

March 2017

In the world, but not of the world

For quite a while the recent events in the world were weighing me down so much that I was losing my joy and also any hope. Hope is the power to face the future with confidence. Instead I was secretly resigning myself to the situation but with a growing sense of fear. Help came in a couple of ways.

In a conversation with a brother I was reminded to look first to Jesus as the one who has been raised on high. He prayed for me, first commanding the spirit of oppression to be gone and then for the door to the Spirit of Jesus to be open. In a flash I felt the prayer was answered and hope returned like a light shining from outside into my being once again.

At another time the Spirit spoke to me: "Read the last words of Jesus" – "All authority in heaven and earth has been given to me." (Matthew 28:18). So, there it is! He has all authority. This should be my perspective, my "world view" on the future. Amen! -OS-

Answers to prayer

Concerning the problems in accepting asylum applications from Muslim converts to Christianity, there have now been discussions with leaders in the Federal Agency for Migration and Refugees (BAMF). The problems have now been recognised – keep praying for wisdom to know how to put an end to all the misunderstandings.

The Federal Prosecutor's Office has instigated preliminary proceedings against the Turkish Islamic Institute for Religion (Ditib) with allegations of espionage. In the state of NRW cooperation with Ditib has been suspended for the time being. Pray for more light to be shed on this matter! -RS-

10,000 intercessors for Europe

Under the banner "Europe shall be saved", a movement among the people of God from all denominations and Christian groups has arisen. God is bringing together a new group of leaders who are believing for a breakthrough for evangelism in Europe. At the MEHR conference in January, which was attended by more visitors than ever with around 10,000 participants, a spontaneous alliance was formed between Johannes Hartl, the leader of the prayer house in Augsburg, and several other young leaders from Germany, Austria and Switzerland. They lead ministries such as Holy Spirit Night, Awakening Europe, Campus Crusade for Christ, and the Loretto Movement. Prayer and evangelism belong together! World renowned evangelists also came together at a meeting and are making themselves available for the evangelism of Europe. They are now looking for prayer support. At the MEHR conference there was a call for a "40-day Jesus fast" for a spiritual breakthrough in Europe. For this they are looking for 10,000 intercessors who are ready to serve God with prayer and fasting from March 1st until Easter. The Call of the Watchmen prayer network will take part in this break-through fast with a 24/7 chain of prayer and fasting in the week from March 5th to 11th. If you would like to join this prayer chain, please sign up for a specific prayer time in the prayer calendar on our website at:

<http://www.waechterruf.de/gebetsbriefe/gebetswoche/> .

The focus of the Holy Spirit is now on Europe. There is a growing "Canopy of Prayer" over Europe that was initiated by Ortwin Schweitzer. Every two weeks a prayer letter is issued in several European languages including English. You can sign up for this at: www.canopyofprayer.eu .

Throughout the month of March there will be youth evangelism by "JesusHouse", an initiative of "ProChrist". On March 23rd - 25th the "Dynamissio" congress will take place in Berlin. The central theme will be "Church and Mission".

Prayer:

- **That there will be a sustained connection between the prayer and evangelism movements in Europe. (Luke 10:2)**
- **For a strong anointing on the "40-day Jesus fast" during Lent. (Joel 2:12-15)**
- **That thousands of intercessors who believe God for a breakthrough in evangelism in Europe will respond to the call. (Mark 9:23)** -RS-

The Treaty of Rome – 60 years ago

March 25th marks the 60th anniversary of the signing of the Treaty of Rome by the government leaders of Belgium, Germany, France, Italy, Luxembourg and the Netherlands. This treaty widened the scope of cooperation between these six states which officially began in 1951 and was later fully implemented in 1954 with the collective production of coal and steel. The goal to set up the free movement of people, goods and services between their countries was introduced at this time. The Treaty of Rome was the actual starting point for today's post-war Europe. The project was named "EEC" (European Economic Community) or simply "The Common Market".

At a time when this community, which has since grown to 28 countries, is now in danger of crumbling, it is all the more important to once again remember the events that led up to the Treaty of Rome. For at that time Europe was facing the horror of two world wars within 31 years with millions dead, cities in ruins, and an ocean of tears, pain and hate for the enemy – especially for the Germans. Against this background on May 9th 1950 the French Foreign Minister Robert Schuman presented a proposal to consolidate the production of coal and steel, "so that the centuries-old enmity between France and Germany will be finally set aside". These branches of industry, so closely related to the supply of war materials, would come under a common regulatory body. Adenauer agreed. Trust grew between the two men and then also between the peoples. Schuman made it clear that a new framework for peace in Europe could only be built on the basis of Christian values. Reconciliation between old enemies developed through close cooperation: in peace, in liberty, in equality, and in solidarity of the strong with the weak. The European Union (EU) has stood by these values until this day, albeit now without a reference to God.

In the current situation in Europe it is good to remember

the foundations of the EU – that their faith had played a role in politics, and that only together can we preserve our European values, as expressed in the speech of Norbert Lammert, President of the German Parliament, on February 12th in the Reichstag in Berlin.

Prayer:

- **Thanks for the gift of liberty and peace among the peoples of Europe since the Treaty of Rome. (Psalm 67)**
- **For a revival of joy among the citizens of Europe in belonging together.**
- **Let us ask God for forgiveness for the godlessness of Europeans on behalf of all the citizens of the continent. (Nehemiah 1:4-7)** -OS-

Growing unity

In this year of remembrance of the Reformation, the pressure is on as never before to make every effort to overcome the division in the church that followed the Reformation. In the churches in Germany and Europe there is a growing consciousness that the body of Christ can only reflect Christ and be a powerful and effective witness in society when working in unity. This will only happen when we no longer look for our identity as Christians in denominations and the differences between us, but in Christ. Following on from their joint word for 2017: "Healing of memories – witnessing to Jesus Christ", the German Bishops Conference and the Protestant Church of Germany (EKD) have made an open invitation to a central repentance and reconciliation service in the *Michaeliskirche* in Hildesheim on March 11th 2017. What Christians have caused in suffering and injury to one another in the 500 years of separation will be confessed and mutually forgiven. There will be encouragement to hold such services at regional level. The reconciliation of the family of God in the power of the Holy Spirit should be effective in bringing a unity which can be seen and experienced within the church of Jesus Christ in shared beliefs, in mutual acknowledgment of baptism and through fellowship together in Holy Communion. In order for this to happen, questions concerning the support and understanding of churches and authorities, and individual and social reactions and behaviour patterns, must be answered.

With the current political polarisation within Germany, which is also evident in the church, unity of the body of Christ is also needed in alignment with God's word to stand against the misappropriation of the gospel to support ungodly policies on the left and on the right.

Prayer

- **Thanks for every sign of growing unity in the body of Christ. (1 Corinthians 1:10-13)**
- **For repentance, forgiveness, healing and reconciliation in the family of God. (1 Corinthians 12:12-26)**
- **For reformation and renewal in the church and society from the word of God. (John 17:14-23)** -KH-

Election campaigning - sharpening of profiles and concepts

With the presentation of Martin Schultz by the SPD as its candidate for German Chancellor, the national election campaign has taken off. Even without announcing his

election programme, his entry into the race released a wave of excitement. Thousands have spontaneously joined the SPD. Suddenly there appears to be the possibility of a change of chancellor in Germany. Democracy depends on having a choice of candidates from parties with clearly differentiated policies. We now need parties with the courage to present a programme with clearly formulated concepts and goals, and candidates who honestly and faithfully stand for the party policies. Only in this way can voters make their choice based on credible and rational arguments and not just on feelings. At a time when in democratic societies some voters no longer feel that they are understood and represented by their political leaders, threatening to bring divisions within society, we must fervently pray for a strengthening of our democracy in this land! It is so important that the parties develop and present their policies clearly.

Furthermore we need people (especially many Christians) who want to be involved in politics, become party members and positively influence our land to live and act according to God's standards.

Prayer:

- **For clear profiles and policies from the political parties to help voters to make the right decisions. (Job 12:13)**
- **For politicians who sincerely and honestly represent these profiles and policies. (Daniel 2:21b; James 5:12)**
- **That divisions in society caused by lack of clarity and reluctance to share information will be healed. (Mark 3:24; Psalm 60:2)** -AS-

New assignments in the leadership of Germany

At the end of January *Sigmar Gabriel*, SPD Party Leader and Economy Minister, suddenly resigned from these offices to become Foreign Minister. The Ministry for the Economy is now led by *Brigitte Zypries*. *Martin Schulz*, the former President of the EU Parliament, was nominated as the lead candidate of the SPD for the coming national elections. On March 19th he will be elected as SPD Party Leader. *Frank-Walter Steinmeier*, the newly elected Federal President, will also take office on March 19th. After his election Steinmeier stressed the importance of social cohesion, trust in democracy and Western values. The responsibilities of Gabriel during this period of complex crises (Europe, Middle East, relationship with the USA) are of extreme importance.

Prayer:

- **That those with new assignments will fulfil their responsibilities competently and in the best interests of Germany and Europe under God. (Isaiah 45:1-4)**
- **That the relationship of Germany with Israel will be strengthened through them. (Genesis 12:3)** -JB-

Dates for your diary

- 01.03-16.04** Action: 40 days of Prayer and Fasting for our Land: <http://40tagebetenundfasten.de/home>
- 06.03-09.03** German Catholic Bishops Conference
- 26.03** State Parliament elections in Saarland

Blessings from Rosemarie Stresemann, Ortwin Schweitzer and Team