



Report on the LWF Latin America and the Caribbean & North America Pre-Assemblies

Paramaribo, Suriname 29 August – 02 September 2016

Preamble

The Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) and North America (NA) Pre-Assemblies were preparatory activities for delegates that will participate in the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) Twelfth Assembly in Windhoek, Namibia in 2017. The two regions, with the purpose to enhance relations and deepen theological understanding of the LWF theme and sub-themes, took the decision to hold their Pre-Assemblies in the same venue keeping space for plenary joint discussions and regional matters. The Pre-Assemblies were occasion to nourish relationships, to share concerns and challenges, to learn from the different experiences, and to have strategies to support each other with the specific proposals to be carried to the LWF Twelfth Assembly.

Hosting church and venue

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Suriname (ELKS) hosted the event in the Hotel Krasnapolski, Paramaribo. The ELKS Pre-Assemblies' Committee (7 persons) and 13 stewards (youth) were in charge of logistics locally. Good communication with LWF communion office and other persons were done with professionalism. In dialogue with the Area Secretary, their work contributed to the outstanding results in the Pre-Assemblies that contributed to community building.

Pre-Assemblies specific objectives

1. LWF Member churches in LAC and NA have prepared for meaningful participation in the LWF Twelfth Assembly as a means of reaffirm LWF's role as a vital instrument for God's love and transforming actions in the world
2. Within the framework of the 500 year Reformation, the churches are aware and make visible the impact of the Reformation on church and society

Expected outcomes

- LAC and NA delegates know their role and responsibilities to participate in the LWF Twelfth Assembly
- LAC and NA delegates gather regional themes/fruits for the LWF Twelfth Assembly
- LAC and NA delegates deliver a list of nominees for the LWF Council Members

Methodology

Delegates raised issues and proposals related to their concerns and shared good and concrete examples. The final statement, especially in LAC, mentions the SDGs as an important aspect to follow up.

All sessions were developed in English and Spanish (simultaneous interpretation). The session “The Self-understanding of the Lutheran Communion” and the regional sessions (VII, VIII, IX and X) were developed separately. For LAC and NA, the central theme for the Self-understanding focused on how to continue nourishing the global Lutheran communion. Selected participants from each region contributed to the theme and sub-themes. In the case of the sub themes, specific articles from the not for sale booklets were assigned asking them to contextualize the theological reflection.

Program

The program for the Pre-Assemblies is attached to this report, at the end, under **Attachment A**.

Monday 29 August

Opening Worship and opening of the Pre-Assemblies



The opening worship, in charge of the ELKS, focused on the gracious love of God. The ELKS invited to reflect how being called to serve as children of God is part of grace.

After approval of the LAC and NA Pre-Assemblies' program,

participants agreed that the focal persons for issues related to the code of conduct are Rev. Marcia Blasi and Rev. Dr Rafael Malpica-Padilla. The drafting committee for LAC was formed by Gustavo Gómez and Elizabeth Arciniegas, and for NA by Christ Olkiewicz and Katherine Altenburg.

The LWF/DMD Director Rev. Dr Fidon Mwombeki delivered greetings from the Communion Office and other churches praying for a productive work in the Pre-Assemblies. The General Secretary of the LWF, Rev. Dr Martin Junge addressed delegates with a presentation focusing on the challenges, hopes and opportunities the Lutheran Communion has experienced during the last six years. Through dialogue and questions of clarification, main aspects for the way towards the LWF Twelfth Assembly in 2017 in Windhoek, Namibia were updated.



Tuesday 30 August

Session I - Harvesting from Stuttgart to Paramaribo

Leaders shared two themes that challenged the church during the last six years and the responses contextually given.

Evangelical Church of the River Plate - IEPR (Argentina, Uruguay and Paraguay)

Challenges:

- Theological education for lay and ordained ministries
- Unity in the church – dispersion and different contexts

Response:

- Commission in dialogue with churches for a joint project on TE
- Integration of the Reformed Church, rich Synod and General Assemblies. Holistic pastoral, Foundation in 2014

Evangelical United Lutheran Church – IELU (Argentina and Uruguay)

Challenges:

- Rethink faith community and ministerial models
- Be encourage to the transformation (also for the ministerial models)

Response:

- POA in 201, an evangelizing church, spirituality, in communion, transforming the stewardships and sustainability
- Contextualized theological formation, flexible, through modules for persons who serve

Bolivian Evangelical Lutheran Church – ILEB

Challenges:

- Count with a Strategy and POA build in participatory ways
- Share all plans regionally and capacity building for leaders in PMER

Response:

- Review of the church constitution and implementation of a new governing practice
- Strategic plan for communitarian education

Evangelical Church of the Lutheran Confession in Brazil – IECLB

Challenges:

- Systemic vision, ecclesiology; ethic and aesthetic
- Complicity and positive posture, communications, vocations and daily work

Response:

- Redefinition of the mission: go and come in mission for peace
- An action plan on mission – with passion for the mission with strong ecumenical relations

Evangelical Lutheran Church in Chile – IELCH

Challenges:

- Be a sustainable church – decrease in economic resources, lack of growth
- Change of the statutes and ecclesiastic structure in 2014

Response:

- Recover the identity of the IELCH and its capacity for management – internal and external mission
- Study and response to the ILFECH proposal statues. Do we want to renounce to our theological/prophetic voice?

Lutheran Church in Chile – ILCH

Challenges:

- Council of the Lutheran Churches in Chile – ILFECH
- Ecumenical and interreligious dialogues

Response:

- Film, book, hymnal book, change process in ILFECH, joint conferences for pastors
- Joint pastoral conference issued declaration



on homosexuality and on abortion

Lutheran Costa Rican Church – ILCO

Challenges:

- To be a “Lutheran” church strengthened mission along with the diaconal work
- Structural reorganization

Response:

- Prophetic, contextual and in line with human rights, promoting dignity, diversity, gender perspective
- Development of living standards, code of conduct, gender policy

Evangelical Lutheran Church of Colombia - IELCO

Challenges:

- Theological tendencies
- Structure and legal recognition

Response:

- The Pastoral Conference was organized, pastoral visit to all congregations
- Election of a new Nation Council

Christian Lutheran Church of Honduras - ICLH

Challenges:

- Announce the gospel in a context of violence
- Accompanying migrants

Response:

- Promotion of safe spaces, inclusion, pastoral with emphasis on gender equality
- Being a ray of hope accompanying families

Mexican Lutheran Church – ILM

Challenges:

- Sustainability
- Advocacy

Response:

- Healthy economy, be seen as community
- Ministry in prison, caring for the environment

Salvadoran Lutheran Church – ILS

Challenges:

- Migration
- Violence

Response:

- Advocate with the national security council, accompany returning persons
- Youth and women involve in actions for peace, Pastoral Initiative for Life and Peace IPAZ

Guatemalan Lutheran Church – ILUGUA

Challenges:

- To be a Lutheran, ecumenical church with emphasis on liberating diakonia
- Defence of human rights and gender justice

Response:

- The church and ministries are strengthened, use of ecumenical perspective to read the bible
- Defence of indigenous rights, caring and protecting creation

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America – ELCA

Challenges:

- Declining membership, number of cong. and financial resources
- Faith formation and leadership development
- Discernment of shared vision and priorities
- Global migration and displacement
- Systemic racism in church and society
- Continue church division and new realities of religious pluralism

Response:

- Congregational development, renewal, institutional reorg, campaign
- Collaborative proc. for TE, study Luther Catechism, Young adults, YGRN
- Together in Christ conversation
- AMPARO Migration Children initiative
- Presence in places of tragedy, conversation, becoming multi-cultural, multi-racial, leadership of African Descent Lutheran Association, ecumenical partners (Historic



- Black Churches)
- Declaration, inter-religious dialogue and collaboration.

Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada - ELCIC

Challenges:

- A church engaged in discipleship, justice, healthy and working with partners
- Reformation challenge: 500 refugees sponsored, 500 ELCHJL schools, 500,000 trees planted, 500,000 LWF Endowment Fund

Response:

- Spirited, worked in the renewal, in the process of reconciliation and justice with indigenous
- A good advance in the reformation challenge through the ELCIC campaign

Evangelical Lutheran Church in Guyana - ELCG

Challenges:

- Migration of pastors/deacons
- Youth participation/attendance in church

Response:

- Lutheran Lay Academy- for the spiritual leaders of tomorrow
- Innovative ways to motivate young people

The Nicaraguan Lutheran Church of "Faith and Hope" – ILFE

Challenges:

- Discovering the signs of the times
- They belong to the context

Response:

- Climate change, sustainable development, strategic planning
- Capacity building among peasant leaders, pastoral-theological focus in the diaconal work, lay leadership

Lutheran Church of Peru – ILP

Challenges:

- Institutional challenges linked to the Lutheran identity, influence of neo Pentecostalism
- Be a Lutheran church in the Peruvian context and solid link to the Lutheran communion

Response:

- Motivation and participation in process of reconciliation within the church and outside
- Growing in the the understanding of the mission and evangelization toward the 500 years Reformation

Evangelical Lutheran Church in Suriname - ELKS

Challenges:

- Redefining our faith and structure –
- Redefining our relationships

Response:

- Identified and elected a new board, persons connected in diaconal and ministerial work
- Perseverance building trust. This moved the church to advocate for democracy.

Evangelical Lutheran Church in Venezuela - IELV

Challenges:

- A church with strong engagement in society
- Weak links with the Lutheran communion globally

Response:

- Congregations organized with public voice and diaconal activities
- Active in the communion with concrete actions in the 500 years of the Reformation

Session II - The Self-Understanding of the Lutheran Communion: Reflections and views

After working in the topic respective sessions, each region shared:

Reflections and feedback from LAC

- Within the Lutheran Communion there are differences and divergences. Differences can be reconciled acknowledging our human condition and own histories because we humans change. How to dialogue amid divergences that are potential for divisions? (i.e.: the decision of the Latvian church and the step back on the ordination of female persons. Differences can be embraced as gifts because they encourage us to be moved forward in discussions and actions. Diversity is a gift.
- Communion and autonomy: we are autonomous communities given our own histories, but we live it in responsibility. Using our autonomy in the communion needs to consider the practice of responsibility.
- Accountability and autonomy is a complex relation. What is the limit, in the communion, when a historical decision is not considered and a church goes against? The theological understanding for that aspect is central and it comes before the cultural motivations. But theology also considers the context. If we seat around the same table, we should share concrete actions at the table. It is always important to explain the decisions we take – not just to telling the result but engage in dialogue.
- Word and sacrament – authority of the Bible. Having an open mind to interpret the scriptures considering how other churches o denominations read it. Mediated by God's grace is important - to read the Bible through Christ's eyes.
- Churches in ecumenical relations live in relations with a clear and strong Lutheran identity.
- To make use of the Gender Justice Policy for a transforming and transformed communion.
- Eucharist – a solid opportunity for reconciliation (acknowledging different interpretations) that expresses communion
- The gifts and vocation given by the Holy Spirit strengthens the diaconal work.
- Community of equals living out gender justice – the challenge of dialogue on issues of justice
- The things we dream (for our society and the church) are not lived out in our own churches.





Reflections and feedback from North America

- Communion as a gift – this is an aspirational notion. We are all recipients of the gifts even if we share them we also receive from one another. We recognize that communion is not easy and, if we are to be in communion, how it is leaved out particularly when there is disagreement in the communion, how do we balance diversity and dissention, how do we hold one another accountable –not to same us but to one us.
- The gift of the ones the document shares is lived in unity and diversity. One of the examples shared is the experience lived in the diversity here and throughout the communion, how this opens the individual within the local setting as well as that in the regional setting – that is certainly a gift.
- Regarding accountability: how do we deal with dual membership, how does this document implements it – how is that accountable when we think if communion as a gift.
- The best way forward is to build the consensus. We realize that there are two main disagreements: human sexuality and the rights of sexual minorities, and the role of women. What process can we put in place to move to consensus around these two very important issues?
- Three things to highlight to strengthen the communion: First, this is a historical gather, for to regions to be gathering, how important this is to us. It strengthens the opportunity to hear and learn from one another and to discover that there are certain common themes (resources, smaller churches, financial struggles, structure renewal, mission, etc.) among us. This opportunity empowered us to see as regions in a different way. Second: The Council's work itself – documents and statements it was said that this will be further clarified – perhaps this will be the work of the Council in the next few years particularly as we deal with conflict in the communion, are there processes that can be developed so that we can move to consensus together and what may that look like. To see specific issues may require different protocols seeking insights and the wisdom in the Council before we take action. Third: We need to name our biggest fear: do we have a fear of schism? Naming that is the first step toward transparency and openness among us. We are reminded that this fear of schism perhaps comes because we are not fully grounded in the center that call and holds us which is Christ and then were are strengthen to word and sacrament.

Plenary discussions and clarifications:

The use and practice of the Gender Justice Policy is a way of living as churches within a transformed and transforming communion. In my church (Lutheran Church of Peru) we have experienced that the reflection on gender justice from the 1990s was on the theory level while in the practice during years of crisis, it showed another reality. Gender justice is the result of the gospel.

“Sometimes we act as if we have two tables” in the topic of the Eucharist – Before the the question, what holds people who are so diverse together (in age, economic, social, cultural



backgrounds). The confessional identity has been identified as the bridge that holds together the mosaic spread throughout Latin America and the Caribbean. Along with this understanding comes the fact that we are a hermeneutic community, one that gives account of the work and decisions. This is embodied in our diakonia - a non-optional task for the church working in a majority Roman Catholic context; expressing the passion for justice and mercy. Considering that the sacramental aspect in the Roman Catholic context has to do with the conception of ministry (where the ministers are located on a stage of holiness) it is important to understand that for the orthodoxy, the orthopraxis is crucial, it helps affirming the common and single table.

The aspect of “status confessions”, we took an action in 1984 when we determined apartheid and persisting in that as status confessions for us. It was not done with human sexuality or de understanding of women’s role in the church— particularly around women’s ordination. How do we understand the imbalance there, what is happening with those



churches who were separated from us in 1984? What we can learn from that? In our difficult situation now there has been a painful break between the ELCA, CoS and the EECMY. How can we talk about that, how can it be brought forward or have the chance in front of the entire Council of the LWF to explain how we in the ELCA came to take our decisions while, at the same time the EECMY might say, well this is we wish would hear or how the process could be done before it happened. And in the third part of the document, if we say we are a communion, how do we understand context? Is it simply in our own particular member church, our region or is the context of the entire LWF? And with that prevent, in some cases, what we consider to be a gospel and confessional stand that we took about human sexuality from being taken until we all came to a point of agreement. That is some of the difficulties we are looking at and hope it should take as task in the Council during the next six years.

Wednesday 31 August

Session IV: Liberated by God's grace

Rev. Dr Nestor Friedrich from the Evangelical Church of the Lutheran Confession in Brazil (IECLB) in LAC and Rev. Dr Robin Stainke from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) in NA were responsible for the main presentations. The presentations focused on the theme of the LWF Twelfth Assembly with the respective contextual theological reflexion. The presentations are found in the website

<https://americalatina.lutheranworld.org/es/content/libres-por-la-gracia-de-dios-liberated-gods-grace-4>



Plenary feedback, questions and proposals to the presentation by Dr Friedrich:

- **Rev. Trejo of the ILM:** The role played by the media, considering the information that people receive, is important. The phrase "the one who thinks loses" opens space to certain news. On the other hand, there is news supporting the government and do not give the possibility to think or have new ideas. In this context, the church has the role to encourage people to think, verify what is being communicated and to be aware of the role of the media.

Reflection Rev. Dr. Friedrich: The expression "I think therefore I am" can be paraphrased as "I take a selfie, post it and then, I am". During the cup in Brazil the way of control was not giving information. Today the strategy is the opposite: people receive much more information. What is the filter to know what is the truth or not? Besides, the news are filtered and, in the crisis in Brazil, it showed persons with certain interests. The social network is a great tool but there is still need to learn how to deal with the tensions it causes. Leandro Carnal said "the good thing about social media is that all people can manifest themselves and the negative is also that all people can manifest themselves" – it is about being aware and care when exposing our minds in social media. In Brazil one speaks of corruption but not about corruptors, the ones who have the means of communication on their hand. As churches, we need concrete and sustainable information that assure background and realistic positions.

- **Rev. Gómez of the IELU:** Speaking on polarization and disagreement among peers you speak to my heart. One can understand when you cannot start dialogue with someone radically different. When it is not possible to get in dialogue with your peers, the complicated thing is that they start seeing you as a traitor and then you are a social pariah given the fact that you are not like them but also not a radically different. How to handle that?

Reflection Dr. Friedrich: It is a great challenge to sit at the table and have a conversation with someone who does not think like you. Tensions arise within the church because opposite groups do not dialogue among themselves. But when they express their mind, their manifestations are understood and taken as part of the church. The exercise of dialogue does not solve the fact of living without tension. The challenge is how to work with tensions and differences without invalidating persons or making them look like enemies. We will have to talk with several groups on matters like hermeneutics and human sexuality. I do not know how to follow up and where to arrive but the willingness to hear and to be open is there.

- **Rev. Slagtand of the ELKS:** In the Pre Assembly in Hong Kong I was introduced on the idea of internet for the first time with all possibilities of being connected with the world. My observation as a pastor, serving in the psychiatric hospital and chaplain in the hospital, is that God calls us to be free, liberated by grace to connect to one another. Today, there is a difference in communicating among persons. It is no longer face-to-face. It does not encourage expressing myself and it is affecting even our own communities and families.

Reflection Rev. Dr Friedrich: We need a process of humanizing. We became indifferent and became used to take distance from other. This affects families. When using social media, we tend to forget who we are. Turning back to Jesus Christ we see a gracious God that walks along with people, someone who seeing, touches and goes toward people showing gratitude/unconditional love. We have lost this. The ministerial life is an experience lived alone but the challenge is to rescue the grace of God in the Christian community where we interact even putting in practice the fact of being just and sinners at the same time.



- **Rev. Ojeda of the IELCO:** My comment on God's grace is that grace is priceless and does not need to be understood but lived in faith.
- **Rev. Blasi of the IECLB:** Thank you for making visible gender injustices we have in our reality. We need to understand that for women nothing is free. Therefore, guilt and grace both have gender. Considering this, one cannot speak of guilt and penance in a general way. Most women experience guilt an imposed penitence daily; their lives are in permanent penance and we need to name them and take responsibly. In addition, it is necessary to create spaces to listen to women in our churches. The church can be the space for grace and not of guilty/shame.
 - **Rev. Malpica-Padilla of the ELCA - advisor:** In the presentation, I see the origin of a Lutheran political theology, rooted in grace, facing the world. It is a great contribution of Latin America to the celebration of the 500th Anniversary.
 - **Rev. Dr Rojas of the IELCH - Vice President:** In the last point Nestor touched on the prophetic voice of the church and the task to call to repentance, liberation and radical change. I would like to go deeper; the prophetic voice has two moments: the announcement and the denunciation. Undoubtedly, the denunciation happens within our churches, but what about outside our church world? We, as Lutheran churches, have a responsibility to live by grace announcing the merciful love of God.
- **Answer Rev. Dr. Friedrich:** Raising the prophetic voice is a challenge also in the church. Walking on the desert, we have to rediscover our voices and how to be a prophetic church. However in a polarized society, who is interested in keeping polarization - even within the church? Joint efforts will help us but it nets to happen within the church and in society.

Plenary feedback, questions and proposals to the presentation by Rev. Dr Steinke:

- **A. Gómez of the ILS:** The three questions: by whom, for whom and why we receive the good news leads me to the question if we are actually really free. The reflexion is complex. Observing our contexts and stereotypes, there things that imprison us in a false freedom. Thus, we continue educating our children on it or the church speaks of God and does not commit to speak about what happens in society. In my church, there is discussion on the problems in society and consequently, we are criticized for "entering in politics". Change and dialogue are important.
- **Rev. Nicholson of the ELCG:** Thank you for your presentation and challenge to take the questions, directed to us, very seriously; especially as we speak about forgiveness and love. We don't have an option to love and forgive. We have to do it. It is my prayer that God continues to use you as a leader.
- **D. Dokman of the ELKS – ex officio:** I am getting a growing discomfort with the word freed. I strongly believe in our Lutheran identity that we are freed by God's love to love and serve our neighbour. But my discomfort with that word, as it was already said, is that loving your neighbour is not a choice but something we have to do. In the word freed, it seems to be a connotation of arbitrary choice. To our belief it looks ideological because, even in our churches where we are freed by God's grace, we act in arbitrary choices and that scares me. When it comes out in our communion, there is still an arbitrary choice. How do we deal with this concept of being freed? It is hard for me, as a person coming from a context of slavery, to say that freedom is such an issue, especially as a Lutheran. How do we deal with this when freedom also can bring injustice?
- **Rev. Malpica-Padilla of the ELCA – advisor:** To offer help to the question in interpreting freedom; there is pa phrase of a Cuban Presbyterian preacher, Cecilio



Arrastia, who said, “God is the one who takes the center of your life and frees you to be bound to the other”.

- **Rev. Hands of the IELV:** The question, what were you talking about on the way? in the Emmaus story helped me to understand other people. Many times, we take for granted that people understand us. But there are contexts and experiences, knowledge that are unknown and can be codified differently. In the context of a course of ecumenism in the Catholic Church, sharing the book of Conflict to Communion, the concept of being liberated by God’s grace is understood differently by the Catholic brothers. Coming together is a gesture that liberates, but it needs to consider that there are subjects that are understood in another way.
- **Rev. Mwombeki – Director DMD:** If we have been sent to proclaim good news, what is it? There are so many issues, challenges, problems, debts, hunger, water problems but what is it which I can go out and proclaim as good news?
- **Rev. Nicholson of the ELCG:** To the question of freedom, if I remember Martin Luther, we have to avoid listening to the first part of being freed. Yes, we are been freed by the grace of God but for what? We are freed from, but it needs to be said: we are freed for. The words of Jesus Christ to his disciples, when they were seeking understanding for the kingdom, it was clearly said “this is not for you to be thinking about; this is a decision that is taken by my father”. For what? “so that we can be witnesses” not because he fed 5000 persons with two fish and five loaves, not because he rouse Jairo’s daughter back to life but witnesses to what is going on in our own life. So, if we have a sense of being freed, we speak freedom through our faith in Christ to the grace of God. In other words, tell everybody you can still come to Christ and he will set you free.
- **Rev. Gloria Rojas of the IELCH – Vice President:** The good news was depicted through a beautiful story in t the church. The good news is also for us pastors knowing that people can continue with their lives. But why not organizing a church group to take care of that task as good news. Second, why help was not sought with welfare authorities to have and integral response. The good news is two-folded, for our society in which we live in and for the ones who live painful experiences.
Response by Rev. Dr Steinke: I want to commend us all; the resource in the booklet Liberated by God’s Grace, a wonderful chapter that speaks to Gloria’s question entitled “Freed by God’s Grace. From what to what?” It is a rich resource that will serve well in our contexts to work through these questions that accompany us to come to Windhoek with some renewed wisdom together about these kinds of questions.
- **Rev. Flippin of the ELCA:** I have couple of questions: what is your view about the aspect of suffering and the hidden God, but more importantly, in light of diakonia, what is your vision of servant leadership in view of capitalism, North America and South America, with those disparities as we move forward as a communion.
Response by Rev. Dr Steinke: Why it is that we have such difficulty when we claim to be theologians of the cross, and yet, we find it so hard to call a thing what it is. We live in lots of illusions that we tell ourselves and our communities. And I think what the resurrection of Jesus calls us toward what is to call a thing what it is and, in love, bear one another on what occurs and to cultivate the spaces for that truth telling to occur because the resurrection of Jesus invites us not to fear the consequences of things which are not ultimate but which are penultimate – to use Bonheoffer’s language.
- **Rev. Trejo of the ILM:** The phrase that ended the presentation: "love the church you have, not the church you want to have". In view of the Latin American context, it

could drive to conformism, when in our context we struggle for having a more inclusive church that can be a blessing for all. Could you explain more the phrase considering how can fit into the LAC context?

Response by Rev. Dr Steinke: I think this is precisely why we need each other. The gospel did not come to one individual, it came to a community and it is why we need a communion of churches because no one church has all of this figured out. That is why we need to walk together trusting that in the midst of our differences what holds the center is Christ himself. We come together alongside one another with the courage to call things what they are trusting that those things will not divide us because we are bound together in the love and power of God, the one who raised Jesus from the dead. Our church problems seem rather small and completed.

Session V: Panel on the LWF Assembly Sub Themes

Contributor to the session: Bishop Elizabeth Eaton and Bishop Siegfried Sander for “Salvation not for Sale”, Rev. Geraldina Álvarez and Rev. Katharine Altenburg for “Human Beings not for Sale”, and Rev. Emilio Aslla and Rev. Monika Villareal for “Creation not for Sale”. Each presenter received a text from the respective booklets with the goal to analyze and develop it contextually. All presentations are found in the website <https://americalatinaaribe.lutheranworld.org/es/content/no-se-vende-not-sale-4>



Clarifications and questions to presentations by Bishop Eaton and Bishop Sander – “**Salvation not for Sale**”

J. Caballero of the ICLH: Paying attention to migration, as the countries of Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras are part of the northern triangle, we live in constant menace. Since earth is God’s creation no one should be a foreigner in there. Poverty, insecurity, violence and the commercialization of faith are part of huge challenges we face daily.

Where to find answers to strengthen

our faith of being freed by God’s grace and how the ELCA can influence on migration issues and protection?

Response Bishop Eaton: You are right, the world is the Lord’s and the fullness of the ones who live in, no one is stranger but – along with Elaine Neuenfeldt says, we depend on people being strangers because its definition. It is more clear if someone is an enemy because as a stranger is a greater threat. And we see this in our country when people come, on one point we American born mothers and children with American flags at the border saying go back. That is what some churches are doing, and other churches say that is not



an understanding of the gospel. This is a split where your earthly life doesn't matter and perhaps you find solution in the eternal salvation – here it relates with Villarreal question. But the two kingdoms' understanding we will say that the worldly kingdom reigns according to God's economy of a sufficient sustainable livelihood for all, and the heavenly kingdom operates according to God's holy economy of salvation through Christ or abundant life for all. In both realms, economic life is ruled by a moral principle for all: that salvation is no something we purchase to consume. We are trying to help our people to understand that. The conditions are so dried in the northern triangle because of violence, poverty, climate change. We shouldn't just say that they will be fine when they are in heaven. We have to understand that part of God's economy and that salvation not being for sale is that it is our duty to receive our brothers and sisters. It is important in our Lutheran church to progress in our understanding but also to say there is another way to look at people and to look at the world.

Rev. Villarreal of the ELCA: Where I serve, the young people don't expect to live beyond 20 years old because it is very violent. Their sense of eternal salvation is very strong, so strong that they wish to leave this earth and find comfort in the eternal. How do you see the connection between the eternal salvation and the earthly salvation and the role of Lutheran proclamation of God's grace?

Response Bishop Sander: My own question is how to relate eternal salvation to the search for earthly salvation. There are two extremes with opposed flows: one affirms freedom in Jesus Christ from heaven asking not to worry about the context. The other concerned with the context driving to doubt of freedom - because when addressing issues in the context one is never satisfied. In order not to argue about the poles and tensions, the anchor that sets us free is Jesus Christ and when failing in love with Jesus Christ is when our freedom begins. Knowing that I will not be sufficiently freed in this world, I will always return to this center (Jesus Christ). I dare to say, I am freed in my heart in Jesus Christ and then in my context. Learning to listen and respecting people living different liberations from the experience of faith in Jesus Christ is important - some are more social and others more personal. Each person has its own biography centered in Jesus Christ. This produces a range of stories about how Jesus helped me, for the freedom I have in him, to live being more or less enslaved, with problems throughout life, or with signs of change. But the earthly aspect will never saves us, it rather brings an eternal dissatisfaction, a source of frustration and, if it is not linked to the other source that is Jesus Christ, I fear that frustration will win.

No questions for clarification were at the table to presentations by Rev. Katherine Altenburg and Rev. Geraldina Álvarez – **“Human Beings not for Sale”**

There were no questions for clarification to Rev. Emilio Aslla and Rev. Monica Villarreal – **“Creation not for sale”**

Session VI: Working groups/ village groups

Reports (highlights) from groups on the Theme and Subthemes:

Group 1

- Grace is hope affirming the dignity in each person and, it is not for sale.



- God is with each person affirming grace lived in community where all people recognize themselves as sons and daughters of one God.
- Community sharing brings the dimension to serve outwardly. God's grace is lived as an expression of being in community and gives the opportunity to share it. The challenge is the theology of prosperity because it not only despoils persons but also because it denies rethinking issues of justice, dignity, and being liberated by grace.
- The theology of the cross invites to follow up Christ, to feel the suffering of others and be moved to serve.
- On the reality of migrant and refugees, that is linked to contextual challenges, everyone has the right to transit freely and live where he or she wishes without coercion to barriers (it is a universal humans' right).

Group 2

- Creation, care and protection. We were touched by the subject of land because there are literally "landless" people living in difficulty.
- The theme of land related to the concept of "good living": what brings good living to the concept of land and vice versa? And in who (subjects) do we think when we talk of good living (with whom)? It is worth remembering that the market has proposals for quality of life which does not mean that it generates good living.
- The IERP has spoken against building dams in our rivers, against celluloses that pollute rivers killing species, and a strong resistance against the destruction of native forests.
- The word "care" as transversal in all presentations: care of the other persons, care of creation, and care of God toward us.
- On salvation: often churches speak of the kingdom of God than of salvation. If the kingdom is already among us, how do we live it today? We forget what comes after salvation. How to speak of salvation today if indulgences are still being sold?
- How to speak of grace in times when grace does not abound. We must recover the capacity of wonder; rediscover the world with new eyes and meet again to share it.
- Human beings are still for sale, for instance persons who work hard and do not receive decent salary.
- Churches are not what the world expects to be; they have learned to resist and are presenting alternatives to their realities, but they are called also to see how that reality penetrates the own churches' contexts.
- Dialogue is an alternative but sometimes it becomes a form of oppression. We must be aware that dialogue does not exclude confrontation.
- "We have to imagine another worlds to live our world" - Humberto Eco. Re-thinking our world is possible through diakonia. It helps translating grace to our realities, providing opportunity for dialogue in places not even imagined.

Group 3

- 1) One or three words to sum up the presentations
 - Everything is based on context. In spite of the context, we've got hope
 - Stewardship. Poor stewardship creates the illusion of scarcity. Stewardship is part of the provision
- 2) The courage it requires to be faithful to the three themes
 - The strength of hope, its vibrancy, when contrasted to the weight of the "cross" lived under
 - The question of "sufficiency". Bishop Eaton. In Canada, we generally deal not with trying to get enough, but in dealing with a culture which makes us want too much
 - How do we look at our collective "centre" as Christ in the light of the 3 sub-themes?



- Doing these things communally. This includes repentance which is demonstrated and brought about through liturgy
- In communion we need to experience a sense of obligation to the others and an interconnectedness unless we have this, we can't fulfill the subthemes
- If we assume the church's centre is Christ, there is some concerning when the church receives things from outside influences (seems to be an argument of dilution)
- Need to focus and celebrate our faith and the gift of spirituality
- Focus on the gospel and our interpretation of the "good news" - strong theme of the living out our Diaconal ministry with our neighbors

Salvation:

- Our theological foundations provide us with a basis to speak to those without sufficient material, but lacking in joy, contentedness, and other spiritual resources of resiliency
- Regarding continuing on past 500th anniversary, it's not a linear march forward. It is more dynamic than that with us also looping back. We realize the continued and renewed resilience of Luther and others in the past, as we move forward. This reduces the threshold significance of the anniversary related to a paradigm along a linear development
- Our understanding of salvation, encompassing salvation within our natural life, has actually expanded for many. This despite an apparent reduced emphasis on celestial salvation. Appropriate to not disregard salvation in this life, when we are thinking about celestial salvation.



Group 4

- We found commonalities and relevant themes in and around land, water justice issues (ex. Land-lead poisoning in Chicago with agricultural run-off/ water in Flint, Michigan).
- These issues connect with justice issues that Indigenous peoples face in the region

- They also connect with climate justice – the dryness of the land, water scarcity, wildfires
- Recognition that these issues affect the poor most directly
- Recognized that large landowners have more voice, more power in the equation
- We spoke of the theological resources available in a global tradition. But spoke of sometimes not be willing to name or to face a crisis. In facing crisis, we see the face of God. The lens is the theology of the cross. If we are not willing to face the crisis (name the thing in front of us) then do we miss the face of God?



- A counter point was the ELCA raising the possibility about naming the “thing” – ex. Racism – so how are we not naming it? Starting to break the silence. But then get push back (ex. Service at seminary for Philandro Castille – emails received/questions asked about the police officer that shot him i.e. “Black lives matter”)
- “the ills in society, mirror the ills in the church” – we need to look/fix at ourselves as church first
- The idea was brought up from Nestor’s presentation about the divide/polarization between those that think and those who don’t think. Seems to be the problem of our time
- Conversation came up that came through the presentations, when we speak of salvation, what salvation are we talking about? Careful not to tie salvation to political movements and spoke about the tension in Lutheran theology between being saved and to live out as Jesus did
- Luther’s 2 kingdom theory: challenge for Lutherans that we put all our eggs in the left kingdom basket “thy kingdom come”. What is proper/appropriate work of the church? It is not a social service agency with sacraments.
- Our group observed the theology is contextual – we are not worried about our lives or the violence that will take our lives. Don’t live in that context. Changes perspective. Placed ourselves within the context of American Lutheran quietism, as if only the right hand kingdom mattered. How do we balance the two kingdoms?
- Reflected on why the world continues as it does. Think about all the Eucharist that happen every Sunday. Spoke of getting tired of waiting – Come, Lord Jesus! It’s of one piece – 2 kingdoms
- Deepen on God’s grace to live out as a communion of churches
- A blessing and gift to have NA LAC together. Tension between the global North and South, but there is beauty in the stories we have shared together and commonalities – a “putting up with one another.” Each side learning from the other/good chances to learn and good to be together. Hard to place ourselves into a context like 52 years of civil war in Colombia. There is grace in the dialogue. You don’t choose family – it’s the gift we have – multicultural community – LAC and NA
- Group expressed some sadness that most people in the parish don’t get to have this experience (pre assemblies/lwf). Will congregational members hear/understand when we bring back our experiences to them?
- We don’t need to wait for these gatherings. How do we do this in our own communities? How do we be open to each other and to the world. Tend to go home and get closed in, caught in our own contexts.
- We talked about change “the only people who like change are infants.” Nobody want to change, like the way things are. Until we face a crisis – then we know we need change. 70-80% of congregations (ELCA) think things are fine the way they are.

Session VII – Regional business

The regional sessions aim at enabling delegates to be trained for their effective participation in the LWF Twelfth Assembly in Windhoek, Namibia in 2017. It is also a space for the Vice-President’s report, and to address issues regarding nominations of members to the LWF Council.



Thursday 1st September

Sessions VIII and IX – Regional business

These sessions gave continuation to the activities described in session VII.

Sessions X and XI – On our way to Namibia

In the two sessions, delegates worked in sharing, studying and deepening on issues that will be leading to the LWF Twelfth Assembly in 2017.

Friday 2nd September

Session XII – On our way to Namibia:

Both regions returned to plenary to participate in the presentation on Namibia by Presiding Bishop Ernst //Gamxamûb of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Republic of Namibia. His presentation is found in **Attachment B**.

Also during this session, each region shared themes that will be carried to the Assembly:

Regional Themes in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC)

Liberated by God's grace

- Liberated by God's grace or enslaved by the (market) economic model

Aspects related to the defence of human rights

Naming the system that causes injustice

Liberated...

- Commercialization
- Prophetic voice, advocacy – diakonia
- Role of the churches in the public space

Salvation not for sale

- Gender justice
- Capacity building/formation – in general and theological for holistic mission, permanent, contextual and confessional

Human beings not for sale

- Human rights, and human rights' defenders
- Femicide and other forms of violence (GBV, etc.)
- Impoverishment
- Social, economic, and ecological justice

Salvation...

- Women in the ordained ministry: it is necessary that the LWF systematizes and makes available (at grassroots levels) theological argumentations/rationale, deepens



understanding of the different cultural contexts, develops a study process addressing the status quo of women in the ordained ministry

- It is suggested that the LWF constitutes a study group/task force with the Assembly's mandate to develop this study process.

Creation not for sale

- Climate change and justice
- Ecological justice
- Care for creation
- Water
- Land and territories – aboriginal peoples

Regional themes in North America (NA)

Participants from NA have experienced the richness of this experience of being together:

Liberated by God's Grace: Lutheran identity

We, the Lutheran World Federation, a communion of churches, are united because of and in Christ.

Defining our Lutheran identity is an important part of the journey toward the next 500 years.

We have appreciated the presentations during this time together. The theological concepts have been well presented; but we now bear the responsibility and accept the challenge to live that and put the theological into practice in our home contexts. Salvation not for sale

Human Beings not for sale...

We acknowledge the neoliberal, free-market economic system as a root cause to the movement of peoples today.

We recognize that we are accountable to our neighbors in the beloved community both through things done and left undone.

War, environment, disaster and injustice have created the largest migrant crisis since after WWII, which affects the North America region most closely on the Southern border.

We have a responsibility to welcome migrants and refugees and then to work together toward peace and just societies.

Human trafficking is not limited to movement over borders.

For example, 90% of people trafficked in Canada are Canadian
Exploitation doesn't need to move borders

As Lutherans, and as the baptized community, we turn outward first and only toward our neighbor toward the inbreaking of the reign of God.

Racial justice.



For example, the ELCA is an overwhelmingly white, aging church in an increasingly diverse and younger context.

Gender justice. Very important, much conversation.

Full participation of youth and young adults

Indigenous rights.

We need to listen to the wisdom of indigenous persons related to life on the land; listen to the harm done by colonization; learn from existing and ongoing processes of reconciliation; be intentional about “calling a thing what it is” in using the language of colonialism in the NA context.

Creation not for sale...

Environmental Justice and Political implications (for example, racial and economic disparities present)

Water

Land

Resources

Waste

Indigenous

If our churches take the theological teachings seriously, they must be made practical. Daniel gives an excellent example of this from his area in Canada. If we profess that creation is not for sale; practically, we need to consider that means using the least demanding source of energy, which might be solar or in his location– a few places with wind.

Leadership

Leadership formation

Fully embracing the call of baptism as the priesthood of all believers (Self-Understanding, page 20)

Word and Sacrament/ Ordained

World and Service Rostered/ Lay

ELCA three lay rosters combined

Diverse leaders for the church of tomorrow; not the church of the past

Leadership structures

Ordination of women

The North America region ordains women; and we think it matters. We need to do some self-work on ...

Reception of leaders

North/South, rostered, pastoral exchange example

Session XIII – finalizing business, messages

Messages from each region, after approved in the respective spaces, were read in plenary. The messages are found in

<https://americalatina Caribe.lutheranworld.org/es/content/2016-mensaje-pre-asambleas-america-latina-y-el-caribe-norte-america-4>

Session XIV – closing worship



The youth network in charge of the closing worship invited to reaffirm the commitment for peace, respect, to live in community in continuous dialogue, to promote encounters that inspire other people.

Attachment A - Program

Latin America and the Caribbean & North America Pre - Assemblies

"Liberated by God's Grace"

	Saturday, August 27	Sunday, August 28	Monday, August 29	Tuesday, August 30	Wednesday, August 31	Thursday, September 01	Friday, September 02	Saturday, September 03	
7:00 - 8:00		Breakfast	Breakfast	Breakfast	Breakfast	Breakfast	Breakfast	Breakfast	
8:00 - 8:30		Devotion	Devotion	Devotion	Devotion	Devotion	Devotion	Departure of delegates	
8:30-10:30		Report on WMWM: Her Stories, Gender Justice Policy	Public Forum on SDGs	Session I. Harvesting: From Stuttgart to Paramaribo (learnings, key highlights, challenges)	IV. Keynote speaker - Assembly theme + Self-Understanding of the Lutheran Communion	VIII. Regional business	XII. Our way to Namibia - Presentation on Namibia + sharing regional issues, concerns, proposals in plenary		
10:30-11:00		Coffee	Coffee	Coffee	Coffee	Coffee	Coffee		
11:00-13:00	Arrival of delegates for women's Pre Meeting	Arrival of other delegates and Women's pre meeting (see agenda described on the right side in purple)	Follow up Report: Women in Leadership, Women doing Theology	Public Forum on SDGs	II. Self-Understanding of the Lutheran Communion: regional approaches	V. Panel on the three sub-themes (can also be experiences) + feedback in plenary	IX. Regional business		XIII. Finalizing business in plenary: regional message(s), etc.
13:00-14:30			Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch		Lunch
14:30-16:00		Defining themes and actions towards the Assembly	Public Forum on SDGs	III. Field Visit, social evening and diner	VI. Work in groups and feedback to panel and main presentation in plenary	X. In our way to Namibia - Themes developed in each Regional business	XIV. Closing Worship		
16:00-16:30		Coffee	15:30 Coffee		Coffee	Coffee	Coffee		
16:30-18:00		Continuing and closure	16:00 Public Forum on SDGs		VII. Regional business	XI. Continues session X	Departure of some delegates		
18:00-18:30		18:00-19:00 Dinner		Youth Delegates meeting	Devotion	Devotion			
19:00-20:00		Free			Dinner	Dinner	Dinner		
20:00			Dinner	Free	Free	Free			

Attachment B – Namibia

WELCOME TO

“NAMIBIA LAND OF THE BRAVE”

**LWF PRE-ASSEMBLIES
LATIN AMERICA & CARRIBEAN
AND NORTH-AMERICA
IN PARAMARIBO SURINAME**



Dear LWF General Secretary, Martin Junge; Colleagues of the LWF;
Dear Presidents, Chairpersons, Bishops; Dear Sisters and Brothers

- ▶ I welcome you humbly and profoundly to the land of the ancient Namib Desert with the poetic, awesome and inspiring Psalm 133;
- ▶ Which expresses unity among God's people; these people who draw strength from being connected with one another and the creation; knowingly, that at such mergers God bestows His blessings abundantly;
- ▶ As Lutheran Churches in Namibia, see you in Namibia in May 2017;
- ▶ To sing, pray, praise God, preach and explore God's footprints in the world over five hundred years in the Lutheran Reformation; appreciating the present stage, but setting new goals trusting that the Lord will command blessings and secure survival of life evermore;
- ▶ May God bless you from the echoes of the winds, embrace and protect you with the mountain ranges of Namibia and level every little piece of land you will dare;
- ▶ May God be your umbrella-heaven to bless you with light, sun and shade as Namibia welcomes you and will call you goodbye again;
- ▶ May peace, love, fellowship sprout from the depth of every Christian heart to bless, but also to take blessings home.



Welcome to Namibia, a country with 2,5 Million people, engulfed by the Namib Desert at the western side, where it's name derives from; bordered by Angola, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Botswana and South-Africa



#WE ARE UNITED UNDER THIS NAMIBIAN FLAG#

- Red - represents Namibia's most important resource, its people. It refers to their heroism and their determination to build a future of equal opportunity for all;
- White - refers to peace and unity;
- Green - symbolizes vegetation and agricultural resources;
- Blue - represents the clear Namibian sky and the Atlantic Ocean, the country's precious water resources and rain.



A country of spectacular sunrises and even more spectacular sunsets



A country of vast desert-land and even vaster Atlantic ocean



A country of dense bush-land, rugged mountains, red sand dunes of the coast and the Kalahari semi-desert



A country with a rich diversity of antelopes, predators, reptiles, creatures big and small



A country with a wealth of different plants both big and small,

Bushes and Plants

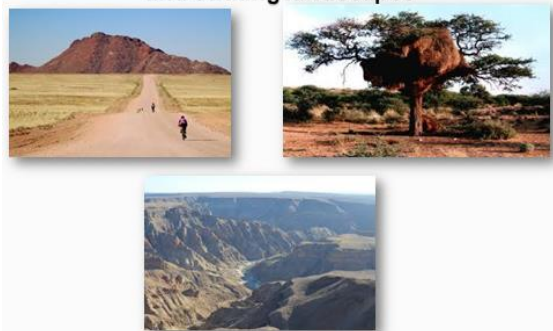
Welwitschia Mirabilis - some of them about 1500 years old



We live in a country of many different cultures, tribes, ethnic affiliations



A country of awe-inspiring views and striking landscapes



Namibian Cuisine





The United Church Council of the Namibia Evangelical Lutheran Churches in Namibia
[UCC-NELC]



We are together as Lutherans and as Namibians,
We come from different backgrounds
- all three of us

ELCIN - GELC



We are together as Lutherans and as Namibians,
We come from different backgrounds
- all three of us

ELCRN



We are together as Lutherans and as Namibians,
We come from different backgrounds -
all three of us

ELCIN



IT STARTED ALL HERE WHEN NAMIBIA RECEIVED THE HONOURS TO HOST THE 12TH LWF ASSEMBLY



As Namibian Lutheran Churches we are inviting you to a country with much ambivalence:

- ▶ Whilst we rejoice in being one independent and liberated Namibia, we also know that many of our people are not fully able to join us in our joy. We still have racism in our country - and we need to deal with it. We still have ethnic struggles in our country - and we need to deal with them. We still have wars and hatred in the corporate memory of our people - and we long for healing and reconciliation;
- ▶ Whilst some of our people have truly profited from our independence, gaining good education and accumulating wealth, there are others who still live in abject poverty, who are uneducated and without skills-training, who have no access to fresh water, who suffer from HIV and AIDS, malnutrition, and related diseases.



As Namibian Lutheran Churches we are inviting you to a country with much ambivalence:

- ▶ Whilst we have a so called first-world situation when it comes to telecommunication and streets, educational facilities and economic power-houses, mines and industry, we at the same time have high unemployment rates and a population with little or no hope of ever finding employment, people disconnected from the economic hubs by a lack of transport infrastructure, without access to well equipped schools and well-run hospitals, people living in houses of corrugated iron whilst the summer temperatures rise to 40°C;
- ▶ Whilst we have people who own farms, houses, factories, businesses of all sorts - and we need to admit that some of the disparities of apartheid times have not yet been overcome -, we also have a majority of people, who cannot afford the concept of a holiday, who cannot afford to be choosy when taking up employment, who will never pass on to their children and grandchildren anything in terms of material wealth and social security.

The LWF has been of great support to our country and its people.

- ▶ We have benefited from the Communion's drought relief;
- ▶ We have benefited from stipends and bursaries granted by the Communion that equipped many of our present leaders in all spheres of life;
- ▶ We have benefited from the Communion's solidarity with our people in the time of struggle for liberation;
- ▶ You have been part of this process by virtue of being part of the LWF;
- ▶ You will remain part of this process as you come to Namibia to reflect on what it means to be: **"Liberated by God's Grace."**

As Namibian Lutheran Churches we are inviting you to a country with much ambivalence:

I welcome you to come and see and struggle with us as we - the Lutheran churches of Namibia -

- ▶ try to bring God's blessing to our people in the way we teach and preach;
- ▶ try to alleviate suffering with our many and diverse diaconal projects;
- ▶ try to impart hope as we sing and pray with our people to God's glory;
- ▶ try to find theological paradigms that will help us to interpret our present challenges and help us to carve out a future for all the people of our land.

Become part of our journey to proclaim this incredible Good News:

- ▶ Theologically speaking this is our daily bread and butter, as we deal with poverty, inequality, gender violence, sickness and disease;
- ▶ We have been **"Liberated by God's Grace."**

"Humans are not for sale"

- ▶ What does this mean in an economy that does not provide food and work for everyone?;
- ▶ What does this mean in terms of human dignity, when some have to sell their bodies to earn a living;
- ▶ when some seek relief in drugs, when some use violence to express their frustration?

Become part of our journey to proclaim God's will for human-kind: BEING CREATED IN THE IMAGE OF GOD.

"Creation is not for sale"

- ▶ What does this mean in Windhoek, our capital, the biggest city in Namibia, when water resources are slowly but surely drying up?;
- ▶ When huge building projects are started and continued, which absorb enormous water reserves at the expense of all living creatures?;
- ▶ What effect does this have on our farms, when bush encroachment threatens economic viability?

Become part of our journey to proclaim God's will for His creation: TEND, CARE, LOVE AND PROTECT - IT IS GOD'S CREATION.

“Salvation is not for sale”

- ▶ What does this mean in a context of mushrooming sectarian groups in the disguise of Christ's church, preaching a gospel of success and prosperity, while neglecting and scoffing at the cross of our Lord?;
- ▶ What does this mean when mankind invents its own salvation through progress, wealth, health, and education?;
- ▶ What does this mean in a postmodern society, where everything goes, yet the precepts of God's Word are forgotten or no longer even heard?

RECONCILIATION

- ▶ A CONCEPT WHICH WAS INTRODUCED BY SWAPO, THE RULING PARTY AFTER WINNING THE FIRST DEMOCRATIC ELECTIONS IN NAMIBIA IN 1990;
- ▶ A CONCEPT WHICH MOTHERS PEACEFUL CO-HABITATION AND FINANCIAL STABILITY;
- ▶ A CONCEPT WHICH CREATED EXPECTATIONS FOR SO MANY, BUT ALSO BY WHICH MANY ARE DISSAPOINTED;
- ▶ DISSAPOINTED REGARDING EMPLOYMENT SECURITY; POLITICAL DISUNITY, ORIGIN AND LANGUAGE-PREFERENCES;
- ▶ A CONCEPT WHICH IS TESTED AT THIS MOMENT ON MATTERS OF LAND REFORM.

Vision- One Namibia Lutheran Church

- ▶ Many want to know, why our three churches are not yet one church, yet they fail to see that we are together as Lutherans and as Namibians.
- ▶ We come from different backgrounds - all three of us - have been formed by different histories and traditions; have developed our own structures; have been divided willfully and skilfully by the architects of apartheid; have lived next to each other without knowing one another, have been distrustful of one another, have been resentful of one another, have been dishonest with one another.
- ▶ And now, after much prayer and labour, after much thinking and communicating, after many efforts to build bridges and tear down walls. The race toward unity is set by Jesus Christ, our Lord in John 17, not on the terms and speed of the LWF family, but as Jesus leads us. Pray for us, we need your fellowship and accompaniment. Thank you.

DIACONAL MINISTRY OF THE CHURCHES

- ▶ DIACONAL MINISTRY IS VERY IMPORTANT; A CHURCH WITHOUT IT IS NO CHURCH (Matt. 28: 19-10);
- ▶ THE TWO BLACK CHURCHES EMBARKED ON A UNITED LUTHERAN THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY IN THE EARLY 1960's; WHERE PEOPLE LIKE EMERITUS BISHOP DR. Z. KAMEETA HAD BEEN EDUCATED;
- ▶ DIACONAL MINISTRIES IN ALL THREE CHURCHES ARE RUN AGAINST GENDER BASED VIOLENCE THROUGH CHURCH ORGANS BUT ALSO TOGETHER WITH THE STATE AND THE NGO'S;
- ▶ THE THREE CHURCHES HAVE EMBARKED UPON AWARENESS CAMPAIGNS ON HIV/AIDS; MALARIA AND DISASTER PREPAREDNESS IN TIMES OF DROUGHT;
- ▶ OUR CHURCHES ARE A STRONG VOICE IN MATTERS OF ADVOCACY...;
- ▶ OUR CHURCHES CONTRIBUTE IMMENSELY IN THE FIELD OF EDUCATION OF CHILDREN BY PROVIDING HOSTEL FACILITIES; KINDERGARTENS AND SCHOOLS;
- ▶ OUR CHURCHES ARE ACTIVELY ENGAGED INTO CHRISTIAN EDUCATION - SUNDAY SCHOOLS; CATECHISM CLASSES; WOMEN, MEN'S MINISTRIES.

DR. HAGE GOTTFRIED GEINGOB, THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA AND A PROUD LUTHERAN, WILL HOST A STATE BANQUET IN HONOUR OF THE ASSEMBLY



WELCOME

//KHORE //HAREHE HÅSE TSÅRE
WILLKOMMEN
MWEYAPO
WELKOM
MUJAKURUA
BIENVENIDO

As I speak to you about the contextualisation of the Assembly theme in Namibia, you have realised that Namibia is inseparably part of this globe.

- Our challenges are your challenges and vice versa.
- Our questions are linked with your answers and vice versa.
- Therefore let me EXTEND it once more...

I welcome you to come and see and enjoy with us in Namibia, the blessings God has bestowed upon us all.

I thank you.

Photo gallery



The ELKS committee and volunteers



Rev. Slagtand during the opening worship



LAC and NA Pre Assemblies opening



... and the message was well received!





Address of the General Secretary, Rev. Dr Martin Junge



Living communion!

