



Edition 156 – July/August 2017

Good news: People encounter God

Christians who work among refugees are experiencing a great openness among the people. New Berliners who are refugees often accept the offer of prayer for themselves. Many experience God's touch, often also physical healing. It also often happens that God himself has prepared them for an encounter with Jesus, for instance like a man who said to a Christian: "Can you tell me what Jesus wants from me - he appears to me every night (!) in a dream!"

- **Thank God for the many people who are open to an encounter with Jesus – and pray for sufficient workers in this field**

Good news: Unemployment is falling

For the first time in many years unemployment in Berlin fell below 9%. There are still 128,340 people seeking employment, but that is nevertheless 10,200 fewer than 2016. In some districts, the number of unemployed is already close to the federal average of 5.6%, while in other districts - such as Neukölln at 12% - are still clearly above the national average.

- **Thank God for the people who have found employment – and pray for a further decrease in unemployment**

Keep Tegel Airport open?

Intense debates about the Tegel Airport have been going on for months. Tegel Airport was to close after the long-awaited and repeatedly postponed opening of the BER airport in Schönefeld. The three shareholders, (Berlin, Brandenburg, and the federal government) had long since decided this with their respective elected parliaments. Now, initiated by the FDP, a referendum will take place in Berlin on the day of the Bundestag elections (9/24). Surveys currently suggest a majority want to keep the airport open. The referendum would not be binding, however, because it is not about a law that has been passed. The red-red-green government coalition and the governing mayor have just reconfirmed their clear position in favour of closure. The CDU drew back from its previous opinion and will ask its members.

Previous court orders specify that the BER may be operated only when the other airports are closed. A new report is casting doubt on that. However, keeping Tegel

open would lead to a wave of law suits. Noise protection for hundreds of thousands of residents in compliance with today's standards would devour immense costs. And the planned 5,000 apartments, technological and educational facilities on the Tegel site are urgently needed.

Prayer:

- **Pray that the debate, which is currently partly populist, will become more objective through sound facts**
- **Pray for a fast completion of BER**
- **Pray for a decision that benefits Berliners long-term and is good for the city**

Crisis in Day-Care Centres

In Berlin, there are currently around 165,000 places in day-care centres. Many parents subjectively perceive a crisis in the day-care centres because it is very difficult to find an available place. Objectively, there are enough available free places. By 2020 30,000 new places will have been added. However, it is not enough that there are available places – there is a desperate need for preschool teachers. There are clearly too few professionals. The education administration therefore wants to train many more who desire a career change. More and more refugee children also need places in a day-care centre, but the number of needed places cannot be calculated exactly. What is clear, however, is that children need intensive attention and reliable relationships, even more so the younger they are. If there is a serious lack of teachers, the remaining ones in the day-care centres can no longer teach what is necessary, and both children and teachers suffer under these conditions.

Prayer:

- **Pray for blessing and strength for preschool teachers**
- **Pray that many who are looking for a change in career will apply to be trained**
- **Pray that women who stay home with their children will once again be valued**

New Senator: Elke Breitenbach

The 56-year-old Elke Breitenbach from the Left Party is the Berlin Senator for Integration, Labour and Social Affairs. She grew up in Hessen and studied politics in Berlin. She worked, among other things, for a research

project on vocational schools and trade unions and at the Sachsenhausen Memorial Centre. From 1992 to 1997 she was a trade union secretary. She experienced a year of unemployment herself. From 2002 to 2003, she was a personal adviser to the Senator for Health, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection. Since 1998, she has been a member of the PDS (now Die Linke, The Left) and its deputy party chairman. She views the GDR past of the party quite critically. From 2003 on she has been a member of the State Parliament and spokeswoman for the areas of work, social affairs, inclusion and senior citizens. Because of the separation of office and mandate, which she supported, she gave up her mandate in January. Breitenbach has lived for 20 years in a shared flat with a female college friend. Her life partner lives there also. In the future, she wants to find a triple or even larger shared-flat to counteract isolation in old age (Interview BILD 12/13/2016). In addition to other concerns, the senator wants to raise the minimum wage. It was a small success that the Senate raised the minimum wage by 50 cents for its own employees beginning July 1. The rates for Hartz IV need to be raised, especially for children. She is committed to the provision of jobs for the long-term unemployed and for refugees and to qualification programmes, for which employers should receive a payroll subsidy. She is also in favour of publically subsidised employment, for which the federal government should provide a solid funding base.

Prayer:

- **Pray for opportunities for implementation for the Senator's sensible social demands**
- **Pray for success for the Senate Administration's plans for the benefit of the disadvantaged**
- **Pray for personal blessing for the Senator**

Rigaer Straße

Violent outbursts happen continuously in the Rigaer Straße in Friedrichshain. One of the last occupied houses in Berlin is Rigaer Str. 94. Until now eviction has not been possible because the owner had not yet provided a complete set of all the necessary legal titles. A new court case has now also failed because the managing director of the British owner company died in May. In June, alleged left-wing extremists attacked vehicles from local residents and police officers. As the G-20 summit in July 7th and 8th in Hamburg approaches, more and more left-wing extremists are gathering in Berlin. An attempt to curb the violence was made at the end of June by paving the Rigaer Straße and the Liebigstraße. Since the left-wing radicals continually "armed" themselves with cobblestones, it was decided at short notice to pave a small part of the street and the intersection. Dealing with left-wing extremism is a political problem for the red-red-green Senate. In

the coalition agreement, the topic of left-wing extremism and, in particular, violence from the left was not mentioned at all. Only right-wing extremism is in view. Therefore, the CDU has now called for an action plan for the Rigaer Straße. There is still no clear concept of how to protect the residents from further attacks.

Prayer:

- **Pray that all parties will cooperate to find a solution for the problem of violence**
- **Pray for insight into what will lead to long-term peace**
- **Pray for the protection of the police and firemen when they are serving in that area**

Summer Break

Summer vacation begins on July 20 for thousands of Berlin students – for most, a long-awaited time without teachers, exams, and grades. Many travel with their parents or go to summer camps. There are good offers from churches and Christian organisations. Others spend the holidays in the city because a holiday is not possible financially or time-wise. The city and various independent or Christian sponsors offer vacation programmes.

Prayer:

- **Pray that the children, parents and other vacationers will have a relaxing vacation**
- **Pray that Christian retreats and summer programmes will help people (above all, young people) to get to know God**

Keeping On: Protection from Terrorism

The terrorist attacks in London, as well as the latest attacks on the Berlin S-Bahn clearly show us that cities are vulnerable - terror is possible almost everywhere. We continue to pray for the protection of our city from attacks, that attacks in planning will be discovered beforehand, and that radicalized people have a radical encounter with the loving God. .

Dates

- **July 12 and August 9, 6-7 pm, prayer for city politicians** at the Rotes Rathaus
- **July 28 and August 25, 5-7pm, prayer for Kreuzberg, Adalbertstraße 97, Gebetskeller**

Spandau is the first district to have its own prayer website: <http://spandaugebet.de>

This prayer mail is for both July and August. We wish everyone a relaxing and blessed summer and/or holiday! By the way: God never goes on holiday and is always reachable everywhere for our prayers!