

May 2011

The fire on the altar of the Call of the Watchmen

"The fire on the altar must be kept burning; it must not go out." (Leviticus 6 v.12)

The current "shakings" in the world are really drawing our attention. As part of his discourse on the end times (Luke 21 v.25-36) Jesus exhorts us to be always on the watch and to pray. At the meeting of regional coordinators in April, we asked the question, how the Call of the Watchmen can advance and grow in spiritual strength.

When we started the Call of the Watchmen in 2000, we wanted to build an altar of prayer for Germany on which the fire would never go out. Day in, day out, *24 hours a day*, we were to bring to God our spiritual sacrifices (see 1 Peter 2 v.5). Praise, worship, thanks and intercession should never cease. This is still our goal today: that the glory of God will fill our land and bring about real change.

We then began purely as a 24 hour prayer movement. Prayer groups would organize themselves into time slots. We now know that only about one fifth of the 290 prayer groups actually cover 24 hours. From the beginning we had also called *for fasting*, whenever possible, on the day of prayer. In order to keep the altar fire going, it continuously needs the firewood of our commitment. We therefore are asking you most sincerely to check if it would be possible for your group to again cover the night hours. Perhaps there are some older brothers and sisters, who no longer have to be up early each morning. Please let us know should any group decide to cover 24 hours in future.

We will also grow in spiritual strength when we not only intercede, but also combine prayer with praise, thanks and the proclamation of God's word.

Prayer:

- **Come, Holy Spirit, help us to be more deeply committed, so that the fire can burn more brightly on the altar of the Call of the Watchmen.**
- **That the body of Jesus in this land will wake up and exercise its calling to be a royal priesthood with an increased commitment to praise and prayer.**
(1 Peter 2 v.9) -RS-

The state elections on March 27th and the consequences

The commentators are calling the results of the elections in Rhineland-Pfalz (Rh-Pfz) and Baden-Wuerttemberg (BW) "**an historic change**". The reason: in BW the CDU lost power after almost 60 years as the ruling party and with Winfried Kretschmann gained a prime minister from the "Greens" – the first in the history of the Federal Republic of Germany. This victory was certainly due to the protests over the past months against the reconstruction of the main railway station in Stuttgart which were organised by the Greens and the melt-down in Fukushima when the German national government reacted with an about-turn in its nuclear policy. This was understandable, but signified a loss of credibility during the final stages of the election campaign.

What are **the consequences** for our land?

- The six votes from BW in the States Council (upper house) in Berlin now belong to the opposition which means that governing will be more difficult for Angela Merkel. She now needs the support of the opposition before enacting new policies and laws.
- Although the CDU is still the strongest force in parliament, it can no longer rule effectively since the FDP has collapsed. If it does not recover, the election result in BW will be repeated in 2013 for the national parliament.
- Because of a very high turn-out, the Leftist party fared badly with 2.8% (BW) and 3% (Rh-Pfz) of the vote. The victory march of the Leftist party in government in the west has been stopped.
- Stuttgart 21 (railway station issue) and Gorleben (nuclear waste issue) laid bare the deep dissatisfaction of citizens with our form of democracy. "Angry" citizens want to be asked about things and want to join in the discussion as "involved" citizens. The basic question being asked is about proper consultation with the citizens and ultimately about the constitution.
- The key issue in the present crisis is however the **loss of trust** of the citizens in their leaders in government. Because of this, humanly speaking, Kretschmann owes his success to his credibility and, spiritually speaking, to his humility.

Prayer:

- **With Psalm 96 we honour God, proclaiming His lordship and trusting Him in this historic change of power in our land.**
- **We pray for our leaders in government to act according to Psalm 101, so that citizens can regain confidence in them.**
- **For the up-coming elections this year: for workable majorities and the elimination of radical groups.**
- **For Angela Merkel: for clarity now in her political line and for encouragement and protection.** -OS-

The new Minister of the Interior and his portfolio

In the latest Cabinet reshuffle Hans-Peter Friedrich (CSU) became our new Interior Minister. The 54 year-old Franconian (from the Franken area in north Bavaria) belongs to the Protestant Church and is married with three children. This is his first post as minister. For him faith is important. He has long been committed to strengthen once again the Christian foundation of the CSU party. When he took office he put into question whether the Islam faith really belonged to Germany and consequently he contradicted the perception of Federal President Christian Wulff. This was sharply criticised by representatives of Muslim groups as well as by opposition parties. The first Islam Conference that Friedrich chaired at the end of March turned out to be very controversial because he wanted to enlist the cooperation of Muslims to uncover dangerous Islamists.

Friedrich is a friend of Israel. On his first foreign trip as Interior Minister, he acquainted himself in Israel with procedures for fighting terrorism.

This stressful job of Interior Minister includes not only such issues as the integration of Muslims into our society but also the protection from terrorist threats in Germany. For this reason he is calling for, among other things, the reintroduction of the abandoned mass data storage system. He is chief of police. He is also responsible in government for sport and the important issue of "restructuring in the east".

Prayer:

- **Thanks for the fundamentally Christian focus of the new Interior Minister.**
- **Pray for wisdom and courage, that Friedrich will understand how to effectively bring his Christian faith into the political arena.**
- **For good cooperation between all those who work with the ministry. We welcome the Holy Spirit as advisor for all issues in the portfolio of the ministry!**

-RS-

Israel

The German-Israeli relationship is under pressure. What exactly are the contentious issues? Here are some of them:

- The cross-party vote in parliament in July 2010 against Israel's blockade of the Gaza strip.
- The continuing practice of the Foreign Office (under the leadership of Foreign Minister Westerwelle) to circumvent sanctions against Iran for the benefit of German business interests (indirectly, using other countries as third parties) and in so doing to soften their effect.
- The inconsistent assessment of the opportunities and the risks associated with the unrest in the Arab world. Germany sees only the opportunities along with the majority of the western world. Israel is very concerned about the (more probable) impending risks from Islamic power groups.

In order to benefit from these perceived opportunities from the unrest and to strengthen the forces of democracy, Israel is being placed under tremendous pressure by the western world (including Germany) to advance the peace process.

Based on this assessment and intention, Germany, which has recently gained a seat on the UN Security Council, in mid-February voted **FOR** the condemnation of Israel's settlement building policy. The USA – as always up until now – exercised its veto right. Germany's condemnation caused particularly great annoyance and uncertainty in Israel. Israel was no longer sure how Germany (possibly along with the EU) would act when in September the UN is expected to endorse by a majority vote a unilateral call for a Palestinian state (without the agreement of Israel). The visit of Netanyahu to Berlin in April brought the following statement: Germany will not vote for this motion. This was really good news after so little recently.

It was also an answer to prayer.

Prayer:

- **Pray for forgiveness for Germany visibly drawing back from Israel – for a return to behaviour that brings blessing (Genesis 12 v.3) – especially when Germany votes in the UN Security Council.**
- **Removal of bad advisors and the strengthening of the influence of spiritual/biblical revelation through good advisors at this time. (Example: Joseph's wisdom before Pharaoh – see Acts 7 v.10)**

-HE-

October 3rd – thanks – celebrate – pray

On the occasion of the celebration of the 20th anniversary of German reunification last year, Christians all over Germany participated in public events, held church services and interceded for our land in prayer meetings. Taking this further, the Project Team "Thank God for October 3rd" now want to encourage all Christians in the land to help arrange events for our national holiday in the coming years. The younger generation knows very little about this miracle of God among our people. We have the duty, just like the Israelites, to tell the next generation about the great acts of God in our history (Deuteronomy 6 v.21-23). Think about how you can participate and help set up events for our national holiday in your area. Now is the time to approach the local authorities when you want to plan something together for your town or village. Many ideas and suggestions for possible events may be found on the website www.3-oktober-gottseidank.de.

Prayer:

- **That more churches and prayer groups take an active part in arranging events for October 3rd and share the vision to really put Psalm 103 v.1-5 into practice.**
- **For creative ideas on how Christians can influence or initiate a public celebration.**

-RS-

Keep praying

In April at the first reading, there was a debate over the three proposals for new laws to control Pre-Implantation Genetic Diagnosis (PIGD). Much prayer is still needed so that the draft which totally forbids the practice of PIGD gets the majority vote.

Pray also for further breakthroughs of God's grace and mercy in the upheavals in the Arab world and in Japan (1 Timothy 2 v.1-4).

Other events for prayer

- 14.05** Day of prayer for all generations together in Luedenscheid - STREAM (<http://bit.ly/eEtBID>)
- 21.05** Day of Prayer "Together for the Rhine-Main Area" (<http://bit.ly/fVpiBn>)
- 22.05** State and local elections in Bremen
- 28.05** Prayer conference "Called to be a Light for the Nations" in Augsburg (<http://bit.ly/huvi08>)

God bless you

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