Christian Solidarity International launches essay series on 'persecution and the unity of believers'

Inspired by Cardinal Koch, CSI seeks to "stimulate conversation among Christians of all traditions"

ZURICH, SWITZERLAND, November 4, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Today, Christian Solidarity International announced the launch of a new series of essays by Christian leaders, exploring the need for Christians of all confessions to find unity in solidarity against persecution.

> Standing in solidarity with the suffering parts of the Body of Christ will spiritually strengthen the whole Body."
>
> *Dr. John Eibner, president of CSI*

Inspired by Cardinal Koch's 2015 lecture, "The Persecution of Christians and the Ecumenism of the Martyrs," the essay series will bring together reflections on Christian solidarity from Christian leaders from a range of church backgrounds and nationalities.

The first publication in the series will be an English translation of Cardinal Koch's 2015 lecture. It will be followed in the coming weeks by a response reflection from the former Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams, and from Professor Yusuf Turaki from Nigeria, a renowned theologian who has documented the systematic persecution of Christians in northern Nigeria.

The essay series will be hosted on CSI's international website.

According to CSI's international president, Dr. John Eibner, the essay series is intended "to stimulate deeper conversation about the 'ecumenism of the martyrs' among Christians of all traditions."

Eibner discovered Cardinal Koch's 2015 lecture, previously available only in German, after a visit to the Cardinal in his office in the Vatican in 2022. "Upon first read, I was struck by the pressing need for Christians of all traditions to consider deeply Cardinal Koch's message and its implications for Christians today," Eibner says.

Kurt, Cardinal Koch, the former bishop of Basel, Switzerland, has served for 15 years as president of the Dicastery for Promoting Christian Unity. In this position, he is, next to the Pope, the Roman Catholic Church's most senior authority on relations between the various Christian communions and traditions. His lecture was made to an overwhelmingly evangelical Protestant gathering in 2015 in Schwäbisch-Gmund, Germany.

In his lecture, Cardinal Koch uses Polycarp, the bishop of Smyrna who was executed in 155, as an example of martyrdom.

"I would encourage Christians from all traditions to read this series not just as a theological exercise for the mind, but also as a call to action," Eibner says. "As we see violent persecution increasing dramatically in much of the world, and as troubling signs of anti-Christian legal and social discrimination appear in Europe and North America, it is hard to make a credible case against the essence of Cardinal Koch's plea for solidarity."

Even if Christians today are divided by confession, politics, economics, and history, they can find unity "focusing on those who have been martyred because of their common faith," Eibner concludes. "Standing in solidarity with the suffering parts of the Body of Christ will spiritually strengthen the whole Body."

About CSI

Christian Solidarity International is an international human rights group campaigning for religious liberty and human dignity.

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