

# Diaconal Work in Lutheran churches in Chile and El Salvador

David Alejandro Cáceres Del Castillo

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Diaconia University of Applied Sciences,

Diak-South, Järvenpää Unit

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## ABSTRACT

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In the research two diaconal systems were compared. The approaches were studied took place in the Evangelical Lutheran church in Chile (IELCH) and the Salvadoran Lutheran Synod (SLS).

The material for the research was collected by using interviews, official church documents from Lutheran World Federation, Salvadoran Lutheran Synod and the Evangelical Lutheran church in Chile were inspected.

The comparative method was used in presenting the work conducted in both countries. The main focus and study was on diaconal work in the Lutheran church, its importance to local people and their visions of the future.

The comparisons between the two Lutheran churches included the following six themes: the church model and structure, the ideology, the development work, the humanitarian work, the social-political positions and economic resources.

The six themes were analysed in a comparison table, which indicated the differences and similarities in order to answer the research questions.

It was found out that there were differences in the church model and structure, and in their economic resources. However, there were also similarities in the ideology and the social-political positions. There was also combination of differences and similarities in the development and humanitarian work.

Keywords: diaconia, diaconal work, community, development, Lutheran church

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

The Lutheran church is one of the minority churches in Latin America. The Lutheran churches have different backgrounds depending on the country and its founders. For example, the Lutheran church in Chile is very different from its counterpart in El Salvador.

The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) is a global communion of Christian churches with the Lutheran tradition. Founded in 1947 in Lund, Sweden, the LWF now has 140 member churches in 79 countries worldwide representing over 68.9 million Christians. (Lutheran World Federation, who we are.)

The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) has a Lutheran Community in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC). The LAC includes 16 member churches, 14 in Latin America and 2 in the Caribbean. It is in 14 countries and has a combined membership of 822 000 at the end of 2007. For example, the Lutheran church in Brazil has over 700,000 members and other nine of the Latin American Lutheran churches have fewer than 10,000 members.

The LAC represents the Latin America and Caribbean regions and it accompanies LWF member churches in their holistic ministries. The implementation of programmes and projects respond to particular concerns of communities and specific priorities identified by the member churches. (Lutheran World Federation, LWF Regions.)

The diaconal work of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Chile (IELCH) and the Salvadoran Lutheran Synod (SLS) has been important and essential in the lives of people in these regions. My interest in this topic is based on my future relationship with both churches, and the hope to someday take part in the diaconal work of the Lutheran church of El Salvador.

In the research, the diaconal work conducted in Chile and El Salvador was studied and compared. The two above mentioned Latin American countries had very different backgrounds as can be seen in current situations.

## 2 FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter, I describe and present the theoretical framework of the research concerning the Lutheran World Federation, the diaconal work and the community development work.

### 2.1 The Lutheran world Federation (LWF) and its member Churches

In 1947 in Lund, Sweden, a group of Lutheran churches founded the global communion called the Lutheran World Federation (LWF). Since then, the global communion has expanded its presence and has increased in member numbers in every part of the world. At present, the Lutheran World Federation has 140 member churches in 79 countries. The population of Christians worldwide is currently over 68.9 million. (Lutheran World Federation, Who we are.)

The LWF confesses the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the only source and norm of its doctrine, life and service. It sees in the three Ecumenical Creeds and in the Confessions of the Lutheran Church, especially in the unaltered Augsburg Confession and the Small Catechism of Martin Luther, a pure exposition of the Word of God.

LWF member churches confess the triune God, agree in the proclamation of the Word of God, and are united in pulpit and altar fellowship. The LWF confesses one, holy, catholic, and apostolic church and is resolved to serve Christian unity throughout the world. It acts on behalf of its member churches in areas of common interest such as communication, ecumenical and interfaith relations, human rights, humanitarian assistance, theology, and the various aspects of mission and development. (Lutheran World Federation, Who we are.)

In the LWF, there is an assembly which is the representational body of its members. The assembly congregates every six years and it is the highest decision-making body of the LWF. In the assembly, there is an election of a council that governs between the times of every assembly. The council is composed of a president, the treasurer and 48 members to be elected by the assembly. (Lutheran World Federation, The Assembly.)

## 2.2 Concept of Diaconia and Diaconal work from Lutheran World Federation

The concept of Diaconia has its fundamental base in the bible,

The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour. (New International Version Bible, Luke 4:16-20.)

In their document *Prophetic Diaconia: for healing the world*, the Lutheran World Federation emphasised the importance of the Diaconia by stating:

Diakonia is central to what it means to be the Church. As a core component of the gospel, Diakonia is not an option but an essential part of discipleship. Diakonia reaches out to all persons, who are created in God's image. While Diakonia begins as unconditional service to the neighbor in need, it leads inevitably to social change that restores, reforms and transforms. (*Prophetic Diaconia: for healing the world*, Lutheran World federation 2002.)

Furthermore, they emphasise that:

Diakonia is more than the strong serving the weak, which can lead to paternalistic assumptions and practices, and imply that some churches are unable to engage in Diakonia because of their lack of resources or expertise. We challenge this assumption. Diakonia is part of the calling of all churches and all Christians in the world. (*Prophetic Diaconia: for healing the world*, Lutheran World federation 2002.)

This concept shows aspects in the everyday life; the interpretation from the biblical times until today is very different. The world situation has undoubtedly changed throughout time. New solutions are necessary since there are now new ways to conceive the life, solve problems and deal with natural circumstances.

Because of the holistic mission of God, Diakonia is deeply interrelated with Kerygma (proclamation of the Word) and Koinonia (sharing at the Table). Diakonia is witnessing through deeds. It is rooted in the sharing of the body and blood of Christ in Holy Communion. The mutual sharing inherent in the communion of the church can transform the unjust power relations that often are present in diaconal work, such as between "wealthy

givers” and “poor recipients”. (Prophetic Diakonia: for healing the world, Lutheran World federation 2002.)

The diaconal work is part of the life of the church; the mission is to assist in bringing justice to this world, and be the call for help of those in need. The lesson that Jesus taught was denouncing justice and announcing the Kingdom of God. This is done not only by word but also by action, making changes in the lives of active messengers in the important mission.

The Lutheran Churches under the umbrella of the LWF have created different principles with a common understanding of Diaconia and its work. It includes the different social and political perspectives of the worldwide communion, values and ethics, faith and love. The members of the LWF share the same principles in their parishes around the world, but it is considered that there is a wide gap between cultures, countries, languages and people.

The diaconal work has different methods of functioning depending on the situation of the country. The international communion has a vision of helping to change the terrible situations faced by our brothers and sisters in other parts of the world. For example, the diaconal work includes helping in political and military conflicts, providing relief after natural disasters such as hurricanes and earthquakes. Furthermore, the diaconal work assists with preventing disease epidemics within the most vulnerable regions in the world.

The cooperation in diaconal work has different methods to act as advocates, assist with community development work and humanitarian work. These methods provide the tools and directions necessary to deduce where the diaconal work will most effectively serve to reduce such social problems as poverty, violence and HIV/AIDS. These three main problems affect the world as a whole and bring with them additional problems of exclusion, inequality and injustice.

The organisation of the diaconal work includes important elements that allow it to function as a clear entity that includes its own leaders, alliances and professional workers that can assist them in reaching their primary objectives.

Considering the diversity and scope of problems within communities, the diaconal work has innumerable ways of functioning; with the contributions of churches resolving problems within local communities. The diaconal work is conducted through projects, advocacy and human rights, ecumenism, participation, inclusion, accompaniment, empowerment, education and training, health care, development and social consciousness in societies.

The concept of Diaconia has been discussed through many generations and is a topic of endless discussion. Nevertheless, its mission of service continues as a fundamental practice of churches.

### 2.3 Community development Work

The diaconal work has several aspects that need to be defined in order to understand the aims of it. The definitions and explanations of community, community work and community development work are essential to understand the practices in the SLS and IELCH.

What is community?

Communities are diverse and fluid. Other people cannot tell you what community you belong to – it is self-defined. Today, many feel part of their community in a geographical sense; others belong to online communities; others feel part of communities of a shared interest for example, by their ethnicity, sexuality or faith. It can be considered as community, the members of parish, the members of a social club, a population living in a certain area, member of the same ethnicity, sexuality or faith. The word community used in the churches, it had the meaning of the member who belong to certain parish or church denomination.  
(Community development foundation.)

There are diverse definitions of community and it is difficult to leave something or someone out of the definition. Community as normally is understood, refers to a group creating activities for its own benefit and wellbeing. The organisation and evolution of

the community needs to be improved for better results and satisfaction. Community has a strong commitment to work for the changes needed in its members' lives.

What is community work?

Community work seeks to facilitate, in given situation, a level of awareness and co-operation, so that people as a group can act together in such ways as to improve their common life (Ballard & Husselbee 2007, 6).

The communities generally work together for a certain goal or purpose. This process of people participating in activities as a group is defined as community work. The efforts of a community in the solutions of problems and in the improvement of their living situations are the core part of community work.

What is community development?

The key purpose of community development work is collectively to bring about social change and justice, by working with communities to: Identify their needs, opportunities, rights, responsibilities, plans, organise and take action, evaluate the effectiveness and impact of the action. All in ways, which challenge oppressions and tackle inequalities. (Community Development Exchange; Federation for Community Development Learning.)

Community development work aims to bring social change and social justice to the communities. Community development work gives the community skills to initiate projects improving the services and assistance needed to benefit the community itself. For example, the construction of a water supply system in a rural community or being a community advocate with local governmental authorities is an attempt to improve the services and living circumstances within the community.

Community development work has become part of the international support given by organisations, churches and governments in different parts of the world. Its concepts and practices are applied to the processes of empowerment and participation.

Through community development work, the people in the communities learn to identify their own problems and needs. Furthermore, people learn how to plan, organise and take action to make a change in their own life situations. The participation of the community is essential in achieving the goal of inclusion. The community development process affords the people of the community the ability to learn and develop necessary skills to successfully resolve their own issues.

Community development encourages people to work for themselves instead of having people work for them. This method of self-help allows the community to be independent to resolve their own problems and become experts of their own situation.

### 3. METHODS

In this chapter, I describe the research methods used. The next subchapters explain the research methods, the process of data collection, and analysis of the data.

#### 3.1 Research questions and aim of the research

The aim of the research was to find out the differences, similarities and types of support and help offered between the diaconal work in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Chile (IELCH) and the Salvadoran Lutheran Synod (SLS).

The purpose was to describe and explain:

- The basic features of the two countries, Chile and El Salvador
- The history and the structure of the IELCH and SLS
- The diaconal work in LWF, IELCH and SLS,

- The comparison of the diaconal work in LWF, IELCH and SLS using six themes

The Lutheran World Federation supports the basic diaconal work in IELCH and SLS. Nevertheless, each church is independent to decide the social and humanitarian aspects they take in conducting their work.

My research questions were:

- How do the churches organise the diaconal work?
- How does the concept of Diaconia from LWF match with the practice at the churches?
- How do the economic situations of the churches affect their diaconal work?
- What are the outcomes of the diaconal work?

### 3.2 Research methods

In this research, I used the qualitative methods; the aim of the qualitative methods is to answer “how” or “why” things are as they are (DJS Research). As part of the investigation, I used interviews as a basic academic tool in qualitative research.

It allows us to share the world of others to find out what is going on, why people do what they do, and how they understand their worlds (Rubin & Rubin 1995).

The first tool chosen was the interview. The interview was used in the data collection to clarify the situations in which the diaconal work needed further description. The research brought information that needed additional explanation of the churches’ organisation and actions. The interview process provided me the ability to understand this information. In order to clarify specific details and examples of specific situations, structured interviews were used to obtain answers. This method was used repeatedly throughout the interview process in order to keep information from every source uniform.

The second tool implemented was the computer-assisted interview. This method was necessary to obtain the information when a face-to-face interview was not possible.

Computer assisted interviewing can be conducted through e-mail correspondence, implying an asynchronous interaction in time, with the interviewer writing a question and then waiting for a reply (Kvale & Brinkmann 2009, 149).

This tool was used because of the impossibility of travel to one of the countries for information gathering. The primary source of computer assisted interviewing in this case was through email and served as an appropriate means of data collecting.

The third tool used was the comparative method. The comparison is useful in understanding the different societies, their structures and institutions. (Social research update 1995.) The aim of the research was to find out the similarities and differences between the diaconal work, and the comparison is the method to know the functions, actions and plans of the work.

The aim may be to seek explanations for similarities and differences, to generalise from them or to gain a greater awareness and a deeper understanding of social reality in different national contexts (Social research update 1995).

### 3.3 Gathering the data

The data was collected in autumn 2008, spring and summer 2009. The first part of the data collection was made in Chile, during my practical placement in autumn 2008. The second part of the data collection was made from El Salvador to Finland during the spring and summer 2009.

In the first part, I interviewed three key persons involved in the diaconal work in Chile. The Bishop Gloria Rojas of the Evangelical Lutheran church in Chile (IELCH), one pastor in a congregation, and a board member in a congregation. I decided to have three

different views of the diaconal work to understand the organisation and conduction of work in the communities.

In the second part, I interviewed three key persons also involved in the diaconal work of El Salvador, the Bishop Medardo Gomez of the Salvadoran Lutheran synod (SLS), an ex coordinator in the Salvadoran Lutheran Synod and a pastor in a congregation.

These people were chosen to interview because they have played an important role in the diaconal work of El Salvador and Chile in past and present. The interviewees' knowledge of complexity, functions and procedures was essential in order to obtain the complete and accurate information about the diaconal practices of these countries.

The third part of the data collection was the obtaining of official documents. Official documents were requested from the Lutheran World Federation -Department for Mission and Development (DMD). The documents contained information related to the diaconal work functioning in the world. The importance of obtaining these documents was to gain knowledge of the basic concept of diaconal work in the different areas, which then allowed the comparison between the two churches. All documents were obtained through e-mail and from the web page of the Lutheran World Federation. There were no face-to-face or phone interviews done with anyone from the LWF.

Official published documents were provided to me by my interviewees from both the Lutheran churches in Chile and El Salvador. The documents were part of the formal organisation of the Lutheran churches in both countries, which provide specific evidence to support their arguments of the works they do.

### 3.3.1 Data from Chile

As mentioned earlier, the data collection from Chile consisted of three interviews. In this part face-to-face interviews were used and an audio transcript was later transcribed. I referred to the interviews as I1CH, I2CH and I3CH.

The list of documents used as references in the IELCH was:

- Politica social de la IELCH 2008 [Socio Political position of the IELCH 2008]
- Organigrama IELCH 2008 [Organization chart of the IELCH 2008]
- Convenio Comision accion Diaconica y IELCH 2004 [agreement between the diaconal action and IELCH 2004]
- Criterios de la IELCH referente a proyectos de accion Diaconina [Criterion of IELCH referent the projects of the diaconal action]
- Mi vida chilena (Frenz Helmut, 2006)
- IELCH internet web page sources

In addition, I used the general information of the IELCH published in the internet web page .The documents from the IELCH contained information which was clear and structured it. There were not problems in collecting the data. All documents were collected during the time I was in Chile.

### 3.3.2 Data from El Salvador

As mentioned earlier, the data collection from El Salvador also consisted of three interviews. Interviews in this part were conducted through computer-assisted interviews and were done strictly through e-mails. Information for these interviews were obtained more slowly due to technical reasons and time constraints of the interviewees. All the interviews were written in digital format and they were sent to me through e-mail. I will now refer to the interviews as I1 ES, I2 ES and I3 ES.

The list of documents used as references in the SLS was:

- Bishop Medardo Gomez Exposure “United in Christ, We Construct Hope and Peace” 2007
- Organigrama SLS 2009 [organizational chart]
- Diaconia SLS 2009
- Proceso de Mutirao 2006 [Process of Mutirao 2006]
- The Lutheran Church in El Salvador (Jahnel 2005)

There are several reasons why the Salvadoran Lutheran Synod did not have clear and structured documents. One primary reason is that during civil war, the production of

these documents would have put the church in a dangerous political position. Therefore, it was prohibited for security reasons. Another factor that influenced the lack of official documents in the SLS was the lack of educated personnel. Since its foundation, the SLS has not had enough educated people to create such documents. For these reasons, the documents expressing the clear diaconal work and action do not exist. The absence of these documents made data collection very difficult. In many cases, I used my prior knowledge from the SLS obtained during my lifelong membership and association with the Lutheran Church in El Salvador.

### 3.3.3 Data from Lutheran World Federation

The data collection from the LWF was obtained through a contact person in the LWF. The contact person was in the department for Mission and Development (DMD) for the Latin American region. The contact person provided the different digital documents of global and regional consultations concerning the diaconal work.

The documents were the base of what is the concept of Diaconia and the diaconal work, the list was:

- Florianopolis statement 2002
- Consultation on Diaconia 2002 “Prophetic Diaconia: for the healing of the world”
- Regional consultation on development of the member churches of LWF in Latin America and the Caribbean 2003
- Diaconia in the Latin American LWF member churches
- Diaconia consultation 2007
- Message from the LWF global consultation on Diaconia 2008
- El papel de la Diaconia en la Vida de la Iglesia, vision y realidad 2009 [the role of Diaconia in the life of the church, vision and reality 2009]
- LWF internet web page sources

I studied the documents from the LWF to understand the fundamentals of the diaconal work. The documents explained the working areas of the Lutheran churches in the world. The influence obtained from the LWF documents made clear the aspects for the analysis and comparison, including the six themes chosen in the comparison of diaconal

work (Chapter 6 & 7). I did not have problems with the access of the official documents from the LWF, which was a positive aspect for the research.

### 3.4 Analysing the data

After converting each interview into audio format, I transcribed and interpreted them into text.

Transcribing from audio recording to text involves a series of technical and interpretational issues- in particular concerning verbatim oral versus written style- for which there are not many standard rules, but rather a series of choices to be made (Kvale & Brinkmann 2009, 180).

When all the data was transcribed and interpreted, I read the data to identify the most relevant themes within. I chose the main themes to be part of the comparison. Audio interviews were made solely in Chile. E-mail interviews and the documents from LWF, SLS and IELCH were also read to establish relevant themes for comparison.

#### 3.4.1 Tables

The analysis of the data collection is presented in table format in order to compare the main actions of each part. This is named the comparison Table (chapter 6). The reason why I chose the six themes was that all the themes were presented in the material as aspects which influenced diaconal work in the LWF, SLS and IELCH. The table demonstrates the crucial aspects of the comparison.

The LWF, SLS and IELCH were placed in the table as comparable objects. The LWF was placed first as having the role of umbrella organisation. The SLS and IELCH were placed after to be the main objects of comparison.

The first theme was the structure of the church (model), in which the LWF was not subject of comparison because was considered to be an umbrella organisation. The SLS and IELCH clearly showed the type of structures in both churches. This comparison

presented the main organisation of the churches in the diaconal work. The second theme was the ideology. This is where I found the link between the concept of Diaconia and the practice. The concept was based on the documents of Diaconia and diaconal work from the LWF.

Therefore, I was able to compare the LWF, SLS and IELCH. The comparisons for themes two through six were made in a similar manner. Themes three through six were development work, humanitarian work, social-political positions, and economic resources, respectively.

A copy of the comparison table was made and it was named the data collection table. In the data collection table, I located the types of data collection used in every box:

- The data collection used in column SLS in boxes 1, 4, 7, 10, 13, and 16 corresponds to the list in the Data from El Salvador section.
- The data collection used in column IELCH in boxes 2, 5, 8, 11, 14, and 17 corresponds to the list in the Data from Chile section.
- The data collection used in column LWF in boxes 3, 6, 9, 12, and 15 corresponds to the list in the Data from LWF section.

The data collection table

	LWF	SLS	IELCH
Structure of the church (model)		1 Interviews IIES and I2ES  Organigrama 2009  Proceso de Mutirao 2006  Diaconia 2009  The Lutheran Church in El Salvador (Jahnel 2005)	2 Interview IICH  Organigrama IELCH 2008  Criterios de la IELCH referente a proyectos de accion Diaconina  IELCH internet web page sources

Ideology	3  All the documents listed from the LWF.	4  Interviews I1ES and I2ES	5  Interviews I1CH, I2CH, I3CH  Politica social de la IELCH 2008  IELCH internet web page sources
Development work	6  Consultation on Diakonia 2002 “Prophetic Diakonia: for the healing of the world”  Regional consultation on development of the member churches of LWF in Latin America and the Caribbean 2003  Message from the LWF global consultation on Diakonia 2008  LWF internet web page sources	7  Organigrama SLS 2009  Diaconia SLS 2009  Interviews I1ES and I2ES	8  Politica social de la IELCH 2008  Organigrama IELCH 2008  Interviews I1CH, I2CH
Humanitarian work	9  Consultation on Diakonia 2002 “Prophetic Diakonia: for the healing of the world”  Consultation on Diakonia 2002 “Prophetic Diakonia: for the healing of the world”  LWF internet web page sources	10  Interviews I1ES and I2ES  Diaconia SLS 2009	11  Interviews I1CH  IELCH internet web page sources
Social-political positions	12  LWF internet web page sources  Diakonia in the Latin American LWF member churches	13  Interviews I1ES and I2ES  Bishop Medardo Gomez Exposure 2007  The Lutheran Church in El Salvador (Jahnel 2005)	14  Interviews I1CH  Mi vida chilena (Frenz Helmut, 2006)  Politica social de la IELCH 2008
Economic Resources	15  LWF internet web page sources	16  Interviews I1ES	17  Interviews I1CH

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#### 4. CHILE

In this chapter, I describe and present the background of Chile, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Chile (IELCH), the diaconal work in IELCH, the community and development work aspects.

##### 4.1 Historical Context

Chile is among the South American countries that were conquered by Spain in the 16th century. Chile was inhabited by the indigenous called Mapuches, which still live in the central-southern part of the country. Chile had a mix between white Amerindians and Spanish. Chile became independent from Spain in 1810, starting from there a long history of military governments.

The country had a relatively stable political history until the military coup of General Pinochet against President Allende in 1973, which was followed by a long period of dictatorship, oppression, torture and disappearances (U.S. Department of State 2009).

Sectors of the Christian churches defended human rights and assisted the victims in those dark years, with the active support of the social and the ecumenical movement. Nevertheless, the leadership of important Pentecostal and Protestant churches were, especially during the early years, on the side of the military regime.

In 1990, Chile has reverted back to democracy and developed a strong liberal economy that contributed to the stability and growth in the country. During that process Chile reduced the poverty rates by over half and has ensured the commitment of democracy and representation in the government. (U.S. Department of State 2009.) Chile has the strongest and highest level of economic trade in Latin America but there is still a wide gap between the rich and poor.

The development of education, social services and industry in Chile is one of the best in Latin America. According to the Government of Chile, the population of Chile is over 15 million inhabitants. Approximately 70 per cent of the population is Catholic and rest belong to Protestant Evangelical Christian churches. (Gobierno de Chile, Censo 2002.)

#### 4.2 Evangelical Lutheran Church in Chile (IELCH)

The origin of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Chile (IELCH) came about in the second half of the 19th century. The government of Chile promoted the so-called colonisation of the southern part of the country and brought citizens from Germany to populate those regions. The religion practiced by the Germans was the Evangelical Lutheran.

In 1904, different congregations were born in the south of Chile and created the “Sinodo de Chile” [Synod of Chile]. In 1959, statutes were changed and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Chile (IELCH) was established. During this period, the church came a long way. It went from being an immigrant church to a church that became strongly active in the national media and was responsible for growth and development in all areas of the Chilean society. (Iglesia Evangelica Lutherana en Chile.)

On September 11<sup>th</sup> 1973, Chile suffered a military coup that eventually led to the military dictatorship of Augusto Pinochet. The first years of the regime resulted in several human rights violations. The IELCH was involved in the process of peace and democracy in Chile, defending the human rights of people suffering political persecution (political refugees) as well as all types of injustice and oppression. (Frenz 2006, 254.) In 1974-1975, these actions caused conflict within the church and along with it the division of the IELCH. One part of the church followed the conservative-political ideology of Pinochet and was not involved in any kind of action bringing help, justice or dialogue. The other part continued helping the oppressed.

After the conflict, the Lutheran Church divided into two different churches, each having own statutes, boards, structure and directions. Currently, there are two Lutheran churches in Chile. The IELCH has about 3,000 members in its communities and congregations. The Lutheran Church in Chile (ILCH) has about 10,000 members in its communities and congregations. (Lutheran World Federation, Members.)

Recently, the IELCH has been one of the evangelical-protestant churches actively working with the government of Chile. They are receiving a lot of cooperation through projects in different parts of the country and communities. The relationship between the government of Chile and the IELCH is very established as the IELCH represents a large group of Evangelical Churches in Chile.

The IELCH is part of the 68.9 million Lutherans in the world and is a member of the World Lutheran Federation (LWF), the Latin American Council of Churches (LAC) and the World Council of Churches (WCC).

#### 4.2.1 Organisational structure

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Chile is composed of nine geographical congregations. The IELCH is an umbrella, which oversees and unites all congregations into groups called “Sinodos” (synods). The synods were created with the delegations from all the congregations and communities from IELCH. (Appendix 1)

The present structure was reorganised in a very complex way. It takes in consideration that the congregations which are legally autonomous in their pastoral and diaconal work.

The model of organisation in the IELCH is called the Participative Democratic system. It permits each congregation to have legal autonomy and independency in their decisions and actions. In addition to this, every congregation has its own administration, projects and board.

The synod is the highest authority decisionmaking body in the church. It meets every two years to decide the plans, strategies and responsibilities for the “consejo sinodal” [synodal council] during the subsequent two years. This synodal council serves the role as the Presidency of the church. (Appendix 1) It leads the church in general matters and represents it with governments, civil society and other ecclesial authorities. It also assists the communities and congregations in carrying out the tasks of the synod.

The synodal council has been working with different commissions such as the commission of education, finances, communication, life and mission, camps, diaconal action, pro ministry and statutes. Thus, these groups complete the main activities of the church.

The commissions have missions and objectives concerning the working areas and the roles assigned. The integral members of the commissions are pastors and active members of the different congregations. Their inclusion makes real the participation of the parish in the structure of the IELCH.

The congregations’ leadership is representative in boards as each congregation has its own board in charge of the administration of the church, finances, diaconal work and projects.

An important point regarding church structure is that every congregation inside the IELCH has its own legal autonomy but is still part of the structure of the entire church. (Appendix 1)

#### 4.2.2 Diaconal work in IELCH

In the IELCH, the commission called “Accion Diaconica” [diaconal action] is in charge of providing advice and assesses every action taken by the synodal council, local congregations and communities corresponding to the diaconal work.

The objectives of the diaconal action commission are:

- To evaluate the relevance and coherence of the social projects presented by the communities and congregations to the synodal council
- To facilitate the economic resources through cooperation at the national and international level
- To ensure that diaconal projects of the churches function well
- To plan formation, capacity-training and self management activities
- To ensure the fulfilment of agreements regarding church projects

According to the organisation chart of the IELCH (Appendix1), the diaconal work in the different congregations of the IELCH showed the various projects such as kindergartens, schools, community centres, domestic violence centres or shelters, and shelters for children with cancer.

#### 4.2.3 Aspects of community development work

The diaconal work, the community work and development work are considered to be a part of IELCH's contribution to the development of Chile.

Community work aspects were presented in the organisational chart (Appendix 1). For example, the community centre project that worked for the empowerment of people in the communities. The community centres promoted the organisation and participation of people to resolve the problems in the community. The work in the community centres was composed of cultural activities with children, youth and women. The information of civil rights and human rights was an important part in the process of empowerment in the communities.

The advocacy made in different domestic violence centres and shelters corresponds to the community development purposes of bringing social change and justice. The IELCH worked with the communities to improve the life, defence of rights against discrimination and violence in Chile. The IELCH had clear aspects of community development work, the existence of educational projects showed the organisation was bringing concrete social change through education.

The existing relationship between the IELCH and the government of Chile with different social projects has been important for the current and future development of the people, communities and the country. The IELCH has since encouraged the diaconal work in support of poor communities, social change, social justice and hopes for a better life. This is all part of the global effort of community development.

## 5 EL SALVADOR

In this chapter, I describe and present the background of El Salvador, the Salvadoran Lutheran Synod (SLS), the diaconal work in SLS, and the community and development work aspects.

### 5.1 Historical Context

El Salvador is part of the Central American region, where indigenous societies existed a long time before the area was conquered by Spain in the 16th century. The colonisation disrupted these communities and killed hundreds of thousands of indigenous people. El Salvador has a very mixed population between mestizo, white Spanish and Amerindian. El Salvador got independence from Spain in 1821. Throughout its history, El Salvador was ruled by a small oligarchy that oppressed the poor for many decades.

Within the Catholic Church and the Protestant churches in El Salvador, Christians have stood for justice and solidarity with the poor. Many have paid with their lives, among them Archbishop Romero who was shot to death while celebrating mass, in 1980.

The growing disparity and the call for land reform, led to a civil war between the F.M.L.N (Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front) and the conservative government, from 1980-1992. The population suffered massive killings and human rights abuses, mostly at the hands of government and paramilitary forces, supported by

the United States. The civil war left over 75,000 deaths. (U.S. Department of State 2009.)

The United Nations ended the armed conflict by signing the peace accords in 1992 and since then the F.M.L.N acts as a democratic political party. Since the war, the people of El Salvador continue to struggle with poverty in a new democratic post war process.

El Salvador is a country suffering high vulnerability from natural disasters such as hurricane Mitch in 1998, Stan 2005 and the earthquakes of 2001. The natural disasters have contributed to the slowing of development in El Salvador. (U.S. Department of State 2009.)

According to the Central Intelligence Agency, the population of El Salvador is over 7 million inhabitants (Central Intelligence Agency, the world Factbook 2009). Over 2 million Salvadorans have immigrated to the United States. The main religion is the Catholic with 60 per cent, the other percentages are divided among the Protestant Evangelical churches of the country.

The country's economy is primarily agricultural, with some industrial aspects. Its main export products are coffee, cotton and sugar. A large part of the economy depends on remittance sent home by Salvadoran residents of the United States. The economy in El Salvador is developing slowly, the existence of a huge gap between the rich and the poor makes the levels of inequalities very high. El Salvador has several social problems; poverty, criminality and insecurity are the biggest issues in the country.

## 5.2 The Salvadoran Lutheran Synod (SLS)

In 1954, the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod from United States began missionary work in El Salvador. During the process of the missionary work, new pastors for El Salvador and Central America were ordained in the church.

The Diaconal programme began by serving Honduran refugees from the football war in 1969. In 1970, the Salvadoran Lutheran Synod became legally autonomous and with it, the organised diaconal work with the communities around the country followed. During the years, 1972 and 1979 the first Lutheran schools and health clinics started their functions. (Bishop Medardo Gomez Exposure.)

In the year 1980, the civil war surged on. The church responded with relief work for the victims. This was a challenging time that, on one hand, brought Persecution, Martyrdom, Death, Treason, Threats, Cross, Pain, Disappearances, Exile and Prison. ( Bishop Medardo Gomez Exposure.)

During the civil war in El Salvador, the SLS played an outstanding role, advocating for justice and assisting the displaced and the poor. The church had to pay a high price for its clear prophetic stance: one of its pastors was murdered. Many church workers, including the Bishop, received threats and had to go into hiding or flee the country.

The relationship with the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod was disrupted in 1986 because of differing views on liberation theology and solidarity with the oppressed, ecumenical commitment and ordination of women (Bishop Medardo Gomez Exposure).

The SLS founded more Lutheran schools, the Lutheran University, organised the structural leadership, and participated actively in a large social and ecumenical network that resulted in the signing of the peace accords in 1992. After the peace accords in 1992, the SLS defined its new role for the post wartime by promoting reconciliation, reconstruction and democratisation in El Salvador. Recently, the SLS has reorganised its structure and identity and as result its own model called Episcopal democratic system (Jahnel 2005.)

### 5.2.1 Organisational structure

The structure of the SLS functioned under a hierarchy of positions, which were chosen from the general assembly in El Salvador. The assembly meets every two years for elections and coordination of the SLS.

The Bishop plays the important role of head shift of the SLS. He represents, approves and guides the actions of the organisation. The Bishop is the person who represents the Salvadoran Lutheran Synod at national and international level. The general assembly also has a board that works with the Bishop to coordinate the decision-making and future planning of SLS. They oversee the executive board that is in charge of overseeing administration and finances, the pastoral and diaconal coordination and sustainable projects. (Appendix 2)

According to the Bishop Medardo Gomez (IIES), the church has two ministries the pastoral and diaconal. The pastoral ministry is in charge of all the related religious doctrines, evangelisation and mission. The diaconal ministry is in charge of the diaconal work, which includes social projects, community development projects and partnerships.

The Salvadoran Lutheran Synod has 62 congregations within the country and membership totals 12,000 (Lutheran World Federation, member churches). The congregations have been organised in regions, which are called micro-regions. In the organisational chart (Appendix 2) was represented as “Microregiones”.

#### 5.2.2 Diaconal work in SLS

According to Bishop Medardo Gomez (IIES), the diaconal ministry is divided into these areas:

- Education
- Human rights
- Emergency aid through risk management
- Health
- Sister Churches Program/ Community development cooperation

The diaconal work is done through the projects such as the Lutheran schools, Lutheran University, health assistance clinics, campaigns, preventive work of HIV/Aids and weekly press conference advocating issues important to church’s vision.

The diaconal work has emphasised advocacy since the beginning of the SLS, and they still work as advocates for the defence of human rights. They advocate for women, youth, indigenous people, homosexuals, migrants and immigrants suffering oppression.

Emergency aid and risk management are especially useful in ecological protection. For example, campaigns against pollution. These actions also support rural communities to cultivate their own grains. Emergency aid becomes available when there are natural disasters such as hurricanes and earthquakes. The emergency aid helps often the poor communities affected by these tragedies.

Health clinics provide help and assistance in poor communities, especially in rural areas where access to health services is limited. Part of the health assistance programme is to provide education to help prevent the spread of HIV/Aids. In the case of natural disasters, the health assistance provided has been essential in saving lives and providing much needed medical care.

The sister parish programme, deals with the international partnerships between the SLS and other churches, mostly from Europe and United States. The congregations have “friendships” or “sisterhoods” with other congregations from different countries. The idea of the friendships is to share all the aspects of life, both material and spiritual. The partnerships have supported different projects in the communities with material and human resources.

### 5.2.3 Aspects of Community development work

The community development program has been functioning for a long time in the SLS. It is supported by international partnerships with agencies, NGOs and sister parishes from United States and Europe.

It is funded through development projects in the communities of El Salvador. An example is the material support of a sister parish in the construction of a water supply system in a rural community.

There are different areas of developing projects within the SLS. These areas of development include infrastructure in the communities (houses, schools, and churches), improving the water supply to provide clean drinkable water, health and ecological campaigns, and general education.

The goal of community development is to build capacity within the community in order to empower people there. The community members learn skills to become advocates for their own communities.

Through the diaconal work, communities in El Salvador are learning to identify their problems and needs. The process of participation is important to resolve the problems and change the living conditions of the communities in El Salvador. The community development work within the SLS is essential to empower the poor and excluded communities.

Since the SLS instituted the diaconal work to support poor communities, social change, social justice and better lifestyle of living have been evident. These things are all a part of the global effort of community development.

## 6. IDEOLOGY AND STRUCTURE

In this chapter, I analyse the research using a comparison table. In the comparison table in the following subchapters, the analysis is referred to the themes structure and ideology of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Chile (IELCH) and the Salvadoran

Lutheran Synod (SLS). In every subchapter, I will write a small conclusion of the differences and similarities between the Salvadoran Lutheran Synod and Evangelical Lutheran Church in Chile.

### 6.1 Comparison of Diaconal work

In comparing the diaconal work, I have used the comparison table below. The analysis went through the six themes presented in the comparison table. The themes were analysed systematically following the order in the comparison table.

COMPARISON TABLE

	<b>LWF</b>	<b>SLS</b>	<b>IELCH</b>
<b>the structure of the church (model)</b>		The Episcopal Democratic system- has a Diaconal Ministry divided in different work areas	The Participative Democratic system- has a leader Diaconal Action Commission
<b>Ideology</b>	-Serving people in need - It leads to social change -Social justice and peace - Transforms unjust power relations	-Serving people in need -It leads to social change -Social justice and peace - Transforms unjust power relations	-Serving people in need - It leads to social change -Social justice and peace - Transforms unjust power relations

<b>Development work</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Poverty</li> <li>-Creating sustainable communities</li> <li>-Combating HIV/Aids</li> <li>-Transforming gender relations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Education</li> <li>-Sister parish Churches/Community development cooperation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Education</li> <li>-Sustainable development</li> <li>-Community development</li> </ul>
<b>Humanitarian work</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Combating HIV/Aids</li> <li>-Natural catastrophes Support</li> <li>- Violence</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Emergency aid and Risk Management</li> <li>-Health assistance</li> <li>-Combating HIV/Aids</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Domestic violence shelters</li> <li>-Support centers for children with Cancer</li> </ul>
<b>Social-Political position</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Advocacy</li> <li>- Promoting peace, reconciliation and human rights</li> <li>-Transforming gender relations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Advocacy towards local &amp; Government authorities</li> <li>-wide social &amp; ecumenical network</li> <li>-close contact to the media</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Advocacy towards local &amp; Governmental authorities</li> <li>-Cooperation with local &amp; national Government and NGOs</li> </ul>
<b>Economic Resources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Approving programs and authorizing fund raising</li> <li>-distribution of funds</li> <li>-Monitoring and reporting systems</li> <li>-contribution to support programs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Development cooperation with International organisations</li> <li>-International partnership with other synods or churches</li> <li>-Donations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Development Cooperation with Governmental institutions, local and international organisations</li> <li>-International partnership with other synods or churches</li> <li>-Rent of church properties</li> </ul>

## 6.2 Structure of church – Models

Inside the Lutheran communion of churches, there are different structures, which can range from the traditional Lutheran to the new reorganised church. In the research, it was essential to define the structure of the church because the structure conducts and shows the working methods. In addition, this part answers one of the research questions about the organisation of church and the diaconal work as contained within.

### SLS

The model of organization in El Salvador Lutheran Church comes from the mission done by the Lutheran Synod of Missouri, United States. This model is called the Episcopal system and it means that the church has a strong hierarchy in its administration and decision making concerning the ecclesiastical and diaconal services.

Limitations and social political positions were carried out between Missouri and El Salvador bringing the independence of the Salvadoran part, an independence that gave the chance to build the own identity of the Salvadoran Lutheran Church and during the time establishing its own model called Episcopal Democratic system (Jahnel 2005).

At present, the Salvadoran Lutheran Synod has strengthened its structure and working model with the aim to be more efficient and organised in their work. The SLS has an Executive board, under that are the three main units: the pastoral and diaconal coordination, administration and finances and sustainable projects. The Salvadoran Lutheran Synod administers the human and material resources in the whole structure. (Appendix 2)

The main work of the SLS is focused on the pastoral and the diaconal coordination. The first, the pastoral coordination is in charge of all the related religious doctrines,

evangelisation and mission. These will not be included in the analysis for objectives reasons of this research.

The second, the diaconal coordination is divided in the following areas:

- Education
- Human rights
- Emergency aid through risk management
- Health
- Sister Churches Program

These diaconal areas will be discussed in the following chapters according to the specific themes in the comparison.

## IELCH

In the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Germans migrated to Chile and founded the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Chile. The main objective of founding the church in Chile was the evangelisation of its people. Originally, the church was not interested in doing diaconal work.

The Chilean social and political situation changed with time as did the church model and structure. An important factor of this change was the integration of Chileans in the life of the church. The church became more and more conscious of the situation people lived in and this started influencing the decision-making of the church.

After the Evangelical Lutheran church in Chile was divided during the dictatorship of General Pinochet in the 70's and 80's, the social-political position of IELCH became clear as well as its future endeavours of diaconal work.

At present, the model of organisation in the evangelical Lutheran church in Chile is called Participative Democratic system. This system provides the congregations with legal autonomy and independency in their decisions and actions. The congregations have their own administration, projects and board. For this reason, the diaconal work varies from one congregation to another, especially in the provision of services in education and community work.

The current structure of the church is reorganised in a very complex way. It makes a synodal council the authority of the church, although its true role is to represent the whole church, and facilitate and support the congregations in their activities. The synodal council has different working committees dealing with the pastoral and diaconal services.

There is a committee called diaconal action [accion diaconia] is in charge of giving advice and assessing every action taken by the synodal council, local congregations and communities corresponding to the diaconal work.

The objectives of the diaconal action committee are:

- To evaluate the relevance and coherence of the social projects presented by the communities and congregations to the synodal council
- To facilitate the economic resources, through the search of cooperation at the national and international level
- To plan activities such as formation of capacity and self management training
- To monitor the performance of approved projects

The influence obtained from the IELCH background and its management by German immigrants has a lot to do with its current structure. This is evidenced by the independence of congregations and professionalism in the working areas.

In El Salvador the process of growing and restructuring, Church congregations and humanitarianism grew, but professionalism and education were lacking in many working areas as these were not priorities.

In this comparison case, congregations have been more independent in their diaconal work, administration and actions while congregations have been unified because of their diaconal work, administration and action. The diaconal work in both structures and models has different methods and approaches, but aims to accomplish the same objectives. It is important to show the way the church has organised its diaconal work. The differences of foundations and local contexts have shaped the diaconal service to

what it is now. The important role that the diaconal work has had within church structure is obvious, and they have developed and accomplished their goals set forth.

In conclusion, the differences between Chile and El Salvador are:

Chile uses the democratic participatory model and structure. This a direct result of having a strong German influence and the influence of Chilean pastors on its foundation, legal independency and the management of present and future plans.

El Salvador has an Episcopal democratic model and structure. This is a direct result of having a strong American Lutheran missionary background and the presence of Central American protestant pastors since its foundation. The church is considered to be one unifying umbrella, under which congregations follow the same order, decisions and actions.

### 6.3 Ideology

The basic ideology from the diaconal work is gospel based, which has been previously defined in the framework and literature chapter. The concept of diaconia and diaconal work were important for understanding the practices of the SLS and IELCH. The SLS and IELCH share the same ideology of diaconal service. This is evidenced by interviews, official documents and web pages.

The main points in the ideology are:

- Serving people in need
- Aiming at social change
- Social justice and peace
- Transformation of unjust power relations

Serving people in need is one of the essential points of this ideology. The diaconal work focuses on those who are poor with various needs, both spiritual and material. The diaconal work of the church places a priority on those who are facing extreme situations

of need and who are most in need of aid. The IELCH and SLS have good histories of servicing those in need with most of their target groups being communities from the medium-low social class to the lowest and marginalized social classes.

The churches are committed to making concrete change on the local and national levels by implementing community development projects, educational projects and health assistance projects. They care deeply about changing the social situation of the people by supporting the people's initiatives, by denouncing injustice and offering hope. Part of this change includes social justice and peace. The thought is that if there is social change then social justice will follow and when social change comes together with social justice the result will be peace.

Another topic of ideology is the transformation of unjust power relations. This is the defence of equality against the unjust aspects in our world, country and communities. These relations include gender equality, the fight against exclusion, marginalisation and oppression. Once these unjust power relations are solved, peace will ultimately follow.

The churches are clear in their message and action that Jesus Christ serves as the highest deacon of the church. This belief is an integral part of the diaconal work and meeting spiritual needs (I1 ES).

The expression and application of the ideology is linked to all diaconal work. This is demonstrated in different working areas such as development work, humanitarian work and social-political aspects.

In conclusion, it has been found that that there are no differences in the shared ideologies of the church. Each church shares the same values and commitment towards the diaconal work in different countries. This demonstrates exactly how closely the churches of the Lutheran Communion of the world are connected.

## 7. PRACTICAL DIMENSIONS OF DIACONAL WORK

In this chapter, I will analyse the research by using the comparison table above. The topics of analysis will be development work, humanitarian work, social-political positions and the economic resources of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Chile (IELCH) and the Salvadoran Lutheran Synod (SLS). In every subchapter, a small conclusion of the differences and similarities between SLS and IELCH will be addressed.

### 7.1 Development Work

The development work contains a diversity of working methods that churches are implementing in the communities. The meaning of the concept has been defined before in the framework and literature chapter.

The Lutheran World Federation (LWF), the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Chile (IELCH) and the Salvadoran Lutheran Synod (SLS) are all active in development work. The ILECH and SLS are also members of the Latin American Council of Churches, which has been organising different congresses to unify their common principles and values to create an alternative development in the region.

In the LWF development agenda are:

- Poverty
- Creating sustainable communities
- Combating HIV/Aids
- Transforming gender relations

The churches have considered the local nature of their countries. They have addressed social, economic, cultural, ecological and political situations in order to determine what forms of development work will be done to respond to the main problems at hand.

## SLS

The development work of the SLS is focused on two areas that contribute to the fight against poverty, the creation of sustainable communities, and the transformation of gender relations. These two areas are:

- Education
- Sister Parish/Community Development Cooperation

Historically in El Salvador, there has been a huge gap between the rich and the poor, with obvious inequities in the opportunities provided to obtain a better quality of life. These inequities lead to unjust power relations, discrimination and oppression.

The Salvadoran Lutheran synod has chosen education as a priority area of development in hope of reducing poverty. Education has been fundamental for the SLS, and education is one of the methods to tackle poverty. The SLS opened three Lutheran schools and one Lutheran University as part of their contribution to the advancement of education in El Salvador. These educational institutions were opened to offer services to the people of the lowest social classes and to those who are most in need of education such as children, youth and impoverished adults.

The Basic education is a proven weapon against poverty, opening up access to knowledge and skills and helping to break down barriers that excluded poor and marginalized people from political and economic life (Hall & Midgley 2004, 153).

Education is essential in the developmental process of a country. In El Salvador, the limited access to education in the past decades has affected the development of its people in a negative way. The result of this is the inequality in which the Salvadoran society is living now.

The SLS has supported the educational projects that have international collaboration. The schools have been providing education in the primary and secondary levels to children and youth, with the integral teaching basis being the Christian beliefs of the SLS.

The Salvadoran Lutheran University was created to be a long term provider of educational services. The goal of the University is to educate and bring quality professionals into society. These professionals will have a depth in the social consciousness of the social issues facing El Salvador.

The entire process will lead to social change as it shows the deep connection between ideology and practice. Education is the single most important element that is needed to transform an inequitable society to an equitable society.

The empowerment of people through education involves the active participation of the SLS in the current and future directions of the country. The SLS is actively participating in this process as part of their contribution to the social change.

Alternatively, the Sister parish and the community development partnership is in charge of managing the communication and partnerships with the international agencies and churches who support a variety of diaconal projects. In addition, the sister parish programme has different functions such as facilitating, consulting, assessing, assisting pastors and their partnerships, management and promotion of projects and financial deals. The sister parishes have been supporting different diaconal projects in the development areas such as the Lutheran schools and the university.

The community development cooperation has been functioning for a long time as a part of the SLS. Support is received from international partnerships with agencies, NGOs and sister parishes from United States and Europe. Economic contributions come through the development projects within the communities of El Salvador. One example is the financial support of a sister parish in the construction of a parish house in a rural area.

The projects within the SLS encompass different areas of development such as infrastructure in the communities (houses, schools, and churches), supplying clean and drinkable water, health and ecological campaigns, and general education. The maintenance of these projects depends on the church and its international partner. It also depends on the motivation of the work and the positive relationships between the partners and the community itself. Within the communities, the problems and situations are different. Thus, community work plays an important role in organising, deciding and resolving community issues.

## IELCH

The development work of the IELCH is focused on three areas:

- Education
- Sustainable development
- Community development

The IELCH as well as SLS both share the idea of tackling poverty with education at the earliest ages possible. In Chile, four of nine congregations have educational projects, with the goal being to service poor communities in different areas in the country.

The kindergartens and schools have made an important contribution to the communities in Chile. Access to primary education in Chile is not limited to those with substantial financial resources but is available to all people regardless of income.

The development work of IELCH strives to provide education in a more accessible way, especially to people in the poor communities. Although the education provided is of the highest quality, the high cost often makes it unattainable for poor families. Many parents strive simply to maintain the bare necessities of life and are often faced with the problem of not having enough money to pay for their children's education.

Being a single parent complicates the situation even more in that they need to work to provide for their families but do not earn enough money to pay for day care or formal schooling. The congregations and communities are aware of this situation and want to help the people from these communities through the diaconal work.

The poverty rate in Chile is very low compared with the other Latin American countries. Additional development in the society is needed and education is the way the IELCH has chosen to tackle poverty.

The educational projects receive support from local and national government, which allows the cooperation between church and government for the greater good. The support from governmental institutions gives stability to the educational projects. Thus, these projects are planned for long term success.

The community development works along with the educational projects. The community development work is oriented towards those poor communities most in need of popular education, general human rights and culture.

The IELCH conducts its work through community centers, where the target groups are children, youth and women. The needs of each community are different, so the plans of the community centers are also different. Most of the community centers provide workshops about drug prevention, HIV/Aids, human rights, family violence and assistance for children with cancer.

The community development projects are different than educational projects in that they follow specific priorities and plans and are often less economically stable than the educational projects.

The diaconal work needs the support of local and international institutions to continue functioning. The plans are designed for short periods, expecting the programmes to continue when a new manner of support is obtained.

The IELCH has worked along side of the congregations for the management of the projects. The independency of the congregations makes the process more complex as it has a different administration and different resources, yet at the same time it has more over the implementation of them (structure of the church).

In conclusion, the differences in the development work are:

- The educational projects are in different levels of education, the IELCH works with the kindergarten and preliminary school, and SLS works with preliminary schools and University.
- Every congregation in the IELCH has its own project management. In the SLS, the project management is done by the church main administration.
- The independency of projects from the IELCH is evident; it appears to be almost completely opposite. In the SLS, there is no independency of projects as all are unified and controlled by the structure of the church.
- Sustainable projects in Chile have economic cooperation with the local and national government, which gives them the ability to function long term. In El Salvador, sustainable projects do not have any local or national governmental cooperation, which makes them more dependent on their international partnerships to keep the projects functioning. Therefore, there is not enough stability to make long term plans, but still the SLS is attempting to gain the cooperation and support of the local authorities.
- The development projects in Chile are under the direction of the community for organization. While supplying basic needs is still a priority, the work is more orientated to popular education and civil and human rights. The SLS has focused its priorities on fighting against poverty and the lack of being able to meet basic needs. Community organization is beginning to be seen but there is still the need for professionalism in the community development work, which is currently lacking.

The similarities in the development work are:

- The development work in IELCH and SLS both have assisting the poor as a priority. It includes the impoverished, the excluded, the mistreated, and those who are in need of help.

- Education is a priority for both churches and both want to contribute to the development of the communities and the people as a whole. Formal and popular education is used as a mode of bringing about social change in each country.
- The community development work from both churches emphasises the transformation of gender relations through popular education.
- International partnerships are important in the organisation of projects and processes.
- Both churches are interested in serving and sustaining communities on a long term basis.
- The diaconal ideology matches its practice of developmental work actions.

## 7.2 Humanitarian work

The Lutheran World Federation humanitarian work is based on providing immediate help and assistance to refugees, displaced persons and people most affected by natural disasters, epidemics and conflicts. The campaigns against violence are a part of humanitarian work. For example, violence against women is part of the intervention in human rights promotion by the diaconal work. Humanitarian work also takes into consideration the training of communities in the case of emergencies and disasters. This is called risk management.

Additionally, the LWF division of health also has different campaigns to prevent epidemics such as HIV/Aids as well as other diseases. Health is also an important part of humanitarian work by assisting the most vulnerable communities in different countries.

The humanitarian work of the Lutheran church around the world commonly focuses their efforts on the same issues within their own countries.

## SLS

In El Salvador, the SLS has three priority areas of humanitarian work:

- Emergency aid and risk management
- General health assistance
- HIV/Aids prevention work

Emergency aid and risk management were the first actions taken by the diaconal work in the Lutheran church in El Salvador.

The diaconal work started in the 80's with victims of the civil war, and the people living in high-risk areas affected by the civil war (I2 ES)

The Lutheran church in El Salvador focused its diaconal work to the areas mentioned earlier in the church structure, which they felt were the most important to help people. Although political and social circumstances influenced the diaconal work and its organisation, the church had to respond to the situation by prioritising the necessities of people.

All of these humanitarian work areas had connections with each other because of the emergency work they had provided during the civil war.

The emergency aid consisted of passing out food and offering health care to different areas and communities in the country (I2 ES).

During the civil war, the church provided programs that offered shelter, assistance to displaced families and pastoral guidance to those in need. These actions have strongly linked war refugees and displaced people to the church. When the war ended, the church played an important role in the post war recovery effort of the nation by running different resources to help the suffering and vulnerable people in El Salvador.

Providing attainable health care has been an important goal of the social service because it is consistently lacking during times of conflict and natural disasters. Providing health

assistance is a fundamental part of humanitarian work, which later became stronger objective by the diaconal work of the church.

El Salvador has suffered the strike of several earthquakes and hurricanes that affected mostly the poor people in the country. The vulnerability of the poor communities puts them at greater risk for the lost of material resources and human life. The coordination between health assistance, emergency aid and risk management is present when natural disasters occur in El Salvador. The SLS has placed priority on providing health assistance, emergency aid and risk management, thus being prepared for any catastrophic situation that may arise.

The purpose of risk management is to provide training to people at risk communities so that they can always be prepared to take emergency action as necessary. Thus, people feel a sense of empowerment to become involved and to help within their own community.

Gaining international cooperation has been an important element in risk management work when natural disasters occur. For example, the LWF and other organisations have supported El Salvador economically and technically in emergency situations.

Humanitarian work was the original basis of diaconal work in the Lutheran church in El Salvador. The church has changed its focus and development of diaconal work as the needs of the country has changed. This keeps its diaconal work appropriate and precise to best serve the people.

At present, the church provides many resources for the prevention of HIV/Aids in El Salvador. The campaigns and preventive work against HIV/Aids are given more often in poor communities as part of the popular education and development projects. In addition, the SLS advocates for the inclusion of the excluded. The people living with the HIV/Aids are suffering social exclusion in El Salvador.

It is a critical time in El Salvador for those affected with HIV/AIDS. It is almost impossible for those infected to receive medical assistance in the Salvadoran public

health system. Those infected are also denied access to education. There is a great need to educate the Salvadoran population on the facts about HIV/AIDS so that their exclusion from society will cease. The SLS cooperates with the campaigns against exclusion of people infected with HIV/Aids in El Salvador. For this reason, the preventive work is an important part of the humanitarian and diaconal action.

## IELCH

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Chile also takes action with humanitarian work in the communities. In the IELCH, humanitarian work is concentrated in the areas of:

- Domestic violence shelters
- Support centers for children with Cancer

Domestic violence shelters are projects run by different communities in IELCH. These projects give help and support to families suffering from domestic violence. In the shelters, most of the users are mothers and children looking for a safe place to live when have been attacked physically or psychologically. The domestic violence shelters have social workers and psychologists as part of the staff.

The aim of the shelters is to provide psychological and social assistance as well as counselling to victims suffering emotional distress. They also provide counselling to resolve the conflicts between couples, parents and children. This type of advocacy is especially important in cases where violence has been excessive against any person. The IELCH has considered that domestic violence is ever present in the Chilean society, and more frequently seen in the less educated regions.

These projects have the support of governmental institutions with the intention being to strengthen communities, increase child protection and the protection of civil rights and the gender relations.

The IELCH through its humanitarian work supports centers for children with cancer, although the social assistance provided for these children is basic in nature. The church in Chile works with communities to raise awareness of the social situations of people

living with cancer and especially of children living with cancer. Within the communities, the church promotes the importance of taking care of people in bad health such as those children with cancer. It is important that sick people receive health assistance and education, just as healthy individuals do.

Social exclusion is present in Chile because they do not provide access to healthcare or education for those that are ill and living with cancer. As part of its humanitarian support to the society in general, the IELCH contributes greatly to different social campaigns of the country. The inclusion of the excluded is one of the objectives of its humanitarian work.

In conclusion, the similarities of the humanitarian work of the IELCH and SLS are:

- The SLS and the IELCH are both working for the inclusion of the excluded in both countries. Their humanitarian work is giving assistance to those who are in need of basic support.
- The SLS and IELCH have a close working relationship with the communities and their problems.
- Health assistance is an important aspect of the humanitarian work of both churches.
- The contributions to the humanitarian campaigns of both countries are present in the communities of both churches.
- Both churches want to bring education to the general population in an effort to change the negative attitude towards the excluded, such as the people with HIV/Aids, cancer, and all type of illness. The work against exclusion is a very important work for both the IELCH and SLS.
- Through research, it is clear that the IELCH and SLS are following the fundamentals of the humanitarian work of the LWF, such as resisting violence, combating against HIV/Aids and practicing risk management.

The differences in their humanitarian works are:

- The SLS humanitarian work focuses on emergency aid and risk management, which deals with vulnerable people in the cases of natural disasters and conflicts. Emergency aid and risk management are of course more in need when disaster occurs, but the preparation for such disasters continues daily. The SLS works closely with international organisations and the LWF to provide assistance when emergencies occur.
- The SLS also regularly provides health assistance and HIV/Aids preventive work to the communities.
- The SLS does not have an alliance with governmental institutions as does the IELCH. Currently the SLS receives minimal cooperation with the government.
- The IELCH's humanitarian work focuses on domestic violence and assistance to children with cancer. Domestic violence is a priority of the community work done in Chile. Domestic violence shelters are provided in collaboration with the local and national government

The way they go about their humanitarian work is very different but the focus is the same, providing for the poor communities and those in need. For example, the emergency aid and risk management cannot be compared with domestic violence shelters. The humanitarian work in each country has different priorities for helping people.

In El Salvador, it seems that natural disasters such as hurricanes and earthquakes are happening more frequently. In Chile, the problems have less to do with natural disasters and more about basic social assistance in the communities. The social situations in both countries are different, therefore the humanitarian work in the IELCH and SLS are different.

### 7.3 Social-Political positions

The main socio-political actions by the LWF are concerned on the defence of human rights and justice as:

- Advocacy
- Promoting peace, reconciliation and general human rights
- Transforming gender relations

The three socio-political actions by the LWF respond to the ideology of Diaconia discussed earlier in the chapter 6.

Advocacy entails efforts to influence decision-makers to use their power in a different way and to change power structures and relationships (Lutheran World Federation-International Advocacy).

The advocacy is the action coming from the ideology of Diaconia, presents in the defence of human rights in different parts of the world.

Advocacy takes place at many levels and in many contexts, from the grassroots to national and regional efforts to international and global forums (Lutheran World Federation-International Advocacy).

The LWF plays the role of a non-governmental organisation, which has a close relationship with the United Nations in different forums. The LWF is also member of the ecumenical advocacy alliance that coordinates the advocacy action by churches and organisations dealing with different global problems such as market trade and HIV/Aids.

The objective of the LWF is to influence the decision-makers to produce social change, which is desperately needed in different parts of the world. The LWF is promoting a dialog of peace and reconciliation in the political-military conflicts in the world. The people in need are those suffering from political- military conflicts and lack of health

assistance. The LWF is in a constant campaign against all types of violence, from campaigns against domestic violence in the local communities, to the global campaigns needed to reduce military spending in favour of increasing funding for social issues.

In addition, gender relations need to be transformed to a more equal level with men. Women are still suffering from exclusion and oppression in different parts of the world and that needs to be changed. Social change not only focuses on the economical situation but with peace between people, equal opportunities for women and men, and the defence of life with dignity.

Latin American Lutheran churches members of the LWF, have many differences in their social-political actions. Some Latin American Churches are focusing on community development work while others are working strongly in the areas of advocacy or education.

## SLS

In the case of the SLS in El Salvador, the social- political positions are:

- Advocacy towards local and governmental authorities
- Active participation in a wide social and ecumenical network
- Close contact to the media

Throughout the history of El Salvador, violations of human rights have always been present. Military dictatorships, massacres to indigenes and peasants, oppression and discrimination have been abuses carried out by radical conservative governments in El Salvador. El Salvador suffered a difficult period of violence before and during the 12 year civil war. During this time, all types of human rights violations existed by authoritarian governments and powerful military groups.

Since its foundation, the SLS has contributed to the advocacy towards the local and national governments. This process contributed to defining the identity of what is now the prophetic action of the SLS. The unjust power relations that exist in El Salvador

have given rise to the SLS and its determination to promote social change. Therefore, the actions taken by the SLS were strongly visible through the diaconal work. The response to the injustices has been the organisation of the civil society, which has demanded a social change.

As mentioned prior in the church structure, the diaconal ministry has one extremely important function, the human rights department.

The department of human rights, it gave support to persecuted families during the civil war helping to safeguard their lives taken them in and out of the country. In the same way, people received pastoral accompaniment in those difficult situations of persecution. (I2 ES)

The SLS gave assistance to the victims of the armed conflict in refugee camps, in health clinics, popular education and in the promotion of human rights in El Salvador. The attention of the human rights department also directed its help to the political prisoners in El Salvador.

The advocacy work of the SLS in the process of peace in El Salvador derived from the participation and cooperation of a wide social and ecumenical network. (Exposure Bishop Medardo Gomez 2007). After the conflict, this advocacy became an essential part in the social-political actions of the SLS.

According to the Salvadoran Lutheran Bishop Medardo Gomez (I1ES), the evaluation proved that the diaconal work was the contribution of the SLS to the Salvadoran peace accords, which were signed January 16th, 1992.

In addition to the assistance given, the SLS has a close working relationship with the media in El Salvador. As part of the social and ecumenical network, media has played an important role educating the people. The media is an important instrument of public opinion; it makes an impact simply by openly showing the living situations of the people. The SLS has denounced publicly the injustice situations in El Salvador that still occur today. The SLS sends a message every week reflecting the situation of the country, and its impact on the people.

All of the socio-political actions taken by the SLS are forming the framework of diaconal work; functioning as a team in their respective work areas for the benefit of the poor people. With this fact being known, the SLS is actively working for social change in the lives of people, communities and the country. The SLS is locally and internationally recognised for the important role it played during the civil war in El Salvador. (Jahnel 2005.)

## IELCH

The Evangelical Lutheran church in Chile has focused its social-political actions on:

- Advocacy towards local and Governmental authorities
- Cooperation with local and national Government

After the military coup in Chile and the new military regime took power over the country, the church suffered a division.

Human rights in Chile during the military regime were severely violated and the IELCH during this crucial time, advocated for those persecuted and executed by the military regime. The advocacy on behalf of the political refugees was important to save human lives. The IELCH played an important role safeguarding people and defending lives against the military dictatorship. The IELCH used their international alliance with Germany and other countries to denounce the injustices occurring in the country. At the same time, the IELCH provided help to refugees by assisting them to leave the country. (Frenz 2006.)

After the democracy returned to rule Chile in 1990, the economical, social and political situation changed with the arrival of a centre-left party to the government in the country. These situations shaped the direction of the diaconal work in the IELCH and brought a close working relationship with the actual government in social assistance situations. The IELCH works closely with the local and national government of Chile, being an active partner in the community work projects.

In addition to this, the IELCH has a positive influence on the decision-making efforts to benefit of the poor populations in Chile (IICH). The IELCH has also gained the cooperation of the NGOs supporting the diaconal projects in the social assistance areas. The IELCH advocated for the needs of people by using their good relationship with local and national governments.

In conclusion, the similarities of the social-political positions are:

- The SLS and the IELCH in their social-political actions act as advocates with the local and national governments for the defence of human rights and denunciation of injustice.
- They both performed diaconal work with political refugees and poor people who have suffered persecution and oppression during the socio-political crisis in each country.
- The SLS and the IELCH are a part of a social and ecumenical network that works to promote social change movements in each country.
- They can share a testimony of the important role the churches play in the reconciliation and peace process that offer help to people in difficult situations.
- During political crisis, the SLS and the IELCH supported communities in their material and spiritual needs.
- The SLS and the IELCH follow the LWF in the socio-political action used to create social change in the world. Therefore, the ideologies match with the practice.

On the other hand, the differences in the socio-political positions are:

- The SLS has a close working relationship with the media to make the advocating more efficient in El Salvador.
- The IELCH has a relationship with the local and national government of Chile in different areas of social assistance. The SLS does not have any alliances with the national government at present.
- The SLS has not caused any division inside the church from its social–political position or understanding, as in the case of the IELCH. On the contrary, the SLS has been strengthening its identity by placing their priorities for assistance on the poorer populations.

#### 7.4 Economic resources

The Lutheran churches of the world share economical support that makes it possible for the poorer Churches to also function. The economical situation of Lutheran churches varies by country. The stability of the Lutheran churches in Scandinavia, central Europe and the United States depends on the economical support given by the church members or by the taxes paid to the national state, which provide funding to churches.

In Latin America, the Catholic Church has been present since the colonisation of the continent, which gives it a strong influence over the cultures and traditions of the countries. In most cases, the situation of Latin American Lutheran churches is different compared to their “founder churches”.

The Lutheran churches in Latin America are part of the minority religious groups. The number of members varies, and it is difficult to compare its membership to different churches. For example, the Lutheran church in Brazil has more than 700,000 members, and the Lutheran Church in El Salvador has about 12,000 members. (Lutheran World Federation, Member churches.) The memberships of each Lutheran church are different, so then are the economical resources available to conduct social work with the people.

As the LWF functions as an umbrella organisation to the world, its role in the economical sense is to be the provider and supporter of different diaconal projects and programs.

These are some functions of the LWF regarding economical help:

- Approving programmes and authorising fund raising
- Distribution of funds
- Monitoring and reporting systems
- Contribution to the support programs

The LWF supports different programs in the world by raising funds for different causes and distributing them. The contributions of the LWF and other international organisations in development work are important in training capacities, administration and monitoring of the processes.

Because of membership size, the smaller churches of the SLS and IELCH have difficulty sustaining themselves financially. Because of this situation, many Lutheran churches have become receivers from the international partnerships with other Lutheran churches in the world.

## SLS

In El Salvador, the SLS has received economical support from international aid, which now works together in close partnerships with the Lutheran churches from United States and Europe.

The SLS has economical support from different actions:

- Development cooperation with international organisations
- International partnership with other Synods or churches
- Donations

The development alliances with international organisations have been present through the economical support for development projects. Educational and community

development projects do not have enough economical sustainability to keep them functioning independently.

The SLS and its members are primarily from the poor social classes in El Salvador, this it means that members do not have enough money to support the church's basic financial needs. Therefore, SLS has played the role of provider and supporter to the poor people of El Salvador. The SLS has based its diaconal work on the development of international relationships with other Lutheran churches through financial donations.

The SLS has given assistance to communities during various emergencies such as natural disasters and the civil war conflict with the economical support of the international partnerships.

At the present, the SLS is still reliant on international help, which it conducts through the Sister parish program mentioned in the development work subchapter. The economic situation of the SLS has become more difficult in recent years. The actual economic situation of El Salvador has not benefited the lowest social classes, which has made the poor poorer and the rich richer. The struggle to become economically independent or self-sustainable has been a long and hard process for the SLS. The frequency of emergency situations has not given the SLS the ability to prioritise their long-term plans.

The different partnerships support different projects in the communities where there is normally a close relationship from parish to parish. In other cases, the partnerships with Lutheran synods are at the level of institution-to-institution. Economical support is given by providing professional medical assistance in poor communities. On another level, it can be providing economical support for the teachers' salaries, and educational materials in the Lutheran schools.

The partnership agreements show how the Lutheran churches that have better economical provisions help their brothers and sisters living in disadvantage around the world. Donations are the signs of solidarity and love that are provided to help the work of the church. Donations are not funds that are generally received on an ongoing basis.

In most cases, they are spontaneous and vary in amounts from small donations to large donations.

Diaconal work is not completely efficient as it is bound by the limits of its economical resources. The SLS works with the vulnerable and poor people, contributing to social change in different areas. The economical resources are not enough to do diaconal work. The SLS struggles to keep diaconal work active by attempting to find solutions to economical issues and strengthening the social economical network. The possibilities of creating a close relationship with the new government of El Salvador are in the future plans of the SLS.

## IELCH

The IELCH has economical resources coming from:

- Development Cooperation with governmental institutions, local and international organisations
- International partnership with other synods and churches
- Rent of church properties

In regards to economical resources, Chile is one of the countries in Latin America with the most economical stability and social assistance made available to its population. The government of Chile is investing a lot of funds into the social welfare of the country and it has different institutions providing support for the benefit of the population. The IELCH has an established cooperation with the government of Chile through its various institutions. The social system in Chile is trying to provide better education, social protection, a better quality of life and more employment and economical growth.

The participation of the civil society is beneficial in resolving the local problems in Chile and in empowering the people in the communities to take part in the developmental process of the country. In the IELCH, the independency of the congregations in their diaconal work makes the methods of finding economical support more diverse. For example, congregations can obtain economical support from the

government and NGOs. The IELCH has also established the cooperation of local and international organisations supporting their different community projects.

The IELCH has partnerships with a few Lutheran churches in the United States and Germany, which also support economical and human resources in Chile. In the same case as the SLS, the donations are also signs of solidarity and love that are given to help the works of the church.

The economic situation of the IELCH is very diverse because of its structure, the independency of its congregations and the responsibility that is assumed by every local community and project. Economical resources are in constant negotiations with the partners to continue the diaconal work. This provides more stability to the long-term plans of the IELCH.

Another economical resource that the IELCH has is income from rental properties. The congregations rent their different buildings for social events such as weddings, graduations and different celebrations. It is an innovative method used to provide economical sustainability to the IELCH.

In conclusion the similarities in the economic resources are:

- The SLS and the IELCH have essential partnerships with other Lutheran churches in the world that allow for diaconal works in the communities to continue.
- The SLS and the IELCH depend upon international financial support for diaconal works to continue in other countries.
- The economic resources available are not enough to provide for long-term planning in the diaconal work in SLS and IELCH.

- The diaconal work in SLS and IELCH may eventually cease due to the lack of economic resources. This will result in result in smaller contributions to the development of the country.

The differences in the economical resources are:

- The IELCH has close cooperation with the national government of Chile in diaconal work.
- The IELCH is working beside governmental institutions in different diaconal projects in the communities; the support is given economically and technically.
- The SLS has no agreements with the national government. There are plans to make a new relationship with the new government of El Salvador, but nothing has happened yet.
- The diaconal projects are functioning in most of the cases as NGO work, and not from the work of the IELCH. The independency of the congregations and its diaconal work gives freedom to decide the methods of funding for the IELCH.
- According to the structure of the SLS, all the administration and functions of the diaconal work is guided and controlled by the authorities of the church.
- The method of renting properties by the IELCH contributes to the economical sustainability of the institution.

## 8 CONCLUSIONS

In this chapter, I will present the results obtained from the comparisons in the research. The main conclusions are the answers to the research questions, opinions of further studies, ethics of the research, the limitations and professional development.

### 8.1 Main results and conclusions

In the presented results, I decided to use the comparison table with different colours. The colours in the table represent different meanings and demonstrate the differences and similarities between the diaconal work in SLS and IELCH.

The differences are shown in red in the comparison table below present the clear differences in the comparison themes.

The similarities are marked in yellow in the comparison table below and again show the clear similarities in the comparison themes.

In some compared themes, it was not possible to measure the combination of the differences and similarities of the diaconal work. These themes are indicated in green.

### COMPARISON TABLE

	<b>LWF</b>	<b>SLS</b>	<b>IELCH</b>
<b>the structure of the church (model)</b>		The Episcopal Democratic system-has a Diaconal Ministry divided in different work areas	The Participative Democratic system- has a leader Diaconal Action Commission
<b>Ideology</b>	-Serving people in need - It leads to social change -Social justice and peace - Transforms unjust power relations	-Serving people in need -It leads to social change -Social justice and peace - Transforms unjust power relations	-Serving people in need - It leads to social change -Social justice and peace - Transforms unjust power relations

<b>Development work</b>	- Poverty -Creating sustainable communities -Combating HIV/Aids -Transforming gender relations	-Education -Sister parish Churches/Community development cooperation	-Education -Sustainable development -Community development
<b>Humanitarian work</b>	-Combating HIV/Aids -Natural catastrophes Support - Violence	-Emergency aid and Risk Management -Health assistance -Combating HIV/Aids -Campaigns	-Domestic violence shelters -Support centers for children with Cancer -Campaigns
<b>Social-Political position</b>	-Advocacy - Promoting peace, reconciliation and human rights -Transforming gender relations	-Advocacy towards local & Government authorities -wide social & ecumenical network -close contact to the media	-Advocacy towards local & Governmental authorities -Cooperation with local & national Government and NGOs
<b>Economical Resources</b>	-Approving programs and authorizing fund raising -distribution of funds -Monitoring and reporting systems -contribution to support programs	- Development cooperation with International organisations -International partnership with other synods or churches -Donations	-Development Cooperation with Governmental institutions, local and international organisations -International partnership with other synods or churches -Rent of church properties

The conclusions of the comparison were:

1. The differences represented in red show that the structures of the SLS and IELCH are very different. The structures played an important role at the time of organising the diaconal work. According to the chapter 6, this difference answered the research question of how diaconal work organised in SLS and IELCH.

Because of its German background and the influence of Chilean pastors since its inception, the IELCH has structured itself by using the democratic participatory model. This model allows for the legal independency of its congregations and allows each

congregation to be responsible for their own actions and management of their present and future plans.

SLS uses the Episcopal democratic model and structure. This came about as a result of the direct influence of the American Lutheran missionaries and the Central American protestant pastors. The church is considered to be one unifying umbrella, under which congregations work together under the same order, decision and action. The facts showed a clear difference between the structures (models) of the IELCH and SLS.

2. The similarities represented within the yellow boxes show the themes of Ideology and their social-political positions. The research answers the question of how the theory of Diaconia from the LWF matches with the practice of the churches.

The green boxes represent the differences of the themes of development work and humanitarian work. According to the chapter 6 and 7, these were the arguments needed to answer the research question.

According to the research, there were no differences in the ideology. Each group shared the same values and ideals towards the diaconal work in the respective countries. This demonstrated the connection that exists between them as part of the Lutheran Communion in the world.

The development work in IELCH and SLS both give priority the poor, the excluded, the mistreated and those who are need of help and encourage formal education as an intervention to bring about social change in each country. The community development work of both churches strives to emphasise the transformation of gender relations through popular education.

The SLS and the IELCH are both working for the inclusion of the excluded populations in both countries. The humanitarian work focuses on giving assistance to those who are in need of basic support. The churches in Chile and El Salvador work closely and have positive relations with the communities and their problems.

The humanitarian actions of SLS and IELCH work diligently to bring education and awareness to the communities in an attempt to change the prevailing negative attitudes that exist towards the excluded, such as people with HIV/Aids, cancer, and all types of violence. The facts presented and discussed have confirmed that the theory is applied to the practices of the SLS and IELCH.

3. The differences represented within the red boxes above, show the theme of economical resources and answer the research question of how the economic situations of the churches affect their diaconal work. According to the chapter 7, these were the arguments needed to answer the research question. Differing points of view were found in this comparison.

The economical resources available are not enough to support the long-term plan of diaconal work in SLS and IELCH. The diaconal work (projects) in SLS and IELCH are similar in the lack of economic resources, which as result contributes less to the development of the country.

The IELCH works closely with the national government of Chile in their diaconal work. This cooperation gives economic stability to the diaconal projects within the communities. The SLS is not working closely with the national government of El Salvador. Because of this, the economic instability was more evident. The SLS and the IELCH have formed essential partnerships with other Lutheran churches around the world to assist with their diaconal work but sadly these partnerships decrease annually.

The differences proved more than the similarities in the theme of economic resources. The economical cooperation and support obtained in the SLS and IELCH was from different levels, which are not comparable. For example the cooperation with the government of Chile and IELCH, could not compared with the SLS and its international partnerships.

The SLS and IELCH showed the need for economic resources to keep their diaconal work functioning and consequently the projects in the communities. It resulted in the projects not being able to continue because of the lack of economical resources.

4. The similarities represented within the yellow boxes above, show the themes of their social-political positions and answered the research question of what are the results of the diaconal work. According to the chapter 7, this argument was needed to answer the research question.

The advocacy work of the SLS in the peace process in El Salvador was with the participation and cooperation of a wide social and ecumenical network. (Exposure Bishop Medardo Gomez Exposure 2007). According to the Salvadoran Lutheran Bishop Medardo Gomez, the evaluation proves the essential contributions of diaconal work the SLS made in the Salvadoran peace accords, which were signed January 16th, 1992.

In addition to the fiscal assistance given, the SLS is in close contact with the media in El Salvador. The media has played an essential role in the education the public regarding the social and ecumenical contributions of the SLS. The SLS is actively working for positive social change within the communities and throughout the country. The SLS was recognized both locally and internationally for the important role they played in El Salvador. (Jahnel 2005.)

Human rights violations in Chile during the military regime were excessive and thousands of citizens were abused. During this crucial time, the IELCH along with its members and pastors were strong advocates for those persecuted and executed by the military regime. The advocacy provided on behalf of the political refugees was an important factor in saving many human lives. The IELCH played an important role in safeguarding people and defending lives against the military dictatorship. (Frenz 2006.)

At the present, the IELCH works closely with the local and national governments of Chile, being an active partner in the community work projects.

Although this thesis speaks only of the results of diaconal works done in Chile and El Salvador, the good works of the diaconal process encompass many more countries and provide countless good works to those in need around the world.

It is my hope that this research can be used by the Salvadoran Lutheran synod (SLS), and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Chile (IELCH) as an instrument to gain understanding of the different views of conducting the diaconal work. Hopefully the Lutheran churches across the world can see this as an example of how to developing stronger and more productive communities through the diaconal works of the church.

In the process of this research, I did not neglect to realize the importance and impact the diaconal works had upon the beneficiaries of these good works. It would have been interesting to know the impact and result of the diaconal work from the beneficiaries' point of view. In addition, it would have been interesting to follow up on a couple of cases in the communities I visited in Chile and El Salvador to see the social changes in progress.

According to Richardson (1990), he emphasizes that writing itself creates value, and that language is not simply reflection of a reality out there, but serves to create a particular view of reality.

In this research, I described the situations, facts, actions and ideas of two Lutheran churches and their leaders. I requested the permission of the authorities in both the Salvadoran Lutheran synod and the Evangelical Lutheran church in Chile to conduct interviews and access the documents that expressed most closely their positions and opinions about the diaconal work. In this research, I had the permission to mention the names of the public personalities such as Bishop Medardo Gomez and the Bishop Gloria Rojas.

The Lutheran churches agreed to allow me to use their information in the making of this research tool for the diaconal work. Having access to the projects in the communities provided me with an important understanding of the veracity of the diaconal work. Research does not hide any information.

The research was limited in that it studied only the diaconal works in two different countries. My research of El Salvador was greatly hindered by distance and made the

research process very difficult. Communication through e-mail and computer assisted interviews were not highly effective.

The nonexistence of official documents from the Salvadoran Lutheran synod nearly caused me to change my topic of investigation. Nevertheless, my personal knowledge about the Salvadoran Lutheran synod contributed to the continuation of this research.

The research focused on the diaconal work in the Lutheran churches in Chile and El Salvador, it was limited to understanding only the working methods from the organisations and not the opinions and thoughts of the beneficiaries.

The completion of the research was more challenging than expected. The topic was interesting on a personal level and my interest in the topic was greatly increased during my practical placement in Chile in autumn 2008. My experience of seeing the actions and works first hand gave me a deeper understanding of the challenges faced by these churches.

This is the first time that I have completed such extensive research. The experience of using face-to-face interviews was much easier for me than the use of computer-assisted interview techniques, such as e-mail. I feel that I need much more knowledge of this type of interview process and additional practice for this method to be more effective for me. Should I do additional research, I will consider travelling to the locations being researched to gather appropriate information as sound information is the basis of all good research.

This research gave me more understanding of the diaconal work within the Lutheran churches in Latin America. It was interesting to see, understand and feel the situations of people in their communities.

The understanding of community development work, and humanitarian work was important for my professional development as a social worker because diaconal work is essentially social work on a broad scale. Diaconal work includes: empowering, counselling, assisting, protecting, and educating communities.

The concepts of Diaconia and Community development have an interesting relation in actions, ideals, goals and processes. The community development plan has been applied by different social organisations in order to produce a social change in communities and countries. The Diaconal work is applying elements of community development work, as mentioned above, but the most important element is the production of social change in the communities and countries. The difference is that Diaconia has its fundamentals in the Christian faith and values.

The connection between the concepts of Diaconia and Community development is the common goal of changing unjust power relations, social injustices, reducing poverty, exclusion and discrimination and the reducing the inequality in our world.

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## Unpublished documents

Bishop Medardo Gomez Exposure “United in Christ, We Construct Hope and Peace”  
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Convenio Comision accion Diaconica y IELCH 2004 [agreement between the diaconal  
action and IELCH 2004]

Criterios de la IELCH referente a proyectos de accion Diaconina [Criterion of IELCH  
referent the projects of the diaconal action]

Diaconia SLS 2009

Organigrama IELCH 2008 [Organisational chart of the IELCH 2008]

Organigrama SLS 2009 [organisational chart of the SLS 2008]

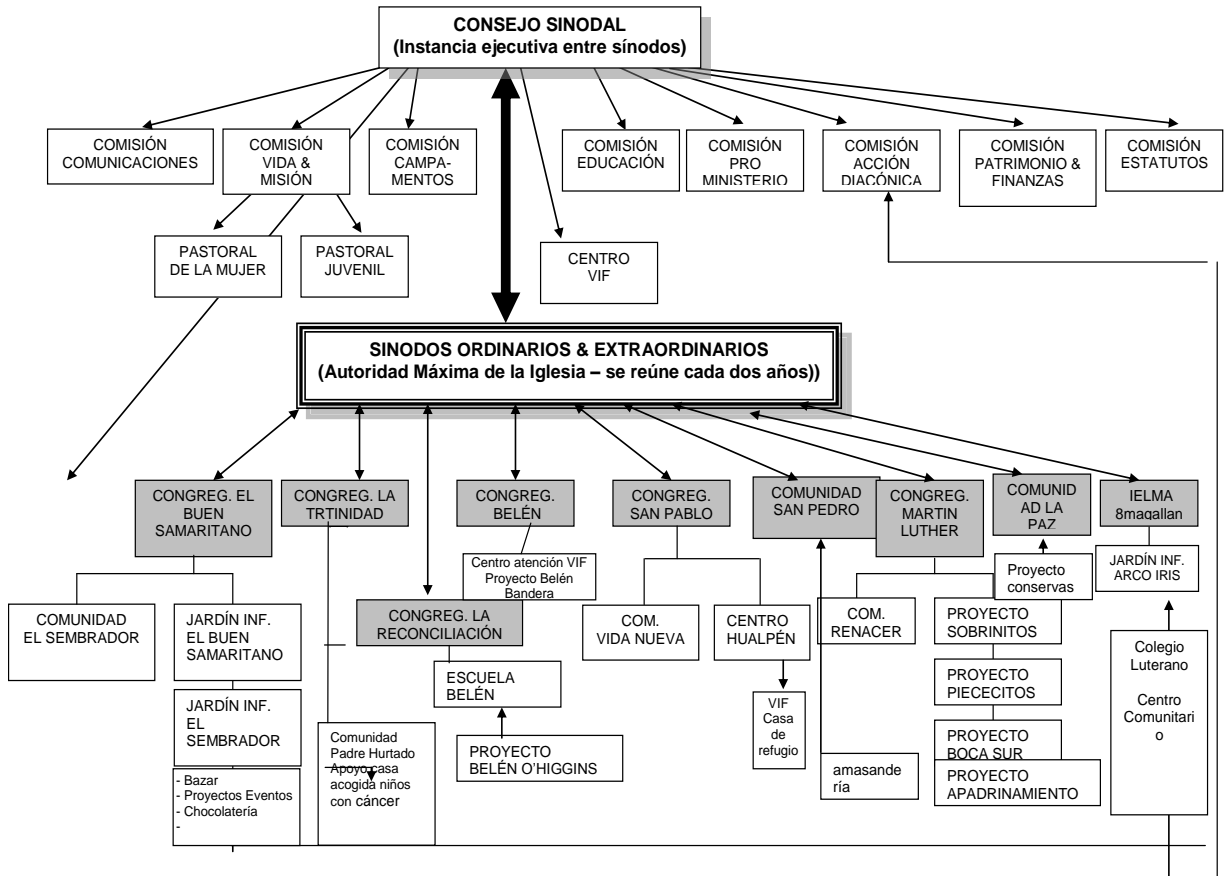
Politica social de la IELCH 2008 [Socio Political position of the IELCH 2008]

Proceso de Mutirao 2006 [Process of Mutirao 2006]

APPENDICES

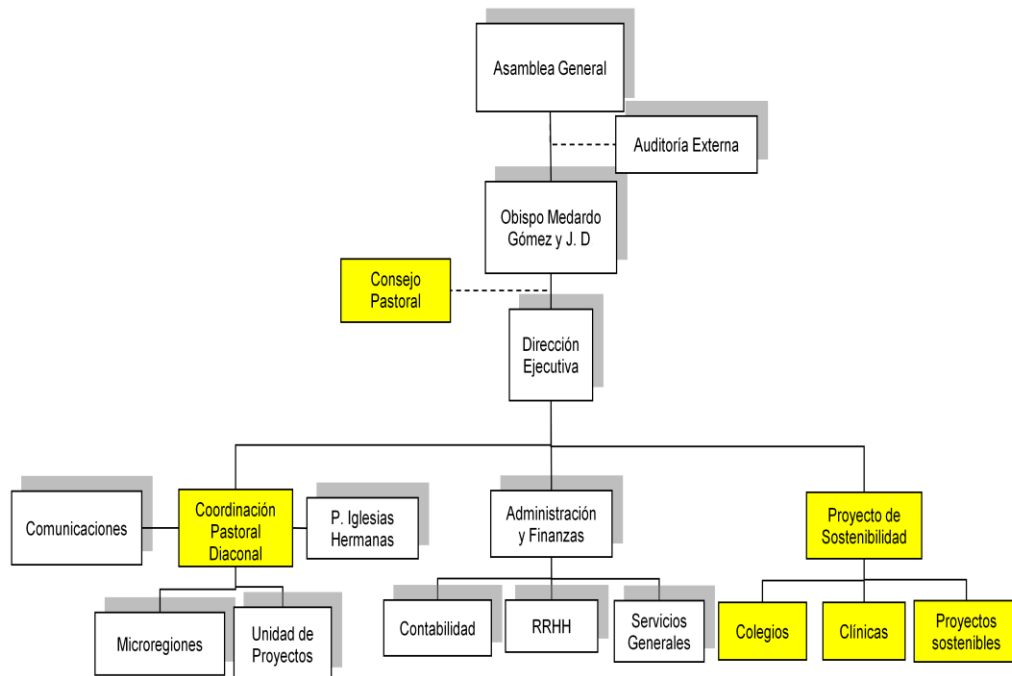
APPENDIX 1

**ORGANIGRAMA DE LA IGLESIA EVANGÉLICA LUTERANA EN CHILE**



## APPENDIX 2

## ORGANIGRAMA SLS



## APPENDIX 3

### Interview

#### Guia en español – Entrevista sobre Diaconia

- La base de la diaconia / trabajo social en la iglesia de Chile : si hay documento(s) sobre el estado de la diaconía en la Iglesia
- La visión, en qué dirección la iglesia quiere desarrollar la diaconía, hay planes para punto.
- Que se ha hecho, que proyectos, Auto-manejo /fortalecimiento o desarrollo de las aptitudes o capacidades /edificar la capacidad, etc. Si hay.
- Como está organizada la diaconía, recursos – económicos, humanos, etc.
- Con quienes hay cooperación y coordinación: sociedad, organizaciones, nacional-internacional, relaciones con la comunidad Luterana en LA y el Mundo.
- cual ha sido el impacto del trabajo diaconico, si hay evaluaciones, estudios
- tres preguntas: si se hizo lo que se prometió? que cambios produjo el trabajo? y si se hizo cosa adecuadas? (porque hubieran podido hacer otras cosas)