

Looking deeper into our relationship and interaction with our country and society

The murder of Charlie Kirk (founder of "Turning Point USA") has shaken our world and become a "turning point" in this world. A moment in time when something became a reality - an event laid bare for all to face. The world had to stop to think about it. We are overwhelmed by the power in the act and what it is saying and demonstrating to us. We try to quickly bring some understanding into what is happening in our analysis of the situation. But perhaps now is not the time for hasty explanations, but for attentive listening. First to God and then to one another in honest conversation, beyond the normal. We stand at a crossroads. Polarization within our society, hatred, and mutual contempt are not new, but they are escalating. Amidst the hurts and anger, the question arises: How do we want to live? I believe we need a new way of listening. A new way of walking and being together. For we will not find the path alone.

We shape our culture not through power, confrontation, or being harsh and tough, but through unity and living in solidarity. If we try to "fix and rebuild" culture by focusing on our differences and conflicts, we only construct new walls and barriers of resistance. True change occurs through unity - not in the sense of egalitarianism (social equality), but through a togetherness that endures differences and builds bridges. Unity is the invisible yet underlying force that engenders trust, creativity, and hope. It works quietly and by transforming, rather than coercing or compelling.

Especially when dealing with our polarizing political culture — such as with an "in vogue left-wing ideology" — it is crucial not to react with the same spirit of harshness and resistance. We are called to take a different path: not to fight for culture, but to shape and permeate it by opening space for encounter and binding hearts together. To do this, we must reopen our own wounded and rejected hearts. This is not about compromise where we have just accepted something as being true, but about authenticity, vulnerability, and genuine encounter. It is about more than just courageously stating what we have accepted as true. It is equally important that we show who we truly are, that our whole personality (and not just our opinion) becomes visible and recognisable.

We win over our opponents not through exchanges of verbal punches, but by the touching of their hearts with our words. It is not about dominating in debates or just being right. People change when they feel that they are seen, understood, and respected. Whoever reaches the heart also wins the mind and soul. This is not a compromise with truth, but an expression of a love that goes deeper than arguments. This creates space where mistrust subsides and new things can grow.

I believe we ourselves are also part of the division and polarization from which we all suffer. We seek security in the right convictions. Our desire to be among "the good guys" can all too quickly lead us into the deceptive trap of moral superiority. It is certainly not about relativizing the truth, but about going to a deeper level: the attitude of our hearts. Are we willing to be more reserved with our judgments and truly seek to understand people? Not just to prove them wrong, but to truly meet with them? Do we acknowledge that we also do not yet have the answers to all the questions of our time? We all carry the wounds of our time within us. Yet, precisely therein lies the opportunity for healing for ourselves and our society. Let us invite the Holy Spirit into our times of prayer and ask Him to show us how we can be part of the solution. He can pray through us *"with sighs too deep for words"*. (Romans 8:26 RSV).

Alexander Schlüter

Guilt and atonement for the Ukraine

During World War II, under German occupation, the Ukrainian population, then as part of the German Protection Squadron (SS) and police, were significantly involved in the extermination of the Jews in western Ukraine. And in massacres in the former Polish eastern territories (Volhynia and Galicia), up to 100,000 Poles (depending on the source of the data) were also murdered by Ukrainian nationalists. So far, there has been only a basic and rudimentary investigation of this in the Ukraine. Since the Russian invasion, on the contrary, national pride and a sense of victimhood have been strengthened. Christians and Messianic Jews are beginning to recognise a connection between the atrocities of their ancestors and the present-day suffering of their people, and are placing this national guilt under the cross of Jesus. Despite this historic burden, no country is supporting Ukraine in this war more than Poland: militarily, with technical supplies, and by taking in over a million refugees. Poland is in fact playing a key role in repelling Russian aggression, as the current provocations of the violation of Polish airspace by Russian drones and fighter jets demonstrate. Approximately 8 million people have left

Ukraine since the beginning of the war, about 5 million going to other European countries and 3 million to Russia, most of them women with their children.

Many no longer want to return and are divorcing their husbands, thus destroying their motivation to fight on the front lines.

Hundreds of thousands have been killed or wounded, and there are only a few men left to recruit. The country is threatened with the loss of an entire generation along with their children. And divine intervention is required in order to bring an end this war.

Prayer:

- **Let us join our Ukrainian brothers and sisters in our shared guilt as Germans for the suffering of Jews and Poles in World War II. (2 Chronicles 7:14)**
- **Repentance for the abandonment of European values that Ukraine claims to defend, for all the broken marriages and for infidelity. (Deuteronomy 30:19f.)**
- **At the same time, we reject any justification of this war by the Russian Orthodox Church under these pretexts. (Matthew 7:3f.)**

- **Let us join with Poles in resisting any spread of the Russian aggression and keeping it within its limits. (Job 38:11)** Karin Heepen

Blessing the economy

At the "Made for Germany" investment summit in July of this year, the main leaders of the German economy pledged an investment initiative of over €600 billion. At another summit in September, the presidents of leading business associations called on the Federal Government to accelerate its efforts in reducing bureaucracy, reforming social and health insurance systems, and easing excessive European Union regulations. Companies are increasingly relocating production abroad due to excessive regulations and reporting requirements, inadequate infrastructure and digitalization, and excessive energy prices, taxes, and social security contributions. Many skilled workers, especially in technical professions, are leaving Germany for the same reasons. Medium-sized companies that relocate are mainly permanently lost, along with their highly specialised technology, know-how, and the places for people to work and earn a good living. Germany's "Capital City of Culture" award this year for Chemnitz bears witness to how an industrial city can become an industrial museum. Small businesses and service providers are now found in the redesigned industrial sites, but hardly any products and goods are now being designed, manufactured, and distributed.

Let us bless our economy and all industrial and agricultural businesses with new creative energy and power such that entrepreneurs and employers will once again enjoy being present and investing in Germany.

Prayer:

- **For a God-inspired investment and industrial location strategy in Germany. (Psalm 104:24)**
- **For the freedom and opportunities to develop our own new entrepreneurial initiatives. (Psalm 115:13-16)**
- **That our young people choose productive careers and participate in God's creative activities. (Psalm 128:1f)**
- **Thanksgiving for this summer's abundant harvests and for the farmers, that they can live well and invest despite the massive drop in producer prices. (Psalm 145:15-19).** Karin Heepen

God's alternative story

Ivan Illich, an Austrian-American cultural critic, philosopher, and theologian, said: "If you want to change a society, you must tell an alternative story."

The society we live in needs an alternative story to hatred and violence. It longs to hear the alternative story of a loving, saviour God whose hope, future, and life have substance.

The gospel is the power of God - and this power is real and must become tangible again in us and through us! Every person is embedded in His eternal plan and carries the longing to become part of God's eternal plan in their heart, (Ecclesiastes 3:11), whether consciously or unconsciously. As followers of Jesus and intercessors for our nation, we are called to proclaim, live, and demonstrate "God's alternative story" - in a way that touches the hearts of the people in our society. Perhaps now is the time for us to return to our true mission of reaching people with the gospel of God's Kingdom and allow ourselves to be recaptured by God's passion for a lost world. Let us be careful not to allow ourselves to be overwhelmed and captivated by the news, media, war events, and

social developments. The world around us needs an alternative story - and eternity outweighs the passing moment.

Prayer:

- **Hear the "song" of God's saving love over your neighbourhood, the politicians, the people in the Middle East, and everywhere, and sing/pray it out. (1 Timothy 2:1-7; John 3:14-17)**
- **Pray for the release of a new level of creativity that will reach hearts that are no longer touched by traditional forms, ways, and practices. Creativity in the form of art, but also in the form of hospitality. (Ecclesiastes 3:11)**

Tanja Frank

Courage and its fruit in sharing our faith

If there is one thing we can take from the life of Charlie Kirk, it is courage - courage to speak our personal truth, regardless of the consequences, without fear of rejection. How beautiful and how simple life can be when we are authentic, always staying true to our convictions, no matter what environment we find ourselves in. That is undoubtedly a great freedom! We must always be aware that all knowledge is only fragmentary. But that does not matter. It keeps us humble. You could always sense Charlie's faith and love for Jesus and the Bible. He did not bend his views, did not play tricks, and did not fear contradiction or rejection. He was inquisitive and respectful, always willing to be corrected by those around him. A mixture of gentleness and pure candour. Thus, he became a role model for thousands, especially for many young people who are searching for true values and guidance in this world of illusion and manipulation. He reminds us of Stephen and John the Baptist, who both proclaimed their message with the same passion, without compromise, and without fear, losing their lives as a result. Their seed became extremely fertile ground for many others. *"Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints."* (Psalm 116:15)

In this time of massive polarization, we should not allow ourselves to be drawn into trench warfare and factionalism, nor should we foster enemy images or attempt to impose our beliefs on others. Instead, we should just stand up for our beliefs openly at university, school, in the neighbourhood, in the family, and at work.

"Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have." (1 Peter 3:15)

"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses ..." (Acts 1:8)

Jesus said this just before he ascended into heaven.

Being an authentic witness is something so incredibly precious when it is born not out of religious zeal, but out of deep love for Jesus and for others. This is precisely why we should always keep our hearts free from the judgment of others and their personal opinions, no matter how high the temptation. This in fact is an enormous challenge, but the fruit in sharing our faith in this way is so great! Let us pray for this.

Alexander Schlüter

May faith and courage fill us again in a completely new way!

Alexander Schlüter and Team