

Europe: Summer 1947

At the end last time we talked about Schaeffer's trip to Europe. He had been sent to make a survey of the situation in the evangelical churches there, as so little was known after the war. He was sent to investigate the possibility and status of children's work. He also was to look into the issue of encouraging the churches there to take a stand against liberalism and to see how evangelical churches in Europe felt about the World Council of Churches. So he was on his way to Europe, and the journey lasted for three months. It was July, August, and September of 1947. As you will see from the summary of the trip, he visited 31 cities in 13 countries. Some of those cities he visited more than once. He slept in 56 different places during those 90 days. During the time he interviewed approximately two leaders or pastors of Christian groups every day for those 90 days in all the different places that he went. He often had tremendous difficulties of language and needed interpretation. His primary purpose for being there was to find out what was happening in the evangelical church. But in addition to all these personal interviews, he also went to various meetings. In particular he went to the Oslo Young People's Conference of the Meeting of the World Council of Churches. Here he heard Visser 't Hooft, who was the general secretary of the World Council of Churches, and Neibuhr speak.

Let us talk about what his time was like, what he discovered, and how his journeys affected him. During his time in Europe he wrote 15 formal, long letters back to his church as well as the personal ones he wrote to his wife and children. He reported every detail of his trip with great care. In one letter he covers a multitude of things. He talks about the landscape, the life in the churches, the museums and buildings that he saw, and his personal experiences in travel. I want to help us to see what his time was like by looking at it under several different points.

We will start first with the difficulties of travel, because he had difficulties on the journey itself. It is hard to imagine what travel must have been like at that time. Europe was still tremendously damaged by the war, so travel was very difficult. All sorts of things were broken down. As well as buildings being bombed, many of the railway lines, roads, and bridges were bombed. Europe was still very much in the stage of reconstruction. I can still remember from the early 1950s when I was a little boy what parts of Britain were still like. Large parts of France, Italy, and Germany were in a much worse state than Britain was in terms of the amount of devastation from bombs. I can remember whole city centers that were basically empty of buildings and in rubble when I was six or seven years old in the early 1950s. In 1947 in the part of Europe that experienced the war most terribly, one can imagine what it was like. This affected travel tremendously.

Looking at Schaeffer's letter, on page one it says that travel was very difficult. There were very complicated police regulations wherever he went. This letter is written from Italy. He says, "I checked on police regulations in Italy and find that Monday I have to go and report to the police and also get a new visa to get back into Italy after visiting Greece." Even though he would only be gone for two or three days, he would have to get a second visa to return to Italy. All these things had to be done as he traveled. He said, "I have said it before, but I think more all the time that anyone who travels in Europe this summer for pleasure should have his head examined. Every step is toil and trouble. For example, all of the American Express offices are crowded with people and short of experienced help." On page three of the same letter he says, "I spend the next couple of hours at the government office. Imagine the confusion of one of our more crowded government offices but with everyone speaking Italian. They sent me out to buy legal paper and revenue stamps at a tobacco store, of all places! Then a man wrote out my request in Italian. Then I had to see the boss, who spoke and read not one word of English. Whatever my request said, it got the permission. They pasted in the stamps, and all was fine. Then I shook hands with the boss, patted everyone who helped me on the shoulder, tipped the man who wrote out the request, and left." If you read through all the letters, which I did last week, he spent hours and hours in offices, trying to

get permission to do the various things that he wanted to do. They are fascinating letters. Sometimes the permission was not forthcoming, and sometimes they would tell him to come back the next day.

Travel was also difficult in flying to places. He had to keep going back and checking and checking because at that time there were no regular flights. It was not like today with a fixed schedule, even though sometimes today flights are late. There was no fixed schedule. You would book a ticket, and they would say that it might go out tomorrow or the next day. You would get there and find that it had gone already or it would go three days later. Maybe it would not go at all that week. Everything was much more difficult. On page four there is another rather amusing example. This is in Naples, "At the station, the porter charged me about a dollar, but I guess it was worth it, for he got me a seat in an already crowded train. When he found it I put my hat down and went with him to check where he was going to put my suitcase. When I got back a man was calmly lifting up my hat to sit down. I made terrifying noises, waved my arms in good Italian style, and kept the seat!" Again on page 6 there are a few more examples. He says, "After supper I took the taxi to the TWA office. The bus was supposed to leave at 9:45 but did not pull out until 10:15. Then they kept us at the airport until 1:30. Really, the things they do make so little sense that they are funny. For example, they took all our passports at the airfield then announced it was time to leave. They took us out in the darkness with only very distant lights to give any light. Then standing there, they tried to read the names on the passports to return them. If it had been less impossible, people would have grumbled, but it was so utterly ridiculous that we all laughed! At times you wonder even if two and two make four any longer." These were the difficulties of traveling from one place to another.

He speaks of the way the trains were tremendously overcrowded. Edith gives an example from one of the letters on page 264 of *The Tapestry*. Francis wrote, "In Germany the regular trains at times did not come for days. When they did arrive, people swarmed on, climbing through the windows as well as the doors." Edith says, "While waiting for his train, Fran helped some to get into windows. People were desperate to get wherever they needed to go. Some climbed onto the roof in determination." He writes about that in several of the letters. Many of the trains were very crowded like that. People hung out of the windows, sat on the roof, and were absolutely squashed in. It is like the game of seeing how many people you can get in a telephone booth. All the trains were like that. Those were the difficulties of travel, getting visas, and actually getting on the planes or trains.

Francis also had problems with the food in Europe. The food was very different, but often it was extremely poor food that he ate. Most European countries still had rationing at that time. He mentions in one of the letters how in Amsterdam, for example, all the parks still had vegetable gardens in them instead of flowers. You found that all over Europe during the war. I still have a gardening book from England of how to turn all your flower gardens and shrubberies into vegetable patches and still make them look beautiful. They advised you on all sorts of plants to grow and how to grow them to make your vegetables look like a flower garden. That is what everyone did. You had to tear up everything that was ornamental, because there were such terrible food shortages all over Europe. That is the way war is. Everywhere every piece of spare ground had food growing on it. It was still like that in 1947. There were potato gardens right in the middle of Amsterdam in the parks. He says that it reminded him of the time during the war when many Dutch people lived on tulip bulbs because they had nothing else to eat. They were past that stage by 1947, but the food was still tremendously poor and very sparse over much of Europe.

He mentions something about this in England as well when he went there a little later on the journey. On page 267 of *The Tapestry* it talks about his experience on a train in England. He says, "I ate in the third class diner and had sausages. I asked the men at the table what they had in them, and a fine old gentleman said, 'Some meat,' at which the whole table broke out in gales of laughter. As a matter of fact, of course, the sausages were 100% soybean. The men said that monotony is the worst danger in food in England now. They find they eat so little that their energy is gradually growing less." I can remember rationing when I was still a little boy. There were very few things to choose from. I remember my parents telling a funny example, in retrospect. There were

such tremendous food shortages, and at one time they won a parcel of food, which came from the United States, in the village raffle. They used most everything themselves, but one tin of cocoa that did not smell quite right. They lived in the country and were fortunate enough to have chickens so they could get fresh eggs. So they fed the cocoa to their chickens, but it killed all the chickens! They were very thankful they had not eaten the cocoa themselves. So Francis had tremendous problems with the food. He became very sick at one point when he was in Oslo. He had to go into the hospital for several days with a temperature of 104. He had regular penicillin injections, which at that time were extremely painful. He says they burned like fire in his body when he was given them. He was very ill. By the end of the journey, he was completely exhausted. We should try to imagine going on a journey like he did, sleeping in 56 different places in 90 days. Traveling to so many countries and cities would be exhausting at any time. The conditions that existed in Europe at that time made it an awful journey in terms of the tremendous pressure that it put on him.

The second point that I want to make is that his time in Europe gave him a window onto the effects of war in Europe. He experienced that partly through the travel itself and the difficulty of it. Everywhere he saw the signs and effects of war and the bombing. He writes about how in Munich there were so many bombed buildings that often you would go through streets and all that was standing of many of the houses were just the front walls with the curtains fluttering in the breeze. He visited Hitler's stadium in Nuremberg, which is an enormous stadium. Today it is restored, and you can see it as it was. But at that time it was still in its war-torn condition. He writes about when he went to Venice and was sickened by the tremendous destruction that the war had wrought there.

In many parts of Europe, and England in particular, there was a tremendous shortage of workers everywhere. There were notices on the factories wanting people to work because so many men had been killed in the war. In many situations they could not get enough people to work. France lost so many people in the two wars that they had to create a huge child benefit allowance to encourage people to have children. They had such a shortage of men that there was a desperate need for people to have children, and the population was declining. There were tremendous problems, and Francis could see the consequences of the war wherever he went.

He describes how when he was in Greece there were still fresh bullet holes in the walls of the place where he stayed. This was from two weeks before where the British soldiers were in Greece trying to drive the communists out. There was still a civil war going on in Greece after the second war. He describes as well what it was like when he visited Prague in what was then Czechoslovakia. He was there just a few weeks before Czechoslovakia was completely closed due to the communist takeover. He says a pastor whom he visited took him to see the little flowers stuck in the walls at points all over the city. The pastor said, "These are places where our people were killed as they tried to resist German takeover, waiting for the Americans to come and free us." Edith writes, "As an American, Fran felt sick that the Americans had held back to let the Russians come in and take over." He got a tremendous sense of the way that people felt in Eastern Europe about their betrayal. This is a betrayal that they are still living under, as Europe was divided at the end of the war between the West and the Soviet Union. Francis experienced this, went around Europe, and saw the effects of the war, which in some places was still going on. Certainly in its effects it is still very much ongoing with us right up to the present time. It gave Francis a new vision of the tremendous importance of human ideas and philosophies. Nazism in Germany under Hitler was a philosophy that had an enormous impact on the whole life of Europe. As he traveled around Europe, he could see that impact and the tremendous human cost it took to resist that. People tried to resist the Nazis as they sought to overrun the whole of Western Europe. He saw both the power of ideas, what they can do to societies, and the costs of resisting them. He had a new and much clearer vision of the effects and dangers of communism and what was happening in Eastern Europe as well. In a way it gave him a clear sightedness both with regard to Marxism and to totalitarianism of the right. That is the second point: he was given a window on the world of war-torn Europe. This made him acutely aware in a new way of the power of human ideas and the effect they have on the destinies of ordinary people who may have no interest in those

ideas themselves. It was something that he began to express later in the phrase, “As a man thinks, so he is.” What people think shapes the whole of their lives and the life of whole nations.

A third point I want to make about Francis’ journeys is a very different one. That is, for the first time he saw for himself the art museums and buildings of Europe. Before he had begun to read about them, but now he really saw them for the first time. In a way on that trip, as Edith points out, the things that he saw laid the foundation for *How Should We Then Live*, which came nearly 30 years later. It was a film that was made, and the book went with it. It gave him a sense of history, civilization, and a tremendous appreciation for the arts and architecture. If you look in the letter, there are several places where he describes some of the things that he saw. Every minute that he did not interview someone or attend some meeting, he explored the cities that he was in. He went to museums, walked around, looked at buildings, and saw tremendous historical and artistic wealth in so many European cities. It is quite dramatic if you go from America for the first time to a city like Venice or Rome. You are used to seeing buildings that at the oldest are 100 years old, even less if you live out in California. It was such a shock to me the first time I visited California when Vicky and I were married in 1967. I do not think I saw anything that was older than about 60 years, and most things were about 20 or 30 years old. When you come from a culture where every city and small town has buildings that are 500 to 1000 years old and the centers of the cities were shaped 900 to 1000 years ago, it is quite dramatic to come into a situation where everything is so recent in comparison.

Francis had the experience the other way around. He went back into the past in a way, seeing the wealth of European civilization and culture. If you look, for example, on page one of this letter, it describes a walk that he took in Rome. He says, “I crossed a bridge, went to the next, crossed back, and wound my way to the Via Vitoria. There is much statuary, fountains, and gardens. The city has a personality. But with the beauty there is much squalor... I went into the excavations. First there are the various forums. A surprising number of columns are standing. The houses are in general well defined. The construction is mostly of a thin brick and one inch thick. It must have been of this that Caesar boasted he had found Rome a city of brick and left it a city of marble. I saw the House of the Vestals and heard a guide pointing out the house where the famous words were spoken, ‘Beware the Ides of March.’ Later I heard him showing the spot where Julius Caesar was cremated... I saw the ruins of the basilica of Constantine built in 290.” The columns would have been 2000 years old. All over Europe he had an experience of the past, a tremendous sense of history and of the wonderful things that human persons who are made in the image of God are able to create. Later on he was to go to the Reich Museum in Amsterdam and see all the Rembrandt paintings there. In Paris he was in the Louvre, and in every one of the cities he went to the museums and looked at the old churches. He soaked himself in European civilization. It gave him a tremendous sense of the value of ideas and what they produce in a society. They shape the very context of what we live in, including the streets, the buildings, and everything that surrounds us. Art was not something simply in museums in Europe; it is everywhere. It is on the streets in fountains, buildings, and statues.

The fourth issue is the appreciation Francis got of the history of the church going back to the New Testament times. When he was in Athens, he went to Mars Hill where Paul preached that wonderful sermon in Acts 17. In Rome Francis was shown various places where the apostles were supposed to have been. You can see in the letter if you look at page two that he says, “We went to the maritime prison, down dark stairs, to a place where Peter and Paul were supposed to have been chained for nine months... Then I saw the arch of Titus, built in 82 to mark the surrender of the Jews and the destruction of Jerusalem. This touched my heart. Then into the Coliseum, after a long walk with my map to guide me, I came to Saint Paul’s gate in the old city wall. Here Paul is said to have been killed. A standard work in the ax says this is the spot, and this monument did see his death. It was a strange feeling to stand there and contemplate the possibility.” Then he went to a church that was built over the place where Paul was supposed to have been buried.

He went to many places where the foundations of our faith were laid. These were places where Peter and Paul had been. He visited the catacombs and learned a lot there about the history of the early church. If you look at page five of the letter, Francis is down in the catacombs looking at all the graves of the Christians down there. He says, "The tunnel so far excavated is said to be over 16 miles." Thousands and thousands of Christians were buried down there. "As they dug new tunnels, the old ones were filled. The bodies were placed in crypts along the walls as many as five tiers high and then sealed with the slab of marble." There were not just a few Christians buried there; there were masses and masses of them. He says, "Even more important are the murals from the second century. These are painted mostly in red as paintings in Pompei, but blues and blacks were needed. Some of these were in remarkably good condition." The priest who showed him around took him to find many off the usual path. "Several of these murals are important: pictures of Mary holding Christ on her lap, receiving three men, probably wise men." This is early enough so there was no halo on Christ or on Mary.

At the same time in Pompei, where he had also been, there were halos on the paintings of Roman gods. He saw several pictures of baptisms, which he carefully points out were clearly not immersions. There were people standing in the water with water being poured over their heads. He got a tremendous sense while he was in Rome of the life of the early Christians there, some of their difficulties, and the expressions of their faith painted on the tombs and the murals. He also got a sense of what the medieval church came to be like as they built these enormous rich buildings over the sites of the New Testament figures. They moved the relics around. On page 5 Francis writes, "In the ninth century, the pope then moved and put in the churches of Rome relics of the early Christians. Now no altar is even raised without some relic of saints in it. Considering the number of Catholic churches, they must be in very small pieces by this time." Of course, a lot of it was not genuine. There were supposed to be enough pieces of the true cross around various churches all over Europe to make a cross 160 feet high.

But Francis got a tremendous sense of the history of the church. He wrote later when he came to Scotland about seeing the tombs there of Christians who were killed. On page 268 of *The Tapestry* it says, "I went to Saint Giles Cathedral and looked at the graves of two martyrs, James Gran and Marquis of Montrose, and the words written on their graves." It quotes Archibald Campbell, the marquis of Argyle, saying just before his death, "I set the crown on the king's head. He hastens me to a better crown than his own." Francis says, "These men are our spiritual heritage. Standing there I know with renewed force that these men belong to us and we to them." He got a sense of his own history in the Reformed churches.

The same happened when he was in Geneva. He went to the place where Calvin worked and Knox preached. On page 253 of Edith's book it says, "I saw the site where Calvin died. I saw the great cathedral, Saint Peter's, where Knox preached, old Calvin College, and the Reformation monument. I found it all so thrilling. We have a great heritage, and I am glad for whatever part I have of carrying it on." That is the fourth point: he got a tremendous sense of the history of the church. He felt he was standing in a stream of people who have had faith in Christ and testified to Christ, often at tremendous cost to themselves right on down through history. That is something that is important for us all to understand. We are part of a church that stretches right back through history, and we all have the same faith and the same Lord. We are often called to make the same kinds of costly sacrifices.

The fifth point is that Francis became even more acutely aware of the problems of liberalism when he saw the devastating effects of its teaching on the churches in Europe. When he went to Switzerland, for example, he found that in the state church of Geneva, which is a Reformed church, only two or three out of 60 pastors were still Bible believing. That is common all over Europe right up until the present time. It gave him a very acute sense of what liberalism does to the church. It kills people spiritually and leaves them with absolutely nothing. He describes what his feelings were when he went to the World Council meetings in Oslo. He heard Visser 't Hooft and Neibuhr speak there and felt the effects of their teaching. There was emptiness in what was being

given. He said, “Dr. Visitor Hoof and a pastor from Paris spoke. The emphasis was to urge younger people to take the leadership and to drive the grey heads out. It was very sad to me... Later on July 26 I heard Reinhold Neibuhr speak. His interpretation of Karl Barth provides the bring for a socialistic conception of Christianity while still keeping some of the religious language.” He describes going to a Greek service at the cathedral. He said it was one of the greatest emotional experiences he has ever had to see those hundreds of Protestant young people from all over the world in the Greek Orthodox service with its adoration of the communion bread and wine, with worship of Mary and prayers for the dead and all the rest of it. This was bad enough, going to a service like that and seeing all these hundreds of Protestant young people at this conference attending this kind of service. They were encouraged to attend at the meetings put on for them. He said that what made it even worse was the fact that even that kind of service with its adoration of the bread and wine, its worship of Mary, and prayers for the dead was closer to the truth than what he had been hearing at the World Council of Church meetings in Oslo. He says, “Even this was nearer to my heart than what the Protestant men had been giving here. At least the liturgy had Christian elements in it. I could have wept, and I guess I was weeping, but it was out of the depth of soul for more power to speak with a tongue of gold and fire for the cause of Christ in this age. Never have I realized more that nothing is worth the lessening of that power. I prayed for the filling of the Holy Spirit as I have never prayed before. I took no part in the worship as you can guess, but God certainly spoke to my heart. How I praise God for the simplicity of the Gospel story!”

He had a tremendous sense of the destructiveness of liberalism and the effect that it had all over the world, particularly in Europe. You may think that it was not so bad that only two or three of the pastors in the state church in Geneva were Bible believers. There are many other denominations. But 95% of all the Protestants in that part of Switzerland went to the state churches. That is where the situation is so different from the United States. All over Europe the great majority of people, if they go to church, go to the state church. If that is unfaithful or preaching a liberal Gospel and denying the person of Christ, most people have absolutely nothing else as a possibility to hear. You see the consequences of liberalism in that situation very dramatically. It underlined for him the need to pray for the Holy Spirit that he might speak the Gospel with a tongue of fire. The hymn sung at his graduation from seminary said, “Give me tongues of fire.”

The sixth point is that in addition to seeing the consequences of liberalism, he saw in a new way the devastating consequences of Roman Catholicism on European life. He saw this particularly in Italy as he went around to churches and met people there. In the letter there is a great deal about the effects of Roman Catholicism. On page one of the letter it says, “I walked the Pantheon, which is within a block of the church. A sign over the door in Italian says that a plenary indulgence will be given to anyone who worships there.” In other words, your time in purgatory will be cut short if you worship in this building. He talks about the way that the World Council of Churches wanted to join with this form of Roman Catholicism. They wanted to recognize it as genuinely Christian. Later he writes, “In front there is a fountain built by Pope Clement XI in 1575 topped by an obelisk from Egypt. Somehow this setting pictures the Roman Catholic Church to be paganism in a Christian veneer.” It was the combination of a Christian and pagan monument stuck together. It is a good description of what Catholicism in Europe was. They basically took the previous pagan worship of the people, changed the names, and turned them into Christian names. The queen of heaven became Mary in their worship. On page two of the letter he describes one of the churches and inside Saint Peter’s. He says, “In the center is the tomb where Peter is supposed to lie. Poor Peter, what a denial of his epistles this is. Above the sunken tomb is a high altar where the pope says Mass on very important occasions. At the very end is an altar with a large chair where the pope sits. Surrounding it is an intricate symbol at the center of which is a dove descending toward the chair. The Vatican is behind Saint Peter’s. It is no wonder that even the Roman Catholics are anti-clerical as such countries as Italy and Mexico.” A young Italian said to him that despite the tremendous domination of the Roman Catholic Church in Italy, 95% of the people are totally pagan. That is the situation in Europe.

I spoke with someone today who wants to go to work in France or possibly Italy. I told him that if he is going to go there, he must realize that it is like plowing stones. The Roman Catholic Church has had such a dramatic effect on people, either holding them in superstition and in bondage or in making people so totally opposed to Christianity that they do not want to have anything to do with any form of Christianity. It may be hard for you to imagine if you have only seen the form of Roman Catholicism that is here in the United States. The Roman Catholic Church has had to work with other churches, because it has not been the state church. It has been one church among many churches. In southern Europe, it is not like that, and even now in some parts of Spain and Italy evangelicals can have an extremely difficult time even being able to have any witness without getting into some kinds of difficulties and troubles with the authorities created by the Roman church. The Schaeffers themselves had that experience in Switzerland later on where they were actually thrown out of the canton or state where they were living by the Roman Catholic bishop. That happened because an atheistic man in the village became a Christian. They were happy for him to be an atheist but not to become an evangelical. When he did, his relatives were so upset that they appealed to the bishop. The bishop had the Schaeffers thrown out of that Roman Catholic canton.

So on this journey to Europe, Francis began to experience in a very dramatic way the practical consequences of Roman Catholicism in the life of the people. There was tremendous idolatry that a part of Catholic worship involves. On page four of the letter it says, "The Roman Catholic influence is felt strongly here on every side. The continuity of the Roman Catholic Church is strongly felt. They can wait a century or two to return the world to the Middle Ages. Their viewpoint is clear: gold on the altar and always more altars and more gold while the people starve and live in ignorance and filth." On page five it says, "For a price, masses can be said in the various chapels for you or your loved ones. That is one aspect of the commercialization." Once you pay, they will say a prayer for you or those you love who have died so that their time in purgatory will be cut short. Francis visited the holy stairs, which were supposed to have come from Pilate's judgment hall. They were put there and covered over with marble because everyone has to go up on their knees, kissing the stairs as they go. He writes about the paganism of this whole approach. "In the chapel is an image of Christ supposedly made by a miracle, made without hands. Pagan Rome and Roman Catholic Rome are brothers. Out I went, and I guess I looked fierce, for the guide said to me in a strange tone, 'You are not a Catholic.' I told him that I felt as Luther did about the place, and he quickly left me!" He learned a great deal about the consequences of Catholicism. At the same time, as Francis saw that he saw the difference that an evangelical faith made to people's lives. Francis met some evangelical Christians in Rome and says about them, "I see the difference that the Gospel makes even in people's facial expressions, the liberating effects that the Gospel of Christ can have."

That brings me to the seventh point, which is finally something much more positive that he experienced. That was a oneness in Christ across all denominational barriers. This is something that he writes about over and over again. Wherever he went in Europe, he met Christians, which was his purpose. He met pastors of churches and leaders of Christian groups wherever he went. These were people from all sorts of denominations. He met the Waldensians in Italy, Baptists, Methodists, and Brethren. He met different groups wherever he went, and he had a tremendous sense of oneness in Christ. He describes going to an evangelical church service in Oslo where he did not understand one word of what was being said. He felt a tremendous oneness with the people, because he knew that they were worshiping the same Christ. He had just come from these World Council meetings where he could understand what was being said, but he felt so much of a greater oneness with these people even though he did not understand the language at all.

At the same time, he met individual men and women who were members of state churches and liberal denominations but who were standing firm for the Gospel. This was something new for him. It gave him a completely different attitude toward them. We talked about this before, as he had been part of the separated movement, which did not have anything to do with people who were still members of liberal denominations. But in Switzerland, for example, when he met a pastor who was one of the only two or three evangelical pastors

in the Geneva state church, his response was to admire the courage of this man. Here was a person who stood firm and taught God's Word against enormous obstacles and opposition simply by himself. Instead of looking down on such a person and thinking he was faithless or compromising, he learned to look at people like that with tremendous respect, admire their courage, and praise God for them. They stood up for the Gospel in such a difficult situation. In addition, he met individuals from Bible colleges, seminaries, training institutes, and people from all sorts of para-church groups. In some parts of Europe, that is all there is in terms of any faithful witness. They have nothing to go to except some dead or liberal church, so on the side they do some evangelical work faithfully by themselves with a handful of a few other Christians. They stand up for the Gospel and have Bible studies in their homes.

All over Europe, wherever he went, he met true believers and real Christians. He experienced a tremendous sense of oneness with them. Let me read a couple of passages from his letters. He says, "I am learning what oneness in Christ means as I have never learned before." There is importance in being able to know that you share the same central faith with someone even though we may disagree about hundreds of minor things. Even though we may have a very different practice in terms of our form of worship and many of the practical things we do, there is something that is to be treasured, which is a unity in Christ that crosses those barriers. On page 271 of *The Tapestry* he wrote in his last letter, "The trip is ended. This has been the great spiritual experience of my life, second only to my conversion. It has been wonderful to realize the unity of the church of Christ." This was one of the things that impressed him very strongly in that time. It made an enormous impact on his whole life from this point on, because it underlined the importance of what he was to later call speaking the truth in love. He recognized the oneness we have in Christ no matter what denomination was belong to. It does not matter which group we work with if we have the same faith. It is really important to recognize that, treasure it, and praise God for it.