

May 2015

### Praying in the spirit of reconciliation

On March 29<sup>th</sup> there was a very moving ecumenical church service of repentance in Berlin, acknowledging the failure of Germany to intervene in the Armenian genocide in Turkey, 100 years ago in 1915. The Armenian Archbishop pronounced forgiveness over us as we confessed our guilt. How did this all start? God calls us to reconciliation. *“All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people’s sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation.”* (2 Corinthians 5:18-19)

Prayer and intercession is part of the ministry of reconciliation. How do we pray for the many people and events that have brought suffering and death? If God has already reconciled the world to himself in Christ, then it can only be done in the spirit of this reconciliation. Then we have hope that, through our prayers, God will make reconciliation a reality: between people, between nations – in small matters as well as in complex political issues. -RS-

### Answers to prayer from March

The continuing protests against the new education policy in Baden-Wuerttemberg (BW) are producing results! In Berlin, new frameworks for education policies have been developed and posted on the Internet for comment. The subject of sexual diversity is no longer included! They do not want any of the discussions as in BW. -RS-

### 1945 to 2015: 70 years of grace

When the unconditional surrender of Germany was signed on May 8<sup>th</sup> 1945, more than 60 million people were dead as a result of the war. As the vast extent of the atrocities of the Nazis was becoming known, it seemed unimaginable that Germany could ever again become a respected member of the community of nations. But: in 2013, according to a BBC survey, Germany was voted the most popular and positively viewed nation in the world. Is there a spiritual reason for this development? The gospel offers grace also for the greatest of sinners through repentance. Several years after the war, the Sisters of Mary in Darmstadt set out on a path of penitence asking God, as representatives of the land of Germany, for forgiveness for all the war crimes and the sins committed against God’s people. And God began to answer: little by little the cover of denial and suppression of guilt was lifted. The German government sought to make reparations towards Israel and in 1952 this resulted in the Luxembourg Agreement. The new German Republic’s acknowledgement of historical responsibility towards the Jewish state was an important precondition for Germany to be accepted again by the international community. On May 12<sup>th</sup> 1965, Germany and Israel established diplomatic relations and in 2008 Angela Merkel declared that the historical responsibility for the security of Israel was one of the fundamental national interests of the German state. Germany and Israel today identify themselves as friends – is there a better example of reconciliation? Internationally

Germany is increasingly becoming an example of how a nation can deal with its guilt and of the incomparable power of grace.

### Prayer:

- **Praise and thanks for the immeasurable grace of God towards our country. (Lamentations 3:22-23)**
- **Germany, arise, shine – go forward in the light! (Isaiah 60:1)**
- **Blessings and mercy for all who are still suffering in the aftermath of the Nazi regime.** -RS-

### Greece

Greece needs our prayers as Europeans, especially from us Germans. Our Greek brothers and sisters asked us for this.

There are currently two issues: [a] the debt conflict with Europe and [b] the reparations claim against Germany.

[a] Greece is facing state bankruptcy and urgently needs the cash in the final instalment (ca. 7 billion Euros) of the second EU aid package. As Greece’s state debt is closely linked with the out-dated public administrative system, the countries funding the package (that is, all EU member states - not only Germany) are demanding radical reforms. As a result the majority of the population will suffer from job losses, pension cuts, etc. Against this background, the left-wing party Syriza came to power after the elections, promising to stop these reforms. However the consequence would be the need for even more payments. To avoid bankruptcy, the Greek Finance Minister demanded that all debts be simply cancelled without reforms. Consequently many politicians and economic experts are now in favour of Greece exiting the Euro zone and even leaving the EU (“Grexit”). The EU governments however want Greece to remain as a demonstration of political “solidarity”.

[b] The claim for reparations (278 billion Euros) has nothing to do with [a]. Reparations are being refused by the German government because (1) already in 1960, 115 million DM were paid to Athens as war reparations, and (2) at the time of reunification of Germany, in the “4+2 Treaty” the four victorious powers (USA, Great Britain, France and Russia) and the two German states stipulated that with this treaty all war reparations claims from any country were deemed to be settled. (3) German Foreign Minister Steinmeier is proposing a German-Greek youth exchange program and other youth educational initiatives instead of reparations.

### Prayer:

- **That the Greek people will be supported in godly ways until the economy takes an upward turn.**
- **For insight on all sides into mistakes and the willingness to make changes – “repentance”.**
- **For de-escalation of the conflict between Germany and Greece with agreements to work together for the benefit of the people of both nations.** -OS-

### Troeglitz (a small town near Leipzig)

Everyone in Germany knows about it: resignation of the local mayor, a fire in the refugee home, threats to decapitate the district administrative officer, and more.

It's all about the acceptance of refugees, most from the Middle East (Syria, Iraq) in our local communities. One thing is certain: "Troeglitz is no exception" (Haseloff – Minister-President of the State of Saxony-Anhalt). It takes you back to the 90's in Moelln and Hoyerswerda. And the NPD (nationalist party in Germany) are making every effort to stir up old resentments: "These fraudulent refugees make us poor". "They come only to take money from Germans". The problem lies even deeper: the general mood of the population. This comes through the media which usually only portray "foreigners" as a problem, be it locally, be it the arguments between the national, state and local authorities over support costs, be it in the way that Europe is allowing the Mediterranean to become a mass grave for refugees.

Why not a daily column in the newspaper reporting on the horrors that these people have lived through? Why not a weekly section on the right way to approach foreigners and deal with the problems that arise? Or write reports about successful experiences in engaging with refugees? This is real gap in the market!

**Prayer:**

- **For softened hearts towards the physical and emotional needs of refugees. (Matthew 5:7)**
- **Protection for all those involved in helping refugees, through the state or privately. (Psalm 31:20)**
- **For a change in media reporting and for politicians to engage directly in discussion with the people. -OS-**

**Changes in the Call of the Watchmen board**

After 15 years Ortwin Schweitzer is handing over the leadership of the Call of the Watchmen to Rosemarie Stresemann. He wants to dedicate more of his time to prayer ministry at the European level. He has accepted the position of "Honorary Chairman" on the board and will continue to contribute items for prayer and assist Rosemarie in the editing of the prayer letter.

**Prayer:**

- **Thanks for Ortwin's dedication and work until now and blessings on Rosemarie for all the new tasks and responsibilities that lie ahead. (Psalm 90:17) -RS-**

**Dangerous blindness**

One day before the Jewish Passover feast and the third "blood moon" in the tetrad, a "breakthrough" was announced in the negotiations with Iran on its nuclear development program. In reality, only the framework for a future agreement was discussed, the contents of which is already now being described in a totally different way by each negotiation partner. Will Iran subject all of its nuclear activities to rigorous international inspection in future? On the contrary! The framework of the agreement fails to include the ratification of the addendum to the "Non-Proliferation Treaty of Nuclear Weapons" because it alone would have allowed a surprise inspection of its nuclear installations without notice. The use of tricks and deception on the part of Iran is standard behaviour and the idea that Iran would agree to a strict control of its installations is an illusion. There is an appalling self-imposed blindness in the Security Council members (including Germany!) to the

openly declared claim to power of the Islamic revolutionary government. During the on-going negotiations a high-ranking Iranian general declared in Tehran that "the annihilation of Israel is not negotiable". Shiite Iran is pursuing a long-term subjugation and extermination strategy against the world that is embodied in the Islamic revolution program. Not only Israel but also Sunni Saudi Arabia rightly fears the Iranian nuclear program. The negotiations for the final agreement are scheduled to be completed by the end of June. No agreement has yet been signed – there is yet time to wake up!

**Prayer:**

- **That God himself will make the plans of the enemy to attack and destroy come to nothing. (Psalm 83)**
- **For a wake-up call in German foreign policy and the courage to stand clearly on the side of Israel. (Jeremiah 32:1-3)**
- **That the lies and tactics of Iran will be unmasked. (Proverbs 19:5) -RS-**

**TTIP – what is this?**

TTIP stands for "Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership" – a transatlantic free trade agreement between the EU and the USA. With the creation of the largest trade area on the earth, the countries involved are counting on a rise in the living standards of their citizens just as this was experienced with the free movement of goods, people and services between the European countries. Critics however say that it will serve only large companies and weaken consumer protection.

The EU Commission takes a different position:

- TTIP will not make any changes to existing EU and national laws.
- TTIP will not include any commitments that could jeopardise the independence of the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA).
- Products must have clear identification labels and detailed information for the consumer.

How a company can make claims against a country when it feels unfairly constrained by the national laws is an open question. TTIP negotiations are extremely complex and due of the lack of transparency are not easy to follow in detail.

**Prayer:**

- **Let us proclaim the name of Jesus over the arguments between consumer advantages and the interests of large companies. (Matthew 6:9-13)**
- **For the exposure of any cover-up regarding dangers for the consumer. (Proverbs 5:21)**
- **Blessings over the cooperation between nations with peace and justice for all. (Psalm 90:17) -OS-**

**Dates for your diary:**

**03-10.05** Marches of Life in Bonn and Berlin.

**08-13.05** Final events of the 100 days "remember-repent-pray" for Israel, Germany and nations in Berlin ([www.100tagegebet.de](http://www.100tagegebet.de) and [www.100-days.eu](http://www.100-days.eu))

**30.05** March for Jesus in Strasbourg.

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