

September 2012

The mango tree

I was born in the tropics. Mangos were part of my earliest diet. A very special taste! But the whole mango tree is special: it blossoms and produces fruit at the same time and has a canopy of thick green leaves even in the dry season. How is this possible? It is because it has extremely deep roots. It draws strength from deep down in the earth. I keep praying: "Lord let me be like the mango tree with roots that reach into the source of life, which blossoms and bears ripe fruit at the same time, and where the heat only makes the roots go even deeper."

It disturbs me how dear brothers and sisters, and also leaders, take so little time to grow roots and how at charismatic conferences we seldom hear "in-depth" Bible teaching. "Lord, may we learn from the mango tree!" (Psalm 1 v.3; Jeremiah 17 v.7-8). -OS-

The prayer walk: *Gemeinsam beten und bewegen (Gbb)*

On August 1st the prayer walkers were tired but pleased to have achieved their goal. They had covered around 1880km in just three months walking with thanks, blessing and intercession.

A hard core of six people walked the entire distance, but altogether over 400 joined in the prayer walk for one day or more. I (Ortwin) was with them for the final six days, 20-25km each day, and experienced the fellowship of the prayer walkers, both young and old, from the "Gbb" organisation and from the Call of the Watchmen. Many thanks to all who helped with accommodation and meals along the way and prayed for the prayer walkers. The participants were also an encouragement to the hosts through their prayers and testimonies.

The overall evaluation by about 20 in the core team indicated that such a prayer walk should definitely be repeated, especially to encourage young people to pray for Germany in a way that attracts the younger generation. For me as an "old-timer" the walk helped me to take a really good look at Germany and gave me a new heart for our nation.

Prayer:

- **Thanks for every form of protection over the walkers, their commitment and perseverance, and for all the love that they received (Hebrews 13 v.1-2) – and that the seeds of prayer will grow and bear rich fruit.**
- **Thanks for how God is spurring on the younger generation, for which we have so often prayed. (1 John 2 v.14)**
- **Wisdom for the next steps, also for the counsel of the older generation. (Psalm 23 v.3; Malachi 4 v.6) -OS-**

"I only believe what I can see"

"I grew up in East Germany and I never missed not having a god." Just like me at an earlier time, many could say this of themselves in the east of Germany which, according to a study at the University of Chicago that covered people

of all generations, was turned into the most godless region of the world!

The socialist state built the ultimate radicalised stronghold in the modern age: ideologically conceived, totalitarian in administration and very destructively industrialised. To finally complete the separation of religious faith and human reasoning which began at the time of the "Enlightenment", a secular and rationalistic world view was built up at all levels: spiritual, interpersonal, and in relation to the natural world. For many Germans in the east, having no religious faith is no loss - it is actually part of their identity.

Even if in the west of Germany only 5% (rather than 50% in the east) call themselves atheists, the east stands as a potentially dangerous influence on the process of secularisation within Germany and also in Europe. Since the fall of the Berlin wall, it is already apparent in the east that a "post-Christian" society, which is the result of the rejection of its Christian roots, is much more resistant to the gospel than one that has not yet heard the gospel. However, church-based social and training facilities enjoy a much higher level of acceptance and trust than the churches themselves and offer possibilities for mission work at the social level. Where people have had no contact with the church for two generations, old prejudices have disappeared. And where previous feelings of collective community (under communism) are missed, people will gladly come together in open church settings.

Prayer:

- **That the works of God in east Germany will become apparent. (John 9 v.1-5; 1 John 3 v.8)**
- **Restoration of the ability to trust where this has been destroyed by men's abuse of power. (Romans 8 v.15)**
- **For the churches to have a great love for their land. (John 3 v.16ff) -KH-**

Court decision on circumcision and the consequences

In an extremely controversial ruling in May, the district court in Cologne decided that circumcision is a punishable act of bodily harm when there are no specific medical grounds even if required by religious practice. A doctor had been taken to the court when complications arose due to secondary haemorrhaging after conducting a circumcision on a child of Muslim parents. Since the ruling was made public, Jews, Christians and Muslims have together protested this invasion of religious freedom. God commanded his covenant people in Genesis 17 v.9-14 to circumcise a male child on the eighth day. By this the child entered into the covenant with God and whoever was not circumcised had broken the covenant! Muslims also have their boys circumcised, but the Quran does not require it. So whoever would by law forbid a Jew to circumcise his child is requiring him to break his covenant with God! Under this ruling Jewish life would be eventually wiped out – and this is happening in Germany!

As a result, the German parliament requested the government as early as July to pass a law to allow the circumcision of boys on religious grounds. Lawyers are now arguing how this can be made possible.

Prayer:

- **We humbly bow before God for the presumption in human thinking to invalidate the Word of God. (Psalm 119 v.89-96)**
- **Pray that the fear of God would come again on our land. (2 Chronicles 19 v.6-7)**
- **For a rapid revision to the law to clearly allow religious circumcision.**

-RS-

Crisis in the intelligence services (Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution in Germany)

Following the review of the NSU (National Socialist Underground) affair (see prayer letter for December 2011) by the parliamentary enquiry committee, so many failures in the intelligence services have been uncovered that their president Heinz Fromm has been forced to resign. A basic problem has been revealed: according to a study by the Amadeo-Antonio-Foundation, the police and other authorities are trivialising the extent of right wing violence in Germany. This was also true for the intelligence services. Since 2001 attention has not been directed at the development of right-wing extremism, but rather on potential radical Islamic attackers. That an extreme right-wing terrorist organisation could be formed underground was way beyond their imagination! Serious suspicion arose that the intelligence services may have actually supported the nine murders by right-wing extremists by payments to their own agents and informants. On their own authority, intelligence services employees destroyed files on informants in the right-wing extremist scene in Thuringia and the head of the local division concealed information from the central office leadership for months. The new leader of the intelligence services Hans-Georg Maassen must now draw lessons from the NSU affair, as the Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution in Germany has to be thoroughly reformed. For example, the cooperation between the central office and the 16 local state offices must be improved urgently. Also the recruitment process and management of agents and informants both need clearer guidelines.

Prayer:

- **Pray for forgiveness and repentance wherever right-wing extremism continues to be trivialised. (Psalm 51)**
- **That the reform of the Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution will succeed and that its work will be more effective.**
- **For the work of all the intelligence services: that potential risks to security will be uncovered well in advance. (Psalm 127 v.1-2)**

-RS-

The European Stability Mechanism (ESM)

Much has been written in the past months about the ESM and its risks: the inadequate democratic supervision of its governing council; the unlimited financial claims; the lack

of control over the banks; virtual collectivisation of debts. The Supreme Court in Germany will decide on September 12th if the ESM is acceptable under the constitution.

On the other hand there is a clear desire to keep the Euro zone with its 17 member countries. For this to happen three resolutions are necessary: (1) The stronger countries must continue to support the weaker ones. But structural changes are needed in the indebted countries to avoid the ESM becoming a "bottomless pit"; (2) Unlike today, there must be a central body for fiscal policy with the authority to refer unrealistic and over-ambitious national budgets back to the respective governments and in the common interest to insist that all agreements are kept; (3) Unlike today, there must be regulation of the banks with clear rules, even if London does not cooperate.

There are of course Christians involved in this debate who will have different opinions. And here lies another danger from the ESM: it is dividing the prayer army and frustrating our prayer efforts. But Christians are the ones who know how to pray and prayer is the contribution that only Christians can make. Let us therefore pray in unity over what we can agree upon, and set to one side our political differences. This concerns not only the future in Germany but also in the whole of Europe. How can we pray without **love** in our hearts for Europe? God has a heart for Europe. True intercession flows out of the heart of God (Romans 5 v.5; Matthew 9 v.36).

Prayer:

- **Praise** God with all your heart – world history is in his hands. (Isaiah 55 v.8ff; Romans 11 v.33-36)
- **Thank** him for all the good things that peaceful European integration has given us and other nations in terms of freedom and prosperity. (Psalm 67)
- **Repent** first for decades of neglect of intercession for Europe (James 4 v.8-12; 5 v.16). Then repent on behalf of the European institutions for wrong decisions, moral failures and broken commitments. (Pray what is on your heart and together following Daniel 9 v.3-19.)
- **Proclaim** the name of Jesus as victor over Germany. (Ephesians 1 v.20-23; Philippians 2 v.9-11)
- **Blessings** from the throne of God on Europe and Germany - especially this month on the Supreme Court judges. (Numbers 6 v.24-26; 1 Peter 2 v.9) -OS-

Other events for prayer

On October 3rd (Day of German Unity) there will again be events for prayer and thanks for our land. The "Thank God for 3rd October" project is collecting and publishing all registered events at www.3-oktober.de (German only).

01.09 Prayer day for Mecklenburg-Vorpommern -Rostock

22.09 March for Life in Berlin (re: abortion/euthanasia)

www.marsch-fuer-das-leben.de/index_en.php

16.-21.10 Prayer for Berlin – Operation Capitals of Europe (Advance notice: see attached "OCE Berlin Moscow Flyer")

*God's blessings from Ortwin Schweitzer,
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