

Grußwort

Von Prof. W. H. C. FREND, Präsident der C.I.H.E.C.

First, I would like to associate myself with the good wishes which my friend, Konrad Reppen, has sent to His Holiness, Pope John Paul, I would like to add, how, we members of all Christian traditions, look forward to welcoming him among us in the United Kingdom next year.

The tragedy which the Pope has suffered, together with the similar assassination attempt on President Reagan and the threat to Her Majesty the Queen, all within six weeks provoke serious thinking. After 36 years of absence of war in Europe, the crust of civilisation based on tolerance and understanding between various groupings in the world community has been shown to be perilously thin. Social and political factors that contributed to the two World Wars of the first half of this century may be no more, but we have so far failed to understand, let alone tackle, a number of deep emotional problems that lie at the heart of present unrest.

In C.I.H.E.C. we hope to strengthen forces working towards peace and harmony in mankind. Our 30 or so sub-commissions span the world. The Vatican and the Soviet Union, countries of eastern and western Europe, the Americas and the Third World all add their different traditions. We stand for scholarship, which first and foremost means understanding, perhaps with that Gnostic aspiration of knowing "whence we came" and "whither we are hastening" (Clement, *Excerpta ex Theodoto*, 78), for without understanding reforming ideals degenerate into the sentimental. Then, fellowship, the resolve to work together, to pool resources to solve the historical problems of Christianity, and thirdly, in this work to retain our identities, for these, in a world that mocks unity with its all-embracing media culture and high-rise flats, are among mankind's most precious possessions.

This conference is about clearing ground: what do we mean by ecclesiastical history, what is its relation to theology and to history, and classical and philosophical studies read in purely secular contexts? Like my friend, Mgr. M. Maccarrone, I would also pay tribute to the great men in our discipline, Hubert Jedin, Hans Lietzmann, Cardinal Mercati, and our *Président d'Honneur*, Bakhuisen van den Brink.

In my three years as President, I want to spread our ideals, to see more Third World sub-commissions, more work in the field of early Christian studies, particularly in archaeology where sites are threatened by the results of increasing world-population. These must be among our principal concerns.

Then, as it has become increasingly clear, a great deal of scholarly work is being done in international colloquia und symposia such as this, I would like to see this type of international collaboration given some permanent and institutional form. The questions asked by historians are no longer principally parochial or national, but concern movements of humanity on continental scales. Our national Academies have not always proved themselves aware of these developments. After all, they belong to the age of the nation state, and even to "Das Zeitalter des Imperialismus". I look forward to the creation of a European Academy of Arts und Sciences in which all, eastern and western scholars, can find a place.

Finally, may I thank the Görres-Gesellschaft and Pontifical Historical Institute for arranging this splendid conference, and also the British Academy for their generous help towards the next venture of C. I. H. E. C. at Durham, 2.-9. September this year. My warmest greetings to you all.