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INTERNATIONAL LUTHERAN-PENTECOSTAL DIALOGUE

Press Release

Third meeting focus: proclaiming the good news to the poor

Santiago De Chile, Chile
October 2018

(LWI) - The third meeting of the international Lutheran-Pentecostal dialogue group drew attention to the situation of the materially poor and how the churches relate to them.

The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) and Pentecostal churches began a five-year dialogue in 2016, preceded by preparatory meetings from 2004 to 2010. Through annual meetings, they seek to better appreciate each other's theological and spiritual traditions and find ways for common witness.

This year's meeting took place in October in Santiago de Chile, with the theme focusing on Christian ministry in light of Luke 4:18-19, "Proclaiming the good news to the poor."

The prosperity gospel came in for criticism, with members of the dialogue group instead extolling faithful teaching on the abundance of God's gifts for the whole human race and for the earth.

"The dialogue members agreed that although one needs to reject a theology of prosperity, which offers false promises and runs the risk of turning God into an object of our desires, we have to affirm an understanding of prosperity as a blessing of God freely given, and affirm Jesus' promise to bring abundant life for all people, as we read in John 10:10," Rev. Anne Burghardt, LWF Secretary for Ecumenical Relations, who accompanied the group, said.

Those who are so blessed are called to be a blessing to others and to work for the betterment of all society, to overcome injustices and to care for all of God's creation.

— Rev. Anne Burghardt, LWF Secretary for Ecumenical Relations

Poverty real for people robbed of human rights.

Dialogue member Rev. Dr Richard Waldrop presented a paper on Pentecostals and the poor, in which he described the fundamental role of the poor in the history and development of Pentecostalism. Rev. Dr Walter Altmann's presentation was on Martin Luther's understanding of the poor, including a christological focus and pointing to the centrality of the cross. Both speakers challenged the prosperity gospel.

Bishop Alexis Salgado of the Lutheran Church in Chile (LCC), met with the group and discussed the local church life, including relationships between different denominations. Pastors from the two LWF member churches in the country (LCC and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Chile) and from various Pentecostal churches met the dialogue members to help them gain insights into their lives. Javier Castro Arcos, Director of the National Office for Religious Affairs, and Rev. Daniel Anabalon, chaplain to the Presidential Palace La Moneda, greeted the group.

During the meeting, the dialogue members participated in a service at the Lutheran Church El Redentor in Providencia district before visiting Pentecostal churches belonging to the Methodist-Pentecostal Church and the Pentecostal Church of Chile.

The dialogue members visited the memorial and museum of human rights in Santiago. Their reflections on the unlawful incarcerations, torture and killings during the 1973 -1989 Chilean military dictatorship, was a reminder that poverty is also a reality for those who are robbed of fundamental rights and freedoms.

The next meeting will be held in 2019 in Africa, with the theme "To proclaim freedom, recovery and release" (Luke 4:18), focusing on healing and deliverance. In 2020, the dialogue will meet in North America to prepare a common document to conclude this dialogue phase.

[<https://www.lutheranworld.org/news/lutheran-pentecostal-dialogue-condemns-prosperity-gospel>]