

# SHARING A COMMON CALL TO MISSION AND LIVING A PARTNERSHIP IN CHRISTIAN COMMITMENT

## MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN MISSION EINE WELT / ELCB AND LCA INTERNATIONAL MISSION

### Introductory:

A long and rich relationship exists between the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Bavaria (ELCB) and the Lutheran Church of Australia (LCA), primarily being built upon a common response of answering the Lord's call to work in his mission. The Neuendettelsau Mission Society played a vital role in establishing this relationship, which dates back to the mid of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and took strong roots with the service of Missionary Johann Flierl from Bavaria amongst Lutherans in Australia in 1878. After his years serving indigenous people in South Australia and as missionary in far North Queensland he was commissioned by the Lutheran Synod of South Australia to serve in New Guinea in 1886. Over the ensuing years as the Word of God took root in the hearts and lives of people in Papua New Guinea mission staff of the LCA and ELCB have worked together in close cooperation and harmony through good times and through troubled times. 57 Pastors from Neuendettelsau served until 1933 in a holistic mission to migrated Australian Lutherans and also aboriginal communities. Lutherans in Australia throughout many decades assisted with endeavour and success to sustain the Neuendettelsau mission in critical times. Their support is an ongoing blessing.

As we enter the second decade of the twenty first century the nature of our mission partnership in PNG has seen changes over the years and taken new shape. Now is an important opportunity to show our solidarity in continuing to serve together as partners. In our present global society and as Lutheran sisters and brothers we are to respond to challenges such as the following ones: Secularism in our pluralistic societies; revival of traditional cultural values in prime cultures where we share ministry; the urgency for appropriate education and services in our partner churches; Christian witness and religions; Christian ethics in the light of presently burning issues such as human rights; overcoming violence; justice for the poor; climate change; corruption; migration; social changes. We shall endeavour to inspire each other in ways which further faithfully promote the proclamation of the gospel in His mission, stand up for what is right and serve God's people through joint action in the midst of many present challenges.

### Shared Mission and Shared Support Now and into the Future

There are many ways our partnership and common mission heritage are evidenced today including the following:

- Serving as partners in the Lutheran Overseas Partners Cooperation (LOPC) in working to build up the capacity of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Papua New Guinea (ELC-PNG)
- Serving as partners in East Asian Churches (LCM, LCS) and in the Mekong Mission Forum (MMF) to assist in building up of the fledgling Lutheran Churches in the Mekong area (e.g. Thailand, Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam and Myanmar)
- Mission OneWorld in its programme to host its partners from the Pacific/Asia region, has repeatedly hosted representatives from LCA – be it individuals or groups for various exposure and learning opportunities in the interest of shaping our profiles and service in His mission. The LCA acknowledges these visitation programs and opportunities with thankfulness to ELCB/ Mission OneWorld for the learning and strengthening of fellowship which these provide.
- Mission OneWorld gratefully acknowledges the opportunities as LCA today hosts ELCB missionaries in the region for orientation and in various other matters of assistance to ELCB staff in the region, including financial/technical assistance.
- LCA International Mission and Mission OneWorld/ELCB co-sponsor scholarships for students from our partner churches in the Pacific/Asia region.
- Increasingly we share joint mission work and multi-relational partnership programmes with churches in many parts of the world - especially in the Pacific/Asia region. We are blessed by mutual

inspiration and support in our cooperation in that region. Since funding these opportunities is increasingly difficult and the challenges are manifold, working together as partners where possible is all the more efficient.

- Opportunities can be further explored in the field of exchange programmes for deacons/lay workers or special vicarage programmes in various ministry settings.
- Programmes are partially being realised and shall be further explored in relation to renewed visits of the churches, their mission departments and possibly also other areas of activities – such as education.
- In seeking to support our partner churches in Asia/Pacific to mature and grow in their capacities it is wise to consider ways to combine efforts and work together with a shared strategic focus.

#### **A Spirit of Mutual Cooperation**

A spirit of mutual cooperation has characterised the relationship between Mission OneWorld/ELCB and the LCA and their predecessors. This spirit of cooperation is built on Christ the rock, who is the foundation for all we are and all we do.

Therefore our relationship has been and will continue to be characterised by a dependence on the Living Word of God in the Holy Scriptures and as witnessed by the Lutheran Confessions in the *Book of Concord*.

Furthermore our relationship has been and will continue to be characterised by common new life in Christ. Therefore if any difficulties or problems should arise between us we will make every endeavour and to show Christ's forgiveness through Christian reconciliation, should it be necessary.

In so doing we will continue to grow in our relationship as we partner with one another in the Lord's vineyard. We shall witness to the world the gift of Christian fellowship in the bond of peace, love and faith.

#### **General notes:**

1. *Mission Eine-Welt – Mission OneWorld is the Centre for Partnership, Development and Mission of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Bavaria, referred to as "the ELCB" in this document.*
2. *The Lutheran Church of Australia is being referred to as "the LCA" and the mission department of the LCA, known as LCA International Mission in this document.*

#### **Signed**

##### **1. LCA:**

*Glenice Hartwich  
Assistant to the Bishop – International Mission  
Lutheran Church of Australia*

*Mr Stephen Wilksch  
Committee for International Mission  
Lutheran Church of Australia*

##### **2. Mission EineWelt/ELCB:**

*Rev. M. Martin, Superior  
for Ecumene and Mission  
in ELCB Governing Council*

*Rev. H. Hoerschelmann  
Director  
Mission EineWelt*

*Rev. Dr. T. Farnbacher  
Secr. PNG, Pacific, East Asia  
Mission EineWelt*