

The Conference of Secretaries of Christian World Communions meets this week in Rome. The Worldwide Moravian Church is represented by the Unity Board Administrator, Rev. Dr. Jørgen Bøytler. Below, please find the statement issued by the Vatican.

The Pope to the Christian World Communions delegation: ecumenism of prayer, journeying and blood, 12.10.2016

This morning, before the general audience and in the room adjacent to the Paul VI Hall, the Pope received in audience the participants in the Conference of Secretaries of Christian World Communions, the international ecumenical association that meets annually in October, each year in a different country, to improve mutual awareness. It is made up of the Anglican Communion, the World Baptist Alliance, the Disciples Ecumenical Consultative Council, the Ecumenical Patriarchate (Eastern Orthodox), General Conference of Seventh-Day Adventists, the International Old Catholic Bishops' Conference, the World Lutheran Foundation, the Mennonite World Conference, the Moravian Church Worldwide Unity Board, the Patriarchate of Moscow (Eastern Orthodox), the Pentecostals, the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity (Catholic Church), the Reformed Ecumenical Council, the Salvation Army, the Friends World Committee for Consultation (Quakers), the World Convention of Churches of Christ, the World Evangelical Alliance and the World Methodist Council. A representative of the World Council of Churches is also usually present.

In his brief address, the Pope referred to two phrases used by the Head of the Delegation: "Jesus is with us", and "Jesus is journeying with us". "These phrases made me reflect, and they pose two questions: am I capable of believing that Jesus is with us? Am I capable of journeying with all, together, and also with Jesus? Often we think that ecumenical work is only that of theologians. It is therefore important that theologians study, they agree, and they express their disagreement: this is very important. But in the meantime ecumenism journeys on. It journeys with Jesus, not 'my Jesus against your Jesus', but with our Jesus. The journey is simple: it consists of prayer, with the help of others. Praying together: the ecumenism of prayer, for each other and all for unity. And then, the ecumenism of work for the many who are in need, for many men and women who today suffer as a result of injustice, wars, these terrible things. ... All together, we must help. Love for our neighbour. This is ecumenism. This is already unity. Unity in journeying with Jesus".

The Holy Father went on to add that there is another form of ecumenism that typifies our age: that of blood. "When terrorists or world powers persecute Christian minorities or Christians", he observed, "they do not ask: 'Are you Lutheran? Are you Orthodox? Are you Catholic? Are you Reformed? Are you Pentecostal?' No. 'You are Christian'. They recognise one only: the Christian. The enemy is not wrong: he recognises where to find Jesus. And this is the ecumenism of blood. Nowadays we are witnesses to this, and I think of the Orthodox brethren beheaded on the beaches of Libya, for example: they are our brothers. They gave witness to Jesus and they died saying, 'Jesus, help me!'. With His name: they confessed the name of Jesus".

"Therefore, ecumenism in prayer, ecumenism in our journey, and the enemy teaches us the ecumenism of blood. Thank you, many thanks for this visit".

