

# Prayer for Berlin

June, 2007



## **Good News: a peaceful May 1st!**

The media loves catastrophes—and when none are happening, they write about them anyway. Anyone who just glanced at the headlines would think that there had been riots in Kreuzberg on May 1st. But the police report said, “At approximately 9:25pm about 600 people gathered on the corner of Wiener Str. and Skalitzer Str. for a spontaneous march that...went through the “MyFest” to the Mariannenplatz. Many people covered their faces, picked up bottles and stones and threw them...at the police. On the corner of Wiener Str. and Skalitzer Str., a few people of a group gathered there piled up ...things in the street. At approximately 10:30pm unknown persons set a trashcan for paper on fire in the Oranienstr. and threw stones at the police. The police responded quickly and forcefully, thus ending the attacks on the police before midnight; several were arrested.” The night of April 30th also stayed relatively quiet—the police were able to continually bring the provocations of drunk punks under control. And that’s all there was! Nevertheless, some media spoke of “riots” and “violence” in their headlines.

On a positive note: Many newspapers and broadcast networks reported that May 1st began with a worship service. Some of them even quoted portions of the sermon, songs, and prayers. The coverage of the worship service was positive in all accounts—there were no negative or cynical comments.

We have much to thank God for—He answered our prayers for peace. The press is increasingly beginning to notice what Christians are doing. Above all, it’s good that the Senator of the Interior made it clear that the incidents on May 1st no longer are associated with political riots. People prayed on site on both days.

## **The consequences of poverty for children**

A series of cases of neglected children in the last weeks has alarmed both the population and the politi-

cians. Two years ago, in June of 2005, we addressed the issue of neglected and abused children in our prayer letter, and we prayed for: “God’s help for prevention and exposure // Further awareness in society // A change in the law, so that youth authorities can act more quickly and effectively in emergency cases // More models of Christian help agencies in this area.”

Now, two years later, we can thankfully see that God has answered our prayers in very specific ways, and that much has been brought to light which had been kept in the dark. In the year 2006, 20 percent more cases of abuse and 85 percent (!) more cases of abandonment or neglect were reported. Berlin still remains at the top of the list. In comparison with Hamburg and Bremen, Berlin has many more families who have claimed a need for help in raising their children. This is due to a large extent because 46% of people in Berlin are single-parent families. According to statistics, every third child is living below the poverty line. Unfortunately, serious cases of neglect and abuse grow out of poverty. It is not viciousness which causes parents to abandon their children. Many unemployed are just not able to cope with the increased financial and mental pressure. They are simply unable to care for themselves and their children. Last year in Berlin, 25% of the funds for youth services were cut. Community staff workers are responsible for up to 150 children each. There is little time for house visits, because administrative tasks are taking up so much of their time—and because there are not enough computers. However, the only means of discovering neglect of children in its early stages is by doing house visits. Staff of the youth services in Neukölln and Mitte have requested improvement and more staff.

Politicians verbalize a desire to see an improvement in the situation in Berlin, but nothing much has happened. All of the public authorities that deal with youth services were recently put together into a network, and there is now a telephone hotline from the Network of Child Protection (Netzwerk Kinderschutz). It is also positive that the staff of the youth authorities now has the right to make unannounced house visits if neglect is suspected. On the federal level, new models of ways to better support families are being tried in an attempt to keep abuse or neglect from happening. Let us pray for these efforts in Berlin!

### **Prayer:**

- **Thank God for increased awareness of this issue in society**
- **Pray that effective models for mentoring of needy families can be developed**
- **Pray for wisdom and inspiration for all those in Berlin who are active in working for the good of children**

## **Protection and Safety**

In the past years, many planned terrorist attacks in Berlin or in Germany were discovered before they could take place. In this way, much suffering has been avoided. This is also an answer to prayer.

However terrorist attacks can be planned in Germany, and they could also be carried out here. The capital city could be a special target, especially for Islamic-motivated terrorists, but also for others. In the past weeks, an increased number of cars have been set on fire by unknown persons.

### **Prayer:**

- **Thank God for His protection**
- **Pray for protection from terrorist attacks on public buildings, public transport and utilities (water, electricity, gas)**
- **Pray that the arsonists would be identified and arrested and for an end to the burning of cars**

## **G-8-Summit**

During the course of the G-8 Summit from June 6-8, there is an increased danger of attacks from violent anti-globalisation activists in places near the meeting place Heiligendamm on the Ostsee, in Rostock, but also in Hamburg and in Berlin. There will also be many peaceful demonstrations about concerns which, from a Christian perspective, are also justifiable.

Among others, these include climate protection and an increase in developmental help for third-world countries to reach the level promised by the rich countries. Our German chancellor wants to lead the way among her colleagues in the area of the protection of climate protection. Let us support her in prayer.

### **Prayer:**

- **Pray for our chancellor, that she would have wisdom in leading the summit, and for good results in the area of climate protection and the fight against poverty**
- **Pray that the anti-globalisation activists can share their concerns in a non-violent way**
- **Pray for wisdom and sober-mindedness on the part of the police during the demonstrations**

## **Fewer Parades in Berlin**

This summer in the Tiergarten, there will be no thundering bass tones, no half-dressed dancers, and no ruined parks. The Loveparade has been cancelled, and now the B-Parade planned for July 21 has also been cancelled. The main reason for the cancellations seems to be that not enough sponsors could be found. This is an answer to prayer.

The initiators of the Loveparade, however, are trying to find another German city in which to hold the pa-

rade. As a result of massive opposition on the part of the Evangelical Alliance and other people in Stuttgart, the city of Stuttgart has refused to hold the parade there. Talks are currently going on with the cities of Essen, Munich and Leipzig, but there is also talk of “selling” the parade to other countries. These developments are not positive for the director of Berlin Tourism and Marketing. He thinks Berlin should be careful not to give away its image as a “city of parades”.

We want to ask God to not allow parades in this city that glorify immorality of any sort. This includes the annual Christopher-Street-Day (CSD), which will take place again in Berlin on June 23, including a large parade. On this day, homosexuals worldwide will take to the streets trying to gain more rights for their minority in society and politics. Christians however have less and less rights to freely verbalize their view of homosexuality.

### **Prayer:**

- **Thank God for answers to prayer**
- **Pray that the Loveparade will not take place in any other German city**
- **Pray that attendance and effects of the CSD will lessen**

## **On our own account**

The prayer newsletter is written by the Forum Gebet (Prayer Forum). The forum is part of an interdenominational network Together for Berlin (Gemeinsam für Berlin GfB). GfB desires to see all areas of society reached with the gospel. GfB is financed through donations. At present, there are not enough finances to continue or expand the work.

More information and regular prayer requests concerning this area can be found in the two attachments or by asking for information at: [info@gfberlin.de](mailto:info@gfberlin.de)

### **Prayer**

- **Pray that new sponsors could be found, among Christians as well as in the secular areas**
- **Pray for multipliers who can introduce the work of GfB to possible supporters**

## **Dates / Information**

- June 1-3: **Prayer meeting** of the prayer initiative “Micha-Initiative concerning the **G-8-Summit**”. Further information on the website of the Micha-Initiative: <http://www.micha-initiative.de/channel.php?channel=61>
- **Worship** night with **Hillsong-United** on September 13. Tickets are limited. Information: <http://www.c-campus-berlin.de/>