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TT – 'Travelling Together' (65)

“AS FOR ME, IT IS GOOD TO BE NEAR GOD.” (Psalm 73 v 28)

Dear Friends,

December 2014

On Saturday 8th November we drove to Slovakia – through fog and rain. But there was sunshine too and we were very excited about our visit. Bratislava (capital of Slovakia) is barely an hour's drive away. In order to get us to our destination (**Modra**) on time and without hold ups, the organiser of the missionary conference kindly sent us the precise co-ordinates for our Satnav, which we then keyed in carefully... We were to be there at 11.00 to give a talk on “**Short-term missionary work and our experiences in Austria**”. But WHERE had we ended up?? The bumpy track looked very strange to us... It took us through forests far from anywhere. The Satnav announced: “You have reached your destination!” Having gone through the tiny village of Dobra Voda (translates as ‘Good Waters’) the track came to an end and there was a wooden fence. We had arrived at the ‘back of beyond’! We quickly reset the Satnav, but we were a good hour away from our actual destination... We drove as fast as we could... The conference guests had had a time of praise and were now eager to hear the speaker. Hans-Georg grabbed his laptop and ran straight from the car directly to the platform to give his talk which had been prepared in English. It was translated into Slovakian for the audience. We only had a short time afterwards at this **missionary conference** which had **260 participants** this year. It has been held every autumn for the past fourteen years. We soon had to set off back to Austria to take part in our next meeting: “**Grieving is a Journey**”, a talk given at the ‘Café 50 Plus’ at the Baptist Church in Parndorf.

News from Papua New Guinea (PNG)

Recently we received an e-mail from Gunni, the indigenous manager of a local palm oil factory, a good friend and church leader. He had something almost unbelievable to report and asked for prayer: a strong church has emerged out of the work started by us among the ‘Kol’ and ‘Mengen’ tribes back in the nineties. The new fellowships are in a remote jungle area around the active volcano Mount Ulawun (see Wikipedia!) on the island of New Britain. Now a new church district is being set up and a team was setting out to establish where the centre of this new church area should be. We were overwhelmed by the latest development in this church which came into being after a shaky start but later saw powerful breakthroughs – whole villages were converted to the Lord Jesus! **This is really a big reason to GIVE THANKS!**

Looking back...

Our heartfelt THANKS to those of you who prayed about our discussion with our Protestant vicar and the Burgenland evangelical Superintendent as well as the lady who is the head of the Lutheran Church Committee! Everything went so positively and constructively that we are going to meet up again in six months' time at the suggestion of the Superintendent. Unity among Christians who are following Jesus is an important matter for us. We want to stay true to God's Word and not make compromises, but one thing is certain: **whoever looks down on others cannot at the same time look up to God!** It is about our hearts and about God's highest commandment to meet one another in love and in truth.

At the delegates' meeting (21st–22nd Nov.) of our Association of Churches (BEG)...

There was a report on the **Free Church RE lessons**, which have begun throughout Austria with 100 teachers in 230 schools! 1200 pupils have signed up for these classes! And numbers are still growing!

The introduction of the **FORUM church constitution** at the last workers' meeting (26th Oct.) has set lots of things in motion. We think it is so good that every Sunday new visitors are appearing at the service who have heard about our church by one means or another! This has led to encouraging discussions on how faith in the Lord Jesus Christ can actually be lived out. Also a good number of our regular visitors are interested in being baptised.

What is coming up in December...

5th–9th Dec.: We are going to Swabia (S. Germany) to take part in various services and to visit family and friends...

14th Dec.: Introduction of the **FORUM youth leadership**: Werner & Christine and Sandra. **Hans-Georg is preaching.**

In the afternoon we are able to have the use of the ‘charity hut’ again at the Eisenstadt Christmas Market.

24th Dec.: Christmas Eve family service: **Hans-Georg is preaching**

28th Dec.: Valedictory service for **Stephanie in Perg** to Bosnia-Herzegovina, (Hans-Georg is preaching)

Praying for missions means being a participant in missionary work!

For this reason we THANK YOU for striving with us here in Austria.

Our wish for you and for ourselves is that in all the hectic activity in the run-up to Christmas we should all find moments of reflection and focus on the Saviour of all peoples and nations who came and who will come again!

Wishing you God's blessing at this special time of year,



Hans-Georg, Margret & Annika

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Grieving is a Journey!

If we are honest, there are times in our lives which we don't enjoy. Sharing joyful times comes easy for us, but dealing with death and loss is a challenge. This kind of pain is hard to talk about.

And sometimes we feel overwhelmed because we don't know how we can help people who are grieving.

Grieving is without doubt one of the most painful feelings that we experience in life. And yet grieving is the only healthy reaction to loss. It is God's way to lead us through the various stages of adapting to change.

The guest speaker, Hans-Georg Hoprich (pictured above with his wife Margret) lives in Eisenstadt.

He is a counsellor working with the Burgenland Red Cross Emergency Team.

Hans-Georg was the guest speaker at the Emmanuel Baptist Church in Parndorf (Burgenland, NE of Eisenstadt) on 8th November 2014.

'Angel Messenger' becomes Child of God

Hans-Georg & Margret Hoprich

In Eisenstadt by Lake Neusiedl we are helping to build up the 'FORUM' Christian Fellowship.

For some months now Jutta has been coming along to the services and the new house group.

She had been seriously caught up in New Age practices.

This is her story in her own words:

"As a child I was shy. I was either afraid of God or imagined Him as a 'God of love'. My time at school had its normal highs and lows. My best friend at the time lived out her Christian faith openly and I admired her very much. For me, however, everything was uncertain and superficial. I met my husband at the age of 19. It was a turbulent relationship right from the outset with disappointments and setbacks, but there were loving times as well. We built a house and we planned a family and had a wonderful daughter.

When I was 30, a friend of mine told me that she saw angels and could ask them questions. I was fascinated. I wanted that for myself and I began to visit her regularly. She taught me spiritual techniques such as Reiki, channelling (the passing on of messages from supernatural beings), angel rituals, and number mysticism. I thought I was serving Jesus and that I could help other people.

I wasn't aware that I was already caught in Satan's trap.

My ego was inflated as this path was 'successful' for me right from the start. I was convinced I was linked to divine energy and I trusted my former friend completely. I set up a spiritual centre, I wrote books about angels, I gave countless 'consultations', I gave talks in Germany and Austria, I wrote articles in New Age magazines and answered e-mails from people seeking advice.

I acted as an 'angel messenger' for the German-speaking area.

The turning point came in 2011, after I had got divorced. In October I fell over in the office at work and broke my hip. Then my father died. A few months later I had a lot of pain in my leg again. I could no longer work or make any 'angel work' appointments. This was followed by weakness, depression and panic attacks at night. I felt burnt out.

When I spoke to the angels, I suddenly started wondering where the answers were actually coming from?!

One day I phoned my Bible-believing friend from my school days and I asked her directly whether I should stop the angel work. She cried as she answered: "Yes, for months I have been praying so much for you!" I became aware that Satan had led me astray and that I had spread a lot of the false teaching that I had been living in myself. My naivety, ignorance and lack of interest in the Bible had brought me into this pit, but the grace of Jesus was now bringing me up out of it.

The sequence of events leading up to my conversion lasted another two years...

The first time I sat in the FORUM, I knew that I had 'arrived' and that my search was over.

On 10th January 2014 I made a decision to follow Jesus – it was an unbelievable release.

It felt as if a ton weight had been taken off my back.

The happiness which I found in Christ was indescribable.

Suddenly I felt I was free to make a new start and I was full of energy.

I had taken the decisive step.

I 'spring-cleaned' my life thoroughly and got rid of everything – really everything – to do with New Age practices.

The FORUM is a living church with genuine missionaries and Bible-believing people who are helping me.

I was lovingly accepted and had the personal experience of new birth right away.

Jesus saved me and sent me people and showed me signs which helped me turn to Him.

If you are caught up in New Age practices, look in the Bible.

In Deuteronomy 18, v 10 onwards God says clearly what He thinks about it.

Please get yourself out of the consequences of it, as I did!"

This article appeared in the German language 'DMG informiert' missionary news magazine