



## The “Wittenberg Project”

Source: International Lutheran Society of Wittenberg

Putting together the funding needed to build a Martin Luther museum attraction in Wittenberg, Germany, currently is the top priority for those responsible for the “Wittenberg Project.”

Rev. David Mahsman, managing director of the International Lutheran Society of Wittenberg (ILSW), said that he is working with Wittenberg city officials to seek government funding in Germany for a “significant portion” of the cost of building the museum.

“We are planning an exciting, modern, attraction in Wittenberg that people will *want* to visit—a ‘museum,’ for lack of a better word, that will present the Gospel to visitors through the life and teaching of Martin Lu-

ther,” Mahsman said.

The ILSW board, which has members from Germany’s Independent Evangelical Lutheran Church (SELK), The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, and the Missouri Synod’s Concordia Publishing House, has considered two options for the museum. A smaller project would be housed in the 16th-century school building that already is owned by the ILSW; a larger project likely would require new construction.

“Our consultants tell us that if we use the old Latin-school building, we can handle about 80,000 to 90,000 visitors per year and have them for about 45 minutes each,” Mahsman said. “On the other hand, they say that if we build to our potential, we can expect about 200,000 visitors a year and have them for an average of two hours each.”



Preliminary ideas for “The Martin Luther Experience” include a Light of the World immersive theatre that would trace Martin Luther’s spiritual journey with video and special effects. When he is caught in a lightning storm on the way to the University of Erfurt, for example, visitors not only will see lightning on the screen, but will be surrounded by it themselves.

Estimates are that it would cost about €12.7 million (US\$17.2 million) to renovate the school building, prepare the museum, and raise the necessary funds. The larger venue would cost about €26.5 million (US\$36 million).



The grey building with the white door is the 16<sup>th</sup>-century school building owned by the International Lutheran Society of Wittenberg. It stands very near the Stadtkirche (Town Church), right, in which Martin Luther preached more than 2,000 sermons.

The ILSW board in October voted to pursue the larger project.

A professional feasibility study indicates that once the museum is built and in operation, it would be self sustaining financially.

The original concept for an LCMS-SELK project in Wittenberg included an “International Lutheran Welcome Center,” an education centre, and reestablishing a SELK congregation in the city. The SELK at one time had a preaching station in Wittenberg.

“We have put meat on the bones of the original concept and made it a viable project,” Mahsman said. “The museum will be a ‘welcome center’ par excellence. It will be the platform for educational programs, seminars, and conferences. And it will have a mutually supportive relationship with a new SELK congregation that is being planted in Wittenberg—one will depend on the other as regards Gospel ministry in Wittenberg.”

Mahsman said he hopes that such a Gospel-centered project, a confessional-Lutheran presence in the place where the Reformation began nearly 500 years ago, will have the interest and support of all member churches of

the International Lutheran Council (ILC).

The ILC Executive Committee met in Wittenberg immediately after the ILSW’s October meeting. ILC Executive Secretary Samuel Nafzger, who also is Chairman of the ILSW Supervisory Board, said he urged meeting in Wittenberg so that the executive committee could become more familiar with the SELK-LCMS project and to begin planning for the celebration of the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Reformation in 2017.

The ILSW currently is researching government subsidies in Germany for the museum project and has solicited proposals for a study to test the feasibility of a fundraising campaign. The basis for government assistance is the number of jobs the museum would create and the positive impact it would have for the regional economy.

“This is a major project for which it is absolutely essential to have government backing,” ILSW board member and LCMS Chief Financial Officer Tom Kuchta told the LCMS Board of Directors in November.



Rev. David Mahsman, managing director of the International Lutheran Society of Wittenberg, meets with Wittenberg Oberbürgermeister Eckhard Naumann. Naumann has signed a letter of support for the ILSW’s museum project in an effort to help the ILSW obtain subsidies to help pay for construction of the museum.

The LCMS Board of Directors will decide whether or not to authorize fund raising for the museum—tentatively called “The Martin Luther Experience”—and has asked for a detailed business plan for the project. Completion of that plan depends on the outcome of the quest for government funds and a positive

report on the feasibility of a fundraising campaign,” Mahsman said.

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## Word from the Chairman

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By Bishop Hans-Jörg Voigt, ILC-Chairman

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ! Freely I will admit that the possibility provided for in our constitution to become chairman as the successor to *Dr. Gerald Kieschnick* was not within my purview when the Executive Committee elected me as Vice Chairman. Therefore the developments that have taken place in the ILC have somewhat surprised me.

And I cannot, of course, guarantee that the work we undertake will continue without any kind of differentiation. My lack in international relations is all too obvious. Therefore I look upon my chairmanship as an interim solution until the next plenary assembly of the *ILC in 2012*. Until that time I request your assistance on all possible levels.

I am very thankful to have President Dr. Robert Bugbee from the Lutheran Church of Canada as the new Vice Chairman of ILC and the former President of the LCC, Dr. Ralph Mayan as the designated Executive Secretary by my side.

I use the opportunity to express my gratitude and to give thanks to Dr. Samuel Nafzger for his manifold services for and within the International Lutheran Council.

At our conference in Accra, Ghana in 2007, I got to know him as Executive Secretary of the ILC as an ecumenical theologian with a clear Lutheran standpoint. His ability to really understand the local situation of any



of our churches had impressed me from the beginning. He has never lost that ability. He put his heart and mind fully into the service for the ILC. For that I want to thank him here and now from the bottom of my heart. May God pour out his abundant blessing upon the trust and love Dr. Nafzger has sown into the hearts of our worldwide brethren.

### Challenges Facing the ILC

To my mind the near future poses the following challenges to the ILC:

1. The further development and joint presentation of our common doctrinal basis founded on the Lutheran Confessions, with emphasis on

- a common understanding of the Sacraments
- our common understanding of Holy Scripture
- our common doctrine of the Church.

2. Strengthening the communion of our member and guest churches. Limitation of local conflicts between Lutheran churches.

3. Presentation and development of a common understanding of missions and diaconic service.

4. Continuation of the consultations and contacts with the Lutheran World Federation in accord with our statement of Oct. 30 to Nov. 2, 2003, with the development of our own ecumenical profile based on the Lutheran doctrine of the Church expressed in Article VII of the Augsburg Confession.

My Brothers in Christ! May God endow us with his Holy Spirit. May he bless our doing and planning so that our partnership in our common confession may continue to grow.

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## From the ILC Executive Committee:

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The next International Conference of the ILC will be held in Niagara Falls, Canada in 2012. The exact date for this conference has not yet been set. The ILC Executive Committee will meet in Niagara Falls June 28-30, 2011 to finalize plans for this conference—date, times, etc.

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## Lutheran Church in Spain Installs First Pastor

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By Walter Ralli

The newly forming Evangelical Lutheran Church of Spain celebrated this fall 10 years of mission and ministry that is being carried out jointly by the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Argentina (IELA) and the LCMS, and the installation of its first pastor -- the country's first Lutheran pastor in nearly 400 years

Installed at the 10<sup>th</sup> October celebration in Madrid, Spain, was Rev. Juan Carlos Garcia Cazorla, who will serve a congregation in Seville. He is the first Lutheran pastor since Casiodoro de Reina, who translated the Bible into Spanish for the first time and then had to flee to Germany to escape the Spanish Inquisition.

Guests at the installation included the presidents of the Portuguese Evangelical Lutheran Church and the Evangelical Lutheran Church--Synod of France, and LCMS and IELA representatives.



Dr. Jorge Groh, former Regional Director for Latin America with LCMS World Mission, congratulates Rev. Juan Carlos Garcia Cazorla, right, on his installation as the first pastor of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Spain, Oct. 10 in Toledo, Spain. At left is Dr. David Birner, Associate Executive Director for International Mission with LCMS World Mission.

Members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Spain also came together Oct. 9-11 to vote on national church issues and to spend time in worship and discussion.

The event also included three confirmations; children's events; a seminar led by Dr.

Douglas L. Rutt, director of International Ministries for Lutheran Hour Ministries, St. Louis; and the showing of "10 Years of Mission: The History of Lutheranism in Spain," a new documentary produced by LCMS and IELA missionaries.

Among surprises at the installation was the testimony and confirmation of Cazorla's mother-in-law, who for seven years heard Lutheran teachings but had resisted joining the church.

The LCMS and the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Argentina began work in Spain 10 years ago by sending Argentinean Missionary Rev. Marcos Bernt to respond to queries there. Today, two missionaries -- Rev. Walter Ralli and Rev. Gustavo Lavia -- serve at least seven mission stations throughout the country. Please for more information, visit <http://www.wix.com/luteranos/decade>.

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## Rev. Greg Seltz Named New Speaker of 'The Lutheran Hour'

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Source: Lutheran Hour Ministries

St. Louis, MO - Lutheran Hour Ministries (LHM) has announced that the Rev. Gregory P. Seltz of Orange, California, has accepted the position of Speaker of The Lutheran Hour radio programme. Seltz succeeds to the microphone following the Rev. Dr. Ken Klaus, who retired from full-time duties at the end of the 2010 calendar year after serving in the Speakership since 2002. Seltz will officially begin his ministry with LHM on a part-time basis Feb. 1 and will become full time on or before June 1.

"We are pleased that the Lord has led us to Rev. Seltz with his diverse ministry experience as the next person to carry on our rich history of proclaiming the Gospel," says Lutheran Hour Ministries Executive Director Bruce Wurdeman. "While we will soon have a new Speaker behind the microphone, our focus for the programme will remain the same: reaching the lost with the message of hope found in Christ."

"I'm honoured to now be included in the long line of Speakers whose goal was to faithfully bring Christ to the nations and the nations to the church," says Seltz. "I'm also very excited about the new opportunities for presenting that same Good News to our increasingly multi-cultural and diverse world."

Seltz is currently the Director of the Cross-Cultural Ministry Centre as well as professor



of Theology at Concordia University in Irvine, California. He came to Concordia in 2000 to oversee the master's programme in Theology and Culture. His present work trains students to launch ministries in a variety of cultural settings, including Vietnamese, Korean, Spanish, Indonesian, Indian, and African-American to name just a few.

Prior to his work at Concordia, Seltz was the Executive Director of Life's Journey Ministries, an urban, not-for-profit evangelism ministry in Manhattan, New York. He was also the founding pastor of Church For All Nations (LCMS) in Manhattan, the first new Lutheran mission start in New York City in more than 40 years, started a mission church in Dallas, served as pastor of a large congregation in Tampa, and started grade schools and pre-schools in a variety of cultural settings. He has led several seminars on urban ministry, entrepreneurial leadership development, team ministry within the city, and evangelism. Seltz has served on the steering committee of the National Urban Evangelism Institute for the LCMS, the Advisory

Board for North American Missions—LCMS, and the board of the Centre for U.S. Missions.

Klaus will continue to serve Lutheran Hour Ministries as Speaker Emeritus. His projects in this role will include writing and editing LHM's daily devotions, writing and recording a sermon a month for The Lutheran Hour, producing Bible studies for LHM's Men's NetWork, and much more. "Pastor Klaus has been and continues to be a blessing to our ministry," says Wurdeman. "We are pleased it is the Lord's will to allow us to continue using his talents beyond his official retirement date."

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Lutheran Hour Ministries is a Christian outreach ministry supporting churches worldwide in its mission of Bringing Christ to the Nations—and the Nations to the Church. LHM produces Christian radio and TV programming for broadcast, as well as Internet and print communications, dramas, music, and outreach materials, to reach the unchurched in more than 30 countries. LHM's flagship program, The Lutheran Hour, is the world's longest-running Christian outreach radio program. It airs weekly on more than 1,350 stations. For more information about Lutheran Hour Ministries, visit [www.lhm.org](http://www.lhm.org).

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## ***Fan into Flame in Vietnam***

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Source: Ablaze Mission News

Concordia International School Hanoi (CISH) will open its doors in August 2011. Many activities are already underway to ensure that Concordia has a successful first year. To date, CISH has secured a temporary facility in Hanoi for classroom and office space, recruited staff and faculty members and implemented an enrolment process for future students. In the coming months, CISH administrators will be working to secure funding for a permanent school facility and continue dialogue with the Vietnamese government to strengthen their relationship and ensure the potential for future expansion.

## The International Lutheran Council Looks to the Future

By Samuel H. Nafzger

In March of this year I will leave my position as the Executive Secretary of the International Lutheran Council, a position that I have held since the Council was organized almost 18 years ago. Dr. Reginald Quirk, the editor of ILC NEWS, has asked if I would be willing to write an article on this occasion in which I, on the basis of my years of involvement with the ILC, would address “the potential of the Council” in the future. I am grateful to him for this kind invitation, and this article is my response to it.

### The Formation of the ILC

The International Lutheran Council was formally organized in September 1993, but its historical roots go back much earlier. In 1952 a group of leaders from strongly confessional Lutheran churches from around the world who had attended the most recent Assembly of the Lutheran World Federation as observers, met in Uelzen, Germany. The topic of discussion at this meeting was “Our Churches’ Relationship to the LWF.” Seven years later a second international meeting took place in Oakland, California, for the purpose of addressing “The Fellowship Between Our Churches.” A third such gathering took place in 1963 in Cambridge, England. It was here that representatives of confessional Lutheran churches from Australia, Brazil, France, Germany, India, Nigeria, South Africa, the United Kingdom and the USA decided to continue to meet on a regular basis as the “International Lutheran Theological Conference,” a name that was later shorted to the “International Lutheran Conference.”

During the next three decades, meetings of the ILTC were held in various places around the world on a somewhat irregular basis. Two important decisions were made at the 14<sup>th</sup> conference in Hong Kong in 1991. It was decided that these conferences should be held on a regular two-year cycle. And secondly, a special Committee was appointed to

develop a concrete proposal for the formation of an organization of confessional Lutheran churches. If the challenges facing confessional Lutheran theology were to be met, they agreed, then more frequent and more formal contacts between its leaders had to take place.

The report of this Committee was presented to the 15<sup>th</sup> international gathering of Confessional Lutheran church leaders in Antigua, Guatemala, in 1993. It came in the form of a Constitution for an organization to be called the International Lutheran Council. This report was adopted. The ILC as a conference had become a council. Dr. Ed Lehman, President of Lutheran Church Canada, was elected as Chairman, and I was appointed to serve on a part-time basis as its first Executive Secretary.



### The Constitution of the ILC

The Constitution of this new organization clearly sets forth what the Council was to be, where it stood theologically, and what it was expected to do. The International Lutheran Council was to be “a worldwide association of established Confessional Lutheran church bodies.” Despite the great disparity in numerical size charter member churches of the ILC ranged in size from several hundred to more than 2.5 million baptized members each member church was to be represented at

its international conferences by only one person, its elected head. The Council was to be an association of churches, but financial commitments for the work of the Council were to be based on an equal assessment per baptized member of each individual member church.

The Constitution of the ILC presents the theological orientation of the Council in simple and straightforward language. The ILC was to be an association of church bodies “which 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.” Commitment to the Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions was not to be merely a matter of the use of traditional terminology in a pro forma way. On the contrary, the confessional commitment of the members of the Council was to be “**unconditional**.” The Gospel to be proclaimed by the church bodies making up the Council was to be the Gospel as it is infallibly taught in the inspired writings of the Holy Scriptures centering in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus the Christ. It was precisely this commitment that would distinguish the member churches of the ILC from that of other Lutheran churches and organizations in the world.

Finally, this Council wanted it to be clearly understood that it was “an association” of churches, but that it was not itself a church. It would not carry out “churchly functions.” The Council was not “to prescribe any course of action for its member bodies.” On the contrary, the duties of this Council were to enable its member churches, through their authorized representatives, to share information, to study theological questions and concerns together, to nurture and strengthen relationships with each other, and, if asked to do so, to issue statements on contemporary questions facing the church.

Membership in the Council therefore did not require formally declared altar and pulpit fellowship between its member bodies. But all member church bodies were “pledged to exhibit mutual respect and fraternal regard

for one another,” and all churches were pledged “to foster, strengthen, and preserve confessional agreement which manifests itself at the altar and in the pulpit.”

### **The Future of the ILC**

If the International Lutheran Council remains faithful to what it was organized to be, an association of equal churches, if its members remain unconditionally committed to the Scriptures as the inspired and infallible Word of God in all that it teaches, if it continues intentionally to encourage and build up all of its member churches and their leaders around the world through its triannual conferences (which since 2009 are also to include the wives of its leaders), then the International Lutheran Council has a very bright future. I speak as one who has personally been strengthened and encouraged through the years by regular contacts with like-minded confessional Lutherans throughout the world in the international conferences of its elected leaders and in its world seminary conferences.

If ever there was a need for the truly confessional Lutheran churches from around the world to stand together in witness to the beautiful Gospel message of full forgiveness of sin, life, and salvation through the suffering, death and resurrection of Jesus, the Christ, as taught in Bible, it is today. If ever there was a need for the truly confessional Lutheran churches from around the world to make a common witness to the implications which faith in Christ has for the way we live our lives in accordance with God’s inspired and infallible Word, it is now. If ever there was a need for the leaders and theologians of confessional Lutheran churches from all over the world to meet together regularly to build up and encourage one another in bearing the heavy burden of leadership in the church and in their personal walk with God, it is now.

I am convinced that the International Lutheran Council is well positioned to give leadership to such a bold and faithful proclamation of the Gospel in the world of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

## China Evangelical Lutheran Church Elects New President

Source: Asia Ablaze

On Monday, November 29, the China Evangelical Lutheran Church (CELC) elected a new Executive Committee at its annual General Conference. Rev. Andrew Miao was elected president. Other Executive Committee members include Rev. Jen- Jhu Ho, Rev. Bo-jiang Zhu, Rev. Alexander Wu, Rev. John Wan, Rev. Aaron Chu, Rev. Luther Jen, Rev. Stephen Wang, and Mr. Ji-liang Dong.

President Miao has been the pastor of Eternal Life Lutheran church in Taipei, Taiwan for the past 18 years. Besides his ministry as pastor of a thriving congregation, supervising and providing pastors for area churches,

his mission heart has led him to plant churches in the Taipei area, visit China for theological training, and spearhead an effort for the entire Eternal Life congregation to be involved in church planting in the Northern Shan State of Myanmar. Eternal Life Church, together with support from Truth Lutheran Church, also in Taipei, has established a preaching station with word and sacrament ministry as well as human care outreach to the Chinese-speaking people in Northern Burma.

They have sent a team of members each summer for the past three years to work with the local people and to reach out to them with God's love. Keep President Miao and the rest of the new leaders of the CELC in prayer as they forge forward in the Great Commission to spread the Gospel in the Chinese world!



General Conference of the CELC, with President Rev. Andrew Miao and other Executive Committee members

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