



30 Day Vienna Exploratory Trip

May 18-Jun22, 2018



Thank you for your patience in waiting to hear back from me. As soon as I got off the plane from Austria, it was back to work for me. I cannot thank you all enough for your financial and spiritual support. This venture would not have been possible if not for all of your support and prayers. The Lord answered so many prayers during this trip and worked through me to touch so many lives.

I guess the second thing you all want to know is what's the next step? Well, the next step is I'm going back to Vienna, Austria as a Missionary! Vienna Christian Center (VCC) graciously extended an invitation to me at the end of the trip. I will return to VCC as a missionary staff member in the church.

While I am over there some of my responsibilities will be discipleship training, assisting in church service development and church planting. At present, VCC operates 13 services in 5 campuses on a weekend to 9 language speaking congregations within the church.



Sky view of the city overlooking UN building.

The city of Vienna has a population of 1.8 million people and is divided into 23 districts. For us to reach this many people in a growing metropolis we would need to plant a campus in each district. To accomplish this immense goal we will need everyone's help to make this happen.

I am overjoyed to be going back and serving with the people I already call family. My church, the Worship Center, in Lancaster will be both my sending church and the missions' board I report to as well. I have been meeting with Missions Pastor as he helps me plan for this new ministry I am stepping into. This is a big step of faith for me.

Preparing to Step out in Faith



Me with the 2017 Austria missions team.

When I went on the first missions trip to Vienna with my church team back in August of 2017, that's when I heard the calling of Lord to return and make this my base of ministry. I spoke to Pastor Larry Henderson, the Lead Pastor of Vienna Christian Center and Shawn Ginder our church's missionary about what the Lord had placed on my heart.

They suggested I return for a 30 day exploratory visit, so that I could experience regular missionary life and see the full scope of the ministry. What started as a 30 day trip, soon turned into a 40 day "Wilderness" time with the Lord.

In the Wilderness with the Lord

Pastor Larry Henderson laid out some simple instructions for me to follow on this trip. He ask me, "to assist Pastor Shawn and Chapa, to observe every aspect of the ministry and the culture it exists in and to listen to the voice of God."

That may sound simple but if you could see my journal you would realize how difficult a task that was for me. Nevertheless, I will attempt to share with you the highlights of this amazing trip the best way I know how.

Assist: Being the Hands of God

The first thing I had to learn quickly in Vienna was how to use public transportation (in German), so that I could assist in everyday ministry work. A couple times the locations were in opposite directions, so I had to plan my day accordingly.

There were several opportunities to serve from wiping down thousands of chairs for the Celebration Sunday in the park, to picking up food from the Czech Republic for the refugee food pantry at VCC.

The one highlight for me was doing church set-up every week. Every Saturday evening we had to set-up for Sunday service at the District 22 campus in Rennweg. We used the 3rd floor multi-purpose room of the International Christian School.

This became a chance to fellowship and learn about the lives of the men and women of that campus. We would spend several hours together setting up chairs, sound equipment, a stage, lighting,

classrooms, a refreshment area and greeting tables. Trust me it was hot, sweaty and painful work but I looked forward to seeing the people I would minister with each week.

Observe: Seeing with eyes of Love

The second thing I had to focus on during the trip was observing the ministry and the culture. There were two main areas that stood out to me on this trip, the battle between apathy and love. Let me explain.

The Austrians are rather apathetic (showing a lack of interest or enthusiasm) towards religion or faith. For the most part they just tolerate it because it's the law. Not to mention their social system makes life so comfortable that a person has no need for anything else. But there has been a growing distaste amongst certain groups in the country that would like to see religion done away with from the culture all together. And that's a scary reality in any country.

On the other hand, there is a glimmer of hope in the form of God's love radiating from the church and pushing back on the darkness, drawing the Austrians towards the light. It's a freedom they have never experienced before and people are curious. The love and unity I see at VCC is infectious and the city of Vienna wants to know why it exists? Why are these people so generous? What really brings all these races and nationalities together? Which leads me to my final point, what is God saying to me?

Listen: Hearing the Voice of God

HOPE! Hope is what I heard the Lord speak over and over again. They need to know the hope of the Savior. I came into contact with so many people in Austria who believe they have a good life. They don't understand why they need "religion"? Yet they are still searching for something missing from their lives and they don't realize the answer they're seeking is the one they are rejecting.



Evette Matta at the Meeting Place where she ministers to young people.

Evette Matta, is a 60 year old Egyptian Christian, who escaped persecution from her country with her husband and two small children when she was only 30 years old. "They need to know the hope of Christ", she says. "I pray that young men like you would come and share the message with them and that they would turn their hearts to God."

"God is about to bless the world through Austria in a special way," proclaims Kelly Uhunoma from the African Fellowship. And bless the world he shall do.



Kelly Uhunoma and Misa Vakadrano my brothers in arms.

I believe God has called and equipped me to encourage others to find their purpose and develop them for ministry in the world. "For we are God's masterpiece , He created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do good things he planned for us long ago. " Ephesians 2:10, NLT

My desire is to see young men and women rise up and be equipped to share the gospel of Jesus Christ throughout Austria, Europe and the ends of the world. We have an opportunity to infect and effect the world with HOPE!

This is not a short term trip, but a life-long ministry, where I get to share my life experiences in

leading worship, life group growth and walking the Christian journey with other people.

I am already hard at work planning for my return to Austria in the Spring of 2019. I welcome your prayers and financial support as I gear up for this next leg of the ministry. I am also looking forward to getting in contact with all of you and finding out how God is working in your lives as well. God bless you and keep making disciples.

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In His service,

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