

## Radio Broadcasts Gospel to War-torn Lebanese

By Sarah Schafer

In 2006, LCMS World Relief and Human Care awarded Lutheran Hour Ministries (LHM) a \$10,000 grant to care for families affected by the 2006 Lebanon War between the Israeli military and Hezbollah. At least a thousand were killed and 4,000 wounded in the month-long conflict, which left the Middle Eastern country's infrastructure in shambles.

LHM's Middle East Lutheran Ministries (MELM) used \$5,600 of the grant to aid an estimated 200 families in three overlooked villages in southern Lebanon. Their homes were destroyed by bombs and some lived in alleys and old abandoned buildings.

It was two years before MELM could utilize the remaining \$4,400 to reach thousands more with radio messages providing Christian outreach to a hurting people. In summer 2008, an LHM supporter made a significant donation toward the project – enough to make it a reality.

In October 2008, MELM began working to broadcast 26 weekly radio programs, expected to reach more than 60 million people in Lebanon and beyond. The 13-minute programs target mid-teens and mid-20s with topics

relevant to life and current affairs, offering messages of hope, that Jesus is the one true way to peace and reconciliation.

"These programs will reach out with a message of hope for the people ... who have suffered for many years due to political tensions, social unrest, and terrorism," said Nancy Amundson, LHM international fund development manager. "The message conveyed will be that for those who trust in Him, He will lead the way through these horrific times."

In an area with little Christian influence, the radio broadcasts provide a way for people to hear God's Word in the privacy of their own homes. Listeners are also encouraged to contact the MELM office. Ministry staff encouraged listeners to sign up for Bible Correspondence Courses (BCC) that may also be done safely in their own homes.

"Christian radio is one of the most powerful and effective mediums we have to reach out and evangelize to the lost, and provide inspiration to them," said Fadi Khairallah, MELM director.

Through the years, MELM received 16,000 names of people who called or wrote in response to radio programming. In the first four



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months of broadcasts, Amundson said MELM workers have received calls from listeners. One Muslim woman heard the broadcasts and through MELM is now involved in a local Christian congregation.

"As we continue to broadcast throughout the Middle East, we pray that the Gospel of Jesus Christ will bring healing and love to a hurting world," said Andrew Fitzgerald, assistant director of LHM International Ministries.

To learn more about LHM, contact Nancy Amundson at 800-944-3450, ext. 4275. To support projects like this, send

donations to LCMS World Relief and Human Care, P.O. Box 66861, St. Louis MO 63166-6861. Call 888-930-4438 or visit <http://givenowlcms.org>.



Lutheran Hour Ministries is using a portion of the WR-HC grant to produce 26 weekly radio programs sharing the Gospel message with war-torn Lebanese and others throughout the Middle East and into northern Africa.

## Give God Glory...

... For the life and ministry of Rev. Andrew Mbugo Elisa, 42, bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Sudan (ELCS), who died Dec. 31 from a brain tumor. He is survived by his wife and four children.

Elisa was instrumental in establishing the ELCS in 1993, which now includes 80 congregations and 15,000 members. LCMS World Relief and Human Care began partnering with Rev. Eliza in 1999. Under his leadership, WR-HC awarded many grants to the ELCS. For example, the clinic in Khartoum was expanded to a full hospital, grinding mills were purchased, and agricultural and other food projects were funded.

In 2005, when civil war in Sudan ended, WR-HC also provided relocation costs.

"Andrew was a one in a billion character. He was tough as nails (he

had to be to do what he did in Sudan) and had a Lutheran heart of gold," said Rev. Matthew Harrison, WR-HC executive director.



Rev. Andrew Mbugo Elisa, right, visits a grinding mill operation funded by WR-HC.

The mission of the church through LCMS World Relief and Human Care is to reach out in mercy and compassion to those in need, motivated by Christ and His Gospel, according to the Lutheran confession of the faith.

SHARING is available free to individuals and in quantities to congregations and other groups. SHARING is the bi-monthly newsletter of the disaster response and self-help development ministries of LCMS World Relief and Human Care, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, 1333 S. Kirkwood Road, St. Louis, MO 63122-7295; (314) 965-9000 or (800)-248-1930. Web site: [www.lcms.org/worldrelief](http://www.lcms.org/worldrelief)

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# “Challenging four years” follows record March for Life

By Kim Krull

A record number of Lutherans took part in the biggest “March for Life” ever, joining an estimated 300,000 pro-life supporters in Washington, D.C., and taking a stand on behalf of the unborn.

But while the tremendous turnout made the Jan. 22 march an inspiring success, LCMS Life and Health Ministries Director Maggie Karner stressed that much work remains in what she calls “a challenging four years” for people who believe in the sanctity of human life, from conception until natural death.

members of the LCMS Sanctity of Human Life Committee (under the auspices of LCMS WR-HC) also marched.

As the Synod’s mercy arm, LCMS WR-HC provided first-time LCMS Web site coverage of march activities, including video interviews and pictures of Lutheran participants, which is still accessible at [www.lcms.org/marchforlife](http://www.lcms.org/marchforlife).

In addition to the LCMS Life Ministries banner, Lutherans For Life signage also paraded through the nation’s capital. The march is just one example of how LCMS Life Ministry and LFL regularly



Among the many Lutherans who took part in the “March for Life” in Washington, D.C., and helped carry the LCMS World Relief and Human Care Life Ministries banner were, from left: Rev. Dr. Robert Weise, a member of the LCMS Sanctity of Human Life Committee; Ed Szeto, coordinator for Life Ministries special projects; and Szeto’s wife, Ruth Szeto.

“We had a banner Lutheran representation this year. Everyone was buoyed by the turnout,” Karner said of the march, where she helped carry the LCMS World Relief and Human Care Life Ministries banner from the National Mall to the U.S. Supreme Court building.

But looking beyond the march, Karner noted President Obama’s troubling views on life issues and legislation “threatening on the horizon.” Indeed, the day after the march and only three days after his inauguration, the new U.S. president repealed the Mexico City Policy, opening the door to government funding for groups that promote or perform abortions overseas.

Concern about the new administration’s impact on abortion and other life issues drew many Lutherans to the 36<sup>th</sup> annual trek marking the anniversary of the 1973 U.S. Supreme Court’s “Roe v. Wade” decision legalizing abortion in the United States. Since the ruling, more than 48 million abortions have been performed in the United States, according to published sources.

Among the LCMS marchers was LCMS President Gerald B. Kieschnick, who opened the pre-march rally with prayer. Several LCMS WR-HC staff members and

join forces. “No one organization could possibly handle all the information and work that needs to be done to uphold the value of life in our world,” Karner said. Both ministries, she said, are desperately needed to “shine the love of Christ into a dark and sinful world. Abortion is a complex issue, and if we’re going to be pro-life, we had better be pro-solutions.”

After the march, Life Committee members met to begin work on their immediate goal: helping the Synod strengthen the church’s pro-life witness in the public square.

LCMS Life Ministry also seeks to reach out to “the many lives that have been scarred by the violence of abortion and the millions of women who are grieving from decisions they made,” Karner said. “They need to know that God can forgive them, and He will.”

Karner urged fellow Lutherans to “stay informed and get involved” with life issues and cited three resources: LCMS Life Ministry ([www.lcms.org/life](http://www.lcms.org/life)), Lutherans For Life ([www.lutheransforlife.org](http://www.lutheransforlife.org)), and Concordia Bioethics Institute ([www.cuw.edu/Academics/institute/bioethics/index.html](http://www.cuw.edu/Academics/institute/bioethics/index.html)).

## Care for the Poor: Scriptural Lessons for Today’s Church of Mercy

“When James and Cephas and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given to me, they gave the right hand of fellowship to Barnabas and me, that we should go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised. Only, they asked us to remember the poor, the very thing I was eager to do” (Galatians 2:9-10).



This extraordinary verse is the culmination of Paul’s struggle for the endorsement of his ministry to the Gentiles by the so-called “Apostolic Council” in Jerusalem ca. 49 A.D. The Jerusalem apostles recognized that the Old Testament ceremonial regulations could not be placed upon non-Jewish Christians as a requirement of the faith. Because of that great struggle in the early church we have the Book of Galatians and all its glorious testimony of the Gospel of grace alone and faith alone. We’ve made much of the “right hand of fellowship” but far less of the apostolic injunctions which Paul was “most eager to do,” namely care for the poor. Paul spent years of his life working on the “Great Collection for Jerusalem.” It is a very significant theme in the Book of Acts, and in Paul’s letters. If you are interested in why Christians are merciful, and how the New Testament church practiced mercy, you will find “Paul’s Collection for Jerusalem” (the newest addition to the Mercy Insights series) edifying. It is a good resource for more serious bible study groups. It may well lead you and your congregation to a deeper conviction regarding your own role of mercy in your community. To find the paper online, go to [www.lcms.org/ca/worldrelief/resources](http://www.lcms.org/ca/worldrelief/resources) and click on “Theological Essays.”

And while I’m on this topic, consider this. The entire decade of the 40s A.D. were difficult for Jerusalem. Famine was frequent. The city was particularly struck in 47, and there was a “Sabbath year” about that time to make it worse (fields lay fallow every seven years). But out of this difficulty came what has become temporal and eternal blessing. Paul and Barnabas got the idea that the first Gentile Christians (in Antioch) should send some money to help the suffering Christians in Jerusalem as a demonstration of fellowship and love (Acts 11-12). The famine eased, but by Paul’s third missionary journey he was raising dollars everywhere for Jerusalem again, which suffered as much as ever. From this work we have virtually ALL the great stewardship passages of the New Testament in 2 Cor. 8-9, which have been such a tremendous blessing for millennia as dedicated Christians seek spiritual input on how best to assist with their dollars. So what do I think about the present difficult times in the church and society? I haven’t the slightest doubt that it all simply amounts to blessing percolating and ready to spill over.

A final note: Our Board Chair, Rev. Bernie Seter, has produced a fabulous Lenten series of sermons and services on the church’s work of mercy entitled The Spirit Anointed Christ for Mercy. It will also be available on the LCMS World Relief and Human Care Web site: [www.lcms.org/worldrelief](http://www.lcms.org/worldrelief). Each week will feature an aspect of mercy. Let your pastor know this is available!

Pastor Harrison

## Will Adam Go AWOL, Will Eve? A Lutheran Forum on “Planned Non-Parenthood”



The absence of Adam and Eve in the formation of a new post-human species will be the troubling topic of a forum on science and theology at:

Concordia Seminary  
Werner Auditorium  
801 Seminary Place  
St. Louis, MO 63105  
March 26, 7 p.m.

Admission is free. Register by March 19 at 314-505-7486 or [ce@csleu.edu](mailto:ce@csleu.edu).



Presenter: Rev. Dr. Robert W. Weise, professor of practical theology and a cellular biologist



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