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Dear Friends,

TT - Travelling Together' (51)

September 2013

The record for the **highest ever temperature in Austria** has been broken! At 16.00 on Thursday 8th August the temperature at Bad Deutsch Altenburg (Lower Austria) – about 40 km (25m) northeast of Eisenstadt – reached **40.5°C** People were amazed to see 40°C in this alpine country. For us it brought back memories of Papua New Guinea...How did we survive in this kind of heat for ten years..? In the meantime it has cooled down and we are having typical late summer temperatures...

'Grandchildren Days' – with limits

Margret has recently got back from Swabia (S. Germany). She had decided at short notice to go and visit her mother who had been in hospital in Herrenberg because of circulatory problems in the brain and had been allowed to go back to her care home. Her right leg and right arm have limited movement. She is in a wheelchair and now needs more support, which isn't easy for her and especially for the care staff. However, there is a real chance that she will regain mobility. Mother Ludwig is having physiotherapy and we are praying that she will soon be able to walk again unaided. Sadly Margret wasn't able to be with us for our long-planned visit to East Styria to spend time with our family and grandchildren.

A week in Croatia

From 26th Sept. to 3rd Oct. we have been invited to have a holiday at no cost in Istria, Croatia. Friends there have unexpectedly given us this holiday, as we advertised their holiday apartment scheme (www.christen-bei-christen.de) through our e-mail network. While we are there we would like to visit our missionaries **Josip and Sofija Cukic** involved in **church-planting work in Umag**. They have been working there faithfully for many years, together with their large family, often at personal cost and experiencing attacks on their health. They are a great encouragement to the people around them in an area which is a spiritual wilderness.

'Free churches in Austria' – now officially recognised as a denomination!

In a unique event in church history, supported by the two main church denominations, five different associations of free churches have formed an alliance. At no other time in the past have such a wide variety of free churches come together under one roof. **On 26th August 2013** they were given official state recognition as 'Free Churches in Austria' (FKOE). After many years of discrimination and being sidelined as 'sects', this is a real miracle and we are very thankful! As a result of this recognition there is now the question of teaching R.I. in public schools. There is so much work to initiate this and to work out teaching curriculums especially for an association such as the BEG that never seems to have enough full-time-workers.

Highlights and dates for September

Schools and nurseries have now gone back after the summer holidays. At our first FORUM service in September (1st Sept.) we sang a song to encourage the children who were there. Then the children stood in a circle and the grown-ups blessed the little ones ahead of their new school term.

Also our oldest grandchild, Timo, is now a **'Taferlklassler'**, as the new school children are called here in Austria... Very proudly he took along an extraordinary 'Schultuete' which his Dad David had spent many hours lovingly making for him. (Note: 'Schultuete' is a special cone-shaped bag containing e.g. sweets, fruit, etc that children take with them as a special treat on their first day at school – a widespread custom in mainland Europe).

ANNIKA is starting her third year at the nursery training college in Oberwart.

In the next few days Andreas, a young man from Styria, is coming to us in **preparation for a missionary placement in Tanzania**. His **valedictory service** will be held on **22nd September** in Kapfenberg. Hans-Georg will be preaching.

From **6th – 8th September** we will be in **Kundl in the Tyrol** to hold another workshop on **'Funerals and Supporting the Bereaved'**. Also Hans-Georg has been asked to preach at an **open air service** up in the mountains in nearby Saulueg on Sunday 8th. We would be very grateful for your support in prayer for the journey and for our times of ministry.

On **11th September** we are visiting a couple who live by Lake Neusiedl, who we knew years ago but lost contact with. We are back in touch with them again following the ProChrist outreach campaign in March.

Before that, **Margret** has a **major thyroid gland investigation**. It seems that an operation is unavoidable!

Nadine is now back from Tanzania! Her one-year missionary placement there working with children was a positive experience for her. **She is coming to us for debriefing on 16th September**.

On **17th September** we are having our **second FORUM workers meeting**. Important points on the agenda include the introduction of membership and our attempt to introduce a weekly service as from October. We will also discuss the preparations for the **fund-raising Gospel concert on 9th October**.

From **19th–21st September** Hans-Georg will take part in two separate **retreats**. One is for the Association of Evangelical Missions in Austria (AEM-OE) and immediately after is the one for our own association of churches (BEG).

Please pray for unity, wisdom and good decision-making.

In closing we would like to say: we are GRATEFUL that through you we are able to carry out our wide-ranging ministry with God's help! It is a fulfilling task, even though it can be very challenging at times!

With our best wishes

Hans-Georg, Margret & Annika Hoprich