

CALL OF THE WATCHMEN

November 2013

God is in control

The results of the national elections surprised everyone and many were also shaken. As from an unseen hand, the position of each party in the table of results was masterfully arranged: some improved, some worsened, some were discarded.

Never before have we called for a fast before an election. Never before have we so clearly seen God's hand in the results. God always operates with the same ground-rules and it is advisable - as a politician! - to know these and take heed. We read about them in Psalm 75: *'It is God who judges...'* (v.7a). He makes a judgement and applies his reality to the situation. *'I choose the appointed time; it is I who judge with equity.'* (v.2). Elections are often God's appointed times. The result is earth-shattering: *'When the earth and all its people quake, it is I who hold its pillars firm.'* God is in control - even now in the coalition play between the parties. *'To the arrogant I say, "Boast no more," and to the wicked, "Do not lift up your horns. Do not lift your horns against heaven; do not speak so defiantly."* (v.5-6). *'...he brings one down, he exalts another.'* (v.7b). We see how God, as Lord, has really demonstrated this principle! *'In the hand of the Lord is a cup full of foaming wine mixed with spices; he pours it out, and all the wicked of the earth drink it down to its very dregs.'* (v.8). Foaming wine and spices represent his anger and the dregs are what is left there from the past – the paedophilia issue for example. *'We praise you, God, we praise you...'* (v.1a). -OS-

Coalition negotiations

Towards the end of October the SPD advisory committee gave the green light for coalition negotiations with the CDU/CSU. After intensive exploratory discussions, both sides decided to start official negotiations. Both parties see a chance to negotiate a government program that they can together implement, despite many differences. The CDU/CSU indicated to the SPD that they would make concessions on the national minimum wage issue. However this does not mean that every issue has been resolved. The SPD leadership have drawn up ten "essential" demands on the coalition with the CDU/CSU. Issues for negotiation include the minimum wage, new sources of energy, education, infrastructure projects, pensions in former East Germany, local communities. Both parties will have to make compromises and let go of extreme demands. The SPD will then ask its 470,000 members to vote on the coalition agreements. Both sides want to take enough time for the negotiations so that the content of the program of work at the political level for the next four years can be defined in as much detail as possible. The assignment of ministries to the parties will also be negotiated. The choice of people for ministerial posts is extremely significant spiritually.

Prayer:

- **That the minds and hearts of the negotiation leaders**

will be jointly aligned with God's will for our land.
(Psalm 33 v.13-17)

- **That the most able and God-fearing men and women are appointed to ministerial posts. (1 Peter 1 v.17)**
- **That the SPD party members will agree with the coalition agreements.** -RS-

Dramatic developments around the European Citizens Initiative "One of us"

In the autumn of 2011 the European Court of Justice (ECJ) ruled in a test case that, according to European law, after the fusion of the sperm cell and the egg, the resulting embryo is a human being. In April 2012 Christians took the next logical step and generated the initiative "One of us". The aim of this initiative from EU citizens to the EU Commission was the protection of the embryo from the moment of fertilisation. In fact, the legal issues surrounding abortion fall under the competence of member states and not the EU. Notwithstanding, the EU has already allocated funds for research into embryonic stem cells even to the point of cloning. A "European Citizens Initiative" has to get one million votes from at least seven member states. This process dragged on into the spring of 2013 and success looked very uncertain ... until the prayer movements realised that they had to get involved. It then became clear how effective a well connected network of intercessors can be.

In May, as the international group "European Union of Prayer" prayed, as many other intercessors, over the problem of abortion, something was released over Europe. In June the "Call of the Watchmen" followed up with a specific call to prayer. And suddenly "One of us" gained momentum. In September there was a repeat of the call to prayer. The initiative gained another new lease of life and will now easily reach 1.4 million votes by the closing date at the end of October – perhaps the most successful citizen's initiative in the history of the EU.

In the middle of October it became known however, that a report was being submitted before the European Parliament which was an attempt to hinder the success of the "One of us" initiative. Several days of intense drama followed (16th to 21st). All the prayer networks in Europe were alerted. On September 22nd the European Parliament decided by 351 votes to 319 not to adopt the "Estrela Report" and after heated discussions referred it back to the originating committee.

Prayer:

- **Thanks that politics and prayer can work together with success. (Jeremiah 29 v.7)**
- **Pray for a lasting victory for "pro-life" over any renewed submission: for effective lobbying efforts!**
- **Success within the EU Commission for the adoption of the requirements in the "One of us" initiative. (Isaiah 65 v.23-24)** -OS-

Where are the Germans?

As written in the last prayer letter (**Germany's roll and**

duty), God gave us Germans a new vision of our calling as a “father nation” at the conference in Leipzig. With their love, encouragement and confidence, our brothers and sisters from other nations inspired us to have joy in this calling and to accept it. Whether this break-through was somewhat forced or too rushed – God only knows. In any case it was a deeply spiritual experience, extremely liberating and full of hope for the future. How is this really going to make a difference? We felt that this is the dawn of a “new season” for Germany. God is renewing the land and its political nature from within, through the people of God. And what has happened since then?

In Stuttgart on the national holiday on October 3rd our Federal President Joachim Gauck made a long speech in which he explained in detail what we in Leipzig had experienced from heaven above: *“I think of our land as a nation that says “yes” to itself.”* He sees Germany absolutely as a role model. He says: *“Germany is a populous nation, set in the middle of the continent and has the fourth largest economy in the world. Part of the strength of our nation is that we gained the friendship of all our neighbouring countries and became a reliable partner in international alliances . . . And if we seek a permanent seat in the Security Council of the United Nations, what role are we ready to play when there is a crisis in a distant region of the world? . . . I cannot imagine that Germany promotes itself in order to dominate others. I can even less imagine that Germany retreats to avoid risk and standing alongside others.”*

This says that Germany in its foreign policy should not just keep its head down and point the finger but that the German government should courageously accept responsibility in international affairs in accordance with the calling of Germany: with sceptre and shepherd’s crook (Leipzig). **Prayer:**

- **Thanks for the dawn of God’s new season for Germany. (Psalm 23 v.5-6; 2 Corinthians 6 v.1-2)**
- **Intercede for the next foreign minister – for wisdom, authority and success. (1 Corinthians 15 v.57-58)**
- **Awakening of Germans to their global responsibility (Matt. 25 v.20-21) and to love Israel (Gen. 12 v.3) -OS-**

Relationship between Europe and Israel

The relationship of the EU with Israel is again very tense - not least as a result of discussions on guidelines that are intended to severely restrict trade between the EU and the disputed territories of Judea and Samaria (West Bank) - a kind of boycott and attempt to discourage and isolate Israel even further. Germany is divided on this issue. The foreign ministry has so far supported it, but the CDU is against. How the new government will respond is still open and a matter for prayer.

This issue highlights the significance of the work of the European coalition for Israel (ECI) under the leadership of Tomas Sandell. ECI is a Christian lobby network in the political arena of the EU, standing for Israel’s interests. This network is gaining influence. It is now celebrating its 10th anniversary. The 10th Annual Policy Conference will

take place in November with leading members of the European Parliament and the EU Commission. A letter from ECI to the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs Policy Catherine Ashton concerning the above mentioned EU policy is in preparation. It will also be sent to other EU member governments. Clarification of the role of Israel is needed more and more both at the political level and also in the churches. The Church-Israel-Congress from 7-9th November in Berlin addresses this need. There will be a supporting prayer chain throughout the event.

Prayer:

- **Thanks for the 10 years of work by ECI and its growing influence in the political arena.**
- **That the work of ECI to win support for Israel among the politicians in the EU will have success.**
- **That the Church-Israel-Congress will have a lasting effect in this land of Germany.** -HE-

Persecuted Christians

75-80% of all those persecuted for religious beliefs world-wide are Christians (about 100 million). No other religious group is persecuted more strongly! The protection of persecuted Christians has long been an important factor in German foreign policy. This is based on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of the United Nations Article 18 which reads: *“...everyone has the right for freedom of thought, conscience and religion...”* This also includes the right to change religion. In Islamic Sharia law however, renouncing Islam is a crime punishable by death. More and more Christians and churches are being attacked by Islamists. Christianity is being forced out of areas where it has been established since the first centuries. This is true for Iraq since 2003, since the start of the civil war in Syria, and now increasingly in Egypt since the fall of the Morsi regime. However politicians in western countries pay little attention to the issue of the persecution of Christians, often because of their own national economic interests.

Prayer:

- **For all persecuted Christians: for protection, help and strength to hold on in faith. (Acts 14 v.22)**
- **That politicians will stand up for the needs of persecuted Christians world-wide. (Proverbs 24 v.11)**
- **That the next foreign minister will stand strongly for persecuted Christians and that this issue will be a focal point of foreign policy. (Proverbs 31 v.8)** -RS-

Keep praying

There have been intensive discussions in the last month concerning the treatment of refugees in Europe. Something is happening – keep praying!

Other events for prayer

- 10.11** Day of Prayer for the Persecuted Church
- 10-13.11** German Protestant Church Synod in Dusseldorf
- 19.11** Europe PrayDay for Schools
- 20.11** Prayer and Repentance Day in Germany – Watchmen prayer meeting in Chemnitz

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