



The Giant Ferris Wheel- Das Riesenrad

**Vienna Tidbits:**

In Austria Dec. 31st is called Silvester. It is named after Pope Silvester who declared that evil spirits could not stand noise. So Austrian's throughout the day keep the spirits at bay and celebrate the New Year with loud noises of all kinds.

December 31, 2007

**Prayer Requests:**

Language Study

Culture Shock

Formation of new relationships with neighbors

Building relationships with existing churches and Christians

Unity

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# Vienna Team Newsletter

MERRY CHRISTMAS AND HAPPY NEW YEAR



## WORK FUND UPDATE

In our last newsletter, we mentioned that we were planning to remove the fundraising update and accompanying graph from this newsletter unless we had an update. Well, praise God that we need to keep the graph and provide an update. In the last month, the Littleton Church of Christ in Littleton, Colorado (Kim's home congregation) as well as an individual stepped forward in faith and committed to ongoing support of our Work Fund. We thank God for their generosity and investment. These contributions to God's work in Vienna will further enable us to effectively minister to the Viennese. As shown in the graph, we now stand at nearly half of our goal. We certainly welcome your one-time and ongoing support toward our Work Fund as we begin to focus less directly on language learning and more intently on the "small group ministry" aspect of our mission over the course of the next year.

Also, for those of you who have played a role in our support in 2007, especially those of you who have consistently offered your prayerful and financial support, we want to say "Thank You". May God richly bless you in the coming year as you sacrifice to advance His kingdom. ~ Josh

## KULTUR KORNER—CHRISTMASTIME

Go to [www.viennateam.org](http://www.viennateam.org) to see previous articles in this series.

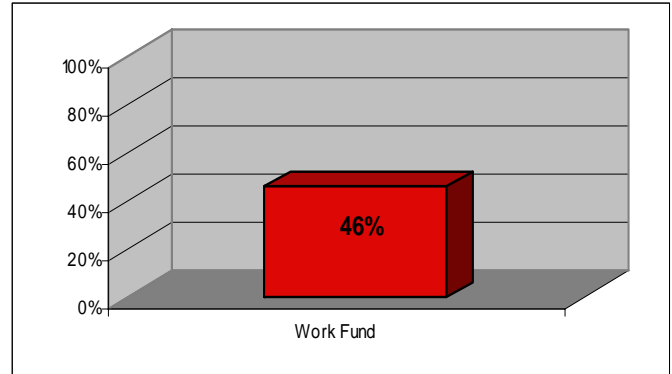
Christmastime in Vienna is wonderful! The streets in the city center are beautifully adorned with festive displays of Christmas lights. In many parts of the city, Christmas markets showcase a variety of handmade gifts and homemade foods. Within this beautiful atmosphere are some cultural traditions that differ greatly from the Christmas season to which we are accustomed in the states.

First, the activities and events leading up to Christmas seem a lot less commercialized than in the states. For example, our local Christmas market offers musical performances, children's plays, and other family activities each week for free. Also, Christmas markets have several booths that donate all their profits to local charities. Commercial retailers and shopping malls still seem to market for gift-seeking shoppers, but I haven't observed any frenzies over the must have gifts (i.e. Tickle Me Elmo) for the holiday season.

"We proclaim him, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone perfect in Christ.

To this end I labor, struggling with all his energy, which so powerfully works in me." ~ Colossians 1:28-29

Team Work Fund Status



Please continue to pray about AND consider supporting our work. If you are interested in supporting our work you can go to our website at [www.viennateam.org](http://www.viennateam.org), click on the "Team" button at the top, then click on "Support Form" link on the left. Or you can always e-mail us at [viennateam@viennateam.org](mailto:viennateam@viennateam.org).



Nativity Scene on display at the Christmas Market

It also surprised me that Santa Claus is basically a "no show" here in Austria. Of course, his image appears in some displays and in the Hollywood movies that are shown on TV, but he doesn't play a significant role in the gift giving tradition. In fact, some Austrians are confused or dismayed that Santa Claus has overshadowed their own traditions. So, who brings the gifts on Christmas Eve? The Christ child bears the gifts at this special time. Some families spend time together reading the gospel and sharing in a meal together.

I really appreciated this emphasis on who actually brings the gifts to our families. I enjoy Santa Claus and his cheerful image, but it really makes a lot more sense to thank Christ for all the good gifts we enjoy in our lives. Unlike the concept of Santa Claus, giving thanks to Christ for our gifts doesn't have to end after our children reach a certain age. As James 1:17 states so well, "Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights." ~ Ira