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From the President

# A SIGNIFICANT MEETING FOR WORLD LUTHERANISM



WITH AS MANY ROUTINE MEETINGS as I attend in a year, rarely do I identify a gathering as a “significant meeting.” Yet, this is how I described the 25th (10<sup>th</sup>) World Conference of the International Lutheran Council (ILC) held Sept. 23–26, 2015, in Buenos Aires, Argentina. World church leaders from 33 countries attended the conference from almost every continent in the world. The theme of the conference was “Bringing the Reformation to the World.” (You can read about the conference here: [goo.gl/MKATnb](http://goo.gl/MKATnb)).

The meeting was significant in part because the world leaders attending the conference represented about 15 million Lutherans worldwide. The papers presented discussed the Gospel, the Sacraments, the Church and the Office of the Ministry. The preaching at the services was Christ-centered and properly divided Law and Gospel. The ILC events provided “mutual conversation and consolation of brethren” (Rom. 14:9 and Smalcald Articles III, Art. IV, “The Gospel”).

The ILC’s World Conference was significant because the group decided to take seriously the idea of “Bringing the Reformation to the World.” The ILC is the premier group representing Lutheran churches that subscribe to the Lutheran Confessions (“quia”) because they are a pure exposition of the Holy Scriptures. This is a gift to bring to the entire world.

With the decline of Lutheranism in Western Europe and North America due to the rejection of biblical, moral standards (acceptance of same-sex marriage and practicing homosexual clergy), Lutherans around the world have become more interested in the ILC because of its commitment to the Holy Scriptures and to the Lutheran Confessions. World Lutheranism is looking for an organization that represents their beliefs and holds to their values.

In order to seize the opportunities for world Lutheranism, the ILC, of which the Missouri Synod is

a founding member, has decided to implement a bold, strategic plan to strengthen, encourage and support Lutherans around the world to increase their confessional commitment and their Lutheran identity. One way that the ILC is seeking to increase its impact is by publishing articles, reviews and materials to expound and explain their position. The publication of this edition of the *Journal of Lutheran Mission* with articles from the ILC World Conference is a part of this effort. The ILC will be updating its website ([ilc-online.org](http://ilc-online.org)) in the coming months as well as expanding its web presence to increase awareness of its work.

The ILC World Conference also elected and appointed an executive committee to carry out these initiatives. The ILC executive committee consists of the Rev. Dr. Hans-Jörg Voigt, bishop of the Independent Evangelical Lutheran Church in Germany (SELK), ILC chairman; the Rev. Dr. Robert Bugbee, president of Lutheran Church Canada, ILC vice-chairman, North American representative; the Rev. Gijsbertus van Hattem, president of Evangelical Lutheran Church in Belgium, ILC secretary; the Right Rev. Christian Ekong, archbishop of the Lutheran Church of Nigeria, ILC Africa representative; the Rev. Antonio Reyes, president of the Lutheran Church in the Philippines, ILC Asia representative; the Rev. Jon Ehlers, chairman of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of England, ILC Europe representative; the Rev. Norberto Gerke, president of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Paraguay, ILC Latin America representative; and the Rev. Dr. Albert B. Collver III, director of Church Relations for The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, ILC executive secretary.

May the Lord grant strength and resources for this goal to be achieved.

*In Christ,*  
Matthew C. Harrison  
PRESIDENT OF THE LCMS