

CALL OF THE WATCHMEN

October 2021

Finding our identity and voice

Identity - when you see this word, you may think of how you regard yourself personally, but not necessarily in relation to intercession for nations. However, our identity determines our approach to prayer and enables us to better understand our calling in intercession for our country and its future. Only through a clear understanding of our identity can we find a voice which needs to be heard so urgently at this time. What is our task at this time and are we ready for it? The identity that we need does not come from looking within ourselves to find our gifts and calling. No, this identity comes from knowing Jesus and who we are in him, and being fully aware of what he wants to do in our land. When Simon realised that Jesus is the Christ (the anointed one), the Son of the living God, he was given a new name (Peter - a rock: Matthew 16:18) and thus became aware of his real destiny. Let us also be as clearly identified by Jesus!

Moving forward with courage

The transition into a new era is not easy for any of us. Many of us have been praying for Germany for many years. We need the spirit of Joshua and Caleb to bravely venture into the unknown (Numbers 14:24). Let us again dare to pray "courageous prayers", knowing that we hold God's promises for our country in our hands. We are called to move forward and break out of the "status quo" in which we feel safe and secure.

Finding wisdom - setting our eyes on the kingdom of God

In addition to such an identity and courage, we need wisdom to know how to pray for our country right now. We are called to pray in a way that we may have never done before. For this we need the wisdom that we do not find in the newspaper. Rather, let's spend much time in the presence of God and keep our eyes on the kingdom of God - more than on the world of politics. -AS-

The new German parliament and coalition negotiations

The SPD (socialists) won the federal election just ahead of the Union (CDU/CSU – conservative alliance). In the coalition talks which now have to take place, we have yet to see which parliamentary parties are prepared to form a coalition with one another. Not only the number of votes received play a role, but also policies and concepts. Although a continuation of the two-party "grand coalition" of the SPD and Union would be possible, a three-way alliance within the form of a "traffic light" coalition (SPD-red, FDP-yellow, Greens) or a "Jamaica-flag" coalition (CDU-black, Greens, FDP-yellow) seems more likely. With which party (SPD or Union) the Greens and FDP (liberals) are prepared to govern will be decisive. We need a government that has the substance to work and stay together and that can develop a common vision for the future. May God's good spirit of wisdom and counsel come into all the coalition negotiations. -AS-

The voice of the church in the land

Society and politics in our land are now facing great uncertainty, which may even still increase. We clearly sense how fragile social peace in society and democracy have become. In the search for answers to the big questions concerning our future at this time, we are only at the beginning. Prayers for the political situation are always based on multiple, diverse perspectives and God even lays different priorities on our hearts. We need to have real appreciation for opposing perspectives and an understanding of how different perspectives can complement

each other. Our prayers must always start with a focus on Jesus and his kingdom - otherwise we are in danger of getting drawn away into the world of politics.

In a society shaken by polarisation and unrest, we want to be part of the answer. As a church, let us be a prophetic voice that reveals the spirit of Jesus! Being aware that these shakings are evidence of a confrontation between light and darkness, we want to take our stand in the midst of all the tensions and demonstrate what it means to be committed to a "kingdom-of-God" culture which knows the power of God in forgiveness and reconciliation through the cross of Jesus and is available to us all. The church has an enormously important part to play based on the "foundation of truth", which is Jesus Christ himself. Without "our light" there is always darkness. And in everything that we are not yet able to understand or evaluate, let us simply trust that God will indeed take care of it.

Prayer:

- **That the body of Christ finds its prophetic voice. (Matthew 5:3ff)**
- **For God's mercy on us to protect the peace and the democracy in our land in all the shakings. (Luke 17:13)**
- **That we, as the body of Christ, can pave God's way for the future in our land. (Isaiah 40:3)** -AS-

A new political culture of togetherness

The Merkel era, and along with it an understanding of political thought and action which has long shaped our country and society, has come to an end. For this next era, a new political culture of togetherness is now required, which will better connect the generations so that responsibility for the future can be shared. The working together of generations is essential for the political decisions which now need to be made. The politician of the future must meet the need for openness, authenticity and willingness to engage in dialogue on a larger scale. He or she must formulate questions to which social discourse can provide the answer. Political responsibility goes hand in hand with participation and a culture of open debate. We need a culture that is not characterised by distrust and bad feelings. The politician to be trusted is not the one who has an answer to all questions, but the one who lives in humility and has the courage to be honest and sincere. Our land needs a reformation in politics and answers to the many questions for its future. The value that we give to life also plays an essential role – the treatment of the life of the unborn, of those who suffer illness and those who are weak and need special care.

Let us pray that the Spirit of God will "wake up" chancellors, ministers, and parliamentarians, so that they will know God and become instruments to fulfil God's purposes. Remember, no matter how things go politically, the kingdom of God is at hand and Jesus is in the process of establishing his rulership on earth.

Prayer:

- **Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name! Your kingdom come! (Matthew 6:9ff)**
- **Lord, move the hearts of politicians to fulfil your word! (Ezra 1:1)**
- **For a new political culture which unites and promotes togetherness and democratic government.**
- **For the Spirit of wisdom and revelation for our intercession for politics and society (Ephesians 1:17)** -AS-

Development of a policy for climate change

Election programs and election campaigns have already given priority to one issue for the upcoming government formation and coalition negotiations: a policy for tackling climate change and setting the course for developments in agriculture, the economy, industry, science and research, but also for personal living standards in our country.

Some of these decisions seem to be firmly established with no alternative - even if they leave ethical, social and scientific questions unanswered.

Cultivating and preserving creation has always been part of the commissioning and calling of mankind (Genesis 2:15). This includes a responsible use of resources using our God-given abilities and creativity. That is a creativity within God's creation that seeks and finds solutions with the awareness of our responsibility before God and mankind, but also in the awareness of our dependence on God, the Creator, himself.

Let us pray that in the struggle to set the course for implementing the climate change policy, a place will be given for solutions that have the Creator and his creation as well as the well-being of the people and the individual areas of society in our nation in mind.

Prayer:

- **For a return to God as the Creator of heaven and earth, who has commissioned us to cultivate and preserve the earth and who himself watches over this earth. (Genesis 1: 1; Genesis 2:15; Genesis 8:22)**
- **That scientific research is done with the wisdom and revelation of God - and that the results are "heeded" and respected. (Romans 8:19-22; Daniel 2:21b-22)**
- **For requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving for the politicians with responsibility for climate change policy. (1 Timothy 2:1ff)**

-TF-

Renewing protection measures for natural disasters

For a long time, experts who have warned that Germany is not adequately prepared for natural disasters have not been listened to. Natural disaster protection has hardly received any attention since reunification. Sirens were dismantled and emergency stock-supplies sold off. With the recent flood disasters, considerable weaknesses in population protection are now apparent. The ability to react to crises must be increased considerably in order to be able to react appropriately to pandemics, floods, forest fires, but also to massive electrical power failures. Vulnerable areas and weak points have to be analysed, early warning systems installed and structures and procedures adapted. The training and procedures of specialist staff are also important. Likewise, the involvement and integration of the local population is essential, because solidarity and cohesion are indispensable resources for crisis management. Disaster control is becoming a key science for the future.

As intercessors we need to learn to be vigilant. When we pray for the authorities, let's include the duties and responsibilities of fire fighters and rescue workers for public safety. Disaster protection is inconceivable without volunteers. Around 17 million people are active in voluntary work in Germany. This cohesion of employed workers and volunteers is good for our society. As the body of Christ, we also need to get involved once again with practical help when disasters occur.

Prayer:

- **Thanks and blessings for the work of fire fighters, rescue workers, technical help and emergency care providers. (John 15:13)**
- **For recognition of all the measures required to prepare for a natural disaster and for the cooperation of all those who may be involved. (James 1:5)**
- **That we as the body of Christ use the opportunities to be there to provide help when disasters occur and to show the love of Jesus. (James 2:20)**

-AS-

Antisemitism in young people

Lately there has been an increasing number of reports of incidents involving antisemitic behaviour by young people in Germany. The thwarted attack on Yom Kippur on the synagogue in Hagen and the assault on a participant in a vigil, publicly standing against antisemitism, in Hamburg are just two examples from the recent past.

Social media platforms are a great breeding ground for the incitement of antisemitic thoughts and actions and there is a great risk that young people especially will easily come into contact with antisemitic material and be influenced by its message. The report "Antisemitism 2.0" (published on the German website Jugendschutz.net) examined, among other things, platforms such as YouTube and Instagram for antisemitic content. It became clear that not only contributions from extremists spread such antisemitic thoughts and ideas, but that antisemitic content can also be found in articles which are not directly addressing relations with our Jewish communities. Comment columns on current or past reporting, as well as on educational articles, are not censored for antisemitic content as they should be and become platforms for the dissemination of hateful slogans and buzzwords against Jewish life.

Antisemitic criticism directed at the State of Israel is one of the most dominant forms of antisemitism online.

At the same time, however, there is hope to be found in some movements among young people in Germany, which are specifically dedicated to developing practical measures to combat antisemitism. Workshops and similar initiatives in schools, sports clubs, youth clubs, local communities and higher education centres are guiding young people in how to deal with antisemitism constructively and to learn how to take decisive action against it!

Prayer:

- **That young people will become informed, through information campaigns and educational initiatives, of the dangerous consequences of antisemitism. (Proverbs 4:10-12)**
- **For awareness and appreciation of the Christian-Jewish heritage of our culture. (Romans 11: 16-18)**
- **For clear and more effective action by social media services to identify and remove antisemitic content. (Isaiah 5:20)**

-TF-

*May the peace and wisdom of God be with you as you pray,
Alexander Schlueter and Team*