

July-August 2014

**Make way, make way!**

Have you ever been involved in the building of a road? Depending on the nature of the terrain it can be an extremely arduous task. Depressions must be filled, perhaps large rocks removed, to make the road level. This requires extensive effort! In Isaiah 40:3-5 God calls exactly for this: *"... In the wilderness prepare the way for the LORD; make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be raised up, every mountain and hill made low; ..."* What is the goal? *"... And the **glory of the Lord** will be revealed, and all people will see it together."*

The Call of the Watchmen has the same goal: the glory of the Lord will be seen in this land. This clearly requires hard work: removing the stones of sin and bitterness and filling the valleys with encouragement. As we build the road we bring everything to the foot of the cross in prayer as representatives for our land. A significant example is the prayer of confession at the conference of the Charismatic Renewal Movement in the Lutheran Protestant Church in Germany in May.

(See Appendix: Confession GGE 2014-05 WR.pdf.) -RS-

**Israel and the "peace process"**

Despite the tremendous pressure from US Secretary of State John Kerry, the latest peace negotiations between Abbas and Israel have failed. All the preconditions demanded of Israel in the form of the release of imprisoned terrorists were again to no avail. Following the breakup of talks, triggered by the Palestinian side, at the end of April there was a reconciliation between the two Palestinian factions, Fatah and Hamas, sworn enemies since 2007. Both sides formed a provisional unity government of politically independent "technocrats" for the West Bank and Gaza Strip. They have to prepare for elections in the entire territory before the end of the year – not only in the West Bank and Gaza, but also in East Jerusalem. In this way their claim on Jerusalem as the capital of a Palestinian state will be reinforced.

A new president and the parliament will be elected. Netanyahu does not recognise the provisional government as in fact it indirectly brings Hamas to power. Israel will not allow Hamas to take part in the elections. A victory for Hamas as happened in the Gaza Strip would be disastrous. Hamas calls for the destruction of the Jewish State in its Founding Charter and continues to fire rockets from Gaza into southern Israel. However the USA and the EU (including Germany) want to work with this new government as it comprises only "technocrats". They are turning a blind eye to the levels of power that Hamas really has.

Many contentious issues between Fatah and Hamas remain unresolved and could quickly lead again to a break in the relationship: Hamas demands an end to the security cooperation with Israel and refuses to put its own armed forces under the control of the new government.

**Prayer:**

- **Wisdom and clear decisiveness within the German**

**government such that they do not unwittingly support the devious plans of the Islamists.**

- **For the worship of Jesus as the Prince of Peace over the entire region so that his path to peace will be made known and recognised.**
- **Proclamation of Zechariah 12:1-8; Jeremiah 31:1-14; Psalm 33:4-12.** -RS-

**Europe after the elections**

Where do we go from here in Europe and with the EU? How do we go forward as Christians and as Europeans in the coming years? Some expect a great crash, others hope for wisdom from the leading politicians and ask for guidance to restore stability.

The election results indicate an increase in anxiety over money, foreigners, and the broad prospect of globalisation. It was therefore the election for Euro-sceptics, right and left wing populists, for "quite simple solutions" and outspoken independents (unconnected with each other), but they do make up over 10% of the European Parliament (EP).

The great majority voted for the EU "citizens' parties" which do not want to break up the EU but stabilise it democratically. The European People's Party (EPP-CDU/CSU) and the Party of European Socialists (PES-SPD) together won 54%. Although according to parliamentary procedure they are actually in opposition to each other, they will now be forced into closer cooperation by those less committed members on the "periphery" of the parliament.

The EPP was the strongest party and they proposed Jean-Claude Juncker as their candidate for the office of President of the Commission. The heads of state of the UK and Hungary voted against him at a summit meeting the end of June as they fear that Juncker will take further steps towards European unity and for them the EU should only be an economic union (common market). Where is Europe heading? We are now set on a new course.

**Prayer:**

- **Thanks for the peaceful and free elections in all member states of the EU. (Psalm 107:1-3)**
- **Pray for good cooperation within the EP with further stabilisation and democratisation despite all of the disruptive challenges. (Romans 12:17-21)**
- **Intercession for the appointments of the next President of the European Council (Heads of State), President of the EU Commission and President of the European Parliament. (Romans 13:1-7)** -OS-

**Who is shaping the next generation?**

While we have been praying intensively in the last months about the education policy in Baden-Wuerttemberg, one thing has become very clear: the spiritual battle is for the formation and development of the next generation. Because of this the "Round-Table-Prayer" of the Lausanne Movement in Germany is calling for a fresh commitment to prayer. Prayer in and for families, and also for children, their personal development and their prayer life.

Some of the specific prayers are as follows:

- *We want to see greater appreciation and esteem for the faith of children and encouragement in their spiritual development – especially their prayer life.*
- *We must revive the spiritual life in our families: families as the place where we experience the presence of God.*
- *We will strengthen the character development of our children as well as their personal relationship with God. The family will then be a place of prayer for the restoration and protection of the family unit as the core of social life in our land.*
- *This also applies to the support of places of learning – the world in which our children live.*

**Pray for forgiveness:**

*Children are our future and an integral part of our present.*

- *We humbly acknowledge that we have neglected and overlooked the needs of our children and their faith in many ways. We have too often delegated their spiritual development and our own responsibility for it to others.*
- *We humbly acknowledge that we in our churches particularly have lost sight of developments in state schools and failed to pray. We have left to others the support of teachers through involvement in committees and with voluntary assistance and initiatives.*

In the summer months there will be many camps for children, young people and families. 14,000 Royal Rangers will meet from August 8<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> in Neufrankenroda.

**Let us pray for a mighty move of the Holy Spirit in these camps and in all the families.** -RS-

**Pensions for mothers**

On May 23<sup>rd</sup> the German parliament concluded the “Pensions Deal”. It enacts the two major election promises of the grand coalition: for the SPD this was the payment of a full pension at the age of 63 when contributions have been paid for 45 years; for the CDU/CSU it was the “pension for mothers”. It means an increase in the pension for mothers who had children before 1992. This “election gift” will cost the tax-payer about 200 billion Euros from now until 2030.

This triggered a heated and somewhat vicious debate in which a “conflict between generations” was evoked and the pension labelled as a “stay-at-home-award”. The critics demand that the current surplus in pension contributions be kept as a reserve fund, the reason being that due to demographic changes in the coming years more people will be retiring and therefore the contributions from younger working people would have to be increased. Without a reserve fund the pension level would then drop because of payments to more people. We could then be faced with the problem of “old age poverty”.

The proponents speak of “closing a justice loophole” in the system. Up until now mothers with children born after 1992 get three pension points for each child and year caring for children. Mothers with children born before 1992 get only one point (!). With the new deal they get two points.

Those now over 22 (born before 1992) are happy because:

a) their ageing mothers get a higher pension, and

b) they themselves as mothers of young children are in an even better position with three points per child.

The quality of a society is measured by its treatment of the old. But “the blessing of the elders builds houses for the children”.

**Prayer:**

- **Thanks that mothers around 50 years old or older will now get recognition for their life’s contribution. (Leviticus 19:32)**
- **That the acceptance and concern of one generation for another will continue to grow. (Malachi 4:6)**
- **Pray for a just and economically viable pension system. (Exodus 20:12)** -OS-

**The threat of terrorism**

The recent attack at the Jewish Museum in Brussels is a clear indication of the threat from Islamists who have gone to fight in Syria and then returned to Europe. From Europe as a whole, about 2000 Islamists have gone via Turkey to join in the civil war in Syria – 320 from Germany alone. There is a real danger that these people, once trained how to kill, could commit acts of terrorism on their return. The Interior Ministers of the European Union are together looking for ways to reduce the risk. The security services report that Salafists in Germany are actively recruiting fighters for the civil war in Syria. The Salafists are a fast growing radical Islamist movement that can convince people, especially young men, to be enthusiastic about “jihad” (holy war).

The sudden radicalisation of young men is affecting more and more Muslim and German families whose are now raising the alarm. Parents have demonstrated in front of one of the mosques in Bremen from where five young Salafists alone have gone off to Syria.

Let us in the Muslim fasting month of Ramadan pray especially for the salvation of these young men.

**Prayer:**

- **Protection from terrorist attacks and wisdom for security cooperation in Europe. (Psalm 59:17; Ephesians 5:10-13)**
- **That Jesus will reveal himself to many radicalised young men. (Psalm 43:3)**
- **Success for the trial programs in Germany to free people from Salafist groups and their influence.** -RS-

**Dates for your diary:**

- 12.06-13.07** Football World Cup (evangelistic outreaches)
- 28.06-27.07** Prayer for the Muslim World during Ramadan ([www.30-days.net/](http://www.30-days.net/))
- 30.07-04.08** German Evangelical Alliance Conference in Bad Blankenburg
- 03.08** Visit of Federal President Gauck to France – 100 days after the outbreak of World War I
- July-August** Outreach missions throughout Germany. Heavy Metal Festivals in Wacken, North Germany, (**27.07-03.08**) and Dinkelsbuehl, Bavaria, (**14.08-16.08**).

*God’s blessings for the vacation period from  
Ortwin Schweitzer and Rosemarie Stresemann*