



Prayer for Berlin

June, 2008

Good News - Kurfürstenstraße

We wrote about the fact that a person wanted to open a large brothel in the Kurfürstenstraße in Schöneberg. The District Office turned down the application. In the meantime, residents have started an initiative to improve their district. They don't want to abandon their streets to prostitution. The month-long initiative «Kiezfrühling» (spring in the district) sponsors various programs on the streets until June 7th.

Residents and businesses alike are taking part in the project, which is being supported by the district management. For instance, a photographer is taking pictures of residents at no charge. A shop has been turned into a café. Someone will be juggling in front of a day-care centre. The discussion about the brothel set the residents in motion. Now they want to show that their district is not a red-light district.

Some are planning projects for the entire year. In October, a street festival is planned. Churches and other Christian organisations will also take part.

Prayer

- **Thank God for this initiative started by the residents**
- **Thank God for positive development in the district**
- **Pray for a decline in prostitution and drug abuse in the district**

Good News – Peaceful May 1st

The night before May 1st – much different than in the past! – was without noteworthy incidents. Even the night of May 1st in the heart of the district of Kreuzberg, where the «MyFest» has taken place for several years, remained totally peaceful for the first time since 1987 (!). The rain even stopped right when the open-air worship service on the Heinrichplatz was to begin on May 1st. The worship service held by Together for Berlin was attended by many, including Vice-President Wolfgang Thierse and his wife.

People who otherwise would rarely attend a worship service heard the gospel. Some residents watched from their windows. The inter-cultural band *Go Worship* was well received.

Because a local project was included, we were able to make our first contacts to the district, and now we will deepen these contacts. During the service, the «Kiezworkers» presented their project. They train young immigrants to stop others from resorting to violence. The over 100 «Kiezworkers» who worked at the «MyFest» did a super job – unlike in former years, there was nearly no violence on the part of young immigrants.

Prayer teams were on site until late in the night, and experienced first-hand how burgeoning riots with a large potential for violence following a demonstration during the evening quickly dissipated following prayer.

Prayer

- **Thank God for a largely peaceful May 1st**
- **Pray that God will bless the work of Christians in the district and further cooperation with various initiatives**

Single-Households in Berlin

In no other city in Germany do people live alone as much as in Berlin. The number of single-households here is 51% - much higher than the federal average (35%). In many cases, there are great personal needs behind this dry number. Beyond those who have voluntarily chosen to live alone, there are many who do not desire to live without a partner. This includes people over 60 who have lost their partners (44% of single households) as well as young people who are searching for a partner.

There are successful models of young and old living together, but often they are an attractive alternative for only a few. The Christian initiative EMWAG is currently developing new living models especially for singles who do not want to live alone. [www.emwag.de]

In other cities, Christians have found creative ways such as «Date for Eight» for young singles to meet each other beyond their own churches. In Berlin however such meeting forums are rarely found [www.date-for-eight.de].

Prayer

- **Pray that churches that will develop creative ways for Christian singles to meet each other and that the right people find each other**
- **Pray that more people will develop the courage to get married**

- **Pray that model projects of living units for singles will be successful**

The work of the police

When police go on strike, as they did in May, residents suddenly realize how versatile the work of the police is. In addition to the well-known jobs of the police, they are also dog-handlers, are part of helicopter teams, provide protection for buildings, guard prisoners, patrol waterways, and answer emergency phones. They work in shifts, and work when others are sleeping or celebrating.

As with other professions, demands on police are increasing. Personnel are being cut although the work load is increasing. Police must live with a high risk. The number of incidents of being attacked by a crowd, especially when attempting to arrest Turkish or Arabian persons, is increasing. This also happens even if they are only trying to help.

Policemen want to be respected and treated like people. In spite of de-escalation training, it is not always easy for them to deal with the hatred they are confronted with, especially on the part of anarchists, right-wing extremists and during arrests in immigrant milieus.

Berlin policemen are also deployed in other states within Germany. They support large-scale operations on-site. Because of their successful operational tactics and their special experience they have gained from their operations surrounding May 1st, Berlin police officers are especially appreciated.

Prayer

- **Thank God for male and female police officers, who often have very dangerous jobs**
- **Pray that they will experience more positive public feedback**
- **Pray that arrests will not be hindered by the solidarity of passers-by**

New Protestant Regional Bishop

Ralf Meister (46) is the new Lutheran superintendent for Berlin. This is equivalent to being a regional bishop of the Lutheran Church. On Pentecost Sunday in the Kaiser-Wilhelm-Memorial-Church, he was officially initiated into his new position. At the same time, his predecessor, Martin-Michael Passauer (65) retired. 800,000 Protestants belong to this parish.

Mr. Meister has great experience with the media. In Lübeck, where he was a provost, he gave the church a new profile. His desire is to approach

people who do not belong to the inner circle of a church. According to Mr. Meister, the primary task of the church is missions. Berlin, much more so than Lübeck, is divided between native residents and foreigners, poor and rich, religious and non-religious.

His new task will be to build bridges in the city. He worked on the study of the Lutheran church «God in the city—Perspectives for the Lutheran church in the city». Thus he is a specialist in this area.

During the ceremony, Bishop Huber said with a bit of humour, «Now he has a city to go with the study.» It will be interesting to see what spiritual course he takes.

Prayer

- **Pray for a good begin in Berlin and for protection for Mr. Meister and his family**
- **Pray that he will set a spiritual course that will lead to an increased saturation of the city with the gospel**
- **Pray that TOGETHER FOR BERLIN will work together well with Mr. Meister**

Evangelism on the Streets and Universities

Under the motto of «In love with Berlin», *Vineyard* churches of Europe are planning a 10-week evangelistic emphasis to reach Berliners with the love of God (www.love-berlin.org).

Training will take place during the mornings, and in the afternoons, participants will go out to the streets to pray for people and to tell them about Jesus. Christians from Berlin are welcome to join them: 10 days 250 Euros, all day Friday and Saturday 65 Euros, including meals, training, and transportation.

Registration: maris.buehlmann@vineyard-bern.ch

Campus Crusdae for Christ will have an international team in Berlin from mid-June to mid-July who will be reaching out to students. This is designed to lead to an expansion of international campus ministry on Berlin campuses.

In addition, as we already mentioned, an overview of evangelistic activities of various churches and organisations in parks and on the streets of the city can be found at www.summer2go.de

Prayer

- **Pray for courage and God's leading for evangelistic activities during the summer**
- **Pray that many Berliners of different generations and cultures meet Jesus as a result of these events**