

April 2006

## Good News

Berlin has been named the "Capital of Design" by UNESCO. We are glad about this recognition of the creative potential of our city.

## The Distrikt Kreuzberg-Friedrichshain

Kreuzberg, together with Friedrichshain, form a common "west-east district", symbolized by the famous Oberbaum Bridge which connects the two districts. Without a doubt, Kreuzberg is one of the most "colorful" and well-known districts of Berlin, although with only 148,000 residents, it is one of the smaller districts. 30% of its residents are non-Germans. 27% are unemployed, and 23 % are living from Hartz IV welfare. In many schools, students with German as their mother tongue are in the minority. The population, with its manifold problems, is concentrated in a small area, because there are many old rental buildings with multiple inner courts and crowded conditions. The formation of ghettos and the lack of a perspective for the future among young foreign immigrants are among the most urgent problems of the district.

The largest and most well-known event in Kreuzberg is the annual Carnival of Cultures which takes place at Pentecost. Hundreds of thousands have come in the last years to watch the approximately 10-hour parade of the various cultures between the Südsterne Kirche and Yorckstraße.

## May 1st in Kreuzberg

On May 1st, during the "Myfest" on the Mariannenplatz, there will be again a prayer service at 11:00. In addition, young Christians will be collecting bottles from the street during the festival, so that potential violent rioters cannot use them as objects for throwing. These activities were particularly well received by both the public and the sponsors last year.

During the afternoon, prayer teams will be in the area to pray for a peaceful day. If you desire to take part in this, please contact the editors.

Because „Walpurgis Night Celebrations“, many of which have an occult background, are increasing in Berlin on April 30th, we recommend that believers honor God especially during this night through praise and that they pray for protection for the city. The "Leuchtturmgemeinde" is holding a praise night on April 30<sup>th</sup> beginning at 8pm in Berlin

Moabit, Erasmusstr. 18/19 (entrance in rear courtyard)

Further prayer initiatives known to us can be found on our internet site under "Termine" (Dates).

### Prayer

- **Pray for a joyful, peaceful festival and for protection for all those involved**
- **Pray that frustrated young people will have no chance for violence on this day**
- **Pray that the Spirit of Peace will rest on Kreuzberg-Friedrichshain on April 30th and May 1st**

## Friedrichshain

Although Friedrichshain and Kreuzberg have been combined into one district, each area has its own identity. One pastor from the area described Friedrichshain:

Friedrichshain is a district with a high birth rate. As a result there are many young families and many single-parent homes. Support activities are readily accepted. However, there is a high fluctuation rate among the population. Many people who move to Berlin choose Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg as their first district in which to live, but many leave the district to move elsewhere in the city. This makes it difficult to build long-term relationships in the district, and often leads to a lack of feeling responsible for neighbors and a lack of involvement in the district itself. On the other side, people who are new to the district often come to events sponsored by churches in the area.

In many areas, the district of Friedrichshain is influenced by young people with a postmodern worldview and its resulting life-style.

Some are still living in illegally occupied buildings and belong to the leftist scene. Others hang around in the many cafés and bars. Openness towards Eastern religions is increasing. In the bars and businesses, one can find more and more events with blatant demonic-satanic backgrounds. Many people in Friedrichshain are open for supernatural experiences, but are openly against the traditional churches. This could be a chance for more contemporary-style churches with a down-to-earth, daily life approach which enable real encounters with God.

Since the summer of 2005, a group of Christian leaders has been meeting in the district of Friedrichshain. "We pray together, we share with one another, we get to know one another, and try to find out what we can do together", says Paul Clarkson, the leader of the church "Oase des Lebens" (oasis of life). Christian churches, however, are very weak in Friedrichshain and have very little impact on society.

### Prayer

- **Pray that Christians find ways of getting to know and serve people in the district**

- **Pray that the spiritual openness of the people will become an openness for the gospel**
- **Pray for more churches and churches with a stronger influence in society in Friedrichshain**

## Juvenile Crime

Ehrhart Körting, Senator of the Interior, recently reported a downward trend in juvenile crime statistics in Berlin. There were many fewer crimes committed in 2005 than in 2004, but the statistics show two problem areas: the percentage of non-German criminals grew to 30%, a rise of 3% from 2004 to 2005, and, even more alarming, the rise in juvenile crime among non-Germans. In 2005, one of every 8 male German youths was charged with a crime, but one of every 3 non-German juveniles was charged with a crime. (Source: Die Welt)

Possible reasons for this were mentioned in our last prayer mail: low education, high juvenile unemployment, few chances for jobs. Turkish and Arab youth are more and more leaving the patriarchal control of the families, as one can see in the new movie "Knallhart". These are the youth who in recent years have sought an outlet for their aggression in the violence on May 1<sup>st</sup>. As we have seen in France, a generation without chances is simply not willing to accept its fate, but rather is giving a voice to its frustration through violence. It is high-time to re-think our education and social services policies. Instead of seeking to save even more money in these areas, we must invest in the coming generation. Let us pray intensely for this much-needed re-thinking.

### Prayer

- **Thank God for the lessening crime rate**
- **Pray for good ideas on the part of police and social services for effective measures against juvenile crime**
- **Pray for more initiatives within society which would provide chances for immigrant youth**

## Love Parade - planned

If „Dr. Motte“ had his way, the Love Parade would take place on July 15<sup>th</sup>. A large sponsor, who has agreed to cover a third of the costs, has awakened this hope. The rest of the costs, however, have not yet been covered. In the last years, the Love Parade has not taken place, mainly because sponsors could not be found to support this festival, which is characterized by drug abuse and liberal sexuality, and because many Christians had prayed against it.

On July 15<sup>th</sup>, the praise event "Calling all Nations" (CAN) will take place. We desire that Jesus alone will be honored on this day!

### Prayer

- **Pray that the Love Parade will not take place**
- **Pray that no further sponsors for the Love Parade can be found, and for financial blessings for Calling all Nations (CAN)**
- **Pray for broad spiritual support among churches of various denominations for CAN**

## The political left divided in Berlin

Before federal elections, the PDS and the WASG (Wahlalternative Arbeit und soziale Gerechtigkeit) joined together to form the „Left“ party. Candidates of the WASG could be voted into Parliament through the PDS candidate list. Until March 31<sup>st</sup>, a vote will be taken about this fusion, whose outcome is still unsure.

At the beginning of March, however, the regional WASG in Berlin, decided to run against the PDS in the elections on September 17<sup>th</sup>. This decision could cause a permanent break between the PDS-SPD coalition, because the PDS would then lose the votes of the WASG voters. According to recent surveys, their percentage at present lies at 3-4%. Because the election results of the leftist coalition actually made the large coalition in the federal parliament, the division of PDS and WASG in Berlin could also lead to surprisingly positive political changes in Berlin.

### Prayer

- **Pray that the division among the leftist parties in Berlin will work for good in Berlin and further God's plan for the city**
- **Pray that people who desire social justice will clearly see what they can do for the good of the city**
- **Pray that God, the Lord of history, will strengthen democratic processes which bring good to the city, and that those which are not good for the city will be weakened.**

## Dates

- April 2<sup>nd</sup>, 7pm in the Lukas-Gemeinde Kurfürstenstraße 133, Berlin-Schöneberg **Prayer Service for the City** with an emphasis on May 1<sup>st</sup> and Calling all Nations. **Noel Richards** will attend
- May 1<sup>st</sup> 11:00 am on the Mariannenplatz in Kreuzberg **Prayer Service for Berlin** and Kreuzberg