In 2000 the Church of Sweden was divided from the Swedish state to become a self-governing congregation

• 20th Century Sweden; a “one-culture-one-religion-nation-state”, recently rural, economy based on steel and timber industry

• 2012 - Sweden – one of the most urbanized countries in Europe, multi-cultural and globalized, high tech, experiences and service industries

• A more heterogeneous population (migration, income, education, religion etc), rapid changes in values, involvement and priorities

An independent church trying to find a new role in a new society
Agreement state-church

Some main issues
1. Unclear ownership of church buildings
2. How to organise and finance management of church heritage?

Results
• All churches decided property of the parishes
• All protected churches (built before 1940): state conservation grant, now 47 million Euros yearly

To receive this amount the church must:
• Organize and pay for all administration
• Develop sufficient competence within church
• Keep same number of churches (2 900 protected, total 3 400) and make sure all churches stay open
Too expensive to spend grants?

- Covers 25% of the total management costs, part of the project self financed (now 50%)

- Small congregations – limited capacity for large projects

- January 1, 2012: 57 million Euros in surplus

- Government evaluation in 2014 – reduction of grants from 2015?
A smaller church – shrinking economy

• 6.5 millions citizens (of 9.5) are still members of the church

• Lost nearly one million members from 2000-2102, about one million fewer next 10 years

• The economy of the church, need for and use of church buildings as well as management resources are shrinking
Consequences

• Deficits managed by merging of congregations and sale of properties; parish houses, vicarages

• Many churches no longer in regular use and/or not heated during winter, some already closed

• 2000 to 2011, 58 churches closed (sold) and one protected church, Maglarp (1917) demolished (2007).

• Congregations with small populations and many churches; the situation is rapidly becoming unbearable.
New strategy for use and management of church heritage in a changing society and church

Renewal of grants 2015: campaign on church heritage 2014

New agreement state-church?
- Use state grants for keeping churches open, heritage accessible, develop competence and administration?

Future reorganisation of management (from parishes to dioceses)?

Finding extended and new uses, new partners
- FRH (learning from countries ahead of development)
- Research and developments projects
Research project: Old Churches – New Values. Use and management of churches in a changing society

The increasing redundancy: a great challenge for local communities, the church and the state

- Analyse the complex relations between religious and secular values

- Analyse impact of existing legal protection on the responsibility for redundant churches

- Find solutions on redundancy, developed and discussed in an international perspective

- Taking care of and **activate** all values related to churches for the benefit of the society