

CALL OF THE WATCHMEN

April 2021

Following Jesus into the unknown

We feel that something has to change deep inside us. We are entering a new era. God is now calling us to step out onto the water, to dare to go where we have never been before. Our feet feel like lead weights and we are very reluctant to venture out onto the open sea which lies before us. But that is exactly where God is calling us - to places where we cannot go in our own strength, where we will no longer feel solid ground under our feet, into the very depths of the unknown. It is somewhat of a paradox that with God we are still safe and secure even in uncharted territory. But it always takes courage on our part to follow God into the unknown.

The changing room for transformation in us and in our land

This is the place where we can feel comfortable when facing change in our lives and where we can come closer to the Father's heart. This place is always open for us and here we sense that the Father is seeking to draw us and our land of Germany to himself. The room is a place of repentance leading to transformation in us personally, in the church, and in our land at this time of great upheaval in our society. Here we can be clothed in a new way for a new era. Here the old clothes of self-importance, of false pride in our performance and ability, careless talk and judgment of others have to be completely discarded. We must stand before God as though we are naked, not in shame, but seeking to be newly clothed by God and to take on a new identity from him, with more love and a new desire and determination for transformation in us and in our land, so that we are prepared to move forward into the future. We need a new awareness of God, his presence and his almighty power in our land! The fact is, we do not have life under control as well as we think. We sense that we should have a firmer grip on the road that lies ahead of us, such that it will still be safe and secure when greater needs arise. Then it will no longer just be the winter tyres on our cars, a healthy diet and regular physical check-ups that we rely on. Rather, it will once again be God himself in whom we trust for our security and who fills us with joy and courage in our daily lives.

Keeping the cross of Jesus in view

We and our entire nation are now being called to once again stand before the cross and to anchor our lives firmly in Jesus' death and resurrection. Ultimately, deep transformation and revival can only come from God. But we have to seek and put our trust in him! We have received so much grace as a nation and we need this to continue even more as we go forward. Only with the help of the Holy Spirit can we get to the roots of the sin in our lives and experience deliverance from all that is wrong in our thoughts and behaviour, from independence and reliance on ourselves for salvation.

We are so pleased that over the Easter period and in the coming months many ministries and organisations, in Germany and world-wide, are joining together to encourage and lead the body of Jesus in worship, repentance and prayer, using the latest communication technologies now available to us. Let us all seek God's face together!

-AS-

Thanks

- For God's clear intervention in the current crisis in many places and in many ways in all the turmoil in these days.

- For the endeavours and dedication of those responsible for protection in our society (politicians, civil servants, rescue services, doctors, care workers, police officers and law and order enforcement forces, etc.) in this time of crisis.
- For the conciliatory words of our Chancellor who is under extreme pressure to assure the population that the government is doing all it can to control the epidemic. -AS-

Raising the cross of Jesus in Germany

The cross is the greatest mystery that is there for all to discover and unfold! The good news of Jesus - crucified, died and risen - is the focal point of the historic message of God to our land and is also central to our intercession. The shed blood of Jesus speaks out loud and clear - also in Germany! (Hebrews 12:24). It calls us to repent, to hallow the Name in which we find redemption, a future and a hope. It is in the message of the cross and resurrection of Jesus that we find the assurance of our salvation. It must be proclaimed once again - on the streets, in schools, at the workplace - in order to reach open ears and hearts.

Prayer:

- **For the proclamation of the message of the cross of Jesus in Germany. (Romans 1:16)**
- **For grace leading to repentance and for our country to trust again in salvation through Jesus. (Romans 2:4)**
- **That we will raise the cross of Jesus in our land and that his saving power will be made known in many places. (Isaiah 17:7)** -AS-

Management of the corona crisis

The German government has extended the declaration of an epidemic crisis on a national scale to June 30th. This means that all decisions on this remain with the Federal Government and the Prime Ministers in the Federal States. Due to increasing rates of infection, the lockdown has been extended to April 18th and contact restrictions have again been tightened. With the withdrawal of the decision to make Maundy Thursday and Easter Saturday public holidays, Chancellor Merkel and some State Prime Ministers admitted that this was a mistake. But trust in the management of the crisis is being challenged. The closing of businesses over the last five months, constant on and off relaxation of restrictions, changing test and trace strategies and sluggish progress with vaccinations offer little prospect and hope for a return to normality. The ban on attending Easter services in person has offended Christians. The economy is facing a wave of bankruptcies.

Scientists are also calling for criteria other than just infection rate statistics to be taken into consideration when imposing restrictive measures. After a year of the pandemic, data is now available worldwide on the good and the harm done by the lockdown measures. Other strategies will be necessary to deal with the virus, but they alone will evidently not defeat it. The aim must be to minimize the death rate and the economic and social damage in equal measure. How to deal with the virus crisis in more balanced and future-oriented way will also be the litmus test for the governing parties in how successful they will be in the federal elections coming up in the autumn, and especially for the CDU party.

Prayer:

- **Repentance for all pride in being able to defeat the virus with human means. (Isaiah 55:6-9)**
- **We thank the Lord that He is in control of this pandemic. (Isaiah 45:5-8)**
- **For His ideas for our land of Germany and blessings for our all those in our government. (Isaiah 40:26-31) -KH-**

Federal election 2021 - shaping the future

This is a decisive year for determining the way ahead. Like a magnifying glass, the corona crisis is bringing to our attention a long-awaited change that calls for a reform of our lives and our values. The new "normal" will look completely different from the old one. Everything is changing in a fundamental way. The true wealth of contentment and inner peace will take the place of the material wealth which comes from pursuing "constant growth" and profit maximization. Life-enriching activities based on relationships with others will become a new measure of success. We need to break out of old established thinking patterns that are holding back progress in our land and develop a plan for the future that will overcome the current divisions within society and set new vision for our land.

Traditional party-political positions (right-left; conservative-progressive) mean less in terms of setting the future direction of government. The party system is not as clearly structured as it was and those with firm political views only make up a small percentage of the voting population. God's kingdom comes now during a vulnerable phase of political reorientation. Let us pray for the empowerment and positioning of men and women whom God would now like to set in key positions. This also includes the candidates for Chancellor. Parties must regain the power to take decisive action and approach the challenges with creativity and courage. We want to support them in intercession and thus shape the future. We need ideas, concepts and solutions that carry the fragrance of the kingdom of God and his righteousness into our government and our society.

Prayer:

- **Lord, lead us into the future with renewed consciousness of your presence among us. (Exodus 33:15)**
- **For the positioning of God-appointed men and women in government who will shape the future in politics and society. (Matthew 6:33)**
- **That parties develop concepts and future plans that bring unity and life. (Jeremiah 29:11) -AS-**

Pornography from the Internet:

Protection for children and young people

Studies from 2017 to 2019 tell us that more than half of 11 to 13-year-olds have already come into some contact with pornography through the Internet. 71% of 14 to 17-year-old boys watch pornographic material several times a week, and 21% even watch it on a daily basis. Lockdowns and online teaching have accelerated the use of digital devices (computers, tablets, laptops and smart-phones) in children's rooms immensely. As a result, many children came into contact with the wide world of the Internet for the first time - often without the necessary training (technical and educational) and instruction to protect them from easily accessible pornographic content. Cyber criminologists also report cases in which online lessons are disrupted by strangers who show pornographic material and confront children with sexual images. While some children are traumatized by such images, others desire more -

often as a relief from boredom, frustration or loneliness. For some, it becomes the entry point into porn-addiction, which experts say can become a life-long affliction. At the same time, the so-called "Schulhof KiPo" (German expression for child pornography in the school yard) has been increasing exponentially since the beginning of the year: children and young people take photographs and film themselves in pornographic poses or actions, and upload the results to the Internet and mobile phones. The consequences of exposure to pornography for children and their character development are extremely serious.

Prayer

- **For protection of our children from all sources of undetected and uncontrolled sexualization and perversion. (Matthew 18:6; Proverbs 4:23)**
- **For parents and teachers to be alert and sensitized to recognise when children are involved in pornography. (1 Peter 5:8)**
- **For help, healing and deliverance for children and young people affected by or addicted to pornographic material. (Isaiah 61,1) -TF-**

Coalition negotiations in Israel

On March 23rd, the Knesset was re-elected for the fourth time in two years. According to current projections, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's conservative Likud party will remain the strongest party in parliament. As after the experiences of previous elections, forming a coalition will be difficult. The parties of the conservative-religious camp when combined did not achieve the required absolute majority of 61 seats. As the strongest challenger, Yair Lapid and his left-wing liberal Yesch Atid party will also find it difficult to establish a coalition of the very diverse parties which are opposed to Netanyahu as Prime Minister. The Arab party Ra'am could tip the scales.

After the election, President Rivlin instructs the candidate, chosen by the members of the Knesset to be the potential Prime Minister, to form a government. He has four weeks to form a coalition, but can then apply for an extension of two weeks. At the same time, the interrogation of witnesses in the corruption trial against Netanyahu begins on April 5th. Before the elections there were protests against him across the country, also because of the repeated lockdowns and the massive damage to the economy. With around one million job seekers, unemployment is close to 25%. In the election campaign, Netanyahu mainly relied on the successful vaccination campaign and encouraged the Arab minority to support him.

Prayer:

- **Let us support Israel in prayer for the formation of a stable government coalition. (Daniel 2:20-22)**
- **Let us pray for a government that will lead Israel beyond the corona crisis and through the worldwide upheavals according to its purpose. (Isaiah 48:17)**
- **For the Israeli economy and society, for healing and recovery. (John 14:27) -KH-**

Note:

13.4 – 12.05 **30 Days of Prayer for the Muslim World (2021)**

For further information, visit:

<https://www.pray30days.org>

*May you feel the presence of God during your times of prayer,
Alexander Schlueter and Team*