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Dear Friends,

TT – Travelling Together' (37)

June 2012

At the end of May we said goodbye to two dear friends who were setting off back home to Germany, having had three days of good cheerful fellowship with us and soon afterwards we had a third guest unexpectedly staying the night with us! Our friends fitted in supportively with our everyday lives. Their visits were beneficial and encouraging for us.

That day at the Germany Embassy in Vienna...

Annika needed a new passport. Early in the morning we waited at the fifth window which had not yet opened. The blind was then drawn up and there appeared the friendly, totally amazed face of an Austrian lady that we've known for many years who is a Christian. We had no idea that she worked in the German Embassy! What a surprise – we were so delighted to see each other – the thick dividing glass, the microphone and all the security around us didn't put us off. **It was such a special gift**, a 'God-moment', totally unexpected.

How God opens doors! We are amazed...

Recently we were invited to the **regional technical college** by Margit from Eisenstadt, a Protestant teacher of religion. Suddenly the impossible became possible, i.e. we could talk to a class of **twenty-five sixteen year old students** about our life and about our experience of Jesus – and it was a **double lesson**! So it was that a **long-held wish** came true, to meet personally at least a few of the thousands of students from the whole of Burgenland who attend the many schools and colleges here in Eisenstadt. Even the Catholic religion teacher came along. We brought along a few **pocket New Testaments** which were quickly snapped up and there were disappointed faces among those who went away empty-handed (we have since made up the 'shortfall'... ☺). Before the lesson we introduced ourselves briefly to the college principal and were promptly given the invitation: **"Come back afterwards for coffee!"** The conversation later in the head's office was very open and friendly. She had a whole range of questions and we had time to go into them in some detail.

A happy event coming up soon...

Sebastian and his fiancée Annie are hard at work preparing for **their wedding** which will take place on **7th July** at the Protestant church in Gols near Lake Neusiedl. They are courageously taking on all the arrangements but they are very grateful to have found a lot of helpers. Our colleague in Vienna has finished taking them through a marriage preparation course. They have put a lot of thought into their **wedding service** and their wish is that Hans-Georg should give the address. **Now we are praying** that this busy time of preparation will bring them even closer together.

What we are expecting in June...

...taken place already...

- **2nd/3rd Jun.:** Women's breakfast and preaching at Kirchdorf/Micheldorf, Upper Austria.
- **4th Jun.:** Important meeting of our Foreign Missions Team with the Association of Evangelical Missions in Austria. Many important matters to discuss and much wisdom needed!
- **9th Jun.:** Funeral of a lady who died suddenly at her 79th birthday party. Please pray that God's Word will continue to bring comfort to the friends and relations and that it will still speak to their hearts.
- **10th Jun.:** Chinese Christian Church, Vienna: Hans-Georg was preaching twice (morning & afternoon), Margret was taking the youth meeting in the morning. Pastor Kwung-Ming Aaron Wei was looking forward very much to having "both of us at the same time under one roof, serving his people...", as he wrote.

...still to come...

- **12th Jun.:** Further training for emergency counselling: "Inter-cultural peculiarities". A good opportunity to build relationships with our Red Cross colleagues.
- **14th Jun.:** Marriage preparation with S & M. Good progress is being made, also in overcoming the past.
- **16th Jun.:** Missionary evening at the Eisenstadt FORUM for our young Austrian missionary family who are soon travelling out to Brazil. The Pingist family have a circle of friends who are supporting them in giving and in prayer!
- **19th Jun.:** Marriage counselling: we are trying step by step with the young couple to overcome the past.
- **21st Jun.:** Christian lecture meeting in Eisenstadt. Peter Rettinger is speaking on **"It surely can't be like that in heaven – or: Why we want to live for ever"**. We would like to have many people in the audience who are open to the message.
- **24th Jun.:** Hans-Georg is preaching at the valedictory service for the Pingist family at the Evangelical Church in Villach.
- **28th Jun.:** The FORUM leadership team is meeting: important decisions regarding the future are on the agenda!
- **30th Jun.:** Meeting with S & M and their families to plan the wedding service.

How did we manage all that...?

Every time we get to the end of the month, we are amazed at everything that has been crammed into the time and how the LORD has equipped us with additional strength to get through everything!

THANK YOU for your prayers, **THANK YOU** for your enquiries and interest – you are so generous in your concern for us! **THANK YOU** for this 'two-way street' – not just us sharing with you, but you also sharing with us: we find this so important and valuable!



Wishing you every blessing

Hans-Georg, Margret & Annika Hoprich

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DMG

Deutsche Missionsgemeinschaft



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Hans-Georg and Margret Hoprich

They really did have the 'fear of the heathen' (German: 'Heidenangst')

(Article in "DMG informiert" 3-2012)

"Do you know what the 'fear of the heathen' is?" I asked the journalist of a well-known daily paper in my home region of Swabia (S. Germany).

Only a few weeks earlier we had returned from Papua New Guinea, the previous country where we had been missionaries.

The interview had almost finished, but she then burst out with: "Your missionary activities have tried to change an ancient culture, or even destroy it!"

I kept calm. Instead of giving an immediate answer I told her the story of my good friend Pita on the island of New Britain (off the coast of the New Guinea mainland) whose father had died.

"In his tribe it was the custom to kill the widow as well.

They believed in the spirits of the natural world.

In their world view no one doubted that a woman was always guilty for the death of her husband and she had to die.

The ritual was always the same," I explained. The journalist stopped in her tracks.

I continued, "The two sons, one of which was Pita, dragged their mother into the jungle immediately after the death of her husband, threw a trailing creeper round her neck and strangled her as their tradition demanded.

Then they ran away – out of fear of the spirits of the dead!

When the Gospel came to their tribe, it opened their eyes and brought them freedom.

No one needed to challenge these dreadful traditions.

The message of the Bible and the Spirit of God alone made it clear to them that such rituals are not good.

They experienced release from the very real 'fear of the heathen'."

I looked at the reporter, "Have you never asked why it's called that – this potent fear?"

She took her leave of us, deep in thought.

A few days later we found a very positive and accurate article written by her in our newspaper.

After a few years in Austria, our new area of mission, we were delighted to have a visit from two Christians from Papua New Guinea.

We talked about the prejudices against Christian missionary work which have grown up in Europe.

Their reaction was brief and to the point: "Why don't they just ask **us**?"

Many thanks for your prayers and your gifts.

They contribute to keeping missionary work up to date and continue to make it possible for people to know the freedom to be found in the Lord Jesus.



Indigenous tribal ritual ("Duk Duk") in Papua New Guinea