

May 31, 2006

Dear Friends and Family,

Thanks again for your involvement with us and especially for your prayers!

In answer to your prayers and with help from our German colleagues, the **visa** application process went smoothly, and within an hour at the visa office we had our visas!

This month we began our **new language course**, and have found it challenging but valuable. Sometimes it is overwhelming to realize how much we have yet to learn!

One of the congregations we visited this month was **Berg Kirche**, a traditional church with about 25 attendees. Among them was a young German woman who said to us, “Thanks for loving Germany and for being here. I hope you will be very open about why you are here. Maybe it will wake people up to the fact that they are missing something as individuals, and that the society is losing something.”

She and her husband expressed their perception that the Germans are too wrapped up in work and material things to pay attention to spiritual things. “Their schedules, including weekends, are packed for weeks in advance. They worship vacation!”

Another highlight of the month was attending the 850-year celebration of the city of **Schwaebisch Hall** (where we spent the month of February). Besides all the medieval-style celebrations, four of the town’s congregations got together and offered prayers, Christian music, food and children’s activities. On Sunday we attended their open-air worship service. An elder of one of the congregations said, “We’ve been doing this for years. At first I was completely opposed to it. I said, it will never work—people will not respond. Now we have members in our congregation who first met us through this outreach. I’m in it all the way!”



Food of the month: fresh asparagus—it is everywhere! A friend showed us how to make a dish of asparagus and ham wrapped in crepes, covered in Hollandaise sauce. Delicious! Asparagus is only available until June 24. After that the ground has to rest. Meanwhile some unemployed Germans and guest workers from Poland have temporary work in the asparagus harvest.

Word of the month: der Schokoladenkeksfabrikchef = the director of a chocolate chip cookie factory

Things we're getting used to: Cold cuts for breakfast, some with bits of asparagus pressed into the meat; \$70,000 cars parked on inner city streets at all times of day and night

We will soon be making preparations to travel back to the U.S. We would appreciate prayers for guidance in the many upcoming decisions, including:

- airline tickets
- a car to drive while in the U.S.
- health coverage while in the U.S. and on returning to Germany
- visas to come back to Germany and stay longer
- support-building seminar in early July
- opportunities and clarity to explain the spiritual situation in Germany to those in the U.S. who are interested
- opportunities to encourage and be encouraged by our loved ones in the U.S.
- wisdom for us and our children as they face tough circumstances and we hope help them get stabilized again while we are near

Looking forward to seeing many of you soon!

Mark and Corinne

I will make rivers flow on barren heights, and springs within the valleys. I will turn the desert into pools of water and the parched ground into springs. Isaiah 41:18