



# Prayer for Berlin

January, 2007

## The fifth year

„Dear fellow Christians in Berlin and elsewhere, a premiere – the first Berlin Prayer Mail...” -- thus began in January, 2003 the first issue. Four years of united prayer lie behind us, during which we have experienced many answers to prayer. A Good News note in which it is evident that prayer is changing Berlin can be seen on our website (under Material). We have approximately 350 German language and 35 English language subscribers. Many of those share the mail with others or distribute them in churches.

We would like to thank all of our faithful prayer partners who bring the requests before the throne of God, thus actively participating in God's kingdom coming and His will being done – in Berlin and beyond.

## Good News: Berlin is in the lead!

*Vocational Training Positions:* In the year 2006 12,284 new vocational training positions were registered with Berlin's Chamber of Commerce – that is around eleven percent more than the previous year (as of Nov. 30<sup>th</sup>). The number of new vocational training positions within companies rose by nearly 8.4% -- this rise in 2006 in Berlin is nearly twice as high as the national average.

*Jobs:* The unemployment rate in Berlin is still too high, but nevertheless, the number of unemployed persons decreased – also more than the national average. The unemployment rate decreased with a one-year period from 17.8% to 16.1%. (Source: Die Welt)

## Looking forward to 2007

During the first six months of 2007, Berlin, the seat of the federal government, will be increasingly in the center of world politics. Angela Merkel will assume the presidency of the European Council as well as the leadership of the G8-Group (Advisory group of the seven largest industrial nations and Russia). Many important meetings will take place in Berlin. This carries with it the opportunity of shaping and influencing these meetings, but it also carries increased responsibility. Great expectations are on Germany's shoulders.

The question arises for prayer partners and spiritual leaders: What are God's intentions for our city at present? The “Verse of the Year 2007” states a promise and asks a question: “*See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it?*” (Isaiah 43:19) It is important to recognize what God wants to do, so that we can agree with Him in prayer.

### Pray:

- For a revelation of God's intentions for Berlin
- That the federal government will make good decisions that lead to the well-being of other nations

## The new Berlin government

The start in the new governing period began with a scandal. Klaus Wowereit failed to be elected as the ruling mayor in the first balloting, and in the second ballot, he received only one vote more than was necessary to be elected. Thus, the entire city government is confronted with the question: How long can the red-red coalition last?

The image of the ruling mayor, who is in his second term of office, is greatly tarnished. Since the election in September, incidents which can be interpreted as slip-ups have been occurring increasingly. However, through a change in the law, the ruling mayor now has a noticeable increase in power. He has competency for making guidelines and appoints the senators, and can as a result, govern “into” the Senate affairs much more than before.

Klaus Wowereit also changed the job descriptions of the Senate administration. He made two significant decisions: the position of Senator for Cultural Affairs was deleted, although Berlin has a strong potential in this area. The area of Cultural Affairs is now a department with a State Secretary underneath the ruling mayor. This decision is viewed with criticism, because Klaus Wowereit is not deemed to be very competent in this area.

On the other hand, the decision to put science and education under the jurisdiction of one Senator has been widely approved, since it sees education as one entity reaching from kindergarten to science and research.

Most of the Senators named already belonged to the previous government. The Senator for Health Katrin Lompscher (PDS), the Senator for Justice Gisela von der Aue (SPD), and the Senator for Science and Education Jürgen Zöllner (SPD) are new.

### Pray:

- That all the Senators and their staff will make decisions and for the good of the city and put these into practice

- **That the new Senators will quickly be able to familiarize themselves with their new areas of responsibilities**

## ***New Sentaors***

**Senator for Justice**, Gisela von der Aue, was born in 1949 in Schleswig-Holstein and began to study law in Berlin in 1968. Since 1979 she has been working in public service in Berlin; since 1994 she worked in public service in Brandenburg; since 1998 she has been President of the Brandenburg Auditor General's Office. She is married to the Administrative Director of the House of Representatives and has three children.

The new Senator for Justice wants to increase the fight against juvenile crime. „This is a problem of the entire society which needs to be addressed by all relevant departments. There needs to be better communication with schools and youth services and also with the juvenile court system. The basic approach up till now has been right, and now we need to talk to all those concerned and make further decisions,” Mrs. Von der Aue said in an interview with the Tagesspiegel.

Jürgen Zöllner, the most experienced and longest active Minister of Science in Germany, was recruited from Rheinland-Pfalz to be the new **Senator for Education**. J. Zöllner is Catholic and has two children. Because he successfully instituted changes in the educational system in Rheinland-Pfalz, expectations are high that he will also have new solutions for the huge problems in Berlin's educational system. Next year he will become President of the Conference of Ministers of Education and the Arts and will be able, among other things, to present his ideas for reform concerning financial equalization among the higher education institutions of the various States. Berlin is one of the few States whose students do not have to pay tuition.

### **Pray:**

- **That the staff will provide the support needed for the new Senators during these first months in office**
- **For rapid success for G. v. d. Aue in the fight against juvenile crime**
- **For Zöllner, that he can correct wrong decisions which had been made and that he will discover how education can be successfully promoted**

## ***Week of Prayer of the Evangelical Alliance***

Following a suggestion of the Estonian Evangelical Alliance, the Week of Prayer from January 7-14 will be held under the motto „*Jesus Christ – the same today and forever*“. The week of prayer sponsored by the Evangelical Alliance takes place in more than 25 European countries and even beyond. In Germany

alone, an estimated 350,000 Christians in 1,105 from various churches and fellowships will gather in prayer. The Evangelical Alliance is a world-wide movement of Christians from various denominations which was founded 160 years ago. At present there are 124 national alliances. World-wide approximately 3.8 million local churches and 380 million Christians belong to the Evangelical Alliance.

The brochure for the Week of Prayer (written by the task force prayer led by Axel Nehlsen) is available online at: <http://www.ead.de>

### **Pray:**

- **For increased prayer efforts and unity among Christians and churches**
- **For visible and encouraging changes in our country as a result of prayer**

## ***Iranians in Berlin***

Several thousand Iranians live in Berlin. Because of the political and religious situation in their homeland, many of them are seeking asylum. Many Iranian are open to the gospel because they are disillusioned by Islamic fundamentalism.

In Berlin there is an Iranian church led by a pastor and a social worker. Practical help and spiritual help go hand in hand. People are offered help in matters of administrative affairs and asylum issues. Because this help is offered regardless of origin or religion, Moslems are coming in contact with the church and are opening up to the Christian faith.

Unfortunately, the legal situation of these people has taken a turn for the worse. It used to be that the majority of applications for asylum were approved; today the opposite is true, although human rights and the situation in Iran have not improved in any way. A return to their homeland is especially dangerous for those Iranians who have converted to Christianity.

During a reception sponsored by Together for Berlin, the Iranian social worker met a district mayor. Since then, the district office has been holding German classes in the Iranian church. Now it would be advantageous for them to have personal contact to Germans so that they could practice their German and begin to understand our society and culture better. Personal relationships between German and Iranian families and intercultural friendships lead to better integration and enrich both sides.

### **Pray:**

- **That more Iranians would turn to Jesus Christ**
- **For rapid granting of resident permits, followed by job placements**
- **That Iranian Christians would not be forced to return to their homeland**
- **For more relationships between Germans and Iranian Christians**