

Letter 407: 22 April 1530, [Strasbourg] Capito to Ulrich Zwingli

Printed in ZwBw 4, pp. 546-551, Ep. 1012.

[*Summary*]: From a letter sent from Italy to Philip of Baden at Speyer, Capito has discovered that Zurich and Bern sent delegates to Venice, warning them against the power of the emperor. Capito thinks that such a matter should not have been discussed in public. Those in power will believe that Erasmus was right, when he predicted that the gospel would open up the way to mob rule (*democratia*). He urges Zwingli to use code when writing about sensitive issues. “For counsel is no counsel if it is spread among many.” Philip of Hesse will not attend the diet.⁴ He has appointed three delegates: [Philip] von Waldeck, chancellor [Johannes Feige], and Erhard Schnepf. Their mandate is to settle or defer the discussion about the Eucharist among the reformers. References to a future council appear to be only a delaying tactic. [Johannes] Fabri is up to his usual tricks. The delegates are to give their opinions in their own name, but refrain from restricting the freedom of the gospel or acknowledging the pope as head of the church. They are not to agree to anything contrary to their beliefs. Capito believes that a general council will never come about. Some people believe that all depends on the emperor, but Capito has his doubts. He points out that Charles speaks neither Latin nor German. He wonders who will represent the cause of the French, for “monarchs listen only to other monarchs.” Philip of Hesse is the only one who looks after the cause of the gospel. It is important that the reformers present a united front. The [Marburg preacher Hartmann] Ibach laments the military plans of Philip of Hesse. Schnepf will be pitted against Fabri. The Strasbourg delegates will be [Jacob] Sturm and [Matthis] Pfarrer.

⁴ He changed his mind, arriving in Speyer on 12 May.