

DIAKONIA Prayer Letter June 2017

In my church tradition we like to choose words from the bible for special occasions. Of course we know very well that you have to consider all the verses around to get to a proper interpretation. But still, the word you get at your baptism, your confirmation, your wedding often enough fits amazingly to you as a person and to your life. You all have heard from the Moravian watchword that is chosen for every day of the year. For many Germans this is the first reading in the morning. In my own tradition, that of Kaiserswerth, we follow a cycle of daily bible reading that is chosen by the Ecumenical Commission of Bible Reading. They also choose a word for the month. For June 2017 it comes from Acts 5, 29: *We ought to obey God rather than men.*

But what is it that God wants us to do? Sometimes it is even hard to tell what is going on! Fake news and alternative truths mingle with real news, politicians of all sorts paint their own picture to get as much followers as possible. Social networks pretend to connect people more than ever, myriads of words are shared but few things really said. Political wings seem to be stronger than ever, extremists terrorizing people and states, causing thousands of people to flee from their homes. And in the midst of this turmoil we are, struggling to do the right thing, to help others in need, to be a voice for those who already gave up. Shaken by the wind of contradictory news, opinions, demands. From June 28 we meet in Chicago for the DIAKONIA World Assembly to ponder together what it means to face this world in turmoil as diaconal people, what it means to obey God rather than men.

In the meantime, as we struggle along in our daily lives, I find consolidation and strength in a word of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, who showed in his life what it means to obey God rather than men: *"I believe that God can and will bring good out of evil, even out of the greatest evil. for that purpose he needs men who make the best use of everything. I believe that God will give us all the strength we need to help us resist in all times of distress. but he never gives it in advance, lest we should rely on ourselves and not on him alone. a faith such as this should allay all our fears for the future."* (D. Bonhoeffer, God Is In The Manger)

See you in Chicago!
Dc. Ulrike Kellner

