

June 2018

Israel and the nations

“... so that the Scripture would be fulfilled” is mentioned many times in the Bible. Biblical promises are often directly connected with the plan of God for Israel. The promises were first given to the people of Israel. (Romans 9:4-5). We must not forget this, before we start claiming scriptures for us personally. Israel is God’s chosen people and first-born son (Exodus 4:22) with whom he writes history and reveals his heart to the world – also in New Testament times. The restoration of Israel is the desire of God’s heart and a promise which is now beginning to be fulfilled before our very eyes. (Jeremiah 16:14-15; Isaiah 62:1-2). The modern State of Israel and the reunification of Jerusalem are clear signs that this is happening. God is calling Germany and the nations to fall into line with his purposes for Israel. This month we want to pray especially for this. -AS-

Answers to prayer with thanks

1. At an historic meeting between the North Korean Ruler Kim Jong Un and South Korean President Moon Jae in April, it was agreed that negotiations for a peace treaty should begin in this current year. A peaceful reunification of Korea appears to be possible for the first time.
2. On May 1st, in Berlin and in Hamburg, the expected violent demonstrations of previous years did not take place.
3. The German government is taking immediate action to create 13,000 new jobs in the social care system. -RS-

Israel’s security: a basic commitment of the German State

Chancellor Angela Merkel (and others) have stressed many times that the security of Israel is one of the basic commitments and fundamental reasons for the existence of the German State. This declaration is worthy but it must lead to action. Since the establishment of the modern State of Israel 70 years ago, it has almost constantly been subjected to existential threats through terrorism and war. Iran which is governed by a terrorist regime openly threatens to annihilate Israel. Recently rockets were fired towards Israel by Iranian forces based in Syria within striking distance of the Syrian-Israeli border. The threat from Israel’s neighbours could scarcely be more real!

President Trump has announced the withdrawal of the USA from the nuclear deal (JCPOA) with Iran. That Iran really is no longer pursuing the development of nuclear weapons is extremely doubtful. Germany and the other partners to the agreement on the other hand want to keep to the Iran deal. The security of Israel is certainly not a central consideration. And the government appears to be oblivious to the fact that the Turkish President Erdogan continues to make use of anti-Semitic rhetoric, even comparing Israel with the Third Reich. Germany needs to take these threats to Israel’s security seriously. Germany must take a stand not only in word but also in deed. Alliances with Iran and Turkey cannot be given precedence when the security of the Jewish state is at stake. With the transfer of the US Embassy to Jerusalem 70 years after the founding of the state, the official recognition of Jerusalem as the undivided capital of

Israel by other nations has also become a major issue. Will Germany now move its embassy to Jerusalem? The calling of Germany is to stand on the side of Israel – and to set a leading example within Europe. Words must be followed by deeds!

Prayer:

- **Thanks for the relationship of Germany with Israel since WWII until today and for the pro-Israel voices in our land. (Psalm 50:23)**
- **For Germany to fulfil its calling to stand on the side of Israel! Israel’s need for security must be given top priority and lead to concrete action in accordance with the stated commitment and fundamental reason for the existence of the German State. (Isaiah 52:7)**
- **That ungodly agreements with Iran and Turkey will be exposed under God’s light and cancelled. (Psalm 43:11)**
- **For a clear acknowledgement by Germany of Jerusalem as the undivided capital of Israel. (2 Chronicles 6:6; Matthew 5:35)** -AS-

Introducing “sexual identity” into German Basic Law

In the months of June and September, “Christopher Street Day” parades will be held in many German cities, where the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersexual and Queer (LGBTIQ) community openly present themselves along with their political demands. A change in the German Basic Law is now envisaged as their next goal. In April the Berlin Senate already agreed to a Federal States Parliament (Upper House) initiative to include gender *and sexual identity* into the areas of protection under Art.3, Abs.3 of the German Basic Law. This will provide special protection for LGBTIQ people against discrimination. In the meantime Bremen has already adopted this change. At present the German Basic Law states: “No-one may be disadvantaged or given preferential treatment because of gender, family origin, race, language, home and country of origin, faith, religious or political views. No-one may be disadvantaged because of a handicap or disablement.” These are clear and verifiable criteria. “Sexual identity” on the other hand is a term solely used for political means to eliminate from our constitution God’s fundamental order in creation.

Prayer:

- **Praise for and affirmation of God’s order in creation. (Genesis 1:27,31; Psalm 104)**
- **That the initiative to introduce “sexual identity” will not receive majority support and that there will be no change in the German Basic Law. (Isaiah 8:10; Psalm 18:3)**
- **For parliamentarians and political parties at national and federal state level to have the courage to oppose the initiative. (Isaiah 54:7; Deuteronomy 31:6)** -RS-

Prayer for the Federal Agency for Migration and Refugees

In previous months we have prayed for the Federal Agency for Migration and Refugees (BAMF in German). On the one hand there is the issue of the total overloading of agency

staff who have to deal with a flood of applications and make decisions under extreme time pressure. On the other hand there is the issue of the legality of the decisions on asylum, especially concerning the inordinate number of refusals for Christian refugees. Nearly all converts from Islam to Christianity are currently denied asylum.

In recent weeks possible infringements of the rules within the district offices of BAMF have come to light, in Bremen in particular. There, between 2013 and 2016, at least 1200 applications have been approved without sufficient legal justification. Interior Minister Seehofer is seeking an explanation. Are the irregularities due to structural failures or actually due to corruptive practices of decision makers and lawyers who represent asylum seekers? It is still not clear whether a committee of enquiry will be set up.

The scandal is of concern to many people who doubt the legitimacy of our refugee policy and is shaking their confidence in the national government and the reliability of their civil servants. The legality of every single decision is necessary, because the quality and integrity of the work of BAMF is so important.

Prayer:

- **That all illegal practices in dealing with refugees will finally come to light and that corrective action will be taken. (Hebrews 1:8-9)**
- **That the continuing practice of denying asylum to Christian refugees on a large scale will stop. (Galatians 6:10)**
- **For God's guidance within BAMF in making the correct and appropriate decisions in all cases. -JB-**

Unity between East and West is still in process

People in former East Germany to some extent still feel disadvantaged or undervalued. The debates over the appointments of ministers in the new government coalition brought to light the lingering feelings of inequality, in for example the small differences in pensions or the fewer appointments of teachers as civil servants (governmental employees), which were clearly identified. Older people especially have not forgotten the wind-up of state-owned businesses that would not survive as private enterprises and the loss of their jobs. The gap is most noticeable in areas of low cost concrete block factories and housing in the east. The west, where individualism and freedom of choice dominates, does not seek a common identity based on the communal "sameness" that was prevalent in the east. The western media keeps alive the stereotype of the dumb, xenophobic "Ossi", and in this way encourages them to hang on to their own separate identity. East German Christians also often feel that they are not taken seriously and are under-represented in national church leadership, although their faith was much more severely put to the test in former East Germany than in the freedom of West Germany.

There is a stark contrast between the weaker economic strength of the East and a modernised economic infrastructure which the West helps to create. The required mentality for socialism and the building of a socialistic state - a mentality that the state must provide for all our needs -

sets welfare and especially financial security above all else. Do we as Christians trust in a "Father State" or in "God the Father"?

Prayer:

- **Thanks and joy in East and West over our reunited country, for all the blessings we have received, and the opportunities that we share. (Psalm 107:1-9)**
- **For us to appreciate and complement each other, and be set free from all stereotyping and prejudice. (Luke 6:41ff; Romans 12:3ff)**
- **For East and West to work together to fulfil our calling as one nation. (Psalm 86:9-11) -KH-**

A generation that for Zion's sake will not keep silent

At the beginning of the 2nd century many of our church fathers turned away from their Jewish roots and began to persecute the Jews. They did not understand the God-given role of the Jewish people and soon labelled Jews as "God-killers" and as "rejected" by God. Their poisonous teaching spread throughout the world. All denominations today have been influenced by this teaching. The consequence is a spiritual blindness that causes the greater part of the Body of Christ to respond to the significant role of Israel with a lack of understanding and indifference.

Last year we celebrated the 500th anniversary of the Reformation. Luther was also blind to the plan of God for the Jewish people and therefore did nothing to destroy the roots of Christian anti-Judaism. Our theological understanding has been influenced in the past 500 years not only by the rich blessings of his confessions of faith but also by his openly expressed hatred of the Jews.

Now there is a new movement. **ReformaZION** is a dynamic movement which already has 150 young people as followers. Its message: The God of Israel is calling a generation back to the roots, to truth, to the Word - back to Jesus, the King of the Jews! It is another Reformation, a "**ReformaZION**", to actively work with the younger generation for the restoration and renewal of the understanding of God's purposes for his people (Zion) that is so urgently needed within the Body of Christ, his church!

Prayer:

- **Thanks for the rising up of a new generation that "for Zion's sake will not keep silent", and pray that many more will join this movement. (Isaiah 62:1)**
- **For a Reformation - for an understanding of God's purposes for Israel in the Body of Christ, for the recognition of Christian anti-Judaism and for true repentance. (Luke 24:45; Psalm 51:4, 12)**

-Luca-Elias Hezel, ReformaZION-

Dates for your diary

29.06-01.07 Call of the Watchmen Prayer Seminar "History Maker" (German only) in Pracht, (Rhineland Pfalz/North Rhine Westphalia border)
Details and registration: www.gebetssseminar.de

*God's blessings from
Rosemarie Stresemann, Alexander Schlueter and Team*