

Joel and Tatjana White
Platanenring 44
D-35423 Lich
Germany
joel.white@gemission.org

November 2011

Dear Friends,

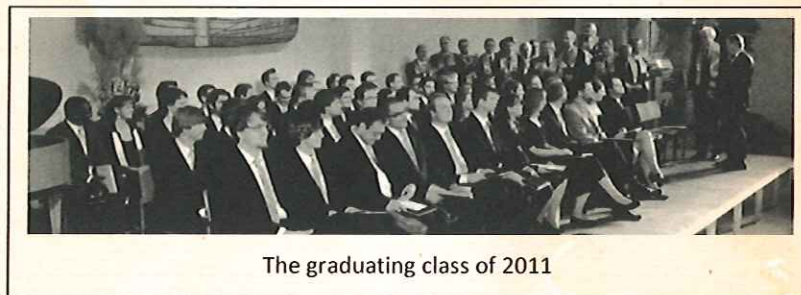
We've been back in Germany for three months now. Time for an update, you might be thinking, and we agree! As you can imagine, both the months leading up to our return and the months since then have been turbulent ones. We're grateful for safety as we travelled many miles in the U.S. in June and July and as we returned to Germany. We found everything in good order here and are enjoying being in our own home once again. Here's an update on our lives.

I (Joel) was able to devote most of his time in August and September to work on a commentary on Colossians and Philemon. This will appear in a German language series called *Historisch-Theologische Auslegung* and is designed to be of high academic quality and theologically conservative in outlook. With all the commentaries available in English you might not think this is a big deal, but it will be the first German series with those dual emphases in about 100 years! I enjoy the research and writing but not the inevitable questions concerning a projected completion date. 2015 is a good guess.



Family Portrait July 2011

In October the fall semester began at the Freie Theologische Hochschule (Giessen School of Theology). The first event is always the commencement exercises for the previous graduating class. It's always a thrill to hear the ministries the graduates are planning be involved in and to send them off



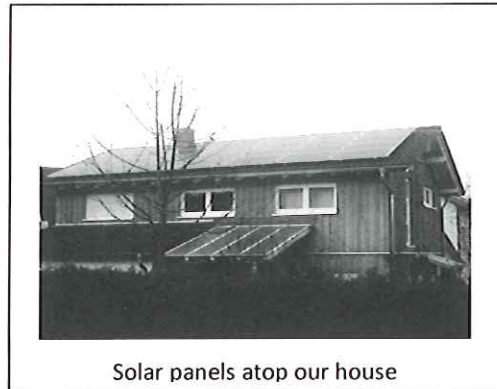
The graduating class of 2011

with the Lord's blessing. In the current academic year I'm teaching courses in Methods of New Testament Exegesis and Exegesis in Colossians. I also have significant administrative responsibilities (thus the smaller course load). As always, I find the interaction with the students most rewarding. One new item on my plate is the position of director of studies for the newly formed European Institute for Church Planting and Church Growth (www.gemeindeinstitut.de). My role will be to help develop opportunities for continuing education for church planters in Europe with a view to making them both more theologically astute and practically effective.

Tatjana is very glad to be back in Europe after our year in the U.S. Upon her return she immediately plunged into a leadership role in our church's summer English camp. The hard work was worth it: Several teenagers came to faith in Jesus through that experience. (Thanks for your prayers!) Tatjana has also taken up her previous part-time position as a physical therapist, which she enjoys more than ever, and is involved in two ministries. One involves mentoring a few younger women in our church here, which she finds very rewarding. She also serves as an event coordinator for the Institute, helping in the planning and execution of various courses and seminars.

Our children are doing well. Unfortunately for **Adrian**, he has to repeat the 11th grade since the courses he took in the U.S. didn't match up with the requirements here. He is eager to return to America as soon as possible, maybe even to finish high school there next year, since the thought of two and a half more years of high school (German schools go through the 13th grade) is not appealing to him. Negotiations with his parents on this point are proceeding apace. In the meantime he enjoys hanging out with his friends and his part-time job at a local movie theater. School not so much. **Helena** was able to go on to 12th grade and is a disciplined and determined, if not enthusiastic, student. She's gotten involved in a local women's soccer team and has quickly become their best striker. She scored three goals in their last game. She wants to return to the U.S. for college, so that skill may come in handy for landing a scholarship. **Emma** is in 9th grade and doing well. She's taken up piano lessons again and is in high demand as a babysitter. We're grateful for the fact that they are all good kids who are walking with the Lord. Tatjana and I are very aware how little time we have left with them before they go their own ways and cherish the times we have together. With the kids' increasingly busy schedules those times are already much too rare!

Some of our more practically-minded friends and supporters will be interested to know about an improvement we made to our house upon returning. Last month we installed photovoltaic panels on our roof and are now generating up to 7 kilowatts of electricity per hour. Germany has been leading the way in converting to green energy and makes this option very attractive by means of tax credits and subsidies. Any electricity that we don't use, we sell the electric company at guaranteed rates that make this a profitable investment. I estimate that we'll generate about 20-30% more electricity than we actually use, so we'll be able to pay off our start-up costs in ten or twelve years. Germany hopes to generate 15% of their electricity via solar power by the end of the decade. Some 5-10% of houses here are already hooked up to the solar grid. This piece of information may or may not interest you, but perhaps it can serve as a reminder that we lead typical German lives here. We're part of the economy and the culture. We send our kids to school here. We chat with our neighbors and take bike rides on weekends. Thanksgiving reminds us how comfortably we live in Europe. Germans are doing well economically, as you know if you follow the news, and we, like them, are not experiencing material want or deprivation.



Solar panels atop our house

Germany hopes to generate 15% of their electricity via solar power by the end of the decade. Some 5-10% of houses here are already hooked up to the solar grid. This piece of information may or may not interest you, but perhaps it can serve as a reminder that we lead typical German lives here. We're part of the economy and the culture. We send our kids to school here. We chat with our neighbors and take bike rides on weekends. Thanksgiving reminds us how comfortably we live in Europe. Germans are doing well economically, as you know if you follow the news, and we, like them, are not experiencing material want or deprivation.

What most Germans do lack, however, is meaningful exposure to the Gospel. Germany, like the rest of Western Europe, is a post-Christian society in which very few people have contact with communities of Christ-followers. We are constantly reminded of that fact in our daily interactions with average Germans, and we count it a privilege that God has called us here to work together with German believers, both in our church and at the seminary, to contribute to a new Reformation, one that will come about, like the first one, by means of a rediscovery of power of the Word of God and that will, as a result, once again transform a whole society.

Thanks for making our ministry here possible through your gifts and your prayers. We appreciate you so much!

In Christ,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Joel'.

Joel, for all the Whites

P. S. In addition to our regular newsletter, which you receive roughly 3 times a year, we have decided to send a (more or less) monthly email report to interested people. This will be brief, containing a bit of information about what's up and a couple of prayer requests. Also, if any urgent prayer requests arise, you'll receive those as quickly as I can write an email. If you're interested in receiving these updates, just let me know by sending an email to me at joel.white@gemission.org, and I'll be happy to add you to the list.

Our Mission:

to impart a passion for and trust in the Word of God to the next generation of evangelical leaders in German-speaking Europe.