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STEPHAN
KALLUS
REPORTING
FROM
THE
GEMEINDE
CHRISTI
AM
LAIMER
PLATZ
IN
MUNICH
GERMANY

Berndt Neumann went home

Many of you have been praying with us for our beloved brother and former elder Berndt Neumann. On October 26, Berndt passed away.



Berndt

Berndt with his wife Isolde were the heart of our church. He had served in the church for several decades, and was always there to step in when others left or would not take over responsibility. That was especially important

during the years when the church did not have a full-time preacher. Berndt and Isolde raised two daughters who are strong Christians with their families and Berndt was a successful businessman working in the German headquarter of Avon Corporation.

It is difficult to express our emotions in words. While we knew that Berndt is now relieved and has a new, healthy body, at the same time we were very sad that our dear brother is not with us anymore. Some of us fell into the trap of self-pity, but as a church, we are getting out of the valley and started to look forward again. That is what Berndt would have wanted.

Please continue to pray for Isolde.

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Growth!

Until December, we did not have a baptism or a new member. I had already resolved that 2004 would be the first year without growth. But the Lord said: "You of little faith":

Hannelore

Some things take years. More than seven years ago, Reiner attended a Bible class at the "Thalkirchner Gemeinde", where he met Hannelore. She told Reiner that she was baptized according to the Bible; however, that she had decided "to stay in the Methodist church to be of influence there". Knowing how remote the chances are to actually change an active Methodist's view on baptism much less an entire church, Reiner thought "Good Luck!". However, Hannelore kept in touch with Reiner over the years, and eventually began to attend one of our mid-week Bible studies. As time went by, she had to discover that her views on the authority of Scripture over tradition were not shared. Hannelore is very actively ministering to the needs of others, and she felt a responsibility for several older members in her Methodist church – she felt she could not leave those people behind, they needed her. At the same time, she wanted to be a member of a church that shared her beliefs; so December 1, we were happy to welcome Hannelore into our fellowship.

Guall and Sarina

We cannot pronounce his real name, and it is rather loooong – so we just call him Guall. Guall and his wife Sarina are from Ghana, but have lived in Germany for many years

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and speak our language rather well. They were devoted Methodists. Our brother Appiah, also from Ghana, explained the way of God to them more accurately, and on December 7, Gual and Sarina were immersed into Christ!

Robert

One Sunday in June, Robert showed up at church. He told me he had lived a homosexual lifestyle for 20 years and found help with Homosexuals Anonymous, „*an interdenominational Christian fellowship of men and women who have chosen to help each other live free from homosexuality*“ (<http://members.aol.com/hawebpage/>). There he found help to leave this lifestyle



Robert baptized!

and there he was pointed to Jesus Christ as his Savior. Robert attended a Baptist church in Munich for several years, but became more and more concerned of their strong inclination towards entertainment instead of worship.

Somehow, Robert established contact with churches of Christ in the U.S. and started participating in World Bible School. He was given our address and started attending our church. On December 1, Robert was baptized into Christ. He is very busy trying to help others find the way out of a homosexual lifestyle and to Jesus Christ. In fact, Robert was asked to establish Homosexuals Anonymous in Germany. This is a very challenging undertaking and a courageous way to minister to the lost. Please pray intensely for Robert that the Father may give him an extra portion of endurance and faith. Those of you who receive my newsletter by email, you can read Robert recalling his story in his own very frank way.

Unity Efforts Continuing

The unity efforts in Munich have developed well. Reiner and I have met with the two preachers of the (former) ICOC church every other week for Bible study and prayer. We have become good friends and can openly discuss questions that arise. On the evening of November 3, Reiner and I were invited to speak at their assembly. That was the first time, anybody from outside the ICOC movement was allowed to address the church! The members welcomed us with great joy and enthusiasm. On the weekend of December 5, the European Leaders Conference of the ICOC was held in Munich, and Reiner and I again were invited to address the men and women

from 31 nations in Europe. It is thrilling for me to observe the development of their thoughts concerning congregational autonomy; while they are committed to helping each other, they have given the decision-making power to the local congregation, and within the congregations to a leadership of several brothers instead of one man.

The brothers of the “Thalkirchner Gemeinde” have worshipped with us three times this year. Besides, the members of both churches have started to invite each other to their homes. We plan to continue these days of fellowship in 2005.

Please continue to pray for our relations to both groups. Just like Barnabas, we want to extend our arms and invite into fellowship all brothers and sisters in Christ – not holding against them things they might have done in the past if they have repented. On the other hand, we do not want to be too naïve, and open the doors for false ideas.

US Trip

Since the US\$ lost more than 30% to the Euro during the year, it was necessary for Reiner and me to do a fund-raising trip – in a period of 11 days, I met with brothers in five States. A special thanks goes to my wonderful hosts in Sayre, OK, Hollis, OK, Nashville, TN, Searcy, AR, Camarillo, CA, and Duluth, GA! You helped one tired road-warrior to relax and gain new strength. Though the trip was exhausting, it was a joy to see you again. I was blessed to hear that two congregations will raise the funds, but that does not quite fill the gap. Please pray that others will be willing and able to support our ministry.

Nina

With the start of the new school year, we now have both girls in school. Our prayers for a good teacher for Nina were answered. We are so thankful that the public school Lisa and Nina attend is a place we can fully trust.

Happy Holidays!

PRAYER REQUESTS:

- * Hannelore
- * Robert
- * Gual & Serena
- * Contact with the two other churches