

December 30, 2017

Dear Praying friends,

Six months ago yesterday, Lynette and I left Austria to begin our 183 day odyssey, aka “home ministry assignment.” It has been an amazing journey, full of blessings, divine encounters, and building friendship old and new. It has also been a good time to reflect on what God is doing in our ministry in Austria and in my regional leadership role for GEM in central Europe. As we prepare to return to Vienna on Sunday, arriving Monday, there are a number of things we are thankful for and other things we would ask you to pray about.

- Immediately after our last update a month ago, we received a note from Fogii and Anna, thanking us for praying – he has a new job (starts Jan. 2) and damaged relationships are healing (“that forgiveness thing is working”). Thank you all for joining us in those prayers.
- My Iraqi/Syrian friend “M” passed his big German test, about which he was quite nervous. He thanked me “very, very much” for our prayers, and is eager for my return. He still has not received word on his asylum status. Please pray as we resume reading the NT together.
- Really good developments in navigating the transition in leadership on GEM’s Germany field. Thank you for praying.
- Thankful for special times celebrating Christmas with our son, Erik, and his wife, Bri, in their home in Maryland.

As we head home tomorrow, please pray for:

- Wisdom as we re-integrate into the Kagran Church. There are many requests and opportunities, but our ministry time available for Kagran is limited. I (Jim) am no longer on the leadership team, but have been asked to continue to serve on the preaching team. Then there are small groups and mentoring possibilities. This is where Lynette and I work most closely together, so we will need to make good choices. (On top of this, the church has apparently been going through some tough times during these past months. We are unsure how that will impact our involvement.)
- Teaching and training through the two ministries of BAO and the EVAK Bible school – we haven’t mentioned this part of our ministry over the past months, but as we return to Austria, several important decisions will need to be made. The Bible school is seeking Austrian accreditation, which is a huge step. I serve on the board, but also teach on occasion. Please pray both for wisdom for all of us in this process as well as for my personal future in teaching and shaping the BAO ministry.
- Jim’s GEM leadership responsibilities – as of January 1, I will no longer be serving as the field leader for GEM’s Austria field, allowing me to focus more on my regional role over the 7 fields in central Europe. This is a welcome development, but will not be easy, since I have served nearly 25 years as FL for Austria. God has thankfully provided a highly qualified person to fill those shoes.
- Jim’s doctoral studies – I have not been able to give much time to this over the past 6 months. I have cleared my travel schedule, however, for January in order to focus on writing a proposal for my dissertation research. Please pray that I will have the energy and concentration for this task. The defense of the proposal is scheduled for mid-March, but from Jan. 30 on, I will be back on the road. The effective use of the next month is critical.
- New opportunities for sharing the Gospel and discipling others – starting with those already in our lives (“M”, neighbors, other friends, etc.) to finding those, whom the Lord has prepared, we long to see many come to faith and grow into vibrant followers of Christ.

During these months, the Lord has kept us safe and generally healthy (only the last 24hrs have we both battled a short-lived stomach bug – please pray that we will both be fit for flying home tomorrow!). As we close this

year, we want to give a huge thank you to all who have partnered with us, both in prayer and financially. You have encouraged us and demonstrated God's faithfulness and love.

May your paths this new year be directed by God himself. Until next time.

Jim and Lynette

Final Record Ticker – Hatcher's HMA	
Anticipated cumulative totals from June 29, 2017, to Jan. 1, 2018	
Distance traveled overland	13,600 miles
Distance traveled by air	44,548 miles
# of beds slept in	About 55
# of countries / US states visited	6 / 23

The words of Jesus for 2018:

"Seek first the Kingdom of God..." (Mt. 6:33) "... for apart from me you can do nothing." (Joh. 15:5)