

Uppsala 2024.09.11

Statement of the Board of WOLI

In November 2023, the Tashkent City Church of Christ (TCCC) Council, as well as a group of regional pastors in fellowship with TCCC, addressed the Board of Word of Life International (WOLI) through separate official letters. The Board learned that a split had occurred within the brotherhood in Uzbekistan.

For a whole year, the Board of WOLI sought to assist the Tashkent Church in resolving the internal conflict. The main goal of these mediation efforts was to help the parties find ways to reconcile and restore brotherhood in Uzbekistan.

Having studied the essence and causes of the conflict, having listened to all the arguments of the parties, having become familiar with all the arguments for and against, we consider it necessary to make the following statements in connection with the situation that has arisen.

1. Over the years, since 1991, senior pastor and spiritual leader Denis Podorozhny and his team of ministers have managed to do an honorable job for the sake of Lord and Gospel. Thanks to their dedicated and diligent work, not only the Tashkent City Church grew over time, but new congregations were also planted in different cities of the country. As a result, a solid brotherhood of churches in Uzbekistan was formed.

2. For a long time, senior pastor Denis Podorozhny has been one of the key figures in the process of establishing the Word of Life International Movement, he actively participated in the work of the WOLI Board, in 2013 he was entrusted to lead the activity of Word of Life in Ukraine, and is a personal friend of many members of the Board. Therefore, we express our trust in Denis Podorozhny as the senior pastor and spiritual guide of the fellowship of churches in Uzbekistan.

3. Without going into details of the crisis in relations within the association of churches, in our opinion, the long absence of pastor Denis Podorozhny due to deteriorating health and long-term treatment has caused a certain vacuum within the brotherhood. On the other hand, the hasty and emotional decision of the leaders of regional congregations to break off relations with the Tashkent Church, without a proper discussion of the emerged disagreements with the spiritual father and senior pastor Denis Podorozhny, cannot receive support and approval from our side.

4. The Board of WOLI has never been and is not now a part or interested party of this conflict. The only desire of the Board is that the parties to the conflict find a way to reconcile as soon as possible. And until peace and harmony between the brothers are achieved, we will refrain from visiting regional churches with the purpose of preaching at their services.

5. The Board of WOLI is not going to delve into internal clarifications of relations between the leadership of the TCCC and regional pastors. The Board has never encouraged splits and divisions within the Word of Life church associations. We also respect the desire and aspiration of senior pastor Denis Podorozhny to restore trust and communication between the TCCC and the group of regional pastors.

6. We call on ministers to respect the role and authority of senior pastor Denis Podorozhny, meet with him and engage in constructive dialogue to restore trusting relationships within the brotherhood.

Mal 4:6: "He will turn the hearts of the fathers to their sons, and the hearts of the sons to their fathers..."

In conclusion, we want to assure everyone that we will continue to pray for our brothers and sisters in Uzbekistan and expect that the Lord will give wisdom to preserve all that is precious that has been accumulated over many years of joint service to the Lord Jesus Christ.

With love and prayers,

Christian Åkerhielm

Artur Simonyan

Mats Ola Ishoel

on behalf of the Board of Word of Life International