

CALL OF THE WATCHMEN

December 2020

At the end of the year

"I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy..., being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus." (Philippians 1:3-4,6).

The words of Paul to the church in Philippi are full of grace and call for the release of God's transforming power. Paul's heart is not filled with frustration, but with gratitude, great joy and confidence. How is that possible? Does he not see the lack of unity and love and the immaturity of the Philippians? Yes, but he is also aware of the powerful work of the Holy Spirit, which creates in them the desire to do good work and will transform them into the image of Jesus. (Philippians 2:13; Romans 8:29).

In the past few months, we have suffered from a "deep rift in the land" that has sought to separate us. Now is the time to overcome this divide, even though we may still see things differently. However, the Holy Spirit wants to bring to our attention a **more important reality**, which is in the fact that we as the body of Jesus on earth have a high calling. (Ephesians 1:18). We are: *the church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of truth* (1 Timothy 3:15); *a city on a hill, the light of the world* (Matthew 5:14); and *the bride of Jesus who is making herself ready* (Revelation 19:7); and much more. **This is what we are truly destined to be.** We are all united in Christ (Ephesians 4:1-5). The bond that holds us tightly together is unshakable. In fact, we have the strongest sense of belonging and purpose imaginable. Different opinions will never be able to change this "higher reality".

As we close the year now:

- Let us ask God for forgiveness for where we have shown contempt, a know-it-all attitude or pride towards our brothers and sisters. At the same time, let us bring our own wounded hearts to Jesus, where we have been misunderstood or ignored. He wants to heal our wounds.
- Let us do something radical and "hurl down the accuser of our brothers" (Revelation 12:10) among us by being thankful for one another with all our hearts. With renewed confidence we will be filled with God's love for one another and go into the new year with reconciled and healed hearts.
- Finally, let us look to Jesus who is coming back, rejoice in our high calling as the body of Christ in this land at this time, and be prepared for his return.

-AS-

Thanks

At the end of this year we have so many reasons to thank God for helping us and our country through this crisis and for standing by us. What are you grateful for?

Protection of animal and plant species and pandemics

Intensive agriculture and the clearing of forests are the cause for up to 130 animal and plant species becoming extinct every day. The situation is dire. Human beings are taking over the habitat of wild animals at a breath-taking pace, and putting themselves in danger at the same time.

Protection of species is increasingly becoming a question of survival for human beings. Whether through the over-fertilization of the soil for ever greater yields, factory farming of animals or the clearing of the Amazon forests to extract palm oil, we have been ruthlessly exploiting nature for a long time. Now our misguided actions are catching up with us.

"The destruction of nature is the crisis behind the corona crisis", said Environment Minister Svenja Schulze recently, making it clear that the destruction of the habitat of wild animals increases the risk of further pandemics. According to studies, 70% of all infectious diseases and pandemics are based on zoonoses, i.e. pathogens that are harmless to wild animals but bring disease when transmitted to humans. Ebola, HIV and probably Covid-19 are consequences of our encroachment on the habitats of wild animals. Protecting their habitats and bio-diversity is a key factor in preventing the spread of new infectious diseases.

God has given us a unique responsibility for the animal world and the environment. Creation is warning us that we should respect and value it in a new way, thereby honouring the Creator! And creation calls out to the "sons of God" who take seriously their duty for restoration in prayer and action. (Romans 8: 19ff.).

Prayer:

- **We ask for forgiveness where we have not protected nature, the animal and plant world. (Genesis 1:28; Psalm 51:12)**
- **For new thoughts and readiness to change our ways and find solutions and innovation in a complex and globalised world. (James 1:5)**
- **That the sons and daughters of God will accept responsibility in prayer and in the fight for righteous action to protect nature. (Matthew 6:33)** -AS-

The media

Journalists are required to conduct proper research and be thoroughly objective, which is not easy under tight economic and time pressure. Straight-forward answers for complex situations, however, result in one-sided reporting. In the reports in the leading German media, there is an increasing difference between what the public feel is correct and the opinion promulgated by the media. The predominantly left-wing political orientation of journalists has influenced the media since the 1968 movement. According to a survey of ARD (German Radio Consortium) interns, 80% of them would vote for the Greens or the Leftists. Patrick Gensing, Chief of ARD online "Fact-finder" news, openly advocates journalism where the stance/attitude of the reporter is also communicated. With the manipulation of objective reporting, the press is giving up its independence and the citizen is told what to think instead of just being given information.

In addition, there is the censorship of social media by way of the Network Enforcement Act. Political opinions from the

opposition are increasingly falling victim to deletion orders from the state by classing them as "hate speech".

Blocking of reports, accusations and a stream of nasty comments take over the rightful place for open debate. YouTube is deleting videos by highly rated scientists as "corona fake news" if they contradict the advice of the World Health Organisation (WHO). Over the past few months Federal Minister Spahn has been working with Google to get priority status for the Federal Government's health portal within its search engine. With this kind of intervention in a free market, the German Health Ministry is annulling the mechanisms for freedom of information and the sharing of opinion.

Prayer:

- **Hatred cannot be simply deleted. Pray for repentance for polarising or dismissing open debate and social discussion. (1 Corinthians 13)**
- **Thanks for Art. 5 of the Basic Law: We seal the right to freedom to form and express opinions, freedom of the press and freedom in education. (Nehemiah 9:38)**
- **Democracy requires mature citizens and journalists with integrity – and liberation for all to know the truth. (Apocrypha: Book of Wisdom 1:1-9)** -KH-
(See: <https://bible.usccb.org/bible/wisdom/1>)

A fresh start

On November 18th, once a national day for repentance and prayer in Germany, spiritual leaders from many churches and Christian groups came together for an online prayer meeting to stand before God to repent and to pray for our country. As the Call of the Watchmen, we met online after this meeting with over 400 intercessors to bow before God, to have our hearts cleansed by him and to confess the sins of our land. We have a God who loves us passionately, but is also a consuming fire to cleanse and purify us and our land. The Holy Spirit uncovers ever deeper levels of fear, pride and independence in us and sets them under the pure light of God - not in a place of condemnation, but a place of loving transformation. God wants to be our sole source of life and security. Therefore, in the coming weeks, we need to consciously set aside **times of encounter with God** in our everyday life, to seek him, to worship and to bow before him. We need "a fresh start" in our prayers - this time not primarily of a political nature, but in prayers that come from our hearts and the hearts of our people towards the Father!

Repentance and prayer:

- **Lord, we humble ourselves before you. Burn up all that is not pleasing to you and release us from pride and independence. Give us tears of repentance to clear the way for your fire to cleanse us and our land. (Joel 2:12,13; Hebrews 12:28,29)**
- **Lord, we identify with and repent for the sins of our land before your throne. Give grace for our land to change direction and forgive us and our people for our sins. (Matthew 6:12; Hebrews 4:16)**
- **Come, Holy Spirit, change our hearts and draw them towards the Father. (John 16:8; Romans 2:4)** -AS-

Christmas

The corona crisis offers many creative opportunities in this season of Advent and Christmas to pass on the gospel. God's Word has powerful appeal especially in times of crisis. As God spoke through the prophet to Israel (Isaiah 60:1-2), he also wants to fill our land with his glory in the midst of darkness and this is God's will for the Christmas season 2020! We are thankful that we will be able open our churches for worship services. In this time of much tension among the people, we want to make Jesus known.

Let us pray for all the people who live in our land, for creative ideas to reach their hearts for Jesus, and for the many online campaigns in our land, such as "Experience Christmas in a new way – 24 times!". -AS-

(See: <https://www.24x-weihnachten-neu-erleben.de/>)

Poland, Germany and Israel

Up until World War II, Poland had one of the largest Jewish communities in the world, with almost 3.5 million Jews. Around 90% of them were murdered during the German occupation. Most of the approximately 200,000 survivors emigrated to Israel after the war. The painful history of the German massacre connects Poland with Germany and Israel. While reconciliation and friendship grew between France and Germany after the war, the border with Poland still forms a dividing line between Western and Eastern Europe and also between our peoples. Many Germans have reservations about Poland or have no interest. The most deeply damaged country in World War II has grown into a flourishing nation, a fact that few Germans recognise.

We believe that the healing of our relationship with Poland is so important for our countries, for Europe, and for our relationship with Israel. Repenting together for the genocide of the Jews on Polish soil can close this wound in our history and suppress the spirit of anti-Semitism in both countries.

Poland is under pressure internally and from outside. Hundreds of thousands have been demonstrating for weeks against a ruling by the Constitutional Court to extend the ban on abortion. And the European Union wants to link the allocation of funds from the EU corona crisis reconstruction program with compliance with EU laws for member states. Let us stand in prayer on the side of our Polish brothers and sisters who are defending the treasured Christian character of their nation.

Prayer:

- **Thanks for our Polish neighbours and for all the work that has been done to bring reconciliation between us. (Isaiah 9:1-4)**
- **Lament for our common sorrowful history and repentance for all contempt for Poland (Isaiah 64,5-8)**
- **Healing for our relationship, that we meet and get to know one another across the border and build up connections in many different areas. (Psalm 126)**
- **For a German-Polish alliance for Israel in the heart of Europe to draw the nations to stand on the side of the Jewish people. (Isaiah 26:11-21)** -KH-

*Wishing you a happy Christmas and a blessed New Year,
Alexander Schlueter and Team*