



## The Mission Province *in Sweden*

– and Nordic partners in Finland,  
Norway and Denmark.

The Mission Province in Sweden is founded on the Holy Word of God and stands in continuity with the spiritual tradition that historically characterized the *Church of Sweden*.

Today, sadly, the bishops and other leaders of the *Church of Sweden* have abandoned that foundation, embracing instead a liberal socio-political agenda.

The Nordic countries share both secular and Church history. Over the last two centuries the churches of these Lutheran monarchies were turned into politicized national churches with a thoroughly liberal clergy.

Since the Reformation, the churches have never been so needed, yet today they offer nothing that can help ... In response to this change, the Mission Province – as our partners – proclaim the Gospel of Christ, and Him crucified.

**The Mission Province in Sweden** was founded in 2003 after many years with various initiatives in order to maintain the biblical understanding of the Ministry.

Bowing to political pressure, the *Church of Sweden* in 1958 accepted the ordination of women. This radical decision was the first of many in which the leaders of the *Church of Sweden* have abandoned the Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions.

The biblical view was at first still tolerated, but in 1993 the bishops barred Confessional men from ordination. This was written into the Church Order in 2000. The new law gives control of the *Church of Sweden* to a Churchwide Assembly dominated by the parliamentary political parties.

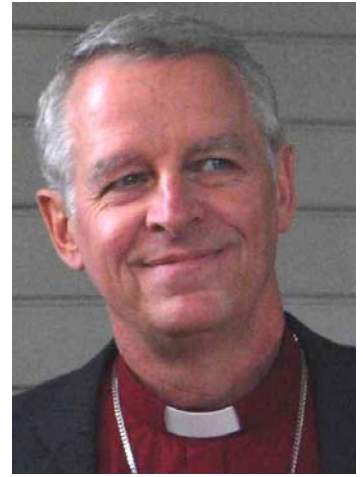
The results of this politicization and abandonment of Scripture are appearing in liturgical practice, in doctrinal statements, in hymnbooks and ecumenical agendas, in congregations and in society.

In 2009, the *Church of Sweden* changed the Church Order – as the political majority changed Swedish law – to include “gender-neutral” marriages.

The Mission Province was established as a direct response to the barring of Confessional pastors, but the development in Sweden shows that the Mission Province is needed still more as an alternative to those who need and seek the Gospel proclaimed – and as a memento to the bishops and others that lead the *Church of Sweden*.



**The Mission Province in Sweden** consists of 15 congregations and pastors under the supervision of bishop Roland Gustafsson. He succeeded Arne Olsson, who was consecrated by bishop Walther Obare Omwanza in February 2005. A dozen additional congregations are served by pastors from the Mission Province.



After examination by the Consistory, 21 men have been ordained for service in Sweden and for mission projects abroad. They would not have been ordained within the *Church of Sweden*, due to their confessional conviction. Two deacons and a deaconess have been commissioned.

The Mission Province's objective is congregations built on full confidence in the Word of God and the Lutheran Confessions. With our Nordic partners, the Mission Province seeks contact and fellowship with Confessional Lutheran churches and organizations.

- [www.missionsprovinsen.se](http://www.missionsprovinsen.se)
- [info@missionsprovinsen.se](mailto:info@missionsprovinsen.se)
- see also [www.scandhouse.org](http://www.scandhouse.org)  
(edited by Christopher Barnekov, Ph.D.)

To support the Mission Province use:  
**IBAN: SE 33 9500 0099 6042 0113 6639**  
**SWIFT/BIC: NDEA SESS**



**Sweden** covers 174 000 sq. miles .

***Sweden 2014 — in short***

The population is 9.7 million  
6.4 million (66%) are members  
in the *Church of Sweden*  
30% of those aged 15 were confirmed

***Sweden 1988 — in short***

The population was 8.45 million  
7.6 million (90%) were members  
in the Lutheran State Church  
66% of those aged 15 were confirmed.

**Finland** covers 130 000 sq. miles and is bordered to the east by Russia.

**Finland 2014 — in short**

The population is 5.45 million  
4.1 million (75%) are members  
in the Lutheran majority Church  
49 500 children were confirmed

**Finland 1990 — in short**

The population was 5 million  
4.35 million (87%) were members  
in the Lutheran majority Church  
60 000 children were confirmed.



In **Finland**, changes began later but are occurring rapidly. Female pastors were not ordained until 1988. Here, the struggle, however, has hardened around Church Order issues.

In 1999, the **Luther Foundation Finland** was formed in order to build Lutheran congregations. Until 2010, when a Finnish bishop, Matti Väisänen, was consecrated, 8 Finnish pastors were ordained in the Mission Province by bishop Arne Olsson. Bishop Matti Väisänen ordained another 12 pastors.



As the Finnish movement grew rapidly, **The Evangelical Lutheran Mission Diocese of Finland** was established in March 2013. More than 35 congregations and pastors are supervised by Bishop Risto Soramies, who has ordained a dozen pastors since 2013.

For further information and contact, visit the homepage of the Mission Diocese:

[www.lhpk.fi/en](http://www.lhpk.fi/en)

In **Norway**, the Mission Province is most closely connected with the Evangelical Lutheran Diocese of Norway, formally established in April 2013. This process began, however, in 1997, when Rev. Børre Knudsen was consecrated as an alternative bishop in reaction to new teachings among the bishops of the *Church of Norway* on homosexual relations.

Partly, the movement stemmed from pro-life-protests; but the *Church of Norway* became even more liberal, departing from Scripture and Confessions. In 2009, Parliament dissolved the traditional concept of marriage in Norwegian law.

Today, Bishop Thor Henrik With succeeds Bishop Børre, and he supervises five congregations, of which one belongs to the arctic Sami minority.

For further information and contact, visit the homepage of the diocese: [www.delsin.no](http://www.delsin.no)



**Norway** covers 149 000 sq. miles

**Norway 2014 — in short**

The population is 5.1 million  
3.85 million (75%) are members in  
the *Church of Norway* (Lutheran)  
40 000 children (63%) were confirmed

**Norway 1990 — in short**

The population was 4.25 million  
3.82 million (90%) were members in  
the *Church of Norway*  
46 000 children (81%) were confirmed.



**Denmark** was the first Nordic country to have female ordinations (1948) and Confessional men have not been formally barred from ordination. Yet, the bishops exercise some pressure on young candidates.

In 1997, the bishops authorized a blessing for "gender-neutral" couples. And in June 2012, the change was completed, so that the Church Order authorizes "gender-neutral" marriages, thus directly opposing the Word of God. The bishops and the Parliament are responsible.

The responses from the Confessional movements have been many and united, but steps taken have been rather disparate. Many congregations have been established during the last two decades. They have not formed a diocese or elected a bishop. Rather, they stand alone or they are connected to one of the Confessional movements.

The Mission Province has so far no direct partner in Denmark. However, a retired Danish pastor is a member of our College of Pastors and also of the Consistory.



**Denmark** covers only 16 500 sq. miles and is bordered to the south by Germany.

***Denmark 2014 — in short***

The population is 5.6 million  
4.4 million (78%) are members in the majority Church (Lutheran)  
71% of those aged 14 were confirmed

***Denmark 1990 — in short***

The population was 5.14 million  
4.58 million (89%) were members in the majority Church (Lutheran)  
81% of those aged 14 were confirmed.

### **Communion of Nordic Lutheran Dioceses**

In November 2015, these Dioceses in Finland, Norway and Sweden signed and declared churchly communion. The background for that was the recognition of a shared spiritual inheritance of the Western Church, the Lutheran Reformation and the revivals of recent centuries. It is seen in our Dioceses primarily in our Lutheran doctrinal foundation, liturgical tradition and episcopal polity.

The three Dioceses have taken part in a similar "church struggle" within the frame of the Nordic national churches. The state of emergency has given rise to similar solutions and actions in the countries of each Diocese.

The Dioceses confess true unity of faith and ecclesiastical communion among themselves. This spiritual reality obliges each Diocese to inform each other of actions, pray for one another and cherish the spiritual communion, thus building Christ's Church in the Nordic Countries.

