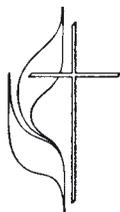


THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH  
NORTHERN EUROPE AND EURASIA CENTRAL CONFERENCE

---

The Book of Discipline  
Supplement Adapted by  
The Northern Europe and Eurasia Central Conference



Kaunas, Lithuania – 2012, October 17-21



# PREFACE

to The Northern Europe and Eurasia Edition

Early on the *Book of Discipline* of the Methodist-Episcopal Church was translated into Scandinavian languages. In the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century relevant parts of The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church were adapted by the Central Conference and published, also in the Scandinavian languages. When the Central Conference was expanded to include all three Baltic Countries, Russia and seven other of the former Soviet republics, English became the official language. And in 2001 an adopted edition of the Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church was published in English. The increasing use of electronic media made it less reasonable to continue to publish a hard copy of our own. In 2012 the Northern Europe and Eurasian Central Conference decided to rely on the General Conference edition of the *Book of Discipline*, and just publish a *Supplement for Northern Europe and Eurasia*.

This Supplement contains the Historical Statement of the Northern Europe and Eurasia Central Conference, a Reading Guide and paragraphs of the Book of Discipline adapted by the Central Conference together with central documents from the 2012 Central Conference in Kaunas, Lithuania and a Directory.

The Supplement is also available on [www.umc-ne.org](http://www.umc-ne.org).

We want to express our appreciation for the work of Lilli Uth and Øyvind Helliesen, and hand over this Supplement with prayer for our vast connectional Church.

*Bishop Christian Alsted*  
Nordic and Baltic Area

*Bishop Hans Växby*  
Eurasia Area



# Content

Addition to the Historical Statement.....	7
Adapted paragraphs to the Book of Discipline 2012.....	17
Introduction .....	17
Paragraphs adapted by the Central Conference 2012.....	19
The Superintendency .....	19
The Conferences (Central Conferences) .....	21
The Conferences (The Annual Conference) .....	28
The Conferences (The District Conference).....	39
Church Property (All Titles – In Trust) .....	41
Episcopal Address.....	45
Laity Address .....	61
Report of the Central Conference Council.....	73
Minutes.....	83
Directory.....	107
Northern Europe and Eurasia Central Conference .....	107
Head Offices Nordic and Baltic Area.....	107
Head Offices Eurasia Episcopal Area .....	108
Northern Europe and Eurasia Central Conference Council .....	109
Northern Europe and Eurasia Central Conference Youth council ....	110
Representatives on boards and agencies.....	110
European Methodist Council .....	111



## **Addition to the Historical Statement**

### **Methodism in Northern Europe and Eurasia:**

Methodist ministry in Scandinavia began in Stockholm as an outreach of British Methodism. In 1830-42 Scottish Methodist pastor George Scott ran a rather comprehensive operation, which had a significant influence upon the initiation of Free Church life in Sweden. George Scott's activities broke down due to opposition of a dramatic nature.

The Northern European Countries were experiencing a period of strife and immense change. The increased population could no longer be supported agriculturally or incorporated into the new industries of the growing cities. Health and welfare standards were low, and social needs were great. Radical changes in society created a longing for better living conditions to be found in America. Likewise, many became occupied with the search for help in spiritual values.

The arrival of the Methodist Church to Northern Europe was linked to immigration across the Atlantic, particularly among seamen who sailed to America. In the 1830's and the following decades, all Protestant denominations in the United States were influenced by the Second Great Awakening. In the same period immigration from the countries of Northern Europe to America began, growing at a massive rate towards the turn of the century. In the 1830's and 40's the first Scandinavian speaking Methodist churches were established in the United States, and conferences were eventually organized, utilizing the Scandinavian languages in worship services, newsletters, books and all matters of administration.

### **Bethel Ship John Wesley**

At the initiative of a Swedish sailor, a seaman's church was established in New York in 1832 in order to serve the harbor's sailors and to bring the gospel to the many emigrants there. The floating church – "Bethel Ship John Wesley" – became a significant instrument in bringing Methodism to the Nordic residents. Olaf Gustaf Hedström, of Sweden, led the mission in New York harbor for over 30 years, beginning in 1845. Many seamen and emigrants who had experienced conversion carried the Methodist revival with them to other parts of the United States, as well as to their home countries in Northern Europe.

### **Norway**

In Norway, the story of Methodism began with seaman Ole Peter

Petersen's preaching in 1849 and the years ahead. In 1851, O.P. Petersen established the Norwegian-Danish Methodist Church in America. In 1856, Danish-American Christian Willerup was sent to Scandinavia as a superintendent in order to lead the church, which had emerged spontaneously. The first Methodist church was founded during the same year, thereby making the establishment of the Methodist Church in Norway a reality. In 1876, the church in Norway received status as an Annual Conference. There were 29 pastors, 19 congregations and 2,798 members, and the conference got its own superintendent, Martin Hansen.

## **Denmark**

During a family visit to Copenhagen, Christian Willerup began public meetings. In 1856, when he was sent to Scandinavia as a superintendent, the work took shape and was launched. The first congregation was established in 1859, and in 1865 the church received official approval by the state, according to The Royal Constitution. It was first in 1911 that Methodism in Denmark had grown substantially enough to receive status as an Annual Conference. At the time there were 53 pastors, 27 congregations, 127 preaching stations and 3,634 members.

## **Sweden**

Various Methodist preachers operated in Sweden in the 1850's. This led to the establishment of the Methodist Church in Sweden in 1868. The work grew rapidly, and in 1876, the church was able to form as an independent Annual Conference with 55 pastors, 97 congregations, 249 preaching stations and 4,123 members. During the same year, the church received official approval by the state as an independent church. Victor Witting was appointed superintendent in Sweden.

In 2012, the Annual Conference in Sweden merged with the Baptist Church of Sweden and the Mission Covenant Church of Sweden, thus creating a new denomination, Joint Future, which the General Conference in 2012 approved as an Affiliated United Church with the United Methodist Church.

Approximately 100 members including 12 clergy desiring to remain United Methodist joined the Finland Swedish provisional Annual Conference and formed a district in Sweden. The 2012 Central Conference decided to extend the border of the Finland Swedish Provisional Annual Conference to include Sweden.

## **Finland and Russia**

On the Finnish side of the Bay of Bothnia, Methodist preaching began to be heard by 1859 and the subsequent years. Gustaf Lervik, a coxswain who had returned to his homeland, began to preach in his home country after being converted aboard the Bethel Ship in New York. Later, the Bärlund brothers joined in as preachers. In the 1880's impulses from Sweden led to a new start for Methodism in Finland, and the first congregation was established in 1881. Methodism in Finland fell in under the Swedish Annual Conference and had status as a district under the leadership of Superintendent B.A. Carlsen. In 1887 the first Finnish speaking congregations arose, and two years later B.A. Carlsen established a mission to Russia, with meetings held in St. Petersburg, leading shortly thereafter to congregational development. The Czar, who at the time ruled both Russia and Finland, gave official approval in 1892 to the Methodist Church in both states. In light of the situation the Swedish Annual Conference organized "The mission in Finland and St. Petersburg" during the same year. In 1907, German-American Dr. George A. Simons (son of Frisian immigrants from Sylt in Schleswig) was appointed as superintendent in St. Petersburg. The link to Sweden weakened, and under his leadership the work developed rapidly with ramifications for Russia and Estonia. The Bolshevik Revolution in 1917 put a stop to all possibilities for church growth, yet, in spite of opposition, the work continued into the 1920's. The Methodist Church in Finland gathered for the first time as an independent Annual Conference in 1911. The church had 1,568 members. In keeping with the development in Finland after its independence, the work was separated in a Swedish-speaking and a Finnish-speaking conference in 1923. Finnish-speaking Methodism suffered greatly during World War II, since 60% of its members lived in regions that were incorporated into the Soviet Union.

## **The Baltic Countries**

Methodism in the Baltic Countries can be traced back to the beginning of the 1900's. From the north, Methodism travelled from St. Petersburg to Saaremaa (Ösel) and the Estonian mainland. From the south, the inspiration came from German Methodism, partly from the Methodist Church and partly from the Evangelical Association and The Christian Brethren Church. At the time of World War II the Evangelical Association and Brethren Church in Lithuania and Latvia were connected with Germany via the Königsberg District, while the

Methodist Church's ties were with the Nordic Countries. In Estonia, Methodist preaching began in 1907, and the first congregation could be established in 1908. Vassili Täht and Karl Kuum, who were sent by the Methodists in St. Petersburg, were integral in starting up the Methodist congregation in Kuressaare, in Saaremaa. The Northwest German Conference appointed the first Methodist minister to service in Kaunas, Lithuania in 1905. In 1900, Pastor Heinrich Ramke of Königsberg had already preached in Kaunas, and during his stay discovered that a group in Kaunas, over several years, had been in contact with the Methodist Publishing House in Bremen. In 1911, the first church building was built in Kaunas, which was the first Methodist edifice built in the Baltics. The Evangelical Association from the Königsberg District started evangelistic work in Riga, the capital of Latvia, in 1908, with the establishment of the first church in 1912. From this point, the work developed into the formation of congregations in Kuldiga and Liepaja. German Methodism started work in Riga with the appointment of George R. Durdis in 1910. This led to the establishment of the first Methodist church in Riga in 1912. In 1911, the Methodists came into contact with the Moravian Brethren missionary Alfred Freiberg, who had founded the congregation in Liepaja, which in turn became a Methodist church.

The three Baltic Countries attained independence after World War I, and the work developed rapidly, with American support. Riga became the centre for Methodism in the Baltics with the establishment of a theological seminary and residence for superintendent Dr. George A. Simons. In 1924, there were 47 Methodist pastors in the Baltics: 24 in Estonia, 15 in Latvia and 8 in Lithuania. The Baltic Annual Conference was organized in 1929, and each of the 3 countries received status as districts. The work in the Baltics grew, so that by 1939 there were around 3,000 registered members. During the same year, 13 Methodist pastors were registered serving 15 congregations in Estonia, 17 Methodist pastors serving 19 congregations in Latvia, and 7 Methodist pastors serving 7 congregations in Lithuania. At that time, the Evangelical Association had 3 pastors and 3 congregations in Latvia, as well as 7 pastors and 7 congregations in Lithuania. The Evangelical Association tallied around 1,000 members in Latvia and Lithuania.

The incorporation of the Baltic Countries into the Soviet Union after World War II was catastrophic for the Methodist Church. Systematic persecution of pastors and congregations, as well as confiscation of buildings destroyed a great deal of the work. Only Estonia was

successful in maintaining the work of the church, due to notable national leaders such as Martin Prikask and Alexander Kuum.

The Baltic Countries re-established their independence in 1991. In Latvia, a small group of earlier Methodists remained, and in 1991 these contacts led to the resurrection of the United Methodist church of Latvia, while the district was formally re-established in 1992 with three congregations. In 1995, the Methodist church of Lithuania resumed in Kaunas and a year later in Siauliai. The United Methodist church in Lithuania was formally re-established in 1996.

The work in all three Baltic countries has been characterized by growth. New congregations have been founded, and the operations have spread from the indigenous languages and peoples to the Russian-speaking population. In Tallinn, there was already a Russian-language outreach in the 1950's, and in the 1980's, the Russian-language outreach likewise commenced in various places. The church in Estonia is an Annual conference. In Latvia and Lithuania, Methodism has status as District conferences within the Estonia Annual Conference, yet function by way of their registration as denominations within their respective countries and as annual conferences in praxis.

## **Europe**

The Depression during the 1930's caused further weakening of the ties to the church in America. Methodism in Northern Europe belonged to the Methodist Episcopal Church, under the auspices of the General Board of Missions, but the Unity conference of 1939 gave Methodism in northern Europe an altered affiliation to the Mother church. Until that time, the work in the Northern European countries had been a branch of the Methodist Episcopal Church, similar to the work in other Central European countries. After World War I, the Methodist Episcopal Church, South had established extensive mission organizations in war torn Europe where no other Methodist churches were established: Belgium, Poland and Czechoslovakia (today's Czech and Slovak Republics).

In addition to the two American Methodist churches, British Methodism, also called Wesleyan Methodism, had made inroads on the European continent with outreaches in French, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese and German speaking areas. Wesleyan Methodism was organized as part of the British Annual conference. Furthermore, the Methodist church tradition was represented in force by several small churches, which were all related to the United Brethren in Christ and The Evangelical

Association. A series of church unions led to the uniting in church structure of the entire Methodist church family on the European continent, which organically is part of the larger United Methodist Church. The United Methodist Church is, by way of her membership in the Methodist church's World council, part of the massive cooperation between churches in the Methodist and Wesleyan traditions.

By the end of World War II, the European continent could organise two central conferences: The German and the Northern European. In addition, there were ten Annual conferences and two Missions conferences from the former German area organised under episcopal supervision of the southeast Jurisdiction of the Methodist Church in the United States.

After World War II, there was an attempt to form a single European central conference. The attempt failed, and in 1954, a central conference for Central and Southern Europe was formed in addition to the other two central conferences, Germany and Northern Europe. The European Council of Central Conferences of the Methodist church was founded after negotiations under the Methodist world conference in Oslo in 1966. In 1980, the name was changed to the European council of the United Methodist Church. Plenary sessions with the British and Irish Methodist churches led to the 1993 formation of the new European Methodist Council, where all Methodist traditions in Europe were united for the first time within the same organization. Affiliates of the European Methodist Council included:

1. The consultative conference of the European Methodist churches, which commenced in 1957
2. The European Methodist Youth council, and
3. The World Federation of Methodist and Uniting church Women - Europe, and The World federation of Methodist and Uniting Women - Britain and Ireland.

## **Eurasia**

After the dismantling of the Soviet Union, The General Board of Global Ministries initiated a contact with Russian Orthodox Church and Soviet/Russian Peach Fund to assist in the re-establish education and organize help sending. At the same time several individual initiatives lead to the formation of congregations in several areas within Russia and Ukraine, mostly as the result of new contacts to Methodism in the United States. The first new congregations were established in Moscow, Samary and Yekaterinburg. Methodism was formally re-established in this part of

the world in 1992 under the name The United Methodist Mission in The Commonwealth of Independent States, 100 years after the Methodist-Episcopal Mission in Finland and St. Petersburg was organized.

In 1991, Rüdiger Minor, bishop of the former East Germany Central Conference, was assigned as episcopal coordinator of Methodism in Eurasia.

The General Conference decided in 1992 to make Eurasia a separate Episcopal Area. The General Conference authorized the Northern Europe Central Conference, which had had oversight over the Methodist ministry in the former Soviet countries, to elect a bishop to carry out the work in the new area. With representatives present from the Russian United Methodist churches, the Central Conference of 1993 elected Rüdiger Minor as Bishop of Eurasia, with residence in Moscow. The next step was taken in 1996 when Russia Provisional Annual Conference was formed, which was confirmed by the Central Conference in Pärnu in 1997. Pastoral education was established in Moscow in 1997.

In 2001 Eurasia became an Annual Conference with full rights. The new conference consisted of 70 clergy members and 81 local churches. In 2003 the United Methodist Church in Eurasia was divided into four conferences: The Central Russia Annual Conference consisted of 923 members, 39 clergies and 33 local churches. The Northwest Russia Provisional Annual Conference consisted of 453 members, 21 clergies and 20 local churches. The South Russia-Ukraine-Moldova Provisional Annual Conference consisted of 759 members, 30 clergies and 30 local churches. The East Russia-Kazakhstan Provisional Annual Conference consisted of 416 members, 19 clergies and 14 local churches. The central conference was, for the first time, held in Moscow in 2005. Ukraine was now separated from the South Russia Provisional Annual Conference to form its own Ukraine and Moldova Provisional Annual Conference.

### **The Northern Europe and European Central Conference**

World War I weakened the connection between Europe and America, thus a substantial independence of continental European Methodism from the Mother church in the United States became necessary. In 1920, the General Conference decided to divide Europe into several episcopal areas. The Northern Europe Episcopal Area, including Methodism in the Nordic countries, was established and put under the supervisions of the Danish Bishop, Anton Bast.

Though Methodism in the North European countries was tied together historically, the new structure meant that the church in this region, to an even greater extent, would forge closer ties and fellowship in order to facilitate their new and greater independence. In 1924, the North Europe Episcopal Area organized as a central conference, and the Baltic-Slavic Annual Conference became integrated. In 1924, pastoral education for Scandinavian language candidates, which until that time took place in their respective annual conferences, became consolidated at the Nordic Theological Seminary, Överås, in Gothenburg. This common Nordic seminary continued until 1971, when a theological seminary was established in Bergen for Norwegian candidates. In 2008 Sweden Annual Conference joined the interdenominational Stockholm Theological Seminary, THS, and the pastoral training for Methodist pastors moved from Överås to THS. Pastoral education for the Baltic Area was re-established in 1994, with the opening of the Baltic Methodist Theological seminary in Tallinn.

With the geographic expansion, beginning with the “Glasnost” period in Soviet Union, the name of the Central Conference has changed from Nordic to Northern Europe (1989), and to Northern Europe and Eurasia Central Conference (2009), which now consists of the two Episcopal Areas - Nordic and Baltic, and the Eurasia Area.

Since World War II, the Northern Europe and Eurasia Central Conference has been led by bishops elected by the Central Conference itself: Theodor Arvidsson of Sweden (elected in 1946); Odd Hagen of Norway (elected 1953); Ole E. Borgen of Norway (elected 1970); Hans Växby of the Finland Swedish conference (elected 1989); Rüdiger Minor of the East Germany Central Conference (elected 1993); Øystein Olsen of Norway (elected 2001); Hans Växby of the Finland Swedish conference (elected 2005); Christian Alsted of Denmark (elected 2009) and Eduard Khegay of Central Russia Annual Conference (elected 2012).





# Adapted paragraphs to the Book of Discipline 2012

## Introduction

Many of the adaptations in previous separate editions of the *Book of Discipline* for the Northern Europe and Eurasia Annual Conference were not about content, but about transferring the text to our own context, cf. ¶543.7 & 16 & 17. As we do not publish a full *Northern Europe and Eurasia Book of Discipline*, this supplement doesn't contain editorial changes of terminology; instead we encourage the practice of "adaptive reading." The following is a guide for reading the *Book of Discipline* (BoD) in the Northern Europe and Eurasian (NEE) context and in addition a few clarifications.

## 1. Clarification of terms

Reading the *Book of Discipline* we encounter American terminology, and we need to know the Northern Europe and Eurasia equivalents or understanding.

- *University Senate* →  
this responsibility is handled by the Central Conference Council
- *General Board of Higher Education and Ministry* →  
when the reference concerns the Central Conference the Central Conference Council is responsible
- *District Committee on Ordained Ministry* →  
is included in the area of responsibility of the Board of Ordained Ministry in annual conferences that have no such committees
- *Ministerial Education Fund* →  
in Northern Europe and Eurasia there are other channels for the support of candidates for ministry
- *General Boards and Agencies* →  
General Boards and Agencies operate only on a limited scale in the Central Conference; the annual conferences have their own boards and agencies
- *World Service and other general funds* →  
References and regulations concerning General Funds do not apply in NEE, with the exception of the Episcopal

Fund. However in Northern Europe and Eurasia the annual conferences are apportioned to the Central Conference Fund, and in Eurasia also to the Area Fund.

- *Residence Program* →  
Continuing education for provisional clergy members of the annual conference

## **2. We practice a simplified organization in the annual conference and provisional annual conference organisation**

Most of the paragraphs where the BoD says, there “shall” be a certain committee or board, we read “may.” The exceptions on the annual conference level from this rule are

- Annual Conference Council
- Board of Ordained Ministry

## **3. Organization of the local church**

The guiding principles for the organization of the local church are outlined in BoD ¶ 243. According to BoD ¶ 244 “The basic organizational plan of the local church shall include provisions for the following unities: A charge conference, a church council, a committee on pastor-parish relations, a board of trustees, a committee on finance, a committee on nominations and leadership development, and such other elected leaders, commission, councils, committees, and task forces as the charge conference may determine.” Note that the paragraphs say “shall include provisions for the following units” which means that all functions must be taken care of, while it does not mean that all councils and committees must exist. Several functions can be taken care of by the church council, if this in a more fruitful way enables the church to pursue its primary task and mission in the context of its own community.

## **4. The Candidacy Process for Ordained Ministry**

The one year membership requirement to be considered for candidacy for ordained ministry is understood to be active membership, which also includes some degree of leadership responsibility. Each annual conference may set its own requirements for candidacy such as having completed the course of study for lay speaker.

## **5. Working conditions**

The basic principle concerning the correlation between the *Book of*

*Discipline* and the law in the individual countries is that we follow the *Book of Discipline*, when it is the most extensive, and we follow the law, when the law is the most extensive. For instance ¶ 356 gives regulations for maternity leave, but we follow the law of the country, as it is the most extensive in most of our countries.

## **6. We adjust to the Northern Europe and Eurasia reality**

Several paragraphs and subparagraphs in previous NEE editions were deleted and marked with “Not relevant in the Northern Europe Central Conference.” We continue to ignore these in our reading, however, this is just about matters that are clearly referring to the American context, not matters we don’t agree with or don’t like.

*When this Introduction is not sufficient, turn to your district superintendent or bishop for further clarification and guidance. Cf. ¶547.3. The introduction and the guidelines for reading the Book of Discipline given in this introduction are included in the responsibility of the Northern Europe and Eurasia Central Conference Judicial Court (¶547.3) to “hear and determine the legality of any action of an annual conference taken under the adopted portions of the Discipline or of a decision of law by the presiding bishop of the annual conference pertaining to the adapted portion of the Discipline, upon appeal of the presiding bishop or of such percentage of the members of the annual conference as may be determined by the central conference concerned.”*

## **Paragraphs adapted by the Central Conference 2012**

*Most of the adaptations in previous editions of the Northern Europe and Eurasia Book of Discipline are taken care of by the guiding principle in the Reading Guide. The following paragraphs are adapted by the Northern Europe and Eurasia Central Conference to replace the corresponding paragraphs in the global Book of Discipline. \* indicates the adapted paragraphs or sections hereof.*

### **The Superintendency**

**\*¶ 404. Provisions for Episcopal Areas**

1. In central conferences, the number of bishops shall be determined on the basis of missional needs, as approved by the General

Conference on recommendation of the Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters. Northern Europe and Eurasia Central Conference has been authorized to elect one bishop for the Nordic and Baltic Area and one for the Eurasia Area

\*¶ 405. *Election and Consecration of Bishops*

1. *Eligibility*—All ordained Elders under the age of sixty-eight in full membership with a United Methodist annual conference and in active service are eligible to the episcopacy.

2. *Term*—a) In Northern Europe and Eurasia a bishop is elected for a first term of eight years. A bishop can be reelected for a second term of four years. A bishop who has served a second term, and will reach the official retirement age in his or her country within the following quadrennium, can be reelected for a third term of four years.

b) An elder between the ages of sixty-four sixty-eight can only be elected for a term of four years.

3. *Nomination*—a) An annual conference, in the session immediately prior to the next regular session of the central conference, may name one or more nominees for episcopal election. Also members, groups of members, disciplinary entities, and organizations within The United Methodist Church in Northern Europe and Eurasia can place a nomination. All nominations shall be made in writing to the central conference committee on episcopacy within a time limit set by the central conference council.

b) A nomination must be made distinctively for one of the two areas.

c) Nomination shall be closed before the first ballot.

d) All nominations shall be accompanied by a presentation of the candidate in writing – half a page A4 (500 words, 30 lines). The chairperson of the central conference committee on episcopacy must approve the presentation before further distribution. Presentation of persons nominated within the set time limit will be published in the pre-conference material.

e) The Northern Europe and European United Methodist magazines and web pages will follow the nomination process on their own initiative from a journalistic perspective. Both nominators and nominees can make themselves available for additional information.

f) Nominators, in cooperation with the central conference committee on episcopacy, shall make it possible for the nominees to be present at the central conference.

g) A public presentation and hearing will be held at the central conference.

h) Debate and election speeches are allowed until the nomination is closed.

4. *Process*—a) Election is by closed ballot and takes place in a session set by the central conference.

b) Tellers elected by the conference will count the votes.

c) Delegates, in electing bishops, shall give due consideration to the inclusiveness of The United Methodist Church with respect to sex, race, and national origin. In addition, consideration shall be given to the nature of superintendency as described in ¶ 401.

d) The ballot is secret and personal. Delegates cannot be bound to vote for any specific nominee.

e) Two thirds of given and valid votes are necessary to elect a bishop.

5. Consecration - of bishops takes place at the session of the conference at which election occurs or at a place and time designated by the conference. The consecration service may include bishops from other jurisdictional and central conferences. It is strongly urged that the consecration service also include representatives from other Christian communions (see ¶¶ 124, 427.2, 1901).

## **The Conferences (Central Conferences)**

### **\*¶ 541. *Composition***

1. a) The central conference shall be composed of clergy and lay members in equal numbers, the clergy members elected by the clergy members of the annual conference and the lay members by the lay members thereof. Their qualifications and the manner of election shall be determined by the central conference itself, subject only to constitutional requirements. Each annual conference and provisional annual conference shall be entitled to at least two clergy and two lay delegates, and no other selection of delegates shall be authorized that would provide for more than one clergy delegate for every six clergy members of an annual conference; except that a majority of the number fixed by a central conference as the ratio of representation shall entitle an annual conference to an additional clergy delegate and to an additional lay delegate.

Each missionary conference and mission is authorized to elect and send one of its members to the central conference concerned as its representative, said representative to be accorded the privilege of sitting with the committees of the central conference, with the right to speak in the committees and in the regular sessions of the central conference, but without the right to vote. Representatives of missionary conferences or missions shall have the same claim for payment of expenses as is allowed to members of the central conference.

b) In the Northern Europe and Eurasia Central Conference the number of delegates to which an Annual Conference or Provisional Annual Conference is entitled shall be computed on a two-factor-basis: the number of clergy members of the Annual Conference or Provisional Annual Conference, and the number of members of local churches in the Annual Conference or Provisional Annual Conference, as follows:

(1) One clergy delegate and one lay delegate for each 75 clergy members of the Annual Conference or Provisional Annual Conference or fraction thereof, and

(2) One clergy delegate and one lay delegate for every 700 confessing members in the local churches in the Annual Conference or Provisional Annual Conference or fraction thereof.

(3) If the number of delegates from each of the categories clergy and lay are more than two plus two, it has to be checked that there are no more than one clergy delegate for every six clergy members of an Annual Conference or Provisional Annual Conference. Should this be the case, the number of delegates has to be reduced accordingly.

(4) A missionary conference that has established the right of full ministerial membership (§586.4.a) and has a minimum of six full ministerial members has the right to one clergy and one lay delegate (§15).

(5) A missionary conference that has not established the right of full ministerial membership (§586.4.g) or mission (§590-591) has the right to one delegate who has all the rights of a delegate except the right to vote.

#### ¶ 547. *Conference Agencies*

1. A central conference may have a standing committee on women's work. This committee should preferably be composed of the women delegates and such other persons as the central conference may

elect. The duty of this committee shall be to study the relation of women to the Church and to devise ways and means of developing this portion of the Church membership, to the end that it may assume its rightful responsibilities in the extension of the Kingdom. The committee shall make recommendations to the central conference regarding women's organizations within its areas. A central conference-organization may become a member of the World Federation of Methodist Women and may elect a representative to the World Federation of Methodist Women within the provisions of the federation.

2. A central conference may organize a women's unit, after consultation with the committee on women's work, in connection with any annual conference or provisional annual conference within its bounds and provide a constitution and bylaws for it.

3. A central conference that adapts and edits the *Discipline* as provided in ¶ 543.16 shall establish a judicial court, which in addition to other duties that the central conference may assign to it shall hear and determine the legality of any action of the central conference taken under the adapted portions of the *Discipline* or of a decision of law by the presiding bishop of the central conference pertaining to the adapted portions of the *Discipline*, upon appeal by the presiding bishop or by one-fifth of the members of the central conference. Further, the judicial court shall hear and determine the legality if any action of an annual conference taken under the adapted portions of the *Discipline* or of a decision of law by the presiding bishop of the annual conference pertaining to the adapted portion of the *Discipline*, upon appeal of the presiding bishop or of such percentage of the members of the annual conference as may be determined by the central conference concerned.

\* a) Membership—The court shall be composed of one member each, with personal substitute, from Denmark, Estonia, Finland S/F, Latvia/Lithuania, Norway, Russia C/NW/E/S and Ukraine/Moldova.

4. A central conference may have a standing committee on young people's ministry. This committee shall be composed of youth, young adults, and adult leaders of youth or young-adult ministry from each annual conference in the central conference. The duty of this committee shall be to study the relation of young people to the Church and to devise ways and means of developing the Church's ministry for, with, and by young people. The committee shall make recommendations to the central conference regarding youth and young-adult organizations within its areas as well as elect delegates to the Global Young People's Convocation (¶ 1210).

5. Every board, standing committee, commission, council, and work area of the central conference shall designate one of its members as its coordinator of witness ministries. These persons shall help the agencies of which they are members to engage in witness ministries and, in particular, to ask, “How are we intentionally reaching new people for Jesus Christ through our ministries?” and “How are we helping new people grow and mature as disciples of Jesus Christ through our ministries and areas of responsibility?”

\*¶ 549. *Northern Europe and Eurasia Central Conference Council*

The council executes assignments given by the central conference, and administers running business between central conference sessions. It is amenable and accountable to the central conference and reports to the central conference. The purpose of the council is for the discernment and articulation upholding of the vision for the church, sharing of experience and good practices, and channelling of connectional resources and mutual help promoting connectional exchange and cooperation.

1. The council reports to the central conference, and prepares central conference sessions.

a) *Membership*

(1) Members of the council are the bishops ex officio, and the following number of representatives:

4 members, both clergy and lay, from Norway

2 members from Denmark

2 members from Estonia; 1 member each from Latvia and Lithuania

1 member each from Finland S and Finland F

1 member each from Central Russia, Northwest Russia and Belarus, South Russia, East Russia and Central Asia, and Ukraine and Moldova.

All members shall be involved in the national leadership of the church

Substitutes shall be elected by the same number and the same criteria.

(2) *Membership recommendations*

All conferences shall seek equal representation between men/women, clergy/lay, and further to ensure representation of young people under the age of thirty five.

A Minimum of one member from each annual and national district conference must be a member of its conference council

(3) *Membership term*—The members and substitutes are elected for the quadrennium, serving from the adjournment of the ordinary central conference session in the beginning of the quadrennium until the adjournment of the following ordinary session.

b) *Area groups*—The members are divided into two groups, arranged by episcopal areas.

c) *Meetings*—The full council meets normally in the spring each year. In the fall, the area groups meet separately in their respective area. Other arrangements can be agreed upon if the budget allows.

d) *Officers*—Each area group elects its own chairperson and secretary in the fall meetings. The bishops agree among themselves who is chairperson. The other bishop and the two area chairpersons are all vice chairpersons of the council. A council secretary is elected by the council. All elections are for the quadrennium.

e) *Office*—The office of the chairperson is also the Office of Northern Europe and Eurasia Central Conference.

f) *Presidium* (1) The chairperson, the three vice chairpersons, and the assistant to the chairperson, form the presidium of the council. Until other officers are elected, the two bishops and the assistant to the chairperson carry the responsibilities of the presidium.

(2) The presidium prepares meetings of the council, and assigns matters to the area groups.

(3) If necessary, the presidium can decide upon matters that cannot wait until next the meeting of the council.

g) *Council responsibilities*—It is the responsibility of the council

(1) To elect treasurer for the Northern Europe and Eurasia Central Conference Fund.

(2) To receive and approve annual financial reports for the fund mentioned above, audited by a certified public accountant.

(3) To give an annual report to the annual and national district conferences, and receive an annual statistical summary from these.

(4) To present a quadrennial summary of the financial reports of the fund mentioned above to the central conference for approval.

(5) Either to publish *The Book of Discipline* of the United Methodist Church in Northern Europe and Eurasia (NEEBoD)

each quadrennium or in other ways make changes and adaptations available.

(6) To set time and select place for central conference sessions.

h) *Area group responsibilities*—It is the responsibility of the area groups to deal with matters assigned to them by the council or its presidium. Decisions with impact on matters outside the respective area require confirmation by the council or its presidium. On a permanent basis, the area groups are assigned

(1) To function as the committee on episcopacy (§ 550).

(2) To function as the episcopal residence committee with the responsibility:

(a) To make recommendations to the annual conferences regarding the purchase, sale, or rental of an episcopal residence.

(b) To prepare an annual budget covering the cost of providing the episcopal residence, which may also include utilities, insurance, and normal costs of upkeep in maintaining the residence.

(c) To supervise the expenditure of funds allocated from all sources for expenses related to the provision of the episcopal residence and to account for such expenditures annually to each annual conference in the episcopal area.

(d) To give oversight in all matters related to upkeep, maintenance, improvements, and appropriate insurance coverage for the episcopal residence.

(3) To be responsible for the necessary administration, in case of vacancy in the office of bishop due to death or other reason, until the vacancy is filled (§ 407).

(4) To develop annual budgets for the episcopal fund (Eurasia Episcopal Fund and the Nordic and Baltic Episcopal Fund respectively) to be submitted to the General Council on Finance and Administration for approval.

(5) To elect treasurer for each Area's Episcopal Fund and Area Funds.

(6) To receive and approve annual financial reports for the funds mentioned above, audited by a certified public accountant.

(7) To present a quadrennial summary of the financial reports of the funds mentioned above to the central conference, which grants discharge of liability for the period for approval.

i) *Subcommittees*—In order to support and perform its duties, the council can organize ad hoc subcommittees to fulfil its purpose and any of its permanent tasks

j) *Economy*—(1) The travel expenses of the council, including its area groups, are covered by the Northern Europe and Eurasia Central Conference Fund. Housing and travel meals (per diem) are paid by respective conference.

(2) The expenses of the Northern Europe and Eurasia Central Conference Fund are apportioned to the annual and national district conferences in relation to the salaries and salary benefits of all pastors under appointment at a rate set by the Central Conference<sup>1</sup>.

**\*¶ 550. Northern Europe and Eurasia Central Conference Committee on Episcopacy—**

a) There shall be a central conference committee on episcopacy, composed by the elected members of the Northern Europe and Eurasia Central Conference Council. The elected vice chairperson of the Central Conference Council is the chairperson of the committee on episcopacy, and the secretary of the Central Conference Council is the secretary of the committee on episcopacy. The bishops are not members of the committee, but give a personal report to the committee in connection with an annual consultation.

b) The functions of the conference committee on episcopacy shall be:

(1) To support the bishop of the area in the oversight of the spiritual and temporal affairs of the Church, with special reference to the area where the bishop has presidential responsibility.

(2) To be available to the bishop for counsel

(3) To assist in the determination of the episcopal needs of the area and to make recommendations to appropriate bodies.

(4) To keep the bishop advised concerning conditions within the area as they affect relationships between the bishop and the people of the conference agencies.

---

<sup>1</sup> Currently 0,75%

(5) To interpret to the people of the area and to conference agencies the nature and function of the episcopal office.

(6) To engage in annual consultation and appraisal of the balance of the bishop's relationship and responsibilities to the area and annual conferences, general Church boards and agencies, and other areas of specialized ministry, including, at all levels, concern for the inclusiveness of the Church and its ministry with respect to sex, race, and national origin, and understanding and implementation of the consultation process in appointment making.

(7) To include decisions and recommendations in the minutes of the central conference committee, and report to the central conference.

\*¶ 551. *Other central conference work* can be performed by the following board, which is also responsible for the promoting and coordinating activities within respective working area without financing from the Central Conference Council: Northern Europe and Eurasia Central Conference Youth Council.

\*¶ 552. *European Methodist Council*

1. The Northern Europe and Eurasia Central Conference is a member of the European Methodist Council.

2. A financial contribution to the council shall be included in the budget for the Northern Europe and Eurasia Central Conference Fund.

3. The Northern Europe and Eurasia Central Conference is represented in the European Methodist Council by six members, including the two bishops and at least two lay representatives. The annual and national district conferences submit nominations to the Central Conference Council, which makes the election.

## **The Conferences (The Annual Conference)**

\*¶ 611. In each annual and national district conference within Northern Europe Central Conference there shall be a conference council. In Denmark the council is called Landsledelsen, in Estonia Kirikuvalitsus, in Finland Kirkkohallitus (Finnish) or Kyrkostyrelsen (Swedish), in Latvia Baznīcas Valde, in Lithuania Baznycios administracinės, in Norway Hovedstyret, in Russia “Совет ежегодной конференции”, and in Ukraine “Рада щорічної конференції”.

\*¶612. The conference council shall have the following functions, membership and organization:

1. *Functions.* The conference council shall have the following functions:

a) Annual conference council on finance and administration (¶ 613-619), of which the purpose is to develop, maintain, and administer a comprehensive and coordinated plan of fiscal and administrative policies, procedures, and management services for the annual conference.

b) Annual conference council responsible for connectional ministries (¶ 608)

c) Annual conference board of trustees (¶ 2512-2517)

d) Annual conference board on church location and building (¶ 2518-2524)

e) Annual conference committee on Christian unity and interreligious concerns (¶ 642)

f) Annual conference board of pensions, when not separately organized (¶ 639).

2. *Membership.* Members of the council are the bishop, the district superintendents, the conference lay leader, and those persons the conference wishes to elect. The conference treasurer may be a member of the conference council.

3. *Officers.* The council shall have a chairperson elected by the annual conference. The council elects among its voting members a vice chairperson, a secretary, and other officers as the council decides. The conference treasurer/director of administrative services (¶ 619) shall be the treasurer of the council.

4. No member of the council shall vote on or take part in deliberations on significant matters directly or indirectly affecting her or his business, income, or employment, or the business, income, or employment of his or her immediate family.

5. *Organization.* a) The council may establish committees and task forces and define their duties and authority as it deems necessary for fulfilling its purpose and responsibilities.

b) The annual conference may enact bylaws governing meetings, quorum, and other matters of procedure for the council, or it may authorize the council to enact such bylaws; in any event, such bylaws shall not be in conflict with the *Book of Discipline*.

c) If deemed necessary for the fulfilment of its functions and if so authorized by the annual conference, the council may be incorporated.

6. *Amenability.* The council shall be amenable and report directly to the annual conference.

¶ 613. *Responsibilities.* The council shall have authority and responsibility to perform the following functions:

1. To recommend to the annual conference for its action and determination budgets of anticipated income and proposed expenditures for all funds that provide for annual conference clergy support, annual conference administrative expenses, and annual conference benevolence and program causes (¶ 614).

2. To receive, consider, report, and make recommendations to the annual conference regarding the following prior to final decision by the annual conference:

(a) any proposal to raise capital funds for any purpose; (b) funding considerations related to any proposal that may come before the conference; (c) any requests to conduct a special conference-wide financial appeal, whether by special collections, campaigns, or otherwise in the local churches of the conference.

\* 3. To recommend to the annual conference for its action and decision the methods or formulas by which apportionments to churches, charges, or districts for duly authorized general, central, conference, and district funds shall be determined (¶ 615).

4. To consult and cooperate with the commission on communication in providing district superintendents, pastors, and appropriate officers of the local churches and charge conferences with interpretive aids or other materials to assist in gaining understanding and support of the conference budget and other approved conference causes. This shall include the theology and discipline of financial giving.

5. To develop policies governing the investment of conference funds, whether in debt or equity, short-term or long-term instruments, with the aim of maximizing funds available for mission in a manner consistent with the preservation of capital, the Policies Relative to Socially Responsible Investments (¶ 716), and the Social Principles of the Church. A statement of such policies shall be printed in the conference journal at least once in each quadrennium.

6. To recommend to the annual conference procedures for funding local churches, including the theology of financial giving.

7. To advise local churches about making their church buildings, facilities, and programs accessible.

8. To recommend to the annual conference for its action procedures for dealing responsibly with situations in which budgeted funds, as approved by the annual conference, are inadequate to meet emerging missional needs or unforeseen circumstances.

9. To review at least quarterly and to account to the annual conference for the disbursement of funds in accordance with budgets approved by the conference.

10. To recommend to the annual conference for its action and determination the conditions under which it may borrow funds for current expense purposes and the maximum amount of such borrowing.

11. To have authority and supervision over the conference treasurer/director of administrative services subject to ¶ 619; to establish policies governing the treasurer/director's work.

12. To work in cooperation with other annual conference agencies for the design and implementation of a plan by which the annual conference may designate the conference treasury as a central treasury for funds designated for any or all conference agencies participating in conference funds.

\* 13. To establish uniform and equitable policies and practices in the employment and compensation of personnel, in consultation and cooperation with other conference agencies that employ staff, unless the annual conference has designated another agency to carry this responsibility. These policies and practices shall be in accordance with the Social Principles (¶ 162 A, E, F, and I).

\* 14. To promote and standardize the financial recording and reporting system in the local churches of the conference.

\* 15. In cooperation with relevant annual conference agencies and institutions, and local churches, to make recommendations to the annual conference regarding the development, promotion, and review of a broad general program of insurance protection. To train and encourage volunteers and employed in the areas of church business and administration.

16. To make recommendations to the annual conference for its action and determination regarding plans to initiate or cause to

be organized a foundation or similar organization for the purpose of securing, conserving, or expending funds for the direct or indirect benefit or support of the annual conference, or of any conference agency, or any of its programs or work. The council shall have opportunity to make its recommendations regarding such plans if the foundation or similar organization is: (1) proposed to be organized by the annual conference itself, whether acting alone or in concert with other annual conferences; (2) proposed to be organized by any conference council, board, commission, committee, or other agency; (3) to make use of the name United Methodist in its title or solicitation; or (4) proposed for the purpose of soliciting gifts primarily from the United Methodist constituency.

17. To perform such other administrative and fiscal functions and services as the annual conference may assign.

18. To ensure that no apportioned conference funds are expended for the use of alcoholic beverages.

19. To ensure that no annual conference board, agency, committee, commission, or council shall give United Methodist funds to any gay caucus or group, or otherwise use such funds to promote the acceptance of homosexuality or violate the expressed commitment of UMC “not to reject or condemn lesbian or gay members and friends” (§ 161.F). The council shall have the right to stop such expenditures. This restriction shall not limit the Church’s ministry in response to the HIV epidemic, nor shall it preclude funding for dialogs or educational events where the Church’s official position is fairly and equally represented.

**\*¶ 615. *Apportionments***

The council shall recommend to the annual conference for its action and determination the methods or formulas by which the approved budgeted amounts for clergy support, administration, and other causes shall be apportioned to the churches or charges of the conference.

**¶ 635. *Conference board of ordained ministry***

1. Each annual conference at the first session following the General Conference shall elect for a term of four years a Board of Ordained Ministry. At least six ordained elders and deacons in full connection and, when possible, at least two associate members or full-time local pastors who have completed the Course of Study shall be included as members of the board with voice and vote. Each annual

conference shall elect at least one-fifth laypersons, which may include diaconal ministers, and may at its discretion elect further lay members, up to one-third of the membership of the board. All laypersons shall be professing members of local churches in the annual conference. The board membership shall include women and ethnic persons, at least one ordained clergyperson in the retired relationship, at least one ordained clergyperson in extension ministry, and when possible at least one young adult clergyperson in full connection age 35 or younger, and a district superintendent named by the bishop to represent the cabinet. Two-thirds of the members who are elders shall be graduates of seminaries listed by the University Senate.

a) Members shall be nominated by the presiding bishop after consultation with the chairperson of the board, the executive committee, or a committee elected by the board of the previous quadrennium, and with the cabinet. To ensure adequate board membership, consultation shall include an evaluation of the workload of the board in meeting disciplinary and annual conference responsibilities. Vacancies shall be filled by the bishop after consultation with the chairperson of the board. An elected board member may serve a maximum of three consecutive four-year terms. The chair of the Order of Deacons, the chair of the Order of Elders, and the chair of the Fellowship of Local Pastors and Associate Members shall be members of the Board of Ordained Ministry (§1c) and its executive committee.

b) This board shall be directly amenable to the annual conference, notwithstanding its organizational relationship within any other program or administrative unit of the annual conference. The annual conference council on finance and administration shall recommend adequate administrative funds for the board and its staff in light of its workload.

c) The board shall organize by electing from its membership a chairperson, registrars, and such other officers as it may deem necessary. A vocational discernment coordinator may be named to coordinate the candidacy mentoring process. The board shall designate its executive committee, which shall include elders, deacons, and laity. The board shall organize in such manner as to care for its responsibilities, including the needs of certified persons, diaconal ministers, local pastors, deacons, and elders. The organization of the board shall include a committee to fulfil the governance responsibilities for diaconal ministers (see *The Book of Discipline*, 1992, ¶¶ 301-317 and 734) and shall provide for certification in specialized ministry

careers under the guidelines of the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry (see ¶ 1421). The board may include in its organization a division of deacons and a division of elders.

d) Each annual conference Board of Ordained Ministry shall establish a Conference Relations Committee of at least three persons to hear requests for discontinuance of provisional members, involuntary leave of absence, administrative location, involuntary retirement, or other such matters as may be referred to them by the board of ordained ministry. District superintendents shall not serve on the Conference Relations Committee.

e) To ensure maximum contact with and support of persons in appointments beyond the local church, the board shall maintain relationships with all general agencies that have responsibility for persons in such appointments.

f) The board shall meet at least once prior to its meeting at the time of the annual conference session and may set a deadline prior to annual conference for transacting its business.

\* g) The board shall select from its own membership an official representative to serve as a member of or liaison to existing district committees on ordained ministry.

h) The board shall provide orientation for new members, including distribution of any available written guidelines.

2. The duties of the annual conference board of ordained ministry shall be:

a) To assume the primary responsibility for the enlistment and recruitment of ordained clergy by working in consultation with the cabinet and the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry to study and interpret the clergy needs and resources of the annual conference, with due regard to the inclusive nature of the Church. It shall, with the assistance of the local church committee on pastor-parish relations, conference agencies, and every ordained minister of the conference, enlist women and men of all races and ethnic origins for the ordained ministry and guide those persons in the process of education, training, and ordination, recommending colleges and schools of theology listed by the University Senate. Persons recruited should have an understanding of and appreciation for persons of different racial and ethnic heritages.

b) To renew a culture of call in the church by giving strategic leadership to annual conferences, districts, congregations, campus

ministries, camps, and other appropriate ministries, especially among youth and young adults.

c) To seek from a school of theology information about the personal and professional qualities of an applicant for provisional membership or of a provisional member; provided, however, that the applicant or member consent to the provision of such information.

d) To receive annual reports on the progress made by each ministerial student enrolled in a theological school and to record credit for work satisfactorily completed.

e) It shall require a transcript of credits from each applicant before recognizing any of the applicant's educational claims. In case of doubt, the board may submit a transcript to the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry for evaluation.

f) The board shall annually appoint and train a sufficient number of mentors in each district in consultation with the district superintendent.

g) To guide the candidate for ordained ministry who is not enrolled in a theological school and who is pursuing the Course of Study as adopted by the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry.

h) To examine all applicants as to their fitness for the ordained ministry and make full inquiry as to the fitness of the candidate for: (1) annual election as local pastor; (2) election to associate membership; (3) election to provisional membership; and (4) election to full conference membership.

i) To provide all candidates for ordained ministry a written statement on the disciplinary and annual conference requirements for the local pastor, provisional, and full membership.

j) To interview and report recommendation concerning: (1) student local pastors; (2) certified candidates for ordination as deacons; and (3) certified candidates for ordination as elders.

k) To assign a board member to serve as liaison to retired clergy in the conference.

l) To interview applicants and make recommendation concerning: (1) changes from the effective relation to a leave of absence or retirement; (2) return to the effective relation from other relations; (3) honourable location; (4) readmission of located persons and persons discontinued from provisional membership; (5) sabbatical leave; (6)

incapacity leave; (7) appointment as a student; (8) termination; and (9) changes to or from less than full-time ministry.

The board shall keep a record of these changes and the reason behind them and place a copy in the permanent records of the annual conference maintained by the secretary of the conference.

m) To ensure confidentiality in relation to the interview and reporting process. The personal data and private information provided through the examinations of and by the Board of Ordained Ministry will not be available for distribution and publication. There are occasions when the Board of Ordained Ministry would not report privileged information, which in the judgement of the board, if revealed in the executive session of clergy members in full connection with the annual conference, would be an undue invasion of privacy without adding measurably to the conference's information about the person's qualifications for ordained ministry. However, it is the right of the executive session of the clergy members in full connection with an annual conference to receive all pertinent information, confidential or otherwise, related to the qualifications and/or character of any candidate or clergy member of the conference.

n) To be in consultation with the bishop through the chairperson or the executive committee regarding transfers. This consultation is to be at the bishop's initiative and, where possible, to take place prior to transfers into the annual conference.

o) To provide support services for the ordained minister's career development, including personal and career counselling, continuing education, formation in servant leadership and continuing spiritual growth in Christ, assistance in preparation for retirement, and all matters pertaining to clergy morale. In providing such support, the board, in cooperation with the cabinet, shall give training and guidance to each local committee on pastor-parish relations regarding its work and role.

p) To work with and support the Order of Deacon and the Order of Elder, including receiving reports, offering financial support, and coordinating the Orders' activity with the continuing formation offerings of the board. The board may delegate continuing formation responsibility to the Orders by mutual agreement, with final approval, evaluation, and budgeting remaining with the board.

q) To work with and support the Fellowship of Local Pastors and Associate Members (see ¶ 323), including receiving reports, offering financial support, and coordinating their continuing formation.

r) To provide a means of evaluating the effectiveness of ordained ministers in the annual conference (§§ 604.4, 350). Suggested guidelines will be provided by the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry, Division of Ordained Ministry. In cooperation with the cabinet, the board shall develop standards of effectiveness for clergy serving as pastors of congregations in that annual conference.

s) To interpret the high ethical standards of ordained ministry set forth in the *Discipline* and to study matters pertaining to character (§605.7).

t) To recommend to the full members of the annual conference for validation special ministries for which members seek appointment.

The appointment to such ministries is the prerogative of the bishop and the cabinet.

u) To provide continuing support and management of consecrated diaconal ministers using the policies described in §§ 301-317 of the 1992 *Book of Discipline*.

v) To care for the administration of professional certification established by the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry through (1) enlisting and recruiting clergy and laity to become certified in Christian education, music, youth, evangelism, and other areas established by the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry; (2) determining whether applicants meet the standards established by the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry; (3) to recommend to the annual conference board and the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry; (4) to renew or discontinue professional certification biannually based on a review of their ministry; and (5) to report annually to the annual conference for publication in the conference journal a roster of all persons certified in professional careers for which they have received certification, including places of service address.

w) To report annually to the annual conference for publication in the conference journal a roster of all persons certified as Lay Ministers.

x) To administer the portion of the Ministerial Education Fund for use by the annual conference in its programs of enlistment, basic professional educational aid, continuing formation, ethnic ministry and language training, and professional growth of ordained ministers. Priority shall be given to scholarships for seminary students preparing for ordination.

y) To cooperate with the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry and assist in: (1) the interpretation of current legislation concerning ordained ministry; (2) the interpretation and promotion of the Ministerial Education Fund; (3) the promotion and observance of Ministry Sunday; and (4) the supplying of a record of all information, recommendations, and action on each candidate for ordained ministry after each session of the annual conference; (5) the promotion and addition of standards required for certification in specialized ministry careers.

z) To promote in the annual conference and/or jurisdictional conference a system of financial aid to ministerial students. A conference transferring a person with less than three years of active service into another conference may require reimbursement either from the person or from the receiving conference for outstanding obligations for theological education financed through conference funds.

aa) To report in a timely manner any change in the conference relationship of a clergy member of the conference to the conference board of pensions.

3. The board shall elect a registrar and such associate registrars as it may determine; one such associate registrar to be given responsibility for candidacy, including giving leadership to the training and guidance of mentors in each district. A staff executive may be named by the board to fulfill the functions of registrar.

a) The registrar shall keep full personnel records for all candidates for ordained ministry under the care of the board, including essential biographical data, transcripts of academic credit, instruments of evaluation, and, where it applies, psychological and medical test records, sermons, theological statements, and other pertinent data.

\* b) Pertinent information and recommendations concerning each candidate shall be certified to the annual conference. The registrar shall forward an acknowledgement of transfer to the pastor of the local church where each newly elected provisional and associate member held membership.

c) The registrar shall keep a record of the standing of the students in the course of Study and report to the conference when required. This record shall include the credits allowed students for work done in accredited schools of theology in approved Course of Study schools, or Course of Study correspondence.

d) The registrar shall file in the bishop's office for permanent record a copy of circumstances involving the discontinuance of provisional membership or termination of the local pastor status.

e) The records and files of the Board of Ordained Ministry are kept on behalf of the annual conference and shall be maintained under guidelines provided by the General Council on Finance and Administration in consultation with the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry and the General Board of Pensions.

4. Administrative costs of the Board of Ordained Ministry shall be a claim on the conference operating budget. The Board of Ordained Ministry shall have direct access to the conference council on finance and administration in support of its program.

### **The Conferences (The District Conference)**

¶ 666. There may be a district committee on ordained ministry.

\* 1. The district committee on ordained ministry shall be amenable to the annual conference through the Board of Ordained Ministry, which shall assign one of its members to the district committee. All members shall be nominated annually by the district superintendent in consultation with the chairperson or executive committee of the Board of Ordained Ministry and approved by the annual conference. Interim vacancies shall be filled by the district superintendent. The committee shall be comprised of at least two professing members of local churches, the district superintendent, who may serve as the executive secretary and at least four other clergy in the district. The clergy shall include elders, and where possible, a deacon in full connection, women, a deacon or elder who is age 35 or younger, an associate member, and may include one local pastor who has completed the Course of Study. All persons named to the district committee on ordained ministry shall be members with vote. The district committee on ordained ministry shall provide orientation for new members, including education regarding the ministry and roles of all clergy and distribution of any available written guidelines. At least two professing members of local churches shall be full participating members of the committee with vote, nominated annually by the district superintendent and approved by the annual conference.

2. The district committee on ordained ministry shall elect its officers at the first meeting following the annual conference session when the members are elected.

3. The committee shall maintain a list of all persons who have declared their candidacy for the ordained ministry and are pursuing candidacy studies with a candidacy mentor. A duplicate list shall be forwarded to the annual conference registrar for candidacy; such list being made current at least prior to each session of the annual conference.

4. The committee shall offer counsel to candidates regarding pre-theological studies.

5. The committee shall supervise all matters dealing with candidacy for the ordained ministry and with the license for local pastor.

6. The vote of the committee on matters of candidacy shall be by individual written ballot of the committee present. A three-fourths majority vote is required for certification. All other matters of candidacy shall be by a simple majority vote.<sup>2</sup>

\* 7. The committee shall maintain a service record and file on every local pastor and candidate for the ordained ministry. The records and files of the committee are kept on behalf of the annual conference and shall be maintained under guidelines provided by the General Council on Finance and Administration in consultation with the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry and the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits.

8. The committee shall recommend to the Board of Ordained Ministry those persons who qualify for associate and provisional membership, for license or continuance as local pastors, and for restoration of credentials. All persons shall have been professing members of The United Methodist Church or a baptized participant of a recognized United Methodist campus ministry or other United Methodist ministry setting for a minimum of one (1) year.

9. The committee shall examine all persons who apply in writing for certification or renewal of certificate. Where there is evidence that their gifts, evidence of God's grace, and usefulness warrant and that they are qualified under ¶¶ 315-319, and on recommendation of their charge conference or the conference Board of Ordained Ministry, the committee shall issue or renew their certificate.

10. The committee shall examine all persons who apply in writing to be certified as lay ministers. When there is evidence that their gifts, evidence of God's grace and usefulness, warrant and

---

2 See Judicial Council Decision 586

that they are qualified under ¶ 271, and on recommendation of their charge conference, the committee shall recommend their certification or recertification. The district committee shall report annually to the annual conference through the annual conference Board of Ordained Ministry a roster of all persons certified as lay ministers.

11. All persons interviewed by the district committee shall be informed of decisions and recommendations as soon as possible, both orally and in writing.

### **Church Property (All Titles – In Trust)**

#### **¶ 2501. Requirement of the Trust Clause for All Property—**

1. All properties of United Methodist local churches and other United Methodist agencies and institutions are held, *in trust*, for the benefit of the entire denomination, and ownership and usage of church property is subject to the *Discipline*. This trust requirement is an essential element of the historic polity of The United Methodist Church or its predecessor denominations or communions and has been a part of the *Discipline* since 1797. It reflects the connectional structure of the Church by ensuring that the property will be used solely for purposes consonant with the mission of the entire denomination as set forth in the *Discipline*. The trust requirement is thus a fundamental expression of United Methodism whereby local churches and other agencies and institutions within the denomination are both held accountable to and benefit from their connection with the entire worldwide Church.

In consonance with the legal definition and self-understanding of The United Methodist Church (see ¶ 141), and with particular reference to its lack of capacity to hold title to property, The United Methodist Church is organized as a connectional structure, and titles to all real and personal, tangible and intangible property held at jurisdictional, annual, or district conference levels, or by a local church or charge, or by an agency or institution of the Church, shall be held in trust for The United Methodist Church and subject to the provisions of its *Discipline*. Titles are not held by The United Methodist Church (see ¶ 807.1) or by the General Conference of The United Methodist Church, but instead by the incorporated conferences, agencies, or organizations of the denomination, or in the case of unincorporated bodies of the denomination, by boards of trustees established for the purpose of holding and administering real and personal, tangible and intangible property.

2. The trust is and always has been irrevocable, except as provided in the *Discipline*. Property can be released from the trust, transferred free of trust or subordinated to the interests of creditors and other third parties only to the extent authority is given by the *Discipline*.

3. Local churches and other United Methodist agencies and institutions may acquire, hold, maintain, improve, and sell property for purposes consistent with the mission of the Church, unless restricted or prevented by the *Discipline*.

\* 4. The incorporated annual conferences in the Northern Europe and Eurasia Central Conference and their legal predecessors are:

a) Metodistkirken i Danmark

b) Eesti Metodisti Kirik (1940-)

(1) Eestimaa Piiskoplik Methodisti kogudus (1919-1935)

(2) Eesti Piiskoplik Metodistikirik (1935-1940)

c) Suomen Metodistikirkko

(1) Suomen Piisallinen Metodistikirkko

d) Finlands svenska metodistkyrka

(1) Metodistkyrkan i Finland, svenska avdelningen

(2) Metodist-Episkopalkyrkan i Finland, svenska avdelningen

e) Latvijas Apvienotā Metodistu Baznīca (1991-)

(1) Metodistu Episkopālā Baznīca Latvijā (1921-1939)

f) Lietuvos Jungtinė Metodistū Bažničia

g) Metodistkirken i Norge

h) Религиозная Организация «Российская Объединенная Методистская Церковь» (Russia United Methodist Church)

i) Релігійне Управління Об'єднаної Методистської Церкви України (The United Methodist Church in Ukraine)

\* 5. A local church or charge may be incorporated separately while retaining its character as an integrated part of the annual conference.

*Øyvind Helliesen    Bishop Hans Växby    Bishop Christian Alsted*





## Episcopal Address

Bishop Christian Alsted  
Bishop Hans Våxby

*Look! I'm doing a new thing; now it sprouts up; don't you recognize it?*

A local church had 0 to 5 children in worship. They decided purposefully to focus their worship on families with children and worship every week. Within a few years the number of children in worship increased to 40-50 every Sunday. An annual conference has received support from the outside for several years. The conference embraced the calling of some people to start mission among unreached ethnic groups in a neighboring country. This bold step is changing the conference's self perception from being a receiver of support to becoming a church in mission to the world.

A local church is building on its strength in music ministry and ministering to hundreds of unchurched people. Through the many new people joining, the church is being transformed.

An annual conference wanted to reopen in a city where there had been Methodist churches before World War Two. After contacts with other churches, they came to the conclusion that the city didn't need another small Protestant congregation. But outside the city was a village where the only Christian activity was a visiting missionary in the summer, so they decided to go where people needed them.

Some years ago they hardly had any elders, but the few leaders were faithful and passed on the leadership to younger leaders. Today this annual conference in spite of their low salaries attract new pastors, they start new churches and last year their membership increased by 5%.

An inner city church is transforming to become multicultural and reaching out to the community with ministries for refugees many of them Muslim, with international student ministries, open church and much more. So far two United Methodist congregations are worshipping in the same facility.

In times of massive national tragedy as it was experienced in Oslo and at Utøya in Oslo<sup>3</sup> in the summer of 2011, and after the tragic accident in a United Methodist Church in L'viv in Ukraine<sup>4</sup> in 2012 we have seen pastors and deacons and local churches expressing Christ's love

<sup>3</sup> On 22nd July 2011 one person exploded a bomb in the government district in Oslo, Norway and later the same day he killed and injured a large number of youth at island Utøya. A total of 77 people were killed and hundreds injured in this national tragedy.

<sup>4</sup> On 10<sup>th</sup> July 2012 a roof of a church collapsed during renovation, several people were killed and injured

in offering care and support to surviving victims and to families and friends grieving the loss of their loved ones, as well as to many others affected by the tragedy.

The founder of a small local church was retiring and for a year no new appointment was available. But an assistant pastor, a lay leader and their families from a congregation in the district decided to move there, find new jobs and continue the ministry as well as creating new contacts.

A few committed people with a burning heart are leading their annual conference in one impressive mission project after the other supplying running water to villages in Africa.

Another annual conference is partnering with the national relief organization and with indigenous partners in running approximately 60 projects in different countries in Africa.

A local church had difficulties to reach out in the big city. They put up an attractive website and are active on social media, and as a result new people have joined the church.

A small declining church is experiencing the joy of reaching new people through an unexpected large Alpha course.

A local church saw the need for a new church in a suburb, they began praying, vision was born and they began preparing for a new church start. A year later the church plant was launched based on small groups, passionate worship and focused on young families with children. Another year later the new church was formed.

A pastor had a summerhouse in a village in the middle of nowhere with no Christian ministry. He started an outpost there, and this summer the first three persons from the village were baptized.

These snapshots are not from America, England or Korea. They are from among our midst in Northern Europe and Eurasia. Together they are one part of the reality that we need to recognize. Jesus Christ is at work in the Northern Europe and Eurasia Central Conference.

Another part of the reality that is equally important to recognize is the fact that all is not well with the United Methodist soul of Northern Europe and Eurasia. Too many churches, programs and leaders, too many United Methodists are satisfied with the second best. We have a tendency to deny our potential instead of stepping out in faith. We find it less demanding to defend and even glorify the status quo than aiming for higher goals and working intensively. Or we put the blame

of our situation on our secular context, our religious context or on the financial circumstances, instead of looking for constructive solutions and new ways forward in making the best of our God-given resources. Recognizing this, our two-folded reality - grace and frustration, chaos and kairos<sup>5</sup>, hope and disillusion - is a good starting point for a church that wants to reclaim its movement.

## **On the Move**

Following Jesus is to be on the move. The first Jesus followers were never in one place for a longer period of time, they were moving on to the next place to new needs, new people, new challenges and new experiences of grace. There is nothing static about Jesus. He called his disciples to follow, not to be with him or to stay with him, but to be moving with him. He never settled down. He never stayed in one place for a longer time. Much of what the gospel accounts took place, when they were on the move. Most of the parables were told when the band of disciples was travelling with Jesus, or when they made a short stop. Many of the healings took place when they met people on the way. In fact movement was so prominent in Christ's teaching and in following him as a disciple, that the name they chose for the early followers were "The Way", they were the people of the Way.<sup>6</sup>

"Way" becomes even more significant when we consider, that Christ refers to himself as "The Way, the truth and the life."<sup>7</sup> Being a Christian is to live in the Way, in Christ. To follow the Way, is to live according to Christ's teaching and example. To be on the Way, is to be continually transformed by Christ's grace in the community of other followers. And to prepare the Way, is to share Christ with others and to be in ministry with the poor and marginalized.

John Wesley and his co-workers lived out this reality in a radical way. They became the Methodist movement!

## **Minority in a majority culture**

Across the 9 time zones of the Northern Europe and Eurasia Central Conference most of our churches exist in a context of institutionalized expressions of Christianity, no matter if it is Orthodox, Roman Catholic or Lutheran. Generally people expect the church to offer little more than worship, baptisms, confirmations, weddings and funerals. For

<sup>5</sup> Kairos (καιρός) greek word meaning the right or opportune moment

<sup>6</sup> Acts 9:2; 18:25f; 19:9; 19:23; 22:4; 24:14; 24:22

<sup>7</sup> Joh 14:6

many years our countries have been considered Christian countries. As expressed by retired Bishop of the Lutheran Church in Denmark, Jan Linhardt, “When you scratch the surface of a Dane, you will find a Christian underneath.” But challenged around the time when Methodism first reached the shore of the Nordic countries by philosopher Soeren Kierkegaard, who in his struggle against the state church dismissed the existence of genuine New Testament Christianity in the Church of Denmark. One of his points was that if all are Christians no one is a Christian.

While Methodism originally was a missional movement, an alternative and often critical to established Christianity, we have become as institutional as any of the majority churches in our countries. Looking at church history and sociology this may not seem so strange, as revivalistic movements appear to have a lifecycle taking them towards institutionalism. Which has certainly happened in the Nordic countries particularly since the 1950’s.

In Eurasia and the Baltics where Methodism was reintroduced in 1990’s<sup>8</sup> the most significant influence was from the mainline United Methodist Church in the United States, and even though the emphasis was evangelistic the way to do church was institutional. State recognition, or at least public recognition as a Christian denomination, became an important issue. In both Eurasia and the Baltics we have several examples of the church being treated as a sect by the government, and even worse being openly opposed and accused for all kinds of things by local church leaders in the majority church. But much more worrying is the fact, that many local churches in Eurasia and the Baltics, where with the exception of Estonia even the oldest churches are no more than 20 years old, have the mindset of a stale established church and express very little desire for change and renewal. They have stopped reaching out to the community, and they are declining.

What we may not have realized is that along with becoming a mainline institutional church, we have also left our theological basis. We are Methodists but we are not quite sure what this exactly means. We are always ready to answer the question, “what is the difference between your church and the majority church?” And doing so, we describe ourselves more as non-Lutheran or non-Orthodox, than positively Wesleyan. We talk about baptism and about being independent from the state. We may offer some words about grace, and we may mention

---

<sup>8</sup> In Estonia the United Methodist Church continued to exist during the Soviet occupation but after the fall of the iron curtain, there was a strong missional effort and support from the United States

the Social Principles as a major contribution to what it means to live as Christians in the world - which is true. What we however tend to forget, is that Grace is foundational, not additional, and that the Social Principles flow from our theology, they are not basic in our theology.

In our official statements we are very clear that our primary purpose is “to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.” But when we try to express what our theology means put into practice, how we implement disciple-making, and what kind of transformation we are looking for, we tend to get academic or just fuzzy.

### **Half Empty or Half Full**

What do you see, and what do you think, when you look at your church? How we perceive our situation determines our self-image which in turn shapes our future. If we emphasize our smallness, our lack of resources, our few successes and years of decline, we feed a self-image of being a dying church, we lose hope and courage, and there is no future. We could instead see our smallness as an asset. As a small and nimble church we can make decisions and implement significant changes fairly swiftly. Compared to our size we have a remarkable amount of resources, and we do significant ministry in the Nordic, Baltic and Eurasia area and across the world. We have several success stories to share, and many more will come. We have been declining, but most of our conferences have plateaued and some are beginning to grow. So take heart, there is hope and God is leading us into a new future. “So what do you see – is the glass half empty or half full?”

The world has changed and we are not keeping up.

– And yet several of our churches are innovatively looking for new ways to reach out to people

We are closing churches and the empty seats are alarming

– And yet we are beginning to start new churches and the momentum is growing.

We are growing grey and young people are absent in many churches

– And yet we see churches that are purposeful in changing to reaching children and youth, and they are successful

We have been declining fiscally, numerically, and most importantly, spiritually

– And yet in all conferences there are churches that are growing financially, numerically and most importantly spiritually

We want to keep the two-folded reality we described in the beginning

alive. We want to be vision minded and to emphasize the positive opportunities rather than being consumed by defeat. We see significant moves to towards becoming a more vital church.

At the same time we also want to be realistic and true, particularly when it comes to perhaps the most crucial area: Generally we are not in a significant way making or becoming disciples of Jesus Christ - what we see are the promising “sprouts”.

### **From Monument to Movement**

George G. Hunter III<sup>9</sup> in his book “The Recovery of a Contagious Methodist Movement” reflects on what it will take to move Methodism out of institutionalism and back to what Martin Atkins calls “a disciple making movement shaped for mission”<sup>10</sup>. Hunter points to 4 themes: Wesleyan theology, lay ministries, small groups and missional Christianity.<sup>11</sup>

He points to the Wesleyan Quadrilateral in its original form as described by theologian Albert Outler and in our part of the world emphasized by dr. Thorvald Källstad, scripture, tradition, experience and reason, where scripture in good Wesleyan tradition was considered the primary source in theological reflection.

Dr. Hunter alludes to a sermon preached by Albert Outler at Baltimore’s Lovely Lane Church during General Conference 1984 in which dr. Outler identified three main themes in Wesley’s theology: Original Sin, Grace and Sanctification. He said that American Methodism has produced 2 great movements, the 19<sup>th</sup> century Holiness movement and the 20<sup>th</sup> century Liberalism, and he considered both of them by 1984 spent forces. The holiness movement was spent because they emphasized the first and the third themes but forgot the second, while liberalism was spent because they focused on the second but forgot the first and the third.

We might think, that the task ahead would be to refocus our theology, but this is only part of the challenge. It is not only helpful but necessary, for us to carefully evaluate, what is being preached and taught in our churches, and to consider what we need to teach and preach today. We have been off course for so long, that we have developed new patterns of being church. We have adopted the current understanding from the

---

9 George Hunter is Distinguished Professor, Emeritus of Asbury Theological Seminary’s School of World Mission and Evangelism

10 General Secretary in the Methodist Church in the UK in his message to the 2011 annual conference

11 Page 7ff

majority churches, that all we have to do is to have good worship, to perform baptisms, confirmation, weddings and funerals, and as we don't have to many religious ceremonies we supplement with different kinds of activities and ministries.

In Methodism, theology and life is developed in a creative tension. In "Our Doctrinal Heritage" puts it like this: "These emphases have been preserved not so much through formal doctrinal declarations as through the vital movement of faith and practice as seen in converted lives and within the disciplined life of the church. Devising formal definitions of doctrine has been less pressing for United Methodists than summoning people to faith and nurturing them in the knowledge and love of God."<sup>12</sup>

Theology grew out of reading the scriptures and studying the church fathers, it was informed by experience and evaluated by reason - and experience and reason pushed Wesley back to study scripture and tradition again. Theological thinking was dynamic, the Methodist leaders would think, pray and reason together, and they might reach a preliminary conclusion, but they would continue to think, experience and learn and to be open for new insight. At the same time they were developing their thinking and their practice on how to lead the revival God had given them to lead.

### **Reclaiming the Ministry of the Laity**

From the very beginning of the Methodist movement lay people were leading most of the ministries that mattered. The vast majority of the preachers were lay preachers. Lay people were leaders of the classes for new believers and seekers, and for the bands of devoted Methodists. The clergy travelled around preached, supervised the lay leaders and administered the sacraments.

This was even true when Methodism came to the Northern Europe in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century. But it changed. In the 1960's and 1970's there was a strong move in the Methodist Church in the US to become main line which implied giving up on our Wesley revivalistic heritage, becoming more clergy centered and put a much stronger emphasis on worship. This move had some affect in the Nordic countries, and we saw a similar move towards becoming a free church alternative to the established church. We were looking for acceptance and in our efforts we lost a clear sense of identity. Many of our churches have to a significant extent been influenced by Methodism from the United

12 NEEBoD ¶ 101 "Our Doctrinal Heritage"

States. And while the churches, organizations and individuals acted out of good heart, to a large extent they brought mainline Methodism, and the emphasis was on building the Church, having the proper kind of worship according to the Hymnal and the Book of Worship, having churches served by pastors and paid staff to do the ministry.

Every congregation doesn't need a pastor, but every faith community needs committed leadership. Figures from the US show that while membership from 1968 to 2005 has decreased by 27%, the number of clergy has increased by 36%<sup>13</sup>. The figures are not exactly the same in this Central Conference, but we see the same trend. Particularly in the Baltics and in Eurasia there is a disproportionate number of clergy compared to the number of members. While previously most pastors would serve in several small churches assisted by several lay preachers and other leaders, pastors today tend to serve in one church where they do most of the ministry.

We need to focus on and lift up the ministry of the laity and particularly the ministry of lay preachers<sup>14</sup>, this is crucial to our future growth and development. If we need a pastor to start new faith communities or plant a new church, we will not be able to grow. We will not be able to train a sufficient number of pastors, we will not be able to afford it, and most importantly we will not build healthy new churches.

## Healthy Churches

“Forward by making new faith communities with new people”, was the closing statement of the 2009 Central Conference. We affirm the validity of this statement in leading the United Methodist Church in Northern Europe and Eurasia into the future. Craig Kennet Miller, who has taught on several occasions throughout the Nordic and Baltic area, defines a faith community as composed of two interrelated components, a worship experience and a discipleship system.<sup>15</sup>

Worship emphasizes proclamation. The church and the believer invite the world to come to the church to hear the gospel whether it is proclaimed through preaching, liturgy or sacrament. The focus is on the event of worship, rather than on the process of discipleship. In a discipleship based church, the Christ followers bring the gospel to the world and invite people to come to the group for faith formation.

---

13 Association of Religion Data Archives, “Evangelical Lutheran Church in America,” [www.thearda.com/Denoms/D\\_1415.asp](http://www.thearda.com/Denoms/D_1415.asp) and “United Methodist Church,” [www.thearda.com/Denoms/D\\_1469.asp](http://www.thearda.com/Denoms/D_1469.asp)

14 The title “lay preacher” as the ministry of lay preaching has disappeared from the BoD, today the term is “Lay Servant”

15 Craig K. Miller: NextChurch Now

Worship and discipleship is rarely in balance. In most of our churches worship has priority, and the worship service is perceived as the primary means of mission. In fact worship is the only functioning activity in most of our small churches. If the worship service was closed down, the church would disappear from one day to the other. However a worshipping church without a discipleship system is a caricature of the biblical understanding of church.

In modern day Methodism we value small groups and bible studies, and they are usually offered as a ministry of the church. We have churches with small group ministries, but rarely do we anymore have churches composed of small groups.

In the early Methodist movement the purpose of preaching was to open people's hearts and minds to the gospel. The altar call was a much later invention.

People who were revived through the preaching were invited to become part of a class. The classes were led by lay people, and they were composed of a mix of seekers, new Christians and mature Christians. The purpose was personal accountability for people desiring to live a new life, to do good, do no harm and to stay in love with God. The classes were engaged in ministry and witness. They were not bible study groups. The early Methodists believed they were modeling the "koinonia"<sup>16</sup> of the New Testament through the classes, and thus it was a requirement for all members to be in a class. The classes were the place for people to commit themselves to Christ, and in that way they have similarities with today's Alpha courses.

In addition to the classes Wesley created "the bands", to be quite homogenous group the devoted Christ followers could join to grow in their spiritual walk. In the bands intensive studies of scripture and prayer took place – again led by lay people.

Leaders were developed in classes and bands. The people would discern each other's gifts for ministry, challenge each other to grow, support, help and pray for each other

The classes and bands were developed out of experience and the need to accommodate and sustain the revival, and it is important to note that Methodist theology of salvation as a process, sanctification, cannot be properly understood nor lived without this accountable discipleship system.

---

<sup>16</sup> Koinonia is a Greek word that occurs 20 times in the Bible Koinonia's primary meaning is "fellowship, sharing in common, communion" The first occurrence of koinonia is Acts 2:42 – the early Methodist saw the classmeeting as a true expression of koinonia

We do have small groups, recovery groups, self-help groups, prayer groups, bible study groups – however just organizing people in small groups is not going to help people grow in their life with Christ. Small groups are not the magic fertilizer that makes people and churches grow, it is what goes on in those small groups that determine the impact.

This is not a sentimental move back to the good old days; this is an experience based statement consistent with our Wesleyan theology. Each of our local churches need to find the balance between worship and discipleship system, there are no short cuts – this balance will determine the health of the church in the future.

### **Reclaiming the Mission**

Wesley believed that God raised up the people called Methodists “To reform the nation, particularly the church, and to spread scriptural holiness over the land” This gave the Methodists a distinctive identity and mission. It was not to become a church, it was to rethink church. It was to move the emphasis from what happens around the altar to what happens in and among people. It was not to register the average worship attendance, it was to expect reports of transformation like, “The Lord’s power was with them, and a large number came to believe and turned to the Lord. When the church in Jerusalem heard about this, they sent Barnabas to Antioch. When he arrived and saw evidence of God’s grace, he was overjoyed and encouraged everyone to remain fully committed to the Lord.”<sup>17</sup>

The mission of The United Methodist Church in Northern Europe and Eurasia is not to be successful and recognized in the society. Our mission is along with other Christians to be part of Christ’s redeeming and transforming work in people’s lives, in the society and in the world. To “spread scriptural holiness” is to grow together and as Christ followers intentionally influence the society “to do justice, embrace faithful love, and walk humbly with your God”<sup>18</sup>

Methodists engage in recovery groups and rehabilitation among people with addictions. We could go one step further and try to influence the drinking patterns in our societies that ruin families and the life and future of many children and young people. Getting drunk every weekend is not cool, it is potentially destroying lives.

Along with migration racism is showing its ugly face. – In debate on the internet, in newspapers and even from politicians we read

17 Acts 11:21-23

18 Micah 6:8

generalizing and prejudice statements about ethnic minority groups not least about Roma and about Muslims. Racist attacks in our streets are not uncommon. Many of our churches have made great efforts in embracing different ethnic groups and the cultural encounters have enriched their fellowship – more churches could do the same. We could go one step further and make our voice heard in the public debate as well as when we hear racist comments in our workplace or among friends. We could even go yet another step in building relationships to the marginalized and purposefully reach out to them.

“So, brothers and sisters, because of God’s mercies, I encourage you to present your bodies as a living sacrifice that is holy and pleasing to God. This is your appropriate priestly service. Don’t be conformed to the patterns of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds so that you can figure out what God’s will is—what is good and pleasing and mature.”<sup>19</sup>

Our mission is to be a part of God’s mission to love creation and humanity back to him. “God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him won’t perish but will have eternal life.”<sup>20</sup> And according to Jesus this eternal life doesn’t start after the physical death. Instead, “whoever hears my word and believes in the one who sent me has eternal life and... has passed from death into life.” Around us from Esbjerg in Denmark to Vladivostok in Russia and from Hammerfest in Norway to Bishkek in Kyrgyzstan people perish in confusion and self-destruction, because so many of them have lost both foundation and direction for their lives. It is our mission not to wait for them to come to the church, but to actually “see them..., be moved with compassion..., bring them to a safe place..., and take care of them”<sup>21</sup>. It is our mission to go “to the highways and back alleys and urge people to come”<sup>22</sup> to Jesus. It is our mission to offer them Christ in order to come back home, to restore their relation to God and help them on “The Way” with Jesus.

This requires more than a new ministry program and more than another sermon series by the pastor. It requires not a new way of thinking, but a re-newed way of thinking. It requires spiritual openness and spiritual depth. This requires energy and new priorities. But this is our mission, and this is the mission we want to reclaim.

---

19 Rom 12:1-2

20 John 3:16

21 Luke 10:33-34

22 Luke 14:23

## Renovation not Redecoration

We are calling for renovation not redecoration. Bright colors on the walls, a new carpet and some fresh flowers in a vase are not going to do it. This is much more than tweaking a program, changing the design of a website, putting up a screen and a projector in the sanctuary or turning up the amplifiers. Renovation goes deeper; it uncovers the damp in the floor, the bad pipes in the walls and the holes in the roof. Renovation tears down walls and builds for the future. Scripture has several expressions of renovation, “repentance”<sup>23</sup>, “born from above”<sup>24</sup>, “be transformed”<sup>25</sup>, and they all go deep.

To fully reclaim our mission we need to look carefully behind the walls and under the floor on how we function as a church, what our priorities are, where and how we use our resources, and how this all relates to our purpose and vision. We must ask scary questions like: What must we stop doing? What must we do in a different way? What must we begin to do? Local churches may need outside help in this process.

The United Methodist Church in Norway has led the way by expressing an unambiguous vision and adopting bold goals for the future with a clear strategy.

Under the title: The United Methodist Church in Norway is people with open minds, open hearts and open doors. The vision says what they desire to be:

”A relevant, open and vital church, where people find faith and a sense of belonging, and are equipped to ministry as followers of Jesus.”

Local churches are categorized in four colors, and the emphasis is on challenging and giving each church the opportunity to grow and develop to the next level. In this process a number of strategic steps are suggested and a variety of tools are offered.

Furthermore the following goals are set:

- To double the number of members received through confession and through baptism annually by 2016.
- To plant 6 new churches before 2016 of which 3 have become local churches.
- To have at least 2-3 candidates for ministry under the age of 30 start education annually and in addition have 2-3 new local pastors every year.

---

23 Mark 1:14

24 John 3:3

25 Romans 12:2

- Increase the average number of people in worship by 10% 2012-2013 and by 20% 2014-2016.

Renovating the church requires major changes in focus, in the way we lead, in the way we prioritize resources, and in accountability.

### **The Challenge**

We are extremely clear about our purpose to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. We even say, that “The local church provides the most significant arena through which disciple-making occurs.”<sup>26</sup> We realize our diversity present in the Northern Europe and Eurasia Central Conference, and yet in spite of our very diverse contexts, we share similar challenges. To reclaim our mission as the United Methodist Church in the Nordic, Baltic and Eurasian countries our purpose must determine our focus and priorities . . . .

- We must have our focus outside of the church among the people Christ loves - and we must study our culture and experiment to find ways to minister in the culture.
- All leaders clergy and lay must have a clear understanding of how disciple making takes place and what their leading role is in this.
- All local churches must know how they make disciples in their specific context, they must have a compelling vision of the future, set unambiguous goals and have a clear strategy for how to obtain their goals.
- All local churches must know their answers to the following questions: Why do people need Jesus? Why do people need the church? Why do people need our particular church?
- We must start new faith communities and plant new churches. The first steps have been taken, now we must build on our experiences.
- We must align the education and training of leaders, deacons and pastors locally and nationally with our purpose – we need change agents, church planters and innovative leaders
- We must move from being a clergy driven church to becoming a church led by lay and clergy in teams. The clergy must release the lay to take leadership; and the lay must reclaim leadership and responsibility in the church.

- We must be purposeful about being church with children and youth
- We must practice mutual accountability on all levels

And finally what all this means must be described in very concrete and tangible ways to enable Methodists on all levels of the church to get involved.

This is the task ahead, and it is going to require of us to give our best in prayer, discernment and action, and it will stretch us to the limits of our ability and strength. Our calling comes from the Jesus Christ, the Way, who is making a way in the desert, paths in the wilderness, and more than that, he has put water in the desert, streams in the wilderness to give water to his people.<sup>27</sup>

Let us reclaim our mission, let us get moving

*Prayerfully submitted*

*Hans Växby and Christian Alsted*

---

27      Isaiah 43: 19 and 20





## Laity Address

Rebekka Steinvig

*I'm walking across a bridge, the bridge of my childhood. There is a large gap between the planks of the bridge, and a small foot could easily stumble between the planks. On each side of the bridge there is murky water. I'm thinking that a person would just disappear, if he were to fall in. I am attentive to both the wide gap between the planks and the murky water beneath, and I struggle to stay on top, to stay on the bridge of my childhood.*

God's mission is to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. It is our job to participate in God's mission by proclaiming the gospel and by following the commandments to love God and our neighbor. "People find that the church has nothing to offer them today. The church seems irrelevant."<sup>28</sup> If that's the case, how do we make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world? How do we translate the gospel to a language that can be heard, seen, understood and received by the present generation?

While preparing the laity address I was in contact with 20 lay people from the Nordic and Baltic countries – young and elderly, men and women, coming from small church plantings and big vital congregations, all involved in different ministries in our church.

As a church we do a lot of good things – and sometimes with success! We are good at welcoming people, making them feel at home in our church and including them in our fellowship. We have a lot of good activities and ministries – choirs, scout groups and camps – that build relationships and strengthen our fellowship. And we prioritize training and educating our pastors and lay leaders. This is a blessing!

But from what I hear, and from what I see, we also face challenges today. It seems like we are walking on a bridge, afraid to stumble and fall into the murky water. If we are to be a church that makes disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world, we have to face these challenges.

The situation of the church in the Nordic and Baltic countries is of course very diverse, and making disciples will have a variety of challenges in different contexts. I cannot address every single situation. However, I will point to this: We are united in spite of our differences. We are

united in Christ. We are one United Methodist Church. That is why we are gathering at this Central Conference. We are gathering because we all take part in God's mission – and being together in this place we should be full of hope, because this is the promise God has given us:

“For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.”<sup>29</sup>

Heavenly Father, I pray that you will give us wisdom to understand the situation of the church as it is today. I pray that your holy presence will guide us in our discussions and decisions. Give us courage and inspiration. Be among us and touch our hearts and minds with your grace. And let us at all times remember what you have told us: “If you believe, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer.”<sup>30</sup>

### **People Forging New Relationships**

In many ways our church does not relate to the present generation, and we do not face the emergent culture as it is. We are not connecting or communicating with people in our communities. This is a great challenge.

In Denmark about 40 per cent of all marriages ends in a divorce. We see the same tendency in Sweden, Norway, Finland and Lithuania. Only Latvia and Estonia do not have the same high divorce numbers. A lot can be said about divorces but one thing is clear: A lot of marriages end in a break-up, and it is often a tragedy for both mum, dad and those children involved.

What we see is that the broken relationships are followed by new relationships and arrangements: People, that have been divorced, start dating and find a new partner. The couple move in together – both with his and her children – and they live happily together, maybe not ‘ever after’, but at least until a new break-up occurs. Or people, that have been divorced, become members of a still larger club of singles, single men and women, who live alone – not in marriages, not even in couples – maybe because they are incapable of such<sup>31</sup>. Or it may even happen that a man finds a man, and a woman finds a woman.

A lot of people have become part of this modern way of life. And

---

29 Jeremiah 29:11-13

30 Matthew 21:22

31 Matthew 19:12

sometimes it feels like one big mess. At least when you, like I have, have grown up with a mum and dad that met 30 years ago, fell in love, got married, had seven children and still to this day live happily together.

The church is where couples go to get married. Our church welcomes married couples, the traditional family. But where is the church when it comes to break-ups, divorces, new relationships (also with people of the same sex) and the single life? How does our church meet those who are single, homosexual, divorced or dating boyfriend number 30? Should the church, just to give one example, help married couples to prevent getting divorced and mediate when the break-up has taken place?

As God has said: “I will live with them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be my people. Therefore come out from them and be separate.”<sup>32</sup> The Lord has spoken, and it is still relevant for us today. Our church has to face the modern way of life. But how? When meeting the present generation, what, then, is negotiable and what is not? How can we come out from the world and still be separate from the world?

### **The Dualism of Life and the World**

A challenge for our church is to reach out to children and young adults and stay in contact with the children and young adults that are already in our church. It is a challenge that has our priority, because we wish for them to know Jesus Christ, our Lord. Not because children are tools we can use, bringing the gospel to the parents. Not because children are the future of the church, bringing the gospel to the next generations. But simply because the kingdom of God belongs to them: ”Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these.”<sup>33</sup>

I know young people whom I have grown up with in the church. Their parents came to church, just like my parents, and we came along. As time went by, we were no longer children. We became teenagers, and it gradually became more and more difficult for us to find our place in the church. We noticed a way of living outside the church – and we noticed that it did not correspond with the way of living inside the church.

In Denmark I see a minority of young Muslims that live a dualistic life.

---

32 2 Corinthians 6:16-17

33 Mark 10:14

On the one hand, they live a traditional, religious life, and on the other hand, they live a modern, liberated life. A consequence of a dualistic lifestyle often is that you slip from one to the other. It may happen without anyone noticing, but it happens.

Are we asking our young adults in the church to live such a dualistic life? If we do, it can give the individual concerns of a more existential matter. And the result might be that the young adults gradually slip away from the church and “dump” God, or are absorbed by the church and become isolated from the outside world.

The kingdom of God belongs to the children. But when looking around, our children and youth are in many places absent or hidden away in our churches. In today’s world, how do we lead children and young adults to Jesus Christ? How do we help children and young adults to avoid slipping away from the church? How do we make room for every generation in our church? And how do we create a church that reduces division in life and provides people with a greater meaning and wholeness?

### **The Perfect Person**

In the emergent culture there is a predominant discourse about perfection. We want to be perfect: Perfect marriages, perfect children, perfectly decorated houses with perfect gardens, perfect jobs with perfect pension schemes, perfect, perfect, perfect...

I am *not* perfect. It is hard to admit when you want to be perfect. But I am *not* perfect. I have gone through personal crisis... And it just doesn’t happen to perfect people! I remember one time when I was very unhappy. I cried a lot. But still hope wouldn’t leave me. Every morning when I showered, the sun would come shining through the window, and the sunshine would blend with the water drops and leave me in a shower of gold. I was showering in gold!

Where does that hope come from? Where does that strength come from? I know where it comes from. It comes from God. And I know that when I am confronted with my own un-perfect self I can go to God. I can tell him about my biggest mistakes and leave my failure with him. He can carry it, and he holds me and whispers in my ear: ”Since you are precious and honored in my sight, and because I love you.”<sup>34</sup>

---

34            Isaiah 43:4

My hope comes from God. From him comes my strength.<sup>35</sup> But what about people who have never met God? What do they do when they are confronted with a personal crisis? Where do they go with their biggest mistakes, failures and un-perfect self? To whom do they turn?

In God's kingdom there is room for everyone. But is there room for everyone in our church? I often hear that we *want* to be a church for everyone. I cannot help thinking: Who is this everyone? The general picture is that we choose to connect with people who think like us, act like us, and look like us.

We experience anxiety when it comes to getting too close to the un-perfect person. And especially, we are afraid of getting in too close proximity to the "lepers" of our time: money swindlers, prostitutes, pedophiles, addicts, psychopaths. Jesus helped the lepers – the un-perfect people of that time – and we should do the same today: "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners."<sup>36</sup> How can our church meet today's un-perfect person? How do we reach out to the lepers of our time?

### **Walk Out of the Church!**

This summer I went kayaking in Sweden with my family. Every day we camped on a new island. One evening I prepared the bonfire and rolled a stone. Hundreds and hundreds of ants hid under the stone. There was a stir in the group of ants – they immediately started moving when the stone was moved. I went to look for branches to put on the bonfire. When I came back, the ants were gone, all hundreds and hundreds of them! At no time, they had moved to another place.

There is a great mobility and flexibility in our society, but we don't see the same mobility and flexibility in our church. "Buildings and habits tend to hinder us from seeing the needs in a changing society only a few kilometres away. We find it difficult to close a church in an area where people are moving out and starting new faith communities in areas where people are moving in."<sup>37</sup> "Christians do not walk into the church. Christians walk *out* of the church."<sup>38</sup> For a long time we have been inside the church. For a long time we have laid passively under a stone. Ants move when their setting changes – but we don't? It is a lukewarm Christianity if it is all about maintaining the church as a building. It is a

---

35 Psalm 118:14

36 Mark 2:17

37 Bishop Hans Växby, 2009

38 Pastor Mark Lewis, Denmark

lukewarm Christianity if it is all about repeating what we have always done. Our faith is not a dead brick. Our faith is a living faith – faith in the risen Christ, which brings salvation to all humankind.<sup>39</sup> ”And those congregations that think outside of the church walls can truly see the fruits of the work that is done by Holy Spirit.”<sup>40</sup>

So let us get to the main thing: If we want to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world, we have to be willing to meet people where they are – also if it means taking chances and moving in new directions. We should have fun, “but you cannot socialize into the kingdom of God.”<sup>41</sup> It is our job to build a bridge to our Saviour, our Lord. In everything we do, we have to be strong witnesses of God’s love and make disciples of Jesus Christ.

We should focus on creating faith communities for new people. And it does not have to be a big project. Jesus and John Wesley did not “plant churches”. They started “small groups” – and it led to new disciples, more people in worship, more leaders and more ministries. When God is calling us, let us plant new faith communities and small groups. Let us start meaningful and relevant activities and ministries. And let us praise and worship in new ways so it can be heard, seen, understood and received by the present generation.

When we see changes in our setting and context, let us respond by moving. In Sweden they formed the new ecumenical church as a response to a critical situation. A crisis is not the end of our church’s existence. A crisis can lead to a restart and a refocusing on the mission of the church. A crisis can create a more transformative ministry. It is about time we walk out of the church.

How do we face challenges we meet? Is God calling us to move the church in a new direction? Does God inspire us to meet new people, engage in new ministries, plant new faith communities or worship in new ways? Where have you witnessed transformative change in the church? How can we achieve a more transformative ministry?

### **Be Doers of the Word!**

”Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.”<sup>42</sup> Our love of God is inextricably linked to love for our

---

39 John 3:16-17

40 Lay person, Latvia

41 Lay person, Denmark

42 James 1:22

neighbor. As United Methodists we want to make a difference by our deeds.

We have a lot of people in our church that serve God and help their neighbor with great commitment and love through their ministry. I can mention Hope Centre in Latvia, a vital youth ministry in Norway, mission and development programs in Liberia and DR Congo, gospel choirs in Denmark, a soup kitchen ministry in Ukraine, just to mention a few.

We see a committed laity, but we also see a lot of people in our congregations that are not yet involved in a ministry. Our pastors do a huge job, but they neither shall nor can do it all. There are functions in the church that calls for laity involvement. A vital church is a church with a committed laity.

Let us focus on motivating everyone in our congregations to engage in ministry. Everyone can serve and take part in God's mission. It is not for the few. Jesus did not choose rich or well-educated followers. The first disciples were fishermen. God also called Moses to be a leader, and Moses became a great leader, though he was not strong either in word or deed. We have to be open. We have to be open for what ministry God is calling us and people around us. "I have realized that it is a great blessing to find your gifts and use them in ministry within the congregation."<sup>43</sup>

What are your gifts? For what ministry is God calling you? What do we experience today that calls for action? How do we find inspiration to continue in our ministry? How do we help and motivate others in the church to find their ministry?

### **Say It, Say It Proudly!**

The Christian fellowship is the largest fellowship in the world that does not live for itself, but exists for the benefit of others. And it is a fellowship that does not live by itself, but lives solely by the power of the risen Christ. This is something to be proud of. Still, we often get quite, and we find excuses why we should *not* tell others about our church, and why we should *not* share our faith with those around us.

As lay people we meet un-churched people every day. We have a unique possibility to share life and testimony with others: Family, friends, schoolmates, colleagues, neighbors, and people we share interests and leisure activities with. Some congregations focus on this

form of “friendship evangelization”. My little sister is especially good at it. She talks far and wide about God. I don’t know anyone like her. I don’t know anyone like her who talks so proudly of her heavenly father. “Every day I am a testimony, and my life outside the church is the most important.”<sup>44</sup>

Do we not confess in the church that we believe in the risen Christ? Why are we, then, so silent outside of the church? It is when we are honest people; it is when we share life and faith, that we can make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. “Let us be proud of Jesus. Let us be strong witnesses of God’s love.”<sup>45</sup> When was the last time you shared your testimony? Who did you tell it to? What led you to share? How did the person respond?

### See the Person

Have you ever been at the playground with a child? And have you ever heard how the child shouts: “Look at me! Look at me!” Unfortunately, adults often reply: “You are so talented!” But this is not what the child asked for. The child asked to be seen.

In our society we tend to focus on competencies and skills.<sup>46</sup> And we also do it in our church. We talk about what we have achieved, and we talk about results. We comment on each other, evaluate each other and judge each other.

The Bible says: “Behold the person”<sup>47</sup>, and a Danish psalm, “*Se hvilken menneske*”, proclaims the same thing.<sup>48</sup> If people are to meet Jesus Christ, “we have to be present in the present world with the people who are presently around us.”<sup>49</sup> Let us not comment on and judge what other people do. Let us be present with people. Let us see people for who they are. Closed eyes don’t see anything. Closed eyes don’t see greatness in the little things. Open eyes do. Let us see the world the way God does – with open, loving, mild, forgiving, generous eyes. God, give me your eyes.<sup>50</sup>

This summer my little brother went to DR Congo as a volunteer on a water supply project – a project that is founded on a partnership between

---

44 Lay person, Denmark

45 Lay person, Sweden

46 “Doppler”, Erlend Loe, 2011

47 John 19:5

48 Lyrics: Hans Anker Jørgensen. Mel.: Merete Wendler. 1987.

49 Bishop Hans Växby, 2009

50 “Give me your eyes”, Brandon Heath, 2008

the United Methodist Church in Denmark and Congo through many years. Life in Congo is like a soap bubble: It is a fragile life, but also a beautiful life, holding the color of the rainbow within it – and with that the promise of a new beginning.<sup>51</sup> People in Congo, and people in other poor areas and conflict areas, are often at the world’s periphery, far away from our comfort zone. Still, I think they are shouting at us: “Look at us! Look at us” But do we see them?

We have to be present and see people, also people who are close to us, even in our own congregations. Here we find beautiful, but fragile lives that can burst as well. We fail to care for each other in our congregations, and some lay people are fighting to find a balance in their ministry: “Very often we see a small number of people doing the majority of the voluntary work. Finally, they get tired, give up or something worse happens to them.”<sup>52</sup>

“We have to care for each other. We have to give space and allow a break, also in the ministry.”<sup>53</sup> How do we support each other in our congregations? How do we avoid our pastors and active lay leaders from burning out? And how do we get better at noticing people, both those who are close to us and those at the world’s periphery?

### **Plans for Prosperity**

The United Methodist Church in the Nordic and Baltic countries is facing various challenges. What I have mentioned are just a few perspectives. We have to face our challenges, but let us not confuse challenges with lack of resources. At the feeding of the five thousand the disciples said to Jesus: “We have here only five loaves of bread and two fish”. And Jesus answered them: “Bring them here to me!”<sup>54</sup> The disciples focused on the shortages and lack of resources. Jesus focused on the gifts. Let us do like Jesus: Let us face our challenges *as well as* our gifts, and we will come to realize that thousands and thousands of people are fed. Let us receive God’s blessings and grace, and we shall see how rich we are.

As lay people it is our job to translate the gospel to a language that can be heard, seen, understood and received by the present generation. It is our job to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. This is our mission – let us not forget that – and let us follow

---

51 Genesis 9:12-17

52 Lay person, Estonia

53 Lay person, Denmark

54 Matthew 14:13-18

the example of Jesus: Walk out of the church, be present in the world, preach the gospel, engage in ministry and praise God.

And let us at all times be full of hope. When walking on the bridge, let us not be afraid to stumble, and let us not focus on the murky water on each side. Let us keep our eyes on the horizon where the bridge ends. Jesus told us: “Surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”<sup>55</sup> And remembering the words of Paul, we can do everything through him who gives us strength,<sup>56</sup> we are to realize that God’s plans are plans of prosperity, of hope and a future.<sup>57</sup>

I thank you God, because you have plans for prosperity. I thank you, because in you we find a future and a hope. I pray for your wonderful world, for your church, for every congregation and every single one of us. Help us, strengthen us, Lord. Let every word we say, every move we make and our very presence in the world lead to you. Heavenly Father and Savior, let us be your light in the world, so people can come to know you. Amen.

*I’m walking across a bridge, the bridge of my childhood. There is a large gap between the planks of the bridge, and a small foot could easily stumble between the planks. On each side of the bridge there is murky water. I’m thinking that a person would just disappear, if he were to fall in. After a while, the planks will stop, the murky water will ebb away, and the bridge of my childhood will end. Have you seen where? The bridge ends at a place where the sun meets the sea, there, where the two converge into a street of pure gold.<sup>58</sup> Eternity.*

---

55 Matthew 28:20

56 Philippians 4:13

57 Jeremiah 29:11-13

58 Revelation 21:21





# Report of the Central Conference Council

Welcome to the 2012 Northern Europe and Eurasia Central Conference in beautiful Kaunas, Lithuania.

We left the 2009 Central Conference with the statement: “Forward by creating new faith communities with new people.” Now we appropriately gather under the theme taken from the prophet Isaiah “Now it sprouts up!”

The United Methodist Church is called to action in response to our mission and to decades of decline in membership in Europe and the United States. The whole denomination is focusing its attention on developing vital churches, starting new churches, forming principled Christian leaders and on accountability on all levels. The vision is a church passionately committed to mission – a hope-filled, inviting, agile, nimble and resilient. A risk-taking church that serves the poor, reach new people and constantly looking for ways to help each person to grow in love and grace, and in personal and social holiness.<sup>59</sup>

## 1. Staying in focus

The Central Conference Council has reflected on its work in comparison with its purpose and responsibilities which are: *The council executes assignments given by the central conference, and administers running business between central conference sessions. It is amenable and accountable to the central conference and reports to the central conference. Its purpose is for the discernment and articulation of the vision for the church, sharing of experience and good practices, and channeling of connectional resources and mutual help.*<sup>60</sup>

These reflections along with the 2009 Central Conference statement, “Forward by creating new faith communities with new people”, has guided our ministry in the past quadrennium. At each meeting we have reflected on one of the denomination’s four areas of focus “Creating new faith communities with new people – Building principled Christian leaders – Ministry with the poor – Global health”, which has centered our attention on, what we should be about.

## 2. Challenges

The Central Conference is challenged by our diversity of culture,

59 Call to action study guide

60 NEEBoD ¶ 549

language, experience, spirituality and financial ability. There are significant differences in needs, approaches and understandings. This makes it important to distinguish between when we will benefit from close cooperation and when ministering separately is more fruitful. We have much to learn from each other, and we move on filled with hope and with the desire to bear witness to Christ through unity in diversity.

### **3. The central conference council has become more purposeful**

At the 2009 Central Conference a new structure of the Central Conference Council was approved. The Central Conference Council has met as a full council every spring and as two area groups the Eurasia Area and the Nordic and Baltic Area. Even when the full council has met time has been set aside for the area groups to meet separately. The area groups have served as committees on episcopacy. Between the meetings a presidium composed of the chairs of the committees on episcopacy, the secretary of the Copenhagen office and the two bishops have met either physically or via internet-conference. This has enabled the council to give more attention to matters related to the Episcopal areas while not neglecting matters concerning the whole central conference. Furthermore the committees on episcopacy have been able work more purposeful with the bishops in evaluating their ministry and performance. The committees on episcopacy will report separately.

### **4. We present legislation to be more purposeful**

We want to build on the positive experiences in the past quadrennium, and thus we present legislation to further adjust the composition and strengthen the work of the central conference council. By this legislation we want to ensure a balance between lay and clergy, men and women, as well as we would like to have more youth/young adults under the age of 35 in the council, and furthermore we want to give authority to the area groups to make decision only concerning the area e.g. approval of financial reports of the Episcopal fund and Area fund as well as budgets.

Apart from the Youth Council none of the boards of the central conference have been functioning. A significant reason is the lack of funding for meetings and the diverse needs in the conferences.

New legislation changes the boards in the following way:

The Northern Europe and Eurasia Youth Council remains and will

meet as it is financially feasible possibly in conjunction with the annual meeting of the Central Conference Council.

The Northern Europe and Eurasia Board of Global Ministries remains and will meet in conjunction with the annual meeting of the European Commission on Mission (ECOM)

The Central Conferences Council will at its first meeting form a number of working committees for areas like, higher education and ministry, discipleship and church development, ecumenical and global church relations, and other areas. These committees will meet during the regular full council and area group meeting, and they may possibly call in experts for specific tasks. We expect this way of working to be more effective both in terms of ministry and use of finances.

## **5. Finances**

Due to large geographical distances between the many very small annual/provisional annual conferences it is difficult for the Central Conference Fund to make ends meet in covering meeting- and travel costs for the Central Conference Council, the Area Groups and the Presidium. Some of the annual/provisional annual conferences struggle to be able to pay the full apportionments for the Central Conference Fund. Furthermore the Central Conference Fund funds accommodation for delegates from the Baltics and Eurasia at the meetings.

The draft budget for 2013 shows a deficit of DKK 27.000 even after expenses are reduced with DKK 30.000 compared to the 2012 budget, and a possible increase in travel costs is disregarded in the budget. The Central Conference Council will bring a final budget proposal to the Central Conference for approval.

The Central Conference Council has received and approved the financial reports of The Episcopal Fund, Copenhagen; The Episcopal Fund, Moscow; The Central Conference Fund, The Area Fund, Copenhagen; The Area Fund, Moscow; The Nordic Theological Fund. These financial reports are presented in overview for the quadrennium.

The Central Conference Council presents these financial reports for approval.

## **6. Matters referred to the Central Conference Council from the 2009 Central Conference**

**Ag It IV.2:** Establishing Central Asia Provisional Annual Conference.

*Central Conference-decision: Tabled until next Central Conference, and referred to Central Conference Council for preparation.*

Based on the 2009 Central Conference's request of the council to follow up on the matter whether the central conference has the authority to create a new provisional annual conference in Central Asia. (See Central Conference minutes, Agenda Item IV.2) The Council asked the Judicial Council for a declaratory decision concerning the authority of the central conference related to this matter (NEEBoD 2008 ¶31.4 in relation to ¶581 and ¶582). The answer from the Judicial Council affirmed the process of creating a Mission Conference that through General Conference decision becomes a provisional annual conference, but it didn't address the question if the central conference has the authority to separate out a district in an existing annual conference to create a provisional annual. (The full text of the decision is printed in the material.) Following this decision the presidium has been in communication with the Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters (SCCCM) about the need to make changes to the Book of Discipline to enable central conferences to create provisional annual conferences to enhance the mission of the church. SCCCM sent in petitions to the 2012 General Conference to change the provisions of the Book of Discipline to enable Central Conferences to create Provisional Annual Conferences, and to reduce the representation of Provisional Annual Conferences at General Conference from one clergy and one lay with full rights per conference to one delegate with voice but no vote per conference. All petitions related to these matters were referred back to the Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters for further consideration.

East Russia and Central Asia Provisional Annual Conference has withdrawn its petition on forming a Central Asia Provisional Annual Conference.

**Ag It V.2: Election of bishop.** The Central Conference committee on Episcopacy is asked by the Central Conference to review the procedures for nomination and election of bishops to clarify the eligibility of candidates, who will reach the age of retirement during the electoral period.

The Central Conference Council is presenting petitions to adapt the following paragraphs of the NEEBoD ¶¶ 404, 405, 408, 411 and 543

**Ag It. IV:5 Petition – permanent address of the bishop office in the Nordic and Baltic Episcopal Area.**

**Decision:** The Central Conference Council has decided not to

recommend a permanent address for the bishop in the Nordic and Baltic Episcopal Area.

## **7. The Annual Conference in Sweden will leave the connection**

In October 2010 an extra Central Conference was held in Malmö, Sweden to deal with the desire of the Annual Conference in Sweden to leave the denomination to form an Affiliated United Church with the Mission Covenant Church and the Baptist Union in Sweden.

With 52 votes in favour, 2 against and 1 abstaining the Northern Europe and Eurasia Central Conference passed an amended motion with a list of presuppositions.

All annual conferences in the Northern Europe and Eurasia Central Conference voted on the following amended motion: *If a new church in Sweden will be formed and the United Methodist Church Sweden decides to be a part of it, the annual conference affirms the approval of the Northern Europe and Eurasia Central Conference that the new church can become an Affiliated united church in relation to the United Methodist Church according to BOD ¶ 572.*

Background material for this vote was an official English translation of the constitution and bylaws of the new denomination “Joint Future”, and a document from the annual conference council in Sweden that addresses the full motion with presuppositions. With this document from the annual conference council in Sweden the Central Conference Council found that the presuppositions had been satisfactorily addressed except for a fair distribution of the annual conference assets. This distribution will take place at the end of the year 2012.

With 397 in favour, 56 against and 14 abstaining the vote passed (85%) with more than the required 2/3 of the aggregate vote in the annual conferences. On 30<sup>th</sup> April 2012 General Conference passed the motion with 97% yes that the Annual Conference in Sweden can leave the connection to form an affiliated united church. This Central Conference must according to NEEBoD ¶ 572 declare the present relationship between The United Methodist Church and the Annual Conference in Sweden dissolved. In the coming months a plan of cooperation shall be developed in accordance with ¶571.4. We expect that an agreement will be developed between “Joint Future” and the Northern Europe and Eurasia Central Conference, that we hope will include but not be limited to full communion.

## **8. Remaining Methodists in Sweden and the change of conference borders**

11 clergy of which 4 are active have decided to move their conference membership to Finland Swedish Provisional Conference, as have 2 local churches and between 100 and 200 full members situated in several different locations. The Finland Swedish Provisional Annual Conference has unanimously accepted to receive the United Methodist from Sweden, and will request that the borders of the provisional annual conference will be expanded to include Sweden. The United Methodists in Sweden will meet for a conference on 27-28<sup>th</sup> October 2012.

3 clergy will transfer their membership to the Annual Conference in Denmark, and 2 clergy will transfer their membership to Norway.

## **9. Composition of the Central Conference.**

With the Annual Conference in Sweden leaving the connection we must adjust the legislation concerning the number of delegates to Central Conference to which an Annual Conference is entitled.( NEEBoD ¶ 541) This paragraph has by mistake fallen out of both the NEEBoD 2005 and 2009 printed editions and has only been present in the NEEBoD 2005 electronic edition.

The number of delegates is worked out on a two-factor-basis: the number of clergy members of the Annual Conference, and the number of professing members of local churches in the Annual Conference. The new legislation will ensure that the Central Conference can have at least the mandatory number of 60 delegates, as required by NEEBoD ¶ 540.2

## **10 Ecumenical relations**

The United Methodist Church quite frequently has the role of bridge builder between denominations in the countries of the Central Conference. We engage in ecumenical relationships and partnership in conversation, dialogue and practical cooperation both locally, nationally and internationally.

In the past quadrennium dialogue between the two Provisional Annual Conferences in Finland and the Finnish Evangelical Lutheran church ended successfully by the signing of an agreement of full communion in December 2010. This agreement is in line with similar agreements in Sweden and in Norway. This fall of 2012 the Annual Conference in

Denmark enters into similar dialogue with the Evangelical Lutheran Church. In 2011 the Annual Conference in Norway concluded several years of dialogue with the Pentecostal Movement with a joint declaration.

On a European level rev. Joergen Thaarup (Denmark) will represent the churches in the European Methodist Council in the Council of Protestant Churches in Europe (The Leuenberg Community). The Central Conference Council has decided to intensify its involvement The Community of European Churches (CEC), where we previously have been members without sending a representative. In the future we will be represented by Bishop Christian Alsted.

## **11 International representation**

In the past quadrennium the Northern Europe and Eurasia Central Conference was represented on the following boards and agencies.

**The Connectional Table:** Øyvind Helliesen; **General Board of Church and Society:** Bimbi Ollberg; **General Board of Discipleship:** Elena Stepanova; **General Board of Global Ministries:** Tove Odland, Pontus Fred, Hans Växby; **General Board of Higher Education and Ministry:** Sergei Nikolaev; **General Board of Pension and Health Benefits:** Vidar Sten Bjerckseth, **General Commission on Christian Unity and Interreligious Concerns:** Knut Refsdal; **General Commission on Communication:** Andreas Elfving, **General Commission of Status and Role of Women:** Meeli Tankler; **General Commission on United Methodist Men:** **Division of Ministry for Young People:** Charlotta Lundgren, Ekaterina Guseva, **Africa University Board of Directors:** Roar G. Fotland, **General Commission on Archives and History:** Jorunn Wendel, **Committee on Faith and Order of the UMC:** Sergei Nikolaev; **Standing committee on Central Conference Matters:** Øystein Olsen, Elisabeth Englund, Sergei Nikolaev; **European Methodist Council:** Øyvind Helliesen, Sergei Nikolaev, Meeli Tankler, Ingemar Nordieng; **European Commission on Mission:** Tove Odland; **Fund for Mission in Europe:** Tove Odland; **European Lay Seminars:** Vigdis-Merete Rønning, **Historical Commission:** Jorunn Wendel, Finn Bræstrup Karlsen; **European Board of Drug and Alcohol Concerns:** Ungvar Ruud, Egle Chomyniene, Olav Øgreid, Stanslav Prokhorov, Vladimir Ditmar; **Conference of European Churches:** Bengt Ekelund (representing Sweden) **Representative to Evangelizations Werk, Germany CC:** Lars Ulrik Jensen; **World Methodist Council:** Christian Alsted, Bimbi Ollberg.

Being a worldwide connectional church our relationships to the United Methodist Church internationally as well as to the extended global Wesleyan family is of significant importance to our self-understanding. And we wish to thank all of those who have served on boards and agencies and in that way have contributed in building Christ's kingdom through the United Methodist connection.

Particularly the European relationships through the European Methodist Council, and the relationships to the other Central Conferences in Europe are becoming increasingly important. There appears to be a desire to explore these relationships further which showed at a recent gathering for the cabinets in Europe and in gatherings of European delegates to General Conference.

We are not local churches, we are not a national or regional church, the people of United Methodist Church form a truly worldwide denomination sharing in prayer, vision, impulses, theological reflections, support and best practices in our endeavours of making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation.

Thankfully submitted

*Elena Chudinova* (vice chair)      *Elisabeth Englund* (vice chair)  
*Hans Våxby* (vice chair)              *Christian Alsted* (chair)





## Minutes

The 2012-Northern Europe and Eurasia Central Conference met in October 17 – 21 in Kaunas, Lithuania. The United Methodist Church in Lithuania hosted the conference. Worship Services were held in the Šanciai United Methodist Church, whose church building were given back to the United Methodist Church in 1996, when the United Methodist Church reestablished its work in Lithuania. The conference sessions took place at Park Inn Hotel & Conference Center, where all delegates, guests and other participants stayed.

The Conference began on October 17 with an opening Worship Service where Bishop Christian Alsted preached, the message was entitled “Embrace the future or repeat the past”. The scripture was Isaiah 43:18-19 and John 14:5-14. Worship leader was Rev. Remigijus Matulaitis.

At the morning worship with communion on October 18 Rev. Hilde Marie Øgreid Movafagh delivered the message entitled “Look, I am doing a new thing, now it sprouts up, don’t you recognize it”, the scripture was Psalms 139:1-8. Rev. Ekatarina Zubkova led the worship service. In the evening of October 18 the Šanciai Congregation invited the conference to a Lithuanian cultural evening with music, dance and singing. The evening ended with a devotional by rev. Andrevs Kask.

At the morning worship with communion on October 19 bishop Charles Crutchfield delivered the message entitled “A word from the Dungeon”, the scripture was Jeremiah 32:2-3; 6-8 and 33:10-11. Rev. Lasse Svensson led the worship service. In the evening the conference celebrated the ministry of the United Methodist Church in Sweden with historical glimpses at people and incidents of importance to the United Methodist Church in Sweden and in Scandinavia.

At the morning worship with communion on October 20 Rev. Camilla Klockars delivered the message entitled “Preparing a place for homecoming sons and daughters”, the scripture was Joh. 4:34-35. Rev. Frøydis Grinna led the worshipservice. The ministry of Bishop Hans Växby was celebrated in the evening in the Šanciai United Methodist Church, the evening was led by the Eurasia Committee on Episcopacy.

At the closing worship service on October 21 Bishop Eduard Khegay was consecrated. Bishop Hans Växby preached a sermon, entitled “The Orbit”. The scripture was Isaiah 6:8 and 2 Corinthians 5:14-15. Worship leader was Rev. William Lovelace.

The Northern Europe and Eurasia Central Conference ended with a special lunch reception for Bishop Eduard Khegay at Park Inn.

On October 18, 2012

the 2012 Session of

The Northern Europe and Eurasia Central Conference

gathered at Park Inn Hotel & Conference Center, Donelaicio g. 27, LT-44240 Kaunas, Lithuania with the following:

**Agenda:**

1. Opening
  - a. Roll Call (Ag It I.2)
  - b. Quorum and setting the bar of the conference
  - c. Election of officers
    - i. Presiding Officers (ex officio): Bishop Charles Crutchfield, Bishop Hans Växby, Bishop Christian Alsted
    - ii. Secretary:                      Assistant to the secretary:
    - iii. Persons to check the minutes
  - d. Tellers
    - i. Team 1
    - ii. Team 2
  - e. Approval of Plan of Organization and Rules of Order (Ag It I.3)
  - f. Election of officers of Focus Groups nominated by the Presidium of the Central Conference Council (Ag It 1.4)
  - g. Approval of the agenda

- h. Presentation of guests
  - i. Greetings
  - j. Other opening matters
2. Laity Address (Ag It II.2)
  3. Episcopal Address (Ag It II.1)
  4. Presentation of candidates for the episcopacy (Ag V.1)
  5. Election: Bishop for Eurasia Episcopal Area (Ag V.1)
  6. Laity Address and Episcopal Address
    - a. Reports from Focus Groups 1-4
    - b. Debate
  7. Focus Group 1
    - a. Personal Report: Bishop Hans Växby (Ag It II.3)
    - b. Report: Eurasia Committee on Episcopacy (Ag It II.6)
    - c. European Methodist Council (Ag It II.11)
    - d. Episcopal Fund, Eurasia (Ag It III.2)
    - e. Eurasia Area Fund (Ag It III.4)
    - f. Petition: Judicial Court ¶ 547.3 a) (Ag It IV.9)
    - g. Petition: Adaptation of ¶665 and 635 (Ag It IV.10)
    - h. Petition: CC-council change ¶549 and delete ¶551 (Ag It IV.11)
  8. Focus Group 2
    - a. Report: Central Conference Council (Ag It II.5)
    - b. Central Conference Fund (Ag It III.5)

- c. 2013-Budget Plan, Central Conference Fund (Ag It III.9)
  - d. Petition: Delegates to Central Conference ¶ 541.1b (Ag It IV.7)
  - e. Petition: Delegates to Central Conference ¶ 541.1b (Ag It IV.8)
  - f. Petition: European Methodist Council ¶552 (Ag It IV.12)
9. Focus Group 3
- a. Personal Report: Bishop Christian Alsted (Ag It II.4)
  - b. Report: Nordic and Baltic Committee on Episcopacy (Ag It II.7)
  - c. Episcopal Fund, Nordic and Baltic Area (Ag It III.1)
  - d. Nordic and Baltic Area Fund (Ag It III.3)
  - e. The Nordic Means for Wesleyan Theology (Ag It III.6)
  - f. Motion: Dissolution of the AC in Sweden (Ag It IV.3)
  - g. Motion: UMC in Sweden – Date of Dissolution (Ag It IV.4)
  - h. Motion: Change of boundaries of AC (Ag It IV.5)
10. Focus Group 4
- a. Reports: Annual/Prov.Annual/District Conferences (Ag It II.8)
  - b. Statistical reports (Ag It II.9)
  - c. European Board of Drug and Alcohol Concerns (Ag It II.10)
  - d. European Methodist Council – e-Academy (Ag It II.12)
  - e. Auditing reports (Ag It III.7)
  - f. Items referred from 2009-CC to the CC Council (Ag It IV.1)
  - g. Motion: The Northern Europe and Eurasia Book of

## Discipline (Ag It IV.6)

- h. Motion: Future editions of NEEBoD (Ag It IV.13)
  - i. Motion: Minutes and report from 2012-CC (Ag It IV.14)
11. Elections (Ag It V.2)
12. Closing Matters:
- a. Resolutions
  - b. Next Central Conference – Time and place
  - c. Other Matters

### **Re. 1 Opening**

Bishop Christian Alsted opened the conference, gave practical information and stressed that as Methodists in conference we are always gathered in Holy Conferencing. He emphasized that the purpose of our conference is together to discern God's will for his church, which implies respectfully listening to each other and expressing our thoughts. He said that there will be times during the conference, when the conference will be in prayer before a certain debate or before a decision is made.

### **Agenda Item I.2 – Roll Call**

Lilli Uth and Tarmo Lilleoja made the roll call. It was determined that the Central Conference was duly called in accordance to ¶542,2 in NEEBoD, had a quorum, and thus was able to conduct its business in accordance to the agenda. The bar of the conference was set to be seats at tables. The first row on the right hand side was reserved for official guests. The Central Conference elected Lilli Uth as secretary and Tarmo Lilleoja as assistant to the secretary. To check the minutes: Monica Lundgren and Jørgen Thaarup were elected. As tellers William Lovelace, Tove Odland, Fredrik Wegelius (group 1) and Gita Medne, Henning Bjerno, Camilla Klockars (group 2) were elected.

### **Agenda Item I.3 – Plan of Organization and Rule of Orders**

Bishop Christian Alsted presented the draft Ag It I.3 Plan of Organization and Rules of Order, which was approved. With this approval of the Plan of Organization and Rules of Orders also Ag It IV.2, Petition: Election of Bishop ¶¶404 and 405 was adopted.

Bishop Christian Alsted emphasized that a member of the conference who wishes to speak must raise the numbered voting card. The member will then in due order be recognized and asked to go to the microphone. First the member must state name, conference, lay/clergy – then the member can continue.

Bishop Christian Alsted pointed to the nomination and elections procedures for the episcopacy and underlined, that further nominations could be made up until the first ballot. He stressed that it would help the process if possible further nominations were made as soon as possible.

### **Agenda Item I.4 – Focus Groups**

Bishop Christian Alsted introduced the procedures of the Focus Groups. The proposed four Focus Groups were approved. As chairs and secretaries were elected: Focus Group 1: Andrei Khen Su Kim, chair; Vidar Bjerkseth, secretary. Focus Group 2: Audun Westad, chair; Thomas Risager, secretary. Focus Group 3: Andreas Elfving, chair; Meeli Tankler, secretary. Focus Group 4: Jørgen Thaarup, chair; Monica Lundgren, secretary.

Agenda Ag It III.7 was moved to Focus Group 2. Ag It IV.2 was included in Plan of Organization, and Ag It II.13 added to Focus Group 2. The proposed assignments of addresses, reports, financial statements, petitions and motions were approved.

### **Presentation and greetings of guests**

Bishop Hans Växby presented and welcomed the official guests.

Bishop Patrick Streiff greeted the conference and stressed the close connection between the European Central Conferences. Bishop Streiff informed about the development in the Central and Southern Europe Central Conference, and told that the next Central Conference will include two new countries, Belgium and Romania.

Bishop Rüdiger Minor expressed his great joy for being together with the Northern Europe and Eurasia Central Conference again and gave an especial greeting to the Eurasian delegation.

Nicola Vidamour brought greetings from the Methodist Church in Britain, especially from reverend Roy Crowder who was unable to attend the conference. Bishop Christian Alsted expressed our appreciation of the close connection to the British Methodist Church, and sent a greeting to Roy Crowder.

Bishop Rosemarie Wenner and Lasse Svensson joined the conference October 18 in the afternoon and were welcomed by Bishop Hans Växby.

On October 19, Vladimir Samoylov, general secretary of the Russian Protestant Association, was welcomed by Elena Chudinova. Vladimir Samoylov greeted the Central Conference and was present during the election of the new bishop for Eurasia.

Bishop Christian Alsted presented Bishop Charles Crutchfield, the Council of Bishops' representative; Bishop Charles Crutchfield will be in the chair of this 2012-Central Conference. Also Rev. Camilla Klokkars from the Finland Swedish Provisional Annual Conference was presented. Camilla Klokkars is the Nordic and Baltic Area-coordinator of the Church Planting project.

Bishop Christian Alsted read a greeting from the United Methodist Publishing House, The Publishing House gave all conference-participants a highly appreciated gift of books. The Central Conference sent its greetings and thoughts of gratitude to The United Methodist Publishing House.

### **Bishop Charles Crutchfield chaired the session.**

#### **Re. 2 - Agenda Item II.2 – Laity Address**

Rebekka Steinvig, Denmark Annual Conference, presented the Laity Address. The address was assigned to the four Focus Groups.

#### **Re. 3 - Agenda Item II.1 – Episcopal Address**

Bishop Hans Växby and Bishop Christian Alsted presented the Episcopal Address. The address was assigned to the four Focus Groups.

#### **Re 4 - Agenda Item V.1 – Presentation of candidates for the episcopacy**

Candidates for the Episcopacy in Eurasia Area, Lydia Istomina, Eduard Kheday and Sergei Nikolaev made a verbal presentation of themselves

to the Central Conference. The presentations were distributed in written form after the presentation.

The chairs of the Committees on Episcopacy Yelena Chudinova and Elisabeth Englund asked the candidates one by one to answer the following questions prepared by Northern Europe and Eurasia Central Conference's two Committees on Episcopacy: What do you see as the biggest challenges facing the church in Eurasia in the next five years, and how would you help the church to face them? What particular gifts of yours will you bring to the Episcopal Ministry? What would be the balance of humbleness and power and authority in Episcopal Ministry? What are your strongest and weakest sides both in leadership and in life? What is the most cherished moment of your life?

The 3 nominees took turns meeting with large groups of delegates in two separate rooms, where the delegates had the opportunity to ask further questions.

### **Re 5 - Agenda Item V.1 – Election of Bishop for Eurasia Episcopal Area**

Bishop Crutchfield gave instructions of the voting procedures, there were 64 delegates, and thus it would take 43 votes to elect a new bishop. He then closed the nomination and opened the election.

62 votes were casted in the first ballot as follows: 1 blank vote, Lydia Istomina 0 votes, Sergei Nikolaev 18 votes and Eduard Khegay 43 votes.

Eduard Khegay was elected bishop and greeted by the bishops present, guests and the Central Conference.

### **Bishop Charles Crutchfield chaired the session.**

### **Re. 6 - Agenda Item II.1 and II.2 the Episcopal and Laity Addresses**

#### **Focus Group 1 reported:**

The committee wants to express its appreciations for the two addresses, for the questions and challenges they bring to the CC. They are showing us a way forward, and challenging us to further reflections on the different issues that they raise.

Suggestions:

We receive the report with the following recommendations:

1. We ask that the addresses will be translated, and distributed to the local churches for further discussion.
2. We commit ourselves to focus on growth by  
renewing our commitment of creating new faith communities with new people.  
focusing on disciple making as a way of equipping God's people to do risk-taking mission for the transformation of the world  
strengthening our ministry among and together with children and youth, to help them having a life-changing experience with Jesus Christ, in a supporting way welcoming their capacity to transform the church and the world.

### **Focus Group 2 reported:**

Laity Address:

Suggestion: To receive the report and add it to the minutes.

The group had a conversation following the address. Among other things we touched:

- Dualism between everyday life and church life.
- Cultural influence on church life.
- The family dynamics of today is a challenge that the church need to address in a serious manner.
- The group was impressed with the laity address.

Episcopal Address:

Suggestion: To receive the report and add it to the minutes.

The group had a conversation following the address. Among other things we touched:

- We are proud of our bishops that they point to the difficult issues for the church since we are church in a new time.
- Renovation and not redecoration.
- Importance of the ministry of the laity.
- Importance of receiving new people (and people of other cultures) in new ways.

### **Focus Group 3 reported:**

Discussion about the Laity address

There are several links between the two addresses; we would highlight the emphasis on not being a church as an *institution* but a church as a

*movement*; and a strong challenge to go outside the church in order to connect with people. It would not just mean to “go out” physically but also to go out of our usual ways (in Episcopal address: to experiment in finding ways for ministry).

It is easier to list the challenges and problems than to come up with solutions. We need to focus on possibilities, gifts, and new avenues – but all this needs to be done in our local context. We can only learn by doing – not by copying others.

The emphasis on laity mobilization is also linked with Episcopal address – the importance of laity will grow in coming years, and we shall need more laity who would be able to lead and serve and preach and witness. How can local churches motivate and facilitate this process?

*We recommend the Laity address as a discussion group guide in each of our local context. In order to do this, it needs to be translated into local languages.*

Discussion about the Episcopal address

A strong challenge to go through the renovation, not just redecoration.

Another challenge was to emphasize the accountability in a positive way in the midst of a culture where no-one would like to be accountable.

A remark was made that we should not describe non-Christian life only in negative terms. We need to be careful how we describe “the world” – if the world does not recognize itself, no possibility for the mutual communication will arise. In the process of looking for answers to the questions: Why do people need Christ? Why do people need church – and our particular church? we should take into account both actual and perceived needs.

We are highlighting the concept of lay and clergy working in teams. However, we wonder what would it mean to “release the lay”? What are the areas (or are there any areas) where laity is not released to do ministry today? There could be also more guidelines for developing the actual teamwork, and using the “must”- language does not create a good ground for it. We also should keep in mind that the concept of leadership means different things in different context.

We are also highlighting the importance of studying our culture and experiment in finding ways to minister in this particular culture. At the same time, we should also study the Word of God and pray that the Holy Spirit would open our hearts and minds to understand and communicate it in a relevant way.

*We recommend especially the list of challenges in the end of the Episcopal address as a guideline for discussion about ministry in the local context, taking into consideration the comments above.*

#### **Focus Group 4 reported:**

The Episcopal Address:

Following headlines were addressed in the group:

The importance of Laity leadership was stressed:

- Use the laity for leadership on all levels of the church and for charge of new groups
- Give the laity the right to share the Communion
- The necessity of having the laity planning and participating in the School of Congregational Development

The church as a movement rather than an institution

- We need to go out and make new disciples
- We need discipleship programs more than good worship services
- We must be able to answer the questions: Why do people need Christ? Why do people need the church? Why do people need my church?

The development of pictures of healthy churches

- We need to lift up the good pictures we already have of healthy churches in the Central Conference and communicate it for inspiration.

*We move to receive The Episcopal Address with the following recommendations:*

*The challenges listed in the end of the Address should be taken to the Annual Conferences, especially to the Laity sessions and to the Annual Conference church councils for study.*

*The focus on 'Empowering the laity' shall have top priority for the next quadrennium.*

The Laity Address:

We appreciate the Laity Address for not being a report, but a description of the real life dealing with personal relations and difficult, stressful issues that we do not speak about in the church. It tells us what is happening in the society. It is a prophetic voice.

We need to translate the gospel in an understandable way. Maybe we cannot give all the answers, but we shall ask the right questions. People

need Christ, but they are not aware of him. We need to rethink church and ask: what is it to be a church in the future?

*We move to receive the Laity Address with the recommendations:*

- *that the Annual Conferences shall translate and distribute it for study in the local churches*
- *that the Address shall be sent to the Annual Conferences and youth organizations for inspiration*

### **Discussion in Plenum:**

Ole Birch moved that a summary of the recommendation from the Focus Groups concerning the Laity address and the Episcopal address was elaborated. The addresses are to be sent to all Annual, Provisional Annual and District Conferences in the Central Conference to be considered for translation, and used throughout the church as the boards of these conferences find helpful. - The motion was seconded and adopted.

Vidar Bjerkseth Focus Group 1 stressed its recommendations regarding the group's decision 2. Bimbi Ollberg stressed Group 4's recommendation that in the next four years great importance should be devoted to the development of the ministry of the laity.

The reports and the recommendations from the four Focus Groups were received and added to the Minutes.

It was agreed that we in the next four years will commit ourselves to focus on growth by:

- 1 renewing our commitment of creating new faith communities with new people.
- 2 focusing on disciple making as a way of equipping God's people to do risk-taking mission for the transformation of the world
- 3 strengthening our ministry among and together with children and youth, to help them having a life-changing experience with Jesus Christ, in a supporting way welcoming their capacity to transform the church and the world.
- 4 focusing on 'Empowering the laity' shall have top priority for the next quadrennium.

Øyvind Helliesen moved that all before us is to be send not only to our conferences but also to the Central Conference Council for discussion and further work. The motion was seconded. Andreas Elfving amended that the Episcopal leaders of the CC shall have the right to lift up what

they find most important. Øyvind Helliesen accepted this as a friendly amendment. The motion was adopted as amended.

### **Responds from the addressors:**

Bishop Växby: What is the function of the addresses – they are meant for reflection and reflections are hard to guide. Neither the Laity nor the Episcopal addresses are programs we can agree on how to follow up. Sometimes reflections in conference result in a single sentence, however this year's addresses require another reaction. Hans Växby expressed his satisfaction with the four Focus Groups' reports.

Bishop Alsted expressed his satisfaction with the Focus Groups' reports and said that it was a challenge to write the address – it describes what the bishops have seen and experienced in the two areas. In the address the bishops try to give focus and directions. The Focus Groups' reports affirm this. There might be differences in how we express ourselves, but the Focus Groups and the bishops noticed the same direction. We want to go forward with making Disciples of Jesus Christ and to stress the importance of ministry of the laity. Christian Alsted expressed his firm belief that we in 4 years can see that what we decided at this Central Conference changed the life of The United Methodist Church in the Northern Europe and Eurasia Central Conference.

Rebekka Steinvig said that many laypeople have contributed to the Laity Address, and this really makes it the Laity Address for the two Episcopal Areas. Rebekka Steinvig expected the conference to talk about the content of the report, and not only about how to receive and distribute it or whether to recommend translation or not. It is of great importance how we will work with the Laity Address in our local church. Let us talk about how we do that.

### **Bishop Christian Alsted chaired the session.**

#### **Re. 7 - Focus Group 1's Report:**

Ag It II.3, Personal Report: Bishop Hans Växby

Comment: We want to give our appreciation for the ministry of bishop Hans Växby, and thank him for his faithful and inspiring service. We will highlight the Eurasian Road Map as a strategy that has helped the churches in the area to focus its work. The map is available on the website of the UMC Eurasia.

*Motion:* We receive the report as information and add it to the minutes.  
– The report was received and added to the minutes.

Ag It II.6, Eurasia Committee on Episcopacy

*Motion:* We receive the report and add it to the minutes. The report was received and added to the minutes.

Ag It II.11, European Methodist Council

*Comment:* We regret that the planned European Methodist Festival had to be cancelled. We believe there is still a need for a conference like this, and will urge the EMC to work for a new one. Many Methodist members are not familiar with the work of the European Council. Information from the EMC to the congregations is missing.

*Motion:* We receive the report with the following recommendation: We ask the CC Council to clarify the role of the EMC, and urge the members of the council to give direct feedback/information to the Annual Conferences. - The report and the comment was received and added to the minutes.

Ag It III.2, Episcopal Fund, Eurasia

*Motion:* We receive the report and add it to the minutes. - The report was received and added to the minutes.

Ag It III.4, Eurasia Area Fund

*Motion:* We receive the report and add it to the minutes. - The report was received and added to the minutes.

Ag It IV.9, Petition: Judicial Court ¶ 547.3 a)

*Motion:* Adopted. – The petition was adopted

Ag It IV.10, Petition: Adaptation of ¶666 and 635

*Motion:* Adopted with the amendment to renumber 665 to ¶666 and add the new text for ¶ 666. There may be a district committee on ordained ministry. The amended petition was adopted.

Ag It IV.11, Petition: CC-council change ¶549 and delete ¶551

*Motion:* Adoption with the following amendments: In §549 a.2. to changes the text “under the age of thirty” to “under the age of thirty five” to be consistent with the wording in the BoD. In §549 h.2.d.5 to add the word “for” in the passage “To elect treasurer for each.” The petition was adopted as amended.

Ole Birch moved to reconsider the decision. The motion was passed.

Ole Birch moved to keep ¶551 and list The Northern Europe and Eurasia Youth Council. On Bimbi Ollberg’s question concerning how the Baltic and Eurasian participation will be financed, Audun Westad answered that Norway Youth Ministry up to now has financed NEEYC’s

activities and will continue to do so in the next quadrennium. – The motion was adopted.

### **Bishop Hans Växby chaired the session.**

#### **Re. 8 - Focus Group 2's Report:**

Ag It II.5, Central Conference Council:

Motion: To receive the report with recommendations. Recommendation: We recommend that the plenary session get more information about the Joint Future and the UMC in Sweden. Rationale: We want to make sure that plenary is informed. The report and the recommendation was received and added to the minutes.

Ag It II.13, The UMC 2012-General Conference:

*Motion:* To receive the report with recommendations. Recommendation: Take the questions from the report to the plenary session to make feedback to send them to the General Conference Committee.

- How can we better make use of the global connections we have?
- What role do the General Agencies of our Church have in our context?
- Can we make use of the resources the General Agencies provide to further the mission our local churches? Rationale: We are concerned about the ability of the general church to make decisions on structure.

Jørgen Thaarup moved to add this information to the report: “The GC 2012 approved that Central Russia Annual Conference, East Russia and Central Asia Provisional Conference, Northern Russia Provisional Conference, Southern Russia Provisional Conference, Ukraine and Moldova Provisional Conference shall be considered as formally established by action of General Conference in compliance with the BoD ¶581.”– The amendment was adopted.

Andreas Elfving stressed the importance of participating in the process of changing the denomination in accordance to how the church develops globally.

The amended report with recommendations was received.

Ag It III.5, Central Conference Fund

Motion: To receive the report and add it to the minutes. The report was received and added to the minutes.

Ag It III.9, 2013-Budget Plan, Central Conference Fund

*Motion:* To receive the report and add it to the minutes. The report was received and added to the minutes.

Ag It IV.7, Petition: Delegates to Central Conference ¶ 541.1b)

*Motion:* To dismiss the motion. *Rationale:* We want to work with Ag it IV, 8 in the further work. The motion was adopted and the petition dismissed.

Ag It IV.8, Petition: Delegates to Central Conference ¶ 541.1b)

*Motion:* To adopt the motion amended by the focus group. *Amendment:* We move to change the number of Clergy to 1 delegate for each 75 clergy and to maintain number of Confession members on 1 delegate for every 700. *Rationale:* We do not want the conference to grow much bigger. The petition was adopted as amended.

Ag It IV.12, Petition: European Methodist Council ¶552

*Motion:* To adopt the motion. – The petition was adopted

### **Bishop Hans Växby chaired the session.**

#### **Re. 9 - Focus Group 3's Report:**

Ag It II.4, Personal Report: Bishop Christian Alsted

We want to emphasize that our Bishop has done a great job as a Bishop. The focus group moved that the report will be received and added to the minutes – The report was received and added to the minutes.

Ag It II.7, Nordic and Baltic Committee on Episcopacy

The focus group moved that the report will be received and added to the minutes – The report was received and added to the minutes.

Ag It III.1, Episcopal Fund, Nordic and Baltic Area

We want to point out the decrease of expenses as a sign of responsible housekeeping; however, there is a certain minimum level of expenses needed for proper functioning from where it will not be possible to go any lower. The focus group moved that the report will be received and added to the minutes. – The report was received and added to the minutes.

Ag It III.3, Nordic and Baltic Area Fund

The Focus Group moves that the report will be received and added to the minutes – The report was received and added to the minutes.

Ag It III.6, The Nordic Means for Wesleyan Theology

The Focus Group moves that the report will be received and added to the minutes – The report was received and added to the minutes.

Ag It IV.3, Motion: Dissolution of the AC in Sweden

The focus group recommended adopting the motion to dissolve the present relationship between The United Methodist Church and The Annual Conference in Sweden. The motion was adopted.

We also point out that the answers to the questions from CC 2011 in Malmö are added for informational purposes, and do not represent a final agreement but rather reflect the process that is still continuing. We also recognize that the Central Conference Council continues the negotiations with Gemensam Framtid with the goal to achieve an agreement that finalizes the relationship between our churches.

The CC Council finds that the CC-2010 requirements are met in a satisfactory manner and that the financial agreement will be finalized at the end of this year. Bishop Alsted informed that the Central Conference Council has formed a group which the council will ask the Council of Bishops to assign to be in dialogue with the Gemensam Framtid to form a plan for the future relationship between the two denominations in Northern Europe. The group consists of council-member Øyvind Helliesen, a member from the Finland Swedish Provisional Annual Conference and Bishop Christian Alsted.

The motion was adopted.

Ag It IV.4, Motion: UMC in Sweden – Date of Dissolution

The focus group recommended adopting the motion. – The motion was adopted.

Ag It IV.5, Motion: Change of boundaries of AC

The focus group recommended adopting the motion. – The motion was adopted.

**Bishop Christian Alsted chaired the session.**

### **Re. 10 - Focus Group 4's Report:**

Ag It II.8, Annual/Prov. Annual/District Conferences

The report tells about meaningful work in the Annual Conferences. The questions are comparable, but it would be nice with more information

that could inspire us and give us opportunities to learn from one another. The church plants are a very positive thing and we hope to have many more new churches in the years to come. The report challenges us with high expectations to carry on a good work.

*We move that the report is received and added to the minutes* – The report was received and added to the minutes.

Ag It II.9, Statistical reports

*We move that the report is received and added to the minutes.* The report was received and added to the minutes.

Ag It II.10, European Board of Drug and Alcohol Concerns

In connection with this report we want to mention that important work with drug and alcohol concerns also has been made locally with local money.

*We move that the report is received and added to the minutes, and underline the goals in the report.*

Håkan Englund moved to repeat 4.b in the Episcopal Address from 2009 as a challenge for the next quadrennium. The motion was adopted; the report was received and added to the minutes.

Ag It II.12, European Methodist Council – e-Academy.

This is the first time we receive a report from the e-Academy. Teaching through the internet is a new way of teaching. The Methodist theological teaching institutions decrease in number and the Methodist e-Academy is important.

*We move that the report is received with appreciation and added to the minutes.* Meeli Tankler moved to amend the Focus Group's comment and add the word "Methodist" before "theological teaching" and "e-Academy". The amendment was adopted and the report received with appreciation and added to the minutes.

Bishop Patrick Streiff, who is one of the initiators of the E-academy, gave an orientation about the development.

Ag It IV.1, Items referred from 2009-CC to the CC Council.

The Central Conference Council asked the Judicial Council for a declaratory decision. The decision states that only the General Conference has the right to establish a Provisional Annual Conference. Thus the question has been removed from the Central Conference. We move to receive the report for information. The report was received and added to the minutes.

Ag It IV.6 Motion: The Northern Europe and Eurasia Book of Discipline and Ag It IV.13,

*We move to adopt the motions with the following amendments:*

1. To change the wording “Reading Guide” to “Introduction”. The amendment was approved.
2. To amend the first paragraph of the Introduction with reference to the legislation in §543.7 & 16 & 17. The amendment was approved.
3. To amend the final paragraph of the Introduction with reference to §547.3 for stating that the responsibility of the CC Judicial Court to “hear and determine any legality of any action under the adopted portion of the Book of Discipline” also include the interpretation of the Discipline after the directions given in the Introduction. The amendment was approved.
4. To refer the Historical Statement to the committee on the discipline to make the necessary corrections and editorial changes and final approval. The Historical Statement was referred to the Northern Europe and Eurasia Committee on the Book of Discipline for corrections, editorial changes and final approval.

*We move to adopt*

1. The adoption of the revised Historical Statement of the Northern Europe and Eurasia Central Conference
2. The adoption of the Introduction
3. The reaffirmation of previously made adaptations to the Book of Discipline with the deletion of “Sweden” §547.3; “in Sweden Kyrkostyrelsen” in §611 and “Metodistkyrkan i Sverige” §2501.3h and the renumbering of the following subparagraphs of §2501.3, and the addition of “the Northern Europe and Eurasia Central Conference” in §2501.3
4. The printing of a supplement to the Book of Discipline composed of the following:
  - a. The Historical Statement
  - b. The Introduction
  - c. Adapted Paragraphs to the Book of Discipline
  - d. The Episcopal Address
  - e. The Laity Address
  - f. The Report of the Central Conference Council

g. The Minutes of the 2012 Central Conference

h. A Directory

The motion as amended by the Focus Group was adopted.

Ag It IV.14, Motion: Minutes and report from 2012-CC.

*We move to reject this motion.* The motion was rejected.

## **Bishop Christian Alsted chaired the session.**

### **Re 11 - Agenda Item V.2 Elections**

The following elections were presented:

#### **Central Conference Council:**

<u>Council-Member (Substitute)</u>		<u>Conference</u>
Sergei Pugachev (Natalya Prokhorova)	lay	Central Russia
Ole Birch (Jørgen Thaarup)	clergy	Denmark
Finn Bræstrup Karlsen (Rebekka Steinvig)	lay	Denmark
Yelena Chudinova (Valentina Sorokina)	clergy	ERus. and C.Asia
Meeli Tankler (Thea Kant)	lay	Estonia
Taavi Hollman (Üllas Tankler)	clergy	Estonia
Gita Medne (Kristine Rozefelde)	clergy	Latvia
William Lovelace (Remigijus Matulaitis)	clergy	Lithuania
Pasi Runonen (Jori Brander)	clergy	Finland-F
Harry Ollila (Monica Lundgren)	lay	Finland-S
Yelena Kitaeva (Fyodor Kim)	lay	NWR and Belarus
Berit Westad (Jan-Erik Hansen)	lay	Norway
Øyvind Helliesen (Steinar Hjerpseth)	clergy	Norway
Hilde Marie Ø. Movafagh (Torill Langbråthen)	clergy	Norway
Per-Endre Bjørnevik (Audun Westad)	lay	Norway
Alexander Kozorezov (Valentina Stavrova)	clergy	South Russia
Vasylina Babych (Vladimir Khabriko)		Ukraine and Moldova

The following nominees were elected:

#### **NEECC Youth Council:**

Audun Westad	Norway
Jennie Mörk	Finland-S

Marjana Luist	Estonia
Gunta Grina-Sologuba	Latvia
Anton Mingus	Eurasia

**European Methodist Council:**

Øyvind Helliesen, Jørgen Thaarup, Meeli Tankler, Natalia Prokhorova + the two bishops.

**Fund for Mission in Europe:**

The General Secretary of the AC Board of Global Ministries in Norway, Øyvind Aske

**NEECC Judicial Court:**

Ove Sørensen	Denmark
Priit Tamm	Estonia
Leif-Göte Björklund	Finland-F/Finland-S
Steinar Hjerpseth (Ivar Granum)	Norway
Oleg Starodubets	Russia C/NW/E/S

**NEECC Committee on Investigation:**

Ove Sørensen	Denmark
Jon-Erik Bråthen	Norway
Leif-Göte Björklund	Finland
Aleksandr Pererva	Eurasia

**European Board of Alcohol and Drug Concerns:**

Karen Brogaard, Denmark	(Nordic and Baltic)
Ole Martin Andreassen, Norway	(Nordic and Baltic)
Stanislav Prokhorov	(Eurasia)
Vladimir Ditmar	(Eurasia)

**European Lay Seminar:** Vigdis-Merete Rønning, Norway

**World Methodist Council:** Bishop Christian Alsted and Jørgen Thaarup (funded by Denmark AC)

**The Conference of European Churches:** Bishop Christian Alsted

**Nominated to be elected by the Council of Bishops:**

**General Board of Global Ministry:** Tove Odland. **Connectional Table:** Ole Birch.

## **Re. 6 - Agenda Item II.1 and II.2 the Episcopal and Laity Addresses**

It was agreed to continue the holy conferencing on the Episcopal and Laity addresses. The conference divided itself into small groups where there was continued conversation and prayer. The groups were asked to bring further emphasis and recommendations, to add to or to sharpen the sentences the conference had previously decided on. In the plenary several insights were shared. There were some suggestions to sharpen the wording in the sentences previously decided on. Furthermore there was conversation on whether to have a slogan to express a main focus deriving from the addresses and the discussion, and a few suggestions for slogans were discussed. However none of the suggestions received sufficient support to have consensus in the conference, and finally the conference decided not to add or change anything in its decisions concerning the Episcopal and Laity addresses, but to confirm its earlier decisions. (See above Re.6, “Discussion in Plenum”).

### **Bishop Hans Växby chaired the session.**

#### **Re 12 - Closing Matters:**

Berit Westad informed of the work of the General Commission of the Status and Role of Women.

Next Central Conference, Berit Westad invited to the next Central Conference in Norway.

The resigning council members: Elisabeth Englund, Håkan Englund, Bimbi Ollberg, Fredrik Wegelius, Tarmo Lilleoja, Henning Bjerno were greeted by bishop Christian Alsted and received a small gift in acknowledgement of their work in the Central Conference Council. The conference expressed its appreciation by applause.

Bishop Christian Alsted gave words of appreciation and gifts to the local planning committee and the Šanciai United Methodist Church. The conference expressed its appreciation by applause.

Helen Lovelace expressed the Local Committees satisfaction with the conference and gave information about the lunch reception for Bishop Eduard Khegay.

Bishop Charles Crutchfield and Mrs. Karen Crutchfield were greeted by bishop Christian Alsted with words of appreciation and they received flowers and a gift from Lithuania. The conference expressed its appreciation by applause.

Bishop Christian Alsted expressed great appreciation for the ministry of his assistant Lilli Uth, who has done a significant part of the preparation of the Central Conference and been in charge of the administration of the Central Conference in the past quadrennium. The conference expressed its appreciation by applause.

Bishop Patrick Streiff found the Episcopal and Laity Addresses to be very significant, he said, he would be looking forward to see how these reports will affect the work in the conferences. The results from last Central Conference about creating new faith communities were remarkable.

Bishop Växby expressed his satisfaction with the conference, and the conference expressed their appreciation of the Episcopal leadership of this Central Conference.

Secretary Lilli Uth informed the conference that electronic evaluation will come from the Episcopal Office in Copenhagen via email.

The session was closed in prayer.

Secretaries: *Lilli Uth* *Tarmo Lilleoja*

Persons to check the minutes: *Jørgen Thaarup* *Monica Lundgren*

Presiding bishops: *Christian Alsted* *Hans Växby*



## Directory

### Northern Europe and Eurasia Central Conference

**Address:** Rigenstgade 21A, Box 2092, DK-1013 Copenhagen K, Denmark

**Phone:** +45 51 33 14 77

**E-mail:** office@umc-ne.org, **Web site:** www.umc-northerneurope.org

### Episcopal Offices:

#### NORDIC and BALTIC EPISCOPAL AREA

**Address:** Rigenstgade 21A, Box 2092, DK-1013 Copenhagen K, Denmark

**Phone:** +45 51 33 14 77, **E-mail:** office@umc-ne.org,

**Web site:** www.umc-ne.org

**Bishop:** Christian Alsted, **Phone:** +45 27 20 46 96,

**E-mail:** bishop@umc-ne.org

**Bishop's assistant:** Lilli Uth, **E-mail:** lu@umc-ne.org

#### EURASIA EPISCOPAL AREA

**Address:** Khamonichesky val 24, stroenie 2, Moscow 119048, Russia

**Phone:** +7 495 961 3458

**E-mail:** office@umc-eurasia.ru, **Web site:** www.umc-eurasia.ru

**Bishop:** Eduard Khegay, **Phone:** +7 916 567 5281, **E-mail:** bishop.eduard@umc-eurasia.ru

**Bishop's assistant:** **E-Mail:** office@umc-eurasia.ru

#### Retired bishops:

**Bishop Øystein Olsen**, Wessels veg 7B, N-2005 Rælingen, Norway.

**Phone:** +47 481 88 931. **E-mail:** oeol@online.no

**Bishop Hans Växby**, Kivipyöntie 6 E 37, FIN-00710 Helsingfors, Finland. **Phone:** +358 40 081 1873. **E-mail:** hans.vaxby@pp.inet.fi

### Head Offices Nordic and Baltic Area:

#### Denmark - Metodistkirken i Danmark

**Address:** Stokhusgade 2, DK-1317 København K, Denmark

**Phone:** +45 33 12 96 06, **E-mail:** landsledelse@metodistkirken.dk,

**Web site:** www.metodistkirken.dk

**Estonia** - Eesti Metodisti Kirik

Address: Narva mnt. 51, EE-10152 Tallinn, Estonia

Phone: +372 66 88 497, E-mail: keskus@metodistikirik.ee,

Web site: www.metodistikirik.ee

**Latvia District** - Latvijas Apvienota Metodistu Baznica

Address: Akas iela 13, LV-1011 Riga, Latvija

Phone: +371 6731 1442, E-mail: gitamednis@aol.com,

Web site: www.metodisti.lv

**Lithuania District** - Lietuvos Jungtinė Metodistu Baznycia

Address: J. Naugardo g. 8, LT-44280 Kaunas, Lithuania

Phone: +370 37 323 588, E-mail: whlovelace@gmail.com,

Web sites: www.jmb.lt

**Finland F** - Suomen Metodistikirkko

Address: Punavuorenkatu 2 B, FIN-00120 Helsinki, Finland

Phone: +358 9 628 135

E-mail: suomen@metodistikirkko.fi, Web site: www.metodistikirkko.fi

**Finland S** - Finlands svenska metodistkyrka

Address: Apollogatan 5, FIN-00100 Helsingfors, Finland

Phone: +358 9 449 874

E-mail: kyrkostyrelsen@metodistkyrkan.fi, Web site: www.metodist.fi

**Sweden District** - Methodister i Sverige

Address: Nils-Gustav Sahlin, Perbogatan 6, S-811 32 Sandviken

Phone: +46 26252 433. E-Mail: ng.sahlin@gmail.com

Web site: www.metodister.se

**Norway** - Metodistkirken i Norge

Address: Postboks 2744 St. Hanshaugen, N-0131 Oslo, Norway

Phone: +47 23 33 27 00

E-mail: hovedkontoret@metodistkirken.no, Web site: www.

metodistkirken.no

**Head Offices Eurasia Episcopal Area**

**Central Russia**

Address: Khamovnicheskij val 24, stroenie 2, Moscow, 119048, Russia

Phone: +7 495 961 3458, E-mail: pugachev\_sergei@mail.ru

### **Eastern Russia and Central Asia**

Address: Molodogvardeyskaya street, h 16/2, apt. 12, Komsomolsk-on-Amur 681000, Russia

Phone: +7 914 775 9842, E-mail: oleg333@mail.ru

### **Northwest Russia and Belarus**

Address: UMC Stremeniye, Tsimbalina street, h. 34, St. Petersburg, 192148, Russia. Phone: +7 906 241 3381, E-mail: andkimUMC@yandex.ru

### **Southern Russia**

Address: Kholzunova street, h. 58, apt. 139, Voronezh, 394053 Russia  
Phone: +7 903 030 7690, E-mail: kopaev.lip@mail.ru

### **Ukraine and Moldova**

Address: Jmerinska str. 32a, komnata 88, Kiev, Ukraine 03148  
Phone: +38 063 5201 757, E-mail: istochnik2000@gmail.com

## **Northern Europe and Eurasia Central Conference Council:**

### **Eurasia Area Group:**

Bishop Eduard Khegay, bishop.eduard@umc-eurasia.ru

Chair Episcopal Committee: Yelena Chudinova, East Russia and Central Asia, mchurch@mail.tomsknet.ru

Sergei Pugachev, Central Russia, pugachev\_sergei@mail.ru

Yelena Kitaeva, Northwest Russian and Belarus, soultan@rambler.ru

Alexander Kozorezov, South Russia, mikulishvasya@mail.ru

Vasilina Babych, Ukraine and Moldova, Vasylyna.babych@gmail.com

### **Nordic and Baltic Area Group:**

Bishop Christian Alsted, bishop@umc-ne.org

Chair Episcopal Committee: Berit Westad, Norway, berit.westad@ebnett.no

Øyvind Helliesen, Norway, oyvind.helliesen@metodistkirken.no

Hilde Marie Øgreid Movafagh, Norway, hildemarie@movafagh.no

Per-Endre Bjørnevik, Norway, per-endre.bjornevik@lyse.net

Ole Birch, Denmark, ole.birch@mail.dk

Finn Bræstrup Karlsen, Denmark, fjkarlsen@gmail.com

Taavi Hollman, Estonia, taavi.hollman@gmail.com

Meeli Tänkler, Estonia, mt.tankler@mail.ee

Pasi Runonen, Finland-F, pasi.runonen@metodistikirko.fi

Harry Ollila, Finland-S, harry.ollila@gmail.com  
Gita Medne, Latvia, gitamednis@aol.com  
William Lovelace, Lithuania, whlovelace@gmail.com

## **Northern Europe and Eurasia Central Conference Youth council**

Chair: Audun Westad, audunwestad@gmail.com

### **Representatives on boards and agencies:**

#### **Elected by General Conference or the Council of Bishops:**

General Board of Finance and Administration: Per-Endre Bjørnevik, Norway (2012)

General Commission of Status and Role of Women: Berit Westad, Norway (2012)

General Board of Global Ministry: Tove Odland, Norway (2008)

General Board of Higher Education and Ministry: Sergei Nikolaev, Russia (substitute of Hans Martin Niethammer, Germany)

General Board of Church and Society: Bishop Christian Alsted, (BoD)

Connectional Table: Ole Birch, Denmark (2012)

Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters: Sergei Nikolaev (Russia), Andreas Elfving (Finland), Bishop Christian Alsted

Africa University: Jørgen Thaarup, Denmark (2012)

United Methodist Publishing House: Bishop Eduard Khegey, (BoD)

Commission on the General Conference: Audun Westad, Norway (2012), Bishop Christian Alsted (BoD)

Commission on Central Conference Theological Education: Sergei Nikolaev, Russia

United Methodist Men: Tarmo Lilleoja, Estonia (2012)

### **World:**

World Methodist Council (the 2012-2016 quinquennium): Bishop Christian Alsted (NE&ECC), Jørgen Thaarup (Denmark)

World Council of Churches: (General Assembly 2013) Bishop Christian Alsted (CoB)

## **Europe:**

### **European Methodist Council:**

Bishop Christian Alsted, Bishop Eduard Khegay, Øyvind Helliesen (Norway), Jørgen Thaarup (Denmark), Meeli Tankler (Estonia), Valentina Stavrova (Russia)

European Commission on Mission: Bishop Christian Alsted (chair), chairs or general secretaries of the European Boards on Global Ministry.

Community of Protestant Churches in Europe: Jørgen Thaarup (Denmark)

The Conference of European Churches (CEC): Bishop Christian Alsted

