

CALL OF THE WATCHMEN

May 2022

New perspectives and experiences of God

We see and form an understanding of the world through glasses that present an image which is very much influenced by the thought and judgment patterns arising from our past experiences and how we perceived and understood them at that time. We now continue to evaluate what we see and create images in our minds according to these specific thoughts, convictions and judgement patterns from the past. All of this now determines our current perspectives – the way we see things, our way of thinking and how we feel about everything. Our experiences of God have also influenced our perspectives on life, as well as our understanding of the Holy Scriptures.

But God wants to help us to go beyond our limitations, because old thought patterns no longer equip us to face new times and the future ahead of us. We have to branch out into the unknown. God requires that we do not lean on our own understanding but that our security is in our relationship with him. Right now we are in a new stage in our lives that challenges our well-known patterns of thought and belief, and invites us to a renewal of our minds and to new experiences of God. The Holy Spirit is only too pleased to draw us deeper into the secrets of God, entrusted to us as servants of Jesus (1 Corinthians 4:1), when we dare to tread with him into new territory and are willing to lay aside our old images and ideas.

The time of change in which we now live requires courage and a new perspective - otherwise we will go round in circles! And we will not be able to respond to the challenges that lay before us with our old tried and trusted patterns. But God is there! And he wants to come into our view in a whole new way - possibly in ways we don't expect.

In the Bible we see again and again how God set up new periods in time, which then required new vision, thought and action: the settling of the people of Israel in the Promised Land; revealing himself to the disciples at Emmaus or to Job, the God-fearing righteous man who needed a new encounter with God and then exclaimed: "My ears had heard of you but NOW my eyes have seen you!" (Job 42:5) Together we want to seek such a new encounter with God and enlarge and widen our perspectives.

Let our spiritual eyes be opened wide!

-AS-

The war in Ukraine

Let us pray for the Ukraine war with help from Proverbs 8:1-18 ("Wisdom's Call"). Let us seek God's heart and hear how heaven wants to lead us in prayer. We ask God: "What do you want to do in Ukraine and Russia at this moment?" and then be still and listen. We want to feel totally involved "at this moment in time" and "see through our inner eyes" how we can pray with deep concern in three specific areas. We look to Jesus for strength.

- The **way this war is progressing** and the great suffering it is causing. Jesus, how will you show your righteousness, mercy and compassion now in this war? (Psalm 116:5)
- **Decisions and positioning** of the Federal Chancellor and the German Government. After the defence budget was increased as a first reaction to the war, the scope and consequences of trade embargos and sanctions against Russia and the supply/financing of weapons for Ukraine are now being debated.

Germany is also providing millions in humanitarian aid. Europe expects Germany to take a leading role. But how do other countries view this reaction by Germany to the crisis? Wisdom and prudence in dealing with the threatening war scenario is now very important. What does the Spirit of God say about the role that Germany should play?

- For **divine ways and solutions**. We want to be able to express God's thoughts and ways for hope and the future, and call for Ukraine and Russia to fulfil their **destiny and identity** according to God's purposes for these nations. If it seems as if there may be no way out or only a limited possibility for peace with solution A or B, God will open other ways to bring peace that nobody has yet thought of. He remains the Lord of history - with love and concern for his creation.

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Protection for Poland in prayer

Poland is Europe's "front-line state" in Russia's war against Ukraine and at the same time Poland is playing a central role in taking in Ukrainian refugees. So far almost 2.5 million Ukrainians have left their country for Poland. At the same time, Poland has imposed the most radical energy embargo on Russia and accuses Germany of standing in the way of tougher sanctions.

As intercessors we ask above all for the plan of God in this war, which goes far beyond what we can now see. World War II began with Germany's invasion of Poland. The Red Army then occupied eastern Poland. In 1941, the German Reich broke the Hitler-Stalin Pact by attacking the Soviet Union. Since 2015, a house of prayer has been under construction in Auschwitz directly opposite the gate of the Birkenau concentration camp. The founders of this prayer house invite worshippers and intercessors from many nations to come to this place of the most extreme horror with a vision for light and new life. On a trip to Auschwitz last year, I first saw in my mind's eye the young men who in 1944/45 were still being enlisted by the Nazi Party into the home guard. When in Auschwitz, this became a picture of young people coming into the camp with open hands, asking for forgiveness and bringing seeds of new life. We as Germans can now reverse the history of the invasion of Poland and the Soviet Union and pray that Poland will become the midwife for the birth of God's purposes in this war. At the same time, our mission has to go even further towards Russia - we are not opening a new front.

Prayer:

- **Thanks for our growing friendship with Poland.** (Psalm 133)
- **We call German intercessors to go to Poland to "occupy" the land now as peacemakers and together with the body of Christ in Poland to ask God for the "power to be overcomers" for the land. – "For God is the Lord who crushes wars; for he has delivered me out of the hands of my pursuers, and brought me to his camp, in the midst of the people." (Catholic Bible - Judith 16:3)**
- **We bless Russia, pray for healing, and stand against the resurgent spirit of imperialism in the government of this land. (Zechariah 4:6)**

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Changing times – being prepared for crises

With the war in Ukraine, we are experiencing the shaking of the European order for peace and security. But not only in the security infrastructure, but also the economic order is beginning to falter. For a long time Germany has been looking to build a connection to Russia, as economic cooperation – in addition to financial benefits – promised security and stability. Now our relationship with Russia is clearly seen as too one-sided and at the same time we are becoming aware of how quickly our cooperation with China, our largest trading partner, could also lead to such a crisis. Even before the war, energy prices had risen drastically. The inflation rate has currently reached a peak. Until now we have only occasionally been affected by food shortages. Low-income earners are particularly hard hit by the rising prices. All this calls for a re-evaluation of the world markets and how we conduct trade internationally.

We are in a time of shaking of old orders, but also in a time of transition into a new era for the Kingdom of God. Crises can become a great opportunity for God's kingdom to come. Let us seek God's advice on all matters. He is a supplier and provider of resources that enable growth in times of crisis. As God's people, we are called not only to provide for ourselves, but to become (like Joseph in Egypt) a place of refuge and resource centre for others.

Prayer:

- **For spiritual blessings and strategies to enable us to be prepared in crises and to maintain our financial independence. (Ephesians 1:3; Deuteronomy 8:18)**
- **That the body of Christ becomes a blessing in times of crisis. (Matthew 5:9; James 1:17)**
- **For the recognition of God's ways and the Spirit of wisdom and understanding during economic upheavals. (Isaiah 11:2)**

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Old wells

In Genesis 26:12-19 we read that hostile tribes oppressed Isaac and his growing clan by stopping up ancestral water wells from the times of his father Abraham by filling them with earth. Isaac painstakingly dug up the wells again and gave them the same names that his father had given them in earlier times. A little later Isaac's servants discovered another well in the valley and found "fresh living water" (v.19). Even if these were ancient geopolitical conflicts between tribes in Canaan, spiritual analogies can be made for us now at this time:

- Many good old wells of divine and Godly worth have been buried in our society by the spirit of this age (zeitgeist). Let us pray that our society will rediscover and open them. Here the spirit of knowledge, repentance and restoration is needed.
- Modern man has dug countless "cracked cisterns" that cannot hold water, and has abandoned the source of fresh living water. (Jeremiah 2:13). In his book *Homo Deus* (from Latin "*Homo*" meaning man or human and "*Deus*" meaning God – *Man as God*, 2015), the Israeli philosopher Yuval Noah Harari explores what could happen when man no longer believes that God is the source of life, wisdom and knowledge, but that man can take control and improve life with human wisdom and knowledge and the development of new technologies such as genetic engineering. He aptly concludes: "*The most common reaction of the human mind to achievement is not satisfaction, but the desire for more.*"

Let us pray that man will discover his true identity in his relationship with his Creator and the source of strength that lies in dependence on his Saviour Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit.

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Terrorism in Israel

At the end of March/beginning of April, Israel experienced one of the worst series of domestic terror incidents in years. Four terrorist attacks were carried out within two weeks, killing a total of 14 people. These were all so-called "lone-wolf attacks", by individuals with their own personal violent intentions, and not belonging to any structured terrorist group. The fact that these individual perpetrators do not act within a recognisable terrorist group makes it difficult for the Israeli secret service to track them down as terrorists - but nevertheless, several attacks have been foiled. At the same time, however, this also makes it unlikely that this is the start of a third intifada, since structured coordination would be necessary for this. However, it is difficult to foresee how the situation will develop and how terrorist groups such as Hamas may use such attacks, or the way Israel's police forces react to them, to intensify their terror campaigns. Also, the payments of lifetime pensions by the Palestinian Authority (PA) from their Martyrs' Fund to the family survivors of terrorists who die and to Palestinians in prison for terrorist activities directed against Israel, are an incentive for terrorists to make further attacks. Almost 250 million Euro was paid out in this way in 2021 alone. In the same year, 164 million Euro was transferred by Germany to the Palestinian territories in the framework of state development cooperation and 100 million Euro was given directly to the PA in 2020/2021. These funds which actually should only be applied for a specific and designated purpose, at the same time however provide the PA with an opportunity and freedom to top up the Martyrs' Fund!

Prayer:

- **For the protection of the Israeli population and the work of the secret service and police force. (Psalm 91:1-2)**
- **For Germany to re-examine the justification for all the payments made to the Palestinian Authority (PA) in consideration of the consequences in terrorism within Israel. (Isaiah 5:20)**
- **That Palestinians and Muslim Arab Israelis will be reached with the gospel. (1 Timothy 2:3-4)**

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Protection and internal peace in our land of Germany

In all the upheavals and social tensions that our country has been going through now for months, let us pray for God's protection from each and every form of violent attack and internal unrest, as well as from terrorist attacks! This country should find safety and security in our God (Psalm 91)!

And we want to pray for relaxation, healing of relationships, good health and rest within families, for employers and employees, politicians and all in government and public service.

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*Looking to Jesus,
Alexander Schlueter and Team*