

## WEEKLY PRAYERS FOR 2007

As the LWF celebrates their 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary, we encourage you to pray each week for one of the places in the world where we, with you, are present in mission and ministry. Stories come from the LWF Annual Country Reports.

### January

#### Week One - Mauritania

Mauritania is located on the western coast of Africa, spreading over more than 1 million square kilometers. The desert covers 90 percent of the land, with dunes as far as the eye can see. Every year the desert advances, threatening everything in its way. It eats up grazing land, decimates livestock, and dries up water sources. It chases away the people who have lived on this land for centuries. Water has become a rare commodity in many parts of the country for both humans and livestock.

*Gracious God, we give thanks for the work of the LWF in planting thousands of trees in Mauritania to help hold the desert back from villages and cities. Please provide the gift of fresh water for parched people and a parched land. We pray for all children, women and men who thirst this day for fresh water or for the life-giving water only you can provide. We give thanks for the LWF lead staff person, Dr. Colette Bouka Coula and her staff, who minister there on our behalf.*

*Amen.*

#### Week Two – El Salvador

Jaime Escobar has worked as a shoemaker since he was 12 years old. He and his brother have a small business in the Modelo neighborhood of San Salvador, the capital of El Salvador. When Hurricane Stan passed through, Jaime watched as more than three feet of water and mud filled his business. He lost his machines and the materials he worked with. When the storm ended, more than 54,000 people had abandoned their homes and were living in 370 shelters throughout this small country. The Salvadoran Lutheran church joined the LWF in 1986 and has a membership of 12,000 members.

*Loving God, we weep with those who have lost homes and livelihoods in catastrophic storms in the countries of Central America in the past few years. We pray that you will give them a future with hope. Grant them safety and help in the long-term work of rebuilding their lives. We give you thanks for the ministry of Alois Moller and his staff in Central America as they, together with many others, work on our behalf.*

*Amen.*

#### Week Three - Kosovo

Zenel is a dairy farmer in Kosovo. At the end of the Kosovo war in August 1999, almost one million Kosovar Albanians returned to damaged homes and farms. The LWF served as a lead agency for shelter needs. A self-help approach provided resources for 5,400 families to repair or reconstruct their homes. At the same time, we worked to revitalize the economic life of the communities. In cooperation with a village dairy farmer who

built a new building, LWF provided the machines for a sanitary milk collection center. The center provides storage capacity for 19 farmers in six villages.

*Creator God, we give you thanks for the gifts of land, livestock and work. We give special thanks for the opportunities for cooperation in the village dairy programs in Kosovo. We pray that these endeavors may prove to be a sustainable method for providing milk to the village markets. We give you thanks for the work of LWF staff person Leila Dzaferovic who coordinates the program on our behalf in Kosovo. Amen.*

#### **Week Four - Cambodia**

After nearly a decade of international reconstruction, the need for assistance in the Asian country of Cambodia remains strong, with 36 percent of the population living below the poverty line. Most of the poor live in rural areas, facing the daily challenges of landmines, food shortages, malaria, tuberculosis, HIV/AIDS, poor education, land grabbing and limited access to water. Emergency relief responds to periodic flooding and drought. The LWF/DWS Cambodia Program works with vulnerable groups, such as poor farmers, households headed by women, landless families, returnees, internally displaced persons, rural youth and people with HIV/AIDS in remote and isolated areas.

Ken Neang is a 55 year-old village farmer. After taking farming classes offered by the LWF, he has started planting fruit trees and smaller crops of sweet potatoes, corn and bananas. His family is better off. He says, "I understand now how to farm. I now produce enough to feed the nine people in our family and we have some left to sell on the market. Early this year, we also received ten hens and they have already hatched 80 chicks. That is food security!"

*Great God, thank you for the opportunity to learn new skills and new ways of doing our work. Thank you for the gifts of water and land on which we can grow food. Thank you for the opportunities you give to farmers in Cambodia to build sustainable lives for their families. Thank you for the work of David Mueller, who works there on our behalf. Amen.*

#### **Week Five - Angola**

Angola is located in southwest Africa. Infants in Angola die at the rate of 192:1000. (In the US the rate is 7:1000.) The life expectancy for women is 38 years and 37 years for men. 53% of the country is Christian and the rest of the population practices a traditional religion. The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Angola has been a member of the LWF since 1997. They have 22,000 members.

There are over 10 million landmines in Angola, a country of 14 million people. It is one of the most heavily mined countries in the world, with more than 75% of its population being threatened by landmines. These are landmines left from war. 80,000 Angolans have been identified as victims. Landmines explode when they are stepped on or driven over. Landmine infestation around strategic sites can deny access to safe drinking water, arable land or prevent the mobile rural vaccination teams from going on their rounds. The LWF

is working together with many others to rid the country of this terror. We are both demining and educating the population about the mines.

*Loving God, we pray that soon the people of Angola will be able to walk freely to their fields, water stations and schools. Grant health and healing to those who have lost loved ones to a landmine explosion. Give hope to those who have lost limbs. Grant safety to all who work in the demining effort. Hold our colleague, Petros Wontamo, in your care as he works on our behalf. Amen.*

## **February**

### **Week One**

The members of the Evangelical Church of Eritrea live in a country where 65% of the people live under the poverty line. Life expectancy is 54 percent; 80 percent of the population are farmers; 58 percent of the people are literate and 43 percent do not have safe drinking water. This small church of 12,000 members works in cooperation with the LWF Ethiopia program. The main effort is centered on water. We are constructing micro-dams, digging fresh-water wells, drilling bore holes and educating the people about the necessity for clean water. The Evangelical Church of Eritrea joined the LWF in 1963 and has a membership of 12,000.

1.1 billion people in the world do not have clean drinking water. 2.2 million people in developing countries die each year from diseases related to contaminated water. Most of those are children. Every single day 6,000 children die due to lack of water or water-borne diseases.

*Gracious God, we thank you for the gift of water. We pray for those who do not have access to clean water. Watch over the children who are dying for a drink of clean water. Put your loving arms around the women who walk miles each day in search of water for their families. Bless all those who are at work today digging wells and providing a means for communities to share in the earth's water. Help us to understand our own use of water resources. Give hope to Mr. Jan Schutte as he works on our behalf in this effort.*

### **Week Two**

A plot of eight acres of arid land was lying unused in the Kandenhula area of India. Three women, Golapi, Puspa, and Alhadini wanted to work the land, although the rainfall was very irregular in this drought-prone area. To encourage the women, the LWF staff assisted them in irrigating the land, taught them some basic farming skills and gave them a loan. Family members are helping them work the land. They have selected a variety of vegetables that will grow during different seasons. In addition to the vegetables, they are planning mango and teak as long-term ventures. The women have brought hope to their families and have demonstrated to other villagers that this land can be made productive!

The Ethiopian Church Mekane Yeses joined the LWF in 1963 and has a membership of over 4 million.

*Holy God, we give thanks for the courage of these three women to change their lives and the lives of their families. Grant them good crops and an abundant harvest. Keep us mindful of the gifts which you have given us. Watch over your servant Edwin Ramathal who serves in Eritrea through the LWF.*

### **Week Three**

Rev. John Halvorson, an ELCA pastor who serves as the LWF program director in Ethiopia, says this: “God is good. People really believe that here. In spite of all the difficulties that confront this land, from famine to deep poverty, to HIV and AIDS, to environment devastation, to civil strife and disorder, people do believe that God is good and that God continues to be merciful and just. (The LWF) responds to the unconditional and encompassing love of God in Jesus Christ for all people on earth.”

In one area of Ethiopia (the Chinaksen District) the LWF works with village women to improve health and education and to assist them in becoming self sufficient through small loans and farming education. We provide vegetable seeds and teach appropriate farming crop production and poultry farming.

*Creator God, thank you for the women of Chinaksen District, Ethiopia and their commitment to learn new ways to provide a sustainable lifestyle for their families. We pray for good soil, abundant rain and warm sun so that their crops may flourish. We rejoice in the knowledge that their children are no longer hungry. Give courage and strength to Pastor John Halvorson who works on our behalf as the LWF lead staff in Ethiopia.*

### **Week Four**

Nepal is a poor country with a fledgling democracy severely challenged by a Maoist insurgency. The intensified level of killing, abduction and sabotage, has resulted in thousands of civilian deaths. In addition, over 100,000 Bhutanese refugees in seven camps in southeast Nepal constitute a decade-long-refugee problem and human rights crisis. Many young girls are denied their right to education in remote places of Nepal. The LWF has a program to empower children and provides scholarships to disadvantaged girls.

*Loving God, we pray for the people of Nepal and for the Bhutanese who are confined to refugee camps within the country. Give the children of Nepal opportunities for education and a bright future. Care for all whose lives are impacted by the violence within the country. Thank you for the gifts brought to the LWF program by staff person Marceline Rozario.*