

**Friendship Agreement Between
The Lutheran Church of Christ in Nigeria (LCCN)
and
Viborg Diocese, The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Denmark**

I. Introduction

The ties between Viborg Diocese of The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Denmark and the Lutheran Church of Christ in Nigeria (LCCN) go back a long way. When the first LCCN bishop, Akila Todi, was installed in 1973, it was the Bishop of Viborg Diocese, Johannes W. Jacobsen, who conducted the ceremony. Since then there have been a number of similar occasions when representatives from Viborg Diocese visited Nigeria. Over the years many missionaries and volunteers have also come to Nigeria from churches in Viborg Diocese through Mission Afrika (previously The Sudan Mission), through whose work the LCCN was founded in 1913. Furthermore, pastors from Viborg Diocese have enjoyed brief stays at the LCCN pastoral colleges. The Diocese of Viborg has also received guests from Nigeria, who have brought important inspiration to the Danish congregations.

Today the LCCN like the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Denmark is both a large and a strong Lutheran Church; moreover, the present LCCN archbishop, Musa Pantti Filibus, served as President of the Lutheran World Federation from 2017-2023 and was succeeded by Bishop Henrik Stubkjær of Viborg Diocese. Our historical links and the present situation make it particularly relevant to strengthen this relationship between the LCCN and Viborg Diocese through a formal agreement.

II. Beneficial bond

The inspiration to enter into a bond with other churches across linguistic, national, and cultural borders is to be found in 1 Cor 12:12-13: "Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. For we were all baptised by one Spirit so as to form one body – whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free – and we were all given the one Spirit to drink." The Church of Christ is a global church, and our understanding of it must transcend any specific borders and historical institutions of which we each have been a part. By entering into a bond with other churches than our own, we can acquire a richer and deeper understanding of the Church of Christ, and we can mutually enrich each other.

III. Expectations

We wish that in particular the bonds of friendship and spirit should bear our relationship. The mutual aim must be to support and inspire each other to be Church in different situations and under different conditions.

IV. Activities

As a point of departure, we will engage in the following activities:

1. Prayers of Intercession for each other and through the ongoing exchange of subjects for mutual prayer.
2. Information Exchange, through visits, e-mails, social media etc., with the aim of gaining a greater understanding of each other's churches and communities – accompanied by the wish to be better

able to share each other's joys and sorrows.

3. Mutual Exchanges at all Levels (bishops, pastors, church staff, and congregations) with a view to strengthening friendships and inspiring each other. A specific priority is to be given to exchanges on a congregational level.
4. The Establishment of Direct Friendships between church congregations in the LCCN and congregations in Viborg Diocese.
5. The Sending-out of Deanery/Diocesan Volunteers (young and senior) from Viborg Diocese to Nigeria.
6. Other Activities which the LCCN and Viborg Diocese can agree to initiate and which can enrich our relationship.

V. Collaboration with Mission Afrika

We recognise the role of Mission Afrika as a bridge-builder between the LCCN and Viborg Diocese. A number of the initiatives outlined above can undoubtedly be mediated through a collaboration with Mission Afrika. Any financial support from Danish congregations to the LCCN should be facilitated through Mission Afrika. In the development of our relationship, it is relevant to draw on Mission Afrika's expertise and great experience.

VI. Coordination

This agreement will be evaluated and revisited when needed.

Within the LCCN the Archbishop's office will coordinate the activities mentioned in this agreement and delegate responsibility to the mission officer and any other relevant office.

Within the Diocese of Viborg the day-to-day responsibility for this relationship will be delegated by the bishop to the Diocesan Council and the Diocese Pastor for Ecumenism, Mission and Inter-Religious Meetings.

Date

Signature

Musa Panti Filibus
Archbishop of the LCCN

Date

Signature

Henrik Stubkjær
Bishop of Viborg Diocese