

Joint statement

by Bishops of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania and the Church of Sweden.

We, 14 Bishops out of 24 from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania and the 14 Bishops from the Church of Sweden, representing two of the largest member churches of the Lutheran World Federation, have spent 24-28 August 2015 together at the Diocesan Centre in Rättvik, Sweden. The goals for our Common Bishops' Meeting were:

- To get to know each other as leaders in the one Church of Jesus Christ
- To understand how context shapes our churches
- To strengthen trust between church leaders and between our churches

During these days we worshipped and prayed, listened and talked to each other in smaller and bigger groups. A study visit to the Copper Mine and the Recycling Station in the city of Falun reminded us of our responsibility to be faithful stewards of creation and the resources of planet earth.

Before we leave the Common Bishops' Meeting for visits of the ELCT bishops to the dioceses in Sweden we want to give this report:

The themes we have discussed cover leadership, common challenges facing our churches and how to maintain and promote cooperation as well as partnership between our churches. This has been done with the guidance by texts from The Book of Acts of the Apostles which describe the life of the first Christians. We focused on the following challenges for both our churches: teaching and education, poverty, discipleship, modern communication and being a church in dialogue - in society and with other religions.

We call on our churches

- to give thanks to God for the gift of communion and for our journeys of learning
- to persevere in mutual prayer, ministry and diaconia to the world and care for the creation
- to renew and deepen our relationships being mindful of generational inclusiveness
- to encourage interfaith dialogue and friendly co-existence, especially between Christians and Muslims
- to give priority to education and teaching the Christian faith
- to promote women in leadership

As leaders of our churches we commit ourselves

- to promote mutual learning through exchange of groups, personnel and programs at national, diocesan and parish levels
- to nurture discipleship and ministry of all the baptised in accordance with the principles of the Lutheran Reformation
- to fight poverty, both material and spiritual
- to share and respect theology shaped by our traditions and the contexts in which we live

Rättvik August 28, 2015

On behalf of

Bishop Andrew Gulle

Bishop Job Mbwilo

Bishop Solomon Massangwa

Bishop Fredrick Shoo

Bishop Owdenburg Mdegella

Bishop Levis Sanga

Bishop Michael Adam

Bishop Lucas Mbedule

Bishop Elisa Buberwa

Bishop Stephen Munga

Bishop Jacob Moreto

Bishop Charles Mjema

Bishop Ambele Mwaipopo

Bishop Fredrik Modéus

Bishop Ragnar Persenius

Bishop Sven-Bernhard Fast

Bishop Eva Brunne

Bishop Eva Nordung Byström

Bishop Per Eckerdal

Bishop Hans-Erik Nordin

Bishop Martin Modéus

Bishop Åke Bonnier

Bishop Johan Tyrberg

Bishop Hans Stiglund

Bishop Thomas Söderberg

Bishop Esbjörn Hagberg

Presiding Bishop Alex Malasusa

Archbishop Antje Jackelén