



Being Protestant in Europe

Taking responsibility – giving hope – being visible

How the Protestant churches can become and remain visible and effective in an extending Europe is the topic of an international conference from 4th till 8th of April 2018 in Wrocław. 17 young theologians from 11 European countries will discuss whether the churches that emerged from the 16th century Reformation throughout Europe are still recognised nowadays and even can be fruitful for society. The participants will also visit Krzyzowa. The former Kreisau was the meeting point of the German resistance group „Kreisau Circle“ from which a group of Hitler assassins emerged.

„The Protestantism has had a strong impact on Europe since the 16th century till modern times,“ says Volkmar Ortmann. The theologian and private lecturer from Giessen supports the conference academically. From his point of view, the Christian imprinting of Europe as well as the Christian ethics have shaped the continent and the self-image of its inhabitants in a way that for most of them it „became second nature, even if they are unaware“ of it. By meeting people from foreign cultures they could rediscover their European identity. At the conference the participants want to figure out what Protestantism can provide for Europe and „whether it can give hope to Europe“.

After countries like Poland or Croatia have become part of the European Union, the amount of Catholics has increased. Half of the European population, in numbers 270 million, are now Catholic. 50 million protestants belong to the round about 100 Protestant, Lutheran or Reformed churches. The Church of England has 26 million christened.

There is no doubt to Ortmann that the protestants - even as a minority - can still make a difference, but „the importance of the churches for the society in general is diminishing“. Even in Germany, the motherland of Reformation, only one third of the population still is

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Protestant. This is what we call secularization. „As protestants we want to take responsibility, give hope and be visible.“ At the conference, the young theologians will describe the situation of the Protestant churches in their country. They are from England, Estonia and France, from Germany, Italy and the Netherlands, from Austria and Poland, from Romania, Switzerland and Hungary. The conference language will be English.

During their stay, the participants will report on the conference in a daily blog on the website www.junge-theologie.de or www.young-theology.eu. The results of the conference will also be documented there. Organisers of the conference are the Protestant League of Hesse (www.eb-hessen.de) and the Community of Protestant Churches in Europe (www.leuenberg.eu).

Pictures:

- Dr. Volkmar Ortman, 2nd chairman of the Protestant League of Hesse (source: private)
- 17 young theologians from 11 European countries meet up in Wroclaw from 4th till 8th of April 2018. (source: Vorwerk / Wikimedia Commons)

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