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## TT – ‘Travelling Together’ (86)

“As a mother comforts her child, so will I comfort you.” (Isaiah 66:13)

*Dear Friends,*

September 2016

This is God’s declaration of love to us: “I have loved you with an everlasting love; I have drawn you with loving–kindness.” (Jeremiah 31 v 3)

These are unbelievably lovely words – who wouldn’t want to hear something like this?

In this passage God allows us to look deep into His Father–heart: **a foretaste of eternity!**

God speaks these words to His people Israel who are going through much suffering and are now scattered.

But this is not the end! God is writing His love story with them and with us.

The suffering in the world which we live in often leaves us doubting God’s love: children die, people lose their lives suddenly, serious illnesses occur, terrorist attacks and wars unsettle us.

How can we talk about God’s love in situations such as these?

The Bible keeps to its message in spite of all misfortune and suffering: **God’s work is characterised by love**, yes, God is love! Everything which God does is out of love for us.

In our daily experience this may not be felt directly, but sometimes it becomes clear as we look back.

Pain and suffering are not far from God, He has experienced it Himself. And it was all for our sakes.

**Who if not Him knows what love is?**

Whenever we are plagued by doubts, whenever we or people around us suffer, whenever life seems unfair, then we should always remember God’s promise and know for sure: “I have loved you with an everlasting love; I have drawn you with loving–kindness”.

### Talking about it...

Whenever we are called to give **counselling in emergency situations**, we don’t actually know in advance the details of the situation we are going into.

This is why we use the time as we drive in to prepare ourselves inwardly in prayer.

Our most recent session came after a very refreshing time of fellowship with two dear friends.

We found ourselves with an extended family who were **bereft, in shock and completely lost for words**.

A very young member of the family, full of hope for the future, had lost his life very suddenly.

Someone showed some photos of the deceased and following this a conversation gradually started – **the atmosphere became a little more relaxed**. Suddenly it seemed as if we also belonged there and individuals began to respond to our questions and tell us how much their young friend and family member meant to them.

Unbelievable but true: in the middle of it all someone suddenly said to us, “By the way, **we know your sons** from work... from playing football... **They’re great lads!**”

As we said goodbye, the relatively young father said, “**We didn’t know what to say. It was so good that you came along.**”

**Talking about things has really helped us!**”

**We experienced God’s closeness and His peace in a new way, which was really effective and could be felt even in the worst of situations!**

### The excitement is growing...

On 23<sup>rd</sup> September we begin our long–planned visit to South America!

There are still some things to prepare, but we are in good spirits – and we are looking forward to what awaits us...

There will be some preaching engagements, and two talks at the ‘**ETNIAS’ Missionary Conference in Santiago, Chile** on these questions:

- “**How can churches become motivated in regard to world mission?**”
- “**The unfinished task – who will hear the call?**”

Then there are three workshops on the topic: “**Family life on the mission field**”.

Also a meeting is planned with the students at the Anglican Theological Training College in Santiago.

On **5<sup>th</sup> October** our visit continues via Lima to Cusco in the Peruvian Andes.

From there we go to Curahuasi to the ‘**Diospi Suyana’ Mission Hospital** to see **our two Austrian lady teachers** who are working at the affiliated Christian School.

While we are there a meeting is planned with the leaders of our partner mission who are based there.

The next stop will be in Sao Paulo on **13<sup>th</sup> October** from where we will travel on to **Cacoal** in the **Brazilian Amazon** region.

This is where the **Pingists** (an **Austrian–Canadian couple** with their two children, Noah and Chiara) are working among the Indians.

On **20<sup>th</sup> October** we fly back to Vienna via Sao Paulo and Milan.

All this is: God willing!

**Together with you we are praying for prepared relationships, for good opportunities for communication, cultural sensitivity and safekeeping on our various flights and above all the leading of the Holy Spirit.**

## Baptism service (4<sup>th</sup> Sept.)

In previous years we have held our FORUM baptism services by Lake Neusiedl where it is hot and there isn't any shelter. This time we looked for somewhere with some shade.

It was a wonderful afternoon, a **moving service** with many visitors including some from nearby Vienna Neustadt and a large group of our migrant friends.

It was an unforgettable event held on the banks of the River Leitha at Katzelsdorf with moving testimonies of very real experiences, followed by the baptism of our dear friends Anni and Wolfi.



Although rain was forecast for later in the afternoon, the weather held out during the picnic and our enjoyable time together which followed the service. **There was so much to give thanks for!**

## Lina Marie's colourful first day at school... (5<sup>th</sup> Sept.)

In Austria the new intake of children are called "Taferlklassler".

Our granddaughter Lina Marie has now joined their ranks...

Her Dad David designed a brilliant 'Pippi Longstocking' 'Schultuete' for her and made it himself (this is usually a decorated cone containing sweets etc. especially for the first day of school).



There was a lot of fun that day!

## Free Church RE lessons in Austria

Here in Austria the schools have gone back after the two-month long summer holiday.

The Free Church RE lessons which have now been available in Austrian schools for two years have also restarted – in **186 locations** spread throughout **all the federal states of Austria**.

In the past year **over 1,500 pupils** have taken part in them!

An hour's lesson can be put in place wherever there is a group of three children and a teacher can be found.

## Prayer requests for events taking place before we leave for S. America...

**8<sup>th</sup> Sept.:** The **Foreign Missions Team (TAM)** is having a meeting with the leaders of our Association of Churches (BEG) with a view to a possible **future restructuring**.

**11<sup>th</sup> Sept.:** We are taking part in the **valedictory service** for Daniel in **I-Meran (South Tyrol, northern Italy)**. Daniel is in the starting blocks for a short-term placement in South Asia.

## Being amazed and giving thanks...

Time and time again we are amazed at how God in His love and greatness moves people to get involved in His Kingdom. He had put it on the hearts of many of you to pray for us and to contribute either spontaneously or regularly to our living costs and our ministry.

A big **"thank you"** from our hearts for hearing His voice and continuing to do so.

**Don't we all have reason to join together to give Him the glory?**

Not least us, as between us this year we have over 120 years to look back on...!

We don't know exactly when we will be able to send out our next newsletter.

Perhaps we can manage it during our four weeks travelling in South America...

**Thank you for all you do to help and encourage us.**

**May you continue to trust in His goodness and faithfulness.**



*Hans-Georg, Margret & Annika*

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