

CALL OF THE WATCHMEN

November 2011

Continuous prayer

Jesus taught his disciples to pray without ceasing and not be discouraged (Luke 18 v.1-8). This is exactly what we have been doing in the Call of the Watchmen since the Year 2000. Here is an encouraging example from Berlin where there was continuous prayer before the elections to the City Parliament. From the beginning of May until the day of the election in September a group of up to 15 intercessors gathered at the Town Hall or in front of the Parliament House every Wednesday. God answered this prayer in an amazing way. Through the entry of the "Pirate Party", the expected majority of the reds and greens was lost. Their coalition negotiations fell apart. Now the CDU will form a coalition which will also affect the building of majorities within the Federal States Council (Upper House). For the foreseeable future the opposition camp will not be able to block government motions by joining forces for a majority vote. God honours continuous prayer – let us keep praying! -RS-

New protest movements

The instability in the financial markets is unsettling people world-wide. They see that the politicians are driven by "market forces" and are at a loss to know what to do. Government should in effect be responsible for setting an overall framework for dealing with social and economic issues for the common good of the people. When instead the stabilisation of stock market prices becomes the major criterion for action, it arouses justifiable indignation. In October there were mass protests in more than 950 cities in 82 countries for a more just financial system. What form will these protests now take? The possibilities for global networking over the Internet are increasingly broadening the scope for organising political campaigns. This can lead to the collapse of entire regimes as we have seen in Tunisia and Egypt. New ideas and forms of action spread within a matter of seconds over the whole world. Whereas in the past it required a trade union or a political party to make a significant change in society, today a call to action can be simply sent to the entire world with a click on Facebook or Twitter.

Models for civil protest can be tested in one country and then they spread like a virus over the Internet. No-one is able to foresee who will be "infected". With their main theme of "unlimited freedom for the Internet", this has brought the "Pirate Party" in Berlin to 8.9% of the vote from nowhere. There is an uneasiness brewing in society that needs our prayer!

Prayer:

- **That the Holy Spirit would give people clear, divine approaches and models for solutions that will then spread throughout the world. (2 Samuel 16 v.23)**
- **Proclaim the lordship of Jesus over all the powers of disorder – protection from outbreaks of violence.**

- **Protection from social and political deception – for a turning towards the wisdom of the cross. (1 Corinthians 1 v.18-21)** -RS-

Debt crisis – a "stress test" for Europe

In two summit meetings in October our leaders tried with great effort to set new guidelines for the future. The critics are saying that the fact that it required two summits is "disastrous" and shows that the actions are "half-hearted" and "much too late". And what do the intercessors say? How can we pray into these matters? Let us ask the Holy Spirit!

- It is not for the intercessor to stand by and criticise, but rather to pray for wisdom and courage in the hearts of those who have to carry the responsibility and who are themselves so uncertain.
- Thanks for our democratic form of government that makes the open management of the situation possible. God loves righteousness. (Psalm 45 v.7; Psalm 85 v.9-13)
- God is putting the unity of Europe to the test. What is the foundation – our values or mammon, our solidarity or profit?
- What is God doing in Greece and Italy at this time? God also loves these countries – with justice and mercy. (2 Chronicles 7 v.14)
- Is this really a late judgement on the Greek-Roman spirit that has been distancing Europe from its Judeo-Christian heritage for centuries through humanism and enlightenment?

Prayer:

- **That God would give the politicians the courage to effectively set limits on the power of capital and wealth. (2 Timothy 1 v.7)**
- **Closer cooperation or a break-up? Proclaim the perfect will of God for the way forward in Europe. (Deuteronomy 30 v.14-20)**
- **Bless our politicians with wisdom from heaven. (Jeremiah 9 v.23-24)** -OS-

Israel – events are overtaking one-another

The latest first: on October 13th Gilad Shalit, who was abducted five years ago, was returned to Israel. The price for his release: 1027 Palestinian prisoners among whom were out-and-out terrorists who had been involved in the murder of Israelis. Hamas celebrated their triumph: "The only language that Israel understands is that of violence" and they announced plans for further abductions to free their people.

Next: the dramatic Friday, September 23rd, in the United Nations in New York:

First of all Mahmoud Abbas applied to the UN General Secretary Ban Ki-moon for the admission of a new state with the name of "Palestine" as a full member of the United Nations - without a peace treaty with Israel. This

application now goes to the UN Security Council which appoints a committee to examine the request in detail. Afterwards Abbas substantiated his application in a speech to the UN General Assembly plenary session.

Then Benjamin Netanyahu replied: "I have come here to speak the truth... The truth is that Israel wants peace with a Palestinian state, but the Palestinians want a state without peace", which means without the recognition of Israel as a state. "Israel is prepared to have a Palestinian state in the West Bank, but we are not prepared to have a second Gaza there".

Finally the so-called Middle East Quartet made another declaration on this day. This was a surprise (= an answer to prayer!), for it blocked the Palestinian application in that it called for direct negotiations "without delay or preconditions" (according to the Oslo II Agreements) that should lead to a settlement by the end of 2012. Israel immediately agreed, but the Palestinians rejected it, as a stop to settlement building was not made a precondition.

Note: A 15 minute documentary about the legal basis for the state of Israel in international law can be seen at www.givepeaceachance.info.

Prayer:

- **Blessings on Gilad Shalit – protection against further abductions in Israel.**
- **For God's will to be done in the further processing of the application for statehood. (Isaiah 55 v.8-11)**
- **Success in the efforts to inform as many people as possible about the legal basis for the state of Israel and to influence the formation of their political opinions with clear explanatory information through all different kinds of media.**

-OS-

Persecuted Christians

Sunday November 13th is the International Day of Prayer for the Persecuted Church. This year the focus is on Pakistan, Eritrea and Algeria.

The persecution of Christians is seldom mentioned in politics and the press. The current German government is however tackling this issue much more offensively. In the meantime the plight of Coptic Christians in Egypt in particular has also been taken up by the general public. Even under the former president, Mubarak, the Coptics were rarely protected against attacks from Islamic fanatics, but now the situation has become much worse after the fall of his regime. In the past seven months three churches have been burnt down. On October 9th in Cairo, during the peaceful protest march by Coptics against these violent acts, there were provoked outbreaks of violence in which 26 people died and hundreds were injured. More and more Coptic Christians are leaving Egypt. The General Secretary of the CDU, Hermann Groehe, spoke out that Germany should be open to receive these people.

On the other hand the number of Christians of Muslim background in Egypt has been increasing greatly for some years through Christian TV transmissions over satellite and

the Internet. Many of these Christians want to stay and use their abilities in the future development of their homeland. (See: www.opendoors.org)

Prayer:

- **Protection, faith, courage and peace of mind for the Christians under threat in Egypt. (Psalm 9 v.9-12)**
- **That Christians threatened with the death sentence in Islamic countries will be set free. (Acts 12 v.5)**
- **Thanks for the increasing willingness of our government to support persecuted Christians. (Psalm 11 v.7)**

-RS-

PrayDay: Worldwide Day of Prayer for Schools

The school system in Germany is in a state of transition. On November 11th, the worldwide *PrayDay*, Christians are called to pray for schools. Parents and teachers are included. The *PrayDay* is an initiative of the Schueler-SMD (see: www.prayday.de). Local events will however be independently organised and rely on the support of individual Christians.

The future of Germany is determined in the places where those who will fashion and form our country tomorrow are today: in the schools!

Week by week more than a thousand Christian students meet to pray in their schools. They are not bound by specific times and do not necessarily need a prayer room. However the number of Christian Bible study groups in schools is declining. Why is this? Many groups have been forbidden to meet because school leaders want a clearer separation between school and religion. In the meantime atheists are becoming more active in schools than ever. The school year is being shortened and the level of stress in students and teachers is rising. Many students say that they are burdened with a tremendous pressure to perform well. They therefore have little energy left to get involved in anything beyond the school day. But prayer can clear away these barriers!

Prayer:

- **Thanks for praying students, parents and teachers who meet in numerous prayer groups every week.**
- **Pray for courage so that living for Jesus will be a clear witness to others in the schools. (Matthew 5 v.13-16)**
- **Pray for a reformation in the school system – so that students and teachers have the opportunity to come to know the Saviour. (1 Timothy 2 v.1-4)**

-Lasse Lahrs- (Schueler-SMD)

Other events for prayer

- 16.11** Day of Prayer and Repentance in Germany. Call of the Watchmen Prayer Day for West Saxony and Vogtland in Chemnitz with Ortwin Schweitzer.
- 27.11** Referendum in Baden-Wuerttemberg over a controversial plan to redevelop the central railway station area in Stuttgart.

*God's blessings from
Ortwin Schweitzer and Rosemarie Stresemann*