



Open Face

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European Journey

David Clayton

During the month of July, 2002 from the 9th to the 29th, Brother Allen Stump and I (David Clayton) visited the countries of Poland, Germany and Norway, holding meetings and encouraging brethren there, especially those who have embraced the truth about God and His Son. This was a wonderful experience which emphasized for us the fact that God is at work in promoting the truth all over the world and is not dependent on any human agency though He gives us the privilege of working with Him. Our newsletter this month is entirely taken up with a report of this trip.

the line without any sign of ours. Finally we were left staring at the empty conveyor (It was a good thing that both Allen and I had taken a change of underwear and an extra shirt in our carry-on luggage because we did not receive our luggage until four days later!). We duly went to the appropriate authority to make our complaint all the time con-

faithfully waiting for us. He was a small man and, as he described himself later, "a small man with a small car." We got into his tiny car, one of the smallest cars I had ever driven in and Allen whispered that perhaps it was providence that our luggage had been lost because it certainly would not have all fit into the car with the three of us. We soon

realized that tiny cars are a popular feature in Poland. Everywhere there were the tiniest cars I had ever seen, some of them hardly bigger than a motor bike. It seemed that there was just enough room for the driver and the passenger in the front seat, but incredibly we saw many of them with rear seat passengers. Many of these cars were even smaller than brother Poreda's tiny Fiat.

Poland, at first sight reminded me a little of both America and Jamaica. It was clean, it had good

roads (not as good as America but better than Jamaica) and the foliage was like foliage in the US. However, it was evident that it was a poor country. Many of the buildings were old and unpainted. Nevertheless, I found it to be a pretty country with even these old buildings adding to the charm and attraction.

There were no mountains to be seen in all the time that we spent in Poland. We were made to understand that there were small mountains in the South



Baptizing Brother Jacek Poreda in Poland

We arrived in Poland at approximately 2.00 pm on Tuesday, July 10. I had very little idea of what to expect of the country and also of our hosts whom I had only met through email correspondence. The Krakow airport was very small by international standards, This perhaps contributed to the fact that we were ushered through customs very quickly with me, as a Jamaican having the longest delay as they had to punch in certain information such as my intended address into a computer. Allen as a privileged American had no such hassle.

At the baggage claim carousel, we watched with a sinking feeling as all the baggage was gradually cleared from

scious of the fact that brother Jacek (pronounced Yatsik) Poreda would be waiting for us on the outside and hoping and praying that he would not assume that we had not arrived and leave. This was important because we had no idea of where brother Poreda lived or of how to get there on our own if we had even known.

Impressions of Poland

When we finally got out, we were grateful to find a smiling brother Poreda

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Open Face is dedicated to the promotion of the truths committed to the Advent movement, as believed and taught by the early Adventist pioneers. In particular to the restoration of those truths which have been cast down to the ground and trampled underfoot by the papacy, and adopted by her daughters.

Our purpose is to motivate our readers to commit themselves wholly to the task of personal preparation for the coming of the Lord, and to the taking of the final warning message to every nation, kindred, tongue and people.

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of the country, but though we traveled from one end of the country to the next we saw only small hills. The land was for the most part rolling, fairly level countryside much of which was given to growing grain, mostly wheat from what we could see.

As we drove the one hour's journey to Jacek's home we saw many magnificent old churches. When we enquired what kind of churches they were, he always gave the same answer. "They are Catholic. There are only Catholic churches in Poland." He gave us the following interesting and perhaps daunting statistics: There are 38 million people in Poland. Of this number 36 million are Catholics. Their greatest object of worship is the virgin Mary. Polish Catholics place Mary above even Jesus or God and believe that there are four members in the godhead rather than three. Of these four, Mary is the most important. We did not find it hard to believe this because everywhere we went we saw shrines dedicated to Mary. We passed many dozens of them on our journey. I thought as I looked at these shrines that Poland must be the most idolatrous country in the entire Christendom.

The people were not what I expected in terms of how they looked. I had anticipated overweight, stocky people, but I was surprised to find that they were for the most part well built and attractive. Many of them were riding bicycles, both men and women of all ages and it was a revelation to me to see middle-aged and older women, some of them well dressed as though they were going to church riding calmly along on their bicycles. I suppose I must have stuck out like a sore thumb because for the entire time that I was there I only saw one other black person.

It turned out that the campmeeting was scheduled to be held in the extreme north of the country while we had landed in the south. We had before us a long drive of eight or nine hours before we would get to the campsite. Brother Poreda's family and some of the other brethren were already at the camp, and in fact he had driven all the way from the campsite to pick us up. In actual fact brother Poreda's home was in the South, only an hour from the airport where we had landed in Krakow, but he explained that because of his enemies he had thought it prudent to have this camp in the north of the country. However, since it was so late in the day when we landed, the plan was to stay at his home for the night and then to make an early start in the morning in heading for the campsite.

Since we had some time on our hands we decided to visit the notorious Auschwitz, the infamous Nazi prison camp where so many Jews had been imprisoned and killed during world war two. Birkenau, the death camp was also nearby and we stopped to see it as well. The sight of the furnaces where the bodies had been burnt and the sleeping quarters where straw was thrown on the floor for people to sleep like cattle and the grim photos of emaciated semi-skeletons took our minds back sixty years and reminded us of the fact that human nature does not really change, and that what humanity has done in the past, it will do again if

the circumstances permit. Even today, so many years later, the atmosphere of tragedy still seems to hang over the grim, forbidding brick buildings of Auschwitz and the ruins of Birkenau.

We left brother Poreda's home at 4.00 a.m. on Wednesday morning and drove until mid-day, stopping only briefly to eat or to relieve ourselves. Sometime after twelve we arrived at the campsite at Orlik where the other campers were waiting for us.

Orlik Camp meeting

This campsite consisted of a large and ungainly half-finished house which was of a very interesting design. There was a spiral staircase something like the stairs in a lighthouse running upwards through three floors to a very tiny room like the Crow's nest of a ship at the very top. The house starts out broad at the bottom, but grows progressively more narrow as it goes up, ending in this single tiny room at the top. Meetings were held on the first floor, while most of the campers slept on the ground floor, but some slept in the room where we held the meetings and also on the floor above. This house was built by a man who lived nearby. He wanted it to be used for camping and retreats, especially for people who were students of the Esperanto language - a language which has been invented for the sole purpose of being a universal language that would enable all the people of the world to communicate with each other.

A few people were sitting on the verandah when we arrived and we were greeted with broad smiles as we alighted from the car. We smiled and nodded our heads as we were introduced, but apart from brother Jacek nobody else spoke English and there was a lot of smiling and head nodding with not much else. At first it was quite frustrating because the people were bursting with questions and we also were very anxious to get to know them better, but the inability to communicate was a huge barrier and we continued with the smiling and nodding of heads

except when our interpreter was around.

Eventually we grew quite comfortable with these brethren. We learned a few simple words and made up for our lack by making exaggerated hand signals and in this way we were able to carry on simple conversations. “Jinquia” (thank you) and “Bogosuavins” (bless you) quickly became a part of our vocabulary. Later we found Slawek (pronounced Swavik) and Rafal, the two young men who had stayed for a few weeks in West Virginia last year. They were very happy to see us. Slawek could speak English quite well and Rafal had learned some while in the USA and so they were a great help to us in our efforts to communicate with the brethren.

During the meetings the 20 (approximately) people who were gathered there were very attentive and had many serious and searching questions to ask. We did our best to answer these questions in a biblical way. At first it was a little difficult preaching with a translator. Sometimes in waiting for the translator to interpret what we had said we lost our rhythm a little. However we soon got the knack of it and learned to enjoy working with him.

Baptism

On the last day of the campmeeting we walked nearly two miles to a lovely lake where we had a baptism. Twelve of these dear souls were buried in baptism and arose to new life with their Lord. Several of them arose from the water with tears streaming down their faces. My joy at seeing the seriousness and wholehearted commitment of these brethren was such that I cheerfully endured the coldness of the lake though I was shivering by the end of the ceremony. Immediately afterwards we had special prayer for seven of these brethren who were suffering from various ailments and had requested this prayer.

At the beginning of the baptismal service two nuns appeared with a group of people apparently heading for the place where we were having the baptism. When they saw us they stopped on a nearby slope and stood watching for a while. By the time the baptism was over there was no sign of them.

These people are very serious about Christianity. They take the new birth to be a complete transformation and because of this there were at first only a few candidates for baptism. Most were convicted that when a person was baptized he could never again commit



One of the many Marian shrines in Poland

sin and they were hesitant to undertake to be baptized because of the fear that they might not be faithful to this high ideal. I was stirred when I saw this conviction because I do believe that God gives us the power not to sin. However, both Allen and I could see that there was some misunderstanding of the righteousness of Christ and that this might lead to much discouragement in the future if these brethren should find themselves falling short of their ideals. Accordingly, in the next few messages we focused on the love, mercy and goodness of God, and on salvation through grace by faith, which proved to be a great blessing to these brethren. While at first it had seemed that there would be two or three persons seeking baptism, the final number of 12 was far beyond what we had expected.

The leader in the work in Poland is brother Jacek Poreda. He also was bap-

tized at this campmeeting. He claimed that two years ago he had decided to be baptized into the Lord Jesus. However, the problem was that he knew of no born-again minister who believed the truth about God, so he determined that I would be the one who would baptize him. His friends asked him if he was crazy because the thought of a preacher from Jamaica baptizing him in Poland seemed ridiculous. However, brother Jacek is a man of strong faith and at this campmeeting his prayer was answered by the God who always hears the requests of His children. One of the great privileges which I had on this trip was that of baptizing brother Jacek, a physically small, but very energetic and large-hearted servant of God.

Brother Jacek has translated more than 70 books from English into the Polish language, including the Great Controversy by Ellen White and one or two of my own booklets on the godhead. In addition he has also written some booklets himself on the subject of the godhead.

Another interesting case was that of Brother Miroslaw Morawiec.

He is a Polish brother who lives in Germany. He drove more than 1000 Kilometers to come to the campmeeting. Brother Miroslaw was once a Bible worker in the SDA Church. In fact it was he who studied with brother Jacek's wife Kristina, and led her from Catholicism to the Advent faith. She in turn influenced her future husband Jacek to become an Adventist. Some years later brother Jacek and his wife Kristina sent him literature on the subject of the godhead which he studied very carefully. After several weeks he wrote back to say that he was convicted that it was truth. It was also one of the most joyful moments of my stay in Poland when I had the privilege of baptizing this brother on the last day of the camp meeting. Later when we had meetings in Germany brother Miroslaw drove more than 600 Kilometers to also attend these meetings.

The camp meeting came to an end on Sunday, July 14. Allen left the following morning at 2.00 a.m. with brother Jacek for a long trip to Romania where he would spend a couple of days studying with brethren there. I had wanted to go with him but unfortunately with a Jamaican passport it was impossible for me to get a visa at such short notice. I was told that it would take at least three days. I would also need visas for Slovakia and Hungary, two other countries which would have to be crossed in order to get to Romania. Allen of course, as a privileged American needed no visas, so I remained in Poland while he went with Jacek to Romania.

Post camp-meeting

My Extra time in Poland was not wasted however. At every opportunity the brethren plied me with all kinds of questions on biblical topics. Jacek was gone, so Slawek became my interpreter. Most of the questions concerned the subject of the new birth and the sanctified life. These discussions continued until well after 10.00 at night. I had to dig deep into my spiritual resources to answer some of the questions, but at the end I was satisfied that it had been the purpose of our Father that I should have remained behind and that by doing this I had been able to be of great benefit to these brethren. They had a deep desire to serve God, but were focusing more on the perfection of the law than on the love and grace of God. One brother had even refrained from being baptized because he was afraid that if he was baptized, he might commit sin and he was convicted that when one was born again he could not commit sin!! I had to show him the folly of continuing to live as a sinner, for fear that if he became a Christian he might commit sin. I used an illustration which seemed to make a deep impression on all minds.

Suppose a good and kind rich man adopts a boy from a very unfortunate background, perhaps from the ghetto. A boy who grew up with bad words, stealing and improper behaviour. This

boy is delighted at the opportunity to escape from his old life. He is thrilled with the beauty and the privileges of his new home. Joyfully and gratefully he promises his new father that he will always do what pleases him. He makes a promise that he will never bring the ways of the old life into his new home, but that he will put away those ways for good. The father is pleased and gladly takes the boy into his home and accepts him as his son. One day however, in an unguarded moment the boy forgets his promise and uses a bad word. As soon as he

Suppose, however, the boy should one day say to him, "father, I cannot live by these rules of this house. I am not happy here. Please either change these rules or let me return to the ghetto." What choice would the father have then but to sadly allow this boy to return to his old life? I used this illustration to show that God will only reject us when we deliberately decide that we will not submit to His way, but He will not cast us off simply because we sometimes are forgetful or careless or make mistakes.



The "taxi" is ready to leave

speaks the word, he looks fearfully at the father, expecting to be sent back to the ghetto. But what does the father do? He puts an arm around his shoulder and says, "I am sorry that you did that son. Nevertheless, I see that you are trying hard to avoid the old ways and I appreciate that. I am sure you will do better next time." He is a wise father. He knows that the habits of a lifetime do not go away overnight and he understands the boy's desire to do what is right. Even though the boy may slip up every now and then, he overlooks it, for he sees that the boy is really doing his best to please him and to avoid the old life. Is God less merciful and understanding than this father in the story?

Trip to the German Border

On Thursday July 18, Slawek and I left the campsite at Orlik to travel by rail all the way to Gerlitz on the German border where we would be picked up by Elizabeth & Ewald, the parents of Erwin Zoor, who was our host in Germany. We set out early in the morning loaded with luggage. Allen had left a small suitcase for us to take for him as he had tried to travel light on the trip to Romania. Unfortunately there were no cars available to take us to the railway station which was about a mile and a half away. However, there was a bicycle at the campsite. So we loaded our luggage onto the bicycle and it was

a sight to see brother Slawek with a heavy knapsack on his back pushing the bicycle while brother Bogumit tried to balance the two smaller suitcases on the carrier at the back, with my large suitcase resting across the bar. It was drizzling slightly, but we were in cheerful spirits and more than a little amused as we set off down the road, a strange caravan indeed.

We got to the railway station in time and it was an emotional moment as I said goodbye to my friend Bogumit. Slawek and I set off on our long journey. We traveled all day and passed through towns, cities and rolling countryside which was composed mostly of field after field of wheat. We passed through a few forests and woodlands and once I glimpsed a fox, another time a deer and twice I saw rabbits bounding away as the train approached. The buildings were for the most part quaint old buildings, many of them from before the second world war. Those that were built afterwards were mostly bleak, sterile unattractive buildings, crafted more for utility than for beauty. These, Slawek told me, were the products of the communist era. In the cities we passed row upon row of high rise tenement buildings, unpainted, drab and ugly. There were many of them. One or two of had been recently painted in bright rainbow colors and it was surprising to see what a dramatic change this made in the appearance of these buildings.

We were supposed to meet Allen and Jacek in Gerlitz. They were driving up from Romania to meet us at the German border. However, they waited at one train station while we arrived at another, and there was much consternation when they didn't see us get off the train and when we arrived at the next stop and did not see them. However both parties were praying and when we took a taxi to the border crossing, Allen and Jacek arrived at the same spot almost at exactly the same moment as we arrived. There was a further mix-up because Erwin's parents who were supposed to meet us at this border crossing were actually wait-

ing at the railway station on the German side of the border having mistaken the meeting point. It took a phone call to Erwin and a phone call back to his parents and back to Erwin again before we got things sorted out and finally we were able to rendezvous with them.

Germany

By the time we left this border crossing it was ten o'clock at night. We drove for five hours, Erwin's stepfather driving all the way and at about three o'clock in the morning we arrived in Pappenheim, woozy, half-asleep, travel-weary, but glad to have arrived. It was a joy to meet Brother Erwin who all this time had been unable to sleep waiting for our arrival. He took us up to the top floor of a very German building where he had his apartment, and gave us his bed while he slept on the couch.

Erwin Zoor is a young man who is just 23 years old. However, He is very much in love with the Lord and His truth and has dedicated his energies to the task of enlightening all who will listen on the subject of the love of God through His Son. At one time Erwin was obsessed with Karate and watched Jackie Chan movies incessantly, insomuch that he started to walk and talk like Jackie Chan. However, when he entered into a close relationship with the Lord, Erwin abandoned all this and changed his lifestyle completely. He recognized that if he would feed on Christ as he had done on Jackie Chan movies, then he would also learn to walk and to talk like Christ and he devoted himself to the task of learning all he could of his Lord. Erwin considers the truth about God and His Son to be one of the greatest truths in the Bible. A truth which he describes as "delicious", and he has established a German website (heart4truth.de) which is completely dedicated to this truth.

The next day we had a hearty meal at his mother Elizabeth's home which we both enjoyed, but Allen especially because of the inclusion of the staple

American item, Irish potatoes. Erwin's mother was a dear lady, a true mother in Israel who did everything to make us comfortable while we were there. We enjoyed the meals she prepared and were blessed by listening to her playing the keyboard which she does very well. Her husband, Ewald does not speak English, but there was no mistaking the welcome in his eyes and the



Erwin and Claudia

goodwill in him. He was always willing to go out of the way to help us in any way possible.

Meetings in Altdorf

We discovered that our meetings were to be held in a town called Altdorf which was about 400 kilometers away. So on Friday afternoon we set off with Erwin, drove for four hours and arrived near 6.00 in the evening. There we were met by Thomas and Birgit Friedrich and discovered that we would be staying at the home of Birgit's mother where the meetings would be held. There were already people waiting on us and so I quickly prepared myself, breathed a prayer and stepped into the meeting room where I found about 14 people sitting waiting to hear what we had to say.

My first impression of these folks was that they were unresponsive and many of the faces were impassive and unsmiling. However there were one or two who helped me to relax. The lady who owned the house where we were having the meetings, Birgit's mother was especially encouraging and kept smiling and nodding her head which did much to lift my spirit. Many thoughts went through my mind as I made my presentation. I did not speak the lan-



Some of the German brethren

guage of the people but Brother Erwin was doing a good job of translating. However, in all my time in Europe so far I had seen only one other black person and this had been in a city in Poland. I did not know these folks, so I wondered what feelings lay behind the faces. However, I trusted in the guidance of the Lord and looked to Him for the right words to speak and by the end of the meeting there were smiles and warmth on every face.

Later when all the meetings were over I discovered that these brethren had been uncertain as to what kinds of people we were. They had not known that there was anybody else in the entire world who believed as they did about God. They had never heard of Smyrna or Restoration ministries. When brother Erwin had gotten in touch with them having heard of them through a third party and tried to arrange for these meetings and also to find out if there was anybody who was willing to accept the legal obligations for me being there, they had been very suspicious. The thought had come to them that maybe Jesuits were trying to infiltrate their little group. Furthermore, brother Erwin's German was so immaculate that they thought it was another thing to be suspicious about. First of all they had declined to help with getting the papers for me to come to Germany, and afterwards when they did agree for us to come there to have meetings they were still quite suspicious. At the end of the meetings they

told us all this very apologetically and of course we had a good laugh and rejoiced that in spite of all this our God had overruled and brought us together. We learned to love each other very much. At the end of it all as we were about to leave and I hugged brother Thomas for the final time,

there was a rush of tears to my eyes as he whispered, "I love you brother." These meetings were very good and it was evident that the spirit of God was with us throughout.

On one occasion two Jehovah Witnesses came to sit in on the meetings. As Allen spoke on the sonship of Jesus they seemed to agree with everything, even when Allen declared that Jesus was literally born from the Father. Later, however, as I showed that the holy spirit is the actual presence of the Father and His Son and not just a force, they became a bit agitated and halfway through the sermon they excused themselves and left.

These meetings in Altdorf were a great blessing. The brethren were overjoyed to know that there was a movement all over the world which believed the truth as they had independently believed it for the past eight years.

On the Sunday evening with sorrow in our hearts we bade good-bye to these dear brethren for we had to get back to Pappenheim so Erwin could get to work on Monday morning.

A wedding

One other highlight of these meetings was the fact that Allen had the privilege of unit-

ing Erwin and his fiancé Claudia in holy matrimony. This was an added joy for the assembled believers to share in the happiness of this young couple who are evidently very much in love and very much desirous of putting God and His Son at the center of their lives. This was a surprise event, for Erwin had been praying about this for many months and had felt impressed to ask Allen or me to perform this wedding when we came to Germany. We helped him pray about the matter and had counsel with them before the actual wedding took place. Finally, we were all convinced that this was what God wanted. So it was four of us instead of three who traveled back to Pappenheim on Sunday evening arriving back at about 10 p.m.

Irresistible Truth

While we were in Germany, Erwin also reported that he had shared the truth about God with a sister from Moldavia while he was in Romania. She had accepted the truth and decided to translate materials into her native language, Moldavian. She shared the materials with her father who is a Russian. He also joyfully received the truth and decided to translate the materials into Russian to be shared with his countrymen. We were amazed, but thrilled to hear of this.

One striking thing we discovered is that the truth about God is making disciples who are willing to work without reward. Most of the people who embrace this truth are filled with a desire to share



With believers in Germany

it with others in every way possible and are willing to make sacrifices for the truth without asking for any kind of reward in return. This is how it was in the time of the apostles. The truth was powerful then as it is now, and this is why the truth about God and His Son will not die, in spite of all the efforts of so-called Christians to squash it. The greatest truth on the planet is the truth that there is only one God and that Jesus Christ is His son. This is the truth for Muslims, Jews, Hindus, Atheists, unbelievers, yes, and for Christendom too. No one who truly recognizes this truth and the implications of such a truth can ever remain the same. Immediately his concepts of God, sin and salvation will change dramatically. This is why this is the everlasting gospel to be carried to the ends of the earth and no power on this planet can stop it. Let those who oppose it fuss and rage and write. God will continue to infuse life into the truth and it will go from strength to strength until the whole world is covered with the glory of the Lord.

Off to Norway

We flew out of Munich airport on Tuesday, July 23, headed for Oslo in Norway. There was just one incident at the Munich airport which left me feeling vaguely uneasy and a little annoyed. As I was standing in the check-in line a man in plain clothes came up to me and said, "passport!" When I looked at him in inquiry he simply repeated the word. I duly produced my passport and handed it to him. He flipped through the pages, examined my visas and handed it back to me without a word and walked away. The reason that I was a bit annoyed was because as far as I could see I was the only one in the line who was asked to produce a passport. The flight from Germany to Norway was within two states which were a part of the Schengen union so there was no need of a passport to travel from one to the other. Hence the reason for my slight annoyance. However, I did not let it bother me too much and we arrived in Oslo without mishap.

We were greeted at the airport by the

smiling face of brother Kaj-Ronny Nilsen. We had never met him before, but there was no mistaking the welcoming smile and as soon as we saw him we knew that it was he. Hanna, his 12 year old daughter was also with him.

Brother Kaj-Ronny Nilsen is the foremost believer in the truth about God and His Son, in the country of Norway. Brother Kaj has a very good website named *sundaylaw.com* which was at first wholly devoted to issues concerning the Sunday laws. However, when he learned the truth that there is only one God, the Father, and that Jesus Christ is His true Son, he revised his website so that it now had a primary emphasis on this truth. Consequently, brother Kaj lost several of his friends who had previously been delighted with his work. Nevertheless, brother Kaj is not the least bit daunted, but is determined, along with his wife Katherine to do all in his power to enlighten the people of Norway concerning this vital truth.

Lakeside Camp

From the airport we traveled to a campsite by a lake (to my Jamaican eyes a huge lake) where scores of campers were parked. Here brother Kaj-Ronny had parked his camper home, which consisted of a huge bus, which he had converted into a mobile home. For the duration of our time in Norway we would share this bus/camper with brother Kaj-Ronny, his wife Katherine and their two children Hanna, and Jonathan who was only 10 months old.

The shores of this lake were just like a sea-side beach. There was an abundance of sand just like at the sea-side

and the people gathered in droves to sun-bathe on the beach and to frolic in the water. I dipped my finger in the water and quickly abandoned any thought of getting a swim. Even Allen said that it felt like it had just come out of a freezer. The Norwegians did not seem to mind it however and frolicked about in it as if it were 90 degrees Fahrenheit.

For the first two days after we arrived the weather was gloomy. The sky was overcast, rain drizzled intermittently, and it was cold. Droves of mosquitos descended on us and whenever we were outside of the bus we had to be continually fanning and swatting mosqui-



Our home in Norway

tos. Many times I thought wistfully of sunshine and coconut trees. However, on the third day the sun came out and everything took on a rosier hue. The mosquitos took a holiday and the weather warmed up. I found it easier to appreciate the clean beauty of the lake and the surrounding countryside.

Meetings & other experiences in Norway

On Wednesday we traveled a little way from the lake to the home of a brother and a sister who were interested in the subject of the godhead. The brother's name was Vidar Krishansen. His wife provided us with a wonderful meal of delicious vegetable soup and lovely home-made bread. Later she comple-

mented this with some refreshing watermelon. They had invited some other people to come to this meeting and there were about 10 adults present for the study when we got there. Some were already more than half convinced of the truth, but there were one or two who had definite leanings towards the Trinity. We had many questions put to us and did our best to answer from the Bible. Towards the end of the meeting, which lasted about four hours, I did a presentation on the holy spirit which lasted about an hour. Afterwards there were still more questions. At the end, we all felt that the meeting had been a worthwhile one and that we had accomplished a good deal by the grace of God. Most of the people if not all were convinced of the truthfulness of the position we have taken on the godhead and were persuaded that this is what the Bible teaches.

The following day, Thursday, we prepared to leave the campground to move on to the home of a brother and sister about an hour away from the campground where we would be staying for the weekend. We spent a part of Thursday at the lake side where Kaj rented a boat and we paddled about for a while, and enjoyed lying in the sun on the beach. There were multitudes of other people on the beach doing the same. In the evening sometime after 5.00 we got the bus packed, secured everything so that they would not roll about while the bus was moving, and said good-bye to the campground. The sun was still very high in the sky because Norway is a very strange country. At this time of the year night does not fall until after 11.00 in the evening and day breaks before 4.00 in the morning. It always startled me a bit to look at my watch and see 10.30 at night and then to look outside and see broad daylight. I am afraid we did not get used to it and most nights found us going to bed late.

On our way to our next stop, the bus suddenly lost its clutch. There was difficulty in changing the gears and Kaj did not know what was happening.

However, we stopped at a bus station and Allen and Kaj discovered that there was a leak in the system and that we were losing clutch fluid. As a result there was air in the line and this was the reason for the clutch failure. They walked about a kilometer to a service station where they were able to get some more clutch fluid and to borrow an oil can with which they pumped out the air (don't ask me how) and finally we were able to get rolling again.

Soon we arrived at our destination, the home of Henning and Josefine Hansen. Initially there was some difficulty in getting the huge bus into the driveway of the home, but Henning, who had experience in driving buses took over the wheel and brought the bus into the yard. We talked a little with our hosts and answered some questions, but did not say too much as it was by then late, and we would have the whole week-end to discuss the issue. Henning and Josephine were at first very cautious and a little uncertain about entertaining us in their home because they were of the impression that we denied the deity of Christ. However, they are honest and sincere people with a deep desire to serve the Lord faithfully and so they had agreed to let us come and to listen to what we had to say.



Henning, Josefine, Maret & Nils

Over the week-end we got to know Henning, Josefine and Josephine's younger sister Maret (who had come to visit for the meetings) better. Again, we allowed the word of God to do the speaking and we were overjoyed to see the happiness expressed on the faces of Henning and Josefine especially when they came to understand our po-

sition better. They thanked God for a better understanding of the nature of Christ, for a deeper appreciation of the truth that Jesus is truly the begotten Son of God, and better insight into how this truth guarantees rather than downgrades the divinity of Christ. On Sunday we said our good-byes with deep regret. Our hosts expressed the hope that we would come again soon and we all gave thanks to God for having allowed us to come. We also said good-bye to Katherine's (Kaj's wife) father who had driven some distance to also attend these meetings. He was a quiet but sincere man who went out of his way to be kind to both Allen and me.

We had one more task before our work in Norway would be over. The following morning at 6.35 we would be flying out of Oslo on the way to Frankfurt from where we would depart for the United States. On this Sunday evening however, we were scheduled to meet with a few people who had agreed to meet us in a camper/trailer park. So we waved goodbye to our newly made, but dear friends and set off in the bus on the second to last leg of our Norwegian experience.

Stuck in mud

After about an hour we arrived at the trailer park. Here we were somewhat horrified to learn that it would cost us 200 kroner (approximately US 30.00) for the few hours we would stay there until midnight when we would be leaving for the airport. This was more striking because at the first trailer park by the lake it had cost only 20 kroner per night. Nevertheless, we had no choice so we drove around looking for a parking space among the hundreds of other campers which were already there. There was a problem because we needed a spot with electricity and these were difficult to find. Finally we found an area, but in attempting to park close to the electrical facilities we found ourselves stuck in very soft muddy soil. All our attempts to dislodge the bus proved to be in vain. By

this time three people had arrived for our study, but with our dilemma, we really were not in the best frame of mind for a Bible study. Finally, the authorities from the park sent a tractor over to pull us out. At first they had no cable. Then when they got one it broke, then finally they got shovels and ramps. They dug around the wheels and then placed the ramps under the wheels. This did the trick and the bus heaved itself out of the morass amid great rejoicing.

During all the time that the drama concerning the bus had been progressing, I had decided to try to have some discussions with the folks who had come for the Bible study. While they were not wholly antagonistic to the truths which we were presenting, they were nevertheless not in agreement on several points and they were interested in having some questions answered. I did my best under the circumstances while Allen busied himself with helping on the outside. Several times we had to break and step outside while some new strategy was attempted in an effort to dislodge the bus. It was a bit disconcerting to be studying the Bible while expecting every moment to feel our study room start to move. However, God blessed us and finally when our guests had to leave, though there were still several questions which needed further clarification, we had said enough to encourage them to ask to be put on our mailing lists.

When the bus was once again mobile, Allen and I urged Kaj to not spend a part of the night at the campsite, but to leave immediately for the airport. By this time, having been away from home for three weeks we were raring to go and wanted nothing to happen to endanger our appointment with the plane in the morning. Kaj agreed and so we departed from the campsite. After the trauma of having our bus stuck in the mud the authorities at the campsite were gracious enough to let us go without charging us anything.

Homeward Bound

Allen and I had had a wonderful time in Norway, as in Germany and Poland. I had learned the great lesson that the only thing really worthwhile in traveling from place to place is meeting new



Kaj-Ronny with Jonathan

brothers and sisters while spreading the truths of God's word. The sights and the sounds are only images in the mind which soon fade away. However, the friends and brethren found and made are treasures of eternal worth. Nevertheless, after three weeks my heart was aching for home. I was finding it difficult to sleep at nights and my thoughts were constantly turning to loved ones and familiar places and faces. So my heart was racing as we started for the airport on the last leg of the Norwegian trip.

Somewhere in Oslo we took a wrong turn and spent a half an hour driving about while we tried to find our bearings. This gave us a good opportunity to get a look at Oslo and to see some aspects of it which we would not have seen otherwise. Kaj told us that it had recently been declared the city with the worst drug record in Europe and at first we could not believe this as we looked at the orderly streets and well-kept buildings. However, as we circled trying to find our route, we came upon some of the poorer sections of town and here we saw many people just hanging about the streets in little groups

or sitting on walls or on the curb idling or smoking. There were evident signs of poverty and looking at them we found it a little easier to believe the reports of high drug use in Oslo.

Finally we arrived at the airport. It was still daylight, but close to 11.00 p.m. We found a gas station nearby where the attendant graciously allowed us to park the bus until morning. Tired, but happy we settled down to rest. Remarkably, both Allen and I were able to sleep for a good portion of the remaining part of the night. I was up before three o'clock however, and the others were not far behind. We arrived at the airport and were checked in long before it was time for the plane to leave for Frankfurt. Saying goodbye to Kaj, Katherine, Hanna and Jonathan was a sad experience. It was amazing how quickly we had all become a part of each others lives. However, our sorrow at parting was tempered with the joy of knowing that our visit had helped to spark an interest and to sow seeds in Norway which would continue to grow until the coming of the Lord.

We flew into Frankfurt as the sun was beginning to warm up the countryside. From the window of the plane I got a clear view of the German countryside and was amazed at how orderly and structured the landscape was. All the houses were neatly gathered into little towns. In between these were fields of neatly cultivated grain. Periodically there appeared patches of neat forests, with a network of roads linking everything together. It was the first country I had seen where even the landscape had been so carefully organized that the organizational pattern was so obvious from the air. I found it attractive but at the same time something in me was a little fearful of the total control and manipulation which was represented by such a careful structuring of even the landscape.

Getting out of Frankfurt was the worst part of our journey. The fear of terror-

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God wanted us to go

In making arrangements for the trip to Europe, I became acutely aware for the first time of how much of a disadvantage it is to be born in a poor third-world country. All that Allen had to do was to buy his tickets and to make sure that he had his passport. If my wife Jen (who was born in England) had been traveling with me, that is all she would have needed to do as well. However, for me as a Jamaican, holding a Jamaican passport, the difficulties I had in getting the necessary visas were so discouraging as to almost have persuaded me to give up the whole venture before I started, had it not been for the conviction that the Lord wanted me to go on this trip.

My travel agent told me that in order to get a visa to visit Poland I would need a job letter, a bank statement and a copy of my flight itinerary. However, I was assured that this was just a formality and there was not much likelihood that I would be refused a visa. I went on the Internet and discovered that Germany and Norway were two of several countries, which had entered into an agreement and were part of what was called the "Schengen States" (not the same thing as the European Union). To visit any of the States in this union, I would need a visa for one country only, and this would entitle me to enter any of the others. The only stipulation was that the state for which I had obtained the visa would have to be the first of the countries visited, or else it would have to be my main destination in terms of the time I would spend in each country.

So I called Allen who would be purchasing the tickets and we arranged to spend 7 days in Poland, 7 days in Norway and 8 days in Germany. I asked him to send me a copy of the flight itinerary as soon as possible. There was some delay in getting this because Allen at this time was very busy away from home, attending a funeral in Washington and a campmeeting in Colorado. When I received the itinerary there was about a month remaining before I was scheduled to leave Jamaica for the campmeeting in West Virginia, from

where we would depart for Europe. I duly took the documents with my passport to the Polish consulate in Kingston and was startled with the news that these documents would have to be sent to Venezuela to be processed and that it would probably take 20 days before I would have it back in my hand. This was a grave concern to me because I would need the passport before I could apply for the German or Norwegian visa, which would also require some days for processing and I would need to have it before I left Jamaica.

Subsequently I called the German embassy and discovered that in addition to the documents I had produced for the Polish embassy, I would also need to have an official document sent to me from Germany, signed by the police stating that someone there would accept my "legal obligations" and would cover my "insurance." I would need to have the original document, because a faxed or scanned copy (sent by email) would not do. Feeling a little anxiety now, I emailed Erwin in Germany and explained the situation to him. He readily agreed to accept these obligations and to get the necessary documents sent to me. Not long after this Allen called again to ask if it looked likely that I would get the visas, because he needed to finalize the bookings on the flights now, as any further delay would result in the price of the tickets going up significantly. As far as I could see, getting the visas seemed to be just a formality, so I told him to go ahead and he duly paid for the tickets.

My first serious concern came a few days later when Erwin emailed me to say that he was not eligible to take responsibility for my legal obligations because he was still undergoing training and was not yet in a full-time job. However, he assured me that he would do his best to find somebody else who would take care of this necessary formality. In a little while he wrote to say that he had contacted a brother who had agreed to accept the legal obligations and to get the necessary forms sent to me and so everything seemed set. The

days passed however and there was no news from Germany. The Polish visa arrived much sooner than I had expected and I had my passport back in hand within ten days. This was a relief, but I could do nothing until I received the papers from Germany. When a week remained before I was scheduled to leave Jamaica, I became desperate and decided to visit the German embassy in Kingston, despite the fact that I had not yet obtained the legal obligations. I had called Erwin several times, but had not been able to make contact with him.

At the German embassy I encountered a curt, impolite and wholly unsympathetic woman who was not in the least moved by my story. When I explained that I would be leaving the island in a few days and that the tickets were already paid for and that I would not be able to get the visa in the USA she simply shrugged her shoulders and repeated that there was no way I could get the visa without the legal obligations.

Shortly after this I received a distressed letter from Erwin. He explained that his computer had been down for several weeks and that he also had been trying without success to reach me by phone. The brother who had promised to take care of the legal obligations had never made any attempt to do so and after two weeks of promising had eventually stated that he was unable to do it. This really left me out on a limb because I was due to leave for the USA in a couple of days and the people at the German embassy had made it clear that as the holder of a Jamaican passport the only place I could apply for the visa was in Jamaica. However, I still believed that God wanted me to go to Europe and that He still had a way to work things out. That night I prayed very earnestly before I went to bed, that He would show me what He wanted me to do.

Of course I could have applied for a Norwegian visa and Kaj-Ronny Nilsen in Norway had already offered to take care of the legal obligations. The problem was that we had already planned our itinerary and bought our tickets with the

arrangement to enter the Schengen union by way of Germany, driving across the Polish border, and staying one day longer there than in Norway so that it would be our main destination in terms of time. This was because I had been pretty confident that we would have been able to get the visa to Germany. Now we had already bought the tickets so there was no way we could change our itinerary.

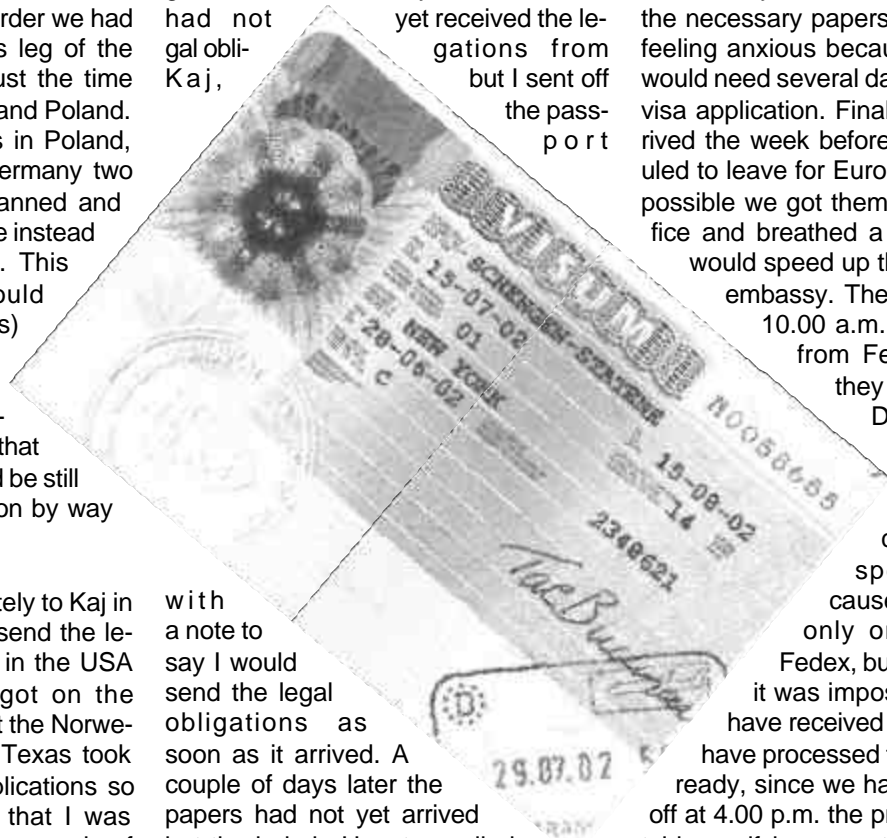
The next morning I awakened at four o'clock with my mind crystal clear and a thought drumming in my head. There was one part of the itinerary which we could change and that was the journey from Poland to Germany. Since we were going to drive across the border we had not bought a ticket for this leg of the journey and we could adjust the time we spent in both Germany and Poland. If we spent two extra days in Poland, then we would arrive in Germany two days later than we had planned and so would spend 6 days there instead of the 8 we had planned. This would mean that we would spend a longer time (7 days) in Norway and so Norway could become my main destination and I could apply for a visa for Norway on that basis even though we would be still entering the Schengen union by way of Germany.

I sent off an email immediately to Kaj in Norway and asked him to send the legal obligations form to me in the USA at Smyrna's address. I got on the internet and discovered that the Norwegian embassy in Houston Texas took care of Jamaican visa applications so this seemed ideal seeing that I was headed for the USA in just a couple of days. I would be in the USA for two weeks and it seemed that this would be ample time in which to get the visa. In fact I called the embassy while I was still in Jamaica and explained my desire to apply for a Norwegian visa.

To my consternation the lady on the other end explained that the Netherlands embassy in Jamaica took care of all visa applications by Jamaicans to visit Norway. I could not believe that the Lord had allowed my hopes to be lifted only to be dashed again and I carefully ex-

plained that the Norwegian website stated that Jamaican applications were dealt with by the Houston consulate. I also explained that I would be leaving Jamaica in a day or two and that there was not enough time to apply for the visa in Jamaica. The lady asked me where on the Norwegian website I had seen the statement concerning Houston and Jamaican visas. When I told her she reluctantly agreed to seek to process the visa if I sent her the documents, though she told me that it was not a certainty that she could do it.

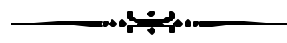
As soon as I arrived in the USA I sent off my passport by Fedex to the Norwegian Embassy in Houston. I had not yet received the legal obligations form but I sent off the passport



with a note to say I would send the legal obligations as soon as it arrived. A couple of days later the papers had not yet arrived but the lady in Houston called to say that my visa was in the jurisdiction of the Norwegian consulate in New York and that she was sending my passport there, and I should send the other papers there. I decided to call the number she had given me in New York to confirm that all was well on that end. The lady who spoke to me seemed quite astonished and told me that it was the consulate in Houston which was supposed to deal with Jamaicans, and as soon as the passport arrived she was sending it back to Houston. You can imagine that by now I was just about

ready to give up, but I knew enough about the ways of God to know that sometimes He allows us to be placed in discouraging circumstances so that our faith may be strengthened when we see His deliverance. So I called the lady in Houston again, and of course she said that my visa application was the business of New York. However, she stated that she would call them and settle the issue. I waited a few hours and then called New York again. Reluctantly the lady there agreed that she would deal with my application. The only problem was that I had not yet received the legal obligations.

Several days later I had still not received the necessary papers and I was again feeling anxious because the embassy would need several days to process the visa application. Finally the papers arrived the week before we were scheduled to leave for Europe. As quickly as possible we got them to the Fedex office and breathed a prayer that they would speed up the process at the embassy. The next morning at 10.00 a.m. there was a call from Fedex to say that they had a packet for David Clayton and they wanted to know where to deliver it. This call led to some speculation because I was expecting only one packet from Fedex, but we all knew that it was impossible for them to have received the papers and to have processed the application already, since we had only sent them off at 4.00 p.m. the previous evening. I told myself, however, that we were dealing with God and if God wanted me to be in Europe all the red tape in the world could not keep me out. When the packet from Fedex arrived the next day, I was the least surprised when it turned out to be my passport, with the precious Schengen visa duly affixed. Thus began our trip to Europe with these events being an indication to us that God wanted us there, though the devil had done his best to try to prevent us from going.



European Journey

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ism made the security precautions extremely tight even to the point of being ridiculous. Before we even checked in we were screened by agents who wanted to know where we were coming from, who we had stayed with, what had been our business in Norway etc. They even demanded some other form of identification from me besides my passport. Fortunately I had taken my driver's license with me as well. After that we had to pass through one security check after another. At each one they scanned our luggage and at one or two used the security wand to scan our bodies as well. It was a great relief when we finally found ourselves on the plane and on the way home. Though the 10 hour flight to Charlotte, North Carolina was wearisome, we did not mind it too much since we were headed for home.

From Charlotte we took a smaller plane to Charleston where Allen's family, Charmaine, Hans and Heidi were waiting for us. I am not able to describe our feelings at seeing them. The welcome and hugs I got in West Virginia were almost as many as Allen got and my happiness was matched only by the thrill of seeing my own family again, my wife Jen and my children Dave and Annelie when I arrived in Montego Bay two days later.

Prophetic Union

There is one other aspect of the European trip which I must mention. While there I discovered that the countries which are a part of the European Union have abolished border checks. A person no longer has to use a passport or even to pass through a border check in order to move from one country to another. Most of the countries of the Union now use the Euro as the currency. Currencies such as the Franc

and the Deutsche mark no longer exist. As I listened to some of the developments within the European Union, I kept feeling a chill running up and down my spine. It is evident that the nations of Europe are attempting to recreate a super nation similar to the ancient Roman Empire. Yet at the same time, they are attempting to retain their individuality to some extent. My mind kept returning to that ominous verse in Daniel chapter 2, "*And whereas thou sawest iron mixed with miry clay, they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men: but they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay.*" (Dan 2:43). The feeling that I was standing in the midst of fulfilling prophecy kept impressing itself on my mind, and filled me with a sense of urgency to get the truth out to all the world while there is still time.



Open Face

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