

# Goals and Vision for the Mission Covenant Church of Sweden 2010

## Our Vision

***A church for all aspects of life that offers redemption and healing through the encounter with Jesus Christ.***

The church has its source and inspiration in the encounter with God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. This encounter happens in different ways for different people in different situations. Out of this diversity, the Mission Covenant Church of Sweden (MCCS) wishes to create opportunities - time, place and environment - for spiritual experiences, individually and jointly. We want to affirm the call to be active stewards of creation, to assist our fellow human beings in sacrificial diaconal service and to develop expressions of and opportunities for prayer and worship.

## Four strategic areas

In the period until 2010, the MCCS will concentrate on four main areas of work. We intend to let the experiences of our encounter with Jesus Christ permeate all this work.

### **1. Empowering local churches and helping them grow**

***Church development concepts with special focus on all ages and on ministry.***

#### **A church for all aspects of life**

- Local churches are a source of spiritual strength for people of all generations through living and varied worship and through open dialogue in matters of faith and life, in a dynamic interaction with the neighbouring community.
- Worship and liturgy have developed through exchanges between congregations and through creative impulses from the church universal.
- The life of the congregation is characterised by diverse expressions of faith, helping people develop their creativity by allowing many different languages and gifts to be expressed.
- There is room in the churches for spiritual renewal and growth for everybody.
- The membership concept is deepened and more closely related to a living relationship with Jesus Christ.
- Relationships to persons who left the church community have been re-established through empathetic listening and learning. New ties have been established to families whose children and youth attend SMU activities.
- Churches and SMU groups offer a variety of meetings places where people can get to know the Christian faith.
- Children and youth play a more obvious role in shaping the life and worship of the church.

- Through SMU, the churches have a stimulating and challenging youth work that utilises the spiritual experiences and commitment of young people and provides space for growth and responsibility.

### **Church development concepts and ecumenical co-operation**

- Every congregation and local SMU organisation has access to a mentor to help them develop and grow.
- Ten new churches have been established in locations where the Christian presence is weak.
- The ecumenical perspective is essential in the development and identity-building work of the churches and the SMU groups, in pioneer strategy and assistance strategy.
- The Agreement on Church Co-operation with the Church of Sweden and the EFS (Swedish Evangelical Mission) has led to new local joint projects and closer co-operation in worship and church life.
- The uniting process between SMU, SBUF (Swedish Baptist Youth Union) and MKU (Methodist Church Youth) has challenged the three mother churches to new and binding talks of a merger.
- National agreements and joint committees between the churches involved have clarified the requirements for the establishment of joint congregations.
- Through the closure or renewal of local churches and through ecumenical joint planning and co-operation on the regional level, smaller congregations, too, can support a functional team of workers, if possible in all municipalities.

### **National and local reciprocity**

- A new distribution of responsibility has developed between different parts of the Mission Covenant Church, where individual congregations, districts, schools and other organisations with special resources take on the responsibility of development work and projects on behalf of the entire church.
- Several meeting places have been created for retreats and spiritual renewal, also in co-operation with other churches.

## **2. A living force in society**

***The diaconal task of assisting the oppressed and marginalised governs the social involvement of the church and makes it a living force in society - locally, nationally, and internationally.***

### **Globally**

- Global responsibility in solidarity with humankind and with creation has been deepened through increased international exchange and extensive co-operation with others working towards the same goals.
- The Mission Covenant Church and SMU are actively working for the fulfillment of the UN Millennium Development Goals by the year 2015.
- The Mission Covenant Church, SMU and the local congregations dare to take a stand for solidarity on all levels.

### **The local community**

- Local churches are actively present in their local communities, with a strong diaconal profile and a clear commitment to dialogue and peaceful co-existence.
- Local congregations reflect our multi-cultural society and our international relations. They are a positive force for the integration of people of different ethnic and cultural backgrounds.
- “Church - Working life” has become an established concept that signifies a church presence in working life, an on-going ethics dialogue with all parties in the labour market, co-operation with other NGOs, and support of marginalised persons in and outside the labour force.

### **Public debate**

- The Mission Covenant Church is an active, multivoice participant in the public debate on philosophy of life and culture as well as social issues relating to global solidarity, asylum and integration, environment and climate, and other socio-ethical issues.
- A clear strategy for the participation of the Mission Covenant Church in public debate encourages
  - the church leadership to play an active role as opinion makers in areas of concern
  - co-operation with ecumenical organisations when it comes to influencing public opinion
  - local initiatives concerning media relations and opinion moulding
  - support of people who are prepared to participate in the public debate
  - development of our own fora for public debate, locally and nationally.
- Thanks to the competence and experience present in the congregations, the church has a living network of diverse political actors, internationally, nationally, regionally, and locally.

## **3. Joint responsibility in international mission**

### ***Realised in co-operation with sister churches and ecumenical partners***

- The international work of the Mission Covenant Church is organised regionally and thematically, for instance:
  - Evangelism
  - Church development
  - Peace and reconciliation
  - Community development.
- Reciprocity in mission has become a cornerstone in the life of the Mission Covenant Church and its sister churches. This means reciprocity in prayer and in sharing of experiences and resources through more frequent and longer exchanges, local church exchanges and an increased number of international mission workers.
- Within the total framework, individual congregations have taken on a greater share of the international responsibilities of the Mission Covenant Church.
- In co-operation with the sister churches, co-workers are recruited to work among specific ethnic groups in Sweden.
- The Mission Covenant Church has made preparations to send out and receive at least 60 international mission workers and volunteers.

#### **4. A creative staff community**

***The Mission Covenant Church offers a creative working environment, where women and men of different ages and different ethnic and cultural backgrounds can develop and grow in a living working community.***

##### **Employers' responsibilities and working environment**

- Knowledge of employer responsibilities has increased on all levels, enabling the Mission Covenant Church to act professionally as an employer.
- The working environment of the Church is characterised by openness and development possibilities, where people want to work, where they can change direction, specialise and come back and where inter-congregational team work is a natural way of working.

##### **Staff recruitment and deployment**

- Co-workers are recruited and trained on a level that meets the needs of church and society, i. e. approximately 500 pastors and 100 diaconal workers.
- Due to an increased demand from various community sectors, a growing number of Mission Covenant Church and SMU associates are working in pastoral/diaconal capacities in the community but closely tied to local congregations.

##### **Youth workers**

- The status of work among children and youth has been raised. It is natural for employees of different categories in the Mission Covenant Church to work professionally and with a long-term commitment among children and youth.

##### **Training and personal development**

- The Church is present both in society and academia, encouraging studies, dialogue and research.
- Staff and lay leaders are equipped through flexible training and continued education in order to meet the complex demands of individuals and society. This happens, for instance, through leadership training, personalised training of people of other professional or denominational background, training of retreat leaders and spiritual counsellors, and training for international service in both directions.
- Through networking, mentorship, etc., strategies have been developed within the church to encourage higher academic studies.
- Every student undergoing basic church training is actively supported to help integrate knowledge, personal development and spiritual maturity – academically, professionally, personally and privately.
- All church employees are offered time for spiritual renewal and growth regularly.

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