

May 2010

Dear brothers and sisters,

Paul writes: *"... I no longer live, but Christ lives in me."* (Galatians 2 v.20). Is this also true for us?

Paul is describing here the deepest mystery of the Christian life. We live as normal human beings, but another is also living in us who does things and meets with others through us. We often do not recognise this in ourselves, but Jesus promised to be in us (John 17 v.23) and therefore it must be true. We do not have to be a kind of spiritual contortionist but simply let ourselves be open for this to happen.

"Christ lives in me" – I do not lose my identity, but my identity is strengthened in him. Paul further describes this life: *"The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, ..."*. This is life that, in a moment, can be connected to an enormous source of power, like with an electric cable, which changes everything. Whoever is connected in this way does not need to fear anyone or anything. Whoever is connected in this way has the faith for an entire nation. Whoever is connected in this way can pray as Jesus prayed - and is still praying - for his people, his community, his world. -OS-

The fight against child pornography on the Internet

In the April prayer letter we prayed for children who are abused in front of the camera. Child pornography on the Internet has developed globally into a billion Euro industry. Owners and producers of porno films face tough penalties – but few are actually convicted because of the anonymity of the Internet.

In June 2009 the CDU-SPD coalition passed a law to block child pornography sites on the Internet. However, in the negotiations for a coalition, the FDP pushed for the law to be withdrawn because for them this was an intrusion into the "freedom" of Internet users. The FDP Justice Minister Leutheusser-Schnarrenberger is now advocating unilaterally for the closure of such sites, which will be much more difficult, as opposed to the EU proposal in March for the blocking of child pornography sites in all member states. **Prayer:**

- **Plead for God's mercy and his intervention to help the abused children**
- **That the current law will be effective immediately until a (really!) better one can be enacted**
- **Let us bow down before the shame and guilt that billions are being made from child abuse – let us claim the children out of the hands of the enemy for Jesus! (Mark 10 v.14)** -RS-

ELENA – no job without a chip card

In Revelation 13 v.17-18 it says that no-one could buy or sell unless he had the mark, which is the name of the beast or the number of his name. We are moving into such times. Technical developments with enhanced possibilities for data storage appear so compelling to the German government that a new system is being

introduced which affects every employee in Germany. It is called ELENA (German acronym for Electronic Pay Slip). From the beginning of this year, employers must align the data in their payroll department with a national database every month. Sick days, absences with the causes, details of dismissals and lay-offs (with reasons), notices of "unacceptable behaviour" to employees, salaries, days worked, child allowances, tax numbers, private addresses, dates of birth and much more – all of this data will flow into a huge file in the government data centre in Wuerzburg. No worker, staff employee or public official can opt out of this. About 40 million people are involved. With this comprehensive collection of data, from 2012 the national employment offices will be able to check with a mouse-click whether an applicant actually has a right to state assistance. Later, many other government offices will also have the possibility to retrieve data. They will however need the agreement of the employee who must have a personal chip card (like a bank credit or payment card) as identification.

From 2012 on, it will therefore no longer be possible to take employment or conduct business without such a chip card! Those responsible for data protection are saying that the storing of such large amounts of data is unconstitutional and have entered a complaint at the Constitutional Court. The Minister for Economic Affairs Rainer Bruederle will now check again the amount of data that needs to be stored. **Prayer:**

- **For the Constitutional Court judges, that they set precise limits to the amount of data that the state can store in this way**
- **That the dangers of such data storage will become increasingly clear and lead to a thorough rethinking about the whole system**
- **Wisdom for all who are fighting against excessive storage of data and for positive progress in their efforts** -RS-

The power of the media – a challenge

The way in which news is broadcast is constantly changing as technology offers new possibilities. Printing the news on paper will become the exception in the foreseeable future. Newspapers and books as we know them will be replaced by electronic reading devices. People will be more and more influenced by material that they only get from the Internet (including television and radio material). Therefore Christians of all confessions are making much more use of the Internet to spread the Gospel. There are special Websites that make known Christian positions on current social issues. Such work requires special skills and knowledge, which is actually available from one Christian media academy as well as from other sources. The secular press is also increasingly taking up faith issues. The articles are however mostly written by journalists who have not come to any faith themselves. Recent articles have been defamatory to evangelical Christians, who have been

labelled as dangerous “fundamentalists”. Since the unveiling of child abuse scandals, the Catholic Church now is a central target for criticism.

What is reported and how it is reported has tremendous power. Just a slight misrepresentation of the truth can damage people’s lives forever. **Prayer:**

- **For honest and objective reporting (generally and especially about Christians)**
- **For all Christian media work: that through the media many people will find faith and truth will be proclaimed that sets people free (John 8 v.32)**
- **That possibilities and opportunities with the new media technologies will be recognised and used more and more by Christians**
- **Wisdom for all who teach media studies in schools**

-RS-

Germany’s image in Europe

In connection with the economic crisis in Greece, there was immediate talk in other European countries of a “Caesura (unexpected break) in Germany’s European policy” and Angela Merkel was suddenly “Madame Non” (the “no” lady). What happened?

In 2002 the Euro currency was introduced after the German Chancellor Kohl had massively pushed for a common currency in the 90s. But as the European countries could not bring themselves politically to agree to a common economic and tax system, they at least agreed stringent criteria for the entry of new states and rigorous standards for the domestic budget in all member states. This stability pact was necessary to protect the Euro.

At that time Athens used some “creative accounting” in order to meet the conditions for entry. In the meantime Greece is in debt to the tune of 300 billion Euros and faces bankruptcy as debt restructuring gets more expensive. Portugal, Italy, Ireland and Spain are also in danger (as well as Great Britain although not in the Euro zone). The stability pact has been broken 43 times. This means that there is a fundamental lack of discipline and proper control. In the final analysis it comes down to the preservation of the Euro by the Europeans themselves.

In this situation, Angela Merkel refused to help the Greeks. They should make savings and take the consequences themselves. Naturally this looks like a lack of solidarity. However this is not true, as for her it is about saving the Euro and about Europe as a whole. She pushed also for help from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) – what a come-down for rich Europeans! While we were praying in April a rescue plan was agreed. Altogether the Euro states want to make up to 30 billion Euros in credit available to Greece, of which Germany would once again take on the greatest contribution with 8.4 billion. However it is still not clear if this arrangement is acceptable under the EU Constitution.

It is very difficult for Germany to act in a tough way in Brussels without creating a nervous atmosphere. But it

was necessary in this case, not to simply pay out, but remain hard for once – for the sake of Europe. **Prayer:**

- **God have mercy on Greece and give to the people and to the country the will to act honestly and to economise. Jesus let your children there be salt and light.**
- **Thanks for Angela Merkel’s clear course of action and the determination to carry it through. Pray that Germany will not be isolated but respected.**
- **Pray for responsible action in all national governments to manage the domestic budget for the good of Europe as a whole. Germany has also broken the stability pact from time to time.** -OS-

Answers to prayer

We prayed in the past months many times for better cooperation within the government coalition, mainly in relations with the FDP. Tax reduction was a central issue. Now at last, at the end of March, the FDP came around and agreed to postpone their plans until 2013. The coalition is being to find its feet. Thanks be to God! -OS-

Restoration of Israel (Excerpt from new Watchmen Website)

The Feast of Passover ended this year on April 6th.

"However, the days are coming," declares the LORD, "when men will no longer say, 'As surely as the LORD lives, who brought the Israelites up out of Egypt,' but they will say, 'As surely as the LORD lives, who brought the Israelites up out of the land of the north and out of all the countries where he had banished them.' For I will restore them to the land I gave their forefathers."

(Jeremiah 16 v.14, 15)

We are living in the times of restoration (Acts 3 v.17-21) and are seeing the fulfilment of prophecy before our very eyes. Also in Germany we are meeting Jewish people who God has already called out of the land of the north.

Prayer:

- **That God will bring back these Jews to their land and to their God and Saviour, as well as other Jews who still live in the nations of the “Diaspora”.**
- **That all the Jewish people, who are already in Israel, will rediscover their identity and calling as individuals and as a nation. (Ezekiel 36 v.26-28)**
- **That God will increasingly open the spiritual eyes of his people and that their hearts will “burn” as they read the scriptures. (Luke 24 v.32)** -DH-

Keep praying

Pray continuously for sensitive handling of the child abuse issue and for God’s intervention in Afghanistan.

Other events for prayer:

- 09.05** State elections in North-Rhine Westphalia
- 12.-16.05** Ecumenical Church Conference in Munich
- 23.05** Global Day of Prayer

God bless you

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