



# Prayer for Berlin

July/August 2012

## **Good News 1 – More Prayer for the City**

Prayer in Berlin is increasing, including prayer for the city. In the last two years, two more houses of prayer have begun, a third is being developed. Their goal is prayer and praise around the clock – in various forms. The prayer meeting for politics in the city began on June 6. Over 20 people attended the first meeting in Berlin's Rotes Rathaus. Further meetings are planned intermittently. On June 26, a prayer walk through the city took place as part of "pray and move together".

## **Good News 2 – Many new Initiatives**

Over 80 new initiatives have begun in the last 10 years in Berlin which in some way are connected to ministry in the districts or social concerns. Among these, there are new churches, cafés, ministry groups, prayer houses, etc. Most of them are small and are described as "grassroots initiatives". Many of them are not known among Christian circles. But they are there – and they are a sign of hope in terms of a Christian witness to the city!

## **Attacks on Policemen are increasing**

The police union is sounding an alarm, because an increasing number of cases are becoming known in which the wheel nuts of police cars parked near their offices during the night are being loosened. Since May, several police cars have been attacked. Just a few days after May 1, unknown persons threw incendiary devices onto the back seat of a police car. Some days before, the back door of a police car was ripped open, and a tear gas container was thrown into the car, causing eye inflammation on the part of the policemen. In June, unknown persons threw stones at a security police car. During a routine control of a homeless group the end of June, police were attacked with bottles, stones, and iron rods. Arrests are continually being hindered through large groups of people who show solidarity with the one being arrested.

### **Prayer:**

- **Thank God for the work of the police**
- **Pray for protection of police and an increase in respect**

## **Motorcycle Gangs in Berlin**

The end of May, Mr. Henkel, the Senator for the Interior, banned the Charter Berlin City MC of the Hells Angels registered in Reinickendorf. In the meantime, several other groups have been banned all over the country. In 2010, following some deaths of members all over the country, a peace agreement had been made between the former enemies, the "Hells Angels" and the "Bandidos" in Berlin. Nevertheless, the violence continued. The gangs are fighting over who gets to be the bouncers, but the real deals are happening behind those doors: prostitution, drugs, weapons, anabolic steroids. Members of the Hells Angels Charters, which have now been closed, have been accused of manslaughter, robbery of a jewellery store, breach of peace, as well as drug trafficking. The ban however has not solved the problem of violent gangs. There are other groups in the city which will welcome the banned members of Hells Angels. In order to ban all such gangs, more evidence which will stand up in court is needed.

### **Prayer:**

- **Thank God for the ban and the clear signal against violent gangs**
- **Pray that God's light would uncover hidden criminal activities**
- **Pray that clear evidence can be found which will enable further bans**

## **Influx of Romanies (gypsies) into Berlin**

Rumania and Bulgaria joined the European Union in 2007. Since then there has been a large influx of Romanies from these countries into Germany, and in particular into Berlin. Because they do not receive work permits, they have discovered another way to finance themselves – Eastern Europeans can be self-employed. And self-employed can apply for social benefits if their income is low. For this reason, registrations of businesses in Berlin-Neukölln have been increasing, though very few of them are even allowed to conduct such business. In March, in Neukölln alone, 2,400 registrations were made by Rumanians and Bulgarians. In the summer of 2011, the Catholic Aachener Siedlungs- and Wohnungsgesellschaft bought buildings in the district in disrepair,

where many gypsies were living. Now a model project with Romane believers has begun. An entire village is being moved. Mr. Marx, the project director, is trying extremely hard to move the residents towards “normal” society. Schools in Neukölln and also in Berlin-Reinickendorf, however, are unable to cope with the increasing influx of gypsy-children. Many of these children have never been to school before. Most speak no German and cannot be integrated into a normal classroom. School Senator Sandra Scheeres (SPD) has become aware of this problem. Language and culture mediators are necessary. Extra learning groups need to be formed. Summer language courses are being offered. But the influx of such children into the schools is larger than the help being offered. A committee comprised of people from the affected districts (for instance Mitte, Neukölln, Tempelhof-Schöneberg) and Senate administrative groups will soon meet to develop a concept for the schools.

**Prayer:**

- **Pray that concept can soon be developed which will help schools long-term with the integration of gypsy children**
- **Thank God and ask for His blessing on the Initiative of the Catholic Wohnsgesellschaft**
- **Pray that true employment opportunities can be developed instead of dependence on unemployment**

## **Share and Partake – Cultural Box Seats**

The Kulturloge in Berlin, which began in 2010, is demonstrating social justice in Berlin – they arrange for tickets, which organisers of cultural events can no longer sell, to be given to needy and low-income people. In this way, they enable people who are often left out because of their low income to take part in the arts and culture. A 60-member team of volunteers offer information about this initiative at places where food is being distributed by the Berliner Tafel. Guests register and then are called personally when an event appropriate for them is being offered. They feel welcomed and encouraged. A scientific study of the concept has shown that it is being well-accepted and successful. Culture as food for the soul, but also as an opportunity to take part in society, is reaching people on the fringes of society. However, up until now, very few churches have been participating as partners. Such partnership could be a signal and meet many deeper needs. This concept will now be

enlarged to include immigrants, as receivers, as well as those offering tickets. During a two-year phase, the federal government will be furthering the internationalisation of the Berliner Kulturloge. [www.berlin-kulturloge.de](http://www.berlin-kulturloge.de)

**Prayer:**

- **Thank God for the idea and successful work of the Kulturloge in reaching out to people, helping them participate, and in sharing values**
- **Pray for successful enlargement of the project to include immigrants**
- **Pray that more churches, which have even more „food for the soul“ to offer, would participate in the project**

## **Vacation and Recuperation**

According to studies, many employees are threatened by burnout. The main reasons are pressure of work on the one hand, and poor leadership qualities of management on the other. Many employees have quit on the inside and are no longer working with commitment passion. Others, who see no alternative, slide into depression and burnout. The summer vacation time is a good opportunity to get away, to restore lost energy, but also to consider constructive possibilities for change for both employees and management alike.

**Prayer:**

- **Thank God for the many vacation days that employees have here in Germany**
- **Pray for real recuperation for those who are the end of their rope – and for good ideas for long-term improvement in the situation**
- **Pray for a nice summer vacation for those who cannot afford to go away somewhere**

## **Dates**

**July 4, 6pm informal prayer in front of the Berliner Rote Rathaus**

**August 4, 6, 13, Summer of Service:** Outreach on the Alexanderplatz with Jugend mit einer Mission (Youth with a Mission) more information:

<http://tinyurl.com/7lmsv5c>

**Looking forward: Oct 3, “thank-celebrate-pray”,** ecumenical prayer for 22 years of German unity

*Note: This issue covers both July and August. The next prayer mail will be the beginning of September.*