

June 2011

### The best kept secret

In Colossians 1 v.26 Paul called it: “ – the mystery that has been kept hidden for ages and generations”. According to 1 Peter 1 v.10-12, the prophets, even the angels, longed to be able to look into this secret about God’s purposes for the world. And this has now taken place! “To them [the saints] God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.” (Colossians 1 v.27).

The mystery of God is, namely, Christ (2 v.2), and more precisely “**Christ in you**”. It is therefore not only about the cleansing from sin through the blood of Christ, and not only about living a good Christian life, but about *Christ living in us*. This is something else. This is life with power which flows through body and soul, which reveals the “glorious riches” of heaven, Christ in us – that is “the hope of glory”!

Do you want to feel Christ and his life within you? So pray in the Spirit for revelation. He will make it known to you. He has made it known even to me. -OS-

### Politicians encourage the Call of the Watchmen

Shortly before the Easter holidays we wrote a letter to all the Members of Parliament in Berlin, in which we thanked them for their work, for which they often receive only criticism, and wished them all the best for Easter. We included the Call of the Watchmen brochure with the CD and a short explanation. Here are extracts from replies:

Dr. Frank-Walter Steinmeier (SPD)

*“The information about your prayer network as well as your calling to develop “politically oriented prayer”, thereby bringing together social politics and faith, is very important and exciting. It is good to know that you as Christians are getting involved in taking this responsibility for our society! I wish you – on behalf of Mr. Steinmeier – every success in your work.”*

Federal Minister Dr. Norbert Roettgen (CDU)

*“As Christians we can be assured that God answers prayer. Therefore Dr. Roettgen is very thankful that you and the prayer network come alongside his work as minister in prayer and thereby actively support it. The minister wishes you and your Call of the Watchmen prayer network God’s blessings for your work.”*

Responses with thanks also came from Julia Kloeckner (CDU), Rainer Arnold (SPD) and from Alexander Funk (CDU/CSU Youth). These replies show that our prayers are welcome and appreciated. This is very encouraging!

Prayer:

- **Wisdom, courage and insight for our politicians, especially those who stand as followers of Jesus. (1 Timothy 2 v.1-2)**
- **Pray that they set the well-being of the land above any party interests. (Jeremiah 29 v.7)**
- **Pray for their families as they are away from home so often. (Psalm 127)** -OS-

### Prayer network over Europe

Under the leadership of Jeff Fountain from Holland, a large European congress – Hope for Europe – took place at the beginning of May in Budapest, Hungary. The 500 or so participants returned to their respective countries on May 13<sup>th</sup> filled with a spirit of hope and ready to take part in shaping Europe within their various fields of activity. Concerned Christians are always asking whether Europe might eventually be the “beast” of end-time revelation. My friend Jeff Fountain answered: “Of course – if Christians, who are called to be light and salt in the world, stand uninvolved on the sidelines and only engage in their church activities. If Europe degenerates into a greedy, ungodly and self-serving “beast”, it will not be because this would be God’s will or purpose for Europe, but because his people have been disobedient and knew no better than to complain from the sidelines and do nothing. In this way such prophecies are self-fulfilling.”

#### My special field of activity at the conference - PRAYER

Since autumn 2006 an international group of national prayer leaders meet every six months in the country that currently holds the EU Council Presidency. This group now includes leaders from 15 countries and is called the “European Union of Prayer”. Intercessors come together who have a commitment on their hearts to pray for Europe. Several important countries are however not represented, such as the UK, France, Italy and Finland. We experience a fellowship together as Europeans that only God’s Spirit can establish through prayer. There are always precious moments of reconciliation between our nations.

Just one prayer network is not however enough to cover the whole of Europe in prayer. So it was a great step forward when leaders from 6 to 9 prayer networks across Europe met for the first time at the end of November in Brussels and felt that “this is God’s time”. In the diversity of their prayer styles and strategies, they all wanted to extend the prayer coverage over Europe. There are now a further 8 or 9 groups on the list who could hopefully be at the next meeting.

Prayer:

- **Give thanks for God’s calling on Europe to live by the gospel and to spread it to the nations. (Matthew 28 v.18-20)**
- **Pray for a vision and desire within the church of Jesus to pray for Europe to fully enter into its calling. (Proclaim over Europe: Psalm 96 v.7-13)**
- **For the prayer movements to quickly grow together for united intercession for Europe. (John 17 v.20-23)**

-OS-

### **Consequences of the FDP crisis for the government**

After the disastrous defeat of the FDP in the last three state elections, there was a power struggle in the party leadership at the beginning of May. Guido Westerwelle, who had achieved still the best result for the FDP in its history with 14.6% of the national vote, has dramatically lost credibility with the public and in his own party within only one and a half years. He was pressured to give up the leadership of the party, had to resign from the position of Vice-Chancellor, and he only held on to the office of Foreign Minister. This led to a cabinet reshuffle. Philipp Roesler handed the Health Ministry over to his Junior Minister Daniel Bahr and took over the post as Vice-Chancellor and the Ministry of Trade and Industry.

With the promotion of Philipp Roesler (38) as new party leader and the election of Daniel Bahr (34) and Christian Lindner (32) to the party leadership team, the FDP is now trying to make a new start with predominantly young politicians. They want to sharpen once again the party image. This will lead to increased discussion within the coalition over the best solutions to political issues. Controversial matters are, for example, tax policies, the planned extension of the anti-terrorist laws and how to go forward with nuclear energy. To prevent this again coming to tedious "trench warfare" that will only slow down the work of the coalition, we need prayer.

#### **Prayer:**

- **Pray that God will use the diversity within the parties to enable good solutions to be found for the issues facing our country. (Proverbs 15 v.22)**
- **For the will, on both sides of the coalition, to work together effectively. (Psalm 133)**
- **Success for the work of the new Health Minister Daniel Bahr and the new Vice-Chancellor and Trade and Industry Minister Philipp Roesler. -RS-**

### **Atheism in the East of Germany**

In the first ten years of the GDR regime in former East Germany, the church was consistently opposed as a part of the old state authority and as a rival to the SED (Socialist Unity Party of Germany) rule, and there was an enforced secularisation of the socialist society. An atheistic centred culture was developed and was used to establish a line of demarcation with the Federal Republic (West Germany). During the 41 years of its existence, a more distinctive atheism emerged in the people of East Germany than in any other socialist country. The number of people with no church association rose from 5% in 1948 to 75% in 1989.

With the fall of the "iron curtain", the ideological doctrine of philosophical and historical materialism also fell and the church got back its freedom. Despite great investments in buildings and staff, the decline in religious faith continued. The East Germans seemed to be immune to religion and didn't feel that anything was missing. The absence of any religious connection is to be expected. But often young people now no longer know the difference

between Christian and atheistic. A new mission effort is seen as hopeless. The church is faced primarily with the preservation of the status quo.

The clearly stated goal of the socialist production industry was to increasingly satisfy the material and cultural needs of the working population. With the fall of the Berlin wall this principle found its fulfilment for many people in the flush of consumerism that followed, and this certainly contributed to the suppression of any hunger for the gospel.

#### **Prayer:**

- **Give thanks for the freedom to now spread the gospel all over Germany. (Psalm 145)**
- **Call fervently out to God about the oblivion in the people of this land towards HIM. (Jeremiah 2 v.5-13)**
- **Pray for a new hunger and thirst for the gospel. (John 4 v.13-15) -KH-**

### **The pressure on Israel is increasing**

In order to be able to reach the goal of "a free, sovereign Palestinian state in Gaza and the West Bank with Jerusalem as its capital", the two largest Palestinian organisations Fatah and Hamas have resolved their differences under Egyptian mediation. A "reconciliation agreement" was signed in May. To put Israel under pressure, Palestinian leader Mahmud Abbas now plans to call unilaterally for the establishment of a Palestinian state, shortly before the start of the UN General Assembly on September 19<sup>th</sup>. The UN assembly should then move to recognise this state.

During the visit of Benjamin Netanyahu on April 7<sup>th</sup> 2011, Germany clearly spoke out against this move. "Christians for Israel" in Germany has now started a petition to show support for this position. Let us together show to the German government with as many signatures as possible that we stand behind its position!

The petition will be first handed over to the government on June 5<sup>th</sup> and then again on September 10<sup>th</sup>.

#### **Prayer:**

- **For a good response and the success of the petition.**
- **That the German government can convince other nations to support its position regarding Israel. (Pray Psalm 2 for Israel) -RS-**

### **Other events for prayer**

Please pray for protection from terrorist attacks and the success of evangelistic outreaches during the following large events:

- 01.06-05.06** Protestant Church Congress in Dresden
- 11.06-13.06** Pentecostal Youth Meeting
- 19.06-26.06** Kieler Woche (Kiel Week - Sailing Regatta)
- 26.06-07.07** Women's Football World Cup in Germany

*God bless you*

*Ortwin Schweitzer and Rosemarie Stresemann*