

Wittenberg project enters new phase

LUTHERSTADT WITTENBERG, Germany - A joint German-U.S. Lutheran church project in Wittenberg, Germany, entered a new phase July 22 with the appointment of a new managing director and election of a new chairman for its supervisory board.

Meeting in Wittenberg, the Supervisory Board of the International Lutheran Society of Wittenberg (ILSW) named an American pastor, Rev. David Mahsman, to succeed Canadian pastor, Rev. Wilhelm Torgerson as managing director. Torgerson, who is retiring, served in the post through August. Mahsman took up his new duties September 1.

The board also elected an American, Rev. Dr. Samuel H. Nafzger, to be its new chairman. He succeeds Bishop Hans-Joerg Voigt of Germany's Independent Evangelical Lutheran Church (SELK). The ILSW's Wittenberg Project is jointly operated by the SELK and the U.S.-based Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS).

The twin actions “underscore the commitment of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod to this project,” Nafzger said. “The LCMS, its president, and its Board of Directors are fully supportive of the Wittenberg 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.”

The ILSW owns an 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.



Canadian pastor, Rev. Wilhelm Torgerson, who serves in SELK, stands at Martin Luther's grave in the Castle Church talking to a tour group from Illinois.

The ILSW was formed by the two German and U.S. Lutheran church bodies to operate a welcome centre for visitors to the Luther sites, re-establish a SELK congregation in Wittenberg, and 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.”

Bishop 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.

Torgerson expressed high regard for his successor's background, noting especially his years of service as a church journalist. He said this would serve Mahsman well, especially as Wittenberg prepares for the 500th anniversary of the Reformation in 2017. He added that he stands ready to offer the new managing director any assistance needed.

Mahsman, 58, was for 20 years the executive editor of the LCMS' two official periodicals *The Lutheran Witness* and *The LCMS Reporter*,

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

Pray for persecuted

Around the world more than 200 million people are suffering for their faith in Jesus Christ. Each year, Lutheran Church—Canada encourages congregations to join with Christians in more than 130 countries to pray for our suffering sisters and brothers as part of the International Day of Prayer for the Persecuted Church (IDOP). This year, Canada will re-join its international partners and recognize IDOP on Sunday, November 8, 2009. For 2009, the theme is “Persecuted: Not Abandoned,” based on 2 Corinthians 4:7-8.

For resources and more information go to www.idop.ca.

Confessional Lutheran Church leaders meet in Korea

SEOUL, Korea -Bishops and presidents from 32 international Lutheran church bodies along with their wives and invited guests met from August 26 to 31 in Seoul, Korea, for the 23rd World Conference of the International Lutheran Council (ILC). Lutheran Church–Canada president Rev. Robert Bugbee and his wife, Gail attended the event which The Lutheran Church in Korea (LCK) hosted for the second time. Its president, Dr. Hyun Sub Um, preached in the opening worship at Luther University/Seminary, Seoul, August 26.

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

The keynote address, delivered by Dr. John Eckrich, a retired medical doctor from St. Louis, Missouri, described the ongoing process of Christian, spiritual formation, growth and maturity, anchored in justification and active in baptismal life.

The second presenter, Dr. David J. Ludwig, 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. On the last conference day, LCC President Robert Bugbee led the Bible study on 1 Corinthians 12:1-5, speaking about how the true God imparts full insight into spiritual gifts, and helps us lead a fuller life as we benefit from the gifts of others in the Body of Christ.

In his report to the conference, ILC chairman Dr. Gerald B. Kieschnick, president of The Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod emphasized the importance of regional ILC conferences and their potential for furthering the ILC’s goals on the local level. He also referred to fiscal realities and envisaged the day when the ILC would have a full time



Elected and installed as officers of the ILC Executive Committee were regional representatives from The Lutheran Church of Nigeria; the Lutheran Church in the Philippines: Rev. Robert Bugbee, (North America); Rev. Gijsbertus van Hattem, secretary; Dr. Gerald B. Kieschnick, chairman; the Independent Evangelical Lutheran Church (SELK) in Germany, the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Brazil.

executive secretary. Currently, the position is a part-time responsibility of Dr. Samuel Nafzger of the LCMS. The executive committee asked Dr. Nafzger to continue serving as executive secretary for the next three years.

ILC Executive Secretary, Dr. Samuel H. Nafzger, reported on the council’s activities during the last two years and announced that plans for a fourth ILC World Seminaries Conference are well advanced. The seminary representatives will meet at Concordia, Fort Wayne, Ind., June 6-10, 2010.

ILC members also heard the General Secretary of the Mission Province in Sweden and Finland, Dr. Bengt Birgersson, describe the situation of confessional Lutheranism in Scandinavia. He spoke of the sad decay of life and teaching in the state churches, particularly with reference to questions of human sexuality, and the authority and inspiration of Scripture. Though he and his co-workers attempt to provide a faithful witness within the established church, he sees the day when the “Mission Province” will need to exist as an independent Lutheran body completely separate from the Church of Sweden. Birgersson spoke touchingly of the encouragement he has received from faithful Lutheran

churches and leaders in Africa, North America, and through his participation in the ILC conference.

At a time when the issue of homosexuality is sending shockwaves through the Christendom, 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 12)

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

With the 500th anniversary of the Protestant Reformation in 2017, the Independent Evangelical Lutheran Church in Germany (SELK) and the LCMS are working together as the International Lutheran Society of Wittenberg to establish a strong Lutheran presence in Wittenberg. Members of the ILC received updates on the project from SELK Bishop H.-J. Voigt and Dr. S. Nafzger. (See page 16)

The next conference of the International Lutheran Council is planned to be held in North America.

President Bugbee’s reflections on Korea and the conference are online at www.lccontheroad.ca.

*Rev. Peter Ahlers
with files from Rev. Robert Bugbee.*

Lutheran women put a shine on Canada's capital

OTTAWA - At the 7th convention of Lutheran Women's Missionary League-Canada (LWMLC) July 9-12, God buffed up the shine of those present as they spent time in worship, in Bible study, in devotions and in prayer. And shine they did!

According to the speakers, that shine isn't something we have to come up with, we don't have to make it, or fake it. Rather, it is God's gift. It's simply who we are because of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Keynote speaker, Rev. Dr. David Ludwig, put it in memorable way saying that the question is not, "Do I *gotta* shine like a star?" rather it is "Do I *getta* shine?" And the answer is yes, you do. It's God's gift to you.

But most of the time we don't feel very shiny. Sin and the influence of the world around us dull our shine. Perhaps it would help to think back to Moses and how his face shone whenever he had been in God's presence. That's also true for us. The more time we spend in His presence, the more we, too, will shine...without our having to "do" anything.

The convention participants shone as they tied two quilts for



LWMLC presidents: Judy Grande (2006-present); Marilyn Schultz (2001-2006); Dorothea Korcok (1997-2001); and Eloise Schaan, founding president (1993-1997).

Canadian Lutheran World Relief; as they folded 450 gauze squares and rolled bandages from 25 pounds of old, used sheets for Medical Missions; as they trimmed oodles of used stamps for the distribution of Bibles by the Canadian Bible Society; and as they cut milk bags into 18-foot strips, crocheting them into mats for Haiti and Africa.

They also shone as they brought *Gifts of Love* to the convention to be given to the Ottawa women's shelter, Chrysalis House, and the Ottawa Food Bank.

Delegates stepped out in shining faith and increased the organization's mission grant goal from \$100,000 to \$125,000. When LWMLC formed in 1993 that goal was \$25,000.

A unique opportunity to shine came as the women "walked for missions" and as a witness to the downtown community of Ottawa. (Photo left) A Member of Parliament stopped to talk to some walkers and invited them to pray with him on the spot on Parliament Hill. Some street musicians stopped another group to ask what they were all about with many hearing the response through the group's sound system. Walkers brought donations of more than \$13,000 to the convention and LWMLC will use the funds further the various projects the League supports with grants.

The women shone as they recognized those who have made special contributions to the

League. Its three former presidents attended the convention where they received thanks for the guidance and direction they gave to LWML-Canada on the Founding Committee and during their terms of office: Eloise Schaan, Dorothea Korcok, and Marilyn Schultz). Also recognized by resolution were the late Deborah Pakrul who served on the Founding Committee and General Council as well as writing songs for special events; and the late Rev. Mark Sallach who wrote words and music to one of the League's two official hymns.

Special programming for young women helped them learn about the League and its purpose as well as share how they picture LWMLC in the future. Judy Grande, re-elected president, challenged members of LWMLC to: "encourage one woman at a time to become faithful in studying God's Word; encourage one woman at a time to be active in the church; and encourage one woman at a time to share the good news of the Gospel." An ad hoc committee that developed and conducted a survey of the needs of women in the church reported to the convention. The General Council will analyze the data and share it with the League as it plans for the future.

For the first time the convention was webcast live. Links to videos of the worship service and speakers on the LWMLC website. (www.lutheranwomen.ca/videos.htm).



Mission walk route included Parliament Hill.

Lutherans invited to witness and serve at Olympics

VANCOUVER, B.C. More than 300,000 visitors from around the world countries attend the Winter Olympic Games (February 12-28, 2010) and the Paralympics Games (March 12-21, 2010) in Vancouver. Many of the visitors and a majority of people who live in Vancouver do not believe in Christ as their Saviour from sin, death and the devil. Would you like to volunteer to serve as a Christian witness for two, three, or four days or possibly a week or two while at the same time experiencing the Winter Olympics? What an opportunity for congregational outreach teams to participate in a short-term outreach trip and for Christian musicians and

congregation worship teams to share the Gospel through concerts!

T r i n i t y Lutheran Church, **R i c h m o n d**, and **B e t h l e h e m** Lutheran Church, **V a n c o u v e r** are planning outreach events (e.g. Internet café; children's sports camp; evening music concerts, etc.) throughout the Olympic Games (February 12-28, 2010) and need your help.

To see the planned outreach activities and how you might can

help out, visit the ABC District website at: <http://www.lccabc.ca/vancouver2010>.



Some of the LCC congregations, in the Vancouver Metropolitan area, are providing lodging to volunteers either in their church building or some fellow Lutherans are billeting outreach

volunteers. This information is also available on the website. Volunteers need to fund their own expenses and arrange/reserve their own lodging.

Make Winter Olympics local

If you can't make it to Vancouver, use the Games as congregational community outreach event!

Olympic "fever" will spread across Canada as the torch run begins toward the opening of the Vancouver Winter Olympic Games. The Olympics provides us with an excellent opportunity to connect with our communities and share the Good News of our Lord!

How can the Olympic Games provide your congregation with local outreach opportunities in your own community?

- Host a sports outreach event (i.e. block party) at your local park or your gym.
- Host an open crowd and big screen community festival (e.g. the Opening Ceremonies and/or the Gold Medal hockey game might be projected on a large screen in your gym or fellowship hall)
- Organize a weekend sports camp for kids, similar to a VBS;
- Distribute sports specific Christian literature in your community.



- Distribute copies of the sports-oriented DVD *Struggle and Triumph* (www.tobiascom.com/lcc)

- If the Olympic Torch is going through your area, think of ways you can serve those lining the torch route

To help you organize local events, *More Than Gold*, a Christian church network focusing connecting with people at the Vancouver Olympics, has produced a helpful "How to" manual which you can download free at www.morethangold.ca

More than Gold is looking for people to serve in the area of creative and performing arts or on mission teams, in Internet cafés, at sports camps or in social ministry initiatives. *More Than Gold* can also provide you with ideas/resources of how to organize and host local outreach events. Sign up on the *More Than Gold* website as a participating church and then request information. *More Than Gold* has inexpensive outreach resources that you can purchase (e.g. a Gospel of Mark is \$1; a copy of the New Testament is \$2).

CLWR Four Corners in new location

WINNIPEG - The *Four Corners* alternative trade program and the commodities program of Canadian Lutheran World Relief (CLWR) are now operating at 549 King Edward Street in Winnipeg.

Telephone numbers and e-mail addresses are unchanged. You can reach them by calling 1.204.694.5602 or toll free at 1.800.661.2597. The direct fax number has changed and is 1.204.697.0326.

Those shipping commodities such as *We Care Kits*, quilts and other supplies to CLWR may continue to use the agency's regular shipping partners: Kindersley Transport, Ridsdale Transport, Gardewine North, and Home Hardware. Shipping labels with the King Edward address are available online at www.clwr.org/How-You-Can-Help/

Those returning consignment sale orders to *Four Corners* should direct them to 549 King Edward Street, Winnipeg, MB. R3H 0N9. Online purchases of *Four Corners* products continue to be received at www.clwr.org.



No international borders for life issues

REGINA - group of seven Canadians traveled to St. Louis in July to attend the annual convention of Lutherans for Life. Cliff Pyle, president of Lutherans for Life – Canada reports that the theme “Celebrating the Abundant Life” focused on both beginning and end-of-life issues. Keynote speaker, Bobby Schindler spoke of his own struggle to keep alive his sister, Terri Schiavo. In 2005 a court ordered caregivers to cease feeding the comatose wife and mother. Schindler said it was the most “heinous, barbaric thing I’ve seen.” He believes his sister could have “lived a normal life span if properly cared for and loved ... there are tens of thousands of ‘Terris’ in our country today whose lives are just as vulnerable as hers was . . . [when] you devalue one life, you devalue all lives.

Mr. Pyle warns that similar issues arise in Canada frequently. He noted that a private member’s bill introduced by Bloc Quebecois MP Francine Lalonde’s (Bill C-384) received first reading in the House of Commons. Titled *An Act to amend the Criminal Code (right to die with dignity)* it would legalize ‘intentional death.’ “This is a matter of grave concern facing Canadians today,” said the LFL-C president. “We need a concentrated effort by our citizens to let their MP’s know that they are against it, and that life must be respected at all levels.” He noted that polls in Canada indicate that the majority of Canadians favour some form of euthanasia. “But on the positive side,” he continued, “there have been some interesting comments and editorials in many of Canada’s leading newspapers many calling for some form of restraint or caution.”

Lutherans for Life-Canada, a Listed Service Organization of Lutheran Church–Canada, provides information on life issues. For more information, visit the website at www.lutheransforlife-canada.ca.

Canadians visible at international convention

GREENSBORO, N.C. - Everyone at the July convention of the International Lutheran Laymen’s League in Greensboro, N.C. knew there were Canadians around.

In his greetings to the convention, LCC President, Rev. Robert Bugbee shared how the LLL’s radio program *The Lutheran Hour* had nourished him in his faith during his college years when that faith was under attack. “To those who worked to sacrifice and make that possible, I thank you with all my heart” said President Bugbee.

The league also recognized a group of Lutheran Hour Ministries’ congregational Ambassadors for outstanding service in that capacity. Included were three Canadians: Margaret Schulz, St. John’s, Wembley, Alta. (ABC District); Ewald Hautz, Christ, Langenburg, Sask., (Central District); and Earl Schaeffer, Redeemer, Waterloo, Ont. (East District).

The convention delegates (including about 40 Canadians) elected: Ed Tiefenbach (Good Shepherd, Regina) to serve as the league’s international treasurer; and Robert “Bob” Felstead (Shepherd of the Valley Canmore, Alta.) who will serve a second term as governor for Region 15 (Canada). Both positions are included in the Board of Governors of the Int’l Lutheran Laymen’s League.

During the convention workshop sessions, LCC’s director of communications, Ian Adnams and son Evan Adnams (ABC District communications) conducted a standing room only overview of current trends in online social media.

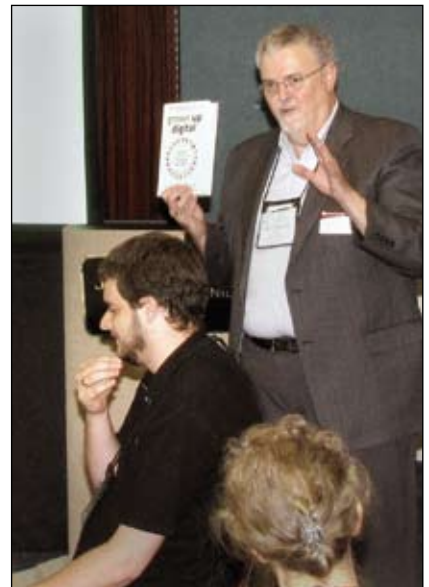
In other business, delegates adopted a resolution to change the Int’l LLL convention from an annual to a bi-annual event beginning after the 2010 convention in Omaha, Nebraska. The Central District in Canada will host the 2012 convention in Saskatoon during July of that year.



LCC president, Rev. Robert Bugbee address the Int’l LLL Convention.



Delegates elected Ed Tiefenbach international treasurer, and re-elected Bob Felstead governor for Region 15 (Canada).



Ian and Evan Adnams (seated at his laptop) conducted a workshop on social media.

You can view convention highlights at www.lhm.org/convention/ondemand.htm or read about them in the September-October issue of *The Lutheran Layman* newspaper.

Federal grant for university college

EDMONTON- Concordia University College (CUCA) has received a federal Knowledge Infrastructure Program grant totalling \$1,017,000. The funding will focus on campus research facilities and revitalizing buildings. This includes replacing original windows installed in Schwermann Hall in 1926.

“Concordia is extremely grateful to receive this generous contribution from the federal government,” said CUCA president, Dr. Gerald Krispin at the August 12 announcement ceremony. “Not only will this funding provide a quick start to our shovel-ready projects, but it also provides an immediate impact on our students in the classroom and in the research field.”



Dr. Gerald Krispin

The investments are part of the Government of Canada’s two-year, \$2-billion plan to repair and expand research and educational facilities at Canadian colleges and universities.

Gear-up for fall

CYBERSPACE - People who moved over the summer are seeking connections in their new neighbourhood, including a church.

Many search for churches on the Internet using Google. That makes your website the first contact with your congregation. Is it up-to-date? It should include your contact information, service times and a map. Google Maps can generate a link you can put on your website.

If people visit, likely the only piece of information they will take with them is your bulletin. Make sure it speaks well of your church and includes your e-mail and website addresses.

LCC welcomes new mission executive



Pastor Leonardo Neitzel and President Robert Bugbee discuss LCC’s overseas missions.

WINNIPEG - Rev. Dr. Leonardo Neitzel has accepted the call to serve as Lutheran Church–Canada’s executive assistant to the president for Mission and Social Ministry Services. LCC’s Board of Directors extended the call June 25.

Pastor Neitzel and his wife, Maria, visited Winnipeg in August to arrange for housing. The new mission executive spent time discussing the future of LCC’s overseas missions with President Bugbee and LCC staff. In Vancouver he received detailed briefings from Rev. Dr. Ralph Mayan, LCC’s interim mission executive.

An installation service for Pastor Neitzel is scheduled for 3 p.m.,

Sunday, October 4 at Bethlehem Lutheran Church in Vancouver. LCC President Robert Bugbee will conduct the Rite of Installation. A live webcast of the service will be available at www.lutheranchurch.ca/video

Pastor 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. The pastor and his wife expect to be in Winnipeg by mid-October.

Liturgies et Cantiques Luthériens - New LCC hymnal in French

MONTREAL - LCC has produced the only Lutheran French-language service book and hymnal currently available. This 864-page volume offers three eucharistic liturgies; Morning Prayer; Evening Prayer; family devotions; lectionaries; Psalms; hymns; collects; proper prefaces; Luther’s Small



Catechism; and 434 hymns, songs, and canticles. Pre-order through LCC’s office in Winnipeg (bcs@lutheranchurch.ca). Send a cheque for \$17 for each volume (shipping included). The hymnal will be available in late November.

Following publication, the hymnal will be distributed by CPH.