
Planning begins for international conference

By the Chairman and Vice-chairman of the ILC Executive Committee

June 30, 2011

Members of the International Lutheran Council's (ILC) Executive Committee met at the end of June in Niagara Falls, Ontario, site of the 2012 ILC International Conference. Under the chairmanship of Bishop Hans-Jörg Voigt of Germany's Selbständige Evangelisch-Lutherische Kirche (SELK), the seven-member committee, along with interim executive secretary Rev. Dr. Ralph Mayan, began planning for the triennial international conference. Lutheran Church-Canada (LCC) President, Rev. Dr. Robert Bugbee serves as the representative from North America as well as vice-chairman.

In addition to the international conference, the executive received the report of the Executive Secretary, and discussed inter-church relations, the celebrations in 2017 commemorating the 500th anniversary of Martin Luther's challenge to the Roman Church. It heard reports from each of the organization's regions: Africa, Europe, North America, South America and Austral-Asia. The question was dealt with whether the ILC can accept the invitation of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) to join in the apology expressed to the Mennonites. The representatives of the various world areas are to submit their counsel and advice. A year ago the LWF asked the Mennonites for forgiveness for the at times bloody persecutions in the 16th century. The small Mennonite Free Church is the successor to the anabaptist movement.

Bishop Voigt submitted a summary of the doctrinal consultations which took place between the Roman Catholic Johann-Adam-Moehler-Institute Paderborn and the Lutheran Theological Seminary in Oberursel. The members' conference next

year will be asked consider the matter, especially whether the ILC should enter into the process of ecumenical dialogue with the Unity Secretariat of the Roman Catholic Church.

After both organizations made changes in their leadership, the regular consultations between the LWF and the ILC should be resumed as soon as is feasible.

Since the 33-member ILC exists as a networking and support organization for confessional Lutherans, the theme for the 2012 conference, the first to be held in Canada, will centre on the interpretation and proclamation of Scripture, the Lutheran Confessions, and the role both have in the life of the church. Discussion and presentations on ordination and same-gender relationships are also proposed for the agenda.

"We are honoured to host this conference in Niagara Falls," said President Robert Bugbee. "With all that is going on in the Lutheran world and within the Christian Church it is important for people of like-minds and like-confession to explore God's Word together and support each other." The ILC invites to each conference observers from established confessional Lutheran church bodies who may be interested in future membership.



President Christian Ekong, The Lutheran Church of Nigeria; Rev. Dr. Ralph Mayan, ILC executive secretary; Bishop Hans-Jörg Voigt, ILC chairman

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12th National Synod of the SELK: A Report from the Bishop

By Bishop Hans-Jörg Voigt

(Berlin June 14-19, 2011)

51 delegates from 11 church districts gathered for the 12th National Synod of the SELK at the Protestant St. John's Foundation in Berlin's borough of Spandau. The main synodical theme was "Baptism – Gift of God. About giving and receiving gifts. Practical Theological Ideas from a Missionary Perspective." In his address Pastor Martin Roemer of Hannover made a number of concrete and practical suggestions. His main point was to anchor baptism more strongly in the daily life of the family, the parish and the individual. And yet if the church emphasizes the family as the centre for daily life, this may prevent single parents from bringing their children to baptism.

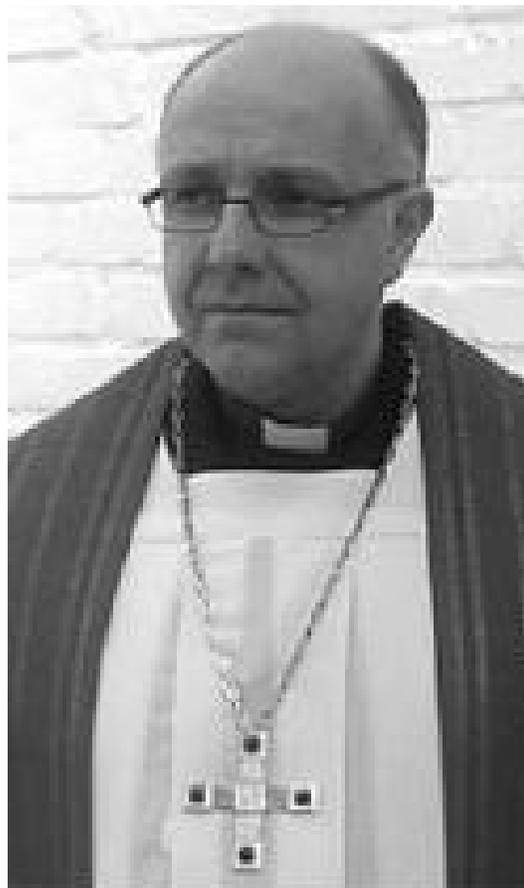
With a large majority the Synod adopted a paper on hermeneutics prepared by the Theological Commission and previously approved by the General Pastoral Conference. This paper formulates Lutheran principles for the interpretation of Holy Scripture in our own day.

The assembly had a long discussion on the matter of the ordination of women to the pastoral office. A resolution was passed stating that this matter is not an open question in the SELK since the church's constitution precludes the ordination of women; but the matter is still under dispute. It was further decided to install a commission that guides the discussion process for the next four years. The ILC will also be consulted.

Bishop Hans-Joerg Voigt reminded the delegates of the merger process between the Old Lutheran Church in East Germany and the SELK during 1991. Documented with photos from SELK parishes, he referred to a "gigantic construction process in the East Diocese" of the church. Large sums of money were channelled from west to east; and the financial and building accomplishments have been tremendous. And yet it must be remembered that to this day there are many congregations in the east still dependent on the assistance of those in the west. This problem needs to be faced, also to some degree in all the dioceses.

The Bishop also informed about his meetings with representatives of Protestant Union churches in Germany. The talks considered mutual rela-

tionships as well as the facts in connection with the distressing beginnings of the Old Lutheran Church (now SELK) and the coming 200th remembrance of the imposition of the Prussian Union.



Consultations between Theological Institutions have ended

By Bishop Hans-Jörg Voigt

At the beginning of 2007 initial consideration was given about how confessional Lutheranism could enter into a worldwide structured process of theological dialogue with the Roman Catholic Church. Prof. Dr. Heinz Schuette (now deceased) of the RC Johann-Adam-Moehler-Institute of Paderborn initiated such a discussion process. In behalf of the Pontifical Council for the Advancement of Christian Unity (Rome), Monsignore Dr. Matthias Türk opened the course of discussions between the Lutheran Theological Seminary Oberursel (SELK) and the Johann-Adam-Moehler-Institute Paderborn, with the participation of the International Lutheran Council (ILC). The latter was represented by the LCMS Professor Dr. Robert Rosin (St. Louis). The SELK was represented by Prof. Dr. Klaen and Pastor Dr.

Armin Wenz. This was the context in which Bishop Hans-Joerg Voigt and Prof. Klaen on Dec. 4, 2004 visited Cardinal Walter Kasper at the Unity Secretariat in Rome.

Six discussions have taken place dealing with the areas of Worship (Gottesdienst) and the Sacraments. At the end of 2010 a final report was submitted for consideration by the ILC and the Unity Secretariat in Rome, with the possible goal of initiating discussions on a worldwide level. The Executive Committee of the ILC will consider the matter at their 2012 meeting in Niagara Falls, Canada.

Evangelical Lutheran Church in Belgium Participating in New Hymnal Project

By Rev. Gijsbertus van Hattem

The ELKB for a long time has felt the need for a new Hymnal which would bring together the old and well known songs, also many hymns and songs from the last decades. Already in 1989 the church published a supplement with this purpose. That is almost 25 years ago, and to publish a totally new Hymnal on her own would be too costly. Therefore the ELKB decided to join the ISK (Interkerkelijke Stichting voor het Kerklied – Interchurchly Foundation for the Church Hymn) in the Netherlands, which is preparing the edition of a new protestant Hymnal to substitute for the 1973 one. The Hymnal has an ecumenical approach, but includes a considerable number of Hymns with a Lutheran background and will more or less replace the number of Hymns the church now has in her current Hymnal. Participating churches include, along with many others, also the Protestantse Kerk in Nederland (the 2004 merger between two Reformed bodies and the Lutheran Church in the Netherlands), and the Verenigde Protestantse Kerk in België. The Hymnal is due to be published in 2013.

Lutheran Evangelical Church of Paraguay holds Seminar for Marriages

Rev. Norberto M. Gerke

With the purpose of giving support to families in

times when all type of family difficulties arise (miscommunication, violence, divorces, unmarried couples, etc.), the Lutheran Hour Ministries (Paraguay) and the Lutheran Evangelical Church of Paraguay (IELPA) organized the "Marriages God's Way" Seminar. This was directed by Pastor Todd A. Biermann and his wife Heather, of the Faith Lutheran Church of Grand Blanc's (Michigan-USA). The Seminar was carried out twice: on July 2nd and 3rd in Santa Rita's town with the attendance of 113 couples, and again on July 5th and 6th in Asunción with the participation of 13 couples.

The Seminar had been framed under the current motto of the Lutheran Evangelical Church of the Paraguay for 2011: "Jesus Life for All through the Faith Family". It was developed in two parts: the first one tried to strengthen the bonds of the couple's union as base of the family. This section was based on Genesis 2:24: "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh." The emphasis was centered in three topics: he/she shall leave, he/she shall cleave and they shall be one flesh". In the second part guidelines were given about how to be able to help families with relationship difficulties. The main point of the Seminar was focused on how God makes possible that each family can live in an atmosphere of love, understanding, forgiveness and happiness when they take into account the teachings of God for the marriage. Pastor Todd's and family's visit, as well as the expenses of materials and lodging of all the participants were covered with offerings of the Faith Lutheran Church of Grand Blanc to whom we express our sincere gratitude.



ILC Meeting

(continued from page 1)

Lutheran Church–Canada has played a key role in the ILC since its formation in 1993. LCC presidents emeritus Rev. Dr. Edwin Lehman and Rev. Dr. Ralph Mayan both served as chairmen of the council, bringing a Canadian presence to the role for 15 years of the ILC's 18-year history.

The ILC will meet at the Mt. Carmel Spiritual Centre in Niagara Falls, September 16-21, 2012. The Conference is set for September 16-21, 2012. Ralph Mayan provided a possible framework to establish time slots for the conference days, based on the practices of recent World Conferences. Expenses of materials and lodging of all the participants were covered with offerings of the Faith Lutheran Church of Grand Blanc to whom we express our sincere gratitude.

The following general thematic approach was suggested:

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?

How Do the Scriptures Speak to Crises Facing Confessional Lutherans Today?

Keynote: How Do the Confessions Say the Scriptures Speak?

- 1st: ... to the Ordination of Women to the Pastoral Office?
- 2nd: ...to Same-Gender Issues in the Church?
- 3rd: ...to the Preaching of the Good News Today?
- 4th: ...to Living in the Word of God?

The meeting agreed to this general thematic approach, understanding that the planning committee will do additional revisions to create a final form..

Pastors' Study Week in Cambridge

By Rev. Jon Ehlers

On 27 - 29 June, pastors from around the United Kingdom gathered for their annual pastors' study week at Westfield House in Cambridge. We were delighted to have been joined by visiting pastors from Canada, Croatia, Denmark, and the United States. This served as a wonderful time for theological reflection and growth, as well as some outstanding social interaction.

Are Danes happy, or just satisfied?

By Rev. Leif G. Jensen

*Evangelical Lutheran Free Church in Denmark
Some notes from the Annual Convention of the
Evangelical Lutheran Free Church in Denmark,
May 2011: "Thanksgiving and Prayer"*

The Evangelical Lutheran Free Church had its 156th annual convention in Martins Church in Copenhagen on May 8th 2011 on the Sunday of the Good Shepherd. 45 members from our four congregations began the day with Sunday Service. Pastor Sigmund Hjorthaug preached on the Gospel from John 10 "Your Shepherd". During the afternoon the congregations reported to each other about the church work going on in the four congregations. And the theme for coming year is: "Church in Thanksgiving and Prayer". Annual Convention May 8, 2011, Martins Church Copenhagen.



The annual convention was reminded how the first congregation in Europe was founded not because the Apostles planned to go to Europe, but because their plans in Minor Asia failed. Actually the second mission journey had a sad background: Paul and Barnabas parted from one another (Acts 15:39). Maybe their work would totally fail? - But God is merciful and does not forsake his Church. He showed Paul, Silas, Luke and Timothy that mission was not in their hands, but in God's hands. And a vision appeared to Paul in the night. A man of Macedonia stood and pleaded with him, saying, "Come over to Macedonia and help us" (Acts 16:9).

When we do not succeed with our missionary plans God has not forsaken us. He is rather showing us who is the Lord of the Church.

In our neighbourhood there is a silent cry coming both from ethnic Danes and from immigrants from Africa, Iran and Iraq. When we didn't succeed through our own efforts the last ten years, God is

still our Saviour and calls us to preach the Gospel. As a small confessional Lutheran church in a fairly secularized and post Christian population we have a great calling.

See what God did in Philippi. Prayer and Thanksgiving characterized the first Christians in Europe. As Lydia begged the apostles to stay in her house (Acts 16:15), so the Gospel can give us new joy serving each other and serving foreigners in our neighbourhood.

And just as a man asked the apostles to come over to Macedonia, so we in Denmark ask sister churches to come and help us. Pray for us!

But why? Are the Danes not known as the most happy people in the world? According to some international polls we are! But please do not make the mistake to confuse satisfaction with real happiness. We Danes are satisfied, satisfied with ourselves. We have a high level of social welfare. But most of us are living without God and without hope. And even Christians are looking for Satisfaction in stead of for Salvation. This has also hit us in our congregations. We lost members during the last two years, about 2 percent.

Our annual convention filled us with thanksgiving because God has given us the Gospel of salvation. This leads us into prayer that this Gospel may be shared in its richness in our congregation and given to people living without Christ.

There was a special greeting from our sister church in England. She invited us in March to send a student to study at Westfield House. This was for us a great encouragement in a situation where we need a younger pastor to serve in our congregations and do missionary work. We pray God to call upon one or two men to prepare for the holy ministry.

Thus encouraged our pastors Hjorthaug and Jensen went to "Pastors Study Week" in ELCE in Cambridge in June. And can tell the ILC churches that we received a sound Biblical- and Christ-centred teaching, and we enjoyed the fellowship with Lutheran brothers and sisters. That is real happiness.

In July our Summer Bible School will meet at one of the beautiful islands of Denmark under the theme: "Lord, teach us pray!" President Agner from our sister church in Portugal visits the camp and gives lectures. 76 persons will come together for 5 days and en-



joy nature, fellowship and the Gospel.

Evangelical Lutheran Church in Belgium Assisting the Malagasy Lutheran Church to establish a congregation in Brussels

By Rev. Gijbertus van Hattem

Since January this year the Lutherans from Madagascar are meeting in the church building the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Belgium uses in Brussels, with our Lutheran pastor regularly preaching in their services. Now they are ready to establish a new congregation of the Malagasy Lutheran Church in Europe. The ELCB congregation in Brussels is co-hosting the event. For the opening service guests are expected from Madagascar, France and other parts of Europe, as well as Christians from Brussels.

The Lutheran faith was brought to Madagascar by Norwegian and American missionaries. The church grew and spread, and became autonomous as one body in 1950, under the name Malagasy Lutheran Church (Fiangonana Loterana Malagasy—Eglise Luthérienne Malgache). The oldest of the Lutheran congregations in Madagascar was founded in the early 19th Century. With almost 3 million baptized members it is the third largest church in Madagascar and is one of the fastest growing Lutheran churches in the world. Its success is due in part to an indigenous revival movement, known as Fifohazana that has worked through the church since the early twentieth century. The Malagasy language relates to the language of central Indonesia and the Philippines, but they use the Latin alphabet. So singing their hymns is quite possible! "Jesus" is pronounced pretty much how you pronounce it in English.

The ELCB will work in close relationship with the new established congregation of the MLC. It is likely that in the future the local congregations will join the national church bodies in the respective countries, as happened in so many emigrant countries.

The harvest is plentiful – Missionary to the area of the disaster by the earthquake and tsunami - IELCHI

By Rev. Cristian E. Rautenberg

After a year of service in the area of the earthquake and tsunami disaster, The Confessional Lutheran Church of Chile sent Rev. Gerardo Omar Kinas, as a Missionary and Projects Manager at the newly created “Maule Mission”, VII Region (Talca and Constitución). The service of installation happened in March of this year.

After more than one year of work in the area of the disaster, with pastors of the Church, groups of volunteers, deacons and deaconesses from Argentina and Chile, it was necessary to see the disaster as an open door for the Lord of the Church in order to keep the gospel being spread to the more than 120 contacted families.



Volunteers in disaster area

The Project, with the support of the National Church and World Relief-LCMS, seeks to give spiritual, psychological and material care to many families that are still suffering the consequences of the earthquake and tsunami of February 2010.

The response of the disaster of Santiago, Talca, Cauquenes and Constitución, during 2010, with the support of the Lutheran Churches from Argentina, Paraguay, Canada, USA, and from the LIMM, World Mission and World Relief of LCMS organizations. Everything made has been useful not only as

an opportunity of Christian service, but also as training field for pastors and volunteers.

Workers for the harvest - Theological Education - IELCHI

By Rev. Cristian E. Rautenberg

From 2011, the congregations and members of the Confessional Lutheran Church of Chile (IELCHI) started with a plan of Theological Education on behalf of the agreement of the Instituto Bíblico Luterano of Chile, with the Seminario Concordia of Buenos Aires.

Around 15 students are registered in the different programmes of Diaconía Ministerial (Education – Youth – Family) and the Pastoral Formation. In the month of August, the first Chilean student, in more than 10 years, will be moved to the Seminario Concordia. In the next years we hope that others add themselves to the theological studies thus answering the growing need of pastors and missionaries for the Church that it is becoming larger and desires to bring the pure Gospel to every corner of a country that has more than 16 million inhabitants.

A brief story of IELCHI

By Rev. Cristian E. Rautenberg

The Lutheran missional work in Chile was developed since the decade of 1950. That missional work had a different characteristic than the other missions in South America. It did not seek to reach Lutherans or their descendants but the Chileans by the sending of missionaries. Fruit of that work bore in 1992 the Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Republic of Chile; this name changed after the new law of religion to the present name Confessional Lutheran Church of Chile. That nowadays has presence in 9 cities of the country, 4 of which are young missions, 3 Congregations and 2 schools.

Our country made news during 2010 for having one of the most destructive earthquake and tsunami of world history, that affected in different ways 8 million people. However, the

suffering also can be an opportunity for the Gospel that shows us the Lord of the cross is present even in the most difficult moments of human life.

To work in the context of the disaster has been a learning process.

The motto of the 2011-2012 cycle “Justified by grace - serving with love” boosts us to keep raising the flag of justification by the faith in the middle of a context of deep heterodoxy, where to hold the truth of the Gospel it is more difficult every day. Knowing that the best service we can give to the fellow man is to take him to the benefits of the Cross of Christ.

Until 2017, 500 years after the Lutheran reformation, IELCHI has presented several targets for the entire Church, the principal being the strengthening of the Confessional Lutheran Identity and the beginning of at least another two new missions in Santiago, the biggest city of the country with 7 million inhabitants, and La Serena in the VI Región of the country. The task in this country has never been easy, but the same motivation of the reformer of the church comes up: “God is our refuge and strength...” (Psalm 46)



Installation service in Talca

Busy days for Canadian convention delegates

By Mr. Ian Adams

Despite a heavy schedule, delegates to Lutheran Church–Canada’s Ninth Convention in Hamilton Ontario wrapped up business one-

half hour ahead of schedule. Meeting from June 3-6 the representatives from across Canada elected those who will serve the Church over the next three years and also resolved some important issues.



President Robert Bugbee, who stood unopposed, will serve his second term working with three vice-presidents: Rev. Nolan Astley (first VP); Rev. Thomas Kruesel (second VP) and Rev. Brian Falkenholt (third VP).

During the three-day event a definitive vote settled the question of making seminary education in LCC cost-efficient and sustainable. Resolution Committee 2 introduced a resolution affirming the process undertaken by the Board of Directors (BOD) and the seminaries for building a closer working relationship between the two institutions. In a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) both seminaries agree to a budget cap and other cost-saving measures. The Boards of Regents of both seminaries agreed to a final draft a week before the convention began and the BOD ratified the memorandum at its meeting prior to the convention.

A substitute resolution brought to the floor called for the closure of the seminary in St. Catharines and consolidation at Concordia Lutheran Seminary, Edmonton. Spirited and passionate debate ensued; however delegates defeated the substitute and adopted the original resolution. Based on the delegates’ action, representatives of both institutions and LCC’s Board of Directors signed the MOU at the convention. The seminaries will now operate under the negotiated terms.

Convention essayist, Rev. Dr. Michael



Semmler, president of the Lutheran Church of Australia spoke to the theme of the convention “In Your Light, we see Light” from Psalm 36. Using the whole psalm as the basis for his three presentations, he talked about prayer, living the Christian life in the light of God’s Word, and reflecting the same light into the world around us.

Other international guests included Rev. Dr. Matthew Harrison, president of The Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod and Rev. Dr. Wilhelm Torgerson who brought greetings from Selbständige Evangelisch-Lutherische Kirche, LCC’s partner church in Germany.

Two former presidents (and former ILC chairmen) also addressed the gathering. Rev. Dr. Edwin Lehman, LCC’s first president encourage delegates to think “synodically” rather than regionally when considering decisions. Rev. Dr. Ralph Mayan expressed his joy at serving the church as a volunteer missionary in Nicaragua and then presented information about the International Lutheran Council, of which he now serves as interim executive secretary.

The convention delegates also commended for use in congregations LCC’s French hymnal *Liturgies et cantiques luterien*. The hymnal has gained wide acceptance and usage especially in Africa and Haiti.

For more than half the delegates, this convention was their first. One commented that it was more like a family gathering than a convention.

The next convention is scheduled for 2014 in Alberta or British Columbia.

Asia Ablaze!

The ILC News usually carries items from Asia *Ablaze!*, but were accessed too late for this issue. A number of informative articles from the Asian continent can be found on-line at www.asiaablaze.org/newsletter.html



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Editor: Rev. Reg Quirk
30 Huntingdon Road
Cambridge CB3 0HH, U.K.
Phone: +44 01223 354331
Fax: +44 01223 355265
E-mail: regquirk@aol.co.uk

Interim Executive Secretary: Dr. Ralph E. Mayan
6565 Willoughby Way
Langley, B.C. V2Y 1K3, Canada
Phone: 778-278-2094
Fax: 604-576-1399
E-mail: ralph.mayan@lutheranchurch.ca

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