

October 2014

When the foundations are being destroyed

In September we prayed for persecuted Christians. We are now seeing how quickly the ground can be swept away from under one's feet – but how would I then react?

As I was thinking about this, Psalm 11:3 came into my mind: "When the foundations are being destroyed [by the wicked – verse 2], what can the righteous do?" Although this question can be the cause for a moment of fright and helplessness, God's word also has the answer: "Nevertheless, the righteous will hold to their ways, and those with clean hands will grow stronger." (Job 17:9).

In times like these, by God's grace we can simply hold on firmly to God and his word. By this we experience an increase in our inner strength which is beyond our understanding. Through prayer we can gain some good practical experience, here and now, in how to hold on firmly to God and his promises. -RS-

In what ways should Germany be taking on greater responsibility internationally?

The actions of the government in the last month in the Ukraine crisis and in its involvement to combat the terror of the "Islamic State" (IS) in Iraq have clearly shown that Germany is prepared to take on increased responsibility internationally. But how exactly does God want our land to exercise international influence? What approach should we take? Although according to Romans 13:4 the government as the servant of God has the right to bring punishment on the wrongdoer, even "with the sword", this is no charter to wage war. The exercise of this responsibility requires an attitude of humility. Since there is no such thing as a "just war", the decision to intervene in international conflicts with weapons must also involve taking good advice.

US President Barack Obama is looking for partners in an international alliance against the terror militia "Islamic State" (IS). So far Great Britain, France, Germany, Italy, Poland, Denmark, Canada, Australia, Jordan, Turkey, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates are expected to participate. To stop a terrorist group like the IS, use of weapons is only one option. There should also be, for instance, a concerted effort to cut off the flow of the money that the terrorists need to fund their terror campaign. What role will Germany play in this?

In the Ukraine conflict, diplomatic measures and economic sanctions are currently being employed to prevent a further escalation of the war. East European leaders asked for a greater NATO presence in Poland and in the Baltic countries at the recent NATO Summit in Wales, and they would like the NATO-Russia Act to be cancelled. This Act forbids the permanent deployment of "substantial combat forces" in the new NATO countries in central and eastern Europe. However Angela Merkel does not want to further stir up the conflict and opposes the cancellation.

Prayer:

- **Thanks for the possibilities for Germany to undertake greater responsibilities internationally. (Psalm 50:23)**

- **For all those in authority who are responsible for making decisions concerning Germany's involvement in crisis areas. That they will recognise God's ways towards solutions. (Psalm 19:7-9)**
- **That our land can contribute in humility to freedom in the world. (1 Peter 5:5).** -RS-

Persecution of Christians in homes for asylum seekers

On July 29th the German TV program "Munich Report" disclosed that Christian refugees in homes for asylum seekers were being threatened and even physically attacked. For instance, in Berlin-Marienfelde 30 Syrian Christians were beaten by 100 Chechens and some had to be hospitalised. Christian children get to hear: "You're infidels, you eat pork, we won't play with you".

It is the duty of the state to ensure that such behaviour is not tolerated in homes for asylum seekers. As Christians we can do more: our Christian brothers and sisters who have suffered so much should be welcomed here by us. As refugees who cannot speak the language they need practical help. Often they are also in a traumatised state. Here's a suggestion: become a "god-parent" for a Christian individual or family when there is an asylum home in your neighbourhood. God-parents can help with forms, with local officials, connect them with churches, invite them for Christmas, teach them German, etc. And whoever does this will automatically start praying for persecuted Christians. Together with many others.

Prayer:

- **Protection for Christian refugees in homes for asylum seekers. (Psalm 91:7)**
- **For Christians to be willing to become god-parents. (Matthew 25:31-46; Galatians 6:9-10)**
- **Comfort and peace from God for all persecuted Christians. (Hebrews 11:35-40)** -OS-

Jihad and Sharia – a challenge to our judicial system

Encouraged by the success of the murderous troops of the Islamic State (IS), Islamists in Germany are publically promoting the IS on the streets. In Berlin a group has been formed under the name of "Islamic State of Berlin". They were spreading their incitement through Facebook until a Berlin newspaper demanded action against this drive. "We must stop radical Islamists from bringing jihad to our streets", announced our Interior Minister de Maizière eventually. He banned all activities of the terrorist group IS – including in social networks. But it was very difficult for the Minister to find a way to actually stop their activities. Whether this ban will stand in court is by no means certain. The judicial system just does not provide effective measures against German jihadists. In August the Federal Supreme Court made a ruling that the promotion of Al Qaeda along with a general call to get involved in jihad (holy war) in one way or another was not sufficient grounds for prosecution as a supporter of a terrorist group. This is only "promotion" and is hardly ever prosecuted. In this way our justice system is increasingly exposing a danger for our country because

there are too few laws to make it possible to explicitly ban all Islamist activities.

Several hundred Islamists from Germany are now fighting for the Islamic State. Many of them have German nationality. The ringleaders of the Salafist movement Sven Lau and Pierre Vogel can bring “verbal jihad” to the German streets and the Internet unhindered. In September in Wuppertal there was even a patrol of self-proclaimed “guardians of public morality” calling themselves “Sharia Police”. There is no clear plan of action to effectively protect our land against radical Islamists. Politicians are always thinking about the Muslims who live here peacefully (so far!) and they do not want to alienate them in any way. They will not recognise that Islam in general is not a peace-loving religion.

Prayer:

- **Let us lift Jesus high as King over our land. (Revelation 11:15)**
- **That loop-holes in our laws which the Islamists are exploiting will be closed very quickly. (Romans 13:4)**
- **For God’s light to shine on those in authority in the Ministry of the Interior and Ministry of Justice, in the Security Services, and on the Office of the Federal Prosecutor and on Federal Judges. (John 1:1-9) -RS-**

The crisis is not over

The national economy of a country is like a huge machine with many wheels which all somehow mesh one with another. When something goes wrong causing inflation or deflation, there has to be corrective action. But how? There are many set-screws that can be adjusted: the money supply, price level of goods and services, production volume, stimulation of consumption or an economy drive, and so on. Economy experts offer many different approaches to possible solutions. In one thing they are all united: the economic crisis in Europe may be out of the headlines but it is far from over.

There appear to be two main approaches in Europe which “incidentally” match two areas in Europe: south and north.

The southern Europeans and France want to see public investment to stimulate their economies, even when this increases the national debt. They want to have access to low interest loans, a concept with which the European Central Bank has said it will comply. Devaluing the Euro against the Dollar has also been considered so that Europeans can buy more cheaply worldwide and thereby revive their economies.

The real cause of the weak economies of the southern Europeans and France is however their resistance to reform. Without reform cheap money does not help, as one can see.

The opposite position is taken mainly by Germany. Wolfgang Schaeuble wants to submit the first balanced budget for 46 years. This is possible through economies and doing without needed public investment. Schaeuble: “being in the black” signals stability and reliability to private investors. And only their investments will revive the economy in the long term. With stronger economic activity,

jobs are more secure and public consumption also increases.

Our duty as intercessors is to be informed, but to stand in prayer *over and above* all the various opinions. Saving is necessary and investment is necessary.

Prayer:

- **Wisdom for those who have to make the decisions, like Angela Merkel and Wolfgang Schaeuble, to find a way out of the economic crisis. (Psalm 127:1-2)**
- **For European Union policy with regard to the economic crisis in southern Europe and France and for the courage for these countries to reform.**
- **Thanks for the overall economic strength of Europe. (Psalm 50:23) -OS-**

Marches of Life

In the closing phases of the Second World War, as the concentration camps close to the war front were being abandoned, there were “death marches” of the remaining inmates through many German cities and towns. A “March of Life” has already taken place in several of these cities and towns, the first in 2007, with the following aims:

1. To face the past and to learn from history.
2. To honour Holocaust survivors and with them Jewish society in Germany today.
3. To break the “veil of silence” in Germany over the past through personal identificational repentance.
4. To make a public statement together against anti-Semitism and to stand in friendship with Israel.

The “March of Life” initiative (www.marschdeslebens.org) has been training Christians since 2012 and supports them to organise a march in their own city or town. The vision is to create an opening for God’s Spirit of life and reconciliation in as many cities and towns as possible before the 70th anniversary of the end of the war in 2015. In October and the last months of this year marches will take place in Kassel (19.10), Emden (22-23.10), Hagen (26.10) and Dresden (8-9.11).

Prayer:

- **Thanks for this initiative and for God’s kindness that leads us toward repentance. (Romans 2:4)**
- **Protection, wisdom and blessing for all who are preparing for a March of Life. (Proverbs 2:6-11)**
- **That through these marches there will be further and much deeper reconciliation with the Jewish people. (2 Corinthians 5:18) -RS-**

Keeping praying

Please follow in your prayers the prayer walk along the old East-West German border from October 3rd to November 9th. See September prayer letter: **Thank.Celebrate.Pray.**

Dates for your diary:

- 03.10** German Unity Day – start of the prayer walk.
- 05.10** International Day of Prayer for Jerusalem.
- 05.10** Watchmen’s Prayer Day in Chemnitz, Saxony
- 31.10** Prayer Day in Guestrow, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern

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