

From the document 'On WOLI leadership, ordination and clergy'

1. Bishop

We fully believe in the strength and potential of the local church, and in great freedom for its local leadership to hear Gods voice, take initiatives and act boldly according to its vision. However, in the course of our relatively short history, we have already seen examples of how churches within our movement have perished and died because of lack of help and support, and also of abuse of power from leaders.

Thus, we see a strong need for a clearer defined **bishop ministry, to support the local churches and ensure that our overall movement will flourish and grow.**

The bishop should **represent, but not personify, the apostolic mandate of the WOL movement.** Not to rule over or control it, but to carry the overall responsibility in ensuring that the WOL churches in a certain region **get the help and support they need**, and making sure the movement **grows and develops according to the theology, vision, DNA and culture** we have defined.

Since we have not yet had this defined function within our own movement, the term 'bishop' already exist within some of its regions - for example within the system and structure of a union that part of our movement is part of. This we need to acknowledge and respect. What we aim for here is a **definition of the ministry of bishop, ordained and certified within our own WOL movement, from now and onwards.**

The WOLI board have already accepted the definition that **Uppsala, Moscow and Jerevan are its three main centers**, and stated that **every WOL church should be connected to one of these** - either directly or through a regional or nation 'hub'. According to our present situation, it is therefore natural that **the three pastors representing the leadership of these centers, carry this responsibility and this certified office** within the WOL movement.

We can ordain more bishops for certain geographical regions or distinct areas of our vision and ministry, for example Missions. Caution should be taken to avoid confusion and inflation (1 Tim 5:22).

The ministry of bishop is absolutely not about titles or positions of power, but rather about **responsibility**. The office of bishop within our movement should have an **acknowledged mandate** to support churches and regions, and to act

when local/regional problems, needs, conflicts and challenges occur. The office should, however, be **limited to act only within the overall guidelines regarding theology, DNA, culture and values that we have defined for our movement.**

To further underline this, the practical aspect of the office of WOL bishop should be carried out by an **apostolic team** appointed for the geographical or visionary area that the mandate relates to. The office of WOL bishop therefore **represents, without too strictly embody**, the apostolical mandate God has entrusted our movement.