

## **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, Maglarps (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)
- Leonardo da Vinci programme 2013: ESVTRHC: European Standards for Vocational Training in Religious Heritage Conservation
- Research and developments projects



Church of Sweden 

# ***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

