

April 2011

Intimacy

I recently read a report from an interview with the well-known prayer leader, Suzette Hattingh, that touched me deeply. She said that there was a time when she had really lost the fire and joy of prayer. She was praying for hours about “religious” things, especially her “projects”. Then one day she said that “God showed me that my first calling is to be his beloved child and then to be an intercessor. I slowly put this revelation into practice. I separated my prayers for my work from my prayer time just to be alone with God. As soon as I did this, the fire came back into my life and I have never lost it again.”

It’s really quite simple. But it is true for so many. I work myself “to death” doing things for God and try very hard to have a disciplined prayer life. But I am not aware that I am losing my personal relationship with Him. Instead of an “Abba, dear Father” relationship we develop a “working relationship” like the older son in Luke 15 v.29.

Let us take time once again for our completely intimate relationship with our Lord. “Take me away, Lord, into your royal chambers, into the secret place, where your love surrounds me.” That is the very best thing! (See also Ephesians 3 v.17-19.)

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Transition in the Arab world in 2011

At this present time (as of March 16th) it is not yet clear if the uprising in the Arab world will continue. Unlike in Tunisia and in Egypt, in Libya and Bahrain the army has been used against the civilian population. And not with their own soldiers – these would not fire against their own brothers – but with mercenaries and foreign troops.

Are we witnessing an historical transition similar to the time of the fall of communism and the political system of the Eastern bloc? The revolt of the Arab people is not in the first instance a call for a western style democracy, but it is the determined will of the people to actually come into the 21st century. Until now the Arabs (all except the oil-barons) have watched developments in the wider world only from the sidelines. There are few rich people in their environments, but masses of poor people, a population explosion, corruption and authoritarian power structures which have suppressed any political movements or parties. The United Nations gave a warning about this explosive mixture ten years ago. Now it has exploded. The people want a share in economic prosperity, an open society with freedom of expression and equal rights politically (democracy).

This transition cannot be held back any longer and would also bring about a change in Islam. An open society with freedom of speech does not tolerate political or religious dictatorship. There would be a modern alternative to an Islamic state (like Iran) that includes religious freedom.

Prayer:

- **May the freedom movement – through revolution or evolution – take hold in all Islamic states and bring changes. May God, who loves righteousness and justice, give prosperity and freedom to the Arab people. Psalm 45 v.1-8.**
- **That Islam will lose its grip on the religious hard-liners and that there will be freedom of thought and religion, including freedom for mission and to change religion.**
- **Pray for a wise foreign policy within the German government towards this uprising and transition.**

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Earthquake in Japan and the consequences for nuclear energy policy

We watch the events in Japan with great shock and sadness. It is a country that has long been closed to the gospel. In increasingly rapid succession our world is being shaken politically, economically, and in the natural realm. It is like birth pains – God is preparing us for the final coming of his kingdom!

After the devastating earthquake in Japan it is clear that, despite all official assurances, nuclear technology involves extreme risks, not all of which man is able to foresee or protect against. If the events in Japan are a “Mene-Tekel-Parsin” (the writing on the wall to show God’s judgement over the presumptions of men – see Daniel 5 v.25), we now need above all to humble ourselves, so that things will not continue on as if nothing had happened. Angela Merkel has now shown a welcome willingness to think again. The seven oldest nuclear power stations have been shut down for the time being and all nuclear power stations will undergo a security check within three months. The CDU/FDP government has therefore stepped back from its original program, which did not have support from other parties, for an extension of their operational lifetime. The future of nuclear energy is once again right in the centre of the political debate.

Prayer:

- **First of all we ask with all our hearts for God’s mercy on the people in Japan - that in their need they will be open for the gospel and that they will be blessed by substantial help and comfort also from Germany. (James 5 v.11)**
- **Come Holy Spirit and give us and our politicians the will to humble ourselves before God and man. (Ezekiel 33 v.11).**
- **Wisdom and courage for all in political authority and responsibility to turn what is now known from this disaster into clear decisions concerning our policies for energy production for the well-being of our land – even if it means further closures of atomic reactors.**

-RS-

Reform of the German army

Thomas de Maizière (57) has moved from the Ministry of the Interior to the Ministry of Defence. He is already familiar with the army through his father who once held the position of Chief of Staff. Thomas de Maizière is a believer who is involved on a voluntary basis in the leadership of the German Protestant Church Congress. During the time of the "Grand Coalition" (CDU/SPD) he was manager of the Chancellor's office. He is recognised as a peacemaker in areas of conflict.

The Minister is now faced with a new challenge with the proposed reform of the army. What is involved?

With the financial goal of saving 8.3 billion Euros in the defence budget by 2015, the army will have to be reduced by 55,000 soldiers to 185,000. National service will come to an end on July 1st this year.

In addition to about 170,000 professional and regular soldiers, there needs to be another 15,000 men and women offering service as volunteers. At present not enough volunteers have signed up, so there will now be a wide-reaching advertising campaign.

With the reduction of the army, about 400 army facilities will be redundant. It must be decided which barracks to close and which to keep open. Since these closures will have an effect on the economy of the region, this will be a contentious issue.

The experience in other EU countries shows that the reorganisation of a professional army does not produce savings in the short term, as there must be investment in the recruitment of volunteers and in the reorganisation itself. How can the requirement for savings be reconciled with the need to reorganize? This is another crunch issue.

The war in Afghanistan increasingly requires the attention of the Defence Minister. His forerunner, zu Guttenberg, was highly regarded for taking good care of the troops. He brought the war to the attention of the general public and the soldiers experienced more support for their dangerous mission. The war is getting fiercer with hour-long battles, heavy casualties and an increasing number of soldiers lost. How can we succeed in bringing this war to an end?

Prayer:

- **Wisdom, prudence and leadership of the Holy Spirit for the Minister and his staff in the running of the ministry (1 Kings 3 v.9).**
- **For divine solutions for the politically contentious issues that will arise from the reorganisation of the army. (Romans 12 v.2)**
- **That the deployment of the army in Afghanistan can be ended successfully. Pray for guardian angels and protection for the lives of our soldiers (Psalm 140 v.1-8).**

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Terrorist attack of a different nature

There was a terrorist attack at the beginning of March on US soldiers at the Frankfurt Airport, where two soldiers were killed and two were seriously injured. A targeted fifth victim was protected by the jamming of a cartridge in the gun so that it could no longer fire and the attacker could then be overpowered. It was an Islamist motivated attack, but of a different nature to previous attacks. The attacker had been driven to his action by hate sermons and hate videos. He did not belong to any terrorist network. This action of a single, independent attacker presents big problems to the security authorities. To search for such attackers through the Internet requires very many specially trained operators. Since the possibilities for the detection of terrorists by police in this way are limited, our country particularly needs the protection of angels.

Prayer:

- **Thanks for the protection from terrorist attacks until now and also for the particular form of protection in this case.**
- **Pray for many guardian angels to help identify potential attackers in advance (Psalm 91 v.11)**
- **For the new Minister of the Interior Hans-Peter Friedrich: that God's Spirit guides him in the daily work of his office.**

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Pray for us

The annual meeting of regional coordinators for the Call of the Watchmen takes place in Friedrichroda from April 5th to 7th. The meeting is for sharing, encouragement and equipping. **Please pray** this month especially for all involved in the organisation of the Call of the Watchmen – for protection and wisdom and an increasing awareness of the will of God. We also need protection for our health.

-RS-

Keep praying: PIGD

The German government will conduct the first reading of the three submitted proposals for the law on Pre-Implantation Genetic Diagnosis on April 7th. The vote will probably take place shortly before the summer recess. We keep praying that PIGD will not be allowed.

Other events for prayer

- 30.03-02.04** JesusHouse – Youth evangelism live from the Porsche Arena in Stuttgart and transmission to many locations in Germany, Austria and Switzerland
- 19.-26.04** Passover (Jewish Feast Days)
- 24.04** Easter Day – end of the 40 Days of Prayer and Fasting for our Land

With special good wishes for Passover and Easter

Ortwin Schweitzer and Rosemarie Stresemann