

Prayer for Berlin

November, 2006



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Good News: Finances for major projects

God is faithful. Two years after the Jesus-Day 2004, the remaining debt has been taken care of. This was made possible by many donations, both large and small, and also through a contribution from the profit from "Calling all Nations" in the Olympic Stadium (a miracle in itself!).

For the first time in two years, the budget of Together for Berlin is "out of the red" beyond the current month: In a very unusual, wonderful way, Together for Berlin became the beneficiary of inherited real estate, which has been sold in part. This is really good news in a time in which financial difficulties are found everywhere. Thanks and honour to God!

Good News: Lower Unemployment

The unemployment rate in Berlin has gone down farther. In October, there were 287,484 people receiving unemployment in Berlin. This is 5665 fewer men and women than last month, and 24,566 fewer than last year. The quota sank to 17.1%. In September of last year, the quota was 18.6%.

More jobs were available in the areas of education and commerce. On the other hand, administration, industry and banking lost jobs. At the end of September, 34,645 available positions were registered, which is 8,689 more than one year ago.

Source: dpa/Die Welt

Forming of the government

The building of the government in Berlin following the elections in September is taking a long time. It seems to indicate that they were waiting for the federal constitutional court in Karlsruhe to make its decision. And now it is clear: The bad news is: Berlin has to get out of debt on its own. The good news is: Apparently they think the city can find ways to do this.

The coalition is attempting at least through personnel changes to set a new, fresh course. According to information from the parties, the ruling mayor Klaus Wowereit (SPD) and Senator of Economy Harald Wolf (Linkspartei PDS) want to send a signal of renewal

through the formation of a new cabinet. There doesn't appear to be an agreed upon list of new senators yet, but there is a list of those current senators who are to be replaced. The social democrats plan to place younger people in their cabinet. The 61-year-old Senator of Education Klaus Böger, and the 62-year-old Senator of Justice Karin Schubert are not to be part of the new senate. Within the PDS, the current Senator for Culture, Thomas Flierl, will also no longer be in the Senate. The Linkspartei wants to send its current managing director, Dagmar Enkelmann, to the next red-red Senate. There she will assume the role of counterpart and substitute for the ruling mayor, Klaus Wowereit. Her area of responsibility is not clear yet, because the dividing up of the responsibilities for the individual positions within the Senate will not take place until the end of the coalition negotiations.

The opposition, on the other hand, is looking at other options for the future. In an interview with the daily newspaper Die WELT, Frank Steffel, who has just been elected as substitute for the CDU-leading candidate Pflüger, said, "Following the failure of red-red, and the resulting re-elections, the CDU will take the political lead for successful economic politics, for educational politics free of ideology, and for a new start in Berlin. I am absolutely certain of this... For many years, I have found black-green socially and politically interesting. A cooperation of this nature would have great charm for a pulsating metropolis like Berlin."

Source: Die Welt

Politics in Berlin remain very suspenseful. We Christians, regardless of our political preferences, want to pray more than ever before that God's kingdom will come to Berlin and that His will might be done. Prayer for "those in authority" doesn't have anything to do with one's political persuasion.

Pray:

- **That God's will might be done and that creative concepts for the future can be instituted**
- **That people of goodwill, humility, and expertise will get positions in the Senate**
- **For good concepts that will help the city to come to terms with the financial debt**

Berlin - a magnet for artists

Last month, two important events took place in the Berlin art scene. One received much public attention – the other was largely unnoticed. Well noted was the art fair "Art Forum" where young and very young artists were presented. International gallery owners were present.

Officially, 6,000 artists live in Berlin, and another 6,000 are staying here for a time. There are 400 galleries in Berlin and around 1000 places that exhibit art. Within

Europe, this means Berlin is in second place, following London. Previous to 1989, Cologne was the most important city of art. This has changed. Renowned galleries have moved to or opened a second branch in Berlin during this year. This means art has become an important economic factor for the city.

Largely unnoticed among the general public, but nevertheless of great importance, the first Christian artists' conference "Collaboration 06" took place in Berlin the middle of October. It was designed to bring artists and creative people with Christian backgrounds together. Well-known speakers such as Steve Turner (London) and Donata Wenders (Berlin) gave important input about how creativity can be brought together with faith. Participants found the two days, which were filled with workshops and speakers, very inspiring. It was a good beginning, and now needs continued prayer.

Pray:

- **That Berlin artists would be reached with the gospel**
- **For mutual encouragement and inspiration among the Christian artists**
- **For the Christian artists, that they would be able to put into practice what they learned at the conference**

Culture as an economic factor

In 2005 a „Cultural-economic Report“ for Berlin was published for the first time. Their findings: Culture is an important economic factor in Berlin. With a sales volume of 8 billion EUR, the over 18,000 mostly small and medium companies in the area of "cultural economics" accounted for nearly 11% of the gross domestic product in Berlin. Nearly 8% of all those subject to social insurance contribution work in the area of culture, and that number is growing.

The report determined that Berlin profits from the side-by-side cooperation of the cultural "scene" and the more traditional "high" cultural offerings. The intertwining of cultural heritage, art, media, new technologies and multicultural influences leads to a special cultural mixture, which accounts for Berlin's special position. There are marked parallels here to London and New York.

The companies and those involved in cultural activities in Berlin are not lacking in potential or products that can compete internationally, however they often lack the financial basis, the business know-how, and international marketing.

The Senate wants to help through targeted assistance programs. In the long-term, cultural economics as a city-wide political topic is gaining importance in the competition between European countries.

Pray:

- **For the development of assistance programs that will also provide an opportunity for small Christian companies to enter the cultural diversity**
- **For good concepts which will strengthen the cultural sector, also in the economic area**

Jews in Berlin

In November, a conference about the relationship between Christians and churches and Israel will take place. Berlin is the right place for such a conference. Our city had and has a rich Jewish life. Jewish scholars, musicians, and artists have shaped life in our city as much as politicians, researchers, businesspeople and educators. There are many memorials, which remind us of this heritage, but they also remind us of the brutal persecution of the Jews during the time of the Nazis. The Holocaust memorial right in the centre of the city at the Brandenburg gate deserves mention here.

The Jewish community in Berlin is growing mostly as a result of immigration of Jews from the former Soviet Union. In some places, there is fruitful dialog between Jews and Christians. Dozens of Jewish organizations and cultural institutes add to the richness of cultural life in the city. Unfortunately even today, memorials are sometimes are defiled, and Jewish people are discriminated against and threatened. It is important that we as Christians do not dwell on the tragic past, but also look to find ways to cooperate in the present.

With the recent opening of the Messianic Centre of Beit Sar Shalom in Berlin-Lichterfelde, there is now in the city also a presence of Jews who believe Jesus is the Messiah of Israel. Their growing church has a lively interexchange with many "heathen-Christian" churches.

Pray

- **Thank God for the wide variety of blessings that have come to us through the Jews**
- **For a credible ministry of the Messianic Jews, especially among their fellow Jews**
- **For protection of the Jews from anti-Semitic attacks**

Information, Dates

- **Day of Prayer for Persecuted Christians** on November 12, 5pm, Freie Evangelische Gemeinde Friedrichshain.
- **Nationwide Students Day of Prayer** on November, 21 – see www.prayday.de