

June 2016

**Pentecost**

“Pentecost: a very difficult term. A problematic holiday. Many Christians do not find it easy to explain what we are celebrating.” These words were recently written in a protestant church magazine. They are true. Unfortunately. Whoever has not consciously invited and accepted the Holy Spirit into their lives as the third person in the trinity will at best only be able to talk *about* him. But we can talk *to* him. He also talks to us: “The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children.” (Romans 8:16). If he can talk to us and we can talk to him, he is a real person. We know the Father as a person and the Son as a person – but what about the Holy Spirit? We should ask him to introduce himself so that we can get to know him better. Just invite him! (1 Corinthians 6:19). He will come to you - personally.

-OS-

**Answers to prayer – but let’s keep praying!**

Much has happened since March when we prayed for protection for Christian refugees in the homes for asylum seekers. This issue has now been taken up by television as well as in national newspapers. On May 9<sup>th</sup> in Berlin a study by Open Doors was presented at a press conference. Christians, mostly Muslim converts, currently in refuge homes, have been interviewed, and 88% of them spoke about serious attacks that they had suffered because of their faith. The Chancellor was challenged to give the highest priority to actions by our government that are urgently required to stop these attacks. A satisfactory solution is however not in sight because there are many different suggestions and representatives from the churches are also not in agreement. Refugee accommodation is under the control of the individual German states and each state can decide how to enforce regulations to protect Christians and other minorities.

**Please continue to pray for protection for our brothers and sisters and for those responsible to seek solutions according to God’s Word. (Psalm 72:4)**

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**30 Days of Prayer for the Islamic World**

A Prayer Guide is again available in many languages to help Christians to pray for Muslims all over the world during the Ramadan month of fasting from June 6<sup>th</sup> to July 5<sup>th</sup>. (See <http://pray30days.org/order/>). In 2016, Ramadan falls on the longest days in the year in Germany. The period without food or drink can last more than 18 hours! In the refugee homes where Muslims and non-Muslims live together, Ramadan brings tension. Those who eat or drink during daylight hours give themselves away! The risk of arguments between people of different religions is much higher during Ramadan than at other times.

**Prayer:**

- **That more and more Muslims in Germany come to faith in Jesus. (Matthew 12:18-21; Isaiah 42:1-4)**
- **For strength, protection and wisdom for all who are working with Muslim refugees. (1 Corinthians 16:9)**

-OS-

**Relationship of Germany and the EU to Turkey**

In the agreement between the EU and Turkey, it was foreseen that Turkey would take back the migrants who have flooded across the Aegean Sea into Greece illegally and that Syrians from Turkey could legally travel in the opposite direction into the EU. Since this agreement came into effect, Syrian and other illegal refugees in Greece have resisted any attempts to have them sent back to Turkey.

In response to one of the counterclaims from Turkey, on May 4<sup>th</sup> the EU Commission said that a visa waiver for a short stay of up to 90 days for Turkish citizens was being considered. Once the preconditions have been fulfilled (an agreement to fight corruption, criminality and terrorism, to cooperate with Europol, for data protection and biometric passports according to EU guidelines), the EU Council of 28 Interior Ministers and the EU Parliament would agree to the easing of visa requirements in June. A decision or a ratification of the proposal by the German Parliament has not been scheduled. Until now Ankara is refusing to make any changes to the Turkish anti-terrorist laws.

The leader of the Greens, Oezdemir, is warning against being fooled or blackmailed by Turkey and Erdogan. At the same time he is again putting forward the proposal to parliament for the “Remembrance and commemoration of the genocide of the Armenians and other Christian minorities in the Ottoman Empire 101 years ago”. On June 2<sup>nd</sup> the German parliament will be adopting a resolution to disregard the protest of Turkey which still denies that the genocide took place.

**Prayer**

- **For a clear acknowledgement by the German parliament of the Armenian genocide. (2 Chronicles 7:14)**
- **No new agreement with Turkey that will lead to loss of life among refugees and migrants. (Isaiah 30:1)**
- **For solutions to the streams of refugees into Europe according to God’s good will and purposes. (Proverbs 14:31-35)**

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**Taboo areas in politics**

In the prayer letter for March 2015 we talked about how certain subjects such as abortion, gender-mainstreaming, homosexuality and Islam have become “protected areas” due to the pressure to be “politically correct” which amounts to “intimidation” to not speak freely. We prayed that politicians would have the courage to tackle this issue. In the past few weeks, Islam in Germany has increasingly been coming under the microscope by conservative and right-wing populist politicians. Muslims who practice their religion privately and peacefully are accepted, but *political* Islam, which claims power to control other people’s lives with elements of Sharia law such as violence, demeaning women, discriminating against Christians and Jews, is being rejected as incompatible with German basic law. The CDU parliamentary leader, Volker Kauder, is now advocating for state control of mosques. The financing and teaching in

mosques is a major issue. It is openly recognised that most of the anti-Semitism in Europe now comes from Islam. The AfD Party for example is stressing the importance of the traditional family as the core of our society, the raising of many children is being encouraged and abortion is coming under strong opposition. The “culture of life” should start with the embryo. The latest gender ideology, according to which children should now be exposed to “sexual diversity” at an early age and given the opportunity to choose their sexual identity for themselves, is being rejected. Increasingly the place of traditional German culture and western Christian values in our society are entering the political discussion.

**Prayer:**

- **That people in politics, the church, education and business will more clearly speak out in these “taboo” areas. (Isaiah 59: 14-16)**
- **That the “Spirit of truth” will enter and guide the discussions. (John 16:13)**
- **That Christians will have the courage to present their perspective on these issues. (Luke 1:68-75)** -JB-

**European Citizens Initiative 2015/000006**

Since the creation of the so-called “civil union” in German basic law in 2001 through left-wing politics, which has eventually led to the “definition” of sexual identities in addition to “man and woman” through the latest gender ideology - all under the banner of “a marriage relationship for everybody”, total confusion has entered our language. And this has also permeated European Union law.

Now a group of Christians has decided to get one million signatures by November to support a European Citizens Initiative which will require the EU Commission to once again define the terms “marriage” and “family” clearly as “father, mother, and children” and to firmly embed this definition in all European legislation.

For further information and how to sign-up, visit:

<https://signatures.mumdadandkids.eu/index.do?lang=en> .

**Prayer:**

- **Let us praise God for his good order in creation. (Genesis 1:27-31)**
- **For the success of this initiative for all in Europe. (Philippians 2:15)**
- **Against the spirit of confusion and defiance of God’s good order in the latest gender ideology. (2 Corinthians 4:2-4)** -OS-

**Genetic engineering**

Every cell in a person’s body contains the complete genetic information of that person. The information is stored in chromosomes which are thread-like structures with the DNA and innumerable genes. Each gene contains specific information such as eye-colour, but also a person’s hereditary predisposition to disease. Genetic researchers have always had the goal to identify such genetic disorders and if possible to “repair” these genes.

Genetic research has already been successful in changing the genetic make-up of plants and animals. So we now have, for example, “genetically modified” maize. But should

we manipulate the genes in human sperm and egg cells or even in embryos (inseminated egg cells)? The researchers have discovered a process to make razor-thin incisions into chromosomes called genetic “editing” (now a part of genetic engineering). But should we do this?

Genetic engineering is allowed in the USA, UK and China, where embryos may be grown outside of the womb in a Petri-dish for up to 13 days. Then they are destroyed. German embryo-protection law forbids any kind of experimentation after fertilisation. Only experiments on sperm cells and egg cells separately are permitted. Germany has set the standard in this respect. Humanity stands before an epoch-making decision that strikes to the heart of the dignity of mankind and its very foundations.

**Prayer:**

- **Worship God, the creator and sustainer of life. (Romans 11:36)**
- **Pray that Germany remains steadfast in the ban on genetic engineering on embryos. (Exodus 20:13)**
- **Pray for a world-wide consensus on the limits to experimentation on human life. (Genesis 1:27)** -OS-

**Israel – increased pressure for a “two-state solution”**

In March we prayed for the development of a warning system for the detection of Palestinian terrorist tunnels. This has now been developed and installed – thanks be to God! In the past few weeks, the voices calling for a two-state solution for Israel have again become louder. Along with this comes the demand for Israel to abandon Jewish settlements in Judea and Samaria as well as parts of Jerusalem. Plans for a UN resolution will now increase the pressure. But this runs an enormous risk that these areas in Palestinian hands will be used as a launching ground for terrorist attacks as is already the case for the Gaza Strip. Moreover, Israel is still not recognised by the Palestinians as the Jewish state. France now wants to advance the peace process – against the will of Israel. It was planned\* for 20 countries to meet on May 30<sup>th</sup> in Paris to pass a resolution to force a two-state solution and to set conditions for a peace conference. In the past Germany has stood protectively on the side of Israel. Let us pray that Germany will not move away from this position.

*\*Translator’s note: Meeting postponed as USA could not attend!*

**Prayer:**

- **That Germany applies no further pressure on Israel that will endanger its security. (Deuteronomy 33:26)**
- **Wisdom for Israel’s political leadership. (Psalm 62:7)**
- **Thank God that the meeting in Paris has been postponed\*.** -AS-

**Dates for your diary**

- 10.06-10.07** Euro 2016 Football Championship in France (Prayer concerning security issues)
- 11.06** CSI Israel conference, Frankfurt
- 23.05** EU Referendum in the United Kingdom (Great Britain and Northern Ireland)
- 30.06-02.07** Together for Europe Congress, Munich

*Blessings from*

*Rosemarie Stresemann and Ortwin Schweitzer*