

World Council of Churches met Pentecostal leaders

Church history was written on Wednesday in the Filadelfia Church Stockholm, when the general secretary of the World Council of Churches, Rev. Dr. Olav Fykse Tveit from Norway, greeted the Pentecostal World Conference.

– The churches of the World Council of Churches needs the Pentecostal movement, Tveit said to the conference participants.

Olav Fykse Tveit was pleasantly surprised by the invitation to the Pentecostal World Conference in Sweden. It was the first time that the World Council of Churches was given the opportunity to come with a greeting. It is not that many years since the Pentecostals were considered a sect by the major churches.

The Pentecostal movement is by no means unfamiliar to the Lutheran Norwegian, who said he has good personal contacts with Pentecostal friends in Norway. He said that the Pentecostal movement in the Nordic countries have contributed much to the spiritual life in the Nordic region and to his own journey of faith.

– It is my deep conviction that the member churches of the World Council of Churches, some of which are Pentecostal, need the closer bond to the Pentecostal churches you represent, Tveit said.

–And it is my humble conviction that you need us.

Grow together

He was referring to the Corinthians where the Apostle Paul says that there are many members in the church, yet one body. According to Tveit, we can not say to any brother or sister in Christ that "we do not need you".

– We need each other because it is only together that we can grow into the one body of Christ, said Olav Fykse Tveit.

The greeting from one of the world's most influential church leaders came as a surprise to the conference. There was nothing written about that in the program. World Council of Churches represents 349 churches with more than 560 million members in 110 countries.

Seek fellowship

Tveit said to Dagen that the good ecumenical climate in the Nordic countries will inspire Christians in other countries to seek fellowship.

–It has been said that ecumenism has stagnated. I feel it is stronger than ever in Scandinavia. I hope it will inspire others, Tveit said and mentioned a unique collaboration initiated in Norway.

The Lutheran theologian seminar now offers students to read the Pentecostal theology with Pentecostals as supervisors.

Talk about face

The Norwegian Pentecostal theologian Terje Hegertun, who doctorated last year in Oslo with Olav Fykse Tveit as an opponent, says that the general secretary's visit is the result of a long process of meetings held over the years. Individuals who for a long time pursued dialogue. The next meeting will for instance occur on the Global Christian Forum in Lahti, Finland in September.

– It gives an opportunity to talk about our faith and a chance to correct misunderstandings and erroneous ideas about each other, says Terje Hegertun.



The general secretary of the World Council of Churches Olav Fykse Tveit came with a greeting to the World Pentecostal Conference. He gave the conference general James Leggett a book as a gift. FOTO: CARL-HENRIK JAKTLUND

Editor-in-chief writes

God bless you all and welcome back to Stockholm

Maybe it has been done before but nobody seems to remember when. Normally Dagen can be read only in Swedish but today it is a pleasure to offer all the foreign visitors at the Pentecostal World Conference one page in English.

Dagen is a newspaper with very strong bonds to the Pentecostal movement in Sweden and abroad. It was started by Lewi Pethrus 65 years ago, in 1945. He was the editor-in-chief all the time until his death in 1984. I am proud to be one of his successors.

A DECADE AGO the Swedish Pentecostal movement took a very brave step when they transformed

Dagen to an ecumenical newspaper. Our owners, readers and staff represent a great part of Swedish Christianity. But the heritage from Lewi Pethrus is living history, not something that belongs to the past.

If you know your roots and stand firmly on solid ground you can have an open mind and see

differences not as threats but as possibilities.

God bless you all when you return to your different countries! We will keep praying for you and the work you do. And welcome back to Stockholm!



ELISABETH SANDLUND