

February 2019

19 years of prayer - serving like Anna

As we began the watchmen prayer network in February 2000, we all had great expectations for what God would do in response to our prayers for Germany. But our perception of timing is mostly very different from God's timing. God is always true to his word, but we must persevere and wait patiently for his promises. One promise which has always motivated us to persevere in prayer is found in Isaiah 60:1: *"Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord rises upon you!"* We are waiting for his glory to be revealed in Germany – but at the moment it appears that is actually becoming darker. Do we then give up and become discouraged – or can we see small signs of hope?

From whom can we learn to have hope?

I am encouraged by the story of Simeon and Anna who had both been prepared and were able to recognise the saviour and redeemer of the world in Jesus when he was just a baby (Luke 2:1-38). Simeon had long waited "for the consolation of Israel", and the prophetess Anna had waited for at least 50 years. *"[Anna] then was a widow until she was eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshipped night and day, fasting and praying. Coming up to [Joseph and Mary] at that very moment she gave thanks to God and spoke about the child to all who were looking forward to the redemption of Jerusalem."* (Luke 2:37-38). How had Anna protected herself from becoming discouraged? She had served God. Her focus was entirely on God. She was not looking for a quick response. It appears to me that this is an important key to being able to persevere in prayer.

In the year 2000 God called his church worldwide to serve *him* in prayer around the clock. Since then God has established prayer, night and day, and we also see in our land how more and more people are being called in special places (prayer houses) to *serve God night and day*. This is our duty and service in these end-times as we wait for the return of Jesus (Luke 21:36) – until he comes!

Until then do not want to cease praying.

As you begin your time of prayer:

- Read Luke 2:1-40 and thank God that he has called you to serve him as priests in this land.
- If you are discouraged because you have envisaged quicker or more positive responses to prayer, let go of your expectations and renew your focus on God.
- Claim once again the promises in Isaiah 60:1-2 and take hold of the calling by God for watchmen in Isaiah 62:6-7. Pray for an increase in prayer, night and day, also in our land of Germany. -RS-

Answers to prayer

- In a recent "Ethics Statement" the CSU party has unanimously professed, with unusual clarity, its commitment to Christian values and to the protection of the unborn. The number of abortions is too high and according to the statement: "God is still the creator of all life". A comprehensive action plan has to be

developed in order to reduce the number of pregnancy terminations.

- The integration of refugees into the job market is now working more successfully, according to the Federal Employment Agency. In addition the German Cabinet has passed a new immigration law for qualified and skilled people. Good reason for thanks! But integration presents many complex challenges. Let us continue to pray for God's leadership in all unresolved issues.
- Meanwhile there are now prayer groups in many companies and businesses in Germany. Christians from different churches and denominations are meeting together in their workplace to pray for the business and for personal concerns.
- 56 years after the signing of the "Élysée Treaty" in Paris in 1963, Germany and France have set the seal on a new friendship pact in Aachen. -AS-

Appreciation for our democracy

Are we still sincerely thankful to God for our country? For 70 years we have lived in a parliamentary democracy and today we know that we cannot take democracy for granted. Democracy is entrusted to us as a system of government for our good but it can easily be lost. Each generation must once again take hold of democracy specifically for itself, practice it, protect it and defend it. Democratically elected governments do not automatically make "good" or even "Christian" decisions, yet they provide an invaluable high level of freedom. Recently we have experienced how democratic values are under attack. Increasingly people are disengaging themselves from democratic values. They are tired and frustrated by governments that in their eyes have failed them. Scepticism and disappointment are becoming wide-spread. Openness to extreme right-wing and left-wing ideologies, authoritarian/nationalistic rule ("a strong hand should take over control"), and anarchy ("everything should in the end be chaotic") are increasingly finding a place in our society. Terrorist attacks from right-wing and left-wing radicals on the offices of political parties in our land are occurring more often, and anyone who thinks differently is threatened, even with death.

We need appreciation for our democracy once again, combined with the sort of politics which is less reactionary, not letting problems come to a head but instead provides creative solutions and can reconcile differences. And we need citizens who can take responsibility and who want to shape the future – also in prayer! So let us once again show love and appreciation for our democratic country and also pray full of hope in difficult times.

Prayer:

- **That forces which undermine our democracy will continue to be exposed and that people's hearts will be delivered from disappointment where democracy is seen to have failed them. (Mark 4:22)**
- **For the release of ideas to protect and build up democracy at this time. (Daniel 1:20)**

- **Release of intercession that looks to the future.**
(Proverbs 29:18)

-AS-

Brexit – what’s going on?

Two months before Britain leaves the EU on March 29th, the withdrawal agreement which has been negotiated with the EU was rejected by a large majority in the British House of Commons in mid-January. After sounding out the chances of getting an agreement between the various opposing factions in the parliament, Theresa May has resumed negotiations with the EU. There are several alternatives for a “Brexit Deal”, from the postponing of the withdrawal date to the holding of a second national referendum. The critical point is the “back-stop” clause that is included in May’s proposed agreement to avoid border controls for an undefined limited period of time between Northern Ireland and the Irish Republic as a continuing member of the EU. This border issue is particularly important as it could again become a conflict zone if border controls are re-introduced. The chaos which is threatened as a result of Brexit without a withdrawal agreement (no-deal) reveals the multifaceted interdependence between member states, neighbouring states, and the EU after 70 years of European integration. As the dangers of Brexit become more evident, on the one hand they can be a warning to other states in Europe not to break away from the EU but to seek new ways of integration, and on the other hand a warning that the EU needs to offer more flexible integration possibilities to meet the diverse requirements and needs of the member states. In an open letter to the London “Times” newspaper, leading representatives from politics and society in Germany have called on the Brits to remain in the EU. They express their thankfulness that Great Britain again welcomed Germany as a nation in Europe after the Second World War. They earnestly desire that Britain remains in the EU and stress that the door to Europe will always remain open. Let us strengthen this sign of earnest appreciation with our prayers that will touch the hearts of the British people.

Prayer:

- **With no consensus within the British government and parliament for the way forward, pray that all will call out to God for guidance. (Lamentations 3:22-26)**
- **For a change of direction within the parliament to find the right way forward for Great Britain. (Psalm 27:11ff)**
- **For healing of divisions and for reconciliation of differences in Europe. (Jeremiah 29:11-13)**

-KH-

Support for families

On January 1st the “Good-DayCare-Law” came into force through which the government will promote the care of small children outside the family with a total of 5.5 billion Euros from now until January 2022. At the same time the support for all-day-schools will continue and be promoted as a way to give children equal opportunities and individual attention and to attain better results. Because of mandatory school attendance (rather than just requiring education for children), which was first introduced in 1938 in Germany by the “3rd Reich” (Nazi) government, home-schooling is still forbidden by law and as a result reduces the direct influence that parents can have on their

children’s education. Germany, Bulgaria and Malta are states within the EU which clearly forbid home-schooling. Although Article 6 of our Basic Law enshrines the support for families, the areas of influence for parents in the raising and education of their children are now being further limited. In German Basic Law the raising of children is not only a natural right, but a “primary duty and responsibility” of parents. This important mandate should not be taken out of the hands of parents! So right now Christian parents should not hold back from actively and directly moulding and shaping their children’s development. From a Biblical viewpoint, this means teaching our children the ways of the Lord and letting them share in our understanding and relationship with God. We thus influence the formation of their personalities and strengthen their sense of identity.

Prayer:

- **For legislation to strengthen rather than erode the primary right of parents to raise and educate their children. (Proverbs 14:34; 22:6)**
- **For a general law requiring education for all children to replace mandatory school attendance which would make home-schooling possible. (Deuteronomy 6:4-7)**
- **For a renewed desire and joy to be able to train and disciple children within the family. (Deuteronomy 4:9; 11:18-19)**

-TF-

German-Israeli cooperation in Africa

Israel is very interested in close cooperation with African countries. In January new diplomatic relations were established for the first time with Chad. German-Israeli cooperation in Africa is helping even Muslim countries in Africa to see Israel in a positive light. Since 2012 Israel and Germany have been working together on policies to aid in the development of such countries. At the instigation of the Chancellor’s office, a joint “African Initiative” project was launched. Since 2016 this has been extended to three-party cooperation in development projects with six African countries. Germany is providing 90% of the financial support, which enables the Israelis to bring to these countries their world-renowned expertise in the latest agricultural developments. Large projects, which Israel cannot carry out alone, will be run in partnership with the *German Society for International Cooperation* (GIZ) enterprise, and include the construction of greenhouses with Israeli drip-water-pipe irrigation. As Israel was forced within its own land to find solutions for the lack of water in desert areas, it can now be a blessing for many countries in Africa with the knowledge it has gained. Here also God’s word is coming into effect: “... and you will be a blessing.” (Genesis 12:2).

Prayer:

- **Thanks for this close German-Israeli cooperation. (Psalm 67)**
- **That more of the Christians in Africa will recognise God’s plans and purposes with Israel. (Isaiah 60:1-12)**
- **That Israel will increasingly be supported by African states at the political level. (Genesis 12:3)**

-RS-

*United with you in prayer for the land of Germany
Rosemarie Stresemann, Alexander Schlueter and Team*