

*Propositions for
consultation*

STUDY AND
REACTION IN
RELATION TO
A NEW JOINT
CHURCH

Metodistkyrkan
i Sverige



Svenska
Missionskyrkan

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PROPOSITIONS FOR CONSULTATION, STUDY AND REACTION IN RELATION TO A NEW JOINT CHURCH

Vision for a joint future

A Church challenged by Jesus and the age in which we are living

- *with depth and identity in Jesus Christ*
- *open and warm*
- *in fellowship and diversity*
- *through prayer and service for the world*

The history of the Baptist Union of Sweden, the United Methodist Church in Sweden and the Mission Covenant Church of Sweden has many common features. One of these is that they were all once church planting movements with a great focus on leading people, living in new places and new contexts, to a faith in Jesus Christ and on assembling them in a living Christian fellowship.

Together with other churches and denominations in Sweden, these three denominations have already stated before, and they state it again, in relation to the Joint Future Church (called the JFC from here on), that

- The spreading of the Kingdom of God is our joint task
- We want to plant new churches in Sweden
- We want the new congregations to be relevant to their respective contexts
- We accept experiments, diversity and new forms of expression in new congregations in a new age

We are now looking ahead towards what lies before us. Now congregations in the whole country are challenged and offered the chance of renewal, inspiration and finding new ways for our joint task of being the people of God. We are striving to find the authenticity of our mission as disciples of Jesus. We have a heritage to administer and a task which constantly leads us onwards on new paths together with Jesus.

Propositions for consultation, study and reaction by the congregations

Together we can now be inspired for renewal and a joint accepting of responsibility in our task of serving. In 2012 we may have a new joint church with the same inspiring task and the same Lord and with the new force which is made possible by our enlarged fellowship.

The Church will have a new name, but that is not all, it renews its task and its focus – to serve Christ and the world. Now the time has come to think in a new way, to go deeper and to share the joy that lies in the fact that God wants to use us.

The study material presented here consists of three parts: **Material for study and consideration** (A Common Basis and suggestions for Statutes of the JFC and its congregations), **Questions** and **Information**. This document could be ordered in a paper version in Swedish from info@gummessons.se, telephone number +46-8-674 07 90, and can be downloaded from www.gemensamframtid.se/remiss.

The reactions in relation to these propositions will reflect the process which will lead us into the future. Well ahead of the respective Church Conferences of 2011 the final proposition will be presented and at the Conferences resolutions will be passed in relation to our joint future.

The congregations and other instances which will receive this document are free to present their answers according to their own wish, but we encourage everybody to pay attention to the questions to be found at the end of the first part of this material.

When answering and reacting on these propositions, please indicate as clearly as possible the passages or the clauses on which you have an opinion. We hope that many hundreds of answers will be sent in, in relation to this important matter, and we appreciate if your replies are concise.

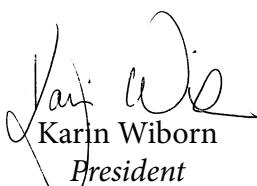
We hope for a deepened reflection on our task and we pray for God's blessing on this work. We are all important – together we seek the will of God.

We need to have your answers and reactions by October 15th 2010. You are welcome to send your answers via e-mail to info@gemensamframtid.se.



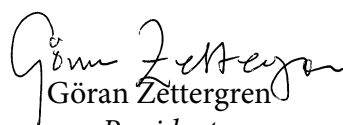
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President

Mission Covenant Church

The present study material is based on texts drawn up by five working parties which have been at work from September 2009 to January 2010. The three Church Boards have decided to send this document but they have not taken a stand in relation to separate wordings in the texts. The members of the Project Group for a Joint Future are responsible for the texts of the document. The Project Group is made up of: Olle Alkholm, Ann-Sofie Lasell, Anders Svensson, Gunilla Hjelmåker and Göran Bondesson.

The working name JFC has been used throughout the text. JFC = Joint Future Church.

A COMMON BASIS

Introduction

The Church is the Body of Christ and the fellowship of the holy, confessing Jesus Christ as Lord. This fellowship is expressed concretely in the world created by God, loved by Him and saved by Him. Under the direction of the Holy Spirit the Church is formed through the preaching of the Word and the administration of the sacraments inviting all people to become disciples of Jesus.

The Church is visible in the world through the small group, the local congregation, in the Denomination as a community of congregations and in the ecumenical Church – locally and universally. These visible parts of the Church constitute the Body of Christ in the world and they are organically linked together. The parts are mutually dependant on each other and through the fact that they belong together each part can accomplish its task to bring people to know Jesus Christ, to believe in Him and to love Him.

The JFC is deeply rooted in three denominational traditions in Sweden: The Baptist Union of Sweden (hereafter BUS), The United Methodist Church in Sweden (hereafter UMCS) and The Mission Covenant Church of Sweden (hereafter M CCS). The forming of the JFC is to be seen as an expression of the fact that unity has a superior value in relation to dividing lines. For the sake of the Gospel previous opinions are being reviewed with a wish to fulfill the prayer of Jesus Christ about the Church being one so that the world may believe.

The Foundation of Faith

God is one, holy and different from everything that a human being knows through his/her senses. God Himself has chosen to reveal Himself in the world and to become perceptible as the threefold: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Since God has revealed Himself in this way, all human beings may have a personal relationship with Him.

The three denominations have their roots in revival movements and renewal movements after the Reformation. Faith has its foundation in Christ, and the apostolic and Nicene creeds witness to this faith. The Church is built on the basis of the apostles with Christ as a corner stone. The history of the BUS, the UMCS and the M CCS and their spirituality constitute the foundation for the contribution of the JFC to Swedish Christianity and community life.

The diversity of congregations and people making up the JFC is to be seen as an asset in the mission of the Church to live the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Thereby the JFC is a sign of God's presence in the world and His love for it.

Mutual Dependence

The Church and the Congregation exist on different levels. One level cannot exist without the other; they live in a mutual dependence on each other. This mutual dependence is related to solidarity, love for the weakest and the importance of joint supervision.

The task of the Church is to enhance the development of the local congregations, to exercise the part of God's mission which presupposes collaboration, education/training and consecration. It provides space for a spiritual community stretching beyond the local one. One of the tasks of the Church is to exercise a mutual function of supervision. The local congregations supervise the joint organization and those who have been given the confidence to exercise supervision of the congregations and the ordained ministries, watch over them.

The Task

The task of the Church and the Congregation is to make people disciples of Jesus Christ and thereby change the world.

In its ministry of the Word, and through the life and ministry of its congregations, the JFC invites people to a fellowship in diversity with Jesus Christ in the centre. The common task, by order of Jesus Christ, is to make visible the Kingdom of God and to spread it in Sweden and in the rest of the world. The fellowship lies in the Gospel and a faith which challenges the world, on a local and a universal level, which is present in the middle of society in order to meet the needs of people and to be a prophetic voice. In the congregation, the Word is preached and the sacraments are administered.

The JFC has a special responsibility for the training for ministry and for the coordination of mission work.

The missionary task is a universal one; it is not reserved for a few. In the world-wide community of the JFC, resources and needs are shared. In the meeting with other Churches within mission work, one's own understanding of the richness of the Gospel and its diversity is enriched. It is in the nature of the Church to live in mission work. Through mission work the Church becomes evident and visible and active, in the same way as God Himself was evident, visible and active in Jesus Christ.

Children and young people have an important place in the JFC on the basis of the Jesus' words about the Kingdom of God belonging to the children.

The Word

The Bible is the Word of God. Everyone who meets the Word is called upon, under the direction of the Holy Spirit, and together with others, to interpret it and understand it. In Jesus Christ the whole divine fullness is revealed and so the Word of God meets us most clearly in Jesus Christ. The Word is the foundation for personal faith and for the fellowship of the congregation. The Word is preached in the worship services of the congregations and through their lives.

Baptism and Holy Communion

Baptism and Holy Communion are holy acts, sacraments, which have been instituted and proposed by Jesus Christ himself. They are sign of the new covenant of which Christ is the mediator through his life, his death and his resurrection. They transfer the grace of God and his restoration, the presence of Christ and they open for community and fellowship between people transcending all frontiers.

The sacraments are administered by the Church and the Congregation under the responsibility of the ordained pastor. When there is no pastor present another person may be chosen and set apart through prayer and the laying on of hands.

Baptism is a holy act with water in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. It is carried out in faith of Jesus Christ and is a sign of the remittance of sins and the union with Jesus Christ and the Church of God, locally and universally. Faith, baptism and membership in a congregation are linked together. Baptism is one as to its contents, but it can be carried out in various ways. It can be done on a person's own confession or according to the confession of the Church and the parents in accordance with the local application of the congregation in question. Baptism in one congregation is valid in the whole Church. In the congregation the possibility of a confirmation of one's baptism and a renewal of one's baptism is offered.

The Holy Communion is the holy meal instituted by Jesus Christ in which he gives himself to everyone who wants to accept him. Through the bread and the wine, gifts of Creation, the Holy Spirit gives us the possibility to be part of the life coming from the crucified and risen Jesus Christ. This means that the Holy Communion is a sacrament, a holy act, in which earthly gifts together with the institutional words of Christ, through the Holy Spirit, transmit the body and the blood of Christ. Jesus Christ is present in the Holy Communion.

The Congregation

The congregation is a fellowship of people confessing Jesus Christ as Lord. The congregation is locally anchored and offers public worship services on a regular basis in which the Word is preached and the sacraments are distributed.

The Congregation is made up of its members expecting God to use them in ministry for the world. The Congregation is the body of Christ in which what is human and what is divine meet. It is God's work, accepted by people who shape it into a local fellowship.

The Congregation is independent and responsible for its own activity, organization and administration. At the same time, every congregation accepting the contents of the Common Basis is a part of the JFC and thus a part of mutual dependence and mutual supervision.

Membership and Affiliated Membership

The congregation welcomes as a member every one who is baptised and who confesses his/her faith in Jesus Christ. Faith and baptism are the paths into the congregation in which the individual member, according to his/her own possibilities, assumes responsibility for the congregation and contributes to the life and ministry of the congregation in the world.

The congregation welcomes as an affiliated member a person who has been baptised as a child, blessed as a child or who according to his/her own wish desires to be member of the fellowship and care of the congregation. The affiliated member is part of the fellowship in accordance with the confession of the congregation of faith in Jesus Christ and is given time to grow into membership on his/her own confession. Therefore affiliated members should regularly be invited to membership.

Membership and affiliated membership in a congregation are valid in the whole church.

Congregation Conference (meeting)

In the Congregation Conference the Congregation seeks the will of God and forms its ministry in the place where it works. The Congregation Conference is the highest decision-making

body of the congregation and adopts its statutes in accordance with the Common Basis and elects the board of the congregation and its Head of the congregation (pastor). The board leads the congregation together with the Head of the congregation (pastor).

Head of the Congregation (Pastor)

The Head of the Congregation (pastor) is part of the leadership of the Congregation. He/she is ordained by the JFC or by another denomination and confirmed by the JFC. Where there is no pastor, another person is elected as Head of the congregation who will receive support from an ordained pastor via the JFC. The Head of the Congregation is a shepherd for the congregation made up of its members and affiliated members and he/she leads the congregation in worship services in which the Word is preached and the sacraments are administered. The ministry of the Head of the Congregation comprises teaching, encouragement, support of members and affiliated members serving in the congregation and in the society. To be Head of the Congregation is a ministry of unity which implies that he/she together with the congregation represents the mutual supervision in relation to the JFC.

Church Conference

The JFC congregations are mutually dependent and so they are responsible for the unity represented by the JFC. This unity is expressed among other things in the fact that the congregations elect delegates for the yearly Church Conference, which is the highest decision-making body of the JFC.

The Church Conference elects the Church Board which is the highest decision-making body in between the Church Conferences.

The Church Conference passes resolutions in relation to the Common Basis and the Statutes of the JFC and the normal statutes of the congregations. The Church Conference ordains deacons and pastors for ministry and consecrates people for special ministries. The Church Conference welcomes new congregations and confirms the resignation of others. The Church Conference decides about ecumenical agreements.

The Direction of the Church

The Church is directed by a Church Board, a Church Leader, and a number of assistant Church leaders who are responsible for the carrying out of the task of the Church according to the decisions arrived at by the Church Conference and in accordance with the contents of the Common Basis and the Statutes. The Church Leader/s/ and the Church Board are responsible for the supervision of the whole Church. A regional division of the country may support congregations and collaborators.

Church Leader/s/

The Church Leader and the Assistant Church Leader are elected by the Church Conference and exercise a ministry of unity. In the ministry of unity lies a special responsibility for the mutual dependence of the congregations through care for and supervision of congregations and collaborators within the JFC. The Church Leader directs the ordination ceremonies of the Church.

Ministry

The ministry of everyone

Every person who believes and who is part of the congregation, whether a member or an affiliated member, contributes to the ministry of the Kingdom of God and to making people know Jesus Christ, believe in him and love him. This is the ministry of everyone, the universal priesthood. No member or affiliated member is solely responsible but the ministry is shaped together in the congregation and the Church. The ministry of everyone is an expression of how God uses every individual part of the Body of Christ according to its possibilities.

Consecration for special ministries

For example missionaries and church musicians can be consecrated for special ministries, both on a national and on an international level, on suggestion by the Church Board.

Ordained ministries

In order to strengthen the mission work of the Church and the congregations, deacons and pastors are called and ordained for ministry. Every deacon and pastor is tested individually by the congregation and by the direction of the Church and is ordained at the Church Conference. This takes place at a worship service during the Church Conference through the giving of promises, prayer and laying on of hands.

The ordained ministry belongs to the Church and is lived out in active service within the congregation through diaconal or pastoral tasks but does not necessarily entail an employment.

The ordained persons are a resource of the Church and the Church Conference and constitute a body led by the Church leader.

Deacons

The special calling of the Deacons lies in the responsibility of proclaiming the Word in action and in service through care, talks and teaching. A deacon gives a promise of secrecy in relation to matters having been confided to him/her in counseling or matters concerning people's personal relationships.

Pastors

The special calling of a pastor lies in the responsibility as a shepherd to lead and build up the congregation by preaching the Word and administering the sacraments. The pastor gives a promise of secrecy for matters having been confided to him/her in confession or in personal counseling.

SUGGESTED STATUTES FOR THE JFC

§1 JFC

1. The JFC is a Christian denomination, an alliance of congregations having adopted the Common Basis. The JFC is created by congregations within the united Methodist Church in Sweden, formerly the Methodist Episcopal Church in Sweden, the Baptist Union of Sweden and the Mission Covenant Church of Sweden.
2. The Church Conference has established the Common Basis for the JFC which lays down the main lines for the foundation of faith. The Common Basis also indicates the basis of the task, the congregation, membership and affiliated membership, Church leadership, the Church and the ministry.

§2 CONGREGATIONS IN THE JFC

1. Admission to the JFC can be granted to a congregation on demand. A demand sent to the Church Board should be made in written form and should contain all data in relation to the adoption of the contents of the Common Basis for the JFC and the statutes of the congregation, the number of members, the name of the Head of the Congregation and its Chair person. The resolution concerning admission is passed by the Church Conference according to the recommendations of the Church Board.
2. A congregation can leave the JFC on its own decision or on a decision concerning the termination of the congregation. The Church Board will be informed of such a decision and it will be reported by the Board to the Church Conference.
3. If the congregation changes its conditions for membership by obvious deviation from the contents of the Common Basis for the JFC in its local appendixes and statutes, the congregation in question can be cut off from the JFC via a resolution passed by the Church Conference on suggestion by the Church Board.

§3 INTERNATIONAL AND ECUMENICAL RELATIONS

1. The JFC is a church with links to three church traditions in Sweden, the BUS, the UMCS and the MCCS.
2. The JFC is member of European Baptist Federation (EBF), Baptist World Alliance (BWA), World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC) and World Methodist

Council (WMC). Through special agreements the JFC is an Affiliated United Church to The United Methodist Church (UMC).

3. The JFC is member of the Christian Council of Sweden and the World Council of Churches.
4. The Church Board can decide in relation to membership of other international and ecumenical organizations and can make agreements with international partner churches.

§4 BODIES OF THE JFC

The following bodies should be found in the JFC:

- a) Church Conference
- b) Church Board
- c) Church Leader/s/
- d) Committee of Responsibility
- e) Auditors
- f) Election Committee

§5 CHURCH CONFERENCE

1. The Church Conference is the JFC highest decision-making body and is made up of elected delegates from the JFC congregations.
2. The Church Conference decides about the JFC common work and gives recommendations to the congregations. The Church Conference is held yearly at the place and time made known by the Church Board.
3. Summons is sent out at the latest six months before the Church Conference. All documents should be sent out to the congregations at the latest one month before the beginning of the Church Conference. Documents should contain the Activity Reports of the Board and the Church Leader, the annual financial report of the Board, the proposals of the Board to the Conference, the proposals of the election committee and possible petitions and the statement by the Board made in relation to those petitions.
4. The Church Board can summon to an extraordinary Church Conference. Summons to such a Conference will be sent out at least two months before the Conference. At an extraordinary Church Conference, only such matters may be treated that have been mentioned in the summons.

§6 DELEGATES AND ELECTIONS AT THE CHURCH CONFERENCE

1. A congregation with up to 199 members has the right to send two delegates to the Church Conference. For every set of members starting a new set of one hundred members the congregation has the right to send one more delegate. However no congregation may send more than seven delegates.
2. The deliberations of the Church Conference are open and all members of the JFC

congregations have the right to speak, except on matters where the Conference has decided differently. Apart from to the delegates, the right to speak and to make propositions at the Conference is also given to the members of the Board, the Church Leader, the Auditors, the Board members of *equumenia* and those registered by the Board as presenting a matter. The right to speak is also given to a representative of a Church with which the JFC has a partnership agreement. Only delegates present at the Conference have the right to vote.

3. The Church Conference passes resolutions in an open voting except on matters concerning which the Church Conference decides differently. The election of delegates for the Church Board should be carried out through secret vote.
4. The Church Conference passes resolutions with simple majority, except on matters concerning which the statutes state differently. Where the voting is even, the opinion represented by the Chair person prevails.

§7 PETITIONS AND QUESTIONS AT THE CHURCH CONFERENCE

1. The right to send in petitions to the Church Conference for treatment belongs to:
 - a) a congregation which is member of the JFC
 - b) a member of a congregation which is member of the JFC
 - c) the annual meeting and the Board of *equumenia*.
2. A motion should be written as a proposition with a brief and clear motivation. It must be sent in to the Church Board at least four months before the Conference. The Board makes a statement on all petitions received.
3. A congregation within the JFC can hand in a simple question to the Church Leader at the latest two weeks before the Church Conference, to be taken up and answered briefly at the Conference.

§8 MATTERS OF THE CHURCH CONFERENCE

At a regular Church Conference the following matters should be taken up and treated:

1. Election of officials at the Church Conference
 - a) Chair person and one or two vice chair persons,
 - b) one or several secretaries,
 - c) two persons to check the minutes of the Conference alongside with the Chair,
 - d) vote counters.
2. The question whether the Church Conference has been announced in accordance with the statutes
3. Activity report and annual financial report for the previous year of activity.
4. The report of the auditors.
5. Establishment of balance sheet and profit and loss account.
6. Decision concerning freedom from liability for the Church Board and the Church Leader in relation to the previous year of activity.
7. Report from *equumenia*.

8. Establishing of activity plan and budget for the coming financial year.
9. Establishing of audit instructions for the coming financial year.
10. Election of members of the Church Board.
11. Election of the chair person of the Church Board, elected among the members of the Church Board.
12. Election of auditors and substitutes.
13. Election of members, chair person and vice chair person for the election committee.
14. Election of committee of responsibility.
15. Matters presented by the Church Board for treatment.
16. Petitions sent in.

§9 CHURCH BOARD

1. The Church Board is the highest decision-making body in between Church Conferences. The Church Board consists of ten members, elected for a period of two years. Every year half of the number of members is elected.
2. Together with the Church Leader, the Church Board leads, plans and organizes the JFC work in accordance with decisions arrived at by the Church Conference. In addition to what is said in these statutes, the Church Board itself organizes its work and decides about the organization needed for the carrying out of the work.
3. The Church Board has the right of decision in relation to the JFC real estate property and has the right to carry out its work through its own companies or companies owned together, foundations and associations of which it is responsible.

§10 TASKS OF THE CHURCH BOARD

Among the tasks of the Church Board are the following ones:

- a) to execute the decisions of the Church Conference and account for decisions arrived at before the Church Conference.
- b) to prepare the election of Church Leader and assistant Church Leader and other matters for resolutions to be passed by the Church Conference.
- c) to be responsible for, to lead and follow up work, organization, staff and financial matters on the basis of the Common Basis between Church Conferences.
- d) to establish a register of the JFC congregations and statistics concerning the number of members, affiliated members, church documents and conditions of importance for the follow up of the whole activity of the Church.
- e) to be responsible for the recruiting and training of ordained pastors and other ministries.
- f) to support the congregations in their responsibility as employers, to support the congregations at the recruiting of new collaborators and to follow up matters concerning the situation of collaborators and congregations.
- g) to draw up instructions for the Committee of responsibility.

- h) to decide on matters in relation to affiliation to different bodies of partnership.
- i) to consult with the Board of *equmenia* concerning the development of child and youth work and in relation to propositions and election of Church Leader.

§11 WORKING FORMS OF THE CHURCH BOARD

1. The Church Board assembles:
 - a) on demand of its Chair person
 - b) on demand of the Church Leader
 - c) on demand of at least three of its members.
2. The Church Leader is present at the deliberations and has the right to have his/her special opinion taken down in the minutes. At the meetings of the Church Boards the chair person of *equmenia* or a substitute is summoned.
3. The Church Board can come to a decision when at least seven of its members are present. Decisions are arrived at through open vote. If a member so demands, secret vote will take place. Where the voting is even, the opinion represented by the chair person will prevail.

§12 THE CHURCH LEADER

1. The Church Leader, elected by the Church Conference on proposition by the Church Board, is the spiritual leader of the JFC and its principal representative.
2. The Church Leader together with the Church Board plans and leads the JFC work in accordance with the decisions of the Church Conference. The special tasks of the Church Leader are described in the Common Basis of the JFC.

§13 ELECTION OF CHURCH LEADER

1. The Church Leader is elected for a period of six years and can be reelected for two more periods, each of them lasting for three years.
2. Eligible as Church Leader are pastors within the JFC.
3. Before a Church Leader election the JFC congregations may hand in suggestions to the Church Board at least six months before the Conference at which the election will take place.
4. The Church Board decides about the substitute for the Church Leader and when necessary appoints a temporary Church Leader up to the next regular Church Conference.

§14 ASSISTANT CHURCH LEADERS

1. A person ordained for ministry within the JFC can be appointed assistant church leader responsible for the regional presence of the church. The number of assistant church leaders and their sphere of responsibility and terms of references will be established by the Church Board,
2. Assistant church leaders are appointed by the Church Conference on suggestion by the Church Board after consultation with the congregations concerned.

3. Assistant church leaders are appointed for a period of six years and can be appointed for two more periods, each one of three years.

§15 REGIONAL PRESENCE

1. The JFC is divided into regions. The regional presence is developed together with the congregations and *equmenia*.
2. The extension of the regions is established by the Church Conference on proposition from the Church Board.
3. In every region, the JFC is represented by an assistant Church Leader.

§16 COMMITTEE OF RESPONSIBILITY

1. The committee of responsibility is in charge of the supervision of the JFC in relation to the ordained ministry.
2. Instructions for the committee of responsibility are decided by the Church Conference on proposition from the Church Board.
3. Decisions of the committee of responsibility can be appealed against to the Church Leader within a month from an announced decision.
4. On proposition from the Church Board the Church Conference appoints five persons as members of the committee of responsibility.

§17 COMMITTEE OF ELECTION

1. The Committee of Election prepares the election of officials at the Church Conference as well as election of the Board and auditors. The Committee of Election can also propose candidates for other elections where the order has not been regulated in another way.
2. The Committee of Election establishes the ballot for the Church Conference with those candidates for the Church Board recommended by the Committee. Regard should be taken to the diversity of the Church. The ballot should have two extra names.
3. Any JFC congregation has the right to propose a member for the Church Board. The proposition should be handed in, in written form, to the chair person of the Committee of Election at the latest four months before the Church Conference. Those making the proposition should ascertain beforehand that the person suggested as a candidate is available. The Committee of Election may present its own candidates. The proposition of the Committee of Election should be sent out to the congregations at least a month before the beginning of the Church Conference.
4. The Committee of Election is made up of nine members, each of them elected for a period of three years. Every year three new members are elected. A member cannot be re-elected immediately after having finished a mandate period.

§18 ACCOUNTS AND AUDIT

1. The financial year of the JFC runs from January 1st to December 31st.

2. Every financial year, the Church Board and the Church Leader establish an activity report for the previous financial year and an annual report containing a financial report, profit and loss account and balance sheet.
3. The annual report, the accounts and the administration should be verified by three auditors appointed by the Church Conference. Among the auditors at least one must be a chartered accountant. For the auditors two substitutes should be appointed, one of whom a chartered accountant.
4. According to the audit instructions, the auditors should follow up the activity and the financial administration consecutively. After their verification they hand in the audit report to the Conference and give suggestions in relation to the establishment of the profit and loss account and the balance sheet and concerning freedom of liability for the Church Board.

§19 SIGNING FOR THE COMPANY

Authorized to sign for the JFC are the following persons:

The Church Leader and the person/s/ designated by the Church Board – always two persons together.

§20 EQU MENIA

The JFC work among children and young people has been handed over to *equmenia*. *equmenia* is closely linked to the JFC. *equmenia* has its own statutes adopted by the *equmenia* General Assembly after consultation with the Church Board.

§21 CHANGES IN THE COMMON BASIS FOR THE JFC AND THE JFC STATUTES

1. Changes in the Common Basis of the JFC and the JFC Statutes can take place via a decision arrived at by the Church Conference. Suggestions for change together with the statement thereupon made by the Church Board in relation to a proposition made by another instance than the Board itself should be sent to the Congregations at least two months before the Conference.
2. When it comes to the change of the name of the Church, the Common Basis for the JFC and the JFC Statutes, a resolution must be passed with 2/3 majority by the delegates present at the vote apart from the clause concerning the termination of the Church which requires a unanimous decision at two consecutive regular Church Conferences.

§22 TERMINATION OF THE JFC

1. For a termination of the JFC a coherent decision arrived at, at two consecutive regular Church Conferences is required. Such a resolution must be passed with a 2/3 majority at the vote by those delegates present.
2. A decision about termination should also comprise the issue of settlement of the JFC property and staff.

PROPOSED NORMAL STATUTES FOR THE CONGREGATION

Congregation X has adopted the following statutes in order to regulate the outer forms and organization of the congregation. If they so wish, a congregation may also adopt a local order.

§1 X CONGREGATION

1. Congregation x is part of the JFC and has accepted the contents of the Common Basis of the JFC. According to its conditions and possibilities, the Congregation assumes the responsibility for the decisions arrived at by the Church Conference. The congregation and its activity are open to all persons wanting to take part.
2. The congregation is active with A (name of place) in Y (name of municipality) as its basis.
3. The bodies and ministries of the congregation are as follows:
 - a) Congregation conference/meeting
 - b) Congregation board
 - c) Head of the congregation

§2 MEMBERSHIP

1. The congregation welcomes as a member everyone who is baptized and confesses his faith in Jesus Christ.
A member from another JFC congregation is welcomed on a transfer basis. Members can also be welcomed from a congregation belonging to another denomination.
2. A current register should be kept of the members of the congregation. Through notification to the head of the congregation a member may leave the congregation.
3. The congregation can exclude a member who manifestly divides or damages the fellowship.

§3 AFFILIATION

1. Affiliated members of the congregation are persons who want to express their association with the congregation and are part of the care given by the congregation in accordance with the Common Basis of the JFC. Children who are baptized or blessed in the congregation are also registered as affiliated members. An affiliated member from another JFC congregation is welcomed on his/her own request.
2. These persons should be registered by the congregation. An affiliated member can, by notifying the head of the congregation, be crossed out from the register.
3. An affiliated member should be offered membership of the congregation, at the latest at the age of 18.

§4 CONGREGATION CONFERENCE/MEETING

1. The Congregation Conference is the highest decision-making body of the congregation. The deliberations of the Congregation Conference are public with right of free speech for everyone present. In case this is particularly called for, the congregation board may however summon a Congregation Conference solely for members and affiliated members.
2. The Congregation Conference is summoned by the board or when at least 1/10th of the members of the congregation so demand. The meeting is held on the day decided upon by the board, however not later than two months after the demand has been made.
3. Propositions for treatment by the Congregation Conference can be handed in to the chair of the board at the latest three weeks before the meeting.
4. Summons to the Congregation Conference is sent out at least four weeks beforehand, in at least two of the following ways: announcement during a worship service, in a congregation publication, through a newspaper announcement or in written form to all the members and affiliated members.

§5 VOTING PROCEDURE AT A CONGREGATION CONFERENCE

1. All present members have one vote each. A member has not the right to vote by proxy.
2. The employed staff of the congregation have no right to vote concerning issues of employment conditions or similar when a situation of challenge may occur, and they are not eligible for the board or the election committee. If they are members of the congregation they have the right to vote in relation to other issues and are eligible as delegates to the partner organizations of the congregation and to bodies of the Church.
3. The Congregation Conference passes resolutions with simple majority. If the issue is related to the appointing of a pastor or a deacon, the change of statutes or the termination of the congregation, purchasing or selling of real estate property or any other major financial commitment, the resolution is passed with 2/3rd majority. Where the voting is even, the opinion represented by the chair of the conference will prevail. Resolutions are passed in open vote as long as the statutes do not indicate otherwise or if the meeting decides otherwise for a special issue.

§6 ANNUAL CONFERENCE/MEETING

1. One Congregation Conference per year is an Annual Conference which must be held at the latest on....., on a day decided upon by the board.
2. Propositions for treatment by the Annual Conference can be handed in to the chair of the board at the latest four weeks before the meeting.
3. Summons to the Annual Conference shall be sent out at least eight weeks before the holding of the Annual Conference. Complete documents should be available for the members at least two weeks fore the Conference.

§7 MATTERS OF THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE

At the Annual Conference the followings matters will be taken up:

1. Election of officials for the Annual Conference
 - a) chair person and one or two vice chair persons
 - b) one or more secretaries
 - c) two persons to check the minutes together with the chair
 - d) vote counters
2. Question whether the summons of the meeting has been made according to the statutes
3. Activity report and financial report of the previous year of activity
4. Auditors' report
5. Establishment of account of profit and loss and balance sheet
6. Question of freedom of liability of the board
7. Report from the youth section of the JFC in.....
8. Decision in relation to budget and activity plan for the coming year of activity
9. Election of the board
10. Election of the chair of the board who will be elected among the members of the board
11. Election of vice Head of congregation
12. Election of auditors and substitutes for them
13. Election of election committee
14. Election of other ministries and tasks within the different branches of activity of the congregation
15. Election of delegates for the Church Conference of the JFC
16. Election of other delegates
17. Announcement of the elections made by the Youth section of the JFC in relation to board and leaders
18. Propositions by the board

19. Petitions sent in
20. Other questions having been referred to the meeting

§8 BOARD

1. Together with the Head of the Congregation, the Board leads the activity of the congregation and is responsible for it in accordance with the contents of the Common Basis for the JFC – alternatively a local congregation order - and the decisions arrived at by the Congregation Conference.
2. The board is made up members. The chair person is elected by the annual conference, the board elects the rest of its officers. All members of the board are elected for a period of two years. Half the number of members is elected every year. If the number of candidates exceeds the number to be elected, the election takes place with ballots. If a member resigns in the midst of his/her mandate a by-election can take place at the following Congregation Conference. The chair is elected every year.
3. The board assembles on the following occasions:
 - a) on the summons of the chair
 - b) on the summons of the Head of the congregation
 - c) on the demand of at least a third of the members of the board.
4. The Head of the congregation and a representative of the youth section of the JFC board participate in the deliberations of the Board and have the right to have their opinion taken to the minutes. Other persons may be called in to the deliberations of the board when required.

§9 TASKS OF THE BOARD

1. Among the tasks of the board are the following ones:
 - a) to plan, lead and organize the work of the congregation, together with the head of the congregation, in accordance with the decisions arrived at by the Congregation Conference, the Annual Conference and the Church Conference.
 - b) to execute the decisions of the Congregation Conference
 - c) to be responsible for the financial administration
 - d) to prepare the appointment of pastor and deacon
 - e) to exercise employee responsibility for the staff of the congregation
 - f) to provide statistics about members, associates and other statistical data for the JFC.
2. The board may not take any loans, purchase or sell any real estate property or in any other way make any major financial engagements for the congregation without a previous decision arrived at by the Congregation Conference.
3. The board forms a quorum when more than half of the members are present. Resolutions are passed through open vote, except when a member demands vote with ballots in relation to a specific issue. Where the voting is even the opinion expressed by the chair prevails.

§ 10 HEAD OF THE CONGREGATION

1. The congregation must have a Head who is the spiritual leader of the congregation.
2. Together with the board, the Head of the Congregation plans and leads the work of the congregation in accordance with the contents of the Common Basis for the JFC, a possible local congregation order and the decisions arrived at by the Congregation Conference. The special tasks of the Head of the Congregation are described in the Common Basis.
3. As Head of the Congregation is appointed an ordained pastor in consultation with the assistant church leader in charge. A local congregation order may indicate that also a non ordained person may be appointed as Head of the Congregation.
4. If the Head of the Congregation is not a member of the congregation the vice Head of the Congregation may execute some of the tasks of the Head of the Congregation, in consultation with the latter.

§11 COMMITTEE OF ELECTION

1. The Committee of Election is made up ofmembers, elected by the Annual Conference. Members of the committee of election are elected for a period of three years, a third of them every three years. A member cannot be re-elected immediately after having finished a mandate period.
2. The Committee of Election prepares the election of officials at the Annual Conference as well as the election of the Board and auditors and other elections according to the existing needs.
3. The Committee of Election endeavors to take advantage of the gifts of the members of the congregation. At the preparation of an election special consideration should be given to the composition of the congregation and the list of candidates should reflect the diversity of the congregation.
4. Every member is entitled to propose candidates for the board and for other tasks. Such propositions should be handed in to the Committee of Election at the latest eight weeks before the conference at which the election will take place.

§12 SIGNING FOR THE CONGREGATION

Those persons appointed by the board, always two persons together, have the right to sign for the company of the congregation.

§13 ACCOUNTS AND AUDIT

1. The financial year of the congregation runs from to
2. The accounts and the administration should be verified by two auditors appointed by the Congregation Conference.
3. At congregation conferences and board meetings minutes are taken down which are checked by the chair and the persons appointed to check them.

§14 CHILDREN AND YOUTH WORK

The congregation's work among children and young people has been handed over to the youth section of the JFC. The YJFC has its own statutes adopted at the YJFC annual meeting.

§15 CHANGES OF STATUTES AND LOCAL CONGREGATION ORDER

1. Changes of statutes and/or local congregation order can take place through unanimous decisions of two consecutive Congregation Conferences one of which being an Annual Conference. Such a decision must be arrived at with a 2/3rd majority.
2. Propositions concerning changes of statutes should be handed in to the board at least two months before the Annual Conference. The Board hands over the proposition to the congregation accompanied by its own statement thereupon.
3. Adoption or change of local congregation order or statutes in relation to the clause of termination should be sent in to the Church Board for statement.

§16 TERMINATION OF THE CONGREGATION

1. After consultation with the assistant church leader in the region, a coherent decision arrived at, at two consecutive regular Congregation Conferences, one of which being an Annual Conference, is required for termination of the congregation. At least six months must pass between the two conferences. Such a resolution must be passed with a 2/3rd majority.
2. At the termination the right of property in relation to the assets of the congregation is transferred to the JFC.

REGIONS

In the Common Basis and in the proposition in relation to JFC statutes the regional presence is seen as a condition for the mutual dependence between the Church and its congregations and between congregations.

The JFC is divided into regions. The purpose of the regions is twofold: parting from the needs of support of the congregations these regions should on one hand be available in relation to matters of development, education/training, collaboration, information, advice, etc. and on the other, a channel should be created for the Church for support, information, challenge and encouragement.

In every region there should be an assistant Church Leader and possibly further collaborators from the JFC. Special attention should be given to collaboration and fellowship between the congregations on different matters, in the form of networking and through joint actions of development in various projects. There are no plans for a district organization similar to the models having been used up to now. A plan for the winding up of current districts should be drawn up.

Background

The organization of the three denominations is marked by the period when they were established. When it was a question of seeking the will of God it was important, among other things, to have a clear democratic structure and that every member should have a vote at the congregation meeting. There was also a need for a splitting up of the country into smaller geographical units with the same democratic structure as the Church itself. Every denomination had its own subdivision and to a large extent these subdivisions followed the system of the province administration of the State. An important factor for the geographical division was the existing limitations for meeting, due to transport and communication problems. This has now been drastically changed. A similar background and development can be noted in most organizations having their origin in the popular movements of the 19th century.

During a number of years, the districts had a strong position. In some cases the congregation became a member of the denomination through the district, and little by little, the tasks of the districts have been adapted to the needs of the congregations and the need of the Church to have a channel to the congregations. Furthermore there have been needs, especially in relation

to the youth work and to more extensive joint projects like camps and summer houses, to have an organization which supports all this and is responsible for it.

In the JFC there must be a regional presence safeguarding the positive experiences from the district work, which can eliminate the tasks which are too burdensome and which can be flexible, efficient and related to the needs.

The Future

The starting points for the regional presence of the JFC are as follows:

- A flexible organization
- Support in relation to the needs of the congregations
- Being a link between the congregations having similar or complimentary needs of development
- Making possible and facilitating a close relationship between the congregation and the JFC
- Solutions which are cost effective and do not demand resources
- Building up the information technology of the Church so that the exchange within the Church on a national level, and also on an international level, may support the development of the congregations
- A project-oriented activity of development

The JFC regions are led by assistant church leaders and other collaborators according to task and need. A coordination of secretariats with *equmenia* and maybe some other organizations closely related to the Church such as *Bilda*, *Hela Människan*, Folk High Schools and others, could offer valuable effects in the form of access to a broader competence at the same time as administration etc, could be made more efficient. At the continued preparation of the JFC regional structure it is important to see to it that there will not be a deficit of democracy when the current district organization is being liquidated.

equmenia

The organization and activity of many current districts are coordinated with those of *equmenia*. E.g. the SMU district organization is currently jointly organized with the MCCA. The regional presence of the JFC may well be coordinated in the future with that of *equmenia*. Greater clarity must be created in relation the task and the organization of the Church and of *equmenia*. The JFC confides its child and youth work to *equmenia* and thus there is a joint task which is best carried out in a partnership as close as possible.

This is the end of the actual study material.

Questions to be answered can be found on page 36 and onwards.

INFORMATION

Apart from *A Common Basis* and *Proposition of New Statutes*, which constitute the documents for study and reaction, a concise material will be presented below under the heading "Information" emanating from the project work carried out in relation to the creation of the JFC. It concerns issues which are still under treatment or which will be treated later on. There are also areas which have not yet been studied but which will be treated on a continuous basis. Everything will not be worked out, and should not be worked out, at the creation of the JFC. It is important to let *what is new shape what is new*.

During the fall of 2009 five working parties have been active, mandated by the boards of the BUS, the UMCS and the M CCS. The task of the working parties was to draw up a basis for decision each one within its own area in the face of the creation of a new Church. The working parties were made up of two representatives from each of the denominations and one representative from *equmenia*. The working parties arrived at different stages of their assignment and handed in their reports in January 2010, apart from a description/inventory of each area, some suggestions for decision or continued treatment of issues.

The following areas were illustrated and prepared by the working parties:

WORKING PARTY 1. CONGREGATION AND CHURCH/DENOMINATION

Responsible for the preparation of the creation of the new Church within the following areas:

- Order of the Church, Order of the Congregation, Children and Young people, Baptism, Membership, Ministry, Supervision.

WORKING PARTY 2. STRUCTURES

Responsible for the preparation of the creation of the new Church within the following areas:

- Name, statutes – on a national level, proposition of statutes – on a local level, general organization, description of democratic order, locating.

WORKING PARTY 3. RELATIONSHIPS - NETWORKS

Responsible for the preparation of the creation of the new Church within the following areas:

- Structures of the relationships of the new Church with different organizations among others: *equmenia*, the Christian Council of Sweden, international relations, ecumenical networks.

WORKING PARTY 4. PROPERTY - PARTICIPATION

Responsible for the preparation of the creation of the new Church within the following areas:

- Structures for the different branches of activity of the new Church in which it will play the role of owner, among others: the Stockholm School of Theology, the folk high schools, the Sändaren/Sändebudet.

WORKING PARTY 5. REAL ESTATE PROPERTY/ADMINISTRATION

Responsible for the preparation of the creation of the new Church within the following areas:

- Structures and guidelines in relation to the responsibility of real estate property, funds, and foundations.

The JF Association

At the joint board meeting on March 12th 2010, an association was created, the JF Association. This association was created in order to assume the responsibility for the process of the creation a new joint Church.

The JF association is financed by the three denominations jointly. The board of the association is made up of 12 persons, four from each denomination. At the constituent Church Conference of 2011, a board will be elected for the JFC according to the statutes which will be adopted and which will replace the temporary JF association board.

About regions

Continued treatment

The JFC association appoints a region study group mandated to pick out good places for the location of regional offices, to form the regional organization of secretariats, to make an inventory of competence clusters, to define the tasks and role of the regional organization and to create a model for a transitional solution from the old district structure.

In January 2010, *equmenia* decided to examine what needs the child and youth activity has for a regional structure and in what way that structure should best be organized in order to support the regional education and coordination. Thanks to this initiative, *equmenia* is now well prepared for accepting a joint work of forming a regional structure for the new Church. All child and youth associations, members of *equmenia*, will receive an enquiry in the spring and summer of 2010 concerning how they conceive the role and the function between the national organization and a regional structure. What would the associations like to get out of such a regional structure? The replies from the associations will be compiled by *equmenia* during the end of the summer of 2010 and will constitute an important foundation for the *equmenia* part of the work with a regional structure for the JFC.

Location of secretariats

The secretariat of the JFC will be built up through regional presence and a national office.

After careful consideration the three denominations now work on the basis that the national office should be located in Stockholm. Another starting point may also be that the JFC secretariat be established in premises which are new for all the three denominations. The premises could be owned by the JFC, but that is not a necessity.

A place which implies an even broader ecumenical physical presence would be advantageous, as well as the nearness to *equumonia* and to other bodies closely related to the Church. The premises should be functional, flexible, presenting a good working environment enhancing informal communication and encouraging good creative work. Both the national secretariat and the regional presence should be marked by a high communicative level through the use of modern IT technique. Where the national secretariat is concerned preparations have started to find new premises in partnership with other organizations at the Ecumenical Centre.

Arguments favoring Stockholm as the place for the national secretariat are among others:

- Many necessary contacts with churches, authorities and other organizations are facilitated if the national secretariat is located in Stockholm.
- Many visits are carried out by both elected representatives and by international partners. Stockholm is then a convenient place for practical and communicative reasons.

Continued treatment

The place and shaping of the secretariat are issues being studied by the JFC board and will take place in consultation both with the working party involved in the matters of real estate property (the head of finances of the three denominations) and with the working party engaged in the issue of premises of the Ecumenical Centre.

Development of democracy, annual conferences, consensus

At the forming of the new Church there are possibilities to create conditions for democracy development and to increase the influence and participation of the congregations and the individual members in the joint work. One of the working parties handled these issues. They were of the opinion that it is important that the Church Conference is held every year in order to create possibilities for influence and as an identity marker, since the Church is a new one. The working party also studied the issue of how the Church can leave behind traditional association democracy which has also characterized the public political work by traditional debates and voting. Is it possible to develop clearer models of consensus where unity in the Body of Christ becomes more important than traditional debate and voting? Various models of consensus are for example used at international ecumenical conferences and in partner churches all over the world.

Trying to find forms for development of democracy is a responsibility for the direction of the JFC and its congregations.

A new name

A new name will make the new Church visible; the name will make it real. The name could become a meeting-point to assemble around while the work is going on for the preparing of the new Church.

The name chosen could be a working name of a temporary character and it could also be a permanent one – a name in a longer perspective for the new Church.

The Steering Group for the JF asked the direction of the project in November 2009 to present the terms of reference for the work with a new name and a logo and to assemble offers from a number of name consultants. The task was given to an advertising agency with great experience in relation to this type of work.

In the ToR it was stated that the name of the new Church should be inclusive, not excluding other churches. The name should express balance between tradition and innovation, history and future. The name should be as broadly accepted as possible, both in the Church and in society and should contain the word “church”. The name should be acceptable also outside the walls of the Church. It should be graphically adaptable and consideration should be taken to the profile of *ecumenia*. The name should be a long lasting one and it should be able to undergo an organizational change. It should also be translatable into English, French and Spanish. The name should also express solidarity with the vision contained in the creation of the new JFC:

A Church challenged by Jesus and the age in which we are living

- *with depth and identity in Jesus Christ*
- *open and warm*
- *in fellowship and diversity*
- *through prayer and ministry for the world*

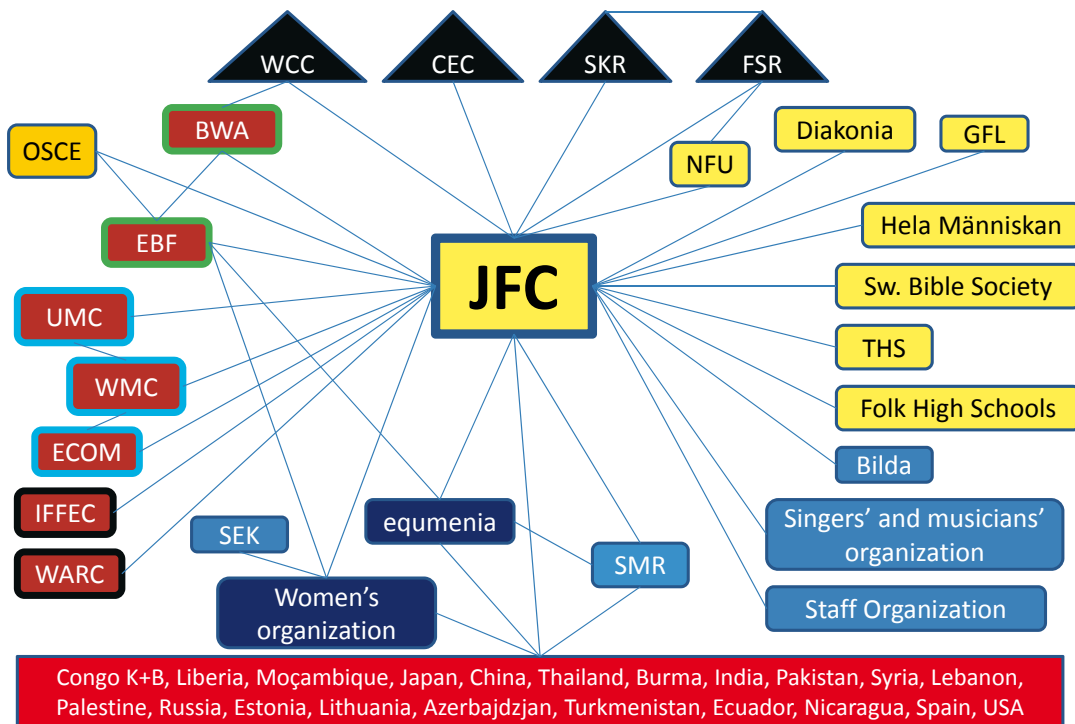
After having collected information by making numerous interviews with people inside and outside the three denominations the consultant presented the suggestion: Samfundskyrkan. This suggestion has given rise to much discussion and many opinions.

Current networks





The JFC has a large and far-reaching network of contacts. It stretches over the world and the JFC is part of ecumenical and confessional and other networks. Also on a national level the JFC is a member of and has responsibilities in many various contexts. Participation in these networks/organizations is present on different levels. The JFC will endeavor to maintain contacts and commitment to them all.

Working party number 3 has described a suggestion in relation to the JFC relations and networks in the following image:

Networks and Relations of the JFC



Colour and Form Symbols

-  Ecumenical affiliation
-  Confessional affiliation:
Green frame = BU; Blue frame = MC; Black frame= MCCS
-  Organization for which the JFC is responsible
-  Countries in which the JFC has international partnership/mission work

Explanation of abbreviations found on the JFC map of relations

BWA = Baptist World Alliance (BUS), 35 million baptized people (approx. 100 million affiliated members). BUS is a member, especially active within the division "Freedom and Justice". Annual council meetings.

World Congress every five years. BWA is represented in UN bodies.

EBF = European Baptist Federation (BUS). 51 member unions in Europe, Central Asia, the Middle East and Egypt with totally 12 000 congregations and 800 000 members. The EBF has annual councils and congresses irregularly. Office in Prague. BUS is a member and especially active in the division for external relations ("Freedom and Justice").

ECOM = European Commission on Mission (UMCS), a Committee attached to the EMC (see WMC) ECOM meets annually and currently organizes mission secretaries and chair persons for mission councils in Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Sw Finland, Fin Finland, Germany, Switzerland, France, Great Britain, Ireland and two representatives from the GBGM (General Board of Global Ministries), the Secretary for Europe and someone from the head office in New York.

FSR = Free Church Consultation (UMCS, BUS, MCCS)

GFL = Give For Life (BUS)

IFFEC = International Federation of Free Evangelical Churches (MCCS)

30 member churches within the "covenant family" i.e. covenant churches and evangelical churches in the Nordic countries, Central Europe, the USA, Latin America and Asia and other countries. The work is led by an Executive Committee and meetings are held regularly for theologians, mission leaders and youth leaders.

CEC = Conference of European Churches (UMCS, BUS, MCCS)

WCC = World Council of Churches (MCCS)

UMCS = Methodist Church of Sweden

NFU = Natural Congregation Growth (UMCS, UB, MCCS)

OSCE = Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (BUS). An interstate organization regrouping states in Europe, Central Asia, the USA and Canada. The OSCE department for human rights has a yearly meeting for representatives of the states and NGO:s working in the area. EBF is a registered organization for these meetings. The BUS is also member of the Swedish OSSE-network actively engaged in the spreading of information about OSSE in Sweden and a platform for national action and international contacts within the OSSE areas of activity.

BUS = Baptist Union of Sweden

SEK = Swedish Ecumenical Women's Council

SKR = Christian Council of Sweden

SMK-MCCS – The Mission Covenant Church of Sweden

SMC-SMR = Swedish Mission Council (UMCS, BUS, MCCS)

UMC = The United Methodist Church (UMCS)

Approx. 10 million members. The American branch of the Methodist Church. General Conference every four years. Divided into Episcopal areas with bishops as leaders.

THS = the Stockholm School of Theology (UMCS, BUS, MCCS)

WCRC = World Communion of Reformed Churches (MCCS), is an association on the global level of reformed churches regrouping some 75 million members. Originally the MCCS entered the reformed community when the association of Congregationalist churches joined the Presbyterian and reformed churches in the world in 1970.

WMC = World Methodist Council (UMCS). Approx. 77 million members. Is made up of all Methodist Churches, both the American and the British branches. Also organizes the EMC (European Methodist Council).

Apart from the organizations mentioned above the JFC has a special relation with *equumenia*, the youth organization of the three denominations, united in a federation. The JFC confides its children's and youth work to *equumenia*.

Within the BUS and UMCS there are women's organizations today. These women's organizations are members of the SEK. The two women's organizations have taken up the issue of forming a joint women's organization, in relation to the JFC. The working committee proposes a gender committee in the JFC (such a committee exists today within the MCCS). The idea was that this committee could work with the gender perspective within the JFC and emphasize these issues both in the church and in the society.

Continued treatment

The network of contacts is vast and demands resources in the JFC. The proposition runs as follows:

- the JFC draws up a list of priority on which the organizations are arranged according to degree of priority and degree of active/passive participation.
- a women's organization in relation to the JFC can be tested in relation to *equumenia*, the collaborators' organization, etc.

International mission work

International mission work is an important part of the JFC. The number of countries having a relationship to the JFC is great, decisive priorities remain to be made. Mission work is not primarily seen as an activity but as an identity. The task of the Church is mission, this attitude characterizes the JFC.

The JFC collaborates with Churches in 23 countries. The countries with which the three original Churches collaborate are included in the JFC work (Azerbaijan, Burma, Ecuador, Estonia, India, Japan, China, Congo-Kinshasa, Congo-Brazzaville, Lebanon, Liberia, Lithuania, Mozambique, Nicaragua, Pakistan, Palestine, Russia, Spain, Syria, Tanzania, Thailand, Turkmenistan and the USA).

Continued treatment

Those in charge of international mission work within the three denominations are asked to work on proposition for priorities in relation to the JFC international mission work.

Diakonia

The BUS, the UMCS and the MCCS are responsible authorities for the development assistance organization Diakonia, together with Interact (Evangeliska Frikyrkan) and the Swedish Alliance Mission (Svenska Alliansmissionen).

Diakonia is an important actor in the network around the JFC. Discussions are being held in relation to the identity and the structure of Diakonia and to forms for the representation and direction of the organization by its responsible authorities.

At the same time as Diakonia continues to be a relevant and professional organization, it is of greatest importance that the relation between Diakonia and its responsible authorities is made clear in relation to the responsibility and the mandate of the responsible authorities. The JFC is anxious to protect its collaboration with Diakonia and would like to attach Diakonia in a more obvious way to the common work of the Church.

Continued treatment

The talks which have already been initiated in relation to the responsibility and the mandate of the responsible authorities, concerning the relationship between Diakonia and the JFC will continue.

Meetingplaces/Centres

Meetingplaces

Today the three denominations own a number of centers, schools and buildings. In the JFC there is need for different meeting places. The JFC will secure the future organization of meetings influencing the society and the existence of such meeting places providing the possibility for spiritual growth. The Church can also provide conditions for community life at one or some of these centers. It is important to have a strategic approach in relation to the possibilities for evangelism, training and meeting places that might be created.

Education/Training

Folk High Schools

The vision of the working committee is a strategy for training and education in the new Church. The schools should both offer a work internally and open up for the needs in the society. The five Folk High Schools of the JFC and Överås and the THS should be looked upon as resources in the new Church and collaboration between the Folk High Schools is needed to reach national coverage. On the basis of the study made on regional structure there will be an inventory concerning in what way the schools could become points of support in so called competence clusters.

Continued treatment

A special study group is appointed by the JFC Association board. This group will work with the issues of collaboration between the schools and will also draw up an educational policy for the JFC.

THS – the Stockholm School of Theology

The Stockholm School of Theology was created in 1993 with the BUS and the MCCS as its responsible authorities (Andelsföreningen teologiska högskolan, Stockholm). In 2008 the UMCS became the third responsible authority of the school.

The THS offers education both on a basic level and on an advanced level, both in theology and areas like human rights and democracy and it also does research within these areas.

The THS has a partnership agreement with the International Baptist Theological Seminary in Prague, with the university of Umeå, the Åbo Academy, the Wesley Theological Seminary, Washington DC and with Chandler School of Theology, Atlanta.

In the assignment given by the responsible authorities to the THS for the period 2008–2012 it is stated in the goals and visions document that the THS should provide:

- Theological education for pastoral ministry
- Education within the area Human Rights and Democracy
- Research

Continued treatment

The organization of the responsible authorities of the THS will change at the creation of the JFC. Necessary changes in relation to ownership will have to be made. The contents of the education which is today related to the preparation for ministry within the different churches/denominations will have to change in order to correspond to the needs and conditions of the JFC. These issues should be handled by the board and the principal of the THS.

Collections

In order to be able to accomplish its task the JFC is dependent upon a well functioning collection work. This is valid for the technicalities and strategies of collections just as well as for the assuming of responsibility for the common engagements of the Church.

Taken separately, the three denominations have a number of different forms of collections. Several of them exist in all three churches (e.g. automatic postal giro, Church Fee, and Days of offering). Special consideration should be taken in the JFC in relation to the fact that the offerings have taken on a more individualistic form.

A clear strategy is needed for the collection work within the JFC. Such a strategy should observe how loyalty can be created in relation to collections in the new Church, the individualization of the offerings, measures reinforcing the confidence and new ideas which could inspire the congregations and individuals to feel ownership, participation and responsibility as donors.

Continued treatment

Those responsible for the collections in the three denominations are assigned to start the work of forming a clear strategy of collection for the JFC. The work will be done in consultation with the JF Association.

Media and Communication

The JFC gives great priority to communication work in order to be a relevant Church in a society which is to a large extent marked by new technique and new means of reaching people, both within the Church and outside it. The JFC deposits important resources for identity creating work. It is important to create a “we-feeling” quickly within the Church and to place the new Church on the map, in the society, so that it may be conceived the way it wants to be seen.

Influencing public opinion is of high priority and will be done by the Church itself and also together with other actors.

In the communication of change, in the transitory phase towards a new Church, a publication for members might be of value. It could be used as a channel to establish and strengthen the "we-feeling". In a longer perspective the JFC will lift its eyes and together with other (e.g. Berling Media, Swedmedia) form a joint work of strengthening the role of the Churches in the society.

Continued treatment

The JF Association has been assigned to take charge of the communication and information matters during the period when the new Church is being formed. The assignment also includes future media strategy. The JF Association will do this in consultation with those in charge of communication matters in the denominations and maybe also external expertise.

Real estate property and administration of capital resources

Today the three denominations own a great number of real estate property or are responsible for foundations owning property. The property can be divided into the following categories:

- Church buildings
- School buildings
- Block of flats
- Cottages/camp centres, land and farming estate property

Ownership and administration of district houses must be studied in connection with transitional solutions for the old district organizations.

Half the joint capital value lies in two buildings, Lidingö and Överås. The third important building is the Stockholm School of Theology/Betel in Bromma. The buildings have a total value accounted for amounting to 93 million SEK, the market value being considerably higher.

Here are some possible solutions identified by the working party in relation to the buildings:

- All buildings are transferred to the new church
- Parts of the buildings are sold and replaced by either a direct ownership or an indirect ownership via a fund, or placed in other assets (stocks and shares, bonds, funds, etc.)
- All buildings are sold and the church concentrates on administration of capital resources.

Administration of capital resources

The three denominations have a combined capital of altogether approximately 180 million SEK. Real estate and the capital resources together constitute an important asset. The assets constitute among other things a guarantee for the retirement engagement of the Church.

The working party having dealt with these issues has seen different alternatives for the administration of the capital resources and has pointed out the importance of focusing on the JFC essential activity. The administration of capital resources will support and make possible

such important essential work. A proposal concerning an investment policy has been drawn up.

Continued treatment

The financial managers within the BUS, the MC, and the MCCS have been assigned by the three boards to draw up a proposition in relation to how the property management (capital, real estate, bonds, etc) should be handled in the JFC. The assignment also includes drawing up a possible picture of demands of proceeds, a suggestion concerning real estate policy, capital investment policy, and at a survey of real estate property to give a global description of the current situation and needs of measures to be taken.

This working party will consult expertise on fiscal matters, administration, real estate administration and company construction.

Foundations

An inventory has been established of the foundations for which the three denominations are responsible. The main foundations are real estate owners possessing student lodgings and schools.

In the records of these foundations it is shown who is responsible for them, what is their purpose etc. It is not possible to terminate the foundations or change their purpose as long as the purpose for some reason becomes impossible to achieve. At the creation of the JFC the foundations cannot automatically be transferred from the three denominations to the newly created Church. In order to have the responsibility registered with the new Church the change must be reported to the Swedish Judicial Board for Public Lands and Funds.

Continued treatment

Each church/denomination respectively will be responsible for the inventory of the records of the foundations and apply with the Swedish Judicial Board for Public Lands and Funds for a change of responsibility when the JFC has been created.

Conclusion

The information material presented here is not part of the consultative document but it will be part of the continued work with the forming of the JFC. What has been presented under the heading **continued treatment** will be followed up under the coming years through more information for the congregations.

QUESTIONS

Here are the questions for you to answer in relation to the propositions for consultation, pages 5-24.

We thank you in advance for answering the questions. Your answers will contribute to the shaping of the future of the JFC.

The propositions for consultation are not identical to the final proposition. Here it is important to create as good conditions as possible for the drawing up of a basis for the resolution to be passed.

It is to be desired that the answers do not solely express reactions against what is seen as negative, but that there is also a response to what is seen as positive in the propositions.

If there are suggestions and statements in the propositions with which you disagree, try to think them over once again and note what you find challenging in the suggestion. It is also valuable to get suggestions of alternative ways of wordings.

A Common Basis and Suggested Statutes for the JFC

1. **The Introduction** describes what the Church represents, how a congregation is defined and how the new Church is built upon the three traditions representing the current Churches.

Do you agree with this description?

Yes

Yes, on the whole

No

Comment:

2. *The Foundation of Faith* is a short summary with references to the Bible, the basic ecumenical creeds and the three church traditions.

Does this section give a sufficiently good description?

- Yes
- Yes, on the whole
- No

Comment:

3. The task of the Church is concisely described under the heading *The Task*. The JFC will continue to adopt its task with relevancy to each age, yet basing itself on the description given here.

Could this description be used as an orientation indicator for the JFC?

- Yes
- Yes, on the whole
- No

Comment:

4. The issue of *Baptism* and *Holy Communion*, the sacraments, is described in the proposition of a Common Basis. It can be seen from the text that a pastor normally administers the sacraments and that when there is no pastor present, the congregation may choose and set apart another person for that mission.

Can this order be applied in the JFC?

- Yes
- No

Motivation:

5. The three Churches have different traditions in relation to *baptism*. In the Common Basis, baptism is described and how there could be place for the different traditions within the JFC.

Do you agree with the description?

- Yes
- Yes, on the whole
- No

Comment:

6. **Membership and affiliated membership.** Faith and baptism are linked together. Members and affiliated members share the responsibility for the congregation and the whole Church. Affiliated membership could be seen as a first step into membership and is a new concept.

Should it be possible to be a member or an affiliated member of a JFC congregation?

Yes

No

Motivation:

7. **Regional presence** is proposed in the proposed statutes. The link constituted by elected representatives existing in the current district organizations has been removed.

Is there a need of regional presence such as it is described?

Yes

Do not know

No

Comment:

8. It is possible to submit further opinions and possible suggestions of change in relation to the proposed **statutes** by indicating the number of the clause. If you like the propositions in a general way it would be a good thing if you could state that clearly.

Comment:

9. What question is missing?

What is your answer to that question?

It is possible to submit further opinions. Please be concise and indicate clearly what section in the material is commented upon.

Please send your answers by e-mail to info@gemensamframtid.se. It is also possible to send your answers by ordinary mail. Addresses are indicated on page 2.

Thank you for your participation!