



Prayer for Berlin

September, 2009

Good News - Baby Boom in Berlin

31,936 babies were born in Berlin last year. That is a new record! Only in the reunification year of 1990 were there more babies born in the city. After that, the number of births in the eastern part of Berlin declined dramatically, and it wasn't until the middle of the 90's that the city's young couples once again had the courage to have more children. In the previous record-high year of 2007, there were more births than deaths for the first time since the fall of the wall. Statisticians talked about a «small sensation», which repeated itself the following year. In 2008, once again there were more recorded births than recorded deaths. The capital city is now at the top, compared with the rest of the country. In 2008, Berlin was the only state with a higher birth rate than death rate.

The reasons behind this have not been fully researched. We, however, understand that this is an answer to many prayers over the last years! «Every child is a declaration of love...to the woman who becomes a mother, to the man who becomes a father – and to the city in which the child is born. Berlin is receiving many such declarations... The young, curious, and well-trained people who are drawn to Berlin apparently find Berlin so attractive that they can imagine starting a family here. Their offspring is a gift to a poor city.» (Numbers and quotes: Der Tagesspiegel July 21 and 26, 2009)

Prayer:

- **Thank God for these surprising developments and for the answers to prayer**

But: Child poverty is growing

What is Berlin doing with this gift of children? «The beautiful pictures of frolicking children in the park hide the unattractive life of many parents. Berlin scores well in comparison with the national average in terms of reconcilability of career and family because of the relatively dense availability of day-care and day-nurseries, but social problems are growing. People in Berlin who decide to have children are by no means economically secure. Among immigrants there is an extremely high rate of unemployment,

and even people with high levels of education often live in tenuous circumstances because of short-term employment or jobs for which they are over-qualified. Berlin, the capital city of aid money, has a poverty problem. Every fifth Berliner and over a third of all children in the city live from unemployment benefits – an entire generation is growing up on the fringes of society...Poverty is reflected in dilapidated schools, lack of teachers, and insufficient integration programs.» (Der Tagesspiegel July 26, 09)

Prayer

- **Pray that Berlin's Senate will strengthen its support of children and families**
- **Pray for a better financial outlook for young families through well-paid jobs**
- **Pray that many parents and children will experience God's love**

The cross and the election

A panel discussion with topics especially relevant for Christians will be held with the (top) candidates from the state of Berlin for the national Parliament: Prof. Monika Grütters, CDU, Dr. Gesine Lötzsch, Die Linke, Hellmut Königshaus, FDP, Wolfgang Thierse, SPD, Wolfgang Wieland, Bündnis 90/Die Grünen. Moderation: Dr. Claudia Nothelle, RBB, Carsten Behrendt, ZDF

Host: the Lutheran and Catholic Church in Berlin, the Ecumenical Council, Together for Berlin (Initiator)

Information: www.gfberlin.de

Monday, September 7, 7:30pm Kaiser-Wilhelm-Gedächtniskirche

Prayer:

- **Pray for a good evening and that God will bless the politicians**
- **Pray that the politicians will make clear statements which will help Christians decide whom to vote for**

Federal Parliament (Berlin's candidates)

Following the election, the candidate from Berlin with the most votes in his district, becomes a member of Parliament by direct mandate. Many will be elected through the Party ticket, and others will be elected directly.

The German Evangelical Alliance has written a questionnaire which can help one understand each party's views on various subjects. The questionnaire and the parties' written answers are available (in German) at www.werte-waehlen.de. Christian Israel-Organisations have a similar project with five questions concerning policies toward Israel and the

Middle-East (www.projekt-bundestagswahl.de). If many Christians contact their Representatives with questions concerning values and Israel policies, their Representatives will become more aware of these issues and place more emphasis on them.

Prayer:

- **Pray that poor attitudes towards politics will be overcome and that many will vote**
- **Pray that the position and candidates and parties whose aim is for the good of the people according to Biblical standards will be strengthened**
- **Pray for a fair campaign among Berlin's candidates**

Protection of Life

Unfortunately, in spite of the good news of the baby boom in Berlin, there is the alarming news that 29,400 abortions took place in Germany in the first quarter of the year (it is well-known that data acquisition in this regard is totally insufficient). 98% of those took place following the required consultation. In other words, these children were not allowed to live because the lawmakers – in agreement also with some church-related consultation centres, Christian doctors and hospitals – did not ensure the most elementary of human rights. For this reason, we can only appeal to all: Stand up against abortion if you are a Christian!

Information (in German only): www.kaleb.de // www.marsch-fuer-das-leben.de // www.gemeindehilfsbund.de/aktion.html

Prayer:

- **Pray for resolute participation by Christians in the «March for Life» on Sept 26, 2009**
- **Pray for a reversal on the part of the Lutheran Church—that they will see that the current «consultation-policy» is not protecting children and is leaving women alone with their decision**
- **Pray that the ongoing signature campaign will cause the Lutheran Synod to change its thinking**
- **Pray that Berlin as the centre of political responsibility will become a Pro-Life place**

Intercultural Day of Prayer on October 3rd

For the third time, on the holiday of German Reunification Day an intercultural Day of Prayer will take place.

This year's motto is: «Thanking – Celebrating – Praying – 20 years since the fall of the wall». An historical review of the fall of the wall through newspaper articles from the East and the West, as well as sharing of one's own experiences among German and immigrants during a buffet, intercultural praise and worship, and prayer for our nation (also on the commemoration site of the wall on the Bernauer Straße) are planned.

Prayer:

- **Pray for a successful, motivating worship service**
- **Pray that the horror of the separation and the miracle of unity will not be forgotten**

Reception of Iraqi refugees

Berlin has a long tradition of accepting refugees fleeing for reasons of their faith. The Huguenots were supported in settling in Berlin by the Prince Elector and contributed greatly to the increase in prosperity in the city. Later, the Moravian Brethren who were forced out of Bohemia settled in Rixdorf (Berlin-Neukölln). By December, 125 refugees from Iraq are expected. That is five percent of the total of 2,500 Iraqis that the federal government has agreed upon. For the most part, these are Christians who cannot go back to their home country, including victims of torture or severely injured people. At first, they will live in flats from the Emergency Reception Centre Marienfelde. They will receive a residence permit for three years and will be able to apply for work permits or social welfare. The goal is to quickly integrate these Iraqis, but difficulties in finding long-term housing and getting previous vocational training certified are expected.

Prayer:

- **Pray that these Iraqi Christians can be integrated and find a new home in churches in Berlin**
- **Pray that they will be able to find long-term housing and that they can find jobs**

Dates

- Sunday, Sept. 13, 3pm, St. Alfons-Kirche, Berlin-Marienfelde, Beyrodtstr.4, ecumenical «Welcome Worship Service» for Iraqi refugees
- Saturday, Sept. 26, 1pm, Neptunbrunnen Alexanderplatz: «March for Life», followed by Worship Service 3pm, St.-Hedwigs-Kathedrale
- Intercultural Day of Prayer, Saturday, October 3, 5-8pm Christuskirche, Anklamer Str. 31, Berlin-Mitte