

Peace is our mission!

by Dr Stefan Nold,* Germany



Stefan Nold.
(Picture ma)

(CH-S) Stefan Nold is one of the clearest voices in Germany warning against the impending war. He knows what he is talking about. What is going on with the churches? Are they caving in again, as they did before the First and Second World Wars? Are they allowing

themselves to be corrupted by power yet again? Nold describes the situation in a deeply divided Germany in a very personal way.

* * *

Dear friends! I am afraid. Afraid of war. Afraid for my children and grandchildren.

Jesus says: "Blessed are the peacemakers." (Matthew 5:9) Peace is our mission! As far as I am concerned, this must be done immediately, without delay.¹ But the Protestant Church now regards nuclear weapons as a "temporary solution."²

Stop! Stand still! It was the conscience of a single individual that prevented our nuclear annihilation during a false alarm in September 1983.³ I was 24 and newly married at the time. We knew nothing of that deadly danger then; it only came to light many years later. The fate of our children and grandchildren will soon be decided by an AI, a cold intelligence. It has no conscience and no fear.

Experts estimate the probability that humanity will be wiped out in this way at 10 per cent.⁴ We have a revolver in our hands. The cylinder has 10 chambers, and a bullet is in one of them. Away with it and follow Jesus! Onwards to peace with ourselves!

* *Stefan Nold*, born in 1959, studied electrical engineering and obtained his PhD at Darmstadt Technical University. Since 1991, he has run an engineering consultancy specialising in optical inspection systems and smart cameras for agricultural machinery. He is an activist and co-founder of various successful local citizens' initiatives in Darmstadt and the surrounding area.

When our children were small, they brought home a grace from the Michaelsgemeinde nursery: "Dear God, I thank you for giving us food." We still do this today, for it reminds us that we are in God's hands. Back then, in the parish hall, we wrestled for a solution with junkies and the head of social services through the "Drug-Free Herengarten" initiative. Gone.

During Advent 2024, the newspaper with the bold four-letter word hounded the vicar,^{5a} for sympathising with Palestinians is now anti-Semitism; remaining silent on Israel's terror is "reasons of state". No! "To bind up the broken-hearted," (Isa 61:1) "to extend peace like a river" (Isa 66:12): that is what we are here for!

There was solidarity,^{5b} but the deanery dismissed the pastor and dissolved the congregation.^{5c} That was not the work of a good shepherd. Nor is our state a good shepherd, leading us to green pastures and fresh water. (Psalm 23:2) The state sees us merely as cattle, dutifully providing the milk for its war until our udders are sucked dry.

During our holiday stay in Allensbach at the end of July 2023, the village festival is taking place there, with an open-air service. A brass band in lederhosen provides the music. The vicar has set up many bells in front of him, rings them and asks the children sitting before him about their meaning. Then he tells of the time when the bells in Germany no longer rang, because their metal had been melted down to make tanks and shells. A hush falls over the village festival on Lake Constance. Moments like these give us hope.

"But now." (1 Cor 13:13) This is how our vicar introduced the good news of Jesus this Easter. My "But now" moment was in February 2021, a year before the outbreak of war, when people here were calling out: "We want regime change in Russia."⁶ "What business is it of ours?"⁷ Are we the good guys again? We believed that last time too. We see the speck in our brother's eye; the log in our own eye (Matt 7:3) is usually only seen by the next generation.

My father was an anti-aircraft gun assistant at 16, a soldier on the Eastern Front at 18, and spent

three years in captivity. His experiences and stories have permeated me and left me permanently opposed to war. I stand here for him too. I hope that I have reached you, that I have been able to break through the walls and the taboos on thought that the rhetoric of war has erected everywhere.

To believe, to love, to hope (1 Cor 13:13), to sympathise and to forgive, to make peace and to help: these are our seven tasks. This is our path to a peaceful and loving future. This is our light in dark times. Trusting in a merciful God, let us now all recite verse 4 of Psalm 23 together: "Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me."

* * *

That was the speech with which I surprised the congregation of the Kreuzkirche Darmstadt-Arheilgen, including the pastor, on 10 May 2026 at the end of the service.

"Not everyone liked that," someone told me afterwards over coffee, adding: "We should have that much more often." "I don't agree with everything, but thank you very much for your courage," said another. "It was a bit forced," thought an elderly lady. "What are we supposed to do now?" I heard another ask. Back to Jesus. Back to the Sermon on the Mount. That would be a good start.

During the service, we sang the hymn: "Blessed are those who still dream."⁸ It goes: "Those who still show their feelings and stand against injustice, those who still suffer in this world and weep like a child, those, dear God, do not forsake. We need their warmth. Let them be our role models!" That is my hope.

(Translation "Swiss Standpoint")

¹ Schabowski, Günter (9 November 1989) Press conference East Berlin. https://www.youtube.com/shorts/kt_c396euYc

² Protestant Church in Germany (2025) A World in Turmoil – A Just Peace in Sight. Protestant Peace Ethics in the Face of New Challenges, Foreword, p. 9. 2nd ed., Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt. https://www.ekd.de/ekd_de/ds_doc/denkschrift-welt-in-unordnung-EVA-2025.pdf

³ Petrow, Stanislaw (18 February 2013). The red button has never functioned. Interview by Stefan Locke. <https://www.faz.net/aktuell/gesellschaft/menschen/offizier-petrow-im-gespraech-der-rote-knopf-hat-nie-funktioniert-12084911.html>. Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung: Frankfurt.

⁴ Krueger, David Scott (Univ. of Montreal) (29 April 2026) "Most AI experts, publishing in the top AI news, think that there is at least a 10% chance of human extinction or something equivalent bad coming from AI." Panel Discussion: "The Existential Threat of AI and the need for international cooperation" with Bernie Sanders, Max Tegmark (MIT), Xue Lan (Tsinghua Univ) and Zeng Yi (Beijing Inst. For AI Safety). <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wjBfS3AEk2c> (minute 23:00)

^{5a} Detsch, Claudia (17 December 2024) Antisemitismus-Skandal in Darmstadt. Hate of Jews on the Church Christmas market. <https://www.bild.de/regional/hessen/antisemitismus-in-darmstadt-judenhass-auf-dem-kirchen-weihnachtsmarkt-676161b7020f6f676c242829>

^{5b} Wilde Friedenskirche (März 2025) Solidarity with the Organisers "Anti-kolonialistischen FRIEDENSweihnachtsmarkts Michaelsgemeinde" <https://www.openpetition.de/petition/online/solidaritaet-mit-den-veranstaltern-anti-kolonialistischen-friedensweihnachtsmarkts-michaelsgemeinde>

^{5c} Statement by the Protestant Church Hessen und Nassau (17 December 2025) <https://www.ekhn.de/artikelvorschau/stellungnahme-weihnachtsmarkt-der-michaelsgemeinde>

⁶ Felbermayr, Gabriel (11.2.2021) speaking with Katharina Peetz. "Wir wollen nicht weniger als einen Regimewechsel in Russland." <https://www.deutschlandfunk.de/neue-sanktionen-gegen-russland-europa-allein-kann-nicht-100.html> Audio recording, at 0:1:50. Deutschlandradio: Cologne

⁷ Nold, Stefan (24.3.2021) "Mit friedlichen Grüßen." Zeitgeschehen im Fokus Jg 6, Nr 4/5.

⁸ Rahn, Uwe (2007) Wohl denen, die noch träumen. Melody: Heinrich Schütz (1661). Hymn Nr 41, Hymn book Egplus (3. Auf.l 2017) Protestant Church in Hessen-Nassau and Protestant Church Kurhessen-Waldeck.