

Authority in crisis

Authority is in crisis. Rather a rude way of not beating about the bush, but it seems to be inevitable. Every week numerous drivers have extensive discussions with the police-officer on duty in the television-program "Wegmisbruikers" (Road-abusers). Bus-drivers and ambulance personnel are beaten up. In the mean time taxi-drivers started hitting themselves. Even the prime-minister – in earlier days probably even by his wife addressed as "Excellence" – does not escape this. Recently when Balkenende was not in top-shape, he was ruthlessly called 'the grocer from Zeeland'.

Smoke-bomb

It probably started in the sixties. "Maagdenhuis" occupation, a smoke-bomb for Beatrix on her wedding day, rebellion everywhere. I can not see that without also looking at the collapse of the compartments. The great stories no longer sufficed, the compartments collapsed as if they were banks and the associations which were the cement of society fell away. And where there are no associations are no shared views on how to organize a society; so therefore also not on authority.

Rules – for others

The neo-liberal government policy of the eighties and especially the nineties even reinforced this. It was everyone for him/herself and no more God for all of us. Individualism to the extreme was the result and since that time everyone is making his/her own rules. There must be rules, but mainly for others. "I can drive 150, because I am a good driver and besides there was no one on the road'.

Plain decency

Higher penalties help. Ever since in Amsterdam there is a tough penalty when you drive without light hardly anybody tries to do so anymore. But you can not out penalties on all kinds of rudeness. Sometimes it is simply about everyday decency. And you have to learn decency. I feel embarrassed when I write this down, because I do not have a ready solution. But we will have to convince each other that some things are wrong and that we need acknowledged authority to remind us of that. Being citizen is to have a say and listen to reason.

Church participant in debate

Does the church have to say something about that? I think she does. We will not just solve things, but the church is positioned in society and participant in the social debate. Is the church allowed to contribute something of what she believes in? I think she has to.

Alive to the insignificant

To me the first thing that springs to mind is the story of the Living. In the oldest gospel (Mark) are the first words Jesus says: 'The time has come, the Kingdom of God is near' (1: 14). Significant words, this is His mission. This kingdom has all kind of meanings to us personally, but also for society as a whole. Is see that looking back on Jesus' life; being alive to the insignificant, taking care of each other. Looking further than what is on the outside, respecting each other, even that adulterous woman.

Without sin

I do not want to raise my finger in warning, but wouldn't that be something for our society? Whoever is without sin, cast the first stone. Or is it the intention that we precisely do not do that?

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