

THE POLITICAL PAGE

September 2012

If ye will not believe, surely ye shall not be established.

An impulse for my Christian friends in Germany and Europe, linked with a proposal on how we should pray for Europe during these critical times.

The Double Reality

All of us desire “a Europe that is grounded on God’s foundation” (Michael Herwig) – and this raises a question: how could it be done and what is the responsibility of believers who long to see this become reality?

Jesus said to Pilate, “My kingdom is not of this world” (Joh. 18:36). “If my kingdom were of this world, then my servants would fight.” In the mean time, an invisible battle rages on, one of great magnitude - a cosmic battle between Satan’s realm and the spiritual kingdom of Christ. This is what “not of this world” means, it describes the spiritual battle, beyond our immediate, visual reality." This battle becomes visible in the temptation of Jesus (Matt. 4:1-11), in Gethsemane (Lk. 22:43) and in Eph. 1:21; Eph. 2:2; Eph. 6:12. The fighters described in these battles are angels (Dan. 10:12,13; Rev. 19:14; 20:1,2) and humans and they fight with spiritual weapons of light (Eph. 6:14-17; 18-20).

Rationalism that developed alongside the enlightenment period, penetrated our culture and affected not only our way of believing but also fostered an overall lack of unity, especially when it comes to our understanding of the battle that goes on in the invisible world around us. In the European arena, this has prevented Christians from rising up together and forming armies of prayer warriors that join this battle on our national level. Furthermore, in recent decades, citizens of Europe have become more unaware of the growing (European?) mergers, while developing increased feelings of unease over “more and more laws from Brussels,” followed by tangible anger over growing interventions on national law. In the mean time, when the financial crisis hit, and its subsequent rescue operation began, a defensive battle ensued in which citizens awoke to oppose it while the Federal Constitutional Court began outlining boundaries for national sovereignty in Germany.

So what about the Christians? It appears that, without giving it much thought, they followed in the same footsteps, failing to recognize their task, blinded instead by the all-encompassing showdown happening in the midst of the worldly kingdom they currently inhabit.

Levels of God’s Mercy upon Europe

After the catastrophe of World War II, through God's inconceivable mercy and the faith of a few politicians, God raised up a desire for unity in Europe in a way never experienced before. It was a unity that was born from acts of reconciliation and solidarity. And so, looking back we ask again, what did Christians do in that time? Nothing!

Believers across the nation simply accepted these developments. Where were the bells rung for the German-French Friendship Treaty 1962? Yes, in Reims by Adenauer and de Gaulle – but where, in Germany or in France, were thanksgiving services held? And yet, in 1962, when the invisible spiritual world experienced the iron gateway between our peoples beginning to give way, the church on both sides of the Rhein did not take the initiative to throw the gates wide and break down that barrier completely. At that time, authorities were, for the most part, open towards Christians. Believers could have seized the opportunity to

reach out and encourage people. In the end, this open gateway, the mercy-gate, slowly closed. Contributing factors to this were: the increasing secularism of Europe in the form of "laicism," according to which God has no place in politics, which began to focus exclusively on the economic interests of acceding countries, leading straight to battle cries from humanistic organizations like the Free Masons against the "Jewish-Christian inheritance of Europe." More and more, the mercy-aspect that once fueled a dream for unity in Europe began to fade away.

And what, again, did the Christians do? They distanced themselves and projected the Tower of Babel and the Antichrist on to the increasingly secularized European Union. How things stood in the spiritual battle for a "Europe grounded on God's foundation" became clear to the visible world when, in 2002-2004 the question was raised concerning the appropriateness of the reference of "God" in the preamble of the planned European Constitution.

And what did believers do this time? They watched as the Catholic Church, with Pope John Paul II, took up the battle and fought. Evangelical Churches were glad they were acknowledged for the first time and included as dialogue partners when EU-policy makers convened. Because of this, no one wanted to stir things up by mentioning the "God" question. Free Churches and believers in general were terribly upset and used this as reason to distance themselves even further from "Europe." Of course, they prayed and collected signatures... but where were worship services being held in which congregations rose up together, local or international, to keep the mercy-gate from closing? The people of God were neither taught nor organized to take up and lead the battle for Europe against an invisible, spiritual world. Who among the children of God weep for Europe? Who weeps for God's story of mercy, for a continent that is beginning to drift away?

Twice after this lost battle – and it was perhaps the most decisive battle for Europe's future spiritual path – God gave a chance for reflection: for politicians in the world and for Christians in the spiritual realm. This one chance was the totally unexpected "no" from the French and the Dutch to the constitutional draft in the summer of 2005 and the decisive "no" from the Irish to the follow-up agreement – the Lisbon Treaty 2009. This could have been a second chance to include the reference to God in the new agreement. Instead, it was missed due to the democratic majority decision, although Angela Merkel fought for it to the end. In this case, intensive prayer did occur but Christendom, as a whole, once again failed to recognize what was happening - grand-scale - on the battlefield of the spiritual world.

Thereby, the Judgment of God Took its Course

In December 2007 the Lisbon Treaty was signed; in September 2008, through the collapse of Lehman Brothers Inc., the financial crisis hit. Now one storm surge after another sweeps across Europe. Like in a hurricane, roofs of security are being torn off, enormous, unheard of downpours of debt are raining down over us. Secondary damages are also accruing: flooding that is no longer controllable because existing regulation systems are overwhelmed and political landslides are devouring one government after the other. Rescue funds are being provided only to prove, after a short time, their inability to measure up to the force of the storm. The Southern European countries, that built on the sunny beaches of the Mediterranean, are being washed out, one after another, clinging in mortal danger of economic bankruptcy to the Northerners, who built on more solid ground. The governments are clueless and are searching for momentarily "pragmatic" solutions in order to survive the storm. Europe is experiencing a time of judgment, the wrath of the living God, who does not allow Himself to be omitted. God has warned us, He has given us chances to repent. But they have been wasted.

And how does the Christian respond today? It appears no different than before. In Christian circles it is known that the Church is the "head and not the tail" of the political system. This

knowledge is not being allowed to penetrate Europe. The emotional disappointment and the spiritual dismay over the development of Europe runs too deeply.

But what does God want?

What does God want to tell His people today? If we conclude that as the Church, God expects us to testify about His plan – because humanity without His vision will perish – then, throughout the decades we, as the Church, have failed. We have left "building Europe" to politicians, we've become angry over their laws, and then we have slandered them like the rest of the world. We've shaken our heads over their wild integration hang-up but we remain aloof and refuse to get involved. We've ignored the voices of political prophets such as Jacques Delors, who warned us that Europe must rediscover her "Christian soul." Since 1982, what have we really done after hearing voices such as longstanding European director of Youth with a Mission, Jeff Fountain? Where have we moved in response to the great vision John Mulinde had about the toxic cloud over Europe and the light that God wants to shed, one more time, despite everything? Europe today, stands in the middle of the fulfillment of this prophecy!

So, what should happen?

The Church has sinned, not through its action but through its inaction. Besides our national identity, God also has given each of us a European identity. We simply have let it disappear into our "blind spot". We have sinned before God and men. "Before God" because, politically, we have made God's acting so non-transparent. Past and present generations have ignored God's call for us to navigate Europe on a godly path. We have not honored God as Lord. We have not humbled ourselves in repentance and we have not worshipped Him through thanksgiving. "Before men" because, through our secularized blindness, reinforced by unproductive political slander, we cannot open the door to the Europe that God had intended for us and would have gladly given to us.

Change is possible

In the past 10 years, increasingly more individual Christian groups have realized their spiritual commission to Europe. Apparently, the Spirit of God is awakening the Church to fight for Europe. Lobbyists for Churches and large Christian organizations have existed in Brussels for a long time – and this is good. But they have their own agenda. God however, has a different plan. He wants to establish His will, which is the manifestation of His Kingdom in Europe - the world's center stage. God does not wish to accomplish this by the human means of this world but rather by that which governs His spiritual Kingdom. You ask "is this possible?" God says: YES! - for He takes our prayers more seriously than we do. For Him, the size of "Europe" is no problem. He waits for Christians to bring Him these prayers in unity and in urgency. Without a doubt, Europe is now in a judgment phase. However, the Bible clearly teaches us that it does not please God to punish us – even now! – rather, it is His desire to do us good. Yes, in the middle of judgment He pauses when representatives like Moses stand in the gap with their whole being. Imagine, the completeness of unity, should the entire Church of Christians rise up to stand in the gap. Yes, God is saddened over Europe, over the Church and the politicians, the banks and the economy, the upbringing etc. But He has a good plan for Europe because HE is God and Father, who loves us and who wants to bless us Europeans for the good of the entire world, as in former days. God desires the prayers and intercessions of His Church for Europe!

The Prayer of God's People for Europe

1. Worship

Every prayer of the Church begins with worship because it honors God for her own sake. He is and was and remains worthy of our worship and praise. He is holy, holy, holy; He is full of love and patience and eternal faithfulness; He is awesome and mighty and reigns above all; He is righteous and there is no sin in Him; Even when He judges, He has our salvation in His sight. The great prayers of the Bible help us to worship: Ps. 146–150; 93–100, Rev. 4:8-11; 5:9-14; 15:3-4. The Lord, God, is the “History Maker,” He alone. Even in chaos, He holds the reigns in His hand. “For Him, and through Him, and unto Him, are all things: to whom be the glory forever.” (Rom. 11:36).

2. Thanksgiving

Whoever wishes to reopen the spilled wells of blessing for and in Europe can do so most rapidly by observing God’s acts of grace in Europe and through Europe in the world, by praising God and, through this, strengthening his faith.¹ Likewise, God deserves thanksgiving for the formation of the European union and the decades of ceasefire (until 1989) and peace (from 1989). God blesses us with every advantage that we enjoy in Europe. The order we have from our constitution, our ingenuity and craftsmanship, the beauty of our cities and countries and much, much more. Denied gratitude to God is no trivial offense. According to Rom. 1:19-22; 28-32, this leads directly to social chaos and unacknowledged thankfulness to the Giver of gifts is to negate, yes, even to revile him. However, God responds to thankful hearts. Psalm 50, 23 opens to us a perspective for Europe: “He who sacrifices thank offerings honors me, and he *prepares the way* so that I may show him the salvation of God.” (NIV)

3. Love

Gustav Heinemann (1899-1976), the former Federal President, was shaped by the misuse of the word “patriotism”, which was exploited during the Third Reich up until “total war” broke out. When asked about his love for Germany, he answered: “I do not love the nation, I love my wife.” With the passage of time, and the healing of some wounds, we have learned that patriotism is a positive emotion and that Germany is a Fatherland that we are *allowed* to love. The learning process for today’s generation entails understanding and internalizing that Europe must also earn this love. As citizens of Europe nearly all of us have a “Fatherland,” the country of our fathers. And Europe? Europe is our “home.” That Europe, as a whole, differs from one’s personal, cultural heritage, with all the varieties inherent in multi-national fatherlands, is felt especially when returning from a journey to Asia or Africa. That is why Europe, as a multi-faceted cultural circle, is home to us, the setting in which we feel comfortable and wherefore we must also take ownership and responsibility. Are we willing?

But how will we pray for a Europe that we reject, even though God loves Europe and its people?

How do we pray for someone who is not well, but whom we esteem and love? We pray often and regularly for him. We acquire how he’s doing, if there is any improvement. We pray intensely, from the heart. In faith we approach God’s heart and intercede, believing in His promises. Let us pray for Europe in this way. Then undesirable developments will not stop us from furthering God’s plans and from proclaiming His Kingdom. And when, through our human limitations, we cannot grasp the complexity of a process, we trust that God can and we call on the Name of the King of Kings. We cannot see into the future, but God can! And because of this, we lay everything – even our personal desires – over and over again into the powerful hands of God. We must do this in faith because we trust in His love for Europe. Do we also trust ourselves to love Europe? And to see Europe, this sinful Europe, through God’s eyes? Automatically, the consequence is – pain.

4. Repentance

¹ For concrete info. see the Political Page on „Europa’s Call“ at www.beter-im-aufbruch.de (May/June 2009 edition)

God had already decided to judge Nineveh, even the point in time was set. However, as the entire city, from the king to the stable maid, repented (meaning they became aware) God held back His Hand raised in judgment and spared the city, along with its people and their animals. Unlike at Sodom, where we see God willing to be solicited by Abraham to spare the city on the account of 10 believers, should they have emerged from it.

These are fundamental Biblical principles that encourage us because they describe the essence of our God. He is slow to anger but quick to have compassion. Even now, this is our assurance, if we pray for Europe. Yes, we are in a period of judgment and we do not know what monetary breakdowns are coming, followed by social unrest. The demonstrations in Greece and Spain are like a distant thunder. So, as the people of God, from all European nations, let us begin to humble ourselves before the Lord and, in unity, call to our God. Quickly, very quickly!!

“Judgment begins at the house of God” (1. Pet. 4:17), meaning that repentance begins with us. Regarding Europe, we have refused to thank God, haven’t given it a thought, have taken everything for granted and, when something didn’t suit us, we didn’t pray for improvement but rather we complained along with the rest of the world. For centuries we have not accompanied the politicians with our prayers and even today, we refuse to take our part of the responsibility for their actions. First, God awaits our repentance, then it must be followed by substitute repentance for those He has appointed as our leaders. This kind of repentance for Europe must be done in the same way in which we offered freedom to the world of finance, believing that, through this, the markets would regulate themselves.

So far, we have only acted as bystanders, watching an unrestrained unleashing of mammon. This spirit can only be disciplined again through the repentance of the Church and concrete political measures. Substitute repentance also is necessary for the carelessness with which all the countries, since the introduction of the Euro, have broken the agreed upon regulations governing the “Growth and Stability Pact from Maastricht (1992). These breaches of contract additionally led us to the current crisis and the remedy of new ones designed to function “forever” and “automatically,” to bring new stability into the monetary system. Before fighting against rigorous restructuring, like the ESM, our repentance should be prioritized as should our recognition that, before God, broken contracts bring judgment as God loves justice and righteousness. Further areas that can be included in our need for repentance are topics such as the aforementioned refusal to acknowledge God and the anti-discrimination laws driven by the GLBT (Gay, Lesbian, Bi-sexual, Transgender) community.

5. Proclamation

There are some very specific spiritual controversies flaring up in Europe. Battles that couldn’t be more radical. They are centered on our Jewish-Christian heritage and they defile it by introducing old and new spiritual powers. From ancient times onward, through the Renaissance of the 18th century, the dispute with anthropocentric humanism and its belief in rationalism as the only standard has, in the past 50 years, supported the growing irrationalism of the “New Age” - a time in which we have seen the revival of the old pagan cults of Celtic and Germanic origin. We also battle the controversy with Islam, which has now established itself as the 3rd largest religion in Germany, and that, with the passage of time, continually gains in importance. Yet, what causes these controversies to fade into the background is our contention with mammon, a pursuit that has seized command over Europe, even over the entire world. Everyone should engage this subject of spiritual powers and forces from the invisible world, according to his possibilities. Over and over again Paul focuses our attention on this dimension of reality (most strongly in Eph. 6:10 ff.). He says explicitly that we are not fighting against humans (“flesh and blood”), but that the opponents are individual, spiritual adversaries, who attack (“in the evil day”) but who can be fended off, yes, defeated with spiritual weapons. We are under such an attack, we are “in the evil day”, and we are called to apply the weapons of Light.

Take for example the negotiations for control of banks and the finance markets that are scheduled to be held this fall. In order to pray, we do not need to know all the details but we call upon the sovereignty of Christ over all markets, intrigues, and powers of mammon. With such prayer, clear decisions could be made that might liberate the political realm and return money to its original meaning: a means for service not for threat. Banks could be led to return to their original design: A support system for the economy instead of catering to business establishments with uncontrollable regulations ("Libor") and their own profiteering. The emphasis is on "open prayer" to lead the way for regulating the banking sector. This is pleasing to God, even if we, as laymen, cannot understand its complexity and we watch their own specialists get lost in the details. Through it all, when we passionately intercede for them, God will lead, even when none take notice.

6. Blessing

It is the privilege of the clergy to bless. Blessings do not come from the person himself – at best, good wishes can come out of it. Rather, blessings come from God and it is through the power of the living God that they are poured out into this world. Those who are aware of this will be sensitive to the voice of the Holy Spirit that resonates in the heart of believers. When the Spirit blesses, speak out the good that was heard inwardly. The (Greek) New Testament word "Eu-logein" is used to describe the process of blessing, "to bless," literally, "to speak good" (out of the mouth of God). In blessing people, God speaks good over them, over things, or over nations. When God speaks, be assured, it will come about! In conclusion to our prayers for Europe, let us hear what the faithful and true, the compassionate and loving God tells us so that we can speak out a blessing over Europe.

Final Thoughts

The current attitude of many Christians towards Europe is negative, ranging from skeptical to aggressively hostile. The concentration of power in Brussels, the apparently uncontrollable ESM, the enormous guaranteed sums, and the independence of the financial markets are a few of the reasons for these sentiments. These reasons should be taken seriously because they represent true danger. However, the crucial question is: How will Europe continue? Should we take these concerns and skepticisms as warnings to retreat or as signals for Christians to engage? Should we contribute, with our means, towards building a new Europe? A few thoughts that favor cooperation:

1. Human worries are one thing, spiritual/ prophetic impressions are another, and Biblical knowledge of God's nature and dealings with mankind are a third. Previous experience tells us that: the third carries the second: the second shapes the first! The integrity of this order must remain intact otherwise our prayers have the wrong foundation as they revolve around us and gain no momentum towards change.
2. The clear commission to the Church is to pray for the government. In a time of European unity this also includes prayer for European institutions: European Council of "Chiefs" and Ministers, the Commission, and the European Parliament. On behalf of God, the Prophet Jeremiah challenges the Hebrew people, while living in exile, to seek the peace of the city and to pray to the Lord on its behalf. (Jer. 29:7) God was calling them, through Jeremiah, to pray for Babylon, the Biblical epitome of Sin and godlessness. In the New Testament, Paul challenges us in 1. Tim. 2:2 to pray for our kings and all the authorities. For first century Jews, these "authorities" they were called to pray for were tyrannical emperors and corrupt provincial governors. We must therefore conclude that Biblically, there is absolutely no excuse we can make to avoid praying and interceding for Brussels.
3. When we read Biblical reports and place them into their accurate cultural-theological- and historical settings, we recognize one thing: God is faithful - in His nature He is congruent with Himself and He is faithful in His dealings with people. This means: We can recognize God's intentions by reflecting on His leadership during the past years or decades.

Applied to the current state of Europe: the pursuit of further unity or movement towards disintegration, one must realize that, from the beginning of the European Coal and Steel Company (1950) and the Roman Treaties (1957), God clearly confirmed the way towards more unity, in spite of the grave mistakes that were made. Observed from a theological/historical perspective, the continuation of the integration of the European Political Union – yet to be designed! – complies more to the continuity (fidelity) of God's plans than would a movement towards a return to disintegration.

4. For our own self-inflicted breaches of contract and many other sins, including the Churches failure to pray, God has let the consequences of our actions come upon us in form of judgment. This appears to be sensed by everyone as a possible downward spiral towards doom. The Christians have it in their power to avert such an end. This is not hubris but rather fact.-Faith in God is not a hobby and prayer is not meant to be recreational. Political prayer is coming before the throne of grace, full of assurance, in a priestly manner, interceding for the people, for the country, for Europe, and calling on the mercy of God on their behalf. This action, our freedom to approach God in prayer, is only made possible through the blood of the Lamb of God, who carries away the sins of the world and gives us access to the mercy seat of God. God wants to save Europe, not spoil it; He wants to do it good, not hurt it. But He is waiting for “someone to stand in the gap” and intercede for Europe. And that is the job of the Church. Unified as one – how else?
5. There are those who believe that Brussels is developing as a powerhouse that is gaining momentum and preparing the way for the appearance of the Antichrist. Therefore, they find it necessary to resist further attempts at moving Europe towards increased integration. But they know exactly that the Antichrist is foreseen in God's future plan for the world. With respect to the Antichrist, Scripture gives no room for the Church to initiate the prevention of his coming. It is God who sets his time and hour. God alone! How effective, in this case becomes the high priestly prayer when it is cast before the throne of God, into his very arms, generating a divine experience with a God, who is known to change His plans when moved by the petitions of his people. However, these changes to the courses of history are not born from current existential anxieties or future fears, but rather they proceed from the person of God, from the great, benevolent heart of the Father, which is greater than our heart and that knows all things. (1. John 3:20). Secure in this heart, we fear nothing, neither present nor future things; neither lofty politics nor deep malice from secret societies; neither angels nor powers from the invisible world. Because we are secure in God's great heart. Today, tomorrow and forever.

Prayer

Europe urgently needs prayer. Everyone knows this. But most European Christians hardly practice it. Instead, there is an abundance of grumbling. Could there be a connection between Europe's condition and the attitude of believers? If so, please do something to change this condition and do it soon! You can pray alone. But you can also reach out and encourage others to pray together. Attempt to direct prayer in the order that proceeds from the 6 points of this article and bring your prayers before the throne of God and join with those in Europe who are beginning to pray for our continent.

1. **Worship God**, who holds the history of this world in His hands and, who will see its destiny fulfilled. He is the great “History maker.”
2. **Give thanks always** for all the good things that you and your parents were allowed to experience over the past decades in Europe: peace, prosperity, order, education, health service, social support, etc. Thank God, also, for the things of a greater dimension, i.e. for your neighboring countries; the pleasant climate; the revival in Europe, from its beginning onwards. God's good deeds have not just begun, they have stood witness of His great Name for generations!
3. Recognize **God's love for Europe** and receive anew this love through prayer. It is impossible to intercede without love. And it is completely impossible to stand in the

gap for others without love. Imagine Jesus without love: He would have never stood in the gap for this world. He couldn't have.

Pray for revival in all the countries of Europe. Acknowledge that God wants more than a revived Church, He wants to spread out His royal dominion over all areas of our society: from EU-institutions to the local establishments and beyond these, to individual businesses. "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven," God wants to get very personal and become very concrete.

4. **Repentance** is not a dark business, but rather a homecoming into the arms of God the Father (Lk. 15:11ff). Repentance is more than an emotion, it is the willingness to rethink and act differently (in NT Greek *metanoia*=to rethink).
 - 4.1. As Christians, our first reversal refers to our failure to stand up mightily and firmly for Europe and her destiny. That's what we are doing here.
 - 4.2. Secondly, we bow, as priestly substitutes, under the sins of the people and the EU-institutions. Let us not "politicize" and give God good suggestions, but rather bring the hardships simply and humbly before the throne of grace and plead for healing and change (2. Chr. 7:14! *If my people shall pray ...*).
5. Let us loudly **proclaim the Kingship of God** over Europe by calling out the Name of JESUS. He is appointed by God as "Kyrios", as Lord of Lords in the visible, political world, as well as in the invisible world of powers and forces. HE says it Himself: "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth" (Matt. 28:18). Let us not attack these potentates from the invisible world by ourselves, instead we proclaim and praise the Name that is above all names - the Name at which all knees must bow in heaven and on earth and under the earth and must confess: JESUS is Lord – over Europe. (Phil. 2:9-11).
6. **Blessing** is God's heart's desire. Therefore, when we bless the country and its people, we are very, very close to God's heart. With our words we are pouring out thoughts of God's love, we are blessing Europe and speaking out good things over her, regardless of her sins, simply because the Father in heaven makes the sun of His grace rise over the wicked and the good (Matt. 5:45), over the believer and the unbeliever and because He also loved us while we were yet sinners. The core words of this blessing are found in Numbers 6:24-26: "The Lord bless thee, Europe, and keep thee..."

If we, as the Church, come together in the countries of Europe, to pray in this manner over all nations and across all denominational boundaries, then we will see political and social change occur. And, indeed, soon. God awaits our prayers. And HE will act.