

Bloom, Germany, bloom!

Tens of thousands of football fans from all over Europe are currently in Germany to celebrate the European Football Championship peacefully in our country. And how good that actually is for us! In many cities, the cultural wonders of Europe are being revealed as Scots in kilts with their bagpipes and our Dutch neighbours dressed entirely in orange joyfully populate our market squares. Sport connects people and nations. A new hope is rising. Like an urgently needed deep breath, we take in fresh air and realise that division and conflict should not actually shape our worldview and attitude to life, that they should never indeed be at the forefront of our thoughts and feelings, but rather an overriding awareness and appreciation of togetherness. When we feel related to people with a united purpose, the feeling of separation that prevails in us, and under which we suffer, melts away, and with it a paralysing fear with its negative emotions of mistrust, jealousy, and scepticism. Now we can end the "fight-for-life" mode completely as we no longer perceive the other person as an enemy. This releases new energy in us and suddenly we see that this is a time of great opportunity for change. Now hope and vision are winning back space in our hearts and the Holy Spirit can now reveal His vision for the future to us! We are currently hearing the national anthems of the European nations, ringing out over our cities from many voices, including our own German anthem: "Unity and justice and freedom (...)" let us all strive for this, as brothers (...) bloom in the splendour of this good fortune, bloom, German fatherland!" Let us call out this in Germany in the coming summer months, that Germany can bloom once again. Let us reunite people with one another and experience solidarity despite in all our differences. Let us step out of an atmosphere of division and meet those who think differently with the honest desire to understand them. Where we hold back from and condemn others with certain beliefs and attitudes, let us set them free in our minds. Our thinking should be flushed anew by the Holy Spirit.

Prayer

- **Take a moment to be quiet. Consciously step out from the media coverage, "ringing out its message of division" and allow yourself be restored and comforted by God's peace. (Psalm 23:2-3)**
- **Dear Holy Spirit, what are your thoughts and plans for our country? Give us a brand-new seed. We want to sow trust, solidarity, confidence, and a new sense of togetherness into the hearts of our people through prayer. How can we lead our country into a new beginning and make it bloom? We pray for new ideas in politics, business, for entrepreneurs, artists, educators, etc., so that our country of "Dichter und Denker" (poets and thinkers) will be newly inspired by you. (Proverbs 29:18)**
- **Let us pray that peacemakers, key people, bridge-builders will arise for the future and let us become such people ourselves. We can expect new incentives and ideas not only from politics, but also from all areas within our society. (Isaiah 43:18-19; Isaiah 60:1, Ephesians 2:14)**

Let us look out for the new things that God is doing at this time and create as many opportunities as we can to meet and listen to Him during the coming summer period!

Alexander Schlüter

Vision for a new tomorrow

We now live in a time of great uncertainty and disorientation, intensified by pandemics, crises, and wars. Our young people are particularly affected. Politicians are currently unable to predict what the future holds, nor is there any discernible direction as to what our society might look like in 10 to 30 years. In general, the needs of our young people are insufficiently addressed by our political system. We need "forward thinking" that goes beyond the management of crises. Without a vision, there is a lack of confidence in a new tomorrow. The transformation process that lies ahead of us can only be successfully constructed by including all areas within our society equitably and together with the younger generation. They belong there with their perspective along with their questions. Contents are so important, that the process must begin with a new way of working with one another. Politics must no longer dominate and instruct, morally elevate themselves, use tactics to stay in power, and political opponents must no longer be morally questioned.

We as prayers also need a vision for a new tomorrow, otherwise we will only be praying after the crises have arisen. Our God, who has already fully planned the future, wants to give us this vision and bring new things into life.

Questions: How can our democracy be further developed or redeveloped in a new way? How can more working together and the willingness to discuss such things come into being among the people of this country? How can the younger generation be integrated and taken into consideration across all generations?

Prayer:

- **Let us ask God how he sees the future. He will give us a clear perspective and a new hope!**
- **How can we as the body of Christ support this social transformation process and contribute something to it?**

Alexander Schlüter

Renewal processes and state elections in the east of Germany

The trust in politics has suffered massively in recent years and there is great resentment against the status quo in the country - especially in the east of Germany. In recent years, many political parties have distanced themselves more and more clearly from voters, even trying to educate them if they did not show support for their decisions. The practice of defamation and discrediting within our political system has also con-

tributed to polarisation within our society. We need a renewal process and an urgent review of past political decisions (regarding Corona for example), so that trust can begin to grow once again.

In September, state elections are due in the states of Saxony (01.09.), Thuringia (01.09.) and Brandenburg (22.09.). In these elections, it is becoming apparent that forming a government without one of the two new parties (AFD/BSW which stand for major changes in policies) may not be possible. The question as to what coalition options will be possible and to what extent the CDU is prepared to engage with them now lays before us. Let us pray that God's wisdom will be revealed in this situation.

Questions: Which renewal processes will be most important for the parties at this time? How can we overcome unconstructive division between parties? How can we as a society take on more responsibility again instead of just delegating it "to the top"?

Prayer:

- **Heal our country! Unite what is divided. (Psalm 80:3)**
- **God's protection and wisdom for questions of coalition formation after the state elections. (Proverbs 8:1ff)**

Alexander Schlüter

Israel, Germany, and the UN: 48 years after Operation Entebbe

On the night of July 4, 1976, a spectacular military rescue operation by Israeli security forces ended the week-long hijacking of an Air France passenger airplane. Palestinian and German terrorists were responsible for the hijacking and - after separating the 253 passengers into Jews and non-Jews - held around 105, mostly Israeli hostages in Entebbe Airport (Uganda). They were supported in this by the Ugandan authorities. During the rescue operation, all seven hostage-takers who were at the airport, three of the hostages, around 20 Ugandan soldiers, and a lieutenant colonel (Yonatan Netanyahu) in the Israeli army were killed. In retaliation for this rescue operation, the Ugandan dictator, Idi Amin, had hundreds of Kenyans living in Uganda murdered because he suspected that Kenya was supporting the preparations for the rescue mission "Operation Entebbe".

The hijacking was a continuation of a series of terrorist activities in the 1970s that were directed against Israelis and in which militant Palestinian groups cooperated with German terrorists from the radical left scene (and also partly with members of the neo-Nazi scene). The aim of this hijacking operation was to demand freedom for 53 prisoners, 40 from prisons in Israel, and 13 from prisons in France, Germany, and Switzerland. As well as Palestinians these prisoners included, amongst others, members of the German RAF (Red Army Faction).

Even then, Israel's reaction to this act of terrorism was criticised by the UN Security Council, even though there was no majority for an explicit condemnation of Israel. Today we find ourselves in a new phase of anti-Semitic-triggered terrorism. In view of this, the UN is largely opposed to the Jewish people and Germany's streets are hosting demonstrations that spread anti-Israel and now also anti-Western and Islamist slogans. Let us not look away, but stand alert in spirit to meet these developments from our position in the heavenly realms with Jesus before the throne of God! (Ephesians 2:6)

Prayer:

- **The history of anti-Semitism in Germany did not end with the Holocaust, but continued in various ways. Ask the Holy Spirit to lead you to repent vicariously – acting in the place of our forefathers – and to seriously examine your own heart. (Psalm 139:23-24)**
- **Let the Holy Spirit guide you to pray for vigilance, wisdom, and repentance in our country of Germany, also for our government and our courts today. (1 Timothy 2:2-4)**
- **Pray for Israel, especially for the hostages (released or still in Gaza), for their families and friends, for all of those in positions of responsibility in the government for enabling their release, and for the IDF military forces stationed in Gaza. (Isaiah 40:1)** Tanja Frank

The mission of the church

The New Testament speaks of the church as an "ecclesia" in the Greek language. This word does not define the institutionalised church as we know it, but a dynamic community of "called out" people, in fact those who have accepted Jesus as their Lord and Saviour and follow Him - those who are in the world but no longer of the world. This is the worldwide body of Jesus, which as an "ecclesia" would be entrusted with a twofold mission: the proclamation of the gospel of the Kingdom of God with the aim of making people followers of Jesus, and furthermore to be living and visible witnesses that Jesus has completely and without any limitation overcome the works of Satan (Ephesians 3:10-11). The church is appointed and empowered to bring the victory of Jesus over sin and the power of the devil to light in the invisible world and to live out this victory in everyday life before the eyes of the whole world.

Let us not regard the role of the church as purely humanistic, reducing it to presenting good values, social commitment, and making everyone think in the same way, but rather let us once more rediscover the essential spiritual nature of the church for all to see. The church was created by God to live and to proclaim the works of the Lord. The church emanated from the person of Jesus, the Son of God and exact representation of God's being (Hebrews 1:3), to continue be the representation of Him on this earth. The church was born through the Holy Spirit and endowed with power to testify that He has overcome sin, death, and the devil. The keys to the Kingdom of God were given to the church to use in its mission! Do we accept this mandate? It is a call to be in constant fellowship with the Holy Spirit and with Christ, seated with Him in heavenly places, and from there to receive, look out, speak, and live – fulfilling the mission of the church!

Prayer:

- **Pray for a fresh revelation in your own heart about this view of the calling of the church. Bring it before the Lord and talk to him about it.**
- **Are you ready to be integrated as a living stone into this twofold mission of the church?**

Tanja Frank

This prayer letter is issued for you to use in both July and August.

Wishing you a refreshing summer period,

Alexander Schlüter and team