

July-August 2011

Thoughts for your vacation

I recently read that Germans are “at the top of the list of those who moan and complain”, although things are better for them at almost every level than for others. Only 56% are contented in their lives and on the global scale for happiness Germans lie in 47th place behind countries like Nigeria, Kyrgyzstan, and even Mali!

Why are the Germans so unhappy? The answer: their “dissatisfaction”. Dissatisfaction is burdening us more and more. We are on a downward spiral. How do we get out of it? Quite simply: “Thankfulness always brings a new dimension into life”. This is true because the thankful person not only enjoys the benefit of good things but also recognises the giver of good things. “Thank you, Lord, and I want to thank you that I can be thankful!” Whoever gets used to thinking in this new way also recognises the giver behind the not-so-good things and learns to “always giving thanks ... for everything” (Ephesians 5 v.20).

Here is a suggestion for your vacation. Make a list of everything for which you can thank God. You may even add to the list each day. And then do it. But you must be thankful for specific things! Otherwise nothing will change. Start with Psalm 50 v.23.

Furthermore, as thankful people we will also change the grumpy mood of the German population. We want it to be bright in this land! -OS-

Answer to prayer

In October 2010 we prayed that the code of practice for physicians would not be relaxed to allow a doctor to assist in a suicide. At the end of May, it was decided for the new code of practice that “doctors ... are ... not allowed to kill patients who want to die. They may not offer or provide any assistance for suicide.” Thanks be to God!

Signs and wonders – healings are increasing

At the end of May, Ortwin and I (Rosemarie) witnessed the tremendous healing power of God during a conference of the “Jeremia Werk” ministry in Augsburg. All the participants were praying for a paralysed man who had already experienced a return of some sensation in his body after previous prayer for healing. He had been sitting in a wheelchair but was now just able to take two steps on crutches. We then saw how he could let the crutches fall and with every new step his strength grew, such that in the end he did not need the wheelchair any longer.

We are hearing about such powerful miracles of God in our land much more often in these days. Signs and wonders are an indispensable part of the presentation of the gospel by which so many people (especially Muslims) are coming to faith in Jesus. (Matthew 10 v.7-8)

Prayer:

- **Thanks for all miracles of healing. (Psalm107)**
- **Pray for an increase in signs and wonders. (Acts 4 v.29-30)**

- **That there will be many miracles of healing during evangelistic outreach this summer. (Acts 14 v.3) -RS-**

Stepping back from nuclear energy – and the future for our land

Who could have imagined that only six months later the German government would reverse the decision taken at the end of last year to extend the life of nuclear power stations? The path for a withdrawal from nuclear energy as agreed upon in 2001 by the then red-green government appeared to have been blocked. This latest decision came under strong pressure from the energy industry lobby. But nothing is impossible for God! No-one had expected such radical changes and the political courage to go against the interests of the energy industry (for which we had prayed already in November 2010). This sudden change in policy sets a new direction for the future of the country.

It brings however big problems within the coalition and its supporters because it puts the overall credibility of its policies in question. Laws to establish the future direction, which will have great significance for our land, will now be hurriedly passed before the summer recess in parliament (starting July 8th).

What is the future direction?

- According to the set timetable, all nuclear reactors will be shut down by 2022.
- The amount of energy from renewable sources needs to be more than doubled by 2020 from the present 16.5% to 35%. Therefore the electrical power network has to be extended and storage capabilities created. The building of new power lines in a short time will be made possible by a special law for an accelerated extension program. This will bring changes to the landscape. Protests from local conservationist organisations and community interest groups against this massive intrusion into nature are to be expected.
- New power stations will have to be built (coal, natural gas or bio-fuel-fired stations) to make up for the short-fall in energy production which will increase CO₂ emissions once again.
- The search for a possible nuclear waste storage depot will be extended to all of the German states.

This stepping back from nuclear power could release a new wave of creative ideas to tackle the resulting problem issues. There will certainly still be many more discussions about how this change in energy policy is best managed.

Prayer:

- **Thanks for the general acceptance at the political level to move away from nuclear energy.**
- **For the release of creative ideas and for many new discoveries in the field of renewable energy sources.**
- **That the best solutions will be recognised and implemented by those responsible for the new energy policy. (Matthew 6 v.10) -RS-**

Afghanistan

Last month four German soldiers were killed within 10 days in attacks. The Northern Regional Commander Markus Kneip was also wounded. The next day he wrote: "I am praying for them [the families of the victims] and for the recovery of the wounded. God protect them." Kneip is a Christian who believes in prayer like many other of his 5000 German and 4000 American soldiers.

Despite much criticism, which almost everyone here in this country is hearing, those who know the situation on the ground in Afghanistan say that there is visible progress in many places: schools, also for girls; Taliban chiefs have recently been switching sides more and more; strengthening of the army; viable alternatives to poppy growing, etc. The principal goal is to build up Afghanistan such that there is an army and police force that in the long term can protect the country from falling back into Taliban domination. But this reconstruction will require the presence of foreign troops for a few more years.

In the meantime there are now some small underground Christian groups ...

Prayer:

- **Protection for the soldiers – comfort for the families of the victims – healing for the wounded and traumatised.**
- **Strength for the military medical teams and counsellors.**
- **Sustainable reconstruction of the country. Sensitivity of the military and aid workers for the culture of the local people.** -OS-

"... for kings and all those in authority"

For these, writes Paul in 1 Timothy 2 v.1-2, we should intercede and give thanks. "Kings" are the leaders who carry the main responsibilities. "All those in authority" are any who are entrusted with authority or responsibility at any level including those in supporting roles such as professional assistants, advisors and secretaries. We should pray for both groups.

Let us not forget that our entire democratic system is based upon the work of these men and women that work for us daily, be they full-time or voluntary, at the local, state or national level. Many are committed Christians who feel a call to politics in their lives.

The summer recess is now approaching for them all and a time of rest and relaxation from their work as well as a time for reflexion and new ideas. And above all time for their families.

Prayer:

- **Thanks for all the faithful work of these men and women at the various levels. Pray for specific names if you can. (1 Corinthians 15 v.58)**
- **Pray that they can let go of their work for the best relaxation and fresh inspiration. (1 Peter 5 v.7)**
- **Blessings on their families and for renewal in their relationships. (Psalm 128)** -OS-

Political action for persecuted Christians

Christians are the most persecuted faith community in the world. During 2010 we prayed in three of the months that the German government would be more strongly engaged in the protection of persecuted Christians. This was indeed agreed as an objective for the coalition.

The chairman of the CDU/CSU parliamentary party Volker Kauder has now taken this on as a serious issue. The protection of religious freedom world-wide should be a function of government. This was brought to public attention in December 2010 through a petition to the parliament. In this case, Islamic states which severely limit free speech and religious freedom on the grounds that they are protecting Islam from defamation were clearly censured. The government was requested to take a stand for religious freedom at all political levels. The media are also increasingly picking up on this issue.

Prayer:

- **Thanks for the stronger commitment of the German government to the issue of persecuted Christians and for the personal involvement of Volker Kauder.**
- **That human rights would also be afforded to Christians in the countries concerned. (Jeremiah 2 v.5-13)**
- **Pray for our persecuted brothers and sisters. (Proverbs 31 v.8-9)** -RS-

30 days of prayer for the Islamic/Muslim world

During Ramadan - the Islamic month of fasting – from August 1st - 30th, there is again a specific prayer call for which the German Evangelical Alliance has issued a prayer guide. Not only are the hearts of Muslims opened for the gospel through prayer, but it also changes our hearts when we bring our Islamic fellow citizens before the throne of God.

Prayer Guides in German: www.ead.de

Prayer Guides in English: www.30-days.net

Prayer:

- **Supernatural revelation of Jesus to the Muslims in Germany.**
- **For more workers to present the gospel to Muslim immigrants.**
- **Protection for all Muslim background converts** -RS-

Other events for prayer

There will be many Christian camps, both large and small, for children and young people during the holidays. We pray that the next generation will be won for Jesus and that they will be strengthened in him.

30.07-06.08 European YMCA Scouting and Jungschar Group ESG "Jamboree", Loreley, Rhineland.

16.08-21.08 World Youth Day of the Catholic Church in Madrid.

God's blessings for your vacation time
Ortwin Schweitzer and Rosemarie Stresemann