

Dr Rowan Williams
Magdalene College
Cambridge
CB3 0AG
United Kingdom

Invitation to Wittenberg, 25th – 27th August 2017

Cologne, November 30, 2015

Dear Dr Williams,

or, as we addressed each other at the WCC, dear Rowan,

it is more than 30 years ago that we met each other for the first time in Kottayam/India working together for the Faith and Order Commission study of the Apostolic Faith. If I remember correctly, you were one of the presenters of a paper on Christology together with Prof. Dietrich Ritschl, whereas I as a staff member was responsible for the result of the conference.

Later I heard you addressing the Porto Alegre Assembly 2006 and we shook hands briefly, when you got your honorary doctorate in Bonn. So much for our personal connections, which I may have remembered longer than you, meeting thousands of persons, especially during your time as Archbishop of Canterbury.

I am writing to you today, in order to invite you to take part at the weekend of the 44th International Congress of the International Ecumenical Fellowship (IEF), which will take place from August 21 to 28 in the year 2017 in Wittenberg. Separately I attach information about the IEF and the conference of about 500 participants from all over Europe, under the title: „About the True Treasure of the Church(es)“ – a quotation from Martin Luther's These 62 of 1517.

First of all we would like to invite you to preside over the celebration of the so called Lima Liturgy – you may remember BEM from 1982 in Lima -, which will take place on Sunday, August 27 2017, 10.00 a.m., in the Stadtkirche in Wittenberg. The newly elected presiding bishop of the EKD, Dr Heinrich Bedford-Strohm, has already agreed to preach on this occasion.

To inform you correctly, we first of all invited the present Archbishop of Canterbury whom I know also personally. But due to his many invitations and obligations he found himself not in a position to

accept our invitation. So it is to us a matter of course, if the present Archbishop will not be able to attend, that we invite you as his predecessor. Therefore I also attach for your information the letter I wrote to Justin Welby, as the arguments to invite him as the present Archbishop of Canterbury apply to my understanding exactly in the same way and with the same urgency to you as former Archbishop of Canterbury.

This is also the case for the other invitation to you to address the participants with remarks on „The Reformation and Christian Unity from an Anglican Perspective“. You will then be the Anglican voice in Wittenberg, as it is Rupert Hoare, who will speak in autumn 2016 in Erfurt at a preparatory meeting for Wittenberg 2017.

We think that we cannot arrange a better sign of Christian Unity at our international conference 2017 in Wittenberg than your presence in your earlier capacity as Archbishop of Canterbury, the historic representative of Christian Churches beside the Patriarch of Constantinople and the Bishop of Rome. In the name of the preparatory committee I ask you to consider this invitation particularly seriously, as we do not have any other person of such an authority, whom we can address.

It would be fine for our preparations, if we can receive an answer from you before the end of the year.

Looking forward to your response I wish you a blessed Advent season and greet you cordially on behalf of our steering group for Wittenberg 2017.

Yours in Christ,

Hans-Georg (Link)