



Prayer for Berlin

November 2012

Good News: October 3rd

On Reunification Day, October 3rd, a beautiful fall day, between 150 and 250 people participated in prayer events called "Giving thanks - celebrating - praying". Christians from various denominations and background cultures came together at three different locations - a Protestant church, in the Chapel of Reconciliation at the Wall Memorial in the Bernauer Straße, and in an Evangelical Free Church. There were different music styles - from a Serbian-Orthodox choir to a brass ensemble to African gospel. We thank God for the sign of living unity and public thanksgiving.

Good News: Car Sharing in Berlin

For every ten Berliners there are three cars. This is the lowest average in Germany. This is due on the one hand to the income situation and the high rate of unemployment, but it is also due to attractive alternatives to expensive and seldom-used private cars. Car Sharing is successful because there is an efficient public transportation system (even though it has its difficulties) and because there is a high concentration of providers of Car-Sharing models that are being used by approx. 73,000 Berliners. In addition to the commercial providers, www.nachbarschaftsauto.de is a platform where persons can offer their private vehicles for rent with full insurance coverage. The provider is currently working on increasing their services.

Prayer:

- **Thank God and pray for an increase in efficient, economic, and environmentally friendly alternatives to private vehicles**

Asylum seekers in Berlin

Every day approx. 50 new asylum seekers arrive in Berlin. Some districts are already unable to cope with further applications. The burden is not being shared equally. More than a fourth of the 4,296 asylum seekers whose applications are currently being processed live in Lichtenberg. Many are also living in Charlottenburg-Wilmersdorf, but there are none in Steglitz-Zehlendorf and Reinickendorf.

There is a big problem with the schooling of the children. In Lichtenberg, for instance, 40% of the asylum seekers are children. Each one of them has compulsory school attendance. But Lichtenberg already has rising numbers of school children and has no room for 400 more. As we mentioned in a previous prayer mail, the large influx of children who for the most part do not speak German is creating large problems in the educational system. Such children need special attention which means the schools need more personnel.

The life of asylum-seekers is strongly regulated by the federal government. They are not allowed to work and are thus often doomed to years of inactivity. This causes a lot of frustration. The districts think that the Senate needs to act. Overall, Berlin should focus more on loosening the laws concerning asylum-seekers and on giving them a new perspective on life through issuing work permits.

Prayer:

- **Pray that the burdens of integrating asylum-seekers will be more fairly distributed in the city**
- **Pray that schools can get more personnel**
- **Pray that politicians will have a merciful view of the needs of asylum-seekers**
- **Pray for new perspectives for all those who seek asylum in the city**

Anti-Semitic Violence

In Berlin in August, a group of youth, most probably of Arabic background, recognized a Rabbi as being Jewish because of his skull cap. They beat him up and threatened to kill his six-year-old daughter. Following the attack, a public meeting was held during which residents and churches pledged to support the Rabbi and other Jewish residents. Nevertheless, the number of incidents is increasing. On Yom Kippur a Jewish couple were thrown out of a taxi, because the taxi driver supposedly did not want to drive them to the synagogue. On the same day, a Rabbi was offended and attacked. Ever the since debate about circumcision began, Jewish associations and facilities, including those in Berlin, have been bombarded with hate mail. The climate in the city is threatening to change.

During a interview with ARD, passersby on the streets in Berlin said in front of the camera, "The Jews just want our money - they want to keep our country small" (<http://bit.ly/VkOvm4>). People are lowering their inhibitions of making such Anti-Semitic remarks openly. According to a survey every

fifth person in the younger generation did not know that Auschwitz was a Concentration Camp. Sixteen million Germans (that is 20%) have Anti-Semitic views. The fact that the media is slanting the views on the conflict in the Middle East towards the Palestinians is contributing to an increase in negativity towards Jews. In the Arabic-background population, hatred toward Israel is alive and is creating problems for teachers in the schools.

History teachers need special concepts to teach Turkish or Arabic children a different view of Jews. Through satellite TV they are growing up with hate propaganda against Jews and Israel.

Prayer:

- **Pray for protection and blessing for the Jews in our country**
- **Pray for the development of educational programs which will fight against hate and eliminate prejudice**
- **Pray that the police will be successful in investigating Anti-Semitic occurrences**

New Integration Commissioner

Dr. Monika Lüke (43), expert on international law, is the new Commissioner for Integration and Migration for the state of Berlin. Since 2011 she has also been a member of the Missions Board, the Supervisory Committee of the Berlin Missionswerk. Dr. Lüke told the "Berliner Zeitung" directly after her appointment that she wants to be an advocate for the immigrants who live in Berlin. This includes criticizing certain phenomena such as Anti-Semitism. She sees herself as a door-opener for immigrants to help them take part in society. The article goes on to say that this includes medical care and school attendance for all. Before becoming the Integration Commissioner, Monika Lüke was the Secretary General for the German branch of Amnesty International. Previously she worked in Brussels as the Immigrant and Refugee Consultant of the Protestant Church in Germany (EKD). In addition, she has served as a development worker in Kenya and Cambodia, and since 2008 has been responsible for human rights projects in Asia. She is the successor of Günter Piening, who voluntarily left the position in June. (Infos: Berliner Missionswerk)

Prayer:

- **Pray for a good start and open doors for Monika Lüke**
- **Pray for effective integration work which will benefit immigrants and refugees**

The Senator Thomas Heilmann

Last but not least, in our series about new members of the red-black Berlin Senate, we want to pray for Senator Heilmann. Since December, 2011 this post had been filled by Michael Braun. As a result of massive accusations in connection with his role by the authentication of so-called junk-properties, he was forced to leave office after only a few weeks. Heilmann (48), like his predecessor, is Deputy State Chairman of the CDU. He is considered to be one of the leading figures in renewed Berlin CDU. He is married and has four children.

He became known through his many internet involvements. In 1990 he founded an advertising agency which became "Scholz & Friends". He was managing partner of the Berlin branch and Chairman of the Board until 2008. Some of the topics he is currently working on are: (too high) water prices, the debate about circumcision of boys, the naming of a Victims Representative, restaurant-"Smileys", long-term problems in the prisons.

Prayer:

- **Pray for success and God's direction in the face of heated topics**
- **Pray for protection from scandals and mistakes**
- **Pray for inspiration to initiate new things**

Keeping On

Attacks on police are continuing. Currently the most dangerous kind of attacks takes the form of loosening the lug nuts on the wheels of private vehicles of the police on duty.

Until now deadly accidents have been avoided because the loose lug nuts were discovered beforehand. Let us continue to pray for protection and discovery of offenders.

Dates

- **Nov. 10, 2:30pm Day of Prayer for Persecuted Christians sponsored by the Evangelical Alliance, Alt Tempelhof 15, 12099 Berlin**
- **Nov. 14, 6pm, Prayer for City Politics at the Rathaus**
- **Nov 21, 7:30pm, Praystation at the Rund-um-die Uhr-Gebetshaus (Around the Clock House of Prayer): For four weeks, get acquainted with and practice various forms of Christian prayer. For more information and to register: <http://tinyurl.com/c9pt8b7>**