



Edition 150 – December 2016 / January 2017

Good news: More Iranian and Arab churches

At the beginning of 2015 there were only two or three small groups of Christian Arabs and two Iranian churches in Berlin. Through the conversion and baptism of many refugees, the number of churches has grown to (at least) six Arab and eight Iranian churches at the end of 2016. Some are part of German churches; others have formed their own churches of various denominations.

Prayer

- **Thank God that so many refugees continue to find a new foundation in Christ**
- **Pray for external protection and inner growth for the new Christians**
- **Pray for integration among the Christians in the city**

The new Senate

After the election of the Berlin State Parliament (House of Representatives) on September 18, everything headed towards a three-party coalition with the SPD, the Greens, and the Left Party. The coalition negotiations have now ended. The coalition agreement is more than 270 pages—longer than ever before. It includes numerous projects for which the financing is often unclear. Now the party members must vote on it. The election of the Governing Mayor Michael Müller is scheduled to take place on 8.12.

In the meantime, the elected House of Representatives met for the first time. 160 deputies determine Berlin's destiny - from a 19-year-old student to a 69-year old woman. Ralf Wieland (SPD) was reelected as president. The AfD and the FDP are now in the 6-party parliament and are likely to form the opposition with the CDU.

At the time the prayer mail was published, the following new senators had been appointed for the ministries, some of which will also be voted on by party members:

Governing Mayor and Science: Michael Müller (SPD); Justice: Dirk Behrendt (Greens); Labor and Social Affairs: Elke Breitenbach (Left); Interior: Andreas Geisel (SPD); Transport and Environment: Regine Günther (no party, for the Greens); Health: Dilek Kollat (SPD); Finance: Matthias Kollatz-Ahnen (SPD); Culture: Klaus Lederer (Left); Housing and Rentals:

Katrin Lompscher (Left); Business: Ramona Pop (Greens); Education: Sandra Scheeres (SPD) In the completely new constellation "R2G", the Senate wants to "work as equals".

Prayer

- **Pray for God's blessing, protection, and wisdom for the new Senate and its members**
- **Pray for an effective beginning of the Senate in the face of major pending tasks**
- **Pray for courage and sensitivity for Michael Müller to lead and act as a mediator**

Christmas with Refugees

At Christmas, there are still thousands of refugees in our city in emergency or mass accommodation. Again and again there are reports that the Christians are being harassed. This is certainly due to overcrowding in the accommodation and the lack of privacy, as well as the trauma they experienced while fleeing. But on the other hand, Christians are also ostracized or attacked because of their faith.

At least in the Senate's master plan, Christians are protected as minorities. A number of churches and groups will celebrate Christmas with refugees. Sometimes, the celebrations will also be open to Muslim refugees. If personal relationships exist, the refugees can be invited to personal homes for Christmas. The birthday celebration of Jesus Christ is a special opportunity to show the love of God in practical ways.

Prayer

- **Pray for open doors for refugees in churches, social welfare groups, and private homes**
- **Pray for special sensitivity and love for Muslims at Christmas celebrations**
- **Pray that God, who became flesh in Jesus, will touch and soften hearts**

Evangelical Alliance Week of Prayer and Anniversary Year of the Reformation

October 31, 2017 marks the 500th anniversary of Martin Luther's famous nailing of the theses on the Schlosskirche in Wittenberg. This legendary event which was the starting point of the Reformation is

being celebrated not just by Lutheran churches, but by many others as well, throughout 2017.

For this reason, the three German-speaking Evangelical alliances (Switzerland, Austria, Germany) decided to use central topics of the Reformation for the annual Week of Prayer. The themes of the Week of Prayer from January 8-15 are based on Martin Luther's quadruple "alone" (Latin sola or solus): Christ alone - the Bible (Holy Scripture) alone - grace alone - faith alone. We owe our focus on these four central points to Martin Luther.

The other reformers also emphasized them in their own way. They still describe in short form precisely what the Christian faith is all about. The fourfold Alone brings to mind the unique character of salvation through Jesus Christ. UNIQUE is therefore the theme of the Week of Prayer. The fourfold Alone forms a unifying band around the variety of the Lutheran churches, evangelical churches, fellowships, and movements, also in Germany. The prayer weeks in other parts of Europe also have the same theme, thus connecting us to our brothers and sisters there.

Prayer

- **Pray that the Week of Prayer will deepen the unity among Christians in Berlin**
- **Pray that the focus on the biblical statements of the reformation will strengthen faith and evangelism**

Gyms will not be cleared out

"My name is Bashar, I am 13 years old, I come from Syria, I live in a gym with my uncle, and we are looking for an apartment". Initiatives seeking to provide housing for refugees receive mails like these almost every hour.

There are still thousands of refugees living in 38 gyms and other emergency shelters. Housing is scarce and the relocation to refugee housing is delayed due to construction delays and mistakes in tenders for the operation of the accommodation. The procurement procedures have to be advertised again all over Europe and even containers which are already done cannot be occupied.

But even regular refugee housing is not a place where you can integrate well into the society. Many fugitives would like to share a flat with Germans or live with a German family for a year or two in order to really "arrive". Berlin initiatives are starting campaigns during Advent and in the New Year to motivate Berliners to rent rooms and flats to refugees. (more at: www.nestwerkberlin.de)

Prayer

- **Pray that refugee housing can be put into operation quickly**
- **Pray for the success of the campaigns**
- **Pray that thousands of Berliners will provide housing for refugees**

Manager for Görlitzer Park

Because the increased police surveillance did not solve the situation in Görlitzer Park, the district of Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg has now employed a "park manager". Cengiz Demirci, 43, a social psychologist, started his work as Berlin's first park manager in November. He wants to find solutions together with local residents, associations, and initiatives on the ground, and to communicate with all parties involved. Women and families have been avoiding the park for a long time because of the aggressive behavior of drug dealers. Demirci is a networker. He would also like to point out alternatives to the Lampedusa refugees who are dealing in drugs there.

Prayer

- **Pray that will be possible to find new solutions for the old problems which also include solutions for the drug-dealing refugees**
- **Pray for blessings for the work of the park manager**

Dates:

- **Dec. 14, 6-7pm Prayer for city politicians at the Rote Rathaus**
- **Dec. 13, 6:30-7:30pm Prayer Forum Refugees, Haus Leo, Stadtmission at the Hauptbahnhof**
- **Dec. 23, 5-7pm Prayer for the Kotti, Adalbertstraße 97, in the Gebetskeller**

- **Jan. 8-15, International Evangelical Alliance Week of Prayer.** Dates and places in the districts: <http://tinyurl.com/z65hrux>
- **Jan. 11 6-7pm Prayer for city politicians at the Rote Rathaus**
- **Jan. 27, 5-7pm Prayer for the Kotti, Adalbertstraße 97, in the Gebetskeller**

Note: This prayer mail is for both December 2016 and January 2017

The editorial team wishes all our prayer partners a blessed Christmas and a happy New Year!

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