

June 2015

Dear intercessors!

Now that I have stepped back from leadership, I would like to encourage you with a message as a “father” of the Call of the Watchmen. Let me express it in the words of the Apostle Paul to his favourite church in Philippi. I tell you: “God has given you the will to follow Jesus and he can also give you the power to remain faithful to him. Even when it is sometimes not so easy, do everything (including prayer as a watchman!) willingly, not continually questioning why you should do it. Be truly like children of God. I know that the world around you does not act like this - you are surrounded by a perverted and fallen generation. But despite this, you shine in this dark world like stars in the night.” (Philippians 2:13-15 - from “Welcome Home” – translated by Fred Ritzhaupt.)

God bless you!

-Ortwin Schweitzer-

Answers to prayer

[1] Following the service of repentance on March 29th in Berlin, the light of God shone brightly and there were many reports in the media about the Armenian genocide. What appeared to be unthinkable early in March became a reality: German President Joachim Gauck made it clear that with the forced expulsion of Armenians and other minorities from the Ottoman Empire 100 years ago a **genocide** actually took place. In his moving speech in the Berlin Cathedral on April 23rd, he made an explicit reference to the German complicity in this act. The recognition of this genocide by the German parliament which then followed in the speeches and the proposed texts for a resolution during the sitting on April 24th broke through the long-standing denial. The resolution has yet to be finally agreed and voted upon.

[2] On April 30th a terrorist attack, presumably planned by Salafists, was thwarted. A bomb filled with nails and other such devices were discovered when a married couple were arrested. One week later, three men and a woman were arrested. They are strongly suspected to be the founders, together with others, of the right-wing terrorist organisation “Old School Society” (OSS) and to have planned attacks on mosques and homes for asylum seekers with nail bombs.

We thank God for these clear answers to prayer and continue to pray for his protective and revealing light in our land.

-RS-

Refugees: a threat or a blessing?

Politicians who speak out on behalf of refugees are under pressure; several houses for asylum seekers have been set on fire shortly before occupation; right-wing extremist attacks on homes for asylum seekers are increasing; the EU is considering a military presence off the coast of Libya to come against human trafficking gangs...

Refugees are mostly only perceived as a threat in Germany and in Europe. But those who act out of fear have a very narrow vision. Fear hardens the heart and nulls the mind such that the possibilities and opportunities of a given

situation can no longer be recognised. “There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear ...” (1 John 4:18) Where fear reigns, the work of God’s Spirit is hindered. Fear appears to be a deeply hidden driving force in us Germans and you often hear people talk about “German angst”. This fear created among other things fertile ground for the plan to exterminate the Jewish people who were considered to be a pest in our nation. Such idolatry which incites fear also induces so much sinful behaviour: control and defence instead of trust; hatred leading to death. The Almighty God has the answers and unlimited power to transform threatening circumstances into blessings. Refugees bring with them much God-given potential and are often well qualified. God can and will use foreigners to be a blessing (like Joseph in Egypt).

To receive this blessing we need to change on the inside: away from anxiety and fear – towards the Lord who is lifted up and to all that is possible through him. (John 3:14)

Prayer:

- **Pray for forgiveness for the national idolatry of anxiety and fear. (Isaiah 44:8-10)**
- **For hearts to be delivered to see the love of God and all that is possible through him.**
- **For God’s guidance in dealing with refugees - within our government, in our cities, in our land and throughout Europe. (Leviticus 19:33-34)**

-RS-

“To the best of our knowledge”

In the current NSA/BND affair, the office of the Chancellor has had to give an answer on four counts.

[1] It concerns the spying of the Americans (National Security Agency – NSA) in Europe and in Germany, and to what extent the German Federal Intelligence Service (BND) has helped them. There is the question of how much the responsible parliamentary control panel knew about this and even more, how much the department in the Federal Chancellery, which is responsible for the oversight of the BND, knew. And “when who knew what” and whether warnings from the BND were given to the Chancellery Chief or the Chancellor herself.

[2] What is certain is that the BND, especially after 9/11 in 2001, has been working closely with the NSA. In 2007 the terrorist cell “Sauerland” was only uncovered because the NSA had given a tip-off to the BND. It is therefore understandable that Angela Merkel would only decide to disclose lists of suspects and documents after consulting the Americans. But for this she is very much under pressure from parliament and the public, who want some clarity concerning the extent of the US reconnaissance activities.

[3] Furthermore, a conflict has developed within the government coalition concerning the question of “transparency with or even without the agreement of the Americans”. Sigmar Gabriel required the Chancellor to show some concerted determination (“backbone”) with respect to the Americans. With such a strong national stand in his time, Schroeder was again able to turn the outcome of the

elections in 2002 to his advantage. But what has Gabriel to gain today for this? The same? But he is already part of the government!

[4] Angela Merkel is again accused: in the election campaign in 2013, the CDU gave the impression that the USA might possibly be ready to sign a "No-Spy" agreement. We now know that this was never intended. Was this a deliberate lie or an error in the assessment of American intentions? Angela Merkel responded that she acted "to the best of our knowledge".

Prayer:

- **Pray for an effective oversight (Chancellery) and control (Parliament) of all security services in our land and for a change in the system where necessary. (Romans 13:1-3)**
- **Thanks for the work of these "security services" and pray for protection for the workers.**
- **Pray for wisdom for Angela Merkel for the decisions she has to make between transparency and maintaining necessary security in consideration of the consequences (as in Nehemiah 2:11-16).** -OS-

Minsk II

Minsk II is the name given to the agreement that was concluded on February 15th to attain a de-escalation and settlement of the war that broke out in the Donbas region in eastern Ukraine between the government in Kiev and the separatists in Donetsk and Luhansk. The current extent of this war was only possible because of the massive support given by Russia to the separatists with weapons and other military assistance, after the annexation of the Crimea in the spring of 2014.

With an admirable effort the German Foreign Minister Steinmeier tried many times to stop the armed fighting - but without success. In February 2015 our Chancellor threw her entire political weight, that she also has on the Russian side, onto the scales, together with French President Hollande, and "forced" the renewed round of negotiations in Minsk between Russia, the Ukraine and representatives of the separatists.

In addition to the immediate actions such as a cease-fire, withdraw of heavy weapons, exchange of prisoners and the guarantee of amnesty, there were also longer-term resolutions in the agreement. In these the parties around the table confirmed "the full respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Ukraine" and that "they are convinced that there is no other alternative than one peaceful solution for all." In practical terms this means that by the end of the year a new constitution for the Ukraine must come into force which will enable a decentralisation of the country and include a law that identifies the special status of Donetsk and Luhansk. In this way Donbas can remain a part of the Ukraine.

Minsk II has been fulfilled in some points, in others not (yet). *Prayer is needed at the European level!* Our German foreign policy definitely needs our spiritual support!

Prayer:

- **No renewed fighting in eastern Ukraine - that would indeed be much fiercer than any until now. (Psalm 46:8-11)**
- **For a new constitution for the Ukraine that takes into account the changes that were discussed.**
- **The possibility of a new order of peace in Europe, with Russia as a partner and no longer as an adversary. (Isaiah 2:4).** -OS-

True friendship with Israel?

On the 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Germany and Israel, the development of this relationship has been seen as a miracle, even by our politicians. Federal President Joachim Gauck said: "Out of diplomatic relations a real partnership has grown ... and step by step this partnership has become a deep friendship." Israeli President Rivlin even said: "The relationship between Germany and Israel is an example for the entire world."

However this positive development is threatened: while two out of three Israelis currently think well of Germany, almost one out of two Germans think negatively about Israel. According to research, hardly any other country is so often criticised by the German media as Israel. This critical view of Israel is not the expression of a true friendship as is often highlighted. It is an anti-Semitic view in disguise that can be recognised by the cooling of the friendship in German hearts. The evidence is growing that this friendship is becoming one-sided and is in serious trouble.

The German government supports the two-state solution, criticises the Israeli settlement policy and does not share the realisation of the threat to Israel in the negotiations with Iran over its nuclear development program. A true friend shares the fears and needs of the other and stands clearly on his side.

Even though the 100 days of prayer for Israel came to an end in May, *increased* prayer efforts are needed for Germany to become a *true* friend of Israel.

Prayer:

- **Thanks for the opening of so many Jewish hearts to reconciliation and friendship. (Psalm 75:1)**
- **For a change in media reporting over Israel that will promote true friendship. (Proverbs 18:24)**
- **That the German government gets an understanding of God's perspective on the election of Israel. (Psalm 122:6-9)** -RS-

Dates for your diary:

- 30.05** Global Outreach Day
- 03-07.06** German Protestant Church Conference
- 07-08.06** G7 Summit in Schloss Elmau, near Munich.
- 18.06-17.07** 30 days of prayer for the Islamic world during Ramadan. (<http://pray30days.org/>)

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