

Europe Miracle Trip 29 August-16 November 2022

Leaving Tomorrow

We leave tomorrow on our adventure with God! We had a beautiful "commissioning" prayer by two of the pastors at our new church, Myers Park UMC, yesterday that meant SO much to us. We also had some precious time with our family in the afternoon before attending an amazing organ/orchestra concert at the church last evening. We were overflowing with the goodness of God by the end of the day.

First Day of Travel: August 30



Our travel day began as Glenn entered our bedroom at 2:30 a.m. He hadn't been to bed because he received a message at 11:00 p.m. that our evening flight the next day to Newark had been cancelled due to threatened thunder storms. He immediately called the airline, only to find that the only seats available were on a flight leaving Charlotte at 6:50 a.m., which meant leaving home at 3:30 a.m. Thanks to our very sleepy son, we made our flight and we're waiting around the Newark airport for several hours! The Lord

provided a way—even though we had a sleepless night! Here is "lovely" view of the Newark Airport.

A "God Surprise": August 31

We are finally in Glasgow. I went 34 hours without sleep, but had a nap this afternoon and will, hopefully sleep well tonight.

We always pray before any ministry trip that God will surprise us with unexpected opportunities for ministry. I felt He answered that request as I sat next to a young woman on the short flight from Dublin to Glasgow. She is Scottish, but lives in Rhode Island with her family. However, she was returning to St. Andrews for her final year of university. The conversation naturally unfolded to tell her of our journey of forgiveness and God's role in my healing and my "new" calling in ministry (to encourage artists). She was astounded, asked many questions, wants to buy "I Choose to Forgive," and then write me, and wants to view Abstraction, our short film. I was so tired that my head was spinning, but in my weakness, God's strength was experienced and loving truth was shared.



I forgot to take photos (of airports & planes?). But the photo is Glenn ordering tea and scones in the almost empty Dublin Airport, in celebration of being in the British Isles!

Garbage in Glasgow: September 1

After a decent night's sleep, we headed into the center of Glasgow for a few hours, before returning for a Zoom call with the leaders of Arts+Europe regarding the upcoming Europe-wide arts & faith conference. As we were walking around the city, we couldn't help but be aware of the overflowing trash bins on every corner. It seems that the refuse collectors of Glasgow have joined the "industrial action



(strike)" of Edinburg and the smelly "discards" of life and have become offensive to everyone.

I couldn't help but make a spiritual application. Whenever I ignore my sin and let it "pile up" — it becomes a stench before God and eventually offensive to others around me.

Very good reminder to "keep a clean slate." 😊

Heading to Iona: September 3



One of the unique plans for this ministry trip for us is that we scheduled "spiritual nourishment" in the beginning, middle and end of the 2-1/2 months. Today we began a "pilgrimage" to Iona, a very special place of spiritual intensity since the 600s A.D. I will write more about it when we are there, but today we came to the western coast of Scotland, to the fishing village of Oban. The photos show some of the town, and the ferry we will take tomorrow to the Mull. We will then coach (bus) across From there we island of Iona. Pray experience God in time in prayer and



Isle of take a the island, to Fionnphort. take yet another ferry to the with us that we will a powerful way as we spend waiting upon Him.

Reflecting on Iona: September 5

Our spiritual “respite” on Iona was wonderful, but much too short. Since the mid-7th Century when Columba and 12 others sailed from No. Ireland and landed on the rocky island of Iona to establish a monastery and spread the Gospel, Iona has been known as a “thin place” where “earth and heaven meet.” The founder of the modern Iona Community wrote, “Iona is a thin place where only tissue paper separates the material from the spiritual.” It is a place for those seeking to spend time in prayer and meditation; to walk and experience the beauty of God’s creation; for artists, writers, and photographers to be inspired to create; and contemplatives to engage in deep encounters with God. Our short stay did not allow for all of this, but we had a taste of it and hope to return someday. There is a saying in Gaelic that translates, “if you come to Iona once, you will come three times.” We are so grateful for the opportunity to experience the peace of the island and the graciousness of people of Iona. (Photos to come when we have a better internet connection.)

Prayers Appreciated: September 6



Prayers are appreciated—the (creepy) hotel we had scheduled several weeks ago had cancelled our reservations and there are NO available rooms anywhere in Glasgow due to the Celtic v. Real Madrid soccer game in town. So, we have ended up spending the night in the airport. We have a

3:00 a.m. check-in time, so perhaps it just wasn’t worth paying for a night’s lodging, but this certainly isn’t what I expected! The joys of travel...



Musings from Glenn #1: September 8



Getting to Iona, Scotland, required of us a long and arduous journey consisting of 3 hours by train, 45 minutes by ferry, 1 1/4 hours by bus and finally 15 minutes again by ferry. A journey well worth it. I’m constantly amazed and fascinated with the work of the Holy Spirit in forming the Bride of Christ. So precious it is to be a member of that Body, from every tongue, tribe and nation.

There is a pervading sense of peace and quiet on the island. It reminded me of how much effort it takes to carve out a place to commune with the Lord, to rest in him. In



hundreds, St. evangelist and planting monk, kind of peace.

Atlantic from Ireland to the Scotland, he discovered Iona, where he established a monastery. The Lord used him and his colleague monks, to begin a spiritual movement affecting the three streams of the Church.



and time to the early six Columba, the church sought that Sailing the Northern Hebrides of

Spending time in Iona, a beautiful church with vaulted decor and to commune with is amazing to think done from the beginnings of St. others from this and counting. Like a church today, If you're interested copy of "Columba" Coram Deo



the Abbey on structure of stone, ceilings, formal furniture, drew me my God. It really what God has humble Columba and small island for fourteen hundred years holy reverberation, we feel the effects in mostly unaware of this gift. to know more, I recommend you get a by Ian Bradley.



Conference in Bulgaria: September 10



This week-end finds us in Sofia, Bulgaria. It is a country we've done much ministry in the 1990's and then between 2010-2015. It has been such a joy for Glenn to meet Christian artists and pastors who have studied in Logos Bible School, an undergrad Christian college. Glenn participated in bringing Biblical Education by Extension, which led to the formation of

the college in the 90's.

We are here because I am a member of the Executive Leadership Team of Arts+Europe and we organized a conference for leaders of Christian arts' initiatives from throughout Europe, but focusing on Bulgarian artists and pastors. My responsibility has been organizing the morning devotional times and tomorrow's worship service. I adapted an Ukrainian Orthodox liturgy and have readers from six countries participating. The

message will be brought by Bishop Rob Gillion. He is the first appointed “Bishop of the Arts” in the Anglican Church of England. Also, we will have a very special time of prayer concerning the Russian Ukrainian war. Please pray for this service.

Leaving Bulgaria::September 12



Writing from the Sofia airport. Heading to Tirana, Albania tonight. The conference was exceptional and so well received by the Bulgarians and the attendees from the other eight countries. I felt my Sunday morning service was powerful and the Lord definitely met us as we worshiped, as well as prayed for the Ukraine/Russia conflict. The photos are the Arts+Europe Executive Leadership Team; Bishop Rob Gillion; me leading the service; and Glenn and I with Bishop Rob.



Transition Chaos im Albania: September 13

At each transition from one country to the next we have experienced difficulties that resulted in serious loss of sleep, and some consternation. Leaving Bulgaria and entering Albania was no different. Our daughter and son-in-law had arranged the schedule so that they would arrive at the Tirana Airport in plenty of time to meet us when our plane arrived at 1:00 a.m. However, their plane was 3 hours delayed, so they arranged for a certain taxi to meet us, deliver us to a hotel a few blocks from their apartment and told us in detail where to go and how to proceed. Unfortunately, those best laid plans didn't work out. #1–no such taxi could be found, #2–contrary to what we had been told, no taxi would accept a credit card (and we had no Euros or Albanian

money). We found ourselves on the side of the road around 2a.m. with no clue what to do. Enter God's provision (and sense of humor?). A young Israeli man who was coming to Albania to hike in the mountains had graciously helped carry our suitcases up and down all the stairs related to getting on and off the plane. He offered to help us get into Tirana. He flagged down a bus, paid the driver and made sure we were dropped off in the right place. We said good-bye, with plans to meet him for coffee before he leaves the city.

We eventually obtained the key to our kids' flat, walked down an unknown street, found the right building in the dark—and the key would not work! We retraced our steps to a hotel, and were told there were no rooms available. It is well after 2:00 a.m. by now. The "innkeeper" carried our suitcases down the block to a little hotel without any signs. Awakening the desk clerk, we were told they would not accept our credit card, but, that he "loved his grandparents too much and wouldn't want anyone to put them out on the street," so he would give us funny little room, with a very strange sounding toilet flush. 🙄

We accepted it, even though there was a strange, stuffy smell and no blankets on the individual beds. We froze all night, with little sleep, but Glenn got up early because he has a meeting with some Methodist pastors this morning. We are thankful to be safely here and are expectant to all that God may have for us until the next country transition! Please continue to pray.

Delightful Ministry in Albania: September 15

It has been a very long time since I have been in Tirana and I can hardly recognize it. It is VERY densely populated; it never sleeps; the traffic is incredible; and the number of coffee bars is



astounding! We have had a delightful time as we stay with our daughter and son-in-law. Glenn continues to meet with various pastors and Christian leaders. We spent this morning at the Christian Counseling Center which our daughter, her husband, and others from their church have

started. Glenn brought an encouraging message to the counseling staff. We then met with a very dynamic local Methodist pastor and introduced him to the counseling staff. It was a very blessed meeting.



This afternoon we met with the current director of Albania Bible Institute. Glenn was very involved in conceiving and founding ABI in the early 1990's. We were very impressed with the current director and we are exploring ways to support the ministry here. ABI is very involved in publishing solid books on the Christian life—in paper, e-books, and in audible format. He asked me to help get the permission to publish my book as an audible book, which would reach many new people with God's message of forgiveness. He is also interested in our film, Abstraction. God continues with His perfect "marketing plan!"



The photos show 2 of the many murals painted on the tall buildings in Tirana; Glenn with our son-in-law and the Methodist pastor; and the play therapy room at the counseling center. I

forgot to take a photo of the others with whom we met!

Final Days in Albania: September 17

We completed our time in Albania well and spent the entire day transitioning by plane (to Vienna) and train (to Budapest). The connections went well, thankfully. Coming from the warm weather of the Balkans, we were shocked by the cold wind in Vienna and very cold rain in Budapest. By the time we found a taxi, we were cold and wet. We found the Air BnB, and then we went through the feelings of panic and disbelief because Glenn couldn't find his telephone! After several minutes of Glenn checking everywhere and the driver tearing apart the inside of his car, they both gave up in frustration. We entered the building and before we started up the stairs, the driver was pounding on the door! He had seen the phone on the street! How it happened, we don't know, but we are so grateful! (All this will probably be funny some day!)

Please pray for this upcoming week of meetings with individuals and some groups. I will be meeting with a group of actors on Friday. Also, continue to pray for God to surprise us with ministry opportunities. Thanks!



The photos are in deep contrast: 2 from an Albanian Folk Opera (wonderful); and one is the bunker that was the entrance to a large underground network that was used during the repressive regime of the Communist years. It now has a museum of artifacts and information of the many years imprisonment, and of murder of the Albanian people. We even saw a video of

the protest that our Albanian son-in-law was in in 1991 that led him to escape to Austria. Our daughter met him there in 1992 and the rest is history!



Musings from Glenn #2: September 19

In the 1990's I worked in Albania between the capitol city of Tirana, and the northern port city of Durres. In those days the whole country was in turmoil, undulating from a state of confusion after

Communism fell; wonderment about the future; and giddy as a kid on Christmas with new toys. There seemed to be new opportunities awaiting them for those willing to take them.

Communism was an overreaching, oppressive, godless regime that had the people in a choke hold. Mismanagement at just about every level of life in the cities caused the infrastructure to virtually collapse. But freedom quickly became license for personal efforts to do whatever they could imagine.

Albania was a vassal nation under the Ottoman Empire, then came Communism. Over the last 30 years the people have made great gains with the help of the West and of the European Union. The indomitable spirit of the Albanians is still alive. They have risen from the ashes of oppression. Massive changes have come to expand the economy, high rise buildings are prominent. Tourism is expanding as outsiders become more aware of this "new country."

Influence from the Middle East has brought a revival of Islam. That probably has more to do with their desire to get the money the Islamic world offers them, than their commitment to Islam.

In the early days of the 90's, some of the missionaries, including me, were concerned about the confusion being created in the minds of the Albanians. We organized all



ministries under two categories, those who were doing evangelism, church planting and education, and those who were in the medical field. I had the privilege of co-founding the first school for biblical training, Albania Bible Institute.

Churches today exist largely due to the work of missionaries who came in the 90's. Now

the pastors and other workers of many of the



churches are men and women who came to Christ in their late teens. Over the years, men and women have taken positions in the church who were trained at ABI.



For the last thirty years we have seen the church grow. Persecution was the means by which the officially declared atheistic, communist government used to control the church. Where once Albania had no organized church and no under ground church, today 1% of the population claims to be Christian. That percentage seems minuscule but it doesn't tell the whole story.



When the country opened it was like a blank piece of paper. Everything we missionaries did was writing a new history for Albania. I was one who, along with others, held a vision for the future that Albania would become a mission sending country, not just mission receiving. Leaders for the church would be trained in the country, not sent to the West for their education. Today, there is

an Alliance of churches and pastors; broad based biblical education in the churches; and even Albanians going to foreign countries as

missionaries.



Looking back, I see the movement of the Spirit of God, to continue forming the church, from every tongue, tribe and nation. Today the Spirit is moving in the culture by raising up counseling ministries to deal with spiritual and emotional bondage.



There is an enormous need for Christian counseling. The lack of mental health care and family counseling is a desperate need. Fortunately, thanks be to God, that need is being met, with the formation of the Christian Counseling Center in Tirana. Our daughter, Wendy Skenderi and her husband, as well as some others, have established that

ministry. They have four counselors, all of them Albanian's. It's a privilege for me to have my daughter picking up where I left off, where I cannot go. This vital ministry is



speaking into the existing gap of good mental, emotional health. Overall, there is reason to be optimistic about the future. The Spirit is moving the church forward. From Dianne: All photos were taken in the new counseling center. Her book is on the entry hall table.

Enjoying Hungary: September 20

Today we spent some time reliving memories by going to Castle Hill on the Budapest side of the Danube River, plus a stop for coffee at an old-world coffee shop.



On the Train to Germany: September 24

After a very long day of travel, we are in our “temporary home” in southern Germany. It was a beautiful train ride through the Austrian Alps. The only transition fiasco was a delayed train getting to Zurich and a canceled train going on to Basel—making us very late getting to our place where we are staying. Typical travel issues.



Thank you for following along with our adventure with God. Please continue praying that we will be used of God in every place and that God will surprise us with opportunities to encourage others in their spiritual journey.



Internet Issues: September 28

We are having frustrating internet connection issues where we are currently staying, so our postings may not be as frequent and photos may not attach. We hope this will be corrected soon.

Musings by Glenn #3: September 28

Being in the southwest corner of Germany, where Germany, Switzerland and France come together, at the bend in the river Rhein, brings back fond memories. In three different phases I have had the privilege of working from this base with a focus on all of Europe. The first was in leadership with Greater Europe Mission, engaging in training and leadership development for church planting and evangelism.

Subsequently, I created what I called my “A” team as we sought to train European men and women to plant reproducing churches. I set up our headquarters for “Impact Ministries” near here with the intentional concept that impact in a culture comes from a multiplication process rather than an additional model.

A third phase was a focus on inductive Bible study groups as the Europe Director of Community Bible Study International. From here, Lörrach, I was tasked with oversight of that ministry in 20 different countries in Europe. The effort was to establish and develop in every country an organized ministry that would be self sustaining, with the ultimate goal of replicating themselves in another country.

Today, I had the privilege of meeting with Bishop Patrick Streiff, who oversees the Methodist churches and other Methodist ministries in Central Europe. I found him to be warm and personable with a passion to grow the Methodist churches in Europe. Our discussion included possible partnerships with him for ministry in the future.

All these ministries are ways of reminding myself what God has done. I'm humbled to be part of the Kingdom work.

Photo is monument signifying where the three countries are joined in the Dreilände Ecke (Three Country Corner). Standing here allows you to be in all 3 countries at once.



Southern Germany: October 2



A view of the Rhine from the old covered bridge. Here it is easy to walk or ride a bike from one country to another. The new bridge for cars in the photo.



Altar of St. Fridolin
Munster



St. Fridolin Munster is beautiful! I spent much time in prayer here (and in the chapels on the sides of the sanctuary) in the late 90's and early 2000's).

“Oma’s Rösti” in our favorite cafe in Bad Säckington. A Rösti is like a cake made of hash brown potatoes, with toppings.



This is an artist’s rendition of the restaurant’s façade. It was named for the very old building which in Medieval days housed the Guild for the artisan’s of the area. The town was founded circa A.D.

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Here I am— “Oma” (Grandma) indulging in a Rösti, while Glenn (Opa) has a Fladdenbrot (flat bread). Both were delicious!



Super Hero Glenn, holding up the old, large tree. 😊
These are the grounds of the Schoenau manor house.

Todtmoos, DE: October 4

Our favorite coffee shop!





I always admire this typical Black Forest house, located in Todtmoos.

All cakes, candies and ice creams are handmade by the Bockstaller family. They have won many



awards. Gabrielle Bockstaller always serves these delicious desserts with a smile.

A photo with Gabrielle Bockstaller.

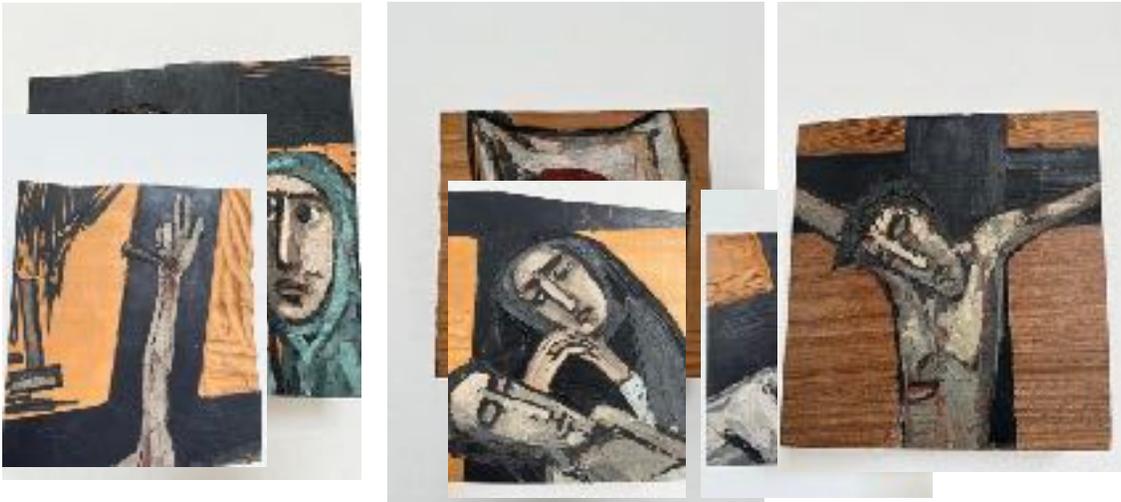


This is the famous Schwarzwald Torte—Black Forest cake. It was delicious.



St. Blasien, Black Forest of Germany. I was intrigued by these small paintings on wood by an anonymous artist. I didn't take photos of all of them, but here are my favorites. They are hung around a circular chapel, off the main sanctuary. Very powerful.





Glenn's Fascination with German Stores: October 5



“Please keep the merchandise in an orderly manner. Thank-you.” I love this sign. I wish we could have this in the store where I work part-time at home.

Glenn's Musing #4: October 5

I thought it might be good to give you a different presentation on my musings today. Instead of a view of history and ministry of years past, how about a few examples of cultural differences? Anyone who has traveled outside of your own culture will know, when you are in another country there are many things that catch your attention as being odd, different, or, shall I say, just plain wrong? The tendency to judge what you experience as different is very normal. However, to view anything through that grid is to miss some of the values of culture built in to the people of the world. God loves us all, shall I say, “God so loved the world?” We must remember he is building a people for himself from every tongue, tribe and nation. (Read Rev. 21-22)

With a little chuckle, I'm passing on to you some pictures of things that, at first, when living here, seemed odd to me. And to be honest, I was more annoyed than



appreciative of what I perceived as limitations on me. Here is a lesson I learned when living in Germany, beginning in 1998. Germans are neat freaks. Orderliness is a very high value. Making life run smoothly is important. Therefore, they live life by the code that “everything is verboten, (forbidden), unless permitted.” We Americans approach life as everything is permitted unless there is a

law against it. Germans have a different sense of space as well.

They practice conservation of space in order to facilitate peaceable existence. Dianne and I learned how to live large in a small space from the Germans and that lesson has served us well, especially now that we live in a small townhouse.

Coming from the well established concept that our country has more than enough open spaces and raw materials for anything we can conceive, underscores our sense of entitlement. After all, if we’re free to do whatever we want, wouldn’t the rest of the world want to be like us? (Think about that. If that were true, wouldn’t life be brutally boring.)

The bottom line here is, we can learn to value what others offer, which is far more important than simply tolerating them. Put that advice in to the context of the Church in every culture. The glory of the universal Church is the presence of the Triune God and Jesus as the head of that Church. (Again, I refer to Rev. 21-22, as a reminder of our future.) We will dwell eternally with people from all over the globe, from the dawn of time. Join me in a chuckle at what looks odd to us, as long as we don’t “assume others have it wrong and we have it right.”



A.C.T. Intl Staff in Germany: October 7

This week we’ve had excellent meetings with colleagues involved in ministry with us. I will highlight only a couple of these people in my next reports.

The first is Ben and Erin Roundtree.

Along with their two daughters, they have been serving through



their incredible musical gifts throughout Germany and much of Europe. Also, God has used all they have learned as parents of a child with disabilities to teach other parents of such children with special needs, especially in Ukraine. When the war in Ukraine

began, the Roundtrees learned that several families with such children were caught without shelter and food.



Along with the leaders of their little village and their church, they organized a rescue of 6 families and



brought them back to this little Black Forest town. The mayor arranged for housing and Erin began the very demanding job of finding financial support, schools, health care and struggling through the governmental regulations. As the men of the families were in

the army, the need for special care for the traumatized women and children was great.



Ben, Erin, Elese and Emily Roundtree are modern-day heroes to me. I am grateful they are part of the A.C.T-Europe family!



Dinner in Switzerland: October 8

Connecting with long-time ministry friends and colleagues is one of the joys of this trip. On Friday night, we had a lovely dinner with Beat and Ari Rink in their home in Basel,

Switzerland. Ari is a licensed counselor who is from Finland. Beat is a pastor/theologian who is the founder/director of Crescendo International, a ministry for professional classical and jazz musicians and, recently, actors and dancers. He started this organization in 1985 and it just continues to grow.



We have served on the Arts+Europe Executive Leadership Team for 20 years and it is an honor to call them friends.



An Old-Country Evening: October 9

Our time in Germany will quickly come to an end, but we are continuing to meet with friends and former ministry colleagues. Last night, two twin sisters, Sylvia and Sabina, and one of their daughters, Chantal, took us to a traditional Baden-cuisine restaurant housed in a farmhouse built in 1592 (!). Glenn and I had worked closely with these women when he was Europe Director for Community Bible Study International. They were leaders of the C.B.S.I.- Germany. Sylvia also owns the place where we are staying. We are thankful for these godly women.



Thank-you to the A.C.T. Intl Colleague: October 17

We are on a train taking us to Vienna for our next stage of this adventure with God. Our week of hosting a colleague, Guy Whitlock, and family around the “Dreilande Ecke” (where 3 countries joined) was delightful. Thank you, Guy, for making the effort to support me and the A.C.T. Europe Gathering!



The First ACT-Europe Gathering: October 17



It is difficult to write a short post about our first A.C.T.-Europe Gathering. I had dreamed for many years that this could happen. I have prayed and planned for nearly as long. This past weekend fulfilled all my dreams (except for so



many staff not able to attend). The theme of the week-end was “Appreciating the Margins” —looking at our role as “mearcstapas” (border crossers) as (1) cross-cultural missionaries; (2) as artists; and (3) as “citizens of the Kingdom” in an ungodly world. Each person had the opportunity to share their ministry and their creative gift. Many of those unable to attend sent short video



presentations. We prayed for each person, individually.



There was time for worship, for tears and time for laughter. On Friday afternoon I led a Visio Divina prayer time in the Musee Unterlinden of Colmar, focusing on The Issenheim Altarpiece (a long-time dream of mine). I am so grateful to God for the entire experience.





Lost Purse: October 17

Please pray—I left my purse on the train. I have temporarily blocked my debit and credit cards, plus filed a report with the train “lost and found.” Praying that it is turned in and returned to me this week while we are in Vienna.

Ministry in Vienna: October 19



Our time in Vienna is filled with meetings with people—some we’ve known for many years and others are new friends—all involved in ministry. Glenn is also meeting with Methodist pastors and discussing possible partnerships in the future. I only have photos of a sampling of the meetings, but rejoice with us as God continues to give us opportunities for ministry. He who called us is always faithful.



Meeting dear friends from our time in Vienna in the early 90's. Mary and I have remained close friends through hard times and times of rejoicing.

Prayers Answered: October 20

Praise God! My purse—including my iPhone, money and credit cards—was turned in and we picked it up this morning when the office opened! Thank you for praying. God has answered in such a wonderful way!



Saying Good-bye to Vienna: October 21

This is our final day in our beloved Vienna. We didn't have much time to do nostalgia activities, but we did spend a couple of hours at the permanent exhibition at the



Albertina Art Museum, "Monet to Picasso." Unfortunately, time didn't allow for the more modern section. But, memories still assailed me as I recalled a snowy day in December, 1992, as I sat in one of the galleries, and God spoke to me in the midst of my deep despair due to the murder of our dear son. God called me by name, and



declared that He was the "original abstract artist." He continued, "Everything in creation came from my imagination; nothing was representational; all creation was originally abstract." He promised to "take the broken pieces of my heart and soul and make something beautiful from them." There is more to the story, but many of you have heard me tell it. Just returning to this particular art gallery brings it all back to me in such a forceful way. Praise God for the healing and beauty it has brought into my life. I am so thankful to even have a few busy days in lovely Vienna.



On the Move to Belgium and the Netherlands: October 26

We are truly “on the move” during this stage of our trip. We left Vienna last Saturday and made our way to **Namur, Belgium**. To our surprise and delight, the A.C.T. Staff couple were living in a “manor home” which was divided into four separate dwellings. It was lovely—

complete with farm animals! While the Romans settled this area, the current home was built in the 1800s. This couple, David & Angie, are musicians working on a church planting team with two



other couples from the U.S. It was glorious to attend their service on Sunday! They have established an arts' center called The Spark, that is drawing all ages and nationalities of people together. It was a wonderful example of artistic missionaries!

On Monday we traveled to Zaandam, The Netherlands, to stay with another A.C.T. staff member, Brenda. She is a very well trained and experienced actor, director and production manager. She has started a theatre company, which produces plays for churches and the general public. Right now she has agreed to direct Shakespeare’s “Mid-Summer Night’s Dream” with high-school English students. It was amazing to sit in on a rehearsal.

Zaandam was the first city in the Netherlands during WWII



to have their Jews forced to leave home, as the initial step towards the “Final Solution.”



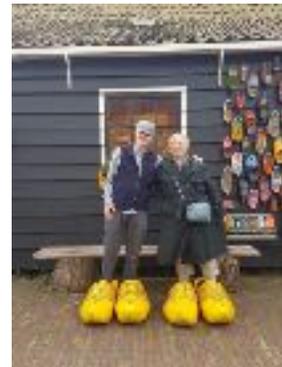
I was shocked to learn that The Netherlands had the highest number of Jews murdered by the Nazis in Western Europe— 102,000! There were 28,000 Jews hidden throughout the country. We know the story of Corrie ten Boom and Anne Frank as examples of this history. Brenda has written and performed a one-women play of Corrie ten Boom’s life and will tour with it again next spring. Brenda took us to a “living museum” called Zaanse Schied. Here we saw a demonstration of how to make wooden shoes; ate all sorts of cheese;

enjoyed Dutch pancakes; and saw mills for spices, wood, and paint pigments. This area was one of the oldest industrial areas of the world (17th century). In the 17th and 18th centuries, there were 600 active windmills grinding oil, spices, colorings, and more. Our Declaration of Independence was actually written on paper made in this area by the wood grinding windmills!



Between 1961-1978, the old buildings were moved to this property owned by the government on the River Zaan to establish a delightful community and a “living museum.” We had a wonderful time visiting all the little shops and historical sites.

Now—we are on the move to the **Normandy area of France**. We are eager to see what surprises God may have during the final 3 weeks of this adventure.



Musings by Glenn #5: October 27



Tucked into the southwest corner of Germany is Kandern, a small town near Basel, Switzerland. This small town has had enormous spiritual influence, disproportionate to its size, for nearly sixty years. It's the home of Black Forest Academy, a Christian boarding school for missionary kids of middle school and high school age. The educational needs of families who are serving around the world



are met by loving Christian teachers and staff, enabling the parents of the children who board there, to fulfill their missionary and cross cultural work.

When I was with my first mission agency, I was asked to take the assignment for the mission to oversee our ministries throughout Europe. The head quarters of the mission rested in Kandern. Dianne and I had an office in one of the buildings we rented from the school. From there I fulfilled my responsibilities for five and half years. It was pleasant working among the

Germans. They were so gracious and kind to the foreigners living among them.

Years later, I served Community Bible Study International as the Europe Director, with oversight of twenty countries. One of those countries was Germany. The main location in Germany, you might guess, was Kandern, with its big sister town, Lorrach.



It was a pleasure renewing old acquaintances in this area. Dianne and I had opportunity to minister to some of our German friends who are carrying

some heavy burdens. As you know, God always surprises us with opportunities like this.

On the Basel side of the river Rhine, we met with colleagues to plan future ministry. One of our good Swiss friends is founder of Crescendo, a ministry of, with and for the begun exploring ministry of the Central Eastern Europe about that in my next Musings It's so meaningful to know from such a small, seemingly been a small piece of this



arts. I also met with and have opportunities with the Bishop Methodist churches. I'll talk to be posted on FB. God has continuing ministries insignificant place and we've puzzle\

An Artist's Retreat Center, Normandy, France: October 30



Our next stay in Europe was the amazing retreat for artists, La Pommeraie, owned and graciously run by ACT-Europe

staff members, Steve and Miki. This couple have served the artistic community in France since 1988 and



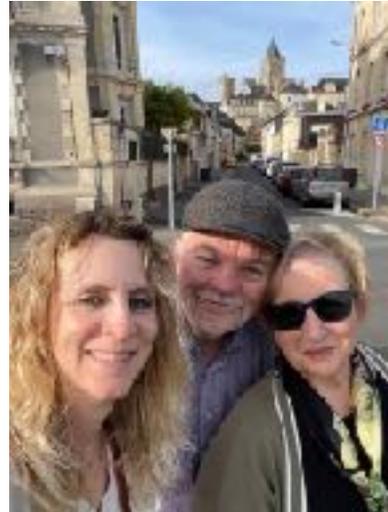
moved from Paris to Normandy four years ago. This lovely agrarian property has thatched roofed houses, the earliest built in the 1700's. The closest town is Bernay. This city was first begun in the 5th Century as a Roman settlement. In the 11th Century a Benedictine Abbey was built (which still stands). Bernay was known for its cloth industry and market fairs, which continue even now. In WWII, Bernay was liberated by the First Canadian Army, but due to a cover of heavy clouds, it could not be heavily bombed, saving the historic city center.



We also visited another ACT-Europe staff member, Kami. Kami has an incredible and varied ministry through her journalism with a great desire to connect with people in a personal way. Kami lives in another part of Normandy, the city of Caen.

Caen was built during the reign of William the Conqueror around 1060. He had one of the largest medieval fortresses built in Western Europe. Duchess Matilda of Flanders established the Benedictine Abbey at the same time. In 1944 Caen was at the center of the Battle of Normandy as the Allies attempted to liberate France from Nazi control. During this battle, most of the old city of Caen was destroyed, as the inhabitants of the town sought refuge in the ancient Abbey.

Our visit in Normandy was short, but so meaningful. I am impressed with the area, but especially our ACT-Europe staff members living there. They are excellent examples of creative Christians, seeking to follow the call of God on their lives. I am privileged to serve with them.



Musings by Glenn #6: October 30

The blue Danube is the river running through Vienna and Budapest. (Actually, it's more green than blue.)

Vienna, home of Mozart and Beethoven; city of glorious music of opera and symphony; birth place of the coffee houses and culture where great thinkers, writers, politicians and artists met to discuss ideas and influence culture changes.

Vienna was the first place Dianne and I lived in Europe. You can imagine our love for that city.



While we were there on this trip, I had the pleasure of meeting the missionary pastor of the Methodist church. He pastored a church in Ukraine before going to Vienna two years ago. His understanding and wisdom of the two cultures he

served was evident. His church is participating in the needs of Ukrainians.



Budapest, the capitol city, is dissected by the Danube. Buda is on the hill side of the river, Pest on the flat side. Seven bridges span the river imposing a spectacular and majestic presence, especially at night. It's a city of massive stone buildings, creating an atmosphere of stability and strength. The largest Jewish synagogue in Europe is



there.

I met with a Methodist pastor and also the Superintendent of the churches in Hungary. I was pleasantly surprised to see the ministry they have developed; a school for the arts for middle school kids and high school kids. They have adult classes in the evening. There are three campuses with a combined enrollment of one thousand students!

Having lived in both these cities, I have a deep appreciation for them. You might call them my “tale of two cities.” Going back as I did on this trip, my desire to see the continuing work of God has not diminished. There are encouraging signs of new inroads into spiritual darkness the Spirit is making.



[A Disappointment in Chartres, FR: October 31](#)

One of the unusual aspects of this ministry trip is that we planned times of “spiritual reflection” for ourselves as we sought to minister to and encourage so many others.

The short, ill-conceived trip to Chartres was one of those times. I have longed to experience the Chartres Cathedral, and especially its labyrinth, for a very long time. Unfortunately, to our dismay, the labyrinth is not available for use from 29 October until sometime in March!



There has been a church at the site of the Cathedral since the 4th Century. Because of fire and wars, it has been rebuilt no less than five times! The current building was completed in 1220—a thousand years ago! As we sat in the sanctuary during the Sunday morning service and Mass, I became so aware of the multitudes of Christians who had worshipped before me. Truly we are surrounded by an immense cloud of witnesses!

Following the service on Sunday, I waited for the crowd of people to disperse around the site of the labyrinth, which was covered with chairs, making it impossible to walk on it. I was able however, to stand in the middle of it and pray. The Chartres labyrinth was one of the largest medieval labyrinths. The center is a 6-lobed rosette, which is a symbol of the nature of God found in the ancient Babylonian, Sumerian, Jewish and Roman art. It is constructed in such a way to point to the moment the true God saved humanity. While monks through the ages have walked the circular stone path which represents the pilgrimage of life, I had to be content with only communing with God in the center. But, it was a very meaningful time with my God.

A True Story in Chartres: November 2

I want to take a step back to our time in Chartres to share a true story that I found interesting. On August 14, 1944, the Germans and Americans were in battle in the Chartres region. The Cathedral was saved



by the heroic actions of an American colonel, Welborn Barton Griffith. He questioned the order he was given to target the Cathedral for destruction because it was assumed that the towers were being used as observation posts by the German army. Griffith, and one unnamed volunteer soldier, bravely went on their own to determine the status of the Cathedral. When they

found it empty, Welborn had the bells rung from the towers and the order to destroy was rescinded.

Unfortunately, Griffith died that very same day in combat action. He received many honors posthumously from both the American and French governments. The Cathedral remains intact, for congregants and visitors. Praise God.

Musings by Glenn #7: November 2



The promise of Jesus to build his church has been on going from the resurrection until now, and no one knows how much longer in the future. The disciples queried Jesus about how long it would be, to which Jesus responded, follow the work of the Spirit and watch what he is doing. That's good advice for us today too. I thought about that this last weekend as Dianne and I visited the Chartres Cathedral in France. Our trip in Europe



has given us new insights and experiences with the phenomena of God's work to produce his promise. The Cathedral demonstrates this promise as one of the places in Europe that has existed since the fourth century. Over the centuries, the cathedral has been destroyed in wars, fires and other conflicts. Today's cathedral is the fifth to occupy the very space where it has always existed.

This massive, magnificent structure, with two towers, reaches upwards to three hundred seventy seven feet, seemingly puncturing the sky, sparking the imagination of the observer. The external and internal walls are lined with saints from of old. I found myself leaning in to the people of God who've gone before and are now in the true land of the living, where my son, our four parents, many family and friends dwell eternally with our Lord.

I pondered what those who planned, paid for, and labored to construct such a marvelous edifice, were thinking. I can imagine hundreds of workers who built this. Some focused on the job as a wage earner; just get a pay check and feed the family. Others must have been thinking, I'm creating an edifice for worship to the glory of God for all who will follow us and be in wonderment who we are and why we did this. I believe they were imagining a long future. It was their gift for perpetuity. God has used it for fourteen hundred years to say to countless generations, "I continue to build my Church!" I'm reminded what God said to Habakuk, "Look among the nations, and see: wonder and be astounded. For I am doing a work in your days that you would not believe if told." (Hab 1:5)

In our contemporary world, we tend to see structures like this as a curious piece from the past, but not relevant for today. We attended the mass on Sunday and appreciated a considerably large gathering of people for worship. It was refreshing to go to church with saints from of old and other contemporaries. "So great a cloud of witnesses."



Our Third "Thin Place" of Spiritual Importance: November 5

I shared at the beginning of our journey that we built in three stops that were for our spiritual reflection and refreshment. We are now engaged in the third of these "thin places" where we meet God in a very special way: Florence, Italy. The most



special place for me is the Convent San Marco. I have eagerly longed to return here since our first visit 10 years ago.

Florence is almost overwhelming with the abundance of history, art, and churches. It began as an Etruscan outpost nine centuries before Christ, but flourished as a trading and banking medieval city. It is known as the birthplace of the Italian Renaissance and was one of the most important cities of Europe from the 14th to the 16th Centuries, under the control of the Medici family.



Convent San Marco began as a Benedictine monastery in 1436. One of the friars, Fra Angelico, entered the priory in 1439. He began painting frescoes merely as aids to meditation and prayer, never expecting them to be seen by the public. What amazes me is that in addition to the frescoes painted in the communal rooms and chapels, he painted incredible scenes from the life of Christ in the individual cells of the friars—solely for their personal experience of “Visio Divina” on a



daily basis!

I desired to sit in one of cells and spend time in meditation and prayer. Unfortunately, due to security reasons, no one is allowed in the cells, so I had to be content to view each cell from the roped-off door opening. I did spend significant time in prayer in the Cloister. I meditated on how my walk with God might be changed if I awoke daily to such a visual of God’s love. Would it just become mundane and cease to challenge me to love and good



works?

One writer says that these paintings “reveal the secret joy of the painter-friar in creating figures of purity to move his fellow friars to meditation and prayer.”



There are many places in Florence that bring me to prayer, meditation, and praise, but San Marco endures as a cherished memory.

(Please note: the photos are a very small sampling of the paintings found in this monastery.)

Musings by Glenn #8: November 6



My spirit resonates with joy to be in Florence, Italy where there are an abundance of churches and cathedrals. Joy comes from understanding and witnessing the Gospel going out to the world with every foreigner who visits here. (And believe me there are a lot of them! The streets and squares were crawling with people this



week.) Think about it; the richness of the biblical message of the Christ, the great Pantocrator, is that he loves them and desires to have a relationship with them. It is clearly presented in so many ways in

every church in the city. I thought of Jesus' good shepherd. I know Father knows me and I



words in John 10:13–16 (ESV): "I am the my own and my own know me, just as the know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep." The witness is here. The Spirit



will bring people to himself. Ready for this...they will come from very tongue, tribe and nation! (That's the missionary speaking.)

While in the Santa Croce Basilica, a Franciscan church, I viewed memorial stones of a number of important characters of years gone by. All these people left their mark somehow. Michelangelo, Machiavelli, Galileo, Dante Alighieri, Marconi and others. Although Francis of Assisi may never have been in Florence,

his presence was there as a result of his

followers. Imagine to line up as though with them with raised in gratefulness to

my joy I were hands



considering Scripture, enjoyment of warm



God. But I also enjoyed the opportunity to stroll through the Cloister, imagining what it was like to be with the Franciscan friars, talking, discussing their devotion to God, the fellowship, the reality of "koinonia."





It was a rare experience. Thanks be to God!

One Week To Go: November 7



It is our final day of our “personal time” in Florence. It has been delightful. Tomorrow we fly to London for one week of ministry before returning home on 16 November. Hard to believe this 2-1/2 month, 13 countries trip will soon be just a memory. Thanks be to God.

Life in London: November 9

We have returned to London—one of my favorite cities in the world. But—this time we are in the Camden Town area of the extreme north-west sector of the city, where we have never stayed before. It seems very different from the rest of the city. Here is how it is described: “A haven of counter culture,



the area is popular with tourists, teenagers and punks.” It is extremely noisy, busy and multi-ethnic. Quite a challenge!



Today we toured the “birthplace of Methodism” as we worked our way through Wesley’s Chapel, the Museum of



Methodism and John Wesley's home. We learned so much, which Glenn will speak to in his next "Musings"



Musings by Glenn #9: November 10

A Dynamic Triumvirate

We are in London on the last stop of our extended mission trip where we have had the privilege Methodist Church. Because I am Spirit of God, I've been intrigued another example of how God Church.

What do these three names Nikolaus Ludwig Von William Booth? All three of them movement to champion and social relief work. Von the development of the



to visit the birth place of the interested in movements of the by what I've learned. This is continues to work to build his

have in common, Count Zinzendorf, John Wesley and were used of God to establish a evangelism, church planting, Zinzendorf was instrumental in Moravians who were founded in

1457 and have sent missionaries to the world. John Wesley, in the mid 1700's, was the man God used to birth what became the Methodist Church. It was in a Moravian Society meeting in 1738 that Wesley experienced an encounter with Christ which changed his life and launched the work that led ultimately to the foundation of the Methodist Church. William Booth was a Methodist preacher who brought the Salvation Army in to existence in 1865. What these men did has resulted in a phenomenal movement that has reached, and is still reaching, much of the world. One interesting tidbit is to note these came in a succession where influence was passed on from one to the other. Movements do that. We stand on the shoulders of those who preceded us.



A Visit with a New Friend: November 12

Glenn and I find ourselves quite tired this week after 2-1/2 months of travel, ministry engagements with dozens of people, and doing personal spiritual research. We head back to North Carolina next week and will need some rest to return to “normal life.” Today we had the distinct privilege of meeting with Bishop Rob Gillion, whom we met in Sofia, Bulgaria, at the beginning of our journey. He is a rector of a local parish; chaplain; actor, and the first Anglican “Bishop of the Arts “ He has become a dear friend. It was a delight to spend time with him in his home city.



Last Days in London: November 14

Winding down from such a long trip and finding ourselves racing towards the homeward flight, creates a tension in me to use our time well and get the most out of our last hours. What is most important to experience or eat? Crazy, but real questions! Yesterday we started the day by attending the service at Wesley Chapel, the birthplace of the Methodist Church. It was a very multi-cultural congregation! The preaching pastor was an American woman whom I really enjoyed—both her message and our time together after the service. They were a very friendly, welcoming congregation. Afterwards, we searched for the grave of Susanna Wesley, but never found it in the graveyard across the street from the church. We did, however, locate John Bunyan’s grave!



For the rest of the afternoon we explored Covent Garden —with thousands of other people! (Just one of the many “must-do” places for me.)



Today began at the Christmas Market in Trafalgar Square and we had a short time in the National Gallery. We then went to Prince Albert's incredible memorial to meet our niece and her husband. They are currently living in south London. After a brisk walk through Kensington Park, we enjoyed a delicious pub lunch and hours of great discussions. Such a blessing to spend time with them.

I am so thankful to God for the wonderful time in the U.K. and Europe. God has given us such a love and a burden for the peoples of Europe. Praise Him.



The Final Day of the Trip: November 15

The final day of this long-prayed-for and long-planned ministry trip has arrived. It has been a "sacred dream-come-true." God not only gave the desire for such a trip; He provided the means through the gifts of His people; and He has given us strength and health to endure 2-1/2 months of travel. We had the privilege of spending time in 13 countries (plus multiple regions in some countries). In total we had the opportunity to personally bring encouragement and a spiritual challenge to at least 90 people. Plus, we sought to be the light of Christ with multiple hotel and restaurant personnel, as well as people met on public transit and in other places.

Besides the people involvement, this trip was designed for spiritual refreshment and research. Beginning with the ancient site of Columba's monastery on the remote island of Iona, Scotland; to the Chartres Cathedral in France; then to the many sacred sites in Florence, Italy; and finally, the Wesley Chapel and museum, we have learned more of the movement of God over the centuries since Christ and we were deeply blessed.



If you have followed us on this journey, you are probably aware of how deeply meaningful it has been for us to revisit the sites of former ministry during our 36 years of commitment and calling to Europe.

Memories are made up of both places and people. We have been very blessed.

Normally I am very excited about returning home after such a long trip. But today, I feel torn because in very real ways, Europe is home. We live “in the margins” between two homes and cultures. I pray that God allows us to return to Europe as we continue to focus

our ministry there, but we will return to Charlotte eager to see family and friends, as well as to continue getting involved in our new church. We are overflowing with gratefulness to God for all He is doing in and through us.

P.S. I won't be sorry to give up my sage green and black travel wardrobe!



Musings by Glenn #10: November 15

Culture and Language

We've moved in and out of London since 1983. Over that span of time I've noted how much culture here has changed. Of course, the same can be said about any culture. But it has caught my attention because my ears are attuned to sounds. Where once intermittently we would hear a language besides English being spoken, now it's only one of a plethora being spoken. I find myself being a little startled when I hear other languages in London.

At the moment when this occurs, I realize I'm making an assumption that being in England means I will be able to speak freely with anyone. Well, I mostly can, but I may not understand them speaking back to me.

English is the world's second language. It's amazing how flexible English can be. Language barriers are big challenges for ex-pat missionaries. (Truth be told, there are some Brits speaking English whom I think must be speaking a different language.)



Language is one of the main elements that identifies, defines, perpetuates, and lends credence to that “at home” feeling, even if home is not where they were born.

Language creates security and promotes self worth.

I've noted, among older Brits, there is a feeling of being over run. It creates tension and causes them to react in one of three ways.

First there is rejection.

This response is rooted in a “scarcity mentality.” This is the fear of losing something they had, something they or someone of their ilk, has produced or they cherish as theirs. It's part of their identity. This can lead to unfounded fear of annihilation.

Secondly, there is the response of toleration. This person hopes it will go away and they won't need to display their rejection of the people who have landed in their country and forced themselves on their "tribe." They suffer in silence with a "woe is me" attitude. Hoping this challenge will go away.



Thirdly, there are people who are open minded, who recognize the value of other cultures and cherish who they are and the dignity of the human family God has created.

The response to this language challenge by Kingdom people, must be to recognize God has brought the mission field to us. In our own country, we have multitudinous opportunities to participate with the Holy Spirit who is bringing other peoples with their cultures

and language, to our land. This is a golden opportunity to respond.

We echo the words from Steve Green's CD:

"To love the Lord our God
Is the heartbeat of our mission
The spring from which our service overflows
Across the street
Or around the world
The mission's still the same
Proclaim and live the Truth
In Jesus' name"

Final Activity of the Trip: November 15



Our final activity of our trip and our time in London was a delightful Afternoon Tea at Bridgit's Bakery near Covent Garden. Afterwards we walked to Trafalgar Square to catch our faithful Bus 29 back to our hotel. Saying farewell...





Musings by Glenn #11: November 16

A Sum of the Parts

Like a journey of any consequence, I planned the details of this remarkable journey, now finished, with careful attention. And, like other journeys, I guessed wrongly on some details and was surprised by many others. Some I could only adjust as best I could, to things I could not control. Given all that, I grade myself with a B+, maybe an A-, for managing all that confronted me.

Looking back now I see highlights I want to share with you.

1. It brings me satisfaction to be part of God's program, to encourage people and cheer them on to great things.
2. What joy it was to see my daughter and son in law building the first Christian Counseling Center in Albania. Standing in a place of ministry that picks up where I left off and becomes what I could not do.
3. Meeting three Methodist pastors in Albania discovering there are five congregations in the country that I was unaware of.
4. Encouraging the Director of Albania Bible Institute as he launches the program of biblical education by extension. He's developing digital Christian books and teaching materials.
5. I met two Methodist pastors who oversee a private high school with a focus on the arts. The school has two campuses with a combined student



enrollment of 1000 students; an adult evening school to train them in new vocational skills.

6. I became friends with the Methodist Bishop, based in Basel and Zurich, who oversees the churches in Eastern Central Europe. He is a very dear Christian brother.

7. It was a pleasure being with Dianne as she worked with and gave leadership to artist missionaries in her assignment of care. She also participated in the international conference for artists in her on-going work with them. That brought me in to their realm as a supporter and encourager for her and all of them.

8. In France, I found great spiritual refreshing at Chartres Cathedral. It was also true in other great churches, in cathedrals and basilicas of several countries. Chartres had a cloister where I really responded in my imagination as though being there with monks walking and talking as friends, sharing in koinonia and heart felt worship.

9. I found great satisfaction to see up close, the enduring church of the past. It was clear in Iona, Scotland with St. Columba; in Chartres in France with men and women whose graves stand as monuments to commitment and service; in London where traces of the dynamic life of John Wesley whom God used to begin the Methodist movement still reaching out to the world today.



10. Evidences of contemporary movements of the Spirit are obvious, such as we found in Albania and Hungary.

All this was rewarding to me as a student of church history. I am excited to see God's work going on and continuing today. It was the trip of a life time. I am so grateful for friends of our ministry who participated in all we were able to do. We are deeply indebted to you and grateful God would use us in this adventure!

****For your edification**

I have written an article on my perspectives of Europe and Europeans. This is written to help people understand better who Europeans are and how they see the world. I offer it to you free of charge. If you want to read it please write me (glenncollard@me.com) and ask me to send it to you via e- mail. The article is titled "A Palette of Perceptions."

Home Again: November 19

We arrived home on Wednesday evening. Unfortunately, Glenn has taken a very heavy sinus cold and I am struggling with severe vertigo. We have so much to do in order to re-enter normal life here. Your prayers are extremely appreciated. We are so thankful for this "trip of a lifetime." Praise God.

Wrap-Up of our Trip

We visited 13 countries (plus to more regions of France), met with 90 people; and lead in two conferences. We also had many “God-surprises” of connecting with people on public transportation and in our various places of housing. Everyday was an unique adventure with our God. Thank your following this “short report.” Unfortunately, there isn’t an easy way to explain every photo, but if you check our our Facebook Group, Collard’s Europe Ministry Trip 2022, each photograph is explained. With overflowing gratitude we end this report.

Dianne & Glenn Collard
December, 2022

