

November 2010

Standing in the gap

"I looked for a man among them who would build up the wall and stand before me in the gap on behalf of the land so I would not have to destroy it, but I found none."
(Ezekiel 22 v.30)

As intercessors we are called by God to take up a special position. In the places where there are visible gaps in our society between people. In the places where there are visible gaps between people and God. Standing in the gap means that I do not take sides. This is very difficult in the current political situation! God is looking for people who do not just accuse, but who bear the tension between both sides in the power of *His* love as they stand right in the middle of the gap. Jesus set himself in the gap between God and man. It cost him his life. Intercession in times of great political tension requires much from us: my prayer must not be governed by my perceptions, my judgements, my anger, but by God's will. And God's will is salvation, redemption, grace. He wants grace to *reign* where sin had reigned previously (Romans 5 v.21). In this spirit let us this month stand in the gap for our land! -RS-

Answer to prayer

In September we had "Unity in our government" as a prayer topic. Something amazing happened. From the date of September 7th, the style of reporting suddenly changed in the newspaper. Since then we read reports of unanimity and that Angela Merkel is exercising her authority. Even the CSU leader Horst Seehofer is making an effort towards harmony and at a press conference remarked: "There has not been so much common ground between the CDU and CSU for a long time."

The subject of pre-implantation genetic diagnosis (PIGD) is keeping the parliamentary parties busy. Chancellor Merkel took a clear position against the relaxation of the embryo protection law. Because of the importance of the ethical aspects of any amendment to the law, there will be no party whips in parliament. However the FDP still wants to allow PIGD. So we must continue in prayer! -RS-

20 years of German unity

Part 2: View from the west

An East German pastor asked her West German colleague: "What has changed for you since the fall of the Berlin wall?" After a moment of reflection he answered: "Nothing really."

"For me – everything!" she replied. "And there lies the fundamental difference."

There have been 20 years of "German Unity" and 21 years since the fall of the Berlin wall. I remember in the week before the fall of the Berlin wall how the television and newspapers were full of positive news. When the wall was suddenly open, as if all by itself, I had the feeling: "A new chapter of history has just begun." And I was privileged to

be there. But that was only one part of the miracle.

After the release of secret files by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, we are learning today about the other part. Other walls had to be broken down – psychological walls – because the fears of the World War II allied victory powers about a reunited Germany were enormous.

The USA required the reunited Germany to be part of NATO, which for the Soviets was definitely an obstacle! Mitterand (France) required from Kohl (Germany) a substantial agreement about the introduction of a common currency (Euro). Mrs Thatcher (UK) tried for a long time to forge an alliance with Russia and France against Germany. It was equally a miracle of God that, behind the scenes, these walls of impossibility fell one after the other. And that within just eleven months!

On October 3rd 1990 the "other parts of Germany" entered into the "territorial area under the (West) German constitution" by decision of the first freely elected "People's Chamber" of the GDR (East Germany) according to Article 23 of the constitution. Therefore October 3rd was rightly chosen as the national holiday of the reunited Germany, even though November 9th stirs up stronger emotional memories in the German people.

The invasion of Poland by Germany on September 1st 1939 eventually led to a new world order between East and West. In turn, 50 years later, a mutual cooperation between the peoples of Europe sprung out of Germany that has endured through to the present day.

From the spiritual point of view, God had shown mercy to us after 40 years of division of our people as a punishment and a time of repentance. The reunification is the sign to Germany from God that he is again being gracious to us.

Prayer:

- **Thanks for the double miracle of God in 1989 and 1990. (Proclaim Psalm 96 v.1-10)**
- **Pray for a reunification of hearts in east and west. (Psalm 133)**
- **Pray that Germany will increasingly be a blessing for the peoples of Europe. (John 15 v.16)** -OS-

The influence of lobbyists in politics

While citizens should be protected against civil disorder by tough laws concerning the right to possess weapons, these laws also limit the activities of those with a vested interest in hunting and shooting organisations. They campaign with the threat of a loss of votes. Whoever knows that they represent a significant number of votes or can threaten the government with the loss of thousands of jobs have a good chance of influencing legislation in their favour. Other examples: the decisions of the government to adopt a new energy policy are the result of effective lobbying by the nuclear power industry. A planned economy package by the government concerning medicines now takes into consideration not only the effectiveness of the drugs but also the

commercial interests of the pharmaceutical industry.

In the past it was mainly commercial and industrial associations that had a strong influence on government policy. Now large businesses are using their own "lobby" organisations. In Berlin there are about 5000 "lobbyists" who advise 622 members of parliament when drawing up legislation. Today no member is alone able to master all the complexities involved in enacting legislation. Lobbyists put together their own expert opinions, which mainly point out the damaging economic consequences of planned laws – naturally always in favour of their clients! They sometimes even provide a draft of textual content for the legislation. Lobbyists have to develop personal, informal contact with members of parliament and make friendships whenever possible. This is the quiet, "behind the scenes" approach. The more openly vocal approach seeks to influence public opinion, with poster campaigns for example. Increasingly ex-politicians immediately take up employment in lobby firms. The "Lobby Control" initiative wants to see all this stopped by law. They want to make sure that the hidden work of the lobbyists is brought out into the light. (www.lobbycontrol.de)

Prayer:

- **That members of parliament will have the courage to pass the necessary legislation without giving in to pressure from lobby organisations. (Psalm 127 v.1-2)**
- **That lobbyist campaigns that rely on misleading or false information will come to nothing. (Psalm 58)**
- **That parliament sets up clear rules of protection that provide more transparency and set limits for the work of lobbyists. (Nehemiah 4 v.9)** -RS-

Persecuted Christians

The worldwide day of prayer for persecuted Christians takes place on Sunday November 14th. This year four countries are in focus: North Korea, Iran, Nigeria and Egypt. In no other country are Christians so persecuted as in North Korea. The more than 200,000 underground Christians ask for our support in prayer. Muslim background believers in Iran are severely persecuted because of their rejection of Islam. Repeatedly there are waves of arrests where Christians are tortured and forced to divulge the names of house churches. In the northern states of Nigeria Islamic law is applied. Hundreds of Christians have been brutally murdered in Plateau State in the past months. In Egypt, Christians are second class citizens. Young Christian girls are regularly kidnapped, raped and forced to marry a Muslim. Coptic churches and villages are often attacked.

Prayer:

- **That doors for evangelism will be opened in North Korea and the Islamic countries.**
- **For the strengthening of faith and the comfort of the Holy Spirit for all persecuted Christians.**
- **That the German government will be committed to**

the protection of persecuted Christians.

-RS-

Prayer for schools

The organisation "Schueler-SMD" (a mission to schools in Germany) is organising a "Pray-Day" for schools on November 16th. The Schueler-SMD wants to encourage young people to live as Christians in every-day school life. Teaching and learning methods vary from state to state in Germany. Each state is responsible for its own education policy. In some states students and teachers are made insecure and are stressed by the continuous reform of the educational system and restructuring of the schools. In the state of NRW (North Rhine Westphalia) they are trying to introduce the 6 year "community school", bypassing parliamentary approval. In many states the traditional secondary and comprehensive schools are being merged into a new type of school. Schools in areas with a large Muslim population have to face even more challenges.

Prayer:

- **For the necessary and varied support for all who have to implement school restructuring and reform of the education system in their local areas.**
- **For a caring atmosphere in all the classrooms.**
- **That the Christian teachers and students can live in a way that attracts others to know more about their faith.** -RS-

Keep praying

- After the successful start of the Alpha Initiative (see September prayer letter), Alpha courses are now running throughout Baden-Wuerttemberg.
- The evangelistic youth outreach program of "Jesus House" (part of the Pro-Christ organisation) continues until the end of November in 250 locations in Germany. Many young people have already come to faith.
- Let us pray for these initiatives, as well as for all evangelistic activities in our land, so that there will be a new awakening of faith in Jesus Christ! -RS-

Other events for prayer

- 06-07.11. Another transportation of nuclear waste to Gorleben will take place. Massive demonstrations are expected with outbreaks of violence. Musicians and intercessors will be praising God and praying for peace in churches along the route from Hitzacker to Gorleben.
- 05-07.11. German Evangelical Church Synod in Hanover.
- 23.11. Leadership meeting of the Coalition for Evangelism (Lausanne Movement) in Kassel.

God bless you

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