

November 30, 2006

Hey, y'all! I was about to wish you a happy Thanksgiving, but I realize that by the time you get this, you'll all be thinking about nothing but Christmas. We hope and pray that this season is a blessing to you. Our Thanksgiving was good as we spent it with all of our Florida family. God is so good in so many ways, but I'll save the list for some other time ☺

This time we wanted to share with you some updates from a part of the world that is close to our hearts, Germany. With Karl's family there and my having lived and worked a bit there, we get very excited when we hear positive updates. Germans tend to be very skeptical and reticent to believe in the first place and to share their faith once they have their own, so ministry can be very slow and very discouraging. These stories are anything but!

“People are frustrated with politics and the way society is developing. There is not much hope for a better future, so they are looking for something to hold onto. The time when the materialist looked down on a believer for being a believer is coming to an end. Nowadays the believers are looking down on the poor materialist for not believing in anything else but the material things. This is a great time to present the message of the Risen One in many new ways. Some people listen...and are more open to discuss the issues with you. I am very thankful that I can minister in a time and place such as this.” (Joe Hartung, Crusade staff in Germany; *Connection*, Dec. 2006)

In Germany, all students must have religion classes, but finding good materials is difficult, so Campus fuer Christus Germany recently adapted The Story of Jesus for Children DVD into a school curriculum. Here's what happened in one pastor's class.

“One girl, Svenia (3rd grade), made it clear she didn't believe in God. But after seeing the Crucifixion, she was in tears, and walked to the teacher's desk to ask a question her classmates had been discussing. ‘Did Jesus go to the cross of His own free will?’ she asked.

‘Yes,’ Pastor Hipfel told her....

Svenia turned back to the teacher and asked, ‘But why would He do that?’”

“Pastor Hipfel then had the opportunity to further explain God's love and forgiveness to the class.

‘These kids process things more through an emotional relationship than through intellectual understanding,’ says Pastor Hipfel, ‘and the curriculum connected with them emotionally.’... ‘I especially like the part where the children write a letter to Jesus,’ he says. ‘They are so sweet and honest – they even ask questions like, ‘Will our soccer team win?’”

“Since the course was completed last year, more than 200 packages have been sold and used throughout Germany. ‘Many teachers have told me they really need this,’ says Andreas (Bartels, dir. Of JESUS film ministry in Germany). ‘They say that such professional, high-quality multimedia materials are not available anywhere else.’” (Worldwide Challenge, Nov/Dec 2006 p.10)

I can't tell you how exciting this is for us! Karl's got cousins who are teachers and don't know God, and yet the truth about Jesus is being shared to children in German schools! We hope and pray for those we know and love personally, but we also pray for this wonderful country that has such a huge spiritual need. Please pray for Campus Crusade in Germany to be creative and God-directed as they seek to see the country changed one person at a time. Thank you all so much!

*Love,
Hiel, Karl
& Anja*