

Lutheran World Federation News

Basic Facts

The Cape Church has been a member of the LWF since 1963. Members of the Synod at Dawn in 1999 will remember General Secretary Dr. Ishmael Noko's visit. But how much do we know about the LWF?



The LWF is a global communion of Christian churches in the Lutheran tradition. Founded in 1947 in Lund (Sweden), the LWF now has 136 member churches in 76 countries representing over 61.7 million of the 65.4 million Lutherans worldwide. The LWF acts on behalf of its member churches in areas of common interest such as ecumenical relations, theology, humanitarian assistance, human rights, communication, and the various aspects of mission and development work. Its secretariat is located in Geneva, Switzerland.

Recent Statistics

The Lutheran World Information (LWI) recently released statistics for 2000-2001. They show an increase in membership by 1,4 million or 2,2%. The largest increase was in Africa where Lutherans now total 11,95 million - the sharpest increase was in Nigeria. The largest Lutheran churches in Africa are in Ethiopia and Tanzania. In Europe, overall Lutheran membership decreased by 305,118 down to 36,64 million. The Lutheran churches in Scandinavia remain strong. The Church of Sweden, the largest Lutheran church in the world, remained unchanged at 7,4 million members. Of any country, Germany has by far the most Lutherans. The overall 2001 total was 13,65 million, a decrease of about 222,000. The Evangelical Lutheran Church of America (ELCA), the second largest LWF member church, had 5,13 million members, down by almost 24,000. The number of Lutherans belonging to non-LWF churches was down by 92,000 to 3,68 million.

Lutheran -Anglican relations

In July 2002, LWF General Secretary welcomed the appointment of the Most Rev. Rowan Williams as new Archbishop of Canterbury. In a letter, Dr. Ishmael Noko expressed his great pleasure saying he has learned to appreciate Dr. Williams' thoughts and faith in his writings. "The ecumenical commitment and creativity you have shown (...) is an indication that we have promising times ahead in Anglican-Lutheran relations", Dr. Noko said.

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