

Watermark 2002-03 Journal

Date: 9/25/2002

Submitted by: Kirsten Vejen Najbjerg

Journal Entry:

I love the USA

Especially, all the movie stars walking around like Tom Cruise and Brad Pitt. Oh, and David Hasselhoff. We Europeans can't get enough of David Hasselhoff.



Kirsten Vejen Najbjerg

Date: 9/26/2002

Submitted by: Seth Gibbon

Journal Entry:

Hello all you people in the "real world."

Life on team has been pretty good so far, although I probably haven't been going long enough to really get a strong flavor for it. Right now it's still all pretty new and fresh and exciting and I can still remember all the names of our host families thus far (3). It's been exciting to see a lot of enthusiasm for our programs in the churches we've been in. Our very first booking there were people jumping up and down during the program and having a grand ol' time. It's great to think that at the same time we're sharing the most important message in the history of, well, everything. When we were in Cannon Falls yesterday, kids were asking for our autographs; that was definitely a new experience for me.

I've done the sharing a couple of times already even though I sort of thought I would be able to sneak out of doing it, at least until December or so. I'm a bit worried if I'm making any sense to anybody. I tell about a time when I was in an advanced chemistry class and I procrastinated and didn't do my homework. I felt really awful and sick and guilty and make the connection that that's a bit like sin, but Jesus gives us a free answer key and has us put our name on it. Or something like that. I'm really not too sure how it comes across.

Our host homes have been fantastic so far. Their hospitality has really been a great example which I hope to follow when I am done with team. I feel a little spoiled and honestly, it's kind of nice. It's really great to meet so many people who are so excited about God and ministry and stuff. There may yet be hope for the Christian Church....

(to be continued by another one of my wonderful team members)

God's Peace-
Seth



Seth Gibbon

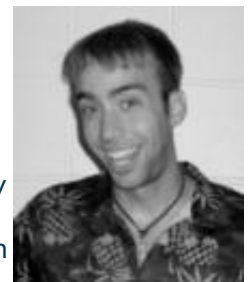
Date: 9/28/2002

Submitted by: Doug Mauss

Journal Entry:

Well, yesterday I think I discovered how it must have felt to be an Israelite in the Egyptian desert. We had no bookings, and so had all day to get to Mequon, Wisconsin by five in the evening. Kevin had decided that leaving anywhere in the vicinity of 10:30 in the morning would give us plenty of time to leisurely arrive on schedule. So he and Seth went in to pick up our van at 9:30, and should have been back within forty-five minutes. At 11:30 they got back, dirty and looking as if they had been working on vans.

I asked Kevin what he had been doing. "Working on the van," he told me. Also, they had acquired a blue fender. So we loaded up as quickly as we could, which included finding a spot in the trailer for our newly acquired blue fender, and then discovered that Jenny was making contact calls. I needed to find the closest notary public and had been informed that one was five miles up the road. So



Doug Mauss

since Jenny wasn't quite ready, Scott and I took the van to quickly run that errand. It turned out the Mailboxes Etc. was farther away than suspected, and most of the highway en route was under construction and down to one lane of stop-and-go traffic. One hour after we had left, Scott and I got back to the church, grabbed everybody and stopped at Subway to pick up sandwiches to go. Finally, at one of the clock in the afternoon, we were on the road to Mequon.

What had started out as an easy day to make a relaxed trip turned into a hassled, stressful journey of epic proportions which made us two and a half hours late to our host church in Mequon. The Israelites had a huge cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night. God rained down manna, and caused water to flow from rocks. Yet even with all these divine helps, the Israelites spent more time astray than they did going where the Lord wanted them to go. And every single one of us on the team had every intention of leaving the church by ten-thirty this morning. Yet various time tables and errands conspired to make us late, when we should have had all the time in the world.

Proverbs 3:5-6 tells us, "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight." Even when doing a year of ministry, it's so easy to forget to lean on the Lord. And sometimes it takes two and a half hours of delays, or forty years of wandering in the wilderness, to remind us to trust in the Lord for everything, and let him do the hard work of making our paths straight.

-Doug

Date: 10/1/2002

Submitted by: Jeni Bradley

Journal Entry:

Wow, what a homecoming!!! This weekend we visited my friend and previous co-worker's new church in Mequon, WI and we also visited my home church of St. Mary's LC in Kenosha, WI. It was a great weekend of being reunited with friends and family that I haven't seen in a whopping 6 weeks!!!! It felt like longer than that... I need to work on that because it is going to be a much longer time when we head over to Denmark! I am slowly easing myself into this.

It was very fun to look out at the congregation of St. Mary's and see kids wearing t-shirts that said "We love you, Jeni!" So many of my family members and friends were also there. It was nice to feel welcomed back and missed because I sure miss all of them. I have found, though, that praying for people when I am missing them helps a tremendous amount. It helps me be productive in my worry and/or sadness. And really, there is not much time for me to dwell on it because we are staying very busy. We are learning to live together as a team and play together, too. The biggest struggle of being on team is not the music, program or people we meet but instead the learning to live together and work as a team! We are learning new things about each other everyday and learning to be flexible... which is needed in my life! And the people we are meeting are amazing! Such blessings!

All in all, I would say things are going well! I am feeling rejuvenated after spending some much needed time with some of the kids I missed and my family and friends. I feel ready for the challenges and excitements of the next 2 months on the road. Not to mention, I am focused on getting out to the east coast to be submersed in hearing some eastern accents! I can't wait! Stay tuned to hear the wonderful things God is doing for and through Watermark...



Jeni Bradley

Date: 10/3/2002

Submitted by: Kirsten Vejen Najbjerg

Journal Entry:

We are back in the van again after two wonderful days in Wauconda. The host families were great and all six of us got a haircut. We look very pretty now! There were a lot of amazing kids at our program yesterday and I hope they will remember that night as a fun night but also remember the good news they heard about Jesus.



Kirsten Vejen Najbjerg

At 12 o'clock today we said goodbye to Wauconda, 30 minutes later than expected. I always thought I was patient but now I realize that I am not. Living together with five other people can sometimes be a challenge, especially when we try to leave at the same time and be on time. That is one thing I think we have to work on. But I can tell you I am glad for my teammates!!! They are SO patient with me. I have at least 79 questions every day and they still try to help me to understand, to teach me new words and to explain their culture for me. I am really thankful. Being a person from another country on team is wonderful but also hard. I learn so much about myself by seeing how other people live and have their daily life but I would like to take more part in their life. I am looking forward to the day I get better at English and can speak with my host families, the people I meet and my teammates without translating everything in my head first. In a few minutes we will arrive to Greenfield, and new adventures will begin. I am glad to know that God is with us, for without his support this would be impossible.

Date: 10/10/2002

Submitted by: Scott Schaffer

Journal Entry:

Hey everybody out there! Scott here; just checking in. Watermark extends a warm hello to all of you, especially everyone out there in the Supporters of Watermark Fan Club!

We have been touring now for more than two weeks and it feels as if some of the bugs are finally starting to get worked out. The time it takes us to set-up and tear-down the sound system is improving almost all the time. We also get lost a lot less lately, which I feel somewhat responsible for since I'm a navigator. I'm also responsible for us missing a few turns, oops. We have met a lot of people in the past two weeks. I can't imagine how many more we will meet. My favorite people to meet right now are little kids.

One of the biggest blessings to me on the road is little children, because kids do and say the funniest things, of course, and are a virtually endless source of entertainment at times.

At one of our first programs in Minnesota, a little boy decided he would go out to the resources table and bring a CD to me. I was preparing to pray before our last song of the evening when he made his way to the front of the sanctuary, carrying the CD, and said, Hey! Can I buy dis? I wanna buy dis! I told him, In a little bit I can help you. It was good for a laugh.

I met some very comical identical twins in Wauconda, Illinois, who played a good amount of Nintendo with me and made me smile and feel like a kid again.

In Greenfield, Indiana, I stayed with a host home where two great little kids lived. We exchanged table



Scott Schaffer

graces and songs after dinner one night and had a lot of fun singing. It's such a blessing to be surrounded by so many people, young or old, that have a childlike faith.

Nearly all of my interactions with children thus far have yielded a learning experience in some way. Sometimes they display how easy it is to believe, sometimes they display why you might not want to sit at a dinner table set with candles and napkins if you have small children. Sometimes the simple truths of life are uttered from their mouths; sometimes they feel it necessary to tell embarrassing family secrets at the dinner table to their guests. Little children always surprise me, keep me on my toes and rejuvenate me.

God bless,
Scott Schaffer
1 John 4:17

Date: 10/12/2002

Submitted by: Doug Mauss

Journal Entry:

One of the side effects of doing ministry through Youth Encounter has been that I don't talk to my family. It is hard enough for me under regular circumstances to let my parents know what I am doing, or talk with my sister on a regular basis, but when I am in a different host home every night, and enjoying spending time with them, family communication becomes non-existent.

But last night I got to talk with my sister, Susanne. I haven't spoken with her since I started Team, about two months ago. And I realized how disconnected we had become; which is crazy to me. I have spent the last two months in hyper-relational ministry. I am fostering new friendships every day, and trying to connect with people almost every waking moment. Yet in this tornado of relationships, my sister fell through the cracks. I have been focusing so much on short-term ministry, my long-term relationships have started to disintegrate. And it is okay to have friends and family as a slightly lower priority while I do a year of mission work. But I realized last night exactly how much I need my sister. I need her support and her prayers and her love, and she needs the same from me.

I don't know if there is a less drastic way to realize how much someone cares for you. But with the whirlwind of faces around me and the myriad churches and towns, knowing that my sister will always be there for me is my anchor. I thank God for her.



Doug Mauss

Date: 10/23/2002

Submitted by: Kirsten Vejen Najbjerg

Journal Entry:

The adventures and the impressions just go on and on. Wittenberg University was the first American college I have ever seen. We had a two-hour program there Sunday and the chapel service this morning. So many people and so many doors... It was easy for a little Dane to get lost – and then Jeni told me that this was not even a big college...

Capital University was our next stop (another big University – in my opinion). Surprise... We had to do our first acoustic program AND WE DID IT. As program coordinator I loved it! I am excited to do that again, and I have heard we are going to do a lot of acoustic programs in Denmark so that sounds great to me.

After the program we went to the dorms to stay with some students for the night. I stayed with two wonderful girls. They tried to teach me the American University atmosphere, what goes on at



Kirsten Vejen Najbjerg

college and what it's like to live there. I learned so much – and now I have also seen my first American dorm.

It has rained today – but that cannot stop Kirsten (it is just like Danish weather). So many peers and so many smiling faces can only make one happy – even with gray skies.

Paul's experiences have been a big example for me the last few days. Even when he had a hard time he continued to encourage, inspire and help his friends. What a great example. I would like to be like Paul.

Philippians 3:12-16

Kirsten

Date: 10/23/2002

Submitted by: Scott Schaffer

Journal Entry:

Ah the East! The glorious, chilly, hilly and colorful East!

I love Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Maryland! The country is hilly, the roads are curvy and the buildings are aged and made of stone or brick. It's all so beautiful.

While we were in Hagerstown, MD, we had a blessed day-off, and being "out East" I was excited to see some new sights I had never seen before. We chose Gettysburg as our destination so we dropped the trailer, met up with Captive Free NE and embarked on a day of historic sight seeing.

It was a gorgeous, sunny, fall day to frolic around Maryland in. Ferdi, Sam, Heidi Luft, and Katie B were a riot and really brightened our day. It was cool to meet up with another YE team on the road and see how they are doing and hear some of their anecdotes and stories, and to see the inside of their van.

And so it went to pass that Monday in Gettysburg was a blast, but it was the end of Watermark's streak of "perfectly healthy days." The very next day Doug, Kevin and Seth all had some scratchiness in their throats. Seth felt a little worse than a simple sore throat though, and had to excuse himself once to go toss some cookies. He was still a little under the weather this morning, but not enough to change our daily routines. I'm happy to report that Watermark is now up to 99% now, Seth is better and none of us got sick or sicker either.

In other news, While we were leaving Hagerstown, MD, our host mom, Jeni, brought us to the "Guitar Room," a really cool little music shop, where I bought a wha pedal as an early Christmas present from my mom. It's going to rock! Thanks mom! I haven't got to use it yet though, because our program was an acoustic healing and meditation service, not hardly the environment you want to break out the wha in.

So that's what's new with Watermark and some of what's new with me. I hope you enjoyed this installment of the Watermark Journal.

Peace,
Scott

1 John:4-17

Date: 11/2/2002

Submitted by: Scott Schaffer

Journal Entry:

AHHHH! It's November! Where are the days going? Another day, another program; such is the life of a teamer. I love every second of it too!

New Jersey is very good to us. Although I think we may have single-handedly paid for a few miles of the New Jersey Parkway with all the tolls we've paid! It was a beautiful fall on the east coast this year. A few days ago we got to go to a board walk and play on the beach. It was really humbling to look out over the Atlantic and have the surf wash over our feet; it made me feel so small; as small as the grains of sand I was standing on. It's amazing to think that God's love for us is wider and deeper than that ocean. We couldn't stay too long though, because our feet went numb and we had some miles to travel.

Today is a special day for me because of a few reasons. I'm really looking forward to a change in the



Scott Schaffer



Scott Schaffer

weather, particularly I'm excited for the snow to start falling because it's just a welcome change of scenery for me. We (teamers) are also half way done with our touring before Christmas break which is significant because I'm sure we all miss our families at least a little bit; I know I do. It seems like there is some other noteworthy thing about today, November 2nd, but I can't remember what it is right now... I'm sure I'll think of it as soon as this entry gets posted. Before I go I just want to give a shout out to all the friends we've met so far in NY, NJ, PA, IN, OH, IL, MI, WI, and MN, my family back in Luck, WI, my Stouties at UW Stout in Menomonie WI, and all those kids down at Wartburg College in Waverly, Iowa that sent us that nifty package – to all of you: we think of you often and are in my prayers.
Scott

Date: 11/12/2002

Submitted by: Jeni Bradley

Journal Entry:

It's hard to keep track of what day it is. Especially when we have a crazy day off! Usually Mondays are our day off, or our day of regaining our "bearings" for the week. Last week when we were in the Washington D.C. our day off was during the middle of the week and then this week part of our day off was spent driving back from a retreat weekend and so it didn't officially begin until about 1p.m. Although it finished nicely with a warm shower and a nap!!! Don't get me wrong, even though our day off last week was in the middle of the week doesn't mean it wasn't awesome! It was amazing. Scott, Kirsten and I went to the Holocaust Memorial Museum and to the Capitol and White House on our day off! It was a GREAT day off. It's just weird when our day off is the only "regular" thing we have in our schedules!!!

Now we are in route to Norfolk, VA, which is a 10 hour trip... this van is becoming more like my home than I ever imagined it could be. I remember past "teamers" telling us of how the van would become our home, I thought they were exaggerating... but they were right!

I think I can safely say that our team is really enjoying the East! We believe we may even hold a share of stock in the New Jersey Turnpike & Garden State Parkway through the amount of tolls we have paid over the weeks we have spent driving through and in the state!!!:) A bonus to our extended traveling schedule is that we see a continuous stream of the awesome fall colors! Although the leaves in upstate New York are mostly on the ground now in, New Jersey and Pennsylvania and Virginia are still holding their gorgeous colors! So the East has been in full bloom since mid-October just about everywhere we go! I love it!

This past weekend we did back-to-back retreats in Pennsylvania and New York. The first of the two retreats was special to me in that it was for 4th & 5th graders!!! I love that age group and I had a ton of fun. I feel that my gifts lie in the younger children in God's family. Although I also love high school kids and enjoy all that they offer, there is just something about the younger ones that energize me! I am also reminded of all the fun I had with the 4th & 5th grade youth group (Purple Cow Club) back at my home church where I served at before team!

Well, it's almost my turn to drive again, so I am going to wrap this up. I am still feeling God's presence in my life and am learning to rely on His strength not my own! Praise Him!

Peace & Love, Jeni Micah 6:8



Jeni Bradley

Date: 11/14/2002

Submitted by: Kevin Gruetter

Journal Entry:

Being on the road brings good days and bad days, fun things and not so fun things. Despite not so fun things I feel really good about my second year on team. I feel like I belong here with my teammates. I feel I was called to be here. I'm having a good time being here. My biggest problem right now is that I've started to think about next year. Having a 14 hour car ride followed 3 days later with an 11 hour ride in a van really gives someone to think about your favorite sports team, celebrity gossip, the war over the Falkland Islands, and a little future planning. (You've got a lot of time.)

Last year I was taking a break from school to decide on a new major so that I could be reinvigorated



Kevin Gruetter

about my education. I could put my year spent in a rock band on the back shelf of my mind only to bring it out and revel in its splendor during my likely numerous mid-life crises. Now in my 15th month of touring I wonder if that really is my plan in life. I want to be completely obedient to God, but I also want solid life plans. My prayers right now are for something less vague than direction, perhaps a messenger from God, or a job contract. For those in our internet audience whose churches are inquiring about a full-time youth director available in August, I know someone with quite a bit of youth work experience, a love for kids and horribly desperate desire to do what God wants me (I mean him) to do.

Date: 11/16/2002

Submitted by: Seth Gibbon

Journal Entry:

Hmmm.....If the van were to break down right now I would probably feel obligated to at least take a look at it, since I am the vehicle and safety manager and all. I'd take a flashlight and my raincoat because it's dumping buckets right now and poke around inside the engine before finally announcing, "Yup, it's broke!" And that's kind of like God. The End



Seth Gibbon

That's not a very good journal entry....the office probably won't like it.... Let's try again!
.....Ummmmmm..... I sort of feel like the young Joan of Arc in the movie The Messenger (a great movie by the way), where she's talking to a priest because she likes going to confessions and being forgiven, but when the priest asks her about all her life all she can say is "wonderful." Her parents, her sister, her life, everything is just "wonderful." Exasperated, the priest tells her God forgives her and she continues on with her wonderful life. I really don't have anything that particularly stands out in my mind, life is just sort of wonderful. My team is getting along well, the churches are terrific, our host families go out of their way to make us feel welcome, it's all just "wonderful."

We are in the van now, driving away from the East Coast, having frolicked in Schenectady, gawked at the sights in Washington D.C. and gotten thoroughly lost whilst traipsing around the New Jersey Turnpike. It's really been a good time. The "wonderfulness" of it all reminds me of God's great provision for His children. I was a bit freaked out at the thought of going a year without a home or a major source of income, but I have been so blessed by so many people, I sometimes cannot help but think that I live some kind of a charmed existence. God is truly good all the time and I cannot wait to see what adventures are in store for us as He continues to be our Driver, Navigator and yes, even Vehicle and Safety Manager.

Date: 11/19/2002

Submitted by: Doug Mauss

Journal Entry:

"Let me explain. No, there is too much, let me sum up."

Yesterday we had the first real day off we've had in a long time. Jeni and I took the opportunity to introduce Scott and Kirsten to one of the greatest movies of all time: The Princess Bride. (That title should be underlined or italicized but-- se la vi-- this program won't let me do either.) Now, I've seen the Princess Bride dozens of times. I could recognize the movie from the briefest glimpse of a scene, or the faintest measure of a theme. I laugh at the jokes out of fondness, and love even Vizzini like an old friend who just never learned to play well with others.

But it was new to my teammates. They hadn't realized that giants could have a gift for rhyme. They couldn't tell you that Bonetti's defense is fitting while on rocky terrain. They didn't believe in rodents of unusual size, and they might have mistakenly become involved in a land war in Asia. They didn't already know that death cannot stop true love.

I base my existence on knowing that death cannot stop true love. And some that we meet also know this, and we share the joy of living because Christ triumphed over death for us. Others still need to be introduced to the greatest instance of true love in history. It was a joy to share my



Doug Mauss

favorite movie with Scott and Kirsten, to watch them experience it for the first time. In the same way, I delight in the opportunity to show others how much Christ loved us. To those who have never seen The Princess Bride, those who don't know the love of Jesus, you might have more questions that you would like me to answer. As you wish.

-Doug Ezekiel
watermark@youthencounter.org

Date: 11/21/2002

Submitted by: Kirsten Vejen Najbjerg

Journal Entry:

Winter is coming. It is getting colder, there are Christmas decorations everywhere and we are starting to head back towards Minnesota. Yesterday, today and tomorrow are housings only so we enjoy having time as a team to do things we normally don't have time for. For example watching Harry Potter which we did today...Fun!

The mood of the team today has been really good (it took us forever to get through our highs and lows because there was so much to talk about) and I think it is because of a wonderful day off we had in Pottstown, PA. Once again we met amazing host families who willingly opened their homes for us to give us a day of rest – and they also made us feel at home.

My cross cultural experience so far this week has been to discover that Americans shorten their names. So Doug is for example not just Doug but Douglas. And I thought I knew my teammate.....or at least his name...

I will go to bed now so that I can be ready for a new day tomorrow. These days of driving and housings only are a gift from God - exactly what we as a team need. God really gives us what we need physically and mentally.



Kirsten Vejen Najbjerg

Date: 11/23/2002

Submitted by: Scott Schaffer

Journal Entry:

Yes, it's that time of year when the wind blows, the snow falls and the YE teamers make their way back to Minneapolis.

I'm just really happy. I'm happy that the snow is here to stay and that I'll be in Wisconsin in four days. I can smell the cheddar now!

The last couple weeks have been an extreme mix of pure pandemonium and blissful relaxation. How is it that we are assigned such long drives to bookings on the east coast where the states are smaller and generally closer together and assigned considerably shorter drives in the lakes region where the states are larger? I would think we'd drive more while we were in Pennsylvania and Ohio and drive less while we were visiting Maryland and New Jersey. Now, however, it looks as if we are back to a more stable and predictable schedule. Last week, the week of blissful relaxation, was really just what we needed after a week or two of not getting a day off. Our spirits are high and we are fully recharged and awaiting our upcoming bookings. I can't wait for Christmas, but I guess that's what the Advent season is all about.



Scott Schaffer

Scott Schaffer
Philippians 4:11

Here are some funny things Seth said:

"Yes! I finally got rid of the Chihuahua blood blister!"

"If I clone you a sheep will you eat it?"

Date: 12/31/2002

Submitted by: Kirsten Vejen Najbjerg

Journal Entry:

First of all I have to say that I like the American Christmas. I spent my Christmas break with Jeni's family – and "wow" they did a good job showing me the American traditions. I went to the mall to sit on Santa's lap, watched *It's a Wonderful Life*, got tons of good food, went to Chicago to see all the Christmas lights (and the Sears Tower of course), drove in a motor home for the first time – and I could just go on and on. I am so thankful to Jeni's family and to God for all those experiences. THANKS!

After a Christmas like that I was excited to see how Americans celebrate the New Year. At 5 pm I wished my teammates a Happy New Year (because it was midnight in Denmark) and at 5:30 our lock-in started. There were around 20 kids – a good size for games, bible studies etc. – so that was exactly what we did. We had a really good evening and again I saw some American traditions. We watched the ball drop in New York (on TV), ate pizza and had a lot of fun. At 11:59:50 pm we counted down – IN DANISH – and welcomed the New Year.

I can do nothing else but thank God for the old year and look forward to a new year with hopefully a lot of good experiences.

I wish all of you a blessed and happy New Year.

Kirsten



Kirsten Vejen Najbjerg

Date: 1/1/2003

Submitted by: Doug Mauss

Journal Entry:

2003

Day One: We finished a Lock-In in Portage, Indiana, counting down with Dick Clark on a circa 1970s black and white TV. 20 kids blew noisemakers until my eardrums could no longer distinguish between Jeni talking and a Black Sabbath concert. We slept in.

Day Two: We will head to Toledo, and share the work of God in our lives with the good people of Ohio.

Day Fifteen: We will fly from JFK airport to Denmark, crossing one ocean, six countries, and 542,000 fish.

Day Thirty-Two: I will run into Cameron Diaz, who is coincidentally concluding her 2003 Denmark tour. Wedding preparations will follow.

Day Forty-Five: Watermark will light the fire of love in Fyn and simultaneously discover the universal solvent.

This is a tentative itinerary for the new year. God only knows what will actually happen to us over the next 365 days. Much of the aforementioned itinerary could never come to pass. (Keep your fingers crossed for me and Cameron.) But I have no doubt that God will use our days to accomplish wonders even greater than any I could make up for a journal entry. May God be with you and all of your days, in 2003 and until we get to meet him in person.

Peace,

Doug Ezekiel



Doug Mauss

Date: 1/2/2003

Submitted by: Jeni Bradley

Journal Entry:

What fun! Today is 01/02/03!!!! 1-2-3!!! It's soo fun how the littlest things make me happy! But that is much like our days on the road!

Today was a day of "bad luck"!!! It started out when Kirsten and I arrived at church before the boys. We thought we'd be helpful by starting to tear down the equipment. Although when they arrived Kevin decided we should practice again! Then on our way out of town, we stopped at the post office and it took an hour!!!! Then as we drove east through Ohio, we came upon a sign that said "you have now entered into E.S.T.!!!

Whoops! We forgot about the time change from Indiana into Eastern Standard Time!!!!

Then, the snow flurries turned into snow blizzards and the traffic was horrible and had slowed down to 20 m.p.h.!!! Cars in the ditches and not a snow plow to be seen! "Luckily", when we called the contact she informed us we need not worry or rush because she canceled the program due to the inclement weather!!!

I don't believe in luck or chance, so it must have been God planning this all out... our every minute and our every mile! He's so good like that. We may make our schedule for the day, but He has His own agenda. An agenda that will somehow bring us closer to Him. We are all being housed in the church together tonight. This has brought about the opportunity for us to have a devotion together, which brings Him happiness and glory. He loves to hear His children in conversation about good things. ... every good and perfect gift comes from above.

We will be on the airplane in route to Denmark in just 2 weeks from now!!! I can not wait! This is what I have been waiting for since I signed my letter of call in April! (Not realizing, of course, how much fun and what a blessing the state-side tour would also be!)

But for now, it's one day at a time!

Scott's hair is getting so long. Sometimes when he takes off his hat his hair shapes naturally into a pompadour! I love it! Another little thing that makes me happy!

Loving Jesus,
Jeni



Jeni Bradley

Date: 1/3/2003

Submitted by: Scott Schaffer

Journal Entry:

Hey! I'm back after a restful Christmas break. It was cool to run into some old friends back in Wisconsin, like, Keri Otremba, Laura Kreger, Keri Schumaker and Steve Day from University of Wisconsin Stout and Angie, Jess, Erin Wilhelm and Lauren Dow from camp. They all made my break better than it would've been if I wasn't able to see them. I'm glad break was so restful because "the road" has been quite challenging in the few days I've been back.

The hardest thing to deal with over the past couple days has been the snow. The past two days it's been coming down fast, thick and wet making driving surfaces less than favorable. In the past two days we have seen a frightening number of vehicles in the ditch.

The weather rearranges our schedule on a daily basis, making us late, making us drive slowly and yesterday it even canceled our booking. It sure does feel like winter, though. Tonight the snow caused us to get "stuck" trying to get into a church parking lot. We weren't really stuck; we just couldn't move any direction except down the gentle slope of the driveway that we were attempting to go up. We would still be stuck there right now if it wasn't for a chance encounter with two nice fellows and their giant truck. They were kind enough to pull us up the little hill in the church parking lot right through the snow.

It amazes me how God provides for us so obviously sometimes. When our trailer lights don't work, we run into people ready to help us at truck stops. When we're stuck in the slush, some guys with a huge truck randomly drive by and see us in distress and help us out. When our van needs an oil change there is always someone in the congregation that we're working with at that time that works in a shop and can help us out.

He is always there, keeping us on the road when it snows and sending angels to help pull us out of



Scott Schaffer

it when we get stuck.

Until next time,
Scott Schaffer
Habakkuk 3:2

Date: 1/5/2003

Submitted by: Doug Mauss

Journal Entry:

January 5, 2003.

From this day forward, January 5, 2003 will always be known to me and my inner circle of friends as "Day o' Craziness." We'll be having a hectic day with lots of stuff going on, and I will say, "Today's been long, but it's no Day o' Craziness." My grandkids will sit on my lap and they'll beg me to regale them with stories about the Day o' Craziness, and it will get bigger with each telling, until I am astounding them with tales of driving the van through six-foot walls of snow, and building churches from scratch so that we could have concerts in them.

In reality, Sunday was a really fun day. We ran two church services in the morning and then had two full set-up concerts two hours apart in two different churches. The first concert was over at 4:30, and then we had to tear down completely, drive five miles to the other church, and set back up completely in time for the concert to start at 6:30. From what I hear, this is actually pretty good training for what will be expected of us in Denmark.

Moses had a similar day once (ah, here it is, the Biblical tie-in you've been waiting for). On the day of the tenth plague, the Israelites ate standing up with their shoes. They didn't even leaven their bread, because they didn't have time wait for the dough to rise. And when the word came, they hurriedly grabbed their possessions and started a very long trek to the Promised Land.

Being in a traveling ministry definitely shows me what it is like to be constantly on the move, waiting for God's call. How often have people not responded to the call to share Christ's love, simply because they weren't ready to move? I almost did not join Youth Encounter because I had a good situation with my town home, and did not want to face the hassle of moving out. We need to be READY to move. We need to figuratively strap the sandals to our feet, and not get too comfortable with our kitchens, so that when God calls us, we can immediately answer, "Here I am, send me!" Even if it is something as little as helping to shovel a neighbor's driveway, or smiling at the checkout lady when you buy groceries, don't let your comfort keep you from sharing the love. And remember, nothing is as hard or out of the way as the Day o' Craziness, by definition.

Doug Ezekiel



Doug Mauss

Date: 1/7/2003

Submitted by: Kirsten Vejen Najbjerg

Journal Entry:

Snow everywhere and a view of mountains, valleys and woods. A wonderful host family and four nights in the same bed. This weekend has been good. We got a new record in setting up and tearing down and met a lot of nice people. It was fun for me to meet a German pastor and hear a little German again (it was like being in Europe again).

We arrived at Reading, PA at 4:00 pm this afternoon – ready to sing at an assisted living home. Actually not all of us were ready. Jeni started to feel really bad in the van today and she had to give up singing with us. It was really hard to do an acoustic program without our dear lead singer, but we had a good time with the residents anyway (I am just glad we have some days with housing only so that Jeni can get some rest and start feeling better, because I don't know how to do an electric program without her). They sang along on "What a Friend We have in Jesus", "Jesus Loves Me", "Amazing Grace" etc. and more and more people came to join the worship. It was a blessing to feel that joy and happiness – and I got to meet another person from Europe. This time from Norway. It was good to hear some Norwegian



Kirsten Vejen Najbjerg

again.

After getting lost only once we arrived at our host family tonight. They had dinner ready for us and welcomed us to their home. It becomes more and more amazing to me, that people just open their homes to us strangers, make us feel at home and help us with all our needs. God really takes care of us.

Date: 1/8/2003

Submitted by: Seth Gibbon

Journal Entry:

Well, here we are: a week away from going to Denmark for four months! That is simply incredible! Having never been to another country except Canada, I really am not quite sure what to expect. Since returning from Christmas break our team has nicely gotten back into our established routine. In one week though, we will all be pushed (except possibly Kirsten) out of our comfort zone a bit more than we are used to. I'm really excited about it all though, wondering how God will use us once we're over there, and how God will change us in the process.

Whilst perusing my Bible the other day I came across a verse I don't remember hearing before, but which I thought was very appropriate to our situation. It's Jeremiah 10:23, which says: "I know, O LORD, that a man's life is not his own; it is not for man to direct his steps." What a great reminder that God really is in charge of everything and "works out everything toward His own ends" (Proverbs 16:4), and that I really don't need to worry about what's going to happen because God will take care of our team while we're overseas and when we return and even will take care of me once I'm off of team and will still direct my steps, even when I haven't the foggiest notion of where to go or what to expect. One more Bible verse I find relevant here is the very popular Micah 6:8 which says, essentially, "God has shown you what is required of you, to act justly, love mercy and walk humbly with your God." I take great comfort there because it takes the task of saving the world and changing peoples' lives out of my hands and puts it into those of Someone much more reliable. Whew! What a relief! Denmark, here we come!



Seth Gibbon

Date: 1/10/2003

Submitted by: Scott Schaffer

Journal Entry:

Hello all! Long time no See! But that's life on the road isn't it? It's hard to believe that in a few days Watermark will be in Denmark! Instead of dwelling on the pre-Denmark induced anxiety we are all experiencing or on how much I miss everyone I would like to tell you about the simple joy found in a child's smile.

We were in New Jersey again, at our final stop on our way to our ultimate destination, Baldwin, New York. We did a program and were having games with the youth of Our Redeemer Lutheran Church in Fords, New Jersey when I was totally taken aback by the kids. They were so much fun. They all had so much energy! Most of them were grade school aged and were wound for sound from the Chapel we lead for them earlier that day, not to mention the program.

We were in the middle of a game of good ol' full contact tic-tac-toe when I started to realize how much I liked being a kid. I couldn't help but remember so many summer days gone by where I didn't have a care in the world, and I could just run around and play and not think about a single thing. All in all, my life hasn't changed all that much, really. It was such a blessing to see a whole group of kids singing and dancing in the chapel and program and to see them having such a blast with tic-tac-toe and rock-paper-scissors tag.

Basically, what I'm trying say is that being there in Fords filled me up. I got some additional sleep, kicked my little snuffle I had and got to hang out with some awesome kids. What more could I ask for before leaving for Denmark?



Scott Schaffer

Scotteric

Date: 1/12/2003

Submitted by: Doug Mauss

Journal Entry:

So then there are times when I struggle with the Second Commandment. Specifically, we are staying at Bethlehem Church in Baldwin, NY, the host church for New Vision in 2001. And one of the guys on New Vision 2001 was Brian West.

I went to college with Brian. He was president of the choir, received the lead in any dramatical production he wanted, and carried himself with such a presence that you couldn't help but be humbled to talk with this soft-spoken, spiritual, caring man of God. You'd want to hate him for being so perfect, but you couldn't, because you liked and respected him so much. And my host family raves about him-- and rightly so-- and talks about these spiritual songs he wrote, and the impact he made on them all.

Two years ago, Brian was doing exactly the same thing I'm trying to do now. He was doing an incredible work for the Lord. And I can't fill his shoes. I know, I know: not me, but the Spirit through me. But I can't help but feel the Spirit had a better instrument two years ago in Brian. And I idolize him. I wish I could be the person, the evangelist, Brian is. And when I hear others rave about how wonderful he was, I feel that I could never make the difference he did. And I know this is a flaw in my thinking. That's the point. I need to rely on God. I'm not. But Brian does all the things I think I'm good at doing for the Lord. And he does them all better than I do. And "variety among individuals" isn't a very comforting answer to the question of why you are not as good as someone else. I know and I pray that God will use me to the best of my abilities. But knowing it in my head and resting assured with it in my heart are two different things. Funny how you can preach a theme so many times just to fall flat on your face because you don't listen to yourself. 2 Corinthians 4:16-18

Doug E



Doug Mauss

Date: 1/14/2003

Submitted by: Kirsten Vejen Najbjerg

Journal Entry:

Three Broadway musicals at the same time, subway rides in Manhattan at midnight and really cold and windy weather. Watermark did it all on their day off in New York City.

It was really good to have a day off before our busy prep days – and it was an experience for all of us to see the New York "night culture." Luckily we had Gail (one of our exuberant Watermark friends) with us. (In case you were wondering, exuberant is a word Doug just taught me). Without Gail I think we – or at least I – would have been lost.

Today we got a lot of stuff done. The best part was cleaning up the van and finding things in there we have been looking for for the last four months. The van has never been this clean since we left training in September. What a wonderful feeling! We also got traveler's checks, made an inventory list of all the stuff we are going to leave here in NY, went for lunch to a China restaurant with the pastor (yummy), had some Danish time and packed.

I don't think I have really realized yet that we are leaving for Denmark tomorrow. Hopefully I will when we are sitting on the airplane. I am a little nervous but God reminded me of a Bible verse last week that really has been helpful for me. "So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand" (Is. 41;10). And the good thing is that this Bible verse is not just for me but for all of us.



Kirsten Vejen Najbjerg

Date: 1/18/2003

Submitted by: Kevin Gruetter

Journal Entry:

If you know me pretty well or have seen the last few weeks of journal entries or just know a little bit about what Watermark is you probably already know that I writing this in Europe. Specifically I'm sitting on a couch in Nykøbing (Don't try to say it.), Falster, Denmark. It's on an island in the southeastern part of the country. This is the start of the fifth day here in Denmark. Let me just tell you a little about how I am taking to this new place. A little background: I was sitting at cross cultural training listening to how and when you use a water purifier, and that using mosquito netting could save my life. But I knew I didn't need to know any of that. I started to think that coming here wasn't going to be a big deal and that it was practically the same as home in the states. Turns out that wasn't entirely true.



Kevin Gruetter

So here I am experiencing culture shock. Now don't let the name fool you. So far it's a wonderful feeling. Everything I see is its own new thing, even the street signs are fun to look at. But for me the most exciting thing to learn about is the language. I love to hear the language. I listen so intently that some Danes ask how much I could understand and are surprised when I say, "I think he said thank you once." With each day comes a new lesson and in turn a new flash card. Maybe by the time we have to go back home to the States we'll be able to understand when people speak to us and maybe even formulate some type of response. Right now I'm content to learn.

There is one more thing that I need to tell you about concerning language. Twice now we have attended small worship and praise sessions. The first time was amazing. There were probably thirty of us. A couple people didn't know much English. Five people didn't know any Danish. But God was there. Sure I didn't know half of what they were singing about, but they let me play my drum and I got the opportunity to listen. I could tell these people were singing with their hearts. God was in the room and I have to think pretty gosh darn happy with all this love that we were offering him.

The second of these times was just as great, although smaller. But the eleven of us felt the same warmth. It was a great time of music and sharing which I'll tell you about if you ask. What I really want to share about that night is the Lord's Prayer or Fadervor. We prayed it together just as you would in church only the five United States prayed in English and the six Danes prayed "Dansk." In my opinion you'll never know quite what that feels like until you've had a chance to pray like that yourself. I can tell you that it was quite evident that it was the same prayer and had the same meaning and most importantly wherever you are, it is the same Jesus.

Vi ses,
Kevin

Date: 1/19/2003

Submitted by: Doug Mauss

Journal Entry:

Life in Denmark. Well it's pretty cool over here. Serious bread everywhere, incredibly friendly people, speeding our German van at 110 on the highways. Kilometers per hour, that is.

Kevin and I have discovered that the best way to bond with people when you don't speak the language is to play sports with them. Yelling for someone to pass it to you, and congratulating a teammate on a goal are pretty universal modes of communication.

Also, it gives you prime opportunity to learn the important Danish vocab. Y'know, "goal," "shoot it," "my bad," "my grandmother plays better than you do." The important stuff.

Kevin and I thought we were doing very well with our vocabulary, our basic grammar and pronunciation, when we hit our first stumbling block. I was sitting around, having "hygge" with about seven Danes from the boarding school, and trading my knowledge of American culture for their knowledge of how to pronounce the more difficult words and phrases. We got to one phrase, and they began arguing amongst themselves on how to pronounce it. Which worried me. Then they confessed that there are whole sections of Denmark which speak completely incomprehensible dialects to each other. And we are going to all of those sections of Denmark. Right when we finally might start to get conversational, we will go to Bornholm, where the Danish is so obscure, they have their own different Dictionary!! That was disheartening, to say the least.

So, there are setbacks along the road to good mental Danish. But soccer has become universal. And we have done much worshipping here. And it turns out-- no matter the language-- singing praises



Doug Mauss

to God is universal, too. We sing with them in Danish, and have almost no idea what they are saying, but when it's lifted to God it no longer matters if we understand.

Danish Vocab o' the Journal:

Bamse (BAHM-suh) - teddy bear

Date: 1/21/2003

Submitted by: Seth Gibbon

Journal Entry:

It's been quite a week since arriving in Denmark! I am really enjoying the sights, sounds, and smells here. There's kind of a cosmopolitan feel to everything, it's difficult to describe, it's all just sort of European. Little cars, brick buildings, really old stuff and NO FREE REFILLS AT McDONALD'S!!!

The people have been wonderful though, very friendly and eager to help us adjust to a different culture. We had a "practice lunch" the day after we arrived in Denmark so we could learn some of the different "rules" for meals in Denmark and were coached by our contact Poul. Cheese is okay with red pepper, but not egg. People have really responded well to us and have seemed very excited to see Watermark perform, due in large part I think to the excellent promotion of Indre Mission and great past Watermark teams. Sometimes it feels like a lot to live up to.

Last night we had a program and Jeni read a Bible verse from 2 Corinthians about how when we are weak, God's power is made perfect in us. Here in Denmark it is sometimes difficult for me to feel at ease and in control, but my weaknesses and other deficiencies can be filled in with God's infinite, perfect power. God can still use me and even use me well even when I'm stubborn, confused or lost. Thanks be to God.



Seth Gibbon

Date: 1/22/2003

Submitted by: Kirsten Vejen Najbjerg

Journal Entry:

Denmark, dear Denmark. It feels so good to be home. I have just realized how much Denmark actually is my home. But I see it in a new way because of my teammates. I can see all the old houses and churches with their eyes and get as excited as they do. I love to show them the country and so far it hasn't been a problem because of all the wonderful people we have met. I really hope God can use us here. Things have to be done a lot differently than we are used to in the States. So that is a new challenge for us. But what I really like is that we stay at the same host home and work with the same contact for a week. We get to know people so much better and we get to meet some of them more than once.

During this first week in Denmark I have found out how many words I have actually learned during my five months in the states. But I have also found out where my weaknesses are and that I still have a long way to go. The only problem is that I get my languages confused. Sometimes I speak Danish to my teammates and English to the Danes. That makes us all laugh!!!

We are all at different levels in our culture shock (or return culture shock) but today we all agreed on going to McDonald's for lunch (even if none of us actually like McDonald's) to feel some American culture again.

Tonight we had a concert in a big, old Danish church. And I really enjoyed talking with all the people afterward. They were just great. I can't describe how happy it makes me meeting people that give me smiles and encourage me to go on. Even when days start really low and it seems like we will never survive, God can do some tricks (that only he is able to do) and send the right people just in time. I am so impressed by God. I would like to know how he can change people's minds from one minute to another. It is a really big and fantastic God and Father we have. I am so glad that he is my dad.



Kirsten Vejen Najbjerg

Date: 1/23/2003
Submitted by: Jeni Bradley
Journal Entry:

"Some of us are Jews, some are Gentiles, some are slaves and some are free. But we have all been baptized into Christ's body by one Spirit, and we have all received the same Spirit."

1 Corinthians 12:13

I have to admit that Culture Shock has sure been getting the best of me. Jet lag mixed in with Culture Shock... not a real fun combination! But things are looking up! We are meeting the most amazing people this week that we have been traveling throughout Lolland-Falster, DK. Tonight as we sat around the table enjoying desserts and coffee and juice with a few middle school teens, conversation was going on between others that I couldn't understand (as usual!). All of the sudden the teens began quickly grabbing extra cookies in excitement and even scrapping up the crumbs left over!!! Kirsten quickly translated that one of the adults told the teens that they could have his share of the cookies! These teens reacted just like American teens would have!

It has been so cool to see how similar we all are. Here I am across the huge Atlantic Ocean and I am singing "Shout to the Lord" with Christians in Denmark. We worship the same God! That statement may sound funny and quite obvious. For the first time, though, it has been made real to me! Our language is different. Our food and the rules for eating it are different. Our social lives are different. Our heritage and culture is very different. But our God... is not different!



Jeni Bradley

Date: 1/24/2003
Submitted by: Scott Schaffer
Journal Entry:

My first week in Denmark was a week of firsts, as one could expect. Adapting to all the changes wasn't exactly easy on me, even though I thought it was at the time. I consider myself a very adaptable person, too, so I was a little disappointed in myself. It's possible that I'm being over-critical of myself; but I've disappointed myself a lot this week. I've been late a few times to team meetings, unable to perform a skit we had worked on and even performed once but the most disappointing thing that happened to me this week happened at one of the schools we were doing a program at.

We did a typical program for the entire student body of this boarding school (the equivalent of high school in the USA), about 45 kids total, and afterwards I was hanging out with some of the students who were skateboarding. I asked them if a lot of the students that went to this school were Christians or not and the young man standing next to me turned to me and said, "Some who go to this school are Christian, but I'm not. I don't believe that Jesus came to earth and died for me." His comment flipped some sort of switch in my head and I couldn't think of anything to say; maybe I was too shocked. It was really bad. This is what I'm called to do! To tell people in this young man's exact position the good news of Jesus Christ. The conversation progressed and I couldn't bring up Christianity again before lunch when we parted company. I totally missed a perfect opportunity to share the gospel with someone. I'm still dealing with this a bit, so if you have any thoughts you could email me at yearofrolling@yahoo.com.

Despite letting myself down, the first week or so overseas has been really good; there was by far more good than bad and more good times than hard times.

Our schedule last week didn't really promote getting to bed before midnight, so we are all a bit sleep deprived right now, but that's nothing new. We are still all healthy. I feel pretty well adjusted to the way Denmark works, but it will only take one unexpected occurrence, some foreign edict or some sort of new traffic law, to make me rethink that statement and make me realize I will never know enough about this culture I've been submerged in.

The bottom line is I'm happy and I like Denmark. Our programs are going exceptionally well and I love the churches and cathedrals we get to do our programs in. They are so ornate and old! Some are from the 1300-1400s, one was even 800 years old. Wow! We just don't get that in the US,



Scott Schaffer

probably because our nation isn't that old.
Until next time,
Scotteric
1 John 4:9-12

Date: 1/26/2003
Submitted by: Scott Schaffer
Journal Entry:

HEY IT'S SUNDAY!

Sunday in Denmark is our day-off, so I thought I may as well post a journal entry even though it's only been a few days since my last entry.

I am doing a lot better since my last email entry. I hope no one found it depressing. I would just like to say hello to the Fyfes in NY State because I know they are following us.

Since it's our day off I will have the luxury of doing little more than some reading, listening to some music (an incredible new Christian Rock band called Sanctus Real, I love them, check them out) and possibly watching the Super Bowl tonight. The Super Bowl will be in Danish, though, but what a better time to learn some new vocabulary words!

I really like everything that is different in Denmark. The brick homes are quaint, the colors the Danes paint walls and homes are great and the little village streets are so cozy when all the shops have racks of merchandise outside. Eating is fun too. So is looking at all the little foreign cars, the Citroens, Fiats and Opels. We also see a lot of Volks Wagons, Peugeots and Fords, too. Our van is a Mercedes Benz, which I think is unbelievably rad.

Ok, I suppose I should go do something constructive now instead of simply listing all the nifty things I like about Denmark,

Until next time,
Scotteric
Philippians 4:13

PS – The Danish keyboard can do lots of neat tricks!
Like: Å æ € and Ø!



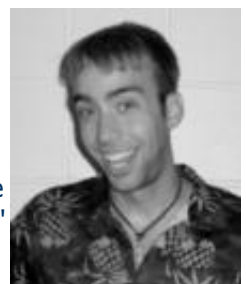
Scott Schaffer

Date: 1/27/2003
Submitted by: Doug Mauss
Journal Entry:

. And then there's the good pain. Watermark had the opportunity to play in an all-day soccer tournament, and then play for the tournament. A concert, that is. We played five games of high intensity indoor soccer, lost most of them, then attempted to show Jesus' love through music. One comment to us after our first soccer game from a Danish bystander: "You guys play soccer too much like Christians." While normally I would be flattered, he was explaining to us why we lost. So Sunday, we had nothing to do but feel sore, and take naps in preparation for watching the Super Bowl live between midnight and three-thirty in the morning, Danish time. And we felt tough while we waited for the Super Bowl to start, complaining about our pain in a manly, we're-not-complaining sort of way.

But we had some hours to kill, waiting for our midnight football. And the TV was showing James Bond: The World is not Enough, in English with Danish subtitles. The bad guy in that movie had been shot in the head and, as a result, could feel no pain. This made him kind of a super man, since you could not hurt him.

Sometimes I wish I could feel no pain. Being in European-cultured Denmark, sometimes feel like trying to cram a square peg in a round hole. It hurts around the edges. There are so many things I just don't understand. So many flamboyant American-isms that don't go over real well in modest



Doug Mauss

Denmark society. And the people are so nice here, it's been such a joy, but there's no question that I don't quite fit. And that strangeness makes me a good witness here. I've had several Danes tell me that they listen to us more when we read the Bible or when we talk about Jesus, just because we're different. We're not the same Danish people they've been listening to their whole lives. So my rough edges are scraping away some of their smooth fronts. It's uncomfortable for both of us, but we are both new creations because of it. And then there's the good pain.

Danish Vocab o' the Journal

sommerfugl (SOM-er-fool) - butterfly (literally "summer bird")

Date: 1/28/2003

Submitted by: Kirsten Vejen Najbjerg

Journal Entry:

I don't know where to start. This day has been a little (actually a lot) different from a normal team day. Kevin and I started at 8:30 by calling the police because yesterday, when we arrived at our booking, we found out that someone had been in our van and taken a lot of stuff. I can't describe the feeling I had when I went to bed. We serve as volunteers for God this year and the way he helps us is to take a third of what we own... When I opened the Bible to read my daily devotion God gave me Matthew 5:43-48 about loving my neighbor. It was really hard for me because I did not feel ready to love the person who felt free enough to break into our van and take whatever he wanted. But this person is my neighbor! God also reminded me that what we have here on earth is not constant. He is preparing this awesome place for us in Heaven. Isn't that great?

The energy was low this morning but I hope God can turn this situation into something good. He did a really good job tonight though. We had a concert with a lot of youth and I met an old friend of mine. That was a really good high.

I have a problem. It is 12:02 am and I am so tired so I think it is best to stop my journal writing and go to bed. I will be back next week. See you then. Take care.

Kirsten



Kirsten Vejen Najbjerg

Date: 1/29/2003

Submitted by: Seth Gibbon

Journal Entry:

Last week we were in the lovely area of Falster. Now we are in West Sjaelland (Shell-land). I'm having a bit of trouble with the language though, so to give you all in the U.S. a taste of what it's like, I am now going to write in English like I speak in Danish: I like Denmark. It is good. How are you? I am fine. Denmark is nice. I like it. We love God. We sing lots. It is fun. God is Big. He is everywhere. People are nice. Thank you very much. Singing is good. No, I don't play guitar. No, I don't play drums. I, um, play this (gesture to soundboard). Please pass the cheese and (yummy) brown bread. No, I don't like fish. I don't even like fish-chunks in curry. No herring for me, thanks. I am full.

Fortunately, as I said in my Danish-English, people are very nice. Even though there is sometimes a substantial language barrier between us people frequently come up to me and shake my hand and thank us for the program and then we just kind of smile at each other because our mutual language skills are nearly exhausted. That's okay though because I think we both know what we mean and, more importantly, God knows what is exactly on each of our hearts.

It has really been eye-opening being in a different culture and seeing that many people get along just fine without English. It makes me feel a little smaller which is probably, all in all, a good thing. It also reminds me of another important truth. God is still working here and working hard and working well. Yeah. God is really big! (Gud er meget stor!)



Seth Gibbon

Date: 1/30/2003

Submitted by: Jeni Bradley

Journal Entry:

Psalm 146:8 says "The Lord lifts the burden of those bent beneath their loads." Psalm 146 has come to be a favorite of mine lately. But different verses stand out to me each day. Verse 8 has been the one that stands out for me lately. Just when I think I have "overcome" culture shock, I get hit by a truck with it! By the way, if I haven't mentioned it already, it may be helpful to know that I pretty much skipped right over Stage 1 of Culture Shock and jumped feet first into Stage 2!!!! Stage one (loving everything about the new culture) lasted for about a day! For the past 2 weeks I have been in and out of Stage 2 ("not loving" and getting easily frustrated with the new culture).

I must say though that God has been with me every step of the way. I really have been feeling "His strength in my weakness" (2 Cor. 12:9) each day when I can't say what I am feeling or I don't have a clue of what is going on around me because of the language barrier. I have really learned how much I talk in day to day life with people around me... and now that ability has been taken away from me. I now do a lot more sitting "patiently" and listening. God is really showing me a lot about that part of my life!

One of these days soon I will be able to fully enjoy Denmark, in all its splendor. Not to say that I am not enjoying it now, but enjoy it more fully, without this "load" on my back!! The Lord will "lift the burden" of this load I am carrying around right now. I know that I was sent here for reasons greater than dealing with Culture Shock. I want to spread the Good News with my life.

Living in hope! Jeni

Psalm 146—read it!!! It's good stuff!



Jeni Bradley

Date: 1/31/2003

Submitted by: Scott Schaffer

Journal Entry:

Hej everyone! We have been blessed by some incredible contact people since being in DK. Paul Nielsen, Jesper Iversen and Frank Fyhn have all been angels to us. Actually, I'm at Frank's house right now posting this journal entry. This week we stayed in a mission house in Jyderup and Frank kept our fridge stocked with lots of milk and some great homemade jam that his wife Lena makes. It's so good I don't know if I'll be able to eat Welch's Jelly when I go back to the States.

Alas we must leave Jyderup and Frank and head for the big city: Copenhagen.

We get to go to Copenhagen tomorrow, actually, for a day of sightseeing before we start our next week of bookings. I have a feeling it's going to be one of the raddest days of our entire tour because our spirits have been so high as of late.

Sunday, as I'm sure you're all aware of, is Groundhog Day. To most, February 2nd holds no special mystique, no excitement and is just another roadblock on the highway to the warm breezes of April and May.

I see the magic in Groundhog Day. The true meaning of Groundhog Day is often lost in the media blitz surrounding poor Punxsutawney Phil's precious shadow. The media coverage of the unveiling of America's favorite groundhog truly fails to capture the excitement of a giant rodent predicting the weather.

In actuality, Groundhog Day is so much more than winter's fulcrum. To me, it is an ever enduring symbol of love because that is the day my parents were married. Coincidentally February 2nd is also the six-month anniversary of my relationship with my girlfriend Angie. I don't mention her a lot in my journal entries (I don't know if I've mentioned her yet actually...) which is odd since she's so important to me and my faith journey.

So anyway, Groundhog Day is my kind of holiday: because it requires faith to believe that spring come and patience and knowledge to realize that it might not warm up as quick as you want it to but it will. All in time.

Scotteric



Scott Schaffer

Date: 2/2/2003

Submitted by: Doug Mauss

Journal Entry:

So an interesting side effect of learning Danish is that I can say far more than I can understand. Not that I know how to say all that much in Danish, but it far exceeds my comprehension level. It is funny because I will speak my carefully formulated Danish sentence to a konfirmander (confirmation student) only to have him answer me in a completely incomprehensible Scandinavian tongue, which I can only assume to be the same language I am painfully attempting to cram into my United States skull. And then I say, "Wait, can you speak English?" which negates my attempt to assimilate the Danish culture and language. It's a funny cycle.



Doug Mauss

But more importantly than Danish, I am trying to speak a message of love and faith. So many of the kids here in this Lutheran state of Denmark have no idea that Jesus loves them. They go to confirmation class, they attend church (it's mandatory), and yet they have no idea of the basic truth of God's loving sacrifice.

And in this more important language, I still say more than I understand. I have to talk about the song "There's a Reason" and tell about how even if we don't understand why bad things happen to us, God works everything for the greater good of those who love him. And at the same time I don't understand how potential nuclear war with Iraq can possibly be worked for good for anybody. So then I have to go back to the basics, and relearn that nothing can separate us from the love of Christ. (Romans 8:38) And eventually, I might learn enough that I will understand more of God's language and timing. Which, in relation to my life, is also a funny cycle.

Doug's Watermark

Danish Vocab of the Journal:

Kærlighed (KARE-lee-hey!) - love

Date: 2/5/2003

Submitted by: Seth Gibbon

Journal Entry:

Another week, another journal. We have been in København (Copenhagen) this week and done a lot of driving around, especially in the downtown. It's very different. There are bicycles everywhere and they think that they own the road. Nobody ever honks in anger though. In fact, the only honking from driver frustration I've heard so far was when a bunch of crazy people ran around a German van screaming at an intersection in a fire-drill like spectacle. There are also a plethora of dead-end streets and blocked off roads and strange signs. My favorite is the "No Parking Here" sign which is a red "X" on a blue circle. It looks exactly like the X-Men symbol. There are also no stop signs. Instead at intersections of major roads there are traffic lights or these cool things called turnabouts. Turnabouts are like a big circle of road with three or four roads coming out of it and a big mound in the middle. Kirsten says there are Vikings buried in some of them, how cool is that? When we get lost we can drive around on the middle circle until we know where to go next. Pretty convenient, eh?



Seth Gibbon

That sort of reminds me of my life on team this year. It's sort of a break where I'm trying to figure out which road to choose next in my life. I worry about that a lot and I keep pestering my navigator-- God-- to tell me where to go next. Even though being on the road is a lot of work, it's still a ton of fun and I get to see things from a lot of different perspectives. That's pretty cool and very, um, horizon-expanding. Maybe that's why I'm sort of taking a detour in my life this year, because God wants me to see some cool scenery and get a little bit wider view of life. Maybe it's also

fun just to drive around in circles in a German van.

Date: 2/6/2003

Submitted by: Doug Mauss

Journal Entry:

So the theme for today's journal entry is miscommunication. And Scott's birthday. Miscommunication and Scott's birthday, those are the themes. Like the confirmation class we were performing for today. Kirsten was addressing them in Danish, as she always does, and suddenly they all burst into Happy Birthday, which is a nice perk of speaking a language that no-one else on the team knows, you can surprise people even when they are standing next to you. And to continue this theme, here are some quotes from the last few weeks:

Seth: "How do I say 'Absolutely not'?"

Jesper (our contact): "In English?"

Kirsten (to Seth): "Okay, you're from America, you're right."

Doug (counting): "1...2...3, 4, 5...6 bicycles."

Seth: "Well, it IS rush hour."

(Doug attempts to speak to a 4-year old Danish boy in Danish)

Silas: "I can't understand you when you speak German to me."

Dina (a Danish friend): "We were forced to learn Spanish at my school because we took a class trip to Italy."

Kevin (while watching the popular Danish kids show "Bamse og Kewling")

"These are the most uncoordinated giant puppets I've ever seen."

Scott: "There's some sort of print in my jam!"

Anne (our contact): "Yeah. It's Polish."

(describing the meaning of "stalker" to Anne):

Jeni: "Someone who 'loves' you, follows you, invades your privacy..."

Anne: "So God's a stalker?"

Anne: "So the message is 'cheap castles between noon and two'?"

Seth: "Well, we want a NICE castle."

We don't always meet each other on the same page, heck, sometimes we're in completely different books. And somehow we accomplish things together. And somehow Scott has made it to be twenty-two years old. How have we done all this? The grace of God. No other way.



Doug Mauss

Date: 2/6/2003

Submitted by: Jeni Bradley

Journal Entry:

Denmark seemed so far away to me a few months ago. When I thought about what the people would be like or the food, it was hard to imagine because it didn't seem real! One of the first songs we learned during training back in August was "Du er Hellig". The song was really great and had a link to this unknown world of Denmark, one which I would one day experience way down the road! We sang this song for soo many American audiences that, myself included, really enjoyed the beauty of the song but didn't have any idea of its meaning. Our first time performing the song in Denmark was at the Bible



Jeni Bradley

School in Børkop; and they all sang along, because not only did they know the words but they knew the meaning of the song! This was an amazing experience for me. Another amazing thing happened tonight with the same song! We were at a church with some teens and we played this song, "Du er Hellig". I couldn't believe their reaction, they were all standing up, some were clapping and swaying to the music, while others were singing other harmony parts along with us. They were praising God to this worship song!

Now 6 months ago when I first learned this gorgeous song, Kirsten did explain the words and the meaning of the song. But after singing it a million times to English speaking audiences who didn't understand it as worship, it was easy to forget it's impact! The song has taken on new shape for me and Denmark has become real to me. Not physically, because obviously we have been here for 3 weeks (today!!), but real to me emotionally. We are here and God is bringing people in our path to share insight and open our eyes. Hopefully we are also planting (or watering) some seeds as we "fly" through Denmark.

We are in Copenhagen this week and now the week is almost over. Time is really flying. Today was Scott's birthday!!! Now he is "officially" 22! He has been telling everyone he was 22 for a couple of weeks now. Now he really is! We had a fun day! God is good, all the time! And all the time, God is good!!! Praise Him!

Clinging to Jesus,
Jeni

Date: 2/7/2003

Submitted by: Scott Schaffer

Journal Entry:

København was awesome. Keep in mind that I don't throw around the word "awesome" carelessly, not this time. I was literally awestruck by the Henriksons, our host family last week. I felt like I was at home, which really nice since I haven't been to mine in quite a while. Our contact Anne was also especially fun and easy to get along with and generous. Because of Anne and the Henriksons I have developed the hypothesis that København is full of extremely nice, generous people. In actuality, København is full of little streets, little cars and Danes.

We saw so many sights last week including the little mermaid, the Danish Parliament building, the Nyhavn area where there are canals and a giant anchor, the Tivoli marching band and the changing of the Royal Danish Guards. I took 195 pictures with the digital camera last week. I hope you don't think that is an obsessive amount or that I have "a problem" or anything like that.

In recap, København was astounding. We are on Bornholm now. Bornholm is an island generally south of Sweden and north of Poland. It's known as the "Pearl of the Baltic."

It looks to be a very challenging week here on the pearl; three electric programs on Monday and three more Tuesday and a couple school days. We'll be taxed to get sleep, but we will survive.

Hopefully we'll be able to see some of this beautiful little island.

Scotteric, over and out

Proverbs 21:21



Scott Schaffer

Date: 2/10/2003

Submitted by: Doug Mauss

Journal Entry:

So I don't know how accurate a portrayal our journals have been of Denmark. A lot of not so terrific stuff has happened to us. Our van was broken into and some of our luggage stolen. They won't accept American credit cards, so Kirsten has had to assume many team expenses. The government has just turned down our application for a visa extension, so we get booted out after two more months. It just seems to pile up. But as I look back on the last few weeks, I have scenes which stick out in my head, scenes which to me are more representative of our time in Denmark than the negative things. So let's dance.



Doug Mauss

...playing cards, and then camping out in sleeping bags on the floor of the 7-hour ferry ride to Børnholm....

...posing-- shivering-- in front of the statue of the Little Mermaid, with snow falling all around us....

...staying with the Henrikson family, who for a week made me feel like I was home again....

...watching the battle of wills between Seth and the Henriksons, as he just kept eating and they just kept bringing more food out to the table, until finally he had to give up....

...discussing God's love with a drunk man at 2:30 in the morning on a downtown street, while wearing pajamas....

...spending three hours at the Statens Museum for Kunst, looking at art, and able to enjoy beauty, without having to be responsible for making it....

...playing a concert for confirmation students who seemed bored out of their skulls, and then having almost all of them come to hear our night concert and bring their friends....

...Scott being given a plastic Viking helmet for his birthday, which he wore faithfully, and many Danes seeming to find that hilarious....

...the concert where every single person in the audience stood up on their chairs to dance to Potoski's song, "The Way."

...fish, cheese, fish, jam, cheese, fish, fish, jam, cheese, shrimp, ham, fish, fruit salad.

...eight year old students coming up to us after a concert and gravely complimenting us on how good our English is....

...having Maria, our host sister for a week, become a fun addition to the Watermark team for two days...

God's blessings abound. And if sometimes we seem to write about the hardships more, it is simply because those are the experiences that God gives us to learn from. Peace out from Denmark.

Doug Ø' Watermark

Danish Vocab o' the Journal:

T-shirt (TEE-shirt) - "T-shirt"

Date: 2/11/2003

Submitted by: Kirsten Vejen Najbjerg

Journal Entry:

I am back-- literally. We arrived at the pearl of Denmark (a little island called Bornholm) that has been my home for nine years. So when we arrived yesterday with the ferry at 6:30 am (yawn) I took the bike to my home city to visit my "grandma" (she was like a grandma for me when we lived here). She is almost 90 years old and it just seems like she is closer to God than the rest of us. She is so wise and I loved to talk with her again and get some good advice about life and Christianity.

At dinnertime I was back and went to bed early because my alarm clock was supposed to go off at 5:30 this morning-- and it did (yawn again). We started out with a full set-up program at 8:00 am and had another full set-up program before lunch. I can only say that we have enough to do and we are not done yet. In half an hour we will leave and have our third full set-up program today. It seems to be a lot but once you are in it it is not that bad-- especially because I



Kirsten Vejen Najbjerg

like to be home.

I would like to write more because this laptop is nice and warm (it is a little cold here in Denmark in February) but I also have to be ready for our next program.

Take care and have fun!

Kirsten

Date: 2/19/2003

Submitted by: Scott Schaffer

Journal Entry:

As I look down at my right knee I can't help but think about our everlasting God. I suppose I should explain a little bit.

Today Jeni, Seth, Kirsten, Doug and I went to Helsingør where Kronborg castle is located. It's the castle from Hamlet, except in English we call it Elsinore. The castle, although a mighty fortress, was once seized by the Swedes. The Danes eventually reclaimed control of the castle and the vital shipping route that it protects.



Scott Schaffer

Helsingør castle fell. I can imagine that many people thought that it would never be captured.

By now you should be thinking, 'What in the world does this have to do with your right knee Scott!' Well here's how my knee ties in.

Today at the "Ye Olde Castle Gift Shoppe" (it wasn't really called that) I bought a Danmark patch to sew over the hole that I tore in my favorite pants. I depended on these pants. In the world of pants these were super-pants. I got them off an Old Navy clearance rack for \$3 which really made them my favorites. They fit perfectly but they didn't last forever. Helsingør Castle didn't even last forever either, and people's lives depended on that. I wonder if I assumed that my pants would last forever.

This world won't last forever, not the castles, not me, and definitely not my pants.

After the gift shop, we bought tickets to explore what most would consider to be the dungeon of Helsingør Castle. In the winding, subterranean passageways of Kronborg lies an incredible larger-than-life statue of Holger Danske, the "Super-Viking" who will again rise to power when Danmark is in her darkest hour.

Some day the Lord will come again to take us home, not so unlike the way Holger Danske waits in the tunnels of Kronborg Castle for his day to come.

Our world is a temporal place, but God's time never ends.

Psalm 90 sings about God's everlastingness.

scottericS

Date: 2/20/2003

Submitted by: Jeni Bradley

Journal Entry:

Even though we are not there anymore, I would like to tell you about my experience with Bornholm. The week that we were there we had to also work on our Newsletters so we were unable to spend as much time on our journals. Bornholm was exactly the depiction I held in my head of what Denmark would be like! I loved it. There were so many skinny, brick streets just big enough for one small European car at a time. Brightly colored houses weaved rows through each little town. We even visited "the smallest house on Bornholm". It was a wonderful place!

We visited the ruins of an old castle. Unfortunately it was at this point that my camcorder decided it was going to stop working. But I was able to catch much of the huge fortress on still film! Along with the 4 other rolls I got developed during the week.

The week ended with a teen retreat at a place right on the "beach". I ran out to the beach the first time I saw it in daylight. Beaches and water are my "escape place". I love being near the water. So, in the amazingly frigid winds and temperatures I ran out to the beach and soaked in the sun (it



Jeni Bradley

comes out every once in awhile, and I get my share when it's here!!!). It was a wonderful few moments... moments are all I can handle in this weather! But I was thankful for the awesome moments and snapped a few pictures to remember those moments!

Psalm 146:6 He is the one who made heaven and earth, the sea and everything in them.

Loving His Son,
Jeni

Date: 2/20/2003

Submitted by: Scott Schaffer

Journal Entry:

The other day when we were on Bornholm, Seth, Doug and I jumped in the Baltic Sea. Yeah, it was February, but we had never been to the Baltic Sea. I did it just to see if I was still alive and to have the bragging rights. I really had nothing to lose.

There's a line in the Allstar United song, "Revolution" that says, "We believe that we've been walking in the light when we're crawling in the dark."

Lately, that's how I've been feeling. There is too much gray area in my life, and it's hard to tell where I'm walking, especially in my prayer life.

I'm reading Acts right now, chapter by chapter, with this little Bible study book. It's really great. That little book makes me realize so much more about the Bible than I could have understood otherwise.

But since I've started reading Acts, I've realized that we have some huge shoes to fill. Peter and John did amazing things with the power of the Holy Spirit. People's lives were transformed just by seeing their boldness in the face of persecution, their dedication to Christ and their faith in God.

Granted, they healed many and did miracles in the name of Jesus, but does my life compare? Do people revolutionize the way they see themselves just by seeing me? Do people gain strength to do God's work in the world today simply by being around me? Are people moved to prayer and ask the Holy Spirit to make a change in their lives when they hear me speak?

Only God knows for sure, but I think people do.

I don't think that anyone on Watermark will cause a crippled man to walk in the name of Jesus, but I know the Holy Spirit has worked through us, just not quite the same way it worked in the early church.

As for God and me now, I'm diving in just like I dove into the Baltic Sea a few days ago and trusting again like I did when I first believed. When we ask for it, we can feel God's presence just like I felt the Baltic Sea around my feet, knees, waist and head when we were on Bornholm. God's love for us is bigger than any ocean and his grace more astonishing and more vitalizing than the chill of those waves I dove into on that February day.

ses



Scott Schaffer

Date: 2/26/2003

Submitted by: Seth Gibbon

Journal Entry:

Whew! We just finished a pretty long day! We woke up before 6 o'clock to make it to a confirmation class just before eight. It was still pitch dark and freezing cold outside when I went outside to warm up the van. We watched the sun come up as we drove to the church. The confirmation class we went to was great. We sang a couple songs and talked about why we were Christians. When the confirmation class was over we were treated to breakfast at one of the mission houses where they held the class. When we had eaten all we could, we went to our host school and led a class on what it's like to be a Christian in America. After that we had lunch and then set up all of our equipment for the big



Seth Gibbon

concert at night. Then we did an acoustic program for the students here. It was a lot of fun. We were in this fairly small room with about 80 kids jumping and dancing around and trying to sing loud enough so they could all hear us. It was one of the first times I've been uncomfortably warm in Denmark. Next was an hour and a half of rehearsal, a quick shower, dinner and then our program. I guess there were about 250 people there. I had our little sound system cranked up almost all the way. After the program we chatted with the students for a while and then tore everything down and packed up the van. We finished at about 10:30. It's days like this that I'm glad that God always keeps His promises. Promises of strength and help and hope. I read a Bible verse the other day that really inspired me. It was Psalm 147 verse 11; it says "the Lord delights in those who fear him, who put their hope in his unfailing love." Unfailing love. Love that never fails. Ever. God's love always wins in the end. No matter how weak or tired we are, no matter how often we fail, God's love doesn't. What a promise! That's news good enough to make me wake up before the sun.

Date: 3/1/2003

Submitted by: Scott Schaffer

Journal Entry:

What a fast paced world we live in. Does life ever seem to be too much, too fast for you? It does for me. We live in a temporary world where we are here one day and gone the next and sometimes there seems to be no rhyme or reason for what happens to us.

About a year ago, after reading "Don't Sweat the Small Stuff" I decided that I wasn't going to worry about ANY decisions that wouldn't make a difference in the world after 100 years. "That's what matters," I thought, "the big stuff." Please note that I said "worry about" not "care about."

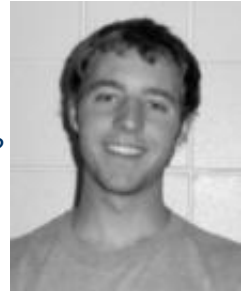
Will the fact that I came here to Danmark to do mission work matter in 100 years? I think so-- no-- I KNOW so. Our contact, Tonny, said to us last night, "What you did here this week matters to eternity." So I can know with certainty that the Holy Spirit is working in the life of at least one person that we've encountered so far on our trip. Even if just one person is moved to believe it is still all worth it, even in a world were people and things don't actually last for that long in the big picture.

Since I read "Don't Sweat the Small Stuff" I worry a lot less. My life hasn't changed that much either, with the exception of my stress level diminishing drastically. I guess they were right all along when they said that worrying doesn't help anything.

My friend/teacher/mentor and role model in general, Judy Wicklund, once told me, "Scott, you will change the way people think in the 21st Century." I have never forgotten that (and if you don't know me, I forget a lot of stuff). I don't know if I have ever received a bigger compliment or a more encouraging piece of advice.

I hope Judy is right and I hope she was talking about the ministry I am doing this year because there is no better way for Judy to be right.

I've made only a handful of decisions in my whole life that will matter in 100 years, and I know being in Danmark is one of them.



Scott Schaffer

Date: 3/4/2003

Submitted by: Doug Mauss

Journal Entry:

Well, here it is, Mardi Gras. For all you holy people out there, start your engines, Lent is around the corner. Some of us on the team have been discussing what sins we need to make sure to commit today, so we can get them out of our system now. Forty days is a long time to go without procrastinating, being lazy, taking too much time in the shower, robbing banks, eating too much, or creating monopolies in a capitalist society. We're kidding around, but really Fat Tuesday is a ridiculous concept. So much so that Kirsten



Doug Mauss

still thinks we're making it up. (Somebody email her and tell her we're not lying. And fill her in on the beads tradition while you're at it.)

But to treat the last day before Lent in such a casual way. Like you have a dentist appointment tomorrow, so you brush your teeth fourteen times today in the hopes it will make a difference. Or your mother-in-law is coming over for dinner, so you last-minute cram all the mess in the laundry room, and hope she won't decide to inspect your washer and dryer after dessert. This isn't like being shipped off to the Navy, and you have one last night to party it up before your life is no longer your own.

Our lives have never been our own. They're on loan from the Creator, and all he asks is that we love him and let that love spill over onto each other. Lent is not some sort of punitive reminder that we're not good enough. It's a time for us to rededicate ourselves to the love. Because we're human, and we forget stuff a lot.

Many people give something up for Lent. Kevin is giving up second helpings. Many college students give up soda. And that's great. But please, please, please don't forget the motive for giving up things. Instead of giving up silly things (like skydiving, or being nice to your sister), or giving up food because it's the trendy Christian thing to do, maybe try to give up something meaningful. Give up one negative comment to others a day. Give up NOT hugging somebody you love. Give up missing that prayer time in the morning or evening. It takes three weeks to build a habit. Maybe this Lent try to build one you won't mind continuing throughout the year.

Doug ø' Watermark

Fæste (FAY-stuh) - Lent

Date: 3/4/2003

Submitted by: Kirsten Vejen Najbjerg

Journal Entry:

Team life is hard. That is not a secret. You can also get really tired. I know how that feels. We had our first weekend off this weekend and I slept most of the time. 12 hours sleep at night and a nap for 4 hours. That was what I needed and I think I am ready to go on again. We spent the weekend at the Bible school and I also got some time to meet and talk with some of my old friends from high school and watch an old Danish movie...



Kirsten Vejen Najbjerg

But Monday morning we had to move on again and this time to the very northern part of Denmark. That was a loooooong drive (3 hours) when you are in a small country like Denmark, but we arrived and got some good Danish lunch before we took off to a Soldiers Home. (A Christian YMCA for soldiers) There were only a few soldiers but we had some really good conversations and had a good evening.

This morning we had to get up early to play for a confirmation class and to say goodbye to Angie (Scott's girlfriend who has spent the last three days with us). It was sad to say goodbye already. I hope she will have a good trip home. Thank you for some good days, Angie!

What God has shown me the last few days is that even if I am tired and feel that I am not able to say one more word or do one more move God can use me--and he does. That is fantastic. There have been so many times the last few weeks where I have been wondering how I ever got the energy to do what I did. I can only say one thing: God is with me. He gives me strength and that is fantastic. I hope he will continue to do that because I need it.

Kirsten

Date: 3/5/2003

Submitted by: Seth Gibbon
Journal Entry:

It's been another good week in Denmark. We had a really nice break last weekend. We all had our own rooms and had nothing to do for two days. I got to catch up on some sleep and do some thinking. It was great. I still have no idea what I want to do after team this year, but what's new? I got a new CD over the weekend when Scott's girlfriend Angie came to visit us from the U.S.A. Lemme tell ya' something, those Hanson kids can be described in two words: pure genius. On our trip to our destination this week we were catchin' a little "Mmmm...Bop" action. It was a rockin' good time. Teammate reactions varied from: "Rock on, this is cool!" to "What is this?! Turn it off now!!" Good times.



Seth Gibbon

We are currently in the very northernmost part of the Jutland peninsula. It's been pretty cold and snowy as of late here. We had a confirmation class yesterday morning. I'm not sure if it was the fact that it was eight in the morning or whether they were just not into our mostly-English program, but I felt a definite lack of enthusiasm from most of the students for the first half of our program. Then we had a break and some kids challenged our band to a snowball fight. Well, actually challenged me because I was the only one outside when about twenty kids started pelting me with all the snow their be-mitted hands could find. Afterward when we went inside, the kids seemed much more into the music and stuff we said. I hope they got something out of it. During the first half of the program when I was leading the sing along "Blessed Be" to a host of blank expressions and even a couple sleeping confirmands (no kidding) I felt a little foolish. But I remembered a Bible verse that helps me in those moments when I feel a bit like a sideshow act. From 1 Corinthians 15:58: "Therefore, my dear brothers, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain." "Oh," I think. "Good to know. Even though sometimes it's tough, it's still better to give all I've got because I know that my work is not in vain. God not only can use this sing-along for his purpose; He will use this sing-along." Sometimes that's what keeps me going when the going's tough. Well, that and the thought of another round of "Mmmm...Bop" on the ride home.

Date: 3/6/2003
Submitted by: Jeni Bradley
Journal Entry:

Tonight during our program I talked about an experience I had one of the first nights in Denmark. We had been singing and playing worship songs together with some Danes at the Bible School in Borkop. Many people were requesting songs to play when "Shout to the Lord" was requested. We sang the first verse in English and then the second verse we sang in Danish. It was amazing for me to experience this aspect of God. Here we were across the ocean and thousands of miles away and we were singing a song that I sang a hundred times with the kids from my youth group back home. It was then that God took on new shape in my life. I always thought He was big but now He's even bigger. People all across the world are singing the same worship songs to Our Father.



Jeni Bradley

Tonight during dinner we were sitting with some teens at a boarding school. They asked us if we could tell them where Oklahoma was, so Kevin drew out a "map" of the U.S. Then one of them asked if we could show her where Racine was. She asked us like it was a state or a major place. Now, for those who are unaware, I am from Kenosha, WI and Racine is in Wisconsin and is the neighboring city to Kenosha. We are in Denmark in Europe, which happens to be the farthest place away I have ever been from Kenosha and I meet someone who knows about Racine, WI. Once again God is getting bigger by the moment! I love seeing God from new angles and that is definitely something that is continually happening throughout this year on the road.
Clinging to Christ,
Jeni 1 John 4:10

Date: 3/7/2003
Submitted by: Scott Schaffer
Journal Entry:

Hej there! Watermark is in Northern Jylland (Jutland) this week. The last couple days have been more relaxed than a lot of our days we've had lately. It's been nice to kick back and have a little hygge time (hangout time). The craziest and most exciting part of the past week had to have been when Angie came by to see me. That was pretty cool of her, considering Danmark is a little ways off from Iowa, she has no money and she hates flying. It was fun though, and she got to see WM do a program at soldier's home. It was fun.



Scott Schaffer

Guess what I did today! I'll give you a hint; it didn't involve climbing up a windmill because that was last week. It also did not involve jumping into any oceans because that was on Bornholm, although it does involve TWO oceans. Ok, I'll just tell you what I did today, because there's just no way for you to guess - I had my feet in the Baltic Sea and the North Sea at the same time!

I hope that having my feet in two different seas wasn't anticlimactic. I found it fascinating and a good time. Now you might be wondering, "But Scott! How could you possibly have your feet in two different seas at once?" You see, in the northernmost part of Danmark the Baltic and North Seas converge, you can actually see the waves hit each other from different angles, and that's where we went.

There was a large sandbar and we just walked out on it and let the waves from both sides come up and over the sand bar until our feet were in the waves from each sea. It was swell. It was like walking a line between two worlds colliding.

There I was, right in-between two great bodies of water. Placement was everything. The experience wouldn't have been the same if I weren't right in the middle of the seas. Sometimes we're just in the right places at the right times. I know that God knows what I need. Jeremiah 29:11 says,

"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD , "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."

ses
Jeremiah 29:11

Date: 3/9/2003
Submitted by: Doug Mauss
Journal Entry:

So I think I've decided that honesty is a social sin. I think people in general don't like the truth. The truth is shocking, and exposes things to light that we would prefer be kept in darkness. John 3:20 says, "Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that his deeds will be exposed." Jesus is the Truth, and the Light. And he was murdered for it. Because a part of all of us is sinful and evil. We are each two people, the sinful creature, and the new creation through Christ Jesus. And the sinful part of us fights against the light and truth. It will do anything to remain in shadow—even kill.



Doug Mauss

I think dishonesty in the name of politeness today is like crucifying Jesus. It is a way of keeping the truth in shadow, under the guise of being courteous. The most evil people or the demons in C.S. Lewis' *The Screwtape Letters* can use politeness as a tool to mask true intentions and feelings. My team, Watermark, has gotten real good at being polite to each other. "No, I'm not tired, I can drive tonight." "Sure Doug, listen to Avril Lavigne on the van radio for the eighteenth time in a row." "No, I don't mind loading the van all by myself." "It's okay, play Command and Conquer on the computer all day, I didn't need it to write a journal."

Why is being nice considered a better virtue than being honest? With all of this polite lying to each other, frustrations just get pent up to volcanic levels. Issues that could be resolved in a few seconds of honesty instead get buried under layers of civility. Scott and I just found out last week that Seth cannot—- CANNOT—- fall asleep with any sort of light on in the room. Since Scott and I both spend

time in bed either journaling or reading, we often have a little bedside lamp on in the room. If Seth had said something anytime in the last six months, we could have been going to a different room to complete our winding down processes. But he was being polite. And not sleeping very well. There can be no room for polite dishonesty in serious Christian relationships! "Please" and "Thank You"—manners—are all very good and necessary, but people shouldn't lie to themselves and others for the sole purpose of not being an inconvenience.

Denmark is a very polite society. And it makes it hard for me to relate to people. Kids who have made it clear throughout our concert that they are bored will clap and yell for an extra number (encore) because it is expected. I'll ask our dinner hosts how they eat a particular dish, and they'll very courteously protest that I may eat it any way I want-- I'm a guest, when I'm just trying to learn more things about Danish culture. As nice as it is, politeness is a barrier which keeps any real communication from happening. And at times it makes me wonder how much ministry we accomplish. Are we getting our message through to people, or is everyone just being courteous?

Our team is finally getting around to being honest with each other. And some feelings have been hurt. But I think those hurt feelings are the sinful part of us screaming in pain at being exposed to the searing light of truth. Yes, it's hard; none of us likes to hear about things we're doing wrong, or ways we are hurting other people. But just like a surgeon has to cut through skin to remove the bullet, we have to cut through the politeness before we have a chance to get the bullets out of our soul. Then the healing begins.

Doug ø' Watermark

Danish Phrase o' the Journal:

For Søren! (Foe SOOR-en) - "For Pete's sake!"

Date: 3/11/2003

Submitted by: Kirsten Vejen Najbjerg

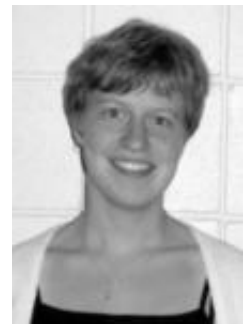
Journal Entry:

SURPRISE. An old friend comes walking toward you. You can talk forever but you only have a few minutes before the program starts.

I love to meet people (and especially people I know) so it is good I am on team because that is what we do all the time – meet people every day.

After a few days staying at boarding schools and mission houses I love to be back in a host family again. This week Jeni and I are staying at a really musical family. Their son is good pianist so I have learned some new "tricks" on the piano.

Today I have been working on my university application for next year. It is a little weird to start thinking of that already – only half way through this year. But I have to. I don't know if it is the right thing to do. There are so many opportunities for next year and how do I know that the one I choose is the one God wants for me? I don't know but I pray that he will stop me if I do something wrong. God has talked to me a lot this year and I believe he will do that again.



Kirsten Vejen Najbjerg

Date: 3/12/2003

Submitted by: Seth Gibbon

Journal Entry:

Hullo everyone-

We had a pretty good week in Western Jutland (Jylland in Dansk). We stayed in a little town called Skive (pronounced "skee-ooo"). On Monday we went to a soldiers' home. In case you've never heard of these before, they are places where soldiers can go and



watch TV or play board games or get something to eat or just hang out. Soldiers' homes are run by Christians and they have Bible studies and sometimes even a cool live band. Enter Watermark.

Seth Gibbon

There were, however, a few problems in getting there. We were staying in two host families: one with all the boys (men) and the other with all the girls (women). When the guys left to pick up the ladies in our cool Mercedes van, we took a wrong turn on a roundabout and drove about 30 km (that's about 19 miles for all you Yankees out there) in the wrong direction! Drat! We didn't notice at first because we weren't really familiar with the local geography and also we lived in different towns from each other. Also, Danish roads are not straight and not labeled the same way as in the United States. It is possible to drive across Skive and watch as signs inform you that you are leaving Skive, you are entering Skive, you are driving towards Viborg, you are leaving Skive, you are in another town, you are driving towards Hostelbro, you are entering Skive again, etc. I was driving and Scott was riding shotgun as my nav-ey-gater. We realized our mistake after about half an hour and we saw a sign politely informing us that Skive was 26 kilometers away. Doug had to take the initiative and say, "Um, hey guys, I don't think Danish roads twist this much. Turn around, eh?" (I paraphrase).

It was really embarrassing having to turn around and realizing that I was just driving and hoping the road would turn back toward where we needed to go, even as where we needed to go got further and further away. It's kind of tough admitting that you're on the wrong road. I think it's really easy to stay on the wrong road and hope things just work out on their own. It takes a lot of initiative or guts or something to wake up and confront what's going on. It's something that's really been challenging me lately. Taking initiative in ministry and life in general. God takes care of everything we need and guides us, but I don't think that God's a big fan of laziness either. I heard a quote somewhere: "Work like everything depends on you, but pray like everything depends on God." I'm sure there's a lesson in there somewhere for me.

When we finally got to the soldiers' home, we had to set up in record time, but everything worked out ok. Plus, we got to have hamburgers for dinner! Woo-hoo, bonus! My United States of America palate was overjoyed. I guess taking initiative has some pretty good benefits too.

Peace out yo'
Seth

Date: 3/15/2003

Submitted by: Scott Schaffer

Journal Entry:

15.03.03 - prepare to enter the world of Scott...

It's already Sunday and Watermark finds itself on Fyn (Fin), but not before the apex of our week in Skive: a few hours of late night street ministry in Viborg.

Working with the local Youth Group, we hit the streets of Viborg armed with the good news of the Gospel, some songs and hot chocolate. Some of the random passers-by would stop and talk to us or have some coffee but others would only laugh as they walked by.

After an hour and a half of hand-numbing, outdoor street-praise we headed home because that's when our "noise permit" expired.

The evening was, from my point of view, rather uneventful. We talked to some people, but most of those passing by on the street couldn't have cared less about what we wanted to tell them. To me, it appeared as if the only ministry we did all night was during our acoustic concert for the Viborg youth group that we played before we went out on the streets with them. But I'm wrong, more ministry than that was done.

In Isaiah 55:10-11 we are reassured that God's word will achieve the purpose he sent for it, even if those who delivered it don't realize what its purpose is. That's good news for those in the short term



Scott Schaffer

ministry business like Watermark is, because we don't have the opportunity to see if God makes any of the seeds we plant start to grow.

Sometimes I like to think about the early church described in Acts and try to draw comparisons to the Apostles early work and my own life. Peter and John did some serious street ministry! What incredible things the Apostles did in the name of Jesus, like Peter's speeches, healing the crippled and the sick, not to mention the thousands of new believers; sometimes thousands in a day!

It's almost scary to think that God put those 12 ordinary guys in charge of telling the world about Jesus. When they prayed, the room shook. When the apostles needed to, they were able to speak boldly, even if it meant imprisonment. When they asked for it, they were filled with the Holy Spirit.

When I pray, my leg shakes, not the room, because I'm impatient and my leg shaking is a nervous habit. When I need to speak boldly, my words usually escape my mind and I get tongue tied. Most of the time I forget to look for the Holy Spirit at work in people and I end up doubting my reasons for standing on a street corner at 11:30 pm trying to play guitar with numbed hands.

Maybe I'm just like the Apostles, maybe I'm the antithesis of them. It doesn't matter if I'm like the apostles or not, though, because they didn't do any of the work, God did everything through them. Today, God works in the same way as he did 2000 years ago. HIS power hasn't faded and HIS love for us, and desire to know each of us, hasn't diminished in any way. I think that Acts was written as an example of what will happen to us, not what could. With God, all things are possible.

ses

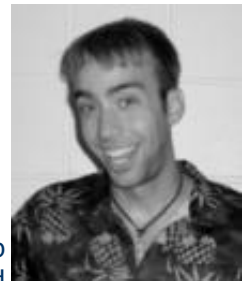
Acts 4:31 Mark 9:23

Date: 3/16/2003

Submitted by: Doug Mauss

Journal Entry:

Do you remember those good old high school days? There was that cute girl/boy in English class. You'd exchanged some long looks, talked a bit by the lockers, felt that little "spark." And then came the day you both decided to date. So you took a shower with all of your clothes on, walked through the school halls drenched, and then stood up in front of the cafeteria at lunch while the entire student body threw food at you. Sound familiar? No? If you can relate to this story it is probably because you have attended a Danish boarding school where dating is a source of much ritual, tradition, and public embarrassment.



Doug Mauss

Watermark recently spent a day at Søndbjerg (in Danish it sounds like "Sin Mountain." I'm sure that's coincidence.) Ungdomsskole (youth school). We were given the grand tour by a few students. Pretty standard, really: a cafeteria, the library, the dorm rooms, the wall which contained the relationship status of every student on campus. Yep, every student's name was categorized either as single, coupled, or with a significant other in his/her hometown. On a nearby wall were glued hearts which contained both names of every current couple. Surrounding these hearts were hearts that had been jaggedly cut in two, signifying loves which had lost their flame already this year. There were eleven relationship hearts. There were twenty-five jagged cut-up hearts. What a ratio. I wonder if beginning a relationship with the unpleasant experience of being a sopping wet target in a culinary shooting gallery negatively affects the longevity of said relationship.

We were astonished that everyone's status was so publicly and completely known. And if two people want to date, they are forced to undergo the Danish equivalent to college fraternity hazing. I didn't date all that much in high school in the USA. And the worst thing I had to face was the decision of whether to sit with my girlfriend or the soccer team at lunch. I'm not sure I would have even had the courage to LOOK at a girl in Danish boarding school sub-culture.

But on the other hand, dating is very much a community thing here. I've been re-reading Joshua Harris' "Boy Meets Girl," and he is very big on the role of the community in romantic relationships. He thinks community involvement keeps a couple honest with each other. And just like the joy of going to an amusement park is better when shared with friends, so can the joy of dating and courtship be better when shared with those around you. When I was reading, I found myself cringing at the thought of involving my girlfriend's father, our pastor, MY father, and her girlfriends (oh, goodness, scariness beyond belief) in a relationship which I tend to consider as a bicycle built for two. And I cringe at the thought of every student on campus knowing who I've dated, who I'm dating and the sordid details behind each. (Not that there would be sordid details, I was only speaking hyperbolically.)

But maybe if we involved our fathers in our dating relationships, it would make it easier to involve our Father (if you get my drift). I don't know-- that might be a stretch. About all I do know is that I will never date a fellow student at my Danish boarding school. Although I probably wouldn't mind throwing some liverpaste and carrots at a few of my friends.

Douglas ø' Watermark

Danish Vocab o' the Journal:

Bare Venner (BAH-uh VEN-uh) - "Just Friends."

Date: 3/19/2003

Submitted by: Kirsten Vejen Najbjerg

Journal Entry:

Denmark has 443 islands and Fyn is one of them. Some weeks just sound more exciting than others. For example, we are spending this week on Fyn. Fyn is one of the few places in Denmark where I haven't lived (yet...). It is Hans Christian Andersen's home island. There are greenhouses everywhere and at the end of the week we are going to jail (only for a few hours...I hope). As program coordinator I don't know what kind of program will be appropriate for some of the worst criminals here in Denmark. What about our song "Free"? Wouldn't it sound a little weird to sing that in a prison even if it is true that we are free in Christ? I am excited to see how it all turns out.



Kirsten Vejen Najbjerg

As a Dane it was interesting for me to see Hans Christian Andersen's house. Yes, it was a little boring. It looked like a lot of the other old houses we have here in Denmark, but now I can say that I HAVE SEEN IT. By the way: The day we went to Hans Christian Andersen's house was a day filled with bad luck. Jeni, Seth and I decided to go to Odense (Hans Christian Andersen's home town) to do some sight seeing. We left at about 2 pm after a loooong discussion about how to pick each other up at our individual host families. When we arrived at Hans Christian Andersen's house it was half way closed because of renovation, so we decided to go and see the cathedral instead. After some trouble finding a parking spot for our van and figuring out the parking ticket machine (we paid way too much) we finally made it to the church – EIGHT MINUTES TOO LATE. It was closed.

We did some sight seeing that day but it wasn't as much as we hoped for. Luckily Jeni and I got a chance to go and see the cathedral today. It was beautiful! The funniest thing for me was to find an open casket in a glass case in the basement with a Danish king from the 1100's. All of his bones were just laying there. It looked nice and I am sure he was smiling (if he still had his skin and some muscles).

The weather. I have to tell you about the weather. It has been amazing the last few days – almost the last week. I have been going for some walks and wow it feels good to feel the spring again. I am becoming a whole new Kirsten. That is a gift from God. He has really great planning. Exactly when we don't feel like the sky has ever had other colors than gray God turns everything upside down.

Date: 3/19/2003

Submitted by: Seth Gibbon

Journal Entry:

Here comes the spring again! At least, that's how it feels here in Denmark. After many weeks of reading the other international team journals talking about the intense heat while we all felt like human Popsicles, our fortunes have changed. We have had almost an entire week with blue skies and I think it really lifted our spirits. We were looking through the pictures we had taken during our time here and there was this solid gray picture that looked like a mistake or something. In point of fact it was a deliberately taken picture of the sky in Denmark in February (hooray for digital cameras).



Seth Gibbon

The sun has been out and I've even gone so far as to wear a T-shirt outside once. Oh yeah. The return of the sun has been a really cool reminder of an important truth for me. Even when times in our lives seem hopeless and we think that nothing will ever get better and life stinks and you just have to deal with it until you don't notice it anymore, God does something unexpected. Some crazy, wild thing you would never have guessed and turns everything around. We are told hope does not disappoint somewhere in the Bible (go look it up, it'll be good for you), and I think spring is definitely a time where God shows His faithfulness to us.

I think that's a really good reminder for my life now, that even though God seems silent, He still hears us and is present with us – just like the sun is still there behind the gray wall of clouds even though we can't see it. And I know that even though occasionally my future and life seems not so great, God has some great sunshiney surprise waiting for me. Pretty neat, eh?

Why the suspense and gray sky then? I really don't know. But I think part of it is that it makes us appreciate the good so much more. You gotta have the sour or else you'll never understand how good the sweet is. I think that's from Vanilla Sky. Preach on Jason Lee.

Adios (not a Danish word)
Seth

Date: 3/22/2003

Submitted by: Scott Schaffer

Journal Entry:

So we got to play in a maximum security prison.

I was really excited because I knew God wanted us to be awesome witnesses for those inmates. I was sure we would be awesome witnesses, too, but at the last second before sound check my entire mood about our program became depressingly unoptimistic.



Scott Schaffer

I don't know why, but my heart just sank. I just wanted to run away but there was no where to go. I couldn't escape the obligation of playing and sharing during the program any more than I could've escaped through the razor wire that adorned the top of the prison walls.

As it turns out, God used us to our full potential that afternoon (I think He did) despite me not being in the "mood" to do ministry. God used us anyway. God used me, ME?!?

For the most part, those in attendance listened to us, although one man left after a few songs. The entire experience simply reinforces one of my favorite qualities about God: (as if anyone could list them, but I'm only human so I will use these feeble words) He does whatever the heaven he wants to and it's almost always above my understanding.

It makes working for God kinda tricky. I try to do what I think my boss is telling me but I don't know what specific task I am to complete. I know his desired, ideal outcome but I seldom see how my actions will bring about the ideal results.

We trust. We push on.

I wonder if reading Ecclesiastes last night affected my thinking.

I wonder what's for lunch today.
I wonder what challenges, mysteries and prizes lie in wait for us in Århus.
I'll know soon enough.

scott eric schaffer (ses)

Proverbs 16:3
Proverbs 16:9
Proverbs 16:33

Date: 3/23/2003

Submitted by: Doug Mauss

Journal Entry:

So I've just had my first experience ever with a prison. I mean, I've visited Alcatraz before, but that had more of a museum feel to it.

And it felt ironic—Denmark in the last week has been transformed into a beautiful springtime country. Yet as we drove to the "statsfængsel," the sky clouded and the wind increased to Popsicle-making force. We drove up to the double set of garage doors in the middle of a giant brick wall. The first opened before us, and then closed behind us, trapping us in this car-sized prison with several guard-type people walking around and looking at us through their windows. After our contact exchanged a few words with one of them, the inner door opened and we drove into a different world.

This world was made up of tall, straight brick walls with bars in the windows; small, straight asphalt roads which ended at barred gates; and not a person in sight. A guard stepped out of a door and waved us to a smaller building where our concert was to be. We walked up a narrow staircase to a room with about twenty chairs, a bathroom, some wood boxes set up as our stage and—of course—bars on the windows. During our set-up we were told that the audience would be separated into two groups on either side of the room. The "clean" prisoners (those not on drugs) would sit to our left, while the chemically dependent prisoners would be to our right.

Ever since I first heard we would be playing at this prison, I had been wondering and praying about what we would say. What in the world do some Danish convicts care about what an American Christian band has to share? We are a relational ministry team, and for the life of me, I couldn't figure out how to relate to these men. It was my job to "glue," to talk between two songs, and I wasn't sure what to say. I finally said "There are a lot of differences between you and me. I'm American and you are all Danish." Some of them spoke up and informed me they were not Danish. "Are any of you American?" No, they were not. "And I'm twenty-two years old, and you guys are..." They mumbled until someone loudly said, "Older." I continued, "But in God's eyes I am guilty of the worst crime; I killed his son. And he still loves me—he loves all of us as his own children." I got no response at all to that statement.

Did they listen? I don't know. Did my words penetrate their drugged senses or walls of hostility? I don't know. Can God's love penetrate those brick walls and razor-wire topped fences? Without a doubt.

Psalm 25:7 tells us, "Remember not the sins of my youth and my rebellious ways; according to your love remember me, for you are good, Oh Lord." To God we are all sinners; we are all convicted criminals. But Jesus served our time for us, and then busted down the gates and the walls, and crumbled Sin's prison to bits, so that we could bask in the love of our Father.

Douglas ø' Watermark

Danish Vocab o' the Journal:

Fængsel (FAYNG – serl) – "prison"



Doug Mauss

Færdsel (FAYR – serl) – "traffic"

Don't confuse the two.

Date: 3/27/2003

Submitted by: Seth Gibbon

Journal Entry:

Another week passes here in Denmark. And the rest of the world too, I suppose. The war in Iraq has sort of been the new development for us. It's very different being out of the country when we're at war. All of the news is in Danish so it's difficult to keep up to speed. It's also tough to respond to all of the people who ask us about it. It's hard to answer because I feel so removed from a lot of what's happening. Also my own personal opinions shift as the situation changes or I listen to different sides of the story. A lot of times I wish there was no war just because it would make my life a lot easier and I wouldn't have to worry about what my views were, and I wouldn't have to choose between defending or vilifying my country.

Interesting related story. We were in a classroom to talk about America and we were divided into groups so the kids would feel more comfortable asking questions. I was in a group with Kirsten and about seven other students. When we went around and said our names, there was a group of three boys whose names were pretty non-Danish. They mostly just stared at us for a whole hour. About five minutes before we were finished, and after I had explained my own personal thoughts on the war, a teacher walked up and started listening to us. She started talking to the three boys who clearly didn't want to talk. She told us they were Muslim. I started to wonder what they thought about all of my talk about Jesus and why I was on team. Then after a small debate with the three boys, she told us they were all three from Iraq, and had moved to Denmark between five years and six months ago. I was floored. I had no idea what to say.

Then the teacher told us that one of the students had family in Baghdad that he could not communicate with and that another of them had relatives in Basra, a town name I recognized from the news because of heavy resistance to American occupation. I was speechless. There we were, two sets of foreigners whose countries were at war. People from my country were killing people from their country, maybe people they knew. I was an extension of a political force that was dropping bombs on his neighborhood. The war seemed a lot more real and I did not like the way it felt. I felt like they should hate me.

I really don't know though. Maybe they wanted to get rid of the current government enough that it was okay. Maybe they saw us as a blessing in disguise. Maybe.

Afterwards, we did an acoustic song for the entire class and everyone clapped and seemed to enjoy it, but my heart wasn't really in it. Why should those boys listen to anything I say? Would I listen if I were them? It's times like this when I am glad I don't have to have all the answers. God is so much greater than anything I can imagine and works in ways beyond my comprehension.

Sometimes you just gotta do your best and trust God to take care of it. Just lean on those promises He makes 'cuz sometimes that's all you've got.

Peace that passes all understanding to y'all-

Sethasaurus



Seth Gibbon

Date: 3/28/2003

Submitted by: Scott Schaffer

Journal Entry:

Hurray for more street ministry! We were on the streets on Århus today, yes today as in not at night. It was a lot warmer and more fun to play musik for people on the streets in the daylight.

A lot of people took flyers for a concert we were doing later that week. I can't say if any of them came to our program because of it, though.



Today is actually March 30th and I'm afraid I'm going to miss my only opportunity to see a "Bog Man" at a Danish Museum.

Bog Men, for those of you who may not have heard, are incredibly well preserved human bodies that laid dormant in the highly acidic bogs of northern Europe. The acidic bog water prevents bacteria from "breaking down" the organic matter of the bog, hence we can see what kind of clothes and hairstyles were "popular" in northern Europe during the times Jesus walked the earth. I did a report on bog people in high school.

And so the bog people's legacy continues through the ages as they are put on display in museums around the world.

There are better ways to live forever, though. Can you think of any?

Scotteric

Date: 3/30/2003

Submitted by: Doug Mauss

Journal Entry:

You are now reading the journal of the proud owner of a Danish library card!!

That's right, at any time he wants Douglas Mauss can casually stroll into any library in Denmark, and check out a book. Or video. Or use the internet with no hassle. And those are just a few examples of the extraordinary power Doug can wield with the simple wave of a laminated piece of paper.



Doug Mauss

Herein lies the deal: I love to read. I devour books the way some people chow down Lay's potato chips. And when I joined Youth Encounter I knew I would have to make a personal sacrifice in the reading department, since I figured that four fully-loaded bookcases wouldn't fit in the recommended one duffel bag, one backpack luggage limit. So, in the manner of a 13th century Monastic wearing horsehair tunics, I decided to bring only three books with me. I felt like Columbus before he embarked for the New World, and could only bring one sextant, a compass, and the pillow his mother had sewn for him. The books were as follows:

The Sun, the Moon, and the Stars by Steven Brust

The Princess Bride by William Goldberg

The War for the Oaks by Emma Bull

How to Win Friends and Influence People by Dale Carnegie (last minute going-away present by roommates)

By the end of training, I had read each of them at least twice, with The War for the Oaks leading the pack at six complete readings. Something had to change. For the first few months of touring I supplemented my meager library by reading books I found at various host homes. Unfortunately, this meant I had to finish books in one night, since we generally moved on each day. I also did much shopping at used bookstores along the way, and started a book box in the van, where I stashed my frugal acquisitions under the seat in readiness for my next speed-reading frenzy.

However, we are now in Denmark. And I have encountered two major difficulties in my reading process. One (1), books here are considerably more expensive than in the U.S. Two (2) they also tend to be in Danish. Even though we are often at host homes for as much as a week, their books are fairly indecipherable to me. And all Danish libraries have an English section, but I have only once had time to just sit in a library and read.

Enter the Silkeborg librarians, who will henceforth be referred to as the sweetest ladies on Earth. We were in Silkeborg for only a day and a half, spending the night in their local Mission House which happened to be one block away from the city library. Out of desperation (I have now read The War for the Oaks upward of fifteen times) I went into their English section which had, like, eight copies of Wuthering Heights. There I selected a book and with all the hope of a Denver Nuggets fan walked up to the front desk. The sweetest lady on Earth looked up at me and smiled.

"Can I register to check out a book?" She explained that I could. Where did I live? "Ummm, the mission house just down the road." That got me a confused look. How long would I live there? "Two days." That was a problem. I then mentioned that I was working with Indre Mission, and was using their mailing address as my own. Oh, that would be okay then. Did I have a CPR number? (Their version of social security number) Mmmm, no. Another problem. She fetched the second sweetest lady on Earth, who spoke better English. Okay, they would trust me. And they informed me since I was only in Silkeborg for two days that I could just return the book to any library in Denmark, it would find its way home.

I was a complete stranger. A complete American stranger which, in these war days, becomes an important factor. But they loaned me a book, and worked around the problems caused by my non-Danish status. And now I master a power known to few United States. I have a Danish library card, and I am not afraid to use it.

Douglas ø' Watermark

Danish Vocab o' the Journal:

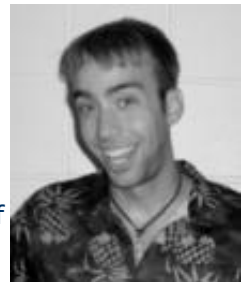
Lånerkort (LOAN-uh-kort) – "library card"

Date: 4/3/2003

Submitted by: Doug Mauss

Journal Entry:

So you're at a Danish boarding school. You've led a workshop on worship with the ninety or so students, and one has caught your eye. He's confident, strong, and darker skinned with wavy black hair. He's the shepherd of this particular flock; if he approves of the band, the rest of the students will also. If he decides to have fun on the sing-a-longs, the others will enjoy themselves as well.



Doug Mauss

The students then invite you to play football with them (read soccer, you crazy Americans). Some of them are worried about trying to speak English with you, since most Danish students are self-conscious about their English, even though they speak with better fluency than Nicolas Cage. That same student comes up and makes a point of speaking to you in English, even though it seems to you that his English is not as good as some of the others. Throughout the game, he commiserates with you when you miss a shot, and congratulates you by name when you score a goal.

Later, after dinner, you carry your plate to the kitchen and encounter him again, washing dishes with one of his friends. They ask some questions about the US, how you feel about the war in Iraq, if you are friends with black people, if there's a lot of racism. This student is obviously not of Danish origin, and has some strong feelings about the way Middle Eastern immigrants are treated.

After a good concert, this student comes up again and asks if you would like to play billiards (read pool, even though it's never called that here). After he tromps you twice he offers to help tear down all the electrical equipment. As you walk back to the gym, you finally ask,

"So where were you born?" He hesitates, tells you that he is half-American, half-Lebanese. Then he stops, turns to you and says,

"No, that's not true. I'm from Iraq."

The world stops. It feels like dozens of responses are flickering through your mind, when—really—you have absolutely no idea what to say next. You finally settle for a neutral, "Ok."

Then he starts talking. He is one of the only Muslims at this Christian school. He came to Denmark five years ago, when he was 12. His family had been trying to get out of Iraq ever since his uncle was hanged by the government, and his father beaten to a pulp by Iraqi police. Over the last six years, his family has fled through Turkey, Italy, and Greece, with his mother and sister being

stuck for two years in Turkey, and his older brothers not able to get out until four years later. His aunt and three cousins still live in Baghdad. So far they have not been bombed or hurt, but he fears for them and says he can hardly concentrate on classes with thinking about them.

You ask, "Do you hate the US? Tell me honestly." And he says that Saddam is evil and needs to be taken out of power, but innocent people are being killed, his friends and family are in danger. Bombs kill whoever they happen to land on. Not just soldiers. And even if the US wins, his people become targets of the remnants of Saddam's supporters. But the US needs to win.

And all the responses you've practiced for three months of being asked about the war become dry and meaningless and crumble in your mouth. "I'm sorry," is pointless and inadequate, and all you can think to do is continue talking with him, and hear his story. He remembers the Persian Gulf war, and watched Arabs and Kurds kill each other in the streets of his town when he was six. His brother was burned during the fighting there. His mother had to leave school because she was so tormented by the Arab students.

A teacher comes up and says that it's almost curfew. You tell him, "I will pray for you and your family. I don't know if that means anything to you, but I will." He nods, shakes your hand, and says he had a really good day with you. Then he leaves you to finish tearing down. And you slowly get your cases out, feeling a lot less sure of yourself than you were this morning.

God be with you, my friend. And your family. And with us all.

Date: 4/3/2003

Submitted by: Seth Gibbon

Journal Entry:

Oh journal my journal! What's new on Watermark, you ask? Well, let's see. We were awakened over the weekend to the sound of techno music in the morning. We had a glorious round of April Fools' Day foolery which entailed every musical channel on the soundboard being moved up one space; i.e. mike one in mike two's channel, the electric guitar in the bass guitar channel, etc. So once our concert started half the instruments didn't make any sound and I couldn't for the life of me figure out why. When I went up after the first song to check things out Doug said to me:



Seth Gibbon

Date: 4/4/2003

Submitted by: Scott Schaffer

Journal Entry:

We play a lot. We set up a lot. One of the "set up jobs" I try to steal every chance I get is unloading the van. Unloading the van is one of my favorite jobs for 3 reasons.

The first reason is because it involves lifting very heavy things while you are doubled over in the excruciatingly confined lower area of the van which is in some way fun for me because it's like doing a favor for the rest of the team. "OK guys, I got this one! Once it's unloaded you just bring it inside to setup." I think to myself.

The second reason is that I like to see how fast I can unload the Mercedes. Because I'm kind of small, I easily fit under the shelf that separates the back of the van into the top and bottom compartments and then I can just hand the equipment out to those who will lug it inside.

Unloading also gives me plenty of time to really get to know our equipment; in fact, most of our equipment has been personified with a name. Especially the guitars that have exceptionally human names like Oliver or Doris.

A lot of the other equipment has a name but it's not always a name you would call someone, like



Scott Schaffer

"Oven-Mitt Holder or "Insanely Heavy Drum Bag." The Oven-Mitt Holder's name was derived from all the confusion surrounding bass guitar amplification. The bass amp in Danmark is in two pieces, the amp and the speaker cabinet. And if someone needs one of these pieces and just asks for "the bass amp" they may receive one piece or the other, and not necessarily the part they wanted. So we named the cabinet Oven-Mitt Holder because the cover for the cab looks A LOT like a giant oven-mitt.

The Insanely Heavy Drum Bag, IHDB for short, was named while we were in the states. It's the bag, or box in Danmark, that carries every piece of Kevin's drum set that isn't an actual drum. It's full of metal and really heavy.

There are some pet names too, like Shsnake for the snake. I can't count how many times the name Power Ampies has been uttered in my presence in reference to the power amps, of course.

Still, we have not named all of our equipment.

God knows your name. God knows everyone's name.

In Psalm 147 it tells us that God even knows the names of all the stars. Surely WE are worth more than them. Luke 12:7 tells us that God even knows the number of hairs on our heads, although I must say that as I get older the number of hairs on my head is becoming easier to count.

Scotteric

Date: 4/6/2003

Submitted by: Jeni Bradley

Journal Entry:

I cannot believe how much the weather really does affect my mood! Denmark started out being a place where I rarely, if ever, saw the sun! Each day we would wake up to another cloudy, windy, cold day! But for the past 3 weeks, maybe longer, we have been waking up to sunshine and much more pleasant temperatures. Even if it is cold outside, if the sun is shining, I can deal with anything more positively. I just have to say, "Jeg elsker Danmark!" ("I love Denmark"); which is definitely a change from what I felt the first few weeks we were in this (great) country. I experienced some hard-core culture shock. I knew things were going to be different, but I wasn't ready for how different things were going to be from normal American way of life!!!! I have come to really appreciate the Danish way of life. It is much slower and more relaxed. Families and friends take time regularly to sit down and eat meals together or have coffee together and just enjoy each others company. It is amazing! The first few weeks I found myself thinking, "Please, no more coffee breaks!!!!". Now, if we don't take one, I find myself thinking, "Hey, wait, we haven't had coffee, yet!" I love coffee/tea/saftavand breaks-- they are wonderful!!! I am going to bring them back to my normal life (when I have one again!) back in the U.S., along with fresh baked bread and lit candles at dinner and for hygge. The last thing I would like to share is something I have learned. God's grace is sufficient. When I am weak then He is strong. Most times we have to be at the end of our rope to see God's greatest work being done in our lives, because that is when we have to let go of whatever control we thought we had and give over all power to Him who had it all to begin with. Let it go!



Jeni Bradley

Date: 4/6/2003

Submitted by: Kevin Gruetter

Journal Entry:

In a perfect world the Cleveland Browns would beat the Pittsburgh Steelers, I could watch baseball in Europe, and I wouldn't need to shave. To start the ball rolling in this direction I have decreed from henceforth all men who could never actually (not even in their wildest dreams) grow a beard shall no longer need to shave. I'm not sure it's going

to take.

At some point in my high school days I started shaving. I haven't stopped since. It's boring, time consuming and in my case potentially lethal. So I asked myself tonight, 'what reason could God have for making me endure such mind numbing bodily up-keep?' I wonder if it's some throw-back punishment from the original sin that just didn't get a lot of media hype. Maybe it's so we (those given somewhat less in the testosterone category) can empathize with our brothers that were given the double dose. Or perhaps it's so that I can unlock the mysteries of the complexities of God. (At this point I cut myself. (Apparently I'd been thinking too hard.)

So here's what I've determined. As much as I don't like to shave, I'm usually better off when I'm done. I guess the same goes for other things in life too: exercise, setting up and tearing down all the sound equipment, and even writing this journal. (Hi Mom and Dad. I'm fine, more soon.) When the Isrealites were in the wilderness they saw the column of clouds and fire. I used to wait for God to perform miracles when I needed to see them. For instance to finish work for me or to speed up or slow down time. Then I would be disappointed when He wouldn't do those simple favors for me. Now I'm starting to see that God shows Himself to me in smaller ways. He comes to me in the insignificant gust of wind or-- in tonight's case-- the inanity of facial trimming. I'm past the point now where I need a billboard from God. I think all the things I typically overlook could show me that Christ loves me. I've got twenty months behind me now. Here's to four more full of things I probably wouldn't have thought about if not for God insisting on the routine maintenance of my baby face.



Kevin Gruetter

Date: 4/9/2003

Submitted by: Kirsten Vejen Najbjerg

Journal Entry:

One of my biggest fears of going on team this year was the thought of living in host families all the time. Would I ever be able to relax, feel at home and enjoy it? I wasn't sure. I really enjoyed my little room at my high school's dormitory. I was able to close my door and be by myself whenever I wanted to. But off I went to the States and got to training where everybody talked about host families all the time. How great they were, how many wonderful people you would meet and how much you would miss them after a year on team. I felt better knowing that but I wasn't convinced until we started touring and met our first host families. Almost every day I wrote in my personal journal that I was staying at the best host family in the world. I could also easily write about host families in every one of the team journals. There are SO many amazing people out there. Nobody needs to convince me that I will miss that A LOT next year. I will miss talking with new people every day, learning new things, seeing how other people have their daily life and just in general get a lot of input and feed back. It has actually been really hard to find negative things to say about any host family -- not that I have been looking for it... But yesterday I saw one of the disadvantages. I am staying at the best host family in the world (again). They have a daughter my age who plays the piano and has a lot of the same hobbies as I do. We talked and talked and played the piano and talked yesterday so I didn't go to bed until 12:45 am. That was really great and I would have stayed up longer if it wasn't that I had to get up early today.

What I am trying to say is that I don't know how to survive next year without host families. Who is going to keep me awake all night? I want to take this chance to say THANK YOU again to all our host families. I am looking forward to meeting some of you again on our return tour in the States.



Kirsten Vejen Najbjerg

Date: 4/11/2003

Submitted by: Scott Schaffer

Journal Entry:

04.11.03

Scott Journal Entry

Hey it's Friday, April 11, 2003 and I'm in Herning, DK.
Hmmm. Can't say that I've ever been here before.
Also, there is this GIANT Maine Coon Cat at our host home and Seth and I like to stare at it and laugh because it's just so huge. We got some pictures...

The recent past seems so uneventful compared to the future. I'm excited to go to Germany and even the USA in 20 days! Wow! There seems to be so much ahead of Watermark right now.

I guess that this anticipation problem is nothing new. Just look at the people in the Old Testament, how long did they wait for the Messiah? It was a lot longer than I care to wait on a promise, I can tell you that! But God made good on it, just like he always does.

Scotteric
1 Corinthians 2:9

"Experience the bitter taste of defeat then brush my teeth."



Scott Schaffer

Date: 4/12/2003
Submitted by: Kevin Gruetter
Journal Entry:

I was praised for my introspection in my last venture into the journaling world. However I was told that I didn't share enough of the information that parents (mine in particular) are seeking. So in response, my hope for this entry is that it fulfills all the hopes of those of you who are reading.

So for those of you with children, we spent this week in and around Herning. We even got to meet a pair of the Queen and Prince's look-alikes. I'm sure she's got dozens. We had our visas extended so that we will stay in Denmark until the morning of the sixth of May. And now our Easter holiday has started. Tomorrow we will drive to Germany to see a plethora of sights including Wittenberg, and some of Dresden. I will spend the rest of the week with Seth where we have a summer home to ourselves. This explains why you probably won't see a lot of new journals in the coming week. On a side note today I ate a potato chip that tasted exactly like a McDonald's French (liberty) fry with ketchup. It was dazzling.

Now for those who like to look past the words and into the minds of the author, my thoughts. (Pauses and strokes hair-less chin) Nothing mind-boggling this time, just a question. _How do you make life goals and plans if you only want to go where God leads you?_ I get torn between worrying what's going to happen to me at the end of this year and telling myself that God has everything under control. If you have any thoughts feel free to let me know.

Well I know this hasn't been one of the most eloquent pieces in literary history, but hopefully everybody got a little of something. If nothing else just sit and ponder the underlined portion of this composition for more hours than you probably should. Then at least we'll have something in common. Happy vacation everybody!

Kevin



Kevin Gruetter

Date: 4/13/2003
Submitted by: Doug Mauss
Journal Entry:

This week we stayed in a house in Herning with a family with a son who shall be referred to as Tobias throughout the remainder of this journal. Mostly because that is his name.

Tobias (pronounced toe-BEE-us) is the single most responsible twelve-year-old I have ever met. He wakes himself early for school, walks the dog, delivers catalogs to earn money, cooks for himself, and-- this week-- took care of two guys from a musical ministry team.



Doug Mauss

After a late night, Kevin and I came home to a note from our host mother saying that she would be gone all the next day, but Tobias would take care of us. The next day, Tobias came home from school at noon, turned on the stove, and started frying eggs for us to make egg and tuna sandwiches. And then (even more to Kevin's and my collected amazement) he cleaned up after all of us with no hesitation. Tobias was practical and collected, friendly and gracious; I kept forgetting that he was only twelve.

When I was twelve, my Mom was still obligated to yell at regular intervals for me to get up for school, my only job was setting the table, and I wouldn't have tried to cook anything more complicated than ice cream. I still had a babysitter, for Pete's sake! Tobias WAS our babysitter.

Frankly, I was a bit jealous of Tobias. He was the son I that I was not mature or responsible enough to be for my parents. And just between you and me (he said on the internet), Tobias at twelve is a more responsible individual than I am at twenty-three.

1 Corinthians 13 (more commonly known for being the love chapter) has been speaking to me. "When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put childish ways behind me." I often, and in many ways, still feel like a child. Most of my friends have now graduated from college, have careers, and are living their lives. And as good as it is to do this ministry through Youth Encounter, I've taken a step backward in the responsibility department. My food, my housing, my schedule is all decided for me. And Tobias could run a small country.

We're all at different places in our walk. And I know I shouldn't compare, but I'm so ready to be the mature, responsible adult that God calls me to be. And I'm never quite there. I'm often farther than I can imagine. (deep sigh) I'm sure by the time I'm twenty-four I'll have stopped making such silly mistakes.

Douglas ø' Watermark

Danish Vocab o' the Journal:

Mølkugler (MOYL-kool-uh); mothballs

(you'd be amazed at the words you suddenly need to know here)

Date: 4/16/2003

Submitted by: Jeni Bradley

Journal Entry:

Well, here we are in Germany!!! And we are even staying longer than 4 hours (like our last trip for our team outing!). We are taking a few days to travel through East Germany. As we drove through Germany today we saw really beautiful landscape of mountains, rivers and small villages in the valleys. It was soo cool (but not better than Danmark!!). Tonight we are staying at the "Gonnermann Gasthaus", which is similar to a hotel, but smaller and more quaint! We are getting up early tomorrow morning to continue our journey through more of Germany. AND tomorrow is Poul's birthday! He and his two oldest children are with us! Poul is our main contact from Indre Missions in Danmark and he does sooooo much for us! We love him. He is so funny, crazy, and just plain great! Speaking of Poul being a great guy, I sat behind him and his kids today during the van ride. I had so much fun watching his interaction with his children. They absolutely adore their father. I don't have to understand their language to figure that out. Their actions and the joy on their faces that came just from being with him spoke louder and clearer than any words! It made me think about how I



Jeni Bradley

reflect the love I have for my Heavenly Father. Is it obvious to people who can't hear or understand my words that I love spending time with Him? At one point I looked over and saw his daughter fast asleep on her dad's lap! Do I feel safe and secure in my Father's arms enough to rest in His peace? It was very fun to witness this relationship that was so alive and growing every minute because of the time they were taking to be together. My prayer (and if any of you want to pray too!) is that I continue to grow in my relationship with my Father by spending quality time with him.

Well, stay tuned for exciting new developments of our trip through Germany from whoever does a journal tomorrow.

Date: 4/19/2003

Submitted by: Scott Schaffer

Journal Entry:

April 19th 2003

Easter break in Europe is cool. It can be divided into two parts though, Germany - part one and Danmark - part two.

In part one, our Indre Mission "Boss" Poul, took us to Germany for an incredible three days of sight seeing which included Wartburg and Wittenburg castles, and a whole lot of driving. We also got to meet some of the coolest people ever, the PÄblers (that 'B' is supposed to be that German "double 'S' thing"). Watermark teams that go to Germany get to meet them, which unfortunately leaves us out, except that we took matters into our own hands and went to see them instead!

Part two, break in Danmark, consists almost entirely of sleeping in and not doing too much of anything.

I'm amazed at the importance of this free time in regards to my survival, or at least to my sanity. It's so good to not have to get up early to do a full set up concert for some confirmands!

Doug and I have been staying a Poul's house and playing a lot of chess. I think he's won 4 out of the 6 games we have played, so today I need to make a come back. And that's what's on the Scott agenda for today

I'll keep you posted,
Peace and Happy Easter to YOU!

Scotteric



Scott Schaffer

Date: 4/20/2003

Submitted by: Doug Mauss

Journal Entry:

I love Germans. Seriously. We got to spend a few days with the Paeszlers, who host the Watermark teams in Germany, and boy, were they fun.

There's Johannes, the father. He insisted on speaking to me in German, even though I don't speak a lick. He would speak incomprehensibly to the whole group, then turn, stare right at me, and ask me something in German. Then I'd panic and look to the two Danish people in the group to translate. Johannes thought that was hilarious. He kept asking me stuff all night, just to see the look of utter bafflement on my face. That was before he switched over to telling me jokes in German.

Anne, one of the daughters, took on the role of the self-proclaimed fish Nazi during dinner. "No fish for you," she'd cackle, and then say defensively, "It's just a little German joke." I hated to tell her that Seinfeld is an American show. Later, she was instrumental in translating Johannes' jokes to



Doug Mauss

me.

Then there's Cecily, who was on Watermark '96. She immediately informed Kirsten that they were expecting an outdoor concert, which would only be attended by four people, and some cows. Cecily wanted our concert to be meaningful to each of the audience members, including the cows. This meant that we needed to translate our English into German, Danish, and-- of course-- Cowish.

Michael added a sense of the absurd to it all with his Amish looks and Andy Kaufman sense of humor. Rosalinde seemed to be the calming influence, until she started throwing in her own jokes when the atmosphere got too sedate.

It was irreverent and friendly, loud and relaxing. The informality made it feel like a family reunion, where everybody picks on you because they all know about the time you lost your swimsuit in the pool, but they love you anyway. We'd just met this family, and already Johannes was treating me like my Uncles Serge and Joe. In German. Weird.

It was a real contrast to Denmark, especially since they're neighbors. I had some trouble figuring out how to lock the bathroom door. After showing me how to use the door, Johannes said to me (in English), "Here you need to use your brains." I wasn't offended; it was like when my Mom can't believe I've stepped over the pile of laundry on the stairs AGAIN without taking it to my room. But no Danish person would ever have said something to me in that fashion. It's like traveling from Connecticut to New York and being in a whole different world. Although, come to think of it, Connecticut and New York can be two completely different places.

People think they need to cross the ocean to get culture-shocked. Things are so different "over there." But we've toured from Minnesota to the Eastern seaboard, and I've had to get used to a few differences. The Wisconsin addiction to butter on everything. The laid-back and informal Indiana life. The crazy driving in Michigan. The hustle and bustle of NYC compared to the farming atmosphere of Schenectady, NY. Virginia, where postal workers will sing to their customers, and I feel like I'm a minority.

Even on our team we have to bridge this cultural gap. We think just because we're from the same country that we don't have to worry about cross-cultural communication. When really, our personal cultural differences have led to lots of miscommunication. Maybe we'll start communicating and loving better when we stop looking at people in groups, and only try to judge them as individuals. But I still love Germans.

Douglas ø' Watermark

Danish Vocab o' the Journal:

Skak (skek) - "Chess"

P.S. Scott might win more games if he could ever learn the difference between the Knights and the Bishops.

Date: 4/22/2003

Submitted by: Kirsten Vejen Najbjerg

Journal Entry:

Wouldn't it be nice to have God on the chair next to you? If I did I would have SO many questions to ask him so that I wouldn't know where to start and where to end. Why can't he just tell me where he wants me next year? Why do I have to guess all the time? Is he really as close as he says in the Bible? Sometimes he feels so far away and then suddenly it is like he is right next to me.



Kirsten Vejen Najbjerg

The last weeks have been a blessing for me. I think God has a bucket filled with blessings. Once in a while he takes out a blessing and gives it to me when I need it. But during the

last weeks he has emptied all buckets with blessings on me.

We came to my old school and suddenly I was surrounded by old friends. One of them even offered to drive me back if I just wanted to stay for a little while. We didn't have a program that night so I was more than willing to stay. On our way back later that night we stopped at a family where I spent a lot of time last year. When the car entered their driveway the boys came running out, the dog was barking, the parents were smiling-- and so was I. It was such a blessing. I felt valued and could see how God has used me in that family and realized how big a role this family has played in my life. Later on I went to a big event where I met a lot of old friends. At a school a little girl came running to me. I was her leader at a music camp last summer and her mom told me that she has been talking about me all the time. I was home for a week during Easter and got to see my family and some friends again.

When I look back I can see all these people God sent to me to tell me that I am ok-- just when I needed it. As mad I was at God because he felt to so far away is as glad and impressed as I am now. Maybe he is not on the chair next to me so that I can ask him questions, but he is present through all the people around me. My prayer is that I can be a blessing for everyone around me too and I can shine the love of God to others.

God is not as far away as it feels sometimes. He has promised to be with us every day. Matt. 28:20b

Date: 4/24/2003

Submitted by: Jeni Bradley

Journal Entry:

Translation is such a big deal, but so much work for us. Tonight we learned how truly important it is, though. The pastor did not want anything in our program translated. We were very excited! Probably most of all, Kirsten-- she is the one who has to do all the translating! So, off we went with our program, all of us excited to do a program without translation, just like our American programs!!! But, instead of people laughing at the funny stuff or looking at us with understanding faces, we saw many blank looks! I tried to speak simply, clearly and slowly during my sharing, but still not much response! After the concert, some of the middle school-aged kids came up for autographs and could not speak one word of English to even ask us for our autographs. When I tried to speak to them, they just looked confused and tried to ask their friends or someone near them what I was saying! This was the point in which I realized that our program had gone completely over their heads! I have faith that God still worked through us tonight and moved in people's hearts, just not so much through our words.



Jeni Bradley

As much of a pain it is, translation is really important. Sometimes, I really would love to see what God is doing in situations like this. Especially when we go places where there are so many who do not understand English very well. Sometimes I wonder what an almost all English speaking team can communicate to these people of Denmark! But then I remember all the things I have learned from people whom I didn't understand the words they spoke. Especially when I first got here and didn't understand 95% of what was going on around me. The only thing I could understand was their body language and the love in their actions and the way in which they reacted to other people they met and lived with. So, even though our words may not be understood, there is much more that we say with our lives! That is a major thing I have learned being in this new culture.

I am really going to miss this incredible country once we leave. But I am also looking forward to being back in the U.S. a bit... in just 11 days! Hey, who's counting?

Clinging to Christ,
Jeni

Date: 4/26/2003

Submitted by: Seth Gibbon

Journal Entry:

We have two weeks left in Denmark. How time does fly. We've really had a pretty amazing week. On Wednesday, we played at a church in Esbjerg. We had seen slides of this church in America and were really looking forward to seeing it in person. The sanctuary is a huge room with 800 incandescent light bulbs hanging from the ceiling from ropes of differing lengths. It doesn't sound really cool the way I say it, but it seems almost like you're looking at the stars up close or some vast sculpture of pure light. It's real neat. The church has an altar and matching baptismal font made of gray-streaked white marble. The walls are red brick but shaped like waves in motion with white flecks to reflect the lights. I was absolutely amazed by the church's beauty. It reminded me that words like "sacred" and "holy" are more than just religious abstractions, but have a presence and a power that I can barely begin to comprehend in such a place, much less in my daily, mundane existence.



Seth Gibbon

And yet the same God who inspired the architect to create such beauty, the God whose holiness and sacredness make the most beautiful creation plain and common at best, this same God chooses to make His dwelling in my own sinful heart. Although I have probably heard this hundreds of times, the experience of such grandeur reawakens in me a sense of awe and wonder at God's amazing love. Love that refuses to be boxed in by what I think is rational or even possible. Love that can even bring new life to old, dusty words. I hear God is pretty good at that new life stuff. Go figure.

Date: 4/27/2003

Submitted by: Doug Mauss

Journal Entry:

So today was the event we've all been waiting for. That's right sports fans, Watermark got to go to the original Legoland in Billund, Denmark. I'll end the suspense: it was a bit of a letdown. I'll let others tell you about the specifics.

But they had this one ride called Power Builder. You get to enter in your pertinent information (height, how wild of a ride you want) and then you get to choose from a menu of roller coaster moves what you want the Power Builder to do to you. It spits out a card, and then you go strap yourself into a gigantic robotic arm. An attendant feeds it your card and then the robotic arm starts swinging you all over the place. Kevin and I spent most of our thirty seconds being jerked around upside down, except for the brief moments we were being spun in circles. It was great. I lost all the change in my pockets. (That stunk, it was about seven dollars worth of change. Crazy Danish monetary system.) We ran into line again and did it twice in a row.



Doug Mauss

Later in the day we went back to do it again. But the line was huge; it took us about twenty minutes of waiting to experience that thirty-second ride. So we quit after that and just wandered around the park. But here's my thinking: why don't we like waiting in line at amusement parks? We're with our good friends, people with whom we've chosen to spend a fun day. We have nothing to do for twenty minutes but hang out and socialize, and yet it doesn't happen. We're too busy waiting for the ride to start.

Are our lives like that? We're so busy waiting for the good parts that we miss the good parts. I remember not being able to wait until I graduated from high school. Not being able to wait until I was done with college. Now those times, those friends, are gone past retrieval. They live only in my memory as better days gone by.

Now I can't wait to get home to the US. I can't wait to actually get my degree. I can't wait to find the woman of my dreams. (Cameron Diaz can only hold out so long.) God help me enjoy and appreciate the times until then.

Douglas ø' Watermark

Danish Vocab of the Journal:

Mistede Småpenge (MIST-e-luh smoh-PENG-uh) - "lost change"

Date: 4/27/2003

Submitted by: Kevin Gruetter

Journal Entry:

Today I put another checkmark on my list of places to go in my life. Legoland was the place and it was definitely a place. I had readied myself for the letdown in rides in comparison to my native land's "Cedar Point." I also had the foresight to make myself knowledgeable in the field of Legos throughout my childhood. I was ready for the day.

It was cold and a little dark and rainy, but instead of letting that get me down I simply thought of it as "characteristic." I felt like I was seven again. The Lego was my favorite toy growing up. I've still got all of the ones that weren't eaten by the vacuum cleaner. Even with all of my Legodom background I was blown away by mini-land. Mini-land is an entire section made up of unbelievably realistic models of real places. It was incredible. I would think that making these models would be the perfect job for me-- that is, if the artistic side of my brain worked in any way other than stick figures. Here I was walking through a vast array of miniature brick architectural masterpieces. You couldn't help but feel a little God-in-His-creation complex come over you.

The whole thing made me think about how God sees his creation. I see the mountains as huge, and glorious. He sees them as something He just put together. He sees all the little pieces. He knows how the 2 and a half million bricks to make a 9-meter Statue of Liberty fit together. He knows everything. The best part is He loves it all the same. He knows how recognizable the beauty of the mountains is. Yet he still takes the time to carefully make a flower just as beautiful. He cares for us more than I can understand. But seeing the little things at Legoland helps a little. Chalk another one up under Places you never thought the complexities of the Almighty would hit you like a sack of plastic bricks. I think this also serves as a way to call playing with Legos a soul searching activity.

Peace from the home of the Lego (Lee-go)
Kevin



Kevin Gruetter

Date: 4/29/2003

Submitted by: Kirsten Vejen Najbjerg

Journal Entry:

"Kirsten, can you help me with this Danish shower?" Jeni called from downstairs. "I don't know how it works."

We are staying at a boarding school again but this time in a little house next to the school with four other girls. The walls are thin, our window is hard to open and then there is this shower.

"This is not a typical Danish shower," I said while a few drops kept dripping from the showerhead even though we were trying to turn the water up. It was getting late. We had to get up early the next morning and we were really dirty from walking around in Legoland all day long.

After a while we realized that it was impossible to use the shower in our house so we went on a "shower hunt" and it was successful. In the house next door we found three showers. Jeni took a shower that night but I decided to wait until next morning. I was too tired to even think of taking a shower. So the next morning I got up at 6:15 am and went back to that neighboring house and THE DOOR WAS LOCKED. I can tell you that it was embarrassing to stand outside in the rain in my pajamas. I had to go inside the school in my pajamas to ask the teacher for a key.

I can almost hear your thoughts: This is just a small thing, Kirsten. Yes it is, but it just confirmed how much I love staying in host families compared to boarding schools. We were talking about that in the team today. All six of us are excited to go to host families tomorrow.



Kirsten Vejen Najbjerg

Maybe this is just a little story, but we had a lot of fun telling the boys about it and it turned out that the boys had similar shower stories from their dormitories. I am really wondering how the students at this boarding school take showers...

I actually should not complain. I have been thinking of you, my dear fellow teamers around the world. You probably have a lot of funny shower stories too. I am excited to hear those once we meet again. I am thinking of you a lot. God bless!

Kirsten

Date: 5/2/2003

Submitted by: Scott Schaffer

Journal Entry:

05.02.03

Hey TGIF! Or maybe TGIOLPDID would be appropriate, Thank-Goodness-Its-Our-Last-Program-Day-In-Danmark, but I'm a little sad we are done in Denmark.

Four months whizzed by and now we find ourselves back at Cafe Genesis for our final program in Denmark, the third and fourth electric programs of today. I really like doing lots of programs in one day because it makes for cool bragging rights and more people get to hear the Good News, but I'm pretty tired today because of all the activity. Denmark has worked us hard, sigh. I shall miss it so. I'll miss all the little bits and pieces of Danish culture that I now see as common everyday occurrences, even though you can only find them in Denmark or Europe. I'm also excited to go back to the states, though.

I wonder how much I have forgotten about the USA.

I wonder if I'll have really bad reverse culture shock.

I wonder how much my perceptions and opinions will change now that I can see America with Danish eyes. Only time will tell.

And now a short list of things I will miss from Denmark:

Heated floors

Coffee and Tea breaks in the MIDDLE of our programs

Cheese, Friggadela, Nutella and good bread – brown and French

Brightly painted houses and walls

Windmills and the ocean

Danish praise music

And a short list of things I look forward to seeing when I go home for a week:

My own bed for a few days in a row

Mom and Dad and maybe my brother Steve

TV, news, and conversations in English

Angie

Hamburgers, pizza and peanut butter

Sleeping in and not necessarily doing three programs a day

We fly out on Tuesday the 6th, so see you soon!

Scotteric



Scott Schaffer

Date: 5/2/2003

Submitted by: Seth Gibbon

Journal Entry:

The U.S.A. beckons. We just played our last official program here in Denmark. We are planning on leaving on Tuesday. Leaving. As I sit in the first room I ever slept in here, it amazes me how, well, normal it all seems now. When I first arrived, I was freaked out by the different power outlets and the bathrooms where the showers are just sort of in the middle of the bathroom with no curtain or anything. I was startled when everyone around me spoke a language I could not understand to save my life. The food was different, the roads and cars were different, so much was different. Now, with four days to go, it all seems so ordinary. Like this is just the way things are.



Seth Gibbon

I fear I may have difficulty explaining what Denmark is like just because a lot of things don't really stand out and some things just can't be put into words. They have to be experienced. It kind of reminds me of a scene from Good Will Hunting. A psychologist is talking with a troubled young genius who thinks he has this foolish old failure of a psychologist all figured out. The therapist counters by pointing out that genius-boy may know a lot of facts about the Sistine Chapel, such as architectural style, biography of the artist, etc., but he has "no idea what it's like to stand in that room and just stare at that beautiful ceiling." (loosely paraphrased)

I think it's probably a lot like that with our faith. A lot of people know a lot of facts about theology and Christianity, but ultimately it must be lived. God is not an abstraction in our little minds, but an Awesome and Loving Creator who wants to be involved in our lives and give us more life and love and joy than we can possibly imagine. But ya can't just write about it, it's gotta be experienced. He's gotta be experienced. So quick, go get off the computer and enjoy some life. Be bold in your faith and know that God is as good and as caring as He says He is. Go. Shoo! And hey, catch you all on the other side of the pond.

Seth

Date: 5/6/2003

Submitted by: Doug Mauss

Journal Entry:

I write this journal from seat 14c of a Boeing 737-400. That's right, we're leaving Denmark. From the whirlwind of the last week's activities and checklists and concerts and packing and driving, I sit back now with only one thought in my head.

We're done.

Four months of rugbrød, konfirmander, outdoor ministry, weird pillows, small streets and a big van are over. No more coffee breaks, no more candles, no more saftavand. I will never be asked to say "rød grød med fløde" again. Thirteen year-olds will no longer smoke and drink in front of me. If someone asks me to play football now, they'll actually mean football.

We're leaving behind Poul, our incredible boss, who also took us to Germany, Legoland, and Tivoli (if any of you are planning a first date, you should definitely have it at Tivoli). We're leaving behind Susanne, who was our manager for two weeks, and lent me Løven, Heksen og Garderobeskabet (The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe). I read an entire book in Danish, thanks to her library. We're leaving behind all the students at the Børkop Bible School, our home base. Carsten, Maria, Bent, Emil, Hanus, Pernille – you were all great friends to us in DK.

--WE INTERRUPT this journal for a public service announcement. Scott's Pilot Precision Rolling Ball pen just exploded all over his seat. We repeat, Pilot Precision Rolling Ball pens are not suitable for air travel. They will explode at high altitudes. We shall now rejoin the journal in progress--

...much left for us to do. Our prayers still go out to Børremosse Efterskole, and all the students there. We pray for Louise—God loves you so much, don't ever forget that. As we fly away now, I realize how much we've started and don't get to see through. God isn't finished with us, in Denmark or the US. We're not done at all. This chapter may be over, but we've still got the rest of our book to write.



Doug Mauss

Vi ses, Danmark. Det var hyggeligt.

Douglas ø' Watermark

Danish Vocab of the Journal:

flyvemaskine (FLUH-vuh-muh-skeen-uh) – "airplane" lit. flying machine

Date: 5/22/2003

Submitted by: Jeni Bradley

Journal Entry:

4 states in 4 days!!! That is our week! We began the week on Tuesday (because Monday is our very "sacred" day off) in Blairstown, New Jersey. Wednesday we drove to New York. Thursday we drove to Attleboro, Massachusetts. Tomorrow we drive to New Hampshire where we will do a weekend synod event at a camp! Although this seems like a busy schedule, and it is, it does not compare to our schedule in Denmark. Overseas we would travel to up to 3 different cities in one day! So this is like a breeze!!!



Jeni Bradley

It is soo amazing to see the difference in my ministry. I am able to talk with very young children now, as opposed to Denmark where I was very limited because of the crazy language barrier. This is definitely where my heart is!!! I love talking and playing with little kids and my heart would break when we met fun little kids in Denmark and I could not communicate at all with them!

It's fun to visit these new states that I have never been to before. We are also meeting soo many new people because we are doing programs at many new churches. We have many new great opportunities to share our experience with these new people at these congregations. I love talking about Denmark, because I really miss that great country!!!

Farvel,
Jeni

Date: 5/23/2003

Submitted by: Seth Gibbon

Journal Entry:

Back in the United States am I. After four months overseas, it's good to be back. It was really fun to find all of the stuff that I left in storage so I could travel light and stock up on souvenirs. Finding my cool green "Happy Camper" T-shirt was neat, as was unearthing my stockpile of English books. During my first couple of days back I also had to get a little bit of "cultural reorientation" and check out a WALMART. It was really pretty amazing. The store was so big and full of things that I knew. There were like 80 varieties of toothpaste! In Denmark our average choice range was about four. That was a bit of a "return culture shock" moment for me. I also went to the toy section and checked out what kids are playing with these days and was surprised to see that "He-Man" is coming back although he has slimmed down a bit to more of a "Marathon Runner He-Man" as opposed to the "I can't tie my shoes or put my arms above my head due to my excessive muscle mass He-Man" of my childhood. "Skeletor" and "Trap-Jaw" were also much scarier looking in general. That's probably not return culture shock, but it was pretty cool.



Seth Gibbon

I think my point is that it's just really nice to come back to a place where you understand everything. We've been back on the road for about a week now, and even that is getting comfortable and familiar again. A really great reminder of where we've been and what we've done though is our slide show. I get to run the projector and I always want to leave it at one slide in particular. It's a picture of our last night in Denmark when we were at Tivoli, the famous Danish theme park. (It was also, incidentally, Walt Disney's inspiration for Disneyland) Our boss Poul and some of our friends we met in Copenhagen and our team are all sitting around a table right in the

middle of the park. That picture reminds me that even though those friends are thousands of miles away, we are all one body in Christ and we will all share one table again when we are reunited in heaven. We'll all be happy campers then.

Date: 5/25/2003

Submitted by: Doug Mauss

Journal Entry:

Recently, we at Watermark had the chance to read a magazine article concerning the pop sensation J-Lo. To our amusement, we read that J-Lo-- whose latest song claims that she is still "Jenny from the block"-- will only sleep on imported Egyptian sheets with a 250 thread count minimum (what does that even mean?), must always have chilled Cristal champagne available, a black Mercedes with a male driver, and white lilies only in her dressing room. (We're not sure whether this means that there can be no other kinds of flowers in her dressing room, or if it is only in her dressing room where there can be white lilies. Darn dangling modifiers.)

We scoffed at this fresh example of the hypocrisy of the rich and famous. Yeah, the old Jenny from the poor neighborhoods of New York would turn up her nose at inferior sheets, and carry on about flower restrictions. Scoff, scoff.

We in the musical ministry business are much more down to Earth. We don't expect people to bend over backwards for us with such pampered demands. In fact, we've gotten pretty good at our routine. Arrive at a church by around four, leisurely set up by six, when we have dinner with plenty of time to digest before our seven of the clock family night program. But when we get there the contact asks us if we can do something extra: run a class, sing a different song, do a skit that pertains to the Sunday school lesson for this week.

And I just flip out. I don't show it on my face, but inside I'm thinking, 'Come oonnn!! We've got our program all figured out, we don't need you throwing a wrench into it at the last minute.' I let myself rant internally for a while until I suddenly realize what I'm doing. These are good, Christian people, asking us to help forward their ministry (y'know, my job for this year) and I'm getting irritated because it throws off my routine.

Just call me J-Lo. Well, don't actually. I have enough unfortunate nicknames as it is. But here I am, acting like a spoiled actress, because someone is treating me like a servant in ministry instead of like a rock star. Romans 12 tells us, "Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you."

When you do something well, and get congratulated often, it is so so easy to just continue congratulating yourself until you expect people to put you on a pedestal. Daily-- even minutely, if I could handle it-- I need to be reminded that all glory goes to God, and God alone. I do nothing apart from him. My job is only to play music to get people's attention and then point to the cross. The messenger shouldn't get a big head just because the message he carries is so important.

Doug o' Watermark
John 13:16



Doug Mauss

Date: 5/26/2003

Submitted by: Scott Schaffer

Journal Entry:

05.26.03

Hello from Delaware! Hey, I'm in Delaware... It's too bad we don't have a little more time to spend in Delaware; we are merely staying here a night to break up the drive to Norfolk, VA (where we are tomorrow) from New Hampshire (where we were yesterday).



Needless to say we will have covered a lot of miles in two days.

Scott Schaffer

Before all of this driving around, though, Watermark spent four days at a Memorial Day Family Retreat at Camp Calumet in NH. There were about one hundred people there, so there was always someone to talk to. We really felt like family. It was great to stay in the same place for a little while too. It's just too bad that the New England weather didn't cooperate with us a bit more; I would've liked to have seen Mt. Washington, but it gives me a reason to come back to this beautiful section of the country some day.

Lately it's as if God really wants me to be happy. It seems there have been a lot of very generous people that genuinely want to bend over backwards for us, all the while showing us the love of Christ. It leaves me wondering who is doing the ministry and who is being ministered to?

Scooter

"No eye has seen, no mind has imagined what..."

Date: 5/27/2003

Submitted by: Kirsten Vejen Najbjerg

Journal Entry:

America, dear America. I am back again. I missed you!! I didn't realize I actually missed America until I saw Jeni and Seth at JFK airport when I came back few weeks ago. To see all the American cars again is a little crazy. To see American signs again is fun and to speak English all the time without having to translate is amazing (In two weeks I will probably be tired of speaking English and will miss the Danish language...but I will never miss all the translation).



Kirsten Vejen Najbjerg

Yes it is good to be back again but there has also been a lot to do the last few weeks by making a new program and getting used to the American way of doing things. I have been really tired the last few weeks and it was therefore a real blessing to go to a synod event at Camp Calumet in New Hampshire this weekend. To be with 94 wonderful kids and adults for three days was indescribable. Everybody was happy, nice and encouraging to me. This weekend has also been special in another way for me. I got to experience Memorial Day for the first time, got to play my first softball game and got to see some of God's beautiful nature. I think the mountains in NH are incredible. I only got to see the mountains' base because it was raining all the time. That was really disappointing. I am so excited about mountains because we don't have those in Denmark – and now I didn't even get to see them.

On the other hand it is Jeni's birthday today and we have a 9-10 hour drive in front of us and 5 states to cross so hopefully we will get some adventure anyway. It is just sad that Jeni has to spend her birthday in a van, but our drive will end at Gail's (she was on Coast to Coast last year) house and we are all so excited to see her.

Date: 5/29/2003

Submitted by: Kevin Gruetter

Journal Entry:

While we were in Denmark we averaged an hour and a half of driving per day. At the end of today's drive we will have driven a total of 25 hours out of our last 72. That's an entire day out of 3. We've also crossed 14 state borders. In Denmark we would sleep in one house for an entire week. Now we're back to sleeping in different beds five or six nights a week. How could it possibly be that I'm so much more relaxed now?



Kevin Gruetter

Simply put, I'm home. I enjoyed almost every minute I was overseas, but I feel very good to be back in my culture and a country where I can use a computer keyboard without having to look for specific keys. On Sunday I attended my first Lutheran liturgical worship service since coming back. I felt so refreshed. I knew what was going on, what was being said; I knew when to

respond and what to say. I have such a new appreciation for that type of worship.

I grew up in a pastor's house going to church every Sunday morning. I was incredibly bored in church as a child. I would sit in a corner of the balcony and make origami puppets out of the bulletin and have them mouth the pastor's parts of the liturgy just for something to do. (Try not to act so surprised, Dad.) When I was in college I wrote paper for a religion class about how the rhetoric of the liturgy meant nothing to me, because I memorized it before I knew what it meant. By the time I understood the words, I didn't realize what I was saying because I had done it this way for so long.

But when I was reading along last Sunday, I felt comfortable, at peace, and in place. More and more my feelings have been changing. I've heard from a large number of youth here in the states and in Denmark that the problem with the church is that it's so old and outdated. They think that we should get rid of the old stuffy liturgy. I used to feel that way too. Now though, I understand that some people need that form of worship. In fact, the most important aspect of a worship service for most people is that they feel comfortable. So for you youngsters out there remember that some people still feel closest to God when the organ is playing. Some people just don't want or need those new fangled fancy schmancy electric guitars.

The grace and peace of our Lord and Savior Jesus be with you now and forever. Amen.

Kevin

Date: 6/10/2003

Submitted by: Jeni Bradley

Journal Entry:

For the past 10 months we have visited new cities with new people everyday or so. We have become accustomed to meeting new people everyday and then planning, most likely, to never see them again (on this side of heaven!)! This is especially true after 4 months in Denmark! So the past few weeks have been exciting and unusual for us. We have been revisiting churches and have been given the opportunity to stay with the families that hosted us in the fall, also. It has been so exciting to go back to a house that is familiar and know exactly where I was going to sleep and to find the bathroom on my own!!! When you travel to new places everyday you get used to unfamiliarity! Ten months ago it was a challenge for me to always be in new place and never have familiar surroundings. This has become easier and more expected. I sense this is another area of growth God has done in my life.

The Lord has really been blessing us to new measures! The thing I was once nervous about has become something I really look forward to... host families! The past few nights we have stayed with families that we stayed with before our trip to Denmark. So, needless to say, we had so much to talk about and we found ourselves talking until the late hours of the night, yawning the whole time but not wanting the conversation to have to break for sleep. God has really blessed me through the love and kindness the host families have given me throughout this year of ministry with Watermark!

Praise God for His overflowing blessings!!!

Clinging to Jesus,

Jeni

Isaiah 40:29



Jeni Bradley

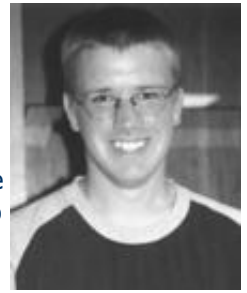
Date: 6/10/2003

Submitted by: Kevin Gruetter

Journal Entry:

How faithful is God? In a word, quite. Our day off is usually Monday. This means that by

Saturday we are (at least I am) starting to feel the need for a day off. The funny thing about church work though is that it's the weekend when you do all the busy stuff. Yesterday, Saturday, I napped on the van ride from Circleville, New York to here in Ridgefield, Connecticut. I was tired. The team was tired. We still are. As I'm typing Doug is sleeping on the couch next to mine; how I envy him. Of course when we arrive I need to make first contact and be all happy and upbeat. Then we get to setup our entire sound system just so we can play a full program and tear it all down before we get to go to our host homes. We slept for a couple hours. Just as many as we had time for considering we arrived at the church at 7:45 this morning. Right now I'm struggling to keep my eyes open to write this.



Kevin Gruetter

But God is faithful. He knew we were tired. So he gave us what we needed. He didn't answer our secret prayer; that the pastor would tell us that instead of a program she'd like to take us to the health spa/ massage parlor. He surrounded us with incredible people. This is a repeat booking for us. We were here almost 7 months ago, and it feels like just yesterday. I know the same will be true for tonight and my day off tomorrow.

Tuesday June 11, 2003

God is Faithful. Yesterday was our day off, and what an incredible day it was. Sure I was hoping for a good day off/birthday. Sure I know that God gives what we need and blesses us even more than that. Why don't I expect it? I expected a nice day off. I didn't expect a golf lesson from a golf pro. I didn't expect a brand new 6 iron that I can drive 170 yards dead straight. I didn't expect to play one of my best rounds. I didn't expect homemade ice cream. I didn't expect to see Jose Offerman hit a homerun to rally the Bridgeport Bluefish at home. I asked God for a good day. He gave me an incredible day.

Today the team was talking about prayer. We discussed how it was easy to ask God things and expect Him to do them, as long as we didn't ask Him to do anything out of the ordinary. For example, "Dear God, please be with me today." Of course we ask that in faith. We know God is always with us. So the question came up, "Why don't we ask for things that we don't know the answer to with the same assurance of his answering?" I want to hear God answer me. I want to see God answer me. So now I struggle with what is asking in faith and what is "testing the Lord our God." But I'm determined to find out. So for now I'll ask with faith for the things I need and I'll expect God to take care of it. Reassuring, eh?

Peace out,
Kevin

Date: 6/11/2003

Submitted by: Scott Schaffer

Journal Entry:

6.11.3

From the depths of Scott comes a journal entry...

Playing at retirement homes is, for me at least, the most humbling experience I have encountered so far this year.

I was humbled again tonight. I realized, again, that I've been taking some things in my life for granted, but that's not news to anyone.

I can't help but wonder what those older folks are thinking of when we sing for them. As I stand there strumming I scan the audience for reactions, but our musical selections for this evening don't exactly facilitate the "Breaking It Downness" that some of our other sing-a-longs do, so I'm hard pressed to see a lot of obvious reactions to our music besides the few people who are singing a few words they picked out.

Although they aren't dancing around, their eyes speak volumes. I can see the contentment in their faces. Their eyes alone tell the tales of years gone by; lives lived through eras I can only imagine. I can't fathom the amount or the variety of the things they must have seen and lived through; the changes they are a testament to.



Scott Schaffer

They say youth is wasted on the young and I couldn't agree more. So often I don't know what I have until it's gone. Today is the only day we have. Nobody promised us tomorrow. If the sun doesn't rise on me tomorrow I want to be sure that I've had the best experience possible and know that I've lived the best life I can.

When I look back on today I wonder about the reasons for tonight. What do we have to offer? What does God whisper to the hearts of the people we encounter? What is God whispering to me?

SeS
Ecclesiastes 12:13

Date: 6/12/2003

Submitted by: Kirsten Vejen Najbjerg

Journal Entry:

Firmly placed between Kevin and Seth, Kirsten is ready for her first baseball game. "Why is he running now?" "What do all the numbers on the screen mean?" "Why does that guy try to hit the ball again? He just tried twice and missed?" The questions are endless and the five teammates try really hard, and with patience, to explain it all to the poor Dane. A mom in front of them turns around. "Please tell me she is from another country?" Sometimes it can be a little hard to hide... but Kirsten enjoys it. This is the most American thing she has experienced in a long time. It is just like in the movies.



Kirsten Vejen Najbjerg

People are eating peanuts and hotdogs, vendors are selling all kinds of stuff, mascots are running in and out of the field while kids are running around with baseball T-shirts on. The atmosphere is amazing and people are happy. It hard to wait until Sunday when the teammates have promised Kirsten to "Take me (her) out to the ball game" – but this time... to a professional game.

Monday was a special day in many ways. It was our day off and also Kevin's birthday, I got to go to my first baseball game and it was the 10th which means we only have two months left. When you realize that you start seeing things from a different perspective. For my part I start longing to go home but I also want to get the most out of every moment. Long van rides can be fun, the nature is amazing and I almost enjoy setting my alarm clock 10 minutes earlier so that I can pack my bag AGAIN.

The thought of being done in two months splits me. I feel so tired and want to do as much as possible at the same time. I read a bible verse the other day I want to share with you. It is from Isaiah 40:28b – 31:

"The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He will not grow tired or weary, and his understanding no one can fathom. He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak. Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall; but those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on the wings like eagles, they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint."

Date: 6/12/2003

Submitted by: Scott Schaffer

Journal Entry:

6.12.3

So how good is God you may be asking?
Purty good I'd say.

Sometimes you just have one of those days where so much good stuff happens that



Scott Schaffer

you have to think that God is smiling on you.

Seymore, CT, June 9th, 2003 - An illustrious day off that will resound in my memory as the early morning sun resounds off the golden, autumn hills of Pennsylvania.

(Yes, it was Kevin's birthday for all you WM buffs). That particular Monday started with a great breakfast courtesy of Pastor Mark and Song (our hosts). We then headed to the driving range to hit some balls and more importantly get a quick golf lesson from golf pro John Radovich. I've never learned more about golf in my life.

Then, with our new found treasure of golf know how, Pastor Mark, Kevin and myself wet to do a quick nine holes at Sleeping Giant, a nice local golf course. That's were we met Ted who completed our golf four-some. 54 strokes and two and a half hours later it was all over... Kevin beat me by two strokes but I lost more balls so I think we called it a draw when it was all said and done.

After our round at beautiful Sleeping Giant, Pastor suggested that we grab some homemade ice cream on the way home, so we did. It had some ambrosiatic black raspberry in a waffle cone. It brought me back to somewhere in my childhood, I'm not exactly sure when or where, that I haven't been in a long time.

As if that wasn't enough, after dinner all of Watermark went minor league baseball game (see Kirsten's journal entry) and that was so fun; I can't wait to see a pro game with WM later...

Until next time, stay cool – literally,

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Ecclesiastes 12:13

Date: 6/13/2003
Submitted by: Seth Gibbon
Journal Entry:

Here we are in lovely Greenville Pennsylvania. We've been helping out with the youth at the Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod Assembly. Since I'm a native of the LCMS, I've never been to a Synod Assembly (we have Districts, but I'm not sure if there are big District Assemblies), and it's been a very interesting experience.

Whenever we go and eat there's people in clerical collars everywhere. I could walk down the very long lunch line and say, "Oh, hi pastor. Pastor! Nice to see you! Pastor. Hello Pastor. Pastor. Pastor," and so on. It was wild seeing so many people that God had called into a life of fulltime ministry. Wow. Scott just walked in and broke up some of my writer's block. Although it's difficult for you – the reader – to tell that I was having some difficulty thinking of something meaningful to say, I was stuck like a 15 passenger van and trailer trying to merge after the toll booths on the George Washington Bridge at rush hour. Very stuck, in other words.

But then Scott intruded on my brooding and said "Hey, wouldn't it be cool if we could go back to Bornholm (an island of Denmark and the "Pearl of the Baltic") and play a concert right now?" Yeah. That would be really neat. Minus the jet lag of course. And the brutal schedule. And the sleeping confirmation students. And the language barrier. Hmmmm..... have you ever noticed how people often romanticize the past? We as people, I think, often take an experience and try to boil it down to a simple scene or a few memorable sound bites. It's a bit like describing a banana split as "sweet."

I had a lot of good times on Bornholm and had some great conversations and saw some things I'll never forget. There were the ruins Hammerhus castle and the time I talked with the couple who were both English teachers and of course my dip in the Baltic in February. But I was also so tired a lot of the time that I had trouble staying awake for the "sharing" part of our program. I had times where I couldn't strike up a post-program conversation to save my life and wound up just wandering around awkwardly until I found some cake and saftavand (like a watered-down fruit punch) and sat down and "listened" to a Danish conversation already underway at the table. At the



Seth Gibbon

end of the week we all took an overnight ferry back to the main part of Denmark and I slept on a couch-seat-turned-bunk and woke up at 6 to go and play for a church service. As in all things I suppose, the good comes with the bad. But still, it would be wicked cool to play a concert there tonight. THANK YOU BORNHOLM!! WE LOVE YOU!! GOODNIGHT!! (GOD NAT)

Maybe that's why I'm so amazed by all the pastors at this Assembly. Their lives are all filled with stories about ministry and working for God and the great things they have seen Him do, but also probably with frustration and failure and loneliness. Most of those stories I will never hear. It's an interesting thing. It makes me glad that God knows all the details of every life. All the joys and all the sorrows that no one else has an inkling of, God knows personally. It's a good thing. He even knows and cares about the details of all the stories of all the people in all the cars on the whole G.W. bridge. Now there's a thought for ya'.

Date: 6/19/2003

Submitted by: Jeni Bradley

Journal Entry:

The Scene: the Watermark van in Downtown Manhattan.

The Time: Thursday lunch hour.

The Driver: You better believe it... ME!

Wow... this was an incredible experience! Now, this little Wisconsin girl has driven in Chicago and even "in" New York on the George Washington Bridge and other crazy areas of the City... but this was my first adventure in downtown! Now when I say downtown I mean we drove down 34th St. We crossed streets such as Broadway and Madison Ave... it doesn't get much more "downtown" than that!!! It was exciting, and now I feel like "if I can drive in downtown Manhattan, I can drive anywhere."



Jeni Bradley

Let me remind you of my little Danish teammate, Kirsten. I've been to Denmark and seen the "big roads" they drive on! Most roads are big enough for one car at a time... the biggest roads we saw were in Copenhagen and they were 3 lanes on each side! Needless to say, Kirsten was "fa-lip-ping out" as we drove through the city. I could hear gasping and squealing along with little bursts of "ooh, watch out..." and "aah, you're really close to...". Finally the guys, almost in unison, told her she had to close her eyes or only watch from the side windows. She was not helping the anxiety I was feeling driving this 15 passenger van with attached trailer through the heavily populated streets of pedestrians and taxi cabs!!! Kirsten had to take a deep breath and let go... she had to trust me!

That is not always such an easy task for me in my life with Jesus. I opened my life to Him, which put Him in the driver's seat. But very often I want Him to pull over so I can push Him out and get behind the wheel. Sometimes He takes crazy routes and flies me straight into oncoming traffic, but I am certain that He is a much more experienced driver than me! He knows what He is doing and I need to shut up, sit back and trust! It's not easy, but no one ever said it was going to be easy... just worth every minute!

Life with Jesus, for me, is one crazy adventure. Somedays it is like driving down the beautiful, scenic back roads of Pennsylvania. But many days it is similar to our day today on the streets of Manhattan. The road can be rough, but I love the places He takes me... and I'm even more excited about our Final Destination!!!

Date: 6/26/2003

Submitted by: Jeni Bradley

Journal Entry:

Waiting, waiting, and more waiting!!!! We sat in New York City traffic on the George Washington Bridge for 2 hours... then we pulled off to a rest area where Kirsten and I had to wait in a line 15 people deep for the women's restroom! Sometimes it just feels like the waiting never stops. As soon as what we are waiting for in our lives happens, something else comes along that we have to wait for!!

Scott and I were talking, during a long drive the other day about what we were thinking last year at this time about our upcoming team experience. He had just signed his letter of call and was imagining what this year would look like and what kind of things we would see and do. Last year at this time I was in my final stages of packing up my apartment and moving back into my mother's house for a month. I had no idea what the year would bring. I was so excited to travel to Europe and get to sing everyday of the year!!! I couldn't wait.

Now, I am at another stage of waiting in my life as I experience this year of ministry slowly coming to a close. It is a bittersweet anticipation of the next stage of my life and ministry. But, it doesn't directly include my teammates, which will be hard to imagine... not spending 16 hours a day with all of them! I am waiting to once again experience "normal life", which includes having an address and a phone number... something that seems foreign, but exciting!

As I wait, I know the Lord is at work with the details... and so I will continue to wait on His promises of hope. For I know that everything works out when it is His will and I am patient and wait on Him.



Jeni Bradley

Date: 7/2/2003

Submitted by: Seth Gibbon

Journal Entry:

You might not know this about me, but everything that I write on a computer has to be in Arial size ten font on Microsoft Word. Everything. All the way through college when everyone else was using Times New Roman size 12 because that was the default and that's what some English professors expected, I broke the mold and added a little flavor to an otherwise (possibly still) dry lab report. Yup. I'm a rebel. I've sort of made a life of going against the grain. Not following the same road as everyone else. When teachers expected homework, I would provide none, ace all their tests and still wind up with an "A" in the class. Or at least a passing grade. Most of the time. I joined YE a week before it started, even though that was technically too late. For my final speech in high school speech class, I convinced my teacher to let me give my graduation salutatorian address instead. I turned in a final history paper in college late enough to give me an "F", but because I got 100s on her test and that "never happened", she wanted to give me an "A" so much that she took the paper without docking any points for lateness. My life has been a series of dodging bullets, scraping by the skin of my teeth, and generally having miraculous events save me from disaster again and again. It's been pretty exciting.

It's also not exceptionally fair and tends to get on people's nerves and stress me out a lot in the process. Not a great recipe for team life. So I've tried to tone it down a little. As this year of relational music ministry winds down though, I'm left with the feeling that things will get hectic again as I search for a job in that nebulous something often referred to as "The Real World." The problem (for me) with The Real World is that it doesn't like daring last minute escapes, it likes consistency. Without the consistent hard work of those working in The Real World, very little would ever get done. I think it's easy to underestimate the importance of all the little things done consistently which make things work, especially in the church. Lately, I've been amazed at the dedication of the people who do the often thankless work of cleaning the church or volunteering to help with the youth programs or doing whatever else needs to be done because no one else wants to do it. It isn't flashy, but mustard seeds don't grow into full grown trees in a flash either. It takes a lot of consistent care to protect and nourish a seed as it grows from a shoot to a sapling to a full grown bird habitat.

So I guess what I want to say is:

kudos to you, unthanked, unnoticed servants of God. No small act is beneath His notice and someday, when everything kept secret is revealed, there's gonna be a hefty pile of gratitude for all your service. God's Peace and I have a lot to learn from you,

Seth



Seth Gibbon

Date: 7/25/2003

Submitted by: Doug Mauss

Journal Entry:

So we be in Wisconsin right now. Wow. Talk about subculture. Green and gold isn't just a decorating option here, it's a question of how much green and gold is required. I have to request that my peanut butter and jelly sandwiches not be made with butter. When we have potlucks, there are at least five different kinds of cheese to choose from. And--most disruptive of our team dynamic--Scott and Jeni are no longer in the minority. The grammar and pronunciation rules which the rest of us have so strenuously enforced all year have now gone by the wayside.



Doug Mauss

But at the moment I am at a crossroads. Team ends in a little over two weeks. On the one hand I am reaccepted at UCCS. I have friends and a family in Colorado Springs. I have a church and a potential job or two. On the other hand, there is a church in Tacoma, Washington called Newsong where the Spirit is totally alive right now. There is a community of mission-oriented believers like I have only dreamed of. Prayer and faith are working in ways which I thought had ended in the book of Acts. And I desperately want to be a part of that.

Where does God want me to be? I pray and I pray for His guidance but I get no sure feeling or plan. I pray that He will clear obstacles and open windows the way He wants me to go, but opportunities seem to open in both directions. At the beginning of Acts, the apostles prayed and then cast lots to decide who the new twelfth apostle would be. Should I pray and then flip a coin? That seems to be a Biblical solution.

When it comes down to it, I'm scared. Scared of wasting these prime years of my life. Scared that I have to sit through the belly of a whale before I end up where God wants me to be. Scared that I'll back down from God's glorious and fulfilling plan for my life, because it means exposing myself to uncertainty and danger.

John 6:28-29

Date: 8/3/2003

Submitted by: Doug Mauss

Journal Entry:

To my future wife,

I must confess, Honey, that this is not my first marriage. For a year I was married to five other people. Don't worry, none of them was as pretty as you. (Okay, maybe Scott) I learned a lot of things about myself that I would never have believed before that marriage. So, rather than spend our first year of marriage rediscovering the same things, I've decided to tell you about what kind of person I am when living with others.



Doug Mauss

I've learned that I tend to tell people what's wrong with them much more often than I tell them what's right.

I don't mind going to get the car in the pouring rain to come pick you up so that you don't get wet. It makes me feel useful and manly.

I've discovered I have a secret liking for the song MmmBop.

I've learned that men or women aren't more or less right than each other; we're just different. And women are more gross.

I'm petty. If I clean up after you a few times, I expect you to return the favor. If you don't, I store up a grudge. I'll work on that.

Sarcasm is a destructive force that tears down relationships; it never builds up. Avoid it. But if you must be sarcastic, do it with a British accent. That helps defuse what is by nature a harmful form of humor.

I've discovered that I can go longer without showering than most people around me appreciate.

I avoid confrontation. I like to let other people make the first move if there is a problem between us. This is cowardly of me, and I hope to one day be able to lovingly bring up conflicts with those I love so that we can resolve our issues.

I like mushrooms. So if you like olives, we'll be able to eat just about any pizza we're likely to come across.

But the number one thing I've discovered, Dear, is this: Jesus Christ is our hope, our refuge, our anchor. On Him, and Him alone, should all our relationships be based. I survived a year with five strangers, and liked them all at the end of it, only because Jesus was our mediator, our strength, and our common purpose. I promise to make Him the head of our marriage, and to attempt to love you the way He first loved me. And when I screw up, and have to sleep on the couch for a night or two because of my stupidity or selfishness, well, I've also learned this year that I am real good at sleeping on couches.

Your loving husband-to-be,

Doug
