

LCMS President's Visit Encourages ELCH Leaders

LCMS World Mission - Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod (LCMS) President Rev. Dr. Gerald Kieschnick shared time with leaders and members from the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Haiti (ELCH) as he visited the disaster-struck nation. While in Haiti on 1 and 2 March 2010, Kieschnick brought words of encouragement on behalf of the LCMS, USA, prayed with Haitian Lutherans, and witnessed first-hand the devastation of the 12 January 2010 earthquake.



Photo: LCMS Reporter - James Neuendorf
LCMS President Dr. Gerald B. Kieschnick hands out copies of the children's book, *Jesus Blesses the Children*, at a refugee camp in Haiti during his visit to the island nation.

His pastoral presence brought the testimony of LCMS' members' commitment to lifting up the Haitian people in their time of critical need and the LCMS' members' firm intention of showing tangible love to their brothers and sisters in Haiti. Rev. Marky Kessa, president of the ELCH, expressed the church body's thanks for the help that the LCMS has provided to Haiti.

"Images on television don't come close to capturing the devastation wrought by the earthquake, nor do the news stories adequately convey the very difficult living circumstances facing the people who have been injured and who have lost their homes and possessions," said Kieschnick. "I give thanks to God for the financial gifts from our members which have enabled us to send food, water, medical

supplies, and tents to the people of Haiti. I pray that our heavenly Father will sustain our generous donors and tireless staff, volunteers, and partners as we work out our long-term response plan for helping the people of this ravaged country to return to a life of relative normalcy."

President Kessa shared that most ELCH congregations did not stop worship services following the earthquake. Though some church buildings were damaged or unstable, church members brought pews outside in the open to have worship. In Jacmel, Haiti, where President Kessa serves a congregation, 104 people have been baptized since the earthquake.

The ELCH has appointed a team that is visiting different locations within the country to assess what the needs are in various places, and they will put together a list of priorities.

On behalf of The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, LCMS World Relief and Human Care (the mercy arm of the LCMS) is working cooperatively with LCMS World Mission (the mission sending arm of the LCMS), LCMS congregations and districts, and U.S. and international partners to provide immediate and long-term relief for the people of Haiti and the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Haiti.

A Still Small Voice

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



Dr. Gerald B. Kieschnick

One would need to have lived in a cave the past few months not to be aware of the two major earthquakes affecting countries that are home to churches of the International Lutheran Council.

On 12 January an earthquake struck Haiti, killing more than 200 000 people and causing billions of dollars in property damage.

Untold numbers of individuals and families, left homeless, now live in tents. Some are real tents. Others are makeshift tents constructed of pieces of plastic, cardboard, wood, tin, or any other available material, held together by string or whatever else might be found. The floor is non-existent. People sleep on the ground. And the rainy season is at hand, meaning the dirt floors will soon become a muddy quagmire.

Much assistance has been sent from many individuals and churches from around the world, including a number of churches belonging to the International Lutheran Council. The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Haiti, a member church of the ILC, is working together with leaders of the Lutheran Church in Haiti and others to assist with provision of food, shelter, medical care, and other necessities for the thousands of people whose lives have been radically affected by this horrendous earthquake.

To make matters worse for many of our Lutheran brothers and sisters in Christ in Haiti, the man widely recognized as the father of Lutheranism in Haiti, Rev. Doris Jean Louis, was brutally murdered in Haiti two months later. His body was laid to rest following a lengthy memorial service on Saturday, 20 March, in Port-au-Prince.

Meanwhile, on 27 February, another earthquake, approximately 500 times more powerful than the one in Haiti, occurred off the coast of the Maule Region in Chile. At the time this article is being written, representatives from The Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod were in Chile, visiting with leaders of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Republic of Chile, another member church of the International Lutheran Council. Early reports have indicated much damage, in addition to the deaths of approximate 800 people.

At times like these, many questions are in our minds. Foremost among them is this one: Are hurricanes, tornados, and earthquakes natural disasters or acts of God? This question is on the minds of many these days in the aftermath of the two earthquakes mentioned above. It's a question asked also by those in the path of hurricanes, typhoons, tsunamis, and other destructive storms. The Bible mentions such catastrophes in numerous places and contexts. According to my electronic Bible, "earthquake" is mentioned in 16 different sections of Scripture.

In one case God is described clearly as the sender: "And in an instant, suddenly, you will be visited by the LORD of hosts with thunder and with earthquake and great noise, with whirlwind and tempest, and the flame of a devouring fire" (Isaiah 29:5-6). In another case God, while very possibly or even likely still the sender, is distinctly separate from such powerful forces:

"And behold, the LORD passed by, and a great and strong wind tore the mountains and broke in pieces the rocks before the LORD, but the LORD was not in the wind. And after the wind an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake. And after the earthquake a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire. And after the fire, a still, small voice ..." (1 Kings 19:11-12).

Almighty God, merciful Father, your thoughts are not our thoughts, and your ways are not our ways. In your wisdom you have permitted disastrous earthquakes to befall the countries of Haiti and Chile. Keep the survivors from despair and do not let their faith fail them, but sustain and comfort them. Direct all continuing efforts to attend the injured, console the bereaved, and protect the helpless. Deliver any who are still in danger, and bring hope and healing, that they may find relief and restoration; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.



LCMS Offers Prayers and Support for IELCHI

Rev. Carlos Schumann, president of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Republic of Chile (IELCHI) said his members and pastors are safe following the 27 February 2010 8.8 magnitude earthquake even as the church body's assessment of damage continues.

"By God's grace, [none] of our church members and pastors' families have suffered," Schuman wrote in an e-mail to the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod (LCMS).

The LCMS is monitoring the needs of the partner church and has pledged assistance in the aftermath of the earthquake that claimed more than 700 lives, toppled thousands of buildings and homes, and left an estimated two million people homeless.

Dr. Gerald B. Kieschnick, president of the LCMS, expressed sorrow and concern for the Chilean people and the IELCHI in an electronic letter to Schumann.

The IELCHI, while still assessing the earthquake's effects on its members, buildings, and schools, has reported no serious damage

from the quake to its congregations and schools. The earthquake is one of the worst on record.

Kieschnick asked staff from LCMS World Mission, led by Rev. Dr. Jorge Groh, regional director for Latin America, and LCMS World Relief and Human Care, to remain in contact with the IELCHI.

Schumann thanked the LCMS' "brothers and sisters that are praying for us and our country." "So, just [one] thing remains firm: God's merciful and powerful hands where your life by faith quietly rests," he wrote in a reply to Kieschnick. "I'm really [appreciative of] your kind, warm and friendly concern about us and the whole Chilean church."

On behalf of the LCMS, LCMS World Relief and Human Care works cooperatively with LCMS World Mission, LCMS congregations and districts, and U.S. and international partners to provide immediate and long-term relief for the people of Chile and the IELCHI.

Asian Lutheran Churches Support Relief Work in Haiti

Asia *Ablaze!* Newsletter - The terrible earthquake in Haiti on January 12 has led many Lutherans in Asia to pray for those who lost loved ones, homes and livelihoods. From around Asia, churches of the International Lutheran Council in Asia have acted to bring God's compassion in practical ways. The Lutheran Church in Korea (LCK), the Lutheran Church-Hong Kong Synod (LCHKS) and the Japan Lutheran Church (JLC) were quick to respond to the needs in Haiti and the Lutheran response to this devastating tremor.

LCK members contributed US\$ 66 000 to Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod World Relief and Human Care (LCMS-WRHC) in their efforts to assist in the relief and recovery while the LCHKS was able to send US\$ 10 000 in the effort to help. The Japan Lutheran Church submitted about US\$ 8 000 to LCMS-WRHC in support of the relief effort in Haiti and Chile.

ILC Seminaries Meet in Fort Wayne

Under the theme, "Lutheran Identity in Light of Changing Christian Demographics," participants from six continents will meet for the fourth International Lutheran Council (ILC) World Seminaries Conference, to be held in Fort Wayne, Indiana, USA from 3 to 7 June 2010. Each ILC member church body has been invited to send two representatives from their respective

seminar(ies), appointed by the head of that church. Each ILC member church that does not have a seminary is invited to send one representative. Lutheran World Federation General Secretary Dr. Ishmael Noko as well as eight other guests, most from non ILC member churches, are also invited to attend.

Included in the program will be two keynote addresses. The first will be by Dr. Philip Jenkins, author of several books on global shifts in world Christianity. The second keynote will be by Dr. Erni Seibert, who for many years was a professor of systematic and practical theology at the Concordia Institute (seminary) in Sao Paulo, Brazil, and is currently the secretary for communications for the Bible Society of Brazil, which has provided him with global and ecumenical experience. He will speak on "Lutheran Identity in Light of Changing Christian Demographics."

Those presentations will be followed by five presentations by a representative from each world areas who will deal with the topic of the conference from the perspective of their world area. Sectional papers will also be given.

The first World Seminaries Conference was held in Porto Alegre, Brazil (2001); the second in Erfurt, Germany (2004); and the third in Pretoria, South Africa (2007). Once again, the ILC has been able to have the fourth conference because of a generous grant from the Marvin M. Schwan Charitable Foundation, which has provided the funding for all of these conferences.

LCMS-CTCR to Hold ILC Leadership Conference

In addressing a Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod (LCMS) 2007 convention resolution that asked the Commission on Theology and Church Relations (CTCR) to coordinate opportunities for the study of confessional Lutheran theology with members of the International Lutheran Council (ILC), it approved a proposal to hold a Confessional Leadership Conference from 3 to 5 June 2010 at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, USA.

The ILC will be holding its Fourth World Seminaries Conference on these same dates in Fort Wayne, and the participants in the CTCR-sponsored conference also will have the opportunity to listen to some of the addresses scheduled to be given at the ILC's conference.

A US\$40 000 grant from Thrivent Financial for Lutherans will fund the CTCR-sponsored conference, to which 15 to 20 representatives of ILC-member churches from each world region and also others from around the world will be invited.

Membership of Lutheran Churches Rises to Nearly 74 Million

LWI - According to the 2009 annual statistical survey conducted by the LWF Office for Communication Services (OCS), the total membership of Lutheran churches worldwide rose over the past year by 1 784 556 to just under 73.8 million (73 758 126), representing an increase of 2.5 percent. The total number of members in churches belonging to the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) last year rose by 1 589 225 to just over 70 million (70 053 316). While membership of Lutheran churches in Africa and Asia increased, churches in Latin America and the Caribbean as well as North America once again experienced a slight decline.

Extension of LWF membership to the newly formed Evangelical Church in Central Germany, resulting from the January 2009 merger of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Thuringia and the Evangelical Church of the Church Province of Saxony, led to a slight increase in the membership of LWF churches in Europe.

In 2008, all Lutheran churches worldwide counted some 72 million members, compared to 71.8 million in 2007. The number of Lutherans belonging to non-LWF Lutheran churches rose by 195 331 to reach 3 704 810, an increase of 5.6 percent. This increase is principally due to the inclusion of Lutheran churches worldwide that had not previously been taken into account. The OCS survey identified an additional seven Lutheran churches in Africa and one in Europe.

Membership in churches belonging to the LWF in Africa over the past year rose by 7.1 percent to a total of 18 520 690. The membership of non-LWF Lutheran churches on the continent was 196 989, an increase of around 142 774 due to the inclusion of data from the seven churches.

The total number of Lutherans in Asia rose by 200 955 in 2009 to 8 746 434, representing an increase of 2.35 percent. Lutheran churches in Asia that do not belong to the LWF reported 189 653 new members, corresponding to an increase of 6 732 or 3.68 percent.

Last year the total membership of LWF member churches in Europe increased slightly, by 250 062, or approximately 0.7 percent, to a current total of 37 164 411. Inclusion in the data of the 40 450 members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church on the Faroe Islands, which formerly belonged to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Denmark, doubled the membership figure of non-LWF member churches in Europe, which now stands at 79 778.

The total membership in LWF member churches in Latin America and the Caribbean decreased by a mere 198 to a total of 837 692. Membership in non-LWF churches in the region counted 285 331, a decline of 49.

In 2009, total membership in LWF member churches in North America fell by 95 007 or 1.95 percent to 4 784 089. Membership in non-LWF Lutheran churches rose by 5 963 or 0.2 percent to 2 953 059.

Full details of the 2009 LWF statistics can be found at: http://www.lutheranworld.org/LWF_Documents/LWF-Statistics-2009.pdf.

Fellowship Talks Between LCMS and Siberian Church

LCMSNews No. 23 - Leaders of the Siberian Evangelical Lutheran Church (SELC) and The Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod (LCMS), USA anticipate that discussions they began at a 27 January 2010 meeting in St. Louis, Missouri will lead to formal altar and pulpit fellowship between the two church bodies.

LCMS Director of Church Relations Dr. Samuel Nafzger, who chaired the meeting, said that its purpose was "to discuss and decide together how we can best get to where we all want to go."



Photo: LCMS Reporter - Frank Kohn

Rev. Alexey Streltsov, left, rector of Lutheran Theological Seminary in Novosibirsk, Siberia of the SELC with (to his left) SELC Bishop Vsevolod Lytkin and two of seven LCMS representatives - Rev. Jon Brauersreuther and Dr. Joel Lehenbauer.

The meeting started with a review of contacts that began in the 1990s between leaders of the two church bodies, after which SELC Bishop Vsevolod Lytkin stated the SELC's appreciation for its close relationship with the Missouri Synod in the years since.

Lytkin also provided a brief history of his church body, including its official licensing by the Russian government in 2002 and his consecration as bishop in 2007, the same year that the church's present name was officially recognized. He described the SELC for those at the meeting as "a small church with 2 000 parishioners, 22 parishes and mission stations, and 17 clergy serving a very large country," noting that its borders cover a geographical area of some 5 000 miles (8 000 km) from east to west.

A joint news release about the meeting notes that "all present supported responsible pursuit of church fellowship based on agreement in doctrine and practice. All also agreed to look for ways to expedite the process."

The release concludes that "the next step in the process toward formal altar and pulpit fellowship will be an early meeting arranged by SELC Bishop Lytkin and LCMS President Kieschnick."

JLC, LCMS Plan Fourth Round of Talks

Representatives of the Japan Lutheran Church (JLC) and the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod (LCMS) will meet on 30 and 31 August 2010 for their fourth round of discussions concerning the two church bodies' relationship in light of the JLC's proposal to ordain women.

The representatives made that decision during their third session together on 3 and 4 February this year in Yokohama, Japan. The next discussion round will also take place in Japan, at a location to be determined.

The talks result from a resolution the JLC adopted at its 14th General Convention in May 2008. A proposal to ordain women as pastors had been presented for convention action. But delegates instead adopted a resolution calling for "talks with the LCMS," to be followed by a special JLC convention to further take up the matter.

A joint news release issued after the third round of the discussions states, "Before finalizing a response to this proposal to ordain women, the JLC and the LCMS representatives to these talks have agreed to have one more round of talks."

Dr. Samuel H. Nafzger, LCMS's director of church relations, said, "Recognizing that a decision to ordain women as pastors would ultimately result in an end to the altar and pulpit fellowship which our two churches have enjoyed for almost 40 years, the JLC representatives indicated that it would be necessary to postpone a special convention which had tentatively been set for May of this year to take up this matter."

"The purpose of this fourth round of talks is to discuss what kind of relationship between our two churches might be possible, should the JLC decide to amend its constitution to permit the ordination of women," Nafzger said. "Our LCMS representatives readily agreed to a fourth meeting to discuss this."

"Since a decision to permit the ordination of women in the JLC would involve a change in its constitution," the news release notes, "it would be necessary that this revision be approved by a two-thirds majority vote."

The news release continues: "In these discussions, agreement between the JLC and the LCMS has become evident on the centrality of the Gospel in confessing that the Gospel of Jesus Christ stands at the center of what we believe, teach, and confess. Both churches agree that what our respective churches teach about the service of women must be normed by the inspired and infallible Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. All participants are in agreement, moreover, that the Scriptures must be properly interpreted, and that a distinction must be made between what is prescriptive and what is descriptive in Scripture. Both churches agree that that which is not clearly taught in Scripture must remain as open questions.

"But it has not been possible in these discussions to date to reach agreement on whether the ordination of women is a doctrinal matter or not," the release states. "The LCMS has repeatedly stated its conviction that we understand the Scriptures to teach 'that women are not to hold the pastoral office or serve in any capacity involving the distinctive functions of this office.' The JLC, on the other hand, has held since 1974 that the question of women serving as pastors is an adiaphoron, an open question."

"The JLC believes that since the matter of the ordination of women as pastors is an adiaphoron, it would be possible to change its constitution to permit the ordination of women as pastors so that it might more aggressively promote the mission of the church in Japan," said JLC President Rev. Yutaka Kumei. "But the JLC also prays that it will be possible to maintain the closest possible relationship to its mother church, the LCMS."

The Japan Lutheran Church traces its origin to the work of LCMS missionaries who first came to Japan in 1948. In 1971, the LCMS responded favorably to a request from the JLC for partner church relationship as an autonomous church.

Roger Zieger is New SELK Mission Director

selk news - Roger Zieger is the new director of the Lutheran Church Mission (LCM), the

mission arm of the Independent Evangelical Lutheran Church (SELK) in Germany. The 50-years old theologian was elected in Bergen-Bleckmar, the seat of the LCM, by its Mission Board on 10 March 2010. After accepting the election result, Zieger immediately became the leader of the LCM. His installation will follow at a later date.

The election of a new director had become necessary as the term of office of the previous director, Rev. Markus Nietzke, had come to an end and he did not make himself available for another term. He has already accepted a call as parish pastor.

Until his election, the new Mission Director was pastor of a SELK congregation in Berlin-Spandau and also the Superintendent of the SELK Berlin-Brandenburg district. Zieger is married and has two children.

Obare Receives Walter-Künneth-Award

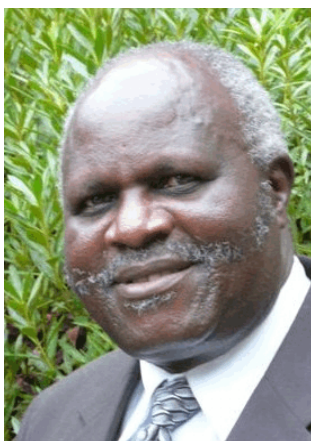


Photo: J. Haessig
Presiding Bishop Dr. Walter
E. Obare Omwanza

idea/selk-news
- The Presiding Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Kenya, The Most Rev. Dr. Walter E. Obare Omwanza, Nairobi, has received the Walter-Künneth-Award. With it his worldwide engagement for the lasting validity of the Bible as the word of God and the Confessions of the Church was

appreciated.

With this honor the Rally Around Bible and Confession (RABC) in Bavaria, Germany expressed the connectedness of European Christians with the growing churches in Africa which are faithful to the Bible, said RABC chairman Andreas Späth, Ansbach, at the conferring of the medal on 14 March 2010 in Nuremberg. Like the name bearer of the award, Prof. Dr. Walter Künneth (1901-1997), Obare also preserves "faithfulness towards Holy Scripture in disputes with representatives of an alleged modern theology which tries do undermine the authority of the Bible and the confessions of the Church," Späth continued.

Several speakers from Germany and Scandinavia especially pointed out that five years ago Obare consecrated Swedish pastor

Arne Olson as Bishop of the "Mission Province" within the Swedish State Church.

The Mission Province advocates conservative theological standpoints which are not tolerated by the rest of the Swedish Church. To it belong pastors which are not employed by the State Church because they reject the ordination of women.

LCMS: CTCR Encourages Positive Response to ACNA Request

LCMSNews - No. 22 - The Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod (LCMS) Commission on Theology and Church Relations (CTCR) encouraged LCMS President Dr. Gerald B. Kieschnick to respond positively to a recent request from Archbishop Robert Duncan to "explore dialogue" between the Missouri Synod and the recently-formed Anglican Church in North America (ACNA), which Duncan heads. This was in response to Kieschnick's request for "input and counsel" from the Commission.

The ACNA, with 100 000 Anglicans in 700 parishes, was formally recognized as a "province-in-formation" in April 2009 by leaders of Anglican churches representing 70 percent of active Anglicans globally. It is based in Pennsylvania.

According to its Web site (<http://anglicanchurch.net/>) the church body "represents the reuniting of orthodox Anglicans who have been squeezed out of the Episcopal Church and Anglican Church of Canada by successive changes to historic Christian teaching and Anglican practice."

In his letter of response to Duncan, Kieschnick wrote, "I believe that discussions such as you have outlined would prove to be a blessing for each of our churches."

Dr. Samuel Nafzger, LCMS Director of Church Relations, will meet with the appropriate ACNA officials to work out the details of how to facilitate these discussions. Nafzger attended ACNA's Inaugural Assembly last June in Bedford, Texas.

LCMS: CTCR Adopts Two Reports

LCMSNews - "The Creator's Tapestry: Scriptural Perspectives on Man-Woman Relationships in Marriage and the Church" is the title of a 76-page report adopted by the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod (LCMS) Commission on Theology and Church Relations (CTCR) at its 10 to 12 December 2009 meeting.

It is the commission's latest and most comprehensive response to a series of questions about 'the Scriptural relationship of man and woman' assigned to it by the LCMS's 1995 Convention. Following publication in early 2010, the report will be sent out to all LCMS congregations and church workers and posted on the CTCR's Web site.

At its 11 to 13 February 2010 meeting, the CTCR adopted "in principle" a further document responding to a LCMS 2007 convention resolution requesting it "to develop a biblical and confessional report on responsible Christian stewardship of the environment for use by Synod entities including our schools and churches as they develop resources for the church at-large."

Titled "Together With All Creatures: Caring for God's Living Earth," the document is designed "to help people embrace their identity and calling as God's creatures to care for God's living earth," according to a brief summary provided by Dr. Charles Arand, a CTCR member and chairman of the systematics department at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, who drafted the report.

LCHKS Celebrates 60 Years Jubilee

Asia Ablaze! Newsletter - As part of its 60th Anniversary Jubilee Celebration, the Lutheran Church-Hong Kong Synod (LCHHKS) organized a photo-shoot to "Hold the Cross High."

More than 2 200 students from LCHKS schools and clients of Lutheran Social Services gathered on 30 January 2010. The participants gave thanks to Christ for the sixty year history of the LCHKS and that He continues to hold the cross high in Hong Kong.

LCK Pastors Visit Japan Lutheran Church

Asia Ablaze! Newsletter - Lutheran Church in Korea (LCK) President Rev. Hyun-Sub Um and Clerk of the General Assembly, Rev. Kyungman Hong, together with three LCK pastors, visited Okinawa from 12 to 15 January 2010 at the invitation of the Japan Lutheran Church (JLC). The JLC invited the LCK delegation to its annual pastors' retreat at Okinawa Lutheran Church under the theme "As Peace Makers."

The program consisted of worship services, a keynote speech, discussion, and visits to war memorial sites like Okinawa Peace Park. LCK President Um and NRK President Yutaka Kumei held a public bilateral conference on the mission

exchange between Korea and Japan. They agreed to study the possibilities of exchanging pastors for a substantial promotion of mission relationships between the Lutheran churches of both countries. As a first step, they pushed ahead to give JLC's graduate students of theology the opportunity to study in the Graduate School of Theology at Luther University in Korea and to receive practical training within the LCK this coming summer.

ELCE: The Lord Provides Workers For His Vineyard

For a small church, the Evangelical Lutheran Church of England (ELCE) is experiencing the joy of many ordinations. Over eight months the number on the roll of active pastors increases from ten to fifteen. In August 2009 Steve Edge - dubbed the 'marathon man' at Westfield House who completed his studies over eight years part-time while maintaining a full work schedule 'out in the world' - was ordained and has taken up a role as an Assistant Minister (NSM) at Ascension Lutheran Church, Brandon. He is continuing to work full-time as he also engages in sharing the Gospel to the English with an English accent!

Eight of the pastors on the active roster were born overseas! The non stipendiary minister model is one the ELCE is facing more and more.

At the annual synod of the ELCE in October last year two men, Gordon Naumann and Mark Smith were ordained. Gordon immediately began work as pastor (full-time) at St. David, Cardiff. Mark is a missionary at large as he serves St. Timothy, Sunderland while undertaking studies at Durham University.

At the time of writing, two more ordinations will occur just prior to Holy Week as Tapani Simojoki and Jaime Kriger are ordained. Both men will serve in the ELCE.

All men have undertaken all or some of their studies through the ELCE's theological house of studies, Westfield House.



Ordination of Steve Edge (centre front row)

"Of course calls may come and pastors may leave the ELCE as well, but it does seem that the Lord of the Church is equipping the ELCE with servants ready to share the Gospel. Jesus is faithful and the little flock of the ELCE need have no fear as she responds to the opportunities before her," commented ELCE Pastoral Advisor Rev. George Samiac. "The ordinations are occasions for much celebration as people from across the ELCE gather to praise God, enjoy fellowship, and admire so many red stoles."

Shareholder Agreement for LTS in South Africa

On 8 December 2009 a Shareholder Agreement for the Lutheran Theological Seminary (LTS) in Tshwane, Pretoria, South Africa was formally signed by Bishop Dr. David Tswaedi of the Lutheran Church in Southern Africa (LCSA), Mission Director Rev. Markus Nietzke of the Lutheran Church Mission (LCM), the Mission arm of the Independent Evangelical Lutheran Church (SELK) in Germany, and President Rev. Peter Ahlers of the Free Evangelical Lutheran Synod in South Africa (FELSISA). Also present was Bishop Hans-Jörg Voigt of the SELK, who joyfully observed the long awaited event.



Photo: D. Reinstorf
Signing the Shareholder Agreement (l.t.r.):
President Peter Ahlers, Mission Director Markus
Nietzke and Bishop David Tswaedi

Contained in the introductory paragraph of the agreement is the fact that the LTS has been the theological education facility for the LCSA since 2001, but that due to the long existing relationship with the LCM, and the existing church and altar fellowship with the FELSISA, the LCSA expressed the wish to share the ownership with the mentioned institutions.

The LCSA will keep a share of forty per cent, the LCM and the FELSISA will each have a share of thirty per cent.

New Student Accommodation for Westfield House

ELCE News - "It's looking more like a home ... a big home," describes Rev. George Samiac, Pastoral Advisor of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of England (ELCE), of the new student accommodation center at Westfield House in Cambridge, England.

Situated in the old car park adjacent to the campus, the building is no longer drawings and imagination but is almost completed and awaiting the fitting out of all the rooms. The house will provide accommodation for 23 and is part of the expansion of the Westfield House program offering confessional Lutheran theological education and also access to the resources of the University of Cambridge. The new facilities will be ready for students for the 2010 - 2011 academic year.

Westfield House is the institution of theological studies of the ELCE.



Westfield House - Student Accommodation Center

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