

# JOURNAL OF LUTHERAN Mission

December 2015 | Vol. 2 | No. 5

*Special Issue*

## Table of Contents

SERMON FOR INTERNATIONAL LUTHERAN COUNCIL—2015 WORLD CONFERENCE, BUENOS AIRES, ARGENTINA BY HANS-JÖRG VOIGT .....	2
AUGSBURG CONFESSION IN THE 21ST CENTURY: CONFESSING THE FAITH ONCE FOR ALL DELIVERED TO THE SAINTS BY ALEXEY STRELTSOV .....	5
CHAIRMAN OF THE INTERNATIONAL LUTHERAN COUNCIL REPORT BY HANS-JÖRG VOIGT .....	12
STATEMENT OF THE INTERNATIONAL LUTHERAN COUNCIL ON THE DOCUMENT “FROM CONFLICT TO COMMUNION:” LUTHERAN—CATHOLIC COMMON COMMEMORATION OF THE REFORMATION 2017 .....	17
SERMON ON ST. MICHAEL AND ALL ANGELS (LUKE 10:20; REV. 12:11) BY ALBERT B. COLLVER III .....	20
OUR CONFESSION IN AUGUSTANA IV–VI BY SERGIO ADRIÁN FRITZLER .....	22
DEVOTION ON MATTHEW 6:24–34 BY LAWRENCE R. RAST, JR. ....	36
AUGUSTANA VII: THE CHURCH AND FELLOWSHIP BY ALBERT B. COLLVER III .....	38
BRINGING THE REFORMATION TO THE WORLD: THE MEANS OF GRACE BY HANS-JÖRG VOIGT .....	45
FAITH, ETHNICITY AND SOCIAL ISSUES IN THE THOUGHTS AND WORK OF PASTOR VLADISLAV SANTARIUS BY MARTIN PIĘTAK .....	52
BOOK REVIEW: <i>MISSION SHAPED BY PROMISE: LUTHERAN MISSIOLOGY CONFRONTS THE CHALLENGE OF RELIGIOUS PLURALISM</i> BY JOHN T. PLESS .....	62
BOOK REVIEW: <i>CALLED TO WITNESS: DOING MISSIONAL THEOLOGY</i> BY JOHN T. PLESS .....	64
BOOK REVIEW: <i>GNOSTIC AMERICA: A READING OF CONTEMPORARY AMERICAN CULTURE &amp; RELIGION ACCORDING TO CHRISTIANITY’S OLDEST HERESY</i> BY CARL ROCKROHR .....	66
BOOK REVIEW: <i>CHURCH ORDER FOR BRAUNSCHWEIG-WOLFENBÜTTEL: HOW DOCTRINE, CEREMONIES, AND OTHER CHURCH-RELATED MATTERS SHALL (BY GOD’S GRACE) BE CONDUCTED HENCEFORTH</i> BY ALBERT B. COLLVER III .....	68

© 2015 The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.  
Reproduction of a single article or column for parish  
use only does not require permission of *The Journal  
of Lutheran Mission*. Such reproductions, however,  
should credit *The Journal of Lutheran Mission* as the  
source. Cover images are not reproducible without  
permission. Also, photos and images credited to  
sources outside the LCMS are not to be copied.

Published by The Lutheran Church—  
Missouri Synod.  
Please direct queries to  
[journaloflutheranmission@lcms.org](mailto:journaloflutheranmission@lcms.org).  
This journal may also be found at  
[www.lcms.org/journaloflutheranmission](http://www.lcms.org/journaloflutheranmission).  
Find the *Journal of Lutheran Mission* on  
Facebook.

Editorial office:  
1333 S. Kirkwood Road,  
St. Louis, MO 63122-7294,  
314-996-1202

Member: Associated Church Press Evangelical Press Association (ISSN 2334-1998)  
A periodical of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod’s Offices of National and International Mission.



# CHAIRMAN OF THE INTERNATIONAL LUTHERAN COUNCIL REPORT

by Hans-Jörg Voigt

## 1. What constitutes the International Lutheran Council?

Most honoured assembly, dear brothers and sisters! I am delighted to be allowed to be a guest here at Buenos Aires, and it is my pleasure to give this report to you. I want to embrace the opportunity to express my gratitude to our host, the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Argentina, especially to President Nagel and Professor Pfaffenzeller and to all helpers. I also want to say a special thank you to Mrs. Catharine O’Neil and to our executive secretary the Rev. Dr. Albert Collver.

Since our last conference in Niagara Falls in 2012, the International Lutheran Council (ILC) turns either 20 or 50. Both are jubilees that will have to be celebrated belatedly. “In 1963 by a third meeting in Cambridge, England, where the name ‘International Lutheran Theological Conference’ was chosen for these informal international gatherings. The ILC as a council of church bodies officially came into existence in 1993 in Antigua, Guatemala with the adoption of a constitution by representatives from Lutheran church bodies from all six continents.” This would be a possible way to read an abstract of our history.

If we humbly agree to restrict ourselves on celebrating the 20th anniversary of the ILC, 1993–2013, we shall still have ample reason to thank our Lord and Savior for His protection and His guidance.

The International Lutheran Council holds the Holy Scripture to be God’s infallible Word and the center of all cooperation. Our constitution formulates: “The International Lutheran Council (ILC) is a worldwide association of established confessional Lutheran church bodies which proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ on the basis of an unconditional commitment to the Holy Scriptures as the inspired and infallible Word of God and

to the Lutheran Confessions contained in the *Book of Concord* as the true and faithful exposition of the Word of God.”

“Unconditional commitment to the Holy Scriptures as the inspired and infallible Word of God” — thus, commonly we describe the authority of the Holy Scripture and its high significance for our member churches. In Western societies — and, as far as I perceive, more and more in the Eastern and Southern Hemispheres too — authority is less and less conclusively justified by itself. The challenge to our churches and to the ILC as a whole

will more and more be to substantiate why, to us, the Holy Scripture is an infallible authority.

First and foremost we have to quote the Holy Scripture’s own testimony: “All scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness.”<sup>1</sup>

The apostle Paul, too, knows about this authority, founded on the

Holy Ghost, when he says: “For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.”<sup>2</sup> A bishop of one of the German *Landeskirchen* said concerning this problem: “A biblical text is not automatically relevant to a congregation, just because it is from the Bible.”<sup>3</sup>

As ILC churches, such words make us stand up and defiantly cry, “But it is.” It is my strong personal conviction that biblical texts are relevant especially because they are written in the Bible. But if we are honest, we will have

The challenge to our churches and to the ILC as a whole will more and more be to substantiate why, to us, the Holy Scripture is an infallible authority.

<sup>1</sup> *The Holy Bible: New Revised Standard Version*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1989, 2 Tim. 3:16.

<sup>2</sup> *The Holy Bible: New International Version*. electronic ed. Grand Rapids : Zondervan, 1996, c1984, 2 Pet. 1:21.

<sup>3</sup> Landesbischof Dr. Ralf Meister in einer Vortrag 2014 vor der Arbeitsgemeinschaft Missionarischer Dienste (AMD).

to admit that we do have to use modern ways of justification in quite a few of our congregations. In other words, the people of our time who are quick to question authorities — that of a physician just as easily as that of a lawyer — more than ever need the theological justification, the theological substantiation, as to why the Holy Scripture is the authority.

It is not enough to claim this authority, it needs to be constituted and justified. This has to be done from the Holy Scripture itself and is only possible through the faith generating power of the Holy Ghost.

Where the Holy Scripture, as the “vehicle” of the Holy Ghost, no longer is a self-substantiating and self-interpreting authority, the Confessions of the Lutheran Church necessarily lose part of their importance as means to interpret the Holy Scripture.

This is why I see the churches of the International Lutheran Council, according to the constitution of the ILC, as churches of the authority of the Holy Scripture and as churches of the unrestricted validity of the Lutheran Confessions.

## 2. Where we are going

Allow me to remind us again about the tasks of the ILC, quoting our constitution:

“The International Lutheran Council is an organization of its member church bodies which enables them, through their authorized representatives, to share information, study theological questions and concerns together, issue statements when asked to do so by its members (e.g., in addressing contemporary questions facing the church), discuss effective and coordinated means of carrying out the mission and ministry of the church, nurture and strengthen their relationships with each other, and work toward the closest possible joint expression of their faith and confession.”

This conference is going to give us the necessary freedom to do so and I am looking forward to the different papers and Bible studies every bit as much I am looking forward to the different encounters and talks in our business meetings and during the breaks. And to no lesser extent it is important that we bishops and presidents serve as multipliers to our churches; the catholicity of

the Church includes its teaching, but also its worldwide prevalence.

The “statement of purpose” reads: “to foster, strengthen, and preserve confessional agreement which manifests itself at the altar and in the pulpit.” The great challenge remains, to develop and evolve the pulpit and altar community of our member churches.

From May 22–25, 2014, the European Lutheran Conference (ELC) is meeting in Bleckmar, Germany, for its 23rd conference. The conference follows on the heels of the International Lutheran Council’s (ILC) European world region conference, also held in Bleckmar, on May 21. Under the headline “Living in an Ecumenical World,” the conference discussed the ecumenical challenges of our days.

We finalized a paper with following conclusion: “His church is one. We also live as pilgrims in a fractured church where the confession of God’s Word is significantly different and at a time when our society increasingly marginalizes us. Our understanding of Church means that we will be scrupulous about the truth of God’s Word (what it says and doesn’t say) and aware of our own history as church bodies. Confident of our confession we are confident in our mission — not arrogantly but always in love — and eager to maintain the

unity in the bond of peace (EPHESIANS 4:3).”

It is my opinion that, on a global level, the ILC will have to deal more and more intensively with the question of ecumenical relations. It is not enough to have a hidden agenda: “No women’s ordination and no same-sex relationships.” We do stand by this agenda, but the theological issues we are going to tackle during this conference are, by far, more important.

## 3. Events and developments since the last ILC conference in Canada (2012)

➤ **ILC welcomes new editor** — The ILC has announced that Mathew Block will serve as the editor of its news service going forward. Mathew Block is currently communications manager for The Lutheran Church—Canada (LCC) and editor of *The Canadian Lutheran* magazine, positions he will continue to hold in addition to his new

Representatives  
from 41 countries  
representing 23 million  
Lutherans worldwide  
converged at the  
very cradle of the  
Reformation not long  
before 2017, when  
Lutherans will celebrate  
the Reformation’s 500th  
anniversary.

duties as ILC editor. He comments, “It’s a great pleasure to begin serving world Lutherans in this capacity.”

➤ **Vatican City** — In November 2013, the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity (PCPCU) and the ILC, an organization for the purpose of encouraging, strengthening, and promoting confessional Lutheran theology, met to discuss the possibility of extending local and regional informal discussions into an informal ecumenical dialogue process on the international level. The meeting between the PCPCU and the ILC primarily occurred after several informal discussions between some ILC members and Roman Catholic organizations resulted in positive outcomes, especially those held between the Lutheran Theological Seminary Oberursel of the Independent Evangelical Lutheran Church (SELK) and the Johann-Adam-Möhler Institute for Ecumenism in Paderborn, Germany. Other informal discussions that contributed to the meeting between the PCPCU and the ILC included those held between The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod and the Archdiocese of Saint Louis and the United States Catholic Conference of Bishops, and those between Lutheran Church Canada (LCC) and representatives of the Canadian Council of Catholic Bishops.

After a productive discussion, it was proposed that the local and regional informal discussions may be extended to an informal international dialogue process between the ILC and the Roman Catholic Church. These international series of consultations would be delegated to the ILC executive committee and to the Johann-Adam-Möhler Institute for Ecumenism. The goals of these discussions would be to define more unity between the churches represented by the ILC and the Roman Catholic Church and to offer a deeper understanding of the work already accomplished by the Lutheran — Roman Catholic dialogue on the international and regional level. A first meeting is scheduled for Oct. 7, 2015.

Cardinal Koch and Bishop Voigt expressed gratitude for the meeting and looked forward to a deepening of relationships between member churches of the ILC and the Roman Catholic Church.

➤ **Philippines** — On Nov. 8, 2013, a devastating typhoon rocked the Philippines. Destruction was widespread throughout the country. More than 6,000 people were

killed and 4 million people were displaced. Members of the Lutheran Church in the Philippines (LCP) did not escape unscathed. Three LCP churches were severely damaged — “one totally flattened,” noted the LCP’s President James Cerdeñola at the time — and countless people were left homeless, both members of the church and their neighbors.

➤ **Brazil** — The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Brazil (Igreja Evangelica Luterana do Brasil — IELB) celebrated its 110th anniversary as a church in Brazil at its national convention, May 1–4, 2014.

➤ Representatives of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, the North American Lutheran Church (NALC), and the LCC met at the LCC’s synod headquarters in Winnipeg, June 24–25, 2014. This is the first time the meetings have taken place in Canada.

➤ Following an invitation from the Bishops’ Conferences of the Mission Provinces of Sweden, Finland and Norway, I visited Helsinki in September 2014 as chairman of

the ILC and as presiding bishop of the Independent Evangelical Lutheran Church (SELK) in Germany.

➤ A new protocol agreement signed in September by the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Cambodia (ELCC), the LCC and The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod will guide the next three years of confessional Lutheran mission and ministry in Cambodia. President Vannarith Chhim of the ELCC hailed the agreement, calling it a “great blessing” for his “small church from a small country” to partner with the LCMS and LCC in ministry. In particular, he stressed the Cambodian church’s thanks for the aid North American Lutherans will continue to offer in theological training. Despite having 32 congregations and approximately 3,000 members, the ELCC has only six ordained pastors.

➤ **The Evangelical Lutheran Church — Synod of France (ELCSF)** held its synod Nov. 9–11, 2014, in Schillersdorf, Alsace, in France. The convention opened the morning of Sunday, Nov. 9, and the French church officially established altar and pulpit fellowship with a group of confessional Lutherans in Switzerland.

➤ **Representatives and leaders from the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus (EECMY) and The**

Global refugee streams have to be mastered. We, in Europe, are right now confronted with a big challenge.

**Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod met Nov. 10–13, 2014**, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia at the Mekane Yesus Seminary, the EECMY headquarters and the Gudina Tumsa Wholistic Training Center to discuss the relationship between the two church bodies, revise an extended working agreement and make plans to strengthen theological education within the Mekane Yesus Church by creating a relationship between the church bodies' seminaries.

► On Jan. 14, 2015, **representatives of the International Lutheran Council (ILC) met with representatives of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) in Geneva** for regular meetings.

As is customary with these meetings, the ILC and LWF took time to highlight important work taking place in each of their organizations. How each intends to commemorate the 500th anniversary of the Reformation was a key topic for discussion, given that the anniversary will take place in 2017. The ILC noted its appreciation for the document *From Conflict to Communion* (prepared by the LWF and the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity), indicating that the ILC intends to engage in further study of the document.

The meeting also addressed areas that continue to be challenges between the two groups. In particular, differing understandings of the theology of mission and disagreements over the concept of the unity of the church were frankly addressed, with plans to follow up on these topics in the future.

Representing the ILC were Chairman Hans-Jörg Voigt, bishop of the Independent Evangelical Lutheran Church in Germany); ILC Secretary Rev. Dr. Albert Collver; ILC Representative for Africa Archbishop Christian Ekong of Nigeria; and ILC Secretary Gijsbertus van Hattem, president of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Belgium. Representing the LWF were General Secretary Rev. Martin Junge, Assistant General Secretary for Ecumenical Relations/Director for the Department for Theology and Public Witness Rev. Dr. Kaisamari Hintikka, Director for the Department for Mission and Development Dr. Carlos Gilberto Bock and Area Secretary for Africa Rev. Dr. Elieshi Mungure.

The LWF and ILC signed a memorandum of understanding in 2005 that has led to regular meetings between the two bodies since then. This was the fourth regular meeting since 2011. The ILC and LWF agreed at their most recent meeting to continue holding annual meetings

in the future. The next meeting will be hosted by the ILC and will be held Feb. 25–26, 2016.

► **The executive committee of the International Lutheran Council (ILC) met Jan. 15–16, 2015**, at the St. Cuthman's Retreat Centre in Coolham, West Sussex, just south of London, England. The Rev. Dr. Lawrence Rast, president of Concordia Theological Seminary in Fort Wayne, Ind., facilitated intensive planning sessions for the executive committee as they strategized for the future and analyzed both strengths and weaknesses of the Council's existing form and function.

► **Mozambique** — Mozambican Lutherans celebrated a major milestone on Aug. 9, 2015, as Concordia Lutheran Church—Mozambique celebrated its first graduating class of eight pastors. The event drew significant local and national attention; more than a thousand people gathered in the Vila de Sena for the ordinations, including local dignitaries, and national television gave ten minutes of coverage to the event.

► **Wittenberg, Germany** — On May 3, we celebrated the dedication of the Old Latin School in Wittenberg. Confessional Lutheran church leaders from every continent except Antarctica attend this marvelous event, which was led by President Harrison.


► **Confessional Lutheran church leaders** discussed burgeoning churches in the global South and East as well as challenges in the West, during the International Conference on Confessional Leadership in the 21st Century here May 6–7.

Representatives from 41 countries representing 23 million Lutherans worldwide converged at the very cradle of the Reformation not long before 2017, when Lutherans will celebrate the Reformation's 500th anniversary. Under the theme "Celebrating the Reformation Rightly: Remembrance, Repentance, Rejoicing," discussions ranged from the challenges of spreading the Gospel in Western countries to its rapid growth in places like Africa, South America, the Far East and many others.

#### 4. Challenges

Finally, I want to elaborate on the special challenges we have to face:

► Especially in Western societies, the number of people who confess their belief in Jesus Christ is drastically decreasing. To proclaim the Gospel of God's love into this time has to be our foremost task and duty. We may not remit.

- 
- The worldwide persecution of Christians is increasing. A free from fear, substantial and — if need be controversial — dealing and arguing with Islam is and will be important to many of our member churches.
  - A high degree of ability to differentiate, in order to distinguish appropriately between peaceful Islam and radical Islam, is called for. Here, especially, it will be necessary to proclaim the accomplishments of Christianity, for example, the diaconal culture and the doctrine of the two kingdoms anew and stress their importance.
  - Global refugee streams have to be mastered. We, in Europe, are right now confronted with a big challenge. The fact that we as ILC are reacting to worldwide catastrophes is part of our challenges.
  - Dr. Collver, the executive secretary, will inform you about the ILC executive committee's strategic planning.

May God endow us with His love, clarity of thought and His wisdom.

---

*The Rev. Hans-Jörg Voigt is bishop of the Independent Evangelical Lutheran Church (SELK) in Germany and chairman of the International Lutheran Council.*