



# THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

NORTHERN EUROPE AND EURASIA CENTRAL CONFERENCE

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## Minutes - Nordic & Baltic Area Group Meeting October 2nd 2020

Present: Edgars Sneiders (LV), Hilde Marie Movafagh (NO), Ingull Grefslie (NO), Johanna Lundereng (NO), Meeli Tankler, Jori Brander (FF), Per-Endre Bjørnevik (NO), Remiguus Matulaitis (LT), Robert Tserenkov (EE), Leif Göte Björklund (FS) substituting for Sarah Tiainen, Christian Alsted (Chair), Ole Birch (DK)(Secretary)

Also: Kirsten Hastrup (The bishops assistant)

Absent: Karen Brogaard (DK).

Opening prayer by Christian Alsted

How to live the Christian life? Phil. 1, 27. "Live together in a manner worthy of Christs gospel". Christian Alsted shared a story of Focas the gardener, a humble saint, in the 4<sup>th</sup> century who witnessed of Christs love through his gardening and by groving fruit and vegetables and became a martyr. Christian Alsted praised people who follow Christ in hospitality. Prayer.

Item	Minutes
1	<p>Opening and approval of agenda and minutes from last meeting</p> <p><b>The Agenda was approved as proposed.</b></p> <p><b>The minutes of our last meeting of March 28. 2020 was approved</b></p>
2	<p>Work in subcommittees:</p> <p>a. <u>Continued Education</u></p> <p>1. Update on the book-project The third book was released in Tallinn last year and got a lot of positive response, but the sales on amazon for the digital book is very low. The physical copies are still in Tallinn. We will do a new boost on publicity for the digital version – information to each country to send out to the congregation, the website with link on Facebook. We will also send information through MTSE and GBHEM.</p> <p>2. Application for the theological funds The committee agreed to support the application from the United Methodist seminary in Norway. (Hilde Marie Movafagh who sent the application was present but did not vote.) Action Item: <b>The application was approved.</b></p> <p>b. <u>Development of the connection in the Episcopal Area:</u></p> <p><b>North Norway Inspirational Conference:</b> The last time the subcommittee met we had planned on inviting the Finnish/Swedish Methodists to our annual inspirational weekend in Northern Norway. Plans had been made and the committee working on the program were prepared to invite our neighbors</p>



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	<p>to the East. As we all know, the corona virus put a stop to gatherings and traveling. If possible, we will go forward with the original plan in 2021 or 2022.</p> <p><b>World Methodist Conference:</b> This conference is postponed until 10 – 13 August, 2022. We discussed the possibility that even in 2022 people may be skeptical to traveling and traveling specifically to Sweden. The situation will be different if there is an effective vaccine by that time. We discussed to what degree folks are talking about the conference and interest in attending. It seems that the clergy are aware and interested, but more information needs to come out to the lay people.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Johanna will ask Øyvind Helliesen to share any brochures available. We can print them locally. Jori will translate it to Finnish to reach more people. Others can do the same.</li><li>2. We talked about establishing a fund for travel expenses. It should cover a percentage of the travel expenses – not a set amount. An amount should be set aside for the CC budget in 2022. We would encourage students to be prioritized.</li><li>3. It would be advantageous if the recipients of the support could get similar support from their local church or annual conference.</li><li>4. We will encourage the planning committee to allow for day passes. This will allow for a greater degree of participation.</li></ol> <p><b>c. International and Ecumenical Representation:</b> Reports from representatives in agencies and councils. Due to the coronavirus a number of meetings have not been held and therefore we have not received reports. These are the reports we have:</p> <p>GCUMM – Received and added to the minutes. ECOM – Received and added to the minutes. UMCOR – Received and added the minutes. UMCOM - Received and added the minutes EMYC – Incomplete report and we do not understand what it says. We must contact the representative. GCFA – We point to the serious financial situation of the UMC and the task force work of the COB and GCFA towards a new financial plan. Our CC cannot expect the same support in the future. Received and added the minutes. GBGM – In gratitude for the ministry of Thomas Kemper we recommend that we receive and add the report to the minutes. Received and added the minutes. UMCOR - Letter from Roland Fernandes. Received and added the minutes. Africa University – We appreciate the good work that the Africa University is doing in these difficult times. Received and added the minutes. GCSRW – We did not find the time to look at this report as it had arrived the same morning.</p>
4	Committee on Episcopacy Chair: Per-Endre Bjørnevik



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	<p>a. Presentation of the Bishop’s personal report and days of presence.</p> <p>After a fruitful conversation on the bishop’s ministry as presented in his report, we thanked him for his leadership in these difficult times.</p> <p>b. Episcopal Election. Proposal from Per-Endre Bjørnevik and Hilde Marie Øgreid Movafagh to enable the reelection of Christian Alsted for another 4-year term. The proposal has already been approved once, but we were asked to reaffirm our decision.</p> <p><b>The proposal was unanimously approved.</b></p>
5	<p>The Future of Methodism in Europe</p> <p>Christian Alsted presented the work done by the European bishops in planning for a possible restructuring of The United Methodist Church in Europe after a split in the church. We will be presented with a proposal for a process at our meeting in the spring.</p> <p>We had a long conversation on the work, which we are positive towards, and the fact that it has been kept secret, which we do not like.</p> <p>Christian Alsted proposed that we asked for greater openness and broader participation in this process.</p> <p><b>This proposal was approved.</b></p>
6	<p>Central Conference 2022</p> <p>a. The 2022 Central Conference</p> <p>We postponed this to the spring meeting.</p> <p>b. The future of the Northern European and Eurasia CC</p> <p>We may be unable to continue as a Central Conference because we drop below 180 clergy members if one or more annual conferences decide to leave. Right now, we have 221 clergy members. The implications will not come into effect until after the Central Conference 2022.</p> <p>c. Northern Europe and Eurasia Book of Discipline</p> <p>The proposal for a General Book of Discipline is not going to come to the coming General Conference.</p> <p>Due to an oversight a paragraph concerning the judicial court has been omitted from our Northern Europe and Eurasia Book of discipline since 2001. No change has been made and thus the paragraph is still in effect. This must be affirmed at the opening of the Central Conference 2022.</p> <p><b>The episcopal office will take action.</b></p> <p>d. Petitions for the Central Conference</p> <p>Christian Alsted propose that he initiate a work for a simplified complaint process for our central conference. A proposal will come to us before the Central Conference 2022.</p> <p>Christian Alsted proposed that we all consider ideas for petitions for the Central</p>



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	<p>Conference 2022 that points forward and give our feedback before the end of the month (October 2020)</p> <p><b>The proposal was approved</b></p> <p>Per-Endre Bjørnevik proposed that we ask the Annual Conference Councils to consider sending petitions to the Central Conference. The petition process must be clarified.</p> <p><b>The proposal was approved.</b></p>
7	<p>Orientation from the Bishop</p> <p>World Methodist Conference 2021 in Gothenburg</p> <p>The Conference has been moved to August 10-13, 2022. Theme: On the move. Work on the program is moving forward. Hopefully, material can come out this fall. Christian Alsted gave an enthusiastic introduction to the Conference.</p>
8	<p>Judicial Court – report</p> <p>Report from Leif Göte Bjørklund.</p> <p><b>The report was received.</b></p>
9	<p>Representation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Conference of European Churches No report.</li> <li>b. European Methodist Council The theological work of the UMC, as mentioned in the report can be very important to the development of a European Methodist identity. <b>The report was received.</b></li> <li>c. Funds for Mission in Europe. Kirsten Hastrup presented the report. <b>The report was received.</b></li> </ul>
10	<p>Possible membership of World Council of Churches.</p> <p>Christian Alsted proposed that we, the Central Conference, seek information on a membership in the WCC.</p> <p><b>The proposal was approved.</b></p>
11	<p>Coming meetings</p> <p>Full Council: March 5-6 (Friday and Saturday) 2021. Partial participation from other European bishops.</p> <p>Full Council: November 4-5. (Thursday and Friday) 2021</p>
12	<p>Other matters</p> <p>Nothing to report.</p>



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	The meeting was closed with prayer.