



Prayer for Berlin

September 2010

Good News 1: The capital city is booming

In Berlin, the economy is growing stronger than in any other state. This is due mainly to tourism. The number of tourists has grown even more during the first six months of 2010—Berlin is obviously attractive! However, Berlin has the highest rate of unemployment in the nation – even though the number of employed persons has increased. In the last years, Berlin’s economy grew more than at any time since Germany was reunited. From 2004 to 2009, the gross domestic product grew an average of 1.7 percent yearly. The national increase was only 0.5 percent. These figures were released the beginning of August in a study of the German Institute for Economic Research (Deutsche Institut für Wirtschaftsforschung DIW). Following ten years of continual decline, Berlin has now turned the corner. Formerly, since the mid-90’s, economic performance had been declining with only one exception. The growth has been caused solely by the services sector. The booming tourist trade has accounted for the strong growth in the hotel and restaurant industry. The areas of health and social services as well as educational sector have been successful. Industry continues to be weak. For this reason, according to the study, Berlin has not been greatly affected by the economic downturn.

Prayer:

- **Thank God for the good economic development**
- **Pray for a further decrease in unemployment**
- **Pray that the boom will also have a positive impact among the socially deprived**

Good News 2: Babyboom

In the year 2009, there were 32,104 children born—more than in any year since the reunification 20 years ago. In 2008 there was already a noticeable increase in the numbers of births, but in 2009 the numbers increased slightly more.

- **We thank God for every new Berliner.**

Overloaded Social Courts

In the first five months of 2010, the Berlin Social Courts reported a record number of cases. Before May, 18,438 new cases were initiated—35% more than in the same period of time in 2009. The 123 judges and their staff are completely overloaded.

The majority of these cases are appeals against Hartz IV decisions (unemployment benefits) made by the Job-Centre. More than half of the judges are working on such cases. Approximately 50% of the appeals are successful, the others are refused.

The President of the Social Court thinks that the large number of laws and the fact that they are often ambiguous result in the high numbers. Both the judges and the plaintiffs are frustrated. The plaintiffs want to be heard – but it usually takes longer than a year before the case is completed.

Prayer:

- **Pray for laws and rulings that lead to a decline in the number of court cases**
- **Pray that the judges and the staff working on the cases will be strengthened and able to work efficiently**
- **Pray for patience and a lowering of stress on the part of plaintiffs who often have to wait a long time for a decision**

Ramadan – Moslems in Berlin

Ramadan, the Islamic Month of Fasting, began this year on August 11. In the brochure produced by the Evangelical Alliance “30 Days of Prayer for the Islamic World”, it says, “The long days are a huge challenge for those who are fasting, because all men and women beyond the age of puberty who are not sick or travelling are expected to fast from sunrise to sunset. Even drinking is prohibited during these hours. ... People are also encouraged to not take medicine and to avoid inappropriate talk and immoral behaviour. Instead, people are to be friendly, generous to the poor and be willing to reconcile. Deliberately disregarding Ramadan is considered a severe sin. The end of Ramadan (Sept. 9) is celebrated with special food, visits, gifts to the poor and to children. During Ramadan, Christians of various denominations in many countries of the world pray for the Moslems in their neighbourhoods, in Europe and all over the world.”

In Berlin, most Moslems have heard little or nothing about the Gospel of Jesus Christ who wants to give every person His love. Most of them have never encountered an active and authentic Christian. There are some small churches and groups of converted

Moslems in the city. GEMEINSAM FÜR BERLIN'S Forum for Islam is a platform of sharing and training for such churches, but also for those working in humanitarian services and also for prayer partners who have Moslems on their hearts.

Prayer:

- **Pray that many Moslems living in Berlin will begin a relationship with the God of the Bible**
- **Pray for protection and growth of the Turkish, Arabic, Kurdish, and Iranian Christians in Berlin**

Projects of Hope: 40 Years of Teen Challenge in Berlin

Four decades ago, Teen Challenge Berlin was founded. It was the time when the usage of hard drugs was increasing in Germany. The initiators founded flat-sharing communities for male and female drug addicts and opened a tearoom in 1973. A few years later, a half-way house for drug addicts was added. Former drug addicts became Christians and joined the staff. Today, the Association has a flat-sharing community in Reinickendorf, runs the Café Sehnsucht in the socially deprived area Kottbusser Tor in Kreuzberg, does prevention work among children and youth, and takes care of the needy in the southern part of Reinickendorf. On September 18th, the Association will celebrate its 40-year anniversary in the Lukas-Gemeinde (Kurfürstenstraße 133, Schöneberg) with a commemorative event (4pm) and a charity concert with Andrea Adams-Frey and Albert Frey (7:30pm). Further information: www.teenchallengeberlin.de

Prayer:

- **Thank God for the 40 years**
- **Pray for God's continuing grace and for adequate finances for the ministry**
- **Pray for full-time staff and volunteers who are full of God's love and who have expertise in the needed areas**

***Thanking - Celebrating -Praying:
20 Years of German unity***

On October 3, 2010 we celebrate the 20th anniversary of the reunification. Above all, on this day, we should thank God, who, in 1989 and 1990, gave our country unity and peace with neighbouring countries in such a special way. In the Bible, God's people are often called upon to remember the great historical deeds of God, "Do not forget what He has done!" Our gratitude has an address—It wasn't

anonymous developments which brought about the fall of the wall. Neither the people alone, nor Gorbatschow, nor the economical weakness of the German Democratic Republic can be seen as the sole cause – but rather God's good plans for our people and the whole of Europe. Those who look back and see God's grace in the years surrounding the fall of the wall will want to celebrate. So let's celebrate together with gratitude -- To God be all the glory. You can find lots of material, texts, and practical suggestions on www.3-Oktober-GottseiDank.de. In Berlin, Together with Berlin has initiated an **ecumenical celebration and intercultural worship service to celebrate 20 years of German unity on October 3, 5pm** in the Herz-Jesu-Gemeinde, Fehrbelliner Str. 98/99, 10571 Berlin. Following the service, there will be a reception and refreshments. Christians from Poland and Korea will take part.

Keeping On: Protection from Terrorism

We are thankful that Berlin has not experienced Islamic or other forms of terrorism up till now. We continue to pray for protection for our city and that planned terror attacks will be discovered before they can take place.

According to a recent report, Islamic hate-preachers are trying to gain influence among young people. Preachers of the radical "Salafismus" are under special surveillance. Among others, the preachers of the Neukölln Al-Nur-Moschee belong to this group, which is against integration concepts and forbids contact with "unbelievers". The members believe that they are the only ones who interpret the Koran correctly.

Dates:

- **October 3, 5-8pm**, Herz-Jesu-Gemeinde, Fehrbelliner Str. 99, 10571 Berlin: **Thanking-Celebrating-Praying – Ecumenical and intercultural Worship Service to Celebrate 20 Years of German Unity, followed by a reception and refreshments**
- **September 18 March for Life, 1pm: Demonstration** at the Neptunbrunnen between Marienkirche and Rotem Rathaus, followed by the march. **3 pm: Ecumenical Worship Service** in the St.-Hedwigs-Kathedrale