



COMMON WITNESS

Basic Policy on Mission of
the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland



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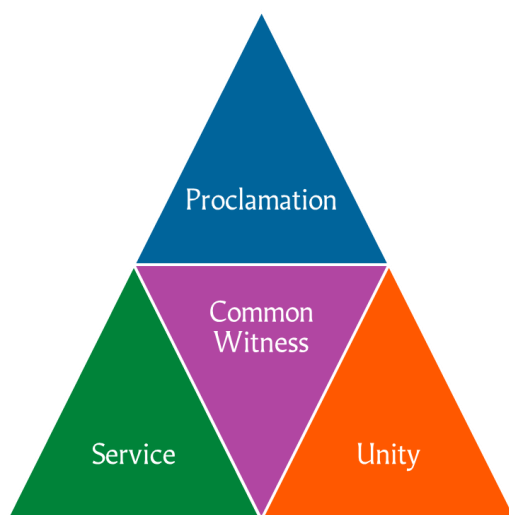
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What is the church?

The church is the people of God on the move, the body of Christ and the temple of the Holy Spirit. The unity of the church of Christ around the world is worked out in every parish. It shows itself in different ways in each particular context. As a community of faith and love, the church witnesses in word and action to God's saving work toward humanity and creation. Christians are called to act in accordance with the love of God and to build up the church of Christ, to which they belong through Baptism.

The mission of God

The church, and every parish, carries out the mission of the Triune God (*Missio Dei*), to which all Christians are called (Luke 4:16-22; Matt. 28:18-20; Jn. 20:21). Christians are at the service of God's mission (2. Cor. 5:20; 2. Cor. 6:1). The gospel of the uniqueness of Christ is to be proclaimed everywhere and to everyone. Mission is the basic, all-embracing task of the parish. The future of the church and the parish is bound up in mission.



Unity, witness, and service

The church is missionary by its very nature. It demonstrates this through its unity, witness and service. Christians are one, because in Baptism

they have been joined to Christ, his church and to one another. The love of God leads Christians to proclaim the Gospel and to serve their neighbour, together with other churches and Christian communities. Mission is the heart of the Ecumenical Movement.

Holistic mission and evangelism

In all its activities, the parish lives for mission, and carries out mission. Holistic mission involves every human being. Christian witness begins in a person's home and from their front door. The task of the parish and its members is "supporting mission" and engaging in it as fully as they are able. Holistic mission should form the foundation of all parish life, and prayer and encouragement are needed if new ways of doing things are to be developed.

Principle:

God sends us out to proclaim the good news. The church encounters all kinds of people through its mission and through evangelism. The church and the members of its parishes, together with the church's mission agencies boldly carry the word to people living both near and far. They proclaim the Gospel in a variety of ways especially in places where Christ is not yet known. People who have become alienated from the Christian faith need to be approached with particular care. In its mission, the church encounters all kinds of margins, including the geographical ones.

Principle:

Holistic mission also includes justice, human dignity, equality, and advocacy for people's fundamental rights. Parishes and the mission agencies may encounter immigrants, refugees, displaced people, the marginalized, and the persecuted. They will support and serve them, work with them and on their behalf, and give a voice to those who have none.

Principle:

The church and its mission agencies will promote education in mission and in missiology especially in the basic training and continuing education of the church's employees. They will resource the work of mission and evangelism by providing education for parish officials, and especially for young people and young adults.

**Voluntary activity**

The parish truly demonstrates its focus on mission when it makes it possible for all the members to make their own contribution. This means for church workers and volunteers common planning together, setting goals, receiving of training, and being committed to working together. Voluntary activity strengthens a parish's sense of community.

Principle:

Networks of volunteers support and serve the activities of the parish. Those who take part in the church's mission agencies are a significant part of a parish's voluntary work.

Partnership at home

The church mission depends on partnership and cooperation. It involves interaction and the sharing of common resources. Local cooperation gains strength from having a shared vision of mission. This has been given theological definition in the document "The Baseline of the Mission and International Diakonia of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland until the Year 2015." It is on the basis of this text that parishes and mission agencies will accomplish their mission tasks. Shared vision will open up new ways of putting mission into practice.

Principle:

The church's mission agencies will provide support by offering expertise and networking to parishes and dioceses to enhance their understanding of mission and assist them in carrying out their missional tasks. They will be committed to cooperation. With the church's national Office for Global Mission, they will develop the church's common missionary worker training, provide up-to-date information about mission and help the workers determine the kind of mission work they will engage in.

The church's mission and the clergy

In the church's mission, the following principles concerning the clergy shall be observed:

- 1) In cooperation between parishes and mission agencies, the church's mission agencies shall function in accordance with the church's decision (1986), according to which also women are ordained, and in accordance with the practices of the parishes.
- 2) In working together with foreign churches, the church's mission agencies shall observe respective decisions on ministerial office and shall not create tensions with the partners.



International cooperation

International partners are partner churches, organizations, church associations, other Christian, secular organizations, and networks. Cooperation takes place reciprocally, with mutual respect and listening to one another. The independent position of partner churches, and the decisions they take, must be respected, but there should always be critical dialogue in both directions. Although the situations of some growing churches differ from our own, our church has much to learn from their ways of mission and evangelism, their theology, and theological education. It is also necessary to learn from churches whose work and activities have faced difficult challenges. The renewal of the church requires an understanding of the changing situation of world mission and the application of the lessons learned to the local situation.

Principle:

The church's mission agencies support the parishes' and church's international contacts. Mission agencies will be committed, in accordance with the Framework Agreement, to the church's ecumenical policy and will promote ecumenical relations in all environments. If there are several Lutheran churches in the countries in which the mission agencies' activities take place, they will support

and encourage them to work together. The church and its mission agencies will support partner churches' mission. In accordance with the Framework Agreement, the mission agencies will report significant growth and changes in their activities to the Bishops' Conference.



Media and digital communication

The way the Gospel is proclaimed varies according to culture and context. The church's message spreads spontaneously, often without organized structures. Those who implement the mission of the church seek out and use, actively and without bias, the ever-changing modes and means of digital communication. The widespread use of mobile phones around the world has made possible a quick and modern form of mission and of support for Christians living in difficult situations.

Principle:

The church reaches peoples who live in different cultures and speak different languages, each in their own language. The word of God reaches people in different forms: through printed translations of the Scripture, recordings, digital apps, radio and television programs. The digital environment, especially social media, offers new possibilities for interaction. Modern forms of communication can also support Christians' lives and their task of witness. Digital communication reaches hundreds of millions of people both at home and abroad.



The encounter of faiths

Finnish society has changed rapidly in a multitude of ways: religiously, in terms of worldview, and culturally. Interreligious dialogue begins from everyday encounters with members of other religions and worldviews. Christian witness belongs in this encounter: Christians relate their faith in the Triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. They listen to those of another faith, and allow them to describe their own faith. In encounter, the Triune God works in a hidden manner and is present through the Holy Spirit.

Learning from the other, respecting the other, hospitality, love of neighbour and common

actions all form part of the dialogue. Cooperation in social questions, joint religious occasions and doctrinal discussion are other forms of interreligious dialogue. Dialogue promotes social peace and contributes towards the successful achievement of freedom of religion.

Principle:

The church and the parishes strengthen the mutual bonds between Christians as well as interreligious dialogue, in which people belonging to different religious and cultural backgrounds are able to have genuine interaction with each other. The church's mission agencies, through their expertise, can help parishes increase their knowledge and understanding of other religions and cultures.

Framework agreement between the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland and the agencies for its international work.

1. PARTIES

The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland (hereafter, the Church)

Signatory organisation recognised by the General Synod of the Church:

2. PURPOSE OF THE AGREEMENT

The Church's mission work is based on the Bible and on the confession of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland. The mission work of the Church is conducted in compliance with the Church's Basic Policy on Mission and its principles.

The ratification of this agreement is based on the resolution adopted at the Church's General Synod on 9 May 1979 approving the principles concerning the requirements of being a Church mission agency.

The purpose of the agreement is to define the principles whereby the signatory organisation complies with the implementation of mission work in the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland. The agreement does not conflict with a signatory organisation's private legal status.

3. IMPLEMENTATION OF COOPERATION

The form and implementation of the parties' cooperation shall be approved by the Bishops'

Conference based on a presentation made by the Church's Committee for Global Mission. The authorised representative of a signatory party to the framework agreement has the right to attend and speak at the committee. The representative also has the right to ask that his/her opinion be recorded in the minutes of the committee's meetings.

The Church undertakes to treat all Church Mission Agencies on an equal footing. Each signatory organisation recognises the other signatories to the framework agreement as Mission Agencies of the Church and undertakes to cooperate with them.

4. RIGHTS AND OBLIGATIONS

An organisation that is a signatory to the framework agreement is recognised as a Mission Agency of the Church.

It is the duty of a signatory organisation to comply in its own work with the confession and decisions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland and to implement the Church's approved Basic Policy on Mission and its principles.¹

The signatory organisation collaborates with parishes, dioceses, and the Office for Global Mission in the implementation of the Church's mission work. The signatory organisation reports annually to the Bishops' Conference concerning its main strategic policies, activities, and finances. The Office for Global Mission discusses each year the implementation of the Basic Policy on Mission and the mission task in the operations of the signatory organisation.

A signatory organisation participates in the discussion of the Church's mission principles in the Church's Committee for Global Mission. A

¹ The provision of this agreement in respect of a mission agency's confessional status does not apply to the Finnish Bible Society where, in addition to the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland, the Orthodox Church of

Finland, the Catholic Church in Finland, and the Free Church Council of Finland are also represented on the board.

signatory organisation undertakes to inform the Bishops' Conference when it

- plans new significant openings in bilateral or multilateral relations and/or networks with cooperation partners;
- plans new cooperation agreements with foreign churches or other partners;
- intends to renew existing cooperation agreements with substantial changes.

The same procedure also applies to other substantial changes in the operational plans of a signatory organisation, and to its links with international ecumenical and mission actors such as international church bodies.

The signatory organisation may benefit from parish collections and budget allocations and also from voluntary support through the parishes. The signatory organisation also commits itself to foster the implementation of the Church's mission task domestically within Finland.

5. DURATION OF THE AGREEMENT

This agreement will be valid from 14 June 2018. The agreement will remain valid until 13 June 2023.

The Bishops' Conference will monitor the implementation of the agreement annually.

6. TERMINATION OF THE AGREEMENT

A signatory organisation is entitled to terminate the agreement. Termination shall take effect from receipt of the notice of termination by the plenary of the General Synod. Notice of termination shall also be submitted to the Bishops' Conference.

If the Bishops' Conference considers that the activity of a Church's mission agency is not in compliance with the confession and decisions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland and with the Church's agreed Basic Policy on Mission and its principles, it shall consult with the Mission Agency. If the practices of the signatory organisation do not require immediate representation to the General Synod by the Bishops' Conference, resulting in the signatory organisation's loss of its status as a Church Mission Agency, the Bishops' Conference shall grant a reasonable period of at least two (2) and a maximum of four (4) months to permit correction of any practices contrary to the agreement. If it is the view of the Bishops' Conference that no correction has been made, it may propose to the General Synod that the signatory organisation should lose its status as a Church Mission Agency. The status of the signatory organisation as a Church Mission Agency shall lapse when the General Synod determines that the status has been lost. Based on this decision, this agreement will also be terminated immediately and without notice.

7. DATE AND SIGNATURES

This agreement has been drafted in two (2) identical copies, one for each party.

Helsinki, day, month, 2018

Signatures

Principles collectively

These principles are the ones mentioned in the Framework Agreement between the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland and the agencies for its international work. The Agreement defines the rights and the obligations of the Church and the agencies involved.

1. God sends us out to proclaim the good news. The church encounters all kinds of people through its mission and through evangelism. The church and the members of its parishes, together with the church's mission agencies boldly carry the word to people living both near and far. They proclaim the Gospel in a variety of ways especially in places where Christ is not yet known. People who have become alienated from the Christian faith need to be approached with particular care. In its mission, the church encounters all kinds of margins, including the geographical ones.
2. Holistic mission also includes justice, human dignity, equality, and advocacy for people's fundamental rights. Parishes and the mission agencies may encounter immigrants, refugees, displaced people, the marginalized, and the persecuted. They will support and serve them, work with them and on their behalf, and give a voice to those who have none.
3. The church and its mission agencies will promote education in mission and in missiology especially in the basic training and continuing education of the church's employees. They will resource the work of mission and evangelism by providing education for parish officials, and especially for young people and young adults.
4. The church's mission agencies will provide support by offering expertise and networking to parishes and dioceses to enhance their understanding of mission and assist them in carrying out their missional tasks. They will be committed to cooperation. With the church's national Office for Global Mission, they will develop the church's common missionary worker training, provide up-to-date information about mission and help the workers determine the kind of mission work they will engage in.
5. Networks of volunteers support and serve the activities of the parish. Those who take part in the church's mission agencies are a significant part of a parish's voluntary work.
6. The church's mission agencies support the parishes' and church's international contacts. Mission agencies will be committed, in accordance with the Framework Agreement, to the church's ecumenical policy and will promote ecumenical relations in all environments. If there are several Lutheran churches in the countries in which the mission agencies' activities take place, they will support and encourage them to work together. The church and its mission agencies will support partner churches' mission. In accordance with the Framework Agreement, the mission agencies will report significant growth and changes in their activities to the Bishops' Conference.
7. The church reaches peoples who live in different cultures and speak different languages, each in their own language. The word of God reaches people in different forms: through printed translations of the Scripture, recordings, digital apps, radio and television programs. The digital environment, especially social media, offers new possibilities for interaction. Modern forms of communication can also support Christians' lives and their task of witness. Digital communication reaches hundreds of millions of people both at home and abroad.
8. The church and the parishes strengthen the mutual bonds between Christians as well as interreligious dialogue, in which people belonging to different religious and cultural backgrounds are able to have genuine interaction with each other. The church's mission agencies, through their expertise, can help parishes increase their knowledge and understanding of other religions and cultures.

Office for Global Mission

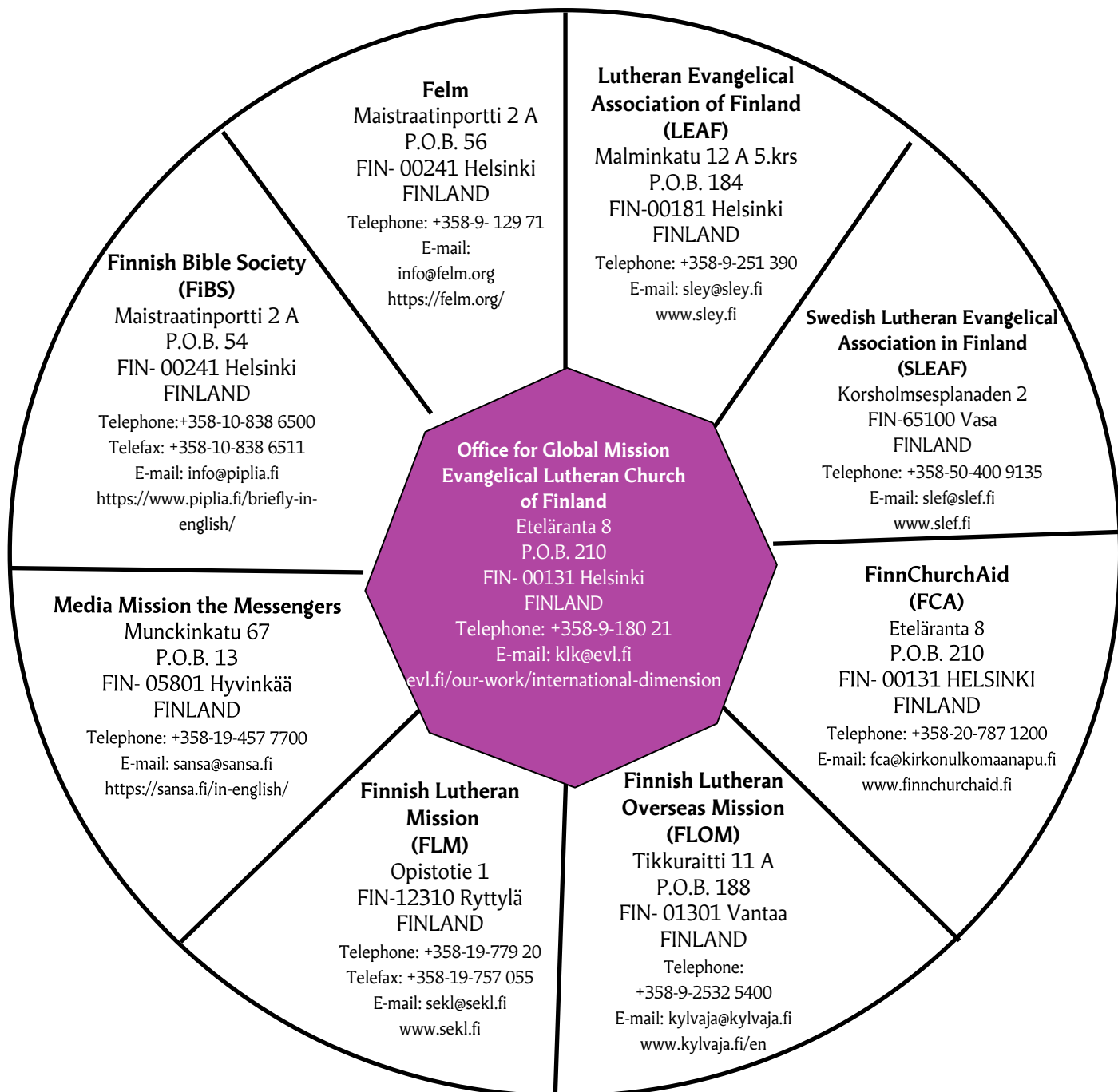
- ✚ **SUPERVISES, DEVELOPS, COORDINATES AND MONITORS** the missionary work of the Church, local parishes and the mission agencies
- ✚ **MAINTAINS** relationships with partner churches and international bodies
- ✚ **IS IN CHARGE OF** the education, training and communications related to mission and interreligious dialogue in collaboration with local parishes, dioceses and mission agencies

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<https://evl.fi/our-work/international-dimension>

Agencies of the Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Finland for its international work



PIPLiA.



FELM 1859



LEAF

LUTHERAN EVANGELICAL
ASSOCIATION OF FINLAND



SLEAF

The Finnish Bible Society's (FiBS) core activities are Bible translation, literacy, strengthening of marginalised communities, Bible publishing and engagement. FiBS is part of the United Bible Societies (UBS) that works in 240 countries and territories through national Bible Societies.

FiBS brings hope for today and creates faith in the future. Founded in 1812.

Felm work aims to promote human dignity and justice around the world. The Christian message of hope, faith and neighbourly love has been the cornerstone of our work for 160 years. Felm is an agency of the ELCF for its international work. Felm currently works in 30 countries with more than 100 partner churches and organisations. As one of the largest Finnish civil society organisations working in global development Felm also receives funding from Finland's Ministry for Foreign Affairs. Founded in 1859.

Lutheran Evangelical Association of Finland (LEAF) started its foreign missionary work in 1900, in Japan. Since the 1970s, it has carried out missionary work also in Kenya, in Papua-New-Guinea, in Zambia, in Cameroun, and in Russia. The LEAF has about 30 missionaries altogether. The organization has work in 11 countries. As a mission agency since 1989.

The Swedish Lutheran Evangelical Association in Finland (SLEAF) is a Swedish-speaking mission organisation in Finland in order to spread the gospel of Christ, the Bible and other literature that conforms to the Lutheran Confessions. On the mission fields SLEAF has put great emphasize on church ministry with preaching, teaching, diaconal work and teaching in schools. Church buildings and youth polytechnics have also been built with mission funds. Founded in 1922.



Finn Church Aid (FCA) is an organisation of the ELCF and carries out international diaconal mission in 14 countries. FCA engages in development cooperation, humanitarian assistance, and advocacy work with the most vulnerable people, so that everyone's right to peace, education and livelihood would be fulfilled. Founded in 1948.



The Finnish Lutheran Mission (FLM) engages in mission work in Asia, Africa, Europe and Oceania, altogether in 13 countries with 63 missionaries (year 2018). The aim is to do pioneer work in unreached areas and to help establish new Lutheran churches. We serve on the mission also in education, health care, development cooperation, Bible translation and the media. There is also work among Finnish immigrants in Sweden. FLM is closely linked to the recent revival movements within the Lutheran Church. FLM represents pietistic Evangelical Lutheran theology. Founded in 1967.



Media Mission the Messengers (Sansa) is involved in media missions through radio, television, internet and mobile devices. Sansa also seconds missionaries to serve with partner organizations. The organization supports work in 35 languages in Asia, Africa and Europe. Founded in 1973.



Finnish Lutheran Overseas Mission (FLOM) is a mission organization of the ELCF with a holistic view of missions. FLOM works particularly in those areas of the world in which there are few Christians. FLOM has about 40 workers in Asia, Africa and among refugees and Jews in Europe. Founded in 1974

**NATIONAL CHURCH COUNCIL
THE OFFICE FOR GLOBAL MISSION **

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