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Dear colleagues and friends,

In our different and diverse religious and spiritual traditions we celebrate the unfolding of life in the midst of crisis, threats, violence, starvation, wars and death. In the midst of our boundaries regarding communication and healthy relationships, we begin to spin our threads of connecting even from a broken web. We develop new ways of networking and exchange, of projects in teaching, training and research.

For this year's celebration of Easter and Passover, the beginning of spring or of a new season, I want to share with you the joy about the publication of a new translation of the bible in Germany – following the example of translation of the bible in modern version in other countries. In a huge scholarly, ecumenical effort, the biblical scriptures were worked through and translated, edited with commentaries and introduction, with explications for Hebrew and Greek words. It was funded by many congregations, persons, organisations and especially women and men in church leadership positions, and scholars.

The new bible is called “**Bible in just language**”. The word *just* is interpreted and used in a threefold meaning:

1. Justice in language means to use inclusive language and make visible the existence of girls and women in the texts. While in the texts for example, “sons of Israel” include men and women, today it is important to make women and girls visible in the reality of the people. Also this translation addresses the complexity of the names of God, and makes sure that the names for God are neither understood only in male imagery and language nor reduced to male/female polarities. In this way, the invitation not to construct any image of God is taken seriously
2. Secondly, the new bible wants to improve justice in regard to Jewish-Christian dialogue. Whereas in the past, some New Testament texts have been translated in a way that stresses differences and antagonism between Christians and Jews, the new translation honors Jewish traditions and makes visible many Hebrew terms in the text.
3. Thirdly, the new bible addresses social justice issues by making visible social injustice and translating some terms more exactly to their social background than Luther did in the German translation

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Of course, the reception of this translation is very diverse. Many women and men, congregations and church leaders are very appreciative, and the bible is sold out already in the third edition. Others are very critical and some bishops even spoke against the use in worships.

I think, in a time where it becomes increasingly visible how complex our live and work-situations are in a world wide context, how diverse and rich our spiritual traditions develop and how important it is to honour and respect diversity while at the same time we need connections, unity and cooperation, it is a great step that one of the most important books of world literature and religious traditions is offering inclusive language.

As we all know and work with every day in our training and teaching of pastoral care and counseling, language, knowledge and power are connected as well as language and reality. How we think and act is how we talk, how we talk and express ourselves is how we shape reality. I hope that also in other countries, the biblical scriptures will be freed more from the boundaries of the missionary's translations of past centuries and will be unfolded for new ways of understanding doing justice to people, of women and men, in their own indigenous traditions. Within ICPCC there are some organisations and colleagues who work especially for honouring indigenous traditions also within the teaching and training of PCC, and I would like to express thanks especially for their work.

May you experience the strength that develops from the power of just language also in your life and work, and may health and love be in the days until we meet again, hopefully in Dresden and Poland for the coming world congress!

In the new bible, the evangelist John starts with the words:

“In the beginning , there was wisdom,
And wisdom was with God, and
Wisdom was as God,
This was in the beginning with God.
Everything came into being by wisdom,
And without her nothing came to be.
What came to existence in her, was life,
And life was light for people.”

Have a blessed Easter time, yours

Ursula Riedel- Pfäfflin

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