

Connecting Our Churches and Friends around the World



Mission

In our last edition of the Bridge we discussed the various changes in organization and focus that the AFCU Board has embarked upon this year. One of our main priorities was to update our Mission Statement. Webster lists one of the definitions for mission as ‘a self- imposed duty.’ We wanted our new mission to define our duty, as we saw it and to guide us in the focus of our efforts for the future. It will also be used to assist in interpreting the AFCU role with our member churches. Thus a task force was assigned the role of writing our mission in a clear, succinct and yet a broad, visionary way. We felt it essential that our reason for being, that all of our efforts and support of our member churches be guided by a single statement of purpose. The final statement, developed by the task force, edited and approved by the AFCU Board, is written as follows:

AFCU Mission

The mission of the American and Foreign Christian Union is to nourish and support the International, English speaking, ecumenical churches whose ministries bear witness to Jesus Christ. Drawing upon our American heritage, in partnership with our member churches, we will strive to develop and manage a strong financial base to further their programs. We will nurture and strengthen our alumni ties and lend support to the pastors, leadership and members of these churches through our care and prayers.

In the next issues of the Bridge we will be discussing our action plans for accomplishing this mission. In particular we will focus on the following issues:

1. Develop and manage a strong financial base to further the church programs.
2. Nurture and strengthen our alumni ties.
3. Care and support of the pastors, leadership and members of our churches.
4. Enhance the ministries of our member churches to bear witness to Jesus Christ.

In summary, the AFCU exists to support our member churches and we are enabled in this role through the Holy Spirit, prayer, fellowship and the active support of our alumni base. We pray that each of our alumni will continue with us through their prayers and financial support on this important mission.

Jim Craig, AFCU President

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Development Committee Report

The AFCU Development Committee meeting in Greenville, S.C. on October, 2, 2004, was attended by 21 devoted volunteers. The meeting was hosted by Calder and Glenda Ehrmann, and all meeting and travel expenses were donated by the hosts or the volunteers attending. This meeting was primarily devoted to discussing how to improve our fund-raising effectiveness for the benefit of our three European churches. After three years of struggling to make the regional "Friends" receptions effective, it was decided that our alumni nurturing efforts should be focused on other initiatives. We hope to focus more on welcoming new alumni back to the U.S. after their overseas experience is completed.

The "Heritage Society" committee has planned major communication initiatives to emphasize the opportunities and importance of "Planned Giving." More information is and will be available on our website at www.afcubridge.org.

The following is our revised list of Champions:

Database of church alumni coordinates—

Megan Foster

AFCU Website—

Bob DeLuryea

Heritage Society [Estate Planning]—

Russ McNaughton

Communications—

Kathie Eppert

Annual Solicitations—

Calder Ehrmann

Donor & Volunteer Recognition—

Lynda DeLuryea

Foundation Grants—Jerry Krupp

*Jerry Burns & Jerry Krupp, Co-Chairs of the
AFCU Development Committee*

Heritage Society Expands

The Heritage Society now recognizes friends of the American Church in Berlin and the Vienna Community Church in addition to the American Church in Paris and AFCU. Those eligible are individuals and families who have included these Christian churches in their planned giving commitments.

The expanded role of the Heritage Society is to encourage supporters of all three churches, whether they are active members, alumni or friends, to include them in their estate plans. The deferred giving can take many forms. Will bequests, living trusts, life insurance policies, donor advised funds, charitable remainder trusts, or retirement plan assets (401-K & IRA) are some of the many options available to those planning to leave charitable gifts at the time of their death. The critical financial needs and expanding role and ministries of these churches make these gifts increasingly meaningful.

Planned giving paves the way for donors to support the church while providing for their families. By giving to an endowment, donors are ensured that the church of their choice

will continue to provide ministries far into the future.

Those who want to qualify for U.S. tax deductibility for their donations must include in their documentation that the gift is made to the American & Foreign Christian Union (AFCU), an IRS category 501(c)(3) organization. The documentation should also be specific as to the church they desire to benefit from the gift. In all cases, an attorney or estate planning professional should be contacted before any final decisions are made or documentation is completed.

We look forward to working with our partners from the Berlin Church, the Vienna Community Church and the Paris Church. On behalf of these churches, we want to thank you for your support and your prayers. If you have any questions or we can be of any assistance with your plans, please contact us at russmacton@aol.com or 512-261-9725

*Russell McNaughton,
Heritage Society/Estate Planning*

Prayer Concerns

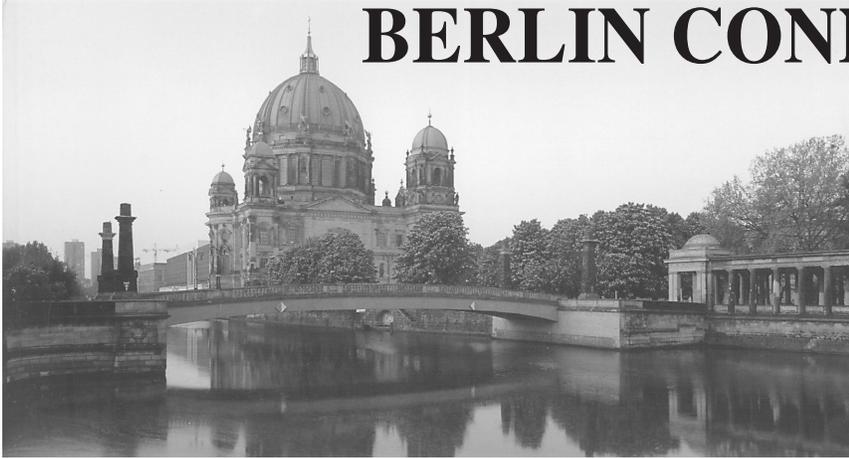
The AFCU would like to extend our condolences to Rev. Charles Lindholm on the death of his sister Elizabeth Betts, in July. We will also continue to keep Charles, his wife Nancy, and their family in our prayers, as Nancy continues her long convalescence from a serious automobile accident last February.

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 AFCU, 475 Riverside Drive, suite 2050, New York, NY, 10115.

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. Your continued support is greatly appreciated.

BERLIN CONNECTION



The Walls Keep Tumbling Down

In the late 80's and early 90's the wall separating East and West Berlin as well as families, friends and hopes came tumbling down. Many of the members at ACB remember vividly that exciting and frightening first night.

Margit and I have been traveling during the months of July and August in the States and Canada sharing the story of the American Church in Berlin. We have had opportunity to share with hundreds of people, entitling our presentation "The Walls Keep Tumbling Down." Showing an excellent video produced in Berlin about the mission and ministry of ACB, we have asked viewers what walls they see continuing to fall. It has been a rich experience to hear people share their insights.

I share with you but a few of these responses:

- the wall separating different races.
- the wall separating old and young.
- the wall separating ambassador and asylum seeker.
- the wall separating seekers of faith and committed in faith.
- the wall separating different denominations.
- the wall separating Christian and Muslim.
- the wall separating employed and unemployed.

In Ephesians 2 we read: "He tore down the wall we used to keep each other at distance" (The Message). Walls have a way of separating people, one from another. Walls divide and control. Walls break community.

Thanks be to God that in Jesus Christ, he has

come and broken down the wall that would separate us from Him, each other, the world and our own self. Thanks be to God that in Jesus Christ he calls us to move beyond building walls to building community centered in His forgiving love.

I heard a speaker share at the missionary conference in Kenosha, Wisconsin these words: "Know this—when the world builds walls to protect itself, God is on the outside of that wall calling us to follow Him in servant hood and dynamic mission and ministry."

At ACB we believe that God is calling us to a mission and ministry that is about "tumbling walls and building bridges." It is a scary and challenging mission. It is a hopeful and life-changing ministry.

Thank you, AFCU family, for your prayers, support and gifts. We need your help! At ACB we operate on a shoestring, but get a lot done! I invite you to share of your resources in this scary, challenging, hopeful and life changing mission and ministry.

Blessing, Pastor Ben Coltvet



Pastor Ben and Margit Coltvet

Letter from ACB Council President

The last time I connected with you, I mentioned that ACB had a niche for everyone and that exciting things could happen when everyone found their niche. ACB continues to change and grow. This summer we were blessed with the open hearts and sunny smiles of John and Barbara Rogers who filled in for Pastor Ben and Margit as they spent two full months in the U.S. sharing the story of ACB with hundreds of people. John and Barbara were always available to listen, help, laugh with, comfort, guide, and bless. Some members had to move away for one reason or another, but God has brought new faces to the congregation so that our numbers do not fall drastically.

Pastor Ben and Margit were able to share the story of ACB in film as well as word of mouth while in the U.S. During the spring, Leah McDonnell put together a film about ACB and its development. This is also available to AFCU for the purpose of sharing our story. It is our hope that those who heard the story will be able to support us in our building project and in prayer.

The thrill of activity and growth continues to be present. It draws to mind Paul's words from Philipians 2:5: "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus." Our attitude for the world is to be one in which we give to others, to give honor to Christ, and serve our fellow human beings.

This summer we again offered the Adventureland Day Camp and had a strong, vibrant staff with a theme of construction through Jesus Christ. Those young children who attended were able to visualize that it is Christ who builds our faith strong to last. They could then relate to the building that needs to take place physically on our premises. Everyone

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wore hard hats, had “tool boxes”, and learned songs appropriate to the theme.

September 5 was Rally Day with the beginning of our complete program of Bible studies, Sunday school, Confirmation, youth activities, choirs, committees, etc. This year we will hold Sunday school classes for the younger children in a day care facility across the street from the church building. The children will be better able to concentrate on their lessons. The number of people installed as teachers and helpers for the Christian Education program has grown steadily since last year.

Since the day was a gloriously sunny day, the doors to the church were wide open and people from the neighborhood stopped by and some even joined in the worship service. During the potluck that followed the service, others stopped by and chatted to find out more about us. This is the building of community and showing our desire to be a church home for people from diverse nations who believe in Jesus Christ.

Denise Banks-Grasedyck has ambitious plans for the Luther Church Development Campaign with one aspect directly involving AFCU members. The Outreach and Cultural Exchange Program will offer opportunities for individuals and groups particularly from the U.S. to join ACB on community work projects around Berlin to expand our ministry. These groups and individuals will provide us with talent and resources to make an even greater impact with our social ministry, while providing participants with challenging and exciting projects and exposure to the cultural diversity of Berlin. A second Gospel Powerhouse Concert in September and a Thanksgiving concert in November are in the works, as is a lecture series to inform

people about the Luther Church campaign.

Although many churches choose to move out of the center of the city, we are convinced that God wants us planted in the heart of the city of Berlin. Yes, there are challenges, but there are also great rewards. It is a joy to bring Christ, the Light of the world, to a dark city. With God’s help, we will be able to overcome the obstacles of a poor economy, significant costs needed to renovate the existing building, and finding ways to involve more people

in the active life of the church. As you have already read, we are making inroads toward our mission. We ask for your persistent prayers on our behalf that we would always recognize the privilege of sharing Christ’s Gospel and share it confidently with joy.

Ruth Bakke, ACB Council President



The American Church in Berlin: A Bird's-Eye View

When you hear the phrase, “summer replacement”, what first comes to mind? Exactly! A TV sitcom that can't quite make it in the prime-time line-up, but makes questionable filler during the off-season. Well, I've been privileged to be one of them during the summer past.

Earlier in the year, the American Church in Berlin and its pastor, the Rev. Ben Coltvet, invited me to assume pastoral duties within the life of the church during his much-deserved home leave in July and August. More than simply supplying the pulpit, but too short a duration to be considered an interim, one of the members introduced me to the congregation on my first Sunday as the “summer replacement”. It stuck.

Serving in this capacity for two months has provided me with a sharpened perspective and a deeper appreciation for this unique congregation situated in the heart of one of Europe's most lively cities.

This congregation had its beginnings about the time the Civil War was being fought in the United States. So it's definitely not the “new kid on the block” within the city of Berlin. But it depends upon which block one is talking about, for this church has worshipped and served God over the years from a good many locations in Berlin. Most recently, it's entered into a lease with option-to-buy agreement to occupy a wonderful cathedral-type facility in the very heart of the city.

But its hundred-year-old building is not what most characterizes the American Church in Berlin.

- ACB is a congregation of approximately 300 members that is still small enough to be a caring, intimate body of believers. It's not uncommon on any given Sunday for as many as half-a-dozen worshippers to feel comfortable in rising and sharing their personal offerings of thanksgiving, petition and intercession in public prayer.
- ACB is a congregation that understands itself to be called into mission, not only to itself and its surrounding community, but to the larger metropolitan area and the world. It ministers to a good number of Africans seeking asylum in Germany as well as supporting specific mission programs as far away as India and South Africa.
- ACB is a very diverse congregation with

as many as 30 nations represented in its membership, including ambassadors of five different nations. The plurality of the membership is no longer American, though the church's name continues to reflect the original founders of the congregation.

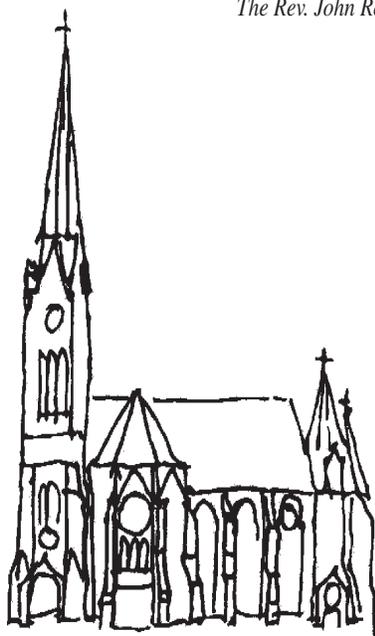
- I've experienced the ACB to be a caring, intimate, diverse congregation actively engaged vcongregation eager to explore the depths of the Bible, the Christian life, and what God has in store for the church in the future. There's a unique sense of curiosity resident here which defines the membership.

As in so many international and domestic congregations, the ACB never has all the resources it needs to fully advance the mission to which it believes God has called them. But what they've been able to accomplish with the limited resources with which they've been blessed is truly quite remarkable.

Finally, the church is richly blessed by the presence of Ben and Margit Coltvet serving as a pastoral team. My impression is that these two devoted Christians form the penultimate team and have every reason to believe that the congregation feels the same.

What a privilege it's been for me to serve this exciting congregation for two months as its “summer replacement” pastor.

The Rev. John Rogers



We Are Rich!!

A word on the ACB Luther Church Development Campaign

When Kathie Eppert asked me to write about the ACB development campaign, I was pleased and thankful for the opportunity to talk about the project and the campaign. We continue working to raise the visibility of the American Church in Berlin, increase recognition of our name as well as expand awareness of our programs and mission which reach far beyond the borders of our own congregation. Being able to point out ACB's relevance to the community at large is crucial as we approach more people and organizations outside the congregation.

So I began listing the important developments, contributions, meet-ings and all the things that are going on as part of the campaign efforts.

When I stopped to review our long list of accomplishments, I realized that something was missing. I had all the facts and the statistics, but somehow none of that reflects the energy and the love and spirit with which our efforts are rewarded every day in this campaign. I realized that we have not yet reached our financial goal of 2.9 million Euro- in fact we are still far from that - but if we measure our gains in terms of the people we have reached and the lives we have touched as we strive to bring our vision to the larger community—we are rich—and getting richer each day.

I want to share just one story of many of how our newfound richness quietly manifests itself. Whenever anyone is in the church whether for an event or just a small meeting, we try to have the doors open. It is such a fantastic feeling when people see the doors of the church open and just come in and look around. Whenever people wander in, I make conscious effort to engage them in a brief conversation and invariably I hear “It is wonderful to see these doors open. I felt like I had to come in.” or “I am not really religious in fact, I never go to church, but for some reason I just felt like this place is alive.”

This is in fact what a young woman said to me when I spoke to her during our June street festival. She happened to be a Turkish lady from the community, whom we'll call Jasmin. Jasmin said she was on her way to visit a sick friend. She also

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The ACB on DW-World Radio

This is the text of a program about the American Church in Berlin that was broadcast earlier in the year on Deutsche-Welle World radio. The ACB and the AFCU are very grateful to Leah McDonnell for this wonderful report. For more information please contact Leah at leahmcdee@yahoo.com

The American Church in Berlin is the oldest English-language church in Berlin. It has worked its way into the city's historical fabric, rolling and going with the tide. Today it is one of the city's ONLY growing Christian communities, in this age of increasing disillusionment with organized religion, which almost says it all. So let's visit the congregation for a moment, and see what is drawing folks to its doors.

It's 10:30 on Sunday morning, and the Luther church in the heart of the city, is bustling with activity. Hundreds of men, women, teenagers, infants, toddlers, fill the pews, and aisle, overflowing into the entrance hall, exchanging animated greetings and gossip, before the service. The American Church in Berlin recently relocated to the massive Luther church, having grown out of its former facility, and this morning, the church is filled to the brim. But it wasn't the size of the congregation that convinced Pastor Ben Colvert, to join the American Church in Berlin two years ago. In the States, he preached to gatherings of thousands. What drew him to Berlin was the unmistakable ACB spirit.

Pastor Ben says: "I have been involved in very large churches in the US and had the opportunity to come to the ACB, and saw what they do, and it intrigued us, both me and my wife - the sense of ministry and sense of mission that these people had."

In another scene, a group of ACB teens stand around a table cutting vegetables, to add to the huge pots of soup, simmering on the stove in the large, warm kitchen of Ruth Bakke. Ruth is an American who has been a member of ACB for as long as she's been in Berlin - a quarter of a decade. When asked, "How important has the church been to her life here?" she responds: "Extremely important. It is my home away from home. These people in the congregation support me, they pray for me, they are just there to help me in everything I need help in."

Like many ACB members, Ruth has an enthusiasm for people, sharing her faith, for music, and for ACB. Ruth continues, "I love singing in the choir,

the contact with the young people, and touching with people on as many bases as I can. When asked, "Can you imagine life in Berlin without the church?" she replies. "No. Definitely not!"

The church ACB now calls home, is a huge, formidable stone and brick structure - much different from the cozy, and intimate little wooden chapel they once inhabited. Ruth claims the warmth of the church didn't get lost in the move. "We have worked very hard to maintain the families and the friendly feeling," she says. "Even though we have grown tremendously - and we have moved location so we are now in a larger building, so it has been a challenge to maintain this family atmosphere, but I think we are succeeding. "

A German visitor is interviewed.

"We are Germans," he says, "and we are enjoying this service here. We are attending the German church as well, but the mood here and the service is so joyful, you leave the church with the heart full of joy, and that is the reason why.—and by the way you are doing good for your English language attending the service. So you are learning with joy and with pleasure."

It may be named the American Church in Berlin, but currently Americans make up only 20% of the congregation, which is dominated by diversity reflecting the growing multiculturalism of the city itself. ACB is a non-denominational church whose American attitude towards worship and prayer has a tradition of attracting the city's international diplomats and ambassadors. Presently representatives from Japan, Ghana, Kenya, and Australia are part of the flock. It is also provides a spiritual home for many foreigners, seeking asylum in Germany. The church has a committee to help them with bureaucratic red tape, and with German language lessons.

The face of the church has changed dramatically since Ruth first joined 25 years ago. Back then it was almost an all-American affair, with few members speaking anything but English. But now, she says, we have more people that have English as second language, but they still identify with the English language; they like using it, they like the tone of our worship.

A new African Member says: "It is good community and you are always welcome. You get integrated into the thing. When asked how is church service in Africa, he replies, "A little

more lively, with drums and guitar. More like the African-American church. That is what it is like in Africa. Here it is more traditional."

Some of these proud, loud performers are barely out of diapers, but they make a striking picture, standing at the foot of the pulpit joyfully making, quite a bit of noise unto the Lord. Families are a focal point at ACB, especially kids, who are integrated into every aspect of ACB life, and are at the core of its mission. Pastor Ben tells us, "The basis of our ministry with young people is building significant caring relationships, we do retreats, we spend time with them— Sunday mornings we have a class in which they can come together, they can talk, share, the pain and joy of their lives, and that is all centered in the gospel, which is accepting of who they are as people. Not of where we think they should be, but rather where they are at."

Now we talk to a group of ACB teens as they prepare huge pots of soup this Saturday afternoon, to sell after Sunday service. The profits will be given to those in need. They're learning about Christianity by putting its basic values into practice.

One young man says: "I am Ricki. I am 14 years old and I've lived in Germany almost five years. I'm from Ohio in America. We are cooking to get some money for four children in Ghana so they can afford school. — Their mother was a member of our church." Ricki's friends wouldn't dare tease him about his going to church, he's much too big and brawny. But they do think it a bit strange, Ricki admits. "For normal Germans perhaps yeah, they just think God doesn't exist and who cares," he says. "But the Americans are quite different, they much more go to church, they just believe more."

Pastor Ben's observations on Christianity & faith in America, back up Ricki's own. "In the States", he says, "there's a generation of young people who have grown up and say, my mom and dad have gone through all this, they have this and that, and they are empty inside. They don't have much going on for them. I want something different - they are open to hearing a new sense of the gospel and it is coming alive for them. I am starting to see that happening here in Germany. —So I think in Germany there is a young group of people that is alive and searching and wants something that hasn't been before."

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The Power of the Gospel in Berlin

We first became aware of the existence of the American Church in Berlin in 1988 when our family moved to Berlin when Gary transferred there by Pan American World Airways. We arrived in late summer with our five children, ages 3 to 11: Rebecca, John, Peter, Katherine, and Christopher. Since our family was not fluent in the German language, we were concerned about finding a church home where we could practice our Christian faith and our children could benefit from Lutheran teaching.

Through friends at Pan American we became aware of the ministry of the American Church in Berlin. We visited the congregation at the Dorfkirche in Zehlendorf and met Pastor Alan Bray. What we found was a warm and open group of Christians who worshipped Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. We visited several times and were attracted to this industrious Christian community by its demonstrated faith in Christ and its warm concern for each other. Those who have experienced the ministry of Pastor Bray among the members of the English speaking community in Berlin will have no trouble in recalling how easy it was to join that joyous band of disciples. We joined the American Church in Berlin and became immersed in its congregational life.

We met were welcomed with open arms and soon had a host of new Christian friends. Some were fellow "Pan Amers" like Don and Sharon Krump, some were teachers at the JFK School like the Baake's, a number were affiliated with the American military forces and still others were representatives of the business community. Our children were enrolled in Sunday school and began to learn the story of what our Lord did to

rescue us from our sins. They participated in the Christmas programs of the ACB and received religious instruction from Pastor Bray at the JFK School. Pastor Bray confirmed our oldest daughter, Rebecca, in the faith. Proverbs 22:6 reminds us to "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it", an admonition that the American Church in Berlin took seriously. We are grateful for the instruction our children received during their formative years in Berlin.

We enjoyed the opportunity to participate in the ministry of the ACB and to be of service to other Christians. Gary served as an usher for the summer services held in Gedächtnis Kirche and was a member of the committee working with Vicar Tim White. The vicarage year is an important experience for seminarians and Berlin provided a unique setting for the training and witness experience of a future pastor under the watchful eye of an experienced clergyman like Alan Bray. A real highlight of that period was when Gary was able to take Tim to Wittenberg for the 1989 Reformation service at the Schloss Kirche. It was a moving experience to be able to worship our Lord Jesus Christ with our German brethren during a critical period in their history, when they were witnessing to the power of their faith in the Creator and its ability to bring freedom to those enslaved in body and soul.

The American Church in Berlin afforded our family a unique opportunity to experience power of the Gospel "in all nations". The members of the congregation come from nations all over the world, united only in their common location in Berlin and their faith in Jesus Christ as the Savior of the

world. We also were fortunate that the ACB had a close relationship with the Paulus Gemeinde in Zehlendorf. We learned about the multinational nature of the Christian faith through the opportunity to worship together with the members of the Paulus Gemeinde, ACB members from all over the world, and tourists visiting Berlin. The American Church in Berlin provided us with the opportunity to be witnesses to our German and other foreign friends that the power of the Gospel was at work among Americans, wherever they may be. The members of our family will never forget the opportunities provided to us by the American Church in Berlin.

The Christian Church does not exist in a vacuum, but shines like a city on a hill wherever it is located. This is certainly true of the American Church in Berlin. For more than a century it has provided an English language witness to the power of the Gospel to those who live and visit the German capital. It is a place for residents and visitors alike to gather to hear the Word and come to faith in the Savior of the World. It is uniquely placed to provide comfort and the word of salvation in a busy and complex world. The Beard family began worshipping as residents and continues to worship at the American Church in Berlin as tourists. It changed our view of the church and its outreach and transformed the lives of our children. We have warm memories of our fellow believers in Berlin and continue to support the work of the congregation. We are confident that the American Church in Berlin will continue to labor to confess the faith and bring the saving Word of the Gospel to all who come to Berlin.

*Gary and Jane Beard
Bellevue, Washington*

World Radio

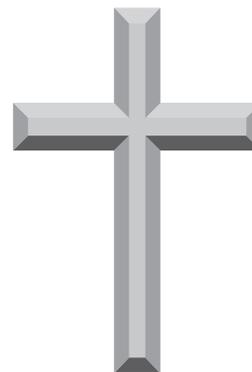
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Thirteen-year-old Becky prepares for her upcoming confirmation by attending weekly confirmation classes. She tells us, "In confirmation you read and recite, but here you talk about what God might mean in those stories. I have come to understand God more." At ACB Becky also finds friends who understand her, and to whom she can easily relate. "In school the friends are, they act cool. And here the friends are nice. Here they are nice and just friends and don't try to act cool or anything, they are just normal," she says.

Fifteen-year-old David chimes in. "I like the congregation it is nice. I can't say I am a strong believer, but I do believe in God and in Jesus." When asked how important is the community feeling that you have here he replies, "That is the most important."

At the American Church in Berlin, Christianity and Community go hand in hand.

Leah McDonnell, for DW-World in Berlin.



PARIS CONNECTION



The Reverend Barry Paul Dawson is Called as Senior Pastor of The American Church in Paris

Following a lengthy search involving more than 200 candidates, the Reverend Barry Dawson has been called to serve as the next Senior Pastor of The American Church in Paris. Pastor Dawson, his wife Shelly, their son Evan and daughter Bethany moved to Paris at the beginning of September. Their oldest son Bradley remains in the U.S. where he is starting his freshman year at Hope College in Michigan. Pastor Dawson led his first worship services and preached at the ACP on October 1st. His formal installation as Senior Pastor will take place on Sunday, November 14th. The Reverend Scott Campbell will preach at the installation service.

Prior to receiving the call from ACP, Pastor Dawson was Senior Pastor of First Presbyterian Church in Sioux Falls, South Dakota. His prior international congregations include four years as Senior Pastor at Tokyo Union Church, Tokyo, Japan, and three years as Senior Pastor of The American Protestant Church of The Hague, The Hague, Netherlands. He has also filled Senior Pastor positions at First Presbyterian Church, Newark, Delaware, and First Presbyterian Church, Kalispell, Montana.

He is a graduate of Lycoming College in Williamsport, Pennsylvania, received his Master of Divinity degree from Pittsburgh Theological Seminary in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and holds a Master of Science in Education, majoring in Pastoral Counseling, from Duquesne University in Pittsburgh. He is completing his Doctor of Ministry degree at McCormick Theological Seminary in Chicago, Illinois, majoring in Parish Revitalization.

We are delighted to have a Senior Pastor with his broad scope of previous assignments, both in the U.S., and internationally. He is very easy to get to know and will be a pleasure to work with. The family's comfort in international assignments was immediately evident as Barry and Shelly got moved-in, and both Evan and Bethany adjusted to their new city and school environments. Congratulations to Barry and the entire Dawson family. We look forward to a wonderful future for the ACP with them in Paris.

Norm Findley, Vice President AFCU and Search Committee Chair

Twin Pillars of the ACP

Every church needs members who work to keep things functioning. When Doug and Danielle (Dani) Lippoldt joined the ACP in 1994, it hit the jackpot! For ten years now you can run into one or the other of them nearly any day of the week going off to run a meeting or conduct other church business. Or you can find them with their daughters, Erika and Rachel, at the 9:00 a.m. service sitting in the front row.

Doug became interested in foreign countries listening to talk around the dinner table of relatives in the Merchant Marine, of reflections of war veterans and of stories of family and friends who had traveled afar. The "forbidden" aspect of the countries involved in the Cold War fascinated him and he started to read about the cultures of Eastern Europe. Born in Missouri, he ended up, via New Jersey, in Maryland where he subsequently undertook a degree in international studies at Washington College including a special focus on economics. In April of his senior year, he developed a deep extra-curricular interest in a sophomore by the name of Dani. In May each went his own way, Dani to Taiwan (to study Mandarin) and Doug to Germany where a Fulbright scholarship enabled him to study at the University of Cologne. There he was able to compare the differences in educational systems where the German professors were on literal and figurative pedestals and the library stacks were closed to browsers, but the academic standards were high. After a rewarding year abroad, he headed to University of Denver for a two year program where he earned a Master's Degree in International Studies, again with a special focus on economics. While he was there, Dani joined him and they set off for a summer course in Mexico. After they both completed their studies in 1982, they were married and went off to join the Peace Corps and serve in Burkina Faso. There, they spent two years living in a small village without electricity or running water.

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Speaking a combination of French and the local language (Moré), Dani worked with the women to design more efficient cook stoves while Doug helped the men to reforest and to build a well, water-retention walls and tree nurseries. Dani found the “Africans live for the moment which makes them such beautiful people.” The people were poor but very generous and were “always ready to give a couple of live chickens, which they would tie to the handlebars of our motorbikes.” Doug and Dani found that roosters crow all night and not just in the morning whereas most of the hens were consigned to laying eggs.

When they returned to Washington, D.C. in 1984, Doug worked for the government as an economist specializing in trade and labor issues including provision of technical assistance to projects in Eastern Europe. He was then hired by the OECD in 1992 to run projects in Eastern Europe, mostly in Russia where things were opening up and unemployment became a reality to contend with. They moved to Paris with their two girls, two and four years old. Doug was traveling a lot and Dani was often left to fend for herself. Having lived abroad she thought adjusting would be a simple matter before being struck with the reality of trying to learn a new language (i.e. French as spoken in France) and new customs that looked skeptically at a mother with a 2 year old and 4 year old “at home” rather than in school.

In 1994 the Lippoldts became involved with the ACP. Doug eventually became Vice Chair of Social Concerns Committee and then Chair for three years. During this time he had an “obsession” of trying to put the committee in order and define procedures for allocating the newly expanded 100,000 franc budget strategically and effectively. Committee members launched new initiatives such as participation in the mission lunches at the American Cathedral, on-site visits to charities, and development of long-term relationships with local missions such as CASP and the Mission évangélique parmi les sans-logis. At the end of his term Doug was presented by the committee with a leather-bound Life Application Bible and he spent the following nine months studying it, reading a chapter a day until he was approached to serve as Moderator. Although at first he felt unable to accept this responsibility, he finally “gave in” after hearing a sermon by then ACP Pastor Larry Kalajainen about the importance of Christian service to one’s faith life.

Doug began his term inauspiciously in March 2001 seeking to give a bit more structure to the Council and Executive Committee functioning. The leadership team launched a number of administrative enhancements such as development of rules for meeting conduct and implementation of a rotation for the pastors giving them a Sunday off periodically. Then 9/11 hit and nothing was the same. The Church Council leadership had to contend with added security needs and a growing budget crunch (which was also linked to the global economic downturn). A key issue was the loss of revenue due to fewer weddings. With a Herculean effort the team managed to balance the budget, improve church administration and accounting, create a procedures manual, and oversee a series of church programs that are flourishing from Youth Groups to Music Programs and everything in between. This was accomplished despite the serious budget problems and the high turnover that exists in an international church. Doug asked the pastors to give short Bible studies each semester in the regular Council meetings, which served to remind members of why they were there and to boost the idea of Christian fellowship. Doug’s favorite metaphor is of the ACP as a “Big Tent” where we celebrate our diversity, where we share our core beliefs and tolerate our differences.

Doug’s greatest satisfaction was working with such a dedicated group of dedicated pastors, staff and volunteers each contributing industriously to the success of the ACP and AFCU. He combats the stressful aspect of leadership through his faith and spiritual nourishment including periodic attendance in the adult Bible studies and regular reading of scripture and scholarship. He believes being a successful leader entails treating people fairly, respecting others and being open and honest.

Having devoted about 15 hours weekly attending to church business for the last three and a half years, Doug woke up after his last day as Moderator, checked his computer first thing in the morning, as was his habit, and found no church business; so ...he read the paper! His projects for the future involve spending more time with his family, hiking in nature, listening to music and dabbling with the piano and ukulele (no concerts

planned for the moment), possibly writing a book on economics for non academics, Bible study, sports, cleaning out his in-box and catching up on his sleep! We wish you well, Doug.

In the meantime, Dani is continuing with her duties at the ACP and elsewhere (maybe she could interest Doug in taking some cooking classes). Dani was born in Laos to a Vietnamese mother and an American father. An American couple, Mr. and Mrs. Robert D. Kennedy, adopted her as a newborn and the family lived in various Asian capitals and the Maryland suburbs. Dani’s father worked for the CIA, so she was brought up as a “third culture kid.” (It was only recently, at a lecture hosted by ACP, that Dani learned that term for kids who find it difficult to answer the question: “where are you from?”) She and Doug are thankful to be able to provide their daughters with



Doug and Dani Lippoldt

a similar experience of growing up abroad. Dani feels immense gratitude both to her birth mother who had the courage to give her up for adoption and to her parents who gave her a childhood rich in love and experiences. Her parents also adopted a second infant Vietnamese/American daughter and a Vietnamese/French boy about six years old.

Dani and Doug met at Washington College on the Eastern Shore of Maryland. After her stint in the Peace Corps, Dani feels every American child should live in a developing country at least three months, her own experience making a big difference in her life. After returning to Washington with Doug, Dani got her Master’s in Library Science and worked as a cataloger for medical libraries in the D.C. area. After the girls were born, she went with Doug to Paris where he had an 11-month contract with the OECD. Twelve years

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Twin Pillars of the ACP

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later, they are still here now living in Chaville in a charming French house, which was formerly an inn. After the initial shock of contending with the French system and trying to do things the French way, Dani finally made her way to the ACP where she has been active ever since. She was involved as a leader in a Bible Study program for four years. Currently she is in charge of the ACP Lending Library where she buys books and writes articles. If you wander into the library after the service, she can find just the right book or tape for you. She became head of the Christian Education Committee in 2002 where among other responsibilities she taught Sunday school to junior high schoolers for two years. Working with Tina Blair and the Youth Pastor (formerly with Stephen Sours and now with Karen Halec), her committee also oversees programming for Sunday school, Adult Education, the annual Retreat, Youth and Young Adults Bible Study. Last year she trained for the Docent program which fulfills a great need as a lot of tourists wander in straight from the Bateau Mouche to see the church, particularly the Tiffany windows. Last spring Dani also joined the training program for lay care givers who help the Pastors make hospital visits, welcome new families or lend a compassionate ear to someone facing difficulties; they will find a good listener in Dani.

Dani is also head of the English Language Library at the International Sections at the Collège de Sèvres. (Rachel is in 9th grade at the Collège and Erika is in the 11th grade at the Lycée). She has brought improvements to the library by introducing a new cataloging system and working with the teachers to make up lists of book recommendations for the 6th to 9th graders. She staffs the library two to three days a week where she enjoys interacting with the students and sparking their interest for reading books in English.

Dani loves walking in the woods near her house, especially when the bluebells are in bloom. Naturally she loves to read and her new favorite vacation spot is Maui, Hawaii although she likes Switzerland and the Netherlands as well. Family excursions and ski trips with the church are also favorite activities.

Thank you both for all the infinite patience and kindness you express and for your devotion to ACP.

Cobi Camberlin, Paris Correspondent

News From my Sidewalk Café

It's rentrée time, encore, in Paris. After a somewhat cool summer, September is parfaite (perfect)... Paris at it's best. There's lots of sunshine with a soft breeze, sitting in the sidewalk café anytime of the day is wonderful but even more glorious lingering over dinner with friends in the evening.

Rentrée, the usual bustle of Paris reawakening after the eerie days of August, brings the "Bloom Where You're Planted" program preparations in full force. Bloom always makes me nostalgic for the many good friends that have enriched my life, (usually met there.)

Perhaps, I'm in an even more nostalgic mood this year because the atmosphere of Paris was immersed with the celebration on August 25th for the 60th anniversary of the liberation of Paris. The day was filled with a grand parade, including American military jeeps, army personnel (real and those enjoying "le look"), and hundreds of French and Americans dressed 40's style parading down the avenues.

They recreated "l'entrée de Paris" just as it had been 60 years before. The women wore hats with veils, anklets with their heels, and bright red lipstick. The men had cuffed and pleated pants suits, wide ties and brimmed felt hats or blue striped shirts, mustaches and berets. Boys were in short pants and girls wore big bows. The soldiers threw chocolate bars, chewing gum, and received big kisses from every age female along the way. Scottish Pipers piped down the parade route.

A Charles de Gaulle look-a-like led the famous walk through the Arc de Triomphe down the Champs-Elysee right to the Hotel de Ville with hordes of costumed French, Americans and Brits, arm in arm singing, chanting, waving their flags; dancing and chewing gum! Glenn Miller bands played at the Eiffel Tower, the Bastille and Hotel de Ville, during the day and long into the night. American, British, (other Allied) and French Flags flew over the Hotel de Ville, down the Champs, Rue de Rivoli, Trocadero, and all around the Eiffel Tower. A sight to behold, croyez-moi!

(Believe me!)

Several months ago there had been ads in the Fusac, the Internet and one or two small ads in papers looking for Americans or Brits as "extras". (Same thing in French papers, I'm told.) I imagined it was probably for a movie, thought about it but did nothing. Now, I'm sorry I didn't follow through. I talked to one of the participants in the parade and they had a great time of get-togethers to rehearse the dancing, singing, etc. More than half the fun had been in the preparation for the event with many young French participants very excited to be part of the program.

Every newspaper and television news team reported the event during several days and recounted the news from 60 years ago. The International Herald Tribune had a solid week, inside their usual editions, with reprinted front-page news from 60 years ago. People who had actually lived during the time were encouraged to recount their stories, which were individually fascinating. Paris celebrated, as only Paris knows how and Franco-American-British relations appeared shining for at least one solid week. Mais, Paris did remember, did celebrate, and did remember to say "Merci Beaucoup" loud and strong. Even President Chirac made a grateful speech of remerciement (thanks) which I hope was widely reported in the United States.

I'm aussi (also) nostalgic je crois (I think) because our new Pastor and his family arrived this week at the ACP. He began immediately a "cours intensif" at the Alliance Francaise. I still remember those first days of school, feeling so dumb. Mais, I remember, avec plaisir, le delight in discovering new firsts. Remember tasting chevre-chaud-on-toast salads, discovering each new fromage (cheese) as you dared to try them, that creative driving didn't kill you when you went around the Arc de Triomphe, that the basement of BHV was your local HandyMan Shop, that the mounds of mushrooms at le marché had names you never heard, that lettuce that still had dirt in it, and light bulbs that didn't screw in? Ca c'est la rentrée pour moi cette annee.... Nostalgic! (That's back-to-school for me this year).

I hope it doesn't mean I'm getting old. Guess I'll drown that thought in another café au lait!

A bientôt!

Ellen Savet, Paris correspondent



VIENNA CONNECTION



Farewell from the Wibergs

“Keep alert, stand firm in your faith, be courageous, be strong. Let all that you do be done in love.” (I Corinthians 16:13).

My colleague, Dr. Larry Kalajainen quoted these words of the Apostle Paul to his congregation in Paris when he departed for the states and it seems to me like appropriate advise for all of the participants in the life and ministry of the Vienna Community Church.

As Luray and I bid farewell this coming Sunday, we will be honored to hear the testimonials of church leaders and pastors, the special music of VCC friends, the wonderful food dishes in a potluck meal following our worship service, but most of all **WE WILL BE HONORED BY YOUR FAITHFULNESS AND CONTINUING SUPPORT OF THE GOSPEL MINISTRY OF JESUS CHRIST THROUGH THE VIENNA COMMUNITY CHURCH.**

Pastors come and go, but the **WORD OF OUR GOD WILL STAND FOREVER.** This Word may be “housed” in different forms in various cultures and countries. This is the distinct “flavor” of the VCC.... you, the people of God....who come from so many different places of the world.

On Sunday, we will also welcome **NEWCOMERS TO THE VCC,** who have found a place with us in this journey to distant lands. Courageous and strong members are needed for the future....people who will commit both their time and their wealth to the challenges of reaching out to the English speaking community of Vienna.

As we say farewell, we will not say goodbye, for “we are a part of all that we have met” and we will take with us the memories and friendships which have been formed here in this great city. The world, being an ever shrinking planet means that some of you will come to visit us in Colorado and we will certainly be back to check up on a new granddaughter soon to be born to our son Dave and his wife Jenn here in Vienna.

For those of you who not yet heard, Luray and I retire to Silverthorne, Colorado at the end of this month.

Our new address is:

Jim and Luray Wiberg
P.O. Box 283
305 Saddle Ridge Drive
Silverthorne, CO 80498-0283
Tel: 970-262-3632
Email: Luray2Jim@yahoo.com

We will cherish our memories, your letters, your pictures, but most of all we will look forward to your visits. We will be in the Rocky Mountains about 70 miles west of Denver and we will have two guest rooms reserved for you, so please come and “hang out” with us for awhile.

Until we meet again, may the Peace of Christ enfold you.

With love and prayer that you will continue to be “strong and courageous” in your faith, letting “all that you do be done in love.” (I Cor. 16:13)

Jim and Luray Wiberg

Vienna Community Church News

The information found on VCC’s website (<http://www.viennacommunitychurch.com/>) includes the notice that we are looking for a qualified and experienced person to fill VCC’s presently vacant pastor’s post. However, at a spring meeting of the governing Board it was decided that, as of September, we would endeavor to fill the minister’s position on an interim basis until spring 2005.

The minister recruited for a September-December 2004 interim assignment had a change of plans but may be available after Christmas. In the meantime we are filling the pulpit with locally available theologians.

At the meeting of VCC’s Board on Monday, 13 September, the most important agenda item was the recruitment of a pastor. It was decided to call the Rev. Troy Morgan, who recently served for a year at the American Church in London, as our interim pastor October-December 2004. On a provisional basis the Rev. Jack Hustad has agreed to serve us during January and February 2005 and the Rev. John Rogers has offered to serve us on an interim basis March-May 2005.

The VCC will now undertake to recruit a full time pastor, to take up duties as from June 2005. Initially, a pastor about to commence a sabbatical leave would be given full consideration.

Bill Price, VCC Moderator

Music CD Offer

For a donation of at least \$10.00, you can receive a music CD featuring the Choir of the Vienna Community Church conducted by Jacquelyn Pruett.

- The CD contains:
- *Ceremony of Carols* by Benjamin Britten, featuring Harpist, Arcola Clark
 - A Collection of Favorite Anthems.

To receive a copy of this CD, send your mailing information below along with donation of \$10.00 minimum to:

Jerry Burns
76 Earlsgate Rd.
Dayton, OH 45440

Make checks payable to the American & Foreign Christian Union. Donations will benefit the Vienna Community Church.



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Please send me a copy of the music CD featuring the Vienna Community Church Choir.
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We are Rich!

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said that she was feeling very tired and empty and something compelled her to come in. She expressed that she felt as though she was always giving, giving of herself and her time and love. With tears in her eyes, Jasmin said that she felt that everyone, her friends and family seemed only to take and had come to expect that she would just give.

Jasmin felt that there was no one to give to her. I responded that there is someone who gives to her every day and indeed has given His most precious belonging to her and it is a gift that never ends. We talked for a long time and finally Jasmin said that it must have been meant for her to come into the church that day - so that we would meet and be able to talk. She asked if it would be okay for her to visit the church sometimes although she is not a Christian. In my opinion, she is not a Christian—yet.

Things like that happen all the time since we have been in the Luther Church and although it is not related directly to the campaign, from my standpoint, I believe that it is the single most compelling reason for people to give to the ACB Luther Church campaign—so that the doors can be open seven days a week. The next Jasmin may not be able to wait for Sunday to come around.



Kindest regards,

*Denise Banks-Grosedyck
ACB Campaign Manager*

2 Cor. 9-7 Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.