

Randy and Brianna Carroll

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Dresden Update Spring 2008–Thankful

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Thanksgiving

Thank you for your prayers on our sister-in-Christ, Anke's, behalf! She succeeded in securing the position in the graduate program that she auditioned for and is now praying that she can handle the stress. But as she told us, "God would not have given this to me if He wasn't going to help me handle the work load" which is very true and we will continue praying for her.

Rössel Family

Right now, the company that Kai Rössel (one of our founding Christians here in Dresden) works for is struggling financially. Kai has been with them for a long time through thick and thin, but they are now five months behind on his pay. Needless to say, he is stressed and he also has his wife, Annette, and daughter, Annamarie, to think of. We ask prayers on his behalf and for others who are struggling financially within our group.

Health Issues

Bri has been seeing a lung specialist after months of chronic coughing which is the main reason our newsletter has been late in coming! Right now the diagnosis is asthma stimulated by bronchitis, but they are still running tests. We ask that you pray for a correct diagnosis and a solution as it is very draining.

Randy was in the hospital briefly in May for gall bladder pain but is now home, back to work and feeling better. He will have to make an appointment soon to remove a gall stone so we ask for your prayers that it will go well.

Friends and Contacts

There are several of our contacts going through difficult times right now. One of our friends here in Dresden for several years has recently been diagnosed with breast cancer. She has been like a surrogate mother and grandmother to us here in Dresden and is struggling with the sudden retirement the cancer has forced on her. She has mentioned that she wants to be baptized but has discovered that she cannot be immersed with her chemo port still intact. We pray for a solution to this and that we can trust to God's good timing and judgement.

Another long-time friend who has been coming to our English bible study on Monday nights for the past 5 years has recently been informed by her husband that he is thinking of leaving her and their two teens. She has mentioned through her marital struggles this past couple of years that the English bible study has been her lifeline. Thankfully he has said that he is willing to go to marital counseling, so please pray that God will open his heart and allow us to be there for this family in the right ways.

We Thank You

We could not work for the Lord as we do without your help. We appreciate and thank you from the bottom of our hearts for the prayers, emails and financial support that you give.

"May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of th Holy Spirit."

--Romans 15:13

Are You a Missionary?

Are you a missionary interested in updating your newsletter or website format? Contact our co-worker and web designer, Steve Martin, who designed our newsletter page.

"We always thank God for all of you, mentioning you in our prayers. We continually remember before our God and Father your work produced by faith, your labor prompted by love, and your endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ." --1 Thessalonians 1:2-3

We Are Thankful

We are thankful! The past few months have been blessedly busy in many different areas and we are ever thankful that God continues to guide us in our work here. We are sorry for the absence of correspondence, but look forward

to filling you in more often on what is happening in God's church in this part of the world. Due to problems with our web hosting company, we were forced to change website addresses, so please bookmark this new address in order to keep up with us with our family life: www.pressingtotheprize.wordpress.com

We apologize on their behalf if you have been frustrated (as we have) with being unable to reach our blog. You will notice that we have NOT yet been able to alter our family website links at the bottom and side of our newsletter to reflect this change, so the links at the bottom and side are not correct. Our email addresses remain unchanged.

Thank you for showing an interest in the church in Dresden!

Family Seminar

The weekend of April 18th through the 20th we were very blessed to have Bill Wilson from Köln, Germany prepare and speak on the topic of "communication in the family" for our Family Lectureship. Bill has extended experience and training in this area and, as he has lived in Germany for over 38 years, his qualifications were perfect. We were very pleased with the content of his session which ran in 45 minute increments with question-and-answer sessions afterwards. Though many of our guests were from the church, including those from neighboring towns, we did have a few visitors who were able to share in the experience. We were especially excited that our neighbors from the floor above us participated in almost the entire weekend. The father took notes on all of the sessions and asked questions about certain points of Bill's lectures. His girls participated in the mini-VBS that Brianna put on for the children during the sessions. By Sunday they were looking forward to the songs they had learned and asking which bible story they were going to hear. This was Brianna's first time to do something of this magnitude in German and is so thankful to several members of our group who helped in preparation and corralling!

What we're most excited about, however, is not what feats of organization, preparedness or presentation we accomplished; we were more happy to see the love of Christ shown to our neighbors (self-proclaimed atheists) and other visitors during the seminar. Children were looked after with patience, parents were encouraged and listened to and our group made a genuine effort to initiate one-on-one conversations. At the end of the weekend, we were touched to see the Church shining Jesus' light on our visitors.

We are thankful for our church family here in Dresden!

Special Visitors

We were so happy to be visited by John and Kay Lucius, elders from our sponsoring church, Northwest Church of Christ in St. Petersburg, Florida. Though we are blessed by support from several churches, our work would not

be possible without a sponsoring church willing to take on the burdens of responsibility for our work and financial organization. Northwest Church willingly plays that crucial role and without their partnership, we would not even be here.

John and Kay were a tremendous encouragement to us as they observed what we do and met some of the Christians during their stay. They expressed keen interest in the members of our group and what is going on in their lives, how the church here is progressing and our plans for further contribution to growth in the future. Don't get us wrong, we love ALL of the emails, phone calls and other support that we receive, but a personal "hug in the flesh" is something that can't be replaced!

We are thankful for the Lucius' and the family at Northwest Church of Christ. Our partnership is seven years and counting!

Searching

We mentioned in a couple of former newsletters that our group is having trouble meeting the monthly rent after a few families having to move out of Dresden. We were so very thankful for the financial support being given to help provide for that need until September when we will move to a new and more affordable location. Randy has been spending a lot of time searching for prospective meeting rooms and we pray that God will provide us with just the right location.

In addition, this "problem" has opened the congregation's eyes to some communication issues within the group. Though at first, the lack of funds was viewed as a serious problem, we are now beginning to see that it sparked an interest in bettering communication within our church family here and has spurred us all on toward greater spiritual growth. We are thankful to God for utilizing monetary issues to open our eyes to spiritual ones.

Play Group

Well it just keeps getting better! We have close to fifty contacts now through our English speaking play group and the only question is: what now? Kristi and I have been working together planning and leading the play group for almost two years now and have been very encouraged at the growth. In the beginning we had about two or three families that came regularly and now there are between 10-15 families on any given Tuesday afternoon. In fact, we were so crowded that we started an additional meeting time on Thursday mornings. We have made several friends and take any opportunity to get together with these families outside of play group whenever we get the chance. Of course, with so many it's hard to find the time, but we pray (and request that you pray) that we can find a way to bring them closer to Christ. We are currently on a two month summer break, but feel free to visit our site if you have not already and see

what we've been up to! We are so thankful to God for providing us with new opportunities every Tuesday and Thursday!

The E.R.

No, the E.R. doesn't stand for "Emergency Room." Those missionaries in Europe might have guessed that it stands for the unpopular Exchange Rate. We can't express to you right now what dread and anticipation we feel when we look online to see what we will receive any given month in exchange for our dollars. Our friend and fellow missionary Clint Everhart put this example in his February newsletter: "Currently (earlier today when I was out) it was 1.40 Euro per liter . So 1 gallon is 3.79 liters that is 5.31 Euros per gallon at current exchange rate would be \$8.18 per gallon." And actually now that it's July, it has climbed to about \$10.00 per gallon. This is only one element of the European missionary's lifestyle that is affected by the climbing Euro. Making it more difficult is the fact that, depending on the exchange rate for that day, the gas could either be \$11.00 or \$8.50 per gallon. The Exchange Rate affects how much grocery money we will have for the week, whether or not rent will be easy or difficult to meet a particular month and makes it nearly impossible to have a normal savings account. You can imagine the outside stress this puts on a missionary and detracts from their concentration!

So why do we mention all of this? We are not known for reporting negative news in our newsletters--and we're not this time either! We mention it because we are so very, very thankful for the supporters that have stuck with us through a 6 1/2 year downhill slide with the Exchange Rate. Many congregations would have backed out after a few years of this steady and expensive decline, especially considering how slowly missionary work in Europe progresses on average. Yes, it is a stress to deal with, but the many prayers and continued support that each and every one of you have given us has been so very much appreciated and has helped alleviate the "pain" of the E.R. On June 12th, we celebrated our 7 year anniversary in Dresden and what we realize is: we're thankful for you.

The Antwines

Clyde and Gwen Antwine long-time workers in Germany are here for their annual 5-6 week visit. We say simply "workers" and not "former workers" because every year they continue to visit Dresden, even after handing over the reigns of their campaign group several years ago. The Antwines come and visit every summer to teach and encourage and every year we see what a blessing their well-spent time in Dresden is to our small congregation. Clyde teaches a weekly bible study, as well as preaches in Dresden and other congregations. Gwen visits with our members and contacts as if no time had elapsed since her previous visit. Also, we've noticed that God brings the Antwines at key times when crucial guidance is needed by some of our members and guests. Just this visit they have comforted two ladies going through separate life shocks. We are

so thankful for their expertise, their willingness to come, despite health and physical problems and for their amazing Christian examples.

MORE FAMILY NEWS

Carroll Family Check our website regularly for family news, stories, and pictures:
www.carrollchronicles.net

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