

The Good Shepherd calls us to rest

I had a picture in my mind: a vast flock of sheep, with the shepherd standing in their midst. All the sheep were looking at him, wondering: "What are we doing here?" Yet the shepherd did not lead his sheep to act according to the next planned move, but rather to a place of rest. In the picture, the sheep eventually found themselves all together in a single fold. They were quiet, their gaze fixed entirely upon the shepherd. Then he began to call each individual sheep by name. And each sheep then laid down, rested, and fell asleep. Jesus is the Good Shepherd who leads us, time and again, to places of rest. He knows each of his sheep intimately. Our entire life is inscribed in his hand - including the path that we are on, our calling, and our ministry as believers. Nothing is hidden from him; the future is an open book to him. He knows that he can speak to us at best when we have come to a state of rest. Perhaps we need to quieten ourselves and lay down in order to hear his voice clearly once more. His words are so gentle, they are almost a whisper. And the more we keep our eyes fixed on Jesus and walk with him, the more we learn to become like him and to follow him.

Dear intercessors,

In these times, I no longer view it as a primary task to formulate a unified approach to "The Call of the Watchmen" and to prescribe such an approach for our collective prayer. Indeed, that would also not be possible. The impressions received from all the intercessors are incredibly diverse—which is a great treasure in itself. You know that there is already so much division regarding political leanings, even among Christians, and no one - truly no one - has the perfect insight into the complex web of circumstances. Ultimately, one can only choose to either exclude all points of possible interaction between faith and current politics from the prayer letter, or to bring these concerns before God together in prayer, setting aside partisan political differences. In recent years, God has laid the theme of unity and interconnection especially upon our hearts. We have learned to prioritize our unity above differing perspectives on the country or political leanings. At its core, this has been about what is on our hearts and adopting a new approach in intercession. Even though there is much we do not clearly see right now - regarding exactly what is happening in our country or what needs to be done - we value this approach because it helps us draw closer together and take our fellowship to a new level. Furthermore, God invites us to "Come up here" (Revelation 4:1). Let us ascend together towards heaven and, in His Spirit, look at the things that matter for our country. With this in mind, please take the articles - which reflect the hearts of their respective authors - as a source of encouragement and inspiration, allowing the Holy Spirit Himself to lead you into all truth. And do not forget: "How good and pleasant it is when brothers and sisters dwell together in unity." (Psalm 133:1).

Alexander Schlüter

German state elections

A new parliament will be elected in the State of Saxony-Anhalt on September 6, while elections for the parliament in the State of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern and the House of Representatives in Berlin will take place on September 20. In Saxony-Anhalt, the AfD (Alternative for Deutschland) party could potentially lead the government - a first for the party at the state level. A crucial factor will be whether the Greens, FDP, BSW, and SPD manage to enter the state parliament. In Berlin, by contrast, polls show Die Linke (The Left) party trailing only narrowly behind the CDU (Christian Democratic Union) party (currently the strongest force) and potentially entering the government. This would manifest the country's polarisation between the current extremes in politics within the states, while also drastically intensifying the polarisation within the state parliaments themselves, even in the absence of absolute majorities.

CDU leader Friedrich Merz has reaffirmed the "double firewall" against both the AfD and The Left, thereby placing the CDU in a precarious position - devoid of a plan or exit strategy - in the face of looming electoral defeats. A strategic discussion on how to deal constructively with the AfD is necessary to avoid the manoeuvring of Germany into an "ungovernable" country.

Democratic systems cannot function when built on "firewalls". Instead, anger and radicalisation mount when the will of the electorate fails to be reflected in government. Furthermore, the upcoming autumn debates regarding the

governing coalition's reform package risk being caught in the crossfire and derailed by the processes of state-level government formation and the inevitable posturing of the federal CDU and SPD (Social-democratic Party Deutschland).

Prayer:

- **We exalt the Lord over and above this political turning point in Germany. (Isaiah 59:1–5)**
- **That, amidst the upheavals within the party system and the existing coalitions, paths may be paved for new political forces of reconciliation - beyond entrenched battle lines. (Deuteronomy 5:31–33)**
- **For the formation of governments: that divine wisdom may break through dysfunctional patterns, bringing peace to the states and charting a new course for Germany. (Psalm 86:8–11)**

Karin Heepen

The influence of Islamist networks in Germany

Although the Iranian Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) has been on the EU's list of terrorist organisations since January, it remains legal in Germany; a motion to ban the group failed to secure a majority in the National Government. Two men of Afghan origin were recently charged with plotting attacks in Germany on behalf of the Iranian IRGC. Their targets included Josef Schuster, President of the Central Council of Jews, and Volker Beck, Chairman of the German-Israeli Society. Germany has become an overseas base of operations for Hamas and Hezbollah; in Berlin alone, there

are over 300 Hezbollah members and 200 Hamas members. In total, Berlin's domestic intelligence agency estimates there are 2,590 Islamists in the capital. The largest group consists of Salafists, numbering 1,250 individuals, with 350 classified as prone to violence.

The radicalisation of young people is particularly alarming. Salafist actors utilise social media, employing short, emotionally charged videos. Seemingly innocuous everyday questions are categorised simply as either "halal" (permissible under Islamic law) or "haram" (forbidden or religiously not permissible). Through influencers and digital networking, this process can gradually foster a fundamentalist Islamist worldview. **Prayer:**

- **Courage, wisdom, clarity, alertness, foresight, and decisive action for policy makers, the judiciary, and for the protection of the constitution in dealing with Islamist networks and their adherents in Germany. (Amos 5:15; Proverbs 24:24–25)**
- **Insight and spiritual discernment in the face of ideological and religious radicalisation. (Isaiah 5:20)**
- **For dramatic conversions and encounters with Jesus among Muslims - including within the Islamist scene. (Acts 9:4–5; Matthew 9:37–38)** Tanja Frank

The creeping threat to democracy in Germany

While our attention is focused on threats to democracy from within and without, a simultaneous development is unfolding that warrants equal attention: the growing restriction on the room for democratic freedom in our everyday lives.

Warning signs include diminishing room for dissent, the exclusion of certain viewpoints (including our Christian faith) from legitimate discourse, and a growing shift from trust toward overall control. Surveillance and digital control mechanisms are frequently justified by the need for protection against crises and crime. However, democratic checks and balances - such as through the media, the parliament, the courts, and civil society - are increasingly difficult to maintain and exercise through such comprehensive oversight functions.

A current example is the proposed chat control measures, which carry the risk that even private communication and research could in future be scrutinized not only when there is specific suspicion, but through an infrastructure that makes the communication of an entire population subject to monitoring. The point is not to reject protection against crime; rather, the issue is how much control a free society can permit without jeopardizing its own foundations.

Democracy thrives on disagreement, diversity, and effective checks and balances. If these are gradually discouraged, the scope of what can be said and discussed narrows.

Authoritarianism does not just begin with the abolition of local and national elections. But it can start with the restriction on what can even be said, discussed or communicated openly. **Prayer:**

- **For wisdom and vigilance in our prayer, and for praying with foresight. (1 Thessalonians 5:4–6)**
- **For the courage to stand up and make one's voice heard where it is necessary. (Proverbs 31:8–9; Deuteronomy 31:6)** Alexander Schlüter

Israel, the Middle East, and Europe

The 60-day deadline set by the mid-June MoU (Memorandum of Understanding) between the US and Iran has - as expected-

expired without result. Consequently, US President Trump has announced plans to exert significant economic pressure on Iran - targeting the blockade of the Strait of Hormuz and imposing sanctions on nations supporting the Iranian regime - in an effort to isolate it internationally. In light of the failure of previous US negotiations with Tehran and Iran's continued attacks on the Persian Gulf states, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, and Pakistan concluded a defence agreement in Mecca in mid-August, an agreement which forms a Sunni front against Iran, though potentially against Israel as well should the need arise. Turkey, a NATO partner, is adopting an increasingly aggressive international stance toward Israel and bolstering its military presence in Syria, thereby creating an additional security threat for Israel along its northern border. Since late June, Israel has been negotiating with the Lebanese government on stripping Hezbollah of its power as part of a historic agreement aimed at a peace treaty, even as fighting against Hezbollah positions continues in southern Lebanon. At the same time, the US and the West are attempting to push through various peace scenarios between Israel and its jihadist neighbours - such as the faltering disarmament of Hamas—while pressuring the Israeli government to withdraw from security zones in Gaza, Lebanon, and Syria.

With the increasing rejection of the Biblical realities concerning the people and land of Israel, the West is now becoming ever more vulnerable to the anti-Jewish and anti-Christian influence of Islamism - an ideology that it is effectively helping to finance. **Prayer:**

- **That the Lord paves the way for a peace agreement between Israel and Lebanon, and that this arm of the Iranian regime - Hezbollah - is completely cut off. (Isaiah 19:23ff)**
- **For the collapse of the regime in Tehran, freedom for the Iranian people, and a period of peace for Israel. (Jeremiah 49:34–39; Luke 1:68–75)**
- **For the exposure and dismantling of the channels funding the jihad against Israel from Germany and the West (through UNRWA, universities, media). (Isaiah 59:1–6)** Karin Heepen

Our finances

Dear brothers and sisters, we would like to share an update on our financial situation with you. Over the past few months, we have revised and redesigned our website. This was essential, as the technical standards were outdated and the site required a fundamental overhaul.

We look forward to showing you the results in the coming weeks! Although we handled much of the work ourselves, we incurred significant costs for professional assistance - expenses that our regular donations cannot currently fully cover. We wanted to let you know about this and ask you to consider whether you might wish to support us in this area.

We are aware that costs have risen across the board in Germany and that this presents a challenge for many of us. Yet, we feel it is time to invest—not only in our work but also in the Kingdom of God, which is growing and taking shape in so many places.

Would you also join us in prayer that this financial gap is closed and that the website renewal project can be successfully completed? Thank you for your partnership; we truly value it! Alexander Schlüter

With our heart-felt blessings for your times in prayer,
Alexander Schlüter and Team