



Edition 145 – June 2016

Good News: May 1 mostly peaceful

Thanks to all who prayed and worked for a peaceful May 1st! It was mostly quiet, for which we are very grateful to God. In Kreuzberg thousands celebrated all Sunday afternoon peacefully. Only a few bottles were thrown towards the end of the Revolutionary May 1st demonstration. The night before remained mostly calm. Unfortunately, the ten minutes after the demo on Lausitzer Platz ended resulted in the summary statement: only "mostly positive". The numbers of bottle-throwing incidents and people injured and arrested are still too high. Let's keep praying!

Prayer:

- **Thank God for a mostly peaceful May 1st**
- **Pray for a completely peaceful May 1, 2017**

Pray for Ramadan June 6-July 4

During the month of Ramadan, the Muslim fasting month, Muslims fast from sunrise to sunset. They do not eat or drink during this time. Their desire is to meet God in a special way. Special importance is given to the so-called "Night of Power" in which Muslims desire and ask for a revelation from God. In 2016 Ramadan takes place from June 6 to July 4—the longest day of the year. Tens of thousands of Muslim refugees are currently living in shelters with people of other religions. This poses particular challenges. Plans to supply food outside of normal meal times must be made. In addition, the long period of time without anything to drink can be a major health hazard, resulting in headaches and even circulatory collapse. It also poses a challenge for a peaceful coexistence, when thousands of people who are easily irritable because of thirst and hunger are living in a confined space with those who are eating normally. The risk of clashes with members of other religions is usually far higher during Ramadan than at other times. The prayer booklet "30 days of prayer for the Muslim world" gives inputs for daily prayer. It is available from the German Evangelical Alliance: <http://www.ead.de/30-tage-gebet.htm>

Prayer:

- **Pray that God will reveal Himself to Muslims during these days in special ways**

- **Pray for successful concepts for food supply, health, and security in the refugee housing during Ramadan**

Study on the Situation of Christians in Refugee Housing

On May 9, a (non-representative) study from Agency Open Doors was presented in Berlin, documenting the violent attacks on Christians in refugee camps. 88% of Christians surveyed 231 (mostly converts) in various refugee housing reported serious assaults on them because of their faith. According to the head of Open Doors, Markus Rode, Christian refugees in Germany are living in a "climate of fear and panic". This also applies to Yazidis and other minorities. There are few opportunities tell someone about what is happening, because the security personnel, who are predominantly Muslims themselves, often become violent. Minorities in refugee camps are losing their trust in the German state. Pastor Gottfried Martens of the Dreieinigkeitsgemeinde Berlin-Steglitz (SELK) has many Iranian and Afghan converts in his church. Many times he has had to spontaneously provide private accommodations for them. He would like to see more Christians agree to take these threatened believers into their homes. The idea of a counselling centre for Christian refugees is also being discussed.

Prayer:

- **Pray that God will provide solutions to protect minorities**
- **Pray that the politicians responsible to make decisions would no longer ignore the problem**
- **Pray the security personnel would be trained, recruited, and controlled differently**
- **Pray that doors will be opened for a counselling centre for Christian refugees**

Education: schools and teachers are becoming scarce

Berlin schools must absorb 40,000 students more than originally planned during the next eight years. But even before the refugee crisis, there were already too few school places. 3,000 more new teachers will be

needed in Berlin's schools in the next 8 years than what was predicted a year ago. A total of more than 16,000 teachers must be hired by the school year 2023/24. These numbers emerge from a recent model calculation done by the Senate Education Administration. The Senate forecasts an additional 75,000 students - an increase of 25 percent. The highest increases are in the Lichtenberg district. To meet the demand, the educational administration is recruiting teachers from Austria and the Netherlands. (Tagesspiegel 25.5.) So far, it has not been possible to absorb the growth in population among young people with new schools and extensions. According to the forecasts of the educational administration, for the coming school year 1100 new primary school teachers would be needed. There are many teacher vacancies in primary schools even in the current school year that could not be filled because there were not enough trained applicants. Teaching must once again become more attractive. As an emergency measure, the Free University and the Humboldt University in collaboration with the Education Senator Sandra Scheeres (SPD) have agreed to double the number of places for prospective primary school teachers already for the coming winter semester. But those who are just now beginning their studies will not be finished for six years. (Morgenpost). The challenge of providing education in light of the current shortages both in teachers and schools, along with the poor condition of school buildings, is also a big issue in the upcoming elections. The CDU is bringing the fact that the restoration costs are estimated to be around five billion euros into the discussions, and is advertising with the reintroduction of the tenure of teachers.

Prayer:

- **Thank God for new places for students of education at the universities**
- **Pray for further successful measures to meet the increasing need**
- **Pray that resources can be set free, especially for primary schools**
- **Pray that people will be called to become teachers**

Youth Festival „Ick brauch keen Hawaii“ (I don't need Hawaii)

From July 20-24, children, adolescents and young adults will have the opportunity every day from 2-6 pm to experience the summer at the Tempelhof field with sports, art and music. Beginning at 6:30pm, the "church", a 400-m² tent, will open its doors. Different speakers will provide insight into their lives and invite people to think about God and their own lives. Each of the five evenings will end with music and cocktails. The festival is organized by the YMCA Berlin in cooperation with Berlin UniteD, the youth track of Together

for Berlin, the student-SMD, the Gemeinschafts-Diakonieverband, as well as a number of other churches and initiatives. Overall, more than 30 groups and more than 300 volunteers will participate in the event. This year there will also be a particular emphasis on inviting young refugees to participate.

Prayer:

- **Thank God for the cooperation of many Christian youth organizations and youth groups in the city**
- **Pray for good, stress-free cooperation**
- **Pray for sufficient finances through donors and sponsors**
- **Pray that God will prepare encounters and conversations about faith**

Keeping On: Elections

On September 18, the Berlin House of Representatives (the parliament of the state of Berlin) will be elected. Several parties are already beginning their first poster campaigns in the election campaign. The party platforms are currently being discussed in various meetings are gradually being finished. Many parties are therefore seeking direct dialogue with residents in the city.

Prayer:

- **Pray for an transparent campaign with real arguments and topics**
- **Pray for a campaign without denunciation of the other parties**
- **Pray for the implementation of God's will in the choice and in the coming period of government**

On a Personal Note

At the end of June, Pfarrer Axel Nehlsen, who has been the director of Together for Berlin for 14 years, will be retiring. He was also the co-initiator of the prayer mail and is still in the editorial team. During a sabbatical over the summer, he will pray about what his future role in the area of prayer and in other areas will be. Until then, Rosemarie Stresemann has editorial responsibility. Ana Hoffmeister from the new leadership team will be responsible in terms of the press.

Dates

- **June 8, 6pm: Prayer for city politicians** at the Rote Rathaus
- **June 10– 11: Seminar “Developing Cultural Understanding – Understanding Islamic Culture”** with Andrea Meyerhoff, including a visit to a mosque. Registration: dte-training.de/anmeldung