

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ!

You will probably know already, that Dr. Margot Käßmann has resigned as bishop of the Ev.-luth. Church of Hannover and as president of the Evangelical Church of Germany (EKD) on 24th of February. She took this step to bear the consequences of being stopped by police while driving under the influence of alcohol. Dr. Käßmann justified her decision by stating, that, in future, she would lack the necessary authority to represent publically the positions she has to stand for as leader of the evangelical Christians of Germany. With regard to her driving under alcohol she said: "I am appalled about myself having made such a bad mistake and I regret it deeply. I am aware of how dangerous and irresponsible drunken driving is."

Margot Käßmann was not only bishop of the largest ELM-carrier-church as from 1999, but also chairperson of the "Missionsausschuss", the highest board of ELM. Many of you got to know her, when she visited our partner churches or maybe you remember the lecture she gave on our consultation in October 2008 in Hermannsburg.

Those of you, who know Dr. Käßmann, will understand, that we at the ELM feel quite touched by this development. Dr. Käßmann was more than a charismatic leader of the evangelical Church in Germany. She also was an outstanding person of public interest and she used her publicity consistently to combine her clear straightforward belief with a critical alert intellect, thus presenting an exemplary and timely form of being a Christian. By this she made it possible, that the voices of the churches and the Christians are being taken more seriously in the secularized German public.

We pay our respect to the steps Dr. Käßmann took. Her decision shows that she considers personal integrity higher than power and influence. Thus Margot Käßmann stands to be an example even in a moment of failure. We ask you, our friends and partners all over the world, to pray for the evangelical church in Germany, that the church continues on the way of a decided and intervening Christianity even without the role model Dr. Käßmann was. And it is our request for Mrs. Käßmann, that she may be relieved of the burden, her public functions laid on her and that she may fruitfully share her pastoral skills as a pastor of the Ev.-luth. Church of Hannover.

With this we greet you quoting the watchword, the Evangelical church in Germany has set for the first week of March: "God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us." (Romans 5, 8)

Martina Helmer-Pham Xuan

