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Straighten the Future — The Visionary Bishop Ting 直面未来——有远象的丁光训主教

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直面未来

——有远象的丁光训主教

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2005年4月,瑞士新教联合代表团访问中国期间,丁主教在他家会见我们,他仔细地倾听,默默地思考,准确地应答。相似的情形也发生在二十年以前,1985年世界基督教会联合会在日内瓦召开会议之后,在瑞士苏黎世,我第一次遇见丁主教,他告诉我们在中国的新发展中“每天有一个新的教会在开放”。

丁主教是一位杰出的教会领袖,为什么这样说?因为他始终走在他所处的时代前列。在中国非常困难的历史时期,他领导中国教会,用他心中的梦想加深基督教信仰。丁主教意识到教会现在和将来面临的挑战,为分析和解决挑战他提出方法,从而指出教会未来的道路。

他是一个值得信赖的充满远象的领袖,为什么这样说?因为他信仰的基点深深地扎根于耶稣基督,深深地扎根于丰富的中国文化土壤中,同时深深地扎根于全世界是所有基督徒和人类的家这一信念中。

在上述基础上丁主教指出中国基督徒面临的三个主要挑战:信仰,教会和伦理。

第一个挑战是信仰。丁主教提出要进行“神学思想建设”,这具有十

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分重要的意义。神学上的挑战对中国教会来说是最严峻的挑战,对欧洲教会来说也是如此。在我们的时代,用一种值得信赖、可以理解的和符合伦理原则的方式来阐明基督教信仰,对中国教会来说是基本的要素,就像水之于树一样重要。基督徒的合一必须建立在清晰的神学思考和神学论述的基础上,建立在祈求上帝的灵引导的基础上。这个挑战将协调不同的神学观点,避免源于不同神学传统的新的宗派主义。在欧洲我们面对的一个主要神学挑战,是要克服基督教文盲主义,因为许多人不再了解《圣经》的基本历史。这个挑战必须给后基督教的欧洲人(post Christian Europeans),带来简明但不是过于简单化的答案,带来根深蒂固于《圣经》中的答案。我们瑞士新教联合代表团在今年4月访问中国期间,因为看到《圣经》在中国教会起着那样重要的作用,而深受感动和鼓舞。

第二个挑战是教会。丁主教对进一步发展教会组织和发展作为教会教义的教会学给予了重要的指导,教会是基督在现世的身体。如何用这样一种方式组织教会,既允许基督徒的自由,又保证为了成为联合的基督身体而使基督徒合一?如何找到一种源于中国文化(在我的处境中是源于欧洲文化)的教会制度,即一种被处境化的教会制度呢?同时,又如何发展一种教会制度,使之成为全世界基督身体(指教会,译者)的一部分,而且这个教会制度在社会上是基督可以信任的工具,从而能够既巩固信仰又增强人类尊严和社会公义。

第三个挑战是伦理。许多年前,丁主教就强调,基督教伦理在中国对信仰、教会和社会的重要性。十五年前,他说:“要在教会工作上注重服务,那么我们的神学思想应当高举伦理和高举道德,……神学处境化的起步点是恢复基督教的伦理道德内容。基督教是一个讲究伦理道德的宗教。”^①我们不能依靠道德行为来拯救自己的灵魂。上帝爱我们,

^① K.H. Ting: *Love Never Ends*, Yilin Press, Nanjing, 2000, p.334.

上帝赦免我们,惟独靠着恩典。而道德行为是我们为感谢上帝恩典所作的回应,是我们爱邻舍,爱所有的人类存在,及爱除人以外的受造物的体现。^②是我们爱所有的人类,爱非人类的创造物的体现。

在我多次访问中国期间,这些挑战通过中国人告诉我们,因此我认识到在中国有四个主要的伦理挑战,这些同样是我们欧洲面临的挑战!因此,为了在中国和在欧洲建立发展和谐社会,我们能够互相学到更多东西。四种伦理挑战是:

家庭伦理:与欧洲社会一样,中国飞速的变化和快速的经济导致家庭关系的不稳定。在中国,尽管离婚率比欧洲低很多,但是破裂家庭的绝对数字正在增长,照料家庭成员的需要,比如流动人口或者农村的老年人,这些问题变得越来越紧迫。不同宗教信仰和无宗教信仰传统之间,关于家庭伦理道德的对话是迫切需要的。

经济伦理:世界市场开放,财富快速增长,但是贫困的人数也在增加,这是一个巨大挑战,特别是商业伦理方面的挑战。为了在全球化市场支持基本价值,全球伦理的商业标准是引人注目和大有益处的。

环境伦理:对于一个尊重人类需要,同时寻求这些需要与环境保护之间的平衡,并能够维持这些地球而言,有限的自然资源,空气和水源的污染,气候的转变和节约能源是伦理方面的挑战。

社会伦理:中国与欧洲一样,贫穷与富裕之间的差距不断加大,为了维护社会和平与稳定,必须缩小贫富之间的差距。欧洲的社会保障体系在极大的强制制度之下,筹措财政资金非常困难,所以必须重新组织和建立社会保障体系,中国也是如此。

^② see more about it: Christoph Stückelberger: China: "Ethical Challenges for Church and Society in a Globalised World", Nanjing Theological Review, No. 4/2004, pp.4-17/18-34).

在所有这四个领域,基督教伦理能够并且必须做出贡献,在教会和社会为人类行为找到一种道德基础,也为个体找到共同的伦理价值。

丁主教是一位卓越的灵性、伦理、政治方面的领袖,首先是一位教会领袖。他的教训、传讲、领导和生活,不仅对基督徒、教会及对中国社会是一个希望的标志,对欧洲及全世界也是一个希望的标志!他的生命就是不可抗拒的上帝恩典的一个标志。

(潘海洁译 莫如喜校)

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Straight to the future The Visionary Bishop K.H.Ting

by Prof. Dr. Christoph Stückelberger
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He listens carefully. He reflects silently. He answers precisely. This is how I met Bishop K. H. Ting in April 2005 during a visit of the delegation of the Federation of Swiss Protestant Churches in Bishop Ting's house. In a similar way I met him for the first time twenty years ago, 1985 in Zurich/Switzerland coming from the World Council of Churches in Geneva, when he told us about the new developments in China "where every day a new church is opened".

Why is Bishop Ting an outstanding Church leader? Because he was always and still is ahead of his time. He leads the Church in China in very difficult periods of history; he deepens Christian faith with his visionary mind; He identifies the present and the future challenges; he offers instruments for analysis and solutions and he therefore shows ways to the future.

Why is he such a credible and visionary leader? Because he's deeply rooted in Jesus Christ as his benchmark, deeply rooted in the Chinese culture as his fertile soil and at the same time deeply rooted in the ecumenical world as the home for all Christians and for humanity.

On this foundation he identified three main challenges for Christians in China: *Faith, Church and Ethics*.

The first challenge is *Faith*. Bishop Ting's call for the "Reconstruction of the theological thinking" is very fundamental. The theological challenge is the most serious for the Churches in China as well as it is in Europe. To

formulate the Christian faith in our time in a credible, understandable and ethical way is basic for the Church, like the water for a tree. Christian unity must be based on clear theological reflection and discussion, based on prayer for God's guiding spirit. The challenge is to reconcile the different theological tendencies and to avoid new denominationalism rooted in different theological traditions. In Europe we face as a main theological challenge to overcome Christian alphabetism because too many people no longer know the basic stories of the Bible. The challenge is to give simple but not simplistic answers and to give biblically well rooted answers to post-Christian Europeans. Our delegation of the Federation of Swiss Protestant Churches during the visit in China last April was very much impressed and encouraged by the fact that the Bible plays such a central role in the Churches in China.

The second challenge is the *Church*. Bishop Ting gave the important guidance to further develop the church structure and the ecclesiology as the doctrine of the church which is the living body of Christ. How to organise the church in a way that allows Christian freedom of the believers and at the same time guarantees Christian unity in order to be the united body of Christ? How to find a Church order which is rooted in the Chinese (and in my case in the European) culture, that means which is contextualised? And how—at the same time—develop a church order which is part of the global body of Christ and a credible instrument of Christ in society in order to strengthen faith as well as human dignity and justice in society.

The third challenge is *Ethics*. Bishop Ting's emphasized for many years the importance of Christian ethics for faith, church and society in China. Fifteen years ago he said: "For the church to emphasize service in her works, our theology ought to hold high ethics and morals. ... The starting point for a contextualisation seems to be the restauration of the ethical and moral content of Christianity. Christianity is a religion that emphasizes ethics and morals." (K.H. Ting: *Love Never Ends*, Yilin Press, Nanjing, 2000, p.334). We cannot save our souls with ethical behaviour. God loves us and forgives us only by grace. But ethical behaviour is our thankful response to his grace

and an expression of our love to our neighbours, to all human beings and to the non-human creation (see more about it: Christoph Stückelberger: *China: Ethical challenges for Church and Society in a Globalized World*, Nanjing Theological Review 61, No 4/2004, p.4-17/18-34).

During my various visits to China I identified four main ethical challenges in China as they were told us by Chinese people. These are the same challenges as we have in Europe! We can therefore learn much from each other in order to develop a harmonious society in China and in Europe. The four ethical challenges are:

- *Family ethics*: the fast transition and the fast economic development in the Chinese as well as in the European society lead to instability in family relations. The divorce rate in China is still much, much lower than in Europe. Nevertheless, the number of broken families is growing, and the need to care for family members, for example of migrant workers or old people in the villages, becomes more and more urgent. The dialogue on family ethics between the different religious and non-religious traditions is necessary.

- *Economic ethics*: the open world market, the fast growth of wealth but also the growing number of people in need is a great challenge especially in business ethics. Global business ethical standards are attractive and helpful in order to support basic values in a globalised market.

- *Environmental ethics*: the limits of natural resources, the pollution of air and water, climate change and energy efficiency are ethical challenges for a sustainable world which respects human needs and looks at the same time for a balance between these human needs and environmental protection.

- *Social ethics*: the growing gap between poor and rich in China as well as in Europe must be reduced in order to maintain social peace and stability. The social security system in Europe is under huge pressure and in big difficulties to be financed. It has to be reorganised and rebuilt—in Europe and in China as well.

In all these four areas, Christian ethics can and has to contribute in order

to find a moral basis for behaviour and to find common ethical values for individuals, in Church and in society.

Bishop Ting is an outstanding spiritual, ethical, political and first of all Church leader. His teaching, preaching, guidance and life is a sign of hope, not only for Christians and Church and society in China but also in Europe and the whole world! His life is a sign of God's overwhelming grace.