



Edition 164 – May 2018

## **Good News: School Construction Programme**

The condition of many schools in Berlin is a sad ongoing theme, but now there is a big step forward. Three senators have presented the "school construction timetable". It describes all planned construction measures for the individual 720 schools sorted by districts. This is the first time a transparent tabular presentation has been made: What exactly should be done? Who is responsible? When will the measure begin and when will it be ready? Who will finance it? In total, there are around 30 schools where there is a need for refurbishment of more than 10 million euros. In the coming years, around 60 (!) new schools are to be built to meet the rapidly growing demand.

### **Prayer:**

- **Thank God for this specific progress**
- **Ask God for fast, effective implementation**

## **Current Good News 2: May 1st**

The Kreuzberg "MyFest" including "MaiGörl", the 6pm demo (with - according to police - only 6,000 people) - all without major incidents. Christians were on-site with prayer, perpetual praise and evangelistic teams.

**Thanksgiving and praise that God answers prayer!**

## **The Future and Potential of Berlin**

"Excellently organized, affordable, cool: a new enthusiasm for the German capital is growing in the world. In Berlin, on the other hand, anger predominates over everyday shortcomings. How does that fit together?" asks DER TAGESSPIEGEL in an April 22 article. British and American journalists living here praise Berlin as clean and cheap with excellent public transport. "In Berlin, we experience the largely classless living together as exciting, but also as an effort. We are proud of our tolerance, but it is hardly stress-free." Contrary to widespread dissatisfaction, there are obviously many more positive things than we realize - such as university and academic excellence: "Berlin has specialists in the fast-growing sectors fintech, health and digital industry. Berlin has four full-time universities, four art colleges, seven colleges, 50 additional institutes, and 500 scientific and engineering companies. ... In Berlin, science is clustered together like no other place in Germany. The Senate also markets the city as the "Brain City", with its more than 70 non-university institutions, two "universities of excel-

lence"...the Charité ... and the humanities are considered world leaders. Berlin's new Einstein Digital Future Centre, where 55 new computer science professorships are being created, is also attracting interest abroad. ... The cluster effect is enormous. In Berlin, diversity is not just a word, life and work are spatially mixed, which reduces traffic and commuting time. Berlin is the capital of sharing of electric individual transport with wheels, scooters and cars."

In the city itself, according to the Tagesspiegel, this encounters a phase of uncertainty. Where is Berlin developing right now? Will it lose its integrative character, is segregation (social separation) increasing? The average Berlin rent is still low at 780 euros compared to 1,843 euros in London, but rents rose 9.7 percent in one year. The article sums up: "What is considered so electrifying about Berlin has shifted - from club playgrounds for young adults to professional work in science and business. But much will depend on whether it succeeds in preserving the city - and improving its functionality."

### **Prayer:**

- **Thank God for some amazingly positive developments and for the image of the city**
- **Pray that Berlin optimally develops its God-given potential**
- **Pray that God's grace and human wisdom limit harmful influences**

## **Generations pray, evangelize and celebrate together**

Building on the ecumenical day of prayer EINS on January 20 (with great interest and resonance), the VEREINT-Tage with three steps: praying - serving - celebrating is now being initiated by Berlin United, the youth network of Together for Berlin.

The programme: **May 25, 7-9pm, prayer evening, Gemeinde auf dem Weg, Tegel. May 26, 11am to 1 pm, Launch, praise and training, Lukas-Gemeinde Schöneberg. 1 pm to 5 pm "Kingdom Teams" (evangelism and practical service) and citywide church activities. 5:30 to 7:30 pm Fun, Food, Fellowship; 7:30-9pm, worship evening, both at the Gemeinde auf dem Weg, Tegel.**

### **Prayer:**

- **Pray for high participation of different generations from many districts in the city**
- **Pray for sustainable impact and spiritual fruit**

## ***Start-up-Capital with Problems***

Berlin is known for the highest-turnover start-up scene in Germany. With around 100,000 employees, start-ups are one of the biggest employers in the city. But when it comes to recruiting, start-ups are facing more difficult conditions, such as bureaucratic hurdles and digitization that needs improvement. The Federation of German Start-ups accuses the Governing Mayor of neglecting the scene as a whole. The interior administration and the government authorities rejected the accusation.

### **Prayer:**

- **Thank God for the strong start-up scene and the creation of new jobs**
- **For a reduction of bureaucratic hurdles in recruiting staff**
- **Pray for the development of digitization and application procedures**

## ***Restless Riager Straße***

In 1990/91 several houses were occupied in the Riager Straße, and leftist communes moved in. In some of the occupied houses, collectively operated pubs and meeting rooms were opened. In 1992, some of the squatters were legalized through rental contracts; others were vacated in 1997. Since then, the street has been the scene of clashes between left-wing groups and the police. In 2017, the situation escalated into riots. Recently, stones were repeatedly thrown at police cars. In the neighbourhood there were increasingly similar incidents in recent weeks. Over the years, the (partly legitimate) protest against gentrification and high rents became a fight against any regulatory power and an outlet for the frustration of a life without a perspective for the future.

### **Prayer:**

- **Pray for the churches in the neighbourhood, that they would not become discouraged in praying for a change in the situation**
- **Pray for people who go to the living quarters as ambassadors of the good news**
- **Pray that the protesters and rioters find a peaceful path for their concerns**
- **Pray for protection, courage and determination for the police**

## ***The Garbage Problem***

Berlin is home to many people who produce large amounts of garbage - often on the streets and in the parks. This is often reported. What we rarely hear about is the garbage in lakes and other waters of Berlin. Recently, the annual spring cleaning action took place at the airport lake, where divers of the Berliner Tauchverein, the Wasserwacht, the fire brigade and

the police together took three cubic meters of garbage out of the lake. The situation is similar in other waters. There are bicycles, safes, scrap metal, glass bottles, plastic and much more, and the amount of garbage is increasing annually. On public waterways special ships are doing regular garbage collection. At the airport lake, the BSR will now be responsible for cleaning the green areas around the lake. It is hoped that the clean green areas around the lake will have a positive influence on the cleanliness of the lake.

### **Prayer:**

- **Thank God for the volunteer divers and for all the other "garbage collectors" on the waters of Berlin**
- **Pray for a new environmental awareness among Berliners and all those who have used lakes and rivers as landfill sites**

## ***Too few day-care places***

There are currently about 3000 day-care places missing in Berlin. Research by the rbb has shown that there are actually enough rooms in the existing kindergartens to increase capacities. Above all, there is a lack of educated educators. One reason for this is that they are paid less in Berlin than in Brandenburg. Many are leaving or no longer working in their profession. The Civic Platforms, day-care workers and parents have developed concrete proposals to promote the education of day-care workers. So far, however, Secretary of State Ms Klebba has claimed that there are enough viable ways to educate day-care workers.

### **Prayer**

- **Pray for openness among those responsible for new ideas and cooperation with the Civic Platforms**
- **Pray for more well-educated day-care workers**
- **Pray for higher pay for day-care workers**

## ***Keeping On: Problems in Schools***

In the city centre, parents often have only the choice between schools with the same problems – the social divide has largely prevailed everywhere. It's not uncommon to have more than 90% of the students coming from non-German speaking backgrounds from families who are receiving welfare or immigrant benefits. In one-third of public schools, the social mix is not good; the shortage of teachers is dramatic; the number of lateral newcomers is high.

### **Dates:**

- **May 9, 6pm: Prayer for the City, Rotes Rathaus**
- **May 25-26: VEREINT – see article above!**