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TT – 'Travelling Together' (66)

"ACCEPT ONE ANOTHER, JUST AS CHRIST ALSO ACCEPTED US TO THE GLORY OF GOD." (Romans 15 v 7)

Dear Friends,

January 2015

Our verse for 2015 has something to say in our daily lives! God doesn't expect us to understand everything straight away and HE doesn't expect us to be on exactly the same wavelength as everybody else. This verse challenges us nevertheless to start out together – regardless of the colour of our skin, whether we're from a 'shame culture' or a 'guilt culture', whether we are rich or poor, whether we are nationals or foreigners... Accepting others in their diversity as a gift from God, that's what Romans 15 v 7 is calling us to do. In fellowship with one another, God gets the glory as we are 'on a journey' together – and that's what it's all about! **It is our most heartfelt wish to be able to help this mutual acceptance to grow – in spite of all our differences.** Our warmest THANKS for your faithful support throughout the past year! How quickly has this year gone by and how much has happened... We have personally experienced God's protection and guidance! We have been particularly glad to receive regularly your family news and to hear what you have been doing! **THANK YOU for sharing it with us!**

Deputation meetings and personal visits...

This is so important for us – right from the start of the year... There are many of you that we have not seen for a number of years and yet you still stand with us and encourage us! That is SO heart-warming for us: THANK YOU! Perhaps we will be able to see you in 2015...? We would love to travel to Germany (**or maybe further afield**) for a long weekend, to take part in a church holiday, to give a missionary talk... Early in December, for instance, we were able to attend our dear friend Karin's 60th birthday party. Her church then used this opportunity to invite Hans-Georg to preach and to give a brief missionary report in the service. The next day there was a house group meeting at which we shared the joys and challenges of our FORUM church-planting project.

Do you think you could include something similar in your church diary for this year?

LOOKING BACK...

THANK YOU for praying for us in all the events that we had in December! Our **Advent celebration on 8th December** was very popular. It was lovingly organised by our FORUM workers. Miriam, a trained singer who joined our church with her family only last summer, formed a choir especially for the occasion to lead the singing. She also volunteered to be responsible for the music for our **Christmas Eve family service.** We were **overwhelmed by the big influx of visitors!** For the first time we ran out of chairs... The service started a quarter of an hour late as more people kept arriving. A new visitor came up to us afterwards, overwhelmed by the warmth and friendliness which she had never experienced before! Between the Advent Celebration and Christmas Eve there was the 14th December when we spent the whole afternoon, staying on into the evening, at the **'charity hut' at the Eisenstadt Christmas market.** Most of the passers by were happy to accept one of the lovely Gospel calendars and there were many good conversations by the hut over fruit punch and Christmas biscuits. When we finally got home at 10pm, totally exhausted and with numb legs, we were only too aware: **we are fast approaching SIXTY!**

OUTLOOK

At our new FORUM church in Eisenstadt we are starting a new series of sermons: "Foundations of the Christian Faith". It is starting on 4th January with "God's Word: The Bible". On 18th January Hans-Georg will speak on **"God's being and character"**. There are many seekers at our services – every Sunday we see 'new' faces!

T. – a country in Central Asia...

Every now and then we have thoughts about whether the LORD has something else planned for us... We want to be open – to stay here but also to move on! In this context we have been following the progress of a project in T. – for more than a year now! From 9th –11th January we had visitors from this country, which we regarded to be of possible importance for our future. Indeed it has been a very special service with a very moving testimony on how the Lord used special circumstances for a M.usl. to turn to HIM. Having grown up fatherless he finally found 'The Father' (Isa 49:14–16).

Workshop in Wels (southwest of Linz, Upper Austria)

We have been invited to on 17th January to hold another day seminar on **"Christian Funerals and Bereavement"**.

FAMILY NEWS...

Over Christmas we were so grateful to be together with all our children and grandchildren and enjoy some 'quality time' with them. Our **daughter-in-law ANNIE's** pregnancy is going better now. **SEBASTIAN's** work situation has also improved.

Many thanks for your prayers!

We can't wait...

...to see what the coming year will bring for us all and how things will work out. It is really valuable to know you!

THANK YOU for taking an interest in our work! May our Father in heaven richly bless each and every one of you!



Hans-Georg, Margret & Annika

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Funerals and Supporting the Bereaved

With Hans–Georg and Margret Hoprich from Eisenstadt

Sat. 17th January at the Mennonite Free Church, Wels, Upper Austria

14.00: Welcome and Introduction

14.30–15.30: The culture of funerals from a Biblical perspective.

Types of funeral held today.

Opportunity to share experiences

15.30–16.00: Break

16.00–17.30: Funerals in a Free Church context

17.30–18.00: Questions, literature – Conclusion

Hans–Georg Hoprich is the leader of the Foreign Missions Team (TAM) in the Association of Evangelical Churches of Austria (BEG).

As well as his church planting work in Burgenland which started in 1998, he and his wife Margret arrange and conduct Christian funerals and are involved in counselling the bereaved, as well as being emergency counsellors (with the Red Cross).

Preparation (if possible):

- Attend a funeral and make notes on the format
- What is included in a Catholic, Protestant, Free Church, secular or a completely free funeral?
- What did you find that was good? What did you miss?
- Plan a funeral according to your own preferences
- Put together your life story to suit your own funeral