



Dear friends,

Christmas is a wonderful time of year for catching up with old friends. When our lives are busy it is so easy to lose touch, but the fact that you are receiving this letter shows that we don't want to lose touch with you! The following is a brief summary of events in our family and work over the past year. We know much of it is not new for those of you who get our regular letter, so please forgive any repetition.

In January we finally made it out to Bangladesh to visit Steve and his family, and see all they have been involved in for the past 5 years. We thought we would find the Asian culture totally foreign, but were surprised how much it reminded us of our years in Turkey!

In June we had a heavy hailstorm in Enns which blew down our neighbour's tree into our garden, and removed tiles from the roof. But out of it we learnt the truth of the verse; "ALL things work together for those who love God." The tree had been shading our garden, so now we have been able to extend our vegetable patch and plant a tree of our own. We had planned to have the roof checked anyway, but the insurance generously covered the cost of a total overhaul and all garden repairs!

### **Family news**

Again, **Esther** has done well, with no particular problems, and we thank God for His constant protection over her.

Life has changed a bit in **Sam's family** this year. In January he started working for an electricity firm, and likes it very much.

They look after their staff well, and even as we write this, the whole family is having a long weekend in the mountains in a chalet owned by the company! Petra also changed jobs and is now personnel manager in her new firm. Calvin loves school and this year Tara started at the same school and thinks it is great too!

The biggest change in the family this year was for **Steve and his family**, who returned from Bangladesh this summer. They are living in our old house in Gerasdorf, and the children are gradually settling into local schools, learning in German. Ria has started studying social anthropology at Vienna university, and Steve has taken a part time mechanics job so that he can share the family workload with Ria.

**Mike** is very much at home in Switzerland, although his work for his professorship is gradually drawing to a close. He is working on his last papers and tutorials, but it remains to be seen what he will do after that.

**Peter** finally took the plunge and got a new job. Starting just last September, he became a 'flying chef' with Austrian Airlines.

That means travelling on long distance flights to cook for business class passengers, and his destinations include Bangkok, Beijing, Delhi, Toronto and the Maldives! So far he is loving the excitement of seeing new places, and can cope well with time zone changes and irregular sleep and work times.

Our work here has continued much as last year. Hamilton continues to be responsible for administration and finance for OM Austria here in our Linz office and is also Financial manager of the OM work in Romania and Moldova. He travels to both countries regularly. Arlene works mainly from home, writing the English prayer letters for the team, and also laying out our church magazine. A highlight this year was celebrating 50 years of OM in Austria, at an all-day event in September. It was exciting to discover just how much God has used OM to share the gospel in unreached towns and villages, and hear how many of today's churches trace their roots to an OM team coming to their area.

We continue to be involved in the church plant situation here in Enns. The new believers from last year continue to go on well, and we have had several new people join us at the Wednesday night meeting. A charity shop was opened in an empty cinema just across the road from the centre, and this has been an amazing success. It has opened the way for contact with so many more people, and also meets a real social need for many townsfolk.

In closing, may we thank you for all your prayers and support for us through the year. We are so thankful for the friends God has given us, and pray that each one of you will know His richest blessings on your lives, not just at this Christmas season, but also throughout the coming year.

With love in Him,

Hamilton and Arlene