

### Creating something new with love and passion

Let us enter this summer with hearts full of gratitude! Has not God graciously guided and blessed us throughout the past decades, and in the most recent times? We are entering into a new era. Jesus is inviting us to discover a new identity and lifestyle by “clothing ourselves” with Jesus Christ - living a new life in Him - fully aware of our close relationship with Him. (Romans 13:14; Galatians 3:27). We are heralds of a new age which is coming. Transformation begins in our hearts. Searching for it outside of ourselves (in the latest social and political developments – in the LGBTQ scene for instance) is totally the wrong way. Everything is waiting there for you and me as new life in Christ is revealed within us.

The fruit of “the tree of knowledge” often keeps us from the new life because we criticise, pass judgement, and condemn ourselves and others. We miss so much in life by deceptively believing that we are intellectually and morally superior and that we “know-it-all”. But that is not how we experience the power of God and the transformation process into which the Spirit of God wants to lead us. We should recognise much more that, in other circumstances, I myself could also be the object of all that I am rejecting, accusing, and detesting in others. But in the way we reject others, thinking that “I would never do that,” we are also in fact rejecting ourselves. The weaknesses that we see in others can also be found in us. Or have we just not looked carefully enough? Above all, where we pass judgement, we always allow room for fear. But fear is not to be found in love. (1 John 4:18ff). Jesus wants to draw us up to this new high place where we will no longer draw battle lines between good and evil, but beat our swords into ploughshares. (Micah 4:3).

I see our hearts as places of transformation. With my judgment I take a step further, but it is only with my heart that I can discern and be a channel for God's redemptive purposes. We need to see our society through God's eyes. Can we relate in a new way to people in their distress and pain? Empathise with them? Can we put on new glasses, which no longer just make us look and feel better and distance ourselves from others, but which enable us to meet people eye-to-eye and make them feel at ease with us? It is the way in which we glance at those around us that gives life, that heals and restores as we learn to look at people, creation, and these difficult times with love.

Prayer is not primarily a battle against sin and problems (here Jesus has already triumphed), but a way to come into God's presence where He will show us all that He can do for us. We are called to pray in an entirely new way and to set in motion, creatively and imaginatively with God, His transformation process for this time and for His promises to the fullest extent.

A good practical step might be to take people into “our hearts” and release grace into their lives. Pray specifically for a person or situation and ask that you would see God's design and purpose for this person or situation. Ask Jesus: “What is your plan for this person or situation? What promises can be claimed for this person or situation? How can we come together, to help, to bring healing?” In a second step, envision that the person or situation is being transformed and that the person will take on a new identity. Together with Jesus, let us create something new with love and passion. Alexander Schlüter

### Gratitude instead of doom and gloom

In the prayer letter last month, we were encouraged to cultivate an attitude of gratitude on a personal level. Over the summer period, let us cover Germany with love and gratitude for all that has been given to us. We are bombarded daily with reports of current terrorism and catastrophic scenarios for the future. Most of the doomsday prognoses in the last 50 years, which came along with some scientific justification, never actually came true - because science cannot predict what will happen in the future, but only carry out research in the present time. But we have a God who knows the beginning and the end. He gives our world hope and a future. (Jeremiah 29:11). This also applies to drastic end-times events that make way for His new world. Let us give thanks to the Lord for our country with its wealth, abilities, its calling and vocation, for our cities and landscapes, our economy and industry, for art and culture, health and well-being, for the wonder of creation and especially for our people: for the old, young and children, entrepreneurs and their families, for doctors and teachers, craftsmen and engineers, police officers and firefighters, indigenous and immigrants. With people awakened by God's Spirit our country is going to be renewed.

So much seed has been sown in prayer for Germany - the harvest is ripe. The earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord. (Habakkuk 2:14).

Karin Heepen

### Refugees

From January to May 2023, 135,961 asylum applications were made in Germany, around 66.2 % more than in the previous year. The applicants come mainly from Syria, Afghanistan, Turkey, and Iraq, mostly with smugglers across the Mediterranean Sea. The Balkan route was largely closed by the EU to prevent illegal migration, crime, and human trafficking. In addition, since 2021 visas for around 30,000 Afghans and since February 2022 for around 1 million Ukrainian war refugees have been issued through the Foreign Ministry admissions program. The number of refugees thus far exceeds that of 2015/2016. About 50% of asylum seekers are granted refugee status. But those who have made it to Germany have little to fear for possible deportation even without protection status. This, together with the highest social benefits, makes Germany the No. 1 destination country.

The capacities of the municipalities are exhausted. Of the mainly young men who arrived in 2015/2016, only about a third are in work or training. Successful integration is usually tied to this. However, society's absorption capacity is largely

measured by the extent to which the local population forms relationships with the immigrants. Where this does not happen, they build parallel societies, possibly in opposition to the hosts. Knife attacks, sexual assaults and infighting increasingly menace the citizens. Meanwhile, the EU is working on the reform of asylum legislation in order to transfer asylum approval procedures to the external borders so that rejected applicants cannot enter and remain in the EU.

**Prayer:**

- **God sees people's hopes for a better life, the dangers they face, the tensions between natives and foreigners. He calls us to serve – may we obey. (Matthew 25:34ff)**
- **What is Germany's calling in the conflict? Pray for God's acknowledgement of our limitations and for the provision of the help that we need. (Psalm 106:47)**
- **That our economic and foreign policy reduces the causes for people to flee from their country. (Proverbs 28:2-8)**
- **Lord, unite all the nations, tribes and peoples and tongues within Your church, the bride of Christ! (Revelation 14:6f)**

Karin Heepen

#### **Mental illnesses in children and young people**

Depression, anxiety, and personality disorders are no longer seldomly diagnosed among children and young people. About one in five adolescents under the age of 18 is so mentally ill that they must receive treatment. Since the Corona pandemic, young people have been treated in hospital much more frequently for mental illnesses. Depression often lies hidden behind aggression, hyperactivity, and learning deficiencies. In addition to a genetic predisposition, the causes of depression are mainly rooted in psychosocial issues such as family problems, the separation of parents, bullying, failure to cope with school, sexual abuse and drug taking. Depression in childhood and adolescence has been underestimated for a long time as it was thought that those who are affected simply lacked the psychological and cognitive prerequisites for self-reflection, reasoning and grieving processes. The case is quite the opposite! We are dealing with a generation that is sensitive, thoughtful, and quite intelligent, yet lacks self-confidence. They just feel that our world no longer gives them sufficient security and they now seek to connect with the older generation, but do not find any assurance from the answers and experiences of a bygone era. The fragmentation in our present society makes it difficult for them to learn any lessons from the experiences of their parents' generation. Currently everything is open to question. That is why they feel abandoned ("lost").

There is also now a lack of stable family relationships that allow for intimacy and a real sense of togetherness. Parents often do not even realise how bad it is for their children. Do we hear the cry of the young people who, despite all the prosperity, the many educational opportunities, and the amazing digital world which we have now developed and appears to offer everything we need, do not feel secure and therefore fall ill? Jesus said: "...their angels in heaven always see the face of my Father..." (Matthew 18:10), inviting us to come with this concern to the Father, who holds the key to the fatherhood and motherhood that is so needed by our youth.

Alexander Schlüter

#### **The passion of the Lord of the harvest**

Isn't summer time wonderful? Summer time is vacation time. Summer time is "outdoors time" - a time when it is so easy to be in contact with neighbours and to be out and about on the streets and in all kinds of places and to meet people. At the same time, summer time is also harvesting time, when the fruit ripens.

Like Jesus, let us go through this special time with open eyes and hearts. In Matthew 9 we read how Jesus, seeing the helplessness and harassment of the people, was deeply moved by it. He saw people like "sheep without a shepherd" always in search of a home, identity, safety, meaning and true life. What was Jesus' immediate solution to this? His disciples! (Matthew 9:37).

Jesus tells his disciples to "ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore to send out workers into his harvest field". The word for "ask" here is not the ordinary word for a request. It is much more like an impassioned: "I command you to ask!" Ask for what? For the workers to be "driven out" into the harvest field – because that is what the Greek word for send out really means: to drive out, to cast out. Do we perceive in this the heartbeat of the Lord of the harvest? He seeks those who connect with his passion, his earnestness, and his desire to reach out to the desperate people of our time. Those who yearn in prayer for harvesters and those who are willing to become the answer to those prayers themselves.

**Prayer:**

- **For a passionate fire to reach out to our friends, our neighbours, and cities and that we may discover ripening harvest fields in them. (John 4:35)**
- **We call for workers to go into the plentiful harvest fields in Germany!**

Tanja Frank

#### **A new sound in our prayers**

If we become very still, we may perhaps hear a deep sigh. It may just be the groaning of creation, but also the groaning of the Holy Spirit and the sons of God. (Romans 8:22-26). Prayer is often not first expressed in spoken words. Prayer comes from our very self and being, from a deep stillness, from a position of establishing a connection, and can express itself in a soft sigh or a loud cry. Creation (such as wind and rain) will react to us more and more clearly when we learn to be more aware of how it calls out. Creation calls for glory. We can answer that call. But words often fail us. The Spirit of God leads us into a calling of the Spirit that emanates from the depths of God. This may seem unusual to us at first. It is another level of prayer that lies in getting to know intimately the calling of the Spirit of God and becoming one with Him. Let us seek his presence again and again during the summer weeks and give new awareness to the sound and call of the Spirit.

"The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God." (1 Corinthians 2:10). Let us wade into the river of life until we can only swim there. (Ezekiel 47:5). Together we want to always be on the lookout for new encounters and revelations of our God.

Alexander Schlüter

#### ***Wishing you a blessed summer***

Alexander Schlüter and team

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