

February 2016

Discovery



Curiosity is a good disease to have. —Earl Franz
(pictured above on the TM Amazon & Galapagos Tour in 2014)

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What Really Matters in Life

by Wilmer Martin, p. 5



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Traveling With an Open Mind

I want to be a listener and ready to change my mind if there is a better way.

—TM Traveler, Earl Franz aka Earl of Lind

When Earl Franz leaves his rural home in Lind, Washington—population 572—to travel the world, he goes with an open mind and heart.

“We are careful in life. Most of the time, we hold our cards close to us. We care about being accepted by other people,” says Earl, a long-time TourMagination traveler. Earl, who is 88, says he plays golf with people with different life philosophies. “I have fun with them, but we don’t talk about the things we don’t agree on.”

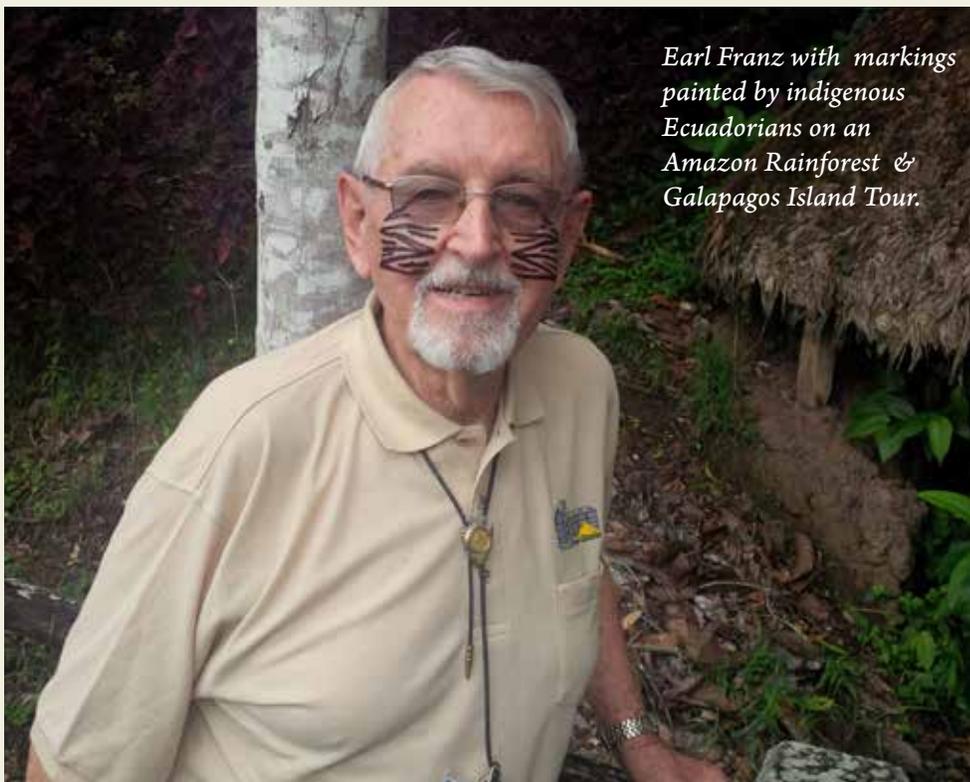
Earl has been on many TourMagination tours and likes meeting people with different worldviews from a variety of places. Though tour members have distinct perspectives, Earl says he appreciates the freedom to express his “deep down feelings.” He says, “You can say anything you want. Maybe it’s the type of people that go on these trips. They are very open, they are inquisitive, and they want to learn new things.”

By contrast, Earl believes most people are so busy that they don’t investigate. “Curiosity is a good disease to have,” says Earl, speaking as one who is afflicted by the malady.

Earl says he is a “steady, middle of the road kind of person.” He adds, “I want to be a listener and ready to change my mind if there is a better way.” For him, travel has been an important part of keeping an open mind as he sees how others live and think.

Last January, Earl went on TourMagination’s inaugural Cuba tour with a group of other curious travelers. “The Cuban people are good people. They treated us so nice.” He adds, “I had no idea they had such a good educational and medical system.”

Back in 2014, Earl took his three daughters—Yvonne, Gail, and Jeanette—to Alaska with a TourMagination group. He liked the trip because it was a mixture of traveling in Alaska on land by train and along the Inside Passage by cruise ship. Earl regrets that they only caught a glimpse of Mount McKinley because it was mostly shrouded in fog.



Earl Franz with markings painted by indigenous Ecuadorians on an Amazon Rainforest & Galapagos Island Tour.

On the cruise portion of the trip, Earl and his daughters enjoyed the nightly shows on the ship and scenery by day—including the whales and the calving of the ice. Earl and his daughter Yvonne sang in a choir on board the ship. “We even performed,” says Earl.

Earl Franz is the author of A Pebble in the Water—his memoir published in 2011 with the help of his daughter Yvonne.



Earl Franz with daughters Jeanette, Yvonne, and Gail on an Alaska tour in 2014

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A unique blend of learning and recreation, expect an authentic cultural experience as you interact with locals on our tours. Our expert storytellers and knowledgeable in-country guides help you understand the significance of sites. Best of all, enjoy rich community as you travel with like-minded people of faith.



Lee Roy Berry, Jr. riding in a classic car on the 2016 Cuba Tour.

 Heritage  Holy Land  Cruise  Eco-Adventure  Cultural Experience  Fellowship

The Great Trek: A Silk Road Odyssey with John Sharp & Fred Redekop

June 5 - 17, 2016

From US \$5,095; CA \$5,995 (International flights included)
Retrace the Great Trek taken by five wagon trains of Mennonites who left Russia in 1880-81 for Central Asia. Marvel at Islamic architecture as you tour cities along the famous Silk Road—Khiva, Samarkand, and Bukhara. Hear the Trekkers' story of joy and sorrow through journals, letters, and archival documents.

European Heritage with John Ruth & Wilmer Martin

June 26 - July 9, 2016

From US \$3,995
Our classic heritage tour traces the Anabaptist-Mennonite story through the Netherlands, Germany, France, Switzerland, and Austria. Premier storyteller John Ruth will regale you with stories about Menno Simons, Jakob Amman, Conrad Grebel, Martin Luther and other Reformation and Anabaptist leaders.

Amish European Heritage with John Ruth & Wilmer Martin July 6 - Aug 9, 2016

From US \$7,782 (International ship travel included)
Seeing historic sites in the Netherlands, Germany, Belgium, France, and Switzerland brings to life the stories of Amish founding father Jakob Amman, Menno Simons, and other Anabaptist leaders. Ride a cogwheel train up a mountain, worship in the Cave of the Anabaptists, and visit Passau where the Ausbund hymnal was written. **Travel from the USA by ship and within Europe by bus, boat, or train.**

Alaska Cruise with Wilmer & Janet Martin Aug 19-29, 2016

From US \$2,479
Enjoy rich times of fellowship with Wilmer and Janet Martin as you travel by coach, train, and cruise ship to view fantastic scenery and wildlife that will inspire you to worship.

Jordan, Palestine, Israel: A Journey of Hope with Nelson Kraybill Sept 8 - 19, 2016

From US \$4,095 (International flights included)
In Jordan, reflect on the Israelites' trek toward the Promised Land as you visit Mount Nebo, Moses' Spring, Mount Hor, and the site along the Jordan where God parted the waters. Guided by popular tour leader Nelson Kraybill, learn about the life of Jesus by the Sea of Galilee, in Bethlehem, at the Mount of Olives, at the Nazareth Village living museum, and at sites in Jerusalem.

Discover Canada: The Canadian Rockies with David & Joyce Eshleman Sept 20 - 29, 2016

From US \$4,490
See incredible scenery and natural wonders—from rock bridges and hoodoos to glaciers and dazzling emerald green lakes. Highlights include a two-day ride in a glass-domed train allowing full view of the picturesque mountain landscape from Jasper, Alberta to Vancouver, BC. **FEW SEATS REMAINING.**

2016-2017 TOURS

CONTINUED



Natural & Cultural Highlights in Switzerland, Germany & Austria

with Wilmer Martin

Sept 21 - Oct 1, 2016

From US \$4,395

(International flights included)

Mountain passes through the Alps, cascading waterfalls, winding rivers, world-class cities, quaint towns, plus historically meaningful sites like Trachselwald Castle and Dachau Concentration Camp. This tour has a little bit of everything—natural and cultural sites, worship with locals, and shopping.



Glory of Russia & the Mennonite Story in Ukraine

with Leonard Friesen & Audrey Voth Petkau

Sept 21 - Oct 3, 2016

From US \$5,320; CA \$5,995

(International flights included)

Russian cultural and architectural riches await you in St. Petersburg and Moscow including Peterhof Palace and Gardens; the Kremlin, Red Square; and stunning cathedrals. In Ukraine, engage with the Mennonite story, past and present, as you visit former colonies, Chortitza and Molotschna. Explore villages related to your family roots or see other sights of your choice on a free day.



Holy Land & Harvest the Olives

with Ruben & Idella Chupp

Oct 10-18, 2016

From US \$3,595; CA \$3,965

(International flights included)

Bible passages leap off the page at Old and New Testament sites in Nazareth, Caesarea Philippi, Bethlehem, Jericho, the Sea of Galilee, and Jerusalem. Experience first-century life as you help to harvest olives at Nazareth Village.



Mennonites of Ohio & Indiana Bus Tour

with Lorne Smith & Wilmer Martin

Oct 24-28, 2016

From CA \$1,295

Explore the rich influence past and present of German settlers—most Mennonite or Amish—in Ohio and Indiana. Lorne Smith and Wilmer Martin will share facts and stories along the way. Local storytellers James and Bernadine Mast will give you an insider tour of Amish farmland in Ohio.



Douro River Cruise: Portugal & Spain

with Audrey Voth Petkau and Terry Petkau

October 25 - Nov 1, 2016

Relax on a seven-day river cruise through Portugal and Spain—expect vineyards, dramatic gorges, and steeply terraced hillsides. Optional pre and post land packages in Madrid and Lisbon.



Vietnam & Singapore

with Luke Martin & Wilmer Martin

Nov 21-Dec 5/16

From US \$4,989; CA \$6298

(International flights included)

Enjoy breathtaking natural sights and unique culture in Vietnam. Rethink the war with the USA. Dialogue with MCC workers and Vietnamese Mennonite leaders.

COMING IN 2017



Fresh Perspectives on Cuba: History, Church, & People

with Jack and Irene Suderman

mid January 2017

Learn about the political, cultural, and religious changes in Cuba since the revolution in 1959. Visit significant historical and cultural sites. Observe the Cuban social “experiment” in action and see how they are preparing for changing relations with the USA. Enjoy rare opportunities to engage both average and influential Cuban citizens as we dialogue and worship with them.



Australia & New Zealand

with Audrey Voth Petkau & Terry Petkau

mid January 2017

See highlights of these two spectacular but different countries—green, sheep-filled New Zealand and arid Australia with its unique animals and stunning landscapes.



Discover Prague & the Mennonite Sojourn in Poland

with John Sharp & Audrey Voth Petkau

June 18-29, 2017

Combine sight-seeing in Prague (Czech Republic), Krakow, Warsaw, and Gdansk (Poland) with investigating the centuries-long settlement of Mennonites in Poland. See stunning architecture and visit historic locations. Explore significant Mennonite villages and sites along the Vistula Delta.



European Heritage

with John Ruth

Summer, 2017

Don't miss this opportunity to travel with engaging storyteller John Ruth as he guides you to discover your Anabaptist roots in the Netherlands, Germany, Switzerland, France, and Austria.



AMBS Reformations Old & New: Cathedrals & Museums (London, Paris & Berlin)

with Allan Rudy-Froese and Sara Wenger Shenk

July 14-26, 2017

Explore European faith and art—past and present—in London, Paris, and Berlin. Enjoy meaningful discussions, times of reflection and worship, as well as light-hearted fun. Tour storyteller Allan Rudy-Froese, Assistant Professor of Christian Proclamation at AMBS, will help you interpret the sights from an Anabaptist perspective.



India Photo Tour

with Jim Pankratz & Al Doerksen

October, 2017

Explore the vivid colors, cultures, and religions of India with avid photographers. Take photos or just enjoy the incredible sights. Dialogue with locals.



Polar Bear Adventure in Churchill, Manitoba

October 2017

For Canada's 150th anniversary, experience an unforgettable journey to see polar bears in the wild and to learn more about the fascinating culture and history of Manitoba's north.



European Christmas Markets Cruise

December, 2017

On this festive pre-Christmas river cruise, marvel at the cities along the banks of the river dressed in holiday splendor. Reflect on the birth of Christ as we visit historic cathedrals, listen to carols, and see nativity scenes at various Christmas markets. Shop for unique gifts and sample traditional holiday fare in each city.

Unless otherwise stated, flights are not included in the price. Payment in Canadian currency is accepted, using the conversion rate posted on the day of payment. Contact TourMagination for more information on inclusions.

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What Really Matters in Life

On October 23rd, 2015—at the end of an excellent 10-day custom Holy Land tour with Daryl and Maxine Zook and their family—I was in a Jerusalem hospital having emergency bypass surgery. I had some general weakness the day before and decided I should visit a doctor. To my surprise, he told me I needed to have surgery as soon as possible. Confident I was in good hands, the Zooks flew home with their children and grandchildren.

During the surgery, there was a complication with one of my heart valves which caused my body to go into shock. Therefore, I was in the Jerusalem hospital for 22 days and St. Mary's Hospital in Kitchener, Ontario for 7 days.

Lying on my back in a hospital bed gave me lots of time to think about what is really important in life. All I could do was meditate, pray, and remember scripture and hymns. I was grateful that my wife Janet and daughter Janelle flew to Israel to be with me.

One morning I said to Janet, “Last night I was thinking about what really matters in life. I want you to write them down.” I told her that the number one priority is to love God. Number two is my love and relationship to her. Number three is my love for my children and grandchildren. Number four is my love for gardening. I reflected that working in the flower beds around the TourMagination office, with Janelle in the garden at her home, and with the grandchildren in the garden at their home is relaxing and helps me feel closer to God and my family.

I was very touched every day as Janet would read the emails from TourMagination friends and business contacts, friends from church, from work and home. They wanted me to know they were praying for me and my family. I came to realize that my health challenge was a gift connecting me to my friends that I had

developed over the past 40+ years in many countries. Now many of these were reaching out to God on my behalf. I was grateful and felt God's presence. I believe it was because of the prayers of all these persons that I never experienced depression or discouragement during this time.

I continue to remember that God is healing my body for a purpose. The surgeon said, “Your heart is strong. You have no heart damage. Keep doing what you are doing.” One of my nurses in Jerusalem said, “You bring pilgrims to the Holy Land. God gave you a new heart in Jerusalem!”

I remind myself that I am thankful to God for his healing presence in my body. God

spared my life for a reason. I feel blessed that of all the places I traveled to in 2015, when the issue with my heart revealed itself I was in Jerusalem, a place with excellent health care. I commit myself to continue to serve God as he gives me the opportunity in the years ahead.

What really matters in life?

Usually I am too busy serving and doing to think about this question. However, the last 10 weeks has changed life for me, giving me lots of time to reflect on what is truly important.

Wilmer Martin



Janet & Wilmer Martin's 50th Anniversary.

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with engaging historian John Sharp
June 5-16, 2016

Enjoy our classic European Heritage tour
with well-known Anabaptist storyteller John Ruth
June 26 - July 9, 2016.

Explore your Amish roots on the Amish European Heritage Tour

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September 21 - October 3, 2016
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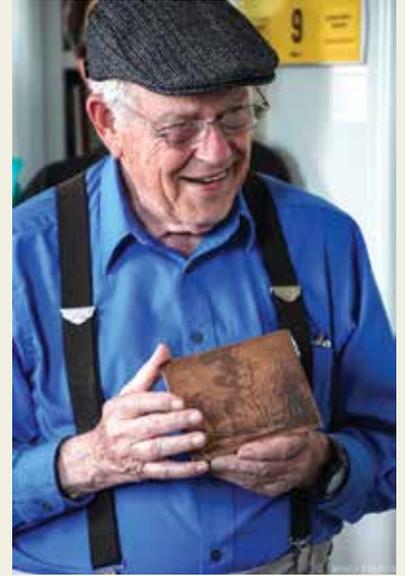
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John Ruth*



We hope to travel with you soon!

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