



Prayer for Berlin

May 2011

Good News: Preparation for May 1st

What happened on May 1st this year was not yet known at our editorial deadline – you certainly were able to read about it in the newspaper.

But nevertheless, we are already thankful that the violence leading up to May 1st was much less than in previous years and that many Christians will be participating in prayer and in practical ways for a peaceful May 1st prayer onsite on the streets, a 24/7 prayer chain, and the open-air worship service on the Mariannenplatz (11:45) were all part of the program. Because prayer and service belong together, Christians can serve Kreuzberg in very practical ways by spending two hours doing everything from helping at the bicycle repair shop, to making sandwiches for the needy, to helping to clean up trash in Görlitzer Park.

Increase in mental illnesses

Mental illnesses have been increasing greatly in recent years—more so in Berlin than in other areas of Germany.

The current health report of the DAK (health insurance provider) shows that the number of young people dealing with depression or pre-depression is growing. In 2010 about 12 percent more people were diagnosed with depression than in the previous year. In 2009 there had already been the same increase. According to the DAK, stress at work and the stress of always being reachable through electronic communication networks is affecting mental health. If youth do not have good relationships which provide balance and support, they need support to find ways to relieve stress. Preventive measures offered by health insurance companies are only one way among many to help prevent mental illness. (Source: www.xity.de from 4.26.11)

Prayer:

- **Pray that young people will discover and take advantage of helpful programs**
- **Pray that Christian youth groups will know how to equip young people for life**

Muslim Extremists in Berlin

When introducing the current Report of the Protection of the Constitution, Claudia Schmid, director of Berlin's Committee for the Protection of the Constitution, reported that violence-prone Islamists in Berlin are enlarging their networks. Increasing radicalisation processes are being observed. The missionary campaigns of the "Salafists", who interpret the Koran in a very strict and literal way, are being particularly successful.

In Berlin, the Al-Nur-Mosque in Neukölln has become a magnet for strict Muslims from all over the city. The teachings of the Salafists have found a large following among young people. Young imams know how to get the young people off the streets. Through a very strict interpretation of Islam, they are challenging them to a radical lifestyle. Many youth are turning away from crime and drugs and are finding safety and a place of belonging by following the strict rules. Integration is rejected by the Salafist—believers, as well as the sexes, are to stay among themselves. Even though they do not officially issue a call to violence, homeland security has received information that people have become radicals through these teachings. The step to violence and hate against non-believers has become a small step through the teachings of the Salafists.

Thus the danger of these young people being recruited as terrorists is growing. According to homeland security, the number of violence-prone Islamists has grown from 410 to 450. The Minister of the Interior, Mr. Körting, thinks the danger of an attack in Berlin is high, even though there is no current direct information to that effect.

Prayer:

- **Pray that the work of the office of homeland security will be successful and effective in discovering terrorist plots before they can be carried out**
- **Pray that politicians would find ways to lessen the influence of radicals preachers**
- **Pray that Jesus will reveal Himself to Muslim youth and that they will come to know Him**

Arson attacks causing concern

Following the noticeable increase in arson attacks in stairways in Neukölln, many residents have become afraid. Three people died on March 12 as a result of arson attacks. In Neukölln alone since the beginning of the year, there have been twelve cases of arson

attacks. Many residents in the district are afraid that their stairway will be the next to be set on fire and are wondering if the attacks are being done by a serial arsonist. The District Attorney's Office attempted to raise the pressure on the offender by setting a 25,000€ reward for decisive information leading to an arrest. Arson series happened last year also in Hellersdorf, which have not yet been solved. (Source: Tagesspiegel from 03.22.11)

Prayer:

- **Pray that the police will be able to solve these arson crimes**
- **Pray that further arson attacks will be prevented. Pray for protection for all those who would be affected by such attacks**
- **Pray for wisdom in knowing which measures would be effective in scaring potential perpetrators**

Architectural Planning in Berlin

There is building going on in various areas of the city. However, according to architects, a lot of the buildings are dull and unimaginative. Good architecture can make life in the city richer and even become drawing-cards. Architects feel that this unimaginative building is a result of a lack of a master plan, a concept for the entire city, and the fact that much planning is done behind closed doors. Residents do not learn about building projects until it is too late to contribute ideas. This was not the case in the 90's, when plans and projects were discussed publicly in the STADTFORUM. In addition, the practice of not advertising publicly, encouraging competition, but rather only inviting a very few planning companies to submit plans, is being criticized.

Prayer:

- **Pray for clear, creative political vision for the design development of Berlin**
- **Pray for the development of a culture of public discussion for upcoming construction projects – a new “Stadtforum”**
- **Pray for the development of a competitive environment which will encourage creativity**

Creatively encouraged arts

Since the Berlin-Bonn-Law of 1994, the federal government has become responsible for the encouragement of cultural life in the capital city. In addition to encouraging Berlin's contributions to the national arts, a national Fund for the Endowment of the Arts in the Capital City (Hauptstadtkulturfonds

HKF) has been developed, which contributes annually around 10 million Euros to “individual projects and events which are important to the city of Berlin, but also have national and international appeal and to those projects which are particularly innovative”. (www.hauptstadtkulturfonds.berlin.de) Individual artists, institutions, etc. from all forms of the arts can apply for funding. A committee will decide who will receive the funding. Thus, a young and dynamic arts community in Berlin is being actively supported and developed. The desired applications from international cooperation partners have made Berlin an intersection in the European network for contemporary forms of art. This flexible funding has been so successful that other European capitals are looking to the HKF as a model for their own cities.

Prayer:

- **Thank God for the wise political move to support the arts which, with relatively low funds, has nevertheless resulted in dynamic, innovation and lively exchange in the world of the arts**
- **Pray for further good ways of financing cultural life and for foundations and private business investments in the arts**

Dates: Weekly Prayer for elections in Berlin on September 18

In September Berlin will elect a new state parliament. As Christians, we are to pray for the governmental leaders, thus contributing to godly standards, intentions, and values. From the beginning of May, prayer partners in Berlin will be praying weekly for the coming elections. We desire to see God call men and women into politics who will act according to His word and give Him glory. We want to pray continually to that end until the elections. Churches are encouraged to make this known, especially to prayer groups and prayer warriors in their congregations. Prayer will take place weekly at the same time, alternating between the Rote Rathaus and the Parliament Building (Preußischer Landtag); every even week (such as the 18th, 20th, 22nd, etc.) at the Rote Rathaus, meeting place on the corner of Spandauer Straße/Rathausstraße on the side of the Rathaus; every uneven week (such as the 19th, 21st, etc. .) at the Parliament Building (Abgeordnetenhaus), meeting place corner of Niederkirchnerstraße/ Stresemannstraße direction of Potsdamer Platz

- **Time: Every Wednesday at 6pm for a maximum of one hour**