



# Prayer for Berlin

May, 2009

## ***Good News: Green Electricity for public buildings***

Public buildings in Berlin will all be using green electricity by the year 2012. The huge amount of 915 million kilowatt hours per year used in public buildings is the equivalent of 300,000 private households. This will include the electricity for town-halls, hospitals, universities and schools, as well as street lighting and traffic lights. The potential effect on climate protection is as large as the amount of kilowatt hours. The decision to use green electricity is a huge success for environmental groups. An insider called the Berlin bid invitation “one of the greenest ever”. (Der Tagesspiegel 22.4.09)

## ***Berlin’s Economic Stimulus Package***

It is well-known that Berlin had to cut back a lot in recent years. Thanks to the financial crisis, however, Berlin will be receiving a lot of money from the federal government in an attempt to boost the economy. In the course of the Economic Stimulus Package II, the federal government will be contributing 474 million Euros, and the state of Berlin 158 million Euros. As a result of this 632 million Euros, long outstanding repairs on public buildings can now be planned. The largest sum, nearly 200 million Euros, will be used to renovate schools. The money needs to be spent quickly. All contracts must be handed out by the end of April, 2010. Thus the guidelines for allocations have been loosened. In order to prevent corruption however, the allocations and the construction site management will be administered by two different administrative departments. All data will be made public. It is hoped that a high percentage of the contracts can be filled by regional companies, since the economic stimulus package is supposed to strengthen the local economy.

## **Prayer:**

- **Pray that corruption can be prevented in spite of loosened guidelines for the allocation of contracts**
- **Pray that these measures will indeed strengthen the local economy**
- **Pray for wisdom for the steering committee which will oversee the projects**

## ***The police department***

15,000 policemen protect Berlin. That sounds like a lot, but in the year 2000, there were 19,000. As a result, the police department is undergoing a re-structuring process. Only 36 of the previously known 49 districts remain following the reorganisation. Many Berliners feel safer when they see policemen on the street. Local policemen are known in their district, but there are fewer and fewer such local policemen. In an attempt to be “closer” to residents, the police have introduced a mobile police station. In this police car, people can ask questions about the department and whom to contact. They can register complaints, get information or press charges. In comparison to many other large cities, Berlin is quite safe. In 2008, the total number of crimes in Berlin continued to decrease, as it had in 2007.

## **Prayer**

- **Thank God for all the policemen in Berlin**
- **Pray for protection for each policeman while performing his/her life-threatening work**
- **Continue to pray for protection against terrorist attacks**

## ***Pacification following the pro religion / pro ethics referendum***

Many Christians are disappointed in the result of the referendum concerning religion and ethics classes. Following the defeat of the referendum, the current model that dictates that all students in grades 7 to 10 must take part in a “neutral” ethics class, will remain in place. Catholic and Protestant religion classes can be chosen as an additional elective. It was surpris-

ing that the majority of the 700,000 who voted at all voted against the Initiative ProReli. Both the Catholic and the Protestant church, the Jewish community, and even some Islamic communities, and the CDU and FDP political parties encouraged people to vote to pass the referendum. An important minority within the SPD, supported by prominent politicians such as the Vice President of the German Parliament Thierse and Steinmeier, candidate for chancellor, also supported the Initiative.

During recent weeks, the discussion grew more heated on both sides of the issue. Poster campaigns seemed to confuse people more than help them understand the issue. ProReli successfully took action against an advertising campaign sponsored by the Senate for ProEthics, but financed through taxes. The fronts grew harder, and people's feelings were hurt. In addition, the results show a shocking religious/world-view separation between East and West. The majority in all former West Berlin districts were for ProReli. The majority against ProReli, thus for ProEthics, were in former East Berlin districts. Although it was certainly helpful on the one hand that the topic of religion in the schools and the mandatory ethics were discussed at many levels within the city, it nevertheless showed that there is still a "wall in the minds and hearts". Now it is time to fill up the trenches, approach one another, and to bring about cooperation between the two subjects on the basis of the retained current ruling and to improve the ethics classes. In addition, the Catholic Church and the Protestant Church must evaluate the poor results and draw conclusions.

#### **Prayer**

- **Lament the chasm that still exists between the East and the West in terms of religion and world-views**
- **Pray that the heated discussions will slow down and that the hardened fronts can be broken down**
- **Pray for more attractive and appealing religion classes, which remain electives**

- **Pray for integration of students from immigrant families in ethics classes**

#### ***May 1st News***

On April 28, it was finally agreed upon that the worship service can take place on the stage on the Mariannenplatz. Budget cuts and the heated discussions before the referendum about ProReli have made things difficult this year. There is potential for violence especially near the following three events/demonstrations: 1. A registered Nazi event in Köpenick. A protest demonstration sponsored by various groups against this event is planned beginning at 10am. 2. 6pm demonstration "Capitalism is Crisis and War" in Kreuzberg. 3. The championship basketball game in the Euro-League in the O2-World in Friedrichshain. Violent hooligans are expected. As in years past, prayer teams will be praying onsite for peace.

#### **Prayer:**

- **Pray for a spiritual covering for the May 1st worship service**
- **Pray for protection for all those working toward a peaceful April 30 and May 1st.**
- **Pray that measures taken by the police will bring about peace**

#### ***Keeping On: Economy***

The economy in Berlin has developed positively in recent years. It is uncertain how the financial crisis will affect our city. We pray that those in positions of responsibility will make good decisions which will make it possible to retain jobs and keep companies in business.

#### ***Dates***

- **May 1, 12 noon: Open-Air-Worship Service with prayer for peace - Mariannenplatz in Kreuzberg**
- **May 31, 7pm: Intercultural Prayer service: African Jesus Miracle Harvest Church, Koloniestr. 29, 13359 Berlin-Wedding, from 6pm-9:30pm with prayer walks in the Soldiner district**