

February, 2006

Good News – Religious topics in Berlin media

We are pleased with the increase and the positive tone of reporting about Christian activities and content in the Berlin media. The “Berliner Morgenpost” printed the complete text of the Christmas story (Luke 2) on Dec. 24th, 2005 with the title “The Most Important News of the Day”. The “Info-Radio” broadcasted a report in January about the volunteer agency of Together for Berlin, and the “RBB” filmed a report about the recently published “Volxbibel” (Bible for the people), a free translation designed for secular people. God’s word is reaching the people through other media too: a church in Kreuzberg distributed nearly 5000 CD’s with the Christmas story in the Berlin dialect and four other languages (Turkish, English, Arabic, and Persian). We are pleased that Berliners are coming into contact with the Christian message through such various means, and we hope and pray that the content will reach hearts.

Steglitz-Zehlendorf District – the mayor’s viewpoint

In a speech given during the Evangelical Alliance prayer week in January, the district mayor of Steglitz-Zehlendorf Herbert Weber (CDU) described the district as the „parlour” of Berlin. It is true that this district in south-western Berlin is better off than most parts of Berlin. The people there have the highest average wages in the city, the lowest unemployment, and a low crime rate. The social infrastructure of the district is good. Steglitz-Zehlendorf has the most sports clubs, many facilities for senior citizens, and a rich cultural life. The infrastructure balances out the deficits of other districts. Steglitz-Zehlendorf is also an important business location because of the Free University.

This wide variety makes Steglitz-Zehlendorf a highly-desired place to live. The preservation and increase of jobs for the highly qualified are important concerns. Herein lies a potential for innovative impulses, which could provide input for middle-sized industry.

Nevertheless, there are some problem areas in this district, for instance the so-called Thermometer housing area in Lichtenfelde-Süd. But the well-to-do areas in the district also have their shady sides—in Steglitz-Zehlendorf there is also a drug problem and difficult relationships between students and teachers in some schools.

Mayor Weber explained that there is an evangelistic possibility for the churches in the district—the stadium in Lichtenfeld will possibly be used by one of the teams for a training place during the Soccer World Cup. In order for this to take place, however, the entire turf would have to be exchanged, which could only happen if there was no more frost after mid-March.

Prayer

- **Thank God for the good standard of living**
- **Pray for the continuation and strengthening of the economy and social affairs in the district**
- **Pray for constructive solutions for the problem areas of the district**

Steglitz-Zehlendorf – interdenominational activities

For the past five years, five to eight pastors of one Lutheran church and several free churches have been meeting regularly to share with one another and to pray. Within the framework of the Evangelical Alliance Week of Prayer 2006, three evenings with the title: “Together for Steglitz—Christians pray for their district” took place. Policemen, school directors, and the district mayor shared prayer requests in the areas of security, school, and politics. This is the beginning of a new awareness among the Christians of their responsibility for their society and the mandate to pray for their district (see Jer. 29:7). The idea of churches working together for the good of their district has not been developed very far yet. Pastors, leaders in the churches and others must take the lead here. Several churches in the area have acute crisis situations and need God’s intervention and constructive solutions.

Prayer

- **Thank God for the pastors’ prayer group**
- **Pray for God’s strength and constructive solutions for the crisis in the churches**
- **Pray for a growing unity among the churches and that they will work together for the good of the district**

Protection for the BVG Drivers

Last year there were more and more reports about violent assaults on employees of the Berliner Verkehrsbetriebe (public transport system BVG). Bus drivers in particular have often been attacked, threatened, verbally abused, beaten, or spit upon. At the end of December, two controllers checking for valid tickets were actually threatened with a pistol. The person without a ticket actually pulled the trigger, but thankfully, the pistol misfired.

Because the number of crimes committed is rising dramatically, the BVG appealed to the public during December '05. The most shocking thing was that the other passengers often did not try to help the bus drivers at all. Starting in January, safety glass barriers next to the driver's seat will be installed in many buses.

Prayer

- **Pray for the protection of the BVG employees**
- **Pray that passengers will be more courageous**
- **Pray for divine protection from accidents and terror in the public transportation system**

„Break up unplowed ground“-Election 06 (Jeremiah 4:3)

In our prayer news, we have often asked for prayer for changes in personnel in the political scene in Berlin. Elections will take place in Berlin on Sept. 17, 2006. Because Berlin is a city state, voters will determine the Parliament, which will in turn elect the Senate as the governing body under the leadership of the governing mayor. The present governing mayor Klaus Wowereit has already been chosen as the SPD candidate. The smaller parties have also nominated their candidates.

Irregardless of which party one prefers, a democracy survives because of clear alternatives, which have long been lacking in the Berlin CDU. It has been very difficult for them to name a candidate. According to many observers and sympathizers, the party needs a phase of both program and personnel renewal. Many feel that the party's structure is encrusted. Polls show voters favoring the CDU in Berlin at only 20%. The extreme low chance of winning is also a reason why it has been so difficult to find a nomination for the candidate.

On January 23rd, however, Friedbert Pflüger (50) from Hannover was nominated as the CDU candidate. (His name in German means “the one

who plows”—thus the verse from Jeremiah). His willingness to run should earn our respect. Mr. Pflüger is the State Secretary in the national Department of Defense. When he was younger, he was a close staff of his political role model Richard von Weizsäcker, who at the time was the governing mayor of Berlin.

Many are hoping that Mr. Pflüger can bring a fresh new start to the party and the city. Berlin needs new ideas and energetic politicians to solve its financial problems (60 billion euros in debt!) and to encounter its huge social challenges. Last but not least, the fact that the present Senate has pushed religion classes out to the outer edges of everyday school life indicates the need for alternative concepts. This development must be reversed.

Prayer

- **Pray for wisdom for Friedbert Pflüger**
- **Pray that concepts can be developed which will help develop the city's potential and that these can be communicated well**
- **Pray for an objective and fair campaign which is based on the desire for the good of the city and not on positions of power**

Dates

- Christian ministries among politicians, businesspeople and diplomats within Together for Berlin are hosting a reception in the Roten Rathaus on February 15th. Leaders in these various areas are being invited. Christine Schirmacher, a specialist in Islamic studies, will be speaking about the topic “Has multiculturalism reached its limit?”
- From Feb. 16-18th, the second „Transforum“ will take place. Participants from Berlin and other regions are expected. More information can be found at: www.transforum-berlin.de

Prayer for these events

- **Pray that they will result in renewal for the city and other regions**
- **Pray for „on-fire“ meetings between people and that long-lasting cooperation will result**
- April 2nd, 7:00pm: **City Prayer Service** in the Lukas-Gemeinde, with prayer for May 1st and Calling all Nations. **Noel Richards** will be there!

Further up-to-date Prayer Requests can be found on our internet site: www.gebet-fuer-berlin.de