

## Peace, Human Rights, conversion

### *Policy for peace, human rights and conversion to a sustainable world*

Adopted in May 2013. Revised by the Uniting Church board in September 2018

#### Theological foundation

The Uniting Church in Sweden wants to protect justice and expose injustice, encourage participation and shared responsibility in society, contribute to equalisation of the world's resources, act for peace and reconciliation as well as take responsibility for the caring of God's creation. (From "Teologisk grund för Equmeniakyrkan", 2011 – Theological Foundation document.)

We want the church to be sustainable, an ecologically sustainable church conscious of the environment, a socially sustainable church with a strong community and an economically sustainable church in its stewardship. That includes interacting perseveringly with God in his creation. (From "Strategisk plattform för Equmeniakyrkan", 2012 – Strategic platform)

Humans are created in the image of God and are themselves a part of the creation. We carry – as humans – a unique responsibility to be God's co-workers, administrators and co-creators. (Genesis 1:26ff; 2:15; Rom 8:19-22). God is present throughout his creation, through the Spirit and his grace and not only in places where the church exists.

Jesus came as a peace bearer and his message of peace and reconciliation is visible throughout the Gospel. This calls us to steer our feet onto the path of peace.

#### Direction

The ultimate goal of mission is transformation; transformation within people, of society, of the whole world and the creation. The Uniting Church is dedicated, based on its Christian conviction, to express its desire for peace and conversion to a sustainable world through its approach and concrete actions that can transform me, you and the world. Priorities and action plans based on this policy can be initiated everywhere in the church, in collaboration with partner organizations as well as cooperating churches in other countries and international networks. Together we can contribute to the realization of the UN declaration of Human Rights, the Global Goals (Agenda 2030) as well as the Paris Treaty (i.e. reduce greenhouse gas emissions and adaptation to climate change after 2020).

#### Peace

War and violence harm people all over the world. In respect of the integrity of creation, the Uniting Church is involved in work towards righteous peace, not only the absence of violence but the presence of justice and equality. It is a process to free mankind from misery and fear which demands work against violence in all forms as well as encouraging justice, equality and freedom. We condemn the use of nuclear weapons and want to contribute to a world without weapons for mass destruction.

The Uniting Church in Sweden therefore wants to work for:

- Overcoming hostility
- Counteracting discrimination
- Fighting oppression in all forms and all situations
- Creating a world without nuclear weapons

### Environment and climate

God has given us a wonderful world to live in. Because of high exploitation of the world's resources and extensive use of fossil fuels the planet's capacity level is overstepped. Consequences are e.g. climate change causing a crisis that threatens the lives of millions of people today and endangers the lives of coming generations.

The Uniting Church in Sweden therefore wants to work for:

- A social and economic development within the planet's capacities
- Encouraging recycling and environmentally conscious lifestyles as well as choosing the environmentally best alternatives for products, services, travel and activities.
- A fast phasing-out of fossil fuels and extension of renewable energy sources.

### Justice and Human Rights

All humans have elementary needs and rights that have to be fulfilled. This is a prerequisite for wellbeing, a well-functioning world and interpersonal relations in harmony – which in the Bible is named "Shalom". The world's resources must be accessible to and used equally by all.

The Uniting Church in Sweden therefore wants to work for:

- A fair distribution of the world's resources and prioritization of fairly produced and procured products.
- Equality between people and ethnic groups as well as fair and equal treatment of everybody before the law.
- The UN's declaration of Human Rights is respected and followed.

### Responsibility and follow up

The policy is discussed annually in the Church board. Together with concrete action plans it is directing for staff and can be guiding and inspirational for congregations and individuals. The confession to Jesus as Lord has to – if it is sincere – include the whole life and life itself. A dedication to the areas in the policy is therefore a natural part of the Christian life. We can inspire each other through dialogue, education and meeting places for mutual exchange of good examples – locally, regionally, nationally and internationally.

The Uniting Church in Sweden challenges individuals as well as groups to formulate positions which contribute to a sustainable world for all.

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