

April 2013

**In prayer . . .**

In prayer we should look on our requests through God's eyes. But I have long asked myself how do I get to see through his eyes? Should I try to think in the same way as God our Father does?

At a recent seminar I heard that we should not just react to problems, but learn to view them from the perspective of heaven above. I don't know why, but I suddenly realised what this meant: it is not about me trying to do something, like thinking as God might be thinking – but it's about the way God acts: *he reveals himself*. In other words, I receive something in my spirit that I was not aware of before.

Here is an example: in the past two years there has been a hot debate in the State Protestant Church over whether homosexual partners can live together in the parsonage. With great concern I was writing to the bishop and synod and getting nowhere. I was very angry and really felt like quitting. But when I asked myself: "How does all this appear from heaven's perspective?" –

I began to weep. With God's tears – my tears. -OS-

**Organisational changes in the Call of the Watchmen**

When we look back over the 13 years of the "Call of the Watchmen" there are truly many reasons to be thankful. Until now the "Call of the Watchmen" prayer network was running under the wings of the "Gospel Forum Stuttgart". We were happy to have the administrative support and the freedom, just to be able to develop our prayer network. During the past summer and with the blessing of the Gospel Forum we decided to become an independent charitable organisation: "Wächterruf e.V.". As the current regional coordinators have been invited to become members of the new organisation, the next meeting on April 9<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> in Friedrichroda will be the first session of the new organisation with the election of board members. The constitution is currently with the fiscal authorities for approval. Please pray for us!

**Prayer:**

- **Thanks for all the blessings until now and pray for continuing spiritual blessings. (Isaiah 54 v.2-3)**
- **For God's blessings on the Gospel Forum for all their support. (Psalm 92 v.12-15)**
- **For the Spirit's leading in each step: our first meeting, election of the board, favour from the authorities, etc. (Psalm 90 v.17)** -OS-

**State Protestant Church Conference in Hamburg**

The conference takes place from May 1<sup>st</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup>, with over 100,000 visitors expected to stay for the entire week. The city network organisation "Together for Hamburg" will take part in various ways with missionary and prayer initiatives. From May 2<sup>nd</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup>, from 8am to 8pm, they will offer blessings and personal prayer to conference

visitors and passers-by. There will be pavilions at four different locations where workers will be available to pray. In a local free church in Holstenwall there will be continuous prayer during each day of the conference. Individuals and teams will take turns to be on duty for one hour. Christian volunteers are still needed for all the initiatives. Further information (in German) can be found at: <http://www.gemeinsam-fuer-hamburg.de/Kirchentag.html>.

**Prayer:**

- **That the Holy Spirit will open the eyes of the hearts of those who are searching, that they will find Jesus. (Ephesians 1 v.17-18)**
- **That enough workers will come forward for all the missionary and prayer initiatives.**
- **That the State Protestant Church will be renewed in the power of the Holy Spirit. (Mark 1 v.8)** -RS-

**Christians come together against human trafficking**

In the February prayer letter we wrote about prostitution and human trafficking. So what are Christians doing?

While many campaigns against this current form of slavery, like "Stop the Traffic" and "The A21 Campaign", have been running for years through the media in other countries, in Germany it has been conspicuously quiet. Apart from organisations such as "Mitternachtmission" (Midnight Mission), the Salvation Army, and "Solwodi" (Solidarity with Women in Distress) which have been long working in "red light" areas, there are only a few other Christian organisations actively involved with helping prostitutes, among them "Alabaster Jar" and "Neustart" (New Start) in Berlin. In the last two years new initiatives have now joined them – "Mission Freedom" in Hamburg for example. Now increasingly, in other cities, prayer groups, street workers and other initiatives are offering practical help to victims, or are drawing attention to their work through specific actions such as the "Flash mob" of the Evangelical Alliance in Darmstadt.

At the European level, there is the "European Freedom Network" (EFN). In Germany cooperation between organisations has only been sporadic and on specific issues. Just last year, charitable organisations, Christian missions and other initiatives from all over Germany met together in Berlin at the invitation of the MP Frank Heinrich. They got to know each other and discussed how they could work together. Since then they have met on three more occasions. A new organisation will be set up shortly to take responsibility for a country-wide campaign that will be announced at the State Protestant Church Conference in Hamburg on May 2<sup>nd</sup> which has been designated as a "Day against Human Trafficking".

**Prayer:**

- **For a good start to the campaign – that churches will increasingly take up this issue and get the attention of our politicians. (James 2 v.14-17)**

- **That more groups and initiatives take up the issue of human trafficking and that Christians will fight in the front line against this latest form of slavery.**
- **For protection for the workers, as women are being delivered from forced prostitution. (Psalm 27)**

-Gerhard Schönborn- "Neustart"

#### **New sources of energy – opportunities and challenges**

By 2050 the supply of energy in Germany has to be predominantly from renewable sources. All nuclear power stations in Germany will be shut down by 2022. The federal government is planning, amongst other things, the development of new energy storage plants, the upgrading of the distribution network, the improvement of conventional power stations to bridge the supply gap, and in particular an increase in overall efficiency of energy generation and distribution. The securing of a reliable, economical and environmentally friendly energy supply is one of the greatest challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. In the government's view, it offers "a one-time opportunity to show the world how commercial viability and sustainability can be reconciled in a leading industrial nation". Environment Minister Peter Altmaier and Industry Minister Philipp Roesler however have different ideas on how the costs for the change to new energy sources should be allocated and how to balance the load between industrial and domestic users. There are many political arguments in this regard. At the moment the upgrading of electricity supply networks is most urgent, but this touches on the interests of each of the federal states, environmentalists, residents, etc., and carries the risk of further conflict. There has not been much progress – but this upgrade is essential.

#### **Prayer:**

- **That the opportunities offered by new sources of energy will be seized and that God will reveal creative solutions. (Jeremiah 29 v.11)**
- **For all those responsible in government, industry and interest groups – that God's good will can be recognised and implemented. (Matthew 6 v.10)**
- **For a just division of the financial burdens of the change to new energy sources. (Psalm 72 v.1-4) -RS-**

#### **Italy**

The current situation is dramatic – for Italians as well as for Europe! Silvio Berlusconi is only in politics so that he doesn't have to go to jail and is bending the law to his advantage: with total disregard for the democratic process. The remuneration of parliamentarians in Rome is the highest in Europe. Corruption is rife at the highest levels of government. The people call it "La casta", (the caste), as they are all in it together to the exclusion of others. Beppe Grillo has taken advantage of the people's anger and obtained 25% of the vote. He wants to break up the parliamentary system and rejects any cooperation.

Economic decline, growing unemployment, and higher interest rates in the capital market are the consequences. Possibly having to save the third largest economy in

Europe was too much for the European Union and may cause it to fall apart.

#### **Prayer:**

- **Lord, let Italy come back to its calling and recognise the causes of this crisis. (Lamentations 5 v.21-22)**
- **For politicians who are trustworthy, open and honest. (Jeremiah 23 v.23-24; Proverbs 14 v.34)**
- **Wake up the church in Italy to pray for its land. (Jeremiah 29 v.7)** -OS-

#### **"Papam habemus" (We have a Pope)**

With these words the people celebrated in Saint Peter's Square in the evening of March 14<sup>th</sup>. Everyone was surprised when the new Pope Francis appeared before the crowd in plain white and asked the faithful to first pray for him *before* he blessed them. Who is this man? Three things distinguish him before he even says a word:

- He is an *Argentinian*, Archbishop of Buenos Aires, known to be close to the people, humorous and to have concern for the poor. Since Syrian Pope Gregory III (731-741), no non-European has filled the office of Pope. Will the churches in other continents now have more influence over Rome?
- He is a member of the Jesuit Order. Although subject to the Pope, the Order is however an organisation in itself that stands alongside the Catholic Church. Will this Pope have an understanding that, outside the hierarchical structure of the Catholic Church, there are other more flexible organisations that are also building the kingdom of God – religious orders, communities, and all evangelical churches?
- This provincial head of an elite order within the Catholic Church now calls himself "Francis" after Saint Francis of Assisi (1181-1226). The name stands for his agenda. "A poor church and a church for the poor." The Catholic Church and society in general need such a Pope. Will he succeed to make it happen?

#### **Prayer (along with our Catholic watchmen):**

- **For Pope Francis, that in his humility he will be an example of a disciple of Jesus for the entire world. (John 13 v.13-17)**
- **That he stands by the Biblical beliefs of Christians as opposed to those of the world (like same-sex marriage). (Romans 12 v.2)**
- **For the protection of angels against his adversaries. (Psalm 91)** -OS-

#### **Answers to prayer**

In March a planned attack by Salafists was again foiled shortly before it was to take place. **We thank God for his protection against terrorism. We keep praying!** -RS-

#### **Other events for prayer**

**07.04** Prayer Day in Braunlage, Harz, 10am – 4pm.

*God's blessings from Ortwin Schweitzer,  
Rosemarie Stresemann and Markus Egli*