

Out of nothing

“And the earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep; and the Spirit of God hovered over the face of the waters.” (Genesis 1:2). In the story of creation, we read how the Spirit of God hovered over what appeared to be nothing of value in deep darkness, over “tohuwabohu” as it is described in Hebrew and which Luther interpreted as being “desolate and empty”. The Spirit of God was brooding over everything that lay in chaos. Clearly, we can no longer feel that we ourselves could bring about a change to this state of the earth through our own intellectual performance, our awareness and analysis of such a problem. Rather, it is only God who can create something new from a place with nothing of value, completely empty, and dark. In Romans 4:17 we read that God “calls things that are not as though they were!”. It appears that with God profound changes, new thoughts and ways, come “out of nothing”. The Spirit of God brings them forth and allows them to enter into our hearts.

Our perspective on Germany is often characterised by a lack of vision and hope within us. No wonder that we are disappointed with the state of our country and consequently perceive our country as being hard, unchangeable and “stuck in the mud”. Inadvertently, we ourselves promote and reinforce this state of affairs. Our perception is determined by how we focus our thoughts and attention. What would happen if we let go of our fixations and made room for brand new thoughts? That would truly be a creative act! We are invited by God through the Holy Spirit to think more deeply with Him about our country. How can we best do that?

- By no longer looking at our country “from the outside”, but by seeing ourselves as completely involved in it. In doing so, we also recognise that we have ourselves contributed to the state and chaos of our country. In a certain way, we have helped to create everything that is problematic in the world. We cannot simply deny any involvement or responsibility in this.
- By starting to feel at ease in darkness (emptiness, nothing of worth, unpredictability, the unknown), we can begin to create something completely new in the light that God can shine there (Genesis 1:3). Is God perhaps more easily found in the darkness than in the limited light of our own ideas? In stillness, we want to engage even more deeply with the unknown, with what appears “desolate and empty”, in order to bring something new to birth at a higher level together with the Holy Spirit.
- We are so used to focusing on the expected end result of pursuing our own ideas and comparing the current situation with these ideas, and then not finding what we were expecting. God can and will do something new! Instead, let us begin to want to follow a process that is driven by weakness, honesty, authenticity, what we do not know, being vulnerable. It is by acknowledging such things that we are led from the past into the future.
- And let us put aside the evaluation and judgment of the present darkness in order to go deeper with God - in an unshakable trust. Everything the enemy does must always eventually play into God's hands.

For the Holy Spirit, nothing is “stuck in the mud”. He hovers over what seems to be without form and void with a view to create new life from it in just the next moment! What does God need to make something new for us out of nothing, emptiness and in darkness? It is our acceptance and trust that only He can do what we are not able to do! Can we trust that the Holy Spirit has our sense of chaos and disorder under control and is in the process of creating something new? Alexander Schlüter

Bridge building in the face of the division

The state elections in the three eastern federal states and the collapse of the Carola Bridge in Dresden are warning signals that must not be ignored politically and economically. Dresden has an excellent local department for planning railway construction. This very visible bridge over the Elbe will have been inspected and approved by highly trained and experienced specialists. When a large, heavily used bridge collapses in such an advanced technical environment, it throws an unmistakable spotlight on the state of the local organisation structure, administration and political priorities when using public funds.

The flood water that flowed over the collapsed bridge shortly afterwards also significantly washed away structures that are no longer to be seen. The bridge collapsed in the face of the State Chancellery and the Saxon Ministry of Finance, just a few days after the state elections in Saxony and Thuringia. The election results have the potential to deepen the division in the country or break up the established party system. For too long, walls have been built instead of bridges. In constitu-

tional terms, when elected to parliament, members of parliament are only bound by their conscience and the basic law, and not by their party, their parliamentary group, or contradictory resolutions. A Member of Parliament is an unfettered representative of the entire people.

The mandate and the constitution take precedence over party interests to ensure that parliament can function as expected and find the best solutions for the country.

Prayer:

- **For grace and mercy in economic and political judgement: for divine solutions for the formation of governments, for the economy and the infrastructure, for the flood victims in our neighbouring countries. (Joel 2:12)**
- **For those who stand up across party lines and serve well for the healing of the country with divine wisdom at all levels. (James 3:13-18)**
- **On the other side of the Carola Bridge stands the Dresden Synagogue. Is the collapse perhaps a warning from God to German politicians not to further strain the relationship with Israel. (Genesis 27:29)?** Karin Heepen

Danger of terrorism

Germany remains a direct target for terrorist organisations such as the so-called Islamic State. According to the Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution, the current risk of religiously motivated attacks has now increased massively due to the Israel-Hamas war. "Hardly a month goes by without the police again having to take action and thwart a planned attack here in Germany", says the President of the Office for the Protection of the Constitution, Haldenwang. According to the report from this Office, there are around 27,000 people in Germany who can be counted as being in the Islamist milieu. In fact, the number of people classified as "dangerous" has almost quintupled since 2013. Since 2017, the number of dangerous people has fallen, but is still at a high level.

Terrorism expert Peter Neumann assumes from this that terror is coming back to Europe. Since October 2023, 22 jihadist attacks have been attempted and seven have actually been carried out. Large-scale, coordinated terrorist attacks, such as the one in Moscow most recently, are also considered a possible scenario. Almost two thirds of those arrested for terrorism in the last eleven months were 19 years of age and younger. Radicalisation often takes place on the Internet via social media. Previously the potential perpetrators were ideologically motivated, the hatred of society and the living from fantasies of violence are now in the foreground. Let us pray for the protection of our cities. **Prayer:**

- **Thank God for where terrorist plans were uncovered and thwarted in time. (Psalm 18:2)**
- **Supernatural guidance for the security authorities in thwarting attacks. (2 Samuel 22:2,3)**
- **For the conversion of potential perpetrators and for their liberation from the "spirit of violence" through the Holy Spirit.**

Alexander Schlüter

Extreme weather and our prayers

In some parts of Germany, fears of further flood disasters are growing in view of persistent rainfall and rising river levels. The situation is particularly tense on the Elbe and Oder, but also in parts of Bavaria. Heavy rain and flooding are expected to become more frequent in the future. However, people are well prepared for these, says Banse, President of the German Fire Brigade Association. Germany has learned lessons from past extreme weather conditions and learned how to prevent them.

We can also prepare ourselves. Jesus wants to teach us how we can pray in extreme weather conditions with an awareness of our connection with creation. Creation has always reacted to people. Creation perceives their thoughts, feelings, and actions. The call of creation can be heard clearly. (Romans 8:22). It is therefore important to include creation in our prayers. It is not just to be understood as an unrelated natural space. Rather, heaven and earth act together. In the Bible we can read how God's actions became visible in and over creation. When Jesus was on earth, he spoke to the wind and it responded to his word. Jesus and his authority live in us. Let us ask him why there is so much rainfall and how we can respond together with him in relation what we see and experience in creation. **Prayer:**

- **Lord, teach us to pray! Jesus, we want to learn to pray with authority when dealing with all extreme weather conditions. (Luke 11:1; Mark 4:39).**

- **For wisdom and foresight in all necessary measures for city authorities, fire departments, police, etc.**

Alexander Schlüter

Renewal of the German economy

The German economy is in crisis. It is suffering from prohibition, regulations, subsidies, and state intervention. Stagnation and regression characterise large parts of our country. Courage, the will to shape things, and freedom must once again find sufficient space along with ideology and a planned economy. The state and tax revenues have meanwhile become ever larger, while the freedom and personal responsibility of citizens, who suffer from tax burdens and are trapped in social systems, have decreased. Entrepreneurs and new business are looking in vain for security in planning with new ideas and investments. Inflation and debt, high real estate prices and so much more are paralysing our country. We urgently need a new orientation and an economic miracle. In order to revitalise our country, we really need strong cooperation, enthusiasm for creativity and open discourses that promote the freedom of thought of each individual. God has placed so many gifts in all of us!

How can we make a difference in our time? We want to seriously ask God this in this month. We need a perspective from heaven so that we do not just keep up with developments in the country. We want to be prepared. God does not hold back on any of the wisdom that we need for our economic and financial world in this time. He gave a strategy to both Joseph in Egypt and Daniel in Babylon. **What can we contribute towards the future cultural landscape of Europe? How can we initiate new reforms in our cities and regions? How can we help the younger generation to fulfil their calling?**

Alexander Schlüter

Israel at war with Lebanon

Lebanon is now facing a new war. According to the Lebanese government, Israel's air force killed more than 350 people when it bombed more than 300 Hezbollah positions. These are the heaviest attacks on the Lebanese Hezbollah militia in years. The air strikes are intended to force pro-Iranian Hezbollah to retreat behind the Lebanese Litani River. The area between the Litani River and Israel has been a troop- and weapons-free zone since 2006 under UN Resolution 1701. The buffer zone was intended to protect northern Israel from some of the Hezbollah attacks. However, UN soldiers were unable to prevent Hezbollah fighters from moving weapons and rockets south across the Litani River. There was relative calm for almost 20 years. Following the Hamas attack on Israel from Gaza last October, Hezbollah also stepped up its fight against Israel with almost daily rocket attacks from the north. Israel is now considering a new occupation of southern Lebanon. Israeli tank units have been deployed to the border with Lebanon for days. The buffer zone is to be re-established. At the same time, Israel is expecting counter-attacks and has therefore declared a state of emergency across the whole country. **Prayer:**

- **Let us, in prayer, place ourselves in this conflict between Hezbollah and Israel, raise our eyes and hands to God and release God's sound of victory over this situation: *Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory!* (Psalm 39:3; Matthew 6:13+)**

Alexander Schlüter

God's blessings for your times in prayer,
Alexander Schlüter and Team