



Schönbrunn Palace (Schloss Schönbrunn)

Vienna Tidbits:

How else would Vienna celebrate Easter than with music! The Sound of Easter music festival in Vienna is from March 14th to the 24th and features music that ranges from classical to contemporary. The concerts are held throughout the city in various venues.

March 31, 2008

Prayer Requests:

Hensal: Prayer for new relationships with Austrian families
Rusher: Prayer for an impact in Vienna
Lockwood: Prayer that Jesus will be shown through acts of service
Haskew: Prayer for continuing opportunities to speak about faith

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Vienna Team Newsletter

IT'S A SMALL WORLD, AFTER ALL

The strategic nature of Vienna within continental Europe has long been a fascinating aspect of the city to our mission team as well as to past missionaries. For many years, Vienna was the point from which Bibles were smuggled behind the Iron Curtain during the Cold War. Now, Vienna represents the center of a Europe that is increasingly united in political ideology and in commerce. There is no "east versus west" mentality here, but rather a concerted effort to elevate the lives of all people across this continent. We are in Vienna because we believe that the greatest improvement one can make to their life is to accept Jesus as Lord and Savior. We pray that what we do in Vienna not only blesses this city, but every place that this city touches.

We spent a lot of time in the states preparing for this mission and talking a lot about strategy. We knew that there would be some variations on our projected strategy but we had no way of envisioning the types of ministry that awaited us in Vienna. We have described on many occasions the international nature of Vienna and how its location is strategic; Vienna is an hour drive from four different countries. Why is this significant? Because the gospel message has never been confined to person-to-person contact. The words of hope have traveled via parchment, paper, radio waves, and now from internet to the very edges of the earth. But when it arrives who is there to encourage, uplift, and guide?

Through a series of contacts at Eastern European Mission (EEM) we were given the name of a young man and woman who had been studying through World Bible School (WBS). They live in Koszeg, Hungary and were recently baptized in Budapest. Where is Koszeg? Good question, just across the border from Austria; a place on the edge of nowhere where the gospel reached out and took hold of these young people. Because of Koszeg's proximity to Vienna we were given their names and have been encouraging them through e-mail and phone calls. In February, Brian and I made a visit to Koszeg to meet the young man and hear his story. What an amazing journey for these two young people. They found the truth of God's salvation, but only to realize their friends and family would not accept this same hope. Listening and conversing with this young man about how the Truth had reached him, his struggles with not having others around him that share his beliefs, and his perseverance as he worships alone in his apartment on Sundays filled our hearts with joy. I praise God for this young man's faith. We visited with him for over four hours and we all left with a sense of encouragement and an understanding that not only are Christians connected through the blood of Christ but also through a quick, two-hour road trip.

This brings me back to my first point: Vienna is an hour away from four countries; countries with little towns on the edge of nowhere where people are looking and when they find the truth, they will be comforted knowing others are not worlds away, but just up in Vienna. ~ Jake and Brian

“DER AUSFLUG” (FIELD TRIP)

Just like first grade in the United States, the children here have the opportunity to participate in field trips (“Ausflug” in German). However, Carli’s class has taken many more field trips than my first grade class ever took. These excursions require involvement by willing parents (chaperone), and Kim and I have helped with a few of these events.

Around Christmas time, Kim traveled with the class to the Rathaus (city hall), where she helped the kids create various crafts at the Christmas Market there. Though she was not overly confident in her ability to communicate to the kids in German, we both knew that God had given her artistic talent and that she would be



Carli at Rathaus Christmas Market

able to help the kids make their crafts. Kim enjoyed her time with Carli’s class, and many of Carli’s friends enjoyed meeting Kim and having her help with their crafts.

A few weeks ago, I helped with two different field trips (in the same week). For the first excursion, we traveled to a theater to experience a child-oriented jazz performance. One of the songs the band played was a well-known German children’s song “Bruder Jakob” (“Brother John” in English), and all of the kids joined in to sing with the band. The kids enjoyed the performance and the opportunity to interact with the songs.

On the second excursion, we traveled to the same stadium where Kim and I had previously watched the Austrians play the Americans in Davis Cup tennis not far from Vienna’s famous ferris wheel. This particular event was a Vienna-wide sport competition where each class competed against other classes of the same grade from different schools in three unique activities. The kids had to first complete a small obstacle course by doing a somersault, crawling through a tunnel, running through cones, jumping a hurdle, and then again

in reverse. The Long Jump was the second activity. To complete the competition, the kids had to run a short distance and jump over two shorter hurdles. Older kids helping with the event recorded the results from each class and shared them with the teacher. Apparently, the top classes from each grade come back at a later date to compete against each other.

Not only did our presence at these field trips help ensure that the kids in Carli’s class made it safely on and off buses, subways, and trams, but I believe God also used us to begin forming a relationship with many of the families in Carli’s class. Conversations with the other kids and their parents, smiles, help opening drinks and snacks have all served to show that we want to be involved in this community and want to serve others in the same way that Jesus served. As I pick Carli up from school, I enjoy the friendly smiles, high fives, and conversations with her friends that occur more naturally as a result of our investment in their lives.

Our prayer continues to be that God would use our team to model the love of Jesus in our own lives and interactions with others that they may “give glory to [our] Father in heaven” (Matt. 5:16). ~ Josh



Carli’s classmates watching the competition