



## One Body – Response to Benny Sinaga

*Bishop Sikhwari*

A body is a unit joined together by ligaments that hold the body to a particular shape. Yes we refer to the physical flesh, the mind and the soul. Some parts of the body are visible and some parts are not. Some parts do not look so important until someone does not have them then we realise their importance.

The body of Christ is a special unit. As indicated from the verses that were quoted it has to do with those that have been bought by the blood of Jesus. According to Paul there is no Greek, no Jew, no Gentile and obviously no man and no woman, no slave no free. All people have indeed been created in the image of God. All people are equal in God.

In South Africa we have eleven official languages and many of the people who speak these languages are accommodated in our church services and in the communities. My observation is that so far, we have been able to accommodate the physically challenged Church members in the church service but we have not yet made consideration for the sign language needs. ELCSA is diverse due to culture, language, ethnic groups as well as the background (Berlin, Hermannsburg, Swedish, Norwegians) of the missionaries who brought the gospel in Southern Africa.

It is not easy to unite the missions within ELCSA but in diversity we still strive for The Gospel. This requires a lot of calls for respect, sacrifice and compromise. The one common purpose which is salvation through Jesus Christ and the witness of the salvation power to the world



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One body is about inclusivity. Who draws the agenda of unity of the body of Christ. Christ died for all, meaning all and respect means treating each other with dignity and having a lot of integrity. The gap between the poor and the rich keep widening throughout the world and the percentage of unemployment amongst the youth keeps growing. It is under these circumstances where the unity of the body of Christ should rise as a testimony to the world. Jesus associated with those at the margins, the poor and the rejected. Labelling according to society standards has now become a requirement in everyday living.

One body is not an arrival at a point in time, it is a continuous journey. We had unity talks that somewhere got stuck and we now resuscitate the talks in a desire for one body, the body of Christ. Willingness, zeal and passion coupled with acknowledgement and understanding of each other's role as a member of the body. Unity is the work of the Holy Spirit and when the Holy Spirit takes the lead.

We have hope for now and for the future. That they may know that you are my disciples John 13:35, if you love one another. Without love as a glue that binds the body together, the body cannot survive.

May the Spirit that binds us continue to unite us to keep the Glory of God alive within us.

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*The [Thirteenth Assembly of the Lutheran World Federation](#) takes place 13-19 September 2023 in Krakow, Poland. The theme of the Assembly will be "One Body, One Spirit, One Hope." It will be hosted by the Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in Poland.*



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