

A service of celebration to mark the retirement of Professor Dr Cornelia Füllkrug-Weitzel on 29th May 2021, and subsequent words of greeting

Words of greeting: Reverend Dieter Kaufmann, former President of the Diakonisches Werk in Wuerttemberg

Christians do not live within themselves, “but in Christ and in their neighbour; in Christ through faith, in their neighbour through love. By faith they move above themselves to God, from God they move again below themselves through love, but remaining always in God and in divine love... “. This, in the words of Martin Luther, is the true, spiritual, Christian freedom.

It is in this spiritual, Christian freedom, dear Cornelia, that you have understood your working service. “Bread for the World” is not something that the church does additionally but is essentially what the church is all about.

Such an understanding of freedom has allowed you to you be courageous. In your work, in the causes you have championed, you have always been committed and combative. Astute and politically oriented. Comprehensively well-informed in a wide range of areas. A love of Christ and of one’s neighbour fosters imagination and vigour. You have been blessed with these gifts in abundance. A rich talent for language. And, in global networks, especially, able to communicate as a much-appreciated partner.

You have never made a secret of the fact that spiritual, Christian freedom compels us to interfere. To be aware of social and political dynamics. Global awareness must, therefore, also have an ecological component.

You have always understood “Bread for the World” as the agency of the Regional and Free Churches. The close ties with Diakonie Deutschland is sustained through the fact that the Diaconal Agencies of the Regional Churches are simultaneously regional offices for “Bread for the World”. This understanding of community connects national and international diakonia. You have intentionally recognised this as the strength of “Bread for the World”.

And, in this way, you, yourself, have lived in Christ and in the worldwide love for your neighbour. We thank God for giving you such rich gifts for this task. And we thank you for bringing these gifts in such abundance into your service for “Bread for the World”. The Regional Churches and the Diaconal Agencies thank you for this.

Martin Luther ends his treatise, “On the Freedom of a Christian Man”, with the following words: “Behold, this is the true, spiritual and Christian freedom, which sets the heart free from all sins, laws and commandments, which surpasses all other freedom as the heaven the earth. May God give us to understand and keep them rightly. Amen.”

Be, thus, commended to God!
Adieu, dear Cornelia.

Member of the High Consistory (emeritus)
Dieter Kaufmann