

May 2019

### Thankfulness and knowing God

Do you also desire to know God better? As I was looking into the subject of thankfulness, I was surprised to find how much our hearts are darkened by not being thankful. Paul writes about this in his letter to the church in Rome: *“For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened.”* (Romans 1:21). And Paul then goes on to dramatically describe how this leads to a downward spiral. Despite the fact that they knew God, the people did not thank him and honour him for this knowledge, and they not only became spiritually blind but also their understanding was darkened. On the other hand I also realised that my heart is enlightened and I have a clearer understanding when I honour God with my thanks. In Psalm 50 God gives this piece of advice to the wicked: *“He who sacrifices thank-offerings honours me, and he prepares the way so that I may show him the salvation of God.”* (Psalm 50:23). When we thank God for all his goodness to us each day, we prepare a glorious way in our hearts to know him better! Then joy immediately springs up in our hearts and strengthens our faith. Do you need a breakthrough in your life? Be thankful! Do you want to see revival in our land and in Europe? Start by thanking him for his tremendous act of redemption on the cross!

In Psalm 33:5 we read: *“... the earth is full of his unfailing love.”* Our thanks must not be distracted by what the enemy sets before us, but firmly based on what God tells us in his Word. That’s the only thing that counts! When I look on this world through God’s Word and start to thank him for his unfailing goodness and love, this builds up my faith, enlightens the eyes of my heart and leads me to rejoice.

### As you begin your time of prayer:

- **Thank God for his unfailing love over this land and for every life within it. (Psalm 52:8-9)**
- **As you offer thanks to God, name specific acts of his grace which you recognise in his Word.**
- **As the Spirit moves in you, ask God for forgiveness for your lack of thankfulness and for the cleansing of your heart and mind.** -RS-

### Answers to prayer

- Thanks for the current debates in our government that have arisen concerning prenatal genetic tests and ask for a ‘yes’ to life with disabilities in Germany.
- Thanks for all the protection from attacks by right-wing extremists and pray for intelligence services to identify perpetrators and to bring them to justice. -AS-

### Thanks for God’s grace over Germany

2019: 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Federal Republic of Germany (West German) Constitution - a new path of grace for Germany that was opened in 1949 despite the initial division of the land; and the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989. God has laid a desire on the hearts of various Christian groups to give thanks in several ways.

**Project 1:** Prayer walk along the former East-West German border from October 3<sup>rd</sup> to November 9<sup>th</sup>, 2019, under the slogan: “From a life-less divide to a new life-line”. The walk will take place along two routes, one from the north and one from the south to a central meeting point, to thank God for freedom and unity, and to pray for further reconciliation and understanding between former East and West Germany.

**Project 2:** For October 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2020, a project team under the leadership of Bernd Oettinghaus is planning an extensive national action to give thanks for the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Reunification of Germany in 1990. Those in the government responsible for former East German areas as well as others involved in politics and business are working together with the goal that there will be a ‘Celebration of Thanks’ in the market places of many cities, towns and villages throughout Germany with candles and communal singing.

**The planning activities of these projects need your support in prayer now.** -RS-

### 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Basic Law/Constitution – joy & thanks

The Bible speaks about how much God desires and loves righteousness and justice. Good law and order bring protection and security to the people of a country. That we in Germany have received these things by way of the West German Basic Law in 1949 after World War II is only by a tremendous act of God’s grace. We also owe it to the work of the men and women who agreed the content of this document as a basis for a system of democratic and federal state government. They wanted to make it impossible for the country to once again become an authoritarian state in which millions of people could be murdered in the name of the state. But how could this be prevented? No longer should people serve the state – the state should serve the people. From this principle the basic rights of individual citizens were determined in Articles 1-19, rights which may not be infringed or put into question by any state law “in its essence or content”. (Art.19,2).

The most well-known basic right is in Art.1.1: “The worth of each person is sacrosanct (untouchable). It is the duty of all state powers to respect and protect it.” The worth of every person however comes from God. This is also clearly stated in the preamble: “Conscious of their responsibility before God and mankind ... the German people have made for themselves ... this basic law.”

The preamble was an important instrument for the legal formulation of the Basic Law, which was adopted on May 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1949, as the provisional Federal Republic of Germany (West German) Constitution. The division of Germany was only marked out provisionally as the document was only valid in the three military zones of western Germany at that time. The constitution has only applied to the whole of Germany since October 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1990.

### Prayer:

- **Thanks for the good foundation on which the Federal Republic of Germany is based. (Psalm 106:1)**

- **Thanks for the basic laws and for freedom with responsibility before God. (Colossians 3:17)**
- **Pray for forgiveness where the government and the governed no longer respect God. (Eccl. 12:13)** -RS-

#### **A law against “conversion therapy” for homosexuality**

The Health Minister Jens Spahn plans to prepare a draft of a new law before this summer which will forbid the offering of so-called “conversion therapy” for people to want to be free from homosexual desires. Such a law is justified because “homosexuality is not a disease and therefore there is no need for a therapy”. There are also proposals in the state parliaments of Schleswig-Holstein, Hessen and Bremen to implement such a law through the States Parliament (Upper House) in Berlin. Homosexuality would then be classified as “unchangeable”. Christian groups who offer counselling advice for people who are struggling with their sexual identity, male or female, are particularly under fire. They are denigrated in the press as “homo-healers”. Every person has the right to live his or her life as a homosexual. This is confirmed in our Basic Law (Art.3). People who experience homosexual desires, but do not feel fulfilled or at peace with such a life style and long to make a change, should however not be denied the freedom to take advantage of expert help. The possibility for a change to take place from a homosexual to a heterosexual orientation must remain open. To prohibit by law any such offer of help curtails individual freedom and is a huge intervention of the state into freedom of religion and belief (Art.4).

#### **Prayer:**

- **Thanks for freedom in our land and pray that this freedom will not be limited by ideological aspirations at the political level. (2 Corinthians 3:17)**
- **That the proposal does not succeed and is deemed unconstitutional under the law.**
- **That people can get support in the search for their true sexual identity and will experience the help of God. (John 3:16-17)** -AS-

#### **Germany must rise again**

Germany finds itself in a state of political paralysis which is also increasingly influencing business and the economy. The shortage of young people is mostly reflected in the availability of craftsmen and in our engineering industry. Moreover large projects such as the new Berlin airport and the Stuttgart railway station are failing because of excessive legal requirements and absence of good management. Lack of progress in digitalisation is visibly disrupting access of German industry to the export market. There is no chance of a swift change of direction at the political level due to the cumbersome process in passing laws. In addition we have an overloaded pension and health system and a crumbling infrastructure.

The old structures which we believed were safe and sure are being shaken. This is hard for us to bear given our German perfectionism and need for security. But in this situation God wants to speak to us as a nation. He can and will use our capabilities to find creative ideas for the future, but above all call us to turn back to him. Until now we have tied our prosperity to material success. But the calling of

Germany as a father nation goes far beyond just exporting goods. In light of falling expectations for the economy we should not succumb to paralysis and doubt or just resort to damage limitation, but actively seek and set in motion the plans that God has for our future and that of Europe. In this way it will no longer only be about high-tech solutions and perfection, but require good cooperation in society and business.

#### **Prayer:**

- **For courage to face the truth and to make an open and honest review of the current situation. (Psalm 32)**
- **Pray for answers from God where all our human efforts have come to an end. (Deuteronomy 32:3-7)**
- **For a new and better approach to problem solving instead of just making demands and laying blame. (Proverbs 13:10-15)** -KH-

#### **Germany’s friendship with Israel is under strain**

Whoever is praying for Israel knows it is a spiritual challenge as it directly concerns the call and destiny of Israel. God fulfils all his commitments, but in the case of major promises they often meet with much resistance. And this is true for Germany’s call to stand on the side of Israel. It is greatly contested – as in a typical tug-of-war with the “to and fro” of opposing forces. On the one hand there is a clear acceptance of responsibility by Germany for the Holocaust, much cooperation in science and trade, in governmental consultations, and well as the commitment that the security of Israel is fundamentally in the interest of Germany as an expression of a special friendship. On the other hand there is rising anti-Semitism and hostility towards Israel in Germany, the prioritisation of economic interests which endanger the security of Israel (such as the Iran-Deal), as well as the recent German solidarity with the enemies of Israel in a one-sided condemnation of Israel in the UN Security Council. Discouragement and anger do not help us to move forward. Now is the time to once again trust God that he knows how to guide Germany to stand on the side of Israel despite clear opposition. We read in Judges 20:18, “*Judah shall go first*”. “Judah” means praise. When we honour God, we then move forward, until he changes the circumstances which put the strain on Germany’s friendship with Israel.

#### **Prayer:**

- **Thanks that God has called Germany to the side of Israel and that his call is irrevocable. (Romans 11:29)**
- **For forgiveness where we as a nation have continually strayed from this calling. (Matthew 6:12-13)**
- **Thanks that God will give new encouragement to all Israel intercessors in Germany. (1 Thess. 5:24)** -AS-

#### **Dates for your diary**

04.05.-11.05 Week for Life – Ecumenical Conferences  
05.05.-04.06 30 Days of Prayer for the Muslim World  
24.05.-26.05 Prayer Conference - Germany - in Bonn  
26.05 European Parliament, Bremen State Parliament, and many local elections.

*With greetings for this Spring season,  
Rosemarie Stresemann, Alexander Schlueter and Team*