

November, 2005

Good News: Prayer on October 3rd

On German Reunification Day, about 70 Christians gathered together to pray for German citizens who have Moslem backgrounds. In the afternoon, some of them went to an „Open House at the Mosque“ and conversed with some of the people there. In the evening, Christians from Turkey, as well as Kurdish and Persian Christians, spoke about how they became Christians. They talked about their efforts to reach their fellow citizens with the gospel.

For many German participants, it was an eye-opener, and they were excited to learn from their foreign brothers and sisters in Christ that God is at work among people with Moslem backgrounds, even if it sometimes takes years for prayers to be answered. There are already some small church-planting efforts among them (see prayer mail from October).

Media and Journalism

On account of the surprising result of the Parliamentary elections, journalism and the media were put into question (even before the election) and accused of political bias. However in Germany, and especially in Berlin, there is a wide spectrum of media, which guarantees a wide variety of opinions. In the capital there are several regional TV stations, numerous radio stations, plus 9 daily newspapers. In addition to the Tagesspiegel, the Berliner Zeitung and the Berliner Morgenpost, there are three tabloids (B.Z., Bild, Berliner Kurier), two explicitly leftist newspapers (taz, junge Welt), as well as a national conservative newspaper with an extensive Berlin section (Die Welt).

This balance and variety, however, is in danger as a result of recent developments. A corporate group took over the Berliner Zeitung. The editors at the Berliner Zeitung are now worried whether they will be able to continue their work in the same manner.

During the last years, there has been an increasingly thorough and fair reporting of Christian projects and events in the media in Berlin, for instance about the Agency of Volunteers, the Jesus Day, and the Youth Evangelistic Campaign „Jesus House“. It is also wonderful that Christian journalists such as Peter Hahne are being recognized as Christians among the public.

Prayer

- **Thank God for freedom of the press and good reporting of Christian activities in the Berlin media**
- **Pray that the variety of media in Berlin will be maintained and for the continuation of the independence of the Berliner Zeitung**

- **Pray for more Christians to become active in the media so that Christian values will again be present in the media**

God in Prison

Prisons are, in the true sense of the word, a closed system. If change occurs in one area, the entire system is quickly affected, positively or negatively. We are therefore urgently seeking people who desire to pray for deep spiritual and practical transformation in the Berlin prisons, and for people who might also desire to minister there. [Please contact us if you want to work with a Christian group in prison]. The atmosphere in prisons is particularly depressing in the fall and winter.

Prayer

- **Pray that God will call men and women of prayer who will pray for change in the prisons**
- **Pray that the peace of God will be felt by those in the prisons, even during the depressing winter months**
- **Pray for strength, health, and wisdom for those working in the prisons, especially for the Christians among them**

Reconciliation Africa–Germany

In 1884-5, 13 European countries and the USA decided upon the fate of Africa at the so-called Congo-Congress in Berlin. With a blown-up sense of pride, the African continent was divided up among the colonial powers. Boundaries were drawn up irrespective of existing borders; natives were oppressed; natural resources were plundered. An entire continent was exploited. Slavery, humiliation, and unimaginable suffering resulted. The results are still felt today and contribute to economical weakness and political instability.

In November, 2005 a Christian conference in Berlin is being held which aims to deal with the spiritual effects of the historical Congo-Congress through repentance and reconciliation.

African church- and ministry leaders such as John Mulinde have been invited. Christians from Berlin and Christians from former colonial powers want to confess this historical sin and ask the Africans how reconciliation and compensation can take place. [Information and registration can be found at <http://www.touchthenations.org/de/earp>]

Prayer

- **Pray that the spiritual and practical ramifications of the historical guilt will be removed**
- **Pray for a new start and increased blessing for the relationship between Africa and Europe**
- **Pray that Berlin will have a more positive input into Africa in the future**

Cost-saving Measures in Youth Services

In light of the extreme situation in the budget, the finance senator Sarrazin wants to cut further expenses in all areas

in all districts. Suggestions have included 6-million Euro cuts in personnel costs in the area of child and youth development. Without more specific reporting, one can only imagine the difficulties that youth who are seeking help already encounter because of the cuts that have already taken place.

An article in the Berliner Zeitung on Sept. 13, 1995 described the harrowing situation. Up until May, 2005, crisis centres in Berlin for abused children and youth provided places to live for up to six months. During that time, staff worked on a long-term solution to protect the child from further abuse. Now, however, because of the financial pressure, this process has been shortened to a few days! This means, among other things, that children have been sent back into intolerable family situations.

Crisis centres run by charities must also compete economically. The Youth Services takes advantage of this by sending abused children to centres where less supervision is offered, which makes them cheaper. In the year 2002, Berlin spent 451 million on Youth Service Programs. Since then, expenditures have been cut by 128 million.

In spite of growing poverty, the number of children being helped in group homes, crisis centres, or through professional workers has declined from 21,000 to 12,900. Further reductions are planned. But where are we headed with politics whose only goal is to cut costs? Distinct measures, including finances, must be taken in the area of development of youth. If there is less and less money available for family support, sports clubs, social work, and Christian youth ministries, the problems will only be relocated to the streets. We need social change and many people who get involved with the needs of youth!

Prayer

- **Pray that God will change the thinking in politics and society to the advantage of the next generation**
- **Pray for more staff in youth programs and that they find effective ways of raising awareness of the needs of young people**
- **Pray for the many youth who do not have healthy home situations**

Finances – Together for Berlin

We thank God as we look back at the last 3 years in which God has wonderfully provided for Together for Berlin. We have had some times of crisis, and some late salary payments, and yet it is a miracle that during this time which has been difficult for financial supporters and churches alike, the money was raised for this new ministry in our city. Finances, however, continue to be a challenge and a reason for prayer. We need 9,500 Euros/month for office costs, publications, events, and two and a half staff positions.

Between now and the end of the year, we are praying for an increase of supporting churches from the current 13 to

20, and for regular financial partners who will carry 50% of our costs (currently 40%). Together for Berlin desires to attain its goal of reaching all areas of society with the gospel!

Prayer

- **Thank God for His faithfulness in providing for the past 3 years**
- **Pray for an increase in the number of churches giving financially (from 13 to 20) and in the number of regular financial supporters**
- **Pray for new sources, sponsors, and supporters**

Christian Volunteer Agency

The new Christian Volunteer Agency was dedicated during a service the end of September. One special prayer request has already been answered: a positive article in the Berliner Morgenpost. Several readers were present as well as friends of Together for Berlin, and representatives from the Senate, social services groups, and churches. As a rule, public officials have responded very positively to this new model project.

It is obvious that the connection between word and deed is contributing to the credibility of Christians in our society. Over 50 agencies have expressed their interest in receiving volunteers. The first ten volunteers have already been placed. It is hoped that more and more Christians from various churches will show God's love to the needy in the city in very practical ways. The finances for this new volunteer agency are also still being raised and need our prayers. This ministry must be financially independent.

Prayer

- **Thank God for the encouraging beginning**
- **Pray for more volunteers from various churches**
- **Pray for the needed finances**

Dates

- Nov. 9th Filia-Women's-Prayer at the Baptist Church Kreuzberg, Bergmannstr.22
- Nov. 11th., 5pm, Prayer service for persecuted Christians, FEG Friedrichshain, Oderstr.27
- Nov. 14th, Prayer Forum – for further information contact the editors
- Nov. 15th, Pray day – Day of Prayer for schools www.prayday.de
- Nov. 27th, Prayer for the City, Baptist Church Kreuzberg, Bergmannstr.22
- Dec. 3rd, 2pm, Prayer with the organising committee of Calling all nations – for further information contact the editors