

H.-G. & M. Hoprich & Family
Jacob Rauschenfels-Gasse 8/10
A-7000 Eisenstadt
AUSTRIA
Tel. / FAX: +43-2682-76021
Mobile: +43-664-55 44 021

e-mail: Hans-Georg@Hoprich.at
SKYPE ID: HansMaggiHoprich
Internet: <www.DMGint.de>
<www.beg.or.at>

<www.facebook.com/hansgeorgmargret.hoprich>

<www.johannes-rebmann-stiftung.de/en/missionaries/hoprich.html>

TT - 'Travelling Together' (68)

"ACCEPT ONE ANOTHER, JUST AS CHRIST ALSO ACCEPTED US TO THE GLORY OF GOD." (Romans 15 v7)

Dear Friends,

March 2015

2015 got off to a busy start for our Foreign Missions Team (TAM). One after the other, **over a dozen requests** came rolling in. These were mainly for short-term missionary placements, but there were also a few for long-term service... In this context **our first contacts were once again with foreign mission organisations** who up till now have been accustomed to sending their workers TO Austria. Now they were facing the situation for the first time of sending Austrians out into the world to work with their organisation. This is a new challenge for them! Through our partnership agreements we are trying to meet them on equal terms to work out a structure for the sending-out process and to share the responsibility. We are seeking to make all the arrangements from here in order to simplify the procedure for the Austrian candidates. We are still limited to missionary work 'only in the humanitarian aid sector' in which the Austrian applicants can be taken on and sent out as 'sent employees'. **For this to be possible at all is a great step forward in itself!** At last tax can be claimed back on donations received for the Austrian workers in missionary humanitarian work. **A long-held wish would be to see all other areas of missionary service (church-planting, teaching, administration, etc.) coming under this regulation!**

News from the South Seas!

Recently we have received a moving report with pictures for the first time from Inok, Hans-Georg's best friend from our time in PNG! A team made up of **two church leaders and their families** had set off for the villages of the Kol and Mengen tribes in the New Britain rainforest to visit the new churches. In one of the villages there was great sadness as the child of the church leader had died. The team mourned with them and attempted to give comfort from God's Word. The young people in the team made a coffin out of bush materials for the child and decorated it with flowers, and they arranged a funeral. The villagers, still to some extent caught up in animism (**the 'fear of the heathen' when faced with death!**), had never before experienced a funeral full of such love – arranged by people who were strangers to them!

We are overwhelmed to see the children of our brothers and sisters who were in the Sunday School during our time in PNG are now themselves pastors or actively involved in the churches and in missionary work.

Eisenstadt FORUM Free Church

At the moment we are busy with the preparations for establishing church **membership** for our FORUM and the selection and **preparation of future church leaders**. In order to set this process going we will have to meet up regularly with those who are interested and study together the **book "Elders and Leaders" by Gene A. Getz**.

We are praying for our brothers and sisters for willingness and strength as they take on spiritual leadership alongside their work and family responsibilities.

Our country is making the headlines!

On 25th February 2015 the Austrian National Parliament passed a new law concerning Islam. This new law has roused interest across the world. It is not new in itself, as Islam was recognised as a religion in Austria in 1912. This makes its situation unique in Western Europe. The new state ruling can be summarised as follows:

- Islamic organisations can no longer be financed from abroad.
- Imams will in future be trained in Austria (over sixty imams have been put in place by the Turkish department for religion!)
- Islamic organisations must provide an interpretation of their faith content
- As well they are to translate the nine editions of the Koran in use at the present time into German
- National law has precedence over religious law

Planned for March...

5th Mar.: **Team meeting** for the Foreign Missions Team (TAM) in Linz (Hans-Georg is leading)

Margret is meeting S whose mother is nearing the end of her life

7th Mar.: **Evangelistic Ladies' Breakfast meeting** in Bad Vöslau near Vienna (Margret)

FORUM **leadership team meeting** (important decisions need to be made)

11th Mar.: **Sophia** is visiting us for an interview (long-term service)

15th Mar.: Hans-Georg is **preaching at the FORUM** ("The last things")

21st Mar.: **Wedding in Vienna** of Kelve and Bettina who is a former short-termer and a friend

22nd Mar.: **Missionary church service** at the FORUM (workers from Kenya, Hans-Georg is leading)

26th-28th Mar.: **Visit and service at a house group in Koetschach, Carinthia**

29th Mar.: **Visit and time of sharing with brothers and sisters at a local church in Oberwart**, in the south of Burgenland

Many thanks for your friendship and your support; how lovely it is that you are there with us, sharing in our lives and in our service for the Lord! Please let us know how things are going for you and how we can pray for you!

With warm greetings from Burgenland,



Hans-Georg, Margret & Annika

DMG interpersonal e.V., Buchenauerhof 2, D-74889 Sinsheim, www.dmgint.de/about-us.html

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