

February 2017

Night watchmen wanted!

On February 1st the Call of the Watchmen will be 17 years of age. Hallelujah! From the beginning it has been a call for watchmen to pray 24/7, around the clock, for God's plans and purposes in our land.

"I have posted watchmen on your walls, O Jerusalem; they will never be silent day or night." (Isaiah 62:6a). The word from Isaiah 62:6-7 is the motivation for our prayer watch which seeks God's will for our land, both day and night. His glory should be visible not only in Israel but also in our land! "... I [the Lord] am watching to see that my word is fulfilled." (Jeremiah 1:12). We need more night watchmen who feel called by God to watch *together with Him* also at night. Ask yourself if you should not be one of them. Let us thank the Lord for 17 years of watchmen's prayer in Germany and pray for increased attendance on the night watch! -RS-

Outlaw the BDS movement

For more than 10 years an anti-Israel movement has been gaining support all over the world. It is called "BDS" for short, and its aim is to promote "Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions" against Israel. The intention is that Israel should be boycotted economically and culturally and isolated from the international community to force it to change its policies with regard to the Palestinians. BDS does not recognise the basic rights of Israel as a nation state for the Jewish people and compares Israel to an apartheid-regime, and anti-Semitic appeals, similar to the calls in Nazi Germany to "stop buying from Jews", are claimed to be justified politically.

This movement is also gaining support in Germany. But the CDU in its last party conference condemned all BDS activities as anti-Semitic and intends to speak out against these boycotts in its election manifesto. Many national and regional parliaments and administrations, for example in Great Britain, Canada and Paris, have already outlawed these BDS activities. BDS should also be outlawed by the German parliament.

Prayer:

- **That the BDS movement will be condemned and outlawed by the German parliament. (Psalm 102:12-22)**
- **That no public aid money will be channelled to anti-Semitic organisations.**
- **For stronger expressions of solidarity with Israel such as the recent beaming of the Israeli flag onto the Brandenburg Gate. See:**
<https://www.welt.de/politik/deutschland/article161040357/Ein-wunderschoener-Albtraum-fuer-jeden-Nazi.html>

-RS-

Election year 2017 – and domestic security

After the recent terrorist attack in Berlin, it has become clear that Germany urgently needs a major improvement in its protection measures against such attacks. Domestic security has now become a predominant election issue and the search for an effective security strategy and action plan dominates the discussions between all the political parties. Controversial issues such as *the handling of known terrorist*

suspects (prolonged custody pending deportation, electronic tagging, repatriation), *vigorous security control at national level* (not just by individual states and communities), and *the general handling of refugees and migrants* (registration, setting upper limits) are being hotly debated at all levels. The rules of democracy are constantly in question: the legislative body has the task to ensure both the security and freedom for its citizens. Security measures for the protection against terrorists must therefore be balanced against the need to preserve individual freedom. Much wisdom is needed to resolve the fierce political arguments over the necessary actions. Furthermore, loopholes in the law must be identified and weaknesses in the cooperation between government employees at state and national level must be resolved in the fight against terror. 40-50 such public servants, from the police to local administrators, were involved at some stage with matters of security in the case of Amri, who drove the truck into the Berlin Christmas market crowd. A comparison of data with so many incompatible computer systems was not possible. An urgent answer is needed especially to the question: How to move forward and deal with the known Islamist terrorist suspects?

Prayer:

- **In Christ is freedom and security – we raise Him above all these issues. (Luke 4:18; Hebrews 6:19)**
- **Pray for the leading of the Holy Spirit in the development of an effective security strategy and action plan. (John 16:13)**
- **For clear communication and good cooperation between the political parties, ministers and government employees in the fight against terror. (Ecclesiastes 4:12)**

-AS-

Integration of refugees

One of the most important issues of our time is how to integrate refugees into German society. Integration works best by *involvement in everyday life* – in a day-care centre or school, in learning a trade or in a place of work. Here the refugees can come into direct contact with the German language and culture and can also become familiar with the social norms and customs of our society. Integration into the job market however takes time. There are many reasons for this: lack of qualifications, few offers of places for apprenticeships and vocational training, and insufficient provision of "one-Euro-jobs" by the local community (jobs to keep refugees usefully occupied while on benefit and waiting for asylum approval) even though finance is available from central government. Many refugees remain in temporary accommodation for a long time with no prospects for work or a more permanent place to live. The ready availability of social housing is a further essential component of a successful integration plan. But a *home of your own* must be affordable, not only for refugees, but also for the low wage earners, the unemployed and pensioners

in our land. These also should not be forgotten! Much patience is often expected also from them. To ensure the keeping of peace and harmony in communities, the task of effective integration requires our constant prayer.

Prayer

- **For effective legislation and the adoption of those measures that best serve the integration of refugees. (Proverbs 31:9)**
- **That the weakest in our society will also benefit from these integration measures. (Psalm 10:17-18)**
- **That citizens, especially Christians, do not slacken in their efforts to help refugees. (Isaiah 58:6-12)** -AS-

Strong economic performance in 2016

We have every reason to thank God for the good state of the economy in Germany. In 2016 the German economy grew by 1.8%. Unemployment is now at its lowest level for 25 years, and with more than 43.4 million people at work a new employment record has been reached. Real income levels have risen by an average of 1.4% per year in this legislative period, and this is partially due to the introduction of the minimum wage.

Since January 2017 there has been a further increase in the minimum wage. But for small businesses (such as hairdressers) the minimum wage can actually be a challenge financially.

Prayer:

- **Give thanks for the continuing growth in the German economy over many years. (Psalm 105:1-2; Prov.21:21)**
- **That the gap between high and low incomes does not continue to widen. (1 Timothy 5:18)** -US-

Businesses and skilled personnel

The limits to economic growth, especially in the east of Germany, increasingly no longer depend on the level of investment and the creation of new jobs, but on the lack of skilled personnel as a result of the ageing society with so few young people in many areas. 25 years after the reunification of Germany, a whole generation of business owners, who started an enterprise after the Berlin wall fell, are concerned about the future and looking for a successor to run the business. Willingness in young people to start or take over a business today is hard to find. Because of the good economy there are lucrative opportunities in the existing job market and many shy away from the challenges and responsibilities of owning their own business.

Adding to this, the image of business owners is often unfavourably presented by the media. A socialist left-wing motivated criticism of capitalism implies that business owners are generally involved in financial malpractice and greed. The 3.7 million businesses in Germany with 28 million employees, generating revenues and paying taxes, are however the foundation for our prosperity and welfare system. In order to secure the strength of the German economy and the success of our businesses and to make the necessary workforce available, business initiatives for and within the young generation are required. The government must create the necessary conditions for this to happen.

Prayer:

- **Repentance for the one-sided concentration on economic growth and consumption and for neglecting the necessary investment in the next generation. (Deuteronomy 11:26ff)**
- **Thanks and blessing for business owners who take on young people and develop their skills. (Psalm 127:3-5)**
- **For a solution to the mistrust and governmental over-regulation which chokes business enterprise and creativity. (Matthew 18:18-20)** -KH-

“Standing in the gap” for Russia

Today only a few are aware of the fact that for a long time Hitler had been planning the war against the Soviet Union to conquer “living space in the east” for the “Aryan master race” and to annihilate “Jewish Bolshevism”. For this a large section of the Soviet population had to be driven out, enslaved and killed. According to Himmler, the real aim of the Russia campaign was “the decimation of the Slavic population by 30 million.” Over 20 million civilians died there as a result of the mass war crimes of the Germans. Two examples: Leningrad was besieged for almost 2½ years in order to systematically starve its inhabitants. The concerted mass murder by starvation to this extent (ca. 1.1 million people) is unparalleled worldwide. And what is often forgotten is that 3.3 million of the 5.5 million Soviet prisoners of war were also murdered – mostly by letting them starve.

Over and over again we find warnings in the Bible to not kill the innocent. This results in being “guilty of innocent blood” and has the same effect as a curse on the perpetrator. (See Deuteronomy 21:1-9 and Jeremiah 26:12-19.) The war crimes of the Germans in the Soviet Union still need the atonement and healing through the shed blood of Jesus on the cross, otherwise they will continue to feed further vengeance and aggression – even today. The work of reconciliation that began in 1993 with the prayer march from Berlin to Moscow needs a renewed impulse through prayer. With all this in mind, let us as German Christians “stand in the gap” (Ezekiel 22:30) for Russia and intercede in prayer.

Prayer:

- **Deep penitence and repentance for the crimes against Soviet civilians and prisoners of war. (Ezekiel 27:31)**
- **For healing of the “soul of Russia” from the wounds of the German “annihilation war”. (Isaiah 53:5)**
- **For a political relationship between Germany and Russia based on mutual respect, trust and a sincere desire for peace. (Isaiah 2:4)** -JB-

Dates for your diary

- 03-05.02** Prayer Conference “Seeking God’s Heart”, Leipzig
- 12.02** Election of a new German President
- 17-19.02** Munich Security Conference 2017
- 23-25.02** Christian Leaders Congress, Nuremberg

Blessings from Rosemarie Stresemann, Ortwin Schweitzer and Team