



Autumn 2015

Inside This Issue

President's Message	1
Heritage Society	2
Repatriating	3

The Berlin Connection

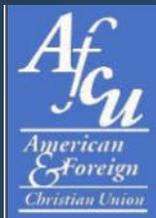
A Note from Pastor Steve	4-5
The Revolution of Green	5

The Paris Connection

A Note from Pastor Scott	6
The Rentrée	7

The Vienna Connection

A Note from the Moderator	8-9
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The American and Foreign Christian Union (AFCU) is a US-based 501 (c) (3) organization that supports the American Church in Paris, the American Church in Berlin, and the Vienna Community Church. Focusing primarily on alumni and friends of these churches, the AFCU manages endowment funds to support these churches, stimulates donations to grow these funds, and offers consultation and direct support to assist these churches in their operations. Please visit www.afcubridge.org for more information.

President's Message

My name is Ted Ziemann and this is my first letter as President of AFCU.

First, I wish to thank Ken Rislov for serving as president during the past two years. We all appreciate his generous service to AFCU and the European churches. Ken and his wife Marcia remain committed members of the AFCU board.

I am honored and humbled to have been elected by the Board to lead the amazing AFCU organization where members, consultants, and friends continue to support our three member churches years after living in Europe and participating in these churches.

My wife, Betty, and I lived in Paris twice in the 1990s and attended the

American Church in Paris both times. Betty was active on the Council and Women of the American Church and I was involved with the Stewardship and Development teams. We both enjoyed our participation in the American Church and have many fond memories of our life in Europe. The ACP was a great blessing, both spiritually and culturally, as we adjusted to life in a foreign country.

I joined the AFCU board in 2000 after returning to the U.S. and have been a member ever since. Now, as a member of the Board I have the privilege of

helping to support the American church in Paris, the American Church in Berlin, and the Vienna Community Church. It has been fantastic to see the progress in all three churches over the past 15 years. I have

also been amazed by the time and financial support that has been given by members of the AFCU and Friends over this time as well as in the past. God has blessed us richly!



Today we face new challenges, but with faith in God, we know that these challenges will be overcome and the churches will continue to bear witness to Jesus Christ and inspire their members and friends.

Over the many years that our churches have served the communities of Berlin, Paris, and Vienna, they have survived numerous challenges, but still prospered.

Today we face new challenges, but with faith in God, we know that these challenges will be overcome and the churches will continue to bear witness to Jesus Christ and inspire their members and friends.

I look forward to visiting all three churches over the next couple of years. I ask for your prayers to be an effective leader with the AFCU organization as we strive to provide spiritual and financial support to the churches.

In Christ,
Ted Ziemann

Heritage Society, Planned Giving, and AFCU Endowment Funds

Financial needs of our churches have clearly demonstrated the importance of the investments in the AFCU Endowment Funds. All three of the member churches have endowments; the American Church in Paris, the American Church in Berlin and the Vienna Community Church. Each of these funds is designed to last forever, expanding by gifts and donations from the generosity of our friends. Donations to these funds are not spent but are left to grow with the investment gains of the funds for the purpose of making grants each year to support these ministries.

We use professional financial managers to invest the funds based upon criteria our Finance Committee reviews on a regular basis. The Committee is obliged to ensure wise and stable investments. Grants made for operations are fixed at 5% of the overall Fund's value. The American Church in Paris currently has the largest endowment fund and therefore has the most available to grant back for supporting operations and special projects. The other churches have smaller funds that are being left to grow until they reach a size that enables their effective use.

The Heritage Society is made up of friends that have included the AFCU in their estate plans and have designated future gifts. Nearly all of the future gifts are designated for endowment. Current contributions can also be designated for endowment and they are immediately invested in the respective fund for the church that is designated, and start to grow and build for the future. The sole purpose of having endowment funds is to ensure the long term survival of the ministries. Your gifts are allowed to live forever, giving your churches a lasting legacy of charitable, religious and educational giving. Donors can use a variety of methods to make gifts to the Endowment Funds. Gifts of all sizes and forms are welcome.

Gifts of cash and non-cash gifts - Current tax laws honor charitable gifts as having federal tax deductibility. Gifts of securities held more than one year, such as stock that has appreciated in value is a very cost effective means to gift. A number of plans allow gifting and still receive an ongoing income to you and a spouse or children. Options include charitable remainder trusts and charitable gift annuities. Help with selecting the best choices for you are available from your tax advisor or financial manager.

Testamentary Gifts-

- Life Insurance - Options are to transfer ownership of an existing policy or purchase a new policy in the name of the AFCU for the benefit of a given church. There are estate tax benefits and the donor may receive a charitable tax deduction for lifetime transfers.
- Bequests - You can leave a living memorial in your will. The AFCU Church Designated Endowment can also be a beneficiary of your estate.
- Real Estate - A gift of property held for more than one year can provide the same tax advantages as a gift of stock.
- Retirement Assets - A great way to grow an Endowment Fund is through beneficiary designations of retirement funds such as an IRA or a 401-K. This provides flexibility for the donor who continues to have access to the funds during their lifetime.

We have listed a few of the options for you to leave a legacy that will enrich God's Kingdom. Please visit our web site to obtain more information at www.afcubridge.org On behalf of the AFCU and our churches, we deeply thank you for your prayers and gifts.

The AFCU is a 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization. If you would like to include one or more of our three churches in your estate planning, please contact us at our e-mail address: afcuheritage@afcubridge.org

Russell McNaughton,

Heritage Society



Repatriating

By Jane Kendall

So, is repatriating a piece of cake?

Most of you have lived overseas and have repatriated. For those of us who have moved home, we have done it with great expectation. Much time and effort was frequently made to help us adjust to our new life overseas, and I did extensive research on this.

But repatriation has often offered a few goodbye parties, and shopping for favorite products to ship home!

Some people have returned to their new home base triumphantly. Others of us have been surprised by our luke- warm reception.

One friend who had been overseas for 5 years was shocked when a stateside friend said, "Frankly, you have been gone a long time and we have been at home, carrying on with our lives." So no real interest in my friend's overseas experience.

Some readjustment is more mundane....like trying to figure out if the price of green beans was reasonable. That was me. I had to translate the price into the value of the French Franc(at the time) to figure it out. Technology in the NYC subway had changed. I felt like a tourist.

I was shocked at the cost of buying ingredients for a special Valentine's dinner. And I had thought Paris was expensive.

On the other hand, some findings or experiences when newly stateside included joy in all the winter sunlight!

We have been thinking that those of us who have been home for quite a while probably have some helpful insights for those of us who have recently arrived.

So we are in fact finding mode, and I will be

the point person for expanding our research.

One thought I have is to include an interactive segment on our website where people could engage in a conversation. And offer suggestions and listen to frustration!

Another is to connect repatriating folks with "coaches"....those among us who feel fairly back to our old selves.

Fully reintegrating takes quite a while. Many of us mourn the loss of some activities, friends, food, and our vibrant churches overseas. While we are sometimes thrilled by our stateside return, the lifestyle of living in a vibrant European city and the proximity of so many interesting cultures can cause us to be "homesick" for this temporary life. We have trouble recreating this at home.

So, my hope is that whether you are newly home or have been back for a long time, take a few minutes to jot down ideas for me. What could have helped you in your readaptation and readjustment? What did help you? How can you envision that you personally could be helpful to others? Would a workbook help?

Each repatriation experience is different. Research has shown that expats overseas for a long time have more challenges than folks returning after just a few years.

Jane Kendall



The Berlin Connection



www.americanchurchberlin.de

The alien who resides with you shall be to you as the citizen among you; you shall love the alien as yourself, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt: I am the Lord your God.
Leviticus 19:34

The influx of refugees into Europe and Germany's open welcome of them has been in the news and on the hearts and minds of many. It has posed challenges to a system not completely ready to incorporate such numbers. It has, however, been amazing to witness initiatives by various organizations and groups to provide for these refugees. The churches have also been on the forefront in living out the biblical mandate to "welcome the stranger." In September ACB collected one of its largest Mission Sunday offerings to support the refugees. We witness an increase in refugees coming to the Friday Laib & Seele food distribution program, and I can foresee an ever greater interest in our Monday Learning Café program. Many have asked how Germany can absorb so many refugees. What will be the effects of such a great influx on German society?

Recently the journalist and author, Martin Walker, was interviewed on the Diane Rehm Show on NPR. In Berlin we are spoiled by being the only European city to have its own NPR station. During the interview Walker spoke about his work with the economic think tank, A. T. Carney, which was hired by Angela Merkel and the German government to envisage the infrastructure needs of Europe and Germany over the next fifty years. This resulted in a report last year entitled Germany 2064 which also became the title of his new book. Two scenarios based on two literary works were posited in their report: Herman Melville's *Bartelby* and Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*.

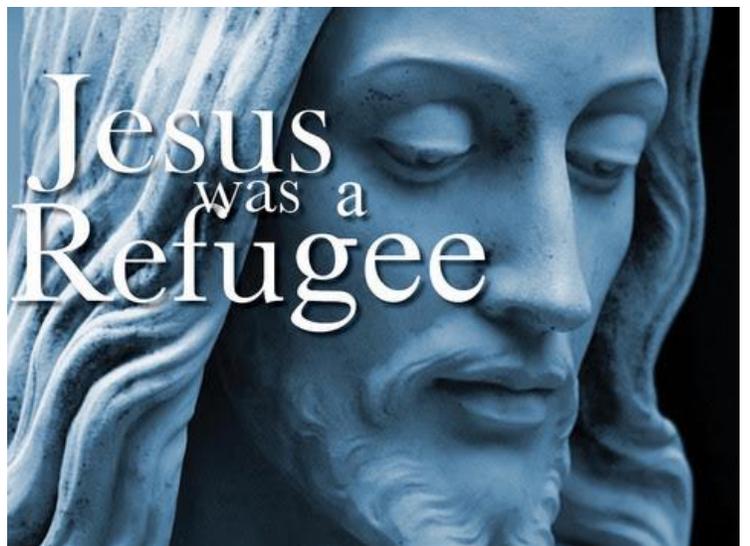
Bartelby is a story about a scrivener for a Manhattan Lawyer, who diligently completes the work given him, until one day he no longer has the will to continue and begins uttering what will become his perpetual response to assignment given him: "I would prefer not to." This response to his work becomes the response to his life as well ending in his demise to the chagrin of his employer.

Gulliver's Travels is a about an adventurer who experiences the most bizarre things, but continuously finds new ways to cope with the unusual predicaments and experiences he faces. He returns home time and again only to set out on new adventures.

These two scenarios applied to the Germany of the future would mean that with the first scenario Germany would continue on as it presently is without making changes. This means that with the present family and immigration policies Germany will have 20 million less citizens and a smaller work force supporting an ever increasing senior population. Without technological advances the industrial base would slowly stagnate and the middle class become smaller. This would have detrimental consequences for their economy.

The second scenario would entail major changes in the way Germany is structured. It would be open to the world and embracing the sometimes precarious global economy by becoming more flexible in all areas of social and economic development. This means that immigration must increase in order to stabilize the population. Germany needs ca. 400,000 immigrants per year and that means a more diverse society. German industry would continue but with a greater emphasis on research and development. The middle class would continue to be the backbone of German society but would be much more diverse than at present.

Continued on page 5...



ACB Connection,

Continued from page 4

The refugee numbers are, indeed, staggering at present, but it is clear that Germany and the rest of Europe will need large influxes of immigrants for the future to maintain and stabilize their economies. This presents a challenge to international ministry as well. I believe that God has situated our ministries in Vienna, Paris and Berlin for such a time as this. We are well versed in welcoming the stranger in our midst with love and openness. We know that our members bring a wealth of talents and experiences that can be a benefit to our host country. Recently we celebrated the baptism of two Egyptian converts. They both have been engaged in helping our ministry with refugees by providing much needed translation from Arabic to English and German. I don't think any of us could have imagined the special calling they would have while engaged in baptismal instruction last Spring. One of them has also gone through the refugee process as well and has particular insights into the German process of asking for asylum.

The support of the AFCU is vital to us as we embrace this new ministry challenge. We hope to continue to improve our facility so that we can host more programs to serve the community. The building of more manageable meeting spaces that can be easily heated is one such improvement. With more groups and people coming into our facility we also need to expand our bathrooms. Two toilets that are not accessible for all can barely serve the needs of our congregation. We are grateful to the friends and members of the AFCU who have given so generously to our Capital Campaign for heating. We will use this residual as seed money to begin these next projects.

On behalf of the American Church in Berlin it is my joy to offer heartfelt thanks for the support of the AFCU; a support that is at its core spiritual and not just material. May God continue to bless your witness and building up of the saints at VCC, ACP and ACB.



Stephan Kienberger

THE REVOLUTION OF GREEN



What is it about autumn
that makes one want to write poetry--
compels one almost?
Or for that matter, what is it
about spring and winter...
and summer?

Seasons beckon change.
They rattle all that wants to
remain comfortable in us--
all our little issues
that need dismantling,
the way the trees dismantle the leaves
and toss them flippantly to the ground,
as if they will have nothing more to do with them,
as if they never knew them.
And then they disrobe completely
standing naked, bare
and unashamed
like Adam and Eve
before they wanted to know it all,
before they ran for cover...
and hid.
Seasons don't allow for hiding.
It's all out in the open--
light and darkness.
Both are needed
for the tumble of inner revolution
that reveals itself on the outside.
Both are needed
if there's to be any growth.
Only after releasing the dried-up
dead leaves
and being willing to stand trembling and vulnerable
facing the unknown
in the crisp of winter
(clothed sometimes only in bitter frosts and white,
as if to add insult to injury),
only then are the new coats and dresses
slowly unveiled
and sent down the conveyor belts of nature--
once more wrapping the oaks, the willows
and birch trees
in the dignity of green
and shaking us alive
with Spring.

By Monique Amado

www.artoflifeandwellness.wordpress.com

The Paris Connection



www.acparis.org

Dear Member and Friends of the AFCU,

Warm greetings to you in this month when we celebrate the 50th anniversary of when the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., spoke here at the American Church in Paris on Sunday, October 24, 1965. We will be welcoming Dr. Clayborne Carson, professor of history at Stanford University, and director of the Martin Luther King, Jr., Research and Education Institute, to speak here along with the Rev. Dr. Luke Powery, the Dean of Duke University Chapel, on Thursday, October 22nd for a very special Thurber Thursday. Dr. Carson has also been invited to speak at the American Library of Paris, the American School of Paris, the American University of Paris, the University of Paris VIII^e as well as other academic venues in Lyon, Rennes and Marseille.



We are thankful that in these difficult days with heightened tensions around race and ethnic discrimination here in Europe and the racial violence and *#BlackLivesMatter* debates in the United States, that we as a church are able to welcome these two prominent scholars to share their wisdom and inspiration for the future with so diverse an audience.

The Rev. Dr. Luke Powery also will be preaching at the ACP on Sunday, October 25th. Dr. Powery, before being called to serve as the Dean at Duke University Chapel, was the Associate Pastor of the International Protestant Church in Zürich and after earning his PhD., and taught homiletics at

Princeton Theological Seminary. We are thankful that he and his wife Gail have agreed to come as our guests for this special anniversary weekend.



Please note that there will be a special evening concert at 20:00 on Saturday, October 24th commemorating Dr. King's visit with some discussion of the significance of his Nobel Peace Prize, and then a one hour program of music, comprised of concert Negro Spirituals – both solo songs and duets.

Given the recent influx of refugees from Syria and Iraq, the ACP is taking a special offering to go directly to families settling in through the French Protestant Federation. We are also going to be collecting clothes, shoes, hats, gloves and scarves to make sure these newcomers stay warm as the cooler fall and winter weather comes upon us. Please pray for all of the churches and synagogues and mosques here joining together to care for these people displaced by war and violence. A mission principle I like is this: "We love them not because they will be Christians. We love them because we are Christians."

Indeed, we are welcoming many newcomers this time of year and enjoying seeing many young families coming and involving their children in the Sunday morning "Children's Worship" program, youth group and young adult ministries. Our new Director of Youth and Young Adults, Billy Roberts, and our new Youth Intern from Princeton Theological Seminary, Alyssa McKnight, are doing a superb job of settling in and transitioning. While we welcome so many newcomers, I was privileged to have a recent lunch with Dr. Andrew and Kerry Hunwick, former professor of French Studies at the University of Western Australia. Dr. Hunwick is a recipient of the *Chevalier dans l'ordre des Palmes Académiques*. They said they have been coming to Paris since 1965, and tell all of their friends "every year the best part of our trip is worshipping at the American Church in Paris!" I thought you should know that whether newcomers, refugees or visitors over the decades, countless people continue to be blessed by the ministry and missions you support through your faithful prayers and financial giving. We appreciate you so much and hope that we'll be able to welcome YOU here soon. We remain sincerely yours,



In Christ,

The Rentrée at ACP

Dear Members and Friends of the AFCU,

We are enjoying the rentrée here at the American Church in Paris, welcoming old and new friends to worship and join us in the ministry and mission of this dynamic congregation. Coming up is a new season of Children's Worship and the Ministry Fair to help people live out our Formula for Spiritual health: **Worship +2!** Simply put that means worshipping in church whenever you're able, plus finding a way to feed your soul during the week through Bible Study or prayer, plus finding a way to serve and share your gifts for ministry with others.



Over the summer, we had a number of exciting events, including a first time *Serve the City* camp week with 40 teens, *Vacation Bible School* with 60 children, and *Young Artists' Week* with over 20 teenagers. The kids during the *Serve the City* camp week visited a rest home facility to interact with the residents, picked up trash on the street and took out food to the homeless. They offered assistance to tourists at the *Gare de Nord*, and did some projects around the church. What a tremendous service experience for our teens!



We also had a very successful *Vacation Bible School* week with over sixty kids at any one time participating, as well as twenty volunteers! This is a great way to serve new families and welcome them to Paris and the ACP community. We care for young and old, and VBS is a fun way to welcome the smallest of God's Children. This year's theme was *Son Spark Labs*, and the kids learned about creation and how faith and science can go together! We want to

encourage our kids to be the best researchers of faith and works! They learned stories about Jesus as Lord of heaven and earth, and some new songs about God's love for all people, and even did some real live chemistry experiments.



Good thing the AFCU pays for building insurance (just kidding)! It was a "blast" for all, and during the afternoons the same week, we had *Young Artists Week* with over 20 teenagers producing some beautiful art... Just know that we appreciate your faithful and generous support for the ministry and mission of the ACP. We are currently exploring ways to offer relief and assistance to the many immigrants and refugees coming into Europe, even as we prepare to celebrate the 50th anniversary of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. speaking at the ACP in October.

Your prayers and financial support help us to do the Lord's work here with energy, intelligence, imagination, and love. Thank you!

In Christ,
Scott

The Vienna Connection



www.viennacommunitychurch.com

It is with much excitement that I am writing as Moderator on behalf of our members and friends of the VCC.

As of 1 September, 2015, the Vienna Community Church started a new era in which the VCC has its own dedicated meeting space and Pastor's office within the VCC Meeting Point. The archive files are consolidated in this space. The name for the meeting/office space was voted on by the congregation with the name 'The Meeting Point' being the winner. The Point is already being used, but with a Pastor in our midst it will make planning meetings and events so much easier. No more hunting around and asking for favours from others or not being able to organise them at all.

The new Manse is for the exclusive use as a



comfortable and pleasant private space for our minister and his or her spouse. The apartment is newly renovated within the same building block as the Meeting Point. It is modern with new windows, new kitchen, new bathroom etc. We were so fortunate to find it when we did. This has enabled us to move to a convenient location with manse and office/meeting space all in one place. The Stadt Kirche, our host church, is a four minutes underground ride from Nestroyplatz to Stephansplatz and the centre of Vienna.

These plans were supported by the congregation and are pleased with what has been accomplished!

With good negotiating skills, the VCC did not have to pay any agent's fees for the new manse, or double rent, as the new landlord gave us 2 months free rent and the old landlord released us from the lease 1 month early.

It was six weeks of long hot summer days, sorting, cleaning, organising and reorganising, disposing of unusable or inappropriate items, planning, replacing items, comparing prices, moving, setbacks, etc.. It could not have been done without the help of the people who not only provided their time, building skills, and/or also, funds, in-kind donations, and items to make the Manse a very liveable place.

Pastor's News

Pastor Troy Morgan who had been with us for three years resigned and returned to his native USA on the 1st June, 2015. We are thankful for his time with us and for his ministry at the VCC.

This necessitated our Worship Chair to find a Guest Pastor for each Sunday during these many weeks. We are indeed grateful to the many English speaking local Ministers who came along to assist us in this way. In Vienna, being a very International city, we are fortunate in having people from many countries. We had Ministers from the US, UK, South Africa, and 2 Austria. Their Services and Sermons were always well received and a warm welcome was given to them all.

Continued on page 9...

The Vienna Connection, Continued from page 8

New Interim Pastor

We would like to welcome back Pastor Lowell Karnes and his wife, Svetlana, to Vienna on 10 September. He will be preaching his first sermon on Sunday, 13 September. Pastor Karnes will be with us until our permanent pastor comes. He has a rich background in ministry, international ministry and interim ministry, and has held various international ministry positions throughout the world. Some of you may recall that Pastor Lowell was an interim minister at the VCC in 2004. We wish him every success in the ministry of God during his time with us. The Pastor Search Committee is currently in the process of looking for our long term pastor.

Visitors

During the summer months, in particular, the church is often sought and found by many visitors to the city from all over the world. We like to ask them to introduce themselves during the service so that we can welcome them personally. We often have existing congregational members who come from the same country albeit sometimes the same city. When we live away from our native countries it is always an exciting time when we recognise an accent from home!

Choir News

The choir has returned after their summer break, under the direction of the Music Chair and Choir Master. We were fortunate during the summer months to have some soloists giving freely of their time. Our very talented organist was fulfilling other musical engagements during the summer and we welcomed other young talented organists to our services. We had the pleasure of welcoming from Finland, the Hyvinkaan Chamberchoir who provided Special Music during our Service and after the postlude, a short programme of music from Jean Sibelius



Rainer's Fellowship Tours

We have been enjoying more of Rainer's walking tours around interesting places in the city. The Art Nouveau Tours, part one and two, have just taken place. We are lucky to have a qualified city guide in our congregation who takes us to a great variety of churches and other buildings, many of which we would not get access to without his contacts! The tour always finishes with an enjoyable late lunch.

Fund Raising

The VCC Board Capital Fund fundraising drive is underway but with many peoples away from the city for extended summer vacation the major plans will be in the coming months. The Board is very grateful for received donations of all kinds since we started on these projects. We wish to thank all of you who support the VCC with your generous gifts of time and financial contributions, and also for those who plan to make contributions to the VCC and AFCU upcoming Capital Funding Campaigns. We would like to welcome you to our church in Vienna if you are lucky enough to be in this fascinating and historical city in the centre of Europe.

Blessings,

Mary Geissler
Moderator



American and Foreign

Christian Union

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If you would like to receive the Bridge through email you may send your email address the Bridge Editor (AFCUEditor@afcubridge.org) with a note saying that you would like "to go green" with the electronic Bridge.

HOW YOU CAN CONTRIBUTE

The American and Foreign Christian Union (AFCU) supports the American Church in Paris (ACP), the American Church in Berlin (ACB), and the Vienna Community Church (VCC) through grants to help their programs. Gifts to the AFCU help to increase our support of these churches. Contributions may be sent to the American and Foreign Christian Union at:

**PLEASE NOTE OUR
NEW ADDRESS**

**AFCU
2885 Sanford Ave. SW #29934
Grandville, MI 49418**

You may also make gifts to the individual churches. If you wish your gift to be tax deductible in the United States, you must make your dollar check payable to the AFCU at the above address. Put the words "for ACB" or "ACP" or "VCC" on the memo line of your check.

DONATION INFORMATION

I PREFER THAT MY DONATION BENEFIT:

AFCU General Fund _____% ; American Church of Berlin _____%

American Church in Paris _____%; Vienna Community Church _____%

Unless otherwise designated, your contributions will go to the General Fund from which annual distributions support all of the churches.

AMOUNT \$ _____ Check enclosed: (preferred)

MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO: **American and Foreign Christian Union**

CREDIT CARD: MasterCard Visa American Express

Name on Card:

Card Number:

Expiration Date (month/year):

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The easiest way to contribute is by going to the AFCU Website:

www.AFCUBridge.org, then click on "support" and contribute electronically by using PAYPAL.