



The Future of the Church in the Period of ‚Cereal-Religion‘

An Interim Report on the Protestant Forum for Young Theology in Wroclaw

“Which future awaits the churches in the period of ‚Cereal-Religion‘,” asks Giovanni Bernardini. The 26-year-old student of theology from the Waldensian Church thinks that the young generation of Christians tries to “pick elements of religion in accordance with their own spiritual needs.” With questions like these Bernardini came to the Protestant Forum for Young Theology. Since Wednesday, 17 young theologians from all parts of Europe are meeting at the conference in Wroclaw. “Being Protestant in Europe” is the title of the conference, which was organised by the Protestant League of Hesse (www.eb-hessen.de) and the Community of Protestant Churches in Europe (www.leuenberg.eu).

The participants are students of theology as well as research assistants at theological faculties or pastors in their first years of employment. Alex Clare-Young who studies theology in Cambridge is the only participant whose mother tongue is also the conference language. He communicates with participants from Germany, Austria, Estonia, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Hungary and Switzerland. They all get the opportunity to present their church and examine very different problems the European Protestantism has to cope with.

Andrei Pinte and Andreas Hartig, two young pastors from Romanian Transylvania, emphasized the vast number of Romanians who have left Romania in recent years. The therefore necessary transformation process is still noch completed. The Hungarian student Blanka Muza talked about the women’s role in her church. It is only since 1985, that women have the same rights as men in the Reformed Church of Hungary.

Besides the contributions of the students there are several academic impulses. Gabriella Ráscok, the principal assistant of Moral Theology from the Sárospatak Reformed Theological Academy in Debrecen (Hungary), talked about the changes in the religious landscape in Eastern Europe by pointing out the signs of postmodern religiosity and its challenges the churches in Eastern Europe will have to meet. The Polish pastor Marcin Brzóška gave a lecture on the history of the Protestant churches in Poland. He discussed the historical roots of the present situation of ecumenism in the host country of the conference. He also mentioned the wide variety of the visible Catholicism in Poland which contains extremely conservative groups als well as groups with openness to dialogue.

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Press Information
07.04.18



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In the upcoming days, the participants of the conference will deal with the consequences of secularization in Western Europe as well as with the global Christian transformation processes. A highlight will be the trip to Krzyżowa (former Kreisau) where the ‚Kreisau Circle‘ was founded. The group had great impact on the resistance of the church against the Nazi dictatorship.

On the website www.young-theology.eu the young theologians will report on the events and on the findings of the conference. The results of the conference will also be uploaded there by and by.

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