

April 2014

**A word of comfort**

The first weeks of this year were very difficult for me. I kept wishing that I would know more of God's presence and be an "overcomer". But I was too preoccupied with my own feelings.

But God is good. He kept speaking to me. Through the words of 2 Corinthians 4 v.6 for example. There Paul speaks of the light that God made shine in our hearts so that we become a reflection of his glory in this world. How wonderful!! – In the next verse however he continues: "But we have this treasure in jars of clay" and then relates from his own experience about being hard pressed and anxious on every side. And right there he experiences "God's power". God then spoke to me: "Look, these two seemingly incompatible truths are at work within you as a Christian. When you experience pain or sorrow you really sense that you have a fragile, earthly body, but at the same time the treasure of my glory is within you. Your weakness in no way hinders me from living in you." This was a real encouragement to me as I felt his presence. And I want to share this with all of you who feel weak. Christ is in you. It's true. Despite your feelings! -OS-

**Week of prayer and fasting for "Education Policy 2015"**

The petition has now been delivered to the State Parliament. Something has certainly been happening since the beginning of our prayers for a change to the "Education Policy 2015" in Baden-Wuerttemberg. We have many reasons to be thankful:

- God has opened doors to politicians. Currently there are encouraging discussions with the opposition – CDU and FDP – who are both pressing for a revision to the education policy. Other organisations and initiatives have joined the protest action.
- Even the "green-red" state government has talked about a revision. However so far it sounds as if only the "problematic wording" will be removed, and that the basic principles will remain.
- There has been wide coverage in the media. At first there were only one-sided, negative articles, but now the tide is turning. Nation-wide many articles are now appearing that discuss the difference between tolerance and acceptance. The media are also taking much more seriously the fact that the latest "gender ideology" is being introduced into our schools by way of the "Acceptance of the LGBTTIQ" lobby.

But this is not enough: we want this "gender ideology" to be exposed as a lie in our land and God's standards to be established once again. Even if we see from the current positive reactions that God is at work here, we feel an urgent call to support this prayer item by fasting.

**We ask you to join a Call of the Watchmen fasting chain in the week from Monday April 7<sup>th</sup> to Sunday April 13<sup>th</sup>.**

For this we have added a new feature to our website.

Under "GEBETSINFOS" we have added "GEBETSWOCHEN". Here you will find a calendar where you or your prayer

group can sign up for a specific prayer time. The latest prayer information for this item is also there. These pages are only available to registered users to enable us to protect sensitive information on our open website.

**Prayer:**

- **For the withdrawal of the "Education Policy 2015" document in its current form. (1 Peter 3 v.12)**
- **For the exposing of the lies in "gender ideology" and thanks for all positive reactions so far. (John 8 v.32)**
- **For the empowering of spiritual resistance to this policy in our land through fasting. (Luke 2 v.37)** -OStz-

**Walking along the border**

There is a new spiritual movement among young people that is also catching the attention of older folks: walking and praying through the land, asking God for unity among Christians, renewal in the churches and revival within our society. A torch, burning day and night, is carried as a sign for the fire of prayer that will never go out.

This walking and praying began in 2012 with an 1800km three-month walk through Germany. One year later they prayed and walked through Mecklenburg-Vorpommern in two weeks. And now in this year 2014 there will be a new challenge. The 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the fall of the Berlin wall is an occasion to thank God in a special way. From October 3<sup>rd</sup> to November 9<sup>th</sup> two groups of intercessors will walk the old border between East and West Germany known as "the death strip", praising the God who gave us back the unity of our fatherland. The northern group will start at the Baltic Sea and the southern group at the Czech border. They will meet in Harzburg on November 8<sup>th</sup>. On November 9<sup>th</sup> there will be a service of thanksgiving. Everyone is invited to participate in the walk with one of the groups for one section or the whole route. More information is available from [www.betenbewegen.de](http://www.betenbewegen.de).

Two books are being published in connection with this anniversary. "Gebetstagebuch" (Prayer Diary) records the events of these historic days in 1989 with Bible verses and prayer requests. The other book is entitled "Wunder der Freiheit – Mit Zeitzeugen auf dem Weg der friedlichen Revolution" (The Miracle of Freedom – with witnesses from that time on the path to peaceful revolution).

There will also be two shorter regional walks from Freiburg (April 20<sup>th</sup>-26<sup>th</sup>) and from Wuestenrot (May 1<sup>st</sup>-4<sup>th</sup>). It is amazing and encouraging how the old spiritual zeal of the pilgrims is coming to life in a new way through the "Gemeinsam Beten und Bewegen" (Together pray and move) organisation.

**Prayer:**

- **That many people will take part in these walks and fill the land with thanks for unity. (Psalm 81 v.9-10)**
- **Pray for the organisational challenges and all the preparations for the walk along the old border. (Ephesians 5 v.15-17)**
- **Pray for protection from accidents along the way. (Psalm 91 v.11-12)**

-OS-

### Home schooling instead of compulsory state school

In almost all western democracies parents are offered a choice in how to comply with the state requirements for child education. In the USA and most European countries home schooling is also allowed. Numerous comparative tests have shown that home-schooled children are better educated and also have better social skills. In Germany however, a child's attendance at a state school is compulsory. As a consequence, more and more parents are not only being fined, but also being sentenced to prison, when they choose to teach their children at home. This law is a legacy of National Socialism. Every dictator wants the children to be educated according to their values and standards, so after coming to power, Hitler banned home schooling which had been allowed up to that time. Today the state determines when the children have to attend school – and the tendency is for this to become earlier. The state also decides for how long the children must attend school daily – and the tendency is towards all-day school. By this the state is increasingly depriving the parents of any possibility to influence the way in which their children are educated, which should actually be their natural right and “their first and foremost incumbent duty” according to Art.6 Para.2 of German constitutional law. The state alone determines the goals for teaching and education. One of these goals – and not only in Baden-Wuerttemberg – is the implementation of the teaching of “gender ideology”, making children uncertain, among other things, as to whether they are male or female. Whoever refuses to accept this teaching, or, for example, wants to home school their children, has to reckon with the fact that the state may withdraw parental rights or take the children away. In recent years, cases have been accumulating where children have been taken away from their parents and the parents have ended up in prison because they wanted to teach their children themselves at home for a variety of reasons. We urgently need more freedom in this country for home schooling where parents actually raise and educate their children and can also influence their personal development. The former CDU minister Norbert Blum recently requested an end to the state monopoly on the education of children and more freedom for the parents, including the right to be able to teach their children at home.

#### Prayer:

- **That home schooling will also be allowed in Germany. (Deuteronomy 6 v.5-7)**
- **For all those parents who have been subjected to great distress by the state because they have assumed their right to teach their children “which is not allowed by the state”. (Psalm 103 v.6)**
- **For more support for marriage, family and private schooling. (Lamentations 2 v.19)** -RS-

#### Signs in the heavens

“The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and dreadful day of

the Lord” (Joel 2 v.31). “Blood moon” is the most common description for a total eclipse of the moon when the moon is still visible as it passes through the full shadow of the earth, as it reflects a dim red light from deflected rays of the sun around the earth. According to the American space agency NASA, there will be a series of “blood moons” during the Jewish high feasts of Pesach (Passover) and Succoth (Tabernacles) in 2014 and 2015. It begins this year on April 15th – the first day of Pesach. The next blood moon is on October 8<sup>th</sup> – the day before Succoth. In 2015 the blood moons occur again on the first day of Pesach (April 4<sup>th</sup>) and the first day of Succoth (September 28<sup>th</sup>). In between there will be a total eclipse of the sun on March 20<sup>th</sup> 2015 at the beginning of the Biblical year 5775 and a partial solar eclipse on September 13<sup>th</sup> 2015 at the beginning of the Jewish New Year 5776. This is also a special holy year which is only observed every seven years – Shemitah (Sabbatical Year or “year of release”) – in which, according to the scriptures, Israelites should be released from all their debts and the land lay fallow. Centuries normally lie between such blood moon combinations. The Jewish rabbis regard them as a sign of war. The same combination of blood moons on the high feasts took place in the years 1949/50 and 1967/68. In 1949 the State of Israel won its war of independence against seven armies from neighbouring Islamic states, and in 1967, during a war intended for the destruction of Israel, Jerusalem came back into Jewish hands after nearly 2000 years. The previous combination occurred in 1493/94 after the Jews had been expelled from Spain.

#### Prayer:

- **God's protection for Israel against all hostile actions. (Deuteronomy 33 v.26-29)**
- **For the church to wake up and recognise the signs of the times. (Luke 21 v.25-28)**
- **For the salvation of Jews throughout the world. (Acts 2 v.17-21 – Joel 2 v.28-32)** -RS-

#### Answers to prayer

At the German-Israeli Cabinet Consultations meeting some important agreements were made in a very friendly atmosphere: Germany will take over the consular representation of Israel in lands where Israel has no embassy or consulate - a tremendous expression of trust! Young Israelis and Germans (18-30) will in future be able to work for one year in the other country in order to encourage friendship and mutual understanding.

Angela Merkel also dismissed a boycott of Israeli products in connection with the issues of settlements. -RS-

#### Dates for your diary:

**05 -06.04** March of Life in Austria ([www.marschdeslebens.org](http://www.marschdeslebens.org))

**21.04** Prayer day in Braunlage, Harz region

**22 -27.04** March of Life in Hungary

*God's blessings from*

*Ortwin Schweitzer and Rosemarie Stresemann*

*PS: Please pray for the current situation in the Ukraine which at the time of writing this letter was continuously changing. May the will of our merciful God be done!*