

Site Report: Stuttgart, Germany

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Introduction: The US Military presence in Stuttgart is located on 4 posts in the greater Stuttgart area. Stuttgart, the cultural and political capital of the state of Baden-Wuerttemberg, has some 600,000 people, and if adjoining suburbs are included, more than 1.5 million people. It is perhaps best known as the manufacturing site of Mercedes and Porsche cars. The US Military community includes the US European Command (EUCOM), the Defense Information Systems Agency, Special Operations Command, US Africa Command and other very significant commands. It is an area of strategic importance. It is heavy in rank structure on both the military and civilian side. There are approximately 11,000 Americans in the area. This figure includes both military and civilian.

The Need: The Stuttgart military community needs a Presbyterian and Reformed Church. This community has some of the most senior leaders in all the services (Army, Air Force, Navy, Marines) and a large number of high level civilians working in the community. These are indeed some of the best and brightest that America has to offer. They are highly trained professionals on the cutting edge when it comes to the defense of our nation. Spiritually, the community is presently served by chaplains in a highly pluralistic environment. There are also 3 Baptist Churches serving the English speaking community.

Project Description: A church planter is needed to establish a Presbyterian and Reformed witness in the Stuttgart area. The primary effort of the church planter would be to establish a P&R witness to the Americans. Secondarily, with the international business climate, universities, and English speaking Germans a mission effort could be initiated to reach beyond the American military community and have an international presence in the city. A bilingual pastor (English-German) would be ideal for this church planting effort. This will be a pioneering effort. Funding for this work will be initially borne by the sending presbytery that adopts this location. Churches outside the geographical bounds of the sending presbytery could also partner in this effort to expand the Kingdom. The Church planter could also participate in the raising of funds for this effort. Our experience, though somewhat limited by only two church plants thus far, indicates that the work could in a reasonably short period of time become self-supporting. The Church planter must be a self-starter. He must be willing to work hard in his vocation. He should be a good expositor of the Word of God and he should have a burden to reach the lost with the good news of Christ. He should also be a disciple maker. A man strong in the faith and yet tender in heart is much needed for the ministry. A familiarity with the military culture would be helpful, but not necessary. A brief training period could be provided for the Church planter to help him understand the military culture. He should also understand that the military is a highly mobile society. It moves soldiers and their family members around quite often. This presents both challenges and opportunities. Challenges in terms of continuity in the body, but it also presents opportunities. Over a period of time the pastor will literally impact thousands of people for the cause of Christ.

Additionally, the church planter must be prepared to live and work in an environment where there are few like-minded, if any, pastors around him.

Conclusion: The military community is a wonderful community that could benefit greatly from a doctrine of grace ministry. In addition to the opportunities for a life-changing ministry to US Military personnel and American civilians the church planter would be able to impact an international community. He will also be able to avail himself and his family of the rich European culture and explore the wonderful sites of the Reformation. It would be a rich experience for a P&R pastor and his family.