

Argentine Methodists send hopes for peace to British counterparts

News

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February 3 (ENInews)--Amid renewed tensions over the Falkland Islands, the Argentinean Methodist Church has sent a letter to the Methodist Church of Great Britain, expressing its desire for their governments to resolve their issues peacefully.

"A war is always a human failure in the light of God's project that we share his creation and that we all enjoy the resources that He has given us," wrote Bishop Frank de Nully Brown, according to the Latin America and Caribbean Communication Agency.

"The issue of the Malvinas Islands is for the Argentinean people and our church, an extremely sensitive and delicate one, given the claim that our country has made for the sovereignty of the islands for many years," the letter said.

The islands, sitting 250 nautical miles (460 km) off the Argentine coast, are under British rule but have been claimed by both nations. On 2 April 1982, Argentinean forces invaded the islands. Britain responded in kind, taking back the territory in two months. More than 1,000 troops and civilians lost their lives in the conflict.

Recently, the two nations have once again begun lobbing heated rhetoric at each other over the ownership of the islands, which have rich fishing grounds and are thought to possess significant offshore oil reserves.

Brown stressed his letter is written in the spirit of the longstanding relationship of fraternity and companionship with the church of Great Britain. "We should persevere in continuing to grow in the unity of Christ's body as the Apostle Paul says in his letter to the Ephesians," he said.

British Prime Minister David Cameron and Argentine president Cristina Fernandez recently accused each other of "colonial" behavior over the islands, London newspapers have reported.

Great Britain announced 1 February it was sending one of its newest destroyers to the area -- with personnel including Prince William, an RAF helicopter pilot -- for six weeks. Argentina is protesting, calling the deployment near the 30th anniversary of the war a "provocative" act and likening the prince to a "conquistador," The Telegraph newspaper said.

In response, Argentina and other members of the Mercosur trade bloc, which includes Brazil, Uruguay and Venezuela, agreed to close ports throughout the region to ships flying the flag of the disputed islands.