

November 2014

There are times

when one is lost for words. Out of anxiety. In shock. It feels like you are in a dark cloud. You think: "I must pray now" – but you feel isolated and alone. Just recently this happened to me as I woke up one morning. The previous evening I was reading about the barbarity of the Islamic State (IS) terrorists who were murdering children as their parents looked on.

Suddenly it came upon me. Suddenly I had this fear. Horror arose in me. How can this be when I am a Christian? How can I comfort others when I myself am seized in the grip of terror's might? I turned to the Bible verses for that day and the Lord spoke to me: "The Lord is my light and salvation – whom shall I fear?" (Psalm 27:1). Jesus said: "Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God, trust also in me." (John 14:1). The stronghold of the fear of death fell away and I came out into the light. -OS-

Answers to prayer

1. On September 16th there was a large demonstration in Berlin against anti-Semitism. (Prayer letter for Sept.)
2. The IS has been banned as a terror organisation and any support will be prosecuted. (Prayer letter for Oct.)
3. A centre for objects of cultural value which have been lost or are missing will be established in Magdeburg which will facilitate the return of works of art stolen by the Nazis. (Prayer letter for January 2014.) -RS-

Problems in the Defence Ministry

When Defence Minister Ursula von der Leyen (CDU) flew to Erbil in October, it suddenly became shockingly evident how ill-equipped the German army is to defend this land.

The transport planes with weapons did not arrive on time since only a few of the nearly 50 year old "Transall" planes are operational. These and further additional breakdowns revealed that the German army is indeed committing a lot of energy and equipment to numerous deployments abroad (18 missions in 14 countries at this time), but is actually in a pretty run-down state.

Running the huge Defence Ministry requires not just political and creative will but also management skills. Some call the Ministry the "snake pit". Ms von der Leyen has accepted the challenge to clean up the department and set new priorities. Political observers are assuming that in this way she wants raise her profile for the job of German Chancellor. Together with her new State Secretary Katrin Suder she is however dependent on the cooperation of many male department heads in the Ministry!

After taking office Ms von der Leyen let external experts investigate current procedures in the Ministry in order to understand the problems in a systematic way. The report from the investigators on the work in the Ministry until now was devastating. They found that no-one had a complete overview of the thousands of armaments orders. Projects were purposely under-estimated to get them through the budget committee in parliament. Risks were glossed over.

Deliveries of new equipment were arriving too late and often with defects. This now has to be changed.

Those who are charged with the implementation of reforms in the Ministry need our prayer. They are: Katrin Suder (State Secretary), Volker Wieker (Army Chief of Staff), Hans-Peter Bartels (Chairman of the Defence Committee), Harald Stein (Head of Procurement).

Prayer:

- **Courage for all those involved in exposing failures and in taking corrective action. (Proverbs 23:23)**
- **For constructive cooperation with the Minister at all levels within the Ministry. (Psalm 127:1)**
- **Blessing for the Minister to humbly use her skills effectively to the benefit and protection of our land. (Psalm 90:17)** -RS-

The world is on the move

Every day 300 - 400 people come into the German central immigration office in Karlsruhe to apply for asylum. This is also happening in many of our cities. They are all faced with the challenge of registering thousands of refugees, and providing them with accommodation and medical care. There are too few places for them to sleep and the emergency accommodation is generally in poor condition. Our cities and states are simply overwhelmed and are looking for support from the federal government.

There are many reasons why people are leaving their home country. We learn from the Bible that Joseph's father and brothers migrated to Egypt with all their possessions because of famine in Canaan. (Genesis 47:1).

Migration is one of the greatest challenges for our society. How do we come to terms with it? Too often refugees, asylum seekers and citizens from other countries come up against a wall of fear and one often hears: "They take advantage of us, they take our jobs away from us, they are just criminals!" But the more important question for us is how God wants us to relate to refugees: "When an alien lives with you in your land, do not mistreat him. The alien living with you must be treated as one of your native-born. Love him as yourself for you were aliens in Egypt. I am the Lord your God." (Leviticus 19:33-34).

We should welcome refugees just like a person who moves from Hessen to Bavaria – and love and esteem them in the same way! They should have the same rights and obligations. With such equal treatment we can also require that everyone who comes to this country obeys our laws as a native-born and respects our constitution. The German policy that asylum seekers may not work in the first nine months can be severely questioned, but the current situation is actually an opportunity for us Christians. We are called to respond to the current challenge with the love of Jesus and not to just leave it all to the state.

Prayer:

- **That Christians will become more involved in bringing the love of God to asylum seekers. (Isaiah 58:7-8)**

- **That those responsible in the cities and in the country are able to handle the asylum seekers with sensitivity and wisdom. (Matthew 5:7)**
- **That we will gladly share the riches of our land. (Ecclesiastes 11:1-2)**

-Friedemann Kalmbach, City Councillor in Karlsruhe-

Call to prayer – Remember-Repent-Pray

The Christian Forum for Israel (CFFI), the Call of the Watchmen, and Ebenezer Emergency Fund International (Germany) are calling for 100 days of prayer for Germany and Israel under the heading: "Remember-Repent-Pray". This will take place during the time window between the date of the liberation of the Auschwitz concentration camp in Poland on January 27, 1945, and the end of World War II in Europe on May 8, 1945. With this we remember the 100 days of the final episode in German shameful history 70 years ago. Within this 100 day period is the season of Lent before Easter. In 2015 the "40 days of prayer and fasting for our land" and the "100 days of prayer" will be interwoven and a single comprehensive prayer guide published. For each of the 15 weeks there will be a theme covering spiritual, political and social issues in relation to Germany and Israel and for each day there will be specific prayer points and Bible references. During these 15 weeks churches and prayer groups can bring the subject of Israel into the foreground with sermons, teaching, seminars and films, looking into local history to bring to life the connection between remembrance, repentance and prayer. Information will be given on historical events that are relevant to the current week. Some will lead us to repentance, others to thankfulness; some will remind us of the shameful history of Germany, others of God's grace. The prayer guide (in German) will be available in January 2015 and you can register for a weekly email update or order the booklet on the website www.100tagegebet.de. Free-will financial contributions are requested.

Prayer:

- **That this call to prayer for 100 days will be taken up by many churches and prayer groups. (Psalm 122:6-9)**
- **That the teaching on Israel in our churches will increase. (Romans 11:25-32)**
- **For the successful completion of all the preparation work for this call to prayer. (1 Corinthians 15:58)** -RS-

National security

There are now several levels of exposure to danger and national security in our land: in one way through Islamic terrorism and in another through conflicts between Salafists and Kurds, Yazidis or other groups.

Prayer:

- **Let us lift the name of Jesus over our land and pray for protection by heavenly hosts of angels. (Psalm 20:1-2; 91:9-11)** -RS-

Faith courses at the core of the "Kirchentag" (German Protestant Church Conference)

The ALPHA course team in Germany has asked the Call of the Watchmen to intercede for them!

This autumn the advisory boards of the German Protestant Church Conference, which takes place from June 3-7, 2015, in Stuttgart, will decide whether faith and discipleship training course initiatives such as ALPHA, Emmaus, Spur 8, etc. are allowed to have a stand and present themselves at one of the central points (in the YMCA Stuttgart for example), or whether they will be relegated to a stand in the "Market of Opportunities" for "all-and-sundry" where they would be one of many and visitors would have to search them out.

At a central point they would be able to catch the attention of many more churches and pastors – for the good of all those who would be led to faith through these initiatives!

We in the Call of the Watchmen have exactly the same concern. We have proposed to the "Kirchentag" to offer a seminar on "Political Prayer" at one of the central points. There was certainly some interest from Protestant Church pastors. But the decision rests with the advisory boards.

Prayer:

- **Thanks for the ALPHA courses through which, for many years, thousands in Germany and all over the world have been coming to faith. (2 Corinthians 5:17-21)**
- **For Holy Spirit led decisions of the advisory boards of the "Kirchentag" in favour of ALPHA, the Call of the Watchmen, and others. (Romans 1:13-16)** -OS-

25 Years after the fall of the Berlin Wall

On November 9th it will be 25 years since the amazing fall of the Berlin Wall. Considering all the bloody and chaotic revolutions in the past few years, let us thank God increasingly for this miracle of freedom and unity!

Since October 3rd two groups of more than 50 pilgrims have been walking along the old east-west border. With prayers, moments of silence and worship services they are remembering this miracle. They are blessing our land and are praying for new life through the Holy Spirit.

Prayer:

- **Thanks for the grace that God bestowed on our land then and continues to bestow to this day. (Psalm 103)**
- **That the spirit of prayer and intercession, for which the prayer walkers are pleading, blows once again through our land. (Psalm 85:1-4)** -RS-

Dates for your diary:

08-09.11 March of Life in Dresden

09.11 International Prayer Day for Persecuted Christians (Open Doors)

09.11 25 years since the fall of the Berlin Wall

15.11 Watchmen Prayer Conference in Mannheim

18.11 Pray Day for schools in Germany

19.11 Prayer and Repentance Day (Holiday in Saxony)

22.11 Watchmen Prayer Day in Thuringia at the Holocaust Memorial in Buchenwald

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