

Partnership

A PUBLICATION OF
Canadian Lutheran
World Relief®

WINTER 2007/08

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Children in parts of Africa are affected by the AIDS pandemic, losing parents to the disease and in some cases living themselves with the virus. Photo: Tracy Shachtay



WORLD AIDS DAY

December 1 is World AIDS Day. Visit www.worldaidscampaign.org for detailed information. Worship leaders can download an order of worship for the first Sunday in Advent at www.e-alliance.ch/wad.jsp.

It's about the people, not the disease

In communities throughout the world, some of the best people who are slowing down the spread of AIDS, are the very people who have contracted the disease. They are People Living With AIDS or PLWA, and they have formed PLWA groups in order to bring the issue of AIDS out into the light where it can be understood and slowed in its spread.

These people are part of a culture shift that is being fostered by international agencies like Canadian Lutheran World Relief. In the fight against AIDS, communities are discovering that changing AIDS culture can stem the tide of new cases of the disease. This new, positive culture brings PLWAs together to share their stories, promote prevention and treatment, and to reclaim their places in society.

In contrast, a harmful AIDS culture can include alienation and exclusion of these people. Livelihoods are lost; treatment isn't sought or offered, denial and misinformation abound, and the disease is spread without any understanding of, or appreciation for the

need of, basic prevention techniques.

It makes sense, then, that the theme for this year's World AIDS Day places special emphasis on taking leadership. Leadership begins with the individual and is vital in families, schools, churches and government. Of course, leadership is also important in agencies like CLWR, which incorporates the fight against AIDS in its community-based programming.

This fall, CLWR led a group of Canadians to East Africa to learn more about HIV and AIDS as well as refugees. You can read their stories in these pages and in *Partnership Online*. You'll notice they won't tell you that 39.5 million people were living with HIV in 2006, up 2.6 million from 2004. You won't be told that Sub-Saharan Africa is home to two-thirds of those infected. You will read about people who are living with the realities of the disease (among other hardships), but how they are still moving forward in life. As always, we thank you for helping them in this process, through your support of CLWR.



COFFEE BEANS IN YOUR ADVENT WREATH?

Ideas for celebrating Christmas, only in *Partnership Online*. www.clwr.org

The view from here



Dear Friends:

The recently completed CLWR Global Encounter — Africa 2007 has served to provide yet another opportunity for Lutherans in Canada to become more familiar with the mission of CLWR. We were reminded once again of the tremendous work of the Lutheran World Federation and the vast network to which we belong...a network of churches and agencies which

are well-positioned to respond to emergency situations and at the same time empower people and communities towards sustainability. Whether it's assisting victims of flooding in eastern Uganda, assisting with peace and reconciliation efforts in Rwanda or community development initiatives in rural Mozambique, through our partnership with the LWF, we are there! With your financial support, you are there too!

As we enter into the season of Advent, it is a good and appropriate time to acknowledge the important work and achievements of our colleagues in the field programs, and at the same time give thanks to God for our many blessings by making a gift towards CLWR programming. A number of opportunities exist to channel this support. Our fundraising program, Gifts from the Heart, is one such instrument. What better way to acknowledge Christmas and our love for family and friends than with a gift to CLWR which will benefit many poor and disadvantaged in Africa, Asia and Latin America?

Your support to our mission is very much appreciated and is essential to the lives and well being of so many.

While we know that many of you are familiar with our work, we are sadly well aware that many do not know and are directing support through other agencies. Help us spread the word about the effective

and good work of CLWR! All gifts received and dated by December 31, 2007, will receive a 2007 income tax receipt. Members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCIC) can contribute to CLWR through the ELCIC's Global Hunger and Development Appeal. Please give generously.

God bless and thank you. ☺



Robert Granke
Executive Director



Photo: Karen Ressel

Editor's Note

CLWR receives feedback from readers on many subjects contained in *Partnership*. One such communication related to an article in the Summer 2007 *Partnership* entitled "Canada's Budget Ignores World's Poor." This article was sourced from CCIC (Canadian Council for International Cooperation) and reflects on the performance of the current government in terms of the level of Canada's foreign aid spending arising out of the federal budget.

It was one reader's belief that the article was politically partisan and misleading. It was not CLWR's intent to be partisan nor to mislead. Our aim was to draw attention to the impact of the 2007 federal budget on the provision of Official Development Assistance and at the same time, together with CCIC, seek to hold the current government (and all governments) accountable for aid levels pledged.

CLWR does not have the capacity to produce its own researched information on issues such as this, which is why we relied heavily on the respected voice of CCIC. This experience has prompted the CLWR editorial team and management to review and revise our approach to issues such as these in the future. Every effort will be made to distinguish between the opinions of our sources and official positions of CLWR. In addition, future editions of *Partnership* will provide opportunities for readers to offer commentary and critique. We regret that some may have taken exception to this article.



Warehouse coordinator Dennis Coughlan holds Christmas Kits. Photo: Lorne Kletke



Gifts that make a difference

It seems like everyone either gave or received a goat for Christmas last year! It was all part of CLWR's Gifts from the Heart program that allows supporters to make a donation in the form of a fun or meaningful gift selected from our annual catalogue. With every donation through Gifts from the Heart, a card is provided to you from CLWR that can be personalized before being presented as a gift.

Each gift in the catalogue has been carefully selected by CLWR staff so you can be sure that no matter which one you choose, the gift will make an important difference.

Our newly expanded Gifts from the Heart catalogue is available at your church or by calling CLWR at 1.800.661.2597. For those shopping closer to Christmastime, we offer our brochure online at www.clwr.org. You can browse the catalogue and place an order quickly and securely by internet. Best of all, you can send your electronic gift card instantly to anyone, anywhere! For phone and mail orders, we guarantee the delivery of your gift card on all orders received by November 30.

Be sure to hold onto your catalogue after Christmas, because Gifts from the Heart is now available year-round. That means you have access to gifts that are a little unusual yet very useful for every gift-giving occasion. Catalogues will be available year-round from CLWR.

ELCIC members can shop online at www.elcic.ca/ghda

Long-distance gifts

As we excitedly anticipate the Christmas season, we are reminded of just how much we have in our lives. Usually we receive not just one, but many gifts each Christmas. For many children around the world, however, a toy is a luxury item. Often it is irrelevant whether the child's family celebrates Christmas or not—either way, there is simply no room in the budget for toys.

So Canadian Lutheran World Relief is giving you the chance to bring a big smile to a small person. You're already familiar with our We Care program through which kits from people like you are shipped overseas to those in need. Now we have the We Care Christmas Kit. Quite simply, it's our usual Children's Kit, with a toy of your choice bundled on the outside.

You don't need to worry about getting your Christmas Kits to us before Christmas. These kits will be shipped in the new year, and the toys will be received with just as much joy as if it were really Christmas morning.



CHRISTMAS KIT TIPS

Find instructions at www.clwr.org/WeCare.pdf
Toys should not require batteries or assembly.
The more durable, the better! Examples include solid foam/rubber ball or plush toy.

BC residents: Our shipping providers have asked us to direct Christmas Kits through your local Home Hardware store. Please send all other kits as usual.



Global Encounter 2007

These Rwandans seek more than economic benefit by working together. Sharing stories of their often horrific experiences brings healing.
Photo: Janet Morley

In October, a group led by CLWR travelled to various African countries to learn more about relief and development work. Here are two accounts of that Global Encounter. Visit us online for more stories and images.

WARNING: DUE TO DISTURBING CONTENT, THE STORIES ON PAGES 4-5 MAY NOT BE APPROPRIATE FOR ALL READERS.

BY JANET MORLEY, GLOBAL ENCOUNTER PARTICIPANT

Please say thank you to the kind people in your country who help us. Their generosity makes a huge difference in our lives. We are truly grateful.”

Such words were spoken several times every day as we travelled through Rwanda or Mozambique or Uganda, visiting communities supported by the Lutheran World Federation (LWF). Let me share some of my experiences in Rwanda where we are helping to make a difference.

HIV and AIDS

Groups of women gather in every village to talk and weave traditional baskets, using dried sisal leaves. Some groups consist of women living with HIV and AIDS, many of them deliberately infected with the virus through mass rape at the time of the genocide. These groups are supported by the LWF, along with counselling workshops, health insurance, and education about prevention and testing.

Peace and Reconciliation

One group of women making baskets demonstrated their craft as they explained how some of them are released prisoners and some of them survivors from the genocide. They described the process of peace and reconciliation facilitated by the LWF to bring about forgiveness and acceptance, which are both necessary in order to secure a peaceful and flourishing future for their children.

In another centre for peace and reconciliation, one released prisoner told how he felt liberated after telling the truth and admitting his guilt during the genocide. Released from prison with nothing, he was very surprised to receive help from survivors. “They accepted me long before I could accept their forgiveness,” he explained. He was afraid about the reintegration process, but through the LWF program he has gained a new sense of hope that he can contribute to the community.

Returnee Resettlement

Since the summer of 2006, more than 10,000 Rwandans living in exile have returned to Rwanda, most as a result of forced repatriation. They have had to leave behind property and cattle, arriving in the transit camps with nothing.

The LWF has assisted in establishing returnee resettlement communities, where people are given shelter and basic start-up items for daily life. They are shown how to make clay blocks

for construction of more permanent homes. There is a new community centre built by the LWF, which has trained people in cooperative management and introduced a loan system.

So, to you people who generously support CLWR from those people determined to rebuild their lives and their communities, people full of hope and courage—thank you!

For more from Janet Morley, visit us at www.clwr.org

BY THELMA GRAHAM, GLOBAL ENCOUNTER PARTICIPANT

In Rwanda we discovered a small, populated country with hard working, affectionate people. The country is healing from the horror of the 1994 genocide. Estimates vary, but between 800,000 and one million people were exterminated, mainly through brutal machete attacks and the HIV infection of girls and women through rape and torture.

Today the country is trying to overcome endemic poverty and HIV and AIDS. We discovered a government with a policy of instilling pride through cleanliness, enacting environmental laws and projects that support sustainability. There is a law, for example, prohibiting the use of plastic bags.

The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) works with community cooperatives, terracing steep slopes to stop erosion and build rice paddies and mills. Water projects bring water several kilometres to resettlement camps and villages for drinking and irrigation. Communities work together marketing handicrafts, clothing, produce and milk. The One Family One Cow initiative increases milk production by introducing non-traditional cattle varieties and tending practices, while calves are given to neighbours in need.

Survivors and the refugee returnees are working together with the suspects (the noun used by Rwandans to describe the perpetrators and those who colluded) of the genocide to reconcile and heal. There are no more Tutsis and Hutus—only Rwandans. Reconciliation is accomplished through the implementation of the *Gacaca* (ga-cha-cha) courts, and the peace and reconciliation committees that bring victims and suspects together. The suspects, prior to release from prison, are required to attend the Gacaca court where all members of the local community are required to participate and hear the suspects' confessions and testimony. The survivors provide information to the court and the court determines



Members and staff of a local peace and reconciliation committee in Rwanda, visited during Global Encounter. Photo: Thelma Graham

the readiness of the suspects to return to the community.

The peace and reconciliation committees are made up of both survivors and suspects. They work together with other suspects to seek forgiveness and to overcome the fear and animosity held by victims. The suspects may be required to provide cattle to survivors. Giving of cattle to another is a sign of love and makes the receiver indebted to the provider. Women weave peace baskets together, promoting conversation as they share techniques. Song and dance promotes unity and peace.

The LWF has been instrumental in providing training to the members of the peace and reconciliation committees including agricultural techniques and social infrastructure that improves economic life and stability.

This short article cannot do justice to the powerful reconciliation process and the socio-economic progress of the people of this small, proud country. The dedication of the LWF field staff, the Lutheran congregations and the people of Rwanda cannot be over-emphasized. My words cannot do justice to their accomplishments.

News Briefs



Photo: Karen Ressel

DISASTER APPEAL: UGANDA FLOODING

Heavy torrential rains that started in mid-July resulted in severe flooding throughout northern and eastern Uganda in October, specifically in the Amuria and Katakwi districts. Relief efforts are being coordinated through Action by Churches Together (ACT) International, of which CLWR is a member.

It is estimated that tens of thousands of people have been displaced by floods that have submerged whole villages. Water logging claimed personal effects and gave rise to deteriorating sanitation conditions. Homes were abandoned in search of higher ground.

CLWR has issued an appeal for financial donations, made online at www.clwr.org/donate or by calling 1.800.661.2597. Members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada are encouraged to donate through Global Hunger and Development Appeal, www.elcic.ca/ghda. ☛

FASTING FOR FOOD JUSTICE

It isn't Lent, but you might want to fast anyway after reading this story.

Canadian Foodgrains Bank (CFGB), of which CLWR is a member, has launched a new campaign called End Hunger Fast. The name is a word play on the dual meaning of "fast." It calls on Canadians to fast, or give something up, in order to focus on the issue of global hunger and make a difference in the process.

The campaign website, www.endhungerfast.com, features suggestions for fasting, including a fast from food, shopping and even mass entertainment. The site also features a Facebook group to join and an online pledge. It all adds up



to one thing and that's food justice. As the CFGB website explains, food justice is the idea that society should be structured so that everyone has reliable access to safe, nutritious food.

The site offers up some compelling statistics that might help convince you to consider a fast of your own. For instance, the site says that North Americans spend \$34 billion a year on perfume and makeup, when it would take \$12 billion to provide clean drinking water and immunizations globally. In this way, the site ties together our overall lifestyle patterns into the search for food justice and the fight against the effects of poverty. ☛

REFUGEES ARRIVE IN CANADA AFTER SEVEN-YEAR WAIT

Two Somali refugees have arrived safely in Canada after waiting seven years since applying for sponsorship with Canadian Lutheran World Relief. The 57-year-old mother and 20-year-old daughter landed in Canada on September 24.

"It is hard for some of us to grasp the idea, but the young woman has spent nearly half her life as a refugee," says Fikre Tsehail, CLWR director for refugees. "These women persevered through an unusually slow determination process."

Refugees often experience delays in their application process, stemming from issues that include a backlog of refugee claimants at the Canadian embassy, and complications arising from medical screenings and security checks. CLWR staff work from two Canadian offices to assist refugee claimants through the lengthy process. ☛

SOPHIE GEBREYES DEPARTS CLWR; CONTINUES AID WORK IN RWANDA

CLWR has had to say goodbye to part of its family, Sophie Gebreyes.

Gebreyes joined CLWR 17 years ago when she first arrived in Canada as a young refugee from Ethiopia. First she volunteered and then was hired as a receptionist. After coordinating CLWR's early MESH and alternative trade consignment sales she joined the program department. It is here that she found a passion for the project work undertaken in Africa, Asia and Latin America. Gebreyes took on the position of program manager for Latin America in 2004.

Gebreyes has left to become the program coordinator for the Lutheran World Federation, Department for World Service, Rwanda program. Based in Kigali, Rwanda, she will oversee project implementation, monitoring and evaluation. ☛

Land reform continues in Bolivia

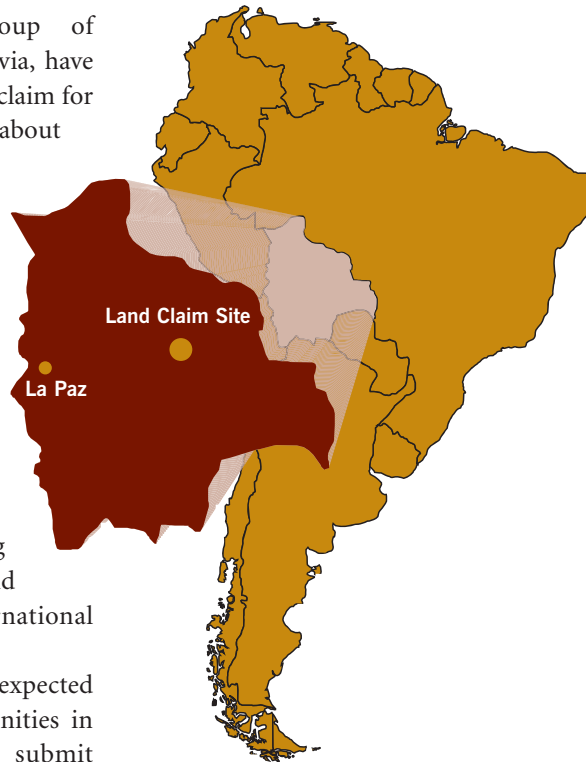
The Chiquitano, a group of indigenous people in Bolivia, have finally won a long-fought land claim for almost one million hectares (about 2.3 million acres) with the federal government. The claim, which has been in progress for over a decade, deals with land in Santa Cruz, one of the two departments where CLWR operates programs.

“This is a landmark decision that will be felt across Bolivia, especially at a time when Bolivians are rewriting the national constitution,” said Elaine Peters, CLWR international program director.

Around 16,600 people are expected to benefit. Organized communities in the affected area must now submit claims to one of three *Centrales*, which are organizations comprised of indigenous communities that legally possess the land.

“The territory will be managed according to the indigenous peoples’ philosophy under a sustainable management plan,” says Fernando Gamon, from the CLWR Bolivia office. Since the territory was awarded, Gamon says that the management plan has been publicized through the indigenous communities in an effort to invite participation among the people at large.

Bolivian President Evo Morales was personally on hand to transfer the land titles in a ceremony held in San Javier. While Morales has vigorously pursued land rights for indigenous people



during his first term, land reform is actually not a new concept in the country. Bolivia’s land reform policies began in the early 1950s and essentially allowed peasants to claim the land that they had traditionally worked. In subsequent decades, however, the land reform process slowed substantially.

The successful land claim is a tangible result of local CLWR programs that deal with leadership training and advocacy. CLWR acknowledges the diligent effort towards this project made by CLWR’s primary local partner, Organización Indígena Chiquitana (OICH), and former partner Asesoría Legal y de Asistencia Social (ALAS). ➤

Special Gifts

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Gifts to CLWR in honour of special occasions like birthdays, anniversaries and other celebrations not only warm the heart of the recipient, but also bring smiles to the faces of those people whose lives are transformed by CLWR’s project work overseas. In lieu of printing names in our *Partnership* newsletter, CLWR will acknowledge these special occasions with a celebratory card that shares the impact such gifts have on communities throughout the world.

DECORATIVE PAPER MÂCHÉ BOXES

This Christmas season wrap a Four Corners gift in handmade paper mâché gift boxes from Thailand.

Available at our Winnipeg retail storefront, call 1.800.661.2597 or email fourcorners@clwr.mb.ca for more information.



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GIFTS FROM THE HEART

Please remember to hold on to your Gifts from the Heart catalogue after Christmas! Orders can be made from the catalogue through all of 2008, for any celebration or time of remembrance in your life. Don't have a copy? Call us or click on www.clwr.org for copies.

2006-2007 ANNUAL REPORT

Serving as a good introduction to the different types of work of CLWR, our new annual report is available today at www.clwr.org.

Partnership

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CLWR carries out international emergency relief, development programming and refugee resettlement on behalf of the ELCIC's Global Hunger and Development Appeal and Lutheran Church-Canada.

Moving? Send your new address along with the old by email to clwr@clwr.mb.ca, Subject: Partnership Address Change.



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