

March 2016

God's plan for our world – in a few words

Recently God showed me from the Gospel of John in a very concise way how we should see God's plan for our world from a spiritual standpoint as we pray in these times. Please read John 16:7-13.

Jesus taught his disciples that the Holy Spirit reveals and convicts us of truth ("opens our inner eyes" in a German translation of v.8) so that we can, at a single glance, see through the turmoil in this world in the light of three basic realities which are all true at one and the same time. The Spirit reveals these as follows:

[1] The world is a place of sin, a place of complete rebellion by mankind against God (v.9).

[2] God's plan of salvation is currently being fulfilled in this world. Jesus has gone away and the Spirit has been sent to us in his place (v.7). Jesus is now seated at the right hand of the Father in heaven, and on earth we have now received the presence of the Holy Spirit. This is the place where **we now stand** in the course of God's great plan of salvation. "Righteousness" (being in right standing with God) comes to us through our redemption by faith.

[3] With the ascension of Jesus to the throne in heaven, the prince of this world, Satan, was **at this time** - and remains **forever** - defeated, judged and condemned (v.11).

Therefore when we are praying and an insurmountable wall of mankind's sin [1] stands before us, then we must raise our eyes towards the risen and exalted Jesus [2] and with the Spirit in us proclaim: "Prince of this world, you have been judged, your might has been destroyed [3]. The victor's name is **Jesus!** He is also the victor right here in this and every situation." -OS-

Answer to prayer for the revised law on prostitution

At the beginning of February shortly after we had begun to pray, the Grand Coalition agreed, after months of argument, to a revision of the law to better protect prostitutes. With this the CDU could take the lead to implement many proposals. In future there will be a legal requirement for sex clients to wear a condom. Brothels will need an operating licence and the licensee must undergo a test for trustworthiness. Business practices such as "Flat-rate" and "Gang-Bang-Parties" will be forbidden. Prostitutes must go to the public health department and register with a local authority. -RS-

Positive development in the economy

As Europe was seized by the great financial and economic crisis in 2008, we started to pray for solutions in our land. No-one expected that Germany would emerge stronger from this crisis with an ever decreasing unemployment rate, and in 2015 there was a record surplus of 12.1 billion Euros in the national budget. With the upswing in the economy the country benefitted from extra cash, higher wages and increasing productivity. But the country still has to come to terms with the financial challenges of the current refugee crisis. German exports in 2015 also broke all records with a rise of 6.4% over the previous year.

Prayer:

- **Thanks for all the economic success – but pray for wisdom in handling the budget surplus.**

(1 Chronicles 29:12,13; Nahum 1:7)

-RS-

A split in the German population

The refugee issue has divided the German population into two camps: those who are for taking them in and those against. Both sides have good arguments for their standpoints, and one would expect that each side would welcome a hearing and a discussion with the other side. But the opposite is happening! Ideological condemnation of the other side is common place: "blue-eyed do-gooders" on one side, "small-minded backwoods people" on the other: a welcoming culture as opposed to a rejecting ("Pegida" = anti-Islamisation) culture. Hate flares up, violence spreads, and our citizens are suddenly committing criminal acts such as burning down buildings. The police are increasingly under attack and a storm of anarchy is brewing.

In the political arena the refugee issue is leading to a crisis in the national government between Angela Merkel (CDU) and Horst Seehofer (CSU). Across the parties the right-wingers are gaining ground. With the potential entry of the AfD into federal state parliaments, a ruling majority may only be possible with a grand coalition of CDU and SPD which will only increase frustration, ineffectiveness and lack of resolve in the government of the state.

In this regard 2016 will be decisive: if there is a noticeable reduction in the number of refugees due to government action, the agitation could die down, the popularity rating of the Chancellor could rise and the protesting parties diminish. If not, then the country faces social unrest to the point of a state of anarchy.

Prayer:

- **That many will be called to build bridges between the opposing camps. (Romans 12:17,18)**
- **That God would show us ways to limit the influx of refugees that we are able to follow. (Psalm 25:4,5)**
- **God protect us from the spirit of blood-thirsty violence and release the spirit of life in our land.**

(Luke 6:27,28; Ephesians 5:8-12)

-OS-

Prayer for those in authority and with responsibility

Article 65 of German Basic Law states that: "The Federal Chancellor determines policy guidelines and carries the responsibility for them." At this time Angela Merkel is finding this very difficult as her refugee policy is rapidly losing support within the German population. The plan of the Chancellor to limit the influx of refugees includes creating peace in Syria, effective control of EU borders, better facilities in the refugee camps in areas of conflict, cooperation with Turkey, distributing refugees among EU countries according to quotas, and tightening the laws for asylum seekers (Asylum Package II). It does not include the establishment of upper limits, which her CSU sister party vehemently demands. It also does not include the quick solutions that many people want to see.

The Word of God *urges* us in 1 Timothy 2:1-8 to “first of all make requests, prayers, intercession and *thanksgiving* for everyone, for kings and all those in authority” – whether we agree with their actions or not. Giving thanks is sometimes a spiritual challenge for us. It requires prayer “without anger and disputing” (v.8) – not only for the Chancellor and her ministers, but also for the federal state governments which are dealing with the practical implementation of her policies day by day.

Prayer:

- **Thanks for all those who carry political responsibility. Speak words of blessing over them. (1 Peter 3:9-12)**
- **Pray for the safeguarding of hearts and minds and for protection from any form of cursing. (Exodus 22:28)**
- **That godly advisors will gain access to those in authority. (Daniel 1:17-20)**

-RS-

How can we do it?

More than one million refugees arrived in our land last year and in many ways the direction has now been set on how this will affect our land and our lives in the future. All this needs our prayer. The decisions that must be made locally in the communes are also very important. The communes urgently require financial support as many are already in deep debt and now need to raise additional money for the accommodation of refugees, for health services, for language and integration training, youth work, family support, schooling and child day care. The provision of places to live has to move at a faster pace. Many refugees have no formal education or training and will be dependent on social welfare (Hartz-IV) for a long time. The Federal Office for Migrants and Refugees (BAMF) is slowly working through the pile of 365,000 unprocessed asylum applications. The pressure to quickly find a way to get the work done is great, but there is a chance that the huge bureaucratic system will be dismantled and faster and more streamlined ways for handling the applications introduced. Under this pressure many people have become very creative. God has made us good at invention – Germany is known for this. Many people are working on concrete solutions on a small or larger scale. We now put our faith in what is possible with God as we pray (Mark 11:22-26)!

Prayer:

- **That the communes will be quickly relieved from financial pressures. (Matthew 14:17-20)**
- **That godly ideas and creative plans will be found and implemented. (Proverbs 21:5)**
- **We stand firm against the devil’s schemes to Islamize our land. (Ephesians 6:12)**

-RS-

Tunnel building by Hamas

Hamas is again building an underground tunnel network to connect the Gaza strip with Israel. In this way Hamas fighters could carry out surprise attacks on the Israeli side of the border. The tunnels pose a massive threat for Israel, making it possible for Hamas fighters to fire rockets from Israeli soil and instigate a blood-bath. Israel is now urgently looking into technical possibilities to develop a system to detect these tunnels. Furthermore the government must

give serious consideration to carrying out pre-emptive strikes. The Israelis who live along the Gaza border already suffer greatly under the day-to-day threats from rockets and grenades. The fear that Hamas fighters could suddenly appear “out of the ground” and stand right in front of their house deprives them of sleep. Hamas has announced that it is planning a war against Israel. The international community is reacting to this threat with a deafening silence.

Prayer:

- **Pray for protection according to Psalm 121.**
- **For the development of warning systems and much wisdom for the Israeli Defence Force (IDF).**

-AS-

Prayer and fasting week – 28.02 to 05.03

In the 24/7 calendar on our website you can sign up to take part in our “Prayer and Fasting Week”. We want to pray for the plight of Christian refugees in the homes for asylum seekers as well as for the conversion of Muslim refugees to Christ. “Christians and Muslim converts to Christianity have no voice”, says Pastor Gottfried Martens whose church in Berlin is a “drop-in-centre” for more than 1,000 Christian refugees. In the refugee homes many Christians live in fear of Muslims who harass them verbally, physically assault them, threaten them and treat them as “infidels” or as “animals”. The Open Doors ministry organisation is now conducting a nation-wide survey in refugee homes and local communities on the conditions under which Christians have to live and the results will be brought to the attention of the public. Although newspapers and television are now reporting on serious attacks, there is a thick veil over the hearts of our people such that there is no outcry against these crimes (as in Cologne on New Year’s Eve). Unfortunately the main churches are also not speaking out for the rights of Christian refugees and Muslim converts.

Prayer:

- **That Christian refugees will be accommodated in safety and security, and be protected from injustice, physically and politically. (Isaiah 25:4,5)**
- **That Open Doors will succeed in gathering many facts through its survey which will be effective in bringing help to Christian refugees. (Proverbs 31:8)**
- **That many Muslim refugees will come to know Jesus as their Saviour. Pray Isaiah 53 for them.**

-RS-

Dates for your diary

04.-06.03 “Shockwave”- an Open Doors initiative for youth to pray for all persecuted Christians in the world.

13.03 German state elections in Baden-Wuerttemberg, Rhineland-Pfalz and Saxony-Anhalt.

27.-29.05 **Prayer Conference for Germany** in Bingen. (See also February prayer letter.) Printed flyers (in German) can be requested from the conference office by email: info@gebetskonferenz.de. For further details and registration visit: www.gebetskonferenz.de.

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