

CALL OF THE WATCHMEN

January 2021

God is merciful

Jesus said: *“Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.”* (Luke 6:36 – Text for the Year 2021 – from Herrnhut/Moravian Daily Texts used by Christians all over Germany.)

God is merciful. This statement is so fundamental in that the whole world depends on it for salvation. God revealed himself to Moses on Mount Sinai as *“compassionate and gracious... slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness”* (Exodus 34:6). Mercy is at the core of God’s being. God’s omnipotence is revealed in his mercy. (cf. Thomas Aquinas/ Summa Theologica). Justice and mercy go hand in hand; God’s mercy is the foundation of his righteousness.

At the same time, our God is always approachable, and is deeply moved when he sees our needs. He cannot help but run to our aid as our Father (Luke 15:20). To move closer to him, we need a deeper experience of his mercy, and not take it on ourselves alone to pursue justice and truth. The transforming power of God’s kindness, tolerance and patience leads us to repentance when we come to him. (Romans 2:4). His mercy changes this world. It was Christians who founded hospitals, fed the poor, prayed day and night for a lost world, and were thus able to significantly influence and shape their society in a new way. Now, in the face of increasing tensions and hardship, we are challenged not to isolate ourselves, physically and emotionally, but to invest our lives more deeply in meeting the needs around us and thereby reveal the heart of God within us. Responding with God’s mercy makes God visible!

Our Father so loves this world with all his heart. (John 3:16). He wants *“all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth”*. (1 Timothy 2:4). Our prayers in the coming year should be based on God’s heart’s desire. Are we prepared to let God’s mercy transform us, our intercession, and the way we act?

If so, we can then make 2021 a year of mercy! -AS-

Corona – where is the way out?

The Federal Government and the State Prime Ministers decided to impose a new lockdown on December 16th. The number of people infected by the virus is increasing and the containment measures up until now have had little effect on this trend. Fear of the virus is making some in our population ill and even more vulnerable to infection. Others have become numb under the constant bombardment with statistics on infection rates and are ignoring both the current regulations and the danger of the virus. Others are suffering from social isolation, loss of income, business collapse and are losing the courage to face life.

A vaccination programme should now prepare the way out of the pandemic. The vaccine BNT 162b2 developed by the Mainz company Biontech and its US pharmaceutical partner Pfizer is to be approved in the EU before Christmas. The vaccination is said to be 95% effective against contracting a serious disease, but it does not prevent the passing of an infection on to others. The duration of immunity and any harmful long-term effects are not yet known as the testing period was not as long as is usually required for new vaccines.

As Christians we regard the protection of life as one of our highest moral duties. But sickness and death also clearly have a place within the Christian/Biblical understanding of our human condition, and physical health is not the highest goal in life.

We are body, soul and spirit, and our lives develop in a holistic way, physically, socially and spiritually, through our relationship with God and our fellow human beings. Loving your neighbour should not be limited to preventing your neighbour from being infected by a virus. The way out from the corona pandemic is through the blood of Christ.

Prayer:

- **That we no longer let our outlook be overtaken by fear of the virus, but instead look to the cross of Jesus. (Numbers 21:6-9)**
- **That government measures are in alignment with the Christian/Biblical understanding of our human condition. (Hebrews 2:14,15)**
- **For an open and transparent risk-benefit analysis of the vaccination programme which is now in progress, that it will serve for the overall good of mankind and not harm anyone. (Psalm 121)** -KH-

God's kingdom in a changing world order

Never before has there been so much prosperity, social security, health care and educational opportunities in industrialised countries. The time period in which human knowledge doubles is getting shorter and shorter. In 1950 it was 50 years, in 2020 it is only about 73 days. We are living in a time of tremendous upheaval that affects the economy, society, politics, the environment and technology, and it harbours both opportunities and risks. The acceleration of change, the pressure to deal with increasingly complex issues and the increasing mutual dependence of so many nations on one another trigger fear and insecurity. The moral aspects alone that are raised by new technology are difficult to assess.

Through the Enlightenment and the growth of humanism we have put ourselves at the centre of life and we seek to order our society, the state and the environment according to scientific, rational criteria and believe in our own potential. But there is still a growing desire for a spiritual awakening.

A meeting of global actors originally planned for January as part of the World Economic Forum has been postponed to May 2021. Under the slogan “The Great Reset”, the aim is to find answers to these pressing issues of our time together.

The Holy Spirit has always given wisdom to men and women who ask him for solutions to the benefit of humanity.

Let us pray that God will position “reformers” in all areas of society who can help to find answers and solutions to the complex issues of our time. (Romans 8:19). With a growing tendency in the world to establish a godless “global world order”, God wants to clearly establish his kingdom and demonstrate his righteousness for all to see.

Prayer:

- **For the coming of the kingdom of God in this time of great upheaval and that God’s help and intervention will be experienced in Germany. (Acts 4:29,30)**
- **For the calling of men and women who will bring God’s kingdom and culture into all areas of society. (Matthew 6:33; Romans 8:19)**
- **That many people will entrust their lives to Jesus in this time of crisis. (1 Timothy 2:3,4)** -AS-

A year of elections - 2021

The year 2021 will be a year in which there will be elections for the parliaments in six federal states and a new federal government has to be elected in the autumn. In addition, there will be various municipal elections across the country. At the online CDU party conference on January 15/16th, the selection of candidates for a new leadership team has to be finalised. The Greens are also still deciding which of their two leaders to send into the race as candidate for chancellor.

The last few months have clearly shown how "fragile" our democratic processes and political consensus-building have become in the day-to-day work of our politicians at the federal and state level. Far-reaching decisions on the future direction in government have to be made in all areas (economy, environment, family and social affairs, etc.).

In this time of crisis, ingenuity, fresh thinking, vision and courage are required, but there is also a need for constructive cooperation of all those in government and for debates that lead to practical solutions. Let us *right now*, strive in prayer, for the establishment of the necessary decision-making processes in the coming year and for God-fearing women and men to be filled by the Holy Spirit and to take up the positions to which God is calling them.

Prayer:

- **Father, we place into your hands the important decisions for the coming year!**
- **For men and women in politics and business who are filled with God's Spirit and who can lead our country wisely into the future. (Deuteronomy 34:9)**
- **For the election of the new federal government (possibly a coalition), and the election of the new Chancellor in the autumn. (Matthew 6:10)**

-AS-

Germany - Turkey

In the Azerbaijani offensive against Nagorno-Karabakh starting at the end of September, Turkey has supported Azerbaijan with military technology and contributed significantly to the successful take-over of the largely Armenian populated Republic of Azrakh. Around 75,000 Armenians had to flee, Armenian churches and sites of cultural significance were destroyed. In the cease-fire agreement negotiated by Russia, Azerbaijan was granted a land corridor to the Nakhichevan autonomous region, which borders directly on Turkey. A direct link was thus established between Turkey and Azerbaijan, running through Armenian land, which is controlled by Russia and gives Turkey access to the Caspian Sea. Germany and Europe did not intervene as Turkey once again extended its power and influence in the region.

In terms of domestic politics, our government has a very difficult task to limit the influence of Turkey within the population of Germany which includes almost five million Turks. Large sections of the Turkish community are not well integrated into our society and are tied in some way to Erdogan. The third generation of Turks in Germany is seeking its identity again in Islam and the spirit of the Ottoman Empire in a radical way. From this Erdogan is gaining strength in his own land, the church in Turkey is being oppressed, and now Armenia is under threat once again. For the church in Armenia and Turkey, which was established there before any church in Europe, to have religious freedom, Germany must no longer bow to the Ottoman spirit which Erdogan wants to again spread out over the region.

Germany did not stand against the Armenian genocide by the Turks in 1915. And we have failed to bring the gospel to our fellow Turkish citizens.

Prayer:

- **We lift up the Lord Jesus Christ over the Ottoman spirit in Germany. (Colossians 2:8-10)**
- **For the Turkish people in Germany, that we reach them with the gospel in word and action. (Matthew 28,18-20)**
- **For all further political take-over plans of the Turkish leadership to be thwarted. (Isaiah 64:1-3)**
- **For the protection of the Christians in Armenia and Turkey and for strength to stand up with the spirit of the early church to be overcomers. (Luke 21,28)**

-KH-

Israel: Brothers coming together

We are all aware of the signing of the Abrahamic Accords between Israel and the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain in September 2020. Whereas 16 years lay between the previous peace treaties between Israel and Arab nations (Egypt in 1979, Jordan in 1995), two other Arab nations were now ready stand with Israel at one and the same time. In October this was followed by the announcement of a peace agreement with Sudan, a nation that had played a major role in both the Arab-Israeli War (1948) and the Six-Day-War (1967). Signals from Saudi Arabia and Oman also point to the future establishment of diplomatic relations with Israel. In December the UN Ambassadors from Morocco and from Israel took part in a Hannukah candle lighting ceremony in a synagogue in New York, organized by the Permanent Mission of Israel to the United Nations, and talked together about the establishment of diplomatic relations between Israel and Morocco*. The current political changes in the Middle East can only be described as historic.

But apart from all the political efforts for peace processes, let us as intercessors sense the heartbeat of Jesus to unite and reconcile the two brothers Ishmael and Isaac. The roots of the hostility of the Arab nations to Israel go back to these two brothers – but through the promised Messiah (Jesus Christ), healing and reconciliation is now taking place. Isaiah prophesied that the surrounding nations (Egypt and Assyria) will come together with Israel to worship the Lord and will be blessed (Isaiah 19:23-25), and that Arab nations will rejoice in the Lord of Israel through his promised Servant, the Messiah. (Isaiah 42:1,11; Isaiah 60:7 – Kedar and Nebaioth were sons of Ishmael). Let us pray that the hearts of the brothers will continue to come together, but also that the light of their Messiah will shine into their hearts.

** Information about Morocco came after the German Prayer Letter was compiled, but could be included in the English translation!*

Prayer:

- **For the current cooperation of these Arab nations with Israel to proceed according to God's word. (Genesis 27:29)**
- **For a further rapprochement in the hearts of the people that stem from the brothers Ishmael and Isaac. (Ephesians 2,14-18)**
- **For the Arab people to turn to the God of Israel through the Messiah. (Isaiah 19:19-21)**

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