



Wisconsin Gospellers

Oct 2019 Newsletter

Host Families: Patterns of relationship building

Malena

I notice on the first night of the stay that everyone is very tentative. We're all walking on eggshells trying to be a welcoming host or a polite guest. We are trying to assess each other's needs in the relationship. It is not overtly tense, but it is certainly not familiar. Communication is always a priority. Since I speak almost no German it is difficult. I always apologize by being the rude American who has not learned German before visiting their country. I've been fortunate. In most of my families, there have been people, often teens, whose English has been very good. But conversations remain relatively simple to allow time for translation and because the young interpreter may not fully understand all the questions and responses. However, there is something of a bond that occurs during this language struggle. We are trying so hard to communicate with additional gestures, facial expressions, and even technology tools. It is a shared journey that usually leads to understanding. The mistakes along the way often lead to shared laughter at our own misunderstandings and then corrections. I think it is the shared desire to learn about this new person that you have suddenly become somewhat intimate with, in a familial way, that builds a relationship like a brother or sister.

On the second day as our hosts feed us and move us to various rehearsals or tour sites, we are both as much concerned about the schedule as our relationship. Somewhere in this schedule we'll share a meal, talk about the similarities and differences in our habits and countries. Then, usually the night before we are set to depart, we sing. We may sing together, if we are participating in a shared concert, or they may be in the audience. But there is a catalyst in this concert. Suddenly the communication struggles, dietary and privacy concerns are lost, perhaps in the music. This host family has suddenly become an extension of your family. In the Bible we hear stories like the tower of Babel or Pentecost where the spirit comes over the participants and there is bonding and understanding and love on another level. I have experienced this to a different extent every time after that concert.

Of course the morning when we climb aboard the bus is so difficult. We've shared this wonderful experience and deepened these relationships and then we fade away, like a dream. I've vowed to myself to try and keep in touch, but I have not done very well. I think that may have been different when our group returned to a similar area. And I hope that I will have the opportunity to connect again with some of these people on another tour or when they can travel here.





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Follow-up Reflections on the 2019 Wisconsin Gossellers Tour by Don Tubesing

The experiences of our tour -- connections with each other, rejoicing with new people, amazing spiritual concerts that touched our audiences and brought them together -- what memories, and what life altering gifts we have and received together. A Pilgrimage is always lived on so many levels simultaneously, and the complex layers of learning take some time to digest and to ascertain where the experience might lead us next. So it is with me these days. As I reflect two guideline thoughts emerge:

What do you say?

When people ask you, as they have, "How was your trip?" What do you say? Several levels of response are possible:

1. A travelogue — here's what we did. That's the longest and the easiest to tell, but has the lightest impact.
2. Deeper experiences — here are the stories and memories and events and contacts I remember most that touched my heart.
3. What happened to you? -- yes, to you? inside of you, to your spirit feelings and insights that you don't want to forget? -- as you digest the trip you may come up with several major insights about friendships in the choir, accepting each other's differences, the joy of singing, the life-changing cross cultural conversations, the confidence you gained, the sense that we all people are so much the same, the level of faith and hope that has grown in your heart.....and on and on. Identify them and hang on to the life they provide as you move forward.

In the early 70's as Professor at Concordia, every second weekend, Nancy and I took a mixed group of students, faculty and staff (yes, the cooks and the landscapers and the plumbers) on an faith development interactive sharing retreat. Every Sunday at noon we all prepared to go home with a high. We encouraged participants to share level three and two and not get too caught in the level one, since others cannot really get a sense of what it was like anyway we would advise, "Tell your friends what happened to you. That's how you connect and communicate your heart with them."

Years later as we lead the Duluth Sister City projects, when delegates would come back we would ask about their trip. Normally, for 60 minutes they would ramble enthusiastically about what they did. Then, we would ask, "And what happened to **you**?" Normally, within 60 seconds their eyes would fill with tears.

A travelogue is the easiest to share, but makes less of a connection. What happened to you? is the most difficult to articulate, but also communicates the deepest and most important truth about the pilgrimage you've been on.

These days, I am consciously trying to make sure I tell people about what happened to me and how my spirit was nurtured during our choir tour to Germany. I look forward to sharing those insights along the way with you as well. When we connect again at that level, we keep the spirit alive in our hearts and invite the insights to guide our actions as we live forward.



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Are you getting your emails? - Check your junk mail periodically - just in case

Does your brick-and-mortar church send newsletters, pledge cards, meeting minutes, and announcements via USPS? As email attachments? Both?

The Wisconsin Gossellers has long used email as a preferred method of communication. The Leadership Team can send group emails to the whole choir—or individual sections—from wisconsin-gossellers@gmail.com. That account is tied to the choir's Google Drive, which is our "office in the cloud." Guided by Malena and others, the Leadership Team keeps minutes, organizational documents, financial updates, etc. on Google Drive, and tries to use the choir email account to communicate with members, friends & supporters. The LT even uses Google Hangout for virtual meetings!

All this technology only works if YOU make sure notes from wisconsin-gossellers@gmail.com are not being automatically funneled into your spam/junkmail folder. If you find emails from us in your junk folder, you can usually tell the software that these are "not junk/spam." It helps to move the item into your Inbox.

And make a point, along with—changing smoke detector batteries, brushing your teeth, and practicing your music—to periodically check your junkmail/spam folder. We don't want you to miss anything!



The picture to the left is from the concert in Weimar, Germany.

Share any small reflections about gospel music and mission-based topics in our Newsletter!

Have you found yourself humming a particular song, reflecting on a conversation, or mulling over a devotional on the way home from a WI Gossellers rehearsal or performance? Please let us know!! Norm (our webmaster) always welcomes shorter and longer notes to keep our webpage & Facebook active. Our followers look forward to updates, and it's a way everyone can help build community. You can type up your thoughts and send them to wisconsin-gossellers@gmail.com anytime. Even easier: talk into your cellphone and send the audio file! Kimberly has access to transcription software, so we can share your thoughts with others. And of course, you ALWAYS choose to contribute anonymously if you wish.



Mission Statement: To bridge cultural divides and touch souls through the transformative power of gospel music

Vision Statement: A world where God's love triumphs over that which divides us.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Lunch</u>	<u>Notes</u>
Sat Nov 9 - Sun Nov 10 2019	10am-3pm Rehearsal 10am Worship	Grace Congregational UCC 2801 Garfield St, Two Rivers, WI 54241	Grace UCC	Rehearsal Concert/Worship *Over night stay available
Sat Dec 14th 2019	10am-3pm rehearsal 3pm tentative concert	Tentatively. Attic Angel Place 8301 Old Sauk Rd, Middleton, WI 53562	men	Rehearsal Tentative concert
Sat Jan 11th 2020	10am-3pm 3pm concert	Cedar Ridge 113 Cedar Ridge Dr West Bend WI 53095	\$5 to Cedar Ridge	Wksp & Concert Dress: business casual
Sat Feb 8th 2020	10am-3pm	Central Wisconsin somewhere -Leadership Team looking for location	sopranos	Rehearsal
Tentatively Jun 29-Jul 10 2020	Gospel & More Choir from Germany visits	Various churches throughout wisconsin	n/a	Rehearsal & concerts & touring

? = still tentative and could change. Stay tuned! Will be updated at a later date or via email.

***Over night stay available = Let the Leadership team know if you need a place to stay**

Music-based assignment for the month

Mission-based assignment for the month