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25/12/2006

Dear friends and colleagues
in the movement of intercultural and international Pastoral Care and Counseling,

We are in transition to a new year and I wish you all a blessed time of regaining strength in the midst of challenges!

In his article on Spirituality and counselling for healing and liberation: The context and praxis of African pastoral activity and psychotherapy, Jean Masamba ma Mpolo wrote:

The first fundamental principle underlying African traditional spirituality and therapeutic practices is the sanctity of life. Life comes from God and finds its origin in Him. It must therefore be preserved by all means. Thus, affirmation, preservation and reinforcement of life dominate the theological and social thoughts as well as the health systems of African traditional people.

In December we received the sad news that Masamba Ma Mpolo died in Kinshasa. ICPCC mourns this loss and we want to express our deepest care for all of his family and friends, colleagues and students. He was one of the first and best theologians in our movement and his words are more than actual in our situation in the world today.

In the midst of ongoing threats and loss of lives, I want to undergird that the affirmation, preservation and reinforcement of life is the source from which all our theory and practice of counseling and care springs, and is necessary more than ever for the social, political and economical practice and theory of our societies as well. In his Christmas sermon, the German bishop Huber also stressed that we need to focus more on the wellbeing of children. And the German theologian Hanna Strack has developed a theology of birth in which the experiences of midwives are a crucial source of knowledge and understanding of life. Thus the dignity of children, women and men especially in the underprivileged and exposed regions of the world needs to be reinforced because we need to regain and re-establish an acknowledgement of the sacredness of life. This cannot be realized without the theological and spiritual acknowledgement of women and mothers worldwide.

Convenor of the ICPCC-Congress 2007:

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ICPCC is a worldwide network in which we have the chance and power to listen to each other's experiences and wisdom, to learn from each other and act together. This has been developed in many ways in co-operative work during the past years, and will be further developed by our upcoming meetings and congresses in Dresden (August 4-6) and Poland (August 7-14).

We invite you to join us in these events and publications on our website www.icpcc.net which is cared for by Klaus Temme. Please, send your questions and applications to Klaus Temme and Helmut Weiss, who is the convenor of the Congress in Poland.

During these congresses, the challenges of fragility and destruction of life will be addressed in manifold ways, and we will have the opportunity to develop a theology and pastoral care of life together!

Blessings and greetings to all of you, and may we meet together in the New Year!

Dr. Ursula Riedel-Pfaefflin

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PS

The book, in which the article of Masamba Ma Mpolo is printed is still available and also contains good articles by Daisy Nwachuku and Emmanuel Lartey, Andre Masiala, Harry Sawyer, Andrew Igenozza, Emele Uka, Dr. Kasonga wa Kasonga. You can write me : The Church and Healing. Echoes from Africa, and order a book.

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International Council on Pastoral Care and Counselling
(Internat. Rat für Seelsorge und Beratung)
Präsidentin, Kongress-Ausrichter, Schatzmeister

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