

Dear Praying Friends,

Thank you for praying for all of the travel that I (and sometimes Lynette) have been doing these past weeks. I returned Thursday evening around 11:30 pm from my fourth trip in the course of past three weeks (with a raging cold, shared by Lynette). Prior to those trips, Lynette was gone for 9 days with the Connecting Hearts ministry. It has all been good, but exhausting. Some of the things in these weeks have included:

*The Connecting Hearts retreat in April was the largest one so far, with around 30 in attendance. Many women in GEM have commented on how much it has meant to them to escape the isolation of their daily ministries, connecting with other women in ministry and focusing on spiritual renewal.

*I had key meetings with the current and future field leader for GEM-Germany, first in Berlin and two weeks later in Frankfurt. The Germany field is one of GEM's largest and will be increasingly strategic with a significant new initiative in Frankfurt. Field leadership transitions are a critical part of my regional responsibilities.

*Lynette and I joined 9 others from our Kagran church at Schloss Klaus in central Austria for three very full days, gaining insights into how to "rightly divide the Word of truth." We saw this as a chance to support our church family, encouraging a growing love for the Scriptures and empowering every believer to study the Word for themselves. Among the participants were Lukas and Maria, friends the Lord has used to encourage us, even as they have asked us to mentor them. (picture below)

*This past week, I spent four days in Lyon, France, with about 20 other GEMers, who are in the process of launching six "affinity groups" in GEM. Each group is bringing together people across the mission, who are passionate about using their particular gifts to reach Europe. These include those working in "anti-trafficking" ministries, those using the arts in ministry, those working primarily with Muslims, and those involved in some way with theological education (this is the group I am leading). While in France, I was reminded of how important God's Word is for us all, and that we must stand on that firm foundation as we live as Ambassadors for Christ.

Meanwhile, on the home front (between trips), I was able to attend a birthday party this past month of an occasional attender at church. It was a fantastic opportunity to "intersect with the lost." I spent most of my time at the party in conversation with "A", who thought South American shamanism was superior to Biblical faith. We talked about many things, but mostly about the Bible and faith issues. He wrote down at least one thing I said, and told me he would follow it up. A has my contact information. Please pray for another seed planted.

Lynette and I are thrilled to have Kristiana home for the weekend, while she visits Vienna with a non-believing friend from Dublin. And to make life almost perfect, Erik flies in tonight for two weeks of vacation. (Bri will join him for the second week.) This will be the first time in 14 years that both K and E were home at the same time for Mother's Day.

Please pray for two up-coming trips:

*May 25-26 – we will be at a planning retreat for the Romanian team. I will be leading a session on personal strategic planning. Also, during this trip, we will be visiting with both our newest missionary appointees in Hungary and another couple, hoping to join GEM.

*May 28 to June 4 – we will be getting away for a few days to spend time with the grands in Dublin. This will be a much needed break for us both.

Thanks so much for your prayers and encouragement.

Much love from Austria,

Jim and Lynette

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