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The Authority of the Churches in a Pluralist Europe. Anglican, Old Catholic, Roman Catholic, Lutheran and Reformed Perspectives. Internationale Anglikanisch-Alt-katholische Theologenkonzferenz in Exeter, 7.–10. September 2015

Bericht über die Internationale Anglikanisch-Alt-katholische Theologenkonzferenz in Exeter

In ungefähr fünfjährigem Rhythmus finden Anglikanisch-Alt-katholische Theologenkonzferenzen statt, bei denen Themen behandelt werden, die für beide Kirchengemeinschaften von Bedeutung sind. Die Idee zum Konferenzthema von 2015 entstammt einer Konferenz über «Autorität – Funktion und Ausübung in religiösen und wissenschaftlichen Diskursen» der Schweizerischen Theologischen Gesellschaft an der Universität Bern im Oktober 2013. Bei der damaligen Tagung, massgeblich vom Departement für Christkatholische Theologie vorbereitet, wurde über die Plausibilität des Sprechens über «Autorität» in modernen Kontexten diskutiert und darüber, was «beglaubigte» Autorität heute bedeutet. Ausserdem wurden zeitgenössische religiöse Führerinnen und Führer vorgestellt, die Autorität haben oder denen sie zugeschrieben wird. Es wurde aber auch die Frage gestellt, inwieweit kirchliche Autoritätsinstanzen überhaupt noch Einfluss auf die öffentliche Meinung auszuüben vermögen. Am Rande der Berner Konferenz traf sich eine kleine Forschergruppe, die beschloss, die Thematik weiterzuverfolgen, um ein deutlicheres Bild davon zu bekommen, in welcher Weise Veränderungen in Religion, Gesellschaft und Kultur die Möglichkeiten von Kirchen beeinflussen, in ihren nationalen Kontexten über christlichen Glauben und ethische Fragen mit einer gewissen Autorität öffentlich Stellung zu beziehen.

Die Wahrnehmung, dass heute Autorität eher infrage gestellt als hingenommen wird, führte zur Fragestellung der Konferenz in Exeter. Wie wird die Autorität der Kirchen in einem pluralen und sich säkularisierenden Europa von ihnen selbst und von anderen wahrgenommen, gestaltet, ausgeübt bzw. rezipiert? Um sich dem Thema «Autorität» strukturiert anzunähern, wurden drei Bereiche unterschieden: 1. Quellen von Autorität (Bibel, Tradition, Vernunft, Gewissen, relevante nicht theologische Disziplinen); 2. Strukturen von Autorität (wie Kirchen ihren Kurs bestimmen und Entscheidungen fällen, etwa durch Synoden oder Konzilien); 3. Dynamiken von Autorität (wie Autorität von denen erfahren wird, die sie empfangen).

Nachdem die Vorbereitungsgruppe der Internationalen Alt-katholischen Theologenkonzferenzen (bestehend aus Vertretungen der Ausbildungsstätten in Bern, Bonn und Utrecht mit den beiden Koordinatoren) der grundsätzlichen Richtung zugestimmt hatte, übernahm Prof. Angela Berlis (Bern) es, ähnlich wie bereits bei der Anglikanisch-Alt-katholischen Konferenz vor fünf Jahren, gemeinsam mit

Prof. Paul Avis (Exeter) die inhaltliche Seite der Tagung zu konkretisieren; die Organisation vor Ort lag in den Händen von Paul Avis.

Berlis und Avis führten auf der Tagung selbst in das Thema ein, indem sie Zusammenhänge mit anderen Diskussionen über Autorität (etwa in *Faith and Order* im Weltkirchenrat), Hintergründe zur Wahl des Themas und Herangehensweisen erläuterten. Danach folgten pastorale, kontextbezogene Überlegungen zum Konferenzthema durch Dr. Joris Vercammen, Erzbischof von Utrecht (Niederlande), und – tags darauf, da der Referent erst später eintraf – durch Dr. Michael Burrows, Bischof von Cashel, Ferns und Ossory (Irland). (Beide sind unten abgedruckt.) Der anglikanische Theologe Martyn Percy (Oxford) hielt am ersten Abend einen sehr anregenden Vortrag über «Autorität in der zeitgenössischen Ekklesiologie: einige Überlegungen». Er wies auf die etymologische Nähe zwischen «Autorität» und «Authentizität» hin, die sich im zeitgenössischen Diskurs jedoch zu einer wachsenden Kluft entwickle. Er warnte vor «blueprint ecclesiologies» (ein Begriff von Nicholas Healy) und plädierte dafür, im Falle fehlender Übereinstimmung in strittigen Fragen auf einen «Konsens innerhalb des Konflikts» hinzuarbeiten. Sein Plädoyer für «authentische Nachfolge» («wir werden an unseren Früchten erkannt, nicht an unseren Samenkörnern») verband er mit dem Aufruf, hörende, demütige, engagierte Kirche zu sein.

Peter-Ben Smit (Utrecht/Amsterdam) behandelte in seinem Vortrag über «Die Autorität im Neuen Testament und des Neuen Testaments» kurz das Schriftverständnis in der anglikanischen und altkatholischen Tradition, um dann näher auf die Wechselwirkung zwischen (autoritativem) Schrifttext und lesender und damit interpretierender Gemeinschaft einzugehen. Martin Leiner (Jena) gab in seinem Vortrag «Autorität ohne Weihrauch – Protestantische Weisen des Verständnisses von Autorität» zunächst einen historischen Überblick über das Verständnis von Autorität als «Kompetenz» bei protestantischen Autoren seit der Reformation und skizzierte anschliessend sechs Hauptelemente eines protestantischen Autoritätsverständnisses (Begrenzung der Autorität der Kirche und Freiheit; Gewaltlosigkeit und Anerkennung von Pluralismus; vertrauensvolle Beziehungen, Parrhesia und Prophetia; Gebet und liebevolles Engagement für Gerechtigkeit und Versöhnung der Menschheit; Aufmerksamkeit im Hinblick auf die Gefahren und den Missbrauch, den Protestanten erfahren haben). Der geplante Vortrag von Sven-Erik Brodd (Uppsala) über «Luthertum als imaginierte ekklesiologische Welt: die Komplexität von Autorität» musste wegen Erkrankung des Redners leider ausfallen. An seiner Stelle referierte Paul Avis über die Art, wie Autorität in der Moderne funktioniert und stellte Überlegungen an, in welcher Weise Kirchen in einem pluralen Europa Autorität begründen und ausüben können, nämlich als von Christus empfangene, nicht der Kirche als solche eignende, auf Zeugnis ausgerichtete, rezeptive Autorität; seiner Unterscheidung verschiedener Arten von Autorität (basierend auf Max Weber) legte Avis seine einschlägigen Veröffentlichungen zugrunde. Ähnlich wie Avis ging auch Adrian Suter (Bern) in seinem Vortrag über «Fehlbare Autorität» auf die Moderne ein; ausgehend von der päpstlichen Unfehlbarkeitsdiskussion, unterschied er mit Bochenski (und Stalder) zwei Formen von –

epistemischer und deontischer – Autorität. Er sprach sich dafür aus, Spur und Sprache einer fehlbaren Autorität zu verfolgen.

In sehr konkreter Weise beschrieb Iain Torrance (Aberdeen) in seinem Vortrag «Die Kirche von Schottland, die zivile eingetragene Partnerschaft und die gleichgeschlechtliche Ehe» die Entwicklungen in Schottland auf politischer («Civil Partnership Act» des Parlaments in Westminster im Jahr 2004) und auf kirchlicher Ebene, Letzteres am Beispiel der Kirche von Schottland, zu der 32% der Bevölkerung gehören («Equality Act» von 2010 und weitere Entscheidungen von 2013 und 2015). Die Einheit der Kirche sei allerdings vorrangig. Ungereimtheiten zwischen Entscheidungen würden dafür in Kauf genommen, so der Schluss des Referenten.

Nikolaus Knoepffler (Jena) und Peter de Mey (Leuven) gingen auf Dilemmata der römisch-katholischen Kirche ein: Peter de Mey fragte in seinem Vortrag «Ist Autorität in der römisch-katholischen Kirche am Ende <nur für Priester>? Die Teilhabe der Laien am königlichen Priestertum Christi – 50 Jahre nach dem Zweiten Vatikanischen Konzil» nach den Auswirkungen dieses Konzils auf die Einbeziehung der Laien in kirchliche Autoritätsstrukturen. Nikolaus Knoepffler behandelte «Karl Rahners Sicht von Autorität» und zog von da die Fäden weiter in Richtung auf veränderte Autoritäts- und Kommunikationsstrukturen, etwa ein ökumenisch zusammengesetztes Kardinalskollegium als Stütze der «ökumenischen Autorität» des Papstes; auch die Rolle von Papst Franziskus, der seine Autorität benutze, um andere einzubeziehen, brachte er zur Sprache.

Wichtig waren die beiden religionssoziologischen, praxisbezogenen Beiträge von Linda Woodhead (Lancaster) und Grace Davie (Exeter). Linda Woodhead besprach «Die Krise der Autorität in den Mainstream-Kirchen in England: Ursachen und Antworten», indem sie die Ergebnisse der von ihr durchgeführten empirischen Umfragen und der von ihr organisierten öffentlichen Diskussionen zu aktuellen Streitfragen präsentierte und dabei die grosse Spannung zwischen offiziellen Stellungnahmen der Kirchen und den Überzeugungen der von ihr Befragten feststellte: Gläubige orientieren sich in spätindustriellen Gesellschaften nicht mehr an Vorgaben kirchlicher Autoritäten, sie wollen sich – u.a. durch über Internet verfügbare Informationen – selbst orientieren. Auch die Ethik habe sich verändert, an die Stelle von Altruismus und Fürsorge sei die Ökologie getreten. Grace Davie, die britische Doyenne der Religionssoziologie, resümierte am Ende der Tagung Ergebnisse und Eindrücke. Ähnlich wie bereits Woodhead konstatierte auch Davie, dass überkommene Modelle von Kirchesein heute nicht mehr greifen und die Kirchen dringend umdenken müssten. Ein Ergebnis der Konferenz war sicher die Erkenntnis, dass das Denken über die Art und Weise einer «glaubhaften» Ausübung von Autorität (als «hörende» und weniger als «vorschreibende») sich bereits gewandelt hat, sowohl in kirchlichen wie nationalen Kontexten.

Die Tagung wurde wesentlich getragen von der bunten Palette bekannter Rednerinnen und Redner, die mit ihren Thesen und Darlegungen meist lebhaftere Diskussionen im Plenum oder in Murmelgruppen stimulierten. Dabei zeigte es sich, dass bisweilen altkatholische und anglikanische Teilnehmende zu unterschiedli-

chen Fragen Diskussionsbedarf empfanden (die Altkatholiken etwa beim päpstlichen Autoritätsverständnis und Anspruch, die Anglikaner beim Rückgang der öffentlichen Bedeutung ihrer Kirche). Morgens und abends fanden Tagzeitengebete statt, die von Mitgliedern verschiedener Kirchen vorbereitet wurden. Am Freitag wurde zum Abschluss der Konferenz in der Mary Harris Memorial Chapel auf dem Universitätscampus gemeinsam unter Vorsitz von Erzbischof Joris Vercauteren Eucharistie gefeiert, bei der Bischof Michael Burrows die Predigt hielt. Der Nachmittagsausflug führte in die Kathedrale von Exeter und wurde nach dem dort mitgefeierten Evensong mit einem Empfang durch das Kapitel und einem festlichen Abendessen abgeschlossen. Die Konferenz wurde finanziell von der *Society of St Willibrord* (Vereinigtes Königreich), *Westminster Abbey*, *Allchurches Trust* und der *St Luke's Foundation* (Exeter) grosszügig unterstützt, sodass die hohen Kosten für die insgesamt etwa 65 Teilnehmenden aus Belgien, Dänemark, Deutschland, Grossbritannien, Irland, den Niederlanden, Polen und der Schweiz erheblich sanken.

Eine Auswahl der Vorträge wird in der Zeitschrift *Ecclesiology* erscheinen.

AB

Some pastoral reflections on the authority of the churches in a pluralistic Europe

I would like to share with you some ideas about the Christian faith in Europe and its future. It is my conviction that churches have a crucial role to play in our continent and that their contribution will be applauded by a wide variety of people, believers and non-believers, Christians and non-Christians. But the condition is that churches should show their solidarity with the European longing for unity. Europe challenges the churches. How far the churches are able to claim some leading role on our continent and in consequence can claim authority, will depend on the responses of the churches to that longing.

1. Christian faith in Europe

Europe is like a big house, with many doors and rooms, in which everybody is talking at the same time in fifty languages. Europe is a complex phenomenon. Sociological surveys show us the "patch-work pattern" of a religious and moral pluralism, which seems to be a main characteristic of European culture. Despite this diversity, all European societies seem to be going through a common process concerning their religious and moral consciousness. It is the process of secularization.

In making "the immanent frame" the leading principle for shaping culture, the secularization process has caused faith to become problematic for a lot of people. This has brought a sense of disorientation and uncertainty to a large part of the

European population [see: CHARLES TAYLOR, *A Secular Age*, Cambridge, MA, London (The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press) 2007, 539–593].

As Pope Francis told the Old Catholic Bishops' Conference at their meeting in Rome (30 October 2014), Europe is “confused about its own identity and vocation” and captive to “a profound spiritual crisis affecting individuals and societies”. “There is a thirst for God. There is a profound desire to recover a sense of purpose in life. There is an urgent need for a convincing witness to the truth and values of the Gospel”.

There is indeed a clear demand for identity, a quest for symbols by which people can recognise themselves, and a need for traditions which are shared and which will lead to sharing. Within this context, religion still appears to many people to be an important reservoir of values which can help them to respond to this demand. We experience contradictory realities over this point in Europe. Firstly, for a small elite, this has manifested itself as an intense experience of being born again, experienced within the evangelical movement. But secondly, for the majority of Europeans, Christianity no longer has any influence on private life; it survives (only) as a strong point of attachment when religious symbols are needed for the expression of their cultural identity.

2. The fear of the Europeans

There is a lot of fear in our European societies. The Greek crisis as well as the crisis over the refugees seeking refuge in Europe have made that fear obvious. Europeans fear losing their prosperity and their security. Moreover, there is also the phenomenon of ever-recurring anti-Semitism and hostility against Islam. Lastly, I mention the anti-institutional attitude that has become a crucial aspect of the European culture and that is based on a deep suspicion towards all kinds of institutions that are experienced as impersonal and only focused on their own interests.

We have to think about the history of Europe during the last century in order to understand where that fear comes from. The inability of the military institution, as the expression of the leadership of the establishment, to preserve peace and bring prosperity to a large number of people, shocked Europe at the time of World War I. After World War II, Europe experienced a bankruptcy of all ideologies, confirmed by the implosion of European communism at the end of the 1980s. There is no longer any trust in ideologies, and even less trust in ideological institutions. These are seen as unreliable carriers of ideologies, from which one had to conclude that they were more interested in their own power than in the destiny of people. This is also the case with the church. In essence, this deinstitutionalisation of religion is an attempt to exclude what is seen as a dangerous source of violence from society. The former so-called Catholic countries, which experienced an acceleration of the secularisation process during the past decades, are examples of this evolution of deinstitutionalisation. The strength of the past has become

today's weakness, namely, that strong hierarchy, including control over people's lives, no longer has the supremacy it once had.

The principle of separation of church and state, which was expressed by the French Revolution and which, to this day, is considered to be the core of modern Western civilisation, is based on the idea that religion is less a civilising than a potentially violent reality. From this point of view, secularised society is seen as redeeming human beings from the authoritarianism and violence of religion and of all ideology. The so-called no-nonsense politics, of which Tony Blair was one of the main initiators, must be seen as an expression of the trust put in a technical approach to social and economic issues that has the ambition to be "objective". The problem is the casuistic aspect of this approach and its lack of vision for the future of the society and on how human dignity will be secured through promoting human relationships.

All these transformations Europe has been involved in for over the last century, have brought a sense of disorientation and uncertainty to a large part of the European population. All over the place there are right-wing parties which try to exploit the fear that is provoked by disorientation and uncertainty.

3. Europe needs ideals

No peaceful society can be built without values on which it can be based. No society can be sustained without a utopia. This utopia is about unity and about what the content of this unity is, and it will be realised through reconciliation. Values are the concrete cornerstones of the community that has to be built in order to make common life possible. The same is true on a higher level, for the community of communities Europe is called to be. The diversity in Europe is great and therefore the need for reconciliation and unity is huge. Therefore I am convinced that either «Europe» remains a peace project and a way to reconciliation, or it does not make any sense.

Faith is not identical to values and ethical direction, but faith is the source of values. It is because «faith» has to do with the truth about the meaning of human beings and their lives. Much has been given to our cultures by the Christian faith, especially because of its stimulating effect on ethical and social thought. Perhaps those values are not recognized any more as issuing from the Christian faith and lifestyle, but they are strong convictions that are alive in our European context. And that is exactly the goal of Christian faith: that it would transform society.

Therefore, it is my conviction that the majority of Europeans still have a high expectation of the church, and it should be understood at this point that the future of religion, Christianity and the church will be decided by the degree to which their representatives succeed in weaving themselves creatively into the culture-creating process, and participating in it significantly. As the Charta Oecumenica puts it, the most important task for the churches in Europe is to proclaim the gospel, and, in doing so, they can support the integration of the European continent.

Europe has to be a community based on common values, and the spiritual heritage of Christianity is able to play an important role in order to build on it [see: The Conference of European Churches/The Council of European Bishops' Conferences, *Charta Oecumenica. Guidelines for the Growing Cooperation among the Churches in Europe*, Geneva, St. Gallen (CCEE – CEC) 2001, para 7].

Therefore: although religious communities are minorities within a secular Europe, it cannot mean that the religious life should be enclosed in the private domain of individual convictions. The solidarity of religious communities with their societies will be shown by their critical questioning of all attempts to reduce people to manageable beings that can be manipulated as needed. There is something to discover within every person that is important for the whole of the community. And for the person herself the experience that her own life is based on a “giving” is fundamental and opens up the possibility of taking responsibility and meaningful action “that announces the presence of the fundamental giving on which the world rests”, as Rowan Williams puts it [ROWAN WILLIAMS, *Faith in the Public Square*, London (Bloomsbury) 2012, 6]. This is the fundamental contribution Christians have to make to the society. This ideal opens up “the utopia” of a peaceful and unified Europe.

4. Churches in Europe

In this respect it is obvious that neither the churches nor the CEC could be confined to a role of lobbying for particular interests. If that would be the case, churches would fail in their calling to be sources of life-giving values to European society. Churches are at the service of society in order to contribute to its human quality, social cohesion and social welfare. Although there is a lot of suspicion on the side of the European institutions concerning the role churches and religious communities could play within the European context, there is also the expectation that those communities would offer the essential fundamental perspectives that are needed. Naturally, all churches experience a degree of marginalisation in a “changing Europe, which no longer finds meaning in a predominantly Christian frame of reference”, as Mary Tanner says [MARY TANNER, *The raison d'être of the Church*, in: James Barnett (ed.), *A Theology for Europe. The Churches and the European Institutions*, Bern [Peter Lang] 2005, 237–248, here 245]. But, she continues: “Many people lack a clear sense of direction, are confused by competing ideals and values, and feel powerless and alienated (...). [T]hese issues have to be addressed in a deeper engagement and solidarity with people (...).” [Ibid.].

However, the perspectives that people are looking for are not given by emphasising confessional identities, which in most cases have little to do with the inspiration the secular society is looking for. My conviction is that we all have to undergo a process of conversion in order to be able to put into perspective our confessional identities. Perhaps the term “identity” itself is a problematic one; in any case a critical attitude towards it seems to be needed.

In fact “identity” is a very modern concept. It has not only to do with what is especially true for an individual, a grouping or a society, but it is often expressed in terms of what makes me or us differ from others. This means, that this concept as it is used, highlights the differences among people to the most particular detail. The consequence is that diversity is accentuated in a way that provokes a high degree of competition because of the exclusiveness that is claimed by each particular instance. This kind of attitude makes “diversity” the enemy of unity.

Since we have already concluded that every particular human being lives from the “giving” that is the source of their life, it is logical to say – in consequence – that every person is a gift to others. In this perspective, “diversity” becomes a gift as well, and is not in competition with “unity”.

These insights are fundamental for churches to accept one another as partners and co-searchers on the way to unity. As Mary Tanner observed at the celebration of the Meissen Agreement, only a short time after the fall of the Berlin Wall: “There was the sense that here was now an opportunity to build a new Europe and the churches had a definitive part to play. In the midst of dramatic changes Christians together had a new opportunity to show a model of belonging to one another in which Europe might recognize possibilities for its own unity.” [Ibid., 241]. Europe challenges national identities because these stress particularities not as a gift to others but as a defence against the otherness and an argument against sharing and building a wider community. This touches the heart of the social and cultural values on which the European project is based. This means for the churches, and in particular for the established churches, that they “can be trapped in an institutional shape that no longer relates to the realities of political life” [Ibid., 246]. In any case, one can hardly say that this would accord with the European project. But this is not only true for the large established churches. The small and free ones may be trapped by their fears of losing particular shape if they were to open themselves to contributing in one or another way to what at some moment must appear: “the Church of Europe”.

The document “Belonging together in Europe” struggles with all these questions [see: Anglican Old Catholic International Coordinating Council, *Belonging together in Europe: A Joint Statement on Aspects of Ecclesiology and Mission*, in: IKZ 101 (2011), 140–158]. The attempt the document wants to make is to discover how Old Catholics and Anglicans might be able to make their unity more manifest. And, in doing this, the document hopes to contribute to a model for a political unity in Europe (as it states in its paragraph 39). I am convinced that we have a responsibility in this respect and that the authority of our churches depends on the degree to which we are taking that responsibility seriously.

5. The authority of the churches

To be credible in this context, the traditional churches have to fulfil three conditions [see: REINHARDT FRIELING, *The Ecumenical Movement in Europe: Chal-*

lenges and Conflicts, in: *Concilium* 39 (2004) no. 2, 57–66]. The first consists of achieving a sufficient level of unity among themselves. The second is to maintain the dialogue with a culture of lay and secular inspiration, with its values of equality and democracy and the role played by the sciences and technical development. However, within this so-called “secular culture” all kinds of religious phenomena are more alive than ever. Therefore the third condition for being taken seriously as a contributor to the humanisation of European society is to show the ability and readiness to participate in the multi-religious dialogue that must guarantee peace and solidarity to all Europeans, including the “new” ones.

Being less concerned about themselves and more about their common mission and witness within European societies, this is the way for churches for strengthening the potential of the Christian faith. Speaking about the authority of the churches and of church organisations, I would like to mention the following points:

(a) The churches have to be aware of the responsibility of Christians in developing the “utopia” that Europe needs in order to guarantee the human quality of its society. Working together with other religions and religious communities is a prerequisite. In this secularized society all believers are allies. The history of religion is too much a history of violence. Religions feared for one another and experienced one another as threats. It is about the complex question of claiming the truth and at the same time often being used by those who are in power. The moment for a sincere exchange of insights has come. If religions can build up peace among each other, peace within societies will draw nearer as well. It is the moral responsibility of churches to be involved in interreligious dialogue, on all levels and in many aspects.

(b) The churches have to respond to social needs and ethical questions that emerge within European society. The CEC may organize the churches’ contribution in this respect by establishing networks of reflection and action. To give one example: how will churches think about the poverty gap between the South and the North? It cannot be that new barriers appear between European regions because of an unwillingness to share resources. The work of the former Church and Society Commission can be an orientation for the future as well. Another example is the problem of the refugees and asylum seekers knocking on the European door. A common European approach must be possible and must be worked out on the basis of a larger solidarity that includes all European countries. Europe is a decent continent where people are respected, even when they are deprived of the fulfilment of their basic needs of living. A third example is about those places in Europe where (ethnic) conflicts emerge. The Christians of those countries or regions need to take part in peace-building processes. We are not credible if Christians do not commit themselves to peaceful solutions for those conflicts.

(c) Collaboration towards a more humane European society will raise the question of the unity among Christians. We are not credible if we do not take real and concrete steps in order to show more unity. Reflection and discussion about dogmatic issues must take place within this challenging context of a continent that is looking for unity. Our unity is our mission for this continent! We have to con-

front churches with critical questions about their unity. The goal of the “visible unity” must be kept alive as the only meaningful perspective in the long term. The CEC needs to contribute to the shaping of “the church of Europe”. And, I repeat: Anglicans and Old Catholics have a common challenge in this respect.

In conclusion, the potential of Christian faith as well as the authority of the churches in a pluralistic Europe will depend on the degree to which we are able to realise these challenges, which are not new but are worth mentioning over and over again. I would like to conclude with the Charta Oecumenica: “With the Gospel, we want to stand up for the dignity of the human person created in God’s image and, as churches together, contribute towards reconciling peoples and cultures.” [Charta Oecumenica, Introduction]. I couldn’t have said it better!

Joris Vercammen, Amersfoort NL

Exploring the authority of the minority. Reflections from a Church of Ireland perspective

Let me begin with a little byway of personal and practical background. I am the Anglican Co-Chair of the Anglican Old Catholic International Co-ordinating Council (AOCICC), the body which both oversees and (I trust) develops the possibilities of the relationship of full communion that has existed for almost a century between the Anglican Communion and the Old Catholic churches of the Union of Utrecht. I am also a bishop in the Church of Ireland.¹ For some reason it

¹ The above reflection derives largely from my experience as a bishop in the Church of Ireland. Over and above the wider issues addressed, readers may be interested in exploring further the context out of which I write. Two great historical experiences permeate the story of Anglicanism in Ireland: the Reformation and the Disestablishment of the church in 1871.

Useful introductions are: ALAN FORD/JAMES MCGUIRE/KENNETH MILNE (eds), *As by Law Established: The Church of Ireland since the Reformation*, Dublin (Lilliput) 1995; ALAN ACHESON, *A History of the Church of Ireland, 1691–2001*, 2nd ed., Dublin (Columba/APCK) 2002. Older but still invaluable works are: MICHAEL HURLEY (ed.), *Irish Anglicanism 1869–1969* (Dublin, Figgis, 1970) and R. B. McDOWELL, *The Church of Ireland, 1869–1969*, London (Routledge and Kegan Paul) 1975.

Of broader scope are RAYMOND GILLESPIE/WILLIAM NEELY (eds), *The Laity and the Church of Ireland, 1000–2000*, Dublin (Four Courts Press) 2002 and TOBY BARNARD/WILLIAM NEELY (eds), *The Clergy of the Church of Ireland, 1000–2000*, Dublin (Four Courts Press) 2006. Two useful collections of reflective theological essays which appeared at the turn of the Millennium are DENIS CARROLL (ed.), *Religion in Ireland, Past Present and Future*, Dublin (Columba) 1999 and STEPHEN WHITE (ed.), *A Time to Build: Essays for Today’s Church*, Dublin (APCK) 1999. A rather more popular work, containing nevertheless substantial scholarly insight is CLAUDE COSTECALDE/BRIAN WALKER (eds), *The Church of Ireland: An Illustrated History*, Dublin (Booklink) 2013.

was felt that the Anglican Co-Chair for this current mandate of the AOCICC should come from one of the “Celtic” churches and so the lot fell upon me. By extension I chair the British and Irish Society of St Willibrord, as did my predecessor as Co-Chair of the AOCICC, Bishop Jonathan Gledhill.

All this has been a steep yet enriching learning curve for me – I have been learning so much about the various Old Catholic churches, their tradition and their witness, and I have formed cherished friendships with my fellow Old Catholic members of the AOCICC (not least our other Co-Chair Bishop Dick Schoon), as well as of course with Archbishop Joris Vercammen. There are certain obvious ways in which I find a Church of Ireland bishop such as myself can have a natural affinity with those who carry out a similar ministry in the Old Catholic context. First of all, St Willibrord did part of his monastic training near Carlow in my own diocese of Cashel, Ferns and Ossory and he remains very much part of the historical and ecumenical fabric of that area. Secondly, the Church of Ireland is a fairly small church, perhaps 3% of the total population of the area in which I serve, and so it relates naturally to churches which tend to be small, yet to punch far above their weight in the civic arena, and which often exist in an atmosphere which has been demographically dominated by the Roman Catholic church. I oversee the ministry of forty-five priests serving an extensive terrain in the largely rural south-east of Ireland and so my ministry is not dissimilar at all to several of my Old Catholic colleagues. Finally, the Republic of Ireland (some might say out of self-interest) has long been a very as it were pro-Europe nation. A recent opinion poll confirmed my own instincts when it suggested that 80% of the Irish electorate continued to believe that membership of the EU was good for Ireland – this in the aftermath of the near-collapse of the banks and the subsequent bailout. Ireland, like many of the countries in which Old Catholics live and witness, has displayed a sustained enthusiasm to give to the European project what Jacques Delors years ago termed “a soul”. By the way, I realize that Switzerland is an honourable exception to much of what I am implying here, but I think it is generally true to say that the Church of Ireland and many Old Catholic churches would share a desire to be creative and committed in their engagement with the European institutions and in their aspirations to foster what I might term participative European Christian citizenship. One of the features of the 2014 AOCICC meeting, held in Ireland, was a session in which we explored together with representatives of the European Commission office in Dublin how the churches can best contribute their insights and perspectives to the current debates of the European public square and to the law-making process. Such a voice and role is actually guaranteed to the churches under the European treaties, and for so many of us who live in the EU area and are as a result hugely affected in our day to day lives by the complex comprehensiveness of European law it is prudent to remember that commenting and lobbying concerning the content of that law needs to be done at the drafting stage. The European parliament, unlike many of our national parliaments, is not a place where you try to get legislation amended in detail once it has been prepared.

I work, therefore, in a very small church in a country where burst economic bubbles and the rapidly declining authority of the Roman Catholic church have been among the factors which have led to a dramatic shift in how moral and political authority are experienced. Furthermore, the level of actual human movement, as well as the general spirit of openness to European ideas and trends, have created a society which in a generation has become startlingly multi-faceted and pluralist. The number of languages I hear around me not least among young children in schools is extraordinary; Polish is the second vernacular language of Ireland. Amid all this change and indeed confusion, what do churches, *especially small churches*, have to say regarding their role?

It seems to me to be the case that churches which have long lived somewhat in the shadow of a dominant church which was indeed allowed to have a certain coercive authority in society are now presented with an opportunity. We can speak to society of the moral authority that comes from service, which is offered in generosity and humility to wider society in a spirit that is truly diaconal. We make no claim to political control or to smug righteousness; we earn the ear of society because of the integrity of our service, because of our capacity to make a difference to the lives and futures of individuals and communities when often much is drab and hope is lacking. Whether it be Irish Anglicans or Old Catholics, churches that are long used to being very small minorities can teach Christianity itself how to speak to a society in which it is no more than one of many minority voices. Yet that authoritative minority voice can be like a trace element in the overall chemistry of society ... something which (to use a scientific analogy) is barely itself measurable but undoubtedly enriches the debates, the compassion, and even the decisions of the public square. Authority in an often fragmented society can only work if it has moral quality rather than coercive character, if it has an attractiveness that magnetises rather than a rigour that repels. When the Irish state was set up almost a century ago, in the midst of violence and civil war, an extraordinarily courageous decision was made, the effects of which have endured, that everyday policemen on the beat would not carry guns. A leading statesman of the time declared that the police could only succeed, not by coercive capacity, but by the moral authority which would derive from being clearly seen as the servants of the people. It's not a bad analogy for the role of the churches in the circumstances in which we find ourselves in today's Europe.

Four issues concerning our experiences of authority

I want now to turn in an admittedly very hasty way to four specific issues which in my opinion confront the various countries and churches from which we come in a manner that both challenges and enriches our experience of authority.

Most obviously, there have been extraordinary changes in the past generation in the area of sexual morality, and my own country became the first to introduce marriage between partners of the same sex by way of referendum earlier this year –

and the result was nothing if not decisive. It has long been clear that faithful people follow their consciences in regard to their sexual intimacies, and that churches which simply lay down the law in this regard know well that it is all largely a chasing after the wind. Yet the churches still surely have a capacity to contribute to a wider understanding of the moral compass of sexual ethics, if only by witnessing to what might be implied by public commitment to a love that is generous, sacrificial, rooted in the fulfilment and joy of the other, where there is a clear connection between the committed intimacies of individuals and the wider common good. As we agonise over things like what to do in church about same-sex unions, or how to deal with clergy involved in such matters, we are in some danger of being left behind in the debate on sexual ethics rather than being cherished as credible partners in that public discussion. Society expects us, I think, to continue to stand for bigger ideals in this matter than some of our more introspective squabbles seem to convey. This paper is a pastoral reflection, and so I share with you two comments made to me recently in my diocese by faithful people during the inevitable after-church conversation over the coffee. One was the response made by a young woman wearing an engagement ring when I enquired of her when she was planning to marry: “Next year” – she said – “but I don’t know if I’ll do it in church because my brother is gay and it would seem unjust for me to avail of something not available to him.” The other was the comment of two old friends about to enter a same-sex marriage when I confirmed that I could offer them no affirmation of a public liturgical nature. They said: “It’s such a shame because it was the church which inspired us with its ideal of marital commitment in the first place”.

My second area of practical concern, where I feel that even small churches can speak with authority into the wider arena, concerns the matter most basic to the future of our planet in these days: namely emissions, climate change, global warming, the increased frequency of dramatic weather events ... and the disproportionate and destructive effect of all this on the global south. This is an area in which people of faith and all people of goodwill can work effectively together, as has also been shown in the response to the latest papal encyclical touching the matter. There seems to be a curious acceptance “out there” in society that people of faith do have enhanced and substantive insights which they can bring to bear on this discussion, perhaps because of the way in which our ancient texts provide an invaluable contemporary mine in which to delve in order to enhance ecological awareness. What I would therefore suggest is that we should never – whether because of sloth, smallness or our preoccupation with lesser issues – allow our sense of how significant a role we can play in the climate change discussion to diminish. The manner in which all of this dominated the recent Church of England General Synod is significant. People expect us to have substantial things to say, they expect us to live as we preach, and they acknowledge that there is something in our theological genes which allows us to speak with the appropriate tones of truly apocalyptic urgency into this crisis. This is perhaps one area where the Body of Christ surely retains God-given authority; if Christ calmed storms by his word, then surely his Body must retain the capacity to quell storms through prophetic

action, especially when they are of humanity's own making and victimize the poor of the world on account of our folly and our western lifestyle choices.

The third practical question I want to mention briefly, to which indeed I have already alluded and in which most of us here share a common interest, is the future of the European project not least as epitomised by the structures of the European Union. I know, given the current debate in Britain, that an Irish person speaking in a British city has to tread carefully and recognise the degree of his undoubted ignorance. That said, the European project commenced amidst the ashes of war and has undoubtedly done so much to preserve the peace of Europe in a manner unprecedented in history – whatever one may say about bureaucracy or the erosion of national sovereignty. Given what Britain did in the 1940s to stand up for freedom and justice when indeed my own country pursued a course of pragmatic and arguably morally bankrupt neutrality, it would be a tragedy for the rest of us if the British voice were to be lost when it comes to the upholding of the positivity (and at times it seems almost the sanity!) of the European vision. Excessive talk of Brexit and Grexit involves talk of two very different nations which nevertheless both – as much and more than most – have contributed to the civilization, the faith story and the aesthetic of the Europe we know. I simply say that in my view it behoves all Christian citizens of the EU and their churches, however small, not to walk away from the task of giving that soul to Europe and of keeping the original vision alive. I come back in this context to my earlier elucidation of the value of trace elements – small we may be, but effective we must be. When Anglicans and Old Catholics talk together (as they do) of “Belonging together in Europe”, using the phrase almost as a slogan, they have surely a consequent essential duty to devote their common energies to contributing ideas regarding how Europe might better function in a humane, effective and democratic manner. There is surely something incoherent about dismantling politically and economically something we are striving to build theologically; there has to be a sense that somehow things are all of a piece.

My final specific issue concerns something that does bond Europe effectively together, even if people often seem barely aware of this. This continent and culture is rooted in a common Christian aesthetic, in art, sculpture and music that witness to a shared formative narrative. Testimony to this can be found in every great art gallery of this continent – it remains the case despite today's much greater and indeed very welcome cultural pluralism, it remains foundational even if the churches that spawned it are often rather empty, it remains crucial even if casual visitors to our great galleries often need to consult the guide book in order to comprehend paintings even of the Nativity or the Crucifixion. It is through art that, over the centuries, faith has often spoken to society with the greatest enduring impact and authority. The artistic imagination has so often been the midwife of theological development. Indeed, art is the best way we know to stimulate the human imagination; few of us would call ourselves artists but all are touched by their work. Even if the day comes when no-one hears a sermon, they will still be moved by the strivings of artistic insight to plumb the depths of our being. I often worry, certainly in my own context, that the legacy of Christian art to this generation is much less

significant than that of the past, that we are becoming crassly functional and failing to take the long view, that our successors will find inadequate artistic expression of the faith and strivings of the humanity of the twentyfirst century. I know I speak rather glibly but I do so in order to emphasize that churches, even small churches, which seek to speak authoritatively yet non-coercively to those around them need to recommit themselves to their relationship with the arts. It's a task which should warm the hearts of Anglicans and Old Catholics who share an approach to liturgy which cherishes beauty, which encourages imagination, which relies upon symbol and ritual. Provided, of course, that we do not embrace the apparent instinct of so many of today's timid believers to protect themselves by a kind of sanctuary escapism and what I might even call corrosive churchiness!

In these few thoughts I have tried to identify specific areas where Anglicans and Old Catholics, little flocks in the midst of change, pluralism and turbulence, nevertheless can – for the sake of the Kingdom – continue to make an authoritative yet humble contribution to the world that is already God's, and learn from each other in doing so. And I choose my words carefully, because all disciples and theologians who engage with the needs of the world with a pastoral heart need to remember that the world is itself charged with the grandeur of God, that it is our task to listen to it as much as to address it, that the Holy Spirit already blows powerfully out there in ways we are only beginning to comprehend. By way of amusing example, when the same-sex marriage referendum was passed in Ireland by an overwhelming majority at the weekend of Whitsun, I was interested to hear a non-Christian commentator describing the atmosphere as being like what he termed with utter seriousness *a secular Pentecost*. I was left wondering just where the Spirit was blowing, and what had inspired such remarkable borrowing of both concept and language.

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«As my final word» – as we say in Ireland. When people hear it they know the ordeal is nearly over! When the AOCICC last met in Zurich this past May, I found myself preaching at the Eucharist in the Anglican church in that city. Following good Anglican practice, I devoted myself, at least on that particular occasion, to the Eucharistic lections of the day. They threw up for me a remarkable nugget regarding just how, in a situation like ours, the big world and apparently little churches still do need one another. The church needs to look at the world and discern – sometimes disarmingly – the wind of the Spirit. Yet somehow the world still needs the church – despite its warts and flaws and weaknesses and even at times institutional injustice – to speak to it of the pervading power and value of what I can only call holiness. Andrew N. Wilson in the less faithful stage of his life once said that if the voice of belief is lost in the world, only then will it discover too late the absence and the value of holiness. At any rate, the verse from the lectionary which inspired me in Zurich, and I readily admit I took it at face

value and somewhat out of context, was Jesus Sirach 36,4. Here the sage commentator contemplates with his audience the power of the surrounding nations, amongst whom God can nevertheless mysteriously move, yet he opines

*As they have seen your holiness displayed among us
So let us see your greatness displayed among them*

It is good sometimes to conclude, rather than commence, with a text ... and that verse for me in a remarkable way encapsulates the mutuality of church and world in our present predicament. We need not shelter from the world which witnesses to God's grandeur, but we should unashamedly share with the world the power and the beauty of holiness, the realisation that life is a mystery to be explored with reverence and that to be human is indeed to be endowed with a divine spark ... as so often we return squarely to the Incarnation. Messy and frightful Western society may sometimes be, but I remain optimistic that it acknowledges the authority of even a little authentic holiness when it sees it.¹

Michael Burrows, Kilkenny JRL

Weitere Berichte

Gedenkfeiern anlässlich der 50-Jahr-Feiern der Full Communion mit der Iglesia Filipina Independiente (IFI)

Auf dem Internationalen Altkatholikenkongress in Wien hat die Utrechter Union am 21. September 1965 mit der Iglesia Filipina Independiente (IFI), der Lusitanischen Kirche von Portugal und der Reformierten Episcopalkirche Spaniens die volle Sakraments- und Kirchengemeinschaft beschlossen. Zu Erinnerung daran fand am 12. Juni 2015 in Utrecht ein Symposium unter dem Motto «50 Years of Solidarity as Contribution to the Ecumenical Movement» statt. Für die Utrechter Union sprachen die Theologen Prof. Dr. Peter-Ben Smit (Niederlande) und Prof. Dr. Franz Segbers (Deutschland), für die IFI Obispo Máximo Ephraim S. Fajutagana und der Theologe Edoi Ruazol. Ein Hauptreferat wurde vom ÖRK-Theologen Dr. Martin Robra gehalten. Der Erzbischof von Utrecht, Dr. Joris Vercammen, eröffnete und schloss das Symposium. Segbers stellte die besondere Bedeutung der Beziehung zur IFI heraus, die darin bestehe, den Übergang von einer eurozentrischen altkatholischen Kirche zu einer globalen Katholizität in Zeiten der Globalisierung ekklesiologisch zu begründen. Für den Ökumenischen Rat der Kirchen überbrachte Dr. Martin Robra Grüße. Er betonte, dass die Beziehung zwischen der IFI und der Utrechter Union ein Modell für Beziehungen zwischen Kirchen weltweit sein könne. Kern aller zwischenkirchlichen Beziehungen sei es letztendlich, zusammen den Weg Christi zu gehen, der in gegenseitiger Solidarität und Verantwortung bestehe. Da die beiden Kirchen autonom sind und sich zugleich

frei zu einer von Solidarität geprägten Beziehung entscheiden, die geographische und kulturelle Grenzen überbrückt, bilden sie eine Inspirationsquelle für den ÖRK, der sich auf einer «Pilgerfahrt von Frieden und Gerechtigkeit» befindet. Robra verwies in seinem Beitrag auf das vorbildliche gemeinsame Projekt über «Globalization and Catholicity», das in den Jahren ab 2006 von der Iglesia Filipina Independiente, der Utrechter Union und der Episcopal Church in den USA, mit Beteiligung der Kirche von Schweden als Gast durchgeführt wurde. Die Katholizität der Kirchen nannte Robra einen Schlüssel für eine ekklesiologische Reflexion der Globalisierung: «Unjust worldwide economic structures, disregard for the dignity of human beings and the integrity of creation are all impacting and undermining the lived catholicity of the communion of local churches. Reflections on globalization and catholicity show the intrinsic link between the unity of the church and the unity of humankind.» Der philippinische Theologe und Priester Edoi Ruazol schloss sich den Gedanken Robras an; er unterstrich dabei, dass Kirchen sich bei ihrer Mission gegenseitig unterstützen und sich für mehr Gerechtigkeit in der Welt einsetzen sollten. Eine Kirche, die die Macht von Kapital und einer ungerechten Politik akzeptiert, ist nicht die Kirche Christi. Prof. Smit bot einen knappen historischen Überblick über die Beziehungen der beiden Kirchen.

Vom 1. bis zum 3. Oktober 2015 fand in Manila eine Konferenz unter dem Motto «Ramento-Konferenz über Katholizität und Globalisierung. Gemeinsames Zeugnis über die Mission der Kirchen in Zeiten imperialistischer Globalisierung» statt. Diese Konferenz verband das Jubiläum der fünfzigjährigen Kirchengemeinschaft mit der Erinnerung an die Ermordung von Obispo Maximo Alberto Ramento im Jahre 2006. Eingeladen zur Konferenz waren die Mitgliedskirchen des Ökumenischen Rates der Kirchen auf den Philippinen. Segbers nahm für Erzbischof Joris Vercammen an der Konferenz teil. Er unterstrich in seinem Beitrag, dass die Bedeutung der Kirchengemeinschaft grösser ist als anfangs beabsichtigt war. Lange existierte sie nur auf dem Papier, bis Bischof Tito Pasco auf dem Internationalen Altkatholikenkongress 1986 in Münster die Solidarität der altkatholischen Kirche mit dem Kampf der Filipinos für ihr Recht und ihre Freiheit einforderte. Dies leitete einen Wendepunkt der beiderseitigen Beziehung ein, die in den Folgejahren immer weiter ausgebaut wurde. Segbers überbrachte im Namen von Erzbischof Vercammen eine Botschaft der Internationalen Bischofskonferenz. Darin heisst es: «Sharing the journey together, we hope to be able to give witness of what it means to be catholic churches at the service of righteousness (...). May your time together help you to discover afresh, how the liberating power of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ is always stronger than the powers of injustice, violence and death.» Für den IFI-Theologen Terry Revollido ist «katholisch» nicht nur eine Kirchenbezeichnung. Katholizität habe mit der Globalisierung von Liebe, Gerechtigkeit, Freiheit und Frieden zu tun, während die neoliberale Globalisierung Ungerechtigkeit globalisiere.

In der Nationalkathedrale in Manila fand am 3. Oktober 2015 ein Gedenkgottesdienst zum Jubiläum der Kirchengemeinschaft und zur Erinnerung an den 9. Todestag des Märtyrerbischofs Alberto Ramento statt. Segbers stellte in seiner

Predigt im Gottesdienst eine Verbindung zwischen beiden Ereignissen her: «Die Propheten der armen Kirchen bringen ein lebendiges und prophetisches Evangelium von den Rändern der Erde in die Zentren der Welt. Sie bekehren die Reichen. Sie zeigen, was es heisst, katholisch in Zeiten der Globalisierung von Unrecht, Habgier und Zerstörung von Gottes schöner Schöpfung zu sein. Sie sorgen dafür, dass die Kirchen sich nicht um sich selber drehen (...). Die Feier der 50-jährigen Kirchengemeinschaft ist eine Feier gegenseitiger Bereicherung. Das Evangelium kommt von den armen Kirchen zurück in die reichen Länder. Die Kirchengemeinschaft mit der IFI ist ein Segen und ein Geschenk für die altkatholischen Kirchen. Die IFI fordert uns heraus, als Kirche in Zeiten der Globalisierung katholisch zu sein. Sie ist nicht nur die arme, die empfangende Kirche, die unsere Unterstützung bräuchte. Nein, sie ist eine reiche Kirche – reich an Märtyrern und reich an einer Spiritualität der Gerechtigkeit.»

Franz Segbers, Kelkheim D

Gedenkfeier anlässlich der 50-Jahr-Feier der Full Communion mit der Lusitanischen Kirche und der Spanischen Reformierten Bischöflichen Kirche

Vom 26. bis zum 27. Juni 2015 fand in der Paulskathedrale der *Iglesia Evangélica Apostólica Católica Lusitana en Portugal* in Lissabon ein Symposium anlässlich des 50-jährigen Bestehens der Full Communion zwischen der lusitanischen Kirche und der *Iglesia Española Reformada Episcopal* (IERE) mit den Altkatholischen Kirchen der Utrechter Union statt. Nach der Begrüssung durch Diözesanbischof Dr. Jorge Pina Cabral skizzierte dessen Amtsvorgänger, Bischof em. Fernando da Luz Soares, in der ersten Session die historische Entwicklung, die zur Integration der lusitanischen und der spanischen Kirchen in die Anglikanische Kirchengemeinschaft geführt hatten; in welcher Weise die Gründung der lusitanischen Kirche von der altkatholischen Bewegung beeinflusst wurde, beschrieb António Manuel S. P. Silva (Institut für Anglikanische Theologie, Portugal). In der zweiten Session sprachen die Bischöfe Carlos Lopez Lozano (IERE) über die Bedeutung der Kirchengemeinschaft aus der Sicht der Spanischen Reformierten Bischöflichen Kirche sowie Dr. Joris Vercammen über Geschichte, heutige Situation und missionarische Herausforderungen der Utrechter Union. In der dritten Session stellte Jenny Knudsen, anglikanisches Laienmitglied des Anglican Old Catholic International Coordinating Council (AOCICC), dessen 2011 erschienenes Dokument «Belonging together in Europe» [s. IKZ 102 (2012) 140–158] vor und berichtete über die aktuelle Arbeit dieses Gremiums. Es folgte ein Gespräch am runden Tisch mit den Bischöfen Vercammen, Lozano und Cabral über zukünftige Perspektiven der Zusammenarbeit. Die Feier wurde mit einem Abendgebet nach anglikanischem Ritus begonnen, mit einem Morgenlob nach altkatholischer Tradition fortgesetzt und einer feierlichen, mehrsprachigen Eucharistiefeyer abgeschlossen.
Quelle: Christen heute 59 (August 2015) 3–5

AB

Wahl und Weihe des neuen altkatholischen Bischofs in Österreich

Richtigstellung

In der Mitteilung «Neuer altkatholischer Bischof in Österreich» [IKZ 105 (2015) 332] sind unrichtige Stimmzahlen angegeben. Bei der Wahl während der Ordentlichen Synode in Klagenfurt am 24. Oktober 2015 waren 60 Stimmberechtigte anwesend. In den ersten beiden Wahlgängen entfielen auf Pfr. Mag. Franz Handler 11 bzw. 6, auf Vikar Dr. Albert Haunschmidt 25 bzw. 27 und auf Pfr. Dr. Heinz Lederleitner 24 bzw. 27 Stimmen. Im dritten Wahlgang entfielen auf Vikar Dr. Albert Haunschmidt 29 und auf Pfr. Dr. Lederleitner 31 Stimmen.

Quelle: Protokoll der Synode, S. 6–8, Kanzlei der Kirchenleitung

AB

Konsekration in Wien

Am 13. Februar 2016 fand unter breiter Anteilnahme aus Kirche und Ökumene in der lutherischen Stadtkirche die Konsekration durch den Erzbischof von Utrecht, Dr. Joris Vercammen, als Hauptkonsekrator statt. Mitkonsekratoren waren Bischof em. Dr. John Okoro (Wien), der auch die Predigt hielt, und Dušan Hejbal (Prag). Neben den weiteren anwesenden aktiven und emeritierten alt-katholischen Bischöfen legten auch die beiden Bischöfe der Episkopalkirche der USA, Pierre Wahlon (American Convocation in Europe) und Mike Klusmeyer (West-Virginia, USA), sowie José Jorge de Pina Cabral (Lusitanische Kirche von Portugal) die Hände auf. Der Bischof der Diözese in Europa (Church of England), Dr. Robert Innes, wurde durch Canon Patrich Curran (Wien) vertreten, Metropolit Arsenios der griechisch-orthodoxen Kirche durch Bischofsvikar Erzpr. Ioannis Nikolitsis. Die römisch-katholische Erzdiözese Wien wurde durch Weihbischof Mag. Dr. Franz Scharl vertreten; ausserdem nahm Bischof Dr. Werner Freistetter (Militär-diözese, Mitglied der römisch-katholischen Bischofskonferenz) teil; Weihbischof em. DDr. Helmut Krätzl (Erzdiözese Wien) war als Privatperson anwesend. Als evangelische Vertreter waren anwesend: Bischof Dr. Michael Bünker (Evangelische Kirche A.B. in Österreich), Landessuperintendent Mag. Thomas Hennefeld (Evangelische Kirche H.B. in Österreich) und der Vorsitzende des Ökumenischen Rates der Kirchen in Österreich, Superintendent Lothar Pöll (Evangelisch-methodistische Kirche in Österreich). Ausserdem waren aus der Ökumene auch ein Vertreter bzw. eine Vertreterin der Mennonitischen Freikirche (Pastor Roger Nuffer) und der Heilsarmee in Österreich (Majorin Heidi Opliger) sowie der Österreichischen Buddhistischen Religionsgesellschaft (Generalsekretär Heinz Vettermann) anwesend.

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