

November 2016

**Choose life**

As the servant of God, Moses called out to the people of Israel on His behalf: *"This day I call heaven and earth as witnesses against you that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life, so that you and your children may live..."* (Deuteronomy 30:19).

Only recently, at the March for Life in Berlin, 1500 people demonstrated, full of hate, against those who were choosing life. People are increasingly making their choice for death and curses. This is happening not only in the issue of abortion, but also in the worship of the powers of darkness at musical events, in Satanism and in the open rejection of the Word of God.

Why do I choose life? Moses continues: *"...that you may love the Lord your God, listen to his voice, and hold fast to him. For the Lord is your life..."* (v.20).

In our intercession we must continue to pray for forgiveness for each and every choice for death and curses in our land instead of for life and blessings. -RS-

**Danger of terrorism remains high**

The discovery of an imminent attack at a Berlin airport is an amazing answer to prayer. Jaber al-Bakr lived in Chemnitz. The leader of the prayer house in Chemnitz wrote to us: "From October 1<sup>st</sup> - 4<sup>th</sup> we held a 24 hour prayer chain for our city. The request that God would shine his light in all (!) places of darkness was very, very important to us! On the following Friday, October 7<sup>th</sup>, the explosive material was discovered! This was our Call of the Watchmen prayer day and we prayed once again for light, that the suspect would be found." On Saturday, October 8<sup>th</sup>, he was then arrested. Despite the police force being severely stretched, he did not succeed in finding a place to hide. The work of the security forces in September alone led to four arrests – all Syrian refugees with a connection to the Islamic State (IS). The Interior Minister is endeavouring to close security loop holes in the screening of refugees by introducing new procedures. But: *"Unless the Lord watches over the city, the watchmen stand guard in vain."* (Psalm 127:1b) The danger of terrorism still exists also from left-wing and right-wing extremists. Too many attacks from the left or from the right remain undiscovered and unpunished.

**Prayer:**

- **Thanks for the prevention of every planned attack since the summer. (2 Chronicles 20:21-22)**
- **More recognition of the work of the police and security forces.**
- **That security loop holes can be recognised and closed by those in authority. (Nehemiah 4:9)** -RS-

**Persecution of Christians in the land of Reformation**

The German Constitution (Art. 4) states: "The freedom of religion shall be safeguarded." However, the protestant minister who spoke at this year's March for Life in Berlin later wrote: "Never in post-war Germany has a Christian event been so successfully and fiercely attacked from start to finish as this March for Life." This massive disruption by

left-wing extremists remains unchallenged by public officials. Politicians are constantly ignoring the right of freedom of religion for Christians. Physical attacks on churches, cemeteries and open-air crosses and verbal attacks against the Christian faith by left-wing extremists and anti-Christian groups are on the increase. When the CDU members of the State Parliament in Thuringia entered a motion to "protect Christian values and legally forbid and punish anti-Christian violence", it was rejected by the SPD (Social-Democrats), Greens and Leftist party members.

In many places hostility towards Christians is alarming. The German Agency for Migration and Refugees (BAMF) is now rejecting applications for asylum from converts to Christianity on a large scale, questioning the validity of their faith and, in so doing, presuming to define the Christian faith. So, for example, that the belief in forgiveness of sins through Jesus Christ is no basis on which to become a Christian. The message of the Reformation that forgiveness of sins comes only through the death of Jesus on the cross in being brought into question by our governmental authorities! Christian refugees are being deported to their home countries where their lives are once again in danger!

**Prayer**

- **That our freedom as Christians in a constitutional democracy will not continue to be limited and that Christians will stand up and protest. (Acts 22:25)**
- **That Christian asylum seekers will be accepted and protected in Germany. (Galatians 6:10)**
- **That people who oppose everything Christian will get the fear of God in their hearts and stop what they are doing. (Romans 13:7)** -J.Blum-

**The Turkish Islamic Institute for Religion (Ditib)**

In Germany Sunni Muslims are banded together in four big mosque associations. The Turkish Islamic Institute for Religion (Ditib) is the largest of them with 900 mosque communities as members. Ditib is special in that it is supported directly by the religious authorities in Turkey. Imams come to Germany for up to five years and are paid by the Turkish state. Their knowledge of German is minimal. The contents of their sermons are dictated by Ankara. Since the failed military coup in Turkey, this subjection to influence from the Turkish government is now being regarded much more critically here in Germany. For some time Ditib has been welcomed as an interface to the Turkish community. In many states in Germany (North-Rhine Westphalia, Bavaria, Baden-Wuerttemberg, Hessen, Lower Saxony, Rhine-Land Pfalz and Saarland) Islam lessons are now part of the official curriculum in schools. In this way Ditib has a direct influence at various levels. In some cases they participate in the development of lesson plans, in other cases they supply teachers. The fact that Erdogan can exercise political influence on the Muslim population in Germany through Ditib is now seen as problematic. That an "enlightened" form of Islam is *not* being taught in our schools is confirmed by a recent Ditib publication in which

Islamic jihad is still being glorified. It is well known that Erdogan himself is pursuing a totalitarian power strategy which is aligned with Islamic ideology. In what ways can Germany release itself from its self-imposed dependence on this Islamic association (Ditib)?

**Prayer:**

- **For politicians to wake up and think again about the dangers of this dependency on Ditib. (Psalm 105:4)**
- **Wisdom for ways for the state to set clear guidelines and requirements for Muslim religious education and development. (Proverbs 2:6)**
- **Discovery and exposure of all subversive, anti-state activities in German mosques. (1 John 3:8)** -RS-

#### **Political manoeuvring with Iran and Israel**

At the beginning of September, the German online news service "Tagesspiegel" reported that unknown to the general public the government was preparing for a visit of the Iranian President Hassan Ruhani. It appeared that the foreign ministry along with the economics ministry were both pressing to improve the relationship with Iran. They were however going against the official position of the government which had stated many times that Iran must first recognise the right for Israel to exist as a nation before the full restoration of the relationship. This did not however stop Economics Minister Gabriel from travelling once again to Teheran on the Jewish New Year (Rosh Hashanah) to promote the building of relations for the "benefit of Germany". Because of a statement concerning the right of Israel to exist as a nation in a press interview before the trip, Gabriel was not actually welcomed by the president of the Iranian parliament who regarded such expectations as improper political interference.

**Prayer:**

- **That it will be recognised that standing clearly on the side of Israel is also to the benefit of our economy. (Genesis 12:2-3)**
- **That there will be no "double-minded normalisation" of relations with Iran. (1 Kings 18:21)**
- **Thanks for every occasion when Germany stands with Israel – as in the latest UNESCO vote on the historic connection of the Jewish people to the Temple Mount.**

-RS-

#### **Schools need our prayer**

How can the Christian faith be lived out in everyday life in schools? Answers to challenges from the Word of God are sought in over 600 Bible study groups of the German Student Mission (SMD) which take place in local schools. Not all head teachers however allow such meetings in the school as they fear that Muslims will make a complaint. November 15<sup>th</sup> is the national "Pray-Day" for schools on which the SMD groups, teachers and parents call for support in prayer ([www.prayday.de](http://www.prayday.de)). This prayer support can take many forms – a bike tour from school to school in one area, a prayer night in a school, a prayer walk. But one prayer day in the year is not enough. Many mothers regularly pray for schools in "Moms in Prayer". Teachers and other child care workers support one another in regular

teachers' meetings for mutual encouragement.

**Prayer:**

- **Thanks for all possibilities to live out the Christian faith in schools. (Psalm 118:29)**
- **That Bible study groups in schools will grow, new ones will be formed, and that Christian students will be prepared and strengthened for everyday life in their schools. (Matthew 5:14)**
- **Wisdom for Christian teachers and students when dealing with controversial subjects (such as gender, homosexuality, denial of creation by God, etc.) (1 Peter 3:15)** -RS-

#### **God's plan for Syria**

There is a great sense of desperation and helplessness in western political leaders concerning the state of war that exists in Syria and its future. No-one really knows what can be done strategically to end the fighting. The trouble began in 2011. At first it was a civil war, but now nearly six years later both super powers (USA and Russia) and three regional powers (Turkey, Iran, Saudi Arabia) are involved. Besides Russia, which wants to strengthen the power of Assad, there are various rebel groups that are supported by the regional powers. And not least the Islamic State (IS) is also part of the conflict. The USA has so far hesitated to get involved in the war with ground troops. Diplomatic efforts to find a solution have been unsuccessful. This conflict in Syria is being seen as a substitution for the struggle for power between east and west (a new *cold war*). The former economic metropolis of Aleppo now stands right in the middle of brutal battles. The world looks on, horrified but helpless, at the sheer brutality of a bombing campaign that does not cease from its intended goals of destruction, even by targeting hospitals and aid convoys. The European Union is not united on whether sanctions are an effective means to convince Russia to stop supporting the Assad regime. In the Bible (Isaiah 19:23-25) we read about God's promises for *Assyria* – today's Syria and Iraq. Let us cry out to God for help, that His plans for this land will come to pass.

**Prayer:**

- **Father, have mercy and let your plans for Syria come to pass. (Psalm 33:10-11; Isaiah 19:23-25)**
- **For protection and ways out of the current hopeless war situations for the Syrian people, especially in Aleppo. (Psalm 68:20)**
- **That God calls up peace-makers and that the will to negotiate for peace will grow. (Matthew 5:9)** -AS-

#### **Dates for your diary**

- 13.11** Prayer day in Germany for the persecuted church (20.11 in UK – Website in English: <http://www.opendoorsuk.org/churches/international-day-prayer.php>)
- 15.11** Pray-Day (see "Schools need our prayer" above)
- 16.11** Prayer and Repentance Day (holiday in Saxony)

*Blessings from  
Rosemarie Stresemann and Ortwin Schweitzer*