



Prayer for Berlin

December, 2008

Good news: Christmas, even in prison

Once again this year, Christians in Berlin are getting involved so that people who must celebrate Christmas without relatives and friends don't have to be alone. The crisis telephone is particularly well-staffed. Christians are organizing Christmas parties and presents for the homeless and are packing packages for «Christmas in a Shoebox» and for people in Berlin's prisons. Other organisations are planning visits to lonely people or inmates. Even though in many places it is barely a drop in the bucket, the experiences of the last years show that these ways of caring reach people and often touch them deeply. Those desiring to get involved by packing packages or visiting inmates along with other Christians or taking an active part in a worship service can contact GEMEINSAM FÜR BERLIN (Together for Berlin).

Prayer:

- **Thank God for all the Christians who are getting involved with lonely people and inmates**
- **Pray that many people can be reached with God's love during the Christmas season**

Evangelistic Events

Following the positive experiences of «Summer2go», during which many people were reached with the gospel and made decisions for Christ, and during which some experienced healing, these evangelistic events are now continuing. Appropriate for this season, they are now called «Winter2go». From Dec. 12-14 approximately 100 young people dressed up as Santa Claus will be sharing the good news in the subways, at Christmas markets and other various public places.

Prayer:

- **Pray that many will take part**
- **Pray that people will be open when they meet these Christians**
- **Pray for clear decisions for Jesus and that people would experience His touch**

Visionary City Planning

Although Berlin has much creative potential, there seems to be little room for it in the new city planning. For nearly 15 years it was clear that the Airport Tempelhof would be closed, but even now, there is no overall concept for this huge site. Finally people are hectically looking for ideas. If well-used, the huge airport-site could be an asset for the poorer districts of Kreuzberg, Neukölln and Tempelhof. New sports facilities, parks, and also cultural institutions could be built.

A second, quite different task for the city planning is the area surrounding the former castle in Berlin's historical centre (Mitte). Presently, the second phase of an anonymous contest for the Humboldt-Forum, which will be constructed using the historical façade of the former castle, is beginning. The entire design and lay-out of the street from Werderschen Markt to Berliner Rathaus must be taken into consideration as part of the construction plans.

City planning must always be pursued actively. Just responding to problems that arise is not planning for the future. If politicians do not provide any planning ideas, the danger arises that only large investors decide what will be built on free sites, as was the case with the Lehrter Bahnhof, the current main train station. Investors have – understandably – primarily economical interests at heart, not necessarily public welfare.

Prayer:

- **Pray for new visionary momentum in the Senate Commission for City Planning**
- **Pray for many creative ideas that will be assets to areas surrounding Tempelhof Airfield**
- **Pray that city planning will once again have an emphasis on planning ahead and that it will take much more active initiative**

Funding for Districts

In the next seven years, five city districts are to receive funding from the national/state program «Attractive Districts» designed to strengthen their industry. This funding is going to: Turmstraße in Moabit, the Marzahn Promenade, the Müllerstraße in Wedding, the Neukölln Karl-Marx-Straße, and the City West around the Gedächtniskirche. The federal government is supplying six million Euros for 2009 for this program.

Prayer:

- **Pray that the money will be used wisely and that the districts will profit from the program**
- **Pray that positive models can be developed that will provide long-term help**

Citizens' Platform Wedding/Moabit

It is encouraging that Christians in an increasing number of places are doing things instead of complaining. This is beginning to be recognized by the public. This is practical Christian involvement in one's own neighbourhood district. This is what is happening in the context of a new Citizens' Platform Wedding/Moabit.

In these two districts, over 40 groups, among which are mosque and district associations, churches, day-care centres, have come together to change the life and politics of their communities. This is the largest citizens' platform to date in Germany.

A member of the African Jesus Miracle Harvest Church who comes from Nigeria told about near-daily discrimination. In spite of these experiences, he and his church have not remained distant, but rather are taking part in getting to know others and sharing with them. Thus, the «Community Organizing» began. It is supported financially through gifts from commerce, foundations and members' fees. The heterogeneous nature of the citizens' platform becomes obvious when members talk about their various concerns. A retiree from the Wedding Stadtmission suddenly pulled a drill out of a bag during a press conference. «We're opening up something here by drilling,» he said proudly. A Turkish woman preferred a different analogy. «We work together like ants. And like bees, we sweeten the bitterness of life.»

Prayer:

- **Pray that good networking in the problem districts will better the social level of those who live there**
- **Pray that churches and Christians will constructively contribute to the Citizens' Platform**

Church Planting

For years, people have been praying for more alive churches in Kreuzberg. People at the open-air service for peace from TOGETHER FOR BERLIN on May 1st also prayed for these requests. At present there are at least two church planting projects aimed at reaching the Kreuzberg «scene» and serving people in the community. One of them is named the «Kreuzberg-Project» after the successful and growing model of the «Berlin-Project» in Mitte/Prenzlauer Berg. The Kreuzberg-Project is working in the context of the Evangelical Free Church (FeG). People in Evangelical Free Churches in the region have been praying for the last year for further church plants in the district. In Staaken on the west side of the city, a new church is currently being started. Two other churches will soon be planted.

Prayer:

- **Thank God for the new churches in Kreuzberg and Staaken**
- **Pray that stable, yet flexible staff teams can be formed**
- **Pray for approaches that serve people in the areas of their felt needs and that can show them the love of God**

Keeping On I

Since we began in November to pray about the wide-spread attacks on bus drivers of the Berlin bus system (BVG), nothing much has happened. Politicians are becoming increasingly aware of the problem. Staff of the BVG are beginning to make demands. In the meantime, it has been decided that bus drivers will be protected at least in part by a partition. Many unemployed persons are being hired as «transportation escorts» in order to raise the level of security; thus jobs are being created. Further measures are being discussed. The number of attacks is decreasing statistically (by nearly 30 percent during the first 8 months of this year in comparison to last year), but the brutality of these attacks is increasing.

Prayer:

- **Pray for an effective concept of protection for the drivers**
- **Pray for a further clear decrease in the number of attacks**

Keeping On II

Berlin needs a functioning opposition and prominent politicians. Let us continue to pray that the state-level Berlin CDU will get out of its inner difficulties and factionalism and begin to work more intensely on issues at hand.

In the meantime, Frank Henkel has been chosen as the new Chairman. Monika Grütters is now on the list for the national parliamentary elections and some surprises have arisen that give way for hope that the hard crusts of power structures within the CDU are breaking up and will no longer block renewal.

Dates

From January 11-18 Christians are once again invited to take part in the International Week of Prayer sponsored by the Evangelical Alliance. A brochure listing the over one hundred prayer meetings taking place in Berlin is also available at GEMEINSAM FÜR BERLIN. Information can be found (in German) at www.ev-allianz.de