prize:

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.

I pray that political leaders meeting in Bali and subsequently will find the wisdom to achieve what must be achieved by 2009 in order to establish a credible and effective post-Kyoto regime for responding to climate change. And I pray that religious leaders, working alongside political and other community leaders, will contribute our special capacities and resources to meeting this unprecedented challenge and to changing the way human beings live together in God's precious creation.

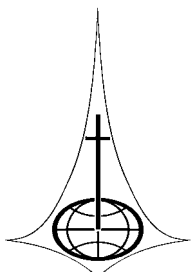
Rev. Dr Ishmael Noko  
General Secretary, The Lutheran World Federation  
Geneva, 5 December 2007

between the two communities “in order to create an environment in which peace can flower.”

Noko said the LWF will be accompanying “with constant and fervent prayers” the negotiations that begin on 12 December this year, and urged Olmert and Abbas to play their part in the conclusion of a peace treaty “resolving all outstanding issues and resulting in two states, Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace and security—and the establishment of peace with justice in the Holy Land.”

He affirmed the LWF's commitment to working with other faith communities in the region to “counter despair and desperation,” and encouraged both leaders to draw upon the resource represented by the Council for Religious Institutions of the Holy Land. The Christian, Jewish and Muslim leaders participating in the Council, have affirmed their “responsibility to find the right way to live together in peace rather than to fight and kill one another,” noted Noko, citing the Council's statement after an early November visit to Washington DC (*see page 3*).

Noko underlined the LWF's commitment to providing essential health, education and other humanitarian services in the occupied Palestinian territories through its member church, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land, and the Department for World Service field program in Jerusalem.



## FEATURE: Laying Stepping Stones

### Estonian Church Has Become a New Support Group for People Affected by HIV

TALLINN, Estonia/GENEVA, 30 November 2007 (LWI)

– Jekaterina Manko comes from a well-to-do family in Estonia’s northeastern city of Narva. At 25, she divides her professional time between two organizations in the capital Tallinn, where she heads projects aimed at fighting the spread of HIV.

But this is a complete turn-around for Manko, an injecting drug user in her teens, who tested positive for HIV when she was 18.

Thanks to follow-up meetings with specialists from the nearby AIDS center and rehabilitation with a narcotics anonymous group, Manko came out of her drug and alcohol dependency, has access to medication and considers her health situation as quite good.



AIDS activist Jekaterina Manko at a workshop in Tartu. © E.-L. Luhamets

#### Discrimination

Talking openly about her HIV positive status was initially difficult as she feared discrimination and losing her close friends. Those fears are in the past now—most of her close friends know she lives with HIV and she enjoys their circle of friendship.

But it is not easy for a person living with HIV to make new friends especially from the opposite sex. “It was hard for me to generally talk with men,” Manko says. She was afraid that “after developing a good friendship it would not be easy to eventually add, ‘I am also HIV positive.’” Two years ago Manko met the man who is now her husband. He is HIV negative, and the couple dreams of having their own children in the future. Manko considers herself lucky, especially knowing that she can get medication that enables women like her to give birth to healthy babies.



The Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church AIDS project work includes group sessions with individuals and organizations assisting injecting drug users. Photo, participants at a meeting in Narva. © E.-L. Luhamets

Hers is a positive struggle with drug addiction and HIV, unlike the case of thousands of people in a country whose HIV prevalence is mainly attributed to young people under the age of 30.

#### Injecting Drug Use

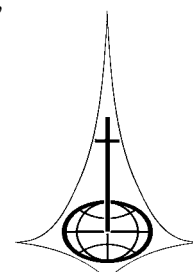
The first HIV case in Estonia was reported in 1988, with only about 10 new infections recorded annually during the next 12 years. Before 2000, HIV and AIDS were almost unknown in this country of 1.3 million people.

According to the December 2007 “AIDS Epidemic Update” by the Joint United Nations Program on HIV and AIDS (UNAIDS), injecting drug use is the most-reported mode of HIV transmission in the three Baltic States (Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania) where the epidemics appear to have stabilized. But Estonia continues to have the highest rate of newly reported HIV diagnoses (504 per one million people) and the highest estimated adult national HIV prevalence, around 1.3 percent, in all of Europe. UNAIDS reports that the number of people living with HIV worldwide increased from 29 million in 2001 to an estimated 33.2 million in 2007.

Although injecting drug users mainly in the northeast were the initial drivers of Estonia’s AIDS epidemic, the prevalence today is currently widespread and there are increasingly more infections through sexual relations.

“The AIDS epidemic here has a woman’s face,” say Tallinn-based medical doctor Irina Moroz, referring to the increasing number of infected young women.

But the attitude that HIV is a problem among drug users is still prevalent and seems to be





strongest in Estonia's third largest city Narva, bordering Russia.

"It seems to me that the more the virus spreads the more the stigma spreads. It is especially relevant for Narva," says Dr Andrei Antonov, based there. He points out that three percent of the city's population of around 70,000 has tested positive. But he is concerned that many of them do not seek further support or treatment. "Are they careful not to infect others? We don't know. Why should they? They feel rejected, stigmatised, lonely and bitter," he remarks, adding that they dare not speak out about their status for fear of judgment and rejection. "Many don't see the point in getting tested, many don't think they could be positive," he says. The number of those infected could be three times higher than the official figures, he argues.



*Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church Archbishop Andres Pöder © EELC*

## Church Leadership

Dealing with HIV-related issues in Estonia is a major challenge also for churches—called to be open and welcoming places for those infected and affected by HIV.

The Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church (EELC) became engaged in HIV prevention work in 2002 after signing the requisite agreement with the Ministry of Social Affairs, says EELC Archbishop Andres Pöder. But it was not until early 2007 that it started its own AIDS coordination project with support from the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) Department for Mission and Development (DMD).

The LWF-supported EELC HIV and AIDS awareness raising project incorporates an ecumenical approach,



*Participants in an education seminar of the EELC "Stepping Stones" HIV-prevention program in Kambja. © E.-L. Luhamets*

with the aim to fight the stigma associated with the disease. The church has translated into Estonian and Russian languages the LWF handbook for AIDS work titled "Grace, Care and Justice" and the video "What Can I Do?" about Ugandan Anglican church leader Canon Gideon Byamugisha, who upon disclosing his HIV-positive status also challenges fellow Christians to avoid judgmental attitudes toward HIV-positive people.

The video and booklet have been discussed at EELC's awareness-raising seminars organized for representatives of all Christian denominations in Tallinn, Narva, Pärnu, Jõhvi and Tartu. Such workshops provide general information and statistics on HIV, about the epidemic globally and in Estonia, dependency on drugs and prevention, how to assist injecting drug users also living with HIV and the role of churches in fighting the epidemic. Each seminar includes a testimony from a young woman living with HIV to demonstrate the people mainly affected, and also show that it is possible to live a normal life with the virus, and overcome drug addiction.

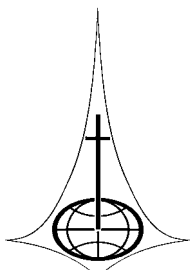
## Equipping Church Workers

But it takes time to get all church workers on board. While most of the pastors commend the EELC's AIDS work, some argue they do not need such seminars as they are neither HIV positive nor have congregation members living with HIV. In Kambja, a small village near the eastern city of Tartu, the EELC is implementing an HIV-prevention program titled "Stepping Stones" among adolescent boys and girls where topics such as alcohol abuse, drug use, sexuality and sexually transmitted infections, HIV and violence are discussed.

Archbishop Pöder acknowledges that a lot of work lies ahead but at the same time commends the church for its leadership role in the AIDS project. "At first it was about organizing topical events every year during World AIDS Day [marked on 1 December globally]. With the current project we have made a big step forward. Not only are church members better prepared to communicate with those who are affected, we are also more informed about prevention work," he stresses.

"The church has become a new support group for those in need," says the EELC archbishop. "A seed has been sown."

The EELC AIDS coordination project is aimed at equipping church workers with the basic infor-



mation about HIV and AIDS, provide theological resources, pastoral care and counseling. The long-term goal is to establish a network of Christians working in the field of AIDS in the country, and create an EELC working group of pastors, diaconal and youth workers to monitor the project and also strategize on support for people living with HIV.

The 163,500-member EELC has 215 pastors. It joined the LWF in 1963.

*Ms Eva-Liisa Luhamets, the EELC AIDS project coordinator contributed this article for LWI. Luhamets was a youth intern at LWF/DMD in 2006.*



*EELC AIDS coordinator Eva-Liisa Luhamets speaks at a conference on "Christian Values in HIV Prevention Work" in Tallinn. © K. Kolk*

*Grace, Care and Justice is available on the LWF Web site at: [www.lutheranworld.org/LWF\\_Documents/HIV-Handbook-web.pdf](http://www.lutheranworld.org/LWF_Documents/HIV-Handbook-web.pdf)*

*More information on ecumenical activities to commemorate World AIDS Day is available at: [www.e-alliance.ch/resources/hivaids/WAD2007-flyer.pdf](http://www.e-alliance.ch/resources/hivaids/WAD2007-flyer.pdf)*

**\*This article is part of the ongoing LWI Features on Healing focusing on the LWF Tenth Assembly theme, "For the Healing of the World."**

## Combating Stigma Is a Contribution to Freedom of Conscience and Religion

### Argentine Government Honors Lutheran Pastor for Dedication to HIV and AIDS Work

*BUENOS AIRES, Argentina/GENEVA, 30 November 2007 (LWI)* – Argentine Lutheran pastor Lisandro Orlov has received a government recognition for his dedicated service to people affected by HIV and AIDS.

Ambassador Guillermo Oliveri, secretary for religious affairs in Argentina's foreign ministry, paid tribute to the work of the 65-year-old pastor of the United Evangelical Lutheran Church (IELU) on 22 November in the context of events marking the 26<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the "Day of Freedom of Conscience and Religious Freedom in the Republic of Argentina."

For Orlov, regional coordinator of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) global campaign against HIV and AIDS, the honor proves that IELU's commitment to AIDS work is no longer seen as a task "destined for the health authorities. It is, in fact, a contribution to freedom of conscience and religion."

In an interview with *Lutheran World Information (LWI)* the theologian emphasized that "both society and government have noticed that we are anxious to develop a message that counters stigma and discrimination."

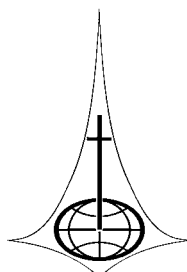
"Our ecumenical pastoral activity is understood in the sense of deepening the democratic system and respect for pluralism in all its forms," said Orlov, who since 1986 is coordinator of an IELU ecumenical solidarity initiative for people affected by HIV and AIDS. He currently heads a center that can accommodate for



*From left to right: Rev. Lisandro Orlov, Rolando Ortez Martinez, Natasha Jimenez, Xiomara Ponce and Miguel Rojas Campbell at the opening of the Fifth Central American Congress on HIV and AIDS (CONCASIDA) held 4-9 November 2007 in Managua, Nicaragua. © Private*

short periods up to 15 people affected by HIV and AIDS. It provides care for those in crisis situations, offering them pastoral, psychological, medical and legal advice, and assisting them to find a new approach to life.

The Argentine government recognition is, according to Orlov, also a sign of appreciation for the LWF global AIDS campaign and action plan, "Compassion, Conversion, Care: Responding as Churches to the HIV/AIDS Pandemic." He sees it as a tribute to the Lutheran communion, which has supported this initiative from the beginning. It is recognition also of the duty to create



**COMMUNION** with individuals and groups stigmatized by the epidemic even before it became widespread. The award translates into recognition of the will manifested by the Lutheran communion to achieve **CONVERSION** by taking the risk in an honest and humane dialogue embracing the consequences of the inner transformation in terms of the true self, thought and action. It is, finally, also about recognizing the resolve to **ASSIST** every person unconditionally when it comes to access to information, prevention and care.

Civil society groups and some governments in the region are indeed showing a growing interest in the work of the Lutheran churches in Latin America, according to Rev. Martin Junge, LWF Department for Mission and Development (DMD) area secretary for Latin America and the Caribbean. Through regular work in the fight against the epidemic, the churches have developed their own theological and pastoral profile, he says. Only last year the LWF member church in Costa Rica was invited to participate in the country coordination mechanism (CCM) on HIV and AIDS.

According to Junge, the honor to Orlov demonstrates not only recognition of the churches' profile and orien-



Ambassador Guillermo Oliveri (left) presents Rev. Lisandro Orlov with the Argentine government award in recognition for service to people affected by HIV and AIDS. © ELCA/D. Wunsch

tation in AIDS work but also emphasis on integration into national strategies. "Thus an important aim of the worldwide LWF AIDS campaign seems to be coming to fruition—that the churches should not be a stumbling block but active partners in combating HIV."

*The full text of the LWI interview with Rev. Lisandro Orlov follows:*

## Lutheran Communion Has Deepened Its Own Message and Confessional Identity

**LWI: Where do you see crucial developments in the area of HIV and AIDS in the last 20 years, particularly regarding the churches?**

*Rev. Lisandro Orlov:* When we started to accompany people affected by HIV and AIDS in 1986, we had neither role models nor points of reference. We went down this road with considerable anxiety and took the risk that our own communion and congregations would not understand what we were setting in motion. I think that the most important achievement over the past 20 years

has been the conversion of the Lutheran communion in Latin America, which understands its pastoral work as a matter of justice and human rights.

From the start this work has been guided by our position and experiences during the years of the military dictatorship in Argentina, which ended in 1983. Just as we appealed for human rights during those tragic years, so have we now tackled this new challenge as a continuation. Because of prejudices and stigmatization, people affected by the epidemic

disappear in a similar way and their civil rights are also not respected.

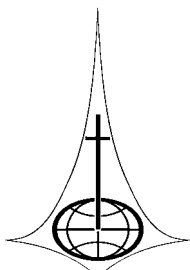
The Lutheran communion has learned that the issue of HIV and AIDS is linked with human dignity and that is our specific approach in fighting the epidemic. It is not the medical data or statistics that spur us into action—we want to promote the full enjoyment of human rights and the comprehensive recognition of dignity in diversity.

**Looking back, where do you see the impact of your work on church and society?**

In these 20 years of commitment to people with HIV and AIDS, the Lutheran communion has discovered the values of its own identity.



An awareness raising campaign by a team from the "Pastoral Ecu mica VIH y SIDA" group, which belongs to a network of HIV and AIDS organizations in Argentina. © L. Orlov





We perceived the revolutionary force that lies in the promise of justification by faith in the context of the epidemic, and also the strength of a life rooted in this justification. It is all about words of comfort to people living with HIV, or affected by it, that their salvation comes from Christ alone and that their faith alone is the foundation of their belonging to the communion of believers. They must understand that nothing or no one can impair their God-given dignity.

The Lutheran communion has discovered its alternative voice and confessional identity in Latin America in dialogue with vulnerable people and groups, thus accepting to be a communion without walls and exclusion, unconditional and open to all.

The sustained work in the field of HIV and AIDS has enabled the Lutheran communion to become an alternative on the religious scene in Latin America. The different networks of people with HIV and AIDS can now distinguish between the different messages and no longer see all churches as a single, closed group. Many of them know by now that there is a community of churches that has something else to say—with regard to both prevention and pastoral care, as well as with human rights and open and inclusive dialogue.

The Lutheran communion has deepened its own message and confessional identity. We have learned how to work in networks on different church projects in the region, and likewise with government bodies and civil society. We have also learned to be present at places where political decisions are taken, becoming aware that all our actions in the field of pastoral and diaconal work must ultimately flow into concrete proposals for legislation. We have realized the importance of advocacy for this kind of process.

### **What does this award from the Argentine government mean to you?**

It is significant that Ambassador Guillermo Oliveri, state secretary for religious affairs in the foreign affairs ministry conferred this honor on the “Day of Freedom of Conscience and Religious Freedom in the Republic of Argentina.” Our work in the field of HIV and AIDS is no longer seen as a task to be assigned to the health authorities. It is, in fact, a contribution to the freedom of conscience and religion. That is where the originality and significance of this award lies.

Both society and government have noticed that we are anxious to develop a message that counters stigma and discrimination, both of which are major problems that need to be taken up by the church in its pastoral work. Our ecumenical pastoral activity

(Pastoral Ecu mica) is understood in the sense of deepening the democratic system and respect for pluralism in all its forms. In my view, this ideological positioning of the project and its contribution is one of the most important achievements.

On the other hand, I feel that this honor is also an acknowledgement of the Lutheran communion, which from the start has supported this innovative yet controversial initiative. It is recognition of the duty to create **COMMUNION** with individuals and groups stigmatized by the epidemic even before it became widespread. It amounts to recognizing the express will of the Lutheran communion to achieve **CONVERSION** by taking the risk in an honest and humane dialogue,

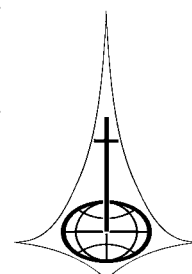


*Rev. Lisandro Orlov with Argentine church leaders, Rev. Alan Eldrid (left), president, United Evangelical Lutheran Church (IELU), and Rev. Jorge Gerhardt (right), coordinator, Evangelical Church of the River Plate (IERP) diakonia department.   ELCA/D. Wunsch*

embracing consequences for its inner transformation in the true self, thought and action. It is, finally, also about recognition of the resolve to **ASSIST** every person unconditionally when it comes to access to information, prevention and care.

### **Where do you see the greatest challenges in the fight against HIV and AIDS?**

The immediate challenge for the Lutheran communion is the creative renewed reading of the Bible, and also rediscovering its confessional basis and the subsequent reformulation of its pastoral work in the context of HIV and AIDS. This epidemic makes it clear that our difficulties are not connected with the virus, ways of becoming infected or types of prevention. HIV and AIDS manifest themselves as a reality that has a profound impact on biblical and confessional hermeneutics. We are challenged to become an alternative voice in a context of religious fundamentalism that is a threat to freedom of conscience and denies respect for diversity. The Lutheran communion has the historic opportunity



to be a prophetic voice, fostering a peaceful co-existence in reconciled diversity, like brothers and sisters, and as the full affirmation of the civil rights for all people.

*\*Rev. Lisandro Orlov is director of the HIV and AIDS project "Pastoral Ecu mica VIH y SIDA" in Buenos Aires, Argentina.*

## Canada's Joint Anglican-Lutheran Commission Commends Church Collaboration

Six years after the establishment of a full communion relationship between the Anglican Church of Canada (ACC) and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCIC), the Joint Anglican-Lutheran Commission (JALC) has commended the ACC and ELCIC churches for the growing collaboration between them. The commission encouraged churches belonging to both bodies "to be imaginative in discovering ways to celebrate and work together."

During the JALC's 22-25 November meeting at St Paul's Anglican Church in Toronto, Canada, representatives from both churches reviewed the work of the past six years of full communion and planned for the next six years.

"At a time when much of our attention is focused on divisions within the Christian communions we represent, we share with Anglicans and Lutherans in Canada that there is much in which to rejoice and many reasons to look forward to our churches working collaboratively in many areas of mission and ministry," the JALC stated in a communiqu . The commission stressed the need to focus on "the public face

of our churches," especially in addressing together matters of human need and global concerns, shared congregational ministries, training for lay and ordained ministry, and the understanding of diaconal ministry formation among others.

At the meeting, ACC Primate Archbishop Fred Hiltz and ELCIC National Bishop Susan Johnson spoke of their hopes for the future as both churches continue to grow into the full communion established in Waterloo in 2001.

The Waterloo Declaration between the ACC and ELCIC was formally endorsed by the churches' governing bodies in Waterloo, Ontario, in July 2001. It allows both churches to share resources and work closely together on common goals while maintaining their distinct identities.

The ACC includes nearly 642,000 members in 30 dioceses with around 1,790 parishes. The ELCIC is Canada's largest Lutheran denomination with 174,500 members in five synods comprising 624 congregations. It joined the Lutheran World Federation in 1986.

*(ELCIC News)*

## LWF President Hanson Among World Religious Leaders Featured on Television Program

The **Rev. Mark S. Hanson**, presiding bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) and president of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF), is among faith leaders from different parts of the world to be featured in a two-hour United States' primetime television program titled "In God's Name." It will be broadcast on 23 December at 9:00 p.m. Eastern Standard Time on CBS, a New York-based television and radio production facility.

Produced by French filmmakers Jules and Gedeon Naudet, the special program explores "complex questions of our time through the intimate thoughts and beliefs of 12 of the world's most influential spiritual leaders," according to a CBS news release.

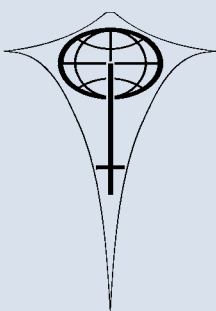
The spiritual leaders "speak out about violence and hatred and reveal their own thoughts about faith, peace, unity, tol-

erance and hope. Viewers will see them in intimate settings, including their homes and personal places of worship."

The LWF president said, "It is a great honor to be included among such diverse and distinguished global religious leaders as those featured in 'In God's Name.'" He expressed his hope that the LWF and ELCA members would "regard this as a strong affirmation of our shared witness to our Christian faith and our commitment to work with people of all faiths for a most just and peaceful world and a sustainable creation."

This is the first time some of the world's religious leaders have appeared together in one broadcast, said Ava Odom Martin, director for public media, ELCA Communication Services.

*(ELCA News)*



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