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TT - 'Travelling Together' (81)

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

Dear Friends,

April 2016

As we go into April we send our warm greetings as we are encouraged by God's Word: **"But you are God's chosen people, you are a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people who belong to him alone and who have the task of proclaiming his great deeds – the deeds of the one who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light."** (1 Peter 2:9) Peter is passing on what he has himself experienced: called by the Lord Jesus to leave the fishing boat and to go into the work of proclaiming! Jesus Himself chose His disciples for service – none of them applied for the job of becoming His fellow-workers. Through this close relationship to Jesus they became God's children and part of God's people – for the rest of their lives they couldn't keep quiet about it. There was great joy in this service, but also a very high price! All of them, except John, died as martyrs. That was the price of making the great deeds of God known throughout the world. To this day Jesus chooses His fellow-workers in the same way and then He sends them out into the world to be His witnesses. Often they experience disadvantages, going right up to hatred and persecution. But through faithfulness to their Lord, much light is shining into the darkness. Because of it many others are finding faith in Jesus. This remains our task: to persevere in bearing witness to the great deeds of God – in spite of opposition!

Ghana & Togo: Hans-Georg's report...

First of all, our warmest **THANKS** to all of you who have supported me in prayer during this visit, my fifth, to Africa. Again I experienced a wealth of meetings and experiences which are even having a direct effect on our current work here in Austria. It is remarkable that our African friends have gone to great lengths to come and see me wherever I was. With some even a pastoral relationship has developed. Among the many that I met in Ghana, **here are two special fellow-workers:**

Albert: His oldest son died recently. For ten years he has been heading up **"Ghana Evangelical Missions Association" GEMA**. During this time he has been constantly confronted by the financial needs of Ghanaian missionaries which have had a severe negative impact on their children especially regarding their education and future prospects. So he has set up **"Missions Purse"**, an organisation which takes care of missionaries' children and their needs.

Thomas: He has five children. He is a humble shepherd who looks after several churches further north in Ghana (Kumasi). Relations between Christians and Muslims are very much on his heart. He wishes to research this further and write a doctorate, especially as the biggest mosque in Ghana is currently being built in Accra, a clear sign of how strongly Islam has spread from the north to the south of the country.

The **SIM conference in Togo** was a special opportunity to be challenged amidst the international fellowship, to reflect again on my own 'being a disciple' as well as 'making disciples'. On the journey from the capital **Lome to Sokode** in the north (340 km / 212 m) we had the opportunity to get to know some of the ECWA churches along the road. I was amazed by this missionary movement that has come from the **ECWA church in Nigeria**. This association of churches has sent out **over 1600 missionaries all over the world** and is supporting them with the planting of countless new churches. There is so much to give thanks for! As in Ghana there are churches and mosques often only a few metres away from each other, and there appears to be a peaceful co-existence between them. In the evening the local church leaders meet up to learn more about church history (the Crusades, pre-Reformation times, etc.). Then it was back by bus to Lome where I met **Sam** who together with his family had been a **missionary in Gabon** for some years and is now working in the administration department of Pioneers Africa. I was so glad to have his practical help in getting across the border into Ghana.

To date I have been kept free of all tropical diseases, for which I am very grateful!

Family News

ANNIKA (19) is busy revising for her 'Matura' exams (equivalent of A-Levels). Also she is thinking about what to do afterwards. Her applications to be a nursery school teacher in our area haven't been successful to date – what does God have in store for her? **MANUEL (28)** is going through a difficult patch – looking for a complete change of direction, which hasn't been easy. **THANK YOU** for helping him in prayer. **MARGRET** is facing an operation to remove her thyroid gland. The date has been put back a number of times...

Among many other things in April...

In our **FORUM Church** we are considering our **identity and church structure**, and also gifts and tasks. Some individual conversations are planned... **Sunday 10th April** Hans-Georg has again been invited to preach at an English-speaking church in Vienna. At end of the month (**29th Apr.–1st May**) there will be a time of training and fellowship for our Association of Churches. The topic will be **"Spiritual parenting – preparing the next generation to live out their faith in our society"**. We are expecting to find fresh inspiration for building up our church here.

THANK YOU for all your prayers that the message of Jesus Christ can shine as a light in the darkness.

Together in the Father who loves to hear HIS children's prayers,



Warmly, Hans-Georg, Margret & Annika

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