

Dear family and friends,

Greetings from a cold and snowy Bremen! I'm pretty sure we've had more snow in the past three days than we did all of last winter. Even though Bremen is so far north, we don't usually get much snow because of the winds that come in from the North Sea. I for one am enjoying the reminder of my childhood winters in Ohio.

The past couple of months have been very busy:

Evangelism Training and Media (ETM) is the course that Jim created for German-speaking Christians. ETM focuses on developing one's prayer life; discovering which talents and gifts God has given us and how we can use them for His glory; and time management and goal-setting. The 10-week long basic course took



place this fall, and I had the opportunity to work in the kitchen during the intensive week when all participants were together for seminars, group work, and presentations. The course was a tremendous help and encouragement to me when I took it last year, and I'm very encouraged that it's able to continue. We are also excited that the basic course will be offered in Vienna in the spring, marking the first time that Austrians will take part in ETM.

The first advanced course since Jim's death will begin on January 4th and will be taught by Glenn Jones from the congregation in Kiel. Three others from Bremen and I will be taking part. While the basic course always covers the same material, the advanced course focuses on a different subject each time and can be taken by anyone who has completed the basic course. This time we will be looking at "The Resurrection of Jesus: Questions about its Historicity and Meaning." While the course means a lot of reading and will surely test my German skills, I'm looking forward to it. Not only is the resurrection paramount to our faith, it also is often one of the sticking points when sharing the Gospel with Germans. I look forward to gleaned knowledge and advice that will guide me in my continued work in Bremen and in my own walk of faith.

I continue to teach the Sunday school class for the 4- to 6-year olds. Here are four of the five kids in my class proudly displaying their ice cream cones. Each week, if they participated well in class, they were allowed to choose a scoop to add to their cone. (Or as they described them, "flavors": "I'm having strawberry. What about you?") For the past couple months, they've been "growing" apples on trees. They've recently learned the books of the New Testament, and they've been hounding me to teach them the Old Testament as well. They love to act out Bible stories, and little Lennart (crouched down) recently did a masterful job of playing Uzzah being stricken by the Lord after touching the Ark of the Covenant. Let me just say it was high dramatics!



Elsa and I had the opportunity a few weeks ago to attend the Euro-American Retreat in Rothenburg ob der Tauber, Germany. There were 103 attendees representing 15 countries on four continents. Most were missionaries, but members of the U.S. military stationed in Germany were also there. How wonderful it was to worship with fellow Christians in English! Throughout the five days I had the thought, these people are like me. They know what it's like to live far away from family and friends. They know what it's like to feel torn between two cultures. They know the struggles and joy of mission work in a foreign land. It was also great to finally be able to match names with faces. I'd heard about a number of the other missionaries who

were there but had met very few of them before the retreat. I returned to Bremen feeling recharged and encouraged and full of new ideas to try.

One of those ideas was World English Institute (WEI). I've done a lot of English Bible studies in Bremen, but they usually focus on developing conversational skills in English and have a certain level of English knowledge as a prerequisite. WEI combines Bible studies with English grammar lessons. As the student works his way through the major stories of the Bible he is being prepared to take the TOEFL exam. I was overjoyed to finally have found a way to study the Bible with someone while still focusing on grammar skills. (As many of you know, it would not be inaccurate to describe me as a grammar nerd!) The day after we returned from the retreat, I started the WEI course with **Irene**, and it seems like it is going to work out well for her. I'm often asked to help people improve their English skills, so I'm hoping to be able to use the WEI material with others as well.

Contacts

Jessica – She is the one who had surgery a few months ago, and she continues to have a number of health problems. She still has not expressed an interest in studying the Bible together, but her situation has given me the chance to share a bit of Scripture with her. One recent conversation about my participation in ETM turned into a discussion about who is included in the definition of “Christian”; how we can know that the Bible is true; and – apropos to her health struggles – why there is suffering in the world.

Qing (“ching”) – I continue to develop my friendship with her. Qing has invited me to spend Christmas Eve (when most Germans celebrate Christmas and open gifts) with her and her husband, **Ken**, which took me by surprise but showed me how our relationship has developed. Yesterday Elsa and I ate lunch at her little restaurant, and we were able to have a good discussion with both Qing and Ken. Helga and Wolfgang (from church) have also visited them. Please pray for all of us that we might be a positive force in their lives, and that they might see in us the true meaning of life as a Christian.

Kai & Rainer – Elsa and I continue the English Bible Study each week, though Rainer has taken a “leave of absence” until after New Year’s because of work obligations. Please pray with us that he truly does rejoin the group in January. Kai, however, has continued to come, and we’re now about halfway through our study of Acts. We’ve had detailed discussions about the Holy Spirit and the meaning of baptism. He asked if I believe that I’ve received the Holy Spirit and has said that he asks questions not in an effort to tear down our faith but rather to better understand. Please continue to pray for this encouraging study!

Other Activities

Jim’s work – I have continued to slowly organize Jim’s books and other teaching materials, and since September I’ve been the ETM “secretary” of sorts. I helped Elsa edit and re-format the handouts and materials for the basic course, and I’ve reorganized Jim’s ETM computer files to ensure that anyone who might come after us would know what to do to prepare for an ETM course.

VBS – Stefanie and I are in the early stages of planning a Vacation Bible School for next July. The men at church were excited about the ideas that we presented to them. As far as I know, the congregation has never done anything like this, so it will be an adventure for all of us. The theme will be “The Armor of the Lord.”

Choir – Recently I joined an international choir being formed as an extension of the “Mentors for Migrants” program here in Bremen. So far it’s been a lot of fun and has provided me with opportunities to talk about the church and why I’m here. I’ve exchanged phone numbers with several of the other women, and I’m hoping we’ll be able to meet more often.

Prayer Requests

My family – You may remember that my grandmother died of cancer in April. Then, in June, my grandfather on the other side of the family died of leukemia. It's been a hard year for my family. Then, a few weeks ago, my other grandmother, Ida (the wife of the grandfather with leukemia), was diagnosed with ovarian cancer with metastatic tumors throughout her abdomen. She has been receiving chemo treatments, and the plan is to operate in mid-January. Please remember my family in your prayers. Dealing with this with one grandparent is difficult enough, but three in one year is just rough. Please also pray for me, as this is not easy to deal with from so far away.

Tina – Tina is a good friend from the European Singles Retreat who had knee surgery earlier this week. Please pray for her as she is forced to spend Christmas and New Year's in the hospital recovering.

Others in the Bremen congregation – Over the past few months **Frank** has had a lot of struggles with his arthritis and side-effects from medication but seems to be doing better over the past couple of weeks. **Jana's** sister (21) was recently diagnosed with leukemia. **Simone's** family has been hit hard by cancer this year, as have several of her co-workers. Please also pray that she and her husband, **Juergen**, might be a source of strength and encouragement and an example of faith to her sister, whose husband passed away this year, as she spends Christmas with them.

While it would be nice to be with my family in the States, I will be spending the holidays with "family" in Bremen. While I've been invited to friends' homes for cake and coffee on the afternoons of the 25th and 26th (the "first and second days of Christmas" in Germany), I'm not yet sure what I will do on Christmas Eve, simply because I've received offers from so many people! I guess it's nice to know that people enjoy my company. ☺ Thank you for all of your prayers, support, and encouraging words. They carry me onward. I wish you and your family a very merry Christmas and a blessed start to 2010!

Love,
Alicia

PS – Those of you who saw me in the States in the spring might notice in the ETM picture that my hair is much shorter. That's because I donated 11 inches of it to Locks of Love, the U.S. organization that makes wigs for children with medical hair loss. I never would have imagined that a hair cut would give me an opportunity to be an example of Christ to others, but it did. People could not imagine that I would just give my hair away when I could sell it for a profit. Apparently doing something for others without expecting something in return was a shocking concept for them.