



116th edition - July/August 2013

Good News: More Prayer

You can never really measure prayer, but nevertheless it is perceivable--more and more Christians in Berlin are praying, not just for personal requests, but also for the city. Praise events around the clock such as BURN are well attended. Prayer initiatives for specific events such as May 1st or the Christopher Street Day are drawing more and more prayer partners to the streets. Other Christians are doing prayer walks through their districts. Prayer for politicians at the Rote Rathaus is very popular. We are thankful for this increase in specific prayer for the city-- and we hope it continues to increase!

City Planning: Teufelsberg

The Teufelsberg in Grunewald was made on the grounds of the military-technical college founded by Hitler in 1937, which Hitler wanted to build for his capital city Germania, but was never finished. From 1950 to 1972 the rubble from the bombed-out city of Berlin was deposited there. Thus, a 114 meter high artificial hill was created. Beginning in 1951 an American listening station was built there, which became part of a worldwide intelligence gathering network. Following reunification, the Americans abandoned the post. Since then, the building with its very visible white dome has been deteriorating rapidly. A plan to build luxury flats fell through, and the land was once again given over to wood land. Now the "Round Table Teufelsberg", which the Senate and the District of Charlottenburg-Wilmersdorf initiated, plan to clarify what should be done with this historical building. It might be possible to save it as a testimony to the cold war.

Prayer:

- **Pray that through God's inspiration a creative solution can be found that would do justice to the history of the place**
- **Pray for all participants of the Round Table - that they would be succeed in working together in a respectful way**

Property Owners Being Threatened

The Tagesspiegel has reported a recent increase in attacks on newly constructed buildings in Friedrichshain and Kreuzberg. Left-wing extremists see this as an appropriate method of protesting the

displacement of long-established tenants in favour of posh redevelopment (gentrification). For instance, unknown perpetrators set fire to the facade of a new penthouse in the Rigaer Straße. Paint was thrown at other facades, and windows were smashed.

There is a left-wing extremist site on the internet advertising "creative campaigns against displacement". It displays dozens of addresses of new construction projects, public housing enterprises, investors, real estate companies, real estate agents, etc. Owners or tenants of such newly constructed buildings are suffering under such "creative campaigns". A reporter of the Tagesspiegel wrote, "Rocks were thrown through the window of the flat of our paediatrician, who lives in a newly constructed building on the next block. They landed in the children's bedroom. The message was clear: "We shouldn't feel safe. We could be next."

Prayer:

- **Pray that the police will be successful in preventing further attacks**
- **Pray for the protection of the owners and tenants**
- **Pray that a peaceful solution to the conflict of interests in the districts can be found**

Berlin's City Palace/Humboldtforum

On June 12, 2103 the foundation stone was laid for the reconstruction of Berlin's Stadtschloss (city palace). The decision of the Lower House of Parliament in 2002 to rebuild the former Prussian imperial residence was met with acceptance, and still is, but also with strong criticism, in the House of Parliament itself, but also among the general population.

The background: Under the East German government because of ideological reasons, the palace was blasted in 1950. The Palast der Republik (Palace of the Republic), which housed the former East German Parliament and the House of Culture for its citizens, was built on the site. Many people, including many former East Germans, feel that the tearing-down of the Palace of the Republic is a tit-for-tat response and a power struggle about who has the final word concerning the ideological and historical meaning of Berlin.

The new construction: The new, modern Humboldtforum will be developed behind the baroque

facade, which will architecturally complete the historical centre of Berlin. It is to be a place for the people to meet and to broaden their horizons, a place of knowledge, world culture, and the arts - with libraries, displays of non-European objects from Berlin's museums, cultural events, restaurants, etc. Mr. Ramsauer refers to the East-German culture of the place when he calls for making the Forum a "true house of the people". Mr. Neumann, the Minister of Culture, talks about the rebuilding as one of the foremost cultural undertakings in Germany. The Humboldtforum is to be completed in 2018. The calculated cost is 590 Million Euros.

Prayer:

- **Pray for a reconciliatory processing of the decisions of the past decades**
- **Pray for wisdom for the construction and for the content concept, including time-frame and finances**
- **Pray that it will truly be a place of the people and that it will lead to reconciliation**

Fewer residents, less money

According to the last micro-census, Berlin has 180,000 fewer residents, whereby experts contend the accuracy of the results, parts of which were estimates. But it does mean less money will be coming from the financial equalisation scheme between the federal government and the states. Thus, the coalition between SPD and CDU had to present a savings plan for the 2014/2015 budget. Planning and financing for the International Construction Trade Fair was stopped. The real estate transfer tax was raised by one percent. The increased promotion of new housing (which has been one of our prayer requests in recent months) and the educational sector have been spared cuts. The Senate does not want to go further into debt. Berlin's potential share in the additional costs of the BER-airport construction is not yet foreseeable, which makes the budget planning uncertain.

Prayer:

- **Pray for a socially agreeable and sustainable budget in spite of cuts**
- **Pray for a fair balance between richer and poorer states**
- **Pray that negative consequences for Berlin can be avoided**

Problems with Development of Day-care Centres

The Chairman of the Arbeiterwohlfahrt (AWO) sounded an alarm recently. According to his observation, the quality of day-care centres is suffering under the pressure of accelerated development.

Since the decision about the legal right to a place in day-care, three foundational factors have been deteriorating: the quality of care, an adequate number of trained professionals, and sustainable funding.

Day-care centres are often overcrowded, and the size of the groups has been increased by 20-25% to accommodate the need. Because trained personnel is lacking, the shortage is being balanced out by socio-pedagogical assistants or childcare assistants or even by untrained personnel.

The legal right to a place in day-care for children 1 year and up will go into effect on August 1 in Berlin. Since it is increasingly difficult to find qualified day-care personnel, the Senate is allowing the percentage of non-trained personnel to rise to 25%.

Lateral- entry employees who are being trained as day-care workers, but are already working in day-care centres are simply being counted as fully-trained personnel. The chairman of the Parents Day-Care Committee for the State of Berlin does not think that Berlin is ready for the legal right to a place in day-care beginning in August. Day-care workers in Berlin receive less pay than any other states.

Prayer:

- **Pray for God's help for all day-care workers who are working beyond capacity in the midst of a growing pressure to perform**
- **Pray that politicians will not continue to implement the legal claim at the cost of the quality of child-care**
- **Pray the parents will see how they can involve themselves (also politically) to achieve the best care for their children**

Summer Camps and Activities

During the summer, many Christian organisations offer summer camps in which faith issues are part of the program along with fun and games. For many, especially for young participants, this is the very first encounter with Christianity

In addition, evangelistic events, barbecues, and other activities will make it possible for Berliners to hear about Christianity, for instance through "European Initiative" and "Juden für Jesus" (Jews for Jesus).

Prayer:

- **Pray that (young) people attending summer camps and those encountered on the streets will decide to let God rule their lives**

Dates

July 10 and August 14, 6pm Political prayer at the Rotes Rathaus

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