

Summer 2015

Discovery

Travel Refreshes & Transforms

by Wilmer Martin, p. 5

Tour Sparks Curiosity in How Others Live

p. 2

2015-2016 TOUR PULL-OUT

p. 3-4

Tour Member Testimonies

p. 6



Brent and Sarah Trauger on Sustenpass in the Swiss Alps



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Tour Sparks Curiosity in How Others Live

Visiting Australia had been on the top of Rachele Bartel's bucket list for several years. Her curiosity was piqued when she saw TourMagination's Australia & New Zealand tour advertised in *The Mennonite*. When she looked over the comprehensive itinerary that spanned several regions of Australia plus New Zealand, it seemed like the perfect opportunity to fulfill her dream.

"I was a little nervous about going with a group I didn't know," says Rachele. Though she has traveled extensively in the US and to Europe with family, she had never gone with a tour group.

Knowing that other tour members had the same faith background made her feel more at ease.

At her request, TourMagination arranged a roommate for Rachele. She and Ceci struck up a friendship as they began emailing each other in advance of the January 30 to February 19, 2015 tour.

Though tour members were from different parts of the US and Canada, they came with a common purpose. "All of us were on the same page, wanting to see these beautiful countries," says Rachele, who is from Kansas. "It was an exciting experience to share with a fun but diverse group."

Rachele was impressed with how well the tour was planned and the balance between group activities and free time. On a free day, she chose to climb the Sydney Bridge—a 3.5 hour experience

that put her 134 meters above the Sydney Harbour. "It was a gorgeous day and the view was amazing," she says. Other tour members chose to visit The Rocks area, where the crafts market was a highlight. "We all had that opportunity to do the things we were passionate about without interfering with others," says Rachele.

At Healesville Sanctuary, Rachele fulfilled more wishes—she interacted with koalas and kangaroos. "The kangaroos reminded me of huge cats. They were mostly indifferent to petting—but if you

had food they were your best friend."

The tour also included many unexpected delights—like watching a colony of the world's smallest penguin parents coming ashore to feed their babies at

dusk on Phillips Island. Rachele was also pleasantly surprised by the beautiful New Zealand landscape. "The destinations were well chosen. Every place we saw had a lot to offer.

There was always something unique."

Rachele tried some new foods including a kangaroo burger, crocodile meat, and the famous yeast-based vegemite spread, which is a traditional Australian survival food that does not need refrigeration. "It's very salty. It is

Unexpected delights included watching a colony of the world's smallest penguins coming ashore to feed their babies.

definitely an acquired taste."

Amidst her amazing experiences, Rachele was most impressed by the sense of community on the tour: "The thing that stood out was the group interaction and the sharing of stories," she says. In fact, tour members still keep in touch by email. Rachele enjoys remembering her trip by rereading her tour diary.

Though she has not decided where to go next, Rachele says, "I came back energized wanting to see other countries. The tour sparked my interest to want to know how other people live." ●



Join a TourMagination Tour in 2015 or 2016!

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, experience rich community as you travel with like-minded people of faith.

RANDY MARTIN



Heritage



Holy Land



Cruise



Eco-Adventure



Educational



Fellowship



Brethren European Heritage

with John Ruth & Wilmer Martin

Sept 18 – Oct 1, 2015

Guided by premier storyteller John Ruth, visit important Anabaptist/Brethren heritage sites in The Netherlands, the Palatinate in Germany, and the Emmental region of Switzerland. Highlights: afternoon cruise on the Rhine River, beautiful mountain views, worshiping in the Cave of the Anabaptists.



Holy Land (Jordan, Israel & Palestine)

with Nelson Kraybill & Audrey Voth Petkau

Nov 5-16, 2015

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.

Almost full—BOOK NOW!



European Christmas Markets

with Wilmer & Janet Martin

Nov 30 – Dec 6, 2015

Start your Christmas season with a tour of Christmas markets in Austria and Germany. Commemorate Christ's birth at live nativities. Enjoy crafts, music, and food unique to each region. Marvel at the beauty of the Alps in early winter. Of special interest to fans of "The Sound of Music" and other music lovers.



Churches, Culture & Beaches of Cuba

with Jack & Irene Suderman

Jan 8-17, 2016

Visit significant political sites including Che Guevara's tomb, the Bay of Pigs, and underground tunnels used during the Cuban Missile Crisis. Tour Havana, Trinidad, and Cienfuegos. Worship and dialogue with Cuban Christians. Reflect on successes and challenges resulting from Cuba's 1959 Revolution. Consider social justice at Martin Luther King Jr. Center. Enjoy Varadero's beach.

Almost full—book soon!



Faith, Spices & Safaris in Tanzania & Zanzibar

with Wilmer Martin & Audrey Voth Petkau

Feb 20-27, 2016

Go on not one but three safaris to see lions, cheetahs, elephants, antelope, colorful birds, and more. Worship with Memnonites in Tanzania. Interact with locals in a traditional Maasai village. Sample aromatic cinnamon, cloves, nutmeg, and other spices with fresh fruit after a plantation tour on the famous spice island of Zanzibar. Relax on the beach.



Spain & Morocco: A Crossroads of Faith, Art & Culture

with Leonard Friesen & Audrey Voth Petkau

Apr 2-14, 2016

Explore the complementary histories of Spain and Morocco. Visit world class cities, including Barcelona and Marrakesh, as well as tiny seaside villages like Cadaqués and Ouarzazate. See awe-inspiring cathedrals, a mountainside monastery, Roman ruins, and desert fortresses. Reflect on your faith as you learn about Islamic and Catholic influences in these nations.

2015-2016 TOURS

CONTINUED

Highlights of Eastern Europe: Danube River Cruise with Wilmer & Janet Martin **May 23 – June 1, 2016**

Enjoy spectacular scenery, delightful culture, friendly people, amazing historical sites and exciting modern cities on a scenic Spring cruise through Romania, Bulgaria, Serbia, Croatia, and Hungary along the majestic Danube River.

Amish European Heritage with John Ruth & Wilmer Martin **May 31 – July 1, 2016**

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.

The Great Trek with John Sharp & Audrey Voth Petkau **June 5-17, 2016**

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**

Our classic heritage tour follows the Anabaptist-Mennonite story in The Netherlands, Germany, France, Switzerland, and Austria. Hear about Menno Simmons, Jakob Amman, Conrad Grebel, Martin Luther, and other Reformation and Anabaptist leaders.

Cathedrals & Museums (London, Paris & Berlin) with Allan Rudy-Froese & Audrey Voth Petkau **August, 2016**

Details to follow.

Alaska Cruise with Wilmer & Janet Martin **Aug 23 – Sept 3, 2016**

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 & Wilmer Martin **Sept 8-19, 2016**

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**

See incredible scenery and natural wonders—from rock bridges and hoodoos to glaciers and dazzling emerald green lakes. Highlights include: a two-day ride on glass-domed train allowing full view of the picturesque mountain landscape from Jasper, Alberta to Vancouver, BC.

Experience the Glory of Russia & the Mennonite Story in Ukraine with Leonard Friesen & Audrey Voth Petkau **Sept 21 – Oct 3, 2016**

Russian cultural and architectural riches await you in St. Petersburg and Moscow including Peterhof Palace and Gardens, the Kremlin, Red Square, and several stunning cathedrals. In Ukraine, engage with the Mennonite story, past and present, as you visit former colonies Chortitza and Molotschna. On a free

day, explore villages related to your family roots or see other sights of your choice.

Holy Land & Harvest the Olives with Ruben Chupp **Oct 10-18, 2016**

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—a living museum that recreates Jesus' boyhood hometown.

Mennonites of Ohio & Indiana Bus Tour with Lorne Smith & Wilmer Martin **Oct 24-28, 2016**

Explore the rich influence past and present of German settlers—most were Mennonite or Amish—in Ohio and Indiana. Tour leaders 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.

Haiti: Hope, Beauty & Resilience Tour with Janelle Martin **Oct 27 – Nov 6, 2016**

Discover Haiti's proud and sometimes tumultuous history. See stunning natural attractions like the Bassin Bleu, Kabic Beach, and the protected caves. Enjoy Haiti's vibrant arts and culture, including the mosaics of Jacmel. Dialogue with Haitians and development organizations that are making a difference.

Vietnam & Singapore with Luke Martin & Wilmer Martin **Nov 21 – Dec 5, 2016**

Enjoy the spectacular beauty and unique culture of Vietnam from Hanoi to Ho Chi Minh City. See limestone mountain islands and the vast rice-producing countryside. Rethink the legacy of the war with the United States. Dialogue with MCC workers and Vietnamese Mennonite leaders.



Travel Refreshes and Transforms

by Wilmer Martin

Traveling has impacted my life profoundly. Listening to stories, eating food, worshiping and praying with people around the world has changed me.

The first time I experienced overwhelming hospitality in an impoverished culture was during Mennonite World Conference (MWC) in India in 1997. Janet and I were billeted in a home and our hosts insisted that we take their bedroom. In the morning when we awoke, we smelled fire and heard voices outside the room. Our hosts had heated water for us to take a bath—they brought us a pail of hot water and one of cold. I was deeply moved by their hospitality. They supplied our basic needs when they had so little.

We felt that God had placed us in India for a purpose. Though I was overwhelmed by the poverty in Calcutta, by the smog and people living on the streets, this was one of my deepest growing experiences, spiritually and culturally. It renewed my commitment as a follower of Jesus Christ. At the MWC Assembly, joy in the faces of our brothers and sisters from around the world, the incredible singing, the enthusiastic proclamation of God's word, changed my inner spirit.

Last November, I was privileged to co-lead our Vietnam tour with Luke Martin. Following the morning worship service at the Hoi An Mennonite Church, the pastor asked willing TourMagination

tour members to join him in visiting a number of house churches to encourage the leaders he was mentoring. Six of us joined Pastor Sang along with several of his congregational members as we visited four house churches.

At each gathering, the house church leader and congregation members shared through an interpreter. Then everyone would join hands. Each time Pastor Sang asked me to pray, and Luke Martin interpreted my English prayer. At the last house church, the woman pastor grabbed my arm and said through an interpreter, "I used to hate people like you, because you killed my father." She added, "I worked for the Ministry of Religious Affairs, arresting people like us who are gathered today. But since I became a Christian, since I met Jesus Christ, my sins are forgiven and I can forgive and love you."

This past January, on our tour to Cuba, we had many meaningful encounters. The tour helped destroy misconceptions for tour members and built goodwill with the Cubans we interacted with. Pastor Raul from the Ebenezer Baptist Church in Havana, an Anabaptist congregation and member of Mennonite World Conference, thanked our group of Americans and Canadians for coming. Just a month earlier, in December 2014, President Obama and President Castro had signed an agreement between Cuba and the USA to begin working together.

Pastor Raul said, "Your being here is a kairos [opportune] moment." Our tour members also felt the significance of TourMagination's first trip to Cuba. On her tour evaluation form, a traveler said, "We feel privileged to have participated in this tour. Meeting so many wonderful people, it was a rich, inspirational, educational experience."

Traveling often forces us to rethink the information we have absorbed from living in North America, from our educational system, and from the media. At the end of our tours, we take time for reflection. We usually ask travelers, "What are you going to share when you get home?" And sometimes, as in Cuba, we asked the Cuban Council of Churches, "What do you want us to share with our congregations? How do you want us to pray?" The answer was, "Pray that the leaders we train at our seminary will stay and work in Cuba." So many of the young Cuban Christian leaders were migrating out of the country, yearning for more education, but they were needed at home to nurture the Body of Christ.

Travel refreshes you, transforms your perspective, and gives you energy to be a kinder, more gracious person in your home and in your daily work. As travelers, we also become ambassadors, sharing what we have learned with family, friends, and our church communities. ●

What TourMagination Travelers Are Saying

We were hesitant to come on a group trip, but the size and people on this trip made it a wonderful first-time experience—especially sharing life stories and singing on the bus.

European Heritage Tour Participant

This was a very meaningful and enriching experience. We need more of these experiences to build bridges in our world.

Cuba Tour Participant

An excellent tour; the story telling and range of experiences presented were exceptional!

South America Tour Participant

The worship and spiritual parts of the tour were very meaningful.

Cuba Tour Participant

We don't have adequate words to describe our thoughts, feelings, and gratefulness. This has been the trip of a lifetime for us! Thank You!

England & Scotland Tour Participant

I enjoyed Ruby as a tour guide. I appreciated her knowledge and insight into history, the Bible, and culture; it added so much to the places we visited.

Holy Land Tour Participant

Thank you so very much. God's creation is spectacular and He is in control. We need to go and discover it! TourMagination gives us that opportunity.

Mexico Tour Participant

CELEBRATE 50 YEARS OF MARRIAGE WITH WILMER & JANET MARTIN

Please join us in celebrating this exciting milestone at a drop-in event hosted by the Martins' children and grandchildren on **Saturday, October 10, 2015**, 5–8 p.m., at the **MCC Welcoming Place** in Akron, PA (21 South 12th St, Akron). Light refreshments will be served and a supervised children's play area will be provided.



Tell us what you think of our new look! New website coming this fall.

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