

2nd Partner's Consultation  
of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Bavaria  
São Paulo, Brazil, September 6-12, 2013

## Abertura da Consulta da Igreja na Baviera

*OKR ELKB Michael Martin*

### **Welcome**

*Friday 6<sup>th</sup> of September 2013*

A very warm welcome to all of you. Thank you for coming to São Paulo for our second Partner's Consultation. We, coming from the ELCB, have the privilege, to be in close contact with you, our Lutheran partners all over the world from Australia via Africa and Europe to Latin America. So we are a kind of the LWF in a nutshell and our partnerships are a contribution to the communion we experience within the LWF.

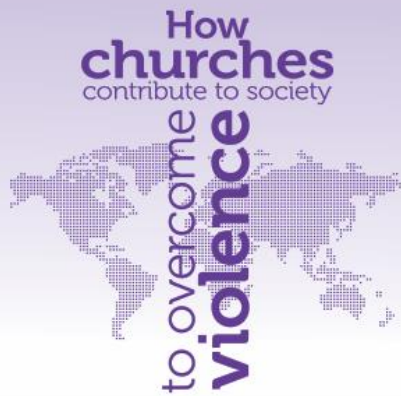
Some of you traveled around half of the world. But now we are her. We are together to discuss, to exchange experiences, to share hopes and sorrows we bring with us from our churches and countries. And we are here to empower us that we are part of the one church, the body of Christ. Therefore we as christians from all over the world belong together. Due to this reason we are here together – as partners and encouraged by God, the lifegiver, who gives us hope for our everyday life and who gives us courage to be his disciples.

Thank you again for coming and thank you for giving us the opportunity to be together as a communion of christians, as a communion of witnessing God's love to the world and as a communion of hope. Hope, that suffering and trouble can be resolved. Because our God is a God of life, who gives life even for the dead and overcomes all signs of dead in the middle of our life, like hate, injustice and violence.

Thanks for all preparations; thanks in front of all to the IECLB, for hosting us in this wonderful country. Thanks to Rosangela Stange and Dr. Mauro Batista de Souza from the IECLB and to Dr. Romeu Martini and the acting president Dr. Nestor Friedrich, who was responsible for the encouraging opening prayer.

Greetings from Peter Weigand, head of Mission one World (MEW) our Center for Partnership, Development and Mission in Neuendettelsau.

We are gathered here for our second Partner's Consultation. I'm sure a few of you remember our first consultation in 2007 in Neuendettelsau.



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Representatives of two churches are with us for the first time: From Australia and from Hungary. We have later enough time to introduce ourselves. I only want to present Ms. Helen Lockwood from the Lutheran Church of Australia; and Dr. Klara Tarr and Bishop Dr. Tamas Fabiny from the Evang. Lutheran Church of Hungary. And I'm so sorry to tell you, that our partners from PNG can not be with us, due to their internal troubles and challenges. Greetings therefore from Albert Tokave, the General Secretary of the Evang. Luth. Church of PNG. He had to cancel his trip to Sao Paulo only three days ago.

During our first partners consultation in 2007 we dealt with our understanding of mission and we decided to have multilateral consultations every 5 years, which "should take place in an rotating system in different regions" of the world. To comply with this agreement we are here.

During our discussions five years ago the document of the LWF "Mission in Context: Transformation, reconciliation, empowerment" was very helpful for our understanding and enhancing of our mission and our partnership.

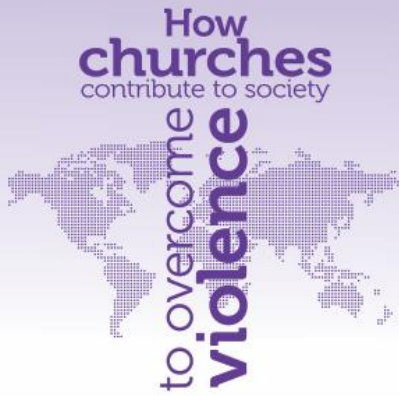
In our final statement we also summarized a few challenges we face in our holistic understanding of mission.

One of them was the suffering and the injustice of our world: "Our place [as christians and churches] is in the world with its rich beauties, but also its suffering and injustice. As churches and as individuals we carry a unique missionary mandate to proclaim God's love and to render service towards the healing of God's world, being bestowed with many gifts by God."

And a few sentences later we focused on a very important challenge we have to face: "We must discern and tackle common issues of vital Christian importance like Christian education, dialogue, care for the future, **overcoming violence**, impacts of geopolitical shift of power".

This in mind and the real challenges of our churches in our societies around the globe we decided to stress the overcoming of violence during this second Partners Consultation here in Sao Paulo. We are looking forward to your specific contributions to our topic "How churches contribute to society to overcome violence".

This is very much related to the question how we as churches want to live and want to witness about our hope and love in our societies. And this is also related to the question, what we as christians have to offer in overcoming violence in our



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families, in our neighborhoods, in our societies, but also in overcoming violence between our churches, our cultures and our countries and between us and our creation, which is suffering because of exploitation, pollution and mistreatment.

A wide range of issues we want to deal with. I'm looking forward with tension and expectations, that we as christians have to say something facing this challenges because of our message of hope, that God is with us and he, as the giver of life, is empowering us to overcome violence and his very different faces.