



Swiss Willibrord News

June 2010

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EDITORIAL

Things are developing with the Willibrord Society! Next year, we will be 10 years old: the *Gründungsversammlung* was on 21 February, 2001, see on our website www.willibrord.org under "Willibrord Societies in Europe and America" / "Schweiz/Suisse/Svizzera".

With the support of many of You, we have achieved *something*:

- a solemn celebration of "75 years of the Bonn Agreement" in 2006
- a better knowledge of each other's church on the level of members of clergy and National/Archdeaconry synods
- and we've have made some steps forward to strengthen better connections also on the local level.

For a practical example, read Peter-Ben Smit's article about our plans for the two congregations of Berne ... And here are some dates for your diaries in 2010-2011:

- From 9 to 13 August, the International Old Catholic Congress (IOCC/IAKK) which will take place in Zurich (see <http://www.iakk2010.com/>). The Willibrord Societies of the various countries in Europe will be meeting on Tuesday evening (10 August), 8:00 p.m. in the *Kirchgemeindehaus zur Münz*, Augustinerhof 8, 8001 Zürich.
- This year's *Willibrord-Day* will also be at Zurich. On Saturday 13 November, we will meet at the Grossmünster at 9.15 for a tour and to see the new stained glass windows. After a Eucharist in the Augustinerkirche at 1100, we shall have lunch and be present at St Andrew's Church's Christmas Bazaar.
- Our AGM 2011 will be held on 24 June in Ticino as the board suggests, combining this with our Willibrord Day 2011. The plan is to travel to Lugano from 23-25 June.

Because of this commitment, we should be glad of your support: our subscription remains at Fr30 a year (Fr50 for families, Fr10 for students and those retired or out of work). There is an *Einzahlungsschein* enclosed with this issue.

Readers will also remember Pfr Franz Murbach, a former member of our SSW board, and will be interested in his thoughts on relations between Old Catholics and Anglicans in a very different environment.



Working and praying for the Church in Switzerland and New Zealand

Similarities and differences

Address given by Pfr Franz Murbach at the AGM of the Association of Anglican Women of the Diocese of Nelson

Motueka Saturday 27 March 2010

Three questions and thanks

- Why does a retired Swiss Old Catholic priest speak at an AGM of the AAW of the diocese of Nelson? Firstly because the Old Catholic Churches in Europe have an ecumenical vocation since their constitution in 1872, and then because the Anglican and Old Catholic Churches have been in full communion since 1931 through the Bonn Agreement. This is the first ecumenical agreement in modern Church history. There is full, worldwide reciprocity between both Churches: we accept the orders, the sacraments, the Church structures of each other.
- Having lived in New Zealand for 5½ years I'm wondering if Christians in God's own little country are really interested in what happened and happens churchwise in Europe in general, and more particularly in the small country of banks, watches, chocolate and Roger Federer?
- Anglicans in Europe warned me that the Anglican diocese of Nelson was quite unique in the Anglican Communion. As a matter of fact it is different to the Anglicanism that I knew and have full-heartedly supported since my youth. However, living and worshipping now here, I enjoy the Nelsonian brand of Anglicanism: it is vibrant, the members are dedicated, the approach to young families is great. I observe a great will to obey the Holy Spirit and to spread the Gospel, a great sensitivity for mission and social involvement. Having said that and coming from outside – Bishop Richard knows about my feelings about the name of the renewal campaign – I'm wondering if the Nelson diocese is not already new enough?!

It is exactly for these reasons that I am most thankful to your president Rosemary and to Ivy Price for inviting me to speak to you about "Similarities and Differences in working and praying for the Church in Switzerland and New Zealand". You are offering me the opportunity to take some time in order to look back on my ministry in Switzerland and to realize how I can still be of some use in the Kiwi part of God's vineyard. Thank you all!

A Short Biography

You can hear it: my mother tongue is French, although my parents were Swiss-German.

I was brought up in a traditional Christian family, as an Old Catholic in a reformed environment, Vevey, “Nestlé-city”, on the Lake of Geneva. The Christian-Catholic services took place in the neighbouring Anglican churches.

I bought my first – and not the last – Bible to be able as patrol leader in the boy scouts to lead the Sunday worship. The vocation to the priesthood came in the Easter holidays in 1957 at the end of a beautiful walk in the Jura mountains in an old village church, whose name is meaningful both for Nelson and Richmond: Kirchberg – Church-Hill! Theological studies at our Faculty in the University of Berne, at the same time attending lectures in the Roman Catholic Faculty at Fribourg. Postgraduate studies in a Lutheran Faculty in Germany. Ordained to the priesthood on 9 September 1962.

In July 1961 I met my future wife, Julia, a Kiwi from Dunedin, having her OE (a New Zealand term for Overseas Experience). We were married in my/our first parish, Laufen and have four sons, three in Switzerland and one in London.

The Old Catholic Church and my Ministry in Switzerland

The Old Catholic- or Christian-Catholic – Church was founded in 1872 in opposition to the papal dogmas of 1870. Being small, the Old Catholic movement in Europe was never – unlike the Protestant or the Anglican Church – a danger to the Roman Catholic Church. The Bible read in accordance to the tradition of the undivided Church is our highest authority. We administer seven sacraments. The beginnings were very turbulent and aggressive, more than just battles of words. Today my home Church has over 13,000 members. It is the only official Church which is growing in numbers... With its 30 parishes, am I right to compare it in size with the Nelson diocese, although it covers geographically the whole of Switzerland?

I worshipped and worked in 4 parishes:

- Laufen, a small town near Basel
- Biel, the bilingual center of watchmaking
- then 17 years in Geneva, the city of Calvin, the Red Cross and the World Council of Churches

- finally 14 years in Olten (50 km northwest of Lucerne) the birthday place of the Swiss railway system and of the Christian-Catholic Church.

Beside the usual parish ministry I had several diocesan ministries:

- for nearly 30 years I was president-director of the mission and development aid programmes of our Church, bringing them from the modest yearly mission collection of 5000 dollars to an average yearly turnover of 250,000 dollars. I'm saying that with a certain pride, but mostly with great thankfulness to the Holy Spirit, who motivated parishes and believers. Projects in Africa, Eastern Europe and the Philippines, supporting there the Iglesia Filipina Independiente, the second largest Church in the Philippines, little known, in full communion with the Old Catholics and the Anglicans. In Africa we are working closely with the Anglicans.
- Translator and interpreter for our National Synod with the handicap of not being a professional!
- Media work: broadcasting and television adviser.
- My passion for the unity of the Christian Churches, following the unofficial dogma of the ecumenical world conference of Montreal: Churches and Christians should do everything together, unless the teaching of their denomination would restrict certain points like intercommunion or ordinations. National secretary for the Protestant youth. Member of the Justice and Peace ecumenical commission of the WCC. Unofficial ecumenical officer of my Church to the WCC head office in Geneva. As chairperson of the Geneva Council of Churches I was 1986 the only non-protestant speaker at the 450th Jubilee of the Reformed Churches.
- Since my studies I was dreaming and fighting for the full implication of the Bonn agreement, a marriage which had not been consummated. Just before I retired, our bishop became honorary bishop for the Swiss Anglicans (there are quite a few Anglican parishes on the continent), mutual delegates at Synods and clergy conferences. Michael Wallace, from Dunedin, is assistant priest in Geneva.

PTO in New Zealand

In August 2004 Julia and I retired to this beautiful, friendly country whose pearl is – you can guess in thousands! – Nelson and the Tasman Bay. After 43 years of very active ministry I was longing for a year to decompress, of enjoying the possibility to be a “normal” Christian, worshipping beside my beloved Julia. However friends asked me to take a wedding. So I was called to “legalize” my situation. Bishop

Derek issued me the PTO and offered me one of the best prayer books of the world – I'm not exaggerating – *A New Zealand Prayer Book*. I was proud, and John Kingsbury, our minister in Richmond, was as happy as can be to reckon with another clergyperson in his parish. As you may know, when you apply for a PTO you have to accept the diocesan options and directives. I read them carefully and found that there was not a word about prayer. I made this observation to John who told me: "but Franz, this goes without saying, Nelson is a diocese of prayer!".

My regular involvements are: once a month the Wednesday morning Eucharist following the 1662 liturgy; for 2 terms Bible in school with an interpreter!; a pastoral care group; the odd Sunday service; chaplain of the building team for the new community centre; a member of the fundraising team for the same (Here I recommend warmly the raffle for the beautiful rug Julia has woven); and I realize my passion for ecumenism in the Richmond Bible Society Action Group and hopefully in the Mission to Seamen.

Weak and strong points in my way to serve God

Weaknesses: Impatience, a tendency to simplify issues, hate to compromise in touchy questions, when asked for a service, cannot say NO (out of pride ?)

Strengths: Preaching. Communicating, counselling, motivating, building bridges, teaching, social and economical involvements in society.

Differences between Switzerland and New Zealand

It is dangerous to talk about differences, because the tendency to simplify is great. However some are quite obvious and please – no offence meant to either side!

The Christian faith came quite early to Switzerland – about the beginning of the third century.

It came anonymously - with one exception: the legend of St Mauritius and the Thebean Legion. In Geneva cathedral and in my former parish church archaeologists found Christian sculptures going back to the beginning of the 4th century. A striking illustration of Psalm 42,1 : *Like the deer who longs for the running streams: so do I long for you my God*. The sculptor has put a cross – Christ – in the middle of the source of fresh water! But there are no names for the persons who brought the Gospel to Switzerland.

In New Zealand you can quote the name of every missionary.

In most of the European countries – not so much in the former communist countries of course – faith is a question of family tradition, while here it is the consequence of a conversion. In Switzerland one would ask: to which denomination do you belong? Being Christian- Catholic, I had always to give a long explanation! While here the question is “Have you met Jesus?”.

When you say YOU to God, we would somehow be more likely to say THOU.

In Europe, Christian values are still very present, although only about 5% of the population goes to church. Kings and Queens are anointed. Constitutions start in the Name of God Almighty. Sundays and Church festivals are legally protected. Bells ring. Cathedrals and big churches visually dominate cities and villages. On Sundays churches might be nearly empty, but 70% of the people confess that they pray, and in many countries Bible and religious teaching in schools is still recognized.

The strength of the Christian Tradition is still evident. But roots in the past can also be a hindrance for innovation. It took our Church about 25 years to introduce the ordination of women. The Roman Catholic and the Orthodox Churches are still fiercely opposed to the ordination of women.

This is a very compressed description of the background I come from. What I see and feel in New Zealand, and particularly in this region, will be short, because you know it much better.

The Churches are full of dedicated believers. The Sunday worship attendance is good. People hop easily from one denomination to the other, because the historic and liturgical differences are seldom outlined. The so-called contemporary service is basically the same everywhere.

Cut off from a century-long tradition and habits you enjoy a big freedom to be the Body of Christ, but in some matters Kiwis are just reinventing the wheel. Architecturally you could have taken over the model of the Maori meeting house, while the Anglicans imported the standard gothic wooden structure, which is spread in 1000 units everywhere on the planet. Do I see here a connection with the stranded Robinson Crusoe on his island trying to cope as well as he could with the bits and pieces he had, a certain do-it-yourself mentality, a heritage from the 1850s' pioneers?

You have a Church made in New Zealand. We in Europe understand it more as a godly gift and responsibility.

Excuse me if these remarks sound a bit like a caricature, but there are features which you cannot help observing when you hear the sharp critics about the western Churches and are yourself moving backwards and

forward between two homelands and cultures you cherish and two Church families you love and pray for. And this brings me to the

Similarities and Parallels

which are much more important than the differences.

- Serving Jesus-Christ, spreading the life-bringing Gospel and believing in the reality of God's Kingdom
- Being together dedicated to the three main missions of the Church: worship, witness, service and finding new ways to carry them out relevantly
- The deep feeling for the necessity of the renewal of the Church, *ecclesia semper reformanda*. Both my bishops, Harald in Switzerland and Richard in New Zealand are unanimous

In this field: something dramatic has to happen: Bishop Richard said it in his charge at the Greymouth General Synod and Bishop Harald is dedicating his first pastoral letter to it. However let me give you a sobering example how difficult it is to change people. In Switzerland I published with the help of many gifted collaborators a manual for the renewal of our Church for its Centennial in order to free it from its anti-Roman syndrome. The majority ignored it and some colleagues remarked "something more to put in the drawer".

- We have to find a new language to communicate the Gospel, we have to ask the right questions because our society in the industrialized countries has become so superficial. See how fragile the economic system is and how short-sighted the reactions can be.
- The religious hunger of the people has to be channelled and encountered – as Bishop Harald puts it: by personal initiatives and relationships we have to bring the questioning people HOME, to God and the Christian community.

The last and by far not the least parallel I kept for the end, not as a compliment to my friendly hosts of today, but as a catholic, worldwide reality in the Church. It is the dedicated ministry of the women in every parish. Their trust in God, their untiring, imaginative work is a vibrant, holy model how to work and pray for the Church, full of hope for its future. Thank you for your listening. But most of all: thank you for all you do.

Franz Murbach

Fleisch am Knochen

Die Willibrord-Gesellschaft macht ein anglikanisch-christkatholisches Sommerpraktikum möglich

„Was der Bauer nicht kennt, isst er nicht“ ist – auf alle Fälle auf Niederländisch – ein Sprichwort. Dies gilt sowohl für das Essen von Bauern (und anderen), wie auch für zwischenkirchliche Beziehungen. Wer eine andere Kirche nicht kennt, wird auch wenig Grund haben, sich mit ihr auseinanderzusetzen. Weitaus die intensivste Art und Weise, eine andere Kirche kennen zu lernen, ist, ihr Leben eine Weile lang zu teilen. Wer so etwas tut, funktioniert zudem zugleich als Botschafter der eigenen Kirche. Eine Beziehung zwischen zwei Kirchen kriegt so buchstäblich „Fleisch an die Knochen.“ Dieses Ziel der zwischenkirchlichen Vernetzung auf der Ebene persönlicher Beziehungen verfolgt das anglikanisch-christkatholische Sommerpraktikum, welches in den anglikanischen und christkatholischen Gemeinden in Bern angeboten wird. Die Willibrord-Gesellschaft macht dieses Praktikum ideell und finanziell möglich und verfolgt damit auf praktische Art ihre Zielsetzung.

Das Praktikum wurde breit ausgeschrieben, und ein geeigneter Kandidat liess sich finden. Der erste Praktikant, der dieses 6-wöchige Praktikum machen wird, ist Jadon Hartsuff (32) aus den USA. Er studiert als Priesteramtskandidat für die Diözese Los Angeles am ältesten Seminar der Episkopalkirche, General Theological Seminary/New York. Mit diesem Seminar ist die Christkatholische Kirche besonders verbunden, erhielt doch in 2008 Prof. Urs von Arx einen Ehrendoktor dieses Seminars als Anerkennung für sein ökumenisches Engagement. Jadon wird in den Kirchgemeinden St. Ursula's und St. Peter und Paul am Gemeindeleben teilnehmen, sich in Gottesdiensten engagieren, nach Möglichkeit in der Seelsorge mitwirken – und sich in St. Peter und Paul auch um die Betreuung von Besucherinnen und Besuchern kümmern, die die Kirche tagsüber besuchen. Dabei werden ihm seine Fähigkeiten aus seinem ehemaligen Beruf, *management consultant* im Bereich „interior design“, sicher helfen. Das Praktikum fängt Mitte Juni an und dauert bis Anfang August.

Für die Unterkunft des Praktikanten wird noch eine Gastfamilie gesucht, die Jadon für die Dauer des ganzen Praktikums oder auch für einige Wochen unterbringen möchte. Eine solche Gastfreundschaft ist bereichernd für beide Seiten.

Peter-Ben Smit

Porvoo

Am Willibrord-Tag in Sommer 2011 hoffen wir ein Referat über das Porvoo-Abkommen zu hören. Dieses Modell für kirchliche Zusammenarbeit ist komplexer als das Bonner Abkommen, und bietet einige zusätzliche Ideen an, die für uns vielleicht wertvoll sind. Für die, die das Abkommen nicht kennen, ist hier eine Zusammenfassung aus Wikipedia:

Porvoo-Gemeinschaft ist ein uninstitutioneller Zusammenschluss zwölf europäischer Kirchen anglikanischer und lutherischer Konfession. Er entstand durch das Porvoo Common Statement, eine Vereinbarung, die 1992 in der Stadt Porvoo (Borgå) in Finnland verabschiedet wurde und die volle Kirchengemeinschaft zwischen den beteiligten Kirchen feststellt.

Die Kirchen der Porvoo-Gemeinschaft verstehen sich als Teil der katholischen und apostolischen Kirche, auch wenn die protestantische Reformation ein Teil ihrer Kirchengeschichte ist. Sie sehen sich verbunden im einen Glauben der Alten Kirche, in der schrift- und traditionsgemäßen Feier der Sakramente und im historischen Bischofsamt, das in ihren Ländern zwar stets erhalten, wenn auch nicht in allen Mitgliedskirchen ununterbrochen weitergegeben wurde (Apostolische Sukzession).

Die beteiligten Kirchen sind die anglikanischen Kirchen der britischen Inseln, die lutherischen Kirchen der nordischen Länder und die lutherischen Kirchen des Baltikums. Durch spätere Verhandlungen traten auch die episkopalen (anglikanischen) Kirchen der iberischen Halbinsel der Vereinbarung bei.

Unterzeichnerinnen der Vereinbarung von Porvoo:

- Die Church of England
- Die Church of Ireland
- Die Scottish Episcopal Church
- Die Church in Wales
- Die Isländische Staatskirche
- Die Norwegische Kirche
- Die Schwedische Kirche (ehemals Staatskirche)
- Die Evangelisch-Lutherische Kirche Finnlands
- Die Estnische Evangelisch-Lutherische Kirche
- Die Evangelisch-Lutherische Kirche in Litauen
- Die Lusitanische Kirche von Portugal
- Die Reformierte Episkopalkirche Spaniens

Weitere Kirchen mit Beobachter-Status:

- Die Dänische Volkskirche
- Die Evangelisch-Lutherische Kirche Lettlands

The 9th Annual General Meeting of the Swiss Willibrord Society was held at Beinwil Ecumenical Monastery, SO, on Saturday 23 January 2010

The minutes are below.

Present: *Robert Amstutz, Hector Davie, Elisabeth Felchlin, Ernst Felchlin, Adèle Kelham, Andrew Ling, Klaus Heinrich Neuhoff*

1. WELCOME

The Chairman welcomed members present, and apologized for the delay which some members had experienced in receiving notice of the meeting.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Angela Berlies, Marlies Dellagiacoma, Peter Hagmann, Dirk Jüttner, Daniel Konrad, Wolfgang Kunicki, John Newsome, Christoph Schuler, Lars Simpson, Peter-Ben Smit and Urs von Arx.

3. PREVIOUS MINUTES

The minutes of the 8th Annual General Meeting, held on 24 January 2009 in Berne, were approved.

4. MATTERS ARISING

- No letter had yet been sent to Bishop Harald Rein to invite him to become honorary president of the society. Klaus Heinrich Neuhoff undertook to do this.
- Hector Davie and Adèle Kelham would check with the Archdeacon whether Bishop Geoffrey was appointing Bishop Harald an Assistant Bishop in the Anglican Diocese in Europe.
- It was noted that the planned visit to Olsberg and Rheinhausen had taken place.
- Adèle Kelham had circulated clergy with details of the Anglican Choir Festival in Lausanne on 1 and 2 May 2010. It was agreed to publicize this further in the *Kirchenblatt* and in *Présence*. The copy date for the former was 9 April.
- No permanent successor had been found for Max Gürtler as auditor. Bruno Worni, from Berne, had acted as Old Catholic auditor ad interim. It was suggested that Pfr Christoph Schuler be asked if the parish in Berne could provide an auditor on a regular basis.

5. ANNUAL REPORT

The Chairman delivered the Annual Report of the Society's activities in 2009.

He noted the co-operation was continuing at Chapter/Pastoralkonferenz level. A current issue was that of Child Protection, where the Anglican church had built up a useful set of guidelines and recommended practices. These needed to be adapted in the light of differences between English and Swiss law.

The question of overlapping jurisdictions also needed further discussion. It was noted that the Bonn Agreement was less detailed than the Porvoo Agreement, and that there was a need for clarification of what ministries clergy might undertake in a sister church without being formally licensed. Adèle Kelham shared her experiences of the Conference of European Churches, and it was felt that contacts involved in

the field of ecumenism (e.g. Colin Williams, Angela Berlis) should be canvassed for their thoughts.

In subsequent discussion, Adèle Kelham reported that the Society would be presenting the latest French text of the Old Catholic liturgy to the Archdeacon at the Anglican Synod on 30 January.

A card had been designed for use on such occasions, and to publicize the Society. It bore a depiction of St Willibrord, flanked by two deacons, on the front, and on the back, a brief description of the Society's aims ("Strengthening fellowship and cooperation between Anglicans and Old Catholics in Switzerland"). There was discussion of the most accurate translation of this into German, French and Italian, and a set of wordings was agreed.

The meeting broke for the midday Office, lunch with the Community, and a meditative tour of the monastery, guided by Brother Christoph Wilden.

6. 2009 ACCOUNTS

Hector Davie presented the accounts for 2009, which showed a small surplus, and read out the auditors' report. The accounts were approved.

7. ELECTIONS

The Executive Committee were re-elected *in globo*: Klaus Heinrich Neuhoff (President), Hector Davie (Treasurer), Sarah Aebersold, Adèle Kelham, Lars Simpson.

8. OBJECTS

It was agreed that the principles of the Society's activities remained unchanged.

9. ACTIVITIES IN 2010

The Society would be playing a rôle at the International Old Catholic Congress from 9-13 August in Zurich. It was anticipated that there would be a joint meeting for national Willibrord societies to meet socially, and to discuss common issues and possibilities for contact and cooperation.

The Willibrord Day events were planned for 13 November in Zurich. There would be an opportunity for members to experience the St Andrew's Church bazaar, but little chance of a specific joint activity. It was suggested that flyers could be distributed. An afternoon programme would be arranged, concentrating on ecumenical issues: the Porvoo agreement was proposed, or current dialogue with the Roman Catholic church. Colin Williams or Urs von Arx were mentioned as possible speakers.

It was suggested that a visit to Utrecht might be planned for 2011.

10. BUDGET

The proposed budget was approved. It was agreed that extra sums could be spent if the need arose, and specifically, that an amount of up to Fr500 might be made available to support the placement of a theological student to St Peter and St Paul's, Berne, who would also liaise with the Anglican chaplaincy of St Ursula's.

11. DATE OF 2011 AGM

It was recommended that the 2011 AGM be held on Saturday 22 January 2011, possibly including an overnight stay from the Friday. (**Note:** The Standing Committee has now agreed to hold this in Ticino on **24 June 2011.**)

Images of Beinwil



The Guided Tour



Around Beinwil



Music and Worship