

## COMMON CULTURAL ISSUES FOR CB STUDENTS

The information presented below is a general guide to understanding some of the interesting differences between *German* and *American* culture. This information speaks only to overall trends and will not hold true in all circumstances, especially since both cultures are very diverse and dynamic. This guide will hopefully be helpful in attempting to understand the underlying causes of some misunderstandings. Remember: Your *CB* student may exhibit **NONE** of these behaviors!

BEHAVIOR/SUPPORT ISSUE	CULTURAL ROOT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Underage Drinking</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The legal drinking age for beer and wine consumption in <i>Germany</i> is 16. One may consume other alcohol at 18. Additionally, many families allow children to drink at home at an earlier age.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Expectation of freedom to socialize independently and to engage in sexual activity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>Germans</i> may have a freer attitude regarding sexual awareness and activity. It is slightly more common to see explicit materials on television or in advertisements or to visit nude beaches. <i>German</i> teenagers may enjoy more freedom to spend time with significant others without chaperones or curfews.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Aversion to participation in any religious activity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The main faiths in <i>Germany</i> are Catholic and Protestant, but strict religious observance is not common. Only about 10 % of <i>Germans</i> attend religious services once a month or more often.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Communication style that emphasizes directness, criticism and intense discussion</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>German</i> society welcomes a direct manner in conversation. <i>Germans</i> may offer candid criticisms or engage in intense discussions in order to fully explain an important point. They may find the <i>American</i> style of communication to be confusing, frustrating, insincere or shallow.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Insistence on cleanliness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ It is common for <i>Germans</i> to maintain meticulously cleaned kitchens and bathrooms and very organized homes. They may not be accustomed to a home that is "lived in", with dishes in the sink, newspapers strewn about, or keys on the table.</li> </ul>