

CALL OF THE WATCHMEN

June 2013

God is doing a new thing

In Isaiah 43 v.19 God calls us to look carefully. He is doing a new thing which will “spring up” before our eyes. This is what we are seeing and want to be thankful for:

- May 1st was mainly peaceful. A newspaper in Berlin reported: May 1st 2013 passed with the fewest serious incidents since this annual rampage first took place in the city in 1987! In Frankfurt the NPD (extreme right-wing party) cancelled its demonstration, in Hamburg there was significantly less trouble than in previous years. Walpurgisnacht was also quiet in Berlin. Instead of all this there was much praise to the Lord throughout the land.
- Another answer to prayer: the federal government and the state of Lower Saxony have settled their dispute over a bill in parliament to define the search criteria for a German nuclear waste storage site, which should be now passed into law before the summer recess of parliament.
- Prayer is growing strongly in the workplace. There are now about 70 prayer groups meeting within company premises. They are listed on the following website where you can also register your own prayer group: www.ciw.de/service/firmengebet/.
- There has been a 24 hour prayer house in Augsburg for several years. The following item appeared in the March newsletter: *In February prostitution was forbidden on the streets of Augsburg. Up until now Augsburg was not an insignificant hub for human trafficking of women from Eastern Europe. Furthermore: Last week, to our great joy, we read in the “Augsburger Allgemeinen” newspaper that there are no longer any doctors in the city area who will carry out abortions.* -RS-

Laws to protect victims of human trafficking

At the present time women from other countries who have been able to get themselves out of forced prostitution are considered to be illegal immigrants. They are only allowed to remain in Germany when they testify against the perpetrators and then only during the criminal proceedings. Although they take a great personal risk by making a statement, they are deported when the case is closed – generally without financial compensation. There has however been a unanimous resolution by the interior ministers of the German states to reform the prostitution laws – but nothing has happened!

Germany had until 6th April to implement a two year old EU-Guideline on combating human trafficking and the protection of its victims. That also has not happened, because the government coalition partners have been arguing for years about how the prostitution laws which were introduced by the Red/Green in 2002 faction should be changed.

After pressure from Brussels, something is happening at last: the coalition will now introduce new laws before the

summer recess. This means that the Justice Minister Sabine Leutheusser-Schnarrenberger (FDP) has to amend the criminal law, the Economy Minister Philipp Rösler (FDP) has to change the trade and industry regulations accordingly so that brothels can receive some guidelines, and the Interior Minister Hans-Peter Friedrich (CSU) must clear the way for foreign women who are in forced prostitution to be assured a safe haven in Germany.

Prayer:

- **That all party political obstacles will be cleared away so that victims get effective protection under the law. (Proverbs 31 v.8-9)**
- **That protection laws will be passed speedily before the summer recess.**
- **That human trafficking rings will be uncovered and broken up. (Psalm 44 v.23-26)** -RS-

Dramatic conversions of leaders and politicians

If we in Germany have entered into a new season and the Holy Spirit – as seen through prophetic eyes – hovers over our land in a cloud of glory, which is only an arm’s length away and we only need to reach in to receive, then we should be praying more passionately than ever before. Let us now boldly ask God for dramatic conversions of politicians – from the local community to the national government, in all parties, really in all of them! Pray for business leaders, media personalities, academics and scientists, all with influence in our society. Let us believe that nothing is impossible for God and that he will bring dramatic, remarkable changes into the life of each one. Through the conversion of William Wilberforce, a member of the British parliament, the slave trade was abolished in the British Empire in 1807, something that also appeared impossible at the outset. Such divine wisdom should also open the eyes of our politicians in Germany so that social evils like human trafficking will be stopped.

Prayer:

- **Let us grasp again the extent of God’s love, mercy and grace for us and all people. (Ephesians 2 v.4-10)**
- **Pray for dramatic conversions of leaders in politics and in our society. (1 Timothy 2 v.1-4)** -OS-

Franco-German Friendship

Europe is dependent on a well-oiled working relationship between France and Germany. As a family is dependent on a good relationship between father and mother, so is the family of European states dependent on France and Germany. This relationship has seldom been so much under strain as now. On a personal level the chemistry between François Hollande and Angela Merkel is not good. Merkel offended Hollande when she refused to meet him in Berlin when he was a candidate in the French presidential election. As President Hollande, he took his revenge by inviting the SPD chief to the Elysée Palace, where only heads of state are normally welcomed. There is much that has yet to come out into the open between the two of them.

Politically they are divided by the basic question on how to solve the European crisis. Merkel and Schaeuble are of the opinion, following the German model, that this can be achieved by strict budget control, debt reduction, liberalisation of the labour market (with minimal state interference), and the reform of the social system.

Because austerity restricts the availability of money to spend, as the countries of southern Europe well know, Hollande holds the opposite opinion. The economy should first be revived with state investment, before looking for savings and reform – a recipe which is of course more palatable. The danger is that this does nothing to change the structure of a system that is spending more money than it receives and caused the crisis in the first place.

Although other countries support the German course of action, all the anger is directed at Merkel and Germany. In the past, Berlin and Paris agreed a policy in advance and then presented a united approach. Because this is not happening, Germany now appears to be standing alone.

Prayer:

- **Clarification of offences and reconciliation between the two leaders at a personal level. (Psalm 133)**
- **Strict budget control and prosperity cannot be incompatible in the long term – wisdom for the best solution for each country. (Job 12 v.13)**
- **Thanks for the friendship and cooperation within Europe, especially between France and Germany, which has been growing since the war. (2 Corinthians 5 v.19)** -OS-

Israel and Syria

Since the spring of 2011 a civil war has been raging in Syria which until today has brought endless suffering to the civilian population and is drawing in more and more radical Islamic groups. Christian communities which have been there since the conversion of Paul are increasingly threatened with “ethnic cleansing” by Islamists.

Israel looks on the unresolved conflict with increasing anxiety. Israel has already attacked targets in its neighbouring country three times. Last time in May. Such attacks are not officially confirmed – that would be like a declaration of war. Israel wants to prevent dangerous war material and long-range rockets delivered by Iran from getting into the hands of Hezbollah terrorist groups based in Lebanon and which support the Assad regime in Syria.

Prayer:

- **Protection for all who find themselves caught up in the civil war. (Isaiah 9 v.6-7)**
- **That Israel will know how it can enforce its security interests in the Syrian conflict without triggering a war. (Leviticus 23 v.22)** -RS-

Supporting immigrant churches

At the national prayer conference in Kassel, a young black German pastor, Joshua Lupemba, opened our eyes to what “typically German” means today. Depending on the state, between 5% and 20% of the population are Germans with an immigration background. More and more immigrant communities are being established in this

country. They can make a very valuable contribution towards integration as they develop ways to help people with an immigration background to cope with the daily challenges of life. Muslim communities make use of their needs to gain influence within society. They form secular associations such as youth clubs which offer after-school tutoring, etc., and know how to get financial support from the state. Christian immigrant churches however do not yet recognise this opportunity. They need practical support from German churches to help them to form associations and develop programs that will have an influence on society. The necessary contact, cooperation and spiritual vision have been absent in the past and are still often missing. Intercultural churches would have the potential to be a model for successful integration and unity. They could even demonstrate new possibilities to our politicians.

Prayer:

- **That long established churches will increasingly be open to the treasure that other cultures can bring and see God’s purposes in them. (Ruth 1 v.16-17)**
- **That immigrant churches will discover their potential, look for support and find it.**
- **That Christians can feed ideas into local government and politics on how to succeed with integration.** -RS-

European Citizens Initiative “One of us”

The European Court of Justice (ECJ) recently ruled in a judgement that the human embryo is the beginning of the development of human life. The European Citizens Initiative “One of us” has now based its case on this judgement and requires the cutting off of EU financing for any activities that involve in any way the destruction of human embryos. The European Citizens Initiative is a new way within the EU to get citizens more involved in the political decision process. Each initiative must be supported by at least one million citizens from at least seven of the 27 member states. As an EU citizen you can register your support at: <https://ec.europa.eu/citizens-initiative/ECI-2012-000005/public/index.do?lang=en>

Prayer:

- **For the success of this initiative and the protection of the unborn child.** -RS-

Keep praying

Please keep praying for the on-going National Socialist Underground (NSU) trial which was a prayer topic in the May prayer letter.

Other events for prayer

- 01.-02.06** World Weekend of Prayer for Children at Risk (<http://www.viva.org/world-weekend-of-prayer.aspx>)
- 06.-08.06** German Conference in Leipzig “A New Season” for Germany, Austria and Switzerland
- 22.-30.06** Mission outreach at the Kiel Regatta Week

*God’s blessings from Ortwin Schweitzer,
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