



# Prayer for Berlin

November 2010

## **Good News: Thanksgiving Worship Service for 20 Years of German Unity**

On October 3, many people, initiatives, and also churches thankfully remembered 20 years of unity. There was an ecumenical, intercultural Thanksgiving Worship Service on a city-wide level held by TOGETHER FOR BERLIN and the Berlin ecumenical movement. A photo show commemorated the separation of the city, the fall of the Wall, and the path to reunification.

We expressed our thankfulness to God through both old hymns and new praise songs. Many participants in the service expressed their personal gratitude to God by lighting a candle at the altar. Many were moved by reports from Christian participants from Korea and Poland who shared about the reunification from their perspective. The diversity and unity of Christians in Berlin was reflected by prayers in English, French, Polish, Russian, Korean, and German. The final blessing was given by clergy from various churches, among them Cardinal Sterzinsky.

Senator Junge-Reyer spoke a word of appreciation on behalf of the Senate. Following the service there was a reception in the courtyard of the church, complete with Korean dances and Polish songs. Videos can be found at: <http://www.youtube.com/user/3Oktober10>

- **Thank God for the moving ecumenical and intercultural worship service**

## **Project of Hope: “Haus der guten Taten” (Good Deeds House)**

In Germany, there are over 900 workshops for the handicapped that produce high-quality products. Often the products are sold in a small shop, or at special events or markets. Often they just land in a warehouse. A new concept for the marketing and sale of these articles is being developed in the form of a non-profit company called “Shop der guten Taten” (Good deeds shop). One of the partners of this new company is TOGETHER FOR BERLIN.

The first store will open on November 18 in the Forum Steglitz shopping mall under the name of “COEO Haus

der guten Taten” (Good Deeds House). Products produced by the handicapped, and also products from international aid projects and Fair Trade organisations will be the primary goods sold. 50% of the profits will go back into social projects. Handicapped persons will be hired to work in the shop.

A Christian bookstore will also open in the same shop. Thus, a new business model which is both social and ecological is being developed on the basis of Christian values. In addition, the profits will be invested in social projects, including Christian projects.

### **Prayer:**

- **Thank God that Christians are moving forward with innovative models**
- **Pray for a good start for the shop**
- **Pray that the shops will multiply God’s blessings**

## **Cancellations within the program “Soziale Stadt” (Social City)**

In the last ten years, especially in Berlin, the integrative approach of the program “Soziale Stadt” have led on the one side to a halt in the downward spiral of “left-behind” districts and on the other side to positive developments. Integrative projects such as district mothers, educational mergers of schools, day-care centres and civic associations, and apprenticeships for youth have grown out of the program “Soziale Stadt”. The dedication of many residents, home-owners, and business owners working on a volunteer basis to shape their neighbourhoods is being threatened by budget cuts. You can sign a petition to the German Parliament against the cuts and cancellations of programs online at: <http://www.openpetition.de/petition/zeichnen/keine-kuerzung-streichung-des-programms-soziale-stadt>

### **Prayer:**

- **Pray that the cuts and cancellations will be revoked**
- **Pray for the effective use of finances in Berlin**

## **Men in Prison**

Unnoticed by those of us on the “outside”, there have been some major changes in Berlin’s prisons for men: Categories of inmates have been developed, daily schedules changed, times when prisoners must be locked into their own cells redefined, therapies taken over by non-governmental agencies, and transitional management put in place. The changes affect the inmates as well as prison personnel and the entire prison structure.

30 men who are currently in the JVA Tegel because of preventive detention are creating a special problem. The Senate administration has been looking for a solu-

tion for quite some time to the growing number of such inmates. In addition, since the federalism reform, new penal laws have been being worked out, which will bring drastic changes. It is feared that these changes will not bring improvement because of financial constraints.

When volunteers with the “Forum for Assistance for Criminal Offenders” from TOGETHER FOR BERLIN have a cup of coffee together with inmates following a worship service, usually at least one of the men says, “I would like to thank all of you who come from the “outside” to visit us.” For the inmates, such encounters are an invaluable treasure. In worship services, through small groups and as helpers for inmates—these are wonderful opportunities to serve people with God’s love.

We are urgently looking for and praying for more bridge-builders from outside to inside and from inside to outside. ([www.forum-straffaelligenhilfe.de](http://www.forum-straffaelligenhilfe.de)). Take a look at the date below!

**Prayer:**

- **Pray that the upcoming changes will be embedded in peace**
- **Pray that the financial constraints will not make everything worse and more difficult**
- **Pray that better opportunities for the re-socialisation of inmates will arise**
- **Pray that Christians will find a place to help in prisons full-time or as volunteers**

### ***Berlin as a magnet for performing artists***

Berlin’s reputation as one of the most creative cities is growing. Performing artists, not just from Germany, but also from abroad, are drawn by the creative atmosphere of the city as well as by the available financial aid structures for performing artists in Germany. In addition, the favourable living and working situations in the city, which has a strong cultural network, contribute to the interest. The exchange among artists and the availability of cooperation with others motivate many to latch onto the unique diversity of sophisticated culture and experimental off-scene in Berlin.

The fact that art and culture fall on fruitful soil in the capital city is also shown by the influx of various companies in the area of the creative arts such as publishing companies and in the music and TV branch (for instance MTV 2004, Suhrkamp-Verlag 2010, Deutsche Grammophon 2011). The Federal Ministry for the Economy and Industry has discovered how important this sector is, and founded the “Initiative for Culture and Creative Business” in 2007. With [www.creative-city-berlin.de](http://www.creative-city-berlin.de) or the Regional Office of Berlin-Brandenburg as a Competence-Centre, they target and

support the sustainability, profitability, and network of the branch of the performing arts.

**Prayer:**

- **Thank God for the many opportunities and the initiatives on the part of the government**
- **Pray that the many free-lance artists will be able to sustain themselves financially in spite of rising costs**
- **Pray that people will discover that art, creativity, and the joy of life are God’s gifts**

### ***Elections in Berlin are drawing near***

Something that is already being discussed in the media will probably be officially announced at the beginning of November—that Renate Künast (Green Party) will run for governing mayor. Thus the course has been set for the election of the Members of Parliament in September, 2011.

If Renate Künast runs, there will be a possibility of a black-green coalition in Berlin. Künast said in an interview that a campaign which excludes the CDU (Christian-Democratic-Union) as a partner from the very beginning would be impossible for her. That statement was a surprise for the Green Party in Berlin.

For the Berlin CDU, a coalition with the Greens would be the only way to remove the red-red coalition.

**Prayer:**

- **Pray that the parties can develop good campaigns which clearly show voters what they stand for**
- **Pray that God Himself will call people into Berlin politics**
- **Pray that an increasing number of candidates will be nominated who will desire to honour God through specific political involvement**

### ***Keeping On – Evangelism***

There are still millions of Berliners who have no connection to the Christian faith. Many have never heard a clear presentation of the Gospel which they could understand. Others have made a clear decision against God.

Let us pray that Christians find ways to share the good news of Jesus with secular Berliners.

### ***Date***

- **City-Prayer-Worship Service** in the JVA Tegel (prison) Nov. 24, 6:30pm, Seidelstr.39, 13509 B.-Tegel. **Reservations are required** by Nov. 15 at [info@gfberlin.de](mailto:info@gfberlin.de) or Tel.23003403!