

Rainbow of Promise 2002-03 Journal

Date: 9/24/2002

Submitted by: Paul Nichols

Journal Entry:

Well, we're three days out of training and have shared in ministry with two wonderful churches thus far. We've had our share of gaffs and blunders but our program, including skit and puppet show, is now together. The journey begins...

I can't help but write of Rainbow of Promise in reference to I Corinthians 12:12—the "one body, many parts" verse. This is a team of gifted people, and as I think about how this team would function without even one of them, each individual's gifts become clear.

Dain brings amazing artistic ability and an alertness that necessitates me using even more alliteration to describe him—apt, grade A astronomicality...ness. Dain plays guitar and I like to make up words.

Debbie has a keen, studious, inquisitive mind. She is able to open up kids who tend to be shy. Debbie plays percussion.

Miriam is an outgoing, relational ministry monster. Her friendly disposition brings everyone up a couple notches on the happiness scale. She plays piano when there is one available and plays percussion as well.

Boni has humor and thoughtfulness that's complimented by his righteous bass playing. He adds depth to our team both musically and culturally.

Jason has a gracious heart, enabling him to relate to young and old alike. He is also the djembe king. A djembe is a hand drum (for a visual think of a conga) that for us replaces the drum set that electric Youth Encounter teams are using.

That's our team. When we are together we transform into something more than we are as individuals (think of the GoBots or Transformers). Our gifts include a variety of instruments and voices working together to praise God as we trek around the Midwest and India and Nepal. To make this body of ministry called Rainbow of Promise work, we will need the combined gifts of all the body parts.

And me you're asking? What gift do I bring to the body? I bring this article.



Paul Nichols

Date: 9/26/2002

Submitted by: Dain Swanson

Journal Entry:

Over the past month and a half I have learned many things about Youth Encounter, myself, God, the world and the people around me. In the end I have realized that I really didn't know as much as I first thought. This world is an expansive place that is growing smaller each day with the advancement of technology. Just this year Youth Encounter has taken a giant financial leap of faith by purchasing a computer, printer, projector, and digital camera for each team. The amazing thing is how much closer and more efficient our ministry is becoming. We are able to keep in touch with family and friends with ease through e-mail; we are able to contact the churches where we have programs with our cell phones to find the specifics about the church so that we may better serve them and their needs. I am truly flabbergasted. I am puzzled though. In this time of faster, better and smaller, how am I going to react when my team and I travel half way around the world to a country that is developing and developed within the same borders.

My impression of India is that of a poor developing country that is struggling to provide enough food for the entire country while in the major cities people wear jeans and listen to American music and is now the routing cities for some major company's 1-800 numbers. That's right, if you call AT&T



Dain Swanson

you are most likely calling India. This is just one of many new and interesting facts that I have learned over the past weeks. How do I deal with this, and how do I convey the concerns I have so that the people I meet can understand? I hope that the time I have on the road and India will give me a better understanding of how to live in a world that is constantly changing both technologically and spiritually.

Another aspect of Youth Encounter I have learned about over the past weeks is that we are not going over to India or the continent of Africa or Australia or anywhere in the world as missionaries. We are not trying to convert the world because that is not possible, especially when the world has a different view of the United States than we perceive ourselves. The world seems to have the idea that we as Americans are fat and rich and full of ourselves and if it were not for the obviousness of that statement I would have never thought that myself. So contrary to the belief that Americans are trying to conform the world to their ways, Youth Encounter is honoring the invitation given to us by the Lutheran church of countries around the world.

In the past weeks Youth Encounter has taught me many things. We, the people of the United States don't need to convert the world into what we think is best for them nor do we need to minister to our fellow Christians like the American way is the true way. We need to follow what Youth Encounter sets out to do and that is meet people where they are. Take the word of God with you in your heart, both in the United States and overseas. That way people will see the love we have for God and wonder what amazing things God can do for them.

The expectations that I have for this year have changed. I am no longer afraid of what to say to a person in order to change their mind and make them believe in God. I know that words are maybe the least effective way, but my actions on the other hand, living, playing, and singing with people all over the world and showing them the love of God in my heart will open their hearts to that same love that has already been given to them through Jesus Christ's death on the cross. Thanks for listening to my thoughts, God be with you.

Date: 9/28/2002

Submitted by: Miriam Anderson

Journal Entry:

Deuteronomy 4:24 "...For our God is a consuming fire..."

A few days ago, Sunitha, the international team director, invited our team along with several other guests to her house for dinner. Now this was no ordinary dinner but a traditional Indian dinner. Even as we arrived in the early afternoon, the air outside her door was thick with mouthwatering spices. You know, the kind that make your mouth burn just by smelling them. We sat and chatted with new friends as smells tantalized us from the kitchen and traditional Indian music tickled our ears from a nearby stereo.

Soon enough the table was ready. Steam rose from every dish as Sunitha explained what each item was and how we should eat it. She suggested with a smile that we take a little extra rice and yogurt to cool the fires of the curry. I almost scoffed at this in my mind. "I'm tough," I thought to myself. "I love hot things. Bring it on."

For the next hour, we talked and laughed and ate...and ate and ate. I began with just a dab of the potato curry and a handful of rice. Recognizing that I could barely even taste the curry, I grabbed some more with the next bite. I kept building up my stamina through the potato curry and on through the lamb curry. Finally, I was ready to face the chutney. I daintily dipped my bread in the fire-red sauce and put it in my mouth. Not so bad. I tried a little more. After several more wimpy bites I was confident in my ability to withstand the heat. I had only a few bites of bread left and lots of chutney, so I scooped up a hefty mouthful and shoveled it in. Immediately this verse in Deuteronomy popped into my head. My mouth was completely consumed with the fire of this sauce. My eyes watering and my nose dripping, I reached discretely for another mouthful of rice. As I regained consciousness, I realized I actually liked the chutney and went back to the serving table for seconds.

Why do we not think of God in this light very often? I believe sometimes we think of God as this old man sitting on his throne up in heaven peering down on us. His purpose there is just to love us quietly and intervene when we need him. God does love us but it is not this quiet, reserved, hands-off kind of love. Our God is all-powerful, all-knowing, in all, with all, and through all. His love is powerful, and his love can consume us. His love can ignite us, if we allow it to do so.

Lord, this is my prayer. Consume me this year. Let me see your fiery passion for me and give me that same love and passion for the people I meet. Thank you for using such mundane things as



Miriam Anderson

dinner and curry to teach me about your character. I pray that you would consume me, in Jesus' name.

Date: 10/1/2002

Submitted by: Debbie Holte

Journal Entry:

Wow! I am really enjoying Wisconsin. Yes, a Minnesotan is admitting that she likes Wisconsin. I love the trees, and this is a great time of year for driving by lots of trees as they are beginning to turn brilliant shades of yellow and orange and red. Our God is a great creator, isn't he?

Anyway, now we've driven from one end of Wisconsin (Onalaska) to the other (Milwaukee) and back (Black River Falls). We have met some awesome people in all these places. While we were in Milwaukee (West Allis), we went to the church of a woman who was formerly on a Youth Encounter Inspirator team. She was very good to us. We went to spend time with the youth group. Every Sunday night their youth group gets together for what they call "Atmosphere." It is a chance for them to get together in good Christian fellowship. This was only their second "atmosphere" of the school year, but there was more attendance at this meeting than at the previous one. It was exciting to see such a good turnout on Homecoming weekend (about 30 youth). We joined them in a game of Capture the Flag (Rambo style). I had not played Capture the Flag for many, many years so I was a little hesitant to play, but once we started, I had lots of fun (and so did the kids). Rambo style meant we each got two "flour bombs" (flour wrapped in Kleenexes) and in order to get someone out, we had to throw the flour bombs at the opponent and have it break open on them. It was very fun. I think I managed to get more flour on myself when I attempted to get someone else than I did on them. Oh well, it was a lot of fun.

After Capture the Flag, we split up. Some people played another game of Capture the Flag, some people tie-died, and some people went to the youth room where we played Jenga and Twister (at the same time). Paul and I beat the youth room record for the number of completed levels of Jenga (27). It was very fun and the kids were very awesome. I hadn't had a very good attitude going into it, but it turned out to be the highlight of my weekend.

Not only did we have a sweet time with the youth group and Trish (the youth director), but we were very well provided for. We had many good meals and we stayed in a hotel. It was fun to swim around in the pool and to be lazy all day Monday (our day off). But I sure didn't feel that I had done anything at all to deserve such posh treatment. God is so good and provides for us in ways that go way beyond what we deserve. Ahhh.

Until next time, peace!



Debbie Holte

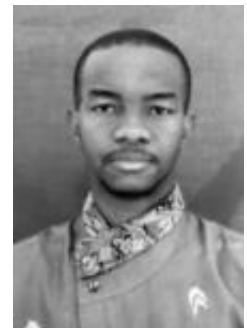
Date: 10/3/2002

Submitted by: Boniface Adam Eliona Kombo

Journal Entry:

After we had rest for a couple of days, having no program or any specific activity to do, and had seen God's blessings through His people of Holy Trinity Lutheran Church at West Allis-Wisconsin. We spent our day off in a hotel at the beginning of this week as a whole team, a thing that I did not expect at all, rather than sleeping at host homes or in host churches. That was amazing hospitality to me.

Wednesday of this week (10-02-02), was one of my most memorable days that I have had since we have been on the road because I saw another of God's blessing in this ministry. On that day my team was at the Black River Falls Evangelical Lutheran Church, in Wisconsin. The Church was almost full of people on that day and according to Pastor Karl Korbel, there were more than 200 people at our show (a Family Night Program) that night. The majority of people at that show were kids; some people even came from



Boniface Adam Eliona Kombo

neighborhood churches.

Before we ate dinner and before the show started, I felt very tired and drowsy, even some of my teammates felt the same thing, tiredness. I did not expect many people to attend, as had been the case at previous programs. During dinner time, we gathered together with a few number of people, eating, drinking and talking together, and my supposition was that the number of attendance of adults and kids at dinner would not increase during the show.

When I finished eating my dinner, I went back to the Sanctuary for the team's warm up and last preparation before starting the program. I was surprised by the number of people there and that it was increasing each minute. I started to feel nervous a little bit, to see the crowd of people increasing.

That night ended up being very hilarious. All my tiredness and drowsiness disappeared. Despite my nervous feeling, I became very happy and blessed to see people singing, dancing happily full of joy together with my teammates, who were very happy too. Everybody who attended our show was blessed.

I thank God the Almighty for my teammates, who work together with great collaboration, helping and loving one another. I also thank God for all the different gifts that He has given to each of us in my team. I thank my colleagues and other fellow team members for using their God-given gifts serving God.

I would like to thank the people of Black River Falls, starting with Pastor Karl and all other Church members: my teammates and I thank you very much for your kindness and hospitality and all the preparations that you did for our coming and staying there. I came to know that you published our coming and performance at your Church in the Newspaper of 25th September 2002 (Banner Journal) on page 3 under the bolded headline "Rainbow of Promise to perform at Evangelical Lutheran Church on October 02." We thank everybody who came to our show and supported my team and Youth Encounter. You helped support this ministry by buying resources and most importantly praying for my team. All these give me hope and morale to continue doing the ministry. God Bless You and Keep You All and fill you with His abundant love. (Read: Deuteronomy 28:8b, 6b).

Boniface A.E. Kombo (ROP-20002/3)

(Swahili Translation)

Baada ya kupumzika kwa siku kadhaa bila ya kuwa na onesho au kitu hasa cha kufanya, pia baada ya kuona baraka za Mungu kupitia watu wake wa Kanisa la Holy Trinity lililopo West Allis, Wisconsin kwa kutulaza katika hoteli timu nzima ya watu 6 siku yetu ya mapumziko mwanzoni mwa wiki hili. Hilo lilikuwa ni jambo ambalo sikulitarajia kabisa, zaidi ya kulala kwenye nyumba za washarika au kanisani. Huo ulikuwa ni ukarimu mkubwa sana.

Jumatano ya wiki hii, tarehe 02-10-02, ni siku ambayo sitaisahau tangu tuanze kuzunguka kufanya huduma hii, nimeona baraka nyingine za Mungu. Katika siku hiyo timu yangu ilikuwa katika Usharika wa Kilutheri wa Kiinjili wa Black River Falls huko Wisconsin (BRF) [Black River Falls Evangelical Lutheran Church, Wisconsin]. Kanisa lilikuwa karibu limejaa kabisa. Kwa mujibu wa Mchungaji wa usharika huo Karl Korbelt, kulikuwa na watu zaidi ya 200 katika onesho litwalo Usiku wa Familia (Family Night Program). Wengi wa wahudhuriaji siku hiyo walikuwa ni vijana na watoto. Baadhi ya watu walitoka makanisa ya jirani.

Kabla ya chakula cha usiku na kabla ya onesho kuanza, nilihisi kuchoka na usingizi, hata baadhi ya wenzangu walikuwa katika hali hiyo. Sikutegemea wahudhuriaji kuwa wengi kuliko maeneo mengine tuliyokwishapita, wala kuwa na uchangamfu wowote wakati wa onesho. Wakati wa chakula tulijumuika pamoja na baadhi ya watu wazima, watoto na vijana wachache waliokuweco nasi, tukila, kunywa na kuzungumza pamoja, idadi niliodhani ndio ingekuwa kwenye onesho letu na isingengezeka.

Nilipomaliza kula nilielekea ndani ya kanisa kwa ajili ya timu kujiandaa kabla ya onesho.

Nilishangazwa na idadi ya watu waliokuweco ndani kuliko nilivyodhani, na waliokuwa wakiongezeka kila dakika. Nilianza kupatwa na woga kidogo kwa idadi hiyo tofauti na maonesho yetu yaliyopita.

Siku hiyo ilikuwa ni nzuri sana. Uchovu na usingizi wote ulitoweka. Mbali na hali ya uwoga niliyokuwa nayo kabla nilijawa na furaha na kubarikiwa sana kuona watu wakiimba, kucheza nasi kwa furaha na uchangamfu mkubwa, hata wenzangu walifurahi sana. Kila mtu aliyekuwa siku hiyo alibarikiwa sana.

Namshukuru Mungu kwa ajili ya timu yangu kwa kushirikiana na kusaidiana kwa pamoja kwa upendo. Pia namshukuru Mungu kwa vipaji mbalimbali alivyotupa kila mtu katika timu yangu.

Nawashukuru wenzangu wote kwa kutumia vipaji vyao kumtumikia Mungu.

Bila ya kuwasahau watu wa BRF, tukianza na mch. Karl na wakristo wote, mimi pamoja na wenzangu wote tunawashukuru sana kwa ukarimu wenu na maandalizi yote mliyoyafanya kwa ajili yetu. Nilikuja kufahamu baadae kabla ya kuondoka isharikani hapo kuwa mlitoa tangazo katika gazeti la mji huo tarehe 25 Septemba 2002 (Banner Journal) ukurasa wa 3 katika kichwa kisemacho "Upinde wa Mvua kufanya onesho katika kanisa la Kilutheri la Kiinjili siku ya tarehe 02 Oktoba" (Rainbow of Promise to perform at Evangelical Lutheran Church on October 02). Upinde wa Mvua ni jina la timu niliyopo mimi. Tunamshukuru kila mmoja wa waliohudhuria siku ile kwa kushirikiana nasi katika kuifanya huduma hii sisi kama timu pamoja na Lutheran Youth Encounter. Mungu akubariki, kukutunza na akujaze upendo wake. (Soma: Kumb.28:8b, 6).

Boniface A.E. Kombo (ROP-20002/3)

Date: 10/8/2002

Submitted by: Jason Moran

Journal Entry:

Today I thought about David Bowie. Do you know where I am going yet with this journal? Honestly, if I were reading this I would have to wonder as well. But just trust me here. When I was little, one of my favorite movies was The Labyrinth. It is quite a wonderful movie starring David Bowie as the bad guy who has kidnapped a young child in order to convince the boy's older sister to become his wife and queen of the goblins. Rent it sometime. It is a lot of fun.

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Well, anyhow, David Bowie has very little else to do with this journal. He just made for a great segue into the topic at hand. Tonight we are staying at Cross and Crown Lutheran Church in Roscoe, Illinois as a housing only stay on our journey to the great state of Wisconsin. I am continuously amazed by the hospitality we receive while we are on the road. This is especially evident at this congregation. The pastor, John Heins, has given us free reign of the youth room tonight as well as couches to sleep on and a kitchen to prepare food. Hardly something I would consider asking for from a church where we are just vagabonds passing through. Clearly, this congregation understands Paul in Romans, when he says, "Share with God's people who are in need. Practice hospitality."

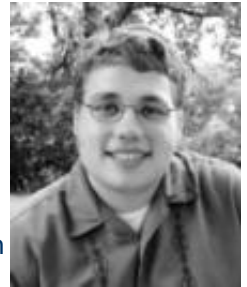
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So, "How does David Bowie fit into this journal?" you may ask. This church has a labyrinth out back. Being continuously fascinated by the devotion and solitude of monasticism, I walked the labyrinth in prayer. Off in the distance Paul and Dain were throwing a football in the parking lot, crickets were chirping all around me and I am certain deer were staring from the surrounding woods at this odd human pacing around in circles, deep in contemplation. I came to an understanding about this year on team; the image of walking the labyrinth fits so well into what we are doing daily, weekly and monthly. While walking the labyrinth I realized that it is really easy to feel lost and no matter how you try you cannot contemplate the end or the beginning that started you in this circular pattern of prayer. When you finally reach the end there is only one way out—the way you came. Still, you feel lost and confused, but you must trust the builder of the labyrinth that the stone path you are following will let you out the same way it let you in. This is so true to life. We enter the world naked and crying and soon we will leave this world the same way we came in (from ashes to ashes and dust to dust). Along the way of life when we feel confused and sometimes lost, we can stop in frustration or yell out at the Creator, but the only way to make progress is to trust the Creator and continue on our way knowing that we will be taken care of.

<p>

Relational ministry fits so well into the pattern of the labyrinth, especially with how God is using Rainbow of Promise this year. We begin by being called to churches in the United States, meeting and finding people in all walks of life. As we head toward the center of the labyrinth we will find our call to the churches in India and Nepal. While there we will have a labyrinth of experiences. Then we will turn around and walk back through the labyrinth as we are called back to the very churches where our journey began. Some days will be hard, and we as a team or as individuals may want to sit down and cry out to our Creator to stop this. However, if we trust our creator and our calling we will make it out and carry a unique message to all people; that the visible church in this world is much larger than anyone can comprehend. Praise God for that!

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Jason Moran

Date: 10/8/2002

Submitted by: Paul Nichols

Journal Entry:

On Saturday we had a six hour trek from Osseo, Wisconsin, to Princeton, Illinois. Those long drives are great for personal reflection, reading time, listening to music, rejuvenation. Just when one thought one couldn't get rejuvenated any more...

We generally arrive at each new church or "booking" at 4:00 p.m. and that day was no different. We met pastor Jerome Diers and began to unload our things and set up in the sanctuary. We also had the pleasure to eat at our first potluck dinner while on the road, not including the baked potato bash the Wednesday before. What took so long to get our first potluck?? We've been on the road for about two weeks!!! Hee hee. Needless to say: yummy.

But it wasn't the food that caught my attention. I could feel the joy of the Lord in the fellowship hall. Fascinating. Sure, I've felt the spirit moving at all of our previous churches, but this was dinner! We were in for a good time.

So First Lutheran Church has a worship service once a month on Saturday night—it's called Ultreya [ultrea]. We got the chance to share in the music ministry of this service with some congregation members and visitors. Many who attend this service have been to Via de Cristo weekend retreats. Via de Cristo is a movement that attempts to get lay persons involved in church leadership. At its core is a study of the Gospel of Grace.

This Gospel of Grace is, of course, the teaching of Christianity, yet it amazes me how often I still think about salvation (and heaven) in terms of the work I need to do to get there. Grace is free for all, and because of God's gift to us, we can have confidence in our relationships with one another, whether Christian or non-Christian. Relationships free from inhibitions and hang-ups about sin are sincere and offer freedom. Brennan Manning writes about this freedom in his book *The Ragamuffin Gospel*, which I have been reading. This is an amazing book that is teaching me oodles. One passage on page 146 discusses freedom in the Spirit:

"Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom" (2 Corinthians 3:17). Freedom in Christ produces a healthy independence from peer pressure, people-pleasing, and the bondage of human respect. The tyranny of public opinion can manipulate our lives. What will the neighbors think? What will my friends think? What will people think? The expectations of others can exert a subtle but controlling pressure on our behavior."

I've often heard complaints against Christians for our hypocrisy—how we change from situation to situation. From my experience with First Lutheran Church, though, this congregation has put behind any grandiose chameleon-hypocritical monster that often plagues churches. In First Lutheran's community of believers, both on Saturday evening and during the Sunday morning services, I felt a sincere desire to know God better that did not hinder their inter-personal relationships. I thus thank God for their ministry in Princeton and around the world. Thank you as well for rejuvenating me. God's blessings to you.



Paul Nichols

Date: 10/11/2002

Submitted by: Dain Swanson

Journal Entry:

Peace to you from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!

Love is rampant in the small towns, large cities, and rural counties of the Midwest states. In the Greek language there are three different words for the types of love in the world, (Agape), (Eros), and (Philos). The Greeks seemed to understand the language of



love better than I ever will because they see love in a different light than I do, although **Dain Swanson** each and every day I seem to be enlightened more in the Greek way of thinking. For example: Philos or the love of a family, brother or sister. I can not think of a better example than the love of my family back home. Every time I call home there is something in the voice of my mother and father that I hear and really can not explain. The Philos they have for me is beyond my understanding, I mean, this year of volunteering and mission work with Youth Encounter is not just a leap of faith for me but equally for my parents. My brother is also an amazing example of Philos, mostly in the way he jumps into my arms every time I surprise him and randomly show up at his dorm room door. I hope they know how much I love them in return.

Another form of love, Eros, has also been present in my travels, not so much in the sense that I have had that type of love, but more or less the lack of it. Eros, or romantic love, is something much more distant to me now that I am on team. However, there is a plus side to being on team when it comes to this aspect of my life. I seem to have more than enough time to think about what I want this love to be. While staying in host homes I get the chance to talk to my host mom and dad about their years of marriage whether it is just beginning or fifty years down the road, there seems to be a common thread in each relationship, Jesus. I have found that a successful relationship in any form needs to be centered on Jesus. This idea is something I have known about but only has recently come to fruition.

The third type of love, Agape, is best described as godly or unconditional love. In my life and through the experiences on team so far this year I have come to realize the amount of love God has for me. God loves me enough to send His son to earth for me and then have Him die for my sins. Excuse me, what? I do not deserve that kind of love at all. I am a sinner and I have my faults, but for some reason I still receive Agape and I have no choice but to accept it because it is already there for me to have. In many ways I have rediscovered the purpose God has for me in this life through Agape. In the end love is much like the trinity. Love is three different parts but is one and the same because of the example given to us in the form of Jesus Christ. Lost and Found, a Christian band consisting of two members Michael Bridges and George Baum talk about this example of love God has given us saying, "God spoke a word of love and His name is Jesus Christ." We are only able to know love because we were first shown love through Jesus and the best part is the lesson in love is free, WOW!

I would like to leave you with words from "No Greater Love" by Steven Curtis Chapman off his "Declaration" CD. May the love God gives us shine bright in your life!

"Man of courage with your message of peace what is this look in your eyes?
Why have you come to this faraway place?
What is this story that you would lay down your life to tell?
What kind of love can this be?

There is no greater love than this
There is no greater love that can ever be given
To be willing to die so another might live
There is no greater love than this.

Broken hearted from all you have lost how can you sing through your tears?
What is this magic that can bear such a cost?
What is this fire that grows stronger against the wind?
What kind of flame can this be?

There is no greater love than this
There is no greater love that can ever be given
To be willing to die so another might live
There is no greater love than this.

This is the love that God showed the world
When he gave His Son
So we could know His love forever
Beyond the gates of splendor

There is no greater love than this
There is no greater love that can ever be given
To be willing to die so another might live

There is no greater love than this."

- Words and music by Steven Curtis Chapman

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Date: 10/12/2002

Submitted by: Debbie Holte

Journal Entry:

Many times in my life, God has acted in surprising ways. One of those times happened recently. I had been having "one of those days." I was just not doing especially well, but I couldn't think of anything that would change my predicament. On this day we went to play at the University of Wisconsin at Stevens Point. We had a wonderful dinner and we had already met some very fun people, but, nevertheless, I was in kind of a bad mood. Ten minutes before we were to begin our program, I was standing by the door greeting people who were coming in when God surprised me. In through the door came my friend Andy Levi. I had no idea he would be there. I knew he went to school in Wisconsin, but I didn't realize it was there. It was such a nice surprise. I was completely distracted from my bad mood. And after our program, we had a good chance to talk and reminisce about our old Spoke Folk days. He told me about what he was doing in school and I told him about what I was doing on team. Then, of course, I told him he should join team once he was done with school because he would be really good at it. But God didn't just use my friend to cheer me up. Paul's original host for the night was unable to host him any more and my friend (Al, as they call him) was very willing and able to house Paul. It worked out very well.



Debbie Holte

On Saturday we headed to Indiana, which was very exciting for me because I had never been to Indiana before. We were actually going to our teammate Jason's home church. It was fun to meet his mom and sister. And that night we all headed out to the home of a congregation member where we lounged around a great campfire and ate good ol' American food—hot dogs and sloppy joes (or manwiches if you're from Indiana). It was great. We sat around and talked. I particularly enjoyed listening to the accents of these Indiana-ites. Of course, I suppose that means that, to them, I was the one with the accent. After supper, we took some time to digest and talk a little more before we ended the night in worship. It was a very nice evening.

Date: 10/15/2002

Submitted by: Miriam Anderson

Journal Entry:

This week has not been the best for me. I have been struggling with my voice for quite some time, and was recently diagnosed with nodes. Nodes are more or less calluses that form on one's vocal chords because of abuse or overuse. They're painful and make it difficult to sing and speak. On top of all that, I've had some sort of flu thing for a few days. It has totally zapped me of any energy for this ministry. Several nights I have found myself getting to my host home and just wishing they would show me my bed. And once I finally do get to my bed for the night I'm too feverish to sleep very well. Not only has this been tough on me physically, this has also been a huge lesson for me and my ego. I like to do everything on my own and feel like I'm on top of things, but lately it's just been impossible. I think one of my love languages (how I express love for people—check out The Five Love Languages by Gary Chapman—excellent book!) is doing things for people above and beyond what I'm asked to do. Needless to say, I can hardly do the things I have to do, let alone anything extra. That's when I have really found myself leaning on my teammates. I am a driver for my team. I haven't been driving or navigating for a few days which means Dain and Paul have taken up some extra driving, and Debbie is nearly always in the navigator seat. Dain has had to cut some of our usual songs from the program and even rearrange speaking parts to save my voice. However, my teammates have nothing but compassion for me and have taken up the slack that I am leaving. The end of I John 3:16 says, "And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters." Their words and actions fill me with love and appreciation every time one of my teammates seeks



Miriam Anderson

me out to find out how I'm feeling and what can be done for me. I know they are making sacrifices—dying to their own needs or desires—to make sure I get better. What an incredible thing to witness every day. I think the thing that strikes me most is that this is real. My teammates are not putting on a show because there is usually no one else around. They are not trying to earn points in some brownie points game because no one is keeping track. This is true, Christ-inspired love and concern. Thank you, Father God, for the love I see in the eyes of my teammates as they minister to others around them and most recently as they have ministered to me. You are an amazing God and always know just what we need. Thank you for calling each of us to your service and that Paul, Dain, Boni, Jason and Debbie have all answered that call. I praise you in the name of Jesus, amen.

Date: 10/17/2002

Submitted by: Boniface Adam Eliona Kombo

Journal Entry:

Hello everybody,

It is a new day again. That means, it adds another day of our lives in this world. That is cool! But oops! The new day also means that, we are approaching our destination!

Last night, we had a program with different groups of youths, under what is known as "ConFest Worship Rally". Those youths were from La Crosse Area Synod (ELCA) and were sponsored by the Lutheran Youth Organization. The Bishop of that synod was there also in what was called Confirmants' Night with the Bishop. In her message, the Bishop said, "Jesus loves us, even we are doing good or bad, He always loves us".

This statement reminds me of a few days ago when I joined a certain group of people at the church. We started our gathering with a word of prayer led by one of members. When he started praying, I did not understand anything. Can you guess why? He has a speaking problem. So, I just kept quiet and believed what he said. Suddenly, before he finished praying, I recognized the prayer. It was the Lord's Prayer! I found out that this person has a great faith in prayers. The Lord's Prayer is his favorite one! Though he knows that other people cannot understand while he prays, he believes that God listens and understand his prayers. How wonderful a faith is this?

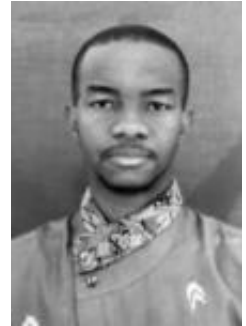
Another person who attracted my attention was one who had been hit by a car. He was in that accident when he was at the age of ten and he was in comma for 18 months. Later, the problem advanced. He has a mental problem. He cannot speak well now. But he has a testimony. His testimony is that Jesus appeared to him when he was in comma. He believes that Jesus saved him and returned his life. Is this not a great faith too?

Despite all our problems or how we look, these people have a great faith that I have never seen before, especially from people like them! Their faith is great and bigger than a big mustard tree! (Mt.13:31f)

I have learnt something from that group, what about you?? God loves us despite how we are, good or evil, complete or incomplete human beings. And the great love is... (John 3:16f).

See you sometime!

Boniface



Boniface Adam Eliona Kombo

Swahili

Hello,

Ni siku mpya tena. Kwa maana hiyo siku moja inaongezeka katika siku za kuishi hapa duniani! Lakini, inamaanisha kwamba, tunakaribia mwisho wa siku za kuishi!

Usiku wa jana tulijumuika na vijana mbali mbali toka sinodi ya La Crosse (ELCA) ambao wanafadhiliwa na shirika la Vijana wa Kilutheri (Lutheran Youth Organization). Askofu wa eneo hilo alikuwepo pia kwenye kilichoitwa "Usiku wa Walio kwenye Mafundisho ya KipaImara pamoja na askofu". Katika ujumbe wake, askofu alisema kwamba, Yesu anatupenda jinsi tulivyo. Tufanyapo mazuri au mabaya, yeye anatupenda tu"

Usemi huu unanikumbusha siku chache zilizopita nilipojumuika na kikundi Fulani kanisani. Tulianza mkusanyiko huo kwa sala iliyoongozwa na mmoja wao. Alipoanza kusali sikuelewa chochote alichosema, unaweza kujua sababu? Ndugu yule ana matatizo ya kuongea. Hivyo nilibaki kimya na kuamini alichosema. Ghafla karibu na mwishoni mwa sala ile nilielewa, ilikuwa ni Sala ya Bwana! Ndugu huyu ana imani sana tena katika sala. Na niliweza kufahamu pia Sala ya Bwana ndio sala

aipendayo sana ndugu yule. Pamoja na kutambua kwamba watu hawaelewi asalipo, bwana huyu anaamini kwamba Mungu anasikia na kuelewa anachosali. Je, hii si Imani ya Kushangaza? Mtu mwingine aliyenivutia siku hiyo ni ndugu mwingine ambaye aligongwa na gari wakati alipokuwa na umri wa miaka 10 tu. Alipoteza fahamu kwa miezi 18. Baadae tatizo lilikuwa kubwa zaidi, amepata matatizo katika ubongo. Kwa sasa hawezi hawezi kuzungumza vizuri. Lakini ndugu huyu ana ushuhuda. Ushuhuda wake ni kuwa Yesu alimtokea alipokuwa hana fahamu na pia amemrudishia uhai wake. Huu si ushuhuda mkubwa pia?

Mbali na matatizo tuliyonayo au jinsi tunavyoonekana, ndugu hawa ambao wana matatizo tofauti tofauti (kama mtindio wa ubongo, viungo), wana imani kubwa sana ambayo sijapata kuiona kwa watu kama wao! Imani yao ni kubwa kuliko mharadani! (Mathayo 13:31-32).

Nimejifunza kitu kutoka ndugu wale. Mungu anatupenda jinsi tulivyo, iwapo tumekamilika (viungo) au tuna upungufu, ama tufanyapo mema au mabaya. Na Upendo mkubwa kabisa ni...(Yohana 3:16-17)

Tutaonana wakati mwingine.

Boniface

Date: 10/19/2002

Submitted by: Jason Moran

Journal Entry:



Jason Moran

It was the one of those nights where you just want to sit around and do nothing. It was a Monday night "official Youth Encounter team day off." I rolled out of bed at 11am poured myself a bowl of Kellogg's Corn Pops (I gotta have my pops.) Had watched two movies and just been a bump on a log all day. Then I remembered, "Whoah, it is my turn to do a journal... I can't just write about eating Kellogg's Corn Pops!" So I wracked my mind for an experience... rewrote, deleted, rewrote, deleted and nothing seemed to sound good. (Remember the part about me being an English Major.)

Around Six in the evening my host dad, David, had received a phone call asking him to deliver milk from a milking farm to a mozzarella cheese plant nearby. As Paul and I were on being incredibly lazy we thought nothing of it. Daniel, Timothy, and Stephanie (our host brothers and sisters) were really excited about the fact that they might be allowed to join their father on the semi journey. Unfortunately for them, their dad would have been back to late from loading and unloading the truck for their established bed time. So David asked if Paul or I would like to join him. Paul was feeling a bit motivated for letter writing and I remembered I had a journal to write... So of course I was more than willing to go out on a semi truck and deliver milk. (What could be more journal-worthy than traveling in a semi?)

I put on my boots and flannel coat and out the door we went to the milking barn at the farm down the road. I had never been in a milking parlor before and what a sight that is. It is wild to see how many cows produce the milk we carried. That evening we carted a tanker truck loaded with 56,000 pounds of milk. Being a thoroughbred city boy, I had no clue that you could measure milk by the pounds. It was a learning experience for me. But that was hardly where the fun was.

I doubt that David knew what an incredible blessing he was to me that evening. I have been finding myself getting incredibly worn out by the constant van travel and the repetitive daily routine. It was like my brain was experiencing carpal-tunnel syndrome. This evening away doing something incredibly different than anything I had done before made life seem a lot less monotonous to me. I also got to learn a few things about milk and no longer do I have to wonder about where mozzarella cheese comes from...

David and I had some great conversations that evening riding in the semi about his life, how he and his wife met, and how incredibly blessed by God they have been. It was amazing to travel alongside such a great caring father, loving husband, and fun person.

Well, that is about it for this week. Hello to all our former host homes and future host homes. Also a special hello and thank you to our partners and sponsors, we love you all and continue to pray for you.

Date: 10/22/2002

Submitted by: Paul Nichols

Journal Entry:

Eastern Time Zone here we are! The time zone switch caught us by surprise as we rolled from Chicago to Battle Creek, Michigan. We arrived a predictable 1 hour late at the church on Saturday—oops!! We still had enough time to prepare for the program, and our lateness provided our hosts and ourselves with a good laugh.

I wish I could express how wonderful it is to do a program: music, sharing, puppet show, skit, and sing-a-longs. It's not great because the program is well-put-together (which it is), but because when we do a program with sincerity, we communicate the true joy it is to know Christ. I can't even begin to count the number of mistakes I've made during our programs—making the congregation sit and stand at my will, not remembering to say where I'm from or what our team name means, going into theological nowhere with the puppet show, and skipping (forgetting) all sorts of lyrics. But when those in attendance join us in worship I cannot help but smile as my heart glows with the warmth of community.

It's this sense of community that God has been making me see the most on team. After three years of graduate school, living in a single room, cooped up, alone, and reading into the wee hours of the night, I have left many of my social skills in a time far away. I have come to undervalue the meaning of community, of being with friends, of encouraging people around me. I like time alone, time to process, and being on team has been a struggle in patience for me, as I am with other people most of the time. Even though my brain yearns for this time alone, I am glad to be constantly reminded of the importance of community.

So I'm pleased I got the chance to "share" (that's the short sermon segment of our programs) when we were at the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point. I feel very close to the university atmosphere having just finished six years of schooling. I talked about the importance of community to peers, sharing from Hebrews 10:24-25: "And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching."

So true. This verse is important to me because, though I may get a headache for being around people so much, there is always a chance to encourage. This verse is a call to persevere even in times when I am besieged by hard times or failure ("The congregation may be seated. The congregation may stand."). So I thank my God for my wonderful teammates and the joyous congregations—let us run this race together in a community of brothers and sisters!



Paul Nichols

Date: 10/24/2002

Submitted by: Dain Swanson

Journal Entry:

In my years of learning what the Lutheran Church is like I have slowly formed a picture in my head of the "typical" church, congregation, and pastor. My stereotype held true until Janesville, WI. I had the pleasure of meeting Pastor Jason Hill of First Lutheran Church. Jason just recently graduated from Wartburg Theological Seminary in Dubuque, IA. Jason is a character because he is not in my idea of a "traditional" pastor. Jason is bald (shaven head), a larger man, muscular, and he has four earrings, two in each ear. Now if I were to see Jason on the street I would think to myself "that is a man who's into late 80's-early 90's rock, possibly owns a motorcycle, and has a group of guy friends that watch football together on Sundays". Well I am not at all far from the truth. Jason is a fan of classic rock, dreams of owning a Harley Davidson motorcycle, and does love football. But rather than staying home and watching football or NASCAR on Sundays, Jason takes his place in front of the congregation and preaches about the good word of Jesus Christ.

I had the pleasure of staying with Jason for an evening on our way through Janesville and we talked all night about theories on worship, youth ministry, the church, and the religious problems present in the world today. Jason and I look eye to eye on almost everything and I must tell you that it was most refreshing to talk about all of these issues and agree on 95% of them.

In many ways we are frustrated with organized religion. Whether it is Christian, Muslim, Jewish, or



Dain Swanson

any other religion, there seems to be strange stereotypes put in place concerning tradition, who is right, and how you have to look and act in order to be devout in your faith. I myself have stated earlier that I have stereotypes of my own, although I consider my thoughts to come from experience rather than assumptions. I have learned that it is alright to have those ideals or stereotypes, but if you do, be ready for God to destroy them by putting someone like Jason in your life.

I must say that I have found a light at the end of the tunnel, and it is in the person of Pastor Jason Hill. His ability to be himself in a world that has the typical Lutheran Church in mind is commendable. When members, guests and visitors walk through the door they may be shocked when they see Jason behind the Alter. But we must also think of the generations that are pleased to see Jason serving them communion and the generations of youth and adults that are brought into the church because of the common ground they share with Jason. Jason is ministering to Youth and their families where they are, not where the church society wants them to be.

Many people are turned away from organized religion because of the expectations that are set upon their shoulders when they walk through the door. I think that it was a Pastor I met in Milwaukee that said, "Many people see church as a place for the righteous and the world as a place for the sinners, when in fact it's the other way around."

I want to say thank you to Jason for helping me understand my purpose for ministry in a different light. And to all the people that have encouraged me to go into ministry. I have learned it is alright to be ourselves both inside and outside of ministry because God calls us all to do His work in so many different ways, and God will be there for us all because His grace is not just given to the 'typical Christian' but to us all.

God be with you till we meet again! -Dain

Date: 10/27/2002

Submitted by: Miriam Anderson

Journal Entry:

This morning, on Reformation Sunday, we had a special treat. The church choir was singing and the pastor had a special sermon prepared for today, so we didn't have any responsibilities during the worship service. We could simply worship. Something the pastor said really caught my attention, and I found myself lost in my own thoughts, unable to pay attention to the rest of the sermon. (Don't worry. I caught it all the second time around!) Pastor Collver was preaching on the Law and the Gospel, or perhaps the difference between the two. Many of us, naturally, feel we've kept the Ten Commandments. In fact, as the pastor relayed, there are not many, if any, murderers, adulterers, or thieves that sit in church each Sunday. My first thought was, "Why not?" Aren't these, after all, exactly the people with whom Jesus spent his time? So much time did he spend with these "sinners," the tax collectors, the prostitutes, that even his own disciples began to question him. In Matthew 9, Jesus is having dinner with some of these folks, and the Pharisees, observing this, ask the disciples what on earth he's doing. Jesus overheard the question, and answered for himself. "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick," he began. "Go and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice.' For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners." I know that sometimes the very thing that keeps someone out of a church is the Christians that attend there. Church can start to look like a righteousness club, only for those who already believe "all the right things." This is not at all what God had in mind when He sent Jesus to walk this earth. Over and over Paul writes in Ephesians that grace and salvation are for all people, not just Jews, but Gentiles too. In modern day terms, Christ didn't die only for the pious that sit in church Sunday after Sunday, but for the lost, broken sinners too. On this, Reformation Sunday, I can think of no other reformation more needed in our churches today than this: that we, as the church, begin throwing open our doors, inviting in with reckless abandon, those that have yet to hear of Christ's love, regardless of the lifestyle they lead or the things they've done. Though I use the term "they," another thought has occurred to me this morning. Each one of us falls into this same category—not the holy righteous category, but the despicable sinner category. How great must be the love of the Father to save even us in this condition? Why would we ever want to limit a love that powerful, to make it exclusive? I pray that we wouldn't.

Peace—Miriam :-)



Miriam Anderson

Date: 10/29/2002
Submitted by: Debbie Holte
Journal Entry:



Debbie Holte

Things have been going well here for me lately. I've had a chance to read parts of the Bible that I have not read for a long time, such as Isaiah, which is a really good book. It's so exciting to be able to read from the Old Testament things which later happened in the New Testament through Jesus' life. Can you imagine living in the time when Jesus walked the earth? I sometimes wonder what I would have thought of Jesus if I had known him personally. I don't know that I would have thought much differently than the Pharisees who looked at His great miracles and said "He is possessed by Beelzebub!" (Mark 3:22). He was so radically different than anyone else, and yet so very human and having so much in common with us. Amazing! I'm very glad that God has given me faith as well as a head and a heart by which I can know and understand Him.

One of my favorite parts of team is host home ministry. The ministry often goes back and forth between us and our host families, but sometimes it seems that my host families do more ministering to me than I to them. One of those times was in Ypsilanti, MI. My host "mom" and I talked for a while and found several areas of common interest. We especially talked about homes and house refurbishing type things—something I always thought would be fun to get in to. She encouraged me to pursue my interest.

After our conversation, I was going to head up to bed. But before I even made it upstairs, I noticed my host "dad's" upright bass. That is another thing I have thought was very neat for a long time. So my host dad kindly offered to show me how to play. He showed me some fundamental things about the bass (both the upright and electric) and showed me how to play some things. I had so much fun. We talked music for a while and he was also very encouraging. I felt very inspired and felt a renewed sense of purpose for doing music ministry.

I'm so thankful for all my host families and for all they do for me and my team. God uses all of us in many ways and I enjoy seeing how he uses the people in the churches we visit to do his work. He is so good.

Debbie

Date: 10/31/2002
Submitted by: Boniface Adam Eliona Kombo
Journal Entry:



Boniface Adam Eliona Kombo

Shots! Shots! Shots! Yes! Shots that have left us feeling as if we are carrying 100 pounds (about 50 Kg) on our shoulders! "Why, have you taken those shots?" Ooh, is this your question? Okay! It is Vaccination! Preparation for going overseas! Everybody in my team has to take some. Only four of us in my team did that, the rest (two) have had those shots before. The shots were in the morning and were for Typhoid, Hepatitis A and Tetanus (three of us). I had three shots, two in one shoulder and one in the other shoulder.

By the way, that is not my point. My point is, tonight we had a wonderful fellowship, a college program at one of the colleges in Ohio. It was a blessed moment to meet, talk and worship together with Christian students and some staff there.

After meeting some people at the end of our program, an older man came and greeted me. That man will reach the age of 78 next Friday. He said he was very happy to be in our program. He continued saying that he is very blessed to see people praising and worshiping God, especially, when they are still young. Could you guess a reason behind him saying that? "I was a slave of alcohol for many years," he said. "I started drinking when I was at the age of 19. I did not use my youth effectively as you do. But, one day, I met Jesus and He healed me. I then became a faithful Christian. I also visited the AA (Alcoholics Anonymous) for counseling for some time. It has been 11 years and 8 months now since I stopped drinking". Pause..! Let us do quick mathematics and find out for how long he has been an alcoholic. So, 78 years old (current age) minus 12 years (when he

stopped drinking) minus 19 years old (first year of drinking), is equal to 47 years. Duh! This is a long period! Isn't it?

I do not know: how many of us are still like that man was before? Or using drugs? How many of us still misuse our different gifts by not using them to glorify and praise the one who has given us those gifts, the Almighty God? That man said "Now, I no longer drink anymore. I will rejoice and praise God as long as I live!" It is true that he now knows the truth, and the truth sets him free. "If the Son sets you free, then you will be free indeed! (John 8:36).

Okay, let us have a small exercise to do at home. Read Romans 6:22 and Galatians 5:1.

Adios amigos!

Boniface Kombo-ROP (2002-3)

Swahili

Sindano! Sindano! Sindano! Ndio, sindano ambazo zimemuacha kila mtu kama vile amebeba kilo 50 (pandi 100 hivi) mabegani. "Kwa nini mmechoma sindano?" Ooh, ndio swali lako? Vizuri! Ni Chanjo! Maandalizi kwa safari nje ya nchi! Kila mtu katika timu anatakiwa apate chanjo. Ni watu wanne tu kati yetu tuliopata chanjo hiyo, wengine wawili wameshapata kitambo. Chanjo hizo asubuhi ya leo zilikuwa kwa ajili ya Typhoid, Hepatitis A and Tetanus (watatu kati yetu) [kumradhi; sijui nitafsirije hizo chanjo]. Nimepata sindano tatu, mbili mkono mmoja na moja mkono mwingine.

Hata hivyo, hiyo siyo mada yangu. Mada ya leo ni, usiku wa leo tulikuwa na onesho la kufana pamoja na wanafunzi katika moja ya vyuo vilivyopo Ohio. Ulikuwa ni wakati wa baraka sana kukutana, kuongea na kuabudu pamoja na wanafunzi wa kikristo na baadhi ya wafanyakazi wa chuo.

Baada ya kusalimiana na baadhi ya watu baada ya onesho kwisha, mtu mmoja alinikaribia na kunisalimia. Ijumaa ijayo, ndugu yule anatimiza umri wa miaka 78. Aliniambia ana furaha kubwa sana kuwoko kwenye onesho letu. Aliendelea kusema kwamba anabarikiwa sana kuona watu wakimsifu na kumtukuza Mungu, hasa wakati wangali vijana. Unaweza kuhisi sababu ya kusema hivyo? "Nilikuwa mtumwa wa pombe kwa miaka kadhaa", alisema ndugu yule. "Nilianza tangu nikiwa na miaka 19. Sikuutumia vizuri ujana wangu kama ninyi mfanyavyo. Lakini siku moja nilikutana na Yesu, akaniponya. Hivyo nikawa mkistro mwaminifu. Pia nilipata ushauri toka AA (taasisi inayoshughulika na madhara ya ulevi) kwa siku kadhaa. Sasa ni miaka 11 na miezi 8 toka nilipoacha kunywa pombe" Hebu subiri kidogo tufanye hesabu za haraka kujua ni kwa muda gani ndugu huyu alitumikia pombe. Tuna miaka yake 78 kutoa miaka 12 (alipoacha pombe) kutoa miaka 19 (alipoanza pombe), tunapata miaka 47. Duh, huu ni muda mrefu sana! Au sio?

Sifahamu ni wangapi miongoni wetu bado wako kwenye "maeneo" kama alivyokuwa ndugu yule? Au wanatumia madawa ya kulevya? Ni wangapi kati yetu ambao tunatumia vibaya karama mbalimbali tulizopewa bila kumsifu na kumtukuza Mungu? Ndugu yule alisema, "Sasa situmii tena pombe. Nitamsifu na kumshangilia Mungu siku zote za maisha yangu". Ni kweli ametambua ukweli na ukweli unamweka huru. "Bwana akiwaweka huru, mtakuwa huru kweli kweli" (Yohana 6:36) Naona leo tuwe na kazi kidogo ya kufanya nyumbani (home work). Soma Warumi 6:22 na Wagalatia 5:1.

Adios amigos!

Boniface Kombo-ROP (2002-3)

Date: 11/3/2002

Submitted by: Jason Moran

Journal Entry:

Last night we had a Family night program and had a great time worshipping with the community at Peace Lutheran Church in Connerville, Indiana. They had the whole place decorated in Rainbow colors and candy everywhere. It was a blast. This morning we woke up and led a Sunday school program for the "kids" of the church. It is usually traditional for Sunday school programs to have an abundance of kids ages 3-18 and several adult teachers. When we stood before this group and looked out into the crowd we could see that we were going to be working with a different Sunday school crowd than we have ever worked with before. In the front row there were about 5 youth ranging in age from 4 to 12 and the back of the church was packed with adults. Looking at our program for the morning Sunday school hour, I was a bit nervous. We were doing all our do-along songs, many sing along songs and a puppet show. Panning the crowd, we had adults in their Sunday's finest and a group of five youth. We went for it.



Jason Moran

By the end of the hour we had a great time. The adults were more into the program than even the kids. We managed to sneak a few pictures of adults tromping around acting out the "Hippo Song" and "The Way." It was awesome to see so much enthusiasm and support for the five youth from a group of adults five times their size. I have to admit that I was really nervous that the adults would walk out, or be bored. But afterwards we had some great conversations about how much fun they had worshipping God by acting like they were 12 again.

This journal is a short one for me... All is well on the road and we wish to send our hellos to all our Partners. We pray for you each night when we see our board. Also I would like to say a big howdy to all the other teamers, it will be great to see you all soon at midwinter training. Please pray for our health as we travel and for continued safety.

Date: 11/5/2002

Submitted by: Paul Nichols

Journal Entry:

Chasing God

Wow—this past week has been quite an adventure! Let me relate some of our happenings, though not in chronological order. We met up with Captive Free West Lakes this Sunday evening in Valparaiso, Indiana! We visited Miriam's church in East Canton, Ohio. My parents came down to visit, too! We got our shots last Thursday. Another tetanus for me, the typhoid shot, and some people got some of the Hepatitis shots. We did another program at a college (Mt. Union does, indeed, rock) and we actually got up EARLIER than we normally do because of the students' energy! I'm talking a 6 a.m. run, 7 a.m. prayer and breakfast, and most of them were off to class for 8 o'clock. Whoa. Obviously there is a marked decrease in metabolism when one hits the age of "me." So I've got a lot of what we call "highs"—things that have lifted my emotions this past week. All blessings.



Paul Nichols

Chasing the Colors

Also this past week we drove around a couple three states—Michigan, Ohio, and Indiana. It seemed as though we were following fall around. We experienced the colors of fall when we were in Wisconsin in late September and early October, then fall went away. Well, it came back this past week with a bang. We got the chance to see the beautiful, vibrant colors that many other areas in the states missed due to drought. As we were driving around, I thought that we were "chasing the colors." I'm sure I'm stealing this delightful little phrase from somewhere, and perhaps it is better left in my brain than written down, but as brains are apt to do, it got me thinking...

You've probably noticed that at your church, most people sit in the back pews. I won't go into the possible reasons for such a pathology or behavior. But one thing I noticed about our programs is that we never have to fight to get people to sit close. Just like at a football game, sitting close means you get the best view for something that's important and exciting. Many children have been educated in the secrets of our puppet show because they sit so close that they can see around the curtain!

I find it encouraging to see how people "chase" God in this fashion at our programs. There is a hunger everywhere to know and sing praises to our Lord. Just as we chase our dreams for playing a

sport or musical instrument well, my wish is that we would chase our need to know God with the same or greater fervor. I am encouraged by the faith I see at all of the congregations and places that I've been. May our chase be successful and colorful as the fall!

Date: 11/7/2002

Submitted by: Dain Swanson

Journal Entry:

Kids are cute but more importantly smart!

Here's a question, what is it like to actually live out a mission statement? Well from the perspective of RoP and more specifically myself, I find it very refreshing, stimulating, energizing, revitalizing, and enlivening.

Youth Encounter's mission statement, strengthening the church through the faith and ministry of its youth, is something that all YE teams live by and strive for during their year of volunteering. But does this actually happen, I mean, do we as a traveling relational music ministry team have the time to truly make a difference? Well, I am here to say that we do! This past week was chock full of wild and crazy adventures through the Immense Lagoon (Great Lake) region of the United States, and has proven to be a most rewarding experience. We have led many different types of programs in subsequent days, everything from confirmation on Sunday night to our regular family night programs. I have stayed with a wide range of families with children from ages 10 months to seniors in high school. It is amazing the amount of "stuff" these kids know. My host brothers and sisters are some of the smartest youth that I have known, the questions that they ask are, for one thing, very important questions, but are also very mature questions. Even more impressive are the answers they give. Just the other night Paul, my host family and I sat down for a devotion before bed and the question of capitol punishment came up. What!? Capitol Punishment!? I thought that we were going to have a nice little discussion on the grace of God and how much He loves us, which wasn't far from the topic but the heaviness of the devotion took me a bit by surprise. The discussion that resulted was very stimulating and led mostly by our 13 and 11 year old host brothers and we still got to the point of the love of God, WOW!

Another instance in Lena, WI led me to believe in the motivation of youth. After the family night program our monster side came to fruition and we enjoyed fellowship with the group present. Being relational monsters is a lot of fun; seeing the smiles on the faces of the kids and knowing that all of a sudden they believe that God is so much more than what they hear on Sunday morning or in Sunday school leads me to believe that God is working. Lena was a great time for us all and I think that the prayers of the kids best sum up my thoughts. Prayers like: "that there is no more wars in the world," and "I wish everybody will live forever." God is working in their lives because these are deep thoughts and the motivation to think about these things must come from somewhere.

I would also like to recognize the size of the hearts of the youth that we meet. After the Lena program a very nice young boy came up to me and gave me a note. This note expressed his thanks for the program and the wonderful time that he had. I know that God touched his heart through me and my teammates. I would like to echo his thanks to all my fellow teammates, YE teams and staff, and my family and friends.

"A BIG thank you for your music made my heart fill with happiness.

God Bless you all" –Russel of Necedah

Kids are not just cute, they are so smart and I think that the conversations that I have had in the past week showed me that there is so much more to the youth of our Churches. I, for one, know that I am going to listen whenever I get the chance because you never know when God may be talking to you.



Dain Swanson

Date: 11/9/2002

Submitted by: Miriam Anderson

Journal Entry:

35 host families I have stayed with this year... so far

6 (as in Romans—read it!)

9 days that I spent without speaking or singing a SINGLE word (to heal my voice)

302,942 number of times my teammates have answered questions for me or intervened when I couldn't say a word to our host families

5 dollars, the price of the white board I've been carrying around as my "voice" this week

7,088.2 actual number of miles ROP has traveled this year

10 number of toes that I have

219 pounds of excess fruit in our shuttle right now

28,764 times that Jason has read my mind these past nine days

0 letters that I've received from my two younger sisters (hint, hint... if you are even reading this)

3 days in a row that I've worn these clothes

24.7 approximate number of Telugu words I know (Telugu is a language found in southern India that we are hoping to learn)

4:13 (Philippians) a verse to live by

41 pages of The Lord of The Rings book I've read in two weeks!

67 days until we leave for India and Nepal!

1.57 price of diesel in these parts

4 actual number of times that Debbie and I have NOT been housed together

1 body, 1 spirit, 1 Lord 1 faith, 1 baptism, 1 GOD!



Miriam Anderson

Date: 11/12/2002

Submitted by: Debbie Holte

Journal Entry:

We were blessed to see four different states this past week: Indiana, Illinois, Wisconsin, and Michigan (the UP!). Although we had managed to avoid all snow all tour so far (which could be good or bad, depending on your perspective), it finally caught up to us (or we to it) in Ishpeming, MI. There is not much snow here right now, but we saw pictures of what the lake effect snow has done in the past (pictures of snow up to the power lines and a wall of snow so high that a doorway had been cut through the thick wall of snow to get to the buildings behind it).



Debbie Holte

We have met some very cool people this week as well. We started the week off with a team Alumna (CFNW '02-'03), Miranda who was Miriam's teammate last year. But not only did we get to stay with her, but we got to see our good friends from Captive Free West Lakes. It was super fun to see them (and their program). Then, in Illinois, Miriam and I had the opportunity to talk about faith matters with a guy named Mike. I don't know that we necessarily knew the best things to say in response to some of his questions and statements, but we pray that God used us as a part of his larger plan to plant a seed or water something that was already growing toward God. We met some great young and chronologically-advanced people this week. We were once again overwhelmed with the graciousness of our hosts—especially when we felt we had done nothing to deserve such great hospitality and generosity.

We played just a few songs for a church service when we were in Manitowoc, WI, yet our host family took very good care of us. Not only did we get to talk with them and share about our ministry and learn about their lives over some excellent lasagna, but we had the opportunity relax, call home, dial in, AND our host mom was a nurse and gave four of us flu shots (and she paid for them!) I can certainly say that I'd never gotten a vaccination in someone's kitchen before. She also was a big help in scheduling us for our first of three rabies vaccinations. Being the health coordinator, that was a big strain off my shoulders.

Somewhere between the shots the boys got back in October and the rabies shots Jason, Paul, and I got last week, I started thinking. I thought about the battle that started raging inside of me the moment the vaccine entered my body. Were it not for a slightly sore arm and a bandaid to cover the place the needle had gone, I would be clueless that this battle was even happening. Then I thought about all the things that go on in our bodies that we are completely unaware of. Many times viruses and bacteria enter our bodies, but our immune systems fight them off without us even thinking about it. It is not until we get sick that we are aware of the

Date: 11/14/2002

Submitted by: Boniface Adam Eliona Kombo

Journal Entry:

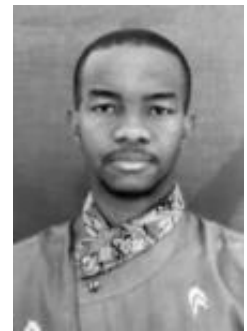
11-14-02

Last week and this week, my teammates and I have been touring and performing at churches which are under the Northern Great Lakes Synod. Perhaps you are asking "why am I talking about this synod?" I am from Eastern and Coastal Diocese (ECD), which covers areas like Dar es Salaam, Coastal Region, Zanzibar and Mafia (Tanzania). The Northern Great Lakes Synod is one of my diocese's partners, with whom we work together in different ways to serve God.

Being in this synod is a great thing. This synod and its people participate well in helping our diocese to build a library and classes at Kisarawe Junior Seminary (KJS) as well as construction of some churches. I met with some people and synod's ministers who have visited my diocese and some parishes like Msasani, Azania, Magomeni, Temeke, etc and also did other things such as visiting Kisarawe (KJS); companion churches, and other social areas and some projects, like Mtoni-deacon, Women group-Mkuza, Youth group-Chamazi, etc.

It is a great thing to thank God for all these wonderful people who have and continue to contribute much to helping my diocese in its ministry. The diocese is situated in the midst of many people with different faith perspectives, people who are thirsting and seeking the Word of God; people who are in need, like proper education, food and other social needs. The diocese still needs more support in doing this ministry by having more people, ministers and workers.

God bless all those who participate in serving you through providing various supports and needs, as our Lord Jesus commanded (Matthew 22:37-39).



Boniface Adam Eliona Kombo

Date: 11/17/2002

Submitted by: Jason Moran

Journal Entry:

So today I was informed by my mom, Hope Moran, that my journal entries have been sounding too "generic teamer" and not enough Jason. So here is my attempt at sounding like me. Personally I have an issue with paragraphs, and occasionally sentences. I am a big fan of the independent clause, dependent clause, basically any type of clause makes me happy. I also love ellipsis... I majored in English in college. As an English major I learned how to write correctly, succinctly, and with a purpose, but as a post-modernesque, romantiquesque, hand-drummer I have learned the succinct means nothing without feeling. I love to write for feel and love to see sentences sprawl on giving the reader a feeling of conversation or sitting beside the author (or journal writer) I am also a Lutheran, and therefore I recognize the importance of the question, "what does this mean?" Basically, as far as I



Jason Moran

can ascertain this means that I am here on team this year as who I am. I am an English-Majored, Lutheran, with a passion for cynical post-modern memoirs, folk-rock music, and intellectual conversation with open-minded people. I also love trying to solve world problems and drinking 7-11 Slurpees. That means that I clash with some people, that means that I get along with some people, but basically what that means is that I am a Christian, although I may struggle with issues of faith, my future, and wonder how God manages to use me on days when I am tired, days when I am selfish, and days when I just plain old don't care... and you know what fascinates me the most... this has been happening even when I wasn't on team. Yes, God uses all you people staring at your computer monitors reading this website when you feel tired, don't care, feel weak in faith, or are preoccupied with other things (like surfing the internet) Honestly, each day I experience a lot, run the gambit of emotional responses, read a bit of great books (like Culture Jam by Kalle Lasn, or A Heartbreaking Work of Staggering Genius by David Eggers) whilst traveling in a remodeled 1994 airport shuttle with five other people who all are different from me. What a fun little model of the global church I experience every day. Everyone is different, but in the end... (to paraphrase Nate Houge's song No Different) We are all no different from one another because we are all equals in the eyes of God (regardless of personalities, opinions, language, and culture) spreading His grace around.

So that is enough of me rambling here on this computer screen. I hope you all enjoy the reading and I am going to try to stay out of the trap of writing trite stuff like I occasionally get tempted to do. □ (some days it is easier to write out of the can things...) Thank God I have a mom on the look out for me.

Hello to all you out there in cyber-ville. Enjoy the internet, but do me a favor and enjoy some of the snow if you have it at your disposal as well. As always, good greetings to all we have met, all we will meet, and all the people who have met the people who we will meet. A "how do you do?" is necessary to all our partners, sponsors, and of course everyone I have ever met at the resource table.

Date: 11/21/2002

Submitted by: Dain Swanson

Journal Entry:

Sitting in the sanctuary, listening to the organ.
Singing in a cathedral-esque place; hearing the sound I experienced in Europe.
Speaking to Stefan, the German pastor, in German.

These three things are what caused me to have a smile on my face since last Wednesday. RoP and I had the pleasure to be in Duluth, MN for a few days and at a few different churches and nursing homes. First Lutheran Church was located right on Lake Superior and many of the pastor's offices overlooked the water, I must say it was one of the better views I have seen from a pastor's window. I was delighted to speak to Stefan, a pastor originally from Frankfort, Germany, where we discussed the finer points of how long he has been in the States and where I have been in Germany. It was a real treat to speak to him for the short time that I was able. Also, during our stay at First, the organist was practicing for Christ the King Sunday, classic hymns echoed through the entire church from the massive pipes encased in the front of the sanctuary. Although the pipes couldn't be seen, there was no doubt that they could be heard and felt throughout the entire church. As I sat and listened I imagined my time in Europe and the amazing cathedrals of Germany, Italy, and England. It was cold and the light of day shown through the stained glass windows. I continued to sit, listen and visualize the music. I was so inspired by the music when the organist left the sanctuary I positioned myself in front of the church and sang whatever song came to mind. Songs in the classic chant style were most prominent. I imagined myself as a monk singing the different parts of a catholic mass. The sense of peace and tranquility was truly unique.

God is all around us, you can't see where He is because He seems to be coming from all directions, and there is nary a wall that contains the power of His word. I'm sure if I would have been outside the church I could have experienced the power of the organ pipes even from some distance away, but there is still a distance that may be reached to where the organ can not be heard. Our team has been all over the Midwest and God has been right there with us. Soon we will head over to India and Nepal. Life will undoubtedly be different than that which we are used to, but we know that God will



Dain Swanson

follow us. God will be the sanctuary where we can always go and listen to the wonderful sounds that will always remind us of His unconditional love.

Date: 11/22/2002

Submitted by: Paul Nichols

Journal Entry:

I would like to write about our afternoon yesterday at Lake Shore Lutheran Home. It was a marvelous program, with a gracious audience, which has been the norm. But actually, I want to focus on the birds.

Now it's my experience that they put aviaries in many of these homes—you know, the huge bird condos. What a tangled web these birds weave. Let me paint the picture.



Paul Nichols

The aviary is about 3 by 6 by 7 feet (wxlhx). Along the back wall lies a mesh grating with a sort of mat-like straw behind it. Protruding from this straw is some greenery and branches to create a woodsy like atmosphere. Birds perch on the branches. Little houses hang on the back wall. Some babies stare out from the edge of these house nests, their eyes perusing the landscape. Food lies in pans on the floor. All eyes focus on the yellow bird, Mr. Canary.

You see, Mr. Canary believes that this aviary is his domain. He flies where he wants to, eats most of the time, and chases other birds. The birds flutter wildly through the cage, shifting their eyes, watching the bully. But wait! One of the doves (the ones in this cage are small) makes a break for the canary's home! What speed, what swiftness, what stupidity! It grabs at the straw and feathers that line the canary's cage. Its beak seems to be lined with lard, for it cannot keep hold of anything! Hurry up bird!!! The jitters seem to have gotten the best of this one. Eureka...success! It grabs a feather as the canary flies in from above to inflict mortal damage. The dove scurries away in the nick of time. Now the chase is on. From branch to branch they weave, around other birds. If I had reflexes like the doves, I'd be pretty flexible. Other birds scurry out of the way of the chase. How does the dove escape time and again? Just when it seems the chase will endure forever, the dove drops the feather from its useless beak. The Canary leaves him be for now, forgiving the transgression.

These birds are no pushovers. It's tough to tell who started picking on whom first. Also, why in the world would I stare so long at birds? Well, Joseph J. Hickey's Guide to Bird Watching gives us some insight into why people would ever bird watch in the first place: "By some, it is regarded as a mild paralysis of the central nervous system, which can be cured only by rising at dawn and sitting in a bog" (taken from For the Birds: An Uncommon Guide, by Laura Erickson). The paralysis part I understand.

So how is this relevant to anything in this world? The canary stopped chasing the other bird, but God doesn't ever stop pursuing us. As we say in our programs, God's knocking at our hearts; we have to open them up to let him in. God is chasing all of us relentlessly, because He wants us to know Him better. So here are two verses that may or may not be relevant.

Matthew 6:26 Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?

John 8:36 Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed.

But wait! The zebra finch cautiously approaches the nest...

Date: 11/23/2002

Submitted by: Miriam Anderson

Journal Entry:

We had another nursing home program a few days ago, and it was an amazing experience for me. I believe it was the first nursing home program I've ever done without crying somewhere during the program. I don't know what it is for sure that causes this phenomenon, but almost without fail I tear up at nursing home programs. Sometimes it is the words to the songs we're singing:

Free by Ginny Owens

Chorus

You're free to dance, forget about your two left feet (insert the word "wheelchair" here)

You're free to sing, even joyful noise is music to me (any noise can bring praises to God: it is what's in one's heart that matters)

And you're free to love, 'cause I have given you my love

And it's made you free, I have set you free. (In God's grace, we are free from the sin that ensnares this world. In His love we can know true freedom.)



Miriam Anderson

Sometimes it's the people I see. The elderly man who clutches his wife's wrinkled hand all throughout the program, hardly giving us a second thought as he watches her face light up in recognition of the hymn we are singing. How long has it been since she has recognized this life, including her faithful husband, as Alzheimer's disease takes control? I also see the elderly woman sitting in a padded floral print chair. As I talk with her before the program, I realize she is blind, and she grips my hand as we speak about the way things used to be and her favorite games to play as a child. After the program, I shake her hand again and tell her thank you for coming. Those aged eyes turn in my direction, and she says that I am beautiful. It means so much more coming from her, knowing that she has no idea what my outward appearance may be, but that she has seen Christ's beauty through me.

On this day, the tears don't come, but joy does abound. As we sing the songs that have become so familiar to us, a lady in a purple skirt with a matching vest catches my eye. She is clapping along to our music and occasionally I catch her directing us just a choir director would. After we have concluded our program, I work my way through the sea of chairs to find this woman. She reaches for my hands and pulls me in to an awkward hug. The wheelchair is somewhat of an obstacle. She whispers, "That was beautiful. Just beautiful."

"Do you sing?" I want to know.

"Oh, I have done some singing in my life, but mostly I like to play the piano. Was that you playing?"

"It was, indeed. What do you like to play?"

"Oh, a little of everything, honey. A little of everything."

"Why don't you play me something?"

A little embarrassed, Kate tells me that today is our day, and she doesn't want to steal the spot light. "Besides," she says, "They get to hear me play all the time around here."

"I don't ever get to hear you play," I argue. "Just one song, once everyone else leaves the room."

After some more encouragement and laughter, Kate finally agrees to play some Christmas carols, but only if I will sing. Of course, I agree, and I wheel her to the piano. I ask if she has a carol or two memorized, but she reaches into her purse and pulls out a well worn copy of a caroling book. She flips through the pages and lands on "Oh, Come All Ye Faithful." She plays more than what is written on the pages, and I wonder if the caroling book is for my sake. For the next twenty minutes we take turns choosing favorite songs. Some I sing. Some, like Bach's piano concerto or another famous tune that I can't name, Kate plays alone. Our final number is "O Holy Night." As a nurse comes to take Kate back to her room, Kate lets me in on another of her secrets. She is 90 years old and was a piano major back when very few women went to college. She has played at Carnegie Hall, and, upon moving to Lake Shore Lutheran Home, she donated her Steinway grand piano to a music academy where young prodigies will learn some of the greatest pieces ever written by some of the greatest composers ever to live on her piano.

There is a quote that I would imagine still hangs on the wall in my high school choir room that says, "Music is a language that everyone can understand." Music can create amazing emotion and speak a million different things to a million different people. Music can connect years gone by to this present day. Music can break down the walls that seem to form between generations, between people, between races. Music is one of the most amazing gifts from God.

Date: 11/23/2002

Submitted by: Miriam Anderson

Journal Entry:



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Chorus

You're free to dance, forget about your two left feet (insert the word "wheelchair" here or perhaps "debilitating disease brought on by old age")

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And you're free to love, 'cause I have given you my love

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a million different things to a million different people. Music can connect years gone by to this present day. Music can break down the walls that seem to form between generations, between people, between races. Music is one of the most amazing gifts from God.

Date: 11/26/2002

Submitted by: Debbie Holte

Journal Entry:

Northern Minnesota has been a real treat. I have enjoyed the snow and even the cold—they make me feel closer to home. Another treat for me was that we got to go to Ely, MN. I had a roommate for two years in college who was from Ely and, though neither she nor her sister were there, it was very fun to be on their stomping grounds.

The people of Grace Lutheran in Ely were very nice and helped make our time there even more wonderful. We were very well fed and had a great time talking with the people. Miriam and I had the unusual experience of having two host homes in one night. First we drove outside of town into the beautiful countryside covered with great evergreen trees. We went to a home filled with 17-year olds who were there for our host sister's birthday party. It was fun to be in a house that was so full of fun. It was a contagious atmosphere and I couldn't help but enjoy myself. It made me hope that I might one day have a house where my kids will feel to bring their friends over to have some good old fashioned fun. Miriam and I sat down with our host mom and youngest host sister and taught them how to play Speed Scrabble. It was very addicting and we could hardly tear ourselves away, but our host mom had arranged for us to go to her neighbor's house to sleep and escape the noise of the party. We also had a very nice time at our second host home. We were very well taken care of.

The next day was also very fun. We shared in worship with the people of Grace. We who are night owls appreciated that there was just one service and that was at 9:30 am. It made us feel much more alive for the service. Afterwards some of our team enjoyed singing Christmas hymns with the church choir while some of us visited with the Sunday School classes.

And one of our favorite parts of Ely Minnesota was that we had ample opportunities to use the word Mukluk. Muklucs are boots made from moose hide. So on our way out of town we stopped by the Mukluk outfitters and oogled over the great, warm boots. None of us bought any, but we sure enjoyed talking about them. On our way out of Ely we drove on a road that is supposedly prime area for moose sightings. We kept our eyes peeled, but saw none. It was a bit of a disappointment after such a great couple of days in Ely, but I guess we should be grateful as seeing a moose may have meant putting Mother Goose (our shuttle) and ourselves in danger.

Debbie



Debbie Holte

Date: 11/28/2002

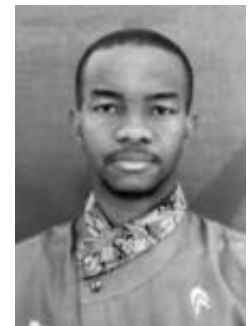
Submitted by: Boniface Adam Eliona Kombo

Journal Entry:

"God, we say 'Thank you God.'" "We thank you our Father God for all the blessings that you provide to us every day." These are words to some songs from a choir in Tanzania.

Today is the Thanksgiving Day! This holiday is an American holiday, and is celebrated on the fourth Thursday of November each year. As a team, we served the Thanksgiving Meal at St. James Episcopal Church, in Hibbing, Minnesota. So, we didn't have a full program besides serving and singing a few songs for people who attended the meal.

More than 300 people from various areas attended today. For those who were unable to make the journey to the church, volunteers served them by bringing food and desserts to their homes. On this day, people are thankful for many things—thanking God for his blessings, mercy and kindness. People are thankful for having families, relatives and friends; thankful for our lives as well.



Boniface Adam Eliona Kombo

Many people celebrate this day with their families. People pray and celebrate with their loved ones. As God's creatures, we have so many things to be thankful for, and I cannot write everything here, so feel free to add your own thanksgivings!
Have a nice Thanksgiving Day!
Boni

Swahili

"Baba Twasema Asante Baba. Mungu twasema Asante Mungu. Tunakushukuru!" Haya ni baadhi ya maneno kwenye nyimbo za kwaya moja.

Leo ilikuwa ni "Sikukuu ya kutoa Shukrani" (Thanksgiving Day) hapa Amerika. Sikukuu hii husherehekewa na Waamerika kila mwaka Alhamisi ya Nne ya Mwezi Novemba.

Tukiwa tunaendelea na mzunguko wa maonesho yetu, siku ya leo tulikuwa katika usharia wa St. James Episcopal, ulioko Hibbing, Minnesota. Tulikuwa mahali hapo kwa ajili ya Chakula cha Mchana, na hatukuwa na onesho kamili. Tulisaidiana na waandalizi kutoa huduma na kuimba nyimbo chache kwa watu waliohudhuria, pamoja na wale ambao walihudumiwa kwa kupelekewa katika nyumba/vituo vyao.

Watu wa aina mbalimbali, toka sehemu mbalimbali walihudhuria na kuhudumiwa katika sherehe ya leo. Walihudhuria baadhi ya wanamichezo, watu wa kawaida na wale ambao walipelekewa chakula nyumbani au vituoni mwao (wazee na wasiojiweza). Takribani watu zaidi ya 300 walihudumiwa. Sherehe hii ni katika kumshukuru Mungu kwa yote anayotufanyia katika maisha yetu ya kila siku, wema wake na upendo wake; shukrani kwa kutupa familia, ndugu na marafiki; shukrani kwa ajili ya nchi zetu; shukrani kwa kila kitu.

Watu wengi husherehekea sikukuu hii kama familia. Watu hufanya sala na kufurahia/kusherehekea pamoja na wapendwa wao. Kila mtu ana sababu ya kumshukuru Muumba wake; shukrani kwa maisha yetu. Shukrani kwa wazazi wetu; shukrani kwa ndugu zetu, kwa marafiki wetu.

Ni mambo mengi sana ya kutoa shukrani. Sitaweza kuorodhesha kila kitu hapa, unaweza kuendelea kuorodhesha/kufikiria mambo mengine zaidi.

Sikukuu Njema!

Boni

Date: 12/6/2002

Submitted by: Paul Nichols

Journal Entry:

We have just a few programs before we have a week of training and then head into our Christmas vacation. And in January...India! I cannot get the excitement of just packing for India out of my head! I'll try to bring as little as possible (like a bandana tied to the end of a stick) because mobility is hugely important to me in new situations. It will be a nice challenge to see how light I can get my luggage. Should I pack the hackysack or not??? Should I just bring the shirt on my back and buy some shirts there? Hee hee hee...My heart leaps at the dorkyness and banality of planning and plotting so scrupulously. Yes, I am excited just to pack my bags.



Paul Nichols

But I am also excited to have learned a little more about Hyderabad, which will be a sort of base of operations for us in India. National Geographic recently ran an article on cities around the world, noting that Hyderabad is making a name for itself because it is well managed, developing urban green spaces and becoming the Indian Silicon Valley. We have met people who have been to India and Nepal, so we have picked their brains for a little more insight on what to expect upon our arrival overseas.

Right now I ask for your continued prayers for us: for safe travel in the states and abroad, for health, for programs that communicate what it is to know Jesus, for our preparation to go to India and Nepal. Thank you for your support and have a merry Christmas!

Date: 12/6/2002

Submitted by: Jason Moran

Journal Entry:

Season of Advent 2002
Journal-type-thing



Jason Moran

The sun is in my eyes, the snow is on the ground, and this computer will not stop shaking at each bump in the road to Nevis, Minnesota. I have thoroughly enjoyed the last few weeks. I had the chance to stop in the city of Bovey, Minnesota which is the home of the "Picture Grace." (This picture appears in most church basements of an earnest older man praying over a bowl of borscht and a half loaf of bread.) Dain and I got out and had our pictures taken underneath the giant picture of this older man praying over his food. Just as we were doing that a mini-van pulled over to greet us. It was Paul's host family from Our Redeemer, how cool is that? (Pretty cool if you ask me... go ahead... ask) We also partook in a real wood-fired Finnish sauna last night. Which is quite possibly the most relaxing experience in the world.

In the spectrum of relational ministry, life is good. Last night we had an awesome program where there was a group of kids dancing the night away. Personally, I had no clue that our music was danceable. Thank God for little kids.

In the spectrum of a crystal... there is a rainbow. But that was a joke.

It is advent now. Advent is one of my favorite church seasons. I love it because it shows how different we Christians are from the rest of the world. The news on Saturday showed thousands of people eagerly waiting outside of mall doors for the doors to fly open and the sales to begin. "We posted record sales on Friday" the Wal-Mart reports read. People on the news were shown elbowing each other in the faces all in this mad rush towards Christmas happiness. We stand in the midst of a paradox as Christians. We love Christmas: the birthday of our Lord and Savior. We want it to come quickly; however, we have this Advent season that is seemingly in the way of the Christmas season. While the world is rushing toward Christmas we Christians wait as four candles are lit to celebrate the wait for our Savior. Thankfully on the first Sunday in Advent I didn't have to elbow anyone out of the way of the church doors to hurry up and wait for the approach of our Savior. The time has finally come for us to slow down and turn slowly around the advent wreath in our wait for the approach of our Lord.

That is basically that... I hope all is well in cyber-ville. Don't forget to drink your milk. We are just getting into the town of Nevis, MN and it is time to start unloading. Till we meet again, be it virtual or otherwise,
Jason

Date: 12/30/2002
Submitted by: Dain Swanson
Journal Entry:



Dain Swanson

Being back on the road is something that is a little strange to me yet. We as a team are ecstatic to see one another and be on the road again, especially since our travels took us to St. Peter, MN the home of one Debbie Holte.

St. Peter is known for a couple things one being Gustavus College and the other the tornado that destroyed it. The town was forced to cope with the destruction of buildings and homes. Churches were not missed either. First Lutheran Church, Debbie's home church, was then called First Lutheran Catholic Church because of the lack and inhabitability of the Catholic Church to hold services. This joining of Christians in the same building was a testament to the wonderful power that is given to us by God.

This past Sunday we participated in a service at First Lutheran where two Lutheran Churches in St. Peter traditionally join for worship the first Sunday after Christmas in celebration of the birth of our savior. The Pastor that spoke in this service that was filled with Communion, Praise and Worship, and four baptisms, told a story about communion and how it is a point of discussion and even controversy in the Christian church both yesterday and today. But through the eyes of faith that God and Jesus have given us we, in our individual faiths, can see the presence of Jesus in the bread

and wine that we share on Sunday.

One of the amazing parts of First Lutheran Catholic Church was how communion was given. Communion was shared by all on Sundays administered on one side by a female pastor and a priest on the other. This joint celebration of the Eucharist is what I imagine India to be like. A place where the 'church' is not what is defined by walls but by belief. Christians of the old church in Rome had to hide from persecution in order to worship, Christians of the modern day church in China still have to hide because of government persecution. But places like St. Peter, MN and India give us hope because of the ability to overcome the troubles and hardships of daily life or natural disasters. As I sit and prepare mentally for India I hope and pray for the Christians around the world both at home and abroad that we can focus on God and not on our differences in our times of need.

Happy New Year to you all,

dain

Date: 1/16/2003

Submitted by: Miriam Anderson

Journal Entry:

This is too surreal in some ways. In other ways, I feel like I just came home. We flew into Hyderabad from Mumbai at 3:30 this morning. Except for two missing guitars we're in good shape. It's now nearly 6:30, and we're all resting for a few hours. We don't have any bookings today but we start tomorrow with a chapel at 7 a.m.! We are with Sunitha's family which is neat. The boys are staying in the room where Sunitha and her husband Paul lived when they were first married. It's amazing to see her "other" life. We have already been blessed with so much kindness and hospitality by the Morthas. (Side note" We were told it's fine to brush our teeth with the water here. I did so at approximately 6:10 this morning, Thursday. Let's just see...)



Miriam Anderson

When we finally landed today in Mumbai it wasn't quite as spectacular as I'd imagined. We waited in a few lines, got a stamp and got back on another plane. Ug! BUT...when we landed in Hyderabad, it was spectacular. We had a few minor hitches at the airport (guitars and being questioned about backpacks for the orphans from Sunitha) but then we wheeled our little carts, piled high with 4 months of life in all our American glory out the doors of the airport and into the thick Indian air. It smelled of exhaust and fresh air and spices and bodies. It was a pleasing aroma, and I felt at home. Reggie, Sunitha's brother, came with Ebenezer, a friend of the family, to pick us up. We actually had to call them and all in all we waited for maybe 45 minutes. I people-watched. I was intimidated by the men at the airport. I could feel their eyes on me. I tried not to make eye contact, but I caught myself time and again. I always tried to look away before my eyes actually met any of theirs, but was hard. [editor's note: The eyes in India are very intimate. Thus, men and women generally do not meet eyes.]

I can't believe the colors here. Everything is bright and exciting. The women wear such beautiful jewelry. It's mostly gold and very ornate. At any given time it seems most women are wearing rings, bangles, necklaces, earrings, toe rings and a nose ring. I love it. The women just have an air of elegance around them. I love to just look at them. I was also noticing a bit of culture (other than the obvious). In general, it seems that the women gather and the men gather but they don't seem to mix much. People here aren't in a hurry either. I must have seen the same people saunter past us within those 45 minutes 5 or 6 times with no apparent rhyme or reason—just to be there with everyone else. At the same time people seem a little distant from one another. I've always known Americans were loud and generally obnoxious, but that was especially evident this morning at the airport. Even as people found friends or loved ones they were waiting for, there was no huge rush of emotion or loud talking or calling out to one another. Everyone remained quite stoic. It was interesting to watch, but also thought-provoking. How will I fit into this culture? I am used to being loud and wild and emotional. I want to help guide people away from the stereotypes or sociotypes about Americans. I believe that in some ways I can. I don't however, know if I'll be able to overcome this one.

As I sit here on my bed on the second floor, Hyderabad is coming to life on the streets below me. A

main street is just outside my window, and I hear the day waking up. Loud rumbling trucks pass, blasting their exhaust in my direction. Little cars zoom in and out of the trucks beating their horns every few seconds. I hear occasional greeting called back and forth, and I believe I can make out the whisk, whisk of someone sweeping the sidewalks with a straw broom. I also hear the call of some bird that is foreign to me. Along with the exhaust, I smell lilies. As we each walked in the door, Sunitha's mom draped long strands of garland around our necks. This garland is made of fresh lilies, chrysanthemums and roses laced with very fine silver threads of tinsel. They are gorgeous and smell even better. The light in the clouded windowpane is slowly brightening, turning from a deep dreamy blue to a pale, hot morning. It is time that I rest my eyes.

Date: 1/17/2003

Submitted by: Debbie Holte

Journal Entry:

After using yesterday to get over our jet lag, we got up nice and early this morning to play at the 7:00 chapel service at Andhra Christian Theological College. Our first performance in India! We took our sandals off at the door to the sanctuary and took our seats at the front. There were mostly men there, and a few played a song at the beginning of the service. It was neat. We played a few praise and worship songs, and Dain gave a sharing. This was a nice place to do our first booking because all the seminary students know English. We didn't have to worry about translating yet. We were very well received, but we didn't get to talk with people too much afterwards.



Debbie Holte

After breakfast we went back to A.C.T.C. and shared some music and a puppet show with the women's group, which consists mostly of the seminary students' wives and professors' wives. Here we used a translator, but I felt how much not knowing the language makes it harder to get the full meaning of our message across. Thank God for those who can bridge that gap and translate. Through translators we learned about the very important role these women have in their homes and elsewhere to spread the Gospel. Since communication and interaction between men and women is much different in India than in the States, it is up to the women to talk to other women and share the Good News and minister. If a woman becomes a Christian, she can influence her whole household's beliefs. So these women really do play a very important though sometimes behind the scenes role.

We went back to Pastor Reginald's house to rest and eat lunch, then made our way back to the seminary once again for a tour of the campus and some fellowship with the youth. Then we played a few songs at the men's prayer meeting and joined them for what I thought was a very spicy supper. At one point I thought I just might pass out because the food was so hot! I'm not used to this. I hope my taste buds get acclimated to the spices quickly.

I survived supper, which despite the spice that almost literally knocked me off my feet, really tasted pretty good. Then we (our team and the men from the prayer meeting) crowded into the hallway of the men's dormitory, and they sang us a very exciting song in Telugu. They wrote the words down, and we got a recording of it, so now we can try to learn it.

What a good first day of programming.

Date: 1/18/2003

Submitted by: Boniface Adam Eliona Kombo

Journal Entry:

It is much better for a cow to be born in India than in Maasai land (Tanzania)! Ok, today is the 2nd day since we arrived here in India. We visited an area where very poor people live. On our way to that place, we passed by some old cows wandering freely in streets. Cows like these wouldn't have lived in Maasai land; they would have been eaten! In this area which is named as SLUM (don't ask me why), poor people live in



unattractive huts, whereas some families are big with four to five people in a single hut. What they wear and the way they eat and live is very difficult. Some of them suffer from TB (tuberculosis) and malnutrition caused by unbalanced diet and insufficient food. **Boniface Adam Eliona Kombo**

The church has a program to help these people. The church provides medicines, treatments, food supplies and at least basic education for small kids. It is a tough task, since everything requires money and time. There are some volunteering people from the church who help at the slum. But their help is not enough. More help and support are needed for these poor people in the slum. You and I can help these people by joining together with the church through our prayers. May the God of Peace Bless you!

Swahili

Ni nafuu kwa ng'ombe kuzaliwa India kuliko Umaasai (Tanzania). Leo ni siku ya pili toka tuwasili hapa India. Tulitembelea eneo wanaloishi watu wenye hali ya chini sana ya kimaisha. Tulipokuwa njiani tunaelekea eneo hilo, tuliona ng'ombe wazee wakizurura mitaani. Ng'ombe kama hawa wangukuwa wameshakuwa kitoweo kule Umaasai! Katika eneo hilo lijulikanao kama SLUM (usiniulize sababu!), watu hao wanaishi katika vibanda visivyovutia hata kidogo, ambapo baadhi ya fasmilia zina watu wengi wapatao wane hadi tano katika kibanda kimoja. Kula yao, vaa yao na ishi yao ni ya kusikitisha sana.

Kanisa lina endesha mpango wa kuwasaidia watu hao. Kanisa linawapatia madawa, matibabu, chakula na kuwasomesha watoto elimu ya msingi. Hii ni kazi ngumu sana kwa kanisa kwa kuwa kila kitu kinahitaji fedha na muda. Kuna watu toka kanisani ambao wamejitolea kuwasaidia ndugu hao. Msaada wao hautoshi na msaada zaidi unahitajika kwa ndugu hao. Kanisa linatimiza ile amri aliyotupa Bwana Yesu, "Mpende jirani yako kama nafsi yako" (Mathayo 22:39). Mimi na wewe tunaweza kuwasaidia watu hao (SLUM) kwa kuungana na kanisa kupitia njia ya maombi. Mungu wa Amani Akubariki!

Date: 1/19/2003

Submitted by: Jason Moran

Journal Entry:

Ahhh yes, my first journal in India. Things are going so well, our hosts are amazing and the more time we spend in Hyderabad the more I am amazed by all I see. Today we were invited to participate in 3 church services (which is amazingly similar to a typical Sunday in the U.S.A.). How are worship services in India different you may ask? Well, let me fill you in on the details. Of all the churches we have been invited to see, they have all been just as diverse in worship styles as in the U.S. We were involved in a charismatic contemporary English service. We attended a Telugu speaking service which was straight out of the German Lutheran hymnal (except of course the German/English was replaced by Telugu). We went to a Methodist congregation who had a youth band leading English praise songs. We even lead a Sunday school program complete with puppet show and the children were jumping, singing, and the biggest similarity of all...there was even the group of "too cool" middle school boys who it took forever to get to participate.



Jason Moran

Date: 1/20/2003

Submitted by: Paul Nichols

Journal Entry:

Driving, oh the driving! Honk honk honk. Honk brake brake. Brake honk punch. Punch punch punch. (I'm kidding about the punching--this comes from a Simpsons episode.) How can I not write about the driving? First off, the most basic distinction: you drive on the left in India. This means that when crossing the street, we must look to the RIGHT first, then left, then right! It's a dangerous task and is up for review by the International Olympic Committee to become a sport at the next summer Olympics (just kidding). Whereas we drive by the rules in the U.S., driving here in India is done mostly by instinct.



Paul Nichols

Jason remarked one day how it was very obvious why computer giant Microsoft would be bringing so much business to the area--everyone who's on the road is already accustomed to multitasking: dodging other cars, people, bicycles, shop owners working on the side of the road, goats, and sometimes even water buffalo.

We've had a driver to get our team of six with all our equipment to a couple programs. I am truly grateful we are not maneuvering the streets on our own. We loved our driver from the start. When we complemented him on his good driving (fast but safe), he drove with great pride, judging by the honk per second ratio, which peaked at 12.5/1 (kidding). Seriously, though, honking is not as it is in the U.S. The team is in agreement that honking here can signify anger, but more often means, "Hi, I'm on your right," or "I know there are four cars side by side on a two lane road, but I think I can still make it by." And that has struck me about the Indian people. Extreme patience. There are not many outbursts of emotion. Calm. These traits have made it easy for us to ask questions about the culture, like, "Should we take our shoes off?", and have made it easier for us to adjust. India is just so friendly!

I'll leave you with a joke a new Indian friend reminded us of:

A pastor and a cabbie went to heaven. The cabbie got put up in a large mansion, tons of rooms, a pool. The pastor got a shack off the main road. He decided to confront St. Peter about the accommodations. "Why don't I have a mansion like the cabbie?" St. Peter consulted God and returned with the answer. "Well," St. Peter replied, "God said that When you preached from the pulpit you made people fall asleep, but when the cabbie drove people around, he made them pray to Me."

Date: 1/21/2003

Submitted by: Dain Swanson

Journal Entry:

As a part of our recovery from a bout with sickness Christie (R.O.P 1999-2000) took us out for a day of shopping and a small tour of Hyderabad. The boys stood aside as Debbie and Miriam found all types of salvars to wear the rest of our stay in India. The scene was a little like this: Imagine a very narrow alleyway with shops as far as the eye can see. Signs and banners laced the sky while buildings on either side shaded us from the afternoon sun. The girls stepped into a shop and before anything was said, colorful cloth was strewn about in every direction. So many choices! The guys, not able to fit in the small shop, continued to walk and look at all the different things for sale. Half an hour later the girls were done and all that was needed was a tailor. The outfits were custom fit and we were off to lunch at Christie's, a light lunch (by India's standard) of rice, 2 or 3 curries, bread and some pop to drink. Desert was fresh fruit. We took it easy and sat on the balcony of the 7th floor apartment pondering life and the fact that we were actually in India. The view of the traffic, buildings and pigeons was amazing. After our rest we traveled to the movie theatre for the 6:00 p.m. showing of "Just U (you)," a movie filmed in Hyderabad. It was a modern love story and in Telugu, the local language, so we relied on Christie to explain. My opinion, it was all right but not the best Indian movie I have seen. At the end of the movie (3 hours later) it was homeward and a good evening of rest. I was told that Indians love two things: movies and cricket. 1 down and 1 to go!

Blessings from India.

Dain



Dain Swanson

Date: 1/22/2003

Submitted by: Debbie Holte

Journal Entry:

Today was our day off. Our first day off in India. Even though I needed to rest, it was very hard not to want to go out and do everything possible. So I stayed home in the morning to rest and organize my stuff while my teammates went out shopping for Kurtas (sort of like long shirts that many Indian men wear). They went with Christie, a

girl from India who was on the last Rainbow of Promise team. She was able to help them find good places to buy Kurtas and bargain for good prices. Many, if not most things in India are sold using the bartering system, which allows customers to try to get as good a price as possible. It was nice to have a local with us who knows how much things should cost and how to get a good deal. Not only that, of course, but Christie has been a very good friend to us, knowing the ways of India, America, and team life. She has been able to answer a lot of our questions.

Hyderabad is the city of pearls, so I could not pass up the opportunity to go pearl shopping. Christie and her mom took us out after lunch to a little store on a side street where they sell pearls. Christie's mom also knows how to get good deals.



Debbie Holte

The store owners found stools for all of us to sit on in front of the glass counter while they brought out many strings of pearls for us to look at. After we had selected some, they went about the task of putting clasps on them (and putting bells on the bangles (ankle bracelets) that Miriam bought). We watched a couple of kids out in the street who played a drum and did acrobatics. They were probably 6 or 7 years old and I thought they were very good. We gave them a few rupees. One of the pearl shop guys went and bought pops for all of us while we were waiting for our necklaces. It was neat.

That night we went to a fair-type thing, kind of like the Minnesota State Fair. There were people selling beautiful sheets, clothes, food, and lots of things. There were also a few rides. I did not go on any as I was still recovering from being sick. Besides, there weren't any "gentle" rides--even the ferris wheel was high speed and scary-looking.

Several people were intrigued by our white skin and obvious differences and came up to us and asked us who we were, what we were doing, and where we're from. They were very friendly, but I was still a little intimidated. I think maybe I was overstimulated by all the new sights and smells at the fair.

All-in-all, a pretty exciting day off.

Date: 1/23/2003

Submitted by: Miriam Anderson

Journal Entry:

If I could choose one thing to be really good at, I've decided it would be playing the dholak. We joined Wesley Methodist Church youth group tonight for an hour or so of kickin' praise/program time. The evening started out with the Wesley praise band playing a few numbers, including a fun sing-a-long in Telugu. I'm pretty sure it was something about walking away from Satan and his temptations because in the actions we made little devil horns and did a funky walk back and forth across the sanctuary. Back to the dholak playing. A dholak is a very common Indian lap drum. It has drum heads on either end and is played with both hands at the same time. One hand hits the larger head, striking first with a finger then sliding the whole palm across the head to create a swooping "buoy" sound kind of like a low raindrop. Meanwhile, the other hand is going to town striking, slapping and flicking the smaller drum head. One of the major, and most incredible, differences between the hand drumming I am familiar with and dholak playing is that the fingers individually are used in playing the dholak. It would be more aptly called finger drumming than hand drumming. It seems that very rarely is the whole hand actually used at the same time. The resident dholak player Sam at Wesley Methodist Church was simply incredible. I have never seen anyone's fingers move that fast. After worship was over, the boys in the youth group swarmed the front of the sanctuary, wanting to play our instruments, asking for words to songs (Potsko—"The Way" is on it's way to double platinum here in India. Every child young and old knows it by heart.) and even singing us some of their own performance songs. There was a big commotion at the back door and after what seemed to be a little bribery, Sam made an appearance. I could see the admiration from his peers as they parted so he could slip into the middle of the crowd. His friends maneuvered their way into the circle bringing him a chair, a dholak and a set of congas. There was almost an audible settling of the crowd in anticipation of what was to come. Sam played and played bringing whoops and hollers from the



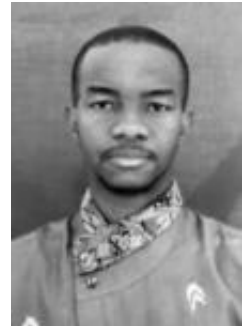
Miriam Anderson

youth group and bringing our jaws to the floor. Sam definitely has that really, super, amazingly good talent. Praise God that he is using it for His service. It's so exciting to have traveled half way around the world to discover another characteristic of this God we worship. When God gives us gifts, He lavishes them upon us and then provides opportunities for us to use them. What are you really, super, amazingly good at?

Date: 1/24/2003

Submitted by: Boniface Adam Eliona Kombo

Journal Entry:



Boniface Adam Eliona Kombo

After staying in Hyderabad for a week, last night we boarded a train to Rajahmundry for an 8 hour ride. The journey was good though we were tired because we couldn't get good rest. The trip started last night around 8 p.m. and we arrived here at Rajahmundry station at 5 a.m. this morning. We were in a sleeping coach. But Indian sleeping coaches are somewhat different from what I'm used to. Here in India, these sleeping coaches don't have doors for the rooms in a car. A person can move freely from the beginning to the end of the car in these coaches. There are 8 beds per cube-like section. 6 beds are on one side of the walkway stacked in two groups of 3 beds. On the other side of the walkway are 2 stacked beds. So while you are in your "room" you need to take care of your luggage. People are passing by all the time. Some of these people carry their business in their hands. You may hear, "Coffee! Coffee!" or "Biriani! Biriani!" (a rice dish), etc. Also there are people who are looking for a helping hand. All these things make this "room" to be a busy place. When you lay down in your bed, you need to use your luggage as a pillow, so as to make it difficult for a thief to steal. But you can only do this with light luggage; heavy luggage can be put underneath a bottom bed and chained. Apart from that, a train ride is a fun thing.

Early before our journey, we visited Wesley Boys Degree College in Hyderabad's twin city, Secunderabad. It is the college owned by CSI Diocese of Medak. It is a very good college with good facilities such as computer labs and offers several degrees. This college serves a number of minority people of India. It is so good to see how the church involves and helps society in various ways, like in this sector of education. Education is one of the key factors for development of any society. This is a very good opportunity for people to acquire better education that may help in conducting life, as well as to serve others. Ciao!!

SWAHILI:

Baada ya kukaa Hyderabad kwa wiki moja, usiku wa kuamkia leo tulipanda treni kuelekea/ kuja Rajahmundry. Safari ilikuwa nzuri japo imekuwa kwa muda wa masaa 8; hivyo kutuacha wachovu kweli kweli kwa kutopata nafasi ya kupumzika vizuri. Safari ilianza mnamo majira ya saa 2 za usiku na tulifika hapa Rajahmundry saa 11 asubuhi. Tulikuwa katika behewa la kulala, japokuwa kuna tofauti na yale niliyoyazoea. Hapa katika hili behewa hakuna milango inayotenganisha vyumba. Unaweza kutembea behewa zima. Kuna vitanda 8 katika "chumba" kimoja. Vitanda 3 vinaangaliana na 3. Kuna njia inayounganisha "vyumba" katika behewa na baada ya njia kuna vitanda vingine 2. Ukiwa katika "chumba" chako ni, "abiria chungu mzigo wako". Watu wanapita kila wakati. Kuna wafanyabiashara za mikononi, wakinadi bidhaa zao kwa sauti kama ya wale wapiga debe kule Dar. Unaweza kusikia "Kahawa! Kahawa! Biriani! Biriani!" katika lafudhi ya kihindi. Pia wapo wale ambao wanapita kuomba msaada wa fedha. Mambo yote haya yanapafanya mahali hapa kuwa katika pilika pilika kila wakati. Wakati huo huo unakuwa katika wasiwasi wa kuibiwa mizigo yako. Kama una mzigo mwepesi basi unaufanya kama mto, wakati ule ambao ni mzito unaweza kuufunga katika kitanda cha chini kwa mnyororo (kama unao). Hata hivyo kusafiri kwa treni ni kuzuri na kuna raha yake.

Mapema kabla ya safari, tulitembelea chuo kimoja cha kanisa kiitwacho WESLEY BOY'S DEGREE COLLEGE, kilichopo katika mji pacha na Hyderabad, Secunderabad. Chuo hiki kiko kiko chini ya dayosisi ya C.S.I, Medak. Ni chuo kizuri chenye vifaa vizuri kama vile kompyuta za kisasa na pia kinatoa shahada (degree) kadhaa. Chuo hiki kinahudumia wanafunzi kutoka familia ambazo hazina nafasi sana katika jamii ya wahindi (caste system). Inatia moyo sana kuona jinsi kanisa linavyojishughulisha kusaidia jamii katika njia tofauti tofauti, hasa sekta hii ya Elimu. Elimu ni mojawapo ya njia kuu za kuleta maendeleo katika jamii. Hii ni nafasi nzuri kwa watu kupata elimu nzuri inayoweza kuwasaidia kuendesha maisha na pia kusaidia wengine. Kwaheri.

Date: 1/25/2003

Submitted by: Jason Moran

Journal Entry:

Sunitha told us before we left, "In India you will see things that are beautiful and you will see some things that are ugly." Today was a good example of this land of extremes. We went to the Regional Horticulture show. So many flowers and arrangements. We (as usual) were the only people of a caucasian background. Rajahmundry is much smaller than Hyderabad and therefore people are less likely to see people who are as white as we are...and man, are we white.



Jason Moran

The flower shop owners rushed to allow us into their booths, even giving us priority over others. One man even closed his booth and gave us a guided tour complete with a photo opportunity. It was too much. So much beauty and the rush of people thinking we are important. On the ride home we saw the aftermath of a bicyclist who had ridden out in front of a freight truck. Not pretty at all. The bicyclist was obviously not alive and the rural community didn't have access to an ambulance or a hospital. It was honestly pretty disturbing.

After our return to the city of Rajahmundry we went to a home for children and the mentally disabled. We had a great time meeting with children and singing with them. The children we have visited with have so much passion for singing. After our program we signed autographs and talked with the children as much as their English and our Telugu would allow us. The most common question we are asked seems to be, "What is your life ambition?" Talk about a deep question. It seems like everywhere we go Indian people have very deep questions for us. It has been great.

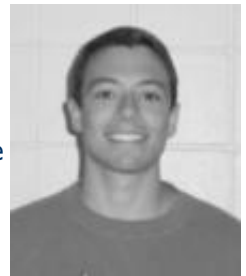
Well, enough is enough for now.
Much love,
Jason

Date: 1/26/2003

Submitted by: Paul Nichols

Journal Entry:

Today we had our first full-fledged Telugu worship service--3 hours long! Of course some services in the states go this long, but not many--we'd miss the football game! (Speaking of which, we missed the Super Bowl so I'll just pretend that the Denver Broncos won.) We did not understand most of the service, except for the parts we participated in: we played 6 songs, including a couple in Telugu and one during the offering, and gave the sharing. And it was my turn to share!! Sharings (a short sermon) in India differ from those in the U.S. primarily in their length. Whereas in the U.S. we're advised to keep sharings under 10 minutes to match the attention span that t.v. commercials give us, a SHORT sharing in India is 30 minutes!!



Paul Nichols

So knowing that I had to speak for a long time, I proceeded to deliver a 12 and a half minute sharing...including the translation from English to Telugu! Oops. I spoke about my time in Argentina and Ukraine, where I studied abroad and went on missions, and related the importance of community. I shared a similar story in the states several times. This is the message God is pounding into my brain most while I've been on team--the importance of having friends to rely on, the importance of having a church to contribute to and rely on in times of troubles. I'm seeing this global community with more clarity the more time we spend in India. My concept of what makes up "the church" has been greatly expanded by being here. It is a very positive experience to see the strength of the local church and the many believers that crowd into a small rented space to share in a Sunday morning worship service. Amen!

Date: 1/27/2003
Submitted by: Dain Swanson
Journal Entry:

An early morning today. We began around 6:30 am and loaded into two taxis headed for Yeleshawaram near Rajmundry for a wedding. We stopped along the way for breakfast and fed the whole crew (rainbow-6, drivers-2, and two guests) for around 2 U.S Dollars. It is affordable here I must say. The food was quickly consumed and we continued on our way arriving in time to rest before the wedding. The wedding itself was a mixture of western and indian culture. The white dress, arranged seating and wedding ring were all there. The differences were very apperant indeed. Not one but fifteen pastors, the bride and groom were seated because of the length of the service, and there was a band there, no not Rainbow of Promise, but an Indian band. They provided the music when there was some transition time in the service. The music was much like the tecno music heard in the discos around town. I wanted to dance every time they started to play. Finally, the knot was tied, literally. Some cloth was tied around the couple's hands and the rings were placed on the fingers and they were wed. It was a wonderful experience and one that I will never forget.



Dain Swanson

The rest of the day was left for travel both by taxi and train. We made it home to Rajmundry, had a snack, and boarded a train for Bapatla.

Every day continues to be a new experience for us. India is a magical place where people live and work together in a community that is similar to a small town feeling in the United States but in a big city setting. Thank you for your prayers and thoughts. Please pray for those in India as well.

Peace to you in Christ,

dain

Date: 1/28/2003
Submitted by: Miriam Anderson
Journal Entry:

"And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God..." Romans 8:28

Tonight I witnessed one of the most beautiful things I've seen since coming to India. The children at the Reach School and Orphanage prepared a talent show for us tonight. Almost every student, old and young, had some sort of gift to share with us—everything from karate moves to song and dance. The most amazing dance of the night, however, was a stick dance. Stick dances are traditional dances in India and work something like this. Dancers form two circles, one inside the other. A few musicians (in this case, a clarinet player and two drummers) are seated in the center of the circles. A leader of sorts also occupies the center of the circle and occasionally calls out to the dancers (the next move? the next song? I'm not really sure). Each dancer has a pair of brightly colored sticks. When the music begins, the circles begin to swirl in opposite directions, slapping sticks, sometimes across to the other circle, sometimes just to the stick in the other hand. The circles spin and gyrate in time to the music, sticks adding to the already percussive music.



Miriam Anderson

The dresses the girls are wearing create quite an image. They are all different and of various patterns, shades and styles. They really are a hodge-podge of colors that don't necessarily match, and yet somehow they do. Somehow they work together. I can't tear my eyes away from this fabric as it spins round and round.

This is a commentary on India as a whole, I think. I am certainly not qualified to speak to the inner workings of this society, but this is what I've seen: water buffalos and commercial buses share the same roads amiably, generally without incident; in the same church service there are women wrapped in full sarees, heads covered and shoes removed as a sign of respect as well as women in

jeans and tennis shoes; an internet café with enough computers to outfit my whole team as a beggar sits outside the door asking for rupees. These pairs seem like complete opposites to me and yet, somehow, they work together. Somehow the vast diversity of this land creates a unity that is India.

Date: 1/29/2003

Submitted by: Debbie Holte

Journal Entry:

Today we got to interact with the kids at the Reach School a little more. We went into each classroom and sang a couple of songs and did a puppet show. Our new friend Herald came with us and interpreted our puppet shows for us. That was a great help. It's kind of hard to get used to pausing during the puppet show to allow translators to translate.



Debbie Holte

The kids sit cross-legged on the floor of each classroom--boys on one side, girls on the other. They sit in neat rows even though they don't have desks. We would leave our sandals outside the door each time we would enter a classroom. I liked it--I like being barefoot and it helped keep my feet cool. When we would walk into the class, the kids would all stand up and salute or say good morning.

In the afternoon we went to the Bay of Bengal to go swimming. It was super fun. Miriam and I did as the Indian women do and wore our clothes in the water. I enjoyed body surfing in the warm, salty ocean. It was great.

When we got back, the kids were having recess. I joined some of the girls in their hand-clapping games. They taught me a couple and I taught them one. It was fun to have something we could do together without spoken language. After a couple of minutes, one girl brought out a chair and they made me sit while they all stood. Then two girls started fanning me with parts of their notebook, while another one made sure that the other girls stood back so I could watch the cricket game if I so desired. Ay carumba! They treated me just like a queen. I tried to stand up at one point to escape the awkwardness of being treated like royalty, but they wouldn't have it. I didn't know how to tell them they really didn't have to fan me, but I didn't know how since I know very little Telugu and they know very little English. So instead I kept playing clapping games and we sang a few songs together. Many times they said "Thank you, sister!" (Thank me??? Thank YOU!)

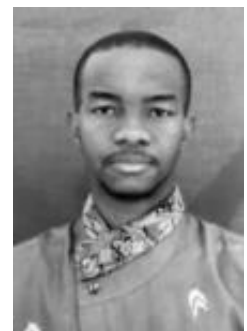
I was completely awed by their hospitality and how well they treated me. That has been my reaction in general to the way we have been so openly and warmly received by our hosts. It's truly amazing!!

Date: 1/30/2003

Submitted by: Boniface Adam Eliona Kombo

Journal Entry:

Now it is 2 weeks and a day since we have been here in India. Yesterday was our last day being in Bapatla. We are now going to a new state of Tamil Nadu. As we were told, this area is higher elevated level than Andhra Pradesh so it will be cool over there. But we will see while there! We enjoyed a lot being there in Bapatla. Being with a family that we are familiar with (Rev. Dr. Victor Paul's). We enjoyed kids at REACH school and had great hospitality and care from that family. We are very sad leaving people who were very kind and generous to us. They treated us very well.



Boniface Adam Eliona Kombo

Ok, we caught a train again to Kodaikanal in Tamil Nadu state, south of India, last night around 11 pm. Actually, this train does not go straight to Kodaikanal, but to Egmore-Chennai station, where you switch to another one going to Dindigul. We arrived at Egmore around 6 am this morning. We

are here waiting for Chennai Express train to Dindigul at 12 noon. From Dindigul station, our contact will meet us and take us to Kodaikanal International School (KIS), where we are going to stay. In the next train we are going to be in the seating coach. This will be a new experience for us. In these train rides, from Bapatla to Kodaikanal, we will be alone without anybody who is from these areas traveling with us. People however, are very helpful, telling us how far is our stopping-station and when we are going to get off trains and so forth.

Though the train ride was not bad, we could not eat. Some of us had things like biscuits/cookies (a junk food). I do not think I like much this kind of food. It is not a real meal for me. It is really hard for me to feel okay after eating it. Anyway, we are very tired and starving, as well as feeling sticky because of sweating. Aah, I am also very tired of writing right now. Since we arrived here I am trying to catch up my personal and team journals. Maybe I should go first and see if I may get anything to eat, which will keep me a little bit alive for another train ride. Hoping to seeing you later. Good Bye Andhra Pradesh. Welcome Kodaikanal! Boni!

SWAHILI:

Leo ni wiki ya pili na siku moja toka tufike hapa India. Jana ilikuwa siku yetu ya mwisho kuweko Bapatla. Kwa sasa tunaelekea jimbo lingine la Tamil Nadu, ambako hali ya hewa ni baridi, kama tulivyoambiwa kwa kuwa eneo hili liko kilimani kuliko Andhra Pradesh. Hata hivyo tumefurahia sana kuweko Bapatla. Kuwa na familia ambayo tunaifahamu ya Mch. Dr Victor Paul. Tulifurahia watoto wa shule ya REACH na kupata huduma bora na uangalizi mzuri toka kwa familia hii. Tuna masikitiko makubwa kuachana na familia hii iliyokuwa njema sana kwetu.

Jana, kwenye saa 5 hivi tuliingia tena katika treni kuelekea Kodaikanal iliyoko jimbo la Tamil Nadu, kusini mwa India. Treni hii haifiki Kodaikanal, ila katika stesheni ya Egmore-Chennai ambako unaingia katika treni nyingine ielekeayo stesheni ya Dindigul. Tulifika Egmore mnamo saa 12 za asubuhi ya leo. Hapo tulingojea tena treni (Chennai Express) kuelekea Dindigul majira ya saa 6 mchana. Kutoka hapo stesheni, mwenyeji wetu atatupokea na kuongozana nasi kwa gari hadi shule ya Kimataifa ya Kodaikanal (KIS), ambako tutakaa kwa siku kadhaa. Katika safari hizi mbili tutakuwa wenyewe bila mwenyeji. Wasafiri wengine wamekuwa msaada mkubwa kwetu kutuambia baada ya muda gani tutafika stesheni na ni wapi tushuke.

Safari ya treni haikuwa mbaya. Lakini hatukuweza kupata chakula njiani ama kabla; hivyo tuko wachovu sana na wenye njaa. Wenzangu wanaweza kula vitu kama biskuti na mambo kuwa sawa. Vitu hivi vinanishinda hasa kama nasikia njaa na ni muda wa chakula; nitahitaji chakula halisi, sio vitu vya "kudanganya" tumbo. Lakini kama hakuna njia nyingine, basi hata biskuti zinalika tu. Aah, nimechoka hata kuandika sasa. naona bora niende kutafuta kitu chochote cha kuweka tumboni kabla ya safari ya treni kuanza tena. Toka asubuhi najaribu kuandika mambo yanayotukia kila siku kwenye daftari na nimeshachoka. Pia kwa sababu ya joto basi hali ya miili yetu sio nzuri kabisa. Mwili unanatanata kwa jasho. Natumaini tutaonana tena siku nyingine. Kwaheri Andhra Pradesh. Karibu Kodaikanal! Boni!

Date: 1/31/2003

Submitted by: Jason Moran

Journal Entry:

I love being on the train. The trains in India are so great. The clickity-clack of the rails and the wind blowing through the windows. There is life happening all around the train and we can sit and watch it happen. This train journey took us from Bapatla to Chennai Central Station. At Chennai Central we had to catch a taxi to Chennai Egmore and wait 6 hours for our train to arrive. Then from Egmore we were to head to Dindigul Station where we would meet Raja of Raja's Travels and proceed up the Ghat (hill road) for three hours to Kodaikanal. We traveled a total of 23 hours to our end destination.



Jason Moran

I hate boarding trains. I have a love hate relationship with the railways. We have 17 bags that we have to move from platform to train in an average of 7 minutes. As well as finding our seats and trying not to knock people over or wake them up with our guitars, drums, and backpacks. This may sound easy to most, but imagine not being able to read the names of the trains because they are

written in Hindi or Tamil script. So we ask people which platform to wait on and trust they are right. Then you have to compete with all the other people who are attempting to board and find seats just as we are. It really tests my ability to trust. I trust that the people around us are correct, I trust my teammates haven't left my bag behind, I trust that nobody will be sitting in our seats. I don't do well with that much trust. It drives me nuts. I prefer to know it all. Strangely, I can't know it all and I have to rely on other people to get me where I need to go to.

So there is this huge link to life as a Christian within the trust that is required when traveling by rail in a foreign country. It is really pretty obvious that we are called to trust God, but just as much as we can say, "Yes, I trust God" it is really hard. (and I hate letting go that much)

So mull that over for awhile, because every time I get ready to board a train I still get panicky, and every time I have to trust God that all will be well in the end, I still get panicky. So, the end result, trust is hard.

Hello to all those on the road! We miss you national teamers and hope to bump into some of you on our return tour. Hello to our partners and sponsors—we think and pray for you frequently. A special hello to our families. We miss you! That is about it,

Jason

Date: 2/1/2003

Submitted by: Paul Nichols

Journal Entry:

Today was our first full day in Kodaikanal, a city located in the western hills of the southeast state of Tamil Nadu. We arrived at around 11 p.m. last evening. We're at about 7,000 feet here, and are enjoying the cooler weather. We only have to wear a long sleeve shirt in the mornings and evenings, or if it's cloudy. We got off right away with our program responsibilities here, leading a weekend retreat for high school students starting this morning. The students attend an international school where English is the main language. We'll be at the school for our time in Kodaikanal, until February 10th.



Paul Nichols

So we drove this Saturday morning about 10 minutes from the school's main campus, Rainbow of Promise and about 18 students in 10th to 12th grade, to the retreat center. We were fairly tired from travel but mostly just intimidated by having to lead a weekend of activities when our experience has been mostly with our 1 and a half hour long family night programs. The students were open to getting to know us from the get-go.

What impressed me most? Not that today went so well, but that the students we were with were so mature! Most of the students were Christians, but life on the campus of Kodaikanal International School, which began as a mission center, is so eclectic in race and religion, it is often difficult for these students to understand deeper issues of faith and how to apply it in their daily lives. Almost half the students on campus are Christian, with Hindu and Muslim being other well-represented faiths. The students we were with were open to sharing about life at the school, their travels and family history, their faith, and even their struggles with God. Together we spent time playing trust games (like falling into each other's arms), singing songs, drawing our faith lines (graphs of how we view our own faith walk), and doing the standard things of a family night program: skits, puppet shows and sing-a-longs. We even did our first interactive Bible Study, where the students get to act out a Bible story.

The day flew by. And I am still greatly impressed by the maturity of this group of students and other students we have met in India. I am excited to spend more than a week getting to know them and the rest of the couple of hundred students at the school even better.

Date: 2/2/2003

Submitted by: Dain Swanson

Journal Entry:

Imagine yourself in a mountain town, it is night, it is raining, you are with 29 highschoolers and adults, it is foggy, you are getting ready to have evening communion, you want to sing songs but your guitar is more than a quarter mile away in the large gathering area used earlier that day. So you decide to go get it in the rain and fog and dark of night. "Hey do you want me to go along with you?" asks Paul from a distance knowing the dangers of walking in these conditions. You respond, "No, I'm fine," and continue walking with your flashlight in hand. You try to remember the way that you had only walked once or twice before. The rain falls and the fog thickens. You soon realize you have no idea where you are. You shine your flashlight around but to no avail. The most you can see is the hand just in front of your face. You are cold, wet, confused and alone.



Dain Swanson

This was the situation I got myself into this past weekend as we hosted the Christian Endeavor retreat located near the Kodaikanal International School. My flashlight was of no use because of the fog, so I stopped and thought about the landmarks I would encounter along the way. I looked for them but only found fog. My thoughts strayed and landed on a Bible verse I read earlier in the day, "...God is light and in Him there is no darkness at all...if we walk in the light as He is in the light we will have fellowship with others..." 1 John 1:5-7. The fellowship with the students was my goal, and I wanted to join them in singing with my guitar. So I lowered my light and focused on my feet, taking one step at a time. I soon found the landmarks I was looking for and returned with my guitar safely, joining the singing that had already begun. It was time to celebrate the Lord's supper.

The moral of this story: Know where your focus should be. I was very focused on my goal of getting my guitar when my focus should have been at my own feet. I was looking for signs I couldn't see unless I was right next to them. In my faith walk I am too often focused on the end goal rather than the steps it takes to get to the goal. I have free will to step where I want, but I need the signs, the landmarks to truly show me the way. In the same way God lets us step lightly on the road of life giving us the signs we need in order to reach the end goal: fellowship with Him.

May you step lightly in your life, always looking at your feet, but also looking up to see the direction God has planned for you. Amen

Peace,

Dain

Date: 2/3/2003

Submitted by: Miriam Anderson

Journal Entry:

I heard the funniest joke I've heard in a long time today. However, I heard it tonight just before heading home for bed, so I'll tell you about my day in backwards order. Boni and I got to visit with 30 middle school boys in their dorm this evening. The time was just



Miriam Anderson

Date: 2/4/2003

Submitted by: Debbie Holte

Journal Entry:

Once again today we spent time in several classrooms—mostly religious education classrooms. Our first class was at 9:15 and we had the opportunity to find out how well we can do when we are split up. Jason, Dain, and Miriam went to a Judaism class and Paul, Boni, and I went to another religious education class. I think both of our groups did fine, but also discovered that we could use some practice in these smaller groups. My group tried to do a modified version of a puppet show usually done by Miriam, Dain,



Debbie Holte

Paul, and Jason. Paul was the only one there this time and he didn't even play his usual part. It was...um...interesting. Also, Boni and I got to be lead guitarists for a few songs. Speaking for myself, I still need quite a bit of practice. But it was good to try things in new ways, step out of some comfort zones, and to realize and appreciate each others' strengths and weaknesses.

Tonight we split into 3 groups of 2 for dinner at 2 staff houses and a dorm. Boni and I enjoyed supper with the president of K.I.S. and his wife, Dr. and Mrs. Robinson. I had a really good time talking, learning more about them and Kodai International School. It was easy to carry on a conversation with them.

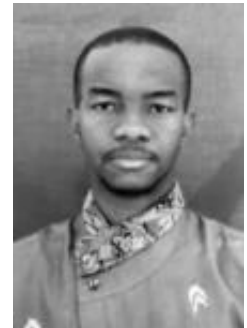
Now, I have to admit, one thing I have enjoyed about being at an international school in a tourist town is that there is a possibility of sometimes getting food that is more like the American food I'm used to. So when Mrs. Robinson announced that we would be eating Indian food, I was a little disappointed. But when it came time to actually eat, I was delighted. We had rice and a chicken curry. And it was really good. I was excited to finally be enjoying the food. Besides that pleasant surprise, I really had a nice day with the kids at school and with Dr. and Mrs. Robinson. And with my teammates, of course.

Date: 2/5/2003

Submitted by: Boniface Adam Eliona Kombo

Journal Entry:

"Hi Rainbow...!" This is how some middle school students greeted us whenever they met us inside school campus. We are still here at Kodaikanal International School (KIS), in what is called "Christian Emphasis Week." We are visiting classes in the mornings and afternoons after lunch, performing some short classes each of 45 minutes in length. In these programs we are doing things such as puppet shows, skits, interactive Bible studies, music (sing-a-longs and do-a-longs), during World Religion class periods. In this period students learn about important things in different religions. This is a very good opportunity, a basic one, for students, learning and knowing about other faiths apart from one's own. This school was started by missionaries from different western countries, to teach their kids. Now the school is educating people from all over the world regardless of faith backgrounds. It is a multi-religious school now though still a christian one.



Boniface Adam Eliona Kombo

Performances for today started at the middle school area, where we split into two equal groups, each of 3 people. Debbie, Paul and I remained at the middle school. The rest, Miriam, Dain and Jason, went to the elementary school. The middle schoolers are very fun, friendly, energetic and welcoming. Wouh...! So we did our program there and afterwards we joined the rest of the team in the elementary school. The funniest thing is that I played some songs on the guitar. This is because we needed to split into two groups to perform in different classes being held at the same time. So Debbie and I play guitar in our group. Even Paul can play some songs; he is more in singing than playing. Dain is our maestro guitarist, and he is in the other group. Guitar is not my area. I can play more well a bass guitar than a guitar. Debbie is 100 times better than me, for sure. But eeh! I am trying to play. Though it may sound weird. It is difficult for me to play loud with acoustic guitar; at least an electric one is easy for me to play because the volume can be turned up or down easily.

Apart from splitting into two equal groups for performance, we also split into groups while visiting student dormitories and staff houses. We are doing this in order to visit as many places as possible. So this night, Paul and I went to a house and the rest went to a girl's dormitory to hang out with students. Later on, after spending some time in those places, dormitory and staff house, we went to CE (Christian Endeavor). In this CE, things went well. Many more students showed up than were expected. The CE started at 9 pm and ended about an hour later. We did different things than we do in an actual program. Many students like Sing-a-longs and Do-a-longs because of doing actions, like "...here we go..here we go..woh..woh..one more time..woh..woh..yeah.." or "Higher higher...". After the CE was done, students returned to their dormitories and we went back to the place we are staying. And the evening and the morning were another day! Hopefully! tehe..tehe..! Boni!

SWAHILI:

"Halo Rainbow..!" Hii ilikuwa ni salamu toka kwa baadhi ya wanafunzi wa shule ya madarasa ya kati kila mara walipotuona katika eneo lao la shule. Bado tuko katika shule hii ya Kimataifa Kodaikanal (KIS) katika kitu kitiwacho "Wiki ya Wakristo y Mkazo". Tunatembelea madarasa mbali mbali wakati wa asubuhi na mchana baada ya chakula, tukifanya maonesho kwa dakika 45 kwenye madarasa hayo. Kipindi ambacho tunakitumia ni cha "Dini za Duniani" na tunaonesha mchezo mfupi, kuimba nyimbo ambazo watu wanaweza kuimba pamoja nasi pamoja na kuonyesha vitendo, watu kushiriki katika habari ya kwenye Biblia kwa igizo fupi, n.k. Katika kipindi hiki wanafunzi wanajifunza vitu nuhimu toka dini mbali mbali. Hii ni nafasi nzuri sana kwao kujua dini zingine tofauti na zile walizoko wao wenyewe. Shule hii hapo mwanzoni ilikuwa ya wamisionari toka nchi mbali mbali za ulaya kwa ajili ya kusomesha watoto wao. Kwa sasa shule hii inatumika na watoto toka maeneo tofauti duniani na toka dini tofauti, lakini ikiwa bado ni ya Kikristo.

Maonesho siku ya leo yalianzia katika shule ya kati ambako tuliganyanyika katika makundi mawili yenye watu 3 kila moja. Debbie, Paul pamoja nami tulibaki jengo hilo; wakati Miriam, Dain na Jason walienda katika shule ya msingi. Wanafunzi hawa wa shule ya madarasa ya kati ni wachangamfu sana, marafiki na wanaojua kukaribisha. Wouh..! Tulifanya onesho hapo na baadae tulienda kujiunga na wenzetu jengo lingine lililoko pembeni kidogo. Kitu cha kufurahisha ni kwamba mimi pia napiga gitaa (dogo) ambalo sina mazoea nalo; tena ukizingatia kuwa ni gitaa baridi (acoustic) sio la umeme ambapo unaweza kuongeza/kupunguza sauti. Napiga besi gitaa vizuri zaidi ya hili gitaa la baridi. Inabidi kufanya hivi kwa kuwa tunagawanyika katika makundi ili kutembela madarasa mengi, muda wa vipindi ukiwa sawa. Debbie na mimi tunapiga katika kundi langu. Mpiga gitaa katika timu yangu ni Dain, ambaye tugawanyikapo huwa kundi lingine. Nadhani Debbie anapiga mara 100 vizuri zaidi kuliko mimi! Lakini ndio hivyo Boni nae wamo. eeh..eeh!

Mgawanyo huu katika makundi hauishii tu wakati wa maonesho, hata wakati tunapotembelea sehemu kama mabweni na nyumba za walimu, inabidi tufanye hivyo. Hii ni katika kukidhi mahitaji ya shule kutembela maeneo mengi. Jioni ya leo Paul pamoja nami tulienda kwenye nyumba ya familia-walimu katika shuleni hii. Wenzetu wao walienda katika bweni moja la wasichana. Baada ya kutembelea bweni na nyumba, tulikutana wote katika onesho la saa moja majira ya saa 3 usiku. Hapo tulifanya mambo kadhaa tufanyayo katika maonesho yetu rasmi. Wanafunzi wengi wanapenda nyimbo zenye vitendo kwa kuwa wanaweza nao kuvifanya. Nyimbo hizo ni kama Blessed Be, sehemu ya "here we go.. woh..woh.. yeah.." ama Cast your burdens, sehemu ya "Higher.. higher.." n.k Baada ya onesho kwisha, wanafunzi walirudi katika mabweni yao nasi tukarudi sehemu tukaapo. Ikawa usiku, ikawa asubuhi. Siku nyingine. Natumaini tutaiona. tehe..tehe..! Kwaheri. Boni!

Date: 2/6/2003

Submitted by: Jason Moran

Journal Entry:

Today is our day of rest in Kodaikanal. It has been a wonderful week spending time with the students here. It has been so good that we are eagerly anticipating a day to relax and recover energy and our voices. We went out to the market today with our friends Tyagi and Sagell. The market is also called "The Budge" by the locals namely because it is so crowded you have to do a lot of budging to get anywhere. We started by visiting "Cottage Craft," a store that sells handicrafts made by people in local villages. It was amazing to see so many different items from bhatiks (cloth paintings done with dye and ink), embroidery, and painting all done by the blind, the widows, and other underrepresented people in society. We had a blast with Tyagi and Sagell. They laughed at our pickiness and our desire to see everything. After doing some shopping we visited Fays Fast Food Restaurant with Tyagi and David. Fays was a fun place. It is about four feet by 12 feet and they cram a large portion of Kodai students and some tourists inside for steak burgers and french fries. They also have the best chocolate cake I have ever eaten. We had a great day getting to know students better and seeing a little more of the Kodai area. In the evening we returned to Rock Cottage, built a fire to keep warm and spent time journaling and writing letters to other teamers for our 1st mail packet home.

So, this journal is pretty factual. Maybe even a bit too informative, but anyhow this was our day. I



Jason Moran

am reminded that it is important to take a day of rest even if in that rest you go shopping and hang out and even do ministry.

Jason

Date: 2/7/2003

Submitted by: Paul Nichols

Journal Entry:

Higher higher!!! Whoop whoop!!! Today marks a full week here at Kodaikanal International School. After visiting many classrooms, dorms, and doing assorted programs, we thought that the students may be getting sick and tired of our songs. But at the middle school assembly today, they reassured us that we could play Cast Your Burdens ("Higher higher!!") and Blessed Be (Whoop! Whoop!), a couple of sing-a-long songs with some actions, over and over again. When we're near some of the students' dorms, both on and off campus, we will hear students singing alone or in groups, "I will follow you Lord, follow you where you lead!!" (Follow You by Justin McRoberts) or the "Come on!" part of Turn, by Paul Coleman Trio. It's been a wonderful experience to be in one place, with one group of people for an extended time. Actually, it makes me a touch scared. Because the atmosphere is so much more American than the rest of India, it will make our travel to Cuddalore on Tuesday like another culture shock, especially as we reenter the hot weather. But am continually convinced that Indian hospitality is the greatest in the world, so I have nothing to fear at all.

I want to thank those who are praying for me during these travels. I miss you all!



Paul Nichols

Date: 2/8/2003

Submitted by: Dain Swanson

Journal Entry:

Praise God for His son, His creation and Yack Cheese!

Teen Dimensions is a middle school organization on the campus of Kodaikanal International School (K.I.S.) and Rainbow of Promise had the pleasure of taking them on a retreat to a mountain camp site near Poondi. After the hour and a half bus ride complete with Indian elevator music in surround sound, a thirty minute hike up a mountain (twice by Paul, Miriam, Boni, and I), and a nice lunch overlooking the small lake in front of the campsite the retreat began. Loosely based, like the prior weekend, around the Head to the Heart theme we lead the group in games, constructed faith lines and gave our family night program for the group of 30 students and 3 staff. But you must be wondering, "Dain, what about the Yack cheese?" Well, let me tell you. On the retreat there were people from many different countries. The United States, India, Korea, Hungary, Bhutan, and Nepal were all represented. Along with the students came their various and different cultural snack foods. The Korean's brought something that was like dry Ramen noodles with a kick. The Americans had their chips and chocolate with them and the Bhutanese had Yack cheese on a string. The team and I were glad to try something new, we were in India. So we popped the bite size hunk of cheese in our mouths. Our reaction was my favorite part. Paul tried to chew the cheese but his efforts were thwarted in part by the thickness of the cheese and dried outer shell. The rest of the team slowly sucked on the cheese hoping that it would soften so that we may swallow it. A half an hour later the cheese was still in our mouths soft enough to chew but too big to swallow. There was no taste really to worry about just breaking it down in order to digest it in our stomachs. Our program was approaching and the chess was not yet gone so regrettably we had to discard the Yack cheese into the woods.

Later that evening while sitting around the warm campfire I was reminded of how wonderful other cultures really are. The potential to learn from even the smallest child is staggering. We sat and played games around the fire, sang and listened to songs in many different languages and shared stories with one another about the love of Christ.

Beginning the weekend with faith lines and then seeing where everyone came from was truly



Dain Swanson

amazing. God had a plan for all of us at that retreat and knowing that Rainbow of Promise was apart of that plan was a great honor. But also seeing the kids interact with God in their lives was equally amazing. I think about how the great commission is given to all nations not just a select few. God's love is so much more than political borders and it was very clear that His message was for everyone that evening.

I am very thankful for all the youth at K.I.S. and all they taught me the week we were in Kodai. May God bless them and keep them in the palm of His hand.

Peace,

dain

Date: 2/9/2003

Submitted by: Miriam Anderson

Journal Entry:

I think ROP has gotten more exercise in the last 2 days than we've had in the last 4 months. I'm going to be sore tomorrow. We finished the T.D. (Teen Dimension) retreat this morning with a group of middle schoolers from Kodai. If you're ever looking to feel really old and have an energy boost at the same time, volunteer to backpack for 45 minutes, all uphill, in the snow, barefoot...er, the uphill, 45 minutes, backpacking with the middle schoolers part is true. We packed in to Poondhi yesterday carrying all that we would need for an overnight stay. As it turned out, there weren't enough hands to carry everything so Paul, Dain, Boni and I joined Mr. Mesterhazy and one of the students in hiking back out to pick up the food. We struggled with boxes filled with bananas, bread, water, spaghetti and who knows what else back to camp. The afternoon followed with more physical activity of games and sing-a-longs! This morning we led an impromptu worship service, interjecting our favorite scriptures between worship songs. As soon as we finished, it was time to repack and hike out. I strapped on my pack, rolled up my sleeves and began meditating on this verse found in 2 Corinthians 12. "Because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, for this reason, to keep me from exalting myself, there was given me a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan to torment me--to keep me from exalting myself!" (v. 7). This thorn in my flesh, this physical activity that my weakened body is so unused to, was not removed after our trek back to the buses. We banded and bounced back down the swervy roads arriving in Kodai just in time for the Terry Fox run. This is a race in honor of Terry Fox held in over 50 countries each year to raise money for cancer research. Last week, unable to foresee my hardship and suffering, I unwittingly agreed to walk the 5k (3.1 miles) with Paul. Interestingly enough, as I marched in the hot sun this afternoon alongside several hundred other participants, verse 9 of 2 Cor. 12 popped into my head: "And He has said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness.' Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me." Surely, this is the power of Christ. I know there is no way I should still be standing after these last few days. I am physically exhausted and mentally drained as I sit to write this, but I also have a sense of peace. At the end of the day, it's not about me. At the end of the day, it's about Christ and how He chooses to use me. "Therefore I am well content with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties, for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong" (v. 10).



Miriam Anderson

Date: 2/10/2003

Submitted by: Debbie Holte

Journal Entry:

Today was our last day in Kodaikanal. :(We have had such a good time here. The town is great and the students and staff of the school are even better. It has been really fun to experience such a culturally diverse environment with kids from all over the world. It has also been nice to be here for a week so we could build relationships with the students.



One of my favorite things about Kodai is Fays fast food restaurant. Even after only a couple of weeks in India I have been craving familiar food with every fiber of my being. And I found it at Fays. There they have steak burgers, french fries, and all sorts of goodies. I decided to take advantage of this wonderful dreamland one more time before we left, so I had lunch there. This was my third time eating there. I ordered the usual--a steak burger, American style cream and onion chips, and an orange soda pop. I also had a Kit Kat for dessert.

Debbie Holte

We had a little time to talk with some of the students, but I was also trying to take care of checking e-mail and packing so I didn't spend as much time with the kids as I would have liked. That made me sad because this was our last day here.

We ate supper with our contact, Kirk, and his wife Tricia. They had already decided to take us out somewhere and somehow or other it was decided that we would go to none other than Fays! Time number 4! I hate to admit it, but I was actually starting to get a little tired of this place. I tried to combat this by ordering something a little different. I had a chicken steak burger. It was good, but it just didn't give me the same pleasure that that very first steak burger had. :(

After supper we walked to their house where we watched Family Man. It was really nice to watch a movie (in English!). For a while I forgot we were in India (not that I wanted to. I just did).

But now, I need to finish packing because we are leaving right away in the morning. Goodnight all!

Date: 2/11/2003

Submitted by: Boniface Adam Eliona Kombo

Journal Entry:

It seems that my routine for writing journals is falling on days which we are traveling from one spot to another these days. This is now the 3rd time I am writing a journal on a traveling day. Anyway, it is not a big deal! Early today we started our journey very sad from KIS (if you don't know its meaning, read my previous journals. Tehe Tehe..!), heading to Villupuram train station, north eastern side of Kodaikanal. The journey was first by small bus from KIS to Dindigul train station, about 2 hours distance. At Dindigul we caught a train to Villupuram train station around 1pm to 6 pm. There, at Villupuram, we met a very sharp contact before we came off the train. It was a very impressive thing to see the contact and his colleagues ready welcoming us and helping to carry our stuff. From this station we traveled by small bus again to a place, the church's girls boarding school, where we are going to stay for some days.



Boniface Adam Eliona Kombo

Leaving KIS is a sad thing as I said before because most of us we loved KIS very much. Some of us are thinking to go back and teach there sometime (this is a rumor. Don't quote me!). I do not believe that I won't see again very friendly...awesome..respectful..fun..energetic students and stuff from KIS. They can cope with anybody very easily and very fast. In case you have forgotten, we were at this school during the "Christian Emphasis Week." Despite all differences in faith matters, these students acted as if they were from same faith path as Christians. It was a very good week for me, meeting people from different faiths from mine and came to know, a little bit, about their religions and faiths. I had opportunity to meet fellows from different angles of my beautiful continent of Africa. I also met other people who had been in my gorgeous country, Tanzania, for various reasons such as visiting national parks, relatives, etc. Yes, I met many friends from all over the world, who had a very warm welcoming. This event occurred in a short period of time since we came to India. KIS is a very good place. I totally felt at home; and now we are leaving this place without returning back again as a team. I wish we would stay at KIS a little bit longer than now. It is so hard to say good bye when it comes time for it. Oooh..!

There is a phrase saying, "mountains cannot meet but people do." I hope that there will come a day when I will meet again these wonderful people. I may not meet all of them but maybe some. May the God who created us, who knows to keep, protect and lead us, be with you people of KIS in your studies, working and future plans to the eternity. Amen..! Boni!

SWAHILI:

Inaelekea kwamba, zamu yangu ya kuandika hii kitu inadondokea siku tunazosafiri toka sehemu moja kwenda nyingine kwa siku za hivi karibuni. Sasa ni mara ya 3; pengine bado ziko siku zaidi zinakuja huko mbeleni. Hata hivyo sio mbaya. Kiswahili cha mtaani pale Dar wanasema "No sweat!" au "Mambo Poa..!" Basi unaweza kukuta kuna watu kuandika hivi kumewaguusaa..! mmh, mapema ya leo tulianza safari yetu kuelekea sehemu iitwayo Cuddalore, ambayo iko Kaskazini Mashariki ya hapa KIS (kama hufahamu KIS ni nini, soma habari zangu kabla ya hii..! Tehe tehe). Safari ilikuwa nzuri kiasi, sababu ilikuwa ni vigumu kuamini kuwa ndio tulikuwa tunaondoka KIS na hatutazamii kurudi tena eneo hili, oooh..! Safari ilianza saa 3 asubuhi kwa basi toka KIS hadi stesheni ya Dindigul, umbali wa saa 2.30 hivi. Hapo dindigul tulipanda treni kwenye saa 7 mchana na kufika stesheni ya Vallupuran saa 12 jioni hivi. Stesheni hii tulipokelewa na mwenyeji wetu pamoja na wenzake, ambaye alitutambua hata kabla ya treni kusimama na kutupokea. Jambo hili lilitufurahisha sana. Kutoka hapo stesheni tulipanda tena gari hadi sehemu hii tuliyofikia ambayo ni shule ya Kanisa ya Bweni kwa Wasichana, toka darasa la 6 hadi 12. eneo hili tutakaa kwa siku kadhaa.

Kuondoka KIS ni kitu cha kuhuzunisha sana kwetu. Tulipapenda sana. Hii inafanya baadhi ya wenzangu wafikirie kurudi tena eneo hili kama walimu hapo baadae (tafadhali usinikariri. Hizi ni tetesi tu!) Hata siamini kuwa sitawaona hawa wanafunzi ambao ni wacheshi sana, marafiki, wenye heshima na ambao wanaweza kujumuika na mtu yeyote yule kwa haraka. Pengine umesahau kuwa hapa KIS ilikuwa ni "Wiki ya Mkazo ya Wakirto". Wanafunzi hawa hawakuonyesha tofauti yoyote kuwa wao sio wakirto bali walijumuika pamoja na kufanya mambo mengi kama wamoja wao (Wakirto). Lilikuwa ni jambo zuri sana kwangu kukutana na watu mbali mbali wenye imani tofauti na yangu, ambao walikuwa ni zaidi ya tayari kuelezea imani yao na baadhi ya mambo katika dini yao. Niliweza pia kukutana na Waafrika wenzangu toka maeneo tofauti ya bara hili. Nimeweza kupata marafiki wengi toka karibu sehemu zote za ulimwengu huu. Hii ni katika muda mfupi sana toka tuwe hapa India. Pia walikuwako watu ambao wameshatembelea nchi yangu nzuri ya Tanzania kwa sababu mbali mbali km kutembelea mbuga za wanyama; ndugu, jamaa na marafiki, n.k. KIS ni eneo zuri sana. Nilijisikia kama niko nyumbani.

Kuna msemu usemao kwamba, "milima haikutani, lakini binadamu tunakutana" Naamini kuwa iko siku nitakayokutana na hawa ndugu. Sijui ni wapi na lini! Lakini naamini nitakutana na baadhi. Mungu aliyetuumba na anayefahamu kututunza na kutuongoza, awe nanyi ninyi watu wa KIS katika masomo yenu, kazi zenu na mipango yote ya maisha. Amen..! Boni!

Date: 2/12/2003

Submitted by: Jason Moran

Journal Entry:

Today was an amazing day. We arrived at the Danish Mission Girls boarding school in Melpattambakkam. There are about 500 girls boarding at this school founded by Danish Mission. It is kind of fun to think that just as our friends on Watermark are working with the Danish church we are working with Indian/Danish mission schools. Let's hear it for the global church. The children here are amazing. They are roughly 6th grade to 12th grade. The 12th graders are undergoing practical exams and are a bit stressed these days. Every time we see them they ask us to pray for their tests. This morning Debbie and I prayed for a group of 8 girls on our way to breakfast.



Jason Moran

This evening we had a program for the girls and we taught them how to play link tag. I have never seen so much excitement and laughter. The girls all speak Tamil and we somehow were able to communicate this game to them. After our program Sujatha (the superintendent) had tea and biscuits with us and told us the children had free time for a few hours after our program. We went to the play yard and all the children encircled us. They were so much fun. We broke into "small" groups so we could spend time with 30-50 children at a time who taught us their names, some games, and a few even gave us on the spot lessons in Tamil. Today's Tamil vocabulary word is, "Ma-ley Vannakkam" which means "Good Evening." The children give us so much energy. It was a great day.

Date: 2/13/2003
Submitted by: Paul Nichols
Journal Entry:



Paul Nichols

We are now in our third "location," in a city called Melpattambakkam outside of Cuddalore, which is south of Chennai (Madras), in the state of Tamil Nadu. It is our second full day here. This morning we visited a nearby town, and while we visited some houses in this settlement, the children were gathered so we could play some songs, teach a song, and play a game. (School was closed today for a holiday.) Around 30 kids were gathered. We taught Cast Your Burdens (remember Higher Higher!! from my last journal??) and also went outside to teach Duck Duck Goose! Oh yes, the staple of American games being taught abroad. We have witnessed a similar game being played here where the children stand up in a circle and once tagged have to beat the other person around the circle in the opposite direction. We decided to bridge the cultural gap with our version.

The Arcot Lutheran Church is the name of the church in this district. And right near this settlement where we were teaching Duck Duck Goose, the church was supporting two schools, one for 200 students and the other for 400 students. Providing education and lunch to disadvantaged children is a gigantic service to this area. Often times we in the states forget what our money can do to support foreign churches and mission work. We as Rainbow of Promise often get to see the result of this support. The church in India has stepped in where there are little services provided to those most in need. We have seen many schools, orphanages, and a hospital reaching many people, doing God's work here in India. What a wonderful reminder for me, that God wants everyone to know Him and that the church is doing this in various ways--through service projects and music, through organized clinics and the helping of a neighbor in need.

This evening we went to a school that was in session and played something like our family night program for, get this, 2,600 students!! I'm breathing faster just at the thought of it! This school yard was packed, and we had our acoustic gear and one microphone! I think it went over wonderfully, though. When we finally approached the stage it was as if we were rock stars. The students broke out in a loud cheer, probably more cheering that they were finally done awaiting our arrival than excitement to see us! Students were from age 11 to 17. It was exciting to be able to share a little about the Bible, too. I don't know how often youth actually see someone they look up to point to a Bible and say, "This is something you should read. There are amazing things in here to read about." I feel confident that someone got the message--1 out of 2,600 are pretty good odds!

This was our day, and it was another good one. Amen!

Date: 2/14/2003
Submitted by: Dain Swanson
Journal Entry:



Dain Swanson

Valentine's Day a world away is something to experience. Apart from the college reference to Lover's Day there is nothing that will hint you towards any sort of romantic holiday. No stores filled with red, white, and pink decoration or candy. Life continues on as it normally would for India and Rainbow of Promise. Apart from team devotions, team job stuff and other team activities, the day was given to personal time. Some e-mailed and others rested while we waited to perform that evening. We gathered into our van with our ever faithful driver, Rajan, and departed for Vadalure. We were greeted very well and our program went very well. A funny thing happened 2/3 the way through the program--the power went out. We continued singing the song "Waterfall" in the dark. We sang the lines "Your love comes pouring down like a waterfall. Capsizing my heart and soul. Your love comes pouring down like a waterfall, baptizing." People couldn't see us, our faces, our instruments, they could only hear. And on this Valentine's Day we were singing about an amazing love. The love of God and Jesus Christ. And hopefully through our music that love was conveyed to those attending and worshiping with us. 1 Corinthians 13: 8-10. "Love never fails. But where there are prophecies they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away. For we

know in part and we prophesy in part, but when perfection comes imperfection disappears."

In our case we had the light disappear and a language barrier. But even those two walls could not stop the love of Christ that evening. Five minutes later when the power came back on the smiles on the faces were right there where we left them. It was obvious that the love of God was all around us that evening. And on this Valentine's Day God's love was sufficient for everyone there.

May everyone feel the love of God every day of your lives and lovingly reflect that love that was first shown us.

In Christ's Love,
Dain

Date: 2/15/2003

Submitted by: Miriam Anderson

Journal Entry:

The term "witness" gets me every once in a while. I think I understand it in the broad, general sense and I think I understand its implication in my own life, but then do I really? Do I realize the witnessing that I do when I'm not on "stage"? When I think no one's watching? When I've been sick for two days and the last thing I want to eat is rice and chicken curry?



Miriam Anderson

I came to understand yet another way that my life is a witness today. We were invited to the pastor's home after the evening church service for dinner. As we sat around his table to a delicious meal of chapati, chicken curry, rice and dhal, we began discussing his work as the local pastor. He shared his delight in having us join in worship with them that evening, but then the conversation took a turn I couldn't foresee. He said his parishioners have traveled to many western cultures in recent years and upon returning to their home congregation, the report is nearly always the same: "The youth of western countries don't go to church. There are no youth in those churches." The pastor mentioned that a widespread belief is that Americans, despite living in a "Christian" country, don't go to church.

The function of the church is to strengthen Christians, to provide a network where Christians can be in community with one another. Hebrews 10:23-25 talks about not forsaking assembling together but encouraging one another in the faith. Team has taught me how important community is. We are constantly giving--giving our time, thoughts, music--to those we meet. Without some place to be filled up, we would soon have nothing left to give. God uses us to feed each other, to encourage each other, to fill each other. By forsaking that assembling, we are forsaking the nourishment God has for us.

The mission statement of Youth Encounter is "to strengthen the church through the Christian faith and ministry of its youth." If youth are leaving the church in the U.S., the strength of the church is compromised and the growth of the church will be stunted.

Today I have renewed excitement and vigor for being a part of this ministry. I praise God that He has opened my eyes to how He is using us as witnesses, that we are part of a revival among the youth in America's churches. Make your prayer today that God will continue to grow churches throughout the world, filling pews and renewing the hearts of our youth.

Date: 2/16/2003

Submitted by: Debbie Holte

Journal Entry:

This morning we played at a worship service in Panruti. The service was all in Tamil except for our portion of it. We sang a few songs, then did a mime skit on the Gospel text, Matthew 20:1-16. That is the story of the landowner who hired workers at

different times of the day and paid them all the same--one denarius. When the pastor gave his sermon, he would speak in Tamil then translate it into English for us (right during the service). That was so nice. He gave me new insight on the story because he told about how in India there are still some people who will stand by the roadside and wait for someone to come by and offer them work.



Debbie Holte

Like most of the churches we've been in, the men and women sat on separate sides of the church. The men all sat on the left side and the women sat on the right or on the floor either in the aisle or in the front. The kids mostly sat on the right side or on the floor as well. When we took communion, all the men went first, then the women. The women all covered their heads with their sarees or shawls. Miriam and I were glad we were wearing our sarees so we could cover our heads, though we did it pretty awkwardly. After the service we enjoyed a nice lunch with the pastor at his house.

In the afternoon we went to the Cassette Ministries of Arcot Lutheran Church in Cuddalore to record a few songs. It was a nice studio and it was really fun to record. Unfortunately we didn't have as much time to record as we would have liked because we had to walk across the street to Arcot Lutheran Church for our evening program.

Fortunately, a lot of the people who showed up spoke a fair amount of English, so we didn't have to rely as much on our translators. The mosquitoes were THICK! We had a mosquito coil burning up front with us, but there were still several mosquitoes that decided to tough it out and annoy us.

Our contact Ruben and his family were there. We met his family on Thursday, so it was fun to know some people in the audience. We had fun playing with Claudia and Sam (Ruben's kids) and a few other kids after the program.

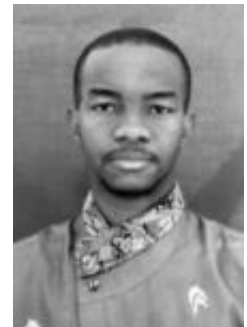
That's all for now. Blessing to you!

Date: 2/17/2003

Submitted by: Boniface Adam Eliona Kombo

Journal Entry:

We are still in the state of Tamil Nadu, continuing with our ministry. We are going to be in this place for another week, which will make a total of 3 weeks in Tamil Nadu, doing different programs in schools, churches, etc. Early today, around 9 am, we started our journey from Danish Mission (DM) Girls Boarding Home, Melpattambakkam to DM Boys Boarding Home at Saron, Tiruvannamalai. This time we did not use the train. Mr. Rajan, who is working with the ALC, drove us in the ALC bus to this new place. The journey was good. We passed by many things on roads. We met a crowd of people with trumpets, drums, etc as if they were celebrating something. So some of us thought that it was a Hindu festival; because some days ago we passed by a Hindu festival. So, we thought the same thing may be happening. But we were very wrong! It was a total different thing. The crowd was mourning and was on their way to cremate a dead person, a man! This event is the second one. In Hyderabad I saw another one, a woman. In this last event, I was somehow shocked, for I did not expect to see a funeral.



Boniface Adam Eliona Kombo

After awhile we reached our destination. Among the roads we used, one was very narrow. Two cars could not even pass by each other. One car/bus needed to pull aside the road so that the other one could pass through. Anyway, we arrived safely at DM Boys Boarding Home at Saron, Tiruvannamalai. In this area we will visit different churches and areas which are under the ALC (Arcot Lutheran Church).

SWAHILI:

Bado tuko katika jimbo hili la Tamilnadu, tukiendelea na huduma yetu. Tutakuwa katika jimbo hili kwa wiki 3, tukifanya mambo na mipango mbali mbali mashuleni, makanisani, n.k. Mapema leo tulianza safari kuja hapa Danish Mission (DM) Boys Boarding Home, Saron, Tiruvannamalai kutokea

DM Girls Boarding Home kule, Melpattambakkam. Maeneo yote haya bado yako katika jimbo hili hili la Tamilnadu. Safari hii hatuktumia treni ila tulitumia basi, ambako ndugu Rajan alituendesha kwa basi la ALC. Njiani tuliona mkusanyiko wa watu wakiwa na tarumbeta, ngoma, n.k. Baadhi yetu tulidhani ilikuwa ni mojawapo ya sherehe za wa-Hindu. Siku chahche zilizopita tuliona sherehe kama hiyo, hivyo tulifikiri ni kitu kama hicho. Loo..! Tulikuwa tumekosea sana..! Ilikuwa ni msiba wa ndugu mmoja na kundi hilo la watu lilikuwa njiani kuelekea kuuchoma mwili wa marehemu huyo. Jambo hili lalinistua kidogo kwa sababu sikuwa nimetegemea kuona kitu kama hicho kwa wakati huo! Hii ni mara ya pili kuona tukio kama hilo. Mara ya kwanza ilikuwa nikule Hyderabad, ambako niliona msiba wa mama mmoja.

Baada ya muda mfupi tuliwasili hapa DM Boys Boarding Home, Saron, Tiruvannamalai salama. Kati ya barabara tulizopita, moja ilikuwa ni nyembamba sana. Hivyo magari yanabidi kusubiriana kwa mojawapo kutoka nje ya barabara ili kupisha lingine lipite..! Eneo hili tutakuwa kwa tukitembelea maeneo mbalimbali ya kanisa hili k.m vile shule, makanisa, n.k. Tuwasiliane wakati ujao. Boni!

Date: 2/18/2003

Submitted by: Jason Moran

Journal Entry:

Tiruvannamalai...can anyone out there pronounce that for me? That is where we are this week. We are staying at a boys boarding school called Saron. Today has been quite the day. Mentally, physically and emotionally exhausting. Our day began by eating our first breakfast without any cultural help. This may sound odd, but when you have a bowl, a plate, a fork and a spoon alongside a dry porridge, boiled eggs, and beans it can be confusing. For instance, do you add milk to the dry porridge? or do you eat it dry? After much experimenting we determined the beans go in the bowl, the dry porridge is best left dry, on your plate and eaten with a spoon and even we could figure out the egg bit. But, breakfast wasn't the end of our day, nosiree.



Jason Moran

We left to pick up a sound system, that's right--Rainbow is officially an electric team. Weird? Yes. We realized the importance of the sound system when we arrived at the Danish Boarding school. We were greeted by 4000 students from 6th grade till 12th grade. 4000 students--wow! It went well for an acoustic team pretending to be electric in front of 4000 antsy school children without a sound tech.

We then met the Bishop. We chatted for quite some time about the vision of Arcot Lutheran Church. It was amazing to hear the future plans for their interfaith dialogue center. Many people come to Tiruvannamalai searching and they hope to build a center where the searchers might find Jesus Christ. These "many people" are mostly westerners searching for enlightenment. I enjoyed hearing how the ALC is reaching out to people like us.

Our evening program was back at the Danish Boarding School. We played for a mixed faith group of 300. Mostly the group consisted of children. We sang "Blessed Be" and "Cast Your Burdens" with them. We also broke out our first song in Tamil, "Sathanea." The children loved it. It is basically saying, "Satan leave me alone because I am a child of Christ." It has great actions and a danceable beat. The unique thing about this song is that it is originally in Swahili and has traveled to Tamil Nadu and been translated. It is a great reminder of how our global church works.

Our evening ended with an amazing moon-rise as we finished our program.

Date: 2/19/2003

Submitted by: Paul Nichols

Journal Entry:

The Autograph Session. The haircut. It's time that everyone learned a little bit about being a rock star. Since Rainbow of Promise is un/officially an electric team, we are

entitled to the amenities of said rockedness. One of these comforts is the autograph signing. Following is a factual progression of my autograph: "Rainbow of Promise. www.youthencounter.org rainbow@youthencounter.org. Jesus Loves You!! Paul Nichols. Proverbs 16:3." I continue signing as such: "rainbow@youthencounter.org. Read the Bible--it contains much wisdom!! Paul Nichols. Proverbs 16:3." I proceed with: "Paul Nichols. Proverbs 16:3." I struggle on: "Paul. Prov. 16:3." The deluge of young children continues. "Paul Nichols." "Paul." "Paul." "Paul." My teammates and I cry out for help, "Why weren't we trained how to do this?!!!" We feel like we're at a soccer match in Argentina...we're drowning in children's arms seeking an autograph! 3 days later I wake up in Sri Lanka, the delirium of the autograph session a foggy memory. (Please don't ask why I wake up in Sri Lanka--that's the only non-factual part of the story.)



Paul Nichols

Because there are so many children at our programs, we are unable to sign for everyone. I struggle with signing an autograph. It is surely something that the child will treasure, but what good is it by itself? Surely a verse of the Bible or the 10 Commandments would be more suitable for long term moral growth! We now ask our contacts here in India how to approach "the autograph session." We want to make sure children aren't skipping classes to stay after a school program, or that our instruments are safe from stampeding feet. We hope that an autograph with a short message will be another way God is using us here.

Well, before tonight's program and autograph session, I also got a haircut. I hopped in an autorickshaw with some teammates and did the scissors clip motion with my hand and we were off. It was a short drive away and I bounded into the shop where two men were staffing a small business with room for four customers. How would I communicate the style I wanted??? I had been thinking of any way I could tell the barber on the way there. My fears were put at ease when I saw that one of the barbers had the "do" I wanted! I simply pointed. Normally, I get a haircut with the electric trimmers, but this guy did it with a comb and scissors. After trimming to a short length and setting the sides in balance with each other, he asked me how it was. "Please cut it shorter, I said." I could see the Homer Simpson "D'oh!!" in his eyes as he realized that his work was not done. So it's as if he gave me two haircuts! He cut some more to my satisfaction, and then trimmed the edges with one of those straight blades. He asked me if I wanted a shave and I declined (though I could have used one!). Jason was brave enough to sit in the chair for a shave--no arteries were hit :). So anyway, I got what I wanted: a nice short haircut that will last me over a month. I paid 40 Rupees, which is about 80 cents. (And this is only because I essentially received TWO haircuts!)

So these are two stories from today. God bless you!!

Paul Nichols. Rainbow of Promise. rainbow@youthencounter.org. Jesus Loves You! Proverbs 16:3.

Date: 2/20/2003

Submitted by: Dain Swanson

Journal Entry:

The best way to describe today's activities is "doing our dignatorial duties." Now, I don't know if dignatorial is a word or not, but to put it another way, Rainbow of Promise were dignataries today. As a team we were invited to the house warming party of the Rt. Rev. Dr. John Franklin, Bishop of Arcot Lutheran Church. The Bishop is retiring after 10 years of service. So we were picked up by our TATA SUMO (an Indian SUV) complete with plush interior, room for 8, and air conditioning, woo hoo! We arrived and took our place in front of 1000 people and proceeded to listen to 2 1/2 hours of speeches, one of which we understood. We did have our time to perform. We talked about God's love and how we hoped it would fill this new house. We sang "Isn't it Love" by Andrew Peterson and sat back down. This time was productive for me because I let my mind wander and think about random things like life and God's plan for me. It was good to just sit and observe India and how it compares to America. For instance: the difference of house warming styles and the number of people attending. It prompted me to ask if this was a large crowd because of the Bishop. The answer, "No, this is a normal size crowd." This comment reconfirmed the fact that the Christian community in India is strong and supportive of one another. This is quite the encouragement.



Dain Swanson

Date: 2/21/2003

Submitted by: Miriam Anderson

Journal Entry:



Miriam Anderson

If I could transport you to India for just one day to experience this country as I have, I would choose today to bring you here. As my teleporter is broken, I will attempt to use mere words on a computer screen to explain what I have seen, felt, smelled, tasted and touched.

This morning we enjoyed ragi, a thick brown porridge that reminds me a little of cream of wheat, for breakfast before heading out on our first adventure. We were heading to a massive Hindu temple erected at the base of a mountain. Lord Shiva, a popular Hindu god, is said to have appeared on top of this mountain in the form of fire. As a result, there are many shrines to various gods scattered next to the road all the way around the mountain. We drove-or rather rode as a very nice Indian driver drove-around the base, slowing occasionally to inspect a particularly ornate shrine or to allow a herd of goats to pass.

Upon completing our circumnavigation of the mountain, we found ourselves nearing the temple entryway. We walked down a long, crowded street to a man behind a little counter. We gave him our shoes and then 50 paise (about 23 cents) each for keeping our shoes. In India it is a sign of respect to remove your shoes, so we wandered around the temple barefoot. (see Exodus 3:5 just for fun) The temple itself was amazing. The architecture is incredible. I think it may be classified as Indo-Aryan. The "temple" is actually 9 different buildings, tiered like wedding cakes, that surround a huge courtyard. In this place only one of the temples actually contained idols and shrines. The others are just huge stone structures, ornately designed with a huge archway. From what I can gather these temples serve two purposes, besides a place to worship: 1) a good place to sit and beg, and 2) kind of a flag so the temple area can be seen from a long way off. It just so happens that we were at the temple around 12 in the afternoon, which means the sun is at its very hottest. The stones and pavement we were traipsing around on was unbelievably hot. We learned quickly that you must find whatever shade is available and use it.

The most amazing thing about the temple was actually not the temple at all but the worshippers. They were very sincere in their worship as they prayed to their gods, lighting candles and whispering blessings in the ear of a statue. My first reaction was shock. I wanted to jump up and down, running circles around them, shouting that they are worshipping false idols. I wanted to tell them about the one true God, the God of old, the God of the present, the God of love, the God of all creation. Fortunately the Holy Spirit stepped in and bridled my tongue long enough for me to see these worshippers in another light. They have an astounding amount of faith and dedication to their gods. They dress up in the finest clothing, bringing huge garlands of fresh flowers, incense and candles to worship their gods. Many Hindus wear bindhis on their foreheads proclaiming their faith. At most Hindu homes, the ground in front of the door is decorated with a kolam. Kolams, also called rangoli, are designs drawn with rice-flour paste or stone dust which symbolize several different things. Some indicate a family's prosperity and hospitality while other designs are believed to keep away evil spirits and call deities to bless the home (see Lonely Planet's India guidebook for other neat facts). Imagine if all of this dedication was focused to the one true God. How powerful is the example of love and faithfulness by these Hindus. How much more powerful if they were worshipping Jesus Christ.

We left the temple to visit an ashram, a quiet meditative place filled with gardens, benches and even peacocks. There is a mountain-ish hill in the ashram where meditators often wander. We decided we ought to trek to the top. As this place is also a semi-place of worship, it is requested that guests remove their shoes. Allow me to paint this picture. The hill is nearly all rock and sand with little vegetation. A lack of vegetation also means a lack of shade. ROP and their Indian counterpart, Esther, begin hiking the trail to the top of the hill barefoot. Jason, Paul and I only made it halfway up. We spotted a little shady place with two trees and decided we better take advantage of it while we were still conscious. The others pressed on. I am told Boni, Dain, Debbie and Esther only made it half as far again before tears over the blisters on their feet demanded they turn around. At some point they met a swami, a holy man who has given up everything but the clothes on his back, a walking stick and a small bag of food to wander the hills searching for enlightenment. Dain spoke with the swami for a little while. If you want more on that topic, ask Dain.

After we hobbled our way back down the hill, we returned to the Boys' Boarding Home by auto rickshaw for some afternoon rest before our evening program. The actual program itself was a typical rural Indian village program-sing-a-longs, a skit, program songs and a puppet show plus a fair amount of gawking at the strange white folk. The events surrounding the program are, however, noteworthy.

It's bound to happen that sometimes we are out and about and realize that we need to use a restroom. Generally this has not been a problem, but tonight was a different story. Before the program, Debbie and I decided it was time we searched out a bathroom. We asked one of the girls that spoke a little English and she took us to a house next door. She let us in the gate (Is this her house?) and searched the area for a toilet room (Pretty sure this isn't her house). It appeared that no one was home and the toilet room was locked so we started to leave. At the gate we met the startled owner of the house (definitely not the house of the girl leading us around). There was a brief but rapid-fire discussion in Tamil filled with hand gestures in our general direction. Moments later, the owner of the house led us out the front gate to a neighbor's house. Another brief Tamil discussion, and we were led to the outhouse. I went first and when I stepped back outside, Debbie looked like a queen. She was seated on the front porch, the owner of the 1st house to her right, the owner of the outhouse to her left and a whole entourage of other women and children who had gathered to...watch Debbie sit. She got up to use the outhouse and I was ushered into her spot. Now, there was a small crowd of little girls standing a mere few feet away. As they were watching me and I was watching them, a flower fell from the hair of one little girl. I thought, "Now here is a chance for some relational ministry." Without the benefit of speaking Tamil, relational ministry sometimes feels like it's lacking. "I will show how much I understand and appreciate this culture by putting the flower back in that girl's hair." I stood from my "throne" with an outstretched hand. Immediately the group of girls disintegrated, running every which way, screaming. They were actually screaming. The older women just laughed but I somehow couldn't help but feel a little silly.

I snatched the flower from the ground on our way back to the church but failed to ever entice that little girl close enough to actually pin the flower back in her hair. I usually don't have that effect on children, but apparently I was in rare form tonight.

Date: 2/22/2003

Submitted by: Debbie Holte

Journal Entry:

Today we left Saron and headed to Siloam. We are staying at a girls boarding school and the place we are staying at is SUPER nice--I feel like we're at a five star hotel!

But anyway, this weekend we are here with the Junior Ministry retreat. There are about 40 Junior Leaders (people, mostly in their 20's who have had some training for leading youth groups) here. They are part of Arcot Lutheran Church. We are leading workshops on sing-a-longs and games. We are also responsible for a Bible Study on leadership. We had been under the impression that we were to do an hour and a half Bible Study 3 times, to 3 completely different groups of people so we would just need 1 1/2 hours of material. But when we got here this morning we found out that the same people would be at each session and we actually needed 4 1/2 hours of material! Oops!

The first Bible study session went well and it was actually good to have more time so we could leave more time for discussion. About a half hour into the second session, we realized we were running out of our session II material already. So we brainstormed. Paul was talking about Joshua's external and internal leadership qualities and how he had to trust God to be a good leader.

So we decided to set up a bit of an obstacle course and have the Junior Leaders get in pairs. One of the pair wore a blindfold while the other led his or her partner around and over the obstacles using only speaking. I lead one of the Junior Leaders through. Fortunately she knew some English or we would have been in a whole heap of trouble. But she was very patient and did very well. The trust walk was very fun and proved to be a good demonstration of several aspects of leadership. We'll see how session 3 goes tomorrow.



Debbie Holte

After supper we had a campfire where the Junior Leaders presented skits and things that they had prepared. One group did a puppet show. I really don't even know what it was about, but it was HILARIOUS. It's obvious that they were having fun too.

They also sang several sing-a-long type songs in Tamil. I think we may try to learn a couple of them.

All the Junior Leaders have a red scarf that they wear to signify that they have been through the Junior Leader training. The different color and number of stripes on the scarves represent how much training they have had, etc.

At the campfire we were all presented with scarves with a blue stripe to signify that we are part of their friendship club. The blue stripe represents being from overseas. Besides the 6 of us, there are also 20 people in Denmark who have these scarves of friendship. It is really an honor (in my eyes at least) to be a part of this group.

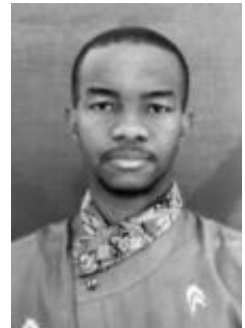
Again I am amazed by the people here and how they continue to make me/us feel special.

Date: 2/23/2003

Submitted by: Boniface Adam Eliona Kombo

Journal Entry:

Hallow again..! Today is the 39th day since we arrived here in India. Yesterday and today, we had a camp with ALC members under what was called as Junior Ministry Team Leaders. I believe things went so well; because when we asked comments from participants, they said positive things only.



Boniface Adam Eliona Kombo

In this two day camp, which was held here in DM Girls Boarding Home, Siloam-Tirukoilur, we led workshops on different topics. We taught some action songs, games and the Bible studies about leadership. The language used was Tamil. No one on my team speaks this language but we had translators. Rev. Joshua Peter (JP), Mr. VijayaRuben and Visuvasam helped for that task.

During that workshop, we had an opportunity to hear and learn some Tamil praise and worship songs. One of those songs/chorus, is originally from Tanzania. The song is, Shetani umebaki nyuma mimi naenda na Yesu, which means in English, "Satan go back I am going with Jesus." I heard this song for the first time in India while we were in Hyderabad, though it was in Telugu. How will you feel when you meet/hear something in your own language? (this question is not for monolingual people.) I think you would feel very good and excited! Wouldn't you!? These people gave us an oil lamp. Now we have two oil lamps; the small and big one!

Again, I had a very good time with those people. I had chances to interact and talk with some of the participants. They wanted to talk and stay together, every time when we had free time during meal time. I still do not know what I do that make people to like me more or applause more during introductions. mmh..mmh..mmh..I like it indeed! It makes me feel very happy and great! See you next time. Boni!

SWAHILI:

Leo ikiwa ni siku ya 39 toka tuwasili hapa India, tumemaliza kambi ya "Junior Ministry Team Leaders" (huduma kwa viongozi wa vijana) katika kanisa hili ALC. Kambi ilikuwa ni ya siku 2, ilianza siku ya jana na mwisho wake ndio ulikuwa leo kwenye saa 11 jioni. Mambo yalienda vizuri, naamini hivyo kwa sababu tulipouliza washiriki kutoa maoni yao kama kuna sehemu ya kurekebisha ama kuongeza juhudi, hawakuwa na kitu cha kusema zaidi ya kuonyesha kufurahia jinsi mambo yalivyoenda.

Katika kambi hii iliyofanyika hapa DM Girls Boarding Home, Siloam-Tirukoilur, tulifanya mambo

mbalimbali. Tulifundisha washiriki nyimbo kadhaa zenye vitendo, michezo ya kufanyia ndani na nje, na kujifunza Uongozi kupitia Biblia; mambo ambayo wataweza kuyatumia na kushirikisha wenzao katika maeneo waliyotoka. Washiriki hawa walikuwa wanatoka maeneo tofauti tofauti ya kanisa hili la ALC. Lugha iliyotumika ilikuwa ni Tamil. Hakuna hata mmoja katika timu yangu anayefahamu kuzungumza ama kuelewa lugha hii. Usishangae sana, tulikuwa na mtafsiri! Mch. Joshua Peter (JP), ndugu VijayaReuben na Visuvasam (Visu) walitusaidia sana kwenye kutafsiri.

Tulipata nafasi ya kusikia na kuona vitendo vya baadhi ya nyimbo katika lugha ya Tamil. Moja kati ya nyimbo hizo una asili ya Tanzania, nao ni "Shetani umebaki nyuma mi naenda na Yesu" Wimbo huu nilianza kuusikia tukiwa Hyderabad katika lugha ya Telegu. Unajisikiaje pale unasikia kitu katika lugha yako halisi? Nafikiri utafurahi sana. Au sio!? Ndugu hawa walitupa taa za kutumia mafuta. Kwa sasa tunazo 2, kubwa na ndogo.

Nilikuwa na wakati mzuri tena na watu hawa. Nilipata muda wa kuzungumza na kufahamiana na baadhi yao, japokuwa majina yao ni magumu kuyatamka na pia kukumbuka. Wengi walipenda nikae na kuongea nao kila wakati tulipokuwa na mapumziko ama wakati wa chakula. Hivyo nimepata tena marafiki wengi. mmh..! Bado sifahamu ni kitu gani ninachofanya ama ambacho kinafanya wanishangilie zaidi k.m. wakati wa kujitambulisha na kunipenda zaidi! Hata hivyo, jambo hili linanifanya niwe na furaha sana na kusikia amani! Nalipenda sana! Tutaonana wakati mwingine. Boni!

Date: 2/24/2003

Submitted by: Jason Moran

Journal Entry:

So, today is rest and relaxation in Siloam. I really feel like I need it too. There are so many things I see and experience each day here in India and I just need some time to process. I am reminded of Dick Borrud's constant statements about the importance of solitude to avoid our minds getting overexposed. It is like film in a camera. If light is constantly exposed to film you will burn the film; you must close the shutter sometime and develop the picture and look at it.



Jason Moran

Enough rambling, so, team life is tough these days. (Can I admit that in a journal? Yes, I can.) Us teamers aren't super heroes you know. Nope, we actually can get burned out, tired of each other, or just need to escape sometime. I am sure you all know that though... Before joining team I was a frequent "escaper." I would get absorbed into computers, books, and music to escape the daily grind of life. Here in India, it is a bit more difficult to hide out. It has been a challenge to figure out how to balance personal time, team time, and public time. Because generally daily life is a mix of team time and public time. So, please keep this struggle for all of us in your prayers.

We spent our day watching the Zimbabwe Australia cricket game, e-mailing home, sleeping, and journaling. I also spent some time perfecting my laundry washing skills. Handwashing with bar soap is an art form that unfortunately many people at home will never experience. (Maybe I will offer classes when I return to the states.) So here is the current method. You begin by soaking your clothes in tap water (cold, because that is what we have). After 10 minutes remove the clothes and be disgusted by the dirtiness of the water. Get out your bar of laundry soap and scrub the offensive areas (collars, bottoms of pants, etc.). Rub soap all over clothes and rub the clothes together. Beat clothes (careful of buttons and zippers) against counter, rock or hard object. Place clothes in bucket of water. Allow 15 minutes to pass. Remove clothes. Be disgusted with the condition of the water. Wring out clothes, rinse, repeat. Hang clothes on clothes line once you are certain no soap remains. If in India return 1 hour later to find dry clothing on the line. If anywhere else, wait 1 full day for drying. Total duration of clothes washing experience (including rests for hands sore from wringing clothes): 1.5 hours.

That's about it from me today. Much love,
Jason

Tamil Vocab of the day: ROOM-BAH NUN-DREE. Thank you very much.

Date: 2/25/2003
Submitted by: Paul Nichols
Journal Entry:



Paul Nichols

Today was the best puppet show ever!! We do a puppet show about a puppet's birthday. Hank, our pig puppet with an orange mohawk and mullet, has a birthday and is preparing for a big party. Zeke, a human-looking puppet, approaches Hank about the party and how he's bringing a big present. Hank tells Zeke that he's not invited because he wears a hat and that he should send the present in the mail by a courier. Pepper, a giraffe, then approaches Hank about coming to the party with a chocolate cake that he and his mom stayed up all night baking. Hank tells Pepper that he can't come because he's too tall and will break the roof. Pepper asks what he should do with the cake and Hank tells him to send it by courier. Our human, normally Jason, then approaches Hank and asks him about the party. Hank lets him know that no one seems to be coming. Jason tells him that we should love everyone as the Bible and Jesus tell us to. When Hank realizes what he's done, he decides to invite Jason before apologizing to the other puppets.

What made tonight's puppet show different than the other times we perform this? First of all, we were using microphones for amplification and the power went out midway through the puppet show, in the middle of one of Hank's sentences. (I will not divulge which of us is the voice of the puppet Hank.) So Hank immediately switched from calm voice to screaming voice so that the hundreds of people in attendance could hear! Har har har!! This cracked us teamers up! After finishing the sentence we broke into a rousing rendition of "Happy Birthday" for Hank as well as one of the people in the audience. Talk about puppet-audience interaction!! Later, when the power was back on, we continued the show. After Jason agreed to come to the party, Hank asked our translator and contact person, Ruben, if he wanted to come to the party...Ruben replied, "No! But I'll send your present by courier!" Har har har--we were rolling.

It is wonderful to know that a translator is doing a marvelous job even though we don't speak the language. Ruben imitates our puppets' voices and this really helps deliver the message. The children love puppet shows because they have never seen them before. We were glad that tonight we could give them a treat: the best puppet show ever!

Date: 2/26/2003
Submitted by: Dain Swanson
Journal Entry:



Dain Swanson

Rainbow day in Rhyme

Good morning Rainbow, beep beep beep.
It's time to get up "I need more sleep."
A quick shower and off to breakfast.
Food in our stomach, air in our chest.

We load our stuff into the van.
It's hot out, staying cool is the plan.
We drive, look and bounce around.
Potholes and no construction for the ground.

We arrive to a sea of kids.
One thousand in number is my bid.
We sit and wait, biscuits and tea,
Laughter from outside filled with glee.

Taking the stage we test the mic.
The sun above provides the light.

We dance, play, talk and sing,
Everyone hears the message we bring.

We head back it's time for lunch.
Sitting at the table around the same bunch.
We laugh, talk, and shoot the breeze,
"Man I wish I had some cheeze!"

Afternoon off it's time for chess.
Jason beat me, what a mess.
Journals, sleep, and personal time.
Washing clothes, look at the grime.

Evening program here at Silom.
Friendly people, feels like home.
Funny puppet show, and translator,
We wish we had him now and later.

That evening we had many guests.
People from Denmark and misquito pests.
All in all it was a blast,
We wish it would always last.

But time past and the program ended,
Hopefully our songs and prayers accended,
To the one on high, the one with love,
The King on high and His thrown above.

So that was our day in rhyme.
Thank you so much for taking the time.
To read this journal and presonal thoughts,
God bless you all, He loves you lots!

Dain

Date: 2/27/2003

Submitted by: Miriam Anderson

Journal Entry:

"I'm too tired. I don't feel like doing a program tonight. It's too hot to dance and jump around. My throat hurts. I just want to take a shower and go to bed." These were the thoughts running through my head on the hour long, pothole-filled ride to a rural village for tonight's program. Some of these thoughts were actually busy forming themselves into sentences and rushing through my lips when we arrived at our destination. From my vantage point squashed next to Paul in the sideways facing seat in the back of an SUV loaded down with guitars, drums, and the rest of my teammates, plus our contact and driver, I could see basically nothing except what was already behind us. We stopped and watched at the open gate to the village. We waited and waited which only caused me greater agitation as I was in the throes of stage 2 of culture shock-annoyance. Naturally, our presence, an SUV cram-packed with white folk, drew the attention of every person under the age of. . . 103. It felt just like the zoo. WE were a captive audience, enclosed in a safe glass and metal cage where the kids could stare at us without getting scared.

Just when I had about had it, our contact told us to get out. We heard drums, cymbals and tinny metal maracas coming our way down the road from the village. Dain thrust the camera into my hands just as a parade rounded the bend, bringing the cacophony of joyous rhythm into our presence. The parade composed mainly of men and boys, danced its way to our parked vehicle and paused its music long enough to greet us. Then it turned and began making its way back to the village, Rainbow of Promise and their instruments in tow.



Miriam Anderson

The entire village was decked out for our coming. There was a stage placed in the middle of the road complete with microphones and some speakers. Strung all along the street were palm leaves folded into shapes for decoration. It seems perhaps every villager from every household showed up for our program because as we came down the dirt road we were slowed and eventually stopped by the sheer number of people. Our instruments were taken from our hands and to the stage. We carefully made our way through the throng of well-wishers shaking hands, and uttering what little Tamil we know.

As we began taking our instruments out to tune and set up, the assembled crowd started a song. It sounded like there was one voice singing with the vigor of a thousand. What a beautiful sound. We finished our unpacking and readied ourselves for the first song. Sundar, our contact, stepped to the microphone to introduce us and suddenly the power was cut. The crowd was absolutely silent and the night was pitch black. After a brief discussion, we stepped forward and began singing, "Satanea" into the warm night air. "Satanea" is a children's song in Tamil. The basic meaning is, "Get behind me Satan. I am a child of Jesus."

Standing there in the veil of the nighttime sky, the words to this song really hit me. I was being consumed with my own woes while God had this amazing night planned for us. We continued singing without microphones, but soon someone drove a vehicle to the end of the street, parking in such a way that the headlights illuminated our faces. Partway through the program the power was restored, and we completed the night with the aid of mics and lights. I still felt tired and hot and worn out, but I also realized just how insignificant I am. It no longer mattered that my throat hurt or I was too sweaty. God used me to accomplish His will on this night despite the devil's pull.

Date: 2/28/2003

Submitted by: Debbie Holte

Journal Entry:

I wish you could all come visit India. I also wish I had a video camera so I could give you all a better idea of what it's like here. But I don't. So instead I thought I'd try to paint a picture with words. Imagine with me if you will...

- cattle, chickens, pigs, water buffalo, oxen, goats, and dogs all sharing the roads with pedestrians, bikes, scooters, rickshaws, cars, vans, and buses
- traffic is not so linear as people are constantly passing others and everyone has the right of way
- Hindu temples, Muslim prayers, and Christian crosses and schools
- cricket (the game)
- mosquitoes (the insect)
- sand school yards
- school assemblies (children stand rank and file in the school yard and sing the national anthem, listen to announcements, etc.)
- school uniforms
- rice
- respect, especially for authority
- amazing hospitality
- DRY river beds that look like deserts (please PRAY FOR RAIN)
- HEAT
- narrow roads
- family of 5 on one scooter
- strong family unit
- plastic chairs galore
- pale blue walls
- dim fluorescent lights
- curry
- coffee and tea (with sugar and milk) at least once a day
- a father riding with his toddler on a bicycle
- trains



Debbie Holte

- physical separation of men and women (in buses, churches, everywhere) yet both men and women can hold positions of authority and work together in many lines of work
- oxen with their horns painted political colors and bells attached to the tops
- honking horns constantly sound pollution
- beggars
- sugar cane
- eastern "squat" toilets
- men wearing lungis and dhotis (long pieces of fabric wrapped around the legs and waist)
- women wearing colorful sarees (5 yards of fabric, carefully wrapped around the body)
- dancing
- wonderfully complex Indian drumming
- eating with hands (the RIGHT hand, that is)
- women with jasmine and other flowers in their hair

P.S. Today was mostly a day off, although we did take some time out to teach about 100 girls at this school a few sing-a-longs, which they in turn will teach the other girls. It was very fun. And afterward we took some yucky banana chips to feed the monkeys, since there are a lot of monkeys at Siloam. I suppose we shouldn't have been holding our hands out to strange monkeys, but they were so cute and intriguing that we just couldn't resist. And the girls were so excited that we were near their hostels that they literally grabbed our arms and pulled us inside so they could show us each of their lockers, their mirror, and the picture of Jesus on the wall. They seemed very proud and excited. In all the boarding school hostels we have seen, the kids just all sleep together on the floor, or sometimes on mats. These girls were actually lucky in some regards because they each had a locker (about 1x1x2) to keep some personal things in. Some kids have not had the luxury of having lockers. After being pulled in several different directions by many girls, it was getting late, so we headed back to our guest house which has a bed for each of us, shelves, drawers, tables, and lots of room for all of our stuff.

Date: 3/1/2003

Submitted by: Boniface Adam Eliona Kombo

Journal Entry:

Today is Saturday, the 45th day since we came here in India. It is the 7th week, out of the 16 weeks we are going to be here in India. Hooray...! We are almost half of our staying/journey now! Today we had a trip to Kalrayan hills. The trip started at 8 Am and reached there around 11 A.m. On the way up, we passed by the Gamuchi Dam, which is empty now without water, due to lack of rainfall, last season. This event has caused a big drought in many places here in India. Harvesting this year is also very poor.



Boniface Adam Eliona Kombo

After we arrived and rested for awhile, we went to an elementary school, which is under this church (ALC), sponsored by the Danish Mission. As we were still meet host people there, we heard a big explosion, not far from place where we were. We were freaked out, not knowing what was going on...Host people told us then, that is a way people using for making new well (water-wells)...!

According to the government system, education is almost free, if not totally free, from standard 1 up to 12. The government supplies uniforms, writing utensils, meals (one time per day-i.e. lunch), etc for all students. The government is like saying, "...here is everything..help yourself...be educated..." There is a small amount contributed by parents/guardians for final examination. This is like nothing, if compared to the actual cost of getting education. This school is serving children of all races/religions living in these hills by giving them education. For this school is belonging to the church, it is like private school, so the church is responsible for all education costs for these kids from standards 1 to 12. The church provides them with uniforms, once a year; it also gives them two meals by day, breakfast and supper. The government is taking care of lunch and teachers' emoluments.

The school has been receiving support from DM, which is no longer supporting it, for the agreement

is now ended. For this reason, the church was looking/still looking, for any one or institutions, etc who is interesting in supporting it in its projects. There is a lady from Denmark, who got a sponsorship from a company, which accepted to support the school. There are also two young women from Denmark, who are volunteering to teach at this school for 4 months. They are helping to teach English as a subject. Other subjects are in the language of Tamil.

"mmh...Have you seen a DOG eaten a sugarcane..!? I saw this yesterday on my way back home from city viewing. This wanderer dog was aside a road, trying to chew that sugarcane. I could not believe what I was seeing...I was very surprised... Ooho..! This is a strange thing for me! Without knowing that other local people were also astounded at me surprising a dog eating sugarcane...! This dog is AMAZING...!
See you...! Amigo Adios..!
Boni!!

SWAHILI:

Siku ya leo ni ya 45 toka tufike hapa India. Ni juma la 7 kati ya majuma 16 tutakayokuwepo hapa India. Huree...! Karibu tunamaliza nusu ya safari yetu! Siku ya leo tulikuwa na safari ya kwenda huko milimani, sehemu iitwayo Kalrayan. Tulianza safari yetu mnamo saa 2 za asubuhi na kufika huko kwenye saa 5 hivi. Njiani tulipita bwawa moja la maji, kwa jina Gamuchi, ambalo kwa sasa liko tupu kutokana na ukame wa mvua msimu uliopita. Sehemu nyingi sana kuna ukame. Pia mavuno yamekuwa mabaya sana msimu huu!

Baada ya kufika na kupumzika kidogo, tulielekea katika shule ya msingi iliyo chini ya Kanisa hili ALC, chini ya ufadhili wa misheni ya Denmark (DM). Tulipokuwa bado tunasalmiana na wenyeji wetu, ulitokea mlipuko mkubwa sio mbali sana na eneo tulipokuwa. Tulistuka na hatukuwa na ufahamu wa nini kinaendelea... Ndipo wenyeji wetu wakatutoa hofu kwa kusema kuwa hiyo ndio njia itumiwayo kuchimba visima vya maji! mmh.. Hatari lakini salama..!

Kwa mujibu wa utaratibu wa serikali, elimu ni ya karibu na bure, (kama sio ya bure kabisa..!) toka darasa la 1 hadi la 12. Serikali inatoa madaftari, sare, kalamu, chakula, n.k, kwa wanafunzi hawa. Ni kama vile inasema, "..haya..shindwa mwenyewe kusoma na kuelimika..!" Kuna sehemu ndogo sana ambayo mzazi/mlezi anachangia k.m. kulipia mitihani ya mwisho. Hiki ni kiasi kidogo sana kulinganisha na gharama halisi ya elimu. Shule hii inatoa huduma ya elimu kwa watoto toka dini zote, waishio eneo hili la milimani. Kwa kuwa shule hii ni ya kanisa, kanisa linawajibika kwa watoto hawa wa darasa la kwanza hadi la sita, kuwapatia sare ya shule, ambayo ni mara moja kwa mwaka. Kanisa, pia linatoa mlo wa chakula mara 2 kwa siku, kifungua kinywa na "kifunga kinywa"-chakula cha usiku. Mlo wa mchana unatolewa na serikali, ambayo inawajibika na malipo ya walimu.

Shule hii ilikuwa ikipata msaada toka misheni hiyo ya Denmark, ambayo kwa sasa inamaliza muda wake. Kumalizika kwa muda wa DM kumefanya kanisa hili kutafuta misaada toka watu/maeneo mengine. Kuna taasisi moja ya Kikristo toka Amerika iitwayo Lutheran Partners in Global Mission (LPGM), ambayo inatoa msaada kwa sehemu ndogo kwa shule hii. Mama mmoja wa Denmark ametafuta ufadhili katika kampuni moja huko kwao ambayo inasaidia shule hii katika uendeshaji wake. Pia kuna walimu wadada 2, wa kujitolea toka Denmark, ambao watakuwa hapo kwa muda wa miezi 4. Walimu hawa wanafundisha somo la Kiingereza. Masomo mengine yote ni katika lugha ya Tamil.

"mmh..Umewahi kuona MBWA akila MUWA..!?" Jana jioni nikirudi zangu kwa miguu toka kuangalia mji, kuelekea sehemu tuliyoifikia/tunayoishi, nilijionea kituko/maajabu haya. Mbwa-koko mmoja alikuwa akihangaika kutafuna muwa pembezoni mwa barabara. Hata sikuamini macho yangu..! Nilibaki nimeduwaa...nikishangaa... Ooho..! Bila kujua kwamba wananchi nao walikuwa wakinishangaa mimi kushangaa mbwa kula muwa..! Mbwa huyu ni kiboko...!
Kwaheri...! Amigo Adios..!
Boni!!

'Tis a sad day indeed... Today is our final day with Arcot Lutheran Church and Vijayaruben, a man who is a wonderful contact and a great friend. We visited a village church this morning that is on the other side of the "river" from our staying place. (The river is completely dry, not a drop of water to be found... please pray for rain) I absolutely love the programs we do in village churches. There is so much life and festivity at each service. The congregants play drums, finger cymbals, and tambourines as they sing hymns in the Tamil language. We clap along with the children in the church when we don't know the English words to accompany the hymns. After church this morning we did a one hour program and had a great crowd gather from the surrounding houses.



Jason Moran

This village in particular has a very interesting story behind its conception. The creation of the roads and plots of land was completely funded by the church and its foreign sponsors. The roads are all designed western style (square corners, intersections, much like the blocks you would find in 1950's suburban Detroit) and homes are built on plots of land much like you would find in the U.S. (though a bit smaller). After basic construction the church members picked the plots of land they desired to have their houses built on. The members picked the plots of land furthest from the church on the edge of the village. The logic behind this was that all the people in the village who were not Christian would see them walk to church on Sunday mornings. What a great subtle witness to their neighbors. I love the image that is present in this walk... it is sort of Lenten. We can't just rush right into Easter. Instead we must slowly walk toward the goal, salvation. Just as Christ slowly walked the journey of the passion for us.

Date: 3/3/2003

Submitted by: Paul Nichols

Journal Entry:

Today we arrived by train in Nagercoil, at the southern tip of India. It is nary a 20 km drive to the point where the Arabian Sea, the Indian Ocean, and the Bay of Bengal join. We are sure to see many wonderful sites while here. Our train journey was the most comfortable one we have taken. We may actually be getting used to carrying so much luggage around! We left the Arcot Lutheran Church to the north at 8 p.m. last night and arrived here at 8 a.m. this morning. So pretty much we hunkered down in our "berths" (that means seat/bed thingy) and ate our packed dinner and slept the entire trip--it was very comfortable. Our dinner was packed in the Indian fashion: with a banana leaf as a plate and wrapped in newspaper and twine. We dined on lime rice, a hard-boiled egg, and some french fries! It makes a tasty meal.



Paul Nichols

So today we walked the streets of Nagercoil a little bit. I also sent a package home containing many of the gifts we have received. It cost around 35 dollars to send a 3.5 kilogram package, fyi. Nagercoil differs greatly from some recent towns we have been in. It is much more cosmopolitan and it is evident that the residents are mostly used to us foreigners invading their territory. So we walked the streets without gaining many second looks at all.

Greetings!

Paul

Date: 3/4/2003

Submitted by: Dain Swanson

Journal Entry:

Today is fat Tuesday, the day before Ash Wednesday, where has the time gone? March snuck up on us and now another season of the church is upon us.

Our day today was much like the past few we have had. We wake up in the morning and wonder what the day will have in store for us. Today the big surprise for us was a



mail packet! We all sat down after our devotions and team meeting and divided up the mail among us. Inside was something called the "beat the blahs" tape sent to us by Youth Encounter. Basically it is a tape that has some fun songs, stories and greetings from home. So in the spirit of fat Tuesday we sent a group out to the Food Mart, bought snack food and returned to listen to the tape. We stuffed ourselves with Pringles, chocolate, nuts, and pop. What a glorious time. We even deemed it a team outing. I think this is the first outing in India. It wasn't much but it was a good time. Later that evening we had our first program in Nagercoil. We arrived at a small girl's school around 8 at night and performed for about an hour and a half. It was a great atmosphere to be in because of the age of the girls (18-21). Being in a school that was more our age made it easier for Miriam and Debbie to be relational with the girls that attended. They enjoyed the performance and so did we; it was good to play music again.

Dain Swanson

On a more personal note I would like to comment on the team energy right now. It seems strange that we have suddenly dropped off of a cliff when it comes to being active and willing to go places and experience India. These past few days we have not had nearly the schedule that we had a week ago. It is possible that we have allowed ourselves to slump and become lazy in this relaxed state we have been in. I am sure that the heat also has something to do with it. The last place that we really want to be is in the direct sunlight when it is 90-100 degrees outside. So we stay inside and are lazy. What to do!? I want to be an encourager to my teammates, somehow give them some of my energy. But I feel as though the problems run deeper than that. In this time of lent we sit and wait for the death of our Lord, we reflect on the lives that we have lead and are reminded that there is so much more happening than a man's death on a cross. That man is dieing for us and our sins. Wow, what an amazing thing. My hope and prayer for all of you and us as a team is that we can reflect and look inward to find those things that bother us and bring us down and give them up to the one on the cross. Only then can we regain the energy we need to continue each day with the love in our hearts that God has first given us. Please keep us in your prayers.

dain

Date: 3/5/2003

Submitted by: Miriam Anderson

Journal Entry:

During our training before we began touring, Sunitha told us that generally Indians are not as forward as Americans. Sunitha, our international band director, is from Hyderabad and imparted much of her knowledge of the inner workings of Indian society upon us. Maybe I just haven't met the right Indians or maybe they become bold in our presence, but I have not found this reservation to be the case in most places.



Miriam Anderson

I have made an effort to fit into this culture as much as possible despite my white skin and inability to speak the languages. I rely instead on things I can control, like clothing and jewelry. It has been a huge sacrifice, of course, but I usually try to wear traditional dress (salwar suits and sarees) and jewelry (bangles, nose ring, necklaces, anklets and toe rings). Not only has this been great fun for me, the women here must also find enjoyment when I play dress up!

Tonight was a shining example of a group of very forward Indian women and our combined excitement over my new wardrobe. Our program was held at St. Paul's Lutheran Church in a small village outside of Nagercoil called Thathiyarkulam. I happened to be wearing a saree tonight as well as the usual gamut of accessories. After the program, a large group of women came right up to me before I even had a chance for a gulp of water. They grabbed my hands, shaking them, thanking me and surreptitiously examining my bangles and rings. There was lots of giggling and nodding of the heads side to side. Soon they moved on to examining the pleats in my saree and the rings on my toes. These little silver rings caused a small shockwave. In India when women wear rings on their second toes, just where mine happen to be, it means they're married. I am not married, of course, but they all wanted to know about my husband and if we had any children. Oops!

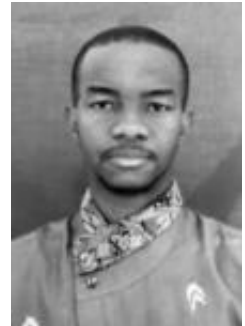
Even though I'm not married nor was I wearing the proper amount of gold jewelry, I think I passed their test. In 1 Corinthians 9:19-23, Paul writes about becoming all things to all people so as to win

some for Christ. Become like the free so as to win the free. Become like the enslaved so as to win the enslaved. Become like the average Indian woman so as to win the average Indian woman. Okay, so Paul didn't say that part, but I think he would have. Somehow wearing these clothes and jewels is opening windows to minister to these women. I know that God will continue to use our visit to this village to strengthen the church here.

Date: 3/7/2003

Submitted by: Boniface Adam Eliona Kombo

Journal Entry:



Boniface Adam Eliona Kombo

Lent is here! We are now in the first week of lent. Christians, all over the world, are commemorating the suffering of our Lord Jesus Christ. During Lent time, you may find these kinds of people: those who truly fasting, those who deceiving themselves fasting by not eating, those who do not know what to do and those who do not know even what is going on the earth...! (I do not know which group among the last three, am I. Tehe tehe...! People in this period, the lent, are very pious. They are almost "holy-like" in deeds, sayings, etc. People minimize all their wickedness such as drinking, smoking, and..., during this period. Aren't they...? mmmh...!

I did not know before that even animals know how to worship/venerating or something likes that! Last day, we had a program in a school. As we were going there, we drove by a goat, resting in the Hindu shrine. We thought the goat was there, resting after wandering the whole day in the terribly sunshine, which caused the weather to be very hot. Tonight, we went to the Lent worshiping service in Bethel Lutheran Church. After the service, we did a program and came back to this place where we are staying. On our way to that church, on the same spot...we saw the same goat. Relaxing. I think there is something up there...mmh...Perhaps, that goat was meditating the suffering (though in a wrong place), as Christians do during Lent...! Or was worshiping Hindu god as Hindus do...! Who knows...!

What then shall we say? Are we, human beings, not more worth and more intelligent than animals? Let us meditate and rethink about the marvelous work Jesus did on our behalf, during this Lent period and to the entire Easter. Wishing you all, All the best during this Lent and the Coming Easter. Have a very meaningful Lent, as our Lord Jesus Christ suffered to the death for our SALVATION. Boni!

SWAHILI:

Kwaresma ndio hiyo imewadia! Hili likiwa ni juma la kwanza la kwaresma, wakristo pote ulimwenguni, wako katika kipindi cha kukumbuka mateso ya Bwana wetu Yesu Kristo. Kipindi hiki utapata makundi ya wale wafungao kikweli kweli, wale wajidanganyao na kushinda njaa, wale wasiojua cha kufanya au wale wasiojua hata kiendeleacho..! (Sijui kama mimi niko kundi lipi kati ya matatu ya mwisho. Tehe tehe...!) Watu katika kipindi hiki wanakuwa karibu "watakatifu" acha mchezo...! Wenye kunywa pombe wanapunguza, hali kadhalika wenye kuvuta mitemba (sigara). Wale wenye kipaji cha kuchombeza, nao wanapunguza makali yao, ama sio...? mmmh...! Sikufahamu kabla kuwa wanyama nao wanafahamu kuabudu au kufanya kitu kama hicho! Katika safari yetu, jana jioni, kuelekea shule moja kufanya onesho, tuliona mbuzi akiwa amepumzika kwenye nyumba ya kuabudia ya wahindu. Kwa wakati huu, kuna joto sana. Jua ni kali. Linawaka kweli kweli. Hivyo tulidhani kuwa mbuzi huyo alikuwa katika kupumzika tu baada ya mizunguko juani. Jioni hii, tulikuwa tukielekea kwenye ibada ya kwaresma katika kanisa moja liitwalo Bethel. Mara baada ya ibada, tulifanya onesho, na kisha kurudi hapa, sehemu tuliyofikia. Njiani, eneo lile lile...Sehemu ile ile...Mbuzi yule yule..., alikuwepo pale. Hana wasiwasi! Nadhani kuna jambo hapo, mmh...! Pengine mbuzi huyo alikuwa akiitafakari saumu ya kwaresma (japokuwa sehemu isiyokuwa yake)...ama ni mhindu na alikuwa akisali...! Ni nani ajuaye...!

Basi tuseme nini sasa? Je sisi binadamu si bora na wenye ufahamu zaidi kuliko wanyama? Katika kwaresma hii tujihoji na kutafakari jinsi Yesu alivyopata mateso na kufa kwa niaba yetu pale Msalabani. Nawatakia ninyi nyote Kwaresma Njema na Kutafakari Kwema mateso ya Bwana wetu Yesu Kristo, ambaye aliteseka hadi kufa kwa ajili ya UKOMBOZI wetu!

Date: 3/7/2003

Submitted by: Debbie Holte

Journal Entry:

We rely a lot on translators here in India as none of us speak more than just a few words of Tamil (or Telugu, Hindi, or Nepali). So when our translator left in the middle of our puppet show to answer his cell phone, we were at a bit of a loss. But Paul was able to be creative. In the puppet show, Hank the pig is celebrating his birthday. He is visited by a couple of his friends who ask to come to his party, but he does not invite them because they are too different from him. Anyway, Hank and his friend Pepper were on the scene, when our translator Lazarus had to excuse himself to answer his phone.

Hank and Pepper were left staring into an audience of about 60 Tamil-speaking boys. So that's when Pepper decided to sing Happy Birthday to Hank in his usual high, obnoxiously cute voice. When he finished, Lazarus was still on the phone, so he proceeded to sing Happy Birthday again, this time in a deep bass voice. Maybe you would've had to be there to know, but it was extremely funny (at least to us). I was almost rolling on the ground behind the puppet curtain. Fortunately, Pepper did not have to sing a 3rd time because Lazarus had returned. But at this point it was very difficult for our puppets to continue because they were laughing so hard. But they did make it through and Jason was able to teach Hank that God wants us to love everyone-even if they're different. Hank also learned about forgiveness. So it had a happy ending.



Debbie Holte

Date: 3/8/2003

Submitted by: Jason Moran

Journal Entry:

Today was sheer perfection. When you sit back and think about a day and find that it is perfectly etched on the plate of your mind, then you know the day is good. Today was one of those days. Today we traveled to Cape Comorin (aka Kanyakumari) to see the coast. Mr. Lazarus (our contact) took us on a 5 star tour to the southern tip of India where the waters of the Bay of Bengal, the Arabian Sea, and the Indian Ocean mingle. This is the spot where the ashes of Mahatma Gandhi were laid to rest and where Hindus come to bathe their sins away in the waters of the three great bodies of water. We were able to take a boat ride from the beach to the two nearby islands: the Vivekananda Memorial Mandapan, and Thiruvalluvar's Statue. Both islands commemorate two very important Tamil leaders. Vivekananda was a spiritual leader who essentially was an Hindu evangelist. He came to Chicago in 1892 to speak at the Parliament of Religions on the combination of social justice and Hinduism. Thiruvalluvar was a poet hundreds of years ago. He wrote the "Thirukkular" which has 133 chapters. The statue memorial is 133 feet tall to mark each chapter of his major work. It was great to be a tourist for a while today and fill my brain with some history of the Tamilian people who live in Tamil Nadu. Our day was completed by the most beautiful sunset I have ever seen. The sun dipped into the waters off the beaches as we stood by the local fishing village's boats. The sky burst into colors of blue, red, yellow, green, and purple as the sun dipped slowly into the ocean. The clouds covered the sky and the ocean waves rolled in brining shells and crabs to visit us on the beach.



Jason Moran

Our day didn't end with the sunset. We took off to visit a girl's hostel to do a program and eat dinner. Many of the girls at the school saw our program on the 4th so they were able to sing along on several of our sing-a-longs. It is always exciting to do a program at the hostels because the children are so eager to participate. They fill us with a lot of energy and are always willing to teach us new things. Miriam gave a sharing tonight at the program about trying to cut her own hair. The girls were laughing and it really reached out to them. It was fun to watch the kids think about cutting their own hair... especially with the length of most of the girl's braids. (The point of Miriam's sharing is that sometimes we want to do everything by ourselves, but we can't... we can't save ourselves... that is why we have Christ) I really feel that it reached these girls in the exact way they needed to be reached. On the way out the girls surrounded the gate and waved to us as our taxi took us home to the I.E.L.C. compound for much deserved rest.

The End... of a very factual journal,
Jason

Date: 3/9/2003

Submitted by: Paul Nichols

Journal Entry:

Check out my newsletter article for information on March 9th!!

http://www.youthencounter.org/teams/pdf/Rainbow_of_Promise_News.pdf

God bless you!

Paul



Paul Nichols

Date: 3/10/2003

Submitted by: Dain Swanson

Journal Entry:

Today class, I am going to teach you the finer points of Indian culture through a few short stories.

Story number one: India and cricket. This time of year comes once every four years. It is as big as the Super bowl and World Series, as exciting as the Stanley Cup finals. It is the Cricket World Cup. People all over the nation have the cricket fever and I have caught it as well. So being the avid sports enthusiast that I am, I thought I would try my hand at it. The boys staying in the hostel next to our bungalow invited me for a game in the afternoon. I had to take myself away from my laundry to play, but I recovered. The boys and I played an exhilarating match where my team came out victorious. The boys and I played despite the language barrier and rejoiced in the game of cricket. This sport truly brings a country together.



Dain Swanson

Story number two: Indian soap operas. Daytime television in India rivals the superior acting and plot lines of our favorite soaps. Every station here has their own series where faithful men and women alike sit, watch, and let themselves be absorbed into the riveting, suspenseful shows. During tea after my cricket match with the boys, we had the pleasure of watching one of these soaps. Here's what happened: A loving, caring, faithful wife is fed up with her abusive husband. He is always drunk and won't listen to her. She is tired of hiding her bruises. She sees an opportunity; her husband is asleep on the bed in a drunken stupor. She goes to the kitchen and grabs the kerosene, returns and pours it on her husband, who refuses to wake up. Tears stream down her face as she grabs a match. She debates, remembers and lights the match. The suspense of the music builds, slow motion kicks in. Will she do it? Will she throw the match? Tune in next time for the answer! A yell of frustration erupts from our table as the hour of slow motion television had us all on the edge of our seats. And that is what Indians enjoy everyday as they sit for tea. Just a side note: luckily for us this scene had no dialogue so the use of our extensive knowledge of the Tamil language was not needed.

Story number 3: Indian garbage disposal. Our time in Nagercoil was almost a week in length, therefore we produced a lot of trash. Our trashcans quickly overflowed with the pop bottles, Pringles cans and other assorted trash. We did have fun playing trash Jenga to see how much we could pile on. But being the fun killer that I am, I decided to dispose of the trash in a typical Indian manner. I grabbed both cans, collected the entrails of garbage on the floor, went outside and set the whole lot on fire. Now in my haste I skipped a few steps of the typical Indian family; let me enlighten you. Step one: collect trash; step two: pile trash away from house; step three: allow a few days for cows, dogs, birds and monkeys to pick through trash; step four: burn remains. So in retrospect I only missed one step. Now, the burning of trash is not entirely environmentally safe or conscious, but

our trash was attracting many species of bugs. Note: Pringles cans are lined with aluminum and don't burn completely.

Well class, I hope you learned a little more about Indian culture through my experiences. There will be a test when I return in May.

God bless all of you. Team life is still difficult but improving every day. Thank you for your prayers.

Dain

Date: 3/12/2003

Submitted by: Debbie Holte

Journal Entry:

The game of Cricket is very popular here in India, especially now since India's cricket team is in the Super Six of the World Cup finals. I got a chance to try cricket when we learned the game at cross-cultural training in September. Ever since then, and particularly since arriving in India, I have wanted to try the game again. We have driven by many, many informal games being played by school boys and some of my teammates had a chance to play with the boys at the Reach school in Bapatla, Andhra Pradesh. I wondered if I would ever get to play. I've never seen girls playing cricket.



Debbie Holte

But today, I finally got my chance. The place we are staying is very close to the Lutheran Boys' Home and there were several boys out playing the game. We did a program for these boys about a week ago (the one where our translator had to leave in the middle of the puppet show). Dain had even played cricket with them a couple of days earlier. So he went to join them again and I tagged along to see if perchance they would let me play. To my delight, I didn't even have to ask, because they asked me if I would play. Yea! It was very fun and the boys were very patient and helpful, telling me when it was my turn to bat or bowl (kind of like pitching). I even scored a few runs. Yippee!

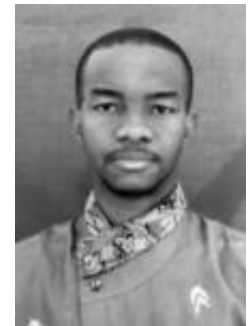
At night we went to Imanuel Lutheran Church outside Nagercoil. We got there late—oops! We did some music for them. Like most churches, they enjoyed singing and clapping with us on the sing-a-longs. We brought a tape recorder along to tape the sing-a-longs for the church we played at last night (Zion L.C.). We have received many requests to either sing our sing-a-longs again at the end of the program, to teach them to a group of leaders, or to record them. It's nice to know that we are able to leave something behind in the places we visit so that our ministry may continue even after we leave.

Date: 3/13/2003

Submitted by: Boniface Adam Eliona Kombo

Journal Entry:

Kerala is one of the provinces that is found at southern part of India. There are several places of attractions in Kerala such as ancient historical buildings, animal parks, a sea, etc. For anyone who visits India, Kerala is not a place to miss it. We went to visit Kerala today, for it was a resting day, so there was no any program. Among things we went to visit, we went to a park that is very close to a palace used by kings of this area. There we saw several animals like king cobra, a python, some hippos, an elephant, lions and lioness, tigers, leopards, hyenas and so forth. I was sad not to see Indian rhinoceros. We saw only a sign that here live a rhino. But it was empty place nothing was there. That is sad. I was somehow unhappy to see some of those animals, like lions, in cages that are kind of smaller than their actual area in jungles. Some of those lions are very old and look like sick.



Boniface Adam Eliona Kombo

After visiting that park and see those animals, we went to visit a lake, which is famous in Kerala,

lake Velli. It is a very good place with good garden and surroundings. We then went to see the Arabian Sea. This is the most tourists' place one can find a lot of them. People were enjoying the time there doing different things such as swimming, relaxing under umbrellas, etc. Due to many westerns and foreigners who visit this place, a culture which is exposed there is not Indian one. The culture is already ruined and become westernized. People wear shorts, swimming cloths and other close that are not in Indian culture. Nobody seems to care or pay any attention. It is now a normal thing in that area. Apart from that there are other things available in this coast. There are different shops and restaurants serve visitors. Not only things that are for entertainments are available in this area, but there are also churches nearby to serve people spiritually as well. I think there are many churches in this area than anywhere else we have visited here in India so far. There are also some mosques and temples. And then our day was gone and we traveled back home where we are staying. See you next time. Boni!

SWAHILI:

Kerala ni jimbo lililo kusini mwa India. Kuna maeneo mengi sana ya kuvutia huko Kerala, kama vile maeneo ya kihistoria, bahari, mbuga za wanyama, vyojo mbali mbali, majengo yenye nakasi nzuri, nk. Hivyo Kerala ni sehemu ambayo mtu hutakiwi kukosa kuona uwapo India. Kerala haikuwa miongoni mwa maeneo ambayo tungetembelea hapa India. Kwa kuwa leo ilikuwa ni siku yetu ya kupumzika na ya kuvuta nguvu kwa ajili ya kuendelea na huduma yetu hapa India, tuliamua kwenda kutembelea Kerala. Tulitembelea maeneo kadhaa. Kati ya hayo tulitembelea mbuga ya wanyama, iliyo karibu na jumba walilokuwa wakikaa wafalme wa eneo hilo. Mbugani humo kuna wanyama mbalimbali, kama vile simba kadhaa; jamii tofauti za chui; tembo, nyoka-chatu na kobra; viboko kadhaa, nk. Nilisikitika sana kwa kutoweza kumuona kifaru apatikanae India. Kifaru huyu sina hakika kama bado yuko hapo mbugani. Tulipofika eneo ambalo kwa mujibu wa vibao vya maelekezo lilikuwa likisema kuwa kuna kifaru, hatukuweza kumuona kifaru huyo. Eneo hilo lilikuwa ni tupu bila ya kuwa na mnyama yoyote. Nasi tukasonga mbele kuangalia wanyama wengine. Nilisikitika pia kuona kuwa wanyama wengi hawakuwa na nafasi ya kutosha. Sehemu wanazokaa zilikuwa ni ndogo. Kwa mfano simba na jamii za chui waliopo hapo mbugani wakiwa katika vyumba ambavyo nadhani haviwapi uhuru sana kama wawapo kule mbugani halisi. Wawili kati ya simba niliowaona walikuwa ni wazee kweli kweli! Nilikuwa sifahamu kuwa "simba mzee ndie afugwae" (Unakumbuka ile methali isemayo, "simba mzee ndie mla nyama?") Haya.

Baada ya kuona wanyama, tulienda kutembelea ziwa moja maarufu eneo hilo, ziwa Velli. Kuna shughuli kadhaa ziendeleazo eneo hilo kama vile kuzunguka na boti ziwani humo, bustani nzuri zenye maua na mazingira mazuri, nk. Kisha tukaenda ufukweni wa bahari ya Arabia. Eneo hili ni maarufu sana kwa watalii. Utamaduni uliopo eneo hili kwa sehemu kubwa ni ule wa kimagharibi. Utamaduni huo utaweza kuuona katika mavazi yanayovaliwa pamoja na mambo mengine yafanyikayo eneo hilo. Watu wengi, wazungu kwa weusi. Watu kadhaa walikuwa wakiogelea, wengine kupumzika kwenye vitanda huku wakiota juani. Wengine walikuwa wakizunguka tu na kufurahia kuwepo eneo hilo. Mimi na wenzangu hatukuwa tumefahamu kabla kuwa tungeenda eneo kama hilo, kwa sababu tungebeba nguo za kuogelea na kuogelea. Basi tukaishia kuchezea maji kwa mikono na miguu. Eneo hili pia pamoja na kuwa ni sehemu ya kuwapa burudani watalii, lina maeneo mengi ya kuwatunza kiroho watalii pamoja na raia waishio eneo hilo. Kuna makanisa mengi, nadhani kuliko maeneo mengi tuliyokwitembelea hapa India. Pia kuna misikiti na mahekalu ya dini zingine kadhaa. Siku yetu ndio ikawa imekwisha. Kerala tukawa tumeshaiona kwa sehemu. Tukajawa na furaha na kuanza safari ya kurudi nyumbani, sehemu tuliyofikia, umbali wa masaa kama 2 hivi. Tuonane wakati mwingine! Boni!

Date: 3/14/2003
Submitted by: Jason Moran
Journal Entry:

Indian Christians are firmly rooted in the power of prayer. They have a strong faith in prayer and you can feel it in every church we visit. Today we visited our first prayer meeting in Nagercoil. It wasn't anything that I expected.

We were told that there would be prayer and we would sing a few songs. As the



Date: 3/15/2003

Submitted by: Paul Nichols

Journal Entry:

Nothing groundbreaking today. Our day off. Due to a mix-up regarding our off day earlier in the week, however, we still found time for devotions, and various other team business items, including rehearsal.

I did have the chance to visit a friend we met at a church service prior this week. Sam owns a medical supply shop and since I've had a stuffy nose with some head congestion, I paid him a visit the other day and bought some nasal spray. Today's visit was to pick up some contact solution that Miriam ordered and to visit with Sam and take some coffee at a nearby watering hole. We talked about the church in India, and about the different Indian and U.S. church denominations. We also talked about his business and what we are doing in the states. It is nice to be in once place (Nagercoil) for an extended time to be able to meet and get to know just a little better someone from a different place than me, with a different style of life, but a Christian brother just the same.



Paul Nichols

Date: 3/16/2003

Submitted by: Dain Swanson

Journal Entry:

Indians are known for their hospitality. They will be hospitable whether it is the middle of the day for lunch or dropping in unexpectedly at midnight.

Sunday is truly a day of worship. After breakfast we attended Calvary Lutheran Church where we successfully read Tamil script writing to know the lessons for the day. We performed two songs and spent time with the Sunday school afterwards. It was very much like a worship service at home. Later that afternoon the hospitality began. The same boys I spent time playing cricket with were hosting us for lunch. By this time I came to know the boys very well. I could remember many names and they called me "Uncle." We arrived and the campus was newly painted, the leaves on the ground swept up and all the boys were dressed in their best. They looked so handsome with their hair cut and on their best manners. We were welcomed properly and sat and ate ourselves silly! The food was so good. While we ate the sky opened up and rain poured from the clouds above. We took picture and then the fun began. I consider myself to be a fairly good magician. My father taught me the art of pulling coins out of various places like ears, noses, and other people's pockets. So I tried my slight of hand tricks and successfully entertained the boys for a half hour or so. I even turned my coin into a toothpick. Don't ask me how, a good magician never reveals his secrets. The lunch ended and we said our good-byes. I will miss those boys. That evening we needed to travel back to Trivandrum, Kerala to catch our train that left at 4:00 a.m. The drive was 3 hours. We left at 10:00 and arrived ahead of schedule. This begs the question: what do you do in Trivandrum at midnight when the zoo is not open? The answer is another amazing example of Indian hospitality. We drove to a local pastor's house around 12:30 after checking the train station for space to stay. We drove up light blazing through the windows of the pastor's house. A hort horn blast to wake them up and we found ourselves following our contact Mr. Bright into the porch of the house. We were greeted by a pastor whose name I will never know and by a wife that I only heard and never saw. Mats were laid out, pillows provided and we were told to sleep for a few hours before our train left. We slept, woke up and left as quickly as we arrived to catch our train.



Dain Swanson

I really don't understand it. The kindness of people to us is amazing. They are helpful, curteous, and kind. I only hope we are good guests.

God bless.

Date: 3/17/2003

Submitted by: Miriam Anderson

Journal Entry:

I've always enjoyed giving things away. I'm one of those people who simply cannot buy presents in advance for any occasion because I always end up giving them to the recipient right away. Today my impulsive giving was good.

We had this shockingly long train trip from Trivandrum Central Station in Kerala (southwestern-most state) to the Vijayawada Station in Andhra Pradesh (another state...somewhere else). We boarded the train at 4:00 Monday morning and arrived in Vijayawada at 7 Tuesday morning.

We spent the majority of the day reading, dozing off, playing speed Scrabble (a super-fun, easy-to-pack game), talking and eating. As our last contact sent us off, he and his wife made sure we had plenty of food for the trip. In fact, too much food. There are beggars at most train stations, and I don't think I've reconciled with myself on how to handle that. Our white skin automatically means money in their eyes. I know I have more money than I need and could certainly give it away. At the same time, these "beggars" are not always legitimate--some are running scams for money lending and other things like that. So today, with all this extra food, I found myself asking my teammates all day long, "Hey, is it okay if I give these cookies away?" "Is anyone going to eat more bananas or can I give them to that kid?" "Has anyone seen the extra bread so I can give it to that man?"

When we finally got off the train I'd succeeded in giving the majority of our provisions away. What we didn't give away, we left sitting on a small luggage shelf. We unloaded our countless bags and waited while Paul went to find our new contact. In the meantime, I saw a scruffy kid board the train as it sat filling with new passengers. He disappeared into the belly of the car, hand extended, mouthing the familiar word, "Ma, ma." Money. He reappeared only a minute later, his arms laden with our pile of discarded food. His eyes were huge as he ran to his friends who were working the crowd. They instantly understood the wealth this boy had stumbled upon, and they all disappeared around the corner of the station.

I don't know yet how I feel about this. I'm glad they found our food, and I know they enjoyed it. But it was our leftovers, food we didn't feel like carrying with us anymore. I should have taken all of those boys to the nearest vendor selling idlies and vadas, omelets and soda, tea and biscuits and let them order whatever they wanted. I need to grapple with this some more. It's a good thing we don't have another train ride for a little while.



Miriam Anderson

Date: 3/18/2003

Submitted by: Debbie Holte

Journal Entry:

We thought our train would reach our destination, Vijayawada, at noon. That's what we'd been told. We left Trivandrum, Kerala around 4:30 a.m. on the 17th and traveled through the rest of that night, the next day, and the next night. We were still sleeping around 8 a.m. when the friendly fried banana vendor that Jason had had a conversation with the day before woke him up and said that the train would be stopping in Vijayawada in just a few minutes. Thank God for that man and that Jason had told him where we were headed, or else we would have slept right through our stop!

After that little adventure, we drove to Guntur where we met our contacts for the next 3 weeks. Then we were brought to the hotel we will stay at for a couple of days. I must say, it is refreshing to have air conditioning, even though this place doesn't seem nearly as hot as Nagercoil. We got to rest just a little, then we were taken on a tour of several churches and a couple schools in town (just to visit, not to perform).



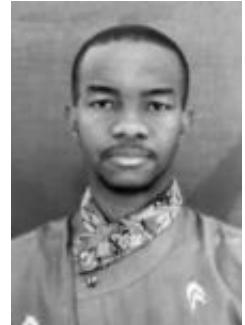
Debbie Holte

That evening we went to play for a women's group. The program itself was pretty typical, although we had to switch gears from Tamil to Telugu. But afterwards we were practically pulled off the stage and dragged thither and yon by these young women. They were SO excited to meet us and shake our hands. And there was a photographer there, so the girls asked him to take many, many pictures. I'm sure he must have taken at least 4 rolls worth of pictures, but we never saw him switch rolls of film. The girls would try very hard to get individual pictures (with each one of us separately), but other girls kept crowding in. And they asked us to pray for them by placing our hands on their heads and praying out loud. There were a couple hundred women there, so it was rather overwhelming to have them all asking me to pray, or be in a picture or whatever, and to be literally dragged from place to place. Uff. But their excitement was contagious, even though it was also overwhelming.

Date: 3/19/2003

Submitted by: Boniface Adam Eliona Kombo

Journal Entry:



Boniface Adam Eliona Kombo

How do you feel when you are getting lost while you have a resident with you? Or how do you feel when you are asked to do a thing you are not familiar with? mmh, I think you have your answer already ready.

Anyway, today we visited a certain village in AP for doing a program. In this journey we were with Rev. Philip, Ravi and Mr. Samuel. From morning we had a habit of getting lost whenever we went somewhere. As we were going to that village with two cars, one was driven by Samuel with Jason, Dain and I as passengers and the other one was a taxi, with Debbie, Miriam and Paul in, we lost on sight this last car. We stopped and waited for it but it did not show up. So we decided to go back and see what was wrong with them. After a while we saw that car, stopping on the middle of road. It had a problem. So pastors and Sam decided to take us, in the 1st car, to that church and then Sam to go back and pick up others. By surprise, Sam and Philip did not know a way to that church. And that taxi driver showed them which way to take. This way was not that far we went before stopping and waiting for the 2nd car to show up. So we were already passed by a place where we were supposed to make a turn and headed to the church. This was the 2nd time we were getting lost while we had residents with us.

Later on, we were all ready for program. At that church we went, congregants were Hindu worshipers before conversion. After the program, then came a period when people who attended wanted us to pray for oil they brought with them. They believed that right after prayer God blessed the oil and can heal a sick person and cure any sickness, as well as do other mighty things. I was feeling that I am not worth to do such a thing and I have not done it before (though it was not a new thing for me because in my country they do things like that too). I thought that we are not like preachers such as Billy Graham, Reinhardt Bhonke and others who have God's power to do miracles and other stuff. But those people in that village believed that by coming all the way to share with them the Good News about Christ, God is with us and is using us. They wanted only prayers and prayers for oil too, and thus, God would bless oil. That is a very great faith!

I then remembered how Jesus asked those who were looking for healing, if they had faith! For those who had it, they received miracles and were healed. Yeah, even for those who have faith in Christ, believing and confessing that Jesus is the Lord, will become heirs of the everlasting life. Bye! Boni!

SWAHILI:

Unajisikia vipi pale unapopotea njia zaidi ya mara 2 tena ukiwa na mwenyeji...? Ama utajisikia vipi pale unapoombwa kufanya kitu ambacho huna mazoea nacho...? mmh, nadhani tayari una majibu yako tayari. Siku ya leo tulienda katika kijiji kimoja hapa Andhra Pradesh kwa ajili ya kufanya enesho. Katika safari hiyo tuliongozwa na wenyeji wetu mch. Philip, Ravi pamoja na bw. Samuel. Siku ya leo tulikuwa na katabia ka-kupotea njia kila mara tulipohitaji kwenda mahali. Wakati tulipokuwa tukielekea kijijini hapo, tukiwa katika magari 2, moja likiwa ni la kukodi na lingine nililokuwa mimi, Jason na Dain likiendeshwa na Bw. Samuel. Lile gari lingine lilikuwa nyuma yetu, na kwa wakati huo halikuwa tena nyuma yetu. Tulisimama kwa muda, kisha tukaanza safari ya

kurudi kule tulipotokea ili kujua ni nini kimewapata wenzetu. Baada ya mwendo kidogo tulilionia lile gari walilokuwemo Debbie, Miriam na Paul limesimama katikati ya barabara. Gari hilo lilikuwa na matatizo. Hivyo ikaonekana kuwa sisi tuendeleo na safari na wao ungefanyika mpango ili wafike mahali tulipo. Ndipo tulipojua kuwa hata tuendapo tulikuwa hatuna uhakika napo. Wakati tuliposimama kuwasubiri wenzetu, tulikuwa tumeshapotea njia. Tulishapitiliza njia tuliyotakiwa kuelekea. Tulifahamu jambo hili baada ya kuona Bw. Samuel akimuuliza yule dereva teksi ni njia ipi tuelekee. Asubuhi ya leo pia tulipotea njia tena. Na hii ilikuwa ni mara ya pili.

Baada ya muda wote tulikuwa tayari kuanza onesho letu. Kanisa tulilokwenda kwa ajili ya onesho hilo, washarika wake walikuwa ni wa dini ya kihindu hapo mwanzoni na kwa sasa wote wamekuwa wakristo wazuri tu. Baada ya onesho kwisha ndipo ulipokuja muda wa kufanya sala pamoja nao. Sasa basi baadhi yao walikuwa wamekuja na mafuta ya nazi yaliyokuwa katika vichupa vidogo, ili tuyaombee. Mafuta hayo waliamini kuwa mara baada ya kuombewa, Mungu angeyabariki na kuwa yangeweza kuwasaidia na hata kuwaponya magonjwa mbalimbali. Japokuwa sisi sio kama tunafanya miujiza, ama kuwa kama wahubiri injili kama Billy Graham, Ren Bhonke, n.k, wenye uwezo wa kuombea na kuponya, ndugu hawa waliamini kuwa kwa kuja kwetu katika nchi yao kushirikiana nao habari za Kristo, Mungu angetutumia pia kuweza kufanya mambo kama hayo. Hii ni imani kubwa sana. Mwanzoni nilikuwa na mashaka juu ya kufanya maombezi hayo. Sababu ni kuwa, sijawahi kufanya kitu kama hicho, japo sio kitu kigeni sana kwangu. Nimeona hata kule nyumbani wahubiri wakifanya maombezi ya aina mbalimbali. Pili, sidhani kama ninafaa kufanya huduma kama hiyo. Lakini wakristo wale hawahitaji kujua kama unafahamu, umewahi kufanya, ama Mungu amekupa uwezo wa kutenda miujiza. Wewe umekuja kwao kama mtenda kazi ya Mungu. Wanachohitaji ni sala, kuombea mafuta hayo na Mungu angefanya kazi yake. Imani kali kabisa ama sio!

Hii inanikumbusha jinsi Bwana Yesu alivyokuwa akiwauliza wale waliotaka awaponye kama walikuwa na imani. Kwa wale waliokuwa nayo, walipokea uponyaji. Naam, hata kwa wale waaminio na kukiri kuwa Yesu ni Bwana, watakuwa warithi wa uzima wa milele. Kwaheri! Boni!

Date: 3/20/2003

Submitted by: Jason Moran

Journal Entry:

Eday Dinam, Eday Dinam, Prabhu Chesinadi...

Telugu for the greatest VBS song ever...no, not Pharaoh Pharaoh, but "This is the day that the Lord has made."

Today was quite the day for an American being abroad. See, today is the day that the Lord has made and we should rejoice and be glad in it. Even on a day when it is hard to do so, we sing this song and are called to remember that today is the Lord's Day.

Today we did a program at a girl's school that had over 1,500 students. We sang and prayed for their government exams. Then we arrived back at our staying place to turn on the news and see that a war had begun, a war between the coalition (U.S., Britain, Australia, and Spain) and Saddam Hussein. Now I don't care to make any political statements in India; I don't care to condone or disown my country's actions. And darn, that is hard. People ask us very frequently what we think, and I can only be honest. The U.S. doesn't have the best international relationship these days so we get lots of questions. Lots of hard to answer questions. Because I don't want to degrade my country, nor do I want to seem too much a liar. So, I walk a thin line. Mostly I try to stifle a bit of my pro-pacifism, Green Party, war on Big Business politics because you can't explain that to someone who doesn't see the inside story.

So, my response is as follows, "I don't like war at all. But, now there is one, so I must remember that today is God's day and he will use this situation to bring his mission. As for me, I pray for peace."



Jason Moran

Date: 3/21/2003
Submitted by: Paul Nichols
Journal Entry:



Paul Nichols

We are in Tenali and had an evening program. It's the fun after the program that I want to discuss. You have heard us talk about Indian hospitality--about the kilos of food prepared for us every meal. As a defense mechanism against this unbridled hospitality, we have initiated a food pass system. This system is designed to channel any extra or miscellaneous food to the teammate who most successfully took the least amount of food or to a teammate who prefers one sort of food over another. (One tries to take only a little food to be able to accept the offer for more food that inevitably comes later.)

So on this evening we had lemon water, vada (picture a bland donut), coffee, paisim (a desert), and the host of other dinner foods. I drank a lot of lemon water (mmmm...it's good for my throat!) as we made up reasons for me to hold people's water as they went to talk with other guests, etc. to complete the food pass. Vadas were passed around as teammates called in favors from recent food passes. Paisim, another yummy food I am all too happy to eat, went Jason's way in a fantastic flurry of dishes and arms and handwashing (you'd really have to be there, and I don't quite have the time to describe this hilarious experience). Some of us like some food, others eat more of the food that I don't prefer. It all balances out and is our little way of making our stomachs get the full enjoyment of the richness of Indian food.

Careful!! There's vada coming your way!!

Date: 3/24/2003
Submitted by: Debbie Holte
Journal Entry:



Debbie Holte

This morning we did a short program at a Lutheran girl's school. It was short because many of the girls had to go take their exams. Exams are big and scary here because so much about their future is hinged on them. They are very stressful. But despite how stressed out the students may have been, they didn't let that stop them from having a good time and joining us on our sing-a-longs. They seemed to enjoy the puppet show, too. I wish we could have done more.

After enjoying a cold Thums Up (kinda like Coke) with the headmistress and learning more about the school, we went next door to her house. We met her family and some boys from a nearby boys' hostel. We did our team devotions at their house and then enjoyed a great lunch, followed by some dancing by some of the Sunday school girls. Afterwards we headed back to the bungalow we are staying in for some team time and some much-needed rest.

Tonight we got to have tea at our driver's house. He has been our driver for a few days and we have really enjoyed him. So it was very nice to be able to see his house and meet his wife and 3 young daughters. He lives at the edge of town, but his neighborhood has a village feel to it. Dain and his lovely assistant, Paul, demonstrated some simple magic tricks for the girls but I don't think they were fooled by them.

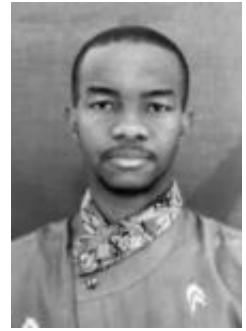
After tea we did a program at a very large church. There were a lot of kids, and they were rather rambunctious, but they certainly enjoyed singing and doing the actions along with our sing-a-longs. At the end of the program, just about everyone (if not everyone) came forward to have us bless them and pray for them. I'm very glad I learned how to say "God bless you" in Telugu. People were actually pushing and shoving to get to the front and taking our hands and placing them on their heads because they were so eager to receive a blessing or prayer. Wow!

The kids followed us over to the pastor's house, shaking our hands and asking questions the whole way. They were not allowed in the house, so they just stood in the doorway and watched us as we ate supper. After eating, our friend Bina, who we met at lunch, taught us the words to one of our favorite Telugu songs. We are excited to practice it so we can perform it. Yea.

Date: 3/25/2003

Submitted by: Boniface Adam Eliona Kombo

Journal Entry:



Boniface Adam Eliona Kombo

Greetings!

Towns are established due to various factors. People normally leave their original places and go to live in new towns. They may live there for the rest of lives or go back to the original places after accomplishment of a concerned task(s). Among the factors are such as constructions of pipelines, mines, factories, dams. It could be because of flood, business, etc. In these new towns, necessary needs such as food, medical treatments, clothing, leisure places, etc, are normally available. Sometimes, it may be very easy to get them and sometimes not.

In this town where we are now, was established during the construction of Nagarjunasagar dam, one of the biggest dams in India. After construction was done, some people remained here up to now and some left back home. It is said that there are about 3000 people who live here now. Among them 1000 are Christians.

This event of people moving to start new towns or places has reminded me that we are also waiting to move in "a new place". There is someone who went to prepare for it. Everything will be there in this new place. There will be no night neither day, for both will be same; neither will there be sickness, sadness or any kind of problem. The Kingdom of Heaven is that new place. Jesus Christ is there make preparation for those who will be ready and have special garments at his 2nd coming. Let make ourselves ready, waiting for the Christ. (John 14; Revelation 21). Boni!

SWAHILI:

Salamu Sana!

Miji inaweza kuanzishwa katika njia mbalimbali. Watu huhama toka makazi yao asili na kwenda kuishi makazi mapya. Watu hawa wanapohamia sehemu hizi mpya, baadhi yao wanaweza wasirudi kwao kabisa. Wakaishi hapo kwa maisha yao yote. Sehemu zingine katika makazi mapya, mahitaji na bidhaa muhimu zinapatikana kwa urahisi sana. Mahitaji hayo ni kama vile upatikanaji wa chakula, matibabu, makazi, mavazi, sehemu za burudani, n.k. Sehemu zingine upatikanaji huu ni wa kiasi tu, hasa yale mambo muhimu tu. Njia hizo zinaweza kutokana na kuwa na migodi, biashara, kiwanda, mafuriko, ujenzi wa mabomba ya mafuta, madaraja na kadhalika.

Mji huu tuliopo sasa hivi ulianzishwa na watu ambao walikuja eneo hili ili kujenga bwawa (Dam) kubwa la Nagarjunasagar. Watu hawa walianza kuishi eneo hili huku wakiendelea kushughulikia bwawa hilo. Kuna watu ambao mara baada ya ujenzi kwisha walirudi makwao na wengine ambao waliamua kubaki na kuishi hapo. Inasemekana kwamba kuna watu kama 3000 hivi waishio eneo hili. Kati ya hao, 1000 ni wakristo na waliobakia ni dini zingine.

Jambo hili la kuhamia mahali limenifanya nami nikumbuke kuwa hata na sisi tunasubiri kuhamia "mahali". Yuko mtu mmoja ambaye ameenda kuandaa makao, makao yatakayokuwa na kila kitu cha muhimu. Makao ambako hakutakuwa na usiku wala mchana; magonjwa, vilio wala matatizo na shida za aina yoyote ile. Ufalme wa Mbinguni ndio makao ambayo Bwana Yesu ameenda kuyaandaa, kwa wale watakaokuwa tayari. Wale watakaokuwa wamejiandaa na kuwa na mavazi rasmi. Tujiweke tayari katika kusubiri kuja kwa mara ya pili kwa Bwana Yesu ili kuchukua wale walio tayari kwenda makao mapya. (Yohana 14; Ufu. 21).
Boni!

Date: 3/26/2003

Submitted by: Jason Moran

Journal Entry:

"On the Road with Charles Kurault" was one of my favorite re-runs to watch with my

mom while I was in High School. Charles Kurault had such a cool camper and he visited so many little touristy places, like "Carhenge," "Wall Drug," and the gas station designed by Frank Lloyd Wright. Well, anyhow, today we were on the road with Rev. Ravi Raj Kumar and Khan, our driver.

We visited old Buddhist ruins from the 12th century, saw the Nagarjunasagar Dam and even did a program. We traveled in a Tata Sumo, an SUV that holds just about all our luggage and almost fits all of us. Our luggage is tied tenuously to the roof rack as we travel on Indian bumpy roads at breakneck speeds of up to 70 k.p.h. (roughly 43 m.p.h.). We had a train to catch. The train leaves at 8:30 and we had a 7:30 program 15 minutes from the station. So, we did a 30 minutes program, ate dinner like crazy fast, downed a Thums Up cola and took 5 pictures to leave for the station at 8:20.



Jason Moran

By the grace of God we arrived in time to say goodbye to our driver Khan, unload, load onto the train, and see the platform begin to disappear behind us.

Date: 3/27/2003

Submitted by: Paul Nichols

Journal Entry:

I figure it's about time to let people know about the most dangerous time we were in India. I am writing this journal on Tuesday morning, June 17, but the events took place on March 27th.

This is really a lesson in communication, because with perfect communication, we wouldn't have been in the situation we didn't know we were in!



Paul Nichols

Here 'goes. It was a standard night in Andhra Pradesh. We had done several programs organized by the Andhra Evangelical Lutheran Church and our faithful contact, the Rev. Ravi Raj Kumar. We were at St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Rajlakshimpuram and had one more program to do at another church. A man approached me and said, "You are coming to my church!" "Great!" I replied. "We are very happy to be coming!" It was nice to see such enthusiasm from him about our visit.

We traveled to his congregation, St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Paravatipuram (puram = village), where people were waiting with anticipation for our arrival. The program was a huge success and we drove back to our lodging, sometime in the a.m.

A week and a half later as we reviewed our time with Rev. Ravi Raj Kumar, he reminded us of this evening, letting us know that we traveled with God. We were confused by his statement until he let us know that we had traveled in an area where Noxolite activity has been recorded. Noxolites are a rather small political faction located on Andhra Pradesh's border with Orissa. They have sometimes taken to violent action to further (or detract from) their cause. So it is really unknown how much danger we were in. I suppose if they had thought the vehicles we were in were associated with the police, they might have opened fire on us. Since we heard of no activity from the Noxolites during our entire visit to India, I doubt that the danger was even moderate in nature, but I take confidence in Ravi's statement that God was with us to keep us safe, just in case.

And as we laughed about the situation, Ravi asked why I had agreed to go to this congregation, which is why Ravi took us there in the first place. I thought about the comment from the man who approached me..."Ah ha!" I thought. His, "You are coming to my church" was actually a question that I understood as an exclamation. My excitement in reply was taken to be a final decision that we would indeed travel to this location, made stronger because I am the team leader of Rainbow of Promise. There was no way for Ravi to refuse having heard this information from the man.

The importance of communication continues to be hammered home as the means to healthy, and safe, living!

Paul

Date: 3/30/2003
Submitted by: Debbie Holte
Journal Entry:



Debbie Holte

What a busy day!! What a busy, busy day! And it could have been even busier. We are in Rajahmundry again (we were here for a couple of days in January, too). We went to the church service of the church right next to the Lutheran General Hospital where we are staying (they are letting us stay there even though we're not sick J. It's a really cool old hospital, but many of the rooms are not currently used.). Then we went to a second church and made an appearance. This was one of the churches we visited in January. It was exciting to be back, but I don't think they knew we were coming, because they only had us sing 2 songs, then we left. On our way out, we talked to our friend Simon, who had us over for tea the last time we were here. We wished we'd had longer to talk.

Now we were supposed to have 2 more services still, but when we arrived at the 3rd church, it was already over. So instead we went to the elementary school where Joshua Peter (one of our contacts) works. After enjoying some cool drinks and swinging on the swings, we headed home. But on the way, our contact decided to stop at another church (not one of the original 4) where the bishop was visiting. We did an impromptu program there for the Sunday school kids, and they sang some of their songs for us (including "The Hookie Pookie").

This evening we did a short program at another church in Rajahmundry. There were a lot of Sunday school kids there too. Our friend Harold, who translated for us in January, also showed up. It was VERY good to see him. We like Harold. After our program we had to squeeze out of the church through masses of excited kids. Unfortunately we didn't get to talk to them much because we had to hurry, hurry, hurry and eat so we could get to our next program. We had a very special treat for supper. Pizza, chicken burgers, cake, and ice cream. It was so good! "Eat, eat, eat," they said, and "hurry, hurry, hurry." So we crammed ourselves full of this American-style food and even took a second kind of ice cream with us as we climbed in the cars.

We pulled up to the church we were supposed to go to and no one was there. A conversation in Telegu happened between our contacts, then we left. I'm not sure what that was all about. Then we headed to a place outside of town to do a program we hadn't even known about. It was a prayer meeting for a young girl's birthday. It was held outside on the street. Tarps were laid down and plastic chairs placed on top. Lights and a sound system were also set up. Many people were there—mostly adults. We did a full program. Afterwards, while we were talking with people, we noticed some tables being set up. We began to be afraid. They couldn't be setting up those tables for us to EAT at, could they?! We were all still STUFFED from pizza and chicken burgers! But the truth was, they had prepared supper for us, so we had to eat.

We took as small of proportions as we could get away with. I think we may have offended them. I feel really bad for that, but we were feeling sick because we were so full. Oooh! The whole time I was eating I was planning my escape route and where I would go to throw up. I was glad we were outside. I came very close to losing it, especially as they continued to bring out new food, but somehow the contents of my stomach stayed inside of me. I don't think I need to eat again for at least a week.

Indian hospitality is incredible. Tonight it was overwhelming.

Date: 3/31/2003
Submitted by: Jason Moran
Journal Entry:

Today was our "full day of rest"...

Now, bear in mind all the journal that follows stems out of stage 2 of culture shock. We began our day with breakfast at 8:30 then quickly moved off to a school compound

where we did 2 programs and then a quick jaunt over to the k-8 girls hostel where the children danced and sang for us. Seriously, it was phenomenal. A time of great celebration in music and dance. Then we did a program for them and ate lunch.

Now, lunch in India is the largest meal of the day. We had coconut rice, chicken curry, chicken fry, white rice, vegetables, curd, papaya, and about 3 full watermelons. No more food would fit in my body. We actually left as they were cutting a fourth watermelon.

After lunch we returned home to "Lutheran General Hospital" (which is not a daytime Christian television show, but our staying place). It is a wonderful building and we have greatly enjoyed our time with the staff. G. Wilson is the caretaker of the hospital and he and I had some great discussions about his work restoring the hospital to full functionality. He is truly a man with great Christian vision.



Jason Moran

After a few hours rest we rolled off the Ephaphania Lutheran Church. Ephaphania is by far one of the largest most beautiful churches I have ever had the pleasure of working with. We performed several songs and met with the congregations afterwards. I have never shaken so many hands...We met a man who had recently converted from Hinduism who told us his story and prayed for him and his wife.

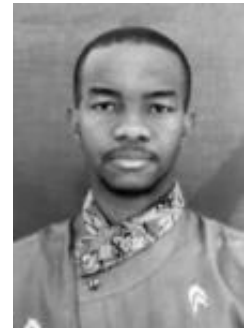
Then...dum dah dah! Dinnertime (11:00 p.m.) we were shocked and amazed to arrive in the back room of the church and see 6 tiny pizzas! And white rice with mutton curry, Woo Hoo! Many of you know the hardest thing for me and my ministry in India is the food...but God was clearly looking out for me tonight.

Date: 4/1/2003

Submitted by: Boniface Adam Eliona Kombo

Journal Entry:

Whenever we have any event to do, like ceremonies or parties, we normally try to do a lot of stuff to accomplish that event, and to make it better and successful. We may decorate nicely and sometimes we make some announcements or advertisements. We sometimes look also for some support from friends and others. Today, before dawn, we visited a place called Old Town (OT) in Tanuku area, in the AP province. We had a program there in OT at Christ Lutheran Church. Since we arrived here in India, I have not seen such a preparation. Christians decided to put in record the entire event into video and through pictures. So they hired people to do that task. Decorations were from a road that directs people to that church up to the church itself.



Boniface Adam Eliona Kombo

They were many people tonight, kids and adults. People were so excited to see us, full of spirit. The program was so good and lively. On our side, we were so happy and cheerful to see people sing with us, do some actions for SAL (sing-a-long songs). Later on we heard that, they planned to make a vcd and then send to us as a souvenir. This will be great! I was thinking that, what we did there is nothing compared to what they did for us. They were really prepared well, and I do not think we deserved that kind of hospitality. But that was fun though.

Try to think how people make themselves busy for preparation of some events, parties, ceremonies, etc. Sometimes they work day and night and thus do not get a time for rest. But let us consider souls, what about souls' preparation? People normally get some strange laziness and boring. People sometimes do not want even to hear about it. Every day we hear from preachers, pastors and evangelists, during church's sermons, open air meetings and other meetings the Good news about Christ Jesus. But it does not work. People are like closing ears. Nothing goes into through for ears are blocked. Few coming days we are going to have Easter. The commemoration of Jesus' sufferings, death, and his great won over the death. His death on the cross gave us the salvation and inheritance of the eternal life. No need for another atonement to make us sufficient or deserved for salvation. Jesus died only once and for all. Let us now make preparation of our souls that we may become heirs of the eternal kingdom, through the way of Jesus Christ. Have nice preparations. Boni!

SWAHILI:

Tunapokuwa na tukio fulani, maalum, huwa tunafanya maandalizi makubwa kadiri tutakavyoweza ili kufanya tukio hilo kufana na kuvutia. Tunajitahidi kupamba, kutangaza wakati mwingine pamoja na mambo mengine. Kuna wakati tunatafuta hata misaada ya michango mbalimbali katika kufanikisha tukio hilo. Leo jioni, tulitembelea sehemu inaitwa Mji wa Zamani hapa Tanuku (Old Town-Tanuku), jimbo la AP. Hapo OT tulikuwa na onesho katika kanisa la kilutheri la Kristo (Christ L.C). Toka tufike hapa India sijawahi kuona maandalizi makubwa kama haya. Wakristo wa hapo walikuwa wameamua kuweka kila kitu kwa siku hiyo katika rekodi. Hivyo waliandaa watu wa kuchukua kila tukio katika video pamoja na kamera. Maandalizi hayo yalikuwa pia katika mapambo, chokaa, pamoja na alama zingine zilizokuwa kuanzia barabarani hadi kanisani.

Washarika walikuwa ni wengi, watoto kwa watu wazima. watu walikuwa wamechangamka sana. Onesho lilifana sana. Nasi kwa upande wetu tulijisikia vizuri sana kuona watu waliochangamka na waliokuwa nasi katika kuimba na kufanya mambo mengine kwa kadri tulivyowaongoza. Mchungaji wa hapo alitambia kuwa wanataka pia kuweka tukio hilo katika utaalamu wa kisasa kabisa, vcd na kisha kutupatia nakala kwa ajili ya ukumbusho wetu. Niliwaza mwenyewe na kusema kuwa sidhani kama tulistahili maandalizi kama hayo. Sidhani kama tulichokifanya sisi kililingana na maandalizi makubwa ya ndugu wale.

Unaweza kufikiri jinsi maandalizi yanavyokuwa mazito kwa matukio mengine pia. Watu huumiza vichwa vyao. Wengine hawapati hata nafasi ya kulala na wakati mwingine hata kukonda. Lakini mmh, linapokuja suala la kufanya maandalizi ya roho zetu, watu hupata uvivu wa ajabu. Wengine hata kusikia habari hiyo hawataki kabisa. Kila siku tunasikia toka kwa wahubiri injili, makanisani, mikutanoni, n.k wakisema juu ya habari za Yesu na ukombozi wetu. Lakini wapi bwana. Masikio yamejaa nta. Hakuna kipenyacho kuingia ndani. Siku chache zijazo tutakumbuka kuteswa, kufa na kufufuka kwa kishindo kwa Bwana Yesu. Kifo chake pale msalabani kinatupa sisi ukombozi na uzima wa milele. Hakuna hitaji la mtu kufa kila siku ili watu wengi waweze kuokolewa. Yesu amekufa mara moja tu, tena kwa ajili ya watu wote. Tujiandae basi, tutengeneze mambo yetu ili tuweze kufanikisha kuurithi uzima wa milele kwa njia ya Yesu Kristo. Maandalizi Mema. Boni!

Date: 4/2/2003

Submitted by: Paul Nichols

Journal Entry:

On this Wednesday morning we were meeting with a Sunday School class. To call the Hindu neighbors to the church we were asked if we could parade around the neighborhood, singing songs so that people would come to the church. We asked if it was safe and got the go ahead. We had some hand drums, and I had my trumpet, and we had 200 voices singing out in not-so-unison fashion. It was a hoot. After the 20 minute walk we cooled down and started playing some songs for the children.



Paul Nichols

It's important for congregations in India to witness to their Hindu neighbors. Not one person may have come because of our procession, but at least it's a seed for the local congregation to work with in the future. Those living around the church know that the church is active and inviting.

In the evening, we continued our outside activities at a lenten gathering at a congregation member's home. We did a full program, including a sharing. I did my sharing about the importance of community and of meeting together.

Again, I see the importance of the letting the Hindu community know that the Christian population is many and that it is an inviting atmosphere.

I feel proud that Rainbow of Promise can serve the church and witness to non-Christians in this way, trusting that the church will sow many seeds here in the future.

Date: 4/3/2003

Submitted by: Dain Swanson

Journal Entry:



Dain Swanson

My account of the longest day in the world.

7:00 a.m. - Woken up by contact: "What do you want for breakfast?" "No Dhosa please!"

7:05 - Fall asleep again.

9:30 - Wake up and eat breakfast.

10:00 - Original departure time.

10:00-12:00 p.m. - Wait for transportation; attempt to write postcards, too many people around!

10:30 - Jason plays rousing game of "catch the sheet" with 3 year old Chinah

12:00 p.m. - Depart in Hospital Aids Information Van

13:00 - Program #1 at village church, temperature around 100 degrees

14:00 - Thums Up soda and pictures

14:30 - leave for pastor's house and lunch

15:30 - finish lunch and watch Michael Jackson videos

16:00 - photos/snaps

16:20 - leave for 4-hour river boat ride that began at 14:30 (2:30 p.m.)

16:50 - begin driving through populated tiger area

16:50-17:30 - see no tigers

17:30 - arrive at boat

17:30-18:00 - boat ride (not 4 hours)

18:00 - no diesel in Aids Van, we can't leave

18:00-18:15 - Debbie and I are mistaken for movie stars

18:15 - we get diesel from boat and leave

19:15 - arrive at Pastor's house in small village

19:16 - leave for a small church in Aids Van

20:00 - arrive at village church

20:01 - Ravi (our contact) says "2 minutes, no problem." We do 2 songs and sneak out during prayer. Program #2

20:20 - Thums Up pop chugging contest.

20:26 - leave village

21:00 - Arrive at another village church. A rooftop gathering. We do 3 songs and leave during prayer. Program #3. People waiting since 18:30.

21:30 - Tea and biscuits (cookies)

21:35 - Local church tour.

21:40 - Leave for another village church.

22:00 - Arrive at outdoor gathering

22:30 - Begin full program #4

23:15 - program ends, we go to a house for dinner

23:30 - start dinner

0:00 - Miriam and I have a watermelon eating contest. She wins, her piece was smaller

0:10-0:15 - snaps (photos)

0:30 - leave house in village

1:00 - wake up people watching our luggage and load van

1:20 - cross largest bridge in Asia, 4 km long

1:36 - Arrive at Lutheran General Hospital

2:00 - Debbie and I explore the old building. find bats, spiders, and watchman.

2:30 - Showers

2:45 - guitar playing and cool/calm down

3:00 - journal for the day

4:00 - fall asleep

This was our longest day every. God truly was with us giving us the strength and energy to get through it all. What an experience!

Date: 4/4/2003

Submitted by: Miriam Anderson

Journal Entry:

Through the course of our stay here using taxis and autorickshaws, we have been blessed with some really great drivers. Take today for example. We are in Rajahmundry and today was a day off. After a pretty quiet day of the usual day off activities (hand-washing laundry, checking e-mail at an internet café and napping for several hours) we decided we needed some adventure in our lives. Debbie, Dain, Jason and I ventured out the front gate of Lutheran General Hospital shortly before 6:00 p.m. in search of pizza. Last time we were here we had some great pizza so we thought we'd treat ourselves (or let Youth Encounter treat us...thank you!) to this special treat for dinner. We have studied Telugu long and hard under the watchful eye of our language and culture coordinator, but even Boni couldn't teach us how to say, "Take us to that one place where they make the really yummy pizza." Instead, we opted for something a bit more rudimentary. We flagged down a rickshaw just outside the gate and said, "Pizza? Pizza? Bakery?" while making the Indian gesture for food. I believe the man thought we were crazy. However, an innocent bystander came to our rescue. I have no idea whether this woman spoke English or even understood us, but she had a lengthy conversation with the rickshaw driver after which he motioned for us to hop in his "4 in all."



Miriam Anderson

I mention this second, lesser-known term for the autorickshaw only because it's essential to the next phase of this trip. You see "4 in all" means 4 people are allowed to ride in these little motor scooter vehicles (including the driver) at once. Supposedly if a rickshaw is overloaded, say with Debbie, Dain, Jason, the driver and I, the driver can be fined if caught. We sped down the street at the breakneck speed of 30 kph until we saw the traffic officer on foot. I'm not sure if he pulled us over or if we pulled ourselves over, but soon we were stopped and before I knew it, Dain was asking the officer if he knew where a pizza place was. The blank stare told us we should think of another way to express what we were searching for. Finally we happened upon a phrase that he understood. He relayed the info to our driver, and we took off again (without a ticket, I might add). I'm pretty sure we stopped at every bakery in the greater metropolitan area of Rajahmundry. Our driver would pull up to a bakery, we would hop out and case the joint, and climb back in dejected, searching for another shop. Just when we thought all hope was lost and we were ready to settle for almost anything, it seems our driver, Chinah, had one last inspiring thought. He motioned for us to jump back in the vehicle and he drove off with a new sense of purpose. Sure enough, only a few moments later we arrived at Kalipurna Bakery, home of the really yummy pizza. Not only did this rickshaw driver ferry us all over the city, he waited for half an hour at the bakery with us so he could take us home, and then charged us exactly what he should have. So today we got e-mail and clean cloths and pizza and a new friend named Chinah. We don't really know anything about this man except that he's resourceful and a good driver. Why don't you pray for Chinah today.

Date: 4/5/2003

Submitted by: Debbie Holte

Journal Entry:

43 degrees Celcius! It was 43 degrees Celcius today! That's $[43(9/5)+32=109.4]$ approximately 109 degrees Farenheit! Uff da! It was certainly good that we had a little time to relax today. Even so, with no air conditioning and no breeze, our fan did little more than push hot air at us. Ugh. It was hard to rest in the heat. My Minnesotan/Norwegian mind finds it hard to comprehend that people can exist in such a hot place. And it gets even hotter in some parts of India (50 degrees Celcius!). Thanks to God, we survived the heat of the day.



Debbie Holte

I must confess, my favorite part of the day was lunch. You see, across from the YMCA where we are staying is a Dominoes Pizza. Oh yes. We have been in India for nearly 3 months now and there have been times when I have wanted nothing more than to indulge in some familiar, American food. And today the dream became a reality. Ahhhhhhh. Pizza and cold Coke. Now, I think I feel satisfied and can go back to enjoying Indian cuisine.

It cooled down a bit in the evening and we went to a retirement celebration for Rev. Joseph Ravela at the Andhra Christian Theological College. I haven't been to many retirement parties in the states, but this was a very big to-do. It was held outside with 2 stages--one for Rev. Ravela and about 20 special guests, and the other for the musicians. The musicians were fantastic. They played Indian classical music--it was marvelous.

We were also invited to share a few songs. Our first song was a song in Telugu. I could only see the people in the front, but I could see that as soon as we started singing in their language, their faces lit up. I don't think they were expecting to hear Telugu from us. After the celebration, many people complimented us on our pronunciation of Telugu. We have our international team director, Sunitha, who is originally from Hyderabad, to thank for our pronunciation. So thank you, Sunitha for taking the time to teach us some Telugu songs.

There were hundreds of people there and the whole thing lasted about 4 hours. At the end, as a way of honoring the retiring reverend, they adorned him with flower garlands and shawls. The garlands were so big (and heavy) and so many that they could only put about 4 or 5 on at a time. Then they took those off so they could put more on. He must have been a very important man. I felt that we were by no means special enough to have played and sung at his celebration.

After the ceremony, we were very excited to see Sunitha's family. When we first arrived in India, we spent about a week with Sunitha's brother and his family. That was almost 2 months ago. It really

felt to me like we had come home after being away for a long time. We will plan to see them all again before we leave Hyderabad.

What a good day. Praise the Lord!

Date: 4/6/2003

Submitted by: Boniface Adam Eliona Kombo

Journal Entry:

Divine Grace! This is the name of a Lutheran church we went to worship this morning here in the city of Hyderabad in Andhra Pradesh (AP). In that service we had a short program. After the service we had some time for mingle ling with some people. We then went to a pastor's house, where were invited for a lunch. While in pastor's house I met a guy, named Samuel, whom we met before at church's service. In the previous conversation with Samuel, he told me that he is a teacher at a special school for kids with slow minds. Though by professional, he is a bachelor of business holder.



Boniface Adam Eliona Kombo

I would like to know more about his job, how interesting it is, or if it is tough for him or easy one. Samuel said that he likes his job much. But added that it is not an easy job to do, if you do not have patience and love to kids like those. He said that as a school's plan, they normally have aims and targets, for what they want to accomplish, in a certain period. For a period of 3 months as a target, the aims are 10. Among the aims is to teach each kid its names and to remember it. Other aims/ things to be learnt by those kids depend on parents' requests. He added saying that, one of the tough things is to convince a kid to enter a classroom and then learn something from teachers. The problem here for those kids is not only to enter classrooms, but is to be willing to enter, learn and remember what they were taught. Among 10 things to be learnt in the period of 3 months, some of the kids can try hard to learn only 3 of them, during that period. So in that case, it takes not less than a month, for a kid with that kind of a problem, to study his/her name only. This is terrible! It really needs a lot of patience from a teacher; otherwise, nothing can be learnt here. Samuel then said that as teachers they have not loose up their hope. But they are struggling as much as they can, to increase the number of things that are to be learnt during that period of 3 months.

The Beneficent is the great teacher of all teachers. He always tries hard to teach us a single thing, to walk according to his will. He has done this same thing for a very long time. But we still have hard head as retarded mind people, who do not understand anything, anytime. It is when we will be willing to learn and understand that Jesus is the Savior who died for our salvation then we will be doing God's will. God help us. Boni!

SWAHILI:

Je unafhamu kuwa binadamu wote tuna mtindio wa ubongo??

Neema Takatifu! (ama Divine Grace, kwa kimombo) Ni jina la kanisa moja la kilutheri hapa Andhra Pradesh (AP), katika mji wa Hyderabad. Asubuhi ya leo tulienda kusali katika kanisa hili pamoja na kuwa na onesho fupi katikati ya ibada. Mara baada ya ibada tulisalimiana na watu mbalimbali. Kisha tulialikwa nyumbani kwa mchungaji kwa ajili ya chakula cha mchana. Tulipokuwa hapo nyumbani nilipata tena nafasi ya kuongea na bwana mmoja ambaye tulionana pale kanisani. Bwana huyu kitaaluma ana shahada ya biashara lakini kwa sasa ni mwalimu; akifundisha katika shule maalum kwa watoto wenye mtindio wa ubongo, watoto taahira.

Nilipenda kufahamu juu ya kazi yake, kama anaionaje, ngumu ama rahisi. Bwana huyu, Samuel alisema kuwa anaipenda kazi yake japokuwa sio rahisi kuifanya. Alisema kuwa huwa wanaweka malengo kadhaa ambayo wangependa kuona watoto hao wakiyatekeleza katika kipindi cha muda fulani. Malengo hayo huwa kama kumi na ni katika kipindi cha miezi 3. Mambo ambayo mara kwa mara huwa wanayapa kipaumbele ni kama vile kufahamu jina kwa kila mtoto, kufahamu baadhi ya majina ya vitu muhimu na vitu vingine kutegemeana na ombi toka kwa wazazi wa mtoto husika. Aliongeza kusema kuwa kazi moja ambayo ni ngumu ni kumfanya mtoto mwenye matatizo

kukubali kuingia darasani. Hapa si kuingia tu darasani bali ni kukubali kuingia, kukaa na kujifunza kitu fulani toka kwa walimu. Katika malengo kumi wanayoweka, ni 3 tu ambayo watoto hao wanaweza kujitahidi kuyafahamu katika muda huo wa miezi 3. Kwa maana hiyo basi, kujifunza jina inachukua siku zisizopungua 30. Kazi hii sio mchezo kwa kweli! Inahitaji moyo na uvumilivu mkubwa sana kuifanya. Ndugu huyu alisema kuwa, wao kama walimu, hawakati tamaa kuifanya kazi yao. Wanajitahidi kuongeza idadi ya malengo yatakayofikiwa ndani ya muda huo wa miezi 3.

Mungu ni mwalimu, tena mkuu. Anajitahidi kila wakati kutufundisha kitu kimoja tu kuyafanya yaliyo ya mapenzi yake. Lengo la Mungu hapa ni moja tu, tena ni kwa muda mrefu wa miaka mingi; kutuokoa kupitia njia ya Bwana Yesu kwa kuamini na kukubali kuwa Yesu ni Bwana na Mwokozi. Lakini, binadamu sisi bado hatutaki kuelewa "darasa" hili. Tumekuwa kama watoto mataahira wasioelewa kabisa wala kukubali kukaa darasani. Ni pale tutakapobadilika na kuwa watoto wazuri, kukubali kusikia na kulielewa fundisho kuwa Yesu ni Mwokozi na alikufa kwa ajili ya ukombozi wetu. Mungu atusaidie.
Boni!

Date: 4/7/2003

Submitted by: Jason Moran

Journal Entry:

Today is our final day with Rev. Ravi Raj Kumar and the Andhra Evangelical Lutheran Church. It is also our first "pseudo-day off" in about 3 weeks. I say pseudo for two reasons: 1) I like the word a lot; and 2) we have so much backlogged team business that we spent much time writing newsletter articles, debriefing our experience with Rev. Ravi Raj Kumar, and packing. The concept of "day off" has become as elusive as the rare South Dakota Jackalope. So, most of our "day off" opportunities are best preceded with the word "pseudo." This way one's hopes of rest and complete relaxation need not be shattered by the forgetting of necessary team business.



Jason Moran

So, anyhow, the English have a saying, "All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy." Sure this day off was a pseudo day off but, I must say the English have it right. So some of us escaped the Secunderabad YMCA and found this elusive concept of "play." A man working at the YMCA as a volunteer music teacher is named William. He noticed us one day and said, "Are you ROP?" After discussion we found out that William remembered hosting a ROP team, Sunitha's team (our Int'l Team Director). He took us on a trip to a music store and a CD store. We were able to purchase some bamboo flutes, and I longed to have the space to purchase a sitar or a harmonium. We also took the time to buy a few Hindi CD's. It was good to find time to escape the monotony of team business. Then we participated in a great reunion. We were able to have dinner with our first contact, Reggie Mortha and his family. It was fun to reunite and learn a little about how we have changed since we arrived in India. Then we traveled off by rickshaw to the train station to depart from Andhra Pradesh for our final visit in India (Madhya Pradesh).

Date: 4/8/2003

Submitted by: Paul Nichols

Journal Entry:

Arrival in Madhya Pradesh!! Our 6th contact/location in India is with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Madhya Pradesh. This place reminds me more of the U.S. than any place we've visited. The vegetation is different than South India, and oh yeah, so is the food (less rice, more breads) and the language (Hindi)! Although M.P. reminds me of the U.S., it is probably the most typical place you have in your head of India. It is dry because the rainy season is still over a month away. The vegetation seems sparse only for this reason. Yet there are hills that remind me of the foothills to the Appalachian Mountains. There are fields that remind me of the fields around my house during the summer. Maybe all this reminiscing is just homesickness written down. It is nice here.



Paul Nichols

We are serving in a village built around a large (and very modern) Christian hospital. The village is

called Padhar. The church here has worked in the neighboring tribal villages to educate people about safe water, staying healthy, and has installed many wells to provide water. It is good to learn about the social projects a church undertakes.

Like other churches we have visited, the nightly Lenten meetings continue here. We will be the main attraction the next two days, but tonight we gave only two songs as a foretaste of what is to come. Yes, it is nice here, and even a bit cooler. I'm looking forward to learning more about this different India.

Date: 4/9/2003

Submitted by: Dain Swanson

Journal Entry:

Rainbow of Promise had a special treat today. We got to see a brail printing machine. This machine was located at a school for the blind, mute, and handicapped. The children we visited were in elementary school, and were being educated and trained for the normal school. This means that they will learn to read, write, and interact with classmates with similar conditions but then be joined with the rest of the children their age in the large school. The wonderful thing about this school is it is a first of its kind in Madhya Pradesh. It has been running for many years and is very successful.



Dain Swanson

The highlight of the visit, other than the cool brail printing machine, was singing a song for the kids. The group of kids were gathered around us shaking our hands, laughing and playing. We began singing "Cast Your Burdens." They clapped along and when the actions came we lifted their hands in the air singing "Higher, higher, higher Lift Jesus higher." The joy on their faces was amazing and pure. We continued to sing as we finished our short tour of the school. When all was said and done we left giving hugs and handshakes. We were delighted when some of the girls came to our evening program and remembered the song and actions. 2 Corinthians 5:7 "We live by faith and not by sight." The faith those girls showed those around them is truly a wonderful testament. It is truly a blind faith.

May God continue to bless them daily.

Date: 4/10/2003

Submitted by: Miriam Anderson

Journal Entry:

I am supposed to write about April 10th but I can't understand this. I'm pretty sure April 10th was actually 4 days. Let me explain. We awoke for a 7:30 breakfast in the guest house we are staying in. The bungalow is owned by Padhar Hospital where a British chap and new found friend, James, is working as part of his studies. So we joined James for eggs and toast and some good laughs then retreated to the boys' room (the ROP boys, that is) for our team devotions. We talked about our vision for ministry here in India and whether or not we felt we were fulfilling the mission we each set out to accomplish. The evening and the morning, the first day.



Miriam Anderson

We headed to the church just down the path, instruments and Bibles in tow, around 10:30 for an all day youth workshop. Youth from the whole district of Betul were gathered here at the Evangelical Lutheran Church, Padhar, and some traveled as far as 200 km to join us. We kicked the day off with some sing-a-longs to get the blood pumping (Ruh-uh-uh...thanks, New Dawn!). We played games, led a Bible study on leadership, had lunch and enjoyed lots o' fellowship. The evening and the morning, the second day.

Our evening program started around 6:00. The congregation here has committed itself to meeting together every night for 40 days of Lent. This must be a big sacrifice when there is work to be done and only so many hours in a day to do it. We have the blessing of conducting these meetings for two nights while we are in this area. I got to share tonight about communication and God's love. I

suppose I shouldn't say I shared. I had an idea for this sharing pop into my head at last night's meeting, but never really had a chance to work through it. When we got to the meeting tonight, I still felt like I should talk about God trying to communicate His love to us. The Holy Spirit took over from there. It was actually pretty exciting. I usually didn't know what my next sentence was going to be until the translator was done speaking and it was my turn to say something. It was amazing to feel God's power work through me. I think we met all 200 congregation members after the meeting as we packed up our instruments. One little girl that stands out in my mind was Sheena. She can do this great eyebrow trick. It just so happens that I can do this trick too, so we became fast friends. After the meeting she was frantically trying to tell me something, but she speaks Hindi and I, well, don't. Finally I spotted her father and asked for a translation. She whispered in his ear and stared at me, tears forming in her eyes. "She doesn't want you to leave tomorrow. She wants you to come stay with us." The evening and the morning, the third day.

Lo and behold, dinner tonight is being held at Sheena's house. We enjoyed further fellowship with the pastor and Sheena's family as well as some very delicious food. We learned more about the work the E.L.C. is doing in the tribal villages in rural areas around Padhar. We learned another interesting fact. In India, churches must report any baptisms to the government along with an affidavit stating that this person was baptized at his or her own will. Because the government somehow has a say in this, only a small number of people can be baptized at the same time before the government tries to put an end to it. The government is fearful of Christians gaining too much power and thus converting more Hindus, ultimately doing away with the caste system. The evening and the morning, the fourth day.

Three more days until the day of rest. How did you do it, God?

Date: 4/11/2003

Submitted by: Debbie Holte

Journal Entry:

Today we arrived in Chhindwara, Madhya Pradesh. It was about a 3 hour drive on a very narrow road going quite a bit faster than I would have gone if I'd had any say in the matter. But despite the speed, we made it safe and sound.

As soon as we got to town, we met the Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Madhya Pradesh. The E.L.C. in M.P. is involved in many outreach programs, some of which we saw in Padhar, like the hospital, and a school for the blind. It was good to hear a little bit more about these programs. Rt. Rev. R.G. Rao is a very nice man.



Debbie Holte

After enjoying a cool drink with him, we went downtown to register as foreign visitors at the police station. We had to wait for awhile because the boss was not there, and while we were waiting, a group of about 10 kids started peeking in at us from any doorway or window they could find. They were so curious about us. We started playing with them from a distance by making funny faces and using body language. They laughed a lot. Paul even embarrassed us and himself by acting like a monkey, right there in the police station. The kids thought it was great.

The downtown area was busy because Hindus were celebrating Rama's birthday. We avoided going downtown, because we were advised that it would be best to stay away from the celebration. We could hear the drumming and music as a parade went by when we were at the police station.

The best part about today is that we are staying in host homes. We have only been in one other host home while we've been in India, and there our host actually left to sleep next door because they gave up all their beds and floor space for us. Now we are split up into 3 host homes and have had some time to spend with our host families. It has been fun to get to experience life in an Indian household.

There is a t.v. at the home Miriam and I are staying in, so before supper, we joined the family watching cricket and got into a good discussion about jobs in the U.S. and India. We also got to try some Tamarind. It is chewy and kind of tart. I liked it. After supper, we relaxed and watched a movie together. Very much like what an American family might do. It has been very fun to learn

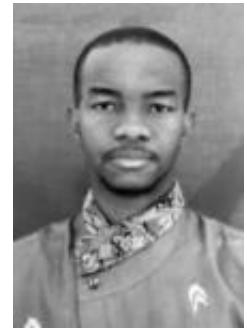
more about the home life in India. And we will have a couple more days with this family to learn even more.

Date: 4/12/2003

Submitted by: Boniface Adam Eliona Kombo

Journal Entry:

The province of Madhya Pradesh (MP) is situated in the center of India; hence, its name. Madhya and Pradesh mean Center and Province, respectively. We are here in this province since April 7. We came here in the city called Chhindwara yesterday. This area is also the main office of this church Evangelical Lutheran in MP. Today, team wise, we had a workshop with youths of this city on Leadership. Though some adults came and join us as well. The workshop started at morning hours and was done at noontime. During workshop, we did also some games, for all who formed a conglomerate, youths and adults.



Boniface Adam Eliona Kombo

In the first game, which was purposely for knowing names of all participants, it was so nice seeing adults played this game. In this game people stay in a circle. One person is going to a center of the circle, holding a baton and moving round the circle. The aim is to touch with that baton, anyone, who cannot be able to remember a name of other person within the circle. I had a very good time to watch one adult played this game. He was very active and fun. Almost all the time he was at the center. This guy albeit, was more like a father to many of us there. But he did not mind whenever was touched by the baton. He went in the middle and did his part happily. Whenever he was in the middle, everybody in the circle was happy too. In the dusk, we had a family night program (FNP). In this FNP people were so alive. This was due to the previous workshop that caused people to be familiar amongst them and with us too. People were also familiar with some songs that we sang in workshop. Bye! Boni!

SWAHILI:

Madhya Pradesh (MP) ni jimbo mojawapo kati ya majimbo ya nchi hii ya India. Jimbo hili lipo katikati ya nchi hii na ndio hata maana ya jina lake. Madhya inamaanisha "katikati" na Pradesh ni "jimbo". Tuko katika jimbo hili toka tarehe 7. Siku ya jana tumekuja hapa katika mji wa Chhindwara, ambapo ndipo yalipo makao makuu ya kanisa hili la Kiinjili la Kilutheri MP. Leo siku ya Jumamosi tulikuwa na warsha na waumini vijana toka maeneo ya mji huu, japokuwa pia kulikuwa na watu wazima wachache waliohudhuria. Warsha hiyo ilianza hapo majira ya asubuhi na kumalizika wakati wa mchana. Katika warsha hii mada kuu ilikuwa ni Uongozi. Pia tulifanya michezo mbali mbali, michache, iliyojumuishia vijana hao na wale watu wazima wachache waliokuwepo.

Kwenye mchezo wa kwanza kabisa ambao ulikuwa ni mahsusi kutambua majina ya watu, ilifurahisha kuona watu wazima wakishiriki. Katika mchezo huo, watu huzunguka duara. Mtu mmojawapo huwa ndani ya duara na kushika kitu kama kifimbo ambacho kinatumika kumgusia mtu mwingine katika duara, ambaye hataweza kukumbuka na kusema kwa nguvu jina la mtu mwingine ndani ya duara hiyo kwa haraka kabla ya kufikiwa na yule mwenye kifimbo. Kama ukiguswa, basi inakuwa ni zamu yako kuingia katikati ya duara na kufanya kama yule aliyepita. Tulikuwa na wakati mzuri sana hadi mchezo ulipokwisha, hasa kila wakati baba mmoja wa makamo, aliyekuwa mcheshi sana, alipokuwa zamu. Pamoja na kwamba wengi wa tuliokuwepo pale tulikuwa kama watoto wake, lakini wapi bwana, baba huyu shughuli aliifanya na kutufanya wote tuwe tunacheka sana kila mara alipoguswa na kuingia katikati. Baadae, jioni ya saa 12, tulikuwa na onesho la usiku kwa familia (family night program). Onesho hili lilichangamka sana hasa kutokana na kuwa wengi wa waliokuwepo tulikuwa tumeshaonana wakati wa warsha na kuzoeana. Pia baadhi ya nyimbo zilishakuwa za kawaida kwao kutokana na kuziimba pale mwanzoni asubuhi. Alamsiki! Boni!

Date: 4/14/2003

Submitted by: Paul Nichols

Journal Entry:

In a previous journal (that I haven't written yet) I talk about us processing in the streets with our Church friends. Yesterday's Palm Sunday service had us marching the streets again. And we landed in Monday's paper! Debbie and Miriam have been wearing sarees ever since their arrival in India. Us guys only have wear Kurtas, a kind of long t-shirt that is quite comfortable for us.

So anyway, in the paper's local section was a photo of Debbie and Miriam walking with Indian ladies carrying palms, decked out in sarees. The newspaper article, for which none of us were interviewed, told how the girls enjoy wearing sarees and wear them every day (first part true, second part untrue). It also complemented them on how beautifully done the sarees were. (A reminder: sarees are 5 meters of cloth!! To wear one correctly takes a lot of careful folding.) The article mentioned that the girls normally wear pants and t-shirts, and that these sarees were gifts from the church in Andhra Pradesh (now how did the papers find this out??).

It was a blast to see that we (the girls, really) had made the paper. We have found that Americans are not as common around these parts of India (Chhindwara, Madhya Pradesh) as in the south. It's fun that the girls can make lasting impressions by accepting the culture of the saree as they have. It's one successful way that we're doing our mission here.



Paul Nichols

Date: 4/15/2003

Submitted by: Dain Swanson

Journal Entry:

Close your eyes and ask yourself this question: "What do you know about Jesus Christ?"...

Who was Jesus Christ and how much do we really know Him? It is not possible to know every detail of His life, because of the 4 limited accounts in the Bible. But of those 4 gospels, how much do you know about Christ? Here is another question: "Who is your favorite actor/sports star/rock star?" How much do you know about them? These were the questions posed to us during a lenten service this evening. A guest speaker asked some important questions that we all need to think about. "Jesus was a teacher, doctor, and savior. What do we know about Jesus and those characteristics? Do we take the time in this lenten season to ask those questions and more important, answer these questions?"

In our time overseas we have learned what Jesus is to many different people. To the children He is a person who their parents worship and they sing about in Sunday school. To the adults He is their personal savior who we should love and trust. The question Rainbow of Promise has faced in both the United States and India is "How do we aid the growth of a child-like faith into a mature learned faith of an adult in the youth of these countries?" Every day we learn something new about effective ways to teach this faith growing. We don't have it perfected yet, but because of the time we spend talking about Jesus we had to ask ourselves how much we know about Christ. I personally think I know a lot, but that is because I have taken the time to read about Him. I know I don't understand it all so I will keep reading. My goal is to know Christ better than I know my favorite actor or rock star. I can only hope all Christians feel the same way.

God bless you all in this Holy week! Thank you for your prayers.

Dain



Dain Swanson

Date: 4/17/2003

Submitted by: Debbie Holte

Journal Entry:

Women in India cover their heads when they pray or take communion. Their clothing is well suited for it because they can cover their heads with the end of their saree or with their scarf if they're wearing a salwar suit. So, to be culturally sensitive, Miriam and I have been wearing sarees each Sunday and covering our heads when we go to take communion.

I remember the first time we did it. All the women were watching to see what we would do. We were wearing our sarees, so we did what the Indian women do. As soon as I draped the end of my saree over my head, I felt something I hadn't been expecting. I felt ashamed. I felt unworthy. I felt despised.



Debbie Holte

And I continue to feel this way each time I do it, although somewhat less each time. I know that's not the intention. Miriam and I were discussing this after communion today. We read I Corinthians 11:3-16. When I first read it, it certainly did sound like women should cover their heads when they pray (v. 5). But verse 6 says, "If it is a disgrace for a woman to have her hair cut or shaved off, she should cover her head." I don't really know if it's considered disgraceful for an Indian woman to have her hair cut or shaved, but about 98% of the women have long, beautiful hair. I'm pretty sure most people in the U.S. don't consider it disgraceful for a woman to have cut or shaved hair (or at least not cut). So does that mean that covering one's head is based on the culture? Or not? Verse 13 tells us to judge for ourselves if it is disgraceful. Hmmm...

Another thought I've had since my discussion with Miriam is what the word "head" is referring to. Does head refer to the physical head? Or does it refer to an authoritative head? Verse 3 says that the head of man is Christ and the head of woman is man. So does that mean that if a woman does not cover her head she is disgracing men somehow, but not God? Or only disgracing God indirectly?

Obviously, I'm still pretty unsure about it all. As far as feeling ashamed when I cover my head, I'm sure that's just because of my cultural background. As far as whether we should make it a practice in our culture or not, I have no firm answer, but refer again to verse 13: "Judge for yourselves."

Location: Sagar, Madhya Pradesh, India

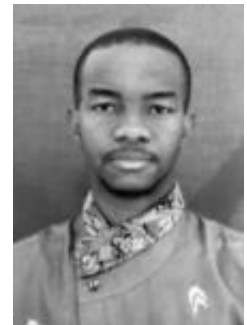
Date: 4/18/2003

Submitted by: Boniface Adam Eliona Kombo

Journal Entry:

Crucify him...! Destroy him...! Crucify him...!

The entire world today is commemorating the day that Jesus Christ was crucified on the cross. Jesus died on our behalf; moreover, for our sins. That was done for us to be free and just, in order to inherit the kingdom of heaven! Today it is a big day. Jesus came into the world to suffer and die for our salvation. To redeem us indeed! What kind of love is this, for a person to leave his glory and his throne, to come and suffer for someone else? As those beginning words I started with, they came from fellow people like us. They screamed those words that Jesus needed to die by crucifixion. May be they thought that by doing so they were exorcized Jesus. But that was the perfect way for us to receive salvation. For most of us, this day is just as a normal day as other days when we commemorate lent, Easter, Christmas and other holidays. So, there is nothing special to do with our soul in this day. That is spiritual. Some of us attended church services as our daily custom during season like this. But this is not a correct way to do. Doing in this way is a sin, just as other sins!



Boniface Adam Eliona Kombo

Jesus is still there waiting for us, you and I, to give him all our sins. So that he may die with them on the cross. His blood is still pouring down, needing to clean a sinner. Blood is waiting to cover all iniquities and to make that person clean like a snow, the blood that turns a sinner and unworthy person to a sinless and a worth one. "...But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised

for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed!" (Cf. Isaiah 53:5)

It is my prayer that, all of us to pray to Jesus that he may take away all our sins; and that we may wait his arising while we are clean. Walking into his paths and do his will. The Peace of our lord Jesus Christ be with you all! Boni!

SWAHILI:

Asulubiwe...! Auawe...! Asulubiwe...! Auawe...!

..."Kweli ni huzuni, kwa kifo chake Bwana Yesu; kilivyokuwa cha maumivu. Akasema moyoni, namaliza kazi kwa huzuni..."

Ulimwenguni mwote, siku ya leo, wakristo wanakumbuka siku ile aliyowambwa Bwana Yesu pale msalabani. Aliwambwa kwa niaba yetu, tena kwa ajili ya dhambi zetu, ili tuwe huru na kuwa tena wana wa Mungu na kisha kuuridhi ufalme wa Mungu! Siku hii ni kubwa sana kwetu, hasa ukizingatia kuwa Bwana Yesu alikuja hapa duniani kutuokoa. Kutuweka huru kweli kweli! Ni upendo wa namna gani mtu kuuacha utukufu na kiti chake cha enzi, kuja kuteseka hapa duniani...!? Kama hayo maneno yangu ya mwanzo kabisa yanavyosema, maneno hayo yalitoka kwa watu kama sisi. Walisema maneno hayo kwa ukali kabisa. Pengine walidhani walikuwa wakimkomoa Yesu. Lakini hiyo ndio ilikuwa njia pekee ya Yesu kutukomboa sisi. Kwa wengi, siku hii ni kumbukumbu tu na haina uzito wowote ule wala haina maana yoyote ile. Wengi tumeenda kanisani au sehemu yoyote ile kwa ajili ya kuabudu kama desturi yetu ya kila siku wakati kama huu, kipindi kama hiki. Lakini kufanya hivyo tu ni vibaya sana, kama sio dhambi!

Yesu bado yuko anasubiri.. Anaita.. Anatungojea mimi na wewe tumpe dhambi zetu zote na makosa yetu yote afe nayo pale msalabani. Damu yake bado inatirika, inahitaji mtu wa kumuosha dhambi, kumtakasa kabisa, kumfanya mweupe kama sufu ama kama theluji. "...bali alijeruhiwa kwa makosa yetu, alichubuliwa kwa maovu yetu; adhabu ya amani yetu ilikuwa juu yake, na kwa kupigwa kwake sisi tumepona!.." (Isaya 53:5)

Basi tumuombe Yesu afe na dhambi zetu na tungojee kufufuka kwake huku tukiwa safi; tukienenda katika njia impendezayo yeye na kuyafanya yaliyo ya mapenzi yake. Amani ya Bwana Yesu Kristo iwe nanyi nyote!
Boni!

Date: 4/20/2003

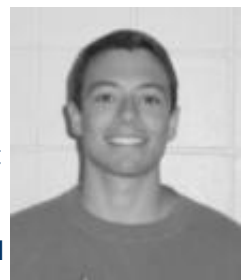
Submitted by: Paul Nichols

Journal Entry:

HAPPY EASTER from Rainbow of Promise!! (This journal comes to you on June 17th, but for posterity's sake I want to make sure this gets out to the public.)

Today was our last full day of programs in India (remember that we're traveling to Nepal in a couple days). We were spared the joy of a sunrise service because of the somewhat late night we had yesterday. We were told that it was a graveyard service and most people would not be attending this 5:30 a.m. gathering. So we awoke and sauntered off to the 8:30 service, instruments in tow. We played just three songs: "Open the Eyes of My Heart," "Waterfall," and one song in Hindi, "Raja ka Rajao" ("King of Kings and Lord of Lords. Glory. Alleluia." Everybody sing now!!!). We also got to see a baptism, the only one we witnessed overseas. It was very similar to a baptism one might witness in any Bible-believing Lutheran church, or UCC church you might attend.

After the service, which ended at 11:00 a.m., we recorded some sing-a-longs to leave with our contact, Sanjay, and also recorded some of his thoughts about our journey. Sanjay took Miriam and I to a public phone so we could call Delhi to confirm our flights to Kathmandu, Nepal (unsuccessful) and confirm our reservation at the YMCA in Delhi (successful). We also had some lunch and time to pack our bags and rest for a little while.



Paul Nichols

Our evening program was simply heart-stopping. At 5 p.m. we traveled just a few short kilometers to the oldest congregation in the area, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in a village called Salba. This was one of the first villages in India to be completely converted by Indian missionaries, not foreign missionaries. It recently completed its 50th anniversary in the Christian faith. Our van stopped short of the gate leading to the church. There was a banner in Hindi hanging to welcome us, "Welcome Rainbow Team." We could hear the singing and instruments from where we stopped, just 50 meters away. We walked to the crowd and gathered ourselves in a straight line so they could greet us.

A traditional Indian greeting is with a garland necklace or shawl, so were expecting something similar here. Two ladies started at the end of our line with a jar of water, a plate-like basin to catch the water, and a towel so they could wash our hands! One by one, they took our hands in theirs, poured water over them and took off the dirt with their own hands, then dried our hands with the towel. Immediately after the handwashing, they also gave us garlands! The music and dancing continued as this was happening. We then followed the crowd to the stage just outside the church. The dancing and singing continued. We were told the celebration would continue even after our departure.

We were served tea in between our joining in with the dancing and singing and energy, which at this point was already at explosive levels! Old men were dancing, playing metal maracas. A circle had formed with drummers in the middle and dancers 8-step dancing around them. We found their joy as we danced and sang and worshiped our God. It was our turn to be treated to worship.

As we sat after this time of dance, the ladies with the water came back. "What will they do now?" we thought! Well, they started to wash our feet! Now I know you remember the story of Mary washing Jesus' feet in the Bible. Often I have reflected on this story with my peers and just thought, "Ho hum. That's pretty cool but I can't really imagine that." Well now here it was happening to me, and I was speechless. This sign of acceptance and love moved Sanjay to tears. Our feet, the lowest part of the body both physically and morally, dirty with a day of collecting dust, were being washed by women with their own hands, without a cloth except the towel used to dry them.

After this we did share a program with them, and the Spirit kept moving. We left far after dark had covered the stage and gathering area outside the church.

The message we share with congregations in the U.S. about the strength of the global church and of the importance of unifying the global church was exemplified in the worship we shared with the people of Salba. I thank God for the chance to have experienced something so powerful and moving. I thank the people of India for their faith and the people of the United States for their faith and support of our trip overseas.

May God bless us all,

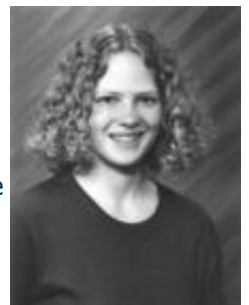
Paul

Date: 4/23/2003

Submitted by: Debbie Holte

Journal Entry:

After more than 3 months in India, we finally got our chance to visit the beautiful country of Nepal. So this morning we took a couple of taxis to the airport in Delhi. As we waited at the gate, we talked to a girl about our age named Liron, from Israel. She was also headed to Nepal, to go trekking and find an old friend. She was very relieved to find us so she would have someone to travel with and talk to. Boni, Dain, Liron, and I sat on the airport floor playing UNO (they have similar game in Israel). (Oh, and just a side note: things are just as overpriced at airports in India as they are in the U.S. Paul bought a soda pop (watered down) for 20 rupees that should have cost 5 rupees.)



Debbie Holte

There was hardly anyone on the airplane. It was weird, but it was nice to have so much space. I suppose part of the reason the plane was so empty was because of the strike in Nepal. All across Nepal was a government-enforced bandh, which means that all the stores were forced to be closed and only official vehicles were allowed to travel. So maybe some people decided not to go to Nepal today. But we went.

We got to the airport, went through customs, changed some money into Nepali rupees, said goodbye to Liron, then managed to find one of just a few vehicles that were either allowed to travel, or willing to risk being caught traveling during a bandh. Our driver drove us to our guest house for a large sum of money.

We had to knock very loudly on the metal door of our guest house until the owner heard us and let us in. Our contact had already made reservations for us.

Our rooms were upstairs, so we lugged all of our heavy luggage up four flights of stairs. Our reward for the long trip upstairs was that we had a nice view of Kathmandu. There wasn't much happening outside, because of the bandh, but I enjoyed looking out. Kathmandu looks much more Asian than India. Some of the people look Indian, and some look Chinese. And there are many people who fall in the middle of the spectrum.

Looks like it will be an exciting and interesting 10 days in Nepal. That's all for now. More later.

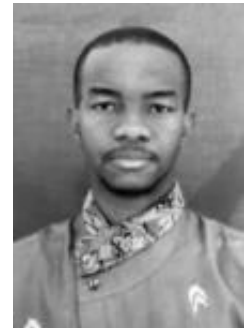
Debbie

Date: 4/24/2003

Submitted by: Boniface Adam Eliona Kombo

Journal Entry:

Well, I waked up very early today. I waked around 4:30 Am, to catch a bus heading to Pokhara (POK), where we are going to meet our contact and performing programs. Remember that we are now in Nepal. We arrived here in Kathmandu (KTM) yesterday and going to be here for 10 days, doing our programs. There are soldiers and Armour vans everywhere, from airport to suburbs of Kathmandu. Anyway, forget about that! Our trip from KTM to POK took like 10 hours of driving. On the way to a bus stop, we drove by many people, who were done different things. Some were cleaning their houses, some headed to work places; and others, who really excited me, where those were doing some exercises, jogging and other physical exercises (PE). Those were youths and adults. I normally enjoy a lot seeing people doing some PE to make bodies physical fits, as well as their health.



Boniface Adam Eliona Kombo

The scenery on the way from KTM to POK was very good, very attractive. It was greenish everywhere. Weather was very good too. Nepal is a very good place for those who like natural vegetations and hiking of mountains. POK area is very famous for tourism. Many tourists come this place for hiking mountainous ranges found in this country, sites seeing, as well as to have fun. Our journey was to go up a hill. On a road, a line was very long. There were many vehicles, small and big ones; buses and lorries. All were heading to POK. After waiting for a while, our bus driver decided to leave a high way road and take a non-official narrow road. The road was for a single vehicle only. Some vehicles followed behind us. On this road, sometimes we did a thing I have not seen before. We went backwards up a hill twice and then continued as normal. I think this is something new for me. I learnt something there. This road was also through a dried river. Some places in it, where slippery due to fine coarse of soil. Some had ravines, so it was difficult for vehicles, especially small ones, to move very easily, till addition of some rocks or pushing them. Some indigenous, who live nearby, put some barriers to stop moving vehicles and asked for money as toll for using that way. After awhile driving, we emerged into the same high way again and continued with the journey up to POK. We arrived there at 4 pm instead of noontime; thus we were late to do a program with students' conference, as it was planned by our contact Mr. Hari Prasad Nyaupane (Daniel), a Brahmin Hindu converted. But we went to that conference, performed two songs; and came then

here in a hotel, where we will be staying for some time while here. And I call it a day. This is Nepal. It seems that things are very easy! Boni!

SWAHILI:

Nimeamka siku ya leo saa 10:30 za usiku. Kuamka mapema huku ni kwa ajili ya kusafiri kuelekea eneo litwalo Pokhara (POK), ambapo ndipo tutakapokuwa na maonesho ya kufanya. Kumbuka kwamba tuko katika nchi ya Nepal. Tumefika katika nchi hii katika mji mkuu wa Kathmandu (KTM) siku ya jana kutokea India. Tutakuwa katika nchi hii kwa siku kama 10 hivi tukiendelea na huduma yetu ya injili kwa kila kiumbe; japokuwa tumepata kimuyemuye baada ya kuona kila mahali kuna askari wengi wakiwa na silaha na magari ya vita. Tuachane na hayo! Safari ilichukua muda wa masaa kama 10, kwa basi. Njiani wakati wa kuelekea kwenye kituo cha basi, kulikuwa na watu kadhaa wakiwa katika shughuli tofauti tofauti. Kuna wale waliokuwa wakifanya usafi wa maeneo ya nyumba zao, waliokuwa wakielekea makazini na walionivutia zaidi ni wale waliokuwa wakifanya mazoezi ya miili yao; wake kwa waume, vijana na watu wazima. Ninavutiwa sana na watu wenye kufanya mazoezi ya miili yao na hivyo kuiweka katika hali nzuri, kimaumbile na kiafya.

Mandhari ya huko njiani, toka KTM hadi POK, ilikuwa ni nzuri sana. Milima kila mahali. Kijani kibichi kila sehemu. Hali ya hewa ilikuwa muruwa kabisa. Kwa kweli kunavutia sana kwa watu wapendao uoto wa asili pamoja na kupanda milima. Eneo hili la POK ni maarufu kwa watalii. Watalii wengi huja eneo hili kwa ajili ya kupanda milima mingi iliyopo katika nchi hii. Safari yetu ilikuwa ni ya kuelekea milimani. Magari madogo, malori, mabasi ya abiria, yalikuwa mengi sana njiani. Yote haya yalikuwa yakielekea POK. Msururu wa ulikuwa ni mkubwa sana. Baada ya kusubiri sehemu moja kwa zaidi ya saa nzima, dereva wa basi letu aliamua kuacha barabara na kufuata uchochoro fulani hivi kuelekea bondeni. Njia hiyo haikuwa pana hata kidogo. Ilikuwa ni njia ya gari moja tu, sio ya kupishana magari mawili. Baadhi ya magari mengine yalitufuata nyuma. Katika njia hii kuna sehemu kadhaa ilibidi turudi kinyumenyume ili kupandisha kilima halafu ndipo tuendelea na safari kama kawaida. Hili lilikuwa ni jambo geni sana kwangu. Naona nitakuwa nimepata funzo la jinsi ya kuendesha eneo kama hilo. Njia hii pia ilikuwa ikielekea mtoni, ulikuwa mkavu hauna maji. Sehemu kadhaa zilizokuwa na udongo mwepesi, zilikuwa zinateleza; na zingine zilikuwa na makorongo, ambapo magari madogo hayakuweza kupita kwa urahisi hadi kuweka mawe ama kusukuma gari. Wenyeji wa maeneo karibu na mto huo walikuwa wameweka vizuizi njiani ili wenye magari watoe fedha kama kibali cha kuruhusiwa kupita mtoni humo. Vizuizi hivi vilikuwa sehemu kadhaa mtoni huko. Baada mwendo wa muda hivi tulitokea tena katika barabara kuu na kuendelea na safari yetu hadi POK. Tuliwasili POK majira ya saa 10 za jioni. Kwa sababu tulichelewa kufika tofauti na muda uliotarajiwa, tukawa tumeshindwa kufanya onesho rasmi kama ilivyokuwa imepangwa na mwenyeji wetu kwa siku hii, Bwana Hari Prasad Nyaupane (Daniel), mhindu-brahimin aliyebadili dini na kuwa mkristo. Hivyo tulienda eneo tulikotakiwa kuwa onesho, katika kusanyiko la wanafunzi wa kikristo na kuimba nyimbo 2 tu, kisha kurudi katika hoteli tuliyofikia. Mambo ya Nepal hayo! Vitu vyaenda kirahisi tu. Tuseme siku imekwisha. Boni!

Date: 4/28/2003

Submitted by: Miriam Anderson

Journal Entry:

This seems to be an oddity that has found and followed us throughout India and now into Nepal. It seems that every time we are even in the vicinity of a hospital we stop in for the full guided tour. We have seen emergency rooms, cancer wards, leprosy wings and even some orthopedic surgery once. Jason calls this our "all access Caucasian pass." Whatever the reason, we have seen more than our fair share of the inner workings of hospitals. Fortunately, these trips are usually just for our enjoyment, but today Paul and I broke the record. I have had a nasty derivative of the common cold, and Paul has had something much yuckier of which I will spare you the details. So while our teammates used their all access Caucasian passes and cooled their parched palates with a chota Pepsi or two, Paul and I sat together with our contact in the examination room of the ER. As is apt to happen in a hospital emergency room, the doctor was quite busy and we had a healthy wait. So to while away the time, I diagnosed Hari our contact. His complaint was that after he's done eating, he doesn't seem to have an appetite anymore. I told him it's best to just keep eating, cramming



Miriam Anderson

more and more food down. Finally, the doc came back to have a look at us. Really, it was just like the States. He listened to me breathe, took my pulse, had me stick out my tongue and say, "Ahhhh..." I don't know exactly what was wrong with me but I got some pink pills that taste like dirt, some little white tablets that don't taste like anything and some nice pungent gargle stuff for my throat. Paul's experience was almost better than mine, but I'm afraid he'll have to tell you about that.

Date: 4/29/2003

Submitted by: Debbie Holte

Journal Entry:

There was another bandh today. There's a lot I don't understand about these things, but I guess they're supposed to inconvenience people. And they certainly do. It's annoying. But on the other hand, it's kind of like a mandatory vacation. If you can't go to school or work, you can rest, right?

Despite the bandh, we did have a program tonight. We are in Tansen, which is a picturesque town, nestled in the hills. So we walked downhill, then uphill again to get to the little church where we did our program.

The strike forced our contact to rearrange our schedule quite a bit, and as a result, we haven't done too much programming. So we were very excited to have an opportunity to share music and stories with the fine people of Tansen. We even tried to learn a song in Nepali about Tansen. It is about how beautiful Tansen is and praising God because of the beauty. We attempted to sing it at our program, but it didn't go so well. At least the congregants seemed supportive and glad that we had tried. I guess we'll have to work on that one a bit more before we perform it in the states.

When we finished our program, we talked with several people from the congregation. They seemed so grateful that we had come. Some said they had never felt so much joy. One woman in particular seemed very touched. She knew she had to leave, but she didn't want to and she didn't have all the words she needed to express how she was feeling. Again I am amazed at how God works and uses us to reach others.

Well, I never ate lunch, due in part to the strike, and partly because I wasn't hungry at lunchtime. But after our program, I was famished and feeling pretty sick. We ordered supper at our hotel and I played Uno with Boni and Dain while we waited. It seemed like we had to wait forever, but at least that gave me the chance to win 4 games of Uno :) (of course, Boni also won 4 games and Dain won even more than that).

Peace,
Debbie



Debbie Holte

Date: 4/30/2003

Submitted by: Boniface Adam Eliona Kombo

Journal Entry:

We are like really tourists here in Nepal. We do not have much to do. Since we arrived here, we are staying in hotels. Though these hotels are not very expensive ones or those, which tourists like to stay in. We are going to be in Nepal for a very short time compared to that we stayed in India. Second, there are some difficulties for the mission work here in Nepal due to the king's policy, which is Hindu. So, since we arrived here we have had only 3 programs. One was only for two songs and other two were somehow like normal programs.



Boniface Adam Eliona Kombo

This morning we traveled from Tansen, where is a home place of our contact Mr. Daniel. We traveled by bus and he used his motorbike. Our journey was about 2:30 hours. Tonight, Daniel took

us and went to show us a place where kings of this area used to live, and he took us also for a dinner. In that area, some remaining of the castle that was used by the last king is still there. These remnants are kept there as the remembrance of the last king and his kingdom. There is also a garden made as attraction for visitors who go visiting that historic area. The kings who dwelt there were Hindu. This is a strange thing because the founder of Buddha was born here in Nepal. But only 7% of a total population is Buddhists, while majority is Hindu. Many Buddhists are in different countries. It is true that "No prophet is accepted into his own land". Tehe tehe...! Bye! Boni!

SWAHILI:

Hapa Nepal tumekuwa kama watalii. Hatuna mambo mengi sana ya kufanya. Tunaishi katika hoteli mbalimbali, japo sio zile za watalii kabisa. Kwanza tuna siku chache za kukaa hapa tofauti na zile tulizokuwa kule India. Pili hapa Nepal ukristo bado haujaingia sana; na pia kuna vipingamizi chungu mzima vya kunyima watu kueneza ukristo. Hivyo toka tufike hapa Nepal siku 6 zilizopita, tumekuwa na maonesho 3 tu. Moja likiwa ni ile siku tulipoimba nyimbo 2 na mawili ndio angalau yalikuwa makubwa kiasi.

Leo asubuhi tuliondoka kutoka Tansen, ambako ndiko nyumbani kwa kuzaliwa kwa mwenyeji wetu Bwana Daniel. Tulipanda basi kwa ajili ya safari yetu na yeye kuendesha pikipiki yake. Safari yetu ilichukua muda wa masaa 2:30 hivi. Na jioni ya leo, bwana Daniel alitupeleka kuona sehemu ambayo walikuwa wakiishi wafalme eneo hili, pamoja na kupata chakula cha usiku. Katika eneo hilo, bado kuna mabaki ya jengo alilotumia mfalme wa mwisho, likiwa kama kumbukumbu ya ufalme huo. Sehemu hiyo imejengewa bustani ili kuvutia watu waendao kutembelea eneo hilo la historia. Wafalme hao walikuwa ni wa dini ya kihindu ambayo ndio kubwa hapa Nepal. La ajabu ni kuwa, Nepal ndio sehemu alipozaliwa mwanzilishi wa dini ya Buddha; lakini Nepal ina 7% tu za wa-buddha. Wengi wa raia ni dini ya kihindu. Wabuddha wengi wanapatikana katika nchi zingine. Kweli "Nabii hatambuliki nyumbani kwake" Tehe tehe..! Kwaheri! Boni!

Date: 5/5/2003

Submitted by: Debbie Holte

Journal Entry:

The Taj Mahal! We got to spend our last day in India at the Taj Mahal-one of the Seven Wonders of the World. It was really neat. It took 4 hours by car to get there and cost a pretty hefty amount to get in (for foreigners), but it was quite a sight to see.

Taj means "crown" and Mahal means "palace," so it is the "crown palace." It was built by the Raj Jehan, for his third and favorite wife, Mumtaz, in the 17th century. The tomb is in the "crown," which was constructed of beautiful Indian marble. Unlike other kinds of marble, Indian marble is not porous, so its color cannot be changed by things like rain or wine or coffee. Inlaid in the marble are ornate flowers and designs made of precious stones. Some of the stones have the special effect that when light shines on them, they glow or sparkle.

I was amazed not only by the beauty and richness of the Taj, but by the careful planning and deliberateness of the design. The Raj called on architects from all over the world to design a tomb for his wife, but only one man from Turkey could come close to the vision the Raj had.

The whole palace is based on symmetry. Around the central dome of the crown are 4 smaller domes and 4 large pillars. The pillars were built leaning slightly outward so that just in case they would fall, they would fall out and not ruin the dome. On the east and west sides of the crown are two buildings, like shoulders. The rest of the palace is symmetrical as well. The Raj began having another Taj constructed out of black marble to complete the symmetry. This was where he was to be buried. This part was never completed, however, so the Raj was buried in the white tomb with his 3rd wife.

The dome is incredible. If you yell in the dome room you can hear a 15 second reverb. It's amazing. Around the doorways are Arabic writings from the Koran, written in black marble. Again, attention was paid to details. The doorways are very tall, so the people who inlaid the black marble made the letters progressively larger as they went higher, so that from ground level, they all appear to be the



Debbie Holte

same size. It's incredible.

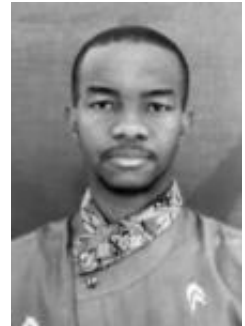
As I stepped back and looked at the Taj Mahal, I thought about the Raj and his wife. He built this unbelievable building for his wife because he loved her so much. What would possess a man to spend 22 years and 5 million rupees (back in the 17th century) on one woman? I cannot fathom the love he must have had for her.

Even more incredibly than that, God sacrificed his only son for some people who constantly disobey him and doubt him. Was God crazy? Or is it just that he loves us so much that he would spare no cost for our salvation. I believe it's the latter. And seeing the Taj Mahal gave me a new perspective on God's incredible love for us. And I can't wait to see his palace in heaven!

Date: 5/6/2003

Submitted by: Boniface Adam Eliona Kombo

Journal Entry:



Boniface Adam Eliona Kombo

Many Greetings! No doubt, I was not on air for a long time; since mid-March, whoa! I am back now as usual. Yahoo...! Today is the day. Tomorrow never come! Today we came back from overseas tour. We are back again here in states from India and Nepal, where we stayed for 16 weeks or 112 days. We were there from mid-January to this date. Our journey took 22 hours by a plane.. Yuck! Can you imagine...22 hours on air! You are starting a journey of 22 hours on Tuesday, May 06, and arriving to your destination at same date and same day. Isn't it a strange thing? But bear into mind that India is about 11 hours ahead of US. Ok, we are really tired after that long trip, consider that we did not sleep the night before the trip. From morning, last day, we were visiting Taj Mahal, situated at Agra, in the northern part of India (for more information about Taj's trip read Debbielicious Holte-Debbie's pleasing journal of May05). We came back to our hotel from Taj around 8 pm. We then finished packing and did other clearance of rooms, etc, around 11 pm. We were supposed to report at airport at 3 Am. We started our journey from hotel, which is a little bit awhile to airport at 2 Am. Our journey supposed to start at 5 Am. And for a certain reason that we did know, we started at 6 Am. Meanwhile, before that delay, Debbie would not be able to make her next plane to Minnesota, after arrival at O-hare; for we would be late than we expected before.

Our first trip started at Indira Gandh International Airport (IGIA) in New Delhi. We boarded into Air India. At the airport-IGIA, there were many people. Travelers like us, and people who just escorted them. The plane was heading to Chatrapathi Shivaji International Airport in Mombay (Bombay), where we switched into another plane heading to O-Hare. Majority of the travelers, more than 90%, were Indians. We had good services in the plane, a lot of food as well. In the first plane, around 7 Am, we had a juice and snacks and then a breakfast. Around 9 Am we had a food. This was in the second plane. Some hours later, around 1 or 2pm, we had food again (all times were according to Indian time. I changed time after arriving at O-Hare)). I had a hard time, really. I forced myself as best as I could to eat more, but I did not have any space in my stomach for more food. This was due to tiredness and been in plane for long time. Okay, now we are back in states. Only one thing is remaining now, to tour within different states as we did before, into churches, nursing homes, schools, etc, sharing our experience about India and Nepal. For some few days we are going to be in vacation, to rest and gain strength for the last tour. Thanks to the Beneficent, for being with us from the beginning of this program, especially this tour up to now. Please be with us to the end of it this coming August. See you after vacation. Bye! Boni!

SWAHILI:

Salamu Sana! Nimekuwa siko hewani kwa muda sasa toka katikati ya mwezi wa 3. Lakini sasa ndio nimesharudi hewani kama kawaida. Uhuuh...! Leo ndio leo; asemaye kesho muongo. Leo ndio ile siku tumerudisha "majeshi" nyumbani. Tumerudi tena hapa Amerika baada ya kuwa pale India na kule Nepal, ambapo tumekaa kwa wiki 16 ama siku 112. Tulikuwa huko toka katikati ya Januari mwaka huu hadi siku hii ya leo. Safari yetu ilikuwa ni ya masaa 22 hewani. Hebu fikiriri masaa 22 uko hewani...! Unaondoka Jumanne tarehe 06 ya Mei, unafika tarehe hiyo hiyo na siku hiyo hiyo

baada ya masaa yote hayo. Inashangaza ama sivyo!? Kumbuka kwamba India iko mbele kwa masaa kama 11. mmh..., tumerudi ni wachovu kweli kweli, ukizingatia kwamba hata usiku wa kuamkia safari hatukulala. Kuanzia majira ya asubuhi siku ya jana, tulienda kutazama Taj Mahal iliyo katika jimbo la Agra, kaskazini mwa India (soma habari murua za safari ya Taj toka bibie Debbielicious-Debbie Holte). Tulirudi toka Taj usiku wa saa 2 hivi, kisha tukamalizia kupaki na kufanya shughuli zingine muhimu hadi kwenye saa 5 hivi za usiku. Saa 9 za usiku ndio tulitakiwa turipoti uwanjani. Hivyo tuliondoka hotelini ambako kuna umbali kidogo hadi kufika uwanjani kwenye saa 8 hivi. Safari yetu ilikuwa ianze saa 11 asubuhi, lakini ndege yetu iliondoka pale IGIA saa 12 za asubuhi badala ya saa 11. Hatukuweza kufahamu kuchelewa huko kulitokana na nini. Wakati huo huo, kabla ya kuchelewa huku, safari yetu ilikuwa imeshasababisha Debbie kutowahi kupanda ndege nyingine ya kumfikisha Minnesota, mara baada ya kufika Chicago.

Uwanja tulipoanzia safari yetu ni wa kimataifa wa Indira Gandh (IGIA) pale New Delhi. Ndege yetu ilikuwa ni ya shirika la ya Air India. Uwanjani pale, IGIA, kulikuwa na watu wengi sana muda huo hata usingeweza kudhani ni usiku wa manane. Kuna wale waliosindikiza ndugu zao waliokuwa wakisafiri kuelekea sehemu tofauti tofauti za dunia pamoja na wale wasafiri kama sisi. Ndege hii ilikuwa ikielekea katika uwanja wa kimataifa wa Chatrapathi Shivaji, Mombay (Bombay), ambapo tungeunganisha ndege nyingine ya kuelekea Chicago, O-Hare. Abiria katika ndege zote 2, asilimia zaidi ya 90 walikuwa ni "magabachori". Kwenye ndege hizo tulipata huduma za chakula na viburudisho. Ndege ya kwanza walitupa juisi na kisha wakatupa kifungua kinywa. Hii ilikuwa kama saa 1 hivi. Kwenye ndege ya pili, kwenye saa 3 hivi, tukapata tena chakula. Baadae labda kwenye saa 7 ama 8 hivi tukaletewa tena "msosi" mwingine (Masaa yote haya bado yalikuwa katika masaa ya India. Nilibadilisha muda katika saa yangu baada ya kuwasili O-Hare). Kwa kweli ilikuwa ni shida kupata nafasi katika tumbo ili kuweka vyakula hivi vyote. Nilijilazimisha kula hivyo hivyo, kidogo kidogo, kwa kiasi tulichoweza na kubakiza kingine. Mara baada ya muda tena walitupa chakula kingine. Duh, sasa imekuwa shida! Ukichanganya uchovu wa kukaa muda mrefu kwenye ndege na ule wa chakula, sijui unapata kitu gani hapo! Hata siwezi kuelezea. Basi bwana, ndio tumeshafika hapa Chicago. Imebaki shughuli moja tu. Kuzunguka sehemu mbali mbali za hapa Amerika, ili kushirikisha wakristo habari za Uhindini na Nepal. Kwa siku chache tutakuwa mapumzikoni ili kurejesha nguvu mwilini bila ya kuwa wachovu sana na kuanza kibarua ngwe ya mwisho. Tunamshukuru Mungu kwa kutusafirisha salama na kutulinda toka pale mwanzoni hadi wakati huu. Naamini atakuwa nasi hadi mwisho wa safari yetu hapo mwezi wa nane. Tuonane mara baada ya mapumziko. Kwaheri ya muda! Boni!

Date: 5/20/2003

Submitted by: Paul Nichols

Journal Entry:

Greeting once again from Rainbow of Promise, this time from the United States! We are back in the swing of things, except for my brain, which is mush. I'm having trouble synthesizing all of the experiences we have had over the past four months, and composing any order to things like a team schedule or questions I must ask contacts... which is kinda bad for a team leader. The daily routine will have me back in working order very soon, I expect.



Paul Nichols

Last night we were blessed enough to participate in Youth Encounter's annual fellowship dinner. The focus of the event was on YE's international ministry. The First Lady of Tanzania was in attendance and shared some words with us, as well as some other distinguished guests. We were able to play some gathering music and present a couple of songs and some memories during the festivities. Now I'm not trying to win brownie points, but YE's president, Larry Johnson, shared about 40 stories of an international nature that highlighted the impact YE's ministry is having. It moved me to tears. A couple of the stories really hit home because they were set in India: our time singing in front of over 2,500 students, most of whom were of the Hindu faith; and a visit to a slum where some mothers requested that Debbie and Dain give their names to their babies.

The impact of our ministry is known and unknown in so many ways. We saw the direct impact and joy of our ministry in India and Nepal because people would tell us exactly how they were affected and we can see the smiling faces of people we have just worshiped with. The same happens here in

the states. It's comforting to know, however, that the effect of our ministry is not short term or just local. God works during our programs and continues to work in the hearts of people we've met. He also works through the prayers we daily offer up on behalf of those we've met.

The fellowship dinner was a great reminder of the importance of this ministry. Thank you all for supporting us and furthering the kingdom of God!!

Paul

Date: 5/27/2003

Submitted by: Debbie Holte

Journal Entry:

It's a small world after all. We spent Sunday and Monday in Marshfield, Wisconsin. I suppose the name of the town should have rung a bell for me earlier, but it wasn't until we met the boys' host family that I realized my connection with the place. We arrived at the church and a girl our age met us at our shuttle. Sharon looked familiar, but I could not figure out why. We followed her to her house (the boys' host home) and we met her parents. Very shortly thereafter, we started looking at their pictures of their kids. There were senior pictures of Sharon and her two sisters. Wait. I knew one of them! Kristi. Now it was all starting to come together for me. I went on a Spoke Folk tour with Kristi in Iowa in 1996. Kristi went on to do two Captive Free tours. Getting information from her while she was on those tours was part of what sparked my interest in being on a Youth Encounter team. Wow! But not only that, I used to be in a drum corps and ran in to Kristi and her whole family at a drum corps show in Wausau, Wisconsin in 1997. That's why Sharon looked familiar. Crazy. Jason and Miriam both had connections with this family, too. Jason and Sharon have mutual friends from Concordia, St. Paul, and Miriam's sister Sarah was on team the same year Kristi was.



Debbie Holte

It's always fun to make connections with people all over this country and this world. I met a woman in India that I had met previously in northern Minnesota. I've run into several people that I met on Spoke Folk tours, people who went to the same college as me, people who know people who go to my home church, etc. There are connections all over the place. And it's been fun to be able to travel and make those connections and realize just how inter-related we humans are. What we do can really make an impact on others, even if we don't realize it. I don't know if Kristi realizes that she influenced me by making me consider joining Captive Free, but she did. I may never know the people I've influenced, but it's neat to be reminded that the people I've met are still out there living their lives. And, you just never know when you might run in to some of those people again. And even if we never meet again on this earth, I can look forward to being reunited with them in heaven. (It's a little cheesy, but it's true.)

So, I hope that all of you reading this will be able to make some connections with people, to influence and be influenced, and can invite people to the Eternal Party, where we will all be united.

Debbie

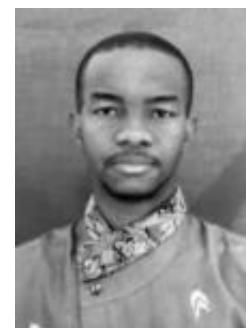
Date: 5/29/2003

Submitted by: Boniface Adam Eliona Kombo

Journal Entry:

Hallow there,

Today is a very special day...! Guess what...? It is my Birthday! Woo huh! Thank You God for giving me another year to serve you. So, today is another commemoration of my birth day far away from my family. I have celebrated four b/days without being with my family. Three of those I was in seminary and now I am on team. This thus, means that, my family is those people who are there with me during a special day like this. Those



Boniface Adam Eliona Kombo

are friends-colleagues in seminary, my teammates and host homes, here in states.

It is such an awesome thing, seeing people around care about you. One of two host homes I had for this day, asked me yesterday night, on how we celebrate b/days in my country. I told them. It is not a thing that everybody/family does and there are also many differences on how we do depending on families or that particular person with b/day. Early in this morning, my host family prepared a special breakfast and made me a cake. We ate that cake all together, except host dad, two host brothers, who went to work and to get more knowledge, respectively. Therefore, my host mom, a host sister, my teammates, a pastor and other teammates' hosts parents and kids were there to celebrate with me. The other host home where I am staying this night, gave me a couple of phone cards to call Africa. So I may get hook up with my family back home. Yahoo!

Yes, we are doing ministry, serving God through music, our faith, etc, etc. But, we are also received service(s) from God's people, who are always there to take care of us, participating and supporting this ministry in different ways. People who are care enough about our moments of happiness such as b/days, etc. Though..."God help us to know and number our days that we may apply and prepare our hearts into wisdom..." (Psalms. 90:12). Praise God for all these wonderful people! God Bless You All. See you later!

Boni.

SWAHILI:

Halo ndugu,

Leo ni siku maalum...! Unaweza kubahatisha? Ni siku ya kukumbuka kuzaliwa kwangu! Uuhuu! Shukrani kwa Mungu kwa kuona mwaka mwingine wa kukutumikia. Leo ninasherehekea kwa mara ya nne siku ya kuzaliwa kwangu nikiwa mbali na familia yangu, mbali na nyumbani. Tatu kati ya hizo 4 nilikuwa chuoni nah ii ya nne nipo hapa katika timu. Hii inamaanisha kwamba, ndugu zangu kwa mara zote nne hizi ni watu ambao wanakuwa karibu kwa kipindi hicho, km wanazuoni wenzangu, wenzangu katika timu na nyumba nilizokaa kwa siku hii ya kuzaliwa.

Kitu cha kufurahisha ni kuona jinsi watu wanavyojali wengine. Mmojawapo ya nyumba mbili nilizokaa toka jana hadi leo hii, waliniuliza kuhusu tunavyosherehekea siku kama hii katika nchi yangu. Hiyo ilikuwa ni jana usiku, na niliwaeleza kuwa tuna tofauti sana katika jambo hilo kutegemeana na mtu na mtu, ama familia na familia. Mapema asubuhi ya leo, ndugu hawa waliniandalia kifungua kinywa maalum. Pia walitengeneza keki, ambayo tuliila mama wa nyumba hiyo, mmoja wa watoto wake, mchungaji wa ushrika tuliokuwepo pamoja na wenzangu. Baba wa nyumba pamoja na watoto wawili hawakuwepo kutokana na kwenda kazini na shuleni. Baadae jioni, nyumba hii nilipo, wamenipa kadi maalum za kupiga simu Afrika, ambazo nitatumia kuwasiliana na familia yangu iliyoko huko. Yap...Yap...!

Nafahamu kwamba tunafanya huduma ya uinjilisti kupitia muziki, kushirikishana mambo ya imani, nk; lakini pia tunapokea huduma toka kwa wakristo. Watu hawa wa Mungu wako tayari kila mara na kila wakati kusaidia kwa lolote linalowezezana kufanywa/ kusaidia. Wako imara na makini katika kutenda na kujitoa kufanya huduma hii pamoja nasi, kupitia njia tofauti tofauti, km kukumbuka siku ya kuzaliwa, nk. Ingawa... Mungu tusaidie kujua na kuzihesabu siku zetu ili tuandae mioyo.. (Zaburi 90:12) Ni jambo la kumshukuru sana Mungu kwa ajili ya watu kama hawa. Mungu Awabariki watu wake. Kwaheri!

Boni.

Date: 6/3/2003

Submitted by: Paul Nichols

Journal Entry:

The return tour is off and running but I'm still lost in memories of our trip to India and our entire year. I'm fascinated that a year serving God could be so productive. I don't know how many lives I was expecting to touch over the course of this year, but I'm pretty sure it doesn't matter. Let me put this in perspective.



Because we are visiting many churches that we visited prior to our India trip, we get to meet and catch up with many people we have seen before. It is a blessed experience that the impression we've left on people gets vocalized to us in these catch-up sessions. So I often find myself in awe that we as Rainbow of Promise have such an enduring impact in the lives of people that we see for only a few hours. I guess that makes sense, though, if you take into consideration the power of the Gospel message. It works by itself very powerfully. When given a push by a song we sing or skit we act out, the message of Jesus finds doorways into people's hearts that may not have been open through only the spoken or written Word. Our return trip will continue to bless me, then, as much as our trip to India. **Paul Nichols**

My brain wanders easily as I ponder this realization and try to grasp the work that Christians are doing all around the world to further the cause. My brain wanders into the depths of future uncertainty: a job search; where I'll live; if I'll write those grad papers hanging over my head; and is brought back to reality by the very real necessity to continue to proclaim the Gospel as much here in the states as much as anywhere else in the world. So I take comfort knowing that this year has been and is productive, fruitful, and has been a year of personal growth. I'll continue being lost in my memories of the past and the made-up stories of my future, but I'll be grounded in the confidence that proclaiming the Gospel with Rainbow of Promise is God's will for me today.

Date: 6/5/2003

Submitted by: Dain Swanson

Journal Entry:

Livonia, Michigan,

Upon returning to Livonia I noticed something. I noticed that there was a different atmosphere about the church and people around us. I thought to myself: "Is it because they know us? Is it because they have an interest in our travels? Do they see us as better people and accomplished because of what we have done? Do they only want to buy a t-shirt?" I thought for a while and realized that the people around us had a true interest in the culture of India and Nepal and our experience. It was a truly positive experience for me. Not only could I relate to times that my host family and I had in the fall but we could bypass the typical 'host home' questions and move straight to the stories from our trip. We shared about the youth and adult Christians overseas and I noticed a sincere curiosity in the subject.



Dain Swanson

When a family, mom and dad, or even an individual takes a true interest in the culture of India and Nepal I feel privileged to share with them what I know. It is strange to think that I am the only part of those countries that most of the people in the United States I meet will experience. I have also come to realize the wealth of knowledge that others people have as well. Conversations about Indian culture have sparked so many different topics concerning world events and other overseas familiarity. In turn I have learned more about other countries that I have not been to because of our time in another country.

Everyday I realize that relational ministry does not only happen in the church. As a matter of fact, the majority of it happens when I get into a car and ride to the home I will be staying for the evening. Those are the times that I value the most now that I am back in the United States. I thank God for the opportunity to share my knowledge with whomever I can, but I feel truly blessed knowing that we are creating a better awareness of the global church and Christianity throughout the world through host home ministry.

Peace,
dain

Date: 6/10/2003

Submitted by: Debbie Holte

Journal Entry:

Today we left good ol' Valparaiso, Indiana and left for East Canton, Ohio to visit Miriam's home church. But our journey was not without incident. First, about two hours into our supposedly 6 hour drive, we realized that we were missing one drum, several rhythm instruments, and the bottoms of our guitar stands. We had left them in the trunk of our contact's car after we had a jam session at one of our host homes. Ugh. Oh well, that wasn't too bad since we actually have another drum just like the one we left and a couple of shakey eggs. Boni even figured out an inventive way to use our guitar stands without the bottoms. So, that wasn't really too big a deal. We can do without those things until we have a chance to swing by and pick them up on our way to Minnesota.



Debbie Holte

But unfortunately, our supposed 6 hour drive became a seven and a half hour drive. That was due in part to underestimating, and in part to getting on the wrong road partway through the drive. We must have missed the point where two highways split and taken the wrong highway. I'm not sure, but it took us a while to correct our mistake. But really, I think that is the first time we have taken the wrong road for a few miles all year. So, I'd say we've done pretty well.

We obviously got to Indian Run Christian Church a bit late, but Pastor Terry was very understanding and graceful. We ate supper right away and then set up our equipment. We had enough time, despite being an hour and a half late. Our program was a little different with a different drum and not as much time to mentally prepare as we would have liked, but I know that Miriam's family and friends were glad we were there and had a good time. I was really glad we could go to Miriam's church too and I wish for her sake at least that we could have stayed longer so she could have spent more time with her family. But, we have other churches to visit.

Praise the Lord for his grace. We have had safe travel all year and have very rarely gotten lost (and then only temporarily). Thank god for the graciousness of all those who house us and provide for us; for all the churches that take the time and resources necessary to have us come to their churches; for the people who support us financially and prayerfully; and for all those who are such important parts of our ministry. God bless you all.

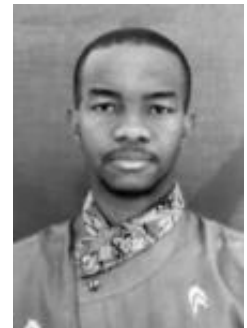
Debbie

Date: 6/12/2003

Submitted by: Boniface Adam Eliona Kombo

Journal Entry:

It seems that, days are moving so fast now. 58 days left so far, before the end of this ministry; and thus team members will go either home to meet their families & relatives or going to work somewhere. But there are also some team members, who still are not sure what they are going to do after team. On the one hand, it is kind of sad news, knowing that, people will not be together again, enjoying and participating in this ministry. On the other hand, it is kind of nice, knowing that some people, like Ferdi, Kirsten, some from Canada & I, who have been very far away from home, are going to meet families & relatives. Wahoo!



Boniface Adam Eliona Kombo

Programs are going on well. There are some times when you may think, "...oh boy, I wish this program will keep going on, and not stopping..." All these caused by seeing how people, with advance ages to kids, are so excited, so happy and alive; participating with you well. Sometimes, you may see people with advance ages are more active than young and kids. And sometimes, things are irreversible. Anyway, all these experiences may leave one very happy and excited. So today, during program, there was a small kid, about 3/4 years old, was very fun. She danced a lot, as music video girls do (if you are a good follower of music stuff), all the time we were singing a song. She is going to sleep very very tired tonight, hopefully. This kid is not yet in dancing school, but learns how to dance by herself, through watching music shows. It is said that, perhaps her "mischievous" came from her grandma. Whether that came from her grandma or not, this kid is talented to learn something by herself. That is so great. Almost the entire program, I was surprised by her amazingly dancing skills, because she is still very young to be able to do those dancing stuff.

She made me smiling & laughing, especially, during our second song before closing of program. So, what do you think, seeing fun things like this? Be happy! Yap! Keep it up Kennedy! See you! Boni.

SWAHILI:

Siku zinakwenda mbio kweli kweli. Zimebaki siku 58 tu kumaliza hii huduma tunayoifanya, na pia kutawanyika kuelekea kwenye mishughuliko mbali mbali. Wengine watakwenda kufanya kazini, wengine masomoni, na wengine bado hawana hakika ya nini kitafanyika mara baada ya muda wa timu kwisha. Kwa sehemu fulani ni huzuni ukianza kufikiria habari ya kutokuwa tena katika timu pamoja na wenzako, hasa ukikumbuka mambo mazuri mnayoyapata/ kuyafanya wote pamoja. Kwa upande mwingine lakini, unafurahia kwa sababu unakwenda tena kujumuika pamoja na familia yako, ambayo hamjaonana kwa muda mrefu sana (hasa kwa watu kama sisi ambao tuko mbali nazo sana).

Maonesho yanaenda vizuri. Kuna wakati unatamani muda usiishe kwa jinsi unavyoona watu, watoto hadi watu wazima, wamechangamka wakiimba na kucheza, wakishangilia yale mnayofanya. Wakati mwingine mambo yanatofautiana. Unaweza kuona watu wazima, tena wazee, wamechangamka zaidi kuliko watoto; na wakati mwingine mambo ni kinyume cha hapo. Siku ya leo, nadhani kwa mara ya kwanza nimeona mtoto mdogo wa miaka kama 3 ama 4, akicheza kwa mitindo mbali mbali ya kisasa, kila mara tulipokuwa tukiimba. Kama wewe ni mfuatiliaji mzuri wa vipindi vya muziki wa kimagharibi, basi binti mdogo huyu alikuwa akicheza mitindo hiyo. Alikuwa amechangamka kweli kweli. Nadhani atalala akiwa hoi kwa uchovu. Binti huyo hayuko katika shule ya muziki. Bado ni mdogo sana kuwemo katika shule, lakini anajifunza mwenyewe kwa kuangalia vipindi vya muziki. Kutokana na minong'ono, inasemekana kwamba "utundu" wa binti huyo ni toka kwa bibi yake! Haijalishi kama "utundu" huo umetoka kwa bibi ama kwa nani. Cha muhimu hapa ni kuwa, binti huyu ana kipaji cha kujifunza kitu mwenyewe. Binti huyu alinifanya nimstaaajabie na kucheka sana karibu muda wote wa onesho letu; lakini hasa wimbo wetu wa pili kutoka mwisho. Katika wimbo huo, binti huyo alikuwa akijinyonga-nyonga, huku umri wake ukiwa bado mdogo. Utajisikia vipi ukiona mambo kama haya? Utajawa na furaha, ama sivyo! Kaza kamba Kennedy! Alamsiki. Boni.

Date: 6/13/2003

Submitted by: Jason Moran

Journal Entry:

So, I am a bit behind on the journal entries these days. Actually, I am pretty far behind, so I thought I would spend a chunk of shuttle ride time to journal a little sumptin-something for all of you. I think that it is important while reflecting back on my time in India and Nepal to bring a few words to mind to those of you faithful journal readers. I did not go to India and Nepal as a missionary. As a matter of fact, missionary activity (i.e. public Gospel proclamation and conversion) is illegal in India and Nepal. So, I was not a missionary, I did no deliberate missionary activity, nor did I convert any people. I went to India and Nepal as a tourist. I toured churches, visited friends, met Christians, made new friends, and even did a little sight seeing. Sure I preached the Gospel message, but for the most part that message was spread to people who had already heard it in the churches and Christian Schools in India and Nepal. Many people greet us in the states with the fanfare of returning missionaries, who brought the Gospel message to the poor pagans in India and Nepal. It is quite the contrary. We visited churches and schools in India and Nepal to come back and let everyone know that the Gospel message is strong in India and Nepal and they are not in need of missionaries... they are in need of prayer support, financial support, and the acknowledgement of their brothers and sisters in the United States. We visited churches in India that were filled with converts from Hinduism... these converts were not reached by western missionaries... they were reached by Indian missionaries. The entire church in Nepal finds its founding in the entrance of the Gospel message by Indian Christians. Indians are the missionaries and we were the observers. People reached out to us with their different cultural methods of proclaiming the gospel truth. We saw the struggles of an eastern church trying to deal with a western church infrastructure. We saw the creativity as culture is included in worship. We now are back in the United States to inform everyone of what we witnessed as we were tourists in the Indian and Nepalese church.



Jason Moran

I just had to get that out there.
Later,
Jason

Date: 6/17/2003
Submitted by: Paul Nichols
Journal Entry:

Happy UCC day!! Today is our first program at a strictly UCC church all year long. I am a life-long member of the UCC, in case you didn't know. We had a nice time doing our international program, and I had a splendid time poking fun at my non-UCC, "pagan" teammates. (They have poked fun at me all year for not being Lutheran, so it was pay-back day.)



Paul Nichols

Our touring is just flying by. As I worry about what life after team will bring, I find myself on our days off looking up job opportunities in the federal, state, and local governments. If you have any leads, let me know at rainbow@youthencounter.org!

God bless all of our supporters!

Paul

Date: 6/19/2003
Submitted by: Dain Swanson
Journal Entry:

Summer is a wonderful time of year for many reasons, one, being outdoors and root beer floats. Both of these summer characteristics were present at Peace Lutheran Church in Waunakee, WI. Rainbow of Promise was privileged enough to be apart of the closing concert for this year's VBS. There was a skit performed by the members involved in VBS and the kids sang the songs that rang with the theme "Fruits of the Spirit," all on an outdoor stage in front of the church. We were about ready to set up whilst the root beer floats were distributed when we got a great idea. "Why don't we do the 'fruits of the spirit' puppet show," inquired Miriam. "You mean the one that we have never practiced," said Paul. "Hey that would be swell," I thought "Let's do it!" So we practiced the show three-fourths of a time and ran quickly to set up for the program.



Dain Swanson

In Galatians "spirit fruits" are listed. "...love, joy, peace, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control." (Gal 5:22) The teammates that I was blessed with this year have been amazing living proof of these traits. Throughout our time in India, Nepal and the United States they constantly exemplify loving their neighbor, kindness to one another, faithfulness to our God and self-control in those times when we may want to explode from stress or lack of sleep. But I would like to add one to the list: improv puppetry! When the time came for our puppet show I had no doubt that we have a high percentage of 'goofing up' the lines. To be honest I was worried because we were ill prepared. But you know what? We pulled it off. With the help of God we did it! Whew.

Continue to thank God for the talents that you have. And be sure to keep on the look out for those that you have not yet discovered.

Peace,

dain

Date: 6/21/2003

Submitted by: Miriam Anderson
Journal Entry:



Miriam Anderson

What's a Guernsey? Good question. I didn't know either until Roger and June, the boys' host parents, decided we all needed some good hometown Wisconsin fun on a Saturday evening. Well, Jason and Dain heard the words "country music" and decided to head into the Twin Cities for the sweet soul music of "Trace" instead. Debbie left us yesterday. She headed home to be in a college roommate's wedding. So Roger, June, Boni, Paul and I piled into June's Jeep Cherokee and headed down the road a ways to a huge Guernsey farm belonging to friends of Roger and June's. There must have been 300 people there. It turns out this farm was a stop on the Wisconsin Guernsey Farm Tour 2003. I had no idea such a thing existed, but basically Guernsey farmers from all corners of the States get together and tour a bunch of different farms for a few weeks. We ate dinner (our first steak dinner since our return to the US) with a nice younger couple from upstate New York who told us all about the tour. The farmers who attend get ideas for milking, what works, what doesn't, share ideas with each other, swap cow stories. Paul and I had such fun getting in on a little of this culture that is somewhat foreign to us. Boni had a blast seeing a dairy farm in the States up close and in person. Roger and June have also been farming for years and years so they provided lots of insight to how things work on a farm. We got to tour the milking barn and see the equipment used to do the milking. Gone are the days where a family can milk their entire herd by hand, we were told. Now, even though there are machines to help out with most of the chores, we learned that farmers still work incredibly hard, or, to use the proper lingo, are still "married to their cows." This farm was beautiful. The buildings were immaculate, the yard was well-kempt, even the cows themselves were clean!

Night after night in our programs we talk about the culture of India and Nepal. We compare and contrast, we wear traditional clothing, we try to apply everything that we learned and experienced. Ironically, tonight we encountered a whole different culture than any of my teammates or I live in right here in our own backyard. It makes me appreciate the differences within the borders of this country, from state to state, from city to country. Maybe I should wear my cover-alls and rubber boots to church tomorrow!

"Give me a big 'M!'" "Big 'M!'" "Give me a little 'm!'" "Little 'm!'" "Don't give me no pop, no pop. Don't give me no tea, no tea. Just give me that milk, moo, moo, moo, moo. Wisconsin milk, moo, moo, moo, moooooo!"

If you are confused, e-mail Captive Free West Lakes and ask about the Wisconsin milk song they taught Rainbow of Promise. Oh, and a Guernsey is a particular type of dairy cow, white with brown spots.

Date: 6/24/2003
Submitted by: Debbie Holte
Journal Entry:



Debbie Holte

What is Youth Create? I wasn't entirely sure myself, but this week we are finding out.

We have the awesome privilege of helping out with the 3rd ever Youth Create event. Here youth and adults come to learn and perfect their music, drama, and dancing skills. It's kinda like camp. We have been learning about worship leading, and how to incorporate puppets, skits, music, and dancing into our home churches. As Rainbow of Promise we have had a lot of fun leading a few sessions.

My favorite session was our very first one where we taught about leading sing-a-longs. We thought the best way to start the sing-a-long workshop would be with a sing-a-long. I don't think anyone there knew it, and if you watched our team, you certainly wouldn't think we knew it either. We were all doing different actions, we couldn't quite get the melody right, we disagreed about which way to turn first, when to end, and all sorts of things. I enjoyed looking out at our audience. Some started out trying to follow along, but gave up because they got too confused. Some looked scared.

We sang through the song once, and then, confessed that we led the song poorly as an example of how not to lead a sing-a-long. It was great fun. We are leading all of our sessions with a bad example first. We mostly do it because it is fun for us, but I think the kids and adults there like it too.

So, I still don't know the best way to describe Youth Create, but I can tell you that we certainly are having a good time. Several kids have written their own songs--many for the first time ever. I'm very excited for them, especially because they will get to put those songs onto a CD and hear their music come to life. You can feel the creative energy flowing. It's inspiring to be with these young musicians.

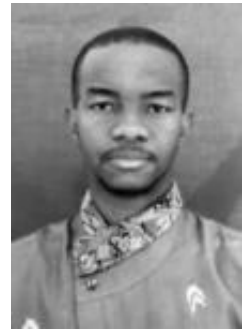
At the end of the day, we join together for worship. During the worship service, there is a time for people to share a "Technicolor moment." It is so fun to hear about the things the kids are learning, and the spiritual journeys they are having. I think this time of the day is very significant and the kids have been getting bolder about sharing. There is a growing sense of camaraderie and excitement here. Praise God!

Date: 6/26/2003

Submitted by: Boniface Adam Eliona Kombo

Journal Entry:

It is Thursday; we are still in Youth Create. Yeah! YC is a big blessing for me. There are wonderful kids, full gifts and talents. There are so friendly and so awesome! YC started on last Sunday. Today is the 4th day. Kids from different angles of US are here to learn different things such as how to write your own piece of music. And not only learning how to write it/them but to have opportunity to record your own work. This is so great. Kids can also learn how to be creative in different things, like puppetry and skits; and later on, work on creating one or couple of each. There are also other experienced musicians and leaders, comedians, bands, who have some things to share with all who attend YC.



Boniface Adam Eliona Kombo

Moreover, people get a chance to hang out with others, kids, adults, seminary scholars and Youth Encounter staff. Later on, at the end of the day, before heading to beds, attendants have a chance to share a little bit about their day, a moment of time which is called "tech-color". How was a day going on? Any blessing or anything one wants to share with others is welcomed. Here you may hear how people are touched and blessed, and seeing God's love. Days seem to move very fast here. The event seems to go very fast. Two days remain to reach the end of this tremendous event. I wish will continue longer. See You next time. Boni.

SWAHILI:

Leo ni siku ya Alhamisi; bado tuko katika Youth Create-YC, ambapo vijana wanajifunza jinsi ya kuwa wabunifu katika mambo mbali mbali na kisha kujaribu kile walichotengeneza. Vijana hawa wanajifunza jinsi ya kuandika wimbo na kisha kupata nafasi ya kuurekodi. Kuna vijana toka sehemu mbali mbali za Amerika, waliokuja hapa kwa ajili ya mpango huu. Vijana hawa wana vipaji vingi na tofauti tofauti. Pia ni marafiki wazuri. Wakati wa mapumziko kuna nafasi ya kuongea nao na kufahamiana zaidi.

Katika YC vijana wanapata nafasi ya kuonana na kuongea na watu mbali mbali kama vile wanafunzi walio katika seminari, watu toka ofisi za YE. Pia kupata nafasi ya kupata burudani kama kuona bendi, watu wa vichekesho, nk. Kabla ya watu kwenda kulala, kuna kipindi cha kusema/ kushirikishana na wengine lile/yale ambayo umeyaona kama baraka ama ungependa watu wasikie, yaliyotukia katika siku nzima. Ninabarikiwa sana na YC. Mpango huu ulianza hapo Jumapili iliyopita, lakini siku zinakwenda mbio kweli kweli. Bado siku 2 tu mpango huu uishe, hapo siku ya Jumamosi ijayo. Natamani kama mpango huu ungeendelea kwa siku nyingi zaidi! Tuonane wakati mwingine. Boni.

Date: 7/1/2003
Submitted by: Paul Nichols
Journal Entry:

After a week of Youth Create and a Sunday service in Chicago, today's long drive to the Upper Peninsula of Michigan is a welcome time to finish reading *The Odyssey*, by Homer. This novel is the precursor of all the novels that we read today, and was written about 1,000 years before Christ. It's a solid read and I'm going to enjoy finishing it very soon.

We do travel quite a bit and as we eat up the miles in our vehicle, "Mother Goose," reading is one activity that I love. I and my teammates also find time to take care of team jobs, such as drawing up the weekly schedule, or cleaning up a little bit, taking a nice cat nap, or chipping away at the 4 metric tons of food that has gathered in our pantry. Today I have done a little of everything, and it has been quite relaxing.

Sorry for the short words here. Please feel free to e-mail us at rainbow@youthencounter.org if you want to hear from us personally!

Peace,
Paul



Paul Nichols

Date: 7/5/2003
Submitted by: Miriam Anderson
Journal Entry:

Happy Fourth of July! I am from a small country town and the Fourth of July is cause for big celebration. We usually have cookouts, see fireworks, do sparklers and have bonfires with s'mores. Although I wasn't at home, our celebration this year was very similar. We are in a small town in Wisconsin and our host moms at two different houses are mother and daughter. We didn't have a program today and we have been very busy lately, so today has been declared an honorary day off. Jason, Paul and I slept in while Debbie, Dain and Boni went to the town parade. After a leisurely breakfast, Jason, Paul and I searched out a Go-Kart track and spent a few hours racing Go-Karts, hitting at the batting cages and enjoying Sno-Kones. Once we were all tuckered out we headed back to our host home for, yes, a mid-afternoon nap. We met the others at their host home, Grandma and Grandpa's house, for a picnic dinner before the whole gang took off for the fireworks display in a nearby town. As Paul and I stood in line for cotton candy (only to discover they were out), our teammates whiled away the time with our host brothers lighting sparklers. Eventually the firework show started and we ordered caramel apples instead. We found really great seats on the baseball field practically underneath the launching grounds. But our little host brother, Evan, who had never seen fireworks before, didn't seem very impressed judging by the ferocity of his screams. The fireworks over and Rainbow of Promise all tuckered out once again, we set out for home. It seems like a long time since we've had such a relaxing, relatively uneventful day. What a special treat!



Miriam Anderson

Date: 7/5/2003
Submitted by: Jason Moran
Journal Entry:

So, I am really behind on my journals. Honestly, it is hard for me to remember exactly when or what I was last supposed to journal about. I suppose the last month of team is a lot like senioritis and you just forget or decide not to remember some of the more repetitive tasks associated with life. So, I take in hand computer today to write about life in general. Lately, we have been bouncing back and forth between Northern Wisconsin and Chicago which creates quite the drain on sanity for the entire team. Thankfully we have spent two days at each of our bookings so that we can recover from



Jason Moran

the 7 or 8 hour drives we have had to make every other day. As a matter of fact we are leaving Shawno (aka Thornton) Wisconsin and heading to Des Plaines, Illinois right now. Tomorrow we will leave Des Plaines, Illinois and roll toward Tomahawk, Wisconsin. Needless to say we have become quite familiar with the county highways in Wisconsin. Those are the boring facts. Let me give you some fun. Yesterday was our official day off, so Paul, Miriam and I went go-carting and then found some batting cages. I can't think of the last time I went to the batting cages. It was such a good stress reliever. Then when night fell we went to the annual fireworks celebration in Boundel. Our contact took us with her children and we sat about 50 yards away from where they were firing off the fireworks. I have never in my life been so close to a fireworks display. It looked as though the fireworks would hit us. Previously I had been counting the days till I will be done with "team life" and into some semblance of normal life... but yesterday I realized that I think I am going to miss my teammates. I suppose I knew that, but it really hit me how short our time together is and after this is over we will head our separate ways. So, I got to thinking about all that stuff that you build up in dealing with people and how it effects how you interact with each other. Like the time so and so said this and it upset me. The time I felt this other person was too selfish or whatever... and then you realize that all that junk keeps you from really caring about each other. So I threw all that stuff out the shuttle window... (I didn't even get a \$500 fine for littering in Wisconsin.) So, forget about it. Life moves by too quickly to hold grudges.

Date: 7/8/2003

Submitted by: Debbie Holte

Journal Entry:

"Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against one of your people" Well, maybe it would be okay if it was all in fun.

This story begins a long time ago while our team was across the seas in India. While we were there, unable to defend our beloved Mother Goose (our shuttle), she came under attack. Our friends on the West Lakes Captive Free team discovered the whereabouts of our shuttle and found a way to finagle the keys from their caretaker. They proceeded to graffiti the inside and outside of the vehicle with white shoe polish and dry erase markers (which fortunately work very well on our fiberglass walls). They hung colorful streamers from the ceiling along with a larger than life card. The aisles of the bus were filled with balloons. The back window announced that we were "Just Married."

Oh yes. West Lakes had gotten us good. But we just couldn't allow them to have the last laugh. Oh no.

Today we put into action "Operation Tomahawk Chop" with some help from the local officials in Tomahawk, Wisconsin. Our friends on West Lakes were in the next town over, so we invited them over to watch the ski show in Tomahawk. It would be nice to get a chance to hang out and talk about how things are going. We hadn't seen them since before we left for India. So they came.

Heh, heh, heh. The great thing about small towns is that you can think big. We had much bigger plans for West Lakes involving a tow truck, a jail, and an airplane, but because of lack of planning time, we stuck with a simpler plan involving only the state patrolman. He pulled up behind our friends' van as they parked for the ski show. "Did you buy gas in Merrill today?" he asked. "Yes." "Did you pay?" Yes, but we had some trouble with the credit card. That was a lucky coincidence for us. The officer asked for Annie's driver's license and gave them a lot of grief. In the end, he went back to his car to get something for her to sign. When he came back he had a piece of paper that said "Gotcha. Rainbow of Promise." It was great. But the best part was that the officer got it all on tape from his squad car video camera.

Revenge. Hmm. Well, I guess maybe we'd better watch our backs.



Debbie Holte

Date: 7/10/2003

Submitted by: Boniface Adam Eliona Kombo

Journal Entry:

Likelihood was in India where we stayed all together in a same place for a week; we were staying all together in a same parsonage, doing a VBS! This VBS was in a small town, called Tomahawk, Wi. People in that town know each other because it is such a small town. VBS was in evenings, and before that we had a chance to do other fun stuff. We had seen and done things like kayaking, water-ski show, swimming, so far. We did not have anything yesterday morning, till VBS in the evening.



Boniface Adam Eliona Kombo

Today, Friday, we are in Oshkosh, Wi; Guess doing what here...? For LIFEST, Yeah! In this LIFEST, are so many good things going on. There are great speakers such as Bob Lenz and others; comedians like Happy Fun Time, the Donut-Man, etc; Bands such as T-Bone, Third Day, Madison Greene, Switchfoot, etc, etc. Either, we will have opportunity to meet with other many famous and important people who are present at this event, from US and other countries. This event is for 3 days, starting last day, Thursday, and is done on Sunday. Our team, ROP, is playing in the Kid Zone. It is really an awesome event for us. We are so excited to be here, mixed up and frolic with known/recognized people. Wahoo! Thanks God for this chance. You know what...I have to go 'cause there is a cool thing going on now. You should attend to LIFEST next, if you have not. It is so great. Ok bye! Boni.

SWAHILI:

Kama vile tuko India, ambapo tulipata nafasi ya kukaa sehemu moja kwa muda wa wiki nzima, tukiwa wote pamoja; tumetoka kumaliza Vacation Bible Study-VBS, ambayo ilikuwa nzuri sana. Katika VBS watoto wa umri mbali mbali wanakutana na kujifunza Biblia pamoja mambo mengine kwa ajili ya Imani yao. VBS ilikuwa katika mji mdogo wa Tomahawk, Wisconsin-Wi, ambao wakazi wake karibu wote wanafahamiana kutokana na udogo wa mji huo. Kukaa kwetu hapo kulikuwa kuzuri sana, tulipata nafasi ya kwenda kuogelea, kuendesha mtumbwi na kuona maonesho ya kwenye maji (water-ski). VBS ilikuwa ni wakati wa jioni, hivyo hayo mambo mengine yalifanyika muda wa asubuhi hadi mchana.

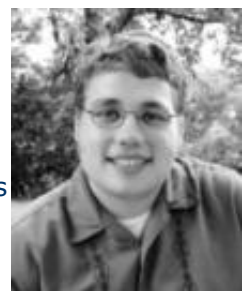
Siku ya leo Ijumaa tuko Oshkosh, Wi. Je waweza kufahamu kwa nini? Tuko kwenye tamasha la Kikristo litwalo LIFEST. Yeah! Katika tamasha hili kuna mambo mengi sana ya maana yaendeleayo. Kuna wazungumzaji wakubwa, wamaana kv Bob Lenz na wengineo. Kuna watu wa vichekesho k.m. Happy Fun Time, Donut man, n.k. Pia kuwepo hapa ni kupata nafasi ya kuonana na kuongea na watu wengi tu wanaokuja kwenye tamasha hili toka hapa Amerika na maeneo mengine. Timu yangu iko kwenye eneo la watoto na wazazi wao. Tunamshukuru Mungu kwa nafasi hii ya kushikiri katika tamasha na watu wanaotambulika sana. Basi nahitaji kwenda sasa kwa kuwa kuna kitu cha maana kiendeleacho sasa hivi. Tuonane baadae. Kwaheri. Boni.

Date: 7/11/2003

Submitted by: Jason Moran

Journal Entry:

We spent the last two days at this great event called Lifest in Oshkosh, Wisconsin. The deal was that we would play the kids stage and hang out at the remaining days concerts (complete with backstage passes.) It was a great experience. It almost made me feel like I was in a big time band. We ate breakfast, lunch and dinner at a local church that hosted all the musicians. I don't know much about mainstream Christian music, but there were some pretty big names at the concerts including Switchfoot, Reliant K, Toby Mac, Michael W. Smith, Jonathan Rundman, Caedmon's Call, Third Day and even teen sensations Jump Five. Actually Debbie and I were in the hospitality tent behind the main stage as Jump Five prepared to do their thing. It was pretty interesting to see so many different artists in this little community. Actually, what amazed me the most is that all artists no matter how huge of a name were all treated the same. All bands had equal access to the hospitality tent behind the main stage, all bands had to drive through the crowds of people to load and unload at their stages,



Jason Moran

and all bands ate the same food in a community setting. I loved that everyone was placed on equal ground. This isn't the same kind of feeling I have received before from prior musical festivals and events I have played when I played with Nate Houge & the Honest Folk. I enjoyed that. I must also tell you about the greatest experience I had at Lifest. A band named Madison Greene played one evening and it was the most amazing (dare I even say, moving) experience I have ever had with Christian Music. Madison Greene is a sort of Jam band that has been kicking some Celtic, Arabic, Tribal roots complete with about 12 people on stage playing Djem-be's, Didgeridoos, fiddle, and acoustic guitar. At one point they even brought a dog on stage to harmonize with the lead singer. How cool is that? Pretty cool. It was a huge hippie dance circus, exactly what I needed amidst all the typical music that was going on at Lifest. Life is good.

Date: 7/15/2003

Submitted by: Paul Nichols

Journal Entry:

A day in the life of Paul.

Wake up at 7:30. Get ready and clean and some other stuff. Depart our lovely housing in central Wisconsin (Osseo), and head to Carlton, Minnesota at 9 a.m. Arrive at 1:30 p.m. and lead a worship service at a nursing home from 2:30 to 3:30. Drive to nearest town and see a movie at 4:30 p.m. (Terminator 3. It was surprisingly good with likeable characters.) Drive to Cromwell for housing at 8 p.m. after a dinner stop at McDonald's. Meet host home again, catch up on old news. Play Super Nintendo (Mario Kart). Write journal at 10:30 p.m. Get ready for bed and sleep at 11:00 p.m.

It was a fun day and a short journal :).



Paul Nichols

Date: 7/20/2003

Submitted by: Miriam Anderson

Journal Entry:

We have been doing programs for nearly 12 months now. We always visit with people after our programs, and we usually get some really good feed back. Especially now during our return tour. We revisit many churches we worshiped with in the fall before India and Nepal. People often tell us that we have improved, gotten louder, sound more cohesive, that sort of thing. Not that we aren't blessed by these programs, but when we do them every single night, they kind of start to blur together for us. We sometimes have trouble remembering if we were in Nevis or Carlton or Milaca. But tonight we were in Ely...for sure. This night started out as a typical program—arriving at the church at 4:00, setting up, eating dinner with the pastor and his wife, warming up. After we were done warming up, we headed to the sanctuary. I remember saying to Paul, "Listen to it in here [the sanctuary]. It sounds like a party!" I don't know what it was other than the Holy Spirit, but the whole room was positively buzzing. We didn't even have a chance to chat with people before the pastor got up and introduced us. The first song we sing is a traditional call to worship in some areas of Andhra Pradesh. We process down the aisles singing and dancing. Before Debbie and I were all the way to the front, the congregation was already clapping along. I could just feel the energy in the room. Debbie and I had the giggles because the song was capoed a fret too high so this added to the "funness" of the atmosphere. It just felt like the program took off from there. The puppets were really funny, the sharing (testimony time) went well, the harmonies sounded great. It was such a fun program to be a part of. Our team was totally fed by being in the presence of the Spirit tonight and by worshipping with our brothers and sisters at Grace Lutheran Church of Ely. John 14:25-27, "All this I have spoken while still with you. But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you. Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid."



Miriam Anderson

Date: 7/29/2003
Submitted by: Paul Nichols
Journal Entry:

We are closing down on our time on team! It's kind of scary to be soon saying good-bye to my five close friends on team. My agenda after team? Visit my brother for his graduation, drive cross-country back home to New York, visiting the Black Hills along the way, and finish my papers for grad school! Somewhere in there I'll be looking for a job in government. You see, I do have a master's degree in Public Administration (that is, the study of Red Tape), so I will be free to look everywhere, at any level of government, for a job. Thanks for your support and prayers!!

Paul



Paul Nichols

Date: 8/4/2003
Submitted by: Jason Moran
Journal Entry:

One year ago tonight I called Youth Encounter Recruitment and said, "Hello, Lisa, you're not going to believe this, but I am actually kinda interested in an International Team. I can't say for sure though... I have a full time job and they would flip out if I leave. Let's talk about the logistics of all this. Don't call me at work." Lisa called at work and asked me if I was serious. I said yes and she called back later that evening and we began to work out the logistics of me leaving a nice computer job in the twin cities to travel with one of the international teams. Little did I know it would be Rainbow of Promise. (it was my first choice, but they told me it was full... a little shifting here and there... and some back-to-backers signing on and boom, I was on Rainbow of Promise) by the way, thanks to Kevin Gruetter for signing on at debriefing thus giving Watermark a drummer thereby shifting me to Rainbow of Promise. I don't know if that is how it happened, but that is what it looks like to me so, Kevin, if you're out there. Thanks



Jason Moran

So, now a year is done. We have come full circle, you and I. I am here, in Duluth, you are there... looking at your computer monitor and you may have been one of those faithful people who checked our journals quite frequently. Maybe you are a partner or a host home family. Maybe you are my real family. Anyhow, I want to thank you for being there to read these journals. All of us on Rainbow of Promise appreciate knowing there are real live people out there behind computer monitors praying for us as they read our journals.

I am tired. Mostly, because it is indeed 4:00am and I am still burning discs of all our slides for my teammates so that we can look back on our experiences and see familiar faces. I am also tired because who knows what is next. I mean, there is a 75% chance that I will be back in St. Paul working at a respectable University doing computer tech/support. There is of course the 25% of the unknown that is really just mixed in there to make life interesting. For now I am off to debriefing, preparing the royal highway for whatever lies ahead in this, "real life" that I hear so much about. I figure, that I will get some rest before this "real life" sets in. You know, actually this last year... was more real than any year I remember recently. Sure it was full of stresses and chaos at times. Sure, my teammates really wanted me to kill them every now and then (can I say that out loud?) Sure they probably wanted to kill me every once in a while. Really, we got tired of being the perfect houseguest... and once in a while indulged in ideas of how to be the world's worst houseguest. (We never acted on them, I promise) But all in all, I lived in a perfect little family this year. Dysfunctional as most families, annoyed with each other as most siblings, unpredictable as most people... we were a real live family that actually worked things out because we had to... there was no escape we were together forever, or at least till August 9th. Wow. Isn't that scary thinking!

So, I guess I just wanted to sign off this journal internet site with those thoughts in mind... and I wanted to leave you with a story from India to close.

Our final night program in India was on Easter day-night. We danced the night away... until it hurt. We danced to communicate with each other... Hindi-speaker to English-speaker, we dance to

celebrate the resurrection of Jesus Christ. We danced even though many of us didn't know how... we tried to learn, but usually the tall man next to us whose name I have forgotten just laughed at us and smiled. We danced to the beat of gas cans, dolucks, djem-bes, ankle bells, locked together in a fusion of culture. We danced the beat of laughter, Hindi language, occasional oops, and dust kicking feet. We danced till the end of the night... and I still dance in my head. The rhythm of the percussion finds me late at night and I realize that not only my teammates, but India will be with me forever. This experience catches me off guard at times. The thought of leaving this experience catches me even more off guard. Where else will I find a captive audience to share the gospel as I see it with? Where else will I find people who know the beat of those drums? Where else will the rhythm catch me off guard and I can just dance it away without being looked at oddly. I don't know.

Really, I am not that sad. I am happy, but full of questions and doubts about what will happen next. (props to Paul Friesen-Carper on that one.)

So, this journal ended a bit sappy maybe? Actually the more I read it the more I feel like I should delete the ending and just let it go... but it wouldn't be as much fun if I didn't let you see my occasional literature minded sappiness.

So, goodnight... this is Jason Moran signing off for Rainbow of Promise 2002-2003

Thanks to you all!

Date: 8/12/2003

Submitted by: Dain Swanson

Journal Entry:

Well....I'm no longer apart of Rainbow of Promise, the year is over, and I am moving into the real world, I should be scared right? Well, I'm not really. I fell as though I have been prepared for what is ahead of me in a way that I can not really explain. Team helped me grow in ways that I am not sure of yet because I have not had the chance to apply these new talents yet. But boy am I extcied to do so. I thank God for the oppertunity to connect with people all over the world through Youth Encounter. Now I get to do it with my own family and friends and co-workers. It is going to be a great experience because God will make sure that I am where He wants me to be...so do I have a job, a place to live, a car, no not yet but that is alright I know that all is well and will happen in God's time. Thanks to all of you this year whose prayers and support came our way. All of it would not be possible without you. God Bless you till we meet again.

Dain Swanson



Dain Swanson
