

July / August 2006

Good News: peaceful World Cup

We are pleased with the peaceful nature of the World Cup so far. Hundreds of thousands of fans have watched the matches with great excitement live in the Olympic Stadium or on large screen on the fan-mile or other places.

People have been celebrating (for the most part, the weather has been very good!) peacefully and joyfully and have brought much color and life to Berlin. The "drying-out" jail cells have been rarely used, because there have been only a few alcohol-related incidents. There have also been relatively few thefts and skirmishes. Contrary to the prognosis, there has been little rise in prostitution in Berlin—actually there has been a bit of a recession. Christians have been using this opportunity to offer help to those desiring to leave that life-style. Churches have been inviting guests to watch the matches on large screens and have thus been able to make new contacts. It is also remarkable that the World Cup has influenced the view that other countries have of Germany. The Daily Telegraph reported, *"The Germans are beginning to have fun"*. The Dutch newspaper "Volkskrant" showed relief over the joy of the German team. *"Germany lights up in black and white. The team has left bureaucratic soccer and has become an example of passion and adventure"*. And the Swiss newspaper "Blick" remarked, *"Somersault Victory – Is Germany going to stand on its head at the end of the World Cup? For once, the Germans were not "working" at playing soccer; they were "celebrating" soccer."*

Berlin will also profit long-term from this change in image. The number of tourists has been constantly rising in the last years, and now most probably will grow even more.

Prayer

- **Thank God for His unearned grace extended to the city and our country**
- **Pray for further protection during the World Cup until July 9th**
- **Thank God that citizens of various countries have been getting along well.**

Too few vocational training positions

As is the case all over Germany, Berlin also has too few vocational training positions in companies this year for those leaving the school systems. There are 20,000 applicants for 9,800 positions. Those are dramatic numbers, even though the number of posi-

tions has increased by 1,300 from the previous year. The problem is not new, and more and more young people are affected by it. Many applicants already applied last year for a position and don't even appear in the statistics because they are taking part in so-called "non-company-related" training measures. Those youth with low general educational levels are often unable to find a vocational training position even after some years, because the qualification requirements in many areas have risen greatly. An American financial investor, who, among other things, owns the GSW, a public utility housing enterprise, has decided to help. In June he provided 1 million Euros for the initiative "Vocational Training Plus". In America it is quite usual for successful companies to be involved in social projects. In Berlin, however, only 1 out of 4 companies which are able to provide vocational training positions actually do so. For this reason, it would be wonderful if his example encourages other companies to do likewise.

On the other hand, many companies are unable to find qualified applicants. Günter J. Matthia, director of personnel in an industrial company has only been able to fill two of three available positions due to start in September. He says, "We need high school graduates with above-average grades in German, math and English. On applications we are receiving, we often see good grades in phys. ed., political science or art, but miserable grades in subjects that are very important to us. Are there no longer good graduates who would rather receive vocational training than go to the university?"

This situation is not an isolated case. Many personnel directors have expressed their dismay over the fact that many of those leaving the school systems are not adequately qualified to being vocational training.

Prayer

- **Pray for more vocational training positions to be offered by Berlin companies who are able to do so**
- **Thank God for the positive initiative of the American company**
- **Pray that frustrated young people will discover new chances, and that the many vacant vocational training positions will be filled by suitable applicants**

Health-Care Issues in Berlin

Berlin has 69 hospitals which employ about 7,000 doctors. The statistics show that in recent years there has been a dramatic drop in personnel in the areas of patient-care and medical-technical assistants. The general public is slowly becoming aware of the stress-level of those working in these areas and the fact that there are deficits in the provision of services in those areas. During the month of June, there were reports of people disappearing from hospitals. One patient died as a result.

Because more and more elderly patients with dementia are being treated in hospitals, they actually need an increasing number of staff to care for them. These patients often run away and need to be cared for in a different way. All of those involved in health-care need our prayers, because they are attempting to provide quality health-care under difficult circumstances.

Prayer

- **Thank God and pray for fresh motivation for all health-care personnel in spite of increasing difficulties**
- **Pray that ways can be found to stop the decline in numbers of health-care workers and to provide help the personnel**
- **Pray for watchful care for hospitalized dementia patients**

July 15th: Calling all Nations

“There can hardly be a more important time in Europe for looking at the Christian message of love and reconciliation. Political dialogue can bring us forward; prayer, however, will get us to the goal,” says Sir Cliff Richard about Calling All nations. The musician has understood what some believers haven’t internalized yet: The event in the Olympic Stadium on July 15th is not a concert. Rather, it is one of the largest prayer services ever held here.

The motto of the day, “Calling all nations”, is an invitation to praise God and to pray for the world. It is a challenge to live the Christian testimony and the gospel in today’s world and to carry it into all nations of the world.

The initiator, Noel Richards, explains, “This will be a day on which new visions arise, on which dreams are born and hope is revived, a day on which a generation renews its promise to serve the King Jesus Christ and His kingdom wholeheartedly.” From Wednesday, July 10th to Friday, July 12th there will be live praise and prayer from 10am to 10pm at the Lukas Church Berlin with some of the musicians who will also be playing at the event in the Stadium.

Those still needing tickets can buy them at the Stadium on July 15th, or better yet, can reserve them at www.callingallnations.com

Prayer

- **Pray for many more tickets to be sold**
- **Pray that it will be an inspiring day, for the glory of God**
- **Pray for worldwide blessings for individuals and countries**

Elections on September 17th

On September 17th, elections will be held in Berlin for the city-state Parliament. Senators as well as the ruling mayor will be elected. According to recent polls, there continues to be widespread support of a red-red coalition led by Klaus Wowereit. The polls show a lessening support of the opposing CDU candidate Friedbert Pflüger; the numbers for Wowereit are increasing slightly. The majority of Berliners want to continue working with the PDS. The polls concerning the FDP show however that there is somewhat of a desire for a different political direction. The FDP shows an increase to 8%.

The capital city of Berlin most certainly plays a key role politically but also spiritually for the entire country. Let us pray earnestly for men and women who have a heart for God to be elected to the Senate and the Parliament. Christians and churches alike need to take their responsibility seriously to pray that God’s plans will be accomplished in Berlin. In our prayer mails, we have often mentioned the request for personnel and political alternatives to the established and firmly entrenched political direction in the city of Berlin, but we have yet to see much change. We do not desire to be one-sided politically, but we do want to encourage people to pray for the realisation of God’s desires and the establishment of His standards in the city of Berlin.

Prayer

- **Pray for politicians with a servant attitude and respect for God’s standards**
- **Pray for new political concepts which give hope and set the talents free that God has given Berlin**
- **Pray that more Christians would recognize their responsibility before God, and that as a result, they would assume political responsibility or act as advisors.**

Vacation

This edition is for two months, July and August, because the editorial staff has vacation. We wish all of our prayer partners a good relaxing summer. Many people will vacation here in Berlin during the summer, and many evangelistic teams will also be here. Pray for them also!

Information, Dates

- **City prayer service Aug. 27th, 7pm, Details and an invitation will be soon be available**
- **9.9. Ecumenical Stadtkirchenfestival**