

CALL OF THE WATCHMEN

March 2020

Praying in turbulent times

We are all very concerned by the recent events in Thuringia. The political tremors in Thuringia are revealing the radical developments and uncertainties that are taking place in our land at this time: a lack of courage and sense of direction, loss of faith in politics, the fragility of our democracy, growing strength of parties on the extreme left and right of the political spectrum, the danger of a widening division within our society, and much more. As intercessors we sense the seriousness of the situation and the impact of these challenges in a time of change. But God has called us as watchmen "for a such a time as this". (Esther 4:14). Being watchful in prayer is extremely important. Moreover, we can be sure that God will equip us as intercessors to face the challenges and cause us to grow in maturity.

It is especially important for us to seek the heart of God our Father and to hear the quiet, gentle voice of the Holy Spirit. In such times of crisis, the Spirit of God is **all the more** our source of help, guidance and inspiration for our prayers. (John 16:7,13). Without him we can do nothing. We really need him to guide us and work through us as intercessors, raising us to a spiritual level, over and above our political analysis of the situation, however "razor-sharp" it may be! For there – in the spiritual realm, before God's throne – we find our place of authority and our intercession has the greatest effect. (Romans 5:17; Hebrews 4:16). God will show us the "keys" (Matt. 16:19) to those prayers which will help our land to come through these difficult times. With sincere confession, repentance and supplication, we must stand and courageously speak God's Word into the spiritual atmosphere in our land, wherever he has made his will known to us. (Isaiah 60:1-3).

And we declare light where there is darkness, and divine solutions that will bring change, even in those problem areas that appear to be hopeless! And we pray for Germany to courageously fulfil its calling to serve Europe and the world. In all the apparent weaknesses and helplessness at this time, with God we are neither powerless nor lack a sense of purpose!

Finally let us keep the unity of the Spirit among us – especially when we interpret the political issues differently. We can always be one before God's throne, as there is so much more that binds us together than a political opinion!

- 1) To begin our prayer-time, let us place our land and politicians under God's protection using **Psalm 91**.
- 2) Then invite the Holy Spirit to work in us and in the hearts of all our people in Germany.

**Holy Spirit, Lord of Light, From the clear celestial height,
Thy pure beaming radiance give.**

Light immortal, Light divine,

Visit thou these hearts of thine, And our inmost being fill.

(Two verses from the hymn "Come, Holy Spirit" accredited to Stephen Langton, Archbishop of Canterbury 1207 – 1228)

-AS-

Political upheaval in Germany

On February 5th, the local FDP (Liberal) party chief Thomas Kemmerich was voted in as Prime Minister of the Thuringia State Parliament – with support from the right-wing AfD – even though the FDP has the least members. The national government and his national FDP party leadership then demanded that he resign and he left office after just three days. The chair of the local CDU (Christian/Democratic) party was forced to resign and Christian Hurde (CDU member assigned to eastern Germany) was dismissed by Chancellor Merkel. The CDU was no longer to be involved in helping the previous Prime Minister, Bodo Ramelow (Leftist), to stay in office after being effectively voted out in the recent election. Since then 10,000 people from the Erfurt area have demonstrated against the "fascists" in the CDU, FDP and AfD. All over Germany there has been violence against politicians and offices of the FDP, AfD and conservative groups within the CDU. Nationally and media-wise, the border-line for what is considered politically acceptable has shifted to the left and the Leftist party is now established as being fully democratic. In the centre of Germany, a massive crater-like hole has opened up, which is tearing apart the political-ideological systems of our more recent history and spilling out what has no place in our land before God. Let us pray that, in this total confusion, God's plan will break through to show how our land can be governed from now on.

Prayer:

- **In Jesus' name we refuse to accept any scenario of a new Weimar Republic. Neither the National-Socialists nor the Socialist-Leftists shall take power again in Germany, rather God's Spirit will make all things new. (Hebrews 12:25-29; Joel 2:21)**
- **That in the shakings, our spiritual heritage from Saint Boniface and the Reformation will break through and a united body of Christ will take up its mandate to reign. (Psalm 107:10-16)**
- **We call politicians into office who will lead our land away from the front lines of the current ideological warfare. (Daniel 2:20-23).** -KH-

Process for renewal within the Union (CDU/CSU)

Long-standing centrist parties need to be especially ready to make compromises and seek to unite different interest groups. They must then stand for generally accepted values, otherwise they no longer give a sufficiently sound basis for people to decide how to vote. In the past conservative politics stood for issues such as support for the family unit, for Europe and globalisation, for transatlantic alliances, and much more. In past years, changes within our society forced the CDU/CSU to find new answers in many different areas and at the same time led them to break away from their own basic values. What values are considered today as being conservative, and what as Christian/Democratic? In a party that has lost its self-confidence in a time of social change there is no longer a clear answer.

An internal struggle between the liberals and the conservatives within the party is now coming to light. With the announcement of the resignation of the party chief Anagret Kramp-Karrenbauer and nearing the end of the Merkel era, the party does not simply face only a change of person as leader, but also the search for good leadership in what the party stands for, for unity amongst the various political wings of the party and a new sense of direction. At the same time, conservative politics must be able to convey a new perspective for the future – especially to the young generation – as well as rediscovering and maintaining their (Christian) values. The SPD (Social/Democratic) also finds itself in a fundamental renewal process and is now headed by a new management duo. These two centrist parties form the coalition in our national government.

Prophetic voices have called us to be aware that we face a critical two-year period where our national government will be in a “vacuum” (without effective leadership) – a “hole” which can surely be filled through prayer.

Prayer:

- **Protection over the government coalition, and the correct timing in the process for renewal. (Psalm 23:3)**
- **For a well-run and fair process of management change within the CDU and for the selection of “God’s candidate” as leader. (Acts 13:22)**
- **That the CDU, in its renewal process, finds a structure based on (Christian) values, equipped for the future, and which will be a blessing for our land. (Hebrews 4:16)** -AS-

Action against anti-Semitism in Germany

“We are today faced with a renewed and growing anti-Semitism”, said Felix Klein, who since May 2018 is the *Agent of the Federal Government for Jewish Life in Germany and the Fight against Anti-Semitism*. The secret service in Germany has underestimated the threat of right-wing extremist terrorism in the past. Now Klein is calling for “more repressive and preventative action” and that an anti-Semitic offence will in future be treated as a crime in a category of its own. Police, magistrates, and judges should have the right to deal harshly with anti-Semitic offences. Furthermore, Klein has given warning that, if necessary, he will take action against “fully unfettered Jew hatred on the Internet”.

The latest attack in Halle has made it very clear that the state and society must act decisively and new measures must be found to tackle hostility towards Jewish people in Germany. This may include a mandatory duty for schools to report anti-Semitic assaults among children and for teachers to instruct children in the classroom on how anti-Semitism and hostility towards Israel within the school will be treated, and also include the appointment of an official in the German football league in view of the shouting of many offensive anti-Jewish remarks in our stadiums, and much more!

It is a great honour to us that Jewish life has again returned to Germany so soon after the war. Let us pray for a “change of heart”, such that, within the core of German society, sincere and authentic friendship with the Jewish community becomes possible – over and above just making statements

of solidarity. To be able to openly reveal one’s identity as a Jewish person without fear of being attacked should again be assured and fully respected in Germany.

Prayer:

- **That the campaign against anti-Semitism in Germany will be more intensively pursued and more effective action for prevention and for criminal prosecution of offences will be found. (Proverbs 14:34)**
- **For a transformation in our society – to welcome Jewish life in Germany and promote friendship with Israel without reservation. (Psalm 51:10)** -AS-

Coronavirus – Prayer for China and Germany

With its origin in China, a new source of infection – the coronavirus – is now spreading worldwide with serious consequences in health and industry. China is mostly affected. More than 76,000 people have been proved to be infected up until now and 2,200 have died from lung illness (as of February 21st). In Germany about 16 have been infected and the overall danger to health in this country at this time has been estimated to be minimal.

So we need to pray for the Chinese people and especially for our Chinese brothers and sisters. Many of them are living in fear, as whole cities must be kept in quarantine. As the body of Christ in Germany we want to support them in prayer and ask our Lord to give them strength and protection.

Prayer:

- **We commit our Chinese brothers and sisters to God’s care and protection and bless them with His peace. (Numbers 6:24-26)**
- **For wisdom in all actions to contain the danger and that the virus will be defeated. (Psalm 91)**
- **That in this difficult situation the Chinese people will call out to the living God and receive his mercy. (Matthew 9:27)** -AS-

Prayer for the Catholic Church in Germany

The spring General Assembly of the German Bishops’ Conference will take place in Mainz from March 2nd-5th. The incumbent chairman Cardinal Reinhard Marx will not be standing for re-election, but step down to make the office of chairman of the German Bishops’ Conference available to the younger generation. Let us pray for the right successor and that the Catholic Church, which is experiencing much criticism at this time, can continue to be salt and light and a blessing in our society through its multi-faceted structure and services – through priests, pastors, cloisters, education and training, counselling and care for the poor and needy. We need their contribution! -AS-

Dates for your diary

- 26.02.-11.04. Lent season – leading up to Palm Sunday
- 06.03. Women’s World Day of Prayer - Theme: “Rise! Take your Mat and Walk” - from Zimbabwe
- 22.03.-26.03. European Union of Prayer gathering in Zagreb, Croatia

United in prayer - Alexander Schlueter and Team