

Participants of the ILC Seminaries Conference in Ft. Wayne, Indiana, USA

World Seminaries Conference of the International Lutheran Council Discusses Lutheran Identity in a Changing World

Some 65 seminary professors and representatives from 24 countries gathered on the campus of Concordia Theological Seminary (CTS), Fort Wayne, Indiana, USA from 3 to 6 June 2010 as part of a world seminaries conference. A representative from the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus (EECMY) attended this conference as a guest.

The conference, sponsored by the International Lutheran Council (ILC), was meeting for the fourth time under the theme "Confessional Lutheran Identity in the Light of Changing Christian Demographics."

The keynote speaker, Dr. Philip Jenkins of Pennsylvania State University, who has written several books on the state and future of

Christianity, including *The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity* and *The New Faces of Christianity: Believing the Bible in the Global South*, set the scene by predicting trends in a global north to south shift in the center of gravity of Christianity. Dr. Jenkins sees this trend continuing to shape a very different picture of world Christianity from that which we currently recognize.

The second keynote speaker was Dr. Erní Seibert, a Lutheran pastor and theologian from Brazil, now serving as the Director for Communications for the Brazil Bible Society. He spoke on the topic of "Confessional Lutheran Identity in the Light of the Changing Christian Demographics."

Presenters from five continents addressed the topic from the perspective of their own continental experience. The aim of sharing this information was to help regions on each side of the demographic shift to prepare for, and to collaborate in, the training of pastors and church workers in light of their developing situation.

"This timely meeting brought together theological educators from all continents to start working together to propose strategies for

meeting this great challenge," said Dr. Douglas L. Rutt, associate professor of Pastoral Ministry and Missions at CTS, chairman of the seminary relations committee of the ILC, and conference organizer.

In view of the interest in the topics being discussed at the ILC conference, two other groups asked to share in the keynote presentations and some of the subsequent discussions. The groups participating were the faculties of the two Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod (LCMS) seminaries and the theology departments of the Concordia University System, as well as a conference of church leaders from ILC and non-ILC countries who were meeting for consultations including preparations for celebration of the 500th anniversary of the Lutheran Reformation.

The seminary provided an ideal venue for this international meeting with its state-of-the-art facilities, pleasant surroundings and multilingual team providing simultaneous translation. In addition to participating in lively debate, delegates also had the opportunity to worship together in the Saarinen-designed Kramer Chapel on the seminary campus and to attend in Sunday services in several of the LCMS churches in Fort Wayne.

"In my opinion, it was a very successful conference and accomplished the purpose of the ILC in sponsoring these conferences - namely to promote confessional Lutheran theology and practice centering in Jesus Christ, both among member churches and throughout the world," said Dr. Samuel Nafzger, ILC executive director.

The conference was made possible by a grant from the Marvin M. Schwan Charitable Foundation to the ILC.

The International Lutheran Council (www.ilc-online.org) is a worldwide association of 34 established confessional Lutheran Churches united around the commitment to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ on the basis of an unconditional commitment to the Holy Scriptures as the inspired and infallible Word of God and to the Lutheran Confessions contained in the Book of Concord as the true and faithful exposition of the Word of God.

C o n f e s s i o n a l L u t h e r a n I d e n t i t y

**Editorial from Dr. Gerald B. Kieschnick
Chairman, International Lutheran Council**

The 2007 convention of The Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod (LCMS), USA, resolved that the LCMS Commission on Theology and Church Relations (CTCR) "in consultation with the Office of the President and our seminaries,



Dr. Gerald B. Kieschnick

coordinate fundamentally constructive and intentionally supportive efforts such as theological symposia, conferences, and other opportunities for study of confessional Lutheran theology, to uphold and nurture confessional Lutheranism," inviting members of the International

Lutheran Council and others to participate.

Accordingly, a conference of confessional Lutheran leaders was held from 3 to 5 June 2010 on the campus of Concordia Theological Seminary in Fort Wayne, Indiana. The conference objectives were (1) to begin to assess the current situation of confessional Lutheranism in our world; (2) to cement further existing relationships with confessional Lutherans in this time of theological uncertainty; (3) to enable new relationships to develop between those committed to a strong confessional and biblical witness both nationally and internationally; and (4) to discuss appropriate ways to celebrate the upcoming 500th anniversary of the Reformation.

At the same time and place the ILC Fourth World Seminaries Conference was meeting under the theme "Confessional Lutheran Identity in a World of Changing Religious Demographics." Also meeting simultaneously were the members of the LCMS university and seminary theological faculties. All three groups met together the first day of the conference to hear plenary keynote speakers Dr. Philip Jenkins of the U.S. and Dr. Erni Seibert from Brazil.

Invited to the confessional leadership conference were the ILC chairman and the members of the ILC executive committee representing each of the five world areas, plus a representative from the theological commissions of Australia, Brazil and SELK, Germany, and members of the CTCR Executive Committee. Additionally, several guests from non-ILC confessional Lutheran churches were invited, including representatives from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus, the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod, and the Mission Province of Sweden. These participants were asked to provide assessments regarding the current state of confessional Lutheran theology in their churches and regions of the world.

As we continue to face the challenges of being confessional Lutherans in this second decade of the 21st century, it behooves us to work together as closely as possible in our God-given task of Gospel proclamation. Especially is this the case in light of decisions by others who bear the name "Lutheran" that threaten to weaken our witness to the Gospel.

In an appearance to Solomon, God said, "If my people who are called by my name humble themselves, pray, seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land" (2 Chron. 7:14).

May God bless our efforts at remaining faithful to our calling as confessional Lutherans. For our confessional Lutheran identity does not end with calling ourselves and each other to repentance, but also serves to strengthen our witness to broken people in a fallen world.



Confessional Leadership Conference and LCMS Theology Professors Conference in Fort Wayne

LCMS News 48 - by Roland Lovstad - Organized by the LCMS Commission on Theology and Church Relations, the International Confessional Leadership Conference sought to assess confessional Lutheranism and strengthen relationships among church bodies committed to a strong confessional and biblical witness. It was supported by a grant from Thrivent Financial for Lutherans.

Among the 20 participants of the conference, held from 2 to 6 June 2010, were representatives from member church bodies of the International Lutheran Council (ILC), as well as other church bodies and groups such as the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod, USA, the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus, the Mission Province of Sweden and Finland, and two pastors from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) who have expressed disagreement with recent ELCA decisions on same-gender relationships.

Eighty-nine theology professors from both LCMS seminaries and the ten Concordia

colleges and universities attended the 2 to 4 June Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod (LCMS) Theology Professors Conference, where they heard scholarly presentations, discussed educational developments, and explored the implications of global Christianity for theological instruction in the United States.

"These few days provided a rare and historic opportunity for Lutheran leaders from around the world to address a critical topic and to establish and strengthen mutually-beneficial relationships," said Dr. Glen Thomas, executive director of the LCMS Board for Pastoral Education.

Ethiopian Church Head Meets With LCMS Leaders



Photo: Frank Kohn, LCMS Reporter
Dr. Wakseyoum Idosa, center, president of the EECMY, meets with LCMS President Dr. Gerald B. Kieschnick, left, and Dr. Samuel H. Nafzger, LCMS director of church relations-assistant to the president.

A partnership agreement between their two churches was among items discussed when the president of the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus (EECMY) met with Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod (LCMS) President Dr. Gerald B. Kieschnick and other LCMS leaders in St. Louis on 11 and 12 May this year.

Dr. Wakseyoum Idosa heads the 5.3 million-member EECMY, one of the fastest-growing Lutheran churches worldwide and, among those in Africa, second in size only to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania.

Wakseyoum made his St. Louis stopover at the invitation of the Missouri Synod, during an extended visit to the United States. While in St. Louis, he also met with the LCMS President's Church Relations Cabinet and with representatives of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis.

The partnership agreement was signed on 22 January 2010 by EECMY and LCMS mission leaders in Addis Ababa, where the Ethiopian church body has its headquarters.

Dr. Samuel H. Nafzger, the LCMS's director of church relations-assistant to the president, said that agreement lays the groundwork for the two churches to work together in Africa in such areas as training for evangelistic outreach, food security, community health and education (including HIV/AIDS prevention), and "empowering marginalized groups."

"This agreement is not church fellowship," Nafzger emphasized, "but it does express the 'mutual hope that our work together will give us the opportunity to more fully realize our unity as Lutheran Christians so that on the basis of agreement in doctrine and practice, the two churches may share full altar and pulpit fellowship.'"

Nafzger added that "one of the areas that will have to be addressed is the question of the ordination of women pastors." He said that several of the EECMY's 21 synods (similar to LCMS districts) ordain women, and at present, 18 of that church body's 2 800 pastors are women.

Among areas where the EECMY and the Synod are already in agreement is opposition to same-sex marriage and to the positions of Lutheran church bodies that support such unions.

A press release from the EECMY reports that, in opening remarks at a meeting of his church body's executive board held from 7 to 10 April, Wakseyoum reaffirmed the EECMY position that same-sex marriage "is a clear disobedience to the Holy Scripture and ... God-ordained marriage."

The release also points out that the EECMY and other Lutheran church bodies in Africa in March reaffirmed a 2007 joint position they expressed against same-sex marriage.

News outlets reported on an 29 April statement posted on the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania's (ELCT) Web site to the effect that that church body would not accept money or help from groups that support same-sex marriage.

That reaffirmation and the ELCT statement are in advance of the Lutheran World Federation assembly, scheduled for 20 to 27 July 2010 in Stuttgart, Germany.

A joint release from Religion News Service and Ecumenical News International states that "homosexuality is expected to be a divisive issue" at that assembly.

Nafzger said that the agreement between the EECMY and the LCMS, as well as Wakseyoum's visit, are examples of "an increase in contacts with churches in Africa that have a deep appreciation for the solid scriptural stand The Lutheran Church -Missouri Synod has taken on this and other issues."

European ILC Churches Meet in Portugal

"Ethical questions of the 21st century in tension between Lutheran Confession and pastoral care" was the theme discussed by the Bishops and Presidents of the European churches belonging to the International Lutheran Council when they met from 1 to 3 June 2010 in Porto, Portugal.

Rev. Jonas R. Flor, president of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Portugal (IELP) and pastor of Emmanuel Congregation in Porto, which hosted the conference, welcomed the member- and guest churches from Belgium, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Germany, England, France, Latvia, Russia, Spain, and the USA.

In his keynote address, Bishop Hans-Jörg Voigt of the Independent Evangelical Lutheran Church (SELK) in Germany emphasized that ethical questions gain significance for the churches in the postmodern and post-Christian society as the Church loses its role in spiritual leadership more and more. But ethical questions must not conceal the proclamation of the gospel. One of the key-issues, therefore, is the acknowledgment of the authority of the Bible and the Lutheran Confessions "because" they are in accordance with holy Scripture.

In further papers, the situation of the Anglican church family and the churches belonging to the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) were presented. Especially African churches question the West-European churches about their critical relation to the Bible in contrast to a "respectful" acceptance of holy Scripture.

The participants of the conference also reported about the situation in their respective churches.

ELC Discusses Neighborhood Mission

selk news - The outreach initiative of a congregation and especially the contacts of its members within their neighborhood was the focal point of the consultations of the European Lutheran Conference (ELC), which followed the conference of the European ILC Churches and also took place in Porto, Portugal from 3 to 6 June this year.

Under the leadership of Rev. Jean Thiébaud Haessig, president of the ELC, pastors and lay-members of confessional Lutheran churches from Belgium, Denmark, Germany, England, France, Portugal and Spain talked about the unique possibilities and challenges of mission work within the neighborhood of a congregation,

and of outreach through witnessing to children and young people. Possibilities of using art and architecture to establish starting points were also discussed.

The conference closed with the ratification of "Recommendations on Missionary Existence" for the congregations of the ELC churches, and by worshipping with the local Emmanuel congregation in Porto.

Harrison is New LCMS President



Foto: LCMS Reporter
LCMS President elect
Rev. Matthew C. Harrison

LCMS NEWS - Rev. Matthew C. Harrison, executive director of LCMS World Relief and Human Care since 2001, is the new president-elect of The

Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod (LCMS).

Harrison was elected on the first ballot on 13 July 2010 by delegates to the church body's 64th Regular Convention, meeting from 10 to 17 July 2010 in Houston, Texas, USA.

Harrison thanked current president Dr. Gerald B. Kieschnick "for his heart for evangelism and his deep desire to move the Synod forward."

Following the election, delegates stood to sing the Doxology in honor of Kieschnick's service, and gave him two standing ovations during his brief comments to the convention.

Harrison, 48, graduated with a Master of Divinity degree in 1989 from Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Indiana. He earned his Master of Sacred Theology degree from the same institution in 1991, and is currently pursuing a Doctor of Philosophy degree from Concordia Seminary, St. Louis.

Prior to his call to LCMS World Relief and Human Care, Harrison served for more than a decade as a parish pastor in rural (Westgate, Iowa) and inner-city parishes (Fort Wayne). He served on the LCMS Board for Mission Services from 1998 to 2001, and is currently on the boards of Lutheran World Relief, Baltimore, and Lutheran Services in America.

He and his wife, Kathy, have two sons. The family lives in Ballwin, Missouri.

Together with other newly elected officers, Harrison will be installed on 11 September in St. Louis.

Lutheran Church in Brazil Elects New President

More than 700 church workers of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Brazil (IELB) elected Rev. Egon Kopereck as its new president for a four-year term..



IELB President Rev.
Egon Kopereck

Kopereck was born on 21 February 1957 in Colônia São Pedro, city of Morro Redondo, state of Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil. He graduated in Theology at the Concórdia Seminary of Porto Alegre, RS, in 1980, and post graduated in Practical Theology at the Concórdia Seminary of São Leopoldo, RS, in 1992. He was pastor in Linha Brasil (Nova Petrópolis), in Três Coroas and in Canoas, RS. and served on various district councils and IELB commissions.

He is married to Tânia Eloísa Voigt. The couple has one daughter.

The IELB's 60th Synodical Convention was held from 21 to 25 April 2010 in the city of Foz do Iguaçu.

Rautenberg New IELCHI President



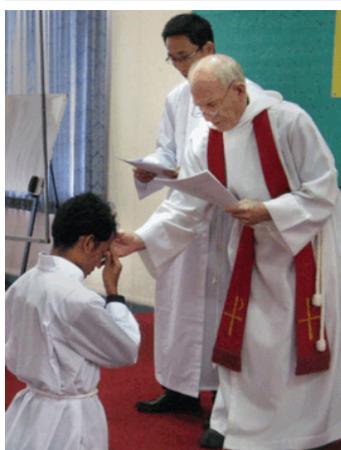
IELCHI President Rev.
Christian Rautenberg

The annual Convention of the Confessional Lutheran Church of Chile (IELCHI), held on 15 May 2010 in the city of Valparaíso, elected the Rev. Christian Rautenberg as its new president.

Rautenberg served as pastor and missionary in Quilpué and is currently serving in Santiago city as a missionary. He is married to Ethel and has two children. He is Argentinean and is serving in Chile for eleven years.

Rautenberg succeeds the Rev. Carlos Schumann in the office of IELCHI's president.

First Bishop of Cambodian Church Ordained



Dr. Leonard Harms ordaining Bishop Vanarith Chhin

LCC news - The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Cambodia (ELCC) ordained its first bishop during a service in the town of Sihanoukville on 14 May this year.

Dr. Leonard Harms, Lutheran Church-Canada (LCC) volunteer missionary representing Rev. Robert Bugbee, president of LCC,

ordained Rev. Vanarith Chhin during a service in this small coastal town, located halfway between Thailand and Vietnam.

Following his ordination, Chhin celebrated Holy Communion with pastors and students who are members of the Luther Seminary-Cambodia (LSC).

During a second service, the Luther Institute Southeast Asia (LISA) and the ELCC granted diplomas to seminary students.

The new bishop of ELCC then conducted the service of Commissioning of the Pastoral Candidates and Deaconess Candidate into the Service of the Gospel in the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Cambodia. More than 25 pastoral and deaconess candidates were commissioned into the church.

Friends and members of other churches attended the services which marked the first graduation and commission for the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Cambodia.

Reinstorf is FELSISA's New Leader

The 57th General Convention of the Free Evangelical Lutheran Synod in South Africa (FELSISA) elected Rev. Dr. Dieter Reinstorf as its new spiritual leader.

The 33 delegates meeting on 4 and 5 May 2010 at St. Peter's congregation in Durban, also changed the title of FELSISA's leader from 'President' to 'Bishop'.

Born in 1958 in Paulpietersburg, South Africa, Bishop Reinstorf studied Theology in Pretoria, South Africa and Oberursel, Germany and earned a Ph.D. degree in theology in 2002.

He was ordained in 1987 and served as pastor of St. Paul's in Pretoria, St. Peter's in Greytown and St. Thomas in Cape Town. At the end of this year he will move to Pietermaritzburg, the capital of the KwaZulu-Natal province.

Reinstorf was synodical youth pastor for eight years and teenager pastor for seven years. In 1994 he was elected a member of the Synodical Council and in 2004 became Vice-President of FELSISA.

He and his wife, Mechthild, have three children.

Bishop Reinstorf was installed by his predecessor, President em. Peter Ahlers, during a special service at the end of the convention.



Photo: Ahlers

President em. Peter Ahlers and Bishop Dr. Dieter Reinstorf after the installation service.

Gustafsson Consecrated Bishop of MPSF

selk news - Leaders of confessional Lutheran churches gathered on 27 March 2010 in Gothenburg, Sweden to consecrate the former missionary Roland Gustafsson as bishop of the Mission Province for Sweden and Finland (MPSF). The nearly three hour long Divine service in the festive hall of the Schiller College, to which several hundred visitors had come, was conducted by the parting bishop Arne Olsson.

The MPSF was founded in 2003. It understands itself as a non-territorial diocese within the Swedish Church and the Church of Finland, in which those pastors find a place who, since 1993, are denied ordination by the Swedish Church because of their rejection of women's ordination and the blessing of same-gender partnerships.

Representatives of confessional Lutheran movements in Finland, Norway and Denmark

took part in the ceremony. The consecration of Bishop Gustavssons was performed by Bishop em. Dr. Jobst Schöne, D.D., Germany; Presiding Bishop Dr. Walter E. Obare Omwanza, Kenya; Bishop Artman Lars, Rev. Pekka Heikkinen, Dr. Bengt Birgersson and Bishop Göran Beijer, Schweden; Rev. Jakob Okkels, Denmark; President Tufa, Ethiopia; Bischof em. Ulf Asp, Norway; newly consecrated Bishop Matti Väisänen, Finland; and Bishop Olsson Roland.

Honorary Doctorate For LCC President



LCC President
Rev. Robert Bugbee

LCC-News - Rev. Robert Bugbee, president of Lutheran Church-Canada was awarded a Doctor of Divinity degree - honoris causa by Concordia Theological Seminary (CTS), Fort Wayne, Indiana, USA, at its Commencement Exercises on 21 May 2010. President Bugbee also delivered the commencement address.

"I am humbled by this honor," said Bugbee. "I thank God daily for the opportunities He gives me to serve His Church and His people." Born in 1955 in Toledo, Ohio, USA, Bugbee earned the Bachelor of Arts in German language and literature in 1977 from Wartburg College, Waverly, Iowa. He later studied theology at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Missouri, USA, which awarded him the Master of Divinity degree in 1981.

He was ordained and installed as pastor of Our Saviour Lutheran Church, London, Ontario, in 1982. He later served Grace Lutheran Church in St. Catharines, Ontario, and Life in Christ Lutheran Church in Albertville, Minnesota, before accepting the call in 1994 to serve as senior pastor of Holy Cross Lutheran Church, Kitchener, Ontario, where he served for more than 14 years.

Elected president of Winnipeg-based Lutheran Church-Canada in June 2008, he was placed into office in September of that year. Additionally, President Bugbee serves on the executive committee of the International Lutheran Council as the representative for North America.



Bishop Waesa Called Home



Bishop Dr. Waima Waesa

Dr. Waima Waesa, former president and bishop of the Gutnius Lutheran Church – Papua New Guinea, died on 2 July 2010.

He was born around 1935, probably at Aipinimanda in the Ambum Valley of Enga Province, Papua New Guinea.

When the Lutheran mission began work at Irelya in 1949, Waesa's community leader brought him to Irelya and enrolled him in the newly opened school. In the following years Waesa worked with missionary families at Irelya as a domestic helper and became a language tutor, translator, and assistant in the outreach and catechetical instruction programs.

Waesa received Holy Baptism at Irelya together with his family in January, 1957. During the 1960s he attended the Birip Lutheran School for Church Workers (now Timothy Lutheran Seminary).

In 1961 Waesa was elected as first president of the newly-formed Wabag Lutheran Church (WLC). He worked with the missionaries to give strong leadership to the outward expansion and inner growth and unity of the WLC throughout the following years.

In 1978 the Wabag Lutheran Church gave its president the title of bishop, and changed its own name to Gutnius Lutheran Church – Papua New Guinea.

Waesa served as bishop until 1982 and retired from active ministry in 1994.

He will be remembered for his energy, his knowledge and wisdom, his courage and dignity, and his love of God's Word, God's people, and the Gutnius Lutheran Church.

Flower Bouquet for Melancthon

19 April 2010 was the 450th anniversary of the death of Philipp Melancthon with lots of official activities by church and state authorities in the Castle Church at Wittenberg, Germany.

In a quieter moment during the afternoon, Rev. David Mahsman, managing director of the joint Wittenberg Project of the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod (LCMS), USA and the Independent Evangelical Lutheran Church (SELK) in Germany, together with former project director Rev. Dr. Wilhelm Torgerson, went to the

Castle Church and honored the author of the Augsburg Confession with a flower bouquet.

They did this in the name of twelve confessional Lutheran churches whose names were on a list attached to the bouquet.



Rev. D. Mahsman and Dr. W. Torgerson at the grave of Philipp Melanchthon in the Wittenberg Castle Church

Planners Begin Work on Wittenberg Attraction

LCMS News Reporter online - "We are a significant step closer to creating a world-class attraction in Wittenberg, Germany, that will very clearly present the Gospel to tens of thousands of people - or more - every year through the story and theology of Martin Luther," Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod (LCMS) missionary Rev. David L. Mahsman said after a two-day creative-planning meeting on 24 and 25 June 2010 in Wittenberg.

Plans are being developed for an "interactive, immersive museum or discovery center" in the city most closely associated with Luther. It is expected to draw Wittenberg-area residents, visitors and tourists from around the world, he said.

Mahsman was sent to Wittenberg in September 2009 to develop a plan for ministry in Wittenberg. He is managing director of the International Lutheran Society of Wittenberg (ILSW), which was established by the LCMS, Concordia Publishing House and Germany's Independent Evangelical Lutheran Church (SELK) to work in Wittenberg.

"The story we want to tell, centers on the clarity of the Gospel that Martin Luther

rediscovered in Wittenberg," said Dr. Samuel H. Nafzger, chairman of the ILSW board. Nafzger, who is also director of church relations in the LCMS Office of the President, was one of the participants in the creative meeting.

LCMS Vice-President-Finance/Treasurer Tom Kuchta, who also participated, added, "We have strong Lutheran theologians and historians involved, but the story will be told in a way that is easily understood by every visitor."

The two-day meeting was led by staff from BRC Imagination Arts, which Mahsman said is "probably the world leader in developing interactive museums and educational and cultural attractions."

Participants also included Dr. Paul L. Maier, LCMS second vice president and professor of ancient history at Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo; Dr. Erik Herrmann, assistant professor of historical theology at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis; SELK Bishop Hans-Jörg Voigt; SELK mission director Rev. Roger Zieger; Dr. Wilhelm Torgerson, retired ILSW managing director; Dr. Martin Treu, curator of Wittenberg's Lutherhaus museum; Wittenberg Oberbürgermeister (Lord Mayor) Eckhard Naumann and mayoral aide Arne Lietz, whose assignments include tourism-related issues.

"This has exciting potential," Dr. Paul Maier said of the project. With the approach of the 500th anniversary of the Reformation in 2017, he said, the Wittenberg project has "the confluence of location, the anniversary and the centrality of what happened here. This is where the Reformation began, and the project is a way to celebrate it properly."

ILC News is published quarterly to provide information for and about churches associated with the International Lutheran Council. Articles for publication and requests for additional copies of the publication (free of charge) should be sent either to the editor or to the executive secretary of the Council.

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ILC News is also available via the internet from the Council's web site <http://www.ilc-online.org>.

Published at Wittenberg, South Africa. Future publications dates: 1 November 2010, 1 February 2011 and 1 May 2011. Articles to be received at least four weeks prior to publication dates.