

February 4 to 10

Zwickau District

Today, if you hear his voice, don't have stubborn hearts as they did in the rebellion.
(Hebrews 3:15 CEB)

Sad times are also part of it.

The letter to the Hebrews is directed at Christians of the second and third generations. Since the early days, and the events around Jesus in Galilee and Jerusalem, things had changed. At first, Christians had been light-footed and full of hope, expecting the imminent coming of the Kingdom of God. That the time had become drawn out is reflected in the contents of the letter. The road had become a sojourn in the desert and their hope had reached its limits. The people had become embittered as a result of great disappointment (Hebr. 3:8+16). The letter asks, "Who was it who rebelled when they heard his voice?". But is it so simple? Rebellion (or embitterment) can lead to a vicious circle: I don't hear God's voice and therefore I become bitter. And because I am bitter, I don't hear God's voice. Who can get me out of this?

We sometimes also encounter bitterness in the church. That shouldn't necessarily be a reproach. Rather, it can be a matter for counselling. The letter to the Hebrews speaks of a lengthy road, wanderings in the wilderness and fading hope. It thereby takes up the church of God on this journey. Among other things, it takes time to break the vicious circle of bitterness. It is certainly a start when I come to understand that I need to go through this time; that these sad times are also part of the journey. One cannot impose a ban on sadness and bitterness, but I can place them into the light of the living Christ, and then pray for the first step. "Today, if you hear his voice, don't have stubborn hearts..."

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I THANKS

- many which are going through difficult times
- whose strength is but small
- which must leave the expectations they once had
- whose workers are disillusioned
- who experience the bitterness of some sisters & brothers
- which must deal with ongoing conflict

I PRAY

- for pastors who accompany those on a difficult patch
- for church councils, that they pause and reflect on their situation before God
- for work-group leaders who see their groups getting smaller & smaller
- for sisters & brothers, that they recognize their own limits
- for congregations which must leave their buildings
- for congregations whose work has reached an end
- for sisters & brothers who have the feeling, their work has all been for nothing.
- for sisters & brothers who have the feeling, their work has all been for nothing.

Zwickau District

The Zwickau District is one of two districts in the East German Conference and covers parts of Sachsen-Anhalt, Thuringia & Saxony. 2800 confessing members, 1800 associate members & 900 friends belong to 57 churches in 28 circuits. 21 pastors, 2 educationalists, a congregation assessor & a pastoral assistant make up the ministry team. Both the Training & Meeting Centre at Schwarzenshof and the Zwickau offices of KJW-East are in the District. 21 pastors are living here in retirement.

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