

January 2019

**It's a new year!**

We are surrounded by news from the media that demands our attention. We are often completely unaware of how the messages and opinions which are conveyed by the media influence our thoughts and feelings. We can easily get the impression that evil triumphs over good, that the destructive plans of evil clearly are on the rise, and that war, poverty, injustice and ungodliness are getting the upper hand.

Because of this we must consistently seek to hear the voice of the Holy Spirit. As intercessors for political and social concerns we want to pray based on the right information. This means that we need to be **much better informed** about what God is thinking, is saying and is doing! Otherwise we will end up being falsely informed – no matter how many different news sources we listen to. We need to listen to HIS voice and HIS interpretation of events.

**God wants to make a difference in the coming year and for you to be part of this as he makes history for our land through difficult times** (as He did with Esther). Can you imagine being used like this? He will do it by sharing His plans with you and filling you with His hope, love and power (Jeremiah 29:11). In this way we will come against every "zeitgeist" (spirit of the age)! Together with you He will overcome what is evil with good things.

**Do not allow doubts to fill your mind:** Jesus still holds Germany's future in his hands and reigns now and for ever. His kingdom come!

**As you begin your time of prayer:**

- a. **Ask the Holy Spirit:** to open your eyes and ears so that you can more clearly see how His kingdom could come!
- b. **Worship Jesus as King of kings:** all earthly and heavenly powers are subject to Him! Proclaim in your hearts and minds that He is highly exalted over our land.
- c. **Be one step ahead as you pray:** the Holy Spirit is never taken by surprise by bad news – He is always one step ahead! Ask him if you can pray together with Him into the future. Then specifically together with Him bless the coming year (Psalm 37:4-6). -AS-

**Thanks for rain**

Let us thank God for sustained rainfall since the beginning of December. It has rained so much in Germany that ships on the Rhine can now sail with their normal loads. As we were with the tour group in Israel, there was also continuous heavy rain for three days after a long period of drought. However both countries still need further continuous rain. (1 Kings 8:35-36) -RS-

**Sections §218, §219a and the Basic Law in Germany**

The significance of the Basic Law in Germany for the lives of its individual citizens is not recognised by many of us. Based on the experience in a totalitarian National-Socialist (NAZI) State that made decisions arbitrarily over the rights of individual citizens to life, work was done after the war to re-establish a rightful place in German Basic Law for basic

human values that would be granted to every citizen as fundamental rights. These fundamental rights cannot be set aside by the state by legislation, and law makers and the courts must respect these rights as the prevailing law of the land (Article 1,3).

Until today Article 2,2 also guarantees protection to the unborn under German Basic Law: "Everyone has the right to life and protection from bodily harm – [literally 'physical integrity' in the German language]." The Federal Constitutional Court (described in the December prayer letter) has time and time again through its legal judgments hindered every attempt of the law makers to annul section §218 of the law and to allow abortion. Pregnancy termination is still punishable in principle, and in mandatory medical consultations, the protection of the life of the unborn by continuing the pregnancy should be encouraged. Section §219a then specifically forbids the advertising of abortion services. The political debate in parliament over the removal of section §219a which continued into December is really a fight to also annul section §218. The Youth Socialist Movement of the SPD (Jusos) recently decided that they wanted to abolish §218 and that abortion should be possible up to the ninth month. The Grand Coalition (CDU/CSU/SPD) now in January wants to conclude an agreement to revise section §219a such that the possibilities to obtain information on abortion will be more clearly regulated, but the ban on advertising should remain. The CDU/CSU insists that the law is retained.

We will again be reminding ourselves of the role of the German Basic Law in protecting life at the German Prayer Conference in Bonn in May 2019. The "spirit of the age" does not want to allow any law that protects life for all!

**Prayer:**

- **Thanks for the German Basic Law that prescribes and requires the protection of life for all. (Psalm 7:17)**
- **That the compromise that is negotiated over section §219a will not again be challenged. (Psalm 118:25)**
- **Ask for forgiveness where we have not affirmed and desired to keep God's basic laws concerning life. (Deuteronomy 5:7-22)** -RS-

**Germany's vote in the UN Security Council**

According to the UN charter, the Security Council has the primary responsibility to maintain world peace and international security. While other UN organisations can only make recommendations, the Security Council can make decisions which are binding on member states. The Security Council has five permanent and ten non-permanent members and Germany will in January once again become a member for a period of two years. Germany will be particularly assigned to crisis prevention and human rights. Israel had decided not to pursue an opportunity to take a non-permanent seat. As Germany has recently consistently voted for UN resolutions that have one-sidedly criticised Israel, our sustained prayer is needed

for Germany's future performance as it now votes in the Security Council.

**Prayer:**

- **For Germany to have the fear of God that leads to wisdom and understanding. (Proverbs 2:1-11)**
- **That Germany represents the interests of Israel as it casts its vote.** -RS-

**Germany and France**

"France loves you." With these words President Emmanuel Macron ended his speech to the German parliament on "Volkstrauertag", the day when Germans remember the fallen and victims of the First World War. Germany and France have a common history which for a very long time was characterised by a German-French enmity that largely determined the course of European history. After the total destruction of Europe in the Second World War, it was the French Foreign Minister Robert Schuman who wanted to reconcile the nations of Europe that were at war and make a future war impossible. Konrad Adenauer agreed to his proposal for a European Coal and Steel Community which was the forerunner of the European Economic Community (EEC) and the European Union (EU). With this agreement the former enemies became the leading team for the European peace project and are still its leaders today.

With his memorable statement Macron touched many hearts in Germany. France and Germany today do not only share similar problems such as protests, strikes and terrorism that put the respective governments under pressure. What really unites us is a growing friendship that now enables us to pass the current "stress test" and should grow deeper. A close connection between Berlin and Paris can show how good relationships between nations can be built and maintained within Europe, and how the states can help each other in love and appreciation of one another, instead of falling back into "going it alone" as nations.

**Prayer:**

- **That Germany and France share strength from love and thankfulness for one other and thereby bring unity in Europe. (Psalm 133)**
- **Pray to be set free from the spirit coming from the French Revolution and from the '68 Movement which perverts the meaning of love through incitement to rebellion. (Luke 17:1-3)**
- **Ask for the righteousness of God for the countries of Germany and France and also for their leading role in Europe. (Romans 1:17)** -KH-

**Israel according to media reporting**

There is hardly any other country that is criticised so often by the German media as Israel. Reporting on the Middle-East conflict is without doubt not easy. But the picture of Israel that is painted by the media is however very often biased, with the twisting of facts, even to the point of being anti-Semitic. An incomplete picture of the Jewish state is so often created through headlines which always present Israel as reacting disproportionately to events, by leaving out important background information, using emotional language and by failing to verify that the message content bears any relation to the truth.

"Two Palestinians killed in an Israeli military operation" was a recent headline. This message is correct, but perpetrator and victim have been interchanged and an act of terrorism covered up. In fact, the Palestinians had first fired shots at Israeli soldiers and thrown fire bombs at them.

Starting with the '68 Movement in Germany, the reporting has gradually changed from "pro-Israel" to "Israel-critical". Israel is now considered to be a western aggressor – the Palestinians as oppressed victims. The "two-state solution" is largely presented as "without alternative" and the move of the US Embassy to Jerusalem judged as a "threat to peace". The German Press Agency (dpa) is Germany's largest news agency and determines to a great extent how Germany thinks about Israel. Considering the rise of anti-Semitism in Europe, journalists carry a high responsibility and should not be allowed to promote such "propaganda".

**Prayer:**

- **For a spiritual breakthrough in the media and the dpa: for fair reporting of Middle-East events in order to silence verbal anti-Semitism in Germany. (Psalm 94)**
- **That a comprehensive picture of Israel will be presented by the media to enable the German people to properly identify with Israel.**
- **That journalists are able to convey an unbiased view of the Middle-East and an understanding of the real motives of the parties in conflict. (Matthew 5:9)** -AS-

**Prayer for schools**

Schools are in a world of their own and have a major influence on the lives of our children and young people besides that of their families. It is not a "spiritually neutral" world: it is in schools that children learn and develop social behaviour and relationships within the community. Therefore schools need our prayers. But it is also important that churches, parents and even the children themselves take on this responsibility.

The "Round Table Prayer" organisation in Germany is calling for "every church to form a prayer partnership with one of the schools in its local area for one school year"!

"From the lips of children and infants You have ordained praise [or strength] ..." (Psalm 8:2 NIV). God gives the prayers of children spiritual power. Can we take this seriously and encourage our children accordingly? Next year we want to develop a prayer letter for children.

**Prayer:**

- **That many churches will respond to the "Round Table Prayer" call: "One school, your prayer, one year!" and form a prayer partnership with a school. (Isaiah 60:1)**
- **That schools become places where the Holy Spirit can work powerfully. (Luke 18:16)**
- **That many children and young people will start praying for our land. (Psalm 8:2)** -AS-

**Dates for your diary:**

- 13. - 20.01 Evangelical Alliance Germany prayer week – Theme: "Learning to live in unity"
- 30. - 31.01 Call of the Watchmen board meeting.

*God's blessings for the New Year  
Rosemarie Stresemann, Alexander Schlueter and Team*