### 1st Wednesday Reflection & Prayer Hour

###   December18

MMI keeps the first Wednesday of the month as a day for corporate prayer. The hour set aside is 9.00am-10.00am, but for those who are not able to join in prayer then, please use these notes to pray for an hour at some time during the day.

### Reflection:

It was December, a few days before Christmas. I had been on my way to the military airport in order to pick up my wife, Erika, after her return from a 5-months-deployment to Mali. The airplane`s arrival was scheduled for midnight and so I was driving late in the evening over snow-covered roads, with myriads of sparkling ice-crystals reflected the headlights of my car. Going through the last village before joining the motorway, the bright shining lights of Advent decorations in windows and doors and on fairy lights crossing high over streets were wonderfully illuminating the snow-misty air. Out of the corner of my eye I spotted an object hanging on a church wall next to the main street. A quick turn of my head and I discovered a banner with big capital letters printed on it. Only one single word was written:

ERWARTET

 This is German - my native language – and means EXPECTED. My thoughts started to soar while I was driving on through the night:

Advent season - the expected arrival of Jesus, as part of God, HIS becoming human in this baby-child, HIS own son, whom all have been waiting for, the one who was expected since Isaiah`s first messianic prophecy:“A child will be born to us. A son will be given to us. He will rule over us. … He will rule on David's throne and over his kingdom. He will make the kingdom strong and secure….(Isa. 9:6-7a).

If a person is waiting for someone, surely this person has expectations of the one to arrive.

Two thousand years ago the Israelites expected the Messiah as redeemer to liberate the people from the pressure of the Roman occupational forces. Likewise, some Jews might have the expected that the predicted King of Kings would disposes Herod Antipas and replace him as ruler over Galilee  - even over the  whole of Judah and Israel. A king as David had been King one thousand years before. Even Jesus` closest confidants, HIS disciples, had not expected that the saviour was not interested at all in conventional power over an earthly empire: My kingdom is not part of this world. (John 18 :36 NIV).

My thoughts continued during the drive through the winter night: what are the expectations of today`s people – two thousand years later? Maybe that Jesus would break open heaven, come storming down on earth to stop all injustice, evil, violence, and suffering. Some old church hymns and chants are demanding exactly this as the only consequence of God coming to us as Jesus to reinstall justice, righteousness, goodness, and peace on earth.

And what am I personally expecting from Jesus? This last question occupied my mind for the rest of the drive to the airfield.

On my way back south – now with Erika by my side and talking all the way and being incredibly happy that she was back again healthy in body and mind – I knew that we would pass through this village with the banner and I was anxious to recognise it in time to show it to my wife.

Here it was again. This time I looked at it with full attention and also a bit longer than the first short glimpse …. and I discovered something new:

ERWARTET

 The first letter E and the third letter W had been printed slightly bigger than the others – slightly but unmistakably clear: ERWARTET.  This way it is two words now: ER  WARTET. The English meaning is: HE`s WAITING.

And suddenly my thoughts took a last soaring curve:

Jesus is waiting. Waiting for us. HE is waiting in love, in patience and in mercy. HE is waiting for us to intentionally and deliberately make a decision in favour of HIM  – of one`s free will. HE waits for us to finally realize, that there is a future and perspective beyond the here and now. That eternity is only with HIM. I am the truth and the way and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. (John 14:6 NIV).

HE expects us to decide for HIM – in this very moment in our life, here on earth, and in the very place that we are living inside our family, in our job, in our neighbourhood, and in fellowship with the people HE leads us to encounter on our way through life. HE expects us to let HIM enter into our lives and let HIM show us how we can induce justice, righteousness, goodness, and peace on earth. HE has told HIS disciples: „You can be sure that I am always with you, to the very end." (Matthew 28:20 NIV).

That is why HE has sent HIS Holy Spirit to us: HE is waiting for two thousand years - for us. It is us to arrive – in HIS arms – why not now in Advent, the time of waiting for the arrival?

 Hermann Meyer. Fieldworker Africa East & Southern

### Prayer:

-     **Pray that God will call military people** into HIS presence especially in this Advent time. That HE reveals HIMSELF in a manner that these people recognise HIM and HIS son Jesus Christ and HIS holy spirit.

 -     Pray that the ones God is calling will accept that call and repent so they will be saved, and that God will be exalted for HIS mercy and that HIS kingdom in the militaries of the world will expand.

 -     **Pray for Southern Africa** region where AMCF VP Peter Louwrens and staff are currently planning TMTI 2019 (Table Mountain Top Interaction). That through this international event emerging junior Christian leaders in South Africa and its neighbouring countries will become ambassadors for Jesus, develop strong bonds within MCFs and their chaplaincies and carry the gospel to others.

 -     **Pray for Ethiopia** that God will continue HIS blessings in the growth of local MCFs and that their employing civilian missionaries (solely by in-country funding) will have a large outreach all over the country. Pray for the newly elected Christian Prime Minister to be inspired by the Holy Spirit, to support MCF`s function and to allow the building of a chaplaincy.

 **Give thanks for the Pan India Conference** and the road trip under-taken in November. Pray for a new MCF group of 50 serving NCOs in S India.

 Pray for Subedar in Kerala who left the Indian Military and  established a church last July. The church has 20 members and is being mentored and encouraged by a pastor with military fellowship experience..

**Give thanks for the Romania and Dutch** MCF Conferences,

**Pray for Bulgaria**. Many pastors and organizations are concerned about the bill being considered by their parliament to severely restrict churches and ministers.

 **Middle East:** Give thanks for Richards visit to Lebanon and Jordan, and for the new contacts made and old friends visited.

**Do please continue to pray protection over all those who involved with MMI and for our families.**

 **MMI Advent Calendar of Prayer is running on Facebook at:**

[https://www.facebook.com/Military-Ministries-International-1718783828361735/](https://www.mmi.org.uk/?email_id=66&user_id=650&urlpassed=aHR0cHM6Ly93d3cuZmFjZWJvb2suY29tL01pbGl0YXJ5LU1pbmlzdHJpZXMtSW50ZXJuYXRpb25hbC0xNzE4NzgzODI4MzYxNzM1Lw&controller=stats&action=analyse&wysija-page=1&wysijap=subscriptions)