

350 for Climate Action

Highlights

LWF Council Elects Chilean Pastor Martin Junge as New General Secretary 9

On 26 October 2009, Chilean pastor Martin Junge was elected as the eighth general secretary of the Lutheran World Federation for a seven-year term. The election took place in closed session...

Call for Greater Public Awareness of Forced Labor and Human Trafficking 11

Representatives of international and faith-based relief organizations attending the Council of the Lutheran World Federation emphasized that wide-spread public awareness was necessary in order to tackle the problems of forced labor and human trafficking...

Council Unanimously Adopts Statement Asking Forgiveness from Mennonites 13

The LWF Council approved a statement that prepares for a significant action of reconciliation with churches of the Anabaptist family...

On the Way to the 2010 LWF Eleventh Assembly in Stuttgart 15

Ms Angelene H. Swart, chairperson of the Assembly Planning Committee for the LWF Eleventh Assembly presented the third and last report of the APC...



LWF Council members at morning prayer during the 2009 Council meeting form the figure 350, evoking the safe upper limit of CO₂ in the world's atmosphere of 350 parts per million. © LWF/D.-M. Grätzsch

LWF Council Affirms Global Commitment to Reducing CO₂ Emissions

GENEVA (LWI) – To mark the International Day of Climate Action on 24 October, representatives of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) member churches from around the world celebrated a morning prayer during which they formed the figure 350.

This was in support of the global campaign 350.org, which advocates further efforts and commitment to reducing the maximum level of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere to 350 parts per million (ppm).

The climate action prayer was observed in the context of the 22–27 October LWF Council meeting at Chavannes-de-Bogis near Geneva, Switzerland, whose agenda included deliberations on additional efforts to reduce CO₂ levels in the atmosphere to 350 ppm, which experts consider to be the safe upper limit for CO₂ emissions.

“Upholding Human Dignity: Confronting Human Trafficking” was the theme of

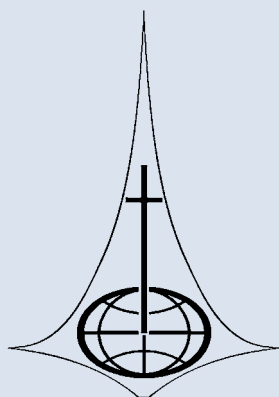
this year’s meeting. The 165 participants included 75 representatives from LWF member churches and partner organizations, as well as invited guests, stewards, interpreters and translators, media persons and LWF staff.

At its June 2008 meeting, in Arusha, Tanzania, the Council resolved to further engage the LWF and its partners in promoting strong political commitments that would lead to lowering CO₂ levels from 390 to 350 ppm by the year 2020.

“I very much hope that the Council continues to take further action toward this goal,” said Rev. Roger Schmidt, secretary for Youth at the Department for Mission and Development, presiding at the morning prayer.

“We can no longer wait but must actively contribute to global ecumenical and inter-

Continues on page 4



Contents

LWF Council Meeting 2009

- 3..... LWF Council Opening Worship Emphasizes Impact of Human Trafficking
1, 4 350 for Climate Action
- 4..... Reformation Sunday Sermon Calls for Truth That Sets Free

Address & Reports

- 6..... LWF President Urges Commitment to a Sustainable and Strong LWF in the Future
- 7..... Global Economic Crisis Has Adverse Impact on Lutheran Diaconal Activities
- 8..... LWF Treasurer Stoll Warns of Impact of Global Financial Situation on LWF's Work

LWF Council Highlights & Actions

- 9..... LWF Council Elects Chilean Pastor Martin Junge as New General Secretary
- 10 General Secretary-Elect Prioritizes Changes That Will Strengthen LWF Communion
- 10 Junge Advocates Relationships That Enhance Sustainability
- 11 Call for Greater Public Awareness of Forced Labor and Human Trafficking
- 13..... Council Unanimously Adopts Statement Asking Forgiveness from Mennonites
- 14 LWF Extends Membership to Evangelical Church in Central Germany
- 15 On the Way to the 2010 LWF Eleventh Assembly in Stuttgart
- 16 International Affairs and Human Rights
- 18 LWF Endorses Action for Membership in New Ecumenical Alliance
- 18 Mission and Development
- 19 USD 5.66 Million for LWF Mission and Development Projects
- 20..... Ecumenical Affairs
- 20..... CHF 12.4 Million for LWF Geneva Coordination Budget 2010
- 21..... Theology and Studies
- 21..... Communication Services
- 21..... Continue Prophetic Example, Ecumenical Partners Urge LWF
- 23..... LWF Leaders Speak of Optimism for a Strengthened Lutheran Communion

News in Brief

- 24..... Replacement of Council Members and Advisers

Assembly Update No. 3I-IV

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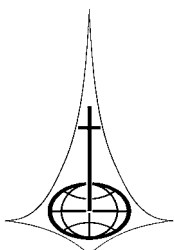
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Includes Assembly Update No. 3



LWF COUNCIL MEETING 2009

Chavannes-de-Bogis, Switzerland, 22-27 October 2009

LWF Council Opening Worship Emphasizes Impact of Human Trafficking

Call for Vigorous Action against This Form of Injustice

A colorful worship service on 22 October marked the opening of the 2009 meeting of the Council of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) at Chavannes-de-Bogis, near Geneva, Switzerland.

During the service, Ms Dagmar Magold, president of the Council host church, the Federation of Evangelical Lutheran Churches in Switzerland and the Principality of Liechtenstein (BELK), Rev. Lusmarina Campos Garcia, of the English-speaking congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Geneva (ELCG) and Rev. Marc Blessing from the ELCG's German-speaking congregation confronted Council members with the situation of boat refugees, illegal immigrants, slave laborers and forced sex workers. Both Lutheran churches are members of BELK.

They recalled that according to Christian belief, God encounters people through those who are mistreated and oppressed. "God weeps with those who cry," Magold and Blessing said, "God is at the side of



Rev. Marc Blessing (left) of the German-speaking Evangelical Lutheran Church of Geneva and Ms Dagmar Magold, president of the Federation of Evangelical Lutheran Churches in Switzerland and the Principality of Liechtenstein, preside at the Council's opening worship service on 22 October. © LWF/H. Putsman Penet

those who are imprisoned, voiceless and terrified with fear."

Citing a newspaper report, they noted that within ten months, humanitarian organizations had identified 19 cases of modern slavery in the Swiss canton of Vaud alone. This included women who are forced into prostitution, as well as men

who are lured by false promises and then sequestered, disenfranchised, threatened and exploited as forced laborers.

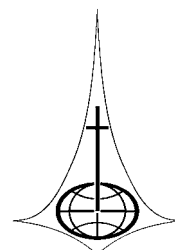
Forced sex workers are beaten, drugged and threatened with death. Often they are sold from one place to another in order to maintain their dependence, isolated from colleagues and placed under constant supervision, the church representatives pointed out, and called for vigorous action against this form of injustice. They emphasized the fact that various biblical texts described similar examples of oppression and the comfort and liberating power of God.

After the opening worship, LWF President Bishop Mark S. Hanson, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, officially opened the Council meeting, whose agenda includes a closed session on the presentation of the report of the LWF Search Committee for a new general secretary.

Further highlights on this year's Council agenda include action on the president's address and reports of the



LWF Council members partake in Holy Communion during the opening worship service at Chavannes-de-Bogis near Geneva. © LWF/D.-M. Grötzsch



general secretary and treasurer. The governing body also receives and acts on the report of the LWF Renewal Committee, as well as on reports from the respective program committees. A plenary on human trafficking is one of the main topics for Friday, 23 October. A morning prayer on Climate Action on 24 October marks the International Day of Climate Change Action, and

would include an invitation to Council members to join in a global action, aimed at reducing CO₂ levels in the atmosphere to 350 parts per million.

The 49-member Council is the LWF's governing body, meeting every 12-18 months between Assemblies held normally every six years. The current Council was appointed at the July 2003 Tenth Assembly in Winnipeg,

Canada. It comprises the President, Treasurer as well as lay and ordained persons, representing the different LWF regions.

The Council was hosted by the Federation of Evangelical Lutheran Churches in Switzerland and the Principality of Liechtenstein. The church has 6,818 members, and has been an LWF member church since 1979.

Continued from p. 1

religious initiatives to respond to this crisis," asserted LWF General Secretary Rev. Dr Ishmael Noko earlier in his report to the Council meeting on 23 October. He noted the organization will also have a delegation with observer status at

the December 2009 United Nations Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen, Denmark.

Climate change is also related to the theme of this year's Council meeting, "Upholding Human Dignity: Confronting Human Trafficking," in view of the reality that people who

are displaced by climate-related crises become desperate economic refugees.

Photos on the LWF Council's support for climate action are available on the LWF Web site at: www.lutheranworld.org/Council/2009/2009-Council.html

Reformation Sunday Sermon Calls for Truth That Sets Free

During Sunday morning worship on 25 October, the President of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) Bishop Mark S. Hanson challenged Lutheran church representatives from around the world to tell the story of "the truth that sets free" as they lead the organization into the future.

"The truth that makes you free isn't some idea you have to discover [nor] some religious proposition to which you must give assent or some personal

decision you must make," Hanson told the LWF Council members in his Sunday morning sermon at the chapel of the Ecumenical Center where the LWF Secretariat is located.

The eucharistic service was celebrated in the context of Reformation Sunday worship. It included a symbolic affirmation of baptism, during which participants dipped their fingers into a bowl of water and made a sign of the cross on the hand

of the neighboring person, saying, "Remember you are baptized."

The LWF president said, "The story we tell is about writing a new script," an embodied narrative centered in Jesus, and in God's reconciling love and mercy. He pointed out that while Christ sets free from bondage to sin, death and the devil, this "liberation is not a kind of release, banishment, sending you out on your own," but rather "forgiveness and your incorporation, your restoration into the abundant life of God's household."

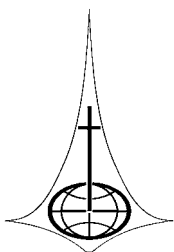
Hanson underlined that great freedoms had been experienced because of curiosity to discover the truth about DNA, distanced galaxies, diseases and what sustains diverse ecosystems. However, he explained, an unintended irony that had resulted out of this was that modernism also includes its own skepticism.

Narratives

He expressed concern that people not only lived in a culture of deception that refused to see the truth, but that "we construct alternative truth [and] narratives, seemingly so plausible, so



Worshippers follow the liturgy during the 25 October Sunday morning service at the Ecumenical Center chapel in Geneva. © LWF/D.-M. Grötzsch





Council member Rev. Kazubiro Sekino (right) and LWF/DTS director Rev. Dr. Karen Bloomquist (left) prepare to distribute Holy Communion during the Sunday morning service. © LWF/D.-M. Grötzsch

He described reflections at the June 2008 Council meeting in Tanzania under the theme “Melting Snow on Mount Kilimanjaro: A Witness of a Suffering Creation,” and the symbolic climate change action of forming the figure ‘350’ at a morning prayer on 24 October, as a call “for the release of creation from our destructive consumption and to restore sustainability to life.”

Equally important are faith reflections on gender and power, signifying God’s restoration of human relationships that are “not based upon domination and male power and privilege.”

Hanson said he had cited these examples as part of story that needed to be told, as it was “the story of God incarnation in Jesus Christ, the story of God’s reconciliation and forgiveness, the story of our continuing reformation.”

believable that we end up deceiving ourselves.”

Hanson spoke of narratives of economic recovery in the USA based on stock market indices while unemployment there averaged 10.5 percent and over half the world’s population lived in poverty. “We deceive ourselves that our consumption does not destroy the environment, that the Israeli occupation brings security rather than breeds resentment. Or that the perpetuation of white male power and privilege is somehow based upon God’s intentions for humanity,” he added.

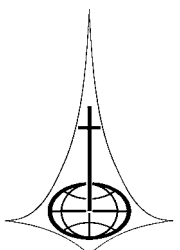
He cited some of the stories that could be told about the life and work of the LWF, its Council members and advisers as well as staff, and the implications for freedom and reconciliation.

The 1999 signing of the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification between the LWF and the Roman Catholic Church was an act of being released from burdens of condemnation. Similarly, a proposed statement for action on the legacy of Lutheran persecution of “Anabaptists” which will be considered during the current Council meeting signified healing of memories. The breaking of the silence on HIV and AIDS is to release people from the chains of

stigmatization and discrimination, restoring them to life in community, the LWF president explained.



During the worship, participants use water to make the sign of the cross on their neighbors’ hands. © LWF/D.-M. Grötzsch



LWF President Urges Commitment to a Sustainable and Strong LWF in the Future

In a report highlighting the rapidly changing contexts of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) and its respective member churches, LWF President Bishop Mark S. Hanson urged the organization's Council to make decisions that reflect commitment to "a sustainable and strong LWF going into the future."

Presenting his oral report to the Council, Hanson asked the LWF member church representatives to focus on the legacy of the governing body's leadership.

dations we are making, including a timetable and process for developing the language of proposed changes to governing documents." He stressed the need to be clear about what decisions would be left to future elected Council members and the Geneva Secretariat.

Decreasing Financial Resources

On issues that have an impact on the organization's finances, the president noted that while the LWF had

Hanson challenged the Council to give high priority to the generation of new resources as part of its responsibility. "Too often we have left this [task] to the Secretariat or some member churches rather than exercising leadership ourselves," he said. He called for a more specific strategy in raising funds for the LWF Endowment Fund.

The president urged member churches to address how discussions and decisions on marriage, family and human sexuality would impact the life, work and unity of the LWF. He explained that the ELCA had already taken significant actions on human sexuality in recent months.

He said "rather than making (issues on) marriage, family and human sexuality the cause for distancing ourselves from one another in the LWF, let us resolve to engage in deeper dialogue on the theological and ethical issues raised in our current discussions and decisions by member churches." He pointed out that the LWF task force report on Marriage, Family and Human Sexuality and the Proposed Guidelines and Processes for Respectful Dialogue offered helpful insights and suggestions.



LWF President Bishop Mark S. Hanson delivers his address to the Council.
© LWF/H. Putsman Penet

The current Council was elected at the 2003 Tenth Assembly in Winnipeg, Canada, and is due to complete its work at the July 2010 Eleventh Assembly in Stuttgart, Germany.

Hanson is presiding bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA).

"What shall be our witness? What story shall we tell?" were Hanson's opening questions in his report, which noted the important issues on this year's agenda such as the election of the next LWF General Secretary, and response to the Renewal Committee report.

The LWF president affirmed his commitment "that when we leave this meeting, we will have clarity and transparency about the recommen-

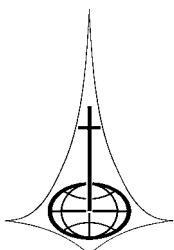
exercised responsible fiduciary leadership despite the global economy and serious changes in the financial resources of member churches, the organization faces greater challenges currently and in the future.

Citing the ELCA's situation, Hanson pointed out that the church would be facing a significant decrease in its budget from which support for the LWF comes. "We are experiencing a 30-year trend in decreased membership and giving to support the work of the ELCA beyond its local congregations. ... Furthermore, we do not know the budgetary implications of our recent decision on human sexuality," he told the Council meeting.

Leadership and Accompaniment

The president called for a renewed commitment to women in leadership and applauded four member churches that recently voted to ordain women. "We need to give strong leadership as Council members affirming and admonishing one another so that gender justice becomes a growing reality throughout the LWF," he said.

He urged sustained engagement as peacemakers and called for renewed resolve for accompaniment especially in urgent contexts such as the Middle East, where the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land seeks an end to



occupation, cessation of violence and lasting and just peace.

The president's report underscored continued commitment to diaconal work; eco-justice and environmental work; and interfaith engagement.

Hanson expressed the hope that the 10th anniversary of the signing of the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification this month would be an opportunity for the communion to renew its "commitment to dialogue so that one day the unity we have with Christians throughout baptism might be experienced together at Christ's table of the Eucharist."

He said he thanked God for the leadership provided by the General



Council members follow plenary discussions. © LWF/H. Putsman Penet

Secretary Rev. Dr Ishmael Noko, and other staff in Geneva and across the

world. "It is truly a joy and honor to serve with you," he added.

Global Economic Crisis Has Adverse Impact on Lutheran Diaconal Activities

The adverse effects of the global economic crisis on some of the LWF member churches and their institutions, threaten not only the continuation of crucial support to needy community members, but the very survival of these organizations.

"In some cases, pastors and staff have not been paid; diaconal activities have been significantly reduced; nursing homes for the elderly and children are facing imminent closure ... and pension funds have dwindled," said LWF General Secretary Rev. Dr Ishmael Noko in his report to the Council meeting.

"If funding levels do not improve we would have to phase out or close

down some of the essential activities much earlier than ordinarily planned," said Noko.

He noted however that the crisis had also portrayed the interconnectedness of "our global village" and further need for reflection on implications of the LWF Eleventh Assembly theme "Give Us Today Our Daily Bread." The theme, Noko continued, has a universal tone and appeal that invite churches to reflect more deeply on the nature and quality of the interconnectedness with the rest of creation. The interconnectedness also allowed broader deliberation on ethics and accountability and other

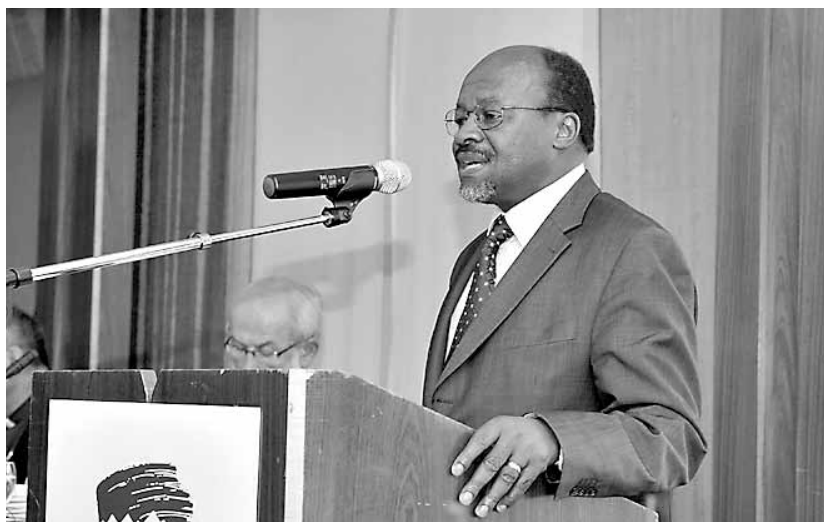
LWF ongoing initiatives on advocacy over illegitimate debt, spearheaded by the churches in Latin America, and on poverty in Africa and elsewhere.

Climate Change Impact

Turning to the global impact of climate change, Noko said a resolution adopted by the June 2008 Council meeting had facilitated practical follow-up action such as the institution of a Geneva Secretariat CO₂ compensation system for air travel. The estimated amount of USD 20,000 annually from this initiative would be allocated to LWF and member church projects that improve the CO₂ balance, he added.

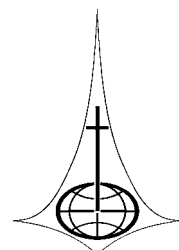
Noko noted that the Eleventh LWF Assembly to be held in Stuttgart, Germany, would be marking 58 years since the Federation held its Second Assembly in Hannover in 1952, in the land of the Reformation. He challenged Council members to ponder the assembly's significance for the host church, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Württemberg, for local ecumenical expressions, as well as for the global Lutheran communion.

Equally significant are commemorative events to mark the 500th anniversary of the Reformation, which will include the planting of



LWF General Secretary Rev. Dr Ishmael Noko presents his report to the Council.

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500 trees in the Luther Garden in Wittenberg, by representatives of Lutheran churches and several ecumenical partners.

His report underlined the significance of a recently published LWF working document that “explores how to guide the communion further in being a sign and an expression” of an inclusive communion. “It will not

be so among you: A Faith Reflection on Gender and Power” is the title of the publication produced by the desk for Women in Church and Society at the Department for Mission and Development.

The general secretary explained efforts taken toward dialogue aimed at strengthening ecumenical relations with the Roman Catholics,

Methodists, Mennonites, Anglicans, Orthodox, and the Reformed.

Turning to relations with the Mennonites, he reiterated the LWF’s need to ask “forgiveness from God, as well as from our sisters and brothers who are the inheritors of the Anabaptist tradition for having used our confessional writings to justify persecution and execution.”

LWF Treasurer Stoll Warns of Impact of Global Financial Situation on LWF’s Work

In his report to the Council, LWF Treasurer Mr Peter Stoll warned of the effects of the global economic and financial crisis on the work of the LWF Secretariat. The economic crisis has been long and deep, he said, and it was unpredictable when times would return to normal.

Stoll underscored that the crisis has had an impact on most if not all LWF member churches and related agencies, several of which already had to reduce their budgets substantially.

The global financial situation therefore will “inevitably have an impact on the support of churches and agencies to the work of the LWF Secretariat,” Stoll indicated. He expressed the hope that churches and agencies would do their best to support the secretariat in the future. However, this year already, some member churches and related agencies have reduced their contributions, and

it was anticipated that this would continue. The work of the Department for Mission and Development had been particularly affected, Stoll said.

Structural Deficit Requires Action

In his report, Stoll noted that the LWF secretariat has had a structural deficit for years. “While exchange gains have fortunately covered the deficits in the last years, we cannot plan our future on exchange gains,” he cautioned.

The projected deficits for 2009 and 2010 called for strong measures. In view of the structural deficit of the Geneva coordination budget, Stoll stressed that activity and staffing policies need to be realigned as soon as possible, and that the organization’s streamlining was also a priority. These measures were especially urgent in view of the projected

decreased support from member churches and agencies.

2008: USD 1.1 Million Surplus

The 2008 LWF budget showed a surplus of USD 1.1 million. While the organization’s reserves had increased to USD 22.5 million, the 2009 and 2010 projected deficits would reduce these reserves substantially, the treasurer noted.

The LWF’s total income in 2008 was around USD 102.9 million, compared with USD 100.2 million the previous year. Total expenditure last year was USD 101.3 million, compared with USD 96.8 million in 2007. The report noted that the LWF had to make a provision of USD 549,000 to compensate undercoverage of the pension fund.

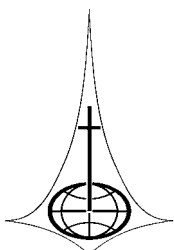
LWF Eleventh Assembly in 2010

Turning to the LWF Eleventh Assembly to be held in Stuttgart, Germany, in 2010, Stoll reported that the Assembly working budget was USD 2.2 million. The projected income covers the projected expenditure. As of 30 June 2009, the LWF had received Assembly contributions amounting to USD 1.6 million.

The treasurer stated that the budget had been worked out together with the host church, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Württemberg, which will be responsible for the local logistics. A prepayment to the Württemberg church had helped to eliminate most of the currency exchange risk, he added.



LWF Treasurer Mr Peter Stoll reports to the Council on the organization’s finances.
© LWF/H. Putsman Penet



LWF Council Elects Chilean Pastor Martin Junge as New General Secretary

On Monday, 26 October 2009, Chilean pastor Martin Junge was elected as the eighth general secretary of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) for a seven-year term. The election took place in closed session.

Since September 2000, Junge has been the area secretary for Latin America and the Caribbean at the LWF Department for Mission and Development (DMD). His key achievements as DMD area secretary

American LWF member churches to deal with the problem of illegitimate foreign debt in the region.

Since 2008 Junge has been pursuing a diploma in the management of not-for-profit organizations at the "Verbandsmanagement Institut" (VMI) of the University of Freiburg in Switzerland.

From 1996 to 2000, Junge was president of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Chile (Iglesia Evangélica Luterana en Chile - IELC). Following his 1989 ordination as an IELC pastor, Junge served in two congregations in Santiago de Chile from 1989 to 2000. He studied Protestant theology between 1980 and 1986 at the Georg August University in Göttingen, Germany.

General Secretary-elect Junge is married, and has two children.

The LWF general secretary conducts the business of the Federation in collaboration with the Cabinet, which is made up of the directors of departments and units appointed by the Council. The position holder is responsible for the implementation of the Council and Assembly decisions.



LWF General Secretary Rev. Dr. Ishmael Noko (left) applauds the election of his successor, Rev. Martin Junge (right). © LWF/D.-M. Grätzsch

With this election, Junge becomes the first representative from the Latin America and Caribbean region to hold the highest position at the LWF Secretariat.

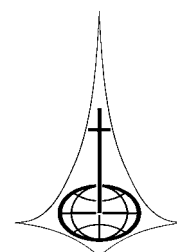
The LWF Council elected the 48 year-old theologian to succeed Rev. Dr. Ishmael Noko who, upon election in June 1994, became the first African to hold the chief executive post in the LWF. An ordained pastor of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Zimbabwe, Noko's position was affirmed in 1997, and he was re-elected for a second seven-year term in 2004. He announced at the June 2008 Council meeting in Arusha, Tanzania, that he would be leaving office on 31 October 2010.

The seven-member search committee for a new general secretary was headed by the former president of the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus, Rev. Iteffa Gobena.

include the strengthening and refocusing of the LWF's programmatic work in the region, and the implementation and structuring of the advocacy program launched by Latin



LWF President Bishop Mark S. Hanson (right) congratulates Chilean theologian Rev. Martin Junge following the latter's election as the next LWF general secretary. © LWF/D.-M. Grätzsch



General Secretary-Elect Prioritizes Changes That Will Strengthen LWF Communion

The newly elected LWF general secretary Rev. Martin Junge, says his major priorities include enhancing the quality of relationships among churches in the Lutheran communion and embarking on a participatory planning process to ensure the organization's sustainability.

Junge received 37 votes in favor and five against in the closed-session election for which a search committee had proposed him as the sole candidate for election.

LWF President Bishop Mark S. Hanson's announcement to the open Council plenary session about Junge's election was received with a standing ovation and a long applause. "Our clear vote is a strong, strong statement of our confidence in Martin Junge," said Hanson.

In his acceptance speech, Junge said he accepted with humility the privilege to serve the Lutheran communion in this new position, and urged support and prayers in carrying the burdens and challenges that the task entailed. He particularly called for the support of outgoing General Secretary Rev. Dr Ishmael Noko, and expressed his conviction that "we will manage to organize a perfect transition period as this communion deserves it. [And one] in which you will be fully in charge until the last day of your period, and I will be able to be in charge right from the first day of my own period."

Congratulating his incoming successor, Noko assured Junge of his cooperation and prayers in the transition, saying, "God's grace is plenty, this is your daily bread, to depend on God."



LWF General Secretary-elect Rev. Martin Junge
© LWF/H. Putsman Penet

He promised to arrange in dignity and respect "the way we should hand over the work of the LWF."

Transition

The LWF president expressed his commitment to facilitate this transition in the best way possible. He declared that the long election process "did not say anything about the quality of the candidate but it was because of the difficulties in the procedure." He said he took personal responsibility that the June 2008 Council meeting in Arusha, Tanzania, had not given clear guidelines for the search committee process. He thanked the two other nominees—Rev. Rafael Malpica Padilla (USA) and Mr Robert Granke (Canada)—who were present at the Council meeting and "for whom the

process wasn't easy." The election was originally scheduled for 22 October.

Participatory Change Process

Junge explained that prioritizing focus on the institutional development of the LWF was necessary in order to enhance democracy in decision making and implementation, promote effectiveness and efficiency, and integrate innovation for sustainability in the future.

"We all know how difficult changes are, particularly for an organization as big and diverse and with as many stakeholders and interests as ours. Yet, without changes, without innovation, no organization can survive in the long term. This is why plans need to be developed, so that those changes that the gift of communion requires today and tomorrow, can actually take place," said Junge in his acceptance speech.

"I'm prepared to lead these processes, involving staff in a participatory manner in order to generate concepts, proposals and scenarios, which will then be the basis for your work as the governing body of the LWF," he added.

The general secretary-elect emphasized the importance of the polycentric nature of the LWF communion—with no one center, but many centers—allowing for spirituality, theology and diaconal witness to develop especially with respect to ecumenical relationships. "This diversity is not a problem. It is a gift," Junge added, citing examples of LWF initiatives globally including diaconal work, ecumenical dialogues and interfaith diapraxis.

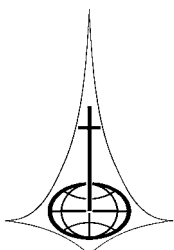
Junge Advocates Relationships That Enhance Sustainability

The general secretary-elect of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) sees sustainability as one of the major challenges for the global Lutheran communion. "It is not only about finances, but it has to do with the quality of relationships outside and within the LWF," said Rev. Martin Junge.

"Communion is a concept about relationships, about strengthening the reason to be. It is the gift of being able to meet, talk, listen to stories and experiences, and have open encounters at the table," Junge stressed, when he addressed a press conference on 27 October. He outlined his vision for an

LWF that continues to affirm the relevance of churches in society especially for people who are marginalized.

Responding to a question on whether the various positions of LWF member churches on human sexuality could eventually lead to division in the communion, the general



secretary-elect underlined that the LWF was already dealing with the issue. It was therefore important to build up on the process instituted by the LWF Council to facilitate discussion on this topic, Junge explained.

He pointed out that the “Proposed Guidelines and Processes for Respectful Dialogue on Marriage, Family and Human Sexuality” produced by a Council-appointed task force in 2007, offered both theological insights and methodology in dealing with this topic. From previous LWF encounters, documents and the current Council meeting, “I perceive energy that the members [churches] want to keep the unity and stay in the communion,” he remarked. He said he foresees “a strengthened LWF coming out of this dialogue.”

Keeping Ecumenism Alive

On LWF’s engagement in ecumenical dialogues, Junge affirmed the important ongoing work by the various dialogue groups and commissions, saying, “We must keep ecumenism alive.”

He noted that as president of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Chile he had participated in the process which led to the 1999 signing of the document “Mutual Recognition of Baptism” by the Roman Catholic Church, Syrian Orthodox Church,

Anglican Church, Evangelical Lutheran Church, Reformed churches, Methodist Church and several Pentecostal churches.

On the current global financial crisis, Junge said it was especially important to assess the implications for “the moral and social fabric of those who have been severely affected.” Such difficult times “call for mutual accountability and responsibility, and solidarity,” he said.

He said it was important to continue strengthening the LWF at the grassroots not only at the global and regional levels but also at the level of church members.”

Communication

General Secretary-elect Junge emphasized the important role of communication, as already pointed out in various LWF processes including a 2007 communication audit. “Communion without communication is not sustainable,” he said, adding the need to take up this as a core issue in the LWF renewal process.

He underscored the LWF itself “as an on-going process” with a strong sense of passion for people, churches, peace, reconciliation and justice. The task now, he added, was to see “how to continue writing the story.”



Ms Karin Achelstetter (left), director of the LWF Office for Communication Services moderates the press conference with Rev. Martin Junge. © LWF/H. Putsman Penet

Call for Greater Public Awareness of Forced Labor and Human Trafficking

Representatives of international and faith-based relief organizations attending the Council of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) emphasized that wide-spread public awareness was necessary in order to tackle the problems of forced labor and human trafficking.

“Upholding Human Dignity: Confronting Human Trafficking,” was the theme of the 22 to 27 October meeting of the LWF governing body.

Mr Roger Plant, head of the Special Action Programme to Combat Forced Labour at the International

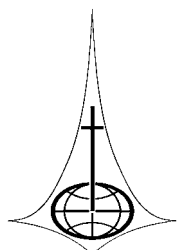
Labour Organization (ILO), called for concrete legislative measures and stricter enforcement of the existing laws of individual countries. He pointed out that despite the great outcry against modern slavery the existing legislative countermeasures were poorly enforced. Criminal law and labor law needed to be brought into line.

According to a first ILO report in 2005, an estimated 12.3 million people

throughout the world were at the time victims of forced labor, the majority of whom, (9.4 million) were in Asia. The human trafficking industry alone generates estimated profits of almost USD 32 billion per year. Plant urged churches to use their influence to strengthen awareness in civil society about injustice and to call upon their governments to take appropriate measures. He confined himself to prob-



Mr Roger Plant, head of the ILO Special Action Programme to Combat Forced Labour © LWF/H. Putsman Penet



lems involving labor-related exploitation. Numerically, human trafficking of women for sexual exploitation is of greater magnitude, yet it also receives greater public attention.

Coercion

Apart from the more brutal and dramatic instances of human trafficking—for example, when refugees die of asphyxia in freight containers—there were many subtler forms of coercion. According to the ILO report “The Cost of Coercion,” a growing number of migrant workers were entrapped into slave-like conditions, as labor brokers promising high wages lured these workers from their home countries. Once abroad, they find themselves isolated, vulnerable and helpless, unable to speak the foreign language and heavily indebted. The passport they would need for the trip back home is taken away from them. Employers and legal recruiters work hand in hand in order to deceive workers. Low wages and poor working conditions aside, forced labor is defined by the ILO as “all work or service which is exacted

from any person under the menace of any penalty and for which the said person has not offered himself voluntarily.” This can also apply to legal work.

In the French-speaking part of Switzerland, the relief organization Libertá has opened a hotline for persons seeking help. Of the 118 calls received last year, 31 were cases of human trafficking. Ms Ismaila Faye, head of the organization, reported that a great stir was caused when they identified six cases of sexual exploitation of women who had been brought legally into the country by diplomats. The organization sees as its most urgent task to heighten awareness among the population, in particular among women and migrants, churches and relief organizations, government bodies, media, police and customs authorities.



Ms Elena Timofticiuc, AIDRom project manager © LWF/H. Putsman Penet



LWF Council member Rev. Sonia Skupch © LWF/H. Putsman Penet



Mr Ismaila Faye, Libertá Association © LWF/H. Putsman Penet



Dr Fulata L. Moyo, WCC program executive for Women in Church and Society © LWF/H. Putsman Penet

Ms Elena Timofticiuc, project manager for AID-Rom (Ecumenical Association of Churches in Romania), highlighted the social consequences of migrant labor in Romania, often involving coercion. Families fall apart, marriages break up, and children are left behind. Out of the 172,000 children attending secondary school, each has at least one parent working abroad. According to Timofticiuc, 35,000 children aged between 10 and 14 years have both parents working abroad.

Rev. Sonia Skupch of the Evangelical Church of the River Plate, Argentina, and an LWF Council member, presented a documentary film on the topic of sexual exploitation, produced by the Argentinean ecumenical relief organization for refugees and migrants CAREF with

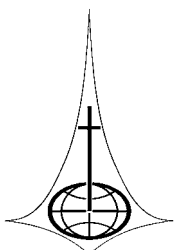
support from the LWF. The film’s core message is “prostitution is not the oldest profession in the world, but rather, the oldest form of abuse of women.”

Dr Fulata Lusungu Moyo, program executive for Women in Church and Society at the World Council of Churches, focused on the exploitation of women from a biblical perspective, saying that women’s bodies were not a commodity, but God’s likeness. As a result, trafficking of women perverts the biblical and humanitarian value of hospitality into its opposite—it is the host who should afford protection and satisfy the needs of the guest, not vice-versa.

LWF General Secretary Rev. Dr Ishmael Noko, in a thought-provoking conclusion, recalled that many high-ranking church leaders, who understood work as a vocation and a blessing, were unaware of the complex reality of slavery and exploitation. Yet, examples of human trafficking could be found even in the Old Testament. He suggested that “this can encourage us to read the Bible with different eyes.”



LWF Council meeting participants exchange views about the plenary on human trafficking and how the issues conveyed relate to their respective contexts. © LWF/H. Putsman Penet



Council Unanimously Adopts Statement Asking Forgiveness from Mennonites

The Council of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) approved a statement that prepares for a significant action of reconciliation with churches of the Anabaptist family.

This action of the LWF was based upon the work done by the Lutheran–Mennonite Study Commission, 2005–2009. Their report “Healing of Memories: Reconciling in Christ,”

ical Affairs, the Council also agreed that the International Lutheran Council (ILC) is informed about the report and statement, and that ILC’s participation is invited in affirming regret and sorrow over the Lutheran persecution of Anabaptists.

The Council requested the LWF General Secretary to send this report and statement to the LWF member churches for information, study and discussion, and possible responses. Both documents would also be made available to pre-assembly delegates for discussion at their meetings.

Justified by Faith Alone

After the unanimous vote, Rev. Dr Larry Miller, general secretary of the Mennonite World Conference (MWC), welcomed the action in a spirit of celebration and prayer. The Assembly of the MWC, meeting in Asunción, Paraguay, in July 2010 had warmly received the news that Lutherans might take such an



Mennonite World Conference General Secretary Rev. Dr Larry Miller brings ecumenical greetings to the 2009 LWF Council meeting. © LWF/H. Putsman Penet

With this endorsement, the statement “Action on the Legacy of Lutheran Persecution of ‘Anabaptists’” is recommended for adoption at the July 2010 LWF Eleventh Assembly in Stuttgart, Germany. The statement expresses “deep regret and sorrow” for the legacy of violent persecution of Anabaptists, and especially for the ways in which Lutheran reformers supported this persecution with theological arguments. It asks forgiveness, “from God and from our Mennonite sisters and brothers,” for these past wrongs and also for the ways in which later Lutherans have forgotten or ignored this persecution and have continued to describe Anabaptists in misleading and damaging ways.

The statement then makes commitments about how the violent history of persecution by Lutherans will be remembered and about how the Lutheran confessional legacy will be interpreted from now on in light of this action.

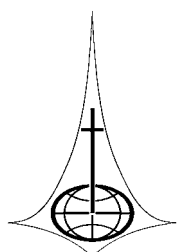


Council members applaud the message from the Mennonite representative. © LWF/H. Putsman Penet

was received by the Council, which commended the Commission for “its thorough and important work.”

Receiving recommendations from the Program Committee for Ecumen-

action and had promised to “walk with” Lutherans in their process. He noted that this request for forgiveness would require that Mennonites also would change.



“You are not applauding for yourselves,” said Miller. “You are applauding for the grace of God in our midst. Mennonites have learned from Lutherans that we are justified by faith alone, because we know that justification produces not only relations between oneself and God but also communion between the churches.”

LWF General Secretary Rev. Dr. Ishmael Noko congratulated the Commission for its work, and expressed his hope that the Stuttgart Assembly “would be a landmark,” in view of the anticipated action. “Our children will be proud of this day,” Noko remarked. He noted that Lutherans and Mennonites already are working together

around the world; this action will move such cooperation to a new level.

Referring to the MWC global conference in Asunción, attended by the LWF general secretary and his assistant for ecumenical affairs Prof. Kathryn Johnson, Noko added, “[We] wept like children in Paraguay when we saw how the Mennonites would embrace us.”

The dialogue reconciliation process began in 1980 during the 450th anniversary of the Augsburg Confession, when representatives of Mennonite churches raised questions, about how they could join in celebrations of a document which explicitly condemned Anabaptists and their teachings.

In 1980, the LWF Executive Committee expressed sorrow for the pain and suffering caused by the condemnations and called on member churches “to celebrate our common Lutheran heritage with a spirit both of gratitude and penitence.”

In 2002, the LWF Council established the Lutheran-Mennonite International Study Commission in partnership with the MWC.

During its work the Commission had discovered that the history of persecution consistently intervened in their efforts at theological discussion.

Telling the history together would in itself be an act of reconciliation.

LWF Extends Membership to Evangelical Church in Central Germany

The Council of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) extended full LWF membership to the Evangelical Church in Central Germany (EKM). The EKM came into existence in January 2009 as the result of a merger between the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Thuringia (ELKT) and the Evangelical Church of the Church Province of Saxony, becoming the legal successor to both churches.

The EKM has around 910,000 members. The number of LWF member churches remains unchanged at 140 churches in 79 countries. However, the membership figure goes up by just under 480,000 to a total of 68.94 million.

The Council endorsed the new church on 26 October upon a recommendation from the Standing Committee for Membership, whose report was presented by committee chairperson Rev. Claudia Schreiber of the Church of Lippe (Lutheran Section), Germany.

The ELKT, a United church, joined the LWF in 1947. In 1817, King Frederick William III of Prussia decreed the merger of the Lutheran and Reformed congregations in his territory, giving rise to the United churches.

“We are glad to become members of the LWF and intend to remain so,” LWF Council member Thomas Jensch, a youth representative from the ELKT told *Lutheran World*

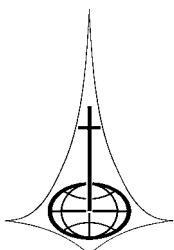
Information (LWI). According to the LWF Bylaws, if a merger takes place involving one or more member churches and one or more non-member Lutheran churches, it is sufficient that the new church declares that it wishes to belong to the Federation.

The two churches had been moving closer together for ten years. In 2007, their synods took the decision to merge, which became effective on 1 January 2009.

Bishop Ilse Junkermann was elected as the first EKM regional bishop in March 2009. The bishop's seat is in Magdeburg and the church office in Erfurt. The EKM's territory hosts some of the most significant memorial sites of the Reformation such as the Luther town of Wittenberg, the Luther town of Eisleben, Mansfeld, Wartburg Castle in Eisenach and the Augustinian Monastery in Erfurt.



Mr Thomas Jensch of the Evangelical Church in Central Germany responds to the Renewal Committee's report during the Council's second plenary session. © LWF/H. Putsman Penet



On the Way to the 2010 LWF Eleventh Assembly in Stuttgart

Ms Angelene H. Swart, chairperson of the Assembly Planning Committee (APC) for the Eleventh Assembly of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) presented the third and last report of the APC.

offerings collected during worship services to the LWF Endowment Fund and the other half to a yet-to-be-determined LWF project. The Council also approved the Assembly song titled "Give, Give Us."

and Village Groups in English and German. The Spanish and French versions should be available before the end of the year. The six brochures take up aspects of the Lord's Prayer petition for daily bread (Given by Grace, To All, Today, Having Enough, Bread and The Bread of Life).

Council members also received *From Winnipeg to Stuttgart – The Report of the General Secretary on behalf of the Council to the Assembly*. Swart announced in her report the launching of the Assembly Web site the previous week. Participants and persons interested may henceforth access comprehensive information in four languages at www.lwf-assembly.org

Local Preparations

Logistic preparations in Stuttgart have begun, Swart indicated, with the recruitment of volunteers locally and from throughout Germany. The Kongresszentrum is organizing accommodation and meals for participants and local institutions are invited to provide financial support. German political figures invited include Chancellor Angela Merkel and President Horst Köhler.

Plans include setting up a large tent to create an affordable place for all participants to get together outside commercial restaurants. An exhibit area is also being negotiated where institutions and partner organizations can make documentation available regarding issues such as climate change, HIV and AIDS, community-building, Lutheran-Mennonite relations and diaconal work.

Swart also indicated that all delegates have been invited to spend several days prior to the Assembly in a local congregation and to visit Reformation sites in Germany. The United Evangelical Lutheran Church of Germany (VELKD) plans to cover the cost of an overnight stay in the Luther town of Wittenberg. Negotiations are under way with travel agencies to obtain economical rates



APC chairperson Ms Angelene H. Swart (South Africa) delivers the committee's report to the Council.
© LWF/H. Putsman Penet

Swart, from the Moravian Church in South Africa, informed participants at the Council meeting about the state of preparations for the forthcoming assembly to be held in Stuttgart, Germany in July 2010.

The Assembly, which is the Federation's highest governing body, will take place from 20 to 27 July 2010 under the theme "Give Us Today Our Daily Bread." It will be attended by 418 delegates from the 138 full member churches, half of whom will be women and 20 percent youth delegates. Representatives of the two associate member churches, recognized churches and congregations will attend, as well as observers from LWF national committees and partner organizations. A total of around 2,000 participants are anticipated, including local church collaborators, co-opted and regular LWF staff, interpreters, translators, stewards and accredited media representatives.

At this year's meeting, the Council adopted the schedule and agenda for the Stuttgart Assembly. It also decided to contribute half of the

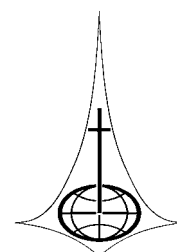
Economic and Climate Justice

The LWF governing body further decided, upon recommendation by the Department for Theology and Studies, that the Assembly preparations include the elaboration of a statement on economic and climate justice. It was requested that the pre-Assembly consultations be actively involved in this process.

The Council agreed that delegates and church leaders should be requested to provide concrete examples of the impact of current economic and climatic changes in their local contexts. In keeping with the Assembly theme, the causes of climate change need to be elucidated, as well as the biblical, theological and ethical perspective of LWF member churches and specific counter-measures they might envisage.

Study Materials and Web Site

At the Council, members received the study materials for the Bible studies



for one to three-day visits of German member churches.

Kirchenrat Klaus Rieth, the secretary for Mission, Ecumenism and Church Development Services of the host church, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Württemberg, hopes the Stuttgart Assembly will send a “very clear message” to society demonstrating that the Assembly theme can have a genuine impact. “We are looking forward to a very spiritual pre-Assembly that will give strong impetus to spiritual life in the congregations,” said Rieth in an interview with *Lutheran World Information (LWI)*. The host church expects the global ecumenical community to take a giant step forward.

The Württemberg church would like to draw on its pietistic tradition to contribute to the rediscovery of the democratic roots of Lutheranism, Rieth added.

Pre-Assembly Consultations

To prepare delegates for the Assembly, seven pre-Assemblies are scheduled: Africa: 23–28 March 2010 in Abuja, Nigeria; Asia: 6–9 December 2009 in Bangkok, Thailand; Europe: 13–17 March 2010 in Bratislava, Slovak Republic; Latin America and the Caribbean: 12–16 April 2010 in Bogotá, Colombia; North America: 29–31 January 2010 in Kitchener, Canada.

The women’s pre-Assembly took place, 27–31 October in Bogis-Bossey, Switzerland, immediately after the Council meeting. The youth pre-Assembly will take place in Dresden, Germany, 11–17 July 2010.

LWF Treasurer Mr Peter Stoll reported that the Eleventh Assembly was budgeted at USD 2.2 million. Projected income covers projected expenditures. At 30 June 2009, the LWF had received Assembly contributions totaling USD 1.6 million. The budget had been elaborated together with the assembly host church, which will be responsible for logistics locally. A prepayment to the Württemberg church would eliminate most of the currency exchange risk, Stoll added.

Council Actions

The sections that follow provide a summary of other actions taken by the LWF Council at its October 2009 meeting.

International Affairs and Human Rights

Action against Human Trafficking

The theme of the October 2009 Council meeting “Upholding Human Dignity: Confronting Human Trafficking” was further emphasized in some of the Council decisions.

Receiving recommendations from the Program Committee for International Affairs and Human Rights, the Council affirmed its rejection of practices and activities that turn human beings into commodities, especially for the purposes of forced or exploitative labor, sexual exploitation, forced marriage, armed conflict or so-called organ harvesting.

The governing body therefore called on all LWF member churches to acknowledge and address the challenges related to theological, spiritual, ecclesiological and Christian anthropological dimensions of human trafficking. Churches were asked to provide leadership in preaching and other forms of public witness against the commercial exploitation of human beings.

The Council urged churches to speak out and work against margin-



*Ms Diadem Depayso (Philippines), chairperson of the Program Committee for International Affairs and Human Rights, reports to the Council.
© LWF/H. Putsman Penet*

alization and stigma of vulnerable persons, and to address issues of poverty, exclusion and insecurity.

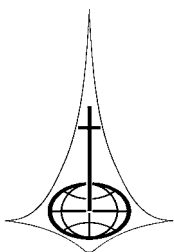
The Council also reminded the LWF member churches of their obligation to offer compassion, counseling and support to victims of trafficking, and the need to promote the reintegration of the affected people in the community in order to reduce the risk of repeated trafficking.

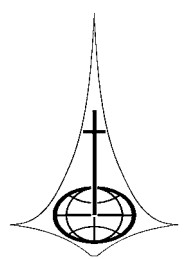
The churches’ role was underlined in not only challenging the widespread impunity enjoyed by traffickers, but also in insisting on the establishment of appropriate and effective laws against human trafficking. The Council urged the Lutheran communion’s churches to join local, national or international actions or campaigns against human trafficking, and support ecumenical and inter-faith cooperation on this issue.

LWF member churches, Department for World Service country programs and partners in countries that had not ratified the Trafficking Protocol were urged to challenge their governments to ratify the Protocol.

Tribute to Peaceful 1989 Revolution

The Council meeting coincided with the 20th anniversary commemorations in the former German Democratic Republic (GDR) of peaceful demonstrations in the city of Leipzig that marked a turning point in the democracy protests, which was fol-





lowed by the opening of the Berlin Wall on 9 November 1989 and free elections in March 1990.

The LWF governing body adopted a public statement in which it commemorated the role played by church people in the former GDR “in inspiring and mobilizing popular resistance to an oppressive government, through prayer and non-violent action for peace and freedom.”

The LWF Council statement noted, “These events culminated on 9 October 1989, when after prayers in the churches of Leipzig an estimated 70,000 people took to the streets bearing candles and prayers against guns and the threat of violence. The faith and courage of those people remains an example to all of us today, and calls us to reflect again on the role of the church in proclaiming God’s peace and justice and confronting violence and oppression wherever God’s people suffer.”

Justice for Dalits

The Council also received the “Bangkok Declaration and Call”, issued by the March 2009 joint LWF and World Council of Churches (WCC) global ecumenical conference on justice for Dalits in Bangkok, Thailand, and commended it to LWF member churches and programs.

The Council affirmed that caste and related discrimination contradict the Christian teaching that all are created equal and in the image of God. The governing body called on LWF member churches in both caste-affected and other countries to challenge their governments to make a firm global commitment to the elimination of caste-based discrimination, and implement measures to fulfill that commitment.

While expressing support for the ongoing work of the UN human rights treaty bodies and other international organizations to address untouchability and caste-based discrimination, the LWF governing body called for the adoption of the draft UN Principles and Guidelines



(Right) Ms Doris Kitutu (Tanzania) makes her point on the international affairs and human rights report; on the left is Rev. Hedwig Pirker-Partaj (Austria). © LWF/H. Putsman Penet

for the Effective Elimination of Discrimination Based on Work and Descent in order to provide an appropriate basis for the international community to address caste-based discrimination as a global concern.

Israel-Palestine

The Council re-affirmed its support for restarting negotiations for the implementation of a just, two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, including a shared Jerusalem. It noted with concern the current efforts by Israelis to change the status quo in the Holy Basin in and around that city (the Old City, Silwan and the Mount of Olives).

It endorsed strongly the August-September 2009 statement by the WCC Central Committee with regard to Israeli settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

The Council deplored actions, such as revocation of residency rights, home demolitions, and denial of permits, which reinforce the trend of Christian emigration from the Holy Land, “a place where the Christian community can continue to be a bridge-builder with the other two Abrahamic faiths for peace.”

The LWF governing body re-affirmed its support for the ministries and witness of the LWF and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in

Jordan and the Holy Land in their quest for continued witness for justice and peace in the region.

It reiterated the importance of the Ecumenical Accompaniment Program in Palestine and Israel as a tangible act of solidarity and witness for peace, and called on churches to continue to support the program and facilitate the presence of companions from churches in the global South.

Climate Change

Receiving the committee’s recommendations on climate change, the Council reiterated the call to member churches contained in the June 2008 Council’s resolutions, urging further involvement and deepening of theological and ethical reflection and action on climate change. Relevant materials and resources produced by the LWF and from the WCC and other ecumenical partners were commended to the member churches.

Further to the symbolic prayer and action on climate change (see page 1) the Council called upon all member churches to observe 13 December 2009—during the UN Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen—as a day for prayer, confession and action on the issue of climate change, to ring church bells or to take other symbolic solidarity actions. The general secretary was

asked to produce and make available liturgical material for use by member churches on this occasion.

Representatives of the LWF communion attending the Copenhagen conference, and LWF member churches around the world, were asked to advocate for an agreement that is based on justice and to speak out for the vulnerable and poor. The Council called upon the Lutheran communion to highlight especially the impact of climate change on food insecurity and increasing human vulnerability, including phenomena such as climate change migration and climate change refugees.

Further effort was urged in insisting that the international community establish a fair, equitable, legally-binding agreement to succeed the Kyoto Protocol, in order to achieve the target of 40 percent reduction of developed country carbon emissions by 2020.

The Council noted that the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change had clearly indicated that if global warming is to be limited to between 2.0 and 2.4°C, global emissions would peak no later than 2015. This would stress again the critical urgency and unprecedented magnitude of the challenge of climate change and its threat to humanity and the rest of creation.

The LWF governing body called for the establishment of just and adequate means of financing climate change mitigation and adaptation in developing countries. The goal is to improve adaptation to the worst consequences of global warming, reduce emissions, and deploy 'clean' technologies. Such funding, the Council noted, "must not be drawn from existing development cooperation budgets or commitments."

The important insights and wisdom of indigenous people were underlined as integral to ethical and sustainable relationships with creation.

LWF Endorses Action for Membership in New Ecumenical Alliance

At its October 2009 meeting, the Council endorsed a recommendation that allows the LWF to seek membership in ACT Alliance – Action by Churches Together, slated to unify in January 2010 the existing ACT emergency and development bodies.

The Council encouraged LWF member churches and related agencies to also apply for membership.

It further requested the LWF to pursue in its relationship with ACT Alliance concerns expressed in the message from the October 2008 LWF Global Consultation on Diaconia (see www.lutheranworld.org/LWF_Documents/LWF-Diaconia_Consult_Oct08.pdf).

Further attention was called to reviewing relationships between churches, agencies and mission societies, with the aim to seeking new synergies and connectivity that

would enhance the effectiveness of diakonia within the Lutheran communion and ecumenically.

In view of the urgent task of translating and conveying local knowledge of partners and networks in the global South into the dialogue with constituencies and governments in the North, the communication of their respective diaconal identity and relationship with the global church was underlined as an immediate task.

The Council noted that today's diaconal contexts required that specialized ministries and related agencies primarily accompany and seek to promote capacity building in churches while playing a facilitating role that is appropriate to local contexts.

The LWF governing body urged organizations to commit themselves to long-term partnerships with churches, and acknowledge the ongoing need



*Ms Brenda V. Akpan (Nigeria), chairperson of the Program Committee for World Service
© LWF/D.-M. Grötzsch*

to engage with one another in discussions about roles and approaches. The urgent need for dialogue was underlined in order to establish codes of conduct in diakonia.

Mission and Development

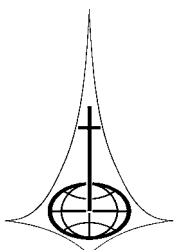
Human Sexuality

Receiving recommendations from the Program Committee for Mission and Development, the Council requested the LWF Secretariat to develop a plan of action for the years remaining until 2012, taking into consideration various aspects related to deliberations on marriage, family and human sexuality.

The LWF general secretary was asked to remind the member churches about the Report of the Task Force on "Marriage, Family and Human Sexuality" adopted by the LWF Council at its March 2007 meeting in Lund, Sweden, and accompany them as they follow up through study and discussion of this document. (See

www.lutheranworld.org/LWF_Documents/2007_Council/Task_Force_Report-EN.pdf)

The Council asked the LWF through its Departments for Mission and Development and Theology and Studies to provide study material on how Lutherans understand and interpret Scripture in light of current challenges in the communion.





Dr. Carlos G. Bock (Brazil), chairperson of the Program Committee for Mission and Development © LWF/D.-M. Gröttsch

The Council further agreed that the Pre-Assembly consultations provide time and space for consultation on this issue and that DMD develop and provide a framework for discussion.

Stewardship

On stewardship in the communion, the LWF governing body resolved that the LWF Secretariat develop for Council approval a draft policy that would deepen “our understanding of God-given gifts for the sake of our common mission and ways in which

they are shared to support the communion.” Such policy would also help in lifting up best practices from the member churches, and build upon the praxis of sustainability within the context of spirituality of giftedness.

Youth and Gender

On youth and gender representation in the LWF, the Council urged the member churches and regions to construct and re-construct the delegations to the Stuttgart Assembly in a way that fully adheres to the commitments regarding women and young people representation made at the LWF assemblies in Budapest, Hungary (1984) and Curitiba, Brazil (1990).

The Council also reminded the member churches of the 2003 Winnipeg (Canada) assembly resolution urging their “commitment to ensure and implement 20 percent youth participation at future assemblies, and to urge the member churches to ensure no less than 40 percent male and no less than 40 percent female youth representation among the delegations within their region at future assemblies.”

The general secretary was asked to prepare a draft document on gender and youth participation in the LWF

structures for appropriate action by the Stuttgart Assembly in order to fulfill a 2003 assembly resolution requesting clear policy definition on this issue. Commitment to the necessary capacity building was emphasized in order to enable meaningful participation and not merely representation.

Gender and Power

The Council received the document *It Will Not Be So Among You! A Faith Reflection on Gender and Power*, produced this year by the DMD Women in Church and Society desk. Member churches were encouraged to actively participate in the follow-up process leading to the development of an LWF gender policy.

Diakonia Handbook

The Council also received the handbook *Diakonia in Context: Transformation, Reconciliation, Empowerment*, and requested DMD to facilitate focused activities to promote utilization of this resource. The publication brings together experiences of how diakonia is practiced and understood in the life of the Lutheran communion.

USD 5.66 Million for LWF Mission and Development Projects

At its October 2009 meeting, the LWF Council received projects of the LWF Department for Mission and Development (DMD) approved by the LWF Project Committee. The DMD projects amount to USD 5.66 million, for the period 2010 to 2012. The amount includes some USD 2.1 million in 2010, USD 1.86 million in 2011 and USD 1.7 million in 2012.

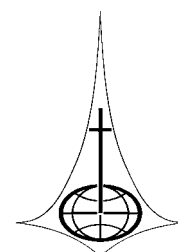
In his report to this year’s Council meeting, the Project Committee chairperson, Bishop emeritus Dr Július Filo, Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in the Slovak Republic (ECAC-SR), explained the budgeted amounts were for 35 projects—11 in Africa, 13 in Asia, 3 in Europe and 8 in the Latin America and Caribbean region. In the committee’s report, Filo

had pointed out that the substantial reduction of projects compared to

previous years was an intentional effort to improve on quality while also tak-



Council members follow program committee reports in plenary. (Left) Bishop em. Dr Július Filo (Slovak Republic) is chairperson of the LWF Project Committee; on the right is Rev. Iteffa Gobena (Ethiopia). © LWF/D.-M. Gröttsch



ing into account the available financial and human resources. In 2008 and 2007, the committee approved 50 and 51 projects with a financial volume of USD 7.4 million and USD 8.9 million respectively.

In the context of the department's overall mission to foster communion within and among the LWF member churches, DMD projects extend the

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

The Project Committee report had emphasized the role of projects and programs as important spaces for learning in the Lutheran communion. It noted the increased interaction between projects and programs as a promising beginning, and stressed the need to harvest from these different spaces in order to enrich the overall work of DMD and strengthen the holistic mission of the churches.

In addition to the action on a Lutheran statement on reconciliation with churches of the Anabaptist family, the LWF Council (*see page 13*) agreed on other processes with respect to ecumenical dialogue and conversations.

Roman Catholics

The Council received the Communiqué from the first meeting of the Lutheran – Roman Catholic Commission on Unity 2009 meeting with appreciation; and expressed its anticipation in receiving a text on the anniversary of the Reformation in 2017.

The Council also received the report from the 2008 meeting of the Symposium of Biblical Scholars with appreciation.

Orthodox

On Lutheran – Orthodox relations, the LWF governing body received the communiqué from the 2009 Preparatory Meeting for the 15th Session

Ecumenical Affairs



*Rev. Dr. Joachim Track (Germany), chairperson of the Program Committee for Ecumenical Affairs
© LWF/H. Putsman Penet*

of the Lutheran – Orthodox Joint Commission with appreciation.

Anglicans and Reformed

The Council also received the Communiqué from the Anglican – Lutheran International Commission 2009 with appreciation, and similarly

from the Lutheran – Reformed Joint Commission 2008.

Pentecostals

On ongoing conversations with Pentecostals, the Council requested the general secretary to begin a process of preparing for a Lutheran – Pentecostal International Commission. A progress report on the formation of such a commission will be provided to the next meeting of the LWF governing body.

Strasbourg Institute

The governing body re-affirmed the LWF's strong commitment to the ecumenical research work in which the Institute for Ecumenical Research in Strasbourg, France, is devoted. Appreciation was expressed for the institute's staff and its assistance to the LWF Office for Ecumenical Affairs. The institute's continued support and substantial contributions to the bilateral dialogues was underlined.

CHF 12.4 Million for LWF Geneva Coordination Budget 2010

At this year's meeting, the LWF Council approved an amount of CHF 12.4 million for the LWF Geneva Coordination Budget for the year 2010.

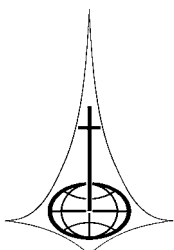
The LWF Geneva Coordination Budget (the so-called A-Budget), of which 80 percent consists of staff-related costs, has a projected deficit of CHF 1.4 million for the year 2010. The Council decided to charge the deficit against the reserves of the respective departments.



*LWF Treasurer Mr. Peter Stoll, chairperson of the Program Committee for Finance and Administration
© LWF/H. Putsman Penet*

Overall, expenditures for the coordination activities of the General Secretariat are projected at CHF 3.7 million. This includes the Offices for Finance and Administration, International Affairs and Human Rights, Communication Services, Ecumenical Affairs, Personnel and Planning, as well as the LWF governing bodies (Council, Executive Committee and the Office of the President).

The expenditure projections in 2010 include CHF 4.1 million for



the Department for Mission and Development; CHF 0.9 million for the Department for Theology and Studies; and CHF 3.7 million for the Department for World Service (DWS).

Already in June 2009 the Council approved by mail vote a budget of

USD 131.2 million for the work of the various LWF departments and offices for the year 2010 including programs and projects. This amount also includes the Geneva Coordination Budget and USD 30 million for the work of eight DWS associate programs.

The so-called Summary of Needs (SoN) for 2010–2011 was sent to the member churches, National Committees, related agencies and mission agencies with requests for funding in the form of designated and undesignated contributions.

Theology and Studies

Receiving recommendations from the Program Committee for Theology and Studies, the Council affirmed and commended the communiqué, “A Call for Churches Critically to Engage with Governments,” from the consultation Holding Governments Accountable, held in Geneva, 19–21 October 2009. The general secretary was requested to send the document to the member churches for their at-



Program Committee for Theology and Studies chairperson Rev. Dr. Barbara Rossing (USA) reports to the Council. © LWF/H. Putsman Penet

tention including the specific actions recommended.

The Council expressed support for the development of a call or declaration on economic and climate justice through the various events leading up to the Eleventh Assembly. It encouraged participatory input into such a declaration as it journeys through the various pre-assembly gatherings leading up to the Stuttgart assembly.

Communication Services

Acting on a recommendation from the Program Committee for Communication Services, the Council asked the general secretary to develop and bring to its next meeting clear procedures to be followed in case of elections in the LWF.



Ms Klára Wagner-Balicza (Hungary), Program Committee for Communication Services © LWF/H. Putsman Penet

It was underlined that these procedures should include “Guidelines for Communication Procedures during Elections of the LWF,” describing internal communication management and potential public steps to be taken.

Continue Prophetic Example, Ecumenical Partners Urge LWF

Greetings from World Church Leaders Praise Lutheran Contribution to Reconciliation

Praise for the justice and reconciliation efforts of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) were the focus of greetings from sister organizations at the October 2009 Council meeting.

Representatives of the Roman Catholic Church, World Council of Churches (WCC), World Al-



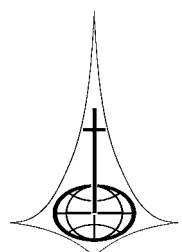
Mr Douglas Chial conveys the WCC's message to the Council. © LWF/H. Putsman Penet

liance of Reformed Churches (WARC), the Mennonite World Conference and the International Lutheran Council (ILC) brought greetings.

W C C G e n e r a l S e c r e t a r y R e v . D r S a m u e l K o b i a praised LWF’s efforts against human trafficking and its

contribution toward Christian unity, particularly the move toward reconciliation with Mennonites.

“The Lutheran World Federation is a deeply valued communion, not only to our common Lutheran member churches, but to the entire WCC fellowship and the wider ecumenical movement. Therefore, it is an honor to offer a word of encouragement as you embark on this final Council meeting before the Assembly in Stuttgart next year,” said Kobia in his greeting read by **Mr Douglas Chial**,



WCC program executive for church and ecumenical relations.

The WCC general secretary described the LWF's move toward reconciliation with Mennonites as deeply significant for the entire ecumenical movement. "The Lutheran World Federation and the Mennonite World Conference have been carefully nurturing a new form of dialogue—reconciliatory dialogue—a dialogue that is rooted in the vision of transforming relations through the unity we share in Christ," he said.

"This form of dialogue is not simply expressed in theological agreement, but through spiritual transformation. Reconciliation and forgiveness are truly the work of Christ alone through the power of the Triune God," noted Kobia.

The WCC general secretary praised the LWF for its wider efforts to foster new forms of dialogue that assist the churches in deepening their search for visible unity in Christ. It was this kind of innovation that helped to pave the way for a common declaration on justification a decade ago, remarked Kobia.

"The election of a new general secretary and the final preparations for the Stuttgart Assembly will be among the legacies that this Council offers to the next generation of LWF leadership," Kobia concluded. "May the Holy Spirit guide the Council as you seek to discern the gifts in leadership that will best serve the Lutheran World Federation in the years to come."

WARC General Secretary Rev. Dr Setri Nyomi, also commended the LWF for taking up the theme of human trafficking, and called on

the Council to set a prophetic example on this important aspect of human injustice.

He asked for LWF's prayers as the new World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC) approaches its Uniting General Council next summer in Grand Rapids, Michigan, and promised to pray with the LWF in preparation for its own Assembly in Stuttgart in July.

Monsignor Dr Matthias Türk of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity (PCPCU) brought greetings from the Roman Catholic Church. There had been a fruitful dialogue between Catholics and Lutherans for over 40 years, he said. "In the last four decades we have achieved more than we could ever have imagined or dreamed of!" The dialogue was impressively characterized by the fellowship and friendship

that had grown up between the two denominations, "without wanting to pass over the difficulties on our way forward together," he stated.

The PCPCU representative added that the new international Lutheran-Roman Catholic Commission on Unity, which first met in July 2009, had tackled two projects:



WARC General Secretary Rev. Dr Setri Nyomi greets the LWF Council.
© LWF/H. Putsman Penet

writing a brief text on the ecumenical significance of the Reformation anniversary year in 2017, and also collating the contents and results of the dialogue to date under the heading "Baptism and Growth in Communion". The reception of the "rich fruits of dialogue" was an urgent ecumenical

task, he declared.

Türk also recalled the tenth anniversary of the signing of the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification, celebrated on 31 October 2009 on a splendid international occasion with a symposium and church service in Augsburg, Germany.

ILC Executive Secretary Rev. Dr Samuel H. Nafzger brought greetings from the council, which has over 30 member churches. He expressed the importance it attaches to seeking ways in which the two Lutheran organizations, ILC and LWF, can cooperate around the world, even when there are significant differences between them on major theological matters. In particular, it would consider involvement in the proposed act of repentance

toward the Mennonites, Nafzger underlined.

At its October meeting, the LWF Council had recommended that the Eleventh Assembly adopt the statement "Action on the Legacy of Lutheran Persecution of 'Anabaptists'" (see page 13) when it meets in Stuttgart, Germany in July 2010.

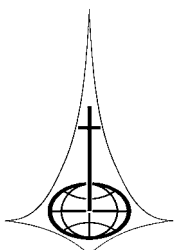


Monsignor Dr Matthias Türk from the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity brought greetings from the Roman Catholics. © LWF/H. Putsman Penet



ILC Executive Secretary Rev. Dr Samuel Nafzger greets the LWF Council.
© LWF/H. Putsman Penet

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LWF Leaders Speak of Optimism for a Strengthened Lutheran Communion

Council Actions Affirm Call to Reconciliation in a Polarized World

The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) Council concluded its 22–27 October meeting with optimism for a strengthened communion, showing that potentially dividing issues could be resolved by reconciliation and not fragmentation.

Hanson said at the Council’s closing press conference. “In a polarized world that is what we, as a communion, are called to do,” he added, during the press conference which he addressed jointly with LWF General Secretary Rev. Dr Ishmael Noko.

the persecution of Anabaptists by Lutheran authorities and especially over the fact that Lutheran reformers theologically supported this persecution. The LWF governing body also received the report “Healing of Memories: Reconciling in Christ, from the Lutheran-Mennonite International Study Commission.

Noko pointed out that “in the awakening of modern time ecumenism, we are beginning to realize we need to relate to people of other faiths, which also makes us look at our own home and start breaking walls that have distorted our image.”

The general secretary noted that the continuing movement of populations also had an impact on how people viewed others. “Because of migration, Lutherans all over the world came to learn of the persecutions of Mennonites,” said Noko. He noted that in today’s context “in joint humanitarian work at ecumenical level, we work closely with the Mennonites in ways we would never have done before.”

Noko said other Council actions such as the adoption of the report of the Assembly Planning Committee,



Left to right: LWF General Secretary Rev. Dr Ishmael Noko, LWF President Bishop Mark S. Hanson and LWF Office for Communication Services Director Ms Karin Achtelstetter at the final press conference of the 2009 Council meeting. © LWF/H. Putsman Penet

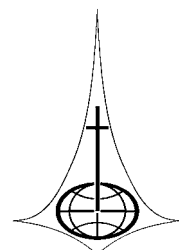
This was how LWF President Bishop Mark S. Hanson described the outcome of the six-day meeting during which the Council elected the next LWF general secretary; adopted a statement on reconciliation with the Mennonites for further action by the Eleventh Assembly and agreed to continue reflection on marriage, family and human sexuality issues, including discussion at pre-Assembly gatherings. The LWF governing body agreed input to recommendations on the LWF renewal process, to be adopted at the July 2010 Assembly; and adopted the assembly agenda including rules of procedure and a song for the gathering.

“Asking for forgiveness from the Mennonites demonstrates the communion’s willingness to seek the truth for the sake of reconciliation.”

The Council adopted a statement in which the LWF expresses publicly its deep regret and sorrow over



Attentive media persons at the closing press conference © LWF/H. Putsman Penet



action on justice for Dalits and human trafficking, on climate change and on peace in Israel/Palestine, affirm the strength of the communion in dealing with crucial issues.

The general secretary pointed out that further steps were required to ensure more fairness and inclusiveness in gender and age balance in the LWF. He emphasized the need for more active participation of youth members in shaping the Lutheran communion “that they are going to lead in future.”

“Upholding Human Dignity: Confronting Human Trafficking” was the theme of the 2009 Council meeting, attended by 165 participants including representatives from LWF member churches and partner organizations. It was held at Chavannes-de-Bogis near Geneva, Switzerland, hosted by the Federation of Evangelical Lutheran Churches in Switzerland and the Principality of Liechtenstein.

The 49-member Council is the LWF governing body, meeting every



Representatives of LWF member churches around the world applaud at the closing session of the October 2009 Council meeting. © LWF/H. Putsman Penet

12-18 months between Assemblies held normally every six years. The current Council was appointed at the July 2003 Tenth Assembly in Winnipeg, Canada. It comprises the President, Treasurer as well as lay and ordained persons, representing the different LWF regions.

More information about actions taken at the LWF Council meeting is available on the LWF Web site at: www.lutheranworld.org/Council/2009/2009-Council_Actions.html

Replacement of Council Members and Advisers

The Council elected **Bishop Dr Solomon Rajah**, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Malaysia (ELCM) as a Council member, replacing the late Bishop Julius D. Paul. Rajah, who was appointed to the Program Committee for Communication Services, became ELCM bishop in February 2009, following the death of Paul in a boating accident in Guatemala in November 2008.

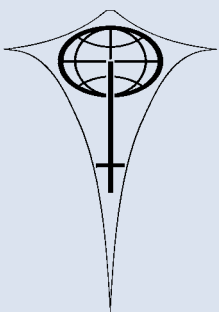
Ms Jenette Alisha Purba, from the Indonesian Christian Church was elected as a Council member to replace Ms Sophia Hutagalung from the Christian Protestant Church in Indonesia. Purba serves on the Program Committee for Finance and Administration.

The Council also elected **Rev. Kenneth Kross**, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Suriname, to replace Rev. Roy Thakurdial

from the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Guyana as an LWF Council adviser. Kross joins the Program Committee for Ecumenical Affairs.

The Council appointed **Rev. Dr A.G. Augustine Jeyakumar** from the Arcot Lutheran Church [India], to the Program Committee for World Service. The Council also appointed Jeyakumar as chairperson of the Standing Committee for World Service, replacing the late Bishop Julius D. Paul.

Other newly elected members of the World Service Standing Committee include **Mr Louis Dorvilier**, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), succeeding Dr Belletech Deressa also from the ELCA. **Mr Volker Gerdemeier**, Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe/Bread for the World in Germany, replaces Dr Konrad von Bonin.



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