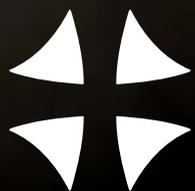


As the Father has sent me, I am sending you. John 20:21

Good News for All



Svenska
Missionskyrkan

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Preface

February 2008

The Great Commission is for ever given to the Church in accordance with the words of Jesus to his disciples:

As the Father has sent me, I am sending you. ¹

And in that task the Mission Covenant Church of Sweden (MCCS) stands side by side with churches all over the world.

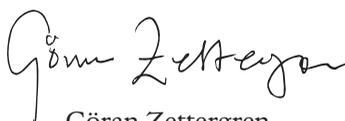
Even though it is not possible to draw a definite line between mission work in Sweden and in other parts of the world, this present publication, “Good News for all” is primarily concerned with the international side of mission work. A living commitment for the local congregation constitutes the foundation and condition for mission work. Mission work in other countries also inspires and challenges the congregations to carry out the Great Commission in Sweden.

In “Good News for all” you will find in a condensed form what is essential in the MCCS international mission partnership. The present document was adopted by the MCCS Church Board in August 2001 and was revised in 2007, awaiting a common mission policy for our international and national work.

Our hope is that this document will provide the congregations and other interested parties with a clearer picture of the aims of the MCCS international mission partnership.



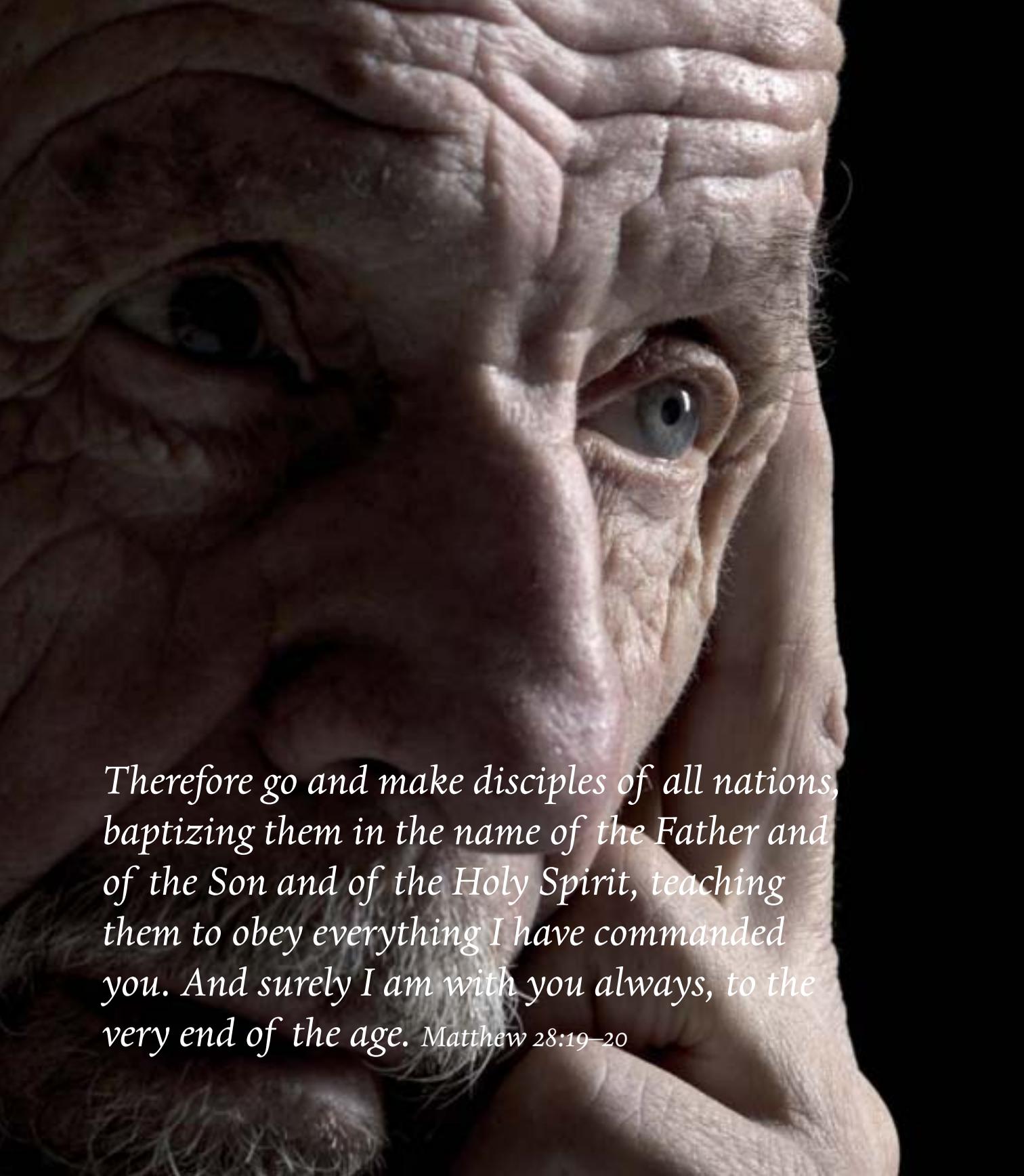
Ulf Hällmarker
Chair of the MCCS
Church Board



Göran Zettergren
MCCS President



Bertil Svensson
International
Mission Director



*Therefore go and make disciples of all nations,
baptizing them in the name of the Father and
of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching
them to obey everything I have commanded
you. And surely I am with you always, to the
very end of the age. Matthew 28:19–20*

Background

A decisive reason for the founding of the MCCA was international mission work. The question was who to send out in mission work. The MCCA has since then continually reflected upon its mission assignment. The work has changed over time, both where geographical areas and methods of work are concerned and through the acquirement of experience and new knowledge. The meaning of the word “mission” has changed, but the assignment remains the same – Good News for all.

Today mission work does not go only in the direction North-South, from churches and mission societies in the North. It has become more global and is expressed more and more often in terms of partnership and reciprocity. We speak about “The Universal Church”. Where methods, experiences and inspiration come from churches all over the world there can be creative encounters for missions in a new era. “Good News for all” wants to emphasize this aspect of reciprocity.

The policy put into words here is built primarily upon the MCCA Constitution. Furthermore two studies have been of importance:

- *The Congo Study* and its final document *Nsalasani ku ntwala, A New Era – a New Partnership* which was adopted in 1993. In that study the holistic view of missions was stressed, the importance of a deepening of the relationship between the churches into a joint responsibility and the fact that church relations could take place at many levels.²

- *Consultation on Missions* a document which was taken up at the Annual General Assembly of 1994.³

Furthermore experiences from the recent work with Goals and Visions 2010 and yearly activity plans have been taken into account at the revision of this document.

The policy document has been discussed within the MCCA and has also been taken up in talks with partner churches and organisations, in Sweden and in other countries.

Theological Foundation

It is the very essence of a church to be engaged in mission work. This is made clear in the Great Commission⁴. Mission work is not just one task among others. Through mission work the church becomes visible and active, the same way as God himself became clear, visible and active through Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ has been sent into the world by the Father through the Spirit. At all times Christ sends out his disciples with the Gospel about the Kingdom of God. And through this sending, or mission, the church is shaped and renewed as the body of Christ in the world:

- through evangelism it carries the testimony of Christ
- through diaconal/social work it serves the fellow humans and the whole creation
- through fellowship men and women are restored and encouraged to use their manifold gifts.

This mission work is modelled upon Christ – the humble servant - and is carried out in the power of love. ⁵

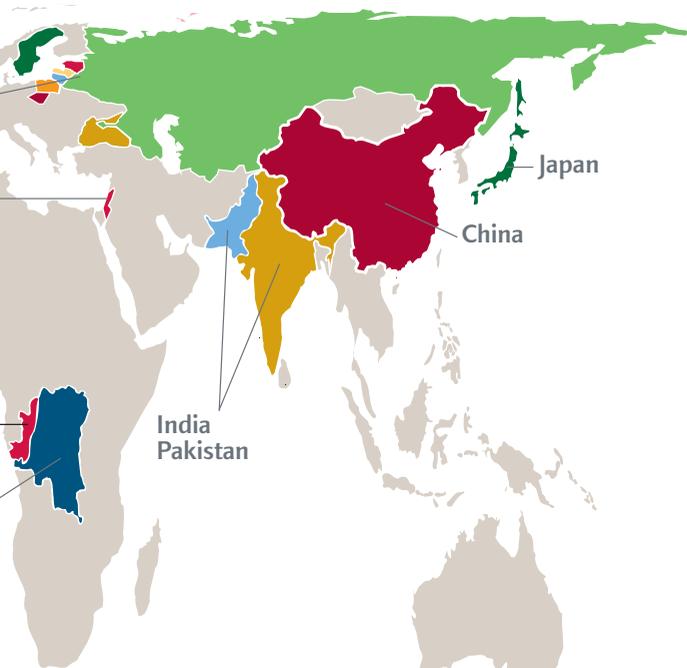


Evangelism

The God who created the world is seeking us human beings, wanting to lead us back to fellowship with him. A person who has discovered Christ as the Way, the Truth and the Life is eager to share this experience with others. The testimony about faith in Christ, given in joy and conviction, can be combined with respect for the opinions and faith of others.

Therefore the congregation wants to:

- show the way to Jesus Christ and invite people to a lifelong fellowship with him in the congregation and to share the assignment of the whole church – to spread the Gospel to all nations.⁶



Diaconal/Social Work

Diaconal work, the ministry of love, means to express the Christian love so that people who are stricken with illness, poverty, oppression and ignorance can be restored and experience their value as human beings. Diaconal work also means being a prophetic voice in society, together with Christians in other countries, claiming righteousness, freedom, democracy and human rights. This means interpreting and proclaiming the deeper meaning of faith in relation to various social systems and explaining what a Christian social commitment may entail. Ministering to ones fellow human being is always unconditional.

Therefore the congregation wants to:

- live in everyday life, in working life and society, claiming the equal value of everybody, defending what is right and exposing what is unjust, encouraging participation in society, contributing to an equalization of the world's resources and taking responsibility for the stewardship of God's creation.⁷

Fellowship

The biblical idea of Christian fellowship has room for diversity. At the same time the unique personality of each individual is recognized. This leads to an equality that knows no boundaries. Paul's idea is that people have different gifts, meant for the whole body. No one is alone, outside or isolated. The Christian outlook on man is characterized by what is boundless, what is mutual, what unites us as human beings and what binds us together in Christ.

The worship service is the main expression of fellowship in the congregation. It has to do both with God's will about fellowship in the whole of mankind and with the sending, the mission. The deepest expression for fellowship with Christ, the bread and wine of the Holy Communion, simultaneously points to the everyday life of all people in the world and the hope for a future that God has in store for us.

Therefore the congregation wants to:

- shape a fellowship which is open for all, and function as the instrument of reconciliation in the neighbourhood and in the whole of God's world.⁸

Basic Values

The Whole Gospel to the Whole Human Being in the Whole World

The M CCS sees evangelism, diaconal work and fellowship as different expressions of God's and the congregation's mission in the world. The Christian proclamation and the worship service together with the testimony of the individual Christian are always linked to actions making the message of love visible and clear. Ministering to our fellow human beings is an expression of the Christian love and is done for the sake of mankind, with no subsidiary motive. In a similar way, the ministry of love witnesses to the Gospel. The different expressions of Christian Missions are kept together by the life and the fellowship of the congregation.

The Universal Church

The Great Commission is universal; it is not reserved for a few. In the M CCS worldwide fellowship, resources and needs are being shared. Ones own faith grows when one shares, when one meets other people's thoughts and when one is faced with new challenges.

In the encounter with other churches, societies and cultures, ones own understanding of the richness and diversity of the Gospel is enriched. Thus faith and responsibility are widened. 9

Continued Fellowship

Through the M CCS international work several new churches have been planted around the world. The M CCS wants to continue sharing the fellowship with these churches which are now autonomous.

The M CCS historical commitment for missions entails continued fellowship with churches which are the fruit of mission work. The fellowship between autonomous churches in different parts of the world constitutes a challenge for reciprocity in intercession and in sharing experiences and resources.¹⁰

New Areas

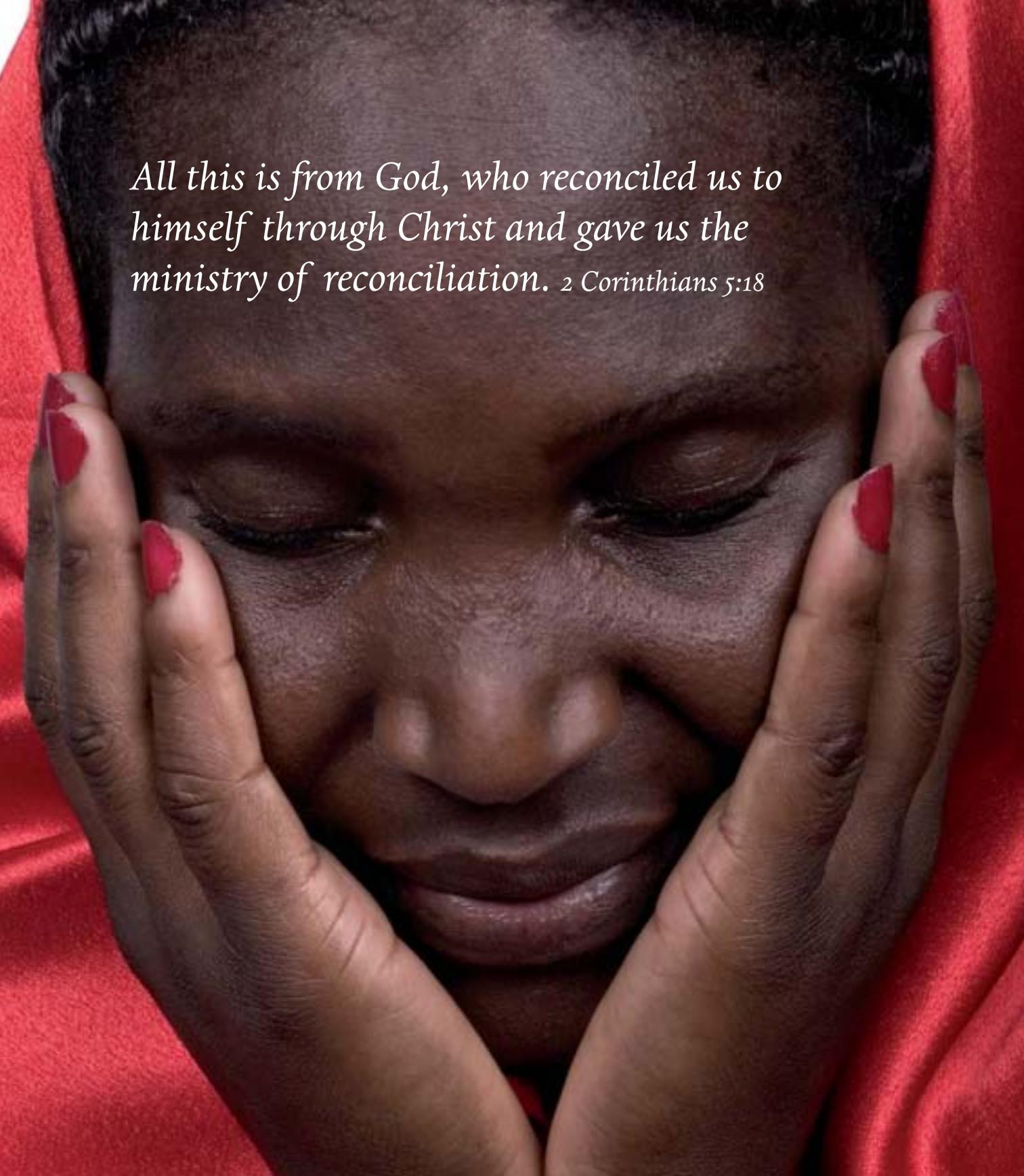
The M CCS wants to go to new areas. This is often done together with our partner churches.

The M CCS wants to express its part of the Great Commission in other countries. As an answer to God's continued calling to mission work, the Church keeps looking for new areas for this assignment which will last till the end of time – to preach the Gospel about the Kingdom of God and to serve ones fellow human beings in the whole world.¹¹

A Boundless Task

The M CCS sees the Great Commission as a boundless task. This means that the Gospel is directed towards people in the neighbourhood of the congregation, to growing urban areas and to various contexts in Sweden as well as in other parts of the world. Our goal is to reach everybody who has not yet heard the Gospel, wherever he or she may live. It is also a question of crossing the boundaries of generations and cultures.

The Great Commission – to preach the Gospel about the Kingdom of God in word and deed – is boundless. The sending is linked to the promise about Christ being there until the end of time.¹²



All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation. 2 Corinthians 5:18

Areas of Priority

The MCCA holistic view of missions is a foundation for the areas of priority which are all of them interdependent. In all its work the MCCA wants to be a church present in society.

Evangelism

During the first decades of its existence, the MCCA found it totally natural to plant congregations in the “mission countries”. Nowadays the major part of the pioneer work has been taken over by the Sister Churches’ own collaborators. But it is still a question of supporting evangelism in areas where the Christian presence is weak and to plant congregations there. People need to take part of God’s word both through preaching and through a translation of the Bible to get the possibility to be firmly anchored in the Christian faith and to be able to grow.

Church Development

Church Development is a natural consequence of evangelism. The task here is to support education and theological research so that the Partner Church may build up its own body of pastors and evangelists. It is also a question of giving support to the Sister Churches to improve their organisation.

Peace and Reconciliation

Jesus Christ embodies peace and reconciliation through his life, his death and his resurrection. The Christian Church is placed in the service of reconciliation¹³. Peace and reconciliation efforts therefore have an important place in the life of the Church.

The MCCA sees the work for peace and reconciliation in for instance Central Africa and the Middle East as being areas of priority. Also in other situations than in war the churches are urgently requested to take part in active work of reconciliation. Both where ethnical and religious conflicts are concerned long term interventions are called for.

The MCCA sees religious dialogue as an important means for people to understand each other and to be able to live together. Here are evident similarities between the situation in several of the countries where the MCCA has Partner Churches and in the Swedish society.

Community Building

From the beginning of mission work education and medical care have been important fields of work. Elementary education has created conditions for work and exercise of a profession and the basis for free thinking, human values and democracy. Health is an important factor for people to build a well functioning society. Education and medical care remain important elements in today's mission work. It is not primarily a question of palliating the shortcomings but rather of addressing the reasons behind the problems.

The MCCS wants to strengthen different groups, in a clear way, and help them to discover their own capacity to change society. One way of doing this is to work in favour of the respect of human rights. Other methods of work can be democracy training or the support of individuals and groups who through personal initiatives can find ways to support themselves.

Humanitarian support

On certain occasions, for instance in times of war and natural catastrophes, the MCCS might have to accept tasks that are not normally among the areas of work convened upon. When such situations occur in areas where the MCCS has deep and intimate relations with a Church, it is called for to give humanitarian aid in connection with catastrophes. This is an expression of shared life, but it is also motivated by the fact that there are already well functioning structures at hand and well founded contacts. A special policy for humanitarian catastrophe interventions has been worked out.

Criteria's

The following concepts should be considered in all mission work.

Reciprocity

Reciprocity is about sharing the Christian faith. The most important issue is to know how the meeting between Churches and individual Christians from two parties enrich each others' faith.¹⁴ The transfer of the centre of Christianity from the West to the South-East must also have theological consequences. For instance churches in the secularized West may get encouragement and support from churches in the South through worship service, prayer and praise.

The concept "reciprocity" within church partnership calls for new and deepened reflection. International missionary practice is still dominated by sending and influence going in one direction. On the basis of reciprocity there should also be support of church development in Sweden, coming from other churches.

The fellowship between autonomous churches in different parts of the world is a challenge towards reciprocity in intercession and in the sharing of experiences and resources.¹⁵

Ecumenism

Since the assignment to spread the Gospel constitutes the very life of the Church, so division and rivalry mean a weakening both of the message and of the Church itself.

Therefore all mission work should be seen as the common task of the Churches in areas where Christian faith is scarcely represented. This must have clear consequences both in pioneer planning, strategy and emerging collaboration where congregations from different Churches are present in a neighbourhood.

Ecumenism has to do with missions, the sending out into the world. The foundation of unity is to be found in the unity of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Ecumenism means striving towards unity between different denominations and local congregations. Through the unity of the Christians the world will believe and understand that God has sent Jesus Christ, in his love, to all people.¹⁶

Justice

God's congregation, just like society on the whole, depends for its survival on those who appear to be the weakest¹⁷. Paul says that if one part of the body suffers then the whole body suffers. To make it possible for people to influence their situation, they need different tools like education, knowledge and confidence in democracy. The M CCS wants to work in favour of a situation where everybody has enough to eat, is in good health and has a bed to sleep in. At the same time, the M CCS wants to work in favour of every person's absolute value and possibility to influence his/her own situation.

Equality

From a Christian standpoint, all people involved in the work should have the possibility to participate and to influence – no matter what their ethnical background, sex, social status or age may be. The M CCS, in close collaboration with equmenia, the Youth Organization, wants to put special emphasis on the perspective of children in its work.

Democracy

The M CCS has an historical heritage of developing the forms of democracy and of taking part in protests against unjust power structures. Support of democracy could be given through strengthening the competence, the identity, the commitment and the self-esteem of people.

Environment

Care for the environment is linked to mission work. In the Great Commission found in the Gospel according to Mark, Jesus gives the assignment to preach the good news to all creation¹⁸. Man is the steward of all creation and he is responsible to the Creator. The M CCS strives to find ways in the work that do not impair the environment but which lead to an ecological balance and a sustainable society.

HIV/AIDS

Many of the poorest and the most vulnerable countries are severely hit by HIV and AIDS. The disease is far more than a disease – it is an obstacle for the development of countries and individuals. Together with many other good forces the M CCS wants to reach the UN Millennium Goals – among others to stop the spreading of HIV/AIDS before the year 2015.

The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour. Luke 4:18–19

GERDY
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Target Groups

Sharing the Gospel means to witness about the good news so that all people may believe. The message of joy is for everyone, in the whole world. Each individual's need is a challenge. And at the same time limits must be traced up in order to make the task clear and the effort realistic. The description given by Jesus about his own sending in the Gospel according to Luke,¹⁹ can help us to define the target groups considered to be given highest priority within the MCCS international work.

The Poor

(Preach good news to the poor)

Materially poor people are limited in many ways. The MCCS strives to improve the economical and social situation for individual poor people, but also, through analyses and influencing of public opinion, to counteract poverty in the world.

However, richness is no guarantee for a happy life. The consumer society focuses on the individual self. Based on the Bible, we want to focus on the fellow human being. Giving oneself out for others can give meaning to life.

Preaching the good news to the poor also means to witness to the message of joy so that all people may believe.

The Prisoners

(Proclaim freedom for the prisoners)

Many people are in jail, others are prisoners of economically oppressive systems, others yet are prisoners of drugs, etc. The MCCS works for justice, freedom and brotherly feelings in these situations.

The Blind

(Recovery of sight for the blind)

Working for the recovery of sight of the blind may mean giving support to people who are literally blind, by giving them medical care. But blindness can also mean lack of consciousness and ignorance concerning the situation in ones own society. The MCCS strives to make people aware of unjust structures so that they themselves can influence their situation.

The Oppressed

(Release the oppressed)

Many people all over the world are oppressed and marginalized. The MCCS strives to incorporate them in the community and let them express themselves through democracy. The most marginalized ones are made visible both for their own sake and for the sake of society.

Structure and Method of Work

As to its identity and structure the M CCS is a **Church** and works for the visible unity of the Church at the local, national and international levels. Its international work is an integrated part of the entire work of the M CCS.

Congregations and Districts

The Great Commission starts at the congregational level and is also the main task of the congregation. It is mainly carried out locally but also jointly via the district and the national organisation and in reciprocity with other churches. This is done to create equality, endurance and a long-term vision.

The M CCS is divided into seven geographical districts. They are democratically built up in relationship to the congregations of the district. The M CCS has one representative, the district supervisor, who collaborates with the district board and the district workers.

Many congregations show a great interest in coming closer to the international work through “Friendship congregation” ties in different parts of the world. Several districts have also developed direct contacts with congregations and districts in different Sister Churches.

The M CCS, as a church, is a fellowship of congregations professing the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour according to the Holy Scripture and therefore together strive to fulfil their common calling to the honour of God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.²⁰

The congregation takes part in the M CCS mission across all frontiers.²¹

Central Coordination

The annual Church Conference is the supreme MCCS decisive body. There the congregations come together to elect the Church Board and other bodies, to call men and women to special tasks, to decide about the activity plan and budget of the coming year and to give recommendations to the congregations. In the Conference pastors and deacons are ordained. Missionaries are also consecrated during the Conference.

The Church Board plans and leads the MCCS work together with the MCCS President in accordance with the decisions of the Church Conference²².

The Missions Department at the MCCS head quarters is in charge of the coordination of mission work in Sweden and in other countries and of development work. Working groups are nominated for a special geographical region or with a special sphere of activity²³.

The task for the International Unit of the Missions Department is to be informed of the international contacts of the congregations, to coordinate international contacts with Partner Churches, to be in charge of the joint mission work, to stimulate exchange, to organize places of encounter between Swedish congregations and Partner Churches and to organize training for missionaries. Theirs is also the task to inform about conditions in other parts of the world to encourage intercession for and gifts towards the international work.

The joint work in international missions is important also for the channelling of the interest of many small congregations and their financial means and to give feed back through information on the ongoing work.

Mission tasks in Sweden are coordinated by the National Unit of the Missions Department: evangelism, fellowship, exchange of information, intercession, training of deacons and pastors, collecting and distribution of financial resources.

One specific goal is that the international and the national work should enrich each other. The coordination of mission work in Sweden and in other countries is done in accordance with various cooperation agreements convened upon by the churches.

Cooperation Agreements

In order to reach a long-term approach to the international work the M CCS has established agreements and contracts concerning the cooperation in missions with churches in other countries. Cooperation Agreements are established between the M CCS and the Evangelical Covenant Church of Ecuador, the Moravian Church in Nicaragua, the Union of Free Evangelical and Baptist Churches of Estonia, the Hindustani Covenant Church (India), the Japanese Covenant Church, the Evangelical Church of Congo (Brazzaville), the Evangelical Community of Congo (Kinshasa) and the Evangelical Covenant Church (of the USA/Canada).

There is also a close collaboration going on with Churches/partners in China, Pakistan, Syria/Lebanon, Costa Rica, Spain, Russia and contacts in other countries, however no formal agreements have been signed with them.

Development Cooperation

The M CCS carries out development cooperation together with churches in other countries. This work is characterized by reciprocity in learning and experiences which in turn derives from a deep sense of community and long term relations having been built up for a long time. The commitment for mission work in local congregations is also coordinated here.

Subsidies from the Swedish International Development Agency, Sida, via the Swedish Mission Council are transferred to the M CCS for support of projects run by the Partner Churches in cooperation with the M CCS. Where these projects are concerned the M CCS and its congregations are responsible for the contribution made by the organisation itself, representing a certain percentage of the overall cost. A special policy has been worked out for Sida-financed projects via M CCS congregations.

A Broader Swedish and International Cooperation

The M CCS cooperates with the Swedish Christian Council and the Swedish Mission Council and other ecumenical bodies in Sweden and with a number of international organisations. This cooperation makes possible information and influencing of public opinion among authorities, media and international bodies. There is a special policy for the work via international ecumenical bodies.

The international ecumenical bodies are:

- The World Council of Churches (WCC)
- The World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC)
- The International Federation of Free Evangelical Churches (IFFEC)
- The Conference of European Churches (CEC)

SMU/equmenia – the MCCA Youth Section

On the basis of the creed, *Jesus Christ is Lord*, the goal for the SMU/equmenia international activities is to create and encourage international work in order to make visible the unity of the church of Christ. The work done by the SMU/equmenia is carried out along the three following lines:

- Strengthen the international commitment within the SMU/equmenia
- Strive for international cooperation, community and exchange
- Strive for international solidarity and justice

The International Committee of the SMU/equmenia carries out its work by order of the equmenia board and in cooperation with SMU/equmenia districts and associations. The international work of the SMU/equmenia is carried out in close cooperation with the MCCA and together with other organisations.

The SMU/equmenia international work should be characterized by:

- reciprocity and dialogue
- meetings between people
- continuity and long-term work
- solidarity and care

The SMU/equmenia and the MCCA make up a whole even though priorities can differ between the two organisations.

The Development Organisation DIAKONIA

DIAKONIA is a joint development organisation for five Swedish churches: The Swedish Alliance Mission (SAM), the Baptist Union of Sweden, the Evangelical Free Church/Interact, the United Methodist Church and the Mission Covenant Church of Sweden (MCCA). The work is done in partnership with some 400 local organisations, denominations and popular movements in some 30 countries. Efforts are done for a sustainable change of the situation for the most marginalized people of the world living in poverty, oppression and violence of various kinds. Essential spheres of work are: democratization, human rights, equality, economic and social justice. The foundation for the work is the will of people to change and improve the world.

Collective and Individual Ministry

A leading principle within the M CCS is that all Christians are called to witness about their faith and to serve their fellow human beings. In order to strengthen this ministry which is for everyone, a number of people are called to special ministries like that of a pastor or a deacon, or to be sent out as a missionary.

Missionaries and Short Time Mission Workers

Historically speaking the calling and the work of the missionaries have been decisive for the mission work carried out by the M CCS. The missionary was called to a life long ministry. This life long commitment has been extremely important for the possibility of the church to establish itself and to carry out a work which meets important needs in a genuine way in the country where the missionary was active. The changes that have taken place among other things in connection with a new way of cooperating with other churches led up to the sending out of short-time mission workers as a complement to life long assignments. The short time missionaries were often connected to a special project or else they possessed some sought-after specific competence.

Today there is still a need of missionaries, both for long assignments and for shorter ones. The task of the missionaries is to be ready to serve in cooperation with another church or to work in new areas, sent out by the M CCS. Here the boundless assignment of the Church becomes visible.

A missionary is consecrated for sending out by the imposition of hands and prayer. For every new period of work the mission worker i.e. the missionary or the short time mission worker is sent out for his task. They are received by the church that has called them as co-workers according to the Cooperation Agreement in force or they execute their task in the country where they have been sent. In the same way the M CCS receives missionaries from other churches.²⁴

The M CCS now tries a new method by linking the missionary to certain congregations through the programme “The Missionary of our Congregation”, in order to increase the intercession and support of the missionary within the framework of the total mission work of the M CCS.

Short Time Volunteers and Trainees

Together with their Sister Churches the M CCS and the SMU/equmenia every year send out and welcome young people for practical experience for a couple of months. This is meant to give the young people the opportunity to test their calling and to get experiences of international cooperation. Another aim of this activity is that, after the period of practice, the young people spread information about and arouse commitment for the M CCS and SMU/equmenia international work. A close collaboration has also been established with the M CCS Folk High Schools.



*Now you are the body of Christ and each
one of you is a part of it. 1 Corinthians 12:27*

Short Historical Account

The M CCS, founded in 1878, was a fruit of the neo-evangelical revival movement of the 19th century. The new denomination brought together free congregations and mission associations for the common mission task in Sweden and in other countries. In 1879 the first missionary was sent out to Finland. In 1880 missionaries were sent to Lapland to work among the Sámi, to Russia and to Congo. During the coming decades the mission work was broadened to even more areas: in 1886 Alaska, in 1887 Northern Africa, in 1890 China, in 1893 Eastern Turkestan, in 1909 French Congo, in 1940 India and in 1949 Japan.

During the last decades, the M CCS had taken up cooperation with already existing churches: in 1971 in Ecuador, in 1979 in Pakistan, in 1991 in Nicaragua, in 1995 in Lithuania and in 2007 in Spain. Recently church cooperation has been taken up again with China (1995), Estonia (1995) and Russia (1991). The M CCS has been active in the Middle East since 1990 via ecumenical bodies. The long time commitment and the continuity have been characteristic of M CCS work over the years.

The M CCS witnesses and builds

The Western Protestant missions expanded considerably around the year 1800. This era was marked by colonialism and Europe was the cultural, political, military and economical centre. Colonialism in Africa and Asia accelerated towards the end of the 19th century and has brought about the arrangement of a whole world into a global, economical system. Colonialism left an economical, political and social heritage which still marks the situation today.

Special missionary societies developed as a reaction to the blurring of the Great Commission and to the fact that missions sometimes came to be identified with the acting of the colonial powers.

The colonial powers spread their own civilization and maintained the political and economic influence something that the missions, more or less unconsciously, contributed to. The mission station introduced the Western view of evangelism, civilization, knowledge, material well-

being. The work contained among other things schools, hospitals, Bible translation and orphanages.

For the MCCS and its history as a protest movement against national churches or state churches, it was natural to see the Great Commission both as mission work in Sweden and everywhere else where people had not yet been reached with the Gospel. At the same time their Christian faith was marked by confidence in the capacity of every person to take his/her own responsibility and standpoint.

There was zeal for Bible translation and for teaching people to read, to able themselves to read the Word of God. This testifies to a positive outlook on the value of each individual and a hotbed for democracy.

The MCCS mission work was thus marked both by colonial institutional building and by a protest against colonialism.

Missions and Development Cooperation

After the Second World War a new era started, marked by two major movements. One was the claim for national autonomy from the colonies. The other one was the Cold War, with the superpowers racing for hegemony.

New concepts like “the Third World”, “Underdevelopment” and “Development Assistance” were coined, concepts chosen from the perspective of the superiority of the Old World. Modelled on the successful Marshall Aid Plan in war-torn Europe the idea was that if the poor countries got help to start off, development would come naturally.

At this time several churches in the mission countries became autonomous. Where the MCCS Sister Churches are concerned this happened in Congo Kinshasa and Congo Brazzaville in 1961, in India and in Japan in 1963. Concepts that were topical were: Autonomy, Moratorium²⁵, the Three-self-movement²⁶ and Missions on six continents.²⁷ The number of life-time missionaries decreased, short time interventions increased. There was hesitation as to the future need for missionaries and also as to their tasks. The mission work was influenced by the emerging governmental, non-confessional assistance both in its terminology and in its methods of work. Focus was put on diaconal work and community building.

The building of institutions like hospitals and schools continued. Administration, congregational life and evangelism came to be the responsibility of the local church. The local churches were surely formally autonomous but the financial means came from outside and were often directed by the donors. At the same time, financial resources were now beginning to be channelled to the mission work from the Swedish State.

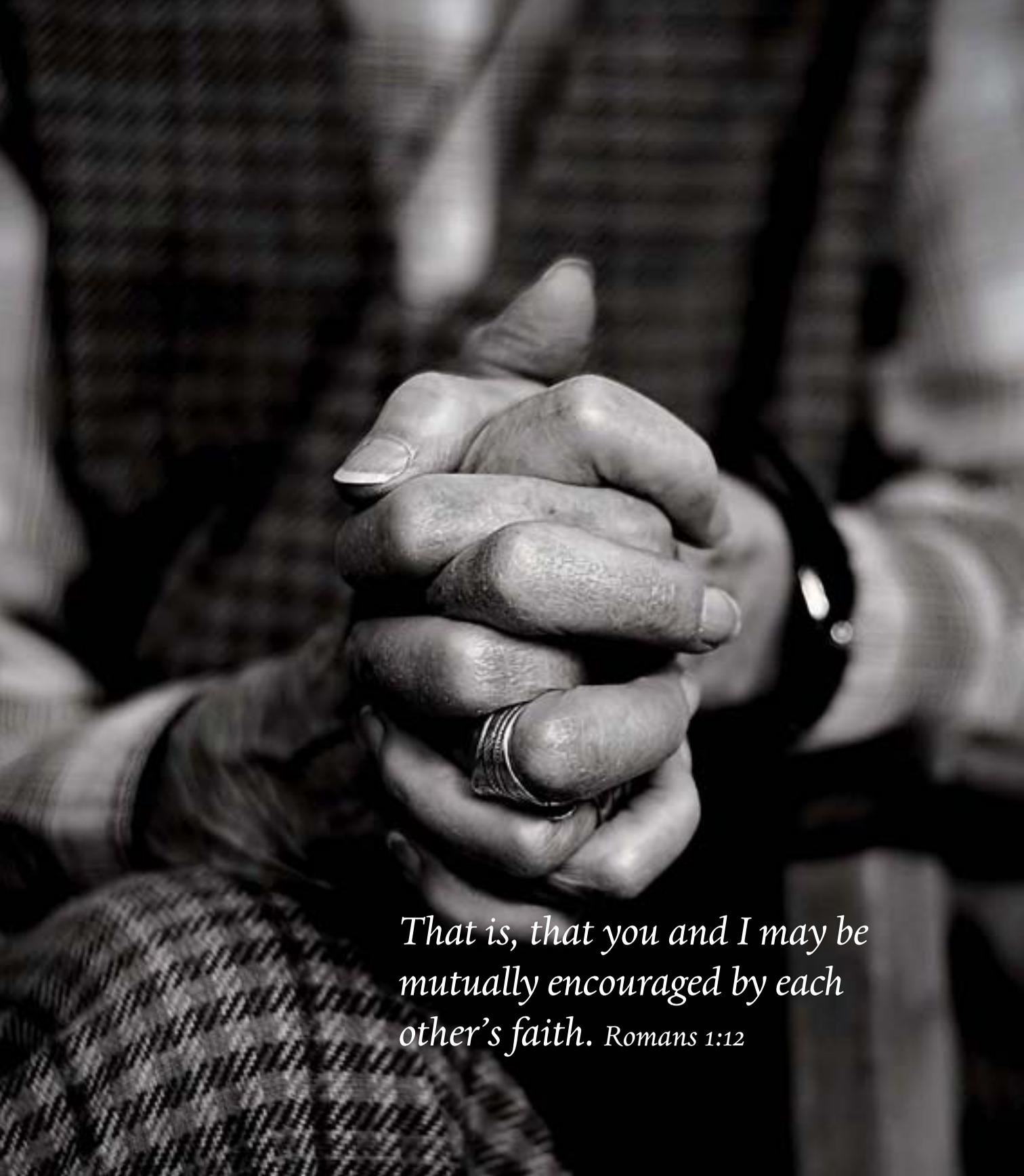
Reciprocity in Missions

During the latter part of the 20th century the world entered a period of globalization. Traditional systems were beginning to loosen up in favour of networks of decision-makers. The sovereignty of national states was more and more questioned. And at the same time the political map of East and West was changed with the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991.

Goods, services, capital and persons are freely moving over frontiers just like knowledge, weapons, fashion, religions, environmental toxics etc. We are now living with a threat against the national security: influence on the environment and on the culture, financial instability, drug and weapon commerce, criminality and terrorism. Trans-national companies exert great influence but show little readiness for taking any social responsibility. Globalization seems to lead to a strengthening of present injustice both within and between countries.

The Christian Church has an important task as a counter-force to all impersonal, economical realities that govern us. The MCCS wants to expose negative trends and together with others analyze and counteract them. The Church wants to create visions for a better world and a righteous society. Reciprocity in thinking and acting must have a greater impact. Ecumenical bodies and networks of contacts and communities must be developed for influence and change.

The MCCS, with its heritage as a popular movement, has something to contribute with in the forming of a good society in the countries where the cooperation is still going on between the churches. Some churches are still to a large extent economically dependent upon the MCCS, a difficult dilemma. Simultaneously a new type of work is emerging within the framework of the “Universal Church”, where the mutual responsibility and interdependence are leading principles.



That is, that you and I may be mutually encouraged by each other's faith. Romans 1:12

Literature

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Årsberättelser för Svenska Missionskyrkan och SMU.

Missionsbilaga i Sändaren inför Annandagsinsamlingen till internationell mission.

För Svenska Missionskyrkans veckobrev om internationell mission samt annat aktuellt material om mission, se www.missionskyrkan.se.

Notes

- 1 John 20:21. The word "mission" is the Latin word for sending, especially used in connection with this Bible passage.
- 2 Nsalasani ku ntuala, Nya tider – nytt samarbete. Une collaboration nouvelle en de nouveaux temps. The final document from the Nordic and Congolese study committees, Brazzaville, Congo, 1992.
- 3 See for instance Gösta Stenström, Voices from the Consultation, General Assembly, 1994.
- 4 Matthew 28:19-20.
- 5 From The Foundation and Contents of Faith
- 6 From the MCCS Congregation Statutes
- 7 From the MCCS Congregation Statutes
- 8 From the MCCS Congregation Statutes
- 9 From the MCCS Congregation Statutes
- 10 From the MCCS Church Statutes
- 11 From the MCCS Church Statutes
- 12 From the Foundation and Contents of Faith
- 13 2 Corinthians 5:18
- 14 Romans 1:8-12
- 15 From the MCCS Church Statutes
- 16 From The Foundation and Contents of Faith
- 17 1 Corinthians 12: 21-27
- 18 Mark 16:15
- 19 Luke 4:18-19
- 20 From the MCCS Constitution
- 21 From the MCCS Congregation Statutes
- 22 From the MCCS Church Statutes
- 23 For example Africa, Europe, China, Middle East, Pakistan, Health and Medical care.
- 24 From the MCCS Church Statutes
- 25 For a limited period of time the sending church should leave off its mission work and hand over all responsibility to the national church. This debate was especially topical in the 1970s.
- 26 Self-government, self-support and self-extension. This mission strategy was formulated already in the middle of the 19th century.
- 27 This expression was coined at the Mission Conference in Mexico City in 1963. Its meaning is that the Gospel must be spread to the whole earth, not only to Africa, Latin America and Asia, but also to Europe and North America.

“Go into the entire world and preach the good news to all creation.” Mark 16:15

