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ASIA/TURKEY - Distorted translation of the Gospel, to make it "close to Muslims"-Christians protest

Istanbul (Agenzia Fides) - A distorted translation of the Gospel and not authorized by the Christian Churches has created a public protest on behalf of Christians in Turkey. In a statement sent to Fides, the "Alliance of Protestant Churches" of Turkey, part of the "World Evangelical Alliance," condemns "the misleading translation" of a turkish edition of the Gospel of Matthew, published at the end of 2011. The text is full of errors concerning " very important and fundamental words of the New Testament," which make the translation "wrong and extremely negative." The Churches underline the urgent need to change these terms, defining the Gospel spread "unacceptable and unusable."

What it refers to is the removal of words such as "Father" and "Son of God" replaced by "God" and "representative of God." The verse from Matthew 28:19 that says "baptizing in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit", became for example "purifying them with water, in the name of Allah, of His Messiah and His Holy Spirit."

Christian leaders say they pointed out these inconsistencies before publication, edited by three American Christian organizations ("Wycliffe Bible Translators", "Summer Institute of Linguistics"-SIL and "Frontiers"), whose purpose was to produce a Bible " close to Muslim sensibilities ". To avoid that Turkish speaking people, Christian or non-Christian, were exposed to wrong teachings, the Churches had asked the translating committee to change things that "undermine Christian theology," but it did not happen.

"We want the Holy Scripture to be read and understood by all sectors of society. The translations produced by the Bible Society in the first half of the twentieth century are excellent, faithful to the history of Christian theology, but also excellent for people who read the Bible to understand the expressions of Christian faith, " notes the statement sent to Fides.

The Alliance of Protestant Churches in Turkey represents the majority of Protestant Churches in the country. In 2011 it published a Report on violations of the rights of Christians in Turkey, which are less than 0.1% of the population of 72 million inhabitants. (PA) (Agenzia Fides 10/5/2012)

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