



Schönbrunn Palace (Schloss Schönbrunn)

Vienna Tidbits:
Men put on your lederhosen and women your dirndls, it's Vienna Ball Season! Typically lasting from New Years to February there will be over 300 different balls throughout Austria. Ranging from elegantly dressed men and women waltzing in a palace to the homeless ball.

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

EMPOWERED: KINGDOM COME

Our team anticipates that 2008 will be a year unlike any before it. We believe that the Lord will accomplish great things here in Vienna and all over the world. We believe that there are great things happening even now. God is using each of us to grow His kingdom and bring His peace to creation.

I recently read a marvelous little book by N.T. Wright titled *The Challenge of Jesus: Rediscovering who Jesus Was and Is*. In this book Wright determines that a first-century Jew would have still considered himself or herself in a state of exile. Though the geographic exile had ended, the theological state of exile continued. The task of Christians is "...to announce in deed and word that the exile is over, to enact the symbols that speak of healing and forgiveness, to act boldly in God's world in the power of the Spirit" (185).

Over the last three months, I've often reflected on these thoughts. I've thought about how they apply to us here in Vienna and what such an application insinuates for our lives. We are here to take hold of this bold vision and announce that the exile is over...

· ...The Kingdom Comes

The dream of our work and evangelistic strategy is rooted in our belief that the scandal of the cross still drives men and women to their knees. The heart of the

matter for us is that there is something appropriately offensive about the story of the cross, and people simply cannot remain the same once they've encountered the resurrected Christ. Not only do we long to share the story of Jesus and His love, but we also long to share the story of how He has changed us.

In a matter of speaking, it is a revolution we're invoking. It isn't a political revolution, but rather a revolution of the heart. The Word of God is a two-edged sword that cuts open our hearts and we are never the same. We are in Vienna to announce that the exile is over and because of this we will *never* be the same. Vienna will never be the same.

We are in the process of effectively accomplishing our primary first-year goals: (1) Learn the language, (2) adapt to a new culture, and (3) build new relationships with the people around us. The importance of these goals cannot be overstated. Dr. Bob Waldron, Executive Director of Missions Resource Network and a longtime missionary, states, "There is an unnecessarily high attrition rate among those missionaries who fail to learn the language and culture of the people to whom they were sent. And those who manage to remain on the field are largely ineffective. That is why we strongly urge mission teams to spend their first year in full time language and culture study." This is one of the reasons our mission team is making acquisition of the German language a primary emphasis of our first year in Vienna. Dr.

Waldron states, "Mission teams who follow this advice experience a richer, deeper ministry and generally have longer tenures on the field."

The task before is one that we do not take lightly, and as we strive towards fluency in the German language, our team has an increasing sense of excitement. We are praying for faith and direction in 2008 so that the kingdom of God will reign in Vienna. It is a big responsibility, but it is also a task that brings us joy. We are not afraid of the work or the challenges of this task because we are so often encouraged by the faith that our brothers and sisters in Christ have in us. We are empowered through your prayers, letters, and support. We know that you daily call upon God to bless this ministry of good news and peace.

· Empowered

I have reflected in the past about how I Corinthians 3:5-6 typifies our ministry—this is a ministry we cannot accomplish alone. We, as a mission team, are but a small part of the family working to end the exile in Vienna. It is the role of some Christians to go and proclaim the good

OUTDOOR OUTREACH

The sign posted over the entrance reads, "This house serves for spiritual edification and relaxation, All the churches of Christ greet you, Romans 16:16." Over the past several years, Schwarzwaldeckhaus has served as a spiritual resource for the Christians of central Europe. Located an hour's drive from Vienna, this mountain cabin provides Christians with a great place to marvel at God's creation and connect with other Christians. Church members from Italy, Switzerland, Austria, and Germany come each year to participate in camps and retreats. The churches also share in



A view of Schwarzwaldeckhaus in the snow

the maintenance and operating cost of the facility.

This winter our team had the opportunity to work on some restoration projects

news. It is the role of some Christians to stay and support those who are sent. Others toil with us through continual prayer. Paul states, "I planted, Apollos watered, but God caused it to grow. So neither the one who plants counts for anything, nor the one who waters, but God who causes the growth."

We play different roles in this ministry, but it is God who causes growth. God forgives sins. God brings peace. God ends the exile. When we look to 2008, we see a great opportunity for us to work together as children of God. God is a great god and he grants our ministry together a bold vision. Whether we plant or we water, God is the all-powerful creator who causes the growth, and I believe that the bold vision we have for Vienna in 2008 is the same Paul held for Corinth in year 1: that all would call upon the name of the Lord and be transformed in His name. ~ Brian



Larry, Moe, and Curly? Nope, just Ira, Brian, Josh, and Jake (not pictured) helping move Hans Dederscheck (preacher at Mondscheingasse congregation) into a new apartment.

in the cabin. The camp's caretaker was very thankful for the extra boost of help, and we were glad to share in making some much needed improvements. We can already see the usefulness and wisdom of having a retreat location here in Austria. It provides a place away from the bustle of the city that many outdoor loving Austrians are attracted to. It also eliminates the distractions of TV and radios so that people can spend quality time on relationships with others and with God.

We are glad to have access to this camp as a resource for the church here in Vienna. Schwarzwaldeckhaus provides us with an excellent outreach opportunity, an opportunity to build relationships with people and connect them to God. We want to continue the heritage of spiritual edification that happens every time someone walks through the entrance of the cabin. ~ Ira

"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