

Address to the BAV on 18.11.2021 in Zurich | Gertje Kollmann

Dear ones,

from near and far we have come, a small group of brothers and sisters of our church. I am very grateful to see you here, here where the International Church Leadership of the NAC meets to discuss women in ministry.

We are here in Zurich to be present and to make our concerns clear. We are not invited. So we brought many posters with our demands and those of our supporters. Anke wrote the words of Martin Luther on her sign: "Hier stehe ich, ich kann nicht anders", or: "Here I stand, I can do no other." That alone is sometimes what is crucial: being in the right place at the right time, standing up for the cause you care about, for your inner conviction. And that is our common desire today: to achieve equality in our church as well.

Women and men, whichever gender they may belong to, are of equal value before God. That is the highest priority.

The church now also publicly acknowledges this. And we are very glad that the church leadership is considering women's ordination and has begun deliberations on the subject, after long years of avoidance. The approach, however, is questionable. Women as stakeholders are not included in the deliberations, even though they are at stake. The power and decision-making authority lies solely in the hands of the church leadership, which consists exclusively of men. This is unacceptable in a Christian church like ours.

Our call to the district apostles and the chief apostle is: Come and talk to us! Let women and men finally participate together in the deliberations. For it cannot be the case that men have authority over women and grant or deny them ministerial gifts. What is needed is an open dialogue and a culture of conversation at eye level. If a system like that of our church closes itself off to this, then the church must ask itself how it still wants to find its place in a democratic system of values.

We are mature Christians and want nothing other than an equitable and sustainable development of our church, or: the completion of God's work - not half a work, not a man's work, but a whole and perfect work. That is why we are here today and with us many who hope in us and in the church leadership.

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