

September 2017

A word to strengthen us ...

“But He gives us **more and more grace.**” (James 4:6 AMP). This source of more and more grace is available to us all! And we need His grace in our lives. God wants to lift us up to new levels of His power, favour, love and care. God puts power into our lives through His grace. Grace should never be in short supply in our lives. On the contrary: “**Grace and peace be yours in abundance** through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.” (2 Peter 1:2). Through His grace we can have the strength, even in these most challenging times in which we live, to share God’s love and power – in prayer for our land and for the people around us. There is always enough grace – Jesus gave his life for this! His grace is abundant and always available – and we need it. -AS-

Marriage for all

Now that German President Steinmeier has signed the bill to legalise “marriage for all”, it will come into force at the beginning of October. Same sex couples can now marry or have their registered partnership converted into a marriage. Adoption of children is now also possible for them.

But does this widening of the definition of marriage not contradict the German Constitution? German basic law places marriage under the special protection of the state. As far as marriage is concerned, the different sex of the partners has always been taken for granted in legal decisions until now. The state government in Bavaria is currently considering whether they should call upon the constitutional court to check the legitimacy of this new law. If and when they will do this, is unknown. It is time to repent, and not only politically. We, as the body of Christ, also bear responsibility that God’s standards and decrees are no longer recognised as binding on our lives.

Prayer:

- **Let us humble ourselves, repent and seek God’s face. (2 Chronicles 7:14, Psalm 27:8)**
- **That “marriage for all” will be checked and ruled to be in contradiction to the German Constitution. (Isaiah 40:4/Luke 3:5; Psalm 35:24)**
- **For courage and strength for politicians who want to protect marriage and for their voice to be heard. -AS-**

National parliament elections

As we approach the national elections there have been some unexpected twists and turns - starting with the short-lived high rating in the polls for Shultz, then the hurried parliamentary vote on “marriage for all”, and finally the change in the majority in the Lower Saxony state parliament leading to new elections. We should be alert and follow these events in prayer to enable new things to happen in politics. But election campaigning does not seem to be taking off. Even election issues like the refugee crisis are no longer making headlines. A kind of depressive air hangs over the parties and their leading candidates, as if they are bereft of ideas, motivation and any will to take charge to govern. Is it the nature of the current negotiable political direction and programme of the established political parties

that makes it not worth fighting? Or is it the ever increasing distancing of the political process from the will of the people? Voters want answers – not empty words.

Innovative thinking and actions are required. But who is going to take the risk in just a four year governmental term? It is as if the usual political rhetoric has been abandoned, and a sense of helplessness is setting in. The system carries on regardless, but with no purpose. Let us pray that in this period of non-action, people will start to seek God’s ways for our land, such that the Lord will call people with His heart to stand for parliament and the new government. And that the election results will make way for God’s good will and His calling for Germany.

Prayer:

- **That politicians make themselves available to hear God’s voice. (1 Samuel 3:9ff)**
- **That Jesus unites Christian politicians in His Spirit and positions them strategically. (Zechariah 4:6-10)**
- **For God to work in coalition negotiations, in the building of the new government and in its agenda. (Psalm 86:8-11)** -KH-

North Korea and the nuclear threat

For years North Korea has been working on a nuclear missile programme despite international sanctions. The government of Kim Jong-Un also conducts test launches on a regular basis. Recently a long-range missile was launched that could potentially reach the American mainland (almost as far as Chicago). It is assumed that a missile will soon be able to carry a nuclear warhead. This has led to an escalation in tensions and a fierce verbal exchange between North Korea and the USA, in which military action was now openly threatened. China wants to mediate. North Korea has long been isolating itself extensively from the rest of the world. UN resolutions with heavy sanctions have been passed many times to try to get the ruling dictator Kim Jong-Un to think again. He sets himself up to be idolised like a god. A large part of the North Korean population suffer from hunger, tens of thousands are imprisoned in concentration camps - many Christians among them. It is effectively a closed country. But God opens doors and moves the hearts of rulers (Proverbs 21:1). Korea has been divided since World War II. As Germans we have a special mandate to ask God earnestly for a miracle and a change in the course of history by praying for the reunification of North and South Korea.

Prayer:

- **God, you are the Lord of history. May your kingdom and your peace come into all areas of political tension. (Daniel 2:21)**
- **For a revelation of the love of God that will change Kim Jong-Un and make him humble. (Daniel 4:27)**
- **That North and South Korea will be reunited. (Ephesians 2:14)** -AS-

The financing of terrorism through the PA/PLO and Hamas

Recently the Israeli security forces uncovered a network through which Hamas financed terrorism in Jerusalem out of Gaza. Relatives of terrorists were being financially rewarded and in this way given an incentive to promote further attacks. To a much greater extent and for everyone to see, the Palestinian Authority (PA/PLO) finances terrorist attacks against Israel. In its published yearly budget, the sum of 153 million dollars is reserved to support imprisoned terrorists as well as family members of Palestinians "who in the fight against Zionism" have died. Terrorists are treated as "heroes" and "freedom fighters" who give their lives as a sacrifice for their people. The "sacrifice" that they actually offer is in fact the cold-blooded murder of Jews.

With about 2500 Euros per month and more, terrorists and their families are supported for life! This is a financing of terrorism by the state that can be maintained through the money that comes from the USA and the EU in particular. For this reason the USA is now cutting its financial support considerably. The EU is not, although everyone knows about the financing of terrorism – including the German government. Up until now no-one has earnestly come against this support except the USA. PA President Abbas survives politically only through such payments – and the EU has no interest in seeing him removed from office.

Prayer

- **That the German government takes action against the financing of terrorism. (Ephesians 5:11)**
- **That the EU contributions of money to the PA will be more closely controlled such that the financing of terrorism can be clearly stopped.**
- **For accurate and truthful reporting by the media. (Proverbs 23:23)**

-RS-

The veiled gospel (2)

During the time of the Renaissance, the rediscovery of antiquity (ancient/classical arts and life-style) led to "man" (humanity) moving into centre stage and being elevated to the "measure of all things". As a result, in the 15th and 16th centuries and especially during the "Enlightenment" (18th century), with the rise of humanism, man's reason was given overall prominence. Rational thinking became the universal authority for judgement. Rationalism and faith only in human knowledge no longer left any room for the living God of the Bible. Liberal theology, which originated in the early 19th century in central Europe, pursued the goal to further develop theology on the basis of humanistic thought and knowledge from the study of arts and humanities. The contents of the Bible were then reduced to what could be understood through human reason and knowledge. In this way Christ was no longer the Son of God, Redeemer and Judge, but rather just a "teacher of the kingdom of God, morality and religious practice". "Truth" was no longer absolute, but rather had many aspects and could also be found in many different religions. Then in the 20th century German theologians stripped the Bible of its supernatural content: the intervention of God, miracles, the virgin birth, the resurrection of Jesus - even God himself was put into question. The training of theologians was then revised

accordingly and the new teaching contributed to the fact that, in Germany and from here worldwide, for the first time in generations, unbelief and scepticism has so often been sown rather than faith in God.

Prayer:

- **For the demolition of humanistic reasoning and conclusions that set themselves up against the knowledge of God. (2 Corinthians 10:5)**
- **That God will destroy the wisdom of the wise through the revelation of the foolishness of the cross. (1 Corinthians 1:18-20)**
- **That teachers who only speak human wisdom will repent and find the way to preach the gospel "with a demonstration of the Spirit's power". (1 Corinthians 2:4-5)**

-JB-

Confronting a shortage of skilled workers in Germany

The German economy is in good shape. With 44.1 million currently in gainful employment, this is an all-time record. But in order to safeguard our economy, plans need to be made for the future. Limited resources and already a shortage of skilled workers are putting our business success at risk. Regions in the south and east of Germany are particularly affected. In the so-called "MINT" professions (Mathematics, Information-technology, Natural Science and Technology), the necessary skilled personnel replacements are just not available in 70% of our companies. This trend will only get worse because of demographic and social changes. By 2020 there will be ca. 6 million less workers available to the German labour market than in 2010. Intelligent planning is required to minimise the associated risks to our economy and social welfare system. We need politicians who recognise their responsibility in this regard and who will make strategic decisions which perhaps can be very unpopular at times. Additional possibilities lie, for example, in the recruitment of skilled workers and trainee apprentices from other countries, in the better integration of the refugees who are coming to us into the professional labour market, and in a concerted effort to employ older, experienced workers, making the structure of our workforce more equally age-based at the same time.

Prayer:

- **Thanks for the positive development in the German economy over many years. (Psalm 50:23)**
- **Wisdom for the leaders in politics and business to make timely plans in view of the future shortage of skilled workers in Germany. (1 Timothy 2:1-2)**
- **That currently available training and support programmes will be better accepted and utilised.**

-US-

Keep praying

The risk of terrorist attacks in our land is still very high. Please keep praying for protection. (Psalm 9:9-10)

-RS-

Dates for your diary

- 01.-03.09** German Prayer Conference: "Make Way", Berlin.
- 16.09** March for Life, pro-life demonstration in Berlin.
- 24.09** German national parliament elections.
- 25.-28.09** German Catholic Bishops Conference, Fulda.

God's blessings from Rosemarie Stresemann and Team