

Breaking through the walls of separation that we sense as we pray for our world

I feel in my heart that we are now being entrusted with a new key within our network as watchmen which will bring a transformation in our lives and prayers. Jesus is our supreme example, who himself overcame every sense of separation between us and Him. He has never been ashamed to be with us, but always treated us as his friends. In this way He has reconciled us with his Father and has also brought us into fellowship with the Holy Spirit within the Trinity - without any reservations. He gave us his very being and we can now be everything that He is. Jesus has broken through all our differences, in body, mind and soul!

We are all aware of the profound times of change in which we find ourselves. What concerns me constantly (and I am sure you feel the same way) is the question of how do we respond? I have noticed that our prayers are so often based on our differences and what separates us. So often we unconsciously consider ourselves to be on the right side, doing good things, while we analyse, criticise and judge others intensely. We in our hearts still hold on to what separates us and thus unwittingly just keep adding to the problem. Jesus wants to be more in control of our hearts. We have already come to know that we are all to be one in the body of Christ and that when we judge one another, we are often ourselves guilty of the same things. For the wrong that I see in others is also in me. I believe that Jesus wants to remove the walls of pride and judgement that indeed separate us from many of the people in our society. In this way we are in fact opening ourselves to the spirit of this world, a spirit which we actually do not want to have!

In this prayer letter we want to explore this aspect of our approach to prayer. Our hearts should be places where a transformation in our prayer lives is possible, where everything can be changed. Our heart is the important key for us as watchmen at this new time. Let us break through the walls of the separation that we sense and build a deeper understanding and concern as we pray for our world. (Ephesians 2:14; John 15:15; Hebrews 2:11; Romans 2:1).

Alexander Schlüter

The resurgence of the spirit of the "Cold War"

According to NATO, the largest manoeuvre since the end of the Cold War has been underway since the beginning of this year. Around 90,000 soldiers are taking part. They are carrying out the transfer of military equipment to the external border in the east of NATO territory. The area of the exercise extends from Norway to Romania. Germany is also involved with up to 12,000 German soldiers. The Federal Republic serves as a military hub. You need practice in order to be able to react quickly and effectively in an emergency. At the same time, they want to demonstrate NATO's complete readiness and also for the manoeuvre to be seen as a sign of deterrence to Russia. NATO is considered as the most powerful military alliance. A comparison of the military strength of NATO and Russia clearly shows the superiority of NATO with regard to soldiers, reservists, air force and naval forces. The arms budget of the EU states alone is twice as high as that of Russia.

For the first time since the Cold War, Germany's defence is being reorganized. On behalf of the Ministry of the Interior, Lieutenant General Bodemann, together with 150 experts, has created a "German Operational Plan" that regulates national and alliance defence. This allows for the civilian population to be actively involved in the event of a crisis or war, and to prepare them for these events now. Six additional homeland security regiments with around 6,000 men and women are being set up. In the event of a need for defence, these are intended to secure ports, railway systems, pipelines, roads for the deployment of troops, bridges, and transport hubs. In addition, there is the need to protect the digital infrastructure to ward off cyber-attacks, espionage by drones and sabotage. "We are not at war yet, but we are no longer at peace either. Defence is a task for the entire state and society as a whole," said Bodemann. The plans are secret and come into effect immediately. In Hessen, Germany, 2,500 people have already registered as reservists.

At the same time, a NATO base is being built in Romania that will be twice the size of Ramstein, and will accommodate more than 30,000 soldiers and their families. The air base is intended to strengthen NATO's supremacy and deterrence in the region.

It recently became known that diplomatic efforts between Ukraine and Russia could have led to an agreement in the first weeks after the start of the war in 2022. A contract with essential security guarantees for Ukraine had already been negotiated. Ukraine should therefore have permanently become a neutral state without nuclear weapons. Joining the EU was then open, but NATO membership was not. The discussions deliberately excluded the question of borders and territories and crucial questions remained unresolved. Nevertheless, there was in fact a significant rapprochement, which was then rejected, not least because the Western alliance believed that a victory for Ukraine was possible and they would have liked to see Russia further weakened. It was clearly felt like they had been transported back to the time of the Cold War and its logic and rhetoric when the talk was of deterrence, rearmament, and nuclear warheads. But this time now is different and we want to seek advice from Jesus. War is never fought alone with ground troops, tanks, and missiles. In war, nations fight for sovereignty over information and how to interpret and use it, while at the same time pursuing territorial and economic interests and seeking the legitimacy and consent of the civilian population.

Is the reaching of an international and peaceful understanding really no longer possible? Is the rearmament and militarization of societies the only way forward?

Prayer:

- **Let us talk with Jesus. What would He do in this situation and what does He advise and assign us to do?**
- **Jesus wants to bring peace into our hearts so that we are able make peace. Where is there still trouble in our hearts (wanting to take sides)? (John 14:27; Matthew 5:9)**
- **Jesus calls us to trust him completely. Let us pray that the eyes of our hearts will perceive Him and His kingdom of peace, at all times and in all places. (Ephesians 1:17-19)**
- **Let us pray for the reconciliation of the peoples (Russia, Ukraine, USA, Europe, Middle East) and for the Lord Jesus to lead them into their future. (Isaiah 9:5-6)**

Alexander Schlüter

European elections

The European Union elections take place on June 9th in Germany. Let us pray that these EU elections will indeed serve God's good plans for our continent. We pray that the EU, which, with its founding fathers, served to heal and bring unity in Europe after the Second World War, is revitalized with its Christian roots and that the Kingdom of God will be seen in times of crisis. And that we as Christians are ready to serve our Lord in the coming of His kingdom in Europe, in our society and also in our politics.

Karin Heepen

Legalisation of abortion

A commission appointed by the Federal Government is now recommending the legalisation of abortions in a recent report. Abortion should become completely legal up to the twelfth week of pregnancy. Currently, Section 218 of the German Criminal Code declares an abortion to be illegal, but can be exempt from punishment if the abortion is preceded by counselling which is mandatory. More and more countries have liberalised abortion rights. France has now even enshrined the right to abortion in its constitution. But the debate about when human life begins, if not with conception and the fusion of sperm and egg, can only lead to arbitrary definitions. For example, one could claim that a twelve-week-old foetus is not yet a human being. This is playing a game with life and death.

German Basic Law guarantees the protection of life in Article 2. According to the Constitutional Court, this also applies for the protection of unborn life. If the protection of life is further weakened, this will have an impact on how we deal with life in all its facets. Because where human life is not protected in the womb, this constitutes a serious missing element within the law, which also puts the lives of the sick and weak into question, as we are already experiencing in early diagnostics concerning the treatment of Down's syndrome.

While the number of abortions has remained the same for some time, the number of doctors who perform abortions has halved. The number of couples who have no children at all is increasing. In all likelihood, there is too short a time for the green light to propose new legislation before the federal election in autumn 2025. Abortion could therefore become an important issue in the election campaign.

Prayer:

- How do we deal with this issue? We will not get an answer to this question if we do not also look into our own hearts. Judgment brings division among us and can lead us to a wrong conclusion, because what can motivate women (and men) to have abortions can also be found within each one of us. Is what is happening in our society reflected in us and what are the reasons for this? How do we get more into the meaning of life ourselves? We do not want to place ourselves over and above others, but rather alongside them! They will then sense that we really care. Jesus went to the deepest depths of our being - even to death. How can we bring transformation in our lives with Jesus within us?

Alexander Schlüter

Seizing the reality of the Ascension of Jesus and Pentecost

"Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world." (John 17:24)

Jesus wants us to be where he is - and that does not just apply when our earthly life is over, but rather he speaks of our "here and now" as his followers. The Ascension of Jesus and Pentecost experience of the power of the Holy Spirit have opened up for us a completely new dimension in spiritual life: we are seated with Christ in the heavenly realms. (Ephesians 2:6). It is the Holy Spirit who draws us into the reality of this truth, teaches us to think and act in the ways of heaven and to shape our lives around this new reality. He helps us to continually renew our minds, so that our thoughts, our feelings, our judgments, and our actions are no longer determined by our circumstances, situations, and current challenges, but by the truth of God's Word and His promises. We still see the challenges and do not deny them, but we know that our God is greater than any challenge we face. Through the Holy Spirit we can, at all times, confidently take our place alongside Jesus, and see the things that are happening in our lives and around us as He sees them, receive His hope and His assurance of salvation, immerse ourselves in His peace and experience His living presence. And we have received such a precious treasure and such a powerful reality through His Ascension and the Holy Spirit at Pentecost! Let us really use this month, as we celebrate both events, to thank Jesus for this new dimension in our spiritual lives. Let us honour the Holy Spirit for his work within us and consciously spend time in fellowship with Him. And let us consciously pay careful attention to the ways in which we rejoice and celebrate. We are called and are enabled by the Holy Spirit to renew our thinking - more and more with the mind of Christ, (Romans 12:2; 2 Corinthians 3:18; 1 Corinthians 2:16), and thus become more and more the bearers of hope, of salt, and of light in our society.

Tanja Frank

European Football Championship

The European Football Championship will be held in Germany from June 14th to July 14th. Fans from over 120 nations are expected. In preparation, the Federal Ministry of the Interior is preparing "for all conceivable dangerous incidents." The focus ranges "from the threat of Islamist terror, hooligans, and other violent criminals to cyber-attacks and other dangers," said the Federal Interior Minister. Let us place the venues in Munich (opening game), Berlin (final), Dortmund, Düsseldorf, Frankfurt am Main, Gelsenkirchen, Hamburg, Cologne, Leipzig and Stuttgart under God's protection and peace, so that no violent incidents occur. And let us pray that we are good hosts and that the European Championship contributes to social togetherness in accordance with its motto: "United in the Heart of Europe". In the midst of great excitement and tension, football can, as in the summer "fairy tale" world cup games of 2006, bring people together in a spirit of reconciliation and fair-play.

Alexander Schlüter

Many blessings for your times of prayer,
Alexander Schlüter and team