

July-August 2016

Devote yourselves to prayer (Colossians 4:2)

Some time ago God showed me a picture of a “tug-of-war” contest. Through our prayers, our devotion, we are a team pulling Germany towards God’s heart – but there is also a pull in the opposite direction - by the team of darkness. It is really a “tug-of-war”. Two teams are pulling on the rope and it’s all about which team is the strongest. The struggle goes back and forth. There is yet no winner. But if one team lets go of the rope it’s all over! Therefore we must remain “devoted” to prayer. For our love and devotion is our strength – love never fails! Our “cheer leaders” are in the “cloud of witnesses” in the heavenly realms. Ask God to continuously strengthen our team of intercessors! -RS-

Answers to prayer

1] The Prayer Conference for Germany in Bingen with more than 600 participants was surely under the protection and blessing of God. Thanks to all who prayed, including those who prayed at home! A report and audio recordings in German can be downloaded from the website at www.gebetsskonferenz.de/rueckblick where there is also a collage of photos from each session.

2] In June the European Court of Human Rights pronounced a ground-breaking verdict. As a result a state may deny same sex couples the right to marry. The declaration that marriage is only the union between a man and a woman is not an act of discrimination under the law! -RS-

The Armenian genocide resolution and its consequences

At the prayer conference in Bingen we again repented on behalf of our land for the alliance between the German and Ottoman Empires in World War 1. A few days later the German parliament passed almost unanimously the Armenian resolution and declared: “The German Parliament humbly bows down to the victims of the expulsion and massacre of Armenians and other Christian minorities in the Ottoman Empire...” And we: “regret the shameful role of the German Empire which, as principal military ally of the Ottoman Empire, despite being clearly informed ... did not try to stop this crime against humanity.” The resolution was based on the realisation that “an honest reappraisal of history is surely the most important foundation for reconciliation.” The inclusion of the word “genocide” and the German statements that are clearly a challenge to the current Turkish government resulted in unrestrained outrage from Turkey. Erdogan likened the members of parliament with a Turkish background who voted for the resolution to terrorists, said that they can no longer call themselves Turks and required then to take a blood test. They were reviled and he even threatened to have them killed. There is now an “action plan against Germany”. The Presidents of the German Parliament and the EU Parliament have clearly distanced themselves from such attacks by Turkey which are undemocratic and deny basic human rights. Cem Oezdemir, German MP with Turkish parents and leader of the Greens party, commented that Turkey under Erdogan cannot become a member of the European Union.

Prayer:

- **Thanks for this clear resolution and protection for all parliamentarians. (Psalm 31:20)**
- **That the negative reactions to the resolution stop and that reconciliation begins. (Psalm 2:1,8)**
- **That the future relationship with Turkey will be based on truth. (2 Corinthians 6:14)** -JB-

Election of a new German Federal President

The election of the next Federal President of Germany is expected to take place on February 12, 2017. The search for an acceptable successor has now begun. Some names have already been put forward including Wolfgang Schäuble, Frank-Walter Steinmeier and Norbert Lammert. Even the nomination of the author and journalist Navid Kermani, with a Persian/Muslim background, is being considered. High (moral) expectations are rightly tied to the office of Federal President as he has to represent the nation and be independent of any party affiliation. In the past the Federal President has offered important guidance and brought reconciliation within society through “*an appropriate word at the appropriate time*”. The President is also often in a position to strengthen the relationship with other countries (especially Israel). A wide-reaching cross-party consensus is desirable in the search for candidates. In 2004 the CDU/CSU and FDP put forward Horst Köhler, a man relatively unknown at the time on the political scene. We pray that a candidate will be elected who will courageously stand for Christian values in our land and know how to protect them, and if necessary be someone from “behind the scenes”.

Prayer

- **For the election of a God-fearing, believing Christian. (Acts 13:22)**
- **God’s leadership in the search for candidates. (Psalm 48:14)** -AS-

Concepts for the future

The next industrial revolution has already begun – with the title: “Industry 4.0”. I recently read that Adidas is now using robots to stitch and bond sports shoes. Special requests from individual customers can be immediately processed. Production can again be cheaper in Germany than in Asia. Industry 4.0 enables custom and mass assembly in the same production line. All this will bring about a great change in our society for which our government must be prepared. While industry has been increasingly moving towards responding to individual customer requirements, the structure of our democratic system has changed very little since the first industrial revolution. Individuals often feel that they are no longer represented in government by the political parties. Confidence that the traditional parties have sustainable policies is rapidly declining. Only 19% of the German population have confidence in the CDU and only 9% in the SPD that these parties have good concepts for the future of Germany. In an environment with such new challenges we need people who can plan for the future! The first industrial revolution gave rise to the ideology of

communism as a political concept and answer to future challenges. This was not the answer! The future lies in God's hands – including the best political answer to all our future challenges. It is important that we pray for our government to have God's way of thinking for the future. Otherwise answers will be sought after in old totally unacceptable political models such as dictatorship, fascism or a revived form of communism.

Prayer:

- **That the Holy Spirit will inspire our government to approach the future with fresh thinking according to God's ways. (Jeremiah 29: 11)**
- **That Christians are able to promote thoughts and ideas which enable the kingdom of God to become a reality in the political process. (Jeremiah 29: 7)** -RS-

Israel in school textbooks and in further education

The image of Israel in German school textbooks is still distorted and biased. While the Jewish state is presented as "the aggressor" in the Middle-East conflict, Palestinian terrorism, anti-Semitism and the overall problems in the Arab world are not mentioned. This is the conclusion of the "German-Israeli Textbook Commission" which investigated the image of Israel in school textbooks from 2011 to 2014. This report is now being discussed in five German states with textbook publishers, teachers and Middle-East experts. The source material, with which the German students are working, is incomplete and suppresses important facts such as the radical Islamic indoctrination of young people to become suicide bombers. Standard reference books also contain incorrect historical information. That Israel is the only democracy in the Middle East is never mentioned.

Not only the students but also the teachers are misinformed. Maren Steege who is working with ICEJ (International Christian Embassy Jerusalem) was recently invited to a "Palestine Day" in the "State Academy for Vocational Education" in Baden-Wuerttemberg. She reported that the day began with statements such as "Israel is destroying our education system and demolishing our schools with the help of their army (IDF)". Such statements were applauded by everyone.

Prayer:

- **For discernment and new understanding by the publishers of the textbooks and awareness of the problem among the teachers. (Psalm 94:8)**
- **That students and teachers will recognise the good educational opportunities in Israel. (Psalm 86:11)**
- **For the availability of new and positive training material concerning Israel in schools and universities. (Exodus 32:13)** -Lisa Schmid, ICEJ-

Large cities flourish while smaller communities run dry

Despite a thriving economy and high tax revenues in Germany, the net income of many smaller towns and communities has not risen for many years due to ever-increasing costs. After income and sales tax, the income of small towns mostly comes from business and land taxes and is therefore very dependent on the strength of the local economy. But these towns have limited influence over the

attractiveness of their region for new industry. In particular relatively few large companies have established themselves in eastern Germany.

The constantly increasing social payments are also a significant factor. Regions with a weak economy typically have high outgoings for the unemployed and Hartz IV (low income) claimants. The growth of day-care centres and increasing costs for schools is straining the capacity of small towns and communities to the limit. On top of all this come the unforeseen costs for the accommodation of refugees. Many areas can only meet their commitments by incurring further debt. There is hardly any room left to support voluntary work and cultural projects which adversely affects life in the region.

Until now central government has contributed towards the costs for income support for the elderly, rehabilitation support for the handicapped and partly towards the costs of accommodating refugees. Now the state governments are fighting for a revision to the allocation of financial support from central government, with regard to the future of the solidarity pact and solidarity income tax (for the financing of the rebuilding eastern Germany after reunification), responsibilities for motorway maintenance, inheritance tax and tax collection, and in particular for the sharing of costs for refugees.

Prayer:

- **That finances from central and state governments will be released to support life also in small towns and communities. (Proverbs 16:11f)**
- **That regions outside of the large cities should not run dry but flourish. (Deuteronomy 28:1-6)**
- **For community administrations to be creative and have freedom to plan. (Galatians 5:1)** -KH-

Terrorism

Terrorism is terrorism, whether from the left or from the right or from Islam. Whoever is planning an act of terrorism is spreading fear and anxiety. It is a deliberate act. A conscious decision. Satan is the supreme terrorist. In every act of terrorism we see the ugly face of Satan. The fight against terrorism must therefore first of all be fought in prayer. A continuous prayer cover over Germany hinders and frustrates the power of Satan. Thousands of police, secret agents, under-cover investigators, and those who comb the Internet need protection in prayer. However, there is no sure protection without a heavenly army of angels in our land to protect all the "soft targets".

Prayer:

- **Thanks for all the protection by God's angels until now. (Psalm 91:1-13)**
- **Special protection for all security forces. (Ps. 91:14-16)**
- **For terrorists to be delivered from demons and to come to know Jesus. (Luke 8:26-31)** -OS-

Blessings from

Rosemarie Stresemann and Ortwin Schweitzer

Note: This prayer letter is a double issue for July/August.