

CALL OF THE WATCHMEN

January 2011

Dear brothers and sisters

The Moravians' "Watchword" for the year 2011 is: *Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.* (Romans 12 v.21)

This word also shows us the way forward as "Watchmen". It gives us courage. It is possible to overcome evil on a personal level and a national level! Overcoming means to hold on to victory in the wrestling match. Jesus tells us to do good to our enemies not only through acts of love but also through prayer and blessing. (Luke 6 v.27-28). What applies to the individual surely applies to the whole land. We can trust that evil will be overcome in this land through intercession and blessing. We must not remain passive and we should not be afraid of the extent of the sin that we see. The Lord will judge on that day when he returns. Until then we are called to actively overcome evil. We do our part by interceding for the land! -RS-

The Word of God and the spirit of the age

On November 10th the Synod of the Evangelical (Protestant) Church in Germany (EKD) in Hanover passed the so-called "Parish Code of Practice" unanimously with 126 votes. It comes into force on January 1st 2011, and all 22 member churches have to ratify it by December 31st. This new code of practice is said to be "marking a new era" in the EKD:

- a) because it unifies 11 different codes;
- b) because it replaces the term "family" with "partnership as a family". The new term is defined as follows: a legally binding relationship between two people with inter-dependency and mutual responsibility. "Partnership as a family" is valid also without children. With this change in terminology the EKD (Council and Synod) is consciously including homosexual and lesbian couples. They are simply conferring the outward label of marriage on civil partnerships, with no consideration of the inward nature of marriage (between a man and woman).
- c) This then allows a single sex pair to live together in the parsonage/rectory with the agreement of their superiors and the parish council. Bishop Friedrich from Bavaria said: "Priests must be able to live with their homosexuality in peace and joy." He further explained that the classifications in the thinking of the Apostle Paul (Romans 1) should be revised and that the "general overall message of the Bible" should apply.

The people of God in Germany are shocked: *is this still the "Church of the Word of God"?* A few years ago the same EKD still confirmed that homosexuality was not consistent with the creative purposes of God as expressed clearly in the Old and New Testaments. And now the theology of the protestant church tells us that the "general overall message of the Bible" has precedence. Theology or the WORD? "Let the Word stand and think no further!" (Luther). *Is this still the Church of the Reformation?*

"Her priests profane the sanctuary and do violence to the law." (Zephaniah 3 v.4b) - instead of obedience - "... and so you can teach the Israelites all the decrees the Lord has given them through Moses." (Leviticus 10 v.11)

Prayer:

- **Repentance, that we have not come against this creeping process of change in the church more aggressively and at an earlier stage.**
- **Mourn before God for the bishops who are spreading false teaching and causing discord in the church. (Ezekiel 44 v.23 / 22 v.6)**
- **That the people of God will stand up against this new code and that homosexual/lesbian parsonages and rectories in the state evangelical churches will not become lawful and generally accepted. -OS-**

Germany and the Euro crisis

With the pressure from the money markets on Greece and Ireland, a basic weakness in the Euro-zone has been exposed which critics of the system had foreseen before the introduction of the Euro. Countries with widely different economic strengths were united in the Euro-zone without an agreement on a common economic and financial policy. Politicians cherished the illusion (lie) that political union would come once there was monetary union. One could say that the house of the Euro-zone was built on sand.

At least, the problems which were already evident in the "Stability Pact" that was defined in the Treaty of Maastricht should be resolved. An annual budget deficit no higher than 3% of gross domestic product was defined but never kept! Also not by Germany! There were no consequences for the uncontrolled debt mountains that were accumulating in many countries in the Euro-zone.

In the countries where creditors no longer had confidence that they would get their money back, ever increasing interest rates had to be paid in the financial markets for state loans. Greece was the first country to face state bankruptcy and Ireland followed. In order to avoid a collapse of the Euro-zone, it was decided to establish a reserve fund of 750 billion Euros until 2013. The countries of the European Union have also committed to support one-another. For the creditors, all these safety measures have not been sufficient. The pressure on Portugal, Italy, Spain and other countries who have extensive debts could still quickly become so great that the Euro-zone collapses. As one of the most economically strong nations, Germany plays a key role in finding solutions. "It is all about the future of Europe, and at the same time the future of Germany within Europe, no more and no less", said Chancellor Angela Merkel. Together with Wolfgang Schäuble she faces enormous challenges to find such solutions. In Europe she is accused of a one-sided nationalistic policy, and in Germany she is accused of giving up national interests to save the Euro. A claim has

been filed in the Constitutional Court against the maintenance of the reserve fund.

Prayer:

- **Courage for an honest analysis of the problems and readiness to seriously look into the details. (Repentance according to Revelation 3 v.17-19)**
- **Wisdom and strength in leadership for Angela Merkel, good health for Wolfgang Schaeuble.**
- **That the problems will not be superficially covered up with ineffective solutions.** -RS-

Sex trafficking and slavery

Shocking statistics: 27 million people worldwide live in sex slavery and the number of young girls and boys in such slavery grows each year by 1 million.

After Thailand and Nigeria, the victims mainly come from the poorest countries, often without hope for the future, in eastern and southeast Europe. Germany is one of the main destination countries. The entire sex industry makes billions. However since Schroeder's government made prostitution a lawful trade in Germany, the police only have limited authority to intervene. According to Article 232 of German law, sex trafficking is still a criminal offence, but a woman who goes to the police is risking her life. In 2009 there were only 534 cases out of an enormous number of female sex slaves under 20 years old (29% between 14 and 17, 51% between 18 and 20). The largest section of the market is operated through Internet pornography, particularly sex with minors, even with small children.

Prayer:

- **Repentance for what is happening in our land with respect to the laws. (Psalm 51 v.10-17)**
- **Call out and proclaim God's word using Psalm 10 over the "red light" areas and Internet pornography. Pray that the traffickers and porno gangs fail and collapse – one after the other.**
- **Pray for the salvation and healing of those traumatised by this trade.**
- **Pray that God can reach and convict the hearts of the traders, pimps and clients (reducing the demand).** -OS-

Initiative "Hope 2011"

Over 30 youth organisations and churches have come together as a network for the initiative "Hope – serving in word and deed". The young people describe the aim of the initiative as follows: *"Hope" springs from our desire to earnestly follow Jesus Christ in which we underline the importance of good deeds and support one another in working on social projects.* In this "Hope 2011" year of action, groups of young people all over Germany will be socially active in practical projects in their local areas. The initiative starts on January 14th with the prayer evening for young people within the Prayer Week of the German Evangelical Alliance.

From March 9th the prayer movement "40 days of prayer and fasting for our land" takes up the theme of "Hope 2011" for the period of Lent.

(Visit: www.initiativehoffnung.de/english-version)

Prayer:

- **Thanks for the rediscovery of our commission to serve others. (Mark 10 v.45)**
- **That through this initiative many will find new hope in Christ. (Hebrews 10 v.23,24)**
- **That through such practical projects in local areas a "hope virus" spreads throughout Germany.** -RS-

Prayer unites – unity needs prayer

In January there are now two prayer weeks that promote Christian unity in a special way. From **January 9th to 16th** the prayer week of the Evangelical Alliance will take place. The Evangelical Alliance is a network of churches and associations with an evangelical-reformation background in which Christians unite in their common faith. The theme this year is: *Praying and serving together.*

The "Prayer Week for Christian Unity" follows on from **January 18th to 25th** and has *Acts 2 v.42* as the theme. The Ecumenical Council and the Papal Council for the Promotion of Christian unity are jointly issuing written guidelines. This prayer week will demonstrate how the churches, looking beyond all their differences, have a common spiritual core that can be experienced in joint prayer and worship services.

Prayer:

- **Pray according to John 17 v.20-24 and humbly bow before God for the divisions in the body of Christ**
- **For reconciliation of Christians within churches with internal divisions**
- **That more and more Christians would come together to pray** -RS-

Keep praying

As mentioned before, the danger from terrorist attack is very high. Keep praying for protection.

Following the decision of the party chiefs of the CDU and FDP in parliament to allow a free vote on the *pre-implantation genetic diagnosis* (PIGD) issue, many of the politicians are forming opinions on how they should vote. We pray that they make the right decision in this process.

Other events for prayer

- 01.01.2011** World Day of Peace of the Catholic Church
- 27.01.2011** Holocaust Memorial Day

God bless you

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