



115th edition - June 2013

Good News: Peaceful May 1

It was exactly ten years ago that Berlin Christians began to pray together for a peaceful May 1. From 1987 on, there had been violence every year in Berlin on May 1, so in 2003 Christians began to ask God for peace in the city during a night of praise and 24/7 prayer.

From 2004 on, there has been a public prayer service in Kreuzberg. In addition, Christians began praying on-site in problem areas. The result: With one exception, each year was more peaceful than the last. This year, instead of an open-air worship service in Kreuzberg, there were de-centralized prayer events in various churches as well as 28 hours of praise with intercessory prayer in the Kreuzberg Gebetskeller "Sieben Feuerflammen" (Prayer basement entitled seven flames)

The Walpurgis Night was totally peaceful. Even the 6pm demonstration from Kreuzberg to Mitte, which had spawned violence in the past, was more peaceful than it has been since 1987! In former years, it often had to be closed down before it reached Mitte, because the so-called "Black Block of Anarchists" provoked violence. However this year, it broke up totally peacefully and reached its goal. The Chief of Police reported: May 1, 2013 had the least amount of incidents since the annual violence began in 1987.

Prayer:

- **Thank God for the most peaceful May 1 since 1987 and for all those who helped make it so**

Flats Construction is making progress!

Our prayer requests from April have been answered surprisingly fast. However, the following points have been agreed upon only by the Parliamentary Chairmen of the SPD and the CDU and still need to be approved by the parties. The financing is also not yet sure. "The leaders of the Berlin coalition of SPD and CDU have agreed on an extensive program to fight the housing shortage in the capital city. For the first time, building permits will be granted only if the investor shares the cost of streets, day care centres, and schools -- or if part of the flats will be rented at affordable rates to low-income households. This "so-

cially fair use" of ground is to be regulated in all of the state of Berlin.

The coalition partners also reached an agreement concerning the question of how to encourage the provision of new living space. 64 million Euros are to be provided annually through a fund, half of which are federal funds. Unlike earlier efforts, only a small portion of the costs will be subsidized. Instead the building owner must rent a portion of the flats at low-priced rates.

With the help of this program, a total of 40,000 new flats could be built. 15,000 of those could be built by private owners who receive funding or who are legally obligated to provide low-priced housing according to the new regulation.

In addition, on Tuesday the Senate approved a bill presented by the Senator for Construction, Michael Müller (SPD) that forbids the misappropriation of housing space. The law will limit the conversion of housing space into commercial space or holiday flats. In addition the demolition or speculative vacancy of housing space will also be prevented. After Pentecost, a new by-law will go into effect whereby the rents can rise by a maximum of 15 percent in the space of three years, as opposed to the current 20 percent. For the 280,000 municipal flats, the cap is now limited to 15 percent within the space of four years. In addition the amount of shared costs for modernization is 9 percent instead of 11 percent. (Source: Tagesspiegel 8.5.2013)

One large problem remains: When a flat is newly rented there is no overall cap. As a result, the price can be increased greatly.

Prayer:

- **Thank God for first specific steps to create and keep affordable housing**
- **Pray that the parties will approve the bill and for a quick implementation through the administration**

The Tempelhof Airfield

The future usage of the Tempelhof airport has not yet been fully decided. Construction of new housing is planned for the border surrounding the Tempelhof airfield. According to the model submitted by City Development Senator Müller, up to 5000 new flats could result. However opposition to this plan for construction for the surrounding border has arisen, which



was to be expected in connection with such a project. Conservationists want to leave the entire area undeveloped.

Prayer:

- **Pray for wisdom for the planning for the future usage of the Tempelhof airfield**
- **Pray that the various interest groups can be involved in such a way that it enriches and improves the planning**

Obama in Berlin

President Barack Obama will visit Berlin on June 18-19. It is his first visit to the German capital city as President. During his last visit to Berlin in 2008, when he spoke to 200,000 enthusiastic people at the Siegessäule, he was still a presidential candidate.

His visit in June, 2013 nearly falls on the 50th anniversary of John F. Kennedy's famous visit to Berlin, where he said his famous sentence on June 26, 1963, "Ich bin ein Berliner", thus aligning himself with a divided city in a divided nation, which was in the crosshairs of the Cold War. Obama's visit recalls the long-standing partnership and support of Americans for Berlin, but will focus primarily on consultations concerning current political situations, in particular the Syrian conflict. The highest level of security will be in effect during the visit.

Prayer:

- **Pray for protection of the President and his delegation and for wisdom for the police and security**
- **Pray that the encounters will lead towards stabilization of relationships and concrete results**

Hatred of Swabians (Schwabens)

It sounds like a joke, but unfortunately it is serious. In the district Prenzlauer Berg, slogans such as "Get rid of Swabians" have been sprayed on walls. Because there has been not just one such case, and because the media has reported about this issue, we want to communicate it as a prayer request.

People from the region of Swabia in southwestern Germany are afraid to reveal their background in certain areas of Berlin. One explanation could be that some socially deprived people, who are perhaps politically radical, are undifferentiatedly focusing their hatred on those benefitting from the luxury restoration of houses (gentrification).

Prayer:

- **Pray for a peaceful coexistence of differing life-styles and income groups**
- **Pray that the situation will be eased through the forced construction of low-priced housing**

Christopher Street Day

On June 22, 2013 the Christopher Street Day (CSD) will take place in Berlin. In many areas of the city, it is viewed as a merry parade of lesbians and homosexuals. Actually, the goals of the CSD are primarily political, among others the dissolution of traditional view of male and female. Among other things in the in the list of demands of the CSD, the statement is made, *"The strict definitions of "male" and "female" are totally unnecessary in an emancipated society. Putting people into legal or judicial classifications just leads to heteronomy, compulsions, and dependencies." -- or "We demand the opening of marriage for all, legal gender mainstreaming, and the protection of rainbow families! -- We demand the separation of church and state!"*

There are many people who oppose these demands who do not think, for instance, that the further dissolution of sexual identity of man and woman is good for society. However he who dares to say this publicly is often attacked and quickly termed "homophobic". It seems as though a minority is attempting to impose its opinions on the majority. (Source: csd-berlin.de)

Prayer:

- **Pray that the press will make it clear that the demands of the CSD are being made by a minority and that critical opinions will also be voiced**
- **Pray that politicians will have the wisdom to see what consequences the demands of the CSD would have and whether these are truly desired**
- **Pray for honest, open discussion about that which is good for the society in general**

Keeping On: Airport BER

The discussion about the correct way to speed up the opening of the airport continues. The new director Hartmut Mehdorn is making unconventional suggestions which are often not being accepted by the board of directors. The shareholders Berlin and Brandenburg and the federal government do not always agree with one another. The costs continue to rise.

Let us pray for protection from further financial and image damage and that the right specialists will be appointed.

Dates

- **June 2, 6pm Political Prayer for the City** in front of or inside the Rotes Rathaus
- **June 21-22 BURN** and prayer on the occasion of the **Christopher Street Day** (Details on request)

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