

A Joint Future



Stockholm, October 12, 2009

News Bulletin about “A Joint Future”

Heartily welcome to the first news bulletin about “A Joint Future”! A news bulletin which will be widely spread within the Baptist Union, the Methodist Church and the Mission Covenant Church of Sweden. This news bulletin will also be published on the website www.gemensamframtid.se And it will be sent to congregation boards, office staff, sister organizations, sister churches, etc.

1.

The process of creating a new joint Church has now reached a very active phase. The project organization presents itself in the following way:

A **Steering Committee (SC)** conducts the process. The SC presidency is on a rotating basis. The SC is made up the chairmen/vice chairmen of the three Churches, the President (Moderator)/Bishop of the Churches and the president of equmenia. The SC is responsible for the conducting of the process, of its anchorage within the boards, for the contact with the Church of Sweden, etc.

A **Theological Workshop (RUT)** works with the theological reflection and has a long term responsibility for the renewal which is expected to characterize the new Church. **Chairman: PA Sahlberg.**

Furthermore there are five working parties:

A. “**Congregation - Church/community**” works with questions about Church order, congregation order, children, youth, baptism, membership, ministry/special services, supervision, etc. **Chairman: Ola Bojestig.**

B. “**Structure**” – a working party specializing on statutes, leadership, districts, office organization and localization, annual conferences, name, etc. **Chairman: Anders Fläckman.**

C. “**Relations and networks**” – working with relations with equmenia, SKR, SMR (SMC), Diakonia, development assistance, international relations, ecumenical networks, etc. **Chairman: Gunilla Ikponmwosa.**

D. “**Property and participation**” – this working party specializes on issues concerning the Theological School of Stockholm, the folk high schools, Sändaren/Sändebudet, Diakonia, etc. **Chairman: Lennart Johansson.**

E. “**Real estate and management**”. Here questions concerning real estate property of the Churches, management of capital resources, administration of funds, etc. **Chairman: Eva-Britt Blomé.**

Apart from that, a **Project Steering Group** is engaged in issues of coordination, in giving special service to the working parties, in communication and issues of a practical kind. This project steering group is made up of Ann-Sofie Lasell, with special responsibility for contacts with the working parties, Olle Alkholm, in charge of contacts with the Theological Workshop (RUT), Anders Svensson, in charge of highlighting what is already common ground for the three Churches and of initiating new joint projects. Gunilla Hjelmåker is in charge of Communications and Göran Bondesson contributes with his experiences from the eumecnia process.

Do not hesitate to contact the project steering group if you would like to a visit to your congregation within the framework of the talks about "A Joint Future"!

2.

The time-table for the work is tight. Already on October 31st, the working parties will hand in their first intermediate report and the final report will be handed in on January 15th, 2010. After that, the reports will be treated by the boards of the different Churches and a document will be formulated on the basis of these reports, which will be presented at the respective conferences in May, and which will after that be sent out to the congregations for comment. This procedure will be finished in October 2010, and will hopefully lead up to the taking of a decision at the Conferences of 2011. The starting point for the new Church would then be either on the first Sunday of Advent in 2011 or on January 1st, 2012.

3.

Two out of the four planned regional days of talks were held on October 3rd, in Gothenburg and in Sundsvall. Many people attended the meeting and issues linked to the areas taken up by the working parties were discussed. One such issue was the one about membership. In Sundsvall, one lady said:

The concept of membership has it not come out of date? Where I live many people see us as "their Church", but they do not want to become members, the issue is not even interesting. And for me is not important whether we call ourselves members or participants – the most important thing is that we are part of the body of Christ.

Regard this as a challenge; take it up in discussions in your congregation!

In the whole process the participation of the congregations is indispensable. Through the website www.gemensamframtid.se you can remain updated and influence our common future!

Take part in the stimulation of important talks in your congregation – but above all, pray for "A Joint Future"!

Greetings

from the Project Steering Group