



Edition 141– February 2016

Good News: Body Worlds Exhibition prohibited

In February, 2015 the permanent Body Worlds exhibition, the "Human Museum", opened on the Alexanderplatz. The district Berlin-Mitte took them to court several times and in December, the judgement was passed. "In the opinion of the administrative court, the plastinated exhibition pieces fall under the term corpse within the concept of the Berlin Burial Act even after their production, and are therefore forbidden to be exhibited." The chance of necessary approval of the exhibition of the corpses is now very low, but it could still take more than one year until this judgement is final. Until then, the museum remains open. In addition, regular anatomy workshops for 8- to 12-year-olds using the plastinated body parts are now being planned. Whether or not this is a youth hazard is being investigated.

Prayer:

- **Thank God for the judicial ban on the exhibition**
- **Pray that the judgement quickly becomes legally binding and that the anatomy workshops for children will also be banned**

Humboldtforum: New Director comes, Project Director goes

There are personnel changes at the Berlin City Castle (Stadtschloss), the future Humboldt Forum. The board of the foundation and former manager of the construction site, Manfred Rettig, will retire on March 1 (age-wise overdue). The experienced expert had already managed the government's move from Bonn to Berlin. He will be on the Board of Trustees of the Stadtschloss Foundation, but will end his professional project management.

Mr. Rettig said that the project will continue to fascinate him as the construction engineer in charge, but that he felt he could no longer support further structural changes in the interior and in the use of the Stadtschloss. This is quite a delicate situation, because in addition to the two founding directors Parzinger and Bredenkamp, Neil MacGregor recently came from Britain. His appointment by Culture Secretary Monika Grütters had been much praised: a renowned Germany-connoisseur and a creative mind - with proximity to the Christian faith. He wants to think

anew about the meaning of the Humboldt Forum as a Schloss of World Cultures - especially now that more people than ever from all cultures of the world have landed in Berlin and in Germany. The construction planner Rettig obviously did not agree with such thinking.

Prayer:

- **Thank God for the recent construction progress in terms of time and budget (an exception!)**
- **Pray that the federal government and the state of Berlin will quickly agree on a successor**
- **Pray for constructive and creative further work on the Schloss for the benefit of the city and the country**

Prayer for Berlin's Administrative Offices: LaGeSo

During this election year in Berlin, we want to pray especially for Berlin's administrative offices. In recent years, they have made headlines from time to time, but they were unfortunately often not positive.

In order for change to happen, politicians must be willing to change, and we need prayer that the right people recognize and tackle the necessary measures.

We start this new prayer topic with the Berlin State Office for Health and Social Affairs, nicknamed LaGeSo. It has a variety of tasks: Health – for instance, the licensing of physicians, caring for people with disabilities, and a wide range of things that belong to "social affairs", under which in Berlin the care of refugees presently belongs. The Office was already stretched to its limits in 2015 because of outdated computer technology and massive job cuts. The influx of refugees in 2015 led to massive overload.

People have to stand in line for days and nights to even have a chance at a turn. Many refugees were homeless for weeks. The former head of LaGeSo resigned in December following massive criticism of his administration. Sebastian Muschter will serve as interim successor for about a year. He does not come from the management side, but rather as a consultant to management. He has expertise in the area of IT-optimization. The area of caring for refugees is due to be separated from the LaGeSo and become a private office.

Prayer:

- **Thank God for the many tasks that the LaGeSo do for Berlin citizens**
- **Pray for quick solutions for the many people – especially the refugees – who are suffering because of inefficient structures**
- **Pray for sustainable improvement of IT and processes and a good structure and team for the new Refugee Office.**

House of Representatives Election September

On September 18, 2016, Berliners will choose the new House of Representatives. The District Assemblies will be elected on the same day. Most direct candidates for the House of Representatives have already been defined within the parties. For example, the SPD elected Mayor Müller in constituency 4 with 100% of the votes.

According to the current Forsa survey, it looks as if only slight changes in the allocation of seats among the four strongest parties will occur. But the Pirate Party has currently fallen below the 5% threshold, and the majority of the previous representatives will support the Left. The AFD could possibly move in as the fifth party. At the last election in 2011 the turnout was 60.2%, a slight increase from the low point of 2006.

Prayer:

- **Pray that God's will be done in the election and the following formation of a coalition**
- **Pray that the voter turnout will rise further**

Berliner of the Year – Refugee Helper

Last year, some 80,000 refugees have come to Berlin. Thousands of Berliners from all walks of life have been involved in helping them. Together with RTL 104,6, the Berliner Morgenpost has chosen a refugee helper as "Berliner of the Year". The student Phillipp Bertrams began helping from the very beginning when the former town hall in Wilmersdorf was converted into a refugee shelter. He organized the Facebook group "Wilmersdorf help" that was able to mobilize 200 helpers to help at the shelter on the day after it was created. 150-200 volunteers are still helping every day, and Phillip Bertrams has interrupted his studies to become the director of the shelter. The honour includes all those who are taking care of refugees every day.

Prayer:

- **Thank God for all who are working tirelessly to care for refugees**
- **Pray that the helpers will receive help from public authorities**

- **Pray that the creativity of the helpers will be recognized and promoted where possible for the benefit of all**

Refugee Village in Tempelhof

The number of refugees calls for new and unconventional thinking on many levels. Decisions must be able to be made more quickly and with less red tape. How difficult this is, however, is already evident in the planning for temporary refugee shelters, some of which will be newly built - such as on the Tempelhof Field. According to a referendum, there can be no construction on Tempelhof Field.

The current idea is to build a temporary development on the edge, which will provide housing for about 7,000 people. A change in the Tempelhof law is not progressing as fast as Mayor Müller desires. The Parliament must discuss what should be done, and this will not take place until the end of January. At the same time the construction of housing also for the growing influx of Berliners must be planned politically and receive state support. In addition, many low income Berliners are finding it extremely difficult to find housing.

Prayer:

- **Pray for success in reducing tight and narrow requirements for residential construction**
- **Pray for a quick solution for the planning of the Tempelhofer Field**
- **Pray that a boost in housing construction will benefit all Berliners**

Keeping On: The Terror Threat

The number of Salafists in Berlin known by Homeland Security is growing. More than 100 of them have left the country to go to Syria and Iraq to fight there. Approximately 30 have returned here from Syria. Many of them are classified as "dangerous persons".

Prayer:

- **Pray for further protection against attacks and for the conversion of Salafists**

Dates

- **Feb. 10, 6pm: Prayer for city politicians** in front of the Rote Rathaus
- **March 3.-5: Transforum-Conference** of Together for Berlin, including a workshop on "Exploring worlds in which people live through prayer walks" and early morning prayer. More at www.transforum-berlin.de