

Bishop Tony Palmer, Champion of Unity, Dies in Motorcycle Accident

Bishop Tony Palmer, a South African Bishop with the Communion of Evangelical Episcopal Churches, has passed away after a motorcycle accident.

Palmer gained worldwide media attention in January after Pope Francis sent a special envoy to a Charismatic Evangelical Leadership Conference Kenneth Copeland hosted.

“Tony Palmer, the charismatic young preacher who enjoyed a friendship with Pope Francis, has apparently died in a motorcycle accident,” Kathy Schiffer reported on her Seasons of Grace blog. Not a Catholic, Palmer was a bishop in the Communion of Evangelical Episcopal Churches.

The Communion (referred to as the CEEC) was birthed in 1995 as a result of a more general work of the Holy Spirit among Christian churches, in what has become known as the “Convergence Movement,” and sometimes referred to as the “Convergence of the Streams” renewal. This is the spiritual vision, rooted in the New Testament revelation and the experience of the early Christians, that saw the church as one body with many diverse and contributing parts. Or, to put it another way: one river with many streams.

Palmer presented a video message from the pope that went massively viral at the Copeland-hosted conference. The message centered on unity among Catholics and Protestants. Copeland prayed for the pope and sent a message of his own back to Francis.

Catholics and evangelicals alike are mourning Palmer’s loss.

"I never personally met Bishop Tony Palmer. However, I look forward to spending an eternity in the full communion of God's love with him. I appreciated his Christian courage and felt that his efforts were prophetic," wrote Keith Fournier, founder and chairman of Common Good Foundation and Common Good Alliance.

"He wrote his life—and lived his ministry—with broad brushstrokes, seeking to reveal the fullness of God's loving plan for the Body of Christ, the healing of the divisions and wounds which separate those of us who share the name Christian."