



LifeLines

ELCA WORLD HUNGER AND DISASTER APPEAL

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Spring 2004

Three Snapshots from an East Africa Journey

by Aaron Cooper

Nine ELCA communicators, including hunger staff members Aaron Cooper, Sue Edison-Swift and Nathan Ruby, traveled to East Africa on February 2–16, 2004. The journey connected ELCA World Hunger and Stand With Africa donations through partners Lutheran World Relief, Lutheran World Federation, and the ELCA Division for Global Mission to HIV/AIDS and hunger programs making a difference in Uganda, Tanzania, and Ethiopia. Among those the communicators met are Kennedy, Tessema, and Margaret.

Kennedy Symphorian Bukoba, Tanzania

Kennedy, a thin 15-year-old with peaceful eyes and a big smile, is HIV-positive. Kennedy's grandmother Martha cares for him (both pictured right), and the HUYAWA ("Service to Children") Program of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania helps get Kennedy medicine and medical attention. Supported by the ELCA through the World Hunger Appeal and the Division for Global Mission, HUYAWA field representatives make regular home visits, helping orphans and their guardians with basic household, school, legal and medical needs.



Photo: Aaron Cooper

Kennedy's weary and inspirational smile is larger than life.

Tessema Hirbaye Wenenata, Ethiopia

It can take two or more adults to drag a 50-kilo bag of wheat (pictured right) from the stack in front of the store-room at the Wenenata relief food distribution center outside of Awassa. Ten people will divide three of these bags into the per-person emergency ration of 15 kilos of wheat. This wheat, along with a ration of corn oil, is to last for a month. It's enough to keep hungry families alive between rains and harvests. The Wenenata station is one of three relief food

distribution sites run by the South Central Ethiopian Synod (SCES), with support from ELCA World Hunger Appeal partner Lutheran World Federation. Close to 400 men, women, and children received food the day of the Wenenata station visit. Tessema Hirbaye, SCES relief coordinator, said that if the *belg* (short rainy season) is good this year, 56,000 people could need emergency help from the SCES stations, down from 96,000 people in 2003. "Hope depends on the weather," said Hirbaye.

Margaret Nakato Lubyayi Katosi, Uganda

The vibrant blue-patterned dresses of the Katosi Women Fishing & Development Association reflect the great strength, poised perseverance, and gracious hospitality of the association's 48 members.

The women began by entering the for-men-only fishing business. With support from ELCA World Hunger Appeal partner Lutheran World Relief, they purchased four boats and started up a member savings and micro-loan program. Now their operation includes other community-development and income-generating projects, such as installing latrines and water tanks, raising cows and pigs, cultivating bananas and other crops, and running a small shop (which sells, among other items, rope made from old fishing nets).

Online trip resources

Find Africa photos, music, and stories at www.elca.org/hunger/stories/EastAfrica.html



Photo: Sue Edison-Swift

Katosi Women Fishing & Development Association Chairperson, Margaret Nakato Lubyayi, said of the support they have received from Lutherans: "We only need a stepping stone and we can do things on our own."



Photo: Aaron Cooper

A per-person emergency ration of 15 kilos of wheat and some corn oil, to last a month, will keep hungry families alive between rain and harvests.

Advocacy for Africa. Participate in Bread for the World's "Offering of Letters" by writing letters to Congress in support of hunger-fighting legislation. Find out how to get your congregation involved at www.bread.org/issues/offering.html

****2003 World Hunger and Stand With Africa combined income totaled nearly \$18 million. See back page for details.****

Haiti: A Normal Catastrophe?

The recent political upheaval surrounding the departure of former President Jean-Bertrand Aristide has created a massive humanitarian crisis that needs immediate response. Living and working among the violence, looting, and widespread destruction is Michael Kuehn, director of the Lutheran World Federation program in Haiti.

Lutherans have been working with people in Haiti for decades, long before the present crisis began. Now, faced with the current situation, Kuehn has appealed for sustained assistance and international support to help combat the instability in the country. He declared that LWF's primary objective there is to fight against poverty—Haiti's "normal catastrophe."

Long-term, participatory programs for development could make an important contribution to crisis prevention, said Kuehn. He and his staff did not leave Haiti at the height of the uprisings—they remain a key facilitator of reconciliation and peace. Find more information online at www.elca.org/dgm/disaster/haiti.html

Haiti resources. "God's Global Table," the 2003-2004 **Open a World of Possibilities** packet (a World Hunger education resource for children) is on Haiti. Its companion video, "**Crack! Crack! Let's go to Haiti,**" is also an excellent adult forum resource. Distribute the "Haiti: Neighbors Build Hope" bulletin insert in your congregation. Call 800.638.3522, ext. 2764 to request these resources.

Youth Challenge² and You

To help end hunger, I will **pray, learn, reflect, advocate, serve, give.** These are the commitments suggested on the great new Youth Challenge² Web page at www.elca.org/hunger/youth/challenge2.html. Those going to the Web site can learn more about the commitments (including helpful information and Web links) and choose one or more to accept. Head to the Youth Challenge² Web page now and accept the challenge, whether or not you are a youth and whether or not you attended the 2003 Youth Gathering in Atlanta (TAG).

The 46,000 TAG participants received a Youth Challenge² packet in February. The packet includes a Youth Challenge² resource, which you can download and print by going to

www.elca.org/hunger/youth. To request a single copy of the packet, call 800.638.3522, ext. 2764.

Youth Challenge² focuses on personal (rather than group) commitments and encourages individuals to donate \$40 or more (\$1 for each day of Lent). Youth Challenge² donations are split between Stand With Africa and the ELCA World Hunger Appeal. It's hoped that most of the donations and commitments to Youth Challenge² will be made in May, so sub-totals can be announced on the Web site on the Day of Pentecost, May 30. Some may want to start their Youth Challenge² emphasis with Pentecost, or rally day, or during a Stand With Africa focus. It's never too early or too late to take the challenge.

Caring for Creation

Environmental hunger-related issues

Mercury Contamination in Fish

The problem: A recent U.S. EPA Forum report estimates that one in six babies born in the United States may be at increased risk of neurological and developmental problems due to methylmercury (mercury contamination). Over 40 states have issued fish consumption warnings due to mercury. Mercury emissions are carried around the globe in the atmosphere, deposited in water bodies and absorbed by fish. In the United States, coal-fired power plants are the largest contributors to atmospheric mercury, even though technology exists to reduce emissions from most U.S. power plants by 90 percent. Most of the people affected are those whose subsistence or culture depends on fish or seafood, including low-income families who depend on tuna or locally caught fish for nutrition. Since mercury persists and accumulates in the environment, however, we all are affected.

What you can do: First of all, heed fish consumption warnings. They are especially critical for children and pregnant women. Find ways in your community to support immigrant populations and others who depend on locally caught fish to feed their families. Then, do what you can to stop further mercury contamination by pressing policy makers (your representatives in Congress, the President, state legislators) to seek more stringent emissions standards for coal-fired power plants.

For more information: If you would like to learn more about the effects of power plant emissions on the health of children, log on to www.envirohealthaction.org/upload_files/ChildrenatRisk.pdf

-Danielle Welliever is director for Environmental Education and Advocacy

From the Hunger Program Coordinator...

Thank you for your 2003 giving. It was an all-time record. The World Hunger Appeal received \$16,472,742 last year, almost half a million dollars over its \$16 million goal. Also, the Stand With Africa Campaign received \$1.3 million in donations through the ELCA. Together, this equaled close to \$18 million. In addition, disaster support (international and domestic) for 2003 totaled \$1,753,130.

The ELCA World Hunger Appeal and Program celebrates **30 years of caring and sharing** in 2004. It began with the 1974 national conventions of the Lutheran Church in America and the American Lutheran Church. Both conventions established a world hunger program with similar directions: to provide immediate relief and long-term development, to sensitize members to the reality of hunger, and to support and encourage governmental programs to deal with the crisis.

Domestic hunger grants for 2004 were recently awarded. Of the 331 applications received, the grants committee met March 15-17 and funded 229 proposals in three categories: relief (144), development (48), and organizing (37). A total of \$656,060 was awarded. The new "Granting Hope" catalogue describing these organizations will be published in July. To learn about the grants process or how to

apply for a grant, visit the online catalogue at www.elca.org/dcs/grantinghope

Join me in welcoming Sue Edison-Swift, who assumed the role of World Hunger Appeal and Program communicator (previously held by Stephen Padre) on December 1, 2003. Please continue to pray with us regarding **staff vacancies** in important Hunger Appeal and Hunger Program positions. The Hunger Program education director position (previously held by Mary Milano) may be filled in April or May. The Hunger Appeal director position (previously held by Lita Brusick Johnson) may be filled by May or June.

-The Rev. John L. Halvorson is the World Hunger Program Coordinator.

Summer 2004 Hunger Packet

"Go and do likewise" (Luke 10:37), from the parable of the Good Samaritan, is the theme of the **Summer 2004 ELCA World Hunger Resources Packet**. Look for a few surprises to help celebrate the 30th anniversary of the World Hunger Appeal and Program. The packet will arrive in congregations in June. A few pieces will be ready in May; contact Stephen Taylor (800.638.3522, ext. 2764) if you need resources for a May synod assembly.



Photo: ELCA Archives

(left) Thirty years ago, delegates to the 1974 national conventions of the Lutheran Church in America (held in Baltimore), and the American Lutheran Church (held in Detroit) established world hunger programs. President Gerald Ford (on right, pictured with David Preus, ALC president 1973-1987), spoke to the 1974 ALC convention, saying: "I am hopeful that we will be able to continue America's humane tradition...and, as I have told the American people, sacrifices will be required. Our lifestyles to some extent must be adjusted if we are to remain a source of strength for all peoples."

A note from Nathan...

"Giving is the greatest joy a human can experience," says Douglas Lawson, an author, speaker and consultant in the major gifts and planned giving field, and he has stories to support the statement drawn from his 40 years of experience. I agree completely. I've worked with donors all over the country, helping them make gifts to their favorite ministry. Time and again I've experienced the joy and happiness people feel after making a gift. As you read this issue of *LifeLines*, pray for the people and places you encounter, and then experience for yourself the joy that comes from making a generous gift to the ELCA World Hunger Appeal.

Please contact me at 800.638.3522, ext. 6557 or via e-mail at nathan_ruby@elca.org. I am here to help you with your gifts to the World Hunger Appeal. Together we experience the joy and happiness of giving to others.

-Nathan Ruby is associate director for Planned Giving, with World Hunger and the ELCA Foundation

P.S. Have you remembered the World Hunger Appeal in your will? Call me to find out how you can set this up.

Post-game Stats: 2004 Souper Bowl of Caring

With contributions still being tallied, 2,117 Lutheran congregations report raising \$581,606 for the 2004 Souper Bowl of Caring (2003 totals: 1,970 Lutheran congregations raised \$503,880). Lutherans are part of the ecumenical, grassroots team. So far, the total tally is \$4,166,516 million from 12,614 participating organizations. Go to www.souperbowl.org for the latest totals and more information. Read the February 4, 2004, ELCA News Service press release, "Lutherans among Most Valuable Players on Super Bowl Sunday," at www.elca.org/newsevents.html

Most Souper Bowl Sunday efforts find youth collecting cash donations and cans of food in big soup kettles after worship on Super Bowl Sunday, and many also do "Service Blitz" (volunteer) activities. Totals are reported to Super Bowl headquarters. Each group decides where to donate their food, money, and volunteer service. Many ELCA groups choose to give all or some of the money they raise during their Souper Bowl of Caring efforts to the ELCA World Hunger Appeal.



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