

CALL OF THE WATCHMEN

March 2011

If God's people will humble themselves ...

"When I shut up the heavens so that there is no rain, , if my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land."

(2 Chronicles 7 v.13-14)

I am sure that these Bible verses have already been an incentive and an encouragement for many to pray for our land. This prayer with the promise of an answer requires three active steps: *humble oneself, seek God and repent*. The first important step is to "humble oneself". It is easily missed. What does it really mean? Some suggestions: make peace, accept one another rather than criticise, speak well of others, forgiveness, seek common ground, serve others who appear undeserving, forsake selfish cares and trust in God.

Fasting can also be an active step towards humility. In this way I show that I want to allow myself to become weak and depend on God.

The 40 day period of fasting (Lent) before Easter begins on March 9th. Let us use this time to actively humble ourselves so that our prayers will be heard. -RS-

Israel and recent developments in Egypt

In the past weeks there have been extensive demonstrations and great unrest in Israel's neighbouring country of Egypt. President Mubarak has been deposed. The army has taken over power. The constitution has been suspended, the government dissolved and in six months there will be free, democratic elections. Here are a few thoughts for your prayers.

1. Israel is watching the developments with great concern. There is the danger that by democratic means radical forces will come to power, as already happened in Germany (Hitler), more recently in Gaza (Hamas) and currently in Lebanon (Hezbollah). In a similar way the seizure of power in Iran in 1979 was accomplished in several stages. The radical Islamic Muslim Brotherhood is the strongest and best organised opposition group in Egypt.
2. At the same time there is a spiritual awakening in Egypt. It seems that around one million Muslims have become believers. Converting to Christianity is however still very dangerous.
3. In Isaiah 19 v.16-25 there are declarations about Egypt that are generally accepted as end-time prophecy. It is quite possible that we are living in the times when both aspects of this prophecy are being fulfilled step by step.

Prayer:

- **For believers in Egypt: that they will receive prophetic revelation and direction so that they can understand the "signs of the times", and that the political developments will indeed bring them religious freedom.**

- **That the Lord keeps his firm hand over the peace treaty between Egypt and Israel and for his continued blessing on Israel and Egypt.**
- **For the fulfilment of God's prophetic purposes according to Isaiah 19 v.16ff at the appointed time.**
- **For God's gracious hand to be over all the current unrest in the Arab-Muslim world and in Iran.** -HE-

The kingdom of God in our society

What is the "kingdom of God"? What immediately comes to mind? For most of you it will be: the church, evangelism, the worship service. And this is certainly not wrong and we should rejoice when we see growth in all of these. But that is not the full picture.

Jesus disclosed many different aspects of the kingdom of God in parables. In one of them he likened it to yeast that was mixed into a large amount of flour until it worked all through the dough. Here he was saying: "Disciples, your "church" really is the kingdom of God that can be found wherever God has called it to go. You live in the "flour of society" – in your family, in your neighbourhood, in your school, in your work... Wherever you go, you bring the leavened dough for change, not by force, but steady and lasting change." For many Christians their lives are divided into two parts: a Christian part with a quiet time, house group, church service and another part with work as the world demands. The transformational power of their leaven is weak.

Others say in their hearts: "In the name of the Lord of the world, JESUS, I come forward as his appointed one to build his kingdom here on earth. In the Spirit I take responsibility within my area of calling and gifting. I have a mandate from the King to reign according to his ways and standards." And even if outwardly you are only a humble servant, inwardly you are setting the spiritual atmosphere with prayer in the name of Jesus. It is all about knowing who you are in Christ – that you pray – that you act according to kingdom principles – that you speak – as the situation arises. (Romans 12 v.1-2.)

Whether you are the boss or the apprentice, teacher or student – it makes no difference, Jesus is the only one who counts. And wherever he is, there is the kingdom of God. He is with you in every part of your life. Wherever!!

Prayer:

- **For our churches, that they will fundamentally widen their understanding of the kingdom of God (1 Peter 2 v.9).**
- **That all disciples of Jesus will receive a spiritual vision revealing the changes they can bring about in their sphere of influence, and that they act accordingly (Matthew 5 v.13-16, Philipians 2 v.14-15).**
- **Strength for all those who are already living out their calling in their place of work (Colossians 1 v.9-14).**

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Emigration and immigration

According to official estimates around two million East Germans have moved to the west of the republic since 1990. The loss of well educated young people in the east is noticeable. The main reason for the migration is better job prospects. In this way Germany is also part of the European east-west migration movement. However, 150 - 180,000, mostly highly qualified Germans, are leaving the country each year, heading primarily for Switzerland, Austria, USA or Scandinavia. The main reasons are high taxes, social contributions and bureaucracy. On the other hand the influx has continuously fallen for several years because of strict immigration requirements. From May 2011, Germany and Austria will be fully opening their labour markets, as the last member states of the European Union to do so, for workers from Eastern Europe. Skilled workers from these countries have found simpler immigration requirements in other EU countries. For low and medium qualified workers, Germany is attractive for earning money and for training and higher education. Highly qualified workers need recognition of their professional qualifications at an equivalent level and it is also important that they feel welcome in the country. The German culture is known for its avoidance of any uncertainty and it tends to resist anything that is different rather than integrating it into the culture. For this reason Germany is not a major destination for immigrants and must depend primarily on the potential of its own population. Let us pray for these people movements at a European level, as the losers are always the eastern countries of Europe.

Prayer:

- **For working conditions that give room for creativity and entrepreneurs.**
- **For the creation of better job prospects for young people in the east of Germany.**
- **For better appreciation and integration of the immigrants who are living here (Matthew 25 v.35).**
- **For just wage structures throughout the European Union (Leviticus 25 v.17).** -KH-

Animal factory farming and the consequences

The building of new "animal factories" in Germany has been booming for the past six years. Animals are penned in and have to endure cruel treatment. To prevent the animals becoming aggressive in the confined conditions, pigs, for example, have their curly tails nipped off without pain killers. Young pigs are castrated without anaesthetic. Large animal factories are always being erected near villages with few inhabitants, because by a change in the law they are no longer treated as industrial buildings but instead as agricultural enterprises. In the Hanover area alone, chicken stalls for 14 million chickens will be built – and 400 million chickens are already being slaughtered each year!

The result of mass animal factory farming is that the ground water is being polluted with nitrates – the upper

limits of the EU have already clearly been exceeded – and the land is being over-fertilised with slurry. The consequences of the pursuit of the maximisation of profits in animal farming in our land are largely hidden from us. When an animal is only seen as a meat producer, this shows total disrespect for creation and its Creator. God's mercy extends to animals as well (Jonah 4 v.11)! Germany does not need all this meat, most of which is exported and creates havoc in the international market, especially in the third world where the farmers cannot keep up with these subsidised cheap products from the EU. Even in this country the conventionally managed farms cannot compete with these cheaply manufactured meat products.

Prayer:

- **Pray for forgiveness for all the production of "cheap meat" at the expense of creation (Romans 8 v.19-21).**
- **For government and society to think again – and for no increase in support for "agricultural factories" (Genesis 2 v.15).**
- **Blessings on everyone who is actively involved in bringing about change in these methods of meat production.** -RS-

40 Days of Prayer and Fasting

This year the initiative "40 Days of Prayer and Fasting for our Land" is linked with "Hope 2011", a special initiative of Christian youth organisations. A prayer poster and prayer cards with weekly prayer topics (in German) are available from "Neues Leben Stiftung":

(info@werte-stiftung.de or info@down-to-earth.de).

For further information and prayer requests see

www.40tagebetenundfasten.de.

Prayer:

- **Pray that many Christians, especially young people, will take part in these initiatives.** -RS-

Keep praying

Let us continue in prayer for the state elections according to the "Lord's Prayer" – Our Father ...

Election Date	State
20.03	Saxony-Anhalt
27.03	Baden-Wuerttemberg
27.03	Rhineland-Pfalz

Other events for prayer

11.03 Prayer Day for the State of Baden-Wuerttemberg (dhbest@web.de)

19.03 Fila – Women's Day of Prayer

27.03 Prayer Day in the Harz region

Further information is available on our website (in German) under "Material" – "Andere Gebetsaktionen".

God bless you

Ortwin Schweitzer and Rosemarie Stresemann