

“Daily Bread” and HIV & AIDS

Video reflection on the theme of the LWF Eleventh Assembly

20-27 July 2010 | Stuttgart, Germany

The theme of the Eleventh Assembly, “Give us this day our daily bread,” in relation to people living with HIV, is closely connected with things associated with bread. Bread in the sense of “communion,” bread in the sense of “sharing.” Seen in this way, we would say that the churches in Latin America are looking for ways of giving this bread, this bread of communion, this bread in which we meet one another and share a sense of inclusion in the Eucharist; not merely a sense, but the right to inclusion and justice and the dignity of individuals.

In Chile we are working on a law drafted by the government to include gender and sexual orientation in the constitution. Gender and sexual orientation are issues which the *government* is introducing into the Chilean constitution. However, the Evangelical churches are campaigning to keep reference to gender and sexual orientation out of the constitution. The Evangelical Lutheran Church is militating with other Protestant organizations for the law to be passed because we believe in inclusion and not in the discrimination of any person in our churches. In this sense, we also believe that the HIV and AIDS pandemic is a call to our churches to broaden our space for communion, communion at the large table of the Lord.

It is in fact physical bread, because we it is bread seen as the whole process of inclusion of persons living with HIV, of struggling to get the governments to provide them with the necessary medication, of struggling for them to be included in our congregations, of struggling for our own transformation as a church, as a congregation, starting with those who have always been excluded. In this way, our churches in Chile, and others that share this view in some way or other, are trying to accompany, share and celebrate with them.

As far as the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Chile is concerned, four congregations have created a space for receiving persons with different sexual orientations and for persons living with HIV. In these two ways, we believe that the church is taking steps so that people experience daily bread not only as physical bread, but also nourishment in the hope, faith and trust that there is a God who includes us and who calls every one of us.

Rev. Dr. Gloria ROJAS VARGAS
President, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Chile