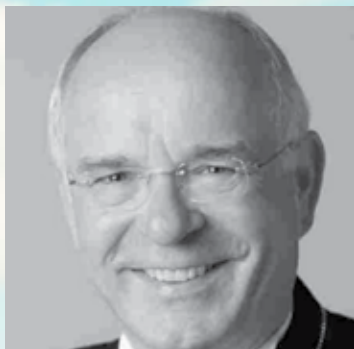


CPCE *focus*

17 (3/2012)



Free for the future!

Just elected: The all new CPCE Council.



Free for the Future - Responsibility for Europe



The Community of Protestant Churches in Europe CPCE has gathered together in Florence on the occasion of its 7th General Assembly, convening just as the process of European integration is experiencing a fundamental crisis, the repercussions of which are quite immense for Europe's citizens, society, democracy and the process of European integration. This situation prompted the General Assembly to issue this address not only to the member churches of the CPCE but to the general public throughout Europe as well.

"Free for the Future" is the motto of the CPCE's General Assembly in Florence. God be-stowed this freedom upon us through Jesus Christ, whose message inspires faith and liberates us all to serve Him dutifully on this Earth. Thus the Protestant churches of Europe committed themselves in the Leuenberg Agreement to serve

justice on Earth and promote peaceful relations amongst individual people and between the nations. "In consequence, they must join with other people in seeking appropriate rational criteria and play their part in applying these criteria." (Leuenberg Agreement: 11).

The current crisis in Europe has brought immediate and existential fear to many of its people. Many Europeans are affected by unemployment, falling income levels, cuts to welfare services, austerity measures that affect the state financing of public services, and growing levels of poverty. One of the most concerning developments must be the extremely high levels of youth unemployment that are emerging in many countries. Deep-seated existential fears and a complete lack of prospects are driving large crowds onto the streets.

The General Assembly of the CPCE is well aware that there are no simple answers to this crisis, that there is no single, noble cure that can simply be conjured up now that the European economy and financial markets are so closely bound up with their global counterparts. The General Assembly also wishes to express its respect towards as well as to assure its intercessions for the political leaders who have been placed under such extreme pressure by this crisis and who carry such enormous responsibility in the way that their actions today will so greatly affect the future.

Within our own countries, but also the world over, a deep chasm is opening up between rich and poor. The victims of this crisis are to be found not only in Europe but scattered right across the globe. Any proposals aimed at salvaging the situation must also be carefully evaluated in terms of their efficacy in assisting those people and societies most deeply affected, their potential effect on the stability of European integration and their contribution towards the promotion of global solidarity.

This profound crisis has multiple causes and diverse ramifications. The following aspects are of particular importance to the General Assembly:

Gathering Courage to Face the Truth

Christian belief derives from the experience that the truth liberates you for the future. It abides by the promise made in the Bible that: “the truth will set you free” (John 8:32). Their faith in this promise leads the member churches of the CPCE to the conviction that the truth about the extent and consequences of the current crisis in Europe is not only something with which the people can actually cope, but that this knowledge can even have a liberating effect. Only if we have the courage to face the truth can we open up new avenues for decisive action and reveal fresh perspectives for the future. On this basis the General Assembly seeks to encourage the leading figures in politics and the economy and indeed

Europe’s citizens as a whole to face what clearly might be very uncomfortable truths.

Courage to face the truth renders us free to challenge any claims asserting that the current political strategy is the only option. Whilst there may well be certain situations in which one particular solution seems quite obvious, nonetheless an ideology that espouses only sole options is the antithesis of one that encourages truth and freedom. It runs the real risk of ruining any chance of future freedom. The admission of one’s own perplexity or uncertainty should not be considered a sign of political weakness, but is instead surely a sign of strength. This is precisely the way in which people’s faith in politics can be reinforced, a faith without which the European project is doomed to failure. This crisis will not be solved overnight. The main objective in facing the continuing crisis must be to generate new scope for creative action aimed at creating a society that can offer a greater degree of justice, solidarity and harmony.

This call for honesty and integrity is simultaneously aimed at the churches themselves, who after all are not perched somewhere on the periphery of society, politics and the economy, but are themselves protagonists in their own right. For this reason the General Assembly encourages its member churches to critically evaluate their own involvement in this crisis. Only then can they speak with any credibility towards others.

Reinforcing Democracy

This crisis is exerting enormous pressure on democracy and democratic procedures for decisive action. The impression has by now arisen that national parliaments or governments are no longer free to make these decisions independently, nor even the European institutions, but that the real power is exerted by the financial markets. People feel increasingly at the mercy of decisions reached by distant forces. This development is due not least to the political decisions of recent years to increasingly liberalise the financial sector and withdraw previous forms of public control.

The General Assembly is convinced that the only way to overcome this crisis in an effective and sustainable manner is via the application of stronger transparent and democratic procedures at all levels of the state throughout Europe. Protestantism considers full participation and active involvement in decision-making processes as the absolute prerequisite for good neighbourly relations and peaceful co-operation within Europe.

Considering the Consequences for Society

Any proposals conceived to date for countering the crisis have failed to sufficiently consider its social consequences or the social hardship caused by the very strategies that have been adopted thus far. The repercussions of concentrating on austerity measures and budgetary discipline, however necessary and desirable the latter might be deemed, have proved quite disastrous in immediate social terms throughout the countries concerned.

The General Assembly welcomes the European Council's decision from June 2012 to invest €120 billion of EU structural funds in a "Compact for Growth and Jobs", but still misses any systematic consideration of the potential social repercussions of any political decisions, as indeed formally demanded in the social clause of the Treaty on European Union itself (article 9 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union).

This imbalance is particularly obvious within the recent formulation of the European economic governance of the EU, which over the last two years has placed overt emphasis on savings and budgetary consolidation way ahead of any consideration of sociopolitical aims. The formal aim of establishing a "highly competitive social market economy" (as declared in the Treaty on European Union, article 3.3) requires corresponding regulatory procedures, however, that address both economic and social concerns to the same degree.

Fair Taxation Policy

Fiscal policy is generally paid too little regard in comparison with austerity measures in consideration of the instruments available for the consolidation of budgets.

The General Assembly reminds all concerned that our societies and states live from the taxes and solidarity of all members, and that all citizens have equal obligations towards the common good. These times of crisis, and particularly such high levels of youth unemployment, clearly highlight yet again the importance of public investment in the general sphere of education, for example.

It is the Christian belief that the strong can and should contribute and bear more than the weak. A higher level of taxation on high income and assets – even just temporarily – or a one-off levy on such would make quite appropriate measures under these current circumstances as a means of distributing the burden of this crisis more fairly. At the same time, effective and serious measures must be undertaken for the detection and combat of tax

evasion and fraud, and the workings of the tax administration authorities need both reinforcing and expanding.

Regulation of the Financial Markets

The financial, economic and national debt crisis has arisen for various different reasons in the individual states throughout Europe, and these aggravating factors must be subject to careful analysis and suitable correction. However, any policy that consistently relies on accruing debts to an extent that will inevitably burden and severely hamper the welfare of future generations is quite unethical. Nonetheless, we must not forget that the current credit crisis ultimately stems from the crisis in the financial markets: the rescuing of stricken banks has, along with various economic stimulus programmes, falling tax revenues and climbing social spending, led to an unprecedented increase in national debt in every single country to have been hit by the crisis. As such, it should go without saying that the future regulation of banks and the financial market should be considered of key importance for the future of not just the European Union but the continent as a whole.

Protestant ethos views freedom and responsibility as intrinsically linked. This fundamental relationship between risk and accountability must therefore be restored in the financial sector as well. In addition, the financial sector and those who have gained from the crisis should be more closely involved in its remedy. It is an absolutely unacceptable ongoing state of affairs that any profits are privatised but losses inevitably passed on to the whole of society!

The financial and banking sectors require continuous monitoring and ethically-minded regulation by efficient and enforceable means. One tangible step in this direction is the financial transaction tax that is envisaged for as many participating states as possible. This could be further improved by means of a European Banking Union that would provide common regulations and a joint supervisory body.

No to Resurgent to Nationalism

The crisis has magnified people's general mistrust towards the European institutions, in many countries blowing fresh wind in the sails of nationalist and populist leanings and political parties. We must be careful to make a clear distinction between a state's absolute right to self-determination and the protection of its genuine national interests and these aggressive forms

of nationalism that incite raw competition and animosity between different nationalities as well as the repression of ethnic minorities. It was precisely as a counterforce to the nationalism that arose in the 19th century, eventually wreaking such devastating havoc during the 20th century, that the process of European integration was conceived. For this reason the Protestant churches – who in part were deeply embroiled themselves in this nationalism – are strongly affiliated with this integration process and offer it their full support. In this context the General Assembly also refers to the CPCE's 2001 report entitled "Church – People – State – Nation".

Rethinking our Economic Model

Alongside these contemporary and immediate considerations, many Christians are pondering the broader possibility that this crisis might actually warrant a reconsideration of the prevailing economic model that defines any increase in prosperity primarily in terms of economic growth and automatically extends the logic of market forces to all fields of life. The General Assembly welcomes any ideas and discussions that suggest different economic approaches and alternative ways of life amongst the churches and their congregations as well as throughout broader society as a whole, such as those identified in the report "Stand Up for Justice" presented here at the General Assembly. This does not represent an outright rejection of the principles of the social market economy, which Protestantism does not view purely as an economic paradigm, but in much broader terms as embodying a whole system of intrinsic values. Rather, it presents the argument for a turn towards greater distributive justice, guaranteeing meaningful and secure employment, providing stable social systems, offering adequate and appropriate public services and, ultimately, establishing sustainable economies that preserve Creation rather than destroy it.

Call for European Solidarity

To date the European Union has made an important contribution towards peace, freedom and prosperity in justice throughout Europe. The CPCE is also committed to these aims itself. It seeks to strengthen the partnerships between churches and their congregations and communities right across Europe, and in so doing strengthen the solidarity that is felt from one end of the continent to the other. Right now church partnerships and ecumenical co-operation are more important than ever as an exemplary form of the way that we can live together in Europe, providing, as they do, a valuable means of

promoting understanding and solidarity in the midst of this crisis. The major challenges now emerging in the 21st century – such as globalisation, climate change, demographic shifts, changes to the world economy, and political transformation in Europe's neighbouring regions – all call for a free and united Europe whose capacity for solidarity does not end at the borders of each individual state, but instead stretches even beyond Europe's own continental frontiers.



**Frei für die Zukunft –
Verantwortung für Europa**

Die 7. Vollversammlung der GEKE in Florenz wendet sich mit einer Stellungnahme zur Lage in Europa an ihre Mitgliedskirchen und an die Öffentlichkeit.

Das Papier erkennt bisherige Bemühungen zur Krisenbewältigung an und hält fest, dass es keinen Königsweg einer Lösung gebe. Entscheidungen müssten sich aber daran messen lassen, wie sie den betroffenen Menschen und Gesellschaften dienen sowie den europäischen Einigungsprozess erhalten.

Die Kirchen der GEKE sind überzeugt, dass nur mit Mut zur Wahrheit über das Ausmaß und die Konsequenzen der gegenwärtigen Krise Handlungsspielräume für die Zukunft gewonnen werden können. Es sei notwendig, aber auch befreiend, sich unbequemen Wahrheiten zu stellen. Eine Ideologie der Alternativlosigkeit sei das Gegenteil von Wahrheit. „Die Wahrheit wird euch frei machen“ zitieren die GEKE-Kirchen das Johannesevangelium.

Eine Konzentration der Krisenbewältigungsstrategien auf Sparprogramme und Haushaltskonsolidierung nehme die sozialen Folgen der Krise nicht ausreichend wahr, kritisiert die Vollversammlung der Gemeinschaft Evangelischer Kirchen in Europa. Sozialpolitische Zielsetzungen blieben bisher weit hinter Einsparungsprogrammen zurück. Auch die Steuerpolitik sei bisher gegenüber Sparmaßnahmen nicht ausreichend berücksichtigt worden. Investitionen der öffentlichen Hand in den Bildungsbereich zur Bekämpfung von allem der Jugendarbeitslosigkeit und eine höhere Besteuerung von hohen Einkommen und Vermögen, auch befristet, erscheinen als sinnvolle Maßnahmen, die Lasten gerechter zu verteilen. Es sei christliche Überzeugung, dass der Stärkere mehr leisten kann als der Schwächere.

Aus dem evangelischen Verständnis von Freiheit und der untrennbar damit verbundenen Verantwortung leiten die GEKE-Kirchen ihre Forderung ab, das Prinzip von Risiko und Haftung auch in der Finanzwirtschaft wiederherzustellen. Sichtbare Schritte in diese Richtung könnten eine Finanztransaktionssteuer und eine europäische Bankenunion sein.

Abgesehen von aktuellen Aufgabenstellungen wirft das Papier auch die Grundsatzfrage nach einem geeigneten Wirtschaftsmodell auf. Die soziale Marktwirtschaft sei nach evangelischem Verständnis nicht nur eine Wirtschafts-, sondern auch eine Werteordnung. Mehr Verteilungsgerechtigkeit, stabile Sozialsysteme und nachhaltiges, die Schöpfung erhaltendes Wirtschaften müßten daher gegenüber Wirtschaftswachstum und Marktlogik ebenfalls berücksichtigt werden.

Die Vollversammlung der Gemeinschaft Evangelischer Kirchen in Europa möchte Partnerschaften von Kirchen quer durch Europa stärken und betont die Notwendigkeit von Solidarität und Zusammenarbeit für das Miteinander in Europa. Die Herausforderungen des 21. Jahrhunderts „verlangen nach einem freien und geeinten Europa, dessen Bereitschaft zur Solidarität nicht an den Grenzen einzelner Staaten endet und über die Grenzen Europas hinausreicht“, so das Europa-Papier der GEKE.



Libres pour l'avenir – Une responsabilité pour l'Europe

L'Assemblée générale de la CEPE, réunie pour sa septième session à Florence, s'adresse à ses Églises membres et à l'opinion publique avec une prise de position sur la situation en Europe.

Ce document reconnaît les efforts qui ont été faits jusqu'à présent en vue de résoudre la crise et constate qu'il n'existe pas de voie royale menant à une solution toute prête. Mais les critères pour les mesures à prendre doivent être leur utilité pour les personnes et les collectivités touchées et leur contribution au maintien du processus d'union européenne.

Les Églises de la CEPE ont la conviction que seul le courage d'affronter la crise actuelle dans toute son étendue et ses conséquences permettra de dégager une liberté de manœuvre pour l'avenir. Affronter des réalités fâcheuses est nécessaire, mais produit aussi un effet libérateur. L'idéologie de la solution unique est le contraire de la vérité. Or « la vérité fera de vous des

hommes libres », rappellent les Églises de la CEPE en citant l'évangile de Jean.

Selon l'Assemblée générale de la CEPE, les stratégies focalisées sur les programmes d'économie et d'assainissement des finances publiques tiennent insuffisamment compte des conséquences sociales de la crise. Jusqu'à présent, les objectifs sociaux ont été nettement relégués derrière les programmes d'économie. Même la politique fiscale a été négligée par rapport aux mesures de restriction budgétaire. Il paraît judicieux, pour une répartition plus équitable des charges, que les pouvoirs publics investissent dans le domaine de la formation afin de lutter contre le chômage des jeunes, et que les hauts revenus et les grosses fortunes soient davantage imposés, ne serait-ce que pour une durée limitée. Le fort, selon la conception chrétienne, peut en effet fournir plus que le faible.

La manière protestante de concevoir la liberté et de ne pas la dissocier de la responsabilité amène les Églises de la CEPE à demander que le principe du risque et de la responsabilité à assumer soit rétabli dans l'économie financière. Un premier pas dans cette voie pourrait être fait par l'introduction d'un impôt sur les transactions financières et la création d'une union bancaire européenne.

Indépendamment des problèmes à résoudre dans l'immédiat, le document soulève aussi la question de l'adéquation de notre système économique. L'économie sociale de marché, selon la conception protestante, n'est pas seulement un mode d'organisation économique, elle est aussi une règle fondée sur des valeurs. L'équité dans la répartition, la stabilité des systèmes sociaux et la pratique d'une économie durable et respectueuse de la Création devraient compter davantage face à la croissance économique et à la logique du marché.

L'Assemblée générale de la CEPE souhaite renforcer les partenariats entre Églises et souligne la nécessité d'une solidarité et d'une collaboration pour la cohésion en Europe. Les défis que lance le XXI^e siècle « exigent une Europe libre et unie dont la disposition à la solidarité ne s'arrête pas aux frontières des États et étend ses effets au-delà de ses propres confins », dit pour conclure le document de la CEPE.

„And he is sent out into the world again“

Sermon for the Induction of the new Council of the Community of European Churches CPCE, 7th General Assembly, by Bishop Prof. Dr. Friedrich Weber, 26 September 2012, Florence.

Text: 1 Kings 19:1-9

(1) Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done, and how he had killed all the prophets with the sword.

(2) Then Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah, saying, „So may the gods do to me, and more also, if I do not make your life like the life of one of them by this time tomorrow.“

(3) Then he was afraid; he got up and fled for his life, and came to Beersheba, which belongs to Judah; he left his servant there.

(4) But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down by a solitary broom tree. He asked that he might die: „It is enough: now, O Lord, take away my life, for I am no better than my ancestors.“

(5) Then he lay down under the broom tree and fell asleep. Suddenly an angel touched him and said to him: „Get up and eat.“

(6) He looked, and there at his head was a cake baked on hot stones, and a jar of water, And he ate and drank, and lay down again.

(7) The angel of the Lord came a second time, touched him, and said: „Get up and eat, otherwise the journey will be too much for you.“

(8) He got up, and ate and drank: then he went in the strength of that food forty days and forty nights to Horeb, the mount of God.

(9) At that place he came to a cave, and spent the night there. Then the word of the Lord came to him saying, „What are you doing here, Elijah?“

Sisters and brothers,

39 years ago the text of the Agreement of Reformation Churches in Europe was finalised at Leuenberg near Basel, from 12-16 March 1973. The church fellowship that was enabled at that time - and has since grown - signified a common understanding of the gospel. The doctrinal condemnations referred to in the confessions no longer reflect the present-day doctrine of the assenting churches, and they now practise pulpit and table fellowship, including the mutual recognition of ordination.

Since my time as a pastor-in-training in a Reformed congregation in the United Church in the Rhineland, I have understood the „unity in reconciled diversity“ gained in Leuenberg as being an expression of a new ecumenical life together of churches stemming from the Reformation; that is not just in keeping with the times but, above all, in keeping with the gospel. It is also a compass for me in my ministry as bishop.

And I confess that I have never been able to understand how Protestant churches could deny each other the Status of ‚church‘ and not let each other share in the special features of their respective confession, and thus denomination. If understood properly, a confession is not a synonym for isolation and distrust of one another. Rather, with its „confession“, the respective church makes clear what it believes.

It is good that this understanding has become widespread precisely within German ecumenism. When talking of „unity in diversity“ we do not gloss over the harm done by church division, but these terms express the fact that we look for what binds us together and find it, again and again. The identity of the respective ‚others‘ deserves the highest respect, indeed, that is what enables discussion and dialogue.

The fundamental confession binding us Christians is: „Jesus Christ is Lord!“ 1 Corinthians 3:11 defines the church: „For no one can lay any foundation other than the one that has been laid: that foundation is Jesus Christ.“ My own confession is founded in God’s confession to me. With my confession I respond to the offer of God’s love. Naturally my confession is always determined by the historical Situation in which it happens. Luther claimed: „Tota nostra operatio confessio est“, i.e. all our actions are confession.

The phrase „Jesus Christ is Lord“ needs to be adapted to the changing times in our lives: the influence of money, violence, war, the relationship between men and women, unjust distribution of the earth’s goods etc. - all this

calls for timely confession. The Statement made by this Assembly on the Situation of Christians in the Middle East is also an expression of this confession, in my view.

However, such a confession can only be credible if we offer it together. This also applies to our fellowship with Catholic brothers and sisters. We are beginning to perceive the points that bind us together more than that which divides us.

Let me mention a few such aspects: baptism, the Bible as a common source of knowledge, faith in the same Spirit of God that accompanies God’s people, the common question about what we can do on earth, the shared image of the people of God as a pilgrim people, our faith in Jesus Christ. That which binds us grows when it becomes more important than that which divides.

Hence I would like to encourage our churches to allow one another to share in the wealth and beauty of each other’s expressions of faith; and, above all, at this point in time, to bear public, resolute witness to our confession of Jesus Christ as Lord.

A lot of things are going well: theological agreement is being turned into practical situations with their liturgical, spiritual, practical and organisational consequences.

But rather frequently the joy in such success is overlaid by experiences that recall the phrase of Elijah: „It is enough: now, O Lord, take away my life, for I am no better than my ancestors.“ (1 Kings 19:4).

Traugott Schall calls this despondency „Elijah fatigue“. It is partly to do with the changed view and reality of the church and congregational life in our society. It is linked to the loss of plausibility of faith and religion that is reflected in the continuing departures from the church. It is connected with disappointment because strong personal and Professional commitment and high expectations are less appreciated in view of what is seen as limited competence and apparently visible failures. This Elijah fatigue is linked to overload and, not least, to the constant question about our own piety, our own spirituality, and the future of our churches. Simply put, how can I find space and time in my daily routine to discover the message of the reconciliation of the world with God and to live from it? How can the Lord Jesus Christ find room in my life and in my church?

Elijah first did the right thing. He went to sleep. By the way, Thomas Aquinas praised sleep as a remedy for melancholy. Sleep, rest, silence cannot do us any harm

either, and when Elijah wakes up, he finds bread and water at his head.

It is as though the angel wants to say: Have a good sleep, first of all. Then eat something! And so he eats and drinks and falls asleep again. A second time he wakes up, and then comes the order: „Get up and eat! Otherwise the journey will be too much for you.“

Angels are necessary. For me they are a symbol that we human beings will not remain alone on earth, on the way through our life and church history. We will be visited and accompanied, supported and sustained, in real life. They help us to adjust to the changing Situation. They preserve us from the temptation to close our eyes to the new things to come. They have a sense of how new things frequently overtax and scare us in our lives. The „fear not“ with which they often begin their message is proof of this sense. Angels are God's messengers. In them, God turns to people; through them God cares for each of us. Do we not experience this still today? Yes, there are angels, many of them in very human form and also here in our midst there are those who have been angels to others. And quite often I have the impression that we in our church fellowship also become angels to each other, nurturing, encouraging and inspiring others with hope in God's name. Bonhoeffer expressed what I mean in his famous poem:

„By gracious powers so wonderfully sheltered, and confidently waiting, come what may.

We know that God is with us night and morning, and never fails to greet us each new day.“

We are wonderfully sheltered by „gracious powers“. In those powers we meet the power of God in the world. Knowing we have shelter in God stops us from being thoughtless or even indifferent to what is happening in our world, in Europe. Terror and hunger, unemployment - all these things raise questions to us about how we can contribute to making the world more humane.

Elijah sets off. Instinctively, unconsciously he is drawn to the place where it all began. To the place where God revealed the divine Self: „I am the Lord your God.“ He took a long time to reach God's and again creeps into a cave. And again he is called: „What are you doing in there, Elijah? You don't want to opt out, do you? Get up!“

We know the end of the story: Elijah meets God, in the still, small voice - the sound of sheer silence. And he is sent out into the world again.

That is also the message of our text. There will always be times in our lives when we are „dead tired“ but also the message will ring out: „Get up. You have a long way to go.“ Don't let your head hang low, or condemn yourself to passivity. Instead: „Get up!“

That is our calling as the Community of Protestant Churches in Europe.

The message is not: „we are surrounded by death in the midst of life“, but „we are surrounded by life in the midst of death“.

Thanks be to God! Amen

Impressum

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Free for the future: the CPCE Council

13 members, 9 countries, 8 newly-elected, 5 re-elected, 4 denominations, 3 presidents, 1 community: we present the Council of the Community of Protestant Churches in Europe.



re-elected

Rev Jan-Gerd Heetderks

1957, Dutch, Reformed, Protestant Church in the Netherlands
Since 2008 Press officer of the Protestant Church in the Netherlands
Languages: Dutch, German, English.

"Für mich ist die GEKE die europäische Begegnungsstätte für evangelische Kirchen. Ich will gerne daran mitarbeiten, dass diese Kirchen sich auf dem Weg zu einem gemeinsamen Zeugnis näher kommen."



newly elected

Rev Kirsten Jørgensen

1960, Danish, Lutheran, Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Denmark
Since 1998 Pastor in the Parish of Kerteminde-Drigstrup, diocese of Fyn
Languages: Danish, German, English

"I am looking forward to working in the CPCE council and find it especially important to reflect upon what it means to be protestant today, coming up to the jubilee in 2017."



re-elected

Rev Cordelia Kopsch

1953, German, United, Evangelical Church in Hesse and Nassau
Since 2005 Vice Church President of the Evangelical Church in Hesse and Nassau
Languages: German, English

"Besonders wichtig in der GEKE ist für mich, dass sie die Gemeinschaft unter den evangelischen Kirchen stärkt und sichtbar macht in Zeugnis und Dienst. Dass sie ihre Stimme(n) hörbar macht und sich auch einsetzt für das gelingende Zusammenleben von Menschen aus unterschiedlichen Ländern und Kulturen."



newly elected

Rev Dr Gottfried Locher, President

1966, Swiss, Reformed, Federation of Swiss Protestant Churches
 Since 2011 President of the Council, Federation of Swiss Protestant Churches
 Languages: German, English, French

„Ökumene hat viele Gesichter. Das Gebot der Stunde lautet: evangelische Einheit. Hier ist Mögliches greifbar. Stärken wir unsere evangelische Kirchengemeinschaft. Einheit in Vielfalt, das ist gelebte, zukunftsfähige Ökumene.“



re-elected

Rev Dr John L. McPake

1961, British, Reformed, Church of Scotland
 Since 1987 Church of Scotland Parish Minister
 Languages: English

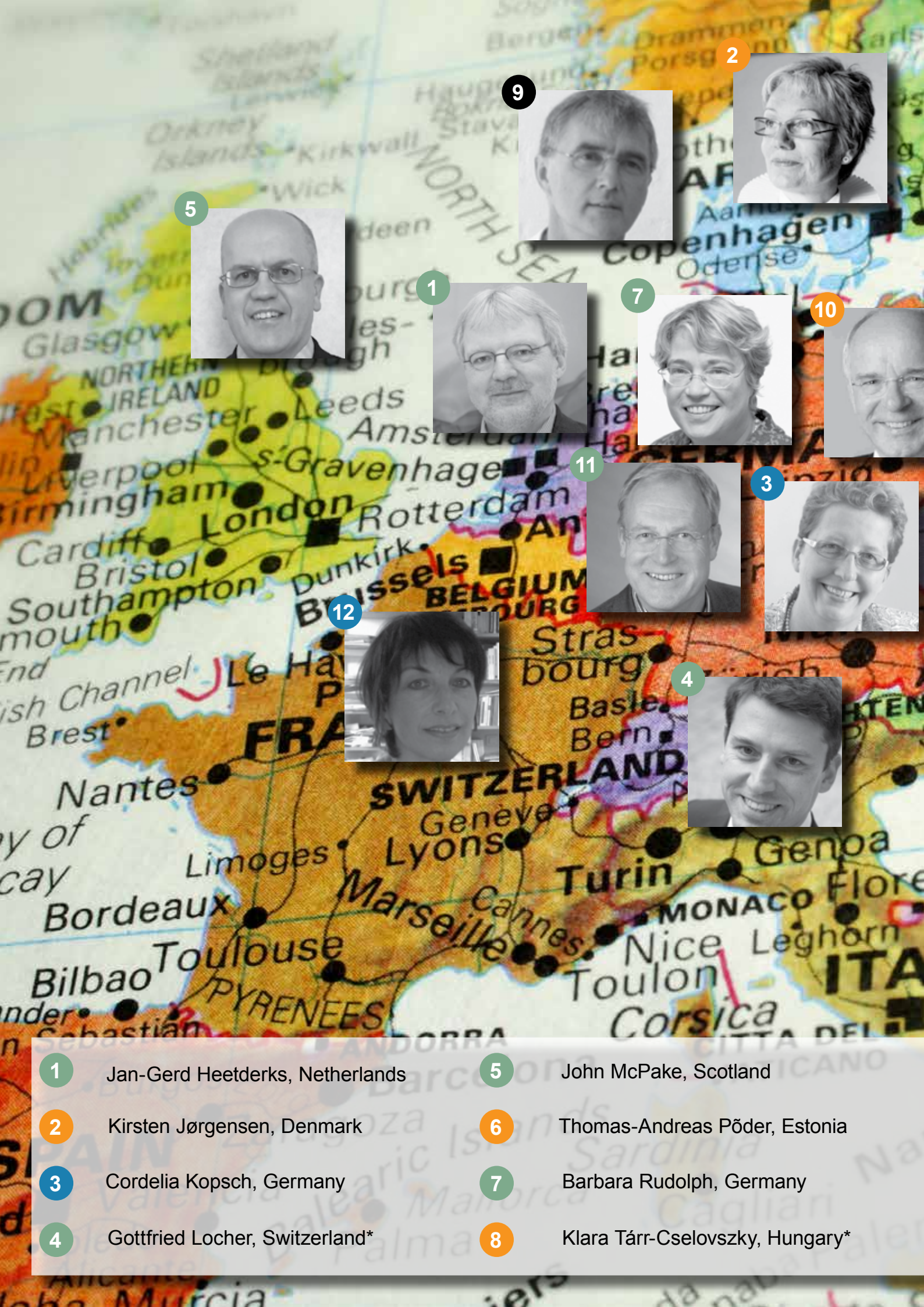


re-elected

Rev Thomas-Andreas Pöder

1976, Estonian, Lutheran, Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church
 Since 2005 Assistant in Systematic Theology, University of Tartu
 Languages: Estonian, German, English

"Besonders wichtig in der GEKE finde ich, dass hier die Kirchen Europas mit einer Konzentration auf das Evangelium im gemeinsamen Gottesdienst, Lernen und Lehren, Zeugnis und Dienst zusammenleben, und die Gemeinsamkeit und Mission aller Kirchen fördern wollen."



- | | | | |
|---|---------------------------------|---|---------------------------------|
| 1 | Jan-Gerd Heetderks, Netherlands | 5 | John McPake, Scotland |
| 2 | Kirsten Jørgensen, Denmark | 6 | Thomas-Andreas Pöder, Estonia |
| 3 | Cordelia Kopsch, Germany | 7 | Barbara Rudolph, Germany |
| 4 | Gottfried Locher, Switzerland* | 8 | Klara Tárr-Cselovszky, Hungary* |



9	Jørgen Thaarup, UMC North Europe	13	Daniel Zikeli, Romania
10	Friedrich Weber, Germany**	*	Member of the Presidium
11	Michael Weinrich, Germany	**	Executive President
12	Esther Wieland-Maret, France	Orange circle	Lutheran
		Blue circle	United
		Black circle	Methodist
		Green circle	Reformed



newly elected

Rev Dr Barbara Rudolph

1958, German, Reformed, Evangelical Reformed Church

Since 2009 Head of the department of Ecumenism, Mission and Global Responsibility

Languages: German, English

"In der reformierten Tradition sind die unterschiedlichen Perspektiven von Ordinierten und Nicht Ordinierten, Frauen und Männern, kleinen und großen Kirchen von großer Bedeutung."



re-elected

Dr Klára Tarr Cselovszky, President

1971, Hungarian, Lutheran, Evangelical-Lutheran Church in Hungary

Since 2007 Head of the Department of Ecumenical and Foreign Affairs of the Evangelical-Lutheran Church in Hungary

Languages: Hungarian, German, English

"Besonders wichtig finde ich in der GEKE die Möglichkeit der Begegnungen und der Diskussion, denn viele Konflikte, Missverständnisse und kulturelle Meinungsverschiedenheiten sind Stereotypen oder mangelnden Kenntnissen zu danken."



newly elected

Rev Dr Jørgen Thaarup

1957, Danish, Methodist, The European Methodist Council

Chairman Executive committee United Methodist Church in Denmark

Languages: Danish, English, Swedish, German

"I see the fellowship of the CPCE as a melting pot of inspiration to empower its member churches to face people in the postmodern Europe with the Christian Gospel. I see the CPCE as a meeting place where Churches can be shaped to enter the process of ongoing reformation for the purpose that people of Europe shall be transformed."



newly elected

Bishop Prof Dr Friedrich Weber, President

1949, German, Lutheran, Evangelical Church in Germany

Since 2002 Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Brunswick

Languages: German, English

"In der GEKE habe ich gelernt, dass der „Zusammenhalt in Unterschieden“ die Vision einer versöhnten Verschiedenheit enthält, die den Kirchen dient und den Staaten Europas helfen kann. Hierfür möchte ich mich gerne einsetzen."

The CPCE Council (continued)



newly elected

Prof Dr Michael Weinrich

1950, German, Reformed, Evangelical Church in Germany
Since 2005 Professor of Theology at the University of Bochum
Languages: German, English

"Der sehr verheißungsvolle Aufbruch der GEKE in den letzten Jahren muss zu mehr Verbindlichkeit und zu einer erkennbaren Gemeinschaft führen. Nur dann führen die durchaus beachtlichen theologischen Anstrengungen der Vergangenheit zu den erwarteten Früchten."



newly elected

Rev Esther Wieland-Maret

1963, French, United Protestant Church in France
Since 2002 Coordinator for Pastoral Further Training
Languages: German, English, French

"Je souhaite être attentive à l'enrichissement mutuel de nos Églises, en étant à l'écoute des réalités des autres Églises membres et en y apportant aussi la voix des Églises du Sud de l'Europe. Je tiens à ce que nous restions toujours attentifs à la prise en compte de l'importance de la variété des langues."



newly elected

Rev Dr Daniel Zikeli

1972, Romanian, Lutheran, Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in Romania
Since 2010 bishop's vicar of the Evangelical Church A.C. in Bucharest
Languages: Romanian, German

"Ich möchte für die GEKE, dass sie sowohl in der kirchlichen wie in der europäischen Öffentlichkeit bewusster wahrgenommen wird. Weiters wünsche ich mir, dass sie gezielter mit einer Stimme spricht, und dass diese protestantische Stimme gehört und ernst genommen wird."

Greifbar frei

Liturgisches Leben der Vollversammlung. Von Adel David.

Kirchengemeinschaft heißt nicht nur diskutieren und gemeinsam vertretbare theologische Meinung zu bilden, sondern auch gemeinsam singen, beten und glauben. So waren Andachten, Friedensgebete und Gottesdienste in Florenz nicht einfach Auflockerung der Sitzungen – wie auch der ehemalige GEKE-Präsident Thomas Wipf betonte –, sondern Ausdruck der Gemeinschaft der GEKE-Kirchen und damit das Herz der Vollversammlung.

Das erste Mal in der Geschichte der GEKE-Vollversammlungen steckte hinter den geistlichen Veranstaltungen ein Konzept. Das Motto der Vollversammlung „Frei für die Zukunft“ hat sich angeboten, über die Dimensionen der christlichen Freiheit im Rahmen der Andachten und Gottesdienste nachzudenken. Wer von Christus befreit wurde, darf mitten in Unsicherheiten fest glauben, darf vergeben und aus Vergebung leben und darf feiern – als wäre alle Arbeit schon getan. Wer von Christus befreit wurde, kann aufbrechen, neue Wege suchen und dabei Entscheidungen treffen, die der Gemeinschaft dienen. Frei sein für die Zukunft ist keine gut klingende, aber leere Parole, sondern ein Geschenk von Gott, das sehr konkrete und greifbare Folgen im Leben der Befreiten hat.

Damit der Leitsatz der Leuenberger Kirchengemeinschaft von der „versöhnten Verschiedenheit“ zum Ausdruck kommt, wurden die Andachten und Gottesdienste von Delegierten aus unterschiedlichen Kontexten gestaltet: aus Nord- und Süd-Europa, von Osten und Westen. Reformierte, lutherische, unierte, waldensische und methodistische Lieder und spirituelle Traditionen wurden hörbar. Dabei dienten zwei Bücher als „geistliche Reiseführer“: das Gesangbuch *Colours of Grace*, das seit seinem Erscheinen 2006 in vielen mehrsprachig arbeitenden Gemeinden und Einrichtungen bekannt ist und oft verwendet wird. Und das Worship book, speziell für die 7. Vollversammlung zusammengestellt. Das dreisprachige Buch ermöglichte, dass die Teilnehmenden auch denjenigen Andachten und Gottesdiensten folgen konnten, die in einer für sie wenig oder gar nicht bekannten Sprache gehalten wurden. Da das Buch eine wertvolle mehrsprachige und ökumenische Sammlung von liturgischen Texten ist, ist es als PDF-Datei auch nach der Vollversammlung auf www.leuenberg.eu zu finden.

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Palpably free – the liturgical life of the General Assembly

Church community doesn't only mean discussing and shaping responsible theological opinion; it is also singing, praying and believing together. So in Florence the meditations, prayers for peace and worship services were not just pauses between the meetings – as past CPCE President Thomas Wipf emphasized – but an expression of the community among the CPCE churches and so of the heart of the General Assembly.

For the first time in the history of CPCE General Assemblies a single concept lay behind the spiritual events. The Assembly's motto, "Free for the Future" suggested reflection in the meditations and services on the dimensions of Christian freedom. Those whom Christ has made free may believe firmly in all uncertainties, may forgive and live from forgiveness and may celebrate – as if all the work had already been done. Those whom Christ has freed can break out, seek new ways and in doing so take decisions that serve the community. Being free for the future is not just a fancy but hollow slogan, but a gift from God with quite real, palpable consequences in the life of the liberated.

In order to express the principle of the Leuenberg Church Fellowship, "reconciled diversity", the meditations and services were led by delegates from different backgrounds: from North and South Europe, from East and West. Reformed, Lutheran, United, Waldensian and Methodist hymns and spiritual traditions were to be heard. Two books served here as "travel guides": the hymnbook *Colours of Grace*, which since its appearance in 2006 has become familiar and frequently used in many multi-lingual congregations; and the Worship Book specially compiled for the 7th General Assembly. This book in three languages made it possible for members also to follow those meditations and services held in a language they knew little or not at all. Since the book is a valuable multi-lingual and ecumenical collection of liturgical texts it can be found as a pdf file even now the Assembly is over under www.leuenberg.eu.



La liberté palpable – la vie liturgique de l'Assemblée générale

La communion ecclésiale ne se limite pas aux discussions cherchant à parvenir à une option théologique commune. Il s'agit aussi de chanter, prier et croire ensemble. Dans ce sens, les moments de prière, les prières de paix et les cultes à Florence n'ont pas été de simples moments de détente lors des réunions mais l'expression de la communion des Églises de la CEPE et ainsi le cœur de l'Assemblée – comme cela a été dit par l'ancien président de la CEPE Thomas Wipf.

Pour la première fois dans l'histoire des Assemblées de la CEPE, il y avait un projet pour les moments spirituels. Le thème de l'Assemblée « Libres pour l'avenir » était tout indiqué pour une réflexion sur les dimensions de la liberté chrétienne dans le cadre des moments de prière et des cultes. Ceux qui ont été libérés par le Christ, peuvent croire au milieu des incertitudes, pardonner et vivre du pardon et célébrer- comme si le travail était déjà accompli. Ceux qui sont libérés par le Christ peuvent se mettre en route, chercher de nouveaux chemins et prendre des décisions qui servent la communion. Etre libres pour l'avenir n'est pas une parole vide qui

sonne bien, mais un don de Dieu avec des conséquences concrètes et palpables dans la vie des libérés.

Soucieux de la « différence réconciliée » qui caractérise la communion ecclésiale de Leuenberg, les prières et les cultes ont été préparés par des délégués issus de contextes variés : de l'Europe du nord et du sud, de l'est et de l'ouest. Des chants réformés, luthériens, unis, vaudois et méthodistes ont donné accès à des traditions spirituelles différentes. Deux livres ont servi de « guides spirituels » : le cantique *Colours of Grace*, connu et utilisé depuis sa parution en 2006 par de nombreuses paroisses et institutions multilingues, et le *Worship book*, élaboré spécialement pour la 7e Assemblée. Ce volume en trois langues a permis aux participants de suivre prières et cultes dans des langues peu ou pas connues par eux. Il constitue une collection multilingue et œcuménique de textes liturgiques et peut être téléchargé après l'Assemblée depuis le site www.leuenberg.eu.

Adel David ist Assistentin für Liturgiefragen in der GEKE-Geschäftsstelle in Wien.



Dialogues bibliques Européennes

Des journées de rencontre et une communion ecclésiale vivante. De Tamara Hahn.

Impressions d'une rencontre



Irina S. de St. Petersburg est à Berlin pour la première fois. Elle est dans la salle de conférence, une tasse de thé à la main,

et observe les autres participants : certains se saluent comme de vieilles connaissances, d'autres essayent de s'y retrouver comme Irina. Un Letton d'un certain âge lui demande en français s'il se trouve au bon endroit. Mais sans attendre sa réponse, il discute déjà en français avec une jeune Polonaise. Irina comprend seulement « beamer » et « internet ». Plus tard, elle entend que la jeune Polonaise parle en anglais avec un Néerlandais.

Lors des présentations, Irina compte 25 participants de 10 pays européens. Certains sont étudiants, d'autres déjà à la retraite, certains sont employés par leurs Églises, mais tous, y compris l'équipe des organisateurs, sont des bénévoles engagés.

Une collaboratrice distribue des casques pour la traduction du premier exposé. Elle explique que l'exposé anglais sera traduit simultanément en allemand. Le Letton se trouve maintenant à côté d'Irina et se demande si son anglais sera suffisant pour comprendre l'exposé au sujet de la Communion d'Églises protestantes en Europe (CEPE) puisqu'il ne maîtrise pas du tout l'allemand. Alors que dans un coin l'interprète traduit l'exposé à voix basse en allemand, Irina chuchote les informations essentielles en russe dans l'oreille de son voisin.

Lors du repas du soir, elle regarde autour d'elle : à chaque table, des hommes et des femmes qui viennent de se rencontrer essaient de se faire comprendre. Ils discutent vivement dans toutes les langues représentées comme s'il n'y avait jamais eu la construction de la tour de Babel. Pour clore la journée, le Notre-Père est récité en dix langues suivi d'un Amen commun.

Trois jours plus tard, lors de la dernière soirée durant laquelle les différents pays se présentent, Irina montre une vidéo YouTube à propos de son Église qui avait

pendant de longues années été transformée en piscine. Deux Hongrois apprennent aux autres participants à danser le Csárdás. On rit beaucoup lors d'une tentative de chanter en tchèque. Des adresses-mail sont échangées, des projets de se retrouver l'année prochaine sont faits.

D'autres impressions sous <http://begegnungstagunge-nbd.blogspot.de>

Les « semaines bibliques de Berlin » organisées par la Evangelische Kirche der Union (EKU – Église protestante de l'Union) ont commencé en 1953 en réaction à la division allemande. Depuis, plus de 40.000 hommes et femmes ont participé à plus de 1.300 rencontres. Depuis 2003, les semaines bibliques font partie des tâches essentielles de l'Union Evangelischer Kirchen de l'EKD (UEK – Union des Églises protestantes de l'EKD) et ont lieu depuis 2007 à la Evangelische Akademie à Berlin

Des membres engagés des paroisses des Églises de la CEPE peuvent y participer.

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<http://www.eaberlin.de/europaeische-bibeldialoge.php>

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European Bible Dialogues.

Conferences for meeting and living church community

Impressions of a day

Irina S. from St Petersburg is in Berlin for the first time. She is standing in the conference room with a cup of tea in her hand and watching the other participants. Some are greeting each other warmly like old friends. Others, like here, are still trying to orient themselves. An elderly Latvian asks her in Russian if he is in the right room, but before she can answer he's already discussing with

a young Polish girl in French. Irina only understands “beamer” and “internet”. Later she hears the Pole talking English with a Dutchman.

In the round of introductions Irina counts 25 participants from 10 European countries. Some are still studying, others are already retired. Some are employed by their churches, but all of them including the team leading the conference are engaged voluntarily.

A staff member offers headphones for the first presentation and explains that the English talk will be simultaneously translated into German. Now the Latvian is sitting beside Irina and worrying whether his English will be adequate for the lecture on the Community of Protestant Churches in Europe (CPCE), for he has no German at all. While the translator quietly translates the lecture into German in a corner, Irina whispers the main information into her neighbour’s ear in Russian.

At dinner she looks around again: at every table people who have just met for the first time are making themselves understood. They are having lively discussions in every available language – as if the Tower of Babel had never happened. At the end of the day the Lord’s Prayer is heard at once in ten languages before all join in the Amen together.

Three days later at the countries evening, the last evening of the conference, Irina shows a YouTube video of her church, which for years had been a swimming pool. Two Hungarians teach the others Csárdás dancing. Lots of laughter at the attempt to sing in Czech. Email addresses are exchanged and plans shaped to meet next year if possible.

Further impressions under <http://begegnungstagungen-ebd.blogspot.de>

Cooperation with the CPCE

Since 1992 a yearly conference meeting has been held in close cooperation with CPCE. In past years it was followed by further international Bible weeks and study days for ministers and theology students. So the originally German-German Bible weeks grew gradually into Europe-wide meetings. Since July 2012 this change in profile is reflected in the new name:

Conference meetings

For a long time now more than a quarter of the members of the Bible dialogues have been coming to Berlin from other European countries. So more and more Bible

dialogues need a further conference language, some are already offered bilingually (German/English). The voluntary leadership teams are also staffed on a European basis; leaders work here from various CPCE churches.

The good understanding and fellowship are not only due, however, to the leaders and translators, but above all to those who come from all over Europe to Berlin to speak with each other about their faith, the Bible and their everyday, to learn from each other and exchange experiences. The European bible dialogues are workshops in faith and thought for the protestant churches of Europe. They transcend cultural, confessional and language boundaries, and just as the consultations and doctrinal conversations of CPCE contribute to the community of the churches, so do these European Bible dialogues to the fellowship between the congregations.



Glaubensbildung

Die Weitergabe des Glaubens im europäischen Protestantismus. Von Hans-Jürgen Luibl und Martin Friedrich.

Glaubensbildung – dieses Wort mag überraschen. In Theologie und Kirche, in Pädagogik oder philosophischen Diskursen ist eher unbekannt. Ein neues Wort also? Eine neue Perspektive? Was erschließt sich in dieser Perspektive?

Der Untertitel gibt die Richtung an: „Die Weitergabe des Glaubens im europäischen Protestantismus“. Darum geht es. Es geht um das, was für den Protestantismus wesentlich ist: den Glauben. Und wie dieser Glaube weitergegeben wird, darin und damit entwickelt sich Profil und Stil der Evangelischen. Und wie dabei Fragen der Zeit aufgenommen und bearbeitet werden, damit gewinnt der Protestantismus Gestalt und Ausstrahlungskraft. Diese Profilierung – gesellschafts offen und zukunfts-fähig – ist im Protestantismus von Anfang an, seit den Tagen der Reformation, die damit ursprüngliche und lang tradierte Impulse aufgenommen hat - mit dem Phänomen der Bildung verbunden. Und mehr noch: motiviert durch den Glauben, verdichtet in der Bildung, hat der Protestantismus damit auch am Verständnis dessen mitgewirkt, das Bildung heißt: die Befähigung des Menschen, das eigene Leben selbst zu verantworten, die Aufgabe der Gesellschaft, lernende Gesellschaft zu sein, allen Freiraum und Partizipation ermöglicht. Bildung wurde europäisch durch Glauben geprägt, nicht als Allheilmittel, sondern als Chance auf ein besseres Leben.

So überrascht es nicht, wenn im Blick auf die Entwicklung des Religiösen in Europa eher vorsichtig festgestellt werden muss, dass Europas religiöse Vitalität eher zurückgeht. Aber dass gerade im Bildungsbereich Religion als positiver Faktor wahrgenommen wird.

Ob es nur um Vermittlung eines Erbes geht oder Vergegenwärtigung des Evangeliums, ob es wirklich die letzte Bastion ist oder eine Perspektive, die Zukunft erschließt: gerade bei der Bildung, dem aktuellen Leitmedium europäischer Gesellschaft, haben Religion und Kirche gesellschaftliche Relevanz. Und umso dringender ist es, dass der Protestantismus seine ganz eigene Art, diese Herausforderungen anzunehmen noch klarer in den Blick nimmt – nicht um sich mit Zeiten eines längst vergangenen Kulturprotestantismus zu beruhigen, sondern aufzubrechen zu einem vom Glauben motivierten

gesellschaftsoffenen Bildungsprotestantismus. Es geht neu das zu denken, was uns mit dem Wort Glaubensbildung zugespielt wird.

Der vorliegende Band gibt Auskunft über den Stand der Glaubensbildung. Dazu gehört unverzichtbar die begriffliche Auseinandersetzung, die Sie in den ersten Artikeln finden. Darin zeigt sich, dass das Stichwort der Glaubensbildung gut an bestehende theologische und pädagogische Diskussionen und entsprechende Bildungs-Prozesse anknüpfen kann. Es zeigt sich aber auch das Innovationspotential, das hier gegeben ist, Glaube neu auf Bildungsprozesse zu beziehen. Glaubensbildung, das verbindet den Protestantismus, eröffnet aber auch die evangelische Freiheit, in unseren Kirchen eigenverantwortet die Glaubensbildung zu gestalten. Ob in Finnland oder in Ungarn, ob bei den Waldensern in Italien oder den Reformierten im Kanton Zürich – die gesellschaftlichen Herausforderungen sind so unterschiedlich wie die theologischen Impulse der eigenen Traditionen. Und doch findet sich eine Verantwortung, den Glauben in theologisch und pädagogisch reflektierte und profilierte Bildungsprozesse münden zu lassen, die allen gemeinsam ist. Gerade von den Unterschieden in diesem gemeinsamen Ansatz aber können wir für die Zukunft noch viel lernen.

Ein dritter großer und spannender Abschnitt im Buch ist überschrieben mit „Konkretionen und Lernorte“. Hier finden Sie Lernorte der Glaubensbildung, die nicht selten übersehen werden – zu Unrecht. Die religiöse Erziehung zu Hause etwa, die gegenüber gesellschaftlicher Erziehung an Bedeutung verloren hat, lässt sich neu entdecken. Auch die ästhetische Bildung darf nicht einfach als ein Zusatz-Thema in der Glaubensbildung verstanden werden, sondern aus evangelischer Sicht als integraler Faktor. Aus der Reihe der Lernorte sei auf Orte besonderer Art verwiesen, die Versöhnungsorte. Es sind zunächst Orte des Schreckens in der europäischen Geschichte, Vernichtungslager, Todesgefängnisse. Dass und wie an diesen Orten Versöhnung wächst, da ist der Glaube im Spiel. Wie dieser Weg von der Vernichtung zur Versöhnung Gestalt gewinnt, das ist eine unverzichtbare Aufgabe der Bildung, die aus Glauben kommt. Grundsätzlich gilt, dass in Zukunft evangelische Kirchen noch größeres Gewicht auf den



Gemeinschaft Evangelischer Kirchen in Europa (GEKE)
Community of Protestant Churches in Europe (CPCE)
Communauté d'Eglises Protestantes en Europe (CEPE)



Martin Friedrich | Hans Jürgen Luibl (Hrsg.)

Glaubensbildung

**Die Weitergabe des Glaubens
im europäischen Protestantismus**

Formation of Faith

Handing down Faith in European Protestantism



non-formale Bereich der Bildung jenseits von Schulen und Hochschulen legen könnten – hier sind sie besonders „stark“ und gerade dieser Bereich ist als Teil des lebensbegleitenden Lernens, des life-long-learning ein Focus europäischer Bildungsprozesse.

Wer sich weiter einführen lassen will in diese Zusammenhänge von Glaube und Bildung, lese den informativen und fast schon programmatischen Einleitungsartikel „Der europäische Protestantismus. Eine Lerngemeinschaft des Glaubens und das Entstehen einer europäischen Bildungsgesellschaft“. Hier trifft es sich hervorragend, dass der Generalsekretär der GEKE ein ausgewiesener Mann der Bildung ist. Vermutlich kein Zufall. Für die GEKE aber ein Glücksfall.

Pfarrer Dr. Hans-Jürgen Luibl ist Leiter der Evangelischen Stadtakademie Erlangen und langjähriger ehrenamtlicher Mitarbeiter bei der GEKE. Prof. Dr. Martin Friedrich ist Studiensekretär der GEKE.



Faith Formation

Faith formation: these words possibly come as a surprise. The expression is more likely not to be used in theology and church, in education or philosophical discourses. So is it a new description? A new perspective? What does this perspective hold?

The sub-title indicates the line of thought: “The Transmission of Faith in European Protestantism”. That is what it is about. It is about what is essential for Protestantism: Faith. The profile and style of Protestants is developed in and through the way in which this faith is transmitted. And the manner in which topical questions are taken up and treated determines how Protestantism achieves its character and power to transmit. This profile – open to society as a whole and looking to the future – has been in Protestantism from the beginning, from the days of the Reformation, which here took up original stimuli which had been handed down over a long period – and is bound up with the phenomenon of formation. Furthermore: Motivated by faith, concentrated in formation, Protestantism has also contributed to how formation is understood: the enabling of a person to take responsibility for his own life, the task of society to be a learning community, makes it possible for all to have freedom and to participate. Formation in Europe became moulded by faith, not as a panacea but as a chance for a better life.

Hence it is not surprising that if we look at the development of what is religious in Europe it must be somewhat

guardedly admitted that religious vitality in Europe is tending to decline. But this is also perceived as a positive factor precisely in the area of religious formation.

Whether it is simply the mediation of an inheritance or a recalling of the gospel, whether it is really the last bulwark or a perspective opening up the future – it is precisely in formation, the current dominating medium of European society, that religion and church are relevant for society. Consequently it is all the more essential that Protestantism in its own unique way should keep these challenges even more vividly in view – not to comfort itself with an age of protestant culture which is long past but to set out towards a Protestantism of formation which is motivated by faith and is open to society. We must think afresh what is passed on to us in the words “faith formation”.

This volume contains information on the state of faith formation. It is indisputable that the conceptual discussion found in the first articles belongs here. Here one can see that the leading theme of “faith formation” fits well with existing theological and educational discussions and corresponding processes of formation. But one can also detect the potential for innovation which is provided here, to relate faith anew to processes of formation. Faith formation unites Protestantism but also opens up the protestant freedom to structure the formation of faith autonomously in our churches. Whether in Finland or Hungary, among the Waldensians in Italy or the Reformed in the canton of Zurich – the challenges in society are as varied as are the theological impulses from our own traditions. Yet there is still a responsibility to allow faith to flow into a process of formation which has been reflected upon and defined theologically and educationally and is still common to all. But it is precisely from the differences in this common starting-point that we can learn a great deal for the future.

A third long and challenging section in the book is entitled “Concretions and Places of Learning”. Here you can find places of learning of faith formation which are frequently overlooked – unjustly so. Religious education at home, for example, which has lost significance compared with education in society, can be rediscovered. Aesthetic formation, too, should not simply be understood as a supplementary theme in faith formation but as an integral factor from a protestant viewpoint. In the series of places of learning we are directed to places of a special kind – places of reconciliation. These are originally places of terror in European history – extermination camps and death camps. There is faith at work in the fact that reconciliation grows and how this comes about in these places. How this way from extermination

to reconciliation takes shape is an indispensable task of the formation which comes from faith. Basically it holds true that in the future Protestants could place still greater emphasis on the non-formal area of formation outwith schools and universities – here they are particularly “strong” and this area in particular is, as part of of life-long learning, a focus of European processes of formation.

Anyone who desires a further introduction to this connection of faith and formation should read the informative and virtually already programmatic introductory article “Der europäische Protestantismus. Eine Lerngemeinschaft des Glaubens und das Entstehen einer europäischen Bildungsgesellschaft”. Here it is splendid that the General Secretary of the CPCE was formerly engaged in the area of education. Presumably a coincidence, but for the CPCE a stroke of luck.



Formation de la foi

Glaubensbildung – ce mot peut surprendre. Il n'est guère utilisé dans la théologie et l'Eglise, dans la pédagogie ou les discours philosophiques. S'agit-il d'un nouveau mot ? d'une nouvelle perspective ? quelles portes ouvre-t-il ?

La manière de transmettre cette foi définit le profil et le style des protestants. Cette tâche inclut l'approche des questions de notre époque, une manière de faire qui donne au protestantisme sa visibilité et son rayonnement. Ce profil - ouvert sur la société et sur l'avenir - a été associé à la formation, dès le début du protestantisme, depuis la Réforme qui, ce faisant, s'était appropriée des impulsions initiales présentes depuis fort longtemps. Plus encore : motivé par la foi, concentré sur l'éducation, le protestantisme a contribué à donner sens à ce qu'on appelle la culture : rendre les hommes et les femmes capables d'être responsables de leur vie ; œuvrer pour une société soucieuse d'apprendre et rendant possible la liberté et la participation. La formation en Europe a été marquée par la foi, non comme un remède universel mais comme une chance pour une vie meilleure.

Le présent volume informe sur la situation de la formation de la foi. L'indispensable clarification terminologique intervient dans les premiers articles. On y découvre que l'expression ‘formation de foi’ permet de renouer avec des discussions théologiques et pédagogiques ainsi que des processus de formation existants. On voit également le potentiel d'innovation pour une nouvelle relation entre foi et processus de formation. La formation de la foi unit le protestantisme, mais ouvre

aussi à la liberté évangélique d'organiser la formation de foi dans nos Églises d'une manière autonome. Que ce soit en Finlande ou en Hongrie, chez les Vaudois en Italie ou les réformés dans le Canton de Zurich – les défis sociétaux sont aussi différents que les impulsions théologiques de chaque tradition. Demeure commune cependant la responsabilité de parvenir à une réflexion théologique et pédagogique à propos de la foi et à des processus de formation appropriés. Ce sont ces différences qui dans leur lien à cette responsabilité commune enrichiront nos connaissances à l'avenir.

Le titre de la troisième grande partie du volume, « Konkretionen und Lernorte » (concrétisations et lieux d'apprentissage), ouvre un chapitre passionnant. On y découvre des lieux d'apprentissage qui sont, à tort, souvent ignorés. Ainsi l'éducation religieuse à la maison, qui a perdu de son influence face à l'éducation par la société, est remise en valeur. La formation esthétique (artistique) ne doit pas être considérée comme étant un thème supplémentaire de la formation de la foi, car d'un point de vue protestant, elle en est une partie intégrante. Parmi des lieux d'apprentissage on sera renvoyé à des lieux spécifiques, les lieux de réconciliation. Il s'agit d'abord de lieux de terreur dans l'histoire de l'Europe, des camps d'extermination, des prisons de la mort. La foi entre en jeu lorsqu'il s'agit de faire croître en ces lieux la réconciliation. L'indispensable tâche de formation – naissant de la foi – est de donner forme à ce chemin qui conduit de la destruction à la réconciliation. Les Églises protestantes devront, à l'avenir, donner davantage d'importance au domaine non formel de la formation par-delà les écoles et les universités. C'est là leur force particulière et ce domaine du life-long-learning, de l'apprentissage tout au long de la vie, est au centre des processus de formation européens.

Ceux qui ont envie de se familiariser avec ces rapports entre foi et formation liront l'introduction intéressante riche en informations et en tant que telle programmatique : « Der europäische Protestantismus. Eine Lerngemeinschaft des Glaubens und das Entstehen einer europäischen Bildungsgesellschaft » (Le protestantisme européen. Une communion d'apprentissage de la foi et la naissance d'une société européenne de formation). Le secrétaire général de la CEPE est un homme qui a fait ses preuves dans le champ de l'éducation. Ce n'est probablement pas un pur hasard – mais un coup de chance pour la CEPE.

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