

LATEST NEWS # 518, June 12, 2008

The following news concerns Austria.

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Vienna's Bible Centre a hive of activity for all

By Dr Jutta Henner, General Secretary, Austrian Bible Society

AUSTRIA — May turned out to be a particularly busy month for the small Austrian Bible Society team working at the Bible Centre in the heart of Vienna!

The Bible Society warmly welcomed an invitation from the Israeli Embassy to host an exhibition of 30 paintings of biblical scenes by children and teenagers from Jerusalem and the surrounding area. For four weeks in May, the paintings were displayed at the Bible Centre and attracted both school groups from different religious backgrounds and adults – donors and friends of the Bible Society as well as tourists and passers-by. Thanks to the Bible Society in Israel, Scriptures, literature and gifts from Israel were also available. The exhibition was part of the Israeli Embassy's official program marking '60 years of Israel' and was one of a series of related cultural events in the museum area where the Bible Centre is located.



At the official opening of the exhibition on May 5, Pastor Helmut Nausner, Vice-President of the Bible Society, stressed that the Bible links people across geographical and cultural boundaries. "Children from Israel painted scenes from the Bible which tell stories to children here in Austria," he said. "Children are ambassadors of peace."

Visitors were impressed by the meaningful interpretations of the biblical scenes in the paintings, and Bible Society supporters also appreciated the gesture of showing love for Israel through hosting the exhibition. "I was so blessed to visit this exhibition," reads one of the entries in the guest book.



A special program arranged with the city's Youth Department saw children attending an afternoon program based around the exhibition. After touring the exhibition and hearing the relevant Bible stories, the children were invited to 'paint the Bible' themselves. A large Noah's ark was painted on the inside of the window of the Bible Centre and the children invited passers-by to come in and ask questions about the Bible.



A very special event marked the end of the exhibition: the Bible Centre participated – for the fourth time - in the annual ecumenical *Long Night of the Churches*, when churches remain open until 1 a.m. and offer cultural attractions such as exhibitions, concerts and readings. The Bible Society offered its visitors – mostly young people and non-church-goers – readings of the Bible stories related to the paintings, accompanied by 'biblical' music played on a harp. A buffet of Israeli food also encouraged visitors to linger and ask many questions about the Bible. A number of them also bought a Bible. Among many positive comments, one visitor wrote, "It was good to be here again."

For an earlier report about the Austrian Bible Society's participation in the Long Night of the Churches, see Latest News # 320.

Photos (Austrian Bible Society):

AUT08DJ-1: Children painting inside the front window of the Bible Centre in Vienna, Austria, as part of events surrounding an exhibition staged there in May 2008 of paintings of biblical scenes by Israeli children and teenagers. The Austrian Bible Society also participated in the Long Night of the Churches in the same month.

AUT08DJ-2: A child painting inside the front window of the Bible Centre in Vienna, Austria, as part of events surrounding an exhibition staged there in May 2008 of paintings of biblical scenes by Israeli children and teenagers. The Austrian Bible Society also participated in the Long Night of the Churches in the same month.

For further information please contact comms@ubs-wsc.org

