

May 2016

**Seek me and live (Amos 5:4)**

God really cares about where we seek help in time of need as a nation. In many places in the Bible we find words that should encourage us as his people to seek the Lord with all our hearts. God wants us to come to him and call out to him. In fact, if we do not seek help specifically from him we are not honouring him as we should. In every prayer in the Call of the Watchmen we are actually saying: "God, we honour you as our helper in every time of need." When at the end of May we meet together in Bingen to seek God at the Prayer Conference for Germany, he will confirm his promise: "I have not said to Jacob's descendents, 'Seek me in vain!'" (Isaiah 45:19). So with this encouragement, let us this month *in the unity of the Spirit* pray together and prepare ourselves for the conference – even when we are not able to be there in person. -RS-

**Two answers to prayer**

After two years the controversy over the "new education policy" in Baden-Wuerttemberg seems to be coming to an end. It will now be implemented in a considerably amended form. Originally the major guiding principle for all areas of teaching in the future was to be the "acceptance of sexual diversity". An online petition initiated by the secondary school teacher Gabriel Staengle, protesting against this attempt to fundamentally change our educational system with this ideology, was supported by 192,000 signatures. Protests from the general population followed in the form of the "Demo for all". And we prayed in the Call of the Watchmen. Staengle's petition and work brought about many of the amendments. The new guiding principle is now called "tolerance and acceptance of diversity" and sets out provisions for dealing with minority groups in general. Awareness is still required so that the original concept of the "acceptance of sexual diversity" does not creep in through the back door into school teaching materials and through lobby groups. Praise God by proclaiming Psalm 118 over the life of Gabriel Staengle! -RS-

Thank you for all your support in prayer for the European Union of Prayer meeting in The Hague in Holland in April. It was a great success! Prayer topics were: Israel; the UK referendum on EU membership; surrogacy; and of course refugees where we heard of a massive spiritual movement among migrants from a Greek lady who works with Syrian and Iranian refugees in Greece. The meeting concluded with six prayer walks through different areas of the city and a prayer evening with Christians in a local church. -OS-

**UK referendum on EU membership and the consequences for the European Union**

What does the referendum on June 23<sup>rd</sup> in the United Kingdom (Great Britain and Northern Ireland) have to do with us in Germany? Much in every way! Solidarity, the cornerstone of the EU, has been placed in jeopardy because of the reaction of the eastern European member states to the refugee crisis. Their behaviour is understandable from their 40 year history of suppression of their own national

identity and they are now equating the power of "Brussels" over and above their national interests with that of Moscow in the past. That one was a dictator and the other is a freely chosen community of nations unfortunately no longer enters the picture.

Whoever wishes to join a community must be prepared to transfer individual rights to that community. Life is now somewhat different. They - in their entirety - now become part of the community – as in a family. In a democracy each member can participate in the decision making process according to the rules, but the decision of the majority applies to all. When the rules of the game are not respected, the community falls apart. The European Union now finds itself in this fragile position because of the behaviour of the eastern member states. However, even within the western member states, the euro-sceptic opponents of the EU have an increasingly strong influence. If now the British leave the EU, an "implosion of the EU" (as the President of the European Parliament called it) would only be a question of time. For this reason the referendum is of major significance for the whole of Europe! Where is it better to live: in a finished house or in the rubble after its collapse? The anti-EU propagandists in the AfD in Germany, the National Front in France and the UKIP in Great Britain should think about this very carefully, as well as those who vote for them.

Christians in the UK who are considering this "Brexit" issue in a wider European context have begun to pray for God's good will to be done both for Britain and for Europe through this referendum. The same is now happening among Christians from Europe who are taking part in the "40 days of prayer and fasting" through the "European Union of Prayer".

**Prayer:**

- **May God protect and preserve His great gift of peace and freedom for us in Europe. (Isaiah 26:3-4)**
- **For a clear majority in the UK referendum on EU membership on June 23<sup>rd</sup>. (Psalm 33:13-15)**
- **May God awaken once again in the people of Europe a joy in working together (Psalm 133), for He directs hearts like a watercourse (Proverbs 21:1).** -OS-

**Refugees – what happens next?**

The stream of refugees is slowing down (now "only" 200 each day). Many see this as a pause and a chance to take a breath in our land. At the same time many in North Africa are already sitting on their suitcases with the intention to head for Europe as soon as the weather improves. A sense of need makes them very creative to find new ways to get here. In the long term the migration to our prosperous land is not going to stop. It is highly questionable whether the strongly contested agreement with Turkey can be part of the solution. The situation on the Greece/Macedonia border has already deteriorated many times. As I saw the shocking portrayal of the catastrophic conditions in Idomeni as presented by Norbert Blum, I had to think again about

what the Bible says concerning “divine mercy”. Mercy is as important to God as justice and righteousness. (Jeremiah 9:23-24). Pope Francis spoke in his Good Friday message about the “numbed conscience of the West” with regard to the refugee crisis. Can we now imagine that God wants to so change us as a nation, that we, who were once known as the most ruthless and merciless, would be regarded as an example of mercy and kindness by other nations? The 1.3 million refugees that have come to us in the past year are demanding much from us at many levels. And God has entrusted much to us with which we can serve these fugitives. Above all else this should also include the sharing of the gospel.

#### Prayer

- **Thanks that we, as a blessed land, can joyfully pass on our blessing to the fugitives. (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18)**
- **That the church of Jesus will use this God-given time window to share the gospel. (Matthew 28:19-20)**
- **That the proposed law on integration will be implemented in such a way that the refugees can be given hope and a future. (Jeremiah 29:11-13)**

-Ernst Schmael, Regional Leader South Bavaria -

#### The AfD (Alternative for Germany) party and its future

While the CDU and SPD as the once largest main-stream political parties in Germany are now fast losing members as well as support from the voters, it could be that the AfD will develop into a new political force in the long term. With the results of the latest three state elections in Rhineland-Pfalz (12.6%), Baden-Wuerttemberg (15.1%) and Saxony-Anhalt (24.3%) the AfD moved from being a non-parliamentary opposition party to suddenly become a new opposition party in our state parliaments. The newly elected members must now however learn to how to work within the parliaments.

From experience, the work in a parliament can be changed significantly by a party which has gained popularity through protest voters. This was evident already in the development of the Greens and also the Pirate Party which in the meantime has become irrelevant. In which direction will the AfD now develop in regard to political position and policy? Will they work constructively in the parliaments or just fundamentally act as an opposition on all issues? As they take the position of the national-conservative camp in politics which the CDU has essentially abandoned (support for marriage and the family, no interest in current gender issues, strict control on migration, etc.), they could easily win the support of voters who are leaving the CDU. However, how successful will they be in keeping their distance from the right-wing radicals? Do they really want to do this? We want to pray for clarification of this issue so that with a cleansing from any right-wing radical influences this party can become a constructive political force.

#### Prayer:

- **That the AfD will set a clear line of demarcation from right-wing radicalism in their speeches and political agenda. (James 3:5-8)**

- **For a constructive participation in the work of the three state parliaments. (Psalm 24:4-5)**
- **For wisdom for the other parliamentary parties in dealing with the AfD.**

-RS-

#### Prayer for Israel and Germany

There is much for which we can be thankful concerning the development of the relationship between Germany and Israel. In 2015 the two nations commemorated the end of World War II and the end of the Holocaust 70 years ago, as well as 50 years of diplomatic relations. As far as the growth of reconciliation and friendship in the last decades is concerned, the talk on both sides has always been of a “miracle”. To God be the glory – it was only by His grace! However this friendship cannot be assumed and relied upon forever. The Iran deal of June 2015, the EU boycott of certain Israeli products in September 2015, the often one-sided reports in the media of the so-called “Knife-Intifada” and much more are putting the relationship under strain. The latest “Government Consultations” in February of this year, where the members of the two Cabinets met in Berlin, were nonetheless marked by a determination to work even closer together under the growing pressure and challenges of terrorism. For the relationship to become even more stable and secure, it needs a wider coverage in prayer. Let us pray that God will give a strategy to Israel ministries for the strengthening of Israel-Germany prayer in our land. Many ministries have joined forces in the newly formed “Christian Forum for Israel”. Regional Israel conferences organised by Christians for Israel in Germany (CSI) have already taken place in Munich, Stuttgart, Berlin and Dusseldorf, and in May and June there will be further regional Israel conferences in Hamburg and Frankfurt.

#### Prayer:

- **Thanks for Christians from Germany and Messianic leaders from Israel who are playing an important role in the process of bringing our two nations closer together. (2 Corinthians 5:18)**
- **That God calls many more watchmen in Germany to stand on the walls of Zion. (Isaiah 62:6-9)**
- **For a new and rising interest within churches for Israel and prayer for Israel, and for a significant increase in the number of participants in the Israel conferences in May and June.**

-Harald Eckert, CSI-

#### Dates for your diary

**04.-08.05** Christival, Youth Congress, Karlsruhe

**06.-07.05** CSI Israel Conference, Hamburg

**20.-22.05** Saxony Israel Conference, Glauchau

**25.-29.05** 100<sup>th</sup> Catholic Church Conference, Leipzig

**27.-29.05** Call of the Watchmen Prayer Conference for Germany, Bingen

*Blessings from*

*Rosemarie Stresemann and Ortwin Schweitzer*