

Prayer for Berlin

October, 2007

Good News: Active Volunteers

“Volunteers step up! (Freiwillige vor!)“ – This is the motto of the Christian Volunteer Agency of Together For Berlin (Gemeinsam fuer Berlin). This agency came into being two years ago and is growing dynamically. It is the first of its kind and is getting attention from the experts. Wolfgang Thierse, speaker of the parliament, is the official patron.

Volunteers are placed in social services to bring practical Christian love to those who need it most. Many organizations are interested in having such volunteers come to help. In addition, the Volunteer Agency advises and comes along side of churches and home Bible study groups during the planning and implementation of their own projects. The need is so great that the staff can hardly keep up. In the meantime, the regional Diakonisches Werk has also formed its own volunteer agency. The ministries complement one another well.

Monika Helbig, State Secretary and Commissioner of the Senate for Volunteers, said, “I would like to see Berlin become the capital of volunteerism.” Berlin is on its way there. Nearly one out of every three employees is actively volunteering somewhere. While in other cities the numbers declined, the willingness to volunteer in Berlin has grown in the last years by 5%. Companies are to continue encouraging their employees to volunteer. In addition it is planned to increasingly draw on the potential of retired persons.

Prayer:

- **Thank God for the good development of the Christian Volunteer Agency**
- **Pray for more sponsors and other sources of finances**
- **Pray that more companies will get involved for the public good**

Emigration

When we look at Berlin’s history, we discover that emigrants have always played an important role in the composition of the city. After the Thirty Years War, Berlin was largely destroyed, and the number of inhabitants greatly reduced. The populace was unable to rebuild the city on its own. For this reason, the elector conducted a concerted settlement

program. Many people from Switzerland, Holland, and Bohemia, who were being persecuted for their faith, found refuge and a warm welcome in Berlin. The largest influx came from France. One fifth of the inhabitants in Berlin were Huguenots, who brought their economical, political and cultural skills with them, thus making a large contribution to the cultural and economic rise of the city. What characterizes the city of Berlin today – the diverse culture and the interest in science—had its roots in the influx of emigrants back then.



People from over 180 nations live in Berlin today. They characterize the city and make it attractive for visitors from all over the world. Up until now, this potential has not been actively developed. This is now beginning to change. The first successes of model projects confirm that many emigrants are simply waiting to form partnerships with existing social groups. For this reason, for instance, a new integration project is seeking to train young emigrants to become mediators and project managers.

Christians in Berlin are also beginning to understand more completely that it is important to view emigrants and foreigners as God’s gifts. They are seeing the many possibilities of working together. Recently an Emigration Forum was formed by Together for Berlin. On October 3, an eight-hour intercultural praise and prayer for our nation is being held in Berlin. Several emigrant churches are taking part.

Prayer

- **Thank God for all foreigners and emigrants who live in Berlin and are active there**
- **Pray that this potential will be realized and encouraged – in politics as well as among Christians**
- **Pray that those who are still on the fringes will be given a real chance**

Missionaries in Berlin

Over and over, people from other countries are being called by God to Berlin to serve with their gifts and to help spread the gospel in Berlin. Our city desperately needs such people, but their vision is not always able to be accomplished. Difficulties in adapting, loneliness, language difficulties, unrealistic expectations, and pressure from the sending countries to accomplish as much as possible, often plague these missionaries. For this reason, many leave Berlin after only one or two years. As a rule, new ministries are able to successfully put down roots only if they have a close relationship with an existing church or group which gives advice, encouragement and helps them get integrated.

Prayer

- **Pray that more people who want to serve Berlin will be called to come**
- **Pray for successful cooperation between “old“ and “new“ Berliners**
- **Pray for God’s blessing and protection for the missionaries and their families during their start phase**

Spiritual Leadership

Taking spiritual responsibility in a city church is different than leading a church in a rural setting. The many cultural influences in the city are a challenge. One needs courage and an inner conviction that God is very much interested in the world in order to confront this challenge and not to retreat from it. Christians and churches do not exist for themselves, but are called to light and salt for the city.

Becoming aware of this and finding concrete ways of putting this into practice often means going through a change in perspective. Men and women in leadership in the churches often need a special understanding of the cultural relevance of the gospel and courage given by the Holy Spirit to take new paths.

Prayer

- **Pray for new vision for the leaders in the city**
- **Pray for a clear perspective on how God’s kingdom can be built in the city**
- **Pray that leaders will be able to infect their church members with love for the city**

Penal institutions

The scandal concerning the juvenile prison in Ploetzensee which revealed that young prisoners were getting cell phones and drugs thrown to them over the prison walls from the outside, and that no one was stopping this has brought the huge need within the prison system to light.

One of the largest difficulties is the lack of personnel and the complete overloading of those working there. There is such a culture of violence among the prisoners that judges are even becoming unwilling to place juveniles there.

In the Forum for Criminal Offenders, Christians are becoming active in praying for ministering in both juvenile and adult prisons. Here are their prayer requests:

Prayer

- **Pray that light will come into the darkness so that the awful conditions can be changed long-term for the better for both prisoners and prison workers**
- **Pray for more personnel and better work for and with prisoners**
- **Pray that people in politics and in the justice system would accomplish change with competence and authority**

Dates

Wednesday, October 3, 2007, 2-10pm in the Kirche am Suedstern, Kreuzberg: **People Praise And Pray**

Intercultural praise and prayer for our nation together with Christians from Africa, Korea, Eastern Europe and Germany (and hopefully many other Berliners from other countries)

At 2pm, 4pm, and 6pm, 90-minute blocks will begin with worship/praise music and prayer for our country. During the break before the next block, participants will be offering “foreign foods”.

November 8-11, Prayer Conference for Germany in Friedrichsroda, Thüringen. Prayer for Berlin is participating. Information and registration at: <http://aufbruch.window.hl-users.com/>