

Graz, Austria

Bob Houck of Stevensburg Baptist in Culpeper

I am not sure of the exact time of my trip to Graz, but I know it was in September of the early 2000's. It was a small team of Tommy Dickens, Don Reid, Melva Rowe (all of Blue Ridge Shores Baptist at the time) and myself. Because of a scheduling conflict, I traveled a day after the rest of the team.

We worked on a Baptist church and did mainly cleaning and painting. We were housed in a hostel that had mostly young people staying there and walked a few blocks to the church. Tommy and I were roommates. We were invited to church members houses for dinner each evening and were taken on tours of the city.

While we were there, a hurricane was hitting Virginia and Don was very worried about how his family was dealing with the hurricane. He

would check the weather back home and talk about how things were going. I kept thinking that we were 6,000 miles from Virginia and why worry about something that we had no control over.

There was a young man living in the church who had been raised in the Islamic faith but had converted to Christianity. His greatest fear was that he would be disowned if his father found out about his conversion—but he had told his mother of his conversion. He was baptized in a bathtub.

I remember Melva saying that she did work on mission trips that she paid other people to do when she was at home. I have good memories of the warmth and fellowship of the group.

Editor's note: Hurricane Isabel struck Virginia hard on September 18, 2003. Bob Houck is a Deacon at Stevensburg Baptist Church and the treasurer for Shiloh Baptist Association for many years.