

## Next Steps 2017-Monthly Report

Johanna Alwardt

Oh how time passes by in the blink of an eye! Sitting here in the airport thinking on what to write, I thought I would first share with you what became known as "Johanna's reflections" all from this last month..

(Being showed around Edinburgh)



As we walked the streets of Edinburgh, and stopped to gaze out at the majestic view, I promptly asked Callum, who was born and raised here, "Do you ever get tired of the view?" Knowing what his answer would probably be, I was not the least bit surprised to see the smile conform his whole face and without any hesitation reply "No"... It is views like these that cause me to stop...It brings a verse from Psalm found in chapter 8 to my mind. Verse 3, "When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained;". But what really causes me to stop... is the next verse... "What is man, that thou art mindful of him?..." but I love how not only is he mindful of us, he

visits us, and not only does he visit us but he loves us and loves to commune with us.

Oh. How. Great. Is. Our. God.

(One of our many prayer walks)



As we followed Callum to our prayer walk destination I was curious to experience the view he spoke of once we got there. We turn a corner to see stairs, that then lead to more stairs, to finally lead to a most beautiful area.. I honestly couldn't stop looking around with a smile not only plastered on my face but in my heart and soul.. my. God. made. this. But there was so much beyond that, because as I looked into the distance at the many houses and streets I allowed my minds eye to think and see the endless souls that were passing below on the very ground God made, taking a deep breath..breath God gave them.. taking snapshot after snapshot of what I was looking at, yet were I was admiring the Creator they were merely admiring the Creation. To see people become moved by what their eyes saw, my heart tore.. thinking " There is so much beyond what the eye sees".. With this heavy on my heart, I prayed for these souls, for this

city God has placed me in.. Let them see beyond the surface, let them hear your voice in the mist of the constant noise, let them feel you God, in a way they can never forget, lead me to them.. but I can't reach them all, so Lord lead them to you.

(First Church Service)



This is the day that the Lord has made!.. And oh what a phenomenal artist he is! The way the vibrant colors of the many flowers I passed on my way to church, captured a part of his beauty. The way the people in church worshipped, overflowing with his love that passes all understanding, the way they hugged my neck showing God's compassion. The way Bro. Beek spoke, teaching of God's word. The way smiles and laughter filled the Beeks house reflecting the joy God brings us. In everything..the people, nature, the sun and the rain, God is shown. I am so thankful to have spent this God given day with people who reflect and show God and the things of him. This is the day the Lord has made, I have rejoiced and am beyond glad in it.

(Touring on our time off)



I've oftentimes wondered what it was like living in a castle. I imagine consuming myself in a book by a fire. Rays of the slowly setting sun streaming in through the windows overlooking the courtyard. The courtyard being full of lush green grass and bright colorful flowers slowly swaying in the wind... but as I think on this, I am reminded of the mansion where instead of streets of stone, there will be streets of gold. Instead of consuming myself in a book, I will consume myself in the presence of my favorite author. Where I'll see sights more eye-catching than flowers and sunsets... what a truly glorious day that will be, when my Jesus I shall see ♥

(Shout out to my Roomies)



You don't have to look very long in these pictures to see the joy and laughter shared when with each other.. It never ceases to amaze me the way you can effortlessly build such deep bonds with someone in such a wee bit of time. Granted when you live in a small area with 5 other girls for weeks you learn quite a bit about them, we'll leave it at that 😊. But the real thing that amazes me is Yes, God placed me here for a reason but let us not forget, he also placed these precious women of God in my life for a reason. I truly, most honestly, and endlessly love each and every one of you girls! Thanks for the joy, encouragement, love, and prayers you have blessed me with. I cherish you all, your friendship, our memories made, and all the more memories to come.♥

(First time teaching Sunday School while in Edinburgh)



Today I had the privilege to teach two amazing young kids in Sunday School, Simon and Dora. We prayed, sang songs (including Funky Monkey and Making Melodies 😊) and went into the word. Which was then followed by my handmade coloring pages and some games... I know not only did I have a smile on my face as these children soaked up God's word, and gave praise unto him.. But that God must have been smiling ear from ear as he heard the prayers of his children say "I love you".

(Last service in Edinburgh, International Sunday)



People are so beautiful, not the outward appearance, nor even the personality, but their spirit, the very soul inside them. Their thought process, passions, simply them in all their entirety. Every piece that has been shaped to fit ever so perfectly in the mosaic of their being... I am so grateful for each one of the individuals I have met and come to know here, for each have impacted me and their presence has bled into the pieces that are being added to the mosaic that makes up my life and me personally.

In writing this, let me remind each one of you..

"Goodbyes are not forever.

Goodbyes are not the end.

They simply mean I'll miss you

Until we meet again."

Some days we walked around 5 miles, other days close to 10 miles if not more, passing out leaflet after leaflet. But let us back up for a moment.. one by one all of us girls wake up, make breakfast, someone gives devotion, we may sing a song, and then prayer. Including taking off anything we didn't need to drag with us (spiritually speaking) and putting on the whole amour of God, to taking needs to the Lord, to anointing over every individual leaflet.. We went on multiple prayer walks hearing from God through tongues interpretation almost every time. You could feel the shift in the atmosphere, the spiritual walls that where and are falling down in the great city of Edinburgh. We got to see from a new and more personal perspective of a Missionary's life and their true work. We lead music, and taught Sunday School. Some, including myself, spoke in service, we did prayer walks, surveys, on and on. As the city of Edinburgh and the many friends we came to know and dearly love intertwined with our hearts, we anticipated the mighty move of God that we know is coming..

Though God reminded us that though we often want a mighty rushing wind all at once, complete with thunder and lightning! ... it just so happens that sometimes God moves in a gentle breeze. Little at a time, we saw and felt a change. We planted seeds, we prayed and interceded, we sowed.. leaving Edinburgh, I only began to see the beginning of the mighty move of God that is going to happen. While I keep interceding in prayer for Scotland and Edinburgh, I am much anticipating the messages from the Beeks informing us that they got a building and the church is growing.. And to think God allowed me to be apart of that, and apart of what has already begun to happen.. Who is man that thou art mindful of him?

I have been changed, in SO many ways during this trip and especially this past month. I wipe the tears from my face caused from the hole in my heart. Goodbyes are never easy.. but I still smile because,

I. Still. have. Joy.

Joy, in anticipation of what is to come. Joy, as I reflect on every memory made. Joy, as the faces of such precious people pass my mind. Joy, as I think on what I can do in my home church with what I have gained and learned. I am weak emotionally and in my spirit, feeling the pull and burden so Very Very strong. But my strength is found in the JOY of the Lord. So I chose to have Joy today, and in my tomorrow, and Joy in whatever my Next Steps may be.

Until next time,

With much Love,

Johanna ♥