

**THEOLOGICAL CONSULTATION of the  
NORDDEUTSCHE MISSION on  
“OUR COMMON MISSION”  
HELD IN LANGEBOG, GERMANY  
FROM 6 – 9 JUNE 2005**

INTRODUCTION

The sixth Theological Consultation of the six Member-Churches of Bremen Mission was held in Langeoog from the 6 – 9 June, 2005 under the theme: **“Our Common Mission”**.

Participating in this consultation are delegates from

- Eglise Evangélique Presbytérienne du Togo - EEPT
- Evangelical Presbyterian Church, Ghana – E. P. Church, Ghana
- Bremische Evangelische Kirche - BEK
- Evangelisch-Lutherische Kirche in Oldenburg - ELKiO
- Evangelisch-Reformierte Kirche in Deutschland - ErK
- Lippische Landeskirche - LLK

and resource persons from various missionary bodies such as

- Evangelisches Missionswerk, EMW, Hamburg
- United in Mission, UiM, Wuppertal
- Evangelisches Missionswerk in Südwestdeutschland, EMS, Stuttgart
- Communauté d’Eglises en Mission - Cevaa, Montpellier

We reflected during these four days on the importance of “Mission” and

We became aware again that the Mission is the essential characteristic of each Church.

We shared our missionary concepts within our different contexts and

We deepened our fellowship in daily Bible studies and evening prayers.

With this final declaration we want to appeal to our Churches and Congregations to develop a new passion and enthusiasm

- to accept the missionary challenge in their particular context in regard to the rapid and dramatic changes that are going on in the world affecting each corner and each people on earth

- and to strengthen our community of the six Member-Churches of the Bremen Mission which we consider vital for our own Christian Faith and Life.

### **General Understanding of our Mission**

1. As the six Member-Churches of Bremen we understand ourselves as part of the one Holy, Catholic and Christian Church, the Body of Christ. It is God himself, who has brought the Life into being and who has confirmed his promise through Jesus Christ to protect and accompany his creation and the life of his beloved people. It is God himself, who wants to bring to all people his salvation, peace, reconciliation and justice. It is his will to use us as instrument and participants in this work. We are required to discern what God wants us to undertake within a particular period and at a particular locality. This is called today the contextualisation of the gospel.
2. We are convinced that we have a common mission. This mission is coined by a common history and experience and by a present solidarity in regard to the various challenges of our time. We consider the community of our six Churches as part of our spiritual and historical identity. Founded on the Bible, the common source of our Faith, Love and Hope, we affirm to stand in solidarity together. We are determined to share our different stories of Faith and Concerns, our particular gifts and joys in order to learn from other and to be strengthened in our own Faith and engagement.
3. We experience the common service as a major unifying tie. While celebrating together the presence of God in our midst with our different aspirations and thoughts, our gratitude and are different questions we feel assured that God is with us to confirm us the brotherhood of Jesus Christ, his beloved Son, and the strength (power) of his Spirit.
4. We reaffirm the understanding of mission as a holistic mission in the sense how the EEPT has formulated it in 1964: "*the Whole Gospel to the Whole Human Being*". This includes the spiritual need of the people as well as their physical demand, to overcome poverty, injustice and the negligence of the dignity of a human being, the commitment for peace, reconciliation and mutual respect.
5. We have become aware again of the different socio-economic living conditions our Churches are living in. There are different histories and cultural backgrounds, different needs and challenges, different aspirations and activities. We have accepted as a matter of fact these differences in order to fulfil the will of God at different places faithfully. Our mission task is not a free choice to impose own convictions on others but an act of Faith and Obedience to God's will to carry out with a particular passion and talent in a particular situation, environment and locality that each Church is asked.

We respect it and feel obliged to support one another in the particular mission approach by prayer and practical solidarity.

6. To accept the mission dimension of the life of the Church will prevent each Congregation from becoming introverted focussing only to serve the own Congregation or Church Members only and waiting and hoping that others may join them. A new openness is demanded that entails to look beyond the boundaries of the own Church or Congregation and to listen and to go to the people we are living with. "To go and not to wait" is being required. Mission becomes another word for being interested in the people instead of waiting for people to be interested in the Church. This certainly will change a certain prevailing mentality.

### **Living in solidarity one with another**

What we have learnt and what we would like to propose:

- From the E.P. Church, Ghana we have learnt that she has identified the struggle to overcome the ignorance of the people as major mission target. To give some examples one can observe among the people ignorance
  - about the reasons of the mushrooming of Christian religious groups
  - about the causes of poverty
  - about AIDS
  - about teenage pregnancy
  - about violence against women
  - about the consequences of child-labour
  - about the political and ethnic dimension of the country
- from the EEPT we have learnt about the anxieties of the people suffering from oppression and insecurity, about the victims of these oppressions in Togo and the refugees in the neighbour countries, Ghana and Benin
- from the German Churches we have learnt about their concern and commitment to regain the hearts of the people, to understand the fears of their people about an uncertain future, to encourage them to develop a new life perspective and to strengthen their confidence in the future that remain always God's future.

The Member-Churches of Bremen Mission are called to solidarity and are asked to be ready to support the different endeavours of their Partner-Churches.

We endorse projects which try to alleviate the suffering of the victims of oppression within Togo and of the refugees in the neighbour countries, Ghana and Benin.

We endorse the pharmacy project of the E.P. Church in Ho which has been identified as a hopeful venture to overcome a certain lack of better health service to the people in Ho.

We endorse to organise an ecumenical visit of a group of three persons to Germany to witness their Faith in meetings with different groups in different situations.

### **The Partnership Sunday:**

The Partnership Sunday will help our Churches to participate in the different life situations of the Churches. It is an opportunity to let the Congregations of our Churches enter in a permanent mutual learning about the life of the others and to read the Bible with the eyes of the others.

This Partnership Sunday should be held on the Sunday after Pentecost. Each Church appoints a person or a group to provide the material in due time for the Congregations to celebrate the Service with the same biblical text, the same hymns and prayers and the same theme.

We recommend that the selected Theme – i.e. “Who is your neighbour?”- accompanies the Church-Groups and Church-Members throughout the year. At the end the different views and experiences are being collected and exchanged.

### **The Children Bible Project**

We appreciated the Project of the Children Bible of the two Church districts of the E.P. Church and the Reformed Church in Germany as a very good example and contribution to strengthen the fellowship among each other and to listen to life stories of the partners by reading the same biblical texts.

We propose that this new Children Bible, being printed in the four languages “English, Ewe, French and German “ be presented in all Congregations of our Churches as a symbol of a common missionary action.

We want to point out that this project demonstrates in a good way that God is a liberating God who will not tolerate child-slavery and is eager to liberate them from this modern scourge of exploitation of children and who will defend the rights and the unique dignity of all children as his own children .

### **Practical and new Co-operations**

We realised that the six Churches within the Bremen Mission family represents only a limited community. Therefore any co-operation with other Churches or Mission Agencies, other NGOs or Government Agencies in specific projects should be encouraged. The Agenda 21 process in the Volta-Region has been an encouraging example for us.

Our own Churches could and should intensify their co-operation.

- The co-operation between the EEPT and the E. P. Church on different levels - seminaries, women work, youth work, agriculture.
- We endorse that the other three German Churches participate in the ecumenical visitation program being organised by the Lippe-Church in 2006.

Langeoog/Bremen

9/6/2005