



BISHOPS

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We stopped at the large street market to buy a souvenir for my overseas hosts. As we picked up an item that we thought suitable, three or four vendors honed in on us: Buy from me, much cheaper! Look, come here! They were pushing and shoving each other aside, hoping to win us. Only a few minutes later my wife and I were back in the car - we bought nothing, and we have never gone back there since then.

“Lutherans believe that the Church of Christ is bigger than any single denomination” “As Lutherans we gladly join all Christians in proclaiming that Jesus Christ is Lord”. These first and last sentences in ELCSA (N-T)’s pamphlet: “Why we are Lutherans” are important statements. All too often denominations have been fighting each other as if we were enemies. Somehow the prayer of Jesus (John 17) “that they may be one” was ignored, or re-interpreted to allow for antagonism, or to apply only to “our own group”.

Jesus knew that his followers would fight each other. He had seen it amongst his disciples and knew that it would continue as the Church grows. A large portion of John 17 deals with this, and the urgent need that Christians overcome these and work together. Why? Because Jesus and the Father are one, but even more important: so that the World can get to know God.

There will always be disagreements amongst Christians - even within the same congregation. There will always be opposing doctrines on issues such as baptism, communion, priesthood etc. We are challenged to work together, to clearly proclaim that despite these differences, we have one Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

Too many people looking for help and hope have been driven away by our pushing and shoving and claims of “better offer”. The Church of Christ is bigger than the Lutheran Church. Christ has much more to offer than what we on our own can give. “Father, I pray that they may be one” - so that the world is not driven away but drawn to what Christ has to offer!

With this in mind ELCSA (N-T) Church council is engaging in talks with Lutheran sister Churches FELSISA and ELCSA, but also other denominations, so that we can together proclaim that Jesus Christ is Lord.

May the congregations of our Church also be actively involved in such closer cooperation in their respective areas.

Host Müller

News from the Church

Congratulations to Vikar Frank and wife Nina Schütte, currently in Döbeln, Germany, on the birth of their son Lars on 8 April 2013. May God richly bless this young family!

Student of theology Heidrun Tobler is returning from Germany and will do a practical year in St Peters, Pretoria. During her time in Germany her studies focussed on Child law and issues concerning Children. May the practical year be beneficial to her and the congregation!

The bi-annual song festival was hosted by Piet Retief congregation on Jubilate Sunday, 21 April. The very cold weather was far outweighed by the very warm welcome we all received. Thank you to the congregation for the wonderful preparation, to the musicians for their commitment and beautiful singing, to all who participated for making this a memorable day.

Our sister Church ELCSA (Cape) is having its synod from 7-9 June 2013 in Cape Town, and is electing a successor to Bishop Nils Rohwer. May God guide the deliberations and election.

On 7 May the Church Councils of ELCSA (NT) and FELSiSA met. The purpose of this meeting was to get to know each other. Rather than talking about, we want to talk to each other. We are grateful that the meeting could take place.