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BURGENLAND UPDATE
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May 18th 2008

Dear Friends,

Spring always comes a few weeks earlier here than in many other parts of Austria – now it is green again outside our windows on the second floor and soon the old lime trees will be in flower near our house...
It is nearly TEN YEARS since we moved, lock, stock and barrel, to Austria. Back then we had no idea what could happen...

Today we are amazed at the wide range of things we are involved in!

‘TRAVELLING’ – **this could be our theme for May**, but in fact this is a continuation of April’s busy schedule...

TRAVELLING to Zenica in Bosnia...

Hans-Georg went to Bosnia with an Austrian family at the end of April. The short visit was in preparation for outreach in the last 2 weeks of July! The entire **home group from Laxenburg**, which belongs to our BEG church at Moedling (south of Vienna) wishes to do this outreach together with the local Christians.

Zenica is about 70% Moslem, the rest of the population belongs to one or other of the large Christian denominations in the Balkans (e.g. Orthodox). When Hans-Georg was there about 3 years ago (it’s about 700 km/440 miles from here) the local church with approx 80 members was numerically one of the biggest in the whole country. Due to various circumstances this once strong church has now shrunk to about 20 people. Overall the number of evangelical Christians there is estimated to no more than about 500. What has happened in Zenica sadly is also happening in other churches in the country. In spite of all the difficulties a very dedicated unmarried Brazilian missionary, **Walter Goncalves**, has been working there for 10 years. Unceasingly he has been busy with welfare projects such as food programmes, distribution of clothing, mobile dentist etc., through which he enjoys great trust among the people and the town leaders and uses the many opportunities to be a witness. **Walter firmly believes there is a harvest to come and sows the seed of the Gospel generously!** He is only too glad to have teams to support him and perhaps wishes there were **more** like our Austrian home group from Laxenburg! If you would like **more information**, please get in touch with us. (Also please visit: www.pray4bosnia.co.cc/)

TRAVELLING between Kosovo and Albania...

Do you remember **Gregor and Kela Menga** and their 3 boys? Gregor is the church planter and was Pastor for some years at the **church in Shkodra, Albania**, until the brothers and sisters there sent him as **their missionary to Gjilan in Kosovo**. The Christians in Shkodra had been working on their own church building for over 5 years. A few days ago Gregor wrote to us to say that the building work was being **delayed because of financial difficulties**. When he last visited Shkodra he encouraged his former church to be prepared for greater sacrificial giving so that the church building could soon be finished. **Gregor and Kela** however found that they were challenged themselves, because **sacrificial giving needs an example**. Their thoughts went straight away to their family car which was worth about €3000. On the spot they decided to sell the car and use half the money to buy a smaller second-hand one and to make the other half available to their sending church to help with the completion of the church building. They simply knew that this was God’s will. Although the car they now have is considerably smaller and they don’t know how long it will last on the very bad roads, they feel a deep joy and firmly believe that the LORD will not leave them in the lurch!

TRAVELLING in Austria...

While we were on the road we came across **Christa**, a lovely Christian who we'd never met before. Up to a few years earlier she had been into obscure philosophies before she got to know her greatest friend Jesus Christ. In the meantime she found she had cancer. She has had several doses of chemotherapy. After a church service we sat with her at lunch. She suddenly stood up and asked if she could speak with Hans-Georg in private. Outside the door she then explained to him that God had made it clear to her that she should pay her tithes faithfully and that she knew that she should support us.

Can you imagine our joy? Now Christa is actively involved with our work and is 'travelling' with us – like so many of you!

Yes, YOU are also TRAVELLING with us!

Some of you have been with us for a number of years! Regardless of for how long, **we are so GRATEFUL to you!** Your prayers have unimaginable power and we depend on them SO MUCH! Quite often there **are times of discouragement, helplessness and uncertainty** as all the tasks given to us threaten to overwhelm us...! The fact that you are praying for us is a great incentive and encourages us to accept the challenges cheerfully!

In May we are TRAVELLING to various services and events...

These include various **church holidays (weekends away)** in different parts of **Austria**. Hans-Georg is leading the Bible studies and Margret is involved in the children's work. Hans-Georg has been invited to visit SIM in **England** for '**Member Care Consultation**'. There are also 2 events in **Germany**. At one (29th May) **Margret is giving her presentation 'Keeping in good health, that's the main thing...?'**

TRAVELLING to and from places of service...

In the next few weeks **SEVEN** of our short-termers will be returning to Austria from Asia, Africa and South America and will be visiting us for their 'debriefing'. We can't wait to hear their various reports and experiences...

ELEVEN NEW CANDIDATES – we've never had that many before – are in the starting blocks ready to go to Poland, Romania, the eastern Mediterranean region, Ethiopia, Canada, Peru, Argentina (2 of them), etc. Gradually all of them are coming to us for **interviews and training sessions**. This is a **huge challenge for us**, but at the same time we rejoice over the great number of highly motivated young people. It is a great privilege for us to accompany them for a part of their personal journey.

They and we need your prayers urgently: for flexibility and perseverance for the short-termers and for wisdom and strength for us!

Family News

Please continue to **pray for our ANNIKA (11)** who has switched to the Grammar school and has a lot of catching up to do. Pray that she will be able to concentrate on her school work and that she will finish the school year successfully.

MANUEL (21) – our 'sporting ace' is being hampered because one of his legs is about 1 inch/2cm shorter than the other. Insoles are no longer sufficient to help him. He gets pains when he goes training and is now looking for a good specialist who can help him.

SEBASTIAN (26) doesn't always find his **night-time driving job** easy as it restricts his social life. His great wish is to find a girlfriend who also trusts in the Lord Jesus!

DAVID & CLAUDIA are so thankful that the acute phase of Claudia's **slipped disc is over**. She doesn't have any more pain and can move normally again! **THANK YOU for all your prayers**, for all the messages of care and concern and all the good advice! Our little **TIMO** celebrates his first birthday on the 1st June.

BENJAMIN & MARIA are apart again until the end of May as Maria is studying in Amsterdam for a term.

We wish to continue to travel together with Jesus and with you. Thank you for your fellowship with us along the way.

With our best wishes