

# Prayer for Berlin

November, 2007

## ***Good News: Research in Berlin***

We have continually encouraged our prayer partners to pray that research in Berlin would be promoted. For this reason, we are happy to relate two items of good news this past month. The Berlin scientist Gerhard Ertl (born in 1936), Professor at the Free University and the Technical University, who is also on the staff of the Fritz-Haber-Institute of the Max-Planck-Society, won the Nobel Prize for chemistry for his research into the chemical processes on solid surfaces (catalysis). In addition, the Berlin Technical University has been named one of eight elite German universities. This means it will receive millions in grants for research—along with an excellent national and international reputation.

Both of these awards show not only that Berlin has an enormous potential in the area of research; they will also most certainly help to increase that potential as well.

### **Prayer:**

- **Thank God for the positive momentum for science and research caused by these two awards**
- **Pray that this potential can be strengthened even further, so that Berlin can fully embrace its particular calling in this area**

## ***Children of immigrants – problematic potential***

40% of all children under five years of age come from immigrant families. Those who work in pre-schools or in schools have been aware of this continual growth for quite some time. However, because special aid for these children has not been a priority in education for decades, many youth are now unemployed. With no good prospects for the future, they are just hanging around in the streets. They attempt to achieve respect by organizing themselves into gangs – their “career” is crime. Up until now, there has been no real emphasis put on helping these children and youth through education. Such education needs to begin very early—in preschools and primary schools. Fortunately private projects are continually being initiated to help give immigrant children a better education—for example, the “Street University” in Kreuzberg. Christians are also helping in Kreuzberg. The Baptist church in the Bergmann-

strasse offers help with homework, among other things. Such committed initiatives are important, but we need a Berlin educational plan that sees the potential of these immigrant children. Just adding a few hours of German classes is not enough.

### **Prayer:**

- **Pray that many will have a heart for helping and aiding immigrant children**
- **Pray that more finances and personnel will be invested in the early years of education**
- **Pray that new ways can be found to motivate youth without good prospects for the future to study more**

## ***Keeping On***

The prison system in Berlin was once again in the news this month. This is not surprising. When light comes into the darkness, the first thing that becomes visible are the negative areas. Much of the blame is being put on the prison guards, who are chronically overloaded. The FORUM STRAFFAELLIGENHILFE (Forum for help for criminal offenders) has asked us to continue to pray that the circumstances will change for the better. The first signs of answered prayer are becoming visible and are encouraging.

### **Prayer:**

- **Pray that light will continue to “come into the darkness” through the press and committed staff**
- **Pray for a long-lasting change in the catastrophic state of affairs in the prisons for the good of the prisoners and overloaded personnel**
- **Pray that Christian ministries will make a visible difference which will open doors for the gospel**

## ***Senator of Education Juergen Zoellner***

In previous prayer newsletters, we have introduced various Senators of the State of Berlin. Prof. Juergen E. Zoellner has been the Senator for Education, Science and Research since November 24, 2006. He was born in 1946 in Maerisch Neustadt, is married, has two children, and grew up in a family of doctors in Bad Schwalbach (Hessen). Mr. Zoellner’s policy of education has two main pillars: equal opportunity and solidarity. He wants his policies to have a wide

foundation in society. He prefers reconciliation to argumentative fronts. He is a pragmatic person. Because new laws concerning education in Berlin have brought about many educational reforms, he is able to provide only a few new impulses. Instead, he must spend time correcting the mistakes in these new laws, which are becoming evident as they are put into practice. School directors are expecting him to provide correction which will bring relief. His reputation and success in Berlin will be for the most part dependent upon whether he can pacify the schools.

He did introduce an innovative suggestion in the area of science and research the end of October. He is considering establishing a totally new form of institution of higher learning. This would bring the best people and the most excellent researchers of the world to Berlin. The working title is: "International Forum of Advanced Studies Berlin". This suggestion however was criticized and needs further discussion.

#### **Prayer:**

- **Pray for protection and blessing for the Senator and his family**
- **Pray that the positive beginnings of reforms would succeed**
- **Pray for the courage to stand behind unpopular (because of high costs) but desperately needed investments in education**

#### **Prostitution**

There are approximately 400,000 prostitutes in Germany, many of whom are not ethnic Germans (for instance, many come from Thailand or Eastern or Southeastern Europe). The majority of these women are prostituting themselves because of financial or personal pressure. In Berlin there are 6-10,000 women or young female prostitutes working on the streets or in brothels (including bars, sex movie theatres and massage salons).

A new prostitution law in January, 2002 made prostitution legal, but it did not provide for a "legally imposed improvement" in the situation of these women, let alone provide any help for women wanting to get out of this "business", which is indeed a despicable exploitation of women. This was shown in January, 2007 in a report on the effects of the new law.

A ministry of "Teen Challenge" to prostitutes who are drug addicts has been active in the capital city for over three decades. In the meantime, other Christian ministries have also become ac-

tive. Women from "Alabaster Jar" have been working among prostitutes in the Oranienburger Strasse (Mitte) and in the drug and prostitution zone of the Kurfuerstenstrasse (Tiergarten/Schoeneberg), where Teen Challenge had had a tearoom until last year. "Neustart" (New Start), a ministry among prostitutes who are drug addicts, has recently been started.

The red-light district has been attempting for some time to establish brothels in that area. An attempt to establish a brothel in a private residence in the Kurfuerstenstrasse was unsuccessful. A rental agreement has been signed by an operator of a brothel for a commercial building on the corner of Potsdamer Strasse and Kurfuerstenstrasse. In other places, there has been little protest when new brothels were opened, but in the Potsdamerstrasse, there appears to be much opposition.

#### **Prayer:**

- **Pray for blessing and success for Christian ministries attempting to free women from this milieu**
- **Pray that no more prostitution establishments will be opened**
- **Pray for a new place for a Christian café on the Kurfuerstenstrasse**

#### **Euthanasia**

The Swiss Euthanasia-Organisation is attempting to legalize euthanasia in Germany through a court battle. They are publicly looking for someone in Berlin who is willing (along with his/her relatives) to risk a criminal prosecution.

#### **Prayer:**

- **Pray that this attempt will not be successful**

#### **Current events: Problem with the Kurds**

On October 28, there was a violent conflict between Turks and Kurds following a demonstration in Kreuzberg.

#### **Prayer:**

- **Pray for de-escalation and peace**

#### **Dates**

**Prayer Service for persecuted Christians**, November 22, 5pm, Freie Evangelische Gemeinde Friedrichshain, Oderstr. 27, on the occasion of the Worldwide Day of Prayer sponsored by the EVANGELICAL ALLIANCE BERLIN