

CALL OF THE WATCHMEN

September 2021

Jesus, what are you doing in Germany?

In all the turmoil and shaking at this time, we are constantly looking to see what God is doing in Germany and to recognise where he is active in his kingdom. Following Jesus in unfamiliar and uncertain circumstances, understanding his heart, and keeping in step with him, is really challenging for us right now. The upheavals are weighing heavy on us and are painful. At the same time, Jesus is seeking to shape and widen the desires of our hearts at a breath-taking pace. But we have far more capacity to express devoted love than we are aware of. The result will be a new maturity and beauty in his church which will be awesome!

Drink from the source regularly

If everything becomes too much for us, then let us quickly drink from the source again. We should not forget this. Living water is found in Christ and is therefore available to us at all times. Only when we are refreshed by Jesus can we pray with joy.

Invest in people

We are a prayer network that prays for political and social issues - but behind it all there are real people! When we pray for the national elections, for society and the economy of our country, we do not only have facts, but also people in mind - the politician, the young person in school, the single mother or the business man or woman. This creates a bond between our hearts and those who we are called to support in prayer. In all our concern to correctly assess a complex situation, we do not want to forget that the kingdom of God is about relationships. His kingdom becomes visible in our land through us, when God's nature - his ways and his thinking, and his love - is reflected in us (and in our prayers).

Sowing new seeds

With all this in mind, let us set for ourselves the task of being sowers of new seeds in the soil of our land – maybe with tears in our eyes but with hearts full of expectation! What promise, what hope should this seed hold? What fruit do we want to harvest? What aroma should fill our land at the end of our prayer time? An aroma of peace, of reconciliation, of humility and devotion, of love and appreciation. Let us not doubt that the soil of this land can actually produce a new harvest. Certainly, new fruit will grow (30, 60 and 100-fold) in response to our prayers, for God has promised it. -AS-

Thanksgiving for God's plans for the time ahead of us

Can we begin our prayer time in such a way that we focus on God's plans for the future in our country and in faith thank him in advance? Let us honour him for always being so dependable and express our trust in him - the faithful God, who never forgets a promise, answers prayer and is the Lord of history. -AS-

German Parliament Election

Since mid-August it has been possible to cast a vote by post for the next national parliament and government, which means that many voters make their decision weeks before the election date of September 26th. Up until election day, however, there may be unexpected changes in policies and people due to current events or in the presentation of leading candidates. Opinion polls also influence the decision on how to vote, as was shown by post-election surveys in Saxony-Anhalt. The fact that

almost one in five voters expects election fraud in the German Parliament elections alarmingly reveals the lack of trust in politics and in democratic processes. And those who choose not to vote increase the weight of the votes of those who do vote and can thus also contribute to the final result of the election. For the first time in the history of the Federal Republic of Germany, the incumbent Chancellor will no longer stand and a new direction for the government in Germany may be set in this election. Election campaigns, however, are conducted with a degree of caution as three parliamentary party groups will foreseeably be required to form a government, and they will have to come to terms with one another with regard to personnel, composition and policies. In terms of policies, the electoral programs of the established parties tend to differ very marginally and they all follow the current gender and climate ideologies that seek to seize control over mankind and creation.

Prayer:

- **Thanks for 16 years of stability in Germany under Chancellor Angela Merkel. (Psalm 21:1-7)**
- **Repentance of our people for turning away from the authority of God. (Joel 2:12-17)**
- **That in all the challenges and risks in the German Parliament election, the Lord makes His mercy and grace over our country clearly evident. (John 16:8-13). -KH-**

Prayer for reconciliation in division

How can we serve our society in a time of increasing tension and polarisation? This century has been marked by upheavals and crises (through globalisation, migration, digitisation, climate change). Questions concerning our identity and our longing for security and meaningful relationships are coming to the surface in our society. We have lost the values and virtues that formed an essential basis for our democracy. Peace and freedom can no longer be taken for granted. A battle is raging on all fronts to fill the vacuum that has emerged. Our time is taken up with the search for meaning and a worth-while purpose in life, a better lifestyle and a vision for the future.

Only the cross and resurrection power of Jesus can once again revive the Spirit of God in Europe. We are the ones to open the path towards the future. The nature of God and his kingdom will become visible and be experienced when we stand alongside those who think differently, not judging them, but recognising that we may need to widen our understanding and that we need one another – as well as in the assessment of current crises, such as corona. As priests we should stand in the rift of division in our country and ask for forgiveness when we become part of the problem and not the solution. The vacuum has to be filled by the kingdom of God. Reaching out to one another, we want to exercise our role as watchmen gently and in humility and to open our hearts and minds to the spirit of reconciliation.

Prayer:

- **For a spiritual revival in Europe. (Acts 2:17)**
- **For the kingdom of God to become visible in our land and for a godly vision for the future. (Jeremiah 29:11)**
- **For a spirit of reconciliation in the church and for open hearts to enable us to lovingly relate to one another with all our differences. (1 Corinthians 12:12ff) -AS-**

Responsibility for our economic prosperity

Train drivers have been on strike several times since August 11th. The Union of German Locomotive-drivers (GDL) wants to get higher wages, more pension entitlements, longer terms for collective wage agreements and higher corona bonuses from German Rail (DB). Behind all this, however, there is a power struggle with the larger Railway and Transport Union (EVG), a state of affairs which is now setting railway workers against each other at the expense of railway travellers, freight transport and taxpayers. Already during the corona crisis, EVG had negotiated for the entire workforce that there would be no short-time work and no lay-offs, although the number of passengers had plummeted by more than 50 percent. While the state-owned German Rail (DB) receives billions in federal aid, some private railway companies are facing bankruptcy due to the cost increases which arise from these new collective agreements. This endangers the regional transport networks that are served by these railway companies.

The GDL strike is an example of making demands that have no regard for the overall railway business and its responsibility to support the economy and society with a reliable service and to keep the peace internally. The shortage of skilled workers in many industries is fuelling such demands even from young professionals who are just starting their careers and are not fully aware of the performance required for business success. Economic prosperity is not generated and maintained automatically of its own accord; it has to be worked for.

Prayer:

- **Thanks for our prosperity and the business virtues with which it was developed: diligence, sense of order, persistence, creativity and willingness to serve. (Proverbs 14:23ff)**
- **Repentance for the exploitation of workers as well as for socialistic-unrealistic demands on employers. (Jeremiah 22:13-16)**
- **For partnership between employers and employees, balancing the interests and demands of all those involved in the business process and economic issues, encouraging and strengthening mutual responsibility and loyalty. (Exodus 20:17)** -KH-

God's love for Afghanistan

On August 15th, the Taliban recaptured the capital, Kabul. Months earlier, the US and NATO allies had started the agreed troop withdrawal. Nobody had expected that the Taliban would recapture Kabul without resistance from the Afghan army within hours without a fight and that the Afghan President would leave the country in haste. The pictures of the Afghans who were fleeing from the Taliban and running after planes at the Kabul airport are deeply disturbing. But our hearts have also been deeply touched by reports of the courageous women who dared to emancipate themselves in the past few years - gaining freedom from severe Islamic oppression - and who are now threatened with death. The German army invested 20 years in the training of Afghan local forces so that they could one day secure the freedom of their country. During this time, 59 German soldiers lost their lives; the total number of allied troops killed is over 3,500. These days are marking a turning point in Afghanistan history. Yet God looks upon Afghanistan with compassion. He will continue his plan of salvation with Afghanistan, and we want to help as a nation wherever and in

whatever way God has already intended. When NATO troops also leave, God and his armies are ready.

We can weep with the Afghans in their misery but at the same time stand up in prayer with them: God's power and glory will be revealed in Afghanistan!

Prayer:

- **That God's plans for the future relationship between Germany and Afghanistan will be fulfilled. (Proverbs 20:18)**
- **For a political change in Afghanistan that does not happen through "might or power" and that many Taliban leaders have a supernatural encounter with Jesus. (Zechariah 4:6; Lamentations 3:22)**
- **For believers here in Germany and in many other countries to stand together in prayer and continue to pray for protection, security and a spirit of fearlessness for the persecuted church and Christian organisations in Afghanistan. (2 Timothy 1:7)** -AS-

Israel. Beginning of the sabbatical (schmita) year

On the evening of September 6th, the new year "5782" begins for the Jewish people. According to biblical (Torah) instruction to his people, this is a "schmita" (sabbatical year) that takes place every seven years. It is a year in which the land is to be left fallow, debts are forgiven and slaves released from captivity (Leviticus 25:4ff; Deuteronomy 15). It is a time of rest, restoration, debt relief and trust in God's provision.

Schmita, "leaving the land fallow in the sabbath year, is the great public proclamation of God as Lord and owner of the land". (Rabbi S.R. Hirsch). It is seen as "an extension of the basic concept embodied in the sabbath commandment", the sense of which is "not to take out to the last - not from the earth's resources, not from capital, not from the labour of others and not from one's own". (J. Ebach). Interestingly, the "kosher" certificate for agricultural products for Jewish farmers is still linked to the observance of the sabbatical year today.

Schmita is God's wonderful concept for a responsible, protective way of handling and dealing with nature and its resources, with ourselves and with each other.

Prayer

- **For Israel to return to God as the owner of their land and to know God's election of the people of Israel as his treasured possession. (Exodus 19:5,6; Deuteronomy 7:6)**
- **For a time of coming to rest, recovery and restoration for Israel and for them to know their God. (Exodus 20:8; Leviticus 25:4ff; Ezekiel 20:12,20; Zechariah 2:13)**
- **For our own land where we live. Are there areas and relationships in which God would like to lead me into a time of rest and "release" - to be holy - to be set apart? (Hebrews 4:9-13; 1 Peter 1,13ff)** -TF-

*Looking forward to sowing new seeds with you,
Alexander Schlueter and Team*