



Prayer for Berlin

January, 2010

Good News – “Verse of the Year” 2010

Jesus Christ said, *Let not your hearts be troubled. Trust in God and trust also in me. (John 14:1)* This is really Good News, and so we greet you, the readers of our prayer news, with this verse in the New Year and encourage you to continue to pray for Berlin. – The Editorial Team

Good News – The sanctification of Sunday

Stores being open for business on Sundays and holidays is allowed only in exceptional cases – the law governing opening hours for stores in Berlin is generous, but also partly unconstitutional. According to the leading decision of the Federal Constitutional Court, the Constitution guarantees that Sunday is a day of rest, so the court decided that stores in the capital city opening on all four Sundays in Advent is not allowed. Exceptions to the protection of Sunday must be well-founded; “shopping interest” alone is not enough. Thus, the Court in Karlsruhe partially supported the lawsuit brought by the Lutheran Church of Berlin-Brandenburg-schlesische Oberlausitz and the archbishopric of Berlin. However, stores in Berlin can nevertheless open on Sundays until Christmas.

Thank God for the protection in principle of Sundays as a day of rest through the law

Projects that give hope: Street Choir Berlin

This year we want to attempt to introduce each month a project that gives new hope to people. On December 15th, a very uncommon choir called the “Street Choir” had its first performance in the Academy of the Arts. The beginning of September, the choir director and concert pianist Stefan Schmidt invited homeless people, unemployed people, and drug addicts to take part in this unusual choir. Even he was surprised when more than 30 people came to the rehearsals, which took place in the Zwölf-Apostel-Kirche in Schöneberg. Following lots of initial difficulties, the participants discovered that they could develop talent. A sense of fellowship developed, and their self-confidence grew. From the start, the ZDFneo filmed the rehearsals and aired them as a “documentary-soap opera”. The ZDF arranged for qualified help for the

choir members through the “Treberhilfe” even beyond the project. The goal of giving people on the fringes of society a new self-confidence and a new perspective for the future remains even following the official end of the documentary-soap opera. The street choir means so much to its members that they want to stay together. They want the choir to grow and give even more people hope.

Prayer:

- **Thank God for the success and stability of the project and that it will continue**
- **Pray that as a result people will be able to successfully turn their backs on their former destructive lifestyles**

Berlin NPD is falling apart

In 2006, the NPD (Neo-Nazi party) wanted to conquer Berlin as the former “capital city of the Reich”. In the meantime, according to the Director of the Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution, the National Association of the NPD is devastated. The current Regional Director, Jörg Hähnel, does not want to continue to lead the party. Last year, both assistant Regional Directors left the party. The treasurer abdicated his position and others followed. Now in light of the diminished size of the National Association there are clearly not enough candidates to fill up the holes. However, even though the NPD is losing members, free associations of radical Neo-Nazis are growing. They are already mobilizing for a demonstration on May 1st, 2010 in Berlin.

Prayer

- **Pray that the NPD will continue to fall apart**
- **Pray that the Neo-Nazis will not continue to grow**
- **Pray that God will help all those who are ensnared with Neo-Nazi ideas to have a change of heart**

People behind the office of Senator

Politicians are seldom seen as people with a private life. Combining family life and public life is most certainly not easy for politicians. Let us pray this month for the people behind the public offices.

Senator of Finance: Ulrich Nussbaum, no party affiliation (for the SPD), married, 2 children

Senator of Integration, Employment and Social Policy: Carola Bluhm (new), Die Linke, married, 2 children

Senator of the Interior: Ehrhart Körting, SPD, married, 5 children

Senator of Justice: Gisela von der Aue, SPD, married, 3 children

Senator of City Development: Ingeborg Junge-Reyer; SPD, married

Senator of Commerce, Technology and Women: Harald Wolf; Die Linke, lives with his companion

Senator for Science, Research and Culture: Jürgen Zöllner; SPD, married, 2 children

Prayer:

- Pray for protection of their family life
- Pray for wisdom to plan enough time for friends, family and relaxation
- Pray that they will begin to seek God

The joy of serving the city (Von der Freude, der Stadt zu dienen)

This is the topic of the fourth conference of this type sponsored by Together for Berlin. The sub-title “Upheavals in society—a chance for Christian involvement” indicates that the conference is designed to meet the challenge of current crises in a special way—awakening hope instead of resignation, discovering chances instead of focusing on problems, activating the joy of faith instead of complaining about deficits. The conference, sponsored by Together for Berlin along with partners from other cities, will take place from Feb. 25-27 and will be full of inspiring lectures, helpful analyses, encouraging project reports from national and international experiences. In the main messages, we will look at the evangelistic challenges of megacities and consider the relevancy of our own life-styles and churches. In addition to learning from experienced speakers and developing new directions together, an important element of the conference will be meeting dedicated and motivated people from other cities. A conference for theologians will take place immediately before the conference. Detailed information about the seminars, workshops and speakers can be found on the following website: www.transforum-berlin.de.

Prayer:

- Pray for successful preparation and advertising
- Pray that both speakers and participants will be inspired
- Pray the conference will result in the transformation of our cities

Keeping On: Left-wing violence

Left-wing extremism in Berlin is manifesting itself in increasingly aggressive forms. “The left-wing scene in Berlin is gearing up. It has recently come to light that militant leftists apparently used a self-made

bomb made of gas cartridges and petrol for an arson attack in October on an uninhabited building of luxury flats in Kreuzberg. Just a few days ago, the perpetrators wrote a detailed description on how to make gas bombs in a leftist publication. For months, the left-wing scene has been mobilizing against renovations which have led to an increase in rents in the district. Berlin’s CDU and SPD Speakers for Domestic Affairs are appalled, since up until now, the left-wing group had disapproved of attacks with the possibility of injury to people.” (Der Tagesspiegel Dec. 15, 2009)

Prayer Weeks

During the Evangelical Alliance Week of Prayer from January 10-17, Christians will come together in more than 25 countries to pray together under the motto “Being a witness”. In Germany, approximately 350,000 church members from various denominations will participate in approximately 1,100 places. Topics and helpful suggestions can be found in the prayer brochure of the German Evangelical Alliance. During the week, approximately 85 prayer meetings will take place in Berlin in various districts. On January 15th, 7pm in the Lukas Gemeinde a prayer concert will take place. The closing worship service will take place on January 17, 3pm in the Kaiser-Wilhelm-Gedächtniskirche. The brochure with information concerning dates and places is available through Together for Berlin.

From January 18-25, there is another opportunity for Christians to pray in diversity during the **Week of Prayer for Unity among Christians**. In Berlin a central ecumenical worship service will take place on January 23, 5pm in the St. Hedwigskathedrale (Bebelplatz, Berlin-Mitte).

Prayer:

- Pray for courageous prayer that will move the arm of God
- Pray for unity among Christians

Looking Ahead

40 Days of Prayer and Fasting for our Nation

Now in its seventh year, the campaign will take place from February 2 to April 3, this year with the motto “True Happiness”. The brochure can be ordered (for a small donation) by: info@campus-d.de, Phone 0641-975180.

The prayer texts are available for download (also in English) on www.40Tagebetenundfasten.de