

THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

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Regarding extra session of the NEECC

Dear sisters and brothers of the Northern Europe and Eurasia Central Conference (NEECC) of the United Methodist Church (UMC), greetings from Eurasia Episcopal Area!

I would like to express my deepest disappointment with the decision of the majority of the Northern Europe and Eurasia Central Conference Council to call an extra session of the Central Conference in order to change the borders of episcopal areas.

I am shocked how insensitive and short-sided this decision made by Nordic and Baltic members of the Council in spite of the position of the Russian members of the Council and myself. While so many Methodists in Russia and Ukraine experience pain of the conflict between our countries, while we try to carefully build small bridges of unity and reconciliation, while we learn how to love and forgive in the midst of war, Nordic and Baltic members of the Central Conference Council decide to build iron curtain between us, bulldoze our efforts to make peace dialogues, and teach us how to live. Instead of helping hands, they want to put their boots on our wounded body. Perhaps, I was too naive thinking that colonialism, nationalism and East-West agenda has no place in the church. Perhaps, I was wrong thinking that Christians are not about territories and power, not about “divide and conquer”. Perhaps, they know better the thousand years history of our nations and how to provide episcopal supervision. My heart breaks to see how some Christians do the same things as world politicians driven by national interests. I always thought that Christ should be our compass.

I hope that people of the Northern Europe and Eurasia Central Conference will not support the motion to move Ukraine and Moldova Provisional Annual Conference from Eurasia Episcopal Area to Nordic and Baltic Episcopal Area. I hope that they will not give in into temptation of expanding their territory and inflict further pain and division in already divided world of the United Methodist Church.

I have already experience betrayal in my life when living among those who supported the Communist system. They said one thing, but did another. I was naive to trust them and experienced disillusionment. Today I feel that it was easier to live in that time than now. At least, they did not use the name of God when they practiced their aggression and colonial politics. They did not put a knife into your back, while smiling at you and preaching love. I had no idea I would experience this disillusionment again. I always thought that trust is the foundation of our Christian relationships. I was too naive. It is time for lament. I pray that my tears would water the seeds of peace for the people of Ukraine and Russia.

In Christ,

Eduard Khegay

Bishop Eduard Khegay