



April, 2005

Good News: Less Crime

Berlin has become safer. The number of registered criminal offenses declined by 4.3 percent to 539,700. This is the lowest rate for the past 12 years. Armed robbery, car theft, and homicide showed the largest decrease.

The press commented: "This decline is a bit strange. It is just simply uncertain why this has happened—even if it is convenient to try to make a statement about the reason." (Berliner Zeitung).

We thank God for this good news, but let's continue to pray that the crime rate will go down, and that crimes will be solved quickly and effectively.

Good News: Christianity in the press

The Berlin press is calling attention to the "book of books". The Berliner Zeitung began a series in March called "What the Bible means to me". Celebrities talk about the influence of the Bible in their lives. The newspaper gave away 3000 Bibles as a special offer during the series.

The Berliner Zeitung reported about the retired politician Rudolf Decker, initiator of the international Prayer Breakfast movement, in an article titled "They Pray for Peace".

Mr. Decker has a hand in reconciliation all over Africa between ethnic groups and entire nations and their enemies. His main approach is dialogue and prayer. We thank God for the presence of Christian topics in the press and pray that many Berliners will be motivated through these articles to take (first) steps of faith.

April 30 Mauerpark

In the past, violent conflicts between rioters and the police have often arisen in the Mauerpark during the night before the 1st of May.

Last year, prayer teams at the Mauerpark and in Kreuzberg experienced God's answers to prayer for peace in the city. These prayer events will be intensified this year. Prayer will take place on-site in the Mauerpark on April 30th and in Kreuzberg on May 1st, both outside and in nearby inside locations (see dates below). Last year the prayer teams noticed that many young people waited around in the Mauerpark just so that they could see the violent conflicts happen live. When the violence began, they applauded enthusiastically. These by-standers craving for sensation actually urged on the youth desiring to take part in the violence.

Let us pray that God will change the mind-set of both the by-standers and potential participants.

Pray

- **That God would mobilize many people to pray on-site**
- **For a turning away from violence in the hearts of both potential violent participants and by-standers**
- **For a well-functioning de-escalation strategy by the police**

A Peaceful May 1st

Just as they did last year, many Christians of all denominations want to stand up again for a peaceful May 1st in Berlin's district Kreuzberg.

This year there will again be a MyFest with concerts, a street fair, and much more. The organizers of the MyFest have once again invited an interdenominational youth initiative in connection with "TOGETHER FOR BERLIN" (GEMEINSAM FÜR BERLIN) to hold an open-air worship service which will take place at 10:30 AM on the Mariannenplatz.

Some Berlin churches will be there in full-force, others are encouraging people to come, and yet others plan to send delegations. A children's program is being planned. Some Christian bands have agreed to play during the MyFest in the evening. They are awaiting the final approval of the organizers.

The "Revolutionary May 1st Demonstration" that has been the origin of much violence in the past will be held this year in Leipzig. The reason behind this decision was the announcement of a demonstration planned there by neo-Fascist groups.

In Berlin, the police plan to again use their plan of systematic crack-down that worked well last year. Bernhard Kufka from police precinct 5 is in charge of police activities. Last year, Turkish and Arabic youth were especially violent, so the police are planning to inform youth in schools in Kreuzberg and Neukölln ahead of time that stone-throwers will be prosecuted.

Pray

- **For a broad effect of the worship service at the Mariannenplatz**
- **That the violence will not be transferred to Leipzig**
- **For tactical wisdom and protection for the police and those in charge**
- **That the peace of God will come to potential violent participants**

Kottbusser Tor

The area around the Kottbusser Tor in the district Kreuzberg-Friedrichshain is a big problem-area. Many families who desired a better future for their children have left the area in recent years. 80 percent of the residents are of Non-German heritage. The

number of those on welfare is higher than in other areas of Berlin. The area is well-situated for public transportation, but has also become one of the main centers for illegal drugs. However the banks and shops surrounding the area are important for Kreuzberg.

Because most of the youth from this area do not have much contact with Germans, they have great difficulty with the German language, and their educational level is generally low. This makes it hard for them to find employment. As a result, young men grow up separate from German society and learn traditional men's roles early in life. They look for recognition and affirmation through the conservation of cultural and family "honor". They stop at nothing, including murder, to avenge the family honor, as was recently seen in the death of a young Turkish woman. The local government plans to take various measures to try to help eliminate this problem. It would be ideal if Christians would get involved here.

(Source: LOS - Lokaler Aktionsplan für das Kottbusser Tor, <http://www.kottbusser-tor-quartier.de>)

Pray

- **For the success of the plan of action**
- **That residents of non-German heritage would increasingly desire to become integrated in German society**
- **For Christians to become involved in this area**

Senator for the Interior

Dr. Ehrhart Körting, born in 1942, is married and has five daughters. He spent his youth in Bad Harzburg, studied law in Berlin and Munich, served as Councilman of Construction in Berlin-Charlottenburg from 1975-79, and as Senator for justice in Berlin from 1997-1999. Since June, 2001 he has been serving as Senator for the Interior.

His responsibilities include state, administrative and civil service law, and the protection of the constitution as well as public safety and order.

Dr. Körting has proven during his time in office that he espouses constitutional principles and desires a safe, peaceful city. He has spoken repeatedly about a "historical duty of the dialogue between the city of Berlin and the nation of Israel". In a speech he said, "Berlin was the center of a racial delusion that left an entire continent in rubble and ashes. We should also not forget the anti-Israeli propaganda that originated in East Berlin during the Cold War. Today Berlin is the center of a democratic Germany, and the connections to Israel are more acute than ever."

He clearly sees the dangers arising out of fundamental Islam and right-wing extremism. He publicly and steadfastly stands up for his concern that "our society

clearly show right-wing extremists that they have no hope for tolerance or sympathy for their deeds."

The containment of extremist groups is only one of the tasks of the senator. Let us also pray for blessing and success in his other responsibilities.

Source: www.berlin.de/seninn/presse/reden_25.html and www.berlin.de/seninn/verfassungsschutz/aktuelles/index.html

Pray

- **Thank God for Senator Körting's consistent and forceful politics**
- **That he can continue to work effectively for the collective good of the city**
- **For success in the fight against extremist groups**

Keeping On

The re-payment of the debt incurred by the Jesus Day continues to be a prayer request. We are thankful for all donations received to date, but we continue to pray that the debt of 120,000 Euro can soon be paid off. Information about this need and ways to help can be found at: www.jesus-tag.de

We also continue to pray for a substantial turn-around in the political situation in Berlin. This requires conceptual alternatives as well as personnel changes. Let us pray that the right ideas and people will be developed.

Dates

- Sunday, April 4, 2005 6:30 – 9:00 PM Lukas-Gemeinde (Kurfürstenstr. 133, 10785 Berlin): **Vision Evening** for Leadership, Prayer Partners, and Supporters of TOGETHER FOR BERLIN (GEMEINSAM FÜR BERLIN)

PREPARATION for April 30 and the 1st of May

Please ask the editorial staff for information about meeting places for the prayer activities.

- Friday, April 15, 2005 7 PM: **Coordination Meeting** for those taking part in prayer activities on April 30th and May 1st.
- Friday, April 22, 2005 7 PM: **On-Site Prayer** for a peaceful May 1st, 2005.
- Friday, April 29, 2005 7 PM: **On-Site Prayer** for a peaceful May 1st, 2005.

Don't miss this:

- Sunday, May 1, 2005 10:30 AM: **Interdenominational Worship Service** with prayer for a peaceful May 1st on the Mariannenplatz in Kreuzberg. You are cordially invited to attend!