



Edition 133 – April 2015

### **Good News: University-Partnership Berlin - Jerusalem**

In the anniversary year 50 years of diplomatic relations Germany- Israel, the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and the Freie University of Berlin are expanding their partnership. A new agreement allows students to pursue doctorates simultaneously at both universities in all departments.

This agreement is the first of its kind between an Israeli and a German university. Graduates will be trained in both Berlin and Jerusalem, and will receive a doctorate from both universities. They will also gain international research experience and establish relationships in the two countries. Thus, not only academics, but also reconciliation and understanding will be encouraged.

### **Good News: German guilt and Armenian forgiveness**

The ecumenical repentance liturgy for German complicity in the genocide of Armenians 100 years ago was a moving event that (according to an Armenian) "made history".

About 300 people gathered in the Kaiser Wilhelm Memorial Church. Pastor Philip from Prussia, a descendant of Emperor Wilhelm II, preached and asked the Armenians who were present for forgiveness. In addition, a prayer of repentance was prayed, which all Germans present could pray. The Armenian Archbishop of Germany took the confession and granted forgiveness. This confession of the (proven, massive) complicity of Germany probably happened for the first time in this way.

Let us pray for lasting consequences also in German politics.

### **100 Days Michael Müller**

Contrary to expectations, the new mayor Michael Müller has quickly risen to be the most popular politician in Berlin. In the first 100 days of his term of office, his popularity-rating exceeded that of his predecessor during his best times. Probably the Berliners are honouring the way he governs, which is not aimed at making a big show. "Govern well" is Mueller's motto.

It's astounding that there have been no beginner's errors and no mistakes in personnel choices in the first 100 days of the government. Thus the new mayor has produced no negative headlines. For Müller, it is important that the government seek out residents.

On his initiative, the Senate is now meeting regularly in the districts, after which he makes himself available to the residents. People can also visit him in the Rote Rathaus, where he also holds consultations with residents. It's important to Müller to address specific problems – he's not spoken about great vision for the future yet. At the same time he is showing strong leadership. He was successful in pushing through a change in the management of the BER against the federal government.

#### **Prayer:**

- **Thank God for Müller's positive start in office**
- **Pray for clarity on how to address the many problems of the city**
- **Pray for courage to make good decisions even if they are unpopular**

### **May 1**

The 1st of May is approaching. Because of prayer, May 1 has become increasingly less violent in recent years. Intercessors will be back on the streets (if interested please contact [info@gfberlin.de](mailto:info@gfberlin.de)). The days will be filled with continuous praise (see schedule).

It is not yet clear which demonstrations will take place, nor how to estimate the potential for violence. For the first time, Christian music groups will participate this year on one of the stages at the "Myfest". A gospel choir and bands of various ethnic backgrounds will be playing at the Heinrichplatz.

#### **Prayer:**

- **Thank God for the intercultural music stage and pray for successful preparation**
- **Pray for a non-violent May 1 holiday in Berlin**
- **Pray for wisdom for the police, and that their actions will lead to de-escalation**

## **Old Mitte – New Love**

The design of Berlin's Mitte is still not finished. It is about the historical centre around Alexanderplatz between the television tower and the Spree river. Now, residents are being involved and can discuss ideas, also online. There, people are already expressing their opinions--most of the entries describe the area as not conducive to lingering.

On April 18, the public beginning of official dialogue with the Senate will take place at the Berlin Congress Centre. Among others, the following questions will be discussed: Should the Neptune Fountain be moved back to the castle? How do you deal with the monuments of Marx and Engels? How should the large open area be used? Should it be retained or should it be opened for construction? If so, how?

Residents can discuss until the end of 2015 and then formulate a kind of manifesto for the area. The Parliament will then take a look at the residents' wishes and decide accordingly. In a competition in 2016, architects will make a design which integrates the ideas and plans. The area surrounding the Marienkirche is already being re-done, and the large Luther monument will be returned to its historic place near the church.

### **Prayer:**

- **Pray for God-given ideas for the design of Mitte**
- **Pray that God's love for the city can be expressed through the architectural design**

**Pray for successful civil dialogue - without provocative interference**

## **Islamic religion teachers and Islamists**

The Senate no longer wants imams and Islamic religion teachers who are sent from abroad to teach here in the mosques, because they often do not speak German and have little understanding of the reality of life of people living in Germany and of Muslims living in Berlin. Therefore, a Berlin Institute of Islamic theology is to be established. Future Islamic religion teachers for Berlin's schools as well as imams for the mosques will be trained there.

Due to the increasing radicalization, especially of young people, the Senate is seriously working on countermeasures. The Senate thinks that the training of Islamic religious scholars in German has the advantage that these people know the German society and are rooted in it. According to educational administration, a committee and an advisory board are to be set up for this project.

Since 2011, the number of Salafists in Berlin known to the Protection of the Constitution tripled to 620. 330 are considered to be violence-prone. Currently,

the Senate is also considering a ban of the association of the Al-Nur-Mosque. The mosque is a meeting-place of Salafists and is being observed by inland security. There have been hate-campaigns against Jews, and recently there was also a sermon with very strong anti-women sentiments directed against the German law concerning respecting the rights of women.

### **Prayer:**

- **Pray for wisdom and success for the implementation of the teacher training**
- **Pray for more insight as to how to counter the radicalization of young people**
- **Pray for a powerful, saving work of the Holy Spirit among Muslims**

## **Counselling for jihad returnees**

In addition, in early April a Counselling Centre for disillusioned returnees from jihad will begin in Berlin. Caregivers funded by the Senate will help them rediscover a peaceful life. The club VPN has already gained experience in other states. So far, Berlin's inland security personnel have counted 90 violent Islamists from Berlin who have gone to the "holy war". One third of them have returned to the capital city.

Berlin is considered a stronghold of the jihadist's scene. The head of the Berlin Constitutional protection is warning about many returnees—they are radicalized, they are jaded, they could pose a danger. The rate of "successful" counselling for returnees is estimated to be quite high.

### **Prayer:**

- **Pray for a high success rate for counselling of jihad returnees**
- **Pray that those who are disappointed because of the brutality of the „Islamic State“ (IS) will find true life in Jesus Christ**

## **Dates**

- **April 8, 6pm, Prayer for city politicians** in front of the Rotes Rathaus
- **April 30-May 2, BURN**, continual praise with intercessory prayer times for May 1<sup>st</sup>, Gebetskeller Kreuzberg, Adalbertstr. 97 (Kottbusser Tor)
- **May 1, 1-7pm, Intercultural Music Stage** with Christian bands as part of the „Myfest 2015“, Heinrichplatz, Kreuzberg
- **Preview: May 8-10, 70th anniversary of the deliverance of Berlin:** Completion of 100 days of prayer (May 8), Commemoration in concentration camp Sachsenhausen (May 9), March of Life (March 10, 3pm)  
More details in the next prayer mail!