



ILC NEWS

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Photo: G. van Hattem

Opening Worship Service of the ILC Conference at Luther University in Seoul, Korea

“IN CHRIST: LIVING LIFE TO THE FULL”

Confessional Lutheran Churches meet in Korea

Seoul, Korea, 31 August 2009 / ah - Bishops and presidents from 32 Lutheran churches from all over the world, together with their wives and invited guests from other churches, met from 26 to 31 August 2009 at the Hanwha resort near Seoul, Korea, for the 23rd conference of the International Lutheran Council (ILC).

The Lutheran Church in Korea (LCK) hosted the conference for the second time. Its president, Dr. Hyun Sub Um, preached in the opening worship at Luther University/Seminary, Seoul, on 26 August.

The theme of this year's conference was “In Christ: Living Life to the Full,” based on the invitation of Jesus Christ in John 10:10: “I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.”

Dr. John D. Eckrich, a retired medical doctor from St. Louis, Missouri, USA, delivered



Photo: P. Ahlers
Dr. John D. Eckrich

the keynote address, in which he described the ongoing process of Christian, spiritual formation, growth and maturity, anchored in justification and active in baptismal life.

Dr. Eckrich has developed a ministry

called ‘Grace Place’ to assist pastors and their spouses to live Biblically-based, Christ-centered balanced lives, with particular emphasis on the holistic health of pastors, their marriages, and ministries.

The second presenter of the



Photo: J. Haessig
Dr. David J. Ludwig

program, Dr. David J. Ludwig, USA, demonstrated how the individual personalities in a marriage can become a strong "WE" by better understanding the intellectual, emotional, spiritual and physical pillars of a relationship.

The topic was further explored by daily Bible studies and devotions.



Dr. Gerald B. Kieschnick

In his report to the conference, ILC chairman Dr. Gerald B. Kieschnick, President of the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod, USA, emphasized the importance of regional ILC conferences and their potential for furthering the goals of the ILC on the local level. He reflected on the importance and challenges of its future,

which he described as bright. Kieschnick also referred to fiscal realities and envisaged the ILC having some day a full time Executive Secretary.

ILC Executive Secretary, Dr. Samuel H. Nafzger, reported on the Council's activities during the last two years. He began by sketching the history of the ILC which goes back to 1952 and developed from the International Lutheran Theological Conference to the International Lutheran Conference and further on to the present International Lutheran Council (since 1993). Nafzger pointed out that the resolutions of the previous ILC conference with regard to the number of world areas and budget and assessment plans have been implemented. He announced that plans for a forth ILC World 'Seminaries' Conference are well advanced and thanked the Schwan Foundation for financing the first three conferences and its promised support for the next one. He also thanked Rev. Peter Ahlers, president of the Free Evangelical Lutheran Synod in South Africa, for ten years of editing the ILC News, the three-monthly newsletter of the ILC.

Dr. Douglas Rutt, Ft. Wayne, Indiana, USA reported on the planning of the next ILC World 'Seminaries' Conference, which is supposed to take place at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne from 3 to 6 June 2010.



Photo: LCMS Reporter
Dr. Samuel H. Nafzger



Photo: P. Ahlers
Dr. Bengt Birgersson

The situation of confessional Lutheranism in Scandinavia was described by Dr. Bengt Birgersson, General Secretary of the Mission Province in Sweden and Finland.

In addition to the main topic, the ILC conference heard reports from member churches and held regional meetings.

Dr. P. Lo, Hong Kong, brought a word of greeting from Dr. Ismael Noko, General Secretary of the Lutheran World Federation.

In an important move the conference unanimously adopted a statement on "Same Gender Relationships and the Church," based on the Bible's witness and Christian teaching through 2000 years (see page 4).

The Evangelical Lutheran Free Church of Denmark decided to change its full membership in the ILC to an associate membership.

Bishop Hans-Jörg Voigt of the Independent Evangelical Lutheran Church in Germany and Dr. S. Nafzger reported on the project of the *International Lutheran Society of Wittenberg* in Wittenberg, Germany.

A visit to the Luther House under construction of the LCK in down town Seoul, the Seoul Tower, and a Korean Folk Village gave the eighty participants of the conference a glimpse of the activities of the LCK, the Korean capital, and the Korean culture.



Photo: G. van Hattem

The 2009 - 2012 Executive Committee of the ILC. L.t.r.: Dr. S. Nafzger (Executive Secretary), Rev. G. van Hattem, (Secretary), Most Rev. C. Ekong (Africa Region), Dr. P. Nerbas (Vice President and Latin America Region), Dr. G. Kieschnick (Chairman), Rev. J. Cerdeñola (Asia Region), Rev. R. Bugbee (North America Region), and Rev. H.-J. Voigt (European Region)



Photo: J. Haessig

Participants of the 23rd Conference of the International Lutheran Council in Seoul, Korea

On Sunday, 30 August the guests from all over the world attended worship services in local LCK congregations, whose members hosted them for lunch.

Elected as officers of the Executive Committee of the ILC were Dr. Gerald B. Kieschnick as chairman and Rev. Gijsbertus van Hattem as secretary. The Lutheran Church of Nigeria, the Lutheran Church in the Philippines, the Independent Evangelical Lutheran Church (SELK) in Germany, the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Brazil and the Lutheran Church-Canada were elected to represent their respective world area on the Committee. The Executive Committee was installed in a very special Service of Sending on the last day of the conference.

The executive committee asked Dr. Samuel Nafzger to continue serving as Executive Secretary of the ILC.

The next conference of the International Lutheran Council is planned to be held in the USA in 2012, hosted by the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod.

The ILC is a worldwide association of confessional Lutheran Churches to promote the proclamation of the Gospel according to the Lutheran Confessions.

Beyond the ILC International Conference

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

The 2009 International Conference of the International Lutheran Council is now history. Approximately eighty men and women from the member churches of the ILC and their spouses gathered in Seoul, Korea, for this biennial

conference. Translators added their special communicative touch to the conference, hosted by the Lutheran Church in Korea and its president, Dr. Hyun Sub Um, and his most helpful and hardworking staff.

Highlights of the conference included:

- Christ-honoring and Spirit-filled worship, especially at the beginning and end of the conference.
- Bible studies by leaders of ILC churches under the theme "In Christ: Living Life to the Full."
- Special presentations by Dr. John and Kathy Eckrich and Dr. David and Kathy Ludwig of Grace Place Retreats under the same theme.
- Wonderful Sunday worship in local congregations of the Lutheran Church in Korea with gracious hospitality from congregational members and pastors.
- Daily stretching and meditation experiences led by Dr. Eckrich.
- Unanimous adoption of the statement titled "Same Gender Relationships and the Church."
- Development of special relationships between wives of ILC church body leaders.
- Shared meals with a variety of Korean foods, including the special Korean dish of Kimchi.
- Wonderful fellowship of brothers and sisters in Christ under the blessing of Almighty God!

The ILC's expressed purpose is that member churches "share information, study theological questions and concerns together ... discuss effective coordinated means of carrying out the mission and ministry of the Church,

nurture and strengthen their relationships with theological questions and concerns together ... discuss effective coordinated means of carrying out the mission and ministry of the Church, nurture and strengthen their relationships with each other, and work toward the closest possible joint



Photo: J. Haessig
Dr. Gerald B. Kieschnick

expression of their faith and confession" (ILC Constitution). This purpose statement becomes more important in the aftermath of decisions made by a number of church bodies in the world, including some Lutheran church bodies, regarding the topic of same gender relationships and ordination of homosexual pastors.

The unanimous adoption of "Same Gender Relationships and the Church" will be most helpful in presenting a clear position on this topic on the basis of Holy Scripture. By the grace of God the ILC will continue to speak the truth in love, bearing witness to the revelation of God's Word and the Lutheran Confessions. We thank God for the opportunity to do so under the freedom of the Gospel, with great love, care, and concern for the lost who do not yet know the love of God in Christ our Lord, and the erring who have lost their way in the darkness and despair of sin and guilt.

It is a humbling privilege to have served as chairman of the ILC these past two years and to have been elected to serve in that same capacity in the next triennium. As you will recall, the 2007 ILC conference voted to move from a biennial cycle to a triennial cycle. This means that the next international conference will be held in 2012. In the meantime, regional conferences will continue to grow in significance as important relationships between and among confessional Lutheran leaders are developed, sustained, deepened, and enriched.

May the peace of God that passes all understanding keep your hearts and minds through faith in Christ Jesus our Lord!

Same-Gender Relationships and the Church

Seoul, Korea, 31 August 2009 - *At its recent conference from 26 to 31 August 2009 in Seoul, Korea, the International Lutheran Council (ILC) unanimously adopted the following statement on "Same-Gender Relationships and the Church".*

Recent years have brought confusion and discord to churches in various parts of the world - including Lutheran churches - as some church bodies have adopted resolutions stating that sexually active, same-gender relationships are an acceptable way of life for Christians. In addition, some have approved the ordination of pastors living in such a committed, sexually active same-gender relationship. The 23rd World Conference of the International Lutheran Council met August 26-31, 2009, in Seoul, Korea, under the theme: "In Christ: Living Life to the Full." Our desire to proclaim and to live the abundant life in Christ compels us to make this statement in light of the current turmoil regarding same-gender relationships.

In evaluating the question of homosexuality, even in the 21st century, we believe we are ultimately dealing with the authority of Holy Scripture as the inspired Word of God. Even in the sensitive matter of human beings and their sexual identity, the church is to submit in humility to the authority of the Word of God. The Scriptures testify clearly and repeatedly that the lifelong committed union of one man and one woman is the place the Lord intends for human sexuality to be lived out. Biblical passages which address the practice of homosexuality do so in terms of disapproval. Rooted in the Bible's witness and in keeping with Christian teaching through 2000 years, we continue to believe that the practice of homosexuality - in any and all situations - violates the will of the Creator God and must be recognized as sin.

At the same time, we declare our resolve to approach those with homosexual inclinations with the deepest possible Christian love and pastoral concern, in whatever situation they may be living. Though we affirm the demands of God's law without reservation, we Christians confess that the sins of the world have been forgiven through Christ's suffering and death on the cross. As the redeemed children of God, we lead our lives as "saints and sinners" at the same time. We hope for full renewal and sanctification, but realize that these hopes are not completely fulfilled in this life. This applies to countless temptations. Our sinful condition calls for a lifetime of prayer and struggle. Confession and absolution provide a welcome refuge to receive the Lord's forgiveness, which He also

offers through His Word and the Sacraments. This enables us to continue our personal struggles to live a God-pleasing life in the power of the Spirit.

Lutheran Theological Conference in South Africa Explores the Unity of the Church

By John T. Pless - Meeting at the FELS Retreat Center near Paulpietersburg, South Africa on 11 to 14 August 2009, over sixty-five theologians and church leaders from South Africa, Botswana, India, USA, Madagascar, Kenya, Ghana, Germany, Finland, Zambia, Mozambique and Congo heard papers and discussed themes related to the credal confession of the church's oneness.

The presentations dealt with classical theological themes in the context of contemporary challenges to confessional faithfulness. Sponsored by Concordia Theological Seminary (CTS), Fort Wayne, Indiana, USA, and the Lutheran Theological Seminary, Tshwane (LTST), South Africa, the conference provided a forum for mutual learning and edification for those in attendance.

There was also a time for representatives of various African seminaries to meet together to discuss opportunities for enhancing theological education in Africa. Dr. Timothy C.J. Quill, Fort Wayne, and Dr. Wilhelm Weber (LTST) provided capable and careful planning and leadership for the conference.

Conference participants expressed appreciation for this opportunity to engage in theological study and conversation and an

eagerness to have such a conference on an annual basis. It is hoped that the proceedings of the 2009 conference might be published in the near future.

Wittenberg Project Enters New Phase

The joint project in Wittenberg, Germany, of the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod (LCMS), USA and its German sister church, the Independent Evangelical Lutheran Church (SELK) entered a new phase on 22 July this year with the appointment of a new managing director and the election of a new chairman for its supervisory board.



Photo: David L. Mahsman
This former boys school, built in 1564, stands near the "mother church of the Reformation," Wittenberg, Germany's St. Mary's Church.

Meeting in Wittenberg, the supervisory board of the International Lutheran Society of Wittenberg (ILSW) named Rev. David Mahsman to succeed Dr. Wilhelm Torgerson as managing director. Mahsman took up his new duties on 1 September.

The board also elected Dr. Samuel H. Nafzger to be its new chairman. He succeeds Bishop Hans-Jörg Voigt of the SELK. The ILSW's Wittenberg project is jointly operated by the SELK and the Missouri Synod.

After serving four years as assistant to the executive director of LCMS World Mission, Mahsman began serving on 1 July as director, special assignments, Eurasia, for LCMS World Mission. He will continue in that post as well.



Photo: W. Weber
Participants of the Lutheran Theological Conference in South Africa

Nafzger, former executive director of the LCMS's Commission on Theology and Church Relations, is an assistant to the LCMS president for church relations.

The ILSW board's actions "underscore the commitment of the LCMS to this project," Nafzger said. He added that the Synod, its president, and the LCMS Board of Directors support the project.

Nafzger noted that the dual actions - choosing a new chairman and new managing director - were taken "at the encouragement of the SELK and with its full support."



Photo: D. Mahsman
LCMS President Gerald B. Kieschnick, left, and SELK Bishop Hans-Jörg Voigt visit in March at the front door of the historic Wittenberg building.

The ILSW owns a historic 16th-century school building near St. Mary's Church in Wittenberg. Reformer Martin Luther, who was a theological professor in Wittenberg, preached frequently at the church. It was on the door of another Wittenberg church, the Castle Church, that Luther posted 95 theses for debate in 1517, an action regarded as the spark that ignited the Reformation.

The ILSW was formed by the LCMS and SELK to operate a welcome center for visitors to the Luther sites, to re-establish a SELK congregation in Wittenberg, and to carry out other work.

"Both of our church bodies believe that it is important that our churches and the theological confession for which we are known around the world be represented in Wittenberg, the birthplace of the Reformation," Nafzger said. "We look forward to working together with the other churches present in this place where Dr. Martin Luther lived, taught, and confessed the Scriptural Gospel of salvation for sinners by grace alone, through faith alone, on the basis of Scripture alone, in Christ alone."

Voigt said he stepped down as chairman of the board "to advance this important project, putting the leadership into the hands of our American brethren. I consider Dr. Sam Nafzger to be ideally suited for the position of chairman.

He will be able to call upon his vast experience as the long-time executive secretary of the International Lutheran Council (ILC) and as one of the leading theologians of the LCMS."

"I pledge to continue to support his work in behalf of the Wittenberg Project with all my heart, a project not only meaningful but necessary," Voigt said.

SELK and the LCMS are members of the ILC, a worldwide association of 34 Lutheran church bodies.



Photo: LCMS Reporter
Rev. D. Mahsman

Mahsman, 58, the new managing director, was for 20 years the LCMS's director of News and Information Services and executive editor of its two official periodicals, *Reporter* and *The Lutheran Witness*. He is a 1983 graduate of Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Indiana, and earned a master of sacred theology degree at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis.

"I am looking forward to getting to know the Wittenberg community and its leaders, to developing many positive relationships, and finding ways to implement the goals that led to the founding of the ILSW by our two church bodies," said Mahsman.

The ILSW was established as a German non-profit organization in 2007 to operate the Wittenberg project on behalf of the SELK and LCMS.

LCC WELCOMES NEW MISSION EXECUTIVE

LCC-Info - Rev. Dr. Leonardo Neitzel has accepted the call to serve as Lutheran Church-Canada's (LCC) executive assistant to the president for Mission and Social Ministry Services. LCC's Board of Directors extended the call on 25 June. Pastor Neitzel and his wife, Maria, visited Winnipeg in August, and he expects to begin work on 1 October.

Rev. Neitzel, 57, a native of Brazil, currently serves Bethlehem Lutheran Church in Vancouver. Before immigrating to Canada in 2003, he was a pastor of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Brazil where he served as a mission developer and taught missiology at the church body's seminary.

Upon receiving the news from Pastor Neitzel, LCC president, Rev. Robert Bugbee expressed his gratitude to God and to the pastor "for his decision to embrace the call to serve as

the new mission executive for our Lutheran Church–Canada.” The president assured Pastor Neitzel of his prayers, asking God to “bless you with a clear head and a heart of love for all the arrangements that now need to be made.”

LCC’s mission and social ministry executive position was left vacant in 2006 with the retirement of Rev. Dr. Leonard Harms. Former president, Rev. Dr. Ralph Mayan began serving in an interim capacity in 2008 and concluded his service on 30 September after which he will serve as a volunteer missionary in Nicaragua.

God Also Speaks My Language

New Translation of the New Testament and Psalms into Kalanga Published

selk-news - He who lives in Botswana knows what hard work it is to plow a piece of land for the first time. Stones have to be collected, thorn trees removed and the soil nearly hard as stone has to be broken up. But also during the next years more stones have to be removed and stumps rooted out, which were left standing the first time round.

In 1929 the first translation of the Gospels and Revelations into the Kalanga language appeared, which was re-printed for the last time in 1985. At the same time work started on a totally new and complete translation of the New Testament, published in 1999. This work was done in the name of the Lutheran Church with help of sister churches in the USA, Germany and Southern Africa. The Lutheran Church Mission - Bleckmar Mission of the Independent Evangelical Lutheran Church (SELK), Germany sent Rev. Klaus Palen as a missionary and coordinator of the translation project.

At the same time the Bible Society of Botswana (BSB) became more and more involved, and with the start of the work on the Old Testament the translation project was taken over by it. A new team of translators, courses in biblical Greek and Hebrew in Nairobi, Kenya, computers and outstanding computer software brought totally new conditions.

Reviews and reports on the New Testament translation caused the BSB to stop the work on the Old Testament and to revise the New Testament from the beginning. “Tolimulula”, said the then translator in the team, “we plough up once again.”

Now the new translation has come out in print. The Psalms have been added to the New Testament, and it shows that the work is based on the original Greek text, that in intensive communication with experts of Kalanga a fluent

and natural language was achieved, and that the translators were eager to bring the Word of God to people in their mother tongue.

On 10 July 2009 the new translation was presented to the public. It was a festive and important occasion in the presence of Botswana’s Minister of Foreign Affairs, its Minister of Youth, Sports and Culture, and a judge at the highest court of Botswana. Also present were many groups of the Roman Catholic, Lutheran, Reformed, Anglian, Baptist and independent African Churches.

Organization of Lutheran Church Body in Norway

For some time the Norwegian branch of the Lutheran Confessional Church – Sweden and Norway (LBK) has talked of organizing its own church body, while remaining firmly in fellowship with their Swedish brothers and sisters in Christ inside the LBK. On 18 July 2009, at a summer camp facility in Grinde, Norway, the formation of the *Lutheran Confessional Church (LBK) – Norway* occurred.

Rev. Egil Edvardsen of Stavanger was elected president, while Rev. Tor Jakob Welde is to serve as the secretary for their church body.

The LBK is a member of the Confessional Evangelical Lutheran Conference (CELC), whose largest member church is the Winconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod, USA.

WCC Elects New General Secretary

Norwegian Lutheran theologian and pastor Rev. Dr Olav Fykse Tveit was elected 7th general secretary of the World Council of Churches (WCC) on 27 August 2009 during its Central Committee meeting. The 48 year-old will succeed Kenyan Methodist Rev. Dr. Samuel Kobia, who has served as the Council’s general secretary since January 2004.

In a congratulating statement the general secretary of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF), Rev. Dr Ishmael Noko, expressed his hope for increased cooperation between the WCC and the LWF, citing the newly created emergency and development work network, ACT Alliance (Action by Churches Together) as one such example for new forms of ecumenical collaboration.

The incoming WCC leader Tveit is an ordained pastor in the Church of Norway. He has been general secretary of the church’s Council on Ecumenical and International Relations since 2002.

Formally inaugurated in 1948 at its first Assembly in Amsterdam, Netherlands, the WCC is a Christian organization dedicated to the search for Christian unity. Its 349 member churches represent some 560 million Christians. Today's member churches come from more than 110 countries on all continents and include Orthodox, Anglican, Protestant, United and other churches. The majority of member churches now come from the southern hemisphere.

ECACP Synod Will Elect New Bishop

LWI -The Twelfth Synod of the Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in Poland (ECACP) decided in April that this year's autumn synod will elect a new bishop to lead the church. The synod said the current church leader, Bishop Janusz Jagucki, will retire in January 2010, following revelations about his cooperation with the secret service of the People's Republic of Poland during his ministry as a pastor in Gizycko.

In a letter to clergy, the church Synod Council said investigators working on a historical commission set up by the bishop in 2007 to examine infiltration of the church by security organizations from 22 July 1944 to 31 July 1990, had discovered files on Jagucki himself, which prompted him to resign from the commission.

Mission grants increased by LWMLC

LCC-Info - Lutheran Women's Missionary League-Canada (LWMLC) meeting in convention in Ottawa from 9 to 12 July 2009 under the convention theme "Shine Like Stars" increased its mission grant goal by \$25 000 to \$125 000. In addition the women raised more than \$13 000 from a walk for missions. Subject to reaching the grant goal of \$125 000, this will allow several additional grant proposals to receive funding.

The Mission Walk also provided an opportunity to witness to the community in downtown Ottawa. Sporting t-shirts with the convention logo on the front and a web address on the back, 125 women walked to and around Parliament Hill and through the Sparks Street Mall. During the walk there were opportunities to talk with others about the group's identity and mission.

50 YEARS OF IELP

The Portuguese Evangelical Lutheran Church (IELP), founded on May 28 1959, celebrated fifty years of its existence with two festive worship services: on 24 May in "Emanuel" Congregation, Maia/Porto, and on Pentecost Sunday, 31 May, in "Consolação" Congregation, Mercês/Lisboa.

In celebrating fifty years of mission work in Portugal, the IELP praises God for the many blessings He has given to her, for His fidelity and mercy and for the support in many moments of difficulty.

Photos of the festivities showing some joyful moments of the Lutheran Christians in Portugal can be seen on the IELP's website (www.ielp.pt).



50-years Jubilee Service

The Lutheran mission in Portugal was started by the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Brazil. Besides the mission and preaching stations, the IELP has about 160 baptized members and three Congregations.

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>.

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