

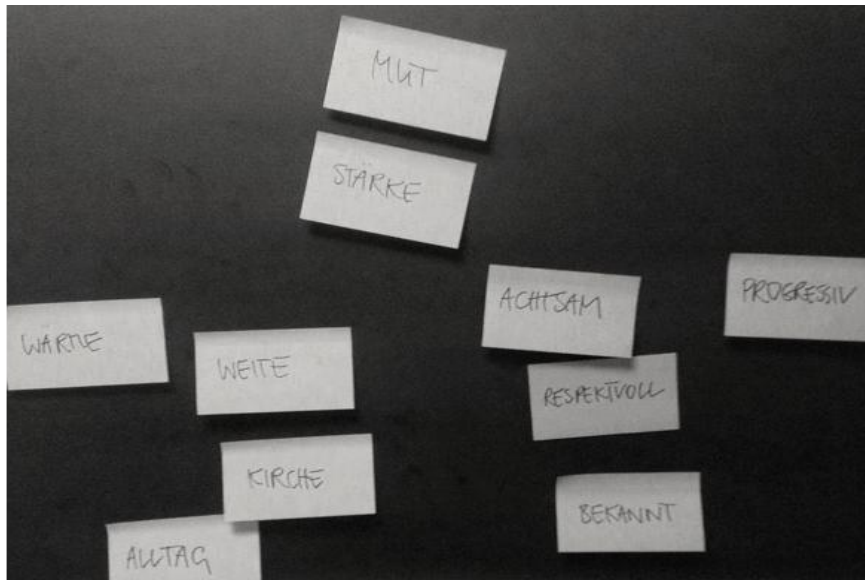


SIEBENQUELL

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# Drawing words from the deep wellsprings of the heart

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QUELLENANGABE: PATRIZIA MONNERJAHN 2012

On March 1 Siebenquell, the Centre for Narrative Theology, marked its one year anniversary. It serves as a good reason to stop and ask the one question that is rather unromantic but mightily important when it comes to the motivation of the heart. »Why bother?« Why go to all this effort? Why set up websites, write columns, and offer days of biblical reflection?

Yet, when I reflect back on what moved us to bring this project to life, my thoughts rest on the day when we were at the planning days in Weimar to prepare for the founding of Siebenquell. Patrizia, our graphic designer, was guiding us through the process. This remarkably gifted young woman was trying to develop a visual story of who we are and what we are about. In order to develop a logo and a look that tells the tale of our corporate identity, she began to draw words out of us. She got us to tell stories of our dreams and aspirations for the people we wish to serve and of our longing and our hopes for the future of our project.

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In the end, we stood before many large sheets filled with words that conveyed something of our passion, our longing and our sense of mission for the world and the Church. In a note scrawled on the side of my notes of that day, I wrote in my dreadful handwriting, »Drawing words from the deep wellsprings of the heart«. It was meant as a description of how Patrizia drew the story of our identity from the hidden depths of our hearts to the surface, where we could work with them. Yet, it ended up being the answer to the question as to why we do what we do.

It is our passion to draw words from the deep wellsprings of the heart. That is what we do when we take a story of the Scriptures and break it open, to draw from its depths words of meaning, healing, guidance and strength beyond the inherited interpretation. It is why we invite people to name and identify their own stories, so that wonderful, deeper, more powerful and life-giving words can surface, long buried beneath the surface of their lives. We are in the relentless search for the Word of God in every deep place, where we draw it to the surface, where it so sorely needed in order to quench our thirst and fashion meaningful lives.

A woman, whose husband has long suffered from Alzheimer's, wrote me a letter. It was a letter that demonstrated to me, that the writer was participating in the work of the angels, for in the letter she wanted to announce unto me a message of great joy. And because we should always honour joy as a gift of God and a fruit of the Holy Spirit, I now tell you her tale of joy, born from drawing words from a heart she loves so dearly.

She told me, that the evening before she wrote me her letter, she had shown her husband a little board book which they intended to give their youngest grandson for his third birthday. The book had the title *A B C Zoo Borns !* The right side of the page shows a photo of a new born zoo animal. The left side shows the large letter of the alphabet with the animal's name and a rhyming description.

Although her husband can only occasionally say a word, he started very slowly reading the book out loud to his wife and his daughter. In every line of the letter, the joy and delight of his wife shone through at hearing that beloved but so often silenced voice. But the greatest line for me was the last one of her letter: »And so, God be praised, we have learned yet another way in which we can free my husband from the »prison« of his body.«

That is what Patrizia did for us that afternoon. That is what we do when people find new and exciting meaning in the stories of God and the stories of faith. That is what we do when people find surprisingly unexpected yearning and desire within their own stories. We draw from the deep wellsprings of the heart, God's and our own, in order to find ways of freeing the words of the Beloved from the prisons of their bodies and souls. That is why we bother.

**Erik Riechers SAC**

*Vallendar, March 4, 2014*