

CALL OF THE WATCHMEN

March 2012

God answers prayer

Every year I look back on the prayer requests in the Call of the Watchmen letters to determine which ones have been answered. I would like to share with you some of the things that I found:

- Although it didn't look good for the government after losses for the CDU in the state elections, the situation had stabilised itself by the end of the year 2011. (February, May, June 2011)
- With regard to the reform of the German army, the new Minister Thomas de Maizière received praise for his work, even from the press. There was no more open conflict as the Minister had clearly been given wisdom. (April 2011)
- With regard to the "Parish Code of Practice" of the Evangelical (Protestant) Church in Germany, a few things happened. Eight former bishops presented a resolution against the new code. In Baden, in Wuerttemberg and in some other member churches, same sex couples were not allowed to live in the parsonage/rectory. (January 2011)
- A number of German soldiers were killed in the early months of 2011. After we prayed in July there have been no further fatalities. (July 2011)
- Concerning the right-wing extremist terrorist group, in a comprehensive statement a suspected supporter has heavily incriminated himself and the ex-official of the NPD Ralf Wohlleben. Beate Zschäpe was convicted as an arsonist without question. (December 2011)
- Interest in prayer is increasing among the youth. At the Youth Prayer Congress in Bad Liebenzell in February, 1000 young people attended the prayer training sessions. (January, December 2011)

We give thanks according to John 14 v.13-14. -RS-

The leadership role of Germany

This is all about Germany's role among the nations, but at the same time about Europe and the global consequences of the Euro crisis.

Germany is geographically in the centre of Europe (if you exclude Russia) and is the only land that borders *nine* neighbouring countries. World changing events have repeatedly emanated from Germany: the Reformation, both World Wars, the fall of the Berlin Wall, and now for Europe also the need to reduce national debts and to strengthen budget discipline to save the Euro. This country has a central and significant role in leadership for this task – be it on a cultural, spiritual, economic or political level – but is reluctant to take it on. The German government as well as the German public are accepting this reality very hesitatingly. Only recently this again became clearly evident at the European Security Conference in Munich: Poland, the United Kingdom, the World Bank and the USA asked Germany to clearly take

on the leadership role in 2012 in the interests of Europe (and of the USA!). The German answer from Thomas de Maizière was defensive: "You should not push us too hard." This reluctance is certainly preferable to the German dominance in years gone by. But is it helpful? No – because it shows that Germany still needs further healing. But this is in the interests of us all.

What are the reasons for Germany's reluctance today?

- Expectations for leadership today come automatically with expectations that more money will also be forthcoming. This is however not achievable because of German domestic politics.
- Whoever leads must say in which direction. No-one can say this for sure at the moment. Therefore Angela Merkel is taking only very small steps, but consistently and responsibly.
- The greatest reservation in taking on the leadership role in Europe is however the German shame of the Nazi period and its atrocities.
- The press, in Greece for example, are portraying German actions as "Nazi terror". While this is still a sore issue in its sense of national identity, Germany seeks acceptance from other nations and fears isolation.

Germany needs further healing in order for it to be able to fulfil its calling. According to Isaiah 40 v.1-2, healing comes from a knowledge of forgiveness. Instead of criticising us as "Nazi-cudgels" (literal translation), we need other nations to grant us grace and forgiveness.

Prayer:

- **For courage with humility, for Germany to seize its God given mandate.**
- **For further healing of Germany. (Isaiah 43 v.24-25. 2 Chronicles 7 v.14.) Openness to accept the expression of forgiveness from other nations.**
- **Wisdom for Angela Merkel, for how she should lead and in which direction. (Proverbs 29 v.18)** -OS-

Our new Federal President

According to Ephesians 1 v.18-23 Christ already rules over this world. God is the one who sets up state rulers and deposes them (Daniel 2 v.20-21). He has a specific plan which he also puts into effect through the nations (Psalm 33 v.10-11). After just 20 months in office Christian Wulff has resigned. In the current political situation Angela Merkel needed to nominate a non-partisan candidate. On March 18th (the day in 1990 of the first free elections to the "People's Chamber" in former East Germany!), a former pastor and civil rights activist, Joachim Gauck, will stand for election to the highest office in the land. He is certainly more down to earth and closer to the people than his predecessor. He became acquainted at an early age with the deprivations that result from a conscience driven approach to life in East Germany. His father was

imprisoned by the Russians. In a radio interview he once revealed that he only studied theology because he was not allowed to study anything else. He was then assigned to a church, without any personal conversion experience, but, as he said himself, he did come to know God through the prayers and faith of some elderly ladies. He is married with four grown-up children but is now separated from his wife. For more than 10 years he has been living with another partner who plans to move with him to Berlin.

Prayer:

- **For reconciliation with his wife and family in accordance with God's plan.**
- **Wisdom for Gauck in his choice of political advisors.**
- **That the parties in government now work together constructively after this testing ordeal.** -RS-

German experience is needed

Korea has been a divided land for over 60 years. Although no-one knows if and when there might be a reunification, there is actually a Korean Reunification Ministry that is preparing for such an eventuality. The German experience is much sought after. A German-Korean expert commission has been meeting for the past year. The German participants are politicians and academics who have experience in this matter. People like Lothar de Mazière, Horst Teltschik and Rainer Eppelmann are on the team. Their experiences do not however correspond "one-to-one" with the situation in Korea. South Korea is the fourth largest economy in Asia, whereas in North Korea millions are starving to death. The difference in the standard of living in the two countries is much greater than it was between East and West Germany. In North Korea the whole population is terrorised, exploited and enslaved. After the death of the supreme leader Kim Jong-il, the situation became dramatically worse for North Koreans. His son Kim Jong-un closed the border with China so that the starving North Koreans no longer had the possibility to get food from China. Until now the South Koreans have not shown much interest in reunification. The Christian churches have also not been concerned until quite recently. But this is now changing. Christians in Germany are being asked to share their experiences.

Prayer:

- **We raise the victory banner of the love of God over the demonic powers in North Korea. (Matt. 28 v.18.)**
- **Wisdom in the work of the German delegation. (Psalm 49 v.3.)**
- **That the hearts of the South Koreans will be open for their fellow countrymen in North Korea. (Deuteronomy 15 v.7.)** -RS-

European Union of Prayer – 11th meeting

From March 26th- 31st the international prayer group "European Union of Prayer" is meeting in Copenhagen, under my leadership, as Denmark holds the Presidency of the EU Council at this time. Many Danish brothers and sisters from the local prayer movement ("Bedehus") are pleased that we are coming. Whoever would like to join

us from the evening of March 27th is very welcome. Please register with Karl-Heinz Fischer: 0049 175 3310265.

Prayer:

- **That many intercessors will come.**
- **That there will be a peaceful atmosphere in friendship and unity.**
- **That with this meeting our authority to pray for nations and for Europe will grow.** -OS-

Israel – "Later may be too late"

Israel's Defence Minister quoted these words concerning military action against Iran. Israel has been preparing itself for this for many years. According to the opinion of the Israeli Security Service, it will only be months before Iran has enough raw materials, expertise and bunker installations to be "immune" from any air attack. Acts of sabotage, cyber attacks and the murder of Iranian technical experts has indeed slowed down the program; western sanctions have indeed damaged the economy of the land, but none of these have brought Iran to the point of giving in. They are still obstructing the inspection of all their installations by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). Behind the assertions that nuclear energy is only being developed for peaceful use lie the threats of President Ahmadinejad to wipe out Israel with an atom bomb as soon as it is available. This means that an Israeli attack between April and June is very likely. The Israeli government consider this to be an opportune time as Syria is currently out of action as an ally and the USA is absorbed by the coming presidential election. Analysts say it is technically feasible. And the international community including the Arab neighbours are not going to protest as none of the sanctions has stopped Iran so far. "If the enemies of Israel lay down their arms, we will have peace. If Israel lays down its arms, it will be suicide." Israel is the only country in the world for which this statement is true!

Prayer:

- **Protection over Israel and for Iran to cooperate with the international community. (Psalm 59 v.9-13.)**
- **With Psalm 46 we pray about the military option. May Israel learn to trust in its God again. (v.11.)**
- **Pray about the response of the nations to a military attack. (Psalm 47 v.8-9.)** -OS-

Keep praying

Pray for a breakthrough of God's glory in our land through the "40 Days of Prayer and Fasting" and the National Prayer Conference in Kassel on April 9th. -RS-

Other events for prayer

- 02.03** Women's World Day of Prayer.
- 22.- 24.03** Christian Health Care Congress, Kassel.
- 13.03** State elections in Saarland

God bless you

Ortwin Schweitzer and Rosemarie Stresemann