

New Dawn 2003-04 Journal

Date: 9/23/2003

Submitted by: Heather Carr

Journal Entry:

This is New Dawn's first online journal entry!!! After 5 weeks of training with the other teams, we are on the road, and it has been great so far. It is strange to be down to just the 5 of us, however....after being in groups of 30-80 people for so long, having only 5 seems like too few. I keep looking around for who's missing, then realize that there are only 5 of us. =)

When we left Camp Wapo on Saturday, we went to Donnelly, MN, just south of Alexandria. During the meal, I looked over at the pastor and his wife, and was surprised to realize that I KNEW her! Sarah is Christie Bandlamudi's sister, who was on Rainbow of Promise the same year I was on Cross Fire, and who I had just visited in India last fall. I remember Christie talking about how Sarah lived in southern MN now, where her husband was a pastor, and how she had just had a baby....and here I was, in their church, without even realizing it ahead of time! That was a fun coincidence, and gave us a few things to catch up on. So Christie, if you're reading this, I hung out with your sister and bro-in-law, and got to meet your niece!

Our first program went alright, even though Elise was gone at her sister's wedding, and we got to spend the night with an awesome farming family whose 19 year old son is running the farm. An awesome lady named Ruth took us out for lunch, and Lou Ella & James became our first partners! Donnelly was a great place to start out our year on the road, and I was kind of sad to leave. I LOVE getting to meet so many amazing people who are so loving and welcoming to us—it is such a huge, fun blessing to be on the road.

Another example of that was in Alexandria, with our sweet host family, Shelly, Wade, Alycia, Darbie, and Devin Crowe. Wade made us hand-tossed pizzas, we told stories, and played games, and laughed and had a grand time. Every day I am reminded again and again of how when you give something to God, he gives it back tenfold. This year we are here to give of ourselves in ministry, and yet those we minister to end up giving us SO much back in return. God is good, all the time! =)



Heather Carr

Date: 9/28/2003

Submitted by: Ruth Bowman

Journal Entry:

The normalcy of living out of a van has begun to slowly settle in. Whether we are with a family for one day or two, that place becomes "home" and we feel loved and welcomed. We have been blessed with meeting some beautiful people in this gorgeous country! I have not only been able to run through the rain, watch the sun set pink through the sky, walk through the dark deserted UP MI side roads with only the brilliant stars to light my way, explore the woods, dance in the fresh morning snow while catching the flakes on my lips and nose, eat breakfast with two crazy ducks down by the pond – bread for them, bread for me! – but I have done all this with God knocking on my heart, begging me to appreciate the beauty He's showing me. I am realizing more and more how much I take God for granted. My mind tends to reason, "Well, of course He's here for me and all around me." Yet I'm not truly understanding the significance of His love, and then in turn, the importance of my submission to it, and dedication to live in it and through it. I am doing my first sharing in tonight's program, and the butterflies are beginning the hockey game in my stomach, bouncing that puck around almost better than the MN Wild! I am feeling the need to humble myself before God and my team, for only then will God's words be spoken above and through my own. And that is my prayer.



Ruth Bowman

Date: 10/1/2003

Submitted by: Joel Mailand

Journal Entry:

Grace, mercy and peace to you from God our Father.

The snow is falling in Escanaba, and I am unprepared! I only have a pullover sweater, jeans and a pair of ratty old tennis shoes. No gloves, no hat, no winter coat. This is a situation that would truly drive my mom up a wall. We are in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan, and at the first of October the leaves are turning color and it is becoming colder. Let Fall Begin!

We have been on tour for just under 2 weeks, and together for 2 months. I am learning how to live on the road again, and live simply. We have been blessed by so many host families offering their homes and hospitality. As guests we have been treated to pizza and brownies, meatloaf and potatoes. It is a universal custom for people to want to feed guests and keep feeding them until they pop. I feel that the important thing is to learn how to take people's gifts of food and hospitality graciously...though I am not that person. Not that I don't want to be! It is not a lack of manners that my mom has taught me (though my teammates may disagree with my ability to say please and thank you when appropriate, or resist the urge to spit on the sidewalk). I can say thank you when a potluck is prepared. It's just a knee jerk reaction. We do it without noticing everyday.

When put into a position where we are given something, we are usually obligated to give something in return (think Christmas or Valentines). I currently am trying to get over my fear of Christmas shopping. I never know what to get. Is it too practical? Is it impractical? Do they really want a red sweater? Do they need a mint/raspberry candle? It's this feeling that I think advertisers use to feed the consumers' thoughts. And it's this feeling that makes me a little woozy. But I digress....

I have watched one of my teammates being thankful for needs list items that we have received. The needs list has different items, ranging from toothpaste to stamps, which keep us going while on the road. It is a joy to watch her light up and say thank you when things are given to the team. Where does that come from? What motivates her? I have a feeling that she looks beyond what is given and looks to the giver. Her interest in people and wanting to meet people and get to talk to them is noticeable.

What a joy it is to be in a community where people are thankful for giving and are blessings to others! God has also given us gifts. He loves us and has given us much more than we can ever or will ever be able to return. We are called into a relationship with Him, and are challenged to love from the heart, not out of obligation, but out of love. Whether through our gifts of food or being challenged to look at cultural differences in a new and creative way, we are being stretched.

I have been thankful too, in other ways, for being able to talk to people and hear their stories. It is wonderful to hear about the lives people live and their stories of faith, or of where they are going in life, or where they have been. I am thankful for this time to visit for a while, and get to know people.



Joel Mailand

Date: 10/2/2003

Submitted by: Elise Coakley

Journal Entry:

It's hard to believe we've only been on the road for two weeks now. This traveling from town to town, meeting new host families and churches everywhere we go, and performing a program almost every night certainly makes the time go by quickly. But while being rushed and a little hectic at times, it has been an exciting life so far. We've spent the past week traveling around the Upper Peninsula of Michigan and it has been so beautiful this time of year! The leaves are beginning to change and the cool, crisp autumn weather is creeping in. We are constantly surrounded by the grace and beauty of God's creation and my heart smiles to see the amazing color palette God works with. Autumn is by far my favorite season, and to be able to spend it in such a beautiful part of the country that I have never been to before fills me with joy.

In addition to the beautiful scenery, we have been surrounded by beautiful and amazing people everywhere we go. Our host families have been so caring and welcoming, they have made us feel really comfortable and at home. The churches that we visit have been a ton of fun as well. It's really encouraging to travel to so many different churches and see how on fire young Christians are and to experience how universal God really is. We are truly brothers and sisters in Christ and it is such a blessing to be sharing our faith with people of all ages. Tonight we were blessed with the chance to



Elise Coakley

sing at a nursing home and we were able to bring an evening of love and joy to these wonderful people. It is great to see how excited they are to hear our music and especially to see our puppet shows. I feel so encouraged to see such devout and strong Christians who have lived such long, rich, and full lives. God is truly opening my eyes and my heart as I meet people in all walks of life and am blessed with learning more about their faith journeys. I eagerly await all the Lord will teach me this year.

Date: 10/4/2003

Submitted by: Bjørn Peterson

Journal Entry:

Greetings Friends and Family,

Friday, October 3 we were in St. Ignace, MI for a football game and Youth Night. The kids were really cool and we had a great time doing improv comedy and singing their favorite worship songs. We all stayed with Pastor Tari and enjoyed great food and conversation. Saturday we had a beautiful drive down to Traverse City where we hung out with the Brand gang at Gordie Howe's Restaurant. We did a program at St. Michael's that night and helped with worship on Sunday morning.

We have had so many wonderful host families it is overwhelming. God's provision is incredible as He has lavished His grace upon us through so many generous families. God is helping us all get comfortable on the road and in our roles on team through the hospitality of all the many giving people we have met. He truly provides all our needs.

Please pray that we will continue to grow in love for all the people we meet and have the energy to pour our whole selves into the ministry of relationships. We love you all and thank you for your prayers.

-Bjørn



Bjørn Peterson

Date: 10/7/2003

Submitted by: Heather Carr

Journal Entry:

Mt. Pleasant, MI

We didn't have a program tonight, but we had a chance for something even better...an evening with Pastor Terry and Cathy Nordheim, and Barb & Chuck McCollom, who traveled to Papua New Guinea 2 years ago with their church. It was an absolutely amazing evening of fellowship and food, and hearing stories and songs and excitement about PNG. They showed us the video of their time there, brought out pictures and souvenirs, and shared story after story of the blessing that the journey and the people and the experience was to them. There was honest passion there, and tears of joy and remembrance as they shared how their lives had been changed, and I was completely re-energized about going there. Some days the fact that we're going to PNG seems so distant that I forget that it's a major focus of our ministry, but tonight I was reminded WHY we're going.

There is a simple beauty in forming a bond with someone of another culture who, despite so many vast differences in experience, cultural norms, language and values, can still unabashedly enfold you into their life because of what makes us all one—Christ. The tears of wonder and joy I saw in those eyes tonight, at how they'd been taken in and loved by people they hardly knew, reminded me that those are my tears from my own experiences in India and Africa, and that they will be mine again in Papua New Guinea. The deep sharing of hearts and souls, so much stronger than the bonds of similar likes and dislikes, are what make us one people, one body of believers, children of the same Heavenly Father. Those bonds connect you to people quicker, sometimes in days, than months of casual conversation about the news or the latest TV show or fad. Those kinds of relationships are the ones that I am just thrilled about getting to form, not only in PNG, but also here in the States, as we travel from place to place, and are blessed by the people who share themselves with us every day. I am thrilled about being able to share those relationships, both here and in PNG, and to be a small part of helping bring God's people closer to one another across the span of distance and cultures. I am excited to be a bridge, to be enriched by peoples' experiences of God both here and



Heather Carr

there, and to be mutually encouraged and encouraging to churches and individuals in PNG and the US. I am blown away by the blessing of being called to be a part of this ministry, and continue to be humbled at the amazing thing that God calls us to—seeking to make God's church One. It's a call that is given to all of us, every day of our life, in whatever arena we are placed in, and I pray that we are seeking God's guidance every step of the way as we live those calls out. Praise God!

Date: 10/9/2003

Submitted by: Ruth Bowman

Journal Entry:

Portage, MI

To become like a child... Their excited, all-knowing and all-seeing faces looked up at us from the first five pews in the sanctuary. Wow! How I loved being in front of a group of kids again! Pre-school through second grade – an age where you can only love the challenge they present. After a brief introduction of ourselves I asked them to join me in prayer. "Dear Jesus" ... my voice trailed off as I heard a quiet but confident echo of my words. "Thank you for this beautiful day you have given us..." Phrase after phrase they repeated the prayer that we offered together. Their cute little hands were clenched together and their eyes were squeezed shut as they repeated the words I was saying, trusting that I was leading them in the right direction.

It was such a cool feeling!

I feel unworthy of all the generosity shown to us as we travel from place to place. It is very humbling to know my entire life's purpose rests in the hands of those I meet. I must become like a child, willing to accept what people give me to eat, and do what I am told to do. And I must understand that I often times am receiving far more than I could ever hope to give. I had this epiphany while sitting in the hot tub of a host home with my two female teammates. This life is really rough huh? Relaxing in the hot tub, eating wonderful food... The thought makes me want to sacrifice something; to really give of myself, and allow God to work through me completely. I am continually praying for opportunities, knowing too, that sometimes the best way to serve is allow others to serve you.

As we drove into Findlay, OH, we came upon a man on the road named Jim, who was looking for money or food, trying to find a way south to see his daughter and granddaughter. We were able to give him some extra food that we had stored up, and a YE cap and water bottle! It felt so good to do something tangible for someone. We were able to give food to a man who hadn't eaten in 2 days, and shade his face from the hot sun with a lovely YE hat!

A prayer request... that God stretches our team and uses us to serve Him; making us humble and faithful!



Ruth Bowman

Date: 10/11/2003

Submitted by: Joel Mailand

Journal Entry:

Findlay, OH

Dear Dairy,
Moooooooo!!!

Ah, here we are in the beautiful countryside the locals call the state of Ohio. I need a theme. Not just for this journal entry, but for the tour. How has God changed me? How in an entire year will I come out of this for the better?

We talked to the Family Outreach guy at Trinity Lutheran this morning. He gave each of us a letter that his three daughters had written for us. They are 3 beautiful Korean-born children that he and his wife adopted. I commented that I thought it was cool that they adopted, because I am also adopted. An interesting response from Dan prompted me to think a little about relationships and how things work out for the better. He said that for he and his wife it was a selfish reason. They wanted children, so from their perspective it was not because they wanted to do good as an end in



Joel Mailand

itself. Interesting. From their perspective, maybe it seems to be a totally selfish reason to adopt? Yet God uses these motives and reasons for things far greater. From my perspective, I joked and said, "Well, I'm glad that my parents were so selfish." Each relationship with a child and parent is different, but essentially the need for a relationship is clear.

How much like our parents is God?

He wants to be in relationship with us, his children. He Loves us and at our very being we want and need a relationship with God. We try so hard to fill our lives with things that do not fill up what we lack. We try to make up relationships with things and people that cannot fulfill. Thanks be to God, that through his Son he has made our broken relationship whole again. I am reminded of how important relationships are. I enjoy the company of my friends and my teammates. They are a source of comfort, not just selfish need, confidence and trust, and keeping us in line when we stray. Even in the work world we have relationships that are built for a common purpose. Thanks be to God for good friends. Help us to see each other in the light of Christ, to see each one as a special and valued person.

Date: 10/15/2003

Submitted by: Elise Coakley

Journal Entry:

Napoleon, OH

Three and a half weeks on the road and things are definitely getting difficult. While there have been no major roadblocks or barriers within the team or from the congregations we travel to, this life of traveling from place to place and living with four other people all the time is definitely wearing on me. While I love each of my teammates dearly and appreciate so much their ideas and views, it can be difficult when we all think and work in different ways. I have always told myself that I embrace people who are different, that I appreciate their diversity, and now is my chance to really live it. It is a struggle, especially since we are always together and can rarely retreat from this life, but I know that God is trying to stretch me. It is my job to bend with the Lord's direction, to follow God's guiding and to seek God's help, because I cannot do this on my own. None of us can. This life demands a lot from us, and thankfully the Lord works through this team in spite of our weaknesses and failures, and perhaps even because of them.

I have seen the work of the Lord in the faces of the people we meet. It's in the middle-schooler who is thrilled because we remembered her name, and the retired couple who treasured having a few house guests for the weekend. It's in the kindergarten class that loved our puppet show and silly songs, and the Sunday morning church-goers who enjoyed the refreshing change from the normal service. God is blessing us in so many ways, and God is blessing others through us as well. I often worry about how we will make an impact or touch a life in only a few hours, but I see now that it is nothing we do at all. It is the Holy Spirit working through our words and songs, our skits and puppet shows, and reaching out in love to everyone around us. I pray that I will never find a way to touch a life on my own but that I will always leave it up to the power of God.

This will be a learning and growing year for me, stretching me beyond my limits and taking me to places I've never been before and places I am not comfortable. I am scared for the struggles, I am worried that my weaknesses will overwhelm me and my doubts about why I'm here will grow too large to handle. But I have hope that the Lord will be with me and guide me through these shadows. God has already blessed me so profusely these past few weeks that I am anxious and excited to see the blessings the year will bring.



Elise Coakley

Date: 10/16/2003

Submitted by: Heather Carr

Journal Entry:

Napoleon, OH --> Cleveland, OH

Well, today begins another 2-day stretch of last-minute bookings/housing arrangements, which always make for interesting days because they're not "normal" (if you can call anything about our lifestyle this year "normal"). Tues. and Wed. we were in Napoleon, and we had a whole lot of things planned for us, which all went really well; singing for the morning chapel service at the Lutheran school, doing a program for the confirmation kids at Bethlehem on Wed. pm, and two nursing homes, plus plenty of time to hang out with our great host families. And then today we're at a youth house outside Cleveland for housing only until Sat am—which is a great break, to have some time to focus on team business, and relax together, play arcade games downstairs, sleep, etc.



Heather Carr

There are some great stories from these last few days—like the little old lady at one of the nursing homes who came in during a slow song (Amazing Grace Alleluia), and when it was done, exclaimed at the top of her lungs, "Oh, thank God that racket is over! That couldn't have been any more terrible!" =) I almost burst out laughing right there in front of everyone, and Bjørn mentioned later that he can't wait to be old enough to burst out with whatever he wants like that. Or the kindergartners all drumming along on their imaginary congas & jamming with us on their air guitars during the chapel service—so cute! Or when we got accidentally locked out of our host home at 11pm, when we went across the street to visit with the other host mom, and our hosts thought we'd all gone to bed—oops! =)

So, these days have certainly had great relational opportunities, and good times for our team to work on things together. It's just been different than other days, when we travel somewhere new each day, have a program each night, and meet new people and new hosts in each place. I find it harder to be motivated to get things done when we're outside the "norm", and I am amused at myself for so quickly wanting to organize my life into understandable patterns and boxes, because the nature of life on the road is that it IS unpredictable, and overseas it will be even more so. Yet I want to find the predictable even here, and I am comforted by the routine of having the same pattern every day—business in the morning, driving in the afternoon, and set-up, relational ministry, program, and host homes in the evening. When that pattern is disturbed, my routine is thrown off, and I don't feel as motivated to do anything...even though there's ostensibly MORE free time to get things accomplished! Funny. I'm still limited by my busy, jam-packed Western lifestyle, and I am anxious for the release of being in PNG, and forced to actually relax, sit back, and let things happen the way they will (which will most likely be different every day). Bring it on!

Date: 10/18/2003

Submitted by: Bjørn Peterson

Journal Entry:

Hudson, OH

Lately I've been thinking a lot about the church as a whole. Although it has been very encouraging to meet all the wonderful congregations thus far, and I am equally excited for the congregations to come, I cannot help but notice certain trends in various Christian communities.



Bjørn Peterson

It is a completely natural tendency to create comfortable situations for ourselves. Church is no different. We want the people that surround us to be like-minded and good examples for our kids. We take a certain amount of pride in the quality of people in our community, and Christ does call us to accountability. But the idea of the body of Christ being a respectable or exclusive place is purely inaccurate. How can we, who are sinners through and through, create a community that Christ Jesus, our head, did not create? For Jesus was never considered respectable or honorable. In fact he was considered so offensive and such a disgrace that his own people crucified him. Yet we, his followers by name, have sold ourselves as worthy of the highest status. We have done this by isolating those the world has deemed untouchable and dirty. But how, you say? It is not enough, nor is it the example of Christ, to sit in our sanctuaries and wait to welcome in the few disenfranchised who are brave enough to climb the front steps. Our savior went to them, not with

condemning words like so many street evangelists use, but with invitations to share a meal and offer the right hand of fellowship. If you are a Christian, then you claim to follow Christ. If you look with an honest heart at the Christ of the scripture you will see that Christ pursued the broken, he didn't just wait for them to come. Christ said he came for the lost sheep of Israel. Lost sheep need not only a welcome stable, but a Shepherd passionate with seeking them. Passion means being consumed. Are you consumed with the desire to seek and love the disenfranchised in your community?

Date: 10/21/2003

Submitted by: Ruth Bowman

Journal Entry:

Meadville, PA -> Syracuse, NY

I just realized how strong we have our polite church protocol pounded into our heads. When "we" go to church, we all know that the sermon is the time when you sit quietly in the pew, and let your mind drift off to the wonderful world of daydreams every now and then. (Of course I never did this; I had my dad's wonderful sermons to listen to! *_*) However, I had the chance to give a sharing at a Children's Home, where they hadn't been taught that protocol. What I had was an interactive sharing, without even having to try! The group was asking questions, offering predictions, and even suggestions as to how I should end my story! To be quite honest, it intimidated me at first. We had been given the opportunity to work with a crowd much different than a Sunday morning crowd. These court appointed teenagers had lived a life I couldn't even begin to imagine. That fact in itself humbled me, and made me want to be real for them. The only way I knew how to show love from the distance of "my world" was through smiles. It touched my heart to smile into their eyes and after awhile see a flicker, and then eventually a full fledged smile in return. The only problem was that I didn't know how to go beyond the smile. I was able to have some neat casual conversations with a few of the kids during meals at the cafeteria, and when visiting them in their cabins, but they didn't seem to know how to get beyond my smile either. I had what they wanted, freedom, with amazing opportunities. Dreams of my own, and the ability to accomplish the goals I set. I take these things for granted far too often. But I loved, the only way I knew how. I could have done more; I could have stretched myself more and taken more of a risk for them. I pray God will work in me, giving me the strength, words, and courage to take the risk of loving every day, knowing that I may not be loved in return. When one of the girls at the home right-out defied Christ right in the middle of my sharing, God did something to my heart. HE strengthened me. Reminding me that although I look at His message of Love and Grace as something I've always known as truth in my life, there are some who struggle with believing that God would actually love them. God loves all. Inspire us to love, Lord. And teach us how to inspire love in each other.



Ruth Bowman

Date: 10/23/2003

Submitted by: Bjørn Peterson

Journal Entry:

Tuesday and Wednesday we were at Syracuse University in New York. Upstate is truly a beautiful place. We stayed with my brother Dane who is a junior biology major there. Tuesday night we heard a survivor of the holocaust speak to the local Baptist Campus Ministry, and then hung out with my brother. Wednesday we did a program/devo for the BCM's free lunch. It is a cool group of kids, and about sixty turned out for food and fellowship. That ministry in itself is a cool story. When my brother arrived as a freshman a couple years ago there were less than twenty people at there Tuesday night gatherings. Now there are over a hundred. Praise God for that. That is all, good bye.



Bjørn Peterson

Date: 10/28/2003
Submitted by: Heather Carr
Journal Entry:



Heather Carr

Oct. 23-29

Topton, PA to Marion, to Hagerstown, MD, and back to Bowers, PA

Whew, I feel like so much has happened that I have a ton to catch up on! Maybe I can cover the bases by focusing on the blessings that have been bestowed upon us this past week:

- 3 free haircuts: our gracious hosts helping us look presentable for programs by trimming up those unruly locks (though Bjørn remains blessedly UNshaved or shorn....and then there's Joel's eyebrows...) =)
- a 24 pack of Mountain Dew, my personal caffeinated beverage of choice, which kept me bouncing around the van for days
- subs from Tony's Pizza (he owns 3 restaurants in the same small town...hmm, our own Pennsylvania mobster? ;) His food is great, though.
- meeting New Dawners Marcus & Lucy, who were on team with Steph Kirkman last year!
- baton twirling lessons from my 10 year old host sister—she's good! I need work....
- An amazing spaghetti dinner in Marion, PA—Italians should take some lessons...
- having Watermark- Denmark walk into our program and spice the whole thing up by clapping along, laughing at all our jokes, and making faces at us as we sang. =)
- getting time to talk to good friends on the phone (Eric, Joy, Ryan, Pugh, Cathleen, Kressen, Kate... love you guys!)
- hangin' with cool youth in Bowers, and Hagerstown, and Marion
- going BOWLING for a team outing, and yelling certain peoples' names as distraction...;)
- amazing food and hospitality from so many of our hosts and contacts
- fun programs, solid music making, and enthusiastic crowds who God touches with the message He has for them
- cute babies to make faces at during the programs
- meeting Pat Torbit's (WMG)family (and exchanging many embarrassing stories...Pat, I feel like I know you so much better now!...)
- trees to climb in the woods outside Baltimore, seeing Carrie during Halloween, and dressing as weirdos for a program without anyone giving us a second glance
- teammates to laugh and quote movies with
- slurpees to sip loudly in a certain Pugh's home church, and Chinese buffet to fill our tummies
- 80 degree weather, while at home in MN it's snowing!
- a KEYBOARD AMP & microphone, lovingly given to us by Karl, so that we could play an outdoor set during the March for the Homeless around the church parking lot
- Grace from God to do the ministry He has set before us

Date: 10/30/2003

Submitted by: Joel Mailand

Journal Entry:

Parkville, MD

Hello journal. It's good to see you again. Have you missed me? It has been a few days since I last wrote. We are now in Maryland. It's beautiful and warm.

The tape player in our van is broken. We have survived for the past few weeks by hooking our bass amp up to the CD player and power inverter. It's worked so far, to help pass the time and keep us all singing as we drive. This is sort of an important thing; it keeps people happy. I am wondering what we will do without all of these things that we 'need' while overseas....and how we will entertain ourselves?

Let's see, we stayed at the pastor's in Parkville, MD, and at the church was a package for me. My shoes arrived! It took about a month from the time I bought them to the time they arrived. See, about the time we were in Michigan, I thought it would be cool to have a new pair of shoes, since everyone has asked me about the holes in the ones I was wearing. I kind of like them- hey, they're comfortable, and I have a hard time letting go of a good pair of shoes. Well, I went to the internet and found some, bought them, and gave the church address that I would be at in two weeks. They arrived, but I had failed to address them to Myself, so the secretary promptly returned them. Whoops! After another two weeks they finally arrived, they are a very cool blue suede. I have been looking forward to buying a back pack and some boots, as well, but I think I will wait for mid-winter break to look for them.

For the most part I am getting my sleep, taking vitamins, running every once in a while, and eating more than I really need to. But there is exhaustion that is slowly creeping up. We are half way through the fall tour. This is more of a full body tired, from being on the go all the time.



Joel Mailand

Date: 11/1/2003

Submitted by: Elise Coakley

Journal Entry:

Friday was a day for us to relax and sight-see, so we split up and went to the harbor in Baltimore to spend the day. Joel, Heather, and Ruth went with the Pastor and the intern from the church in Parkville, while Bjørn and I went with my family who was visiting from Oregon. It was great that they were able to come out; my sister had a few days off from school so they flew out to see my team and visit me and my sister who lives in Virginia. We spent the afternoon down by the harbor, and it was a beautiful day to be outside. In the evening we had a program in Parkville, and since it was Halloween we had to of course dress up. Not having many resources for costumes, my family helped Bjørn and I pick out costumes from the Dollar Tree. They didn't have any costumes but there were tons of Christmas decorations, so I was a Christmas tree and Bjørn was a reindeer. The other three dressed up as well, although it wasn't quite so clear what they were. Heather was kind of a gypsy, Ruth was from India, and Joel had on a very colorful jacket and hat. We enjoyed doing an entire program in costume.

Saturday we were able to sight-see some more with my family. First they took us to the other Washington monument, a memorial built to him by the Masons. Then we went to Mt. Vernon, George Washington's home. It was a beautiful day, almost 80 degrees and sunny. We toured Washington's home and were able to walk around the farm. It was beautiful. We then drove to Dale City for another program. Luckily my family was able to see our program and I think they enjoyed it. I was so thankful for a few days to spend with my family; I only wish they could have stayed



Elise Coakley

longer.

Date: 11/4/2003

Submitted by: Bjørn Peterson

Journal Entry:

We spent the last few days in Lexington Park, MD. I stayed with my good friend Brian "Boo" Wallace. He is always such an encouraging person to see. I am not sure that I know any other man who desires so much to be in God's will. He worries sometimes, as we all do, that he is not doing the right thing. That he is out of God's will. That if he moves he is being unfaithful and if he stays still he is being irresponsible. But, as I reflect on what it means to be in God's will, it seems clearer to me than I sometimes want it to be. Jesus told us to love the Lord our God with all our heart, soul and mind, and to love our neighbor as ourselves. This is God's will for us. But I have heard people talk about the difference between call and commission. Apparently the Great Commission was too general for some. We live in such an individually oriented culture that we are not satisfied with "go to all nations and make disciples," because our names are not included and no bushes have burned in our backyards. The devil loves to tell devout young men like Boo that they are disappointing God so that they will heap guilt and worry on themselves trying to find God. But the God I know and serve has much more grace and allows for much more creativity than that. Boo is in God's will. How do I know? I have seen Boo's heart and I know that he is a man after God's heart. Beyond that I see that he loves so many people with so much of himself that it is clear to me that Boo loves his neighbor as himself. (In fact, I think he love could work on loving himself as much as he loves his neighbor sometimes, as this is a common problem for people in ministry.) The bottom line is that God knows our hearts and he knows our desires and fears, and knows who we are through all of our inconsistencies, and still loves us. That is the good, pure thing that Paul encourages us to think on.



Bjørn Peterson

Date: 11/6/2003

Submitted by: Ruth Bowman

Journal Entry:

Sunderland, MD to Rockville, MD

The church was beautiful. Thin, deep, waterfall blue strips of stain glass fell from four sides of the top of the church down to a collection of rich color at the bottom. After a delicious lasagna dinner we did our newly revised program for the second time. Testify to Love – Mmmhmm, now that's a great song! Well, I had the opportunity to stay with a delightful couple, and to be driven home by the woman's dad who had just moved to the area. The woman's husband suffered from MS and was wheelchair bound, so their van was only able to accommodate the two of them. But I must say I rode in luxury! The retired pastor that drove me home was quite the fireball himself! He escorted me to his car, opened AND closed the door for me! Not many guys will do that for you anymore these days! And I must say I did enjoy being spoiled tremendously. During our ride I couldn't help but become inspired from listening to the stories he told of his life. I was reminded of the love I have for my family and friends, and how important those people are in my life. It also made me think of my grandpa in Japan. We go in and out of so many people's lives, and it makes you wonder who is really making the impact, them or us. The people I have met along the road have been more of a witness of kindness and hospitality than I feel I have been as a traveling example of Christ's Love. We learn and grow from each other. That night, that simple yet beautiful conversation with a retired pastor was enough for me to regain some inspiration. God is always giving us opportunities to serve Him; our job is to recognize them and then do something about them. Thank you God, for being our Purpose in life.



Ruth Bowman

Date: 11/7/2003

Submitted by: Joel Mailand

Journal Entry:

On Friday we visited Christ Lutheran in Washington D.C. We had some time before the program that evening so we decided to sightsee on the Mall that morning. I want to say that security in DC is amazing.

Let me paint a picture for you. Since training in September we have been joking about how we are driving around in a white, unmarked 15 passenger van with a matching white unmarked trailer. It's like something out of a bad Bruce Willis movie (Die Hard 1, 2 or 3, take your pick). When we found out we would be in D.C., the joke got even better. Driving around in our nation's capital, the home of CIA, FBI, and the Pentagon, we figured we would be more than a little suspicious.



Joel Mailand

So, we left our host homes at about 9:30 and proceeded down the George Washington Highway. We crossed the bridge and exited onto Ohio St, where we were told that there were public parking lots. We drove slowly until we spied a parking lot—oh great, we finally found something! However, a sign at the entrance was posted: no RV's, Buses, or Cars with Trailers. We sat there and debated whether we could just maybe park our van and trailer here without anyone noticing, and the nice parking lot attendants would overlook our trailer, since the lot was practically empty.

Three minutes later a security car pulls up and asks us what we are doing. Seriously, it only took them three minutes! My mistake (as I was later admonished by our host pastor) was that I hopped out of the van, and walked over to the car. In trying to explain who we were and what we were doing, I asked him if we could park in the lot.

Turns out he was with the SECRET SERVICE, so he directed us to the Park Police who had jurisdiction over parking enforcement, and who we would have to pay fines to if we parked there. After Ruth discreetly snapped a picture of me talking to the cop, we thanked the nice man, and pulled out, feeling very sheepish. Farther down the road we pulled into lot C, and saw a cop car and a K-9 unit parked there. We stopped, and I again hopped out and walked up (probably a huge no-no) to ask where we could park. These guys were DC cops just taking a break, and directed me to the Park Police HQ farther down the street.

At last! For the last time, I hop out, walk up to the front door, and disregard the sign that says "No civilians past this point. Please use the red phone for assistance or emergencies." After getting the security guard at the front desk to open the door, I ask her where I can park our van. She looks at me with this deer in headlights gaze, and points to the red phone in the entrance. What is this? Like I'm supposed to read signs and make intelligent deductions as to what I am supposed to do? Good grief... Ok, so I go in, hoping that there is a number or something that I can dial, like H.E.L.P., or 0 for "place to park a suspicious van and trailer." So, I pick it up and punch a button, then I read, "Phone answers automatically." Oh....whoops. And just like it says, the dial tone breaks and it begins to ring. Yikes, just like in the movies! A guy answers, and after I tell him who I am and what we are doing, I ask him where I can park a 15 passenger van and trailer. He talks as if he is looking for a pencil, or possibly my van, and then says, "You mean that white one? Yea I see it...Ummm..yea, there's a place along the road just up the way."

Ok, now at this point all the cloak and dagger things I had heard about security went racing through my head. How does this guy know??? It's true! DC is secure and protected. "Nothing to worry about here, just some kids from the mid-west/ west coast, planning to sabotage our nation's capital. Don't mind us..." Cameras and spy satellites, guys walking around talking into their sleeves, tinted windows and the ultimate – Dark sunglasses. For the rest of the day, I wondered about every person who walked past us, "What's their secret? Who do they work for?" I also figured that D.C. must have more people working for law enforcement than anywhere else in the country. Nothing to be alarmed at, they just have a lot of good reasons to be safe. In any case, we parked our van off in the boonies, and walked back to the Mall to meet our teammates and enjoy a day of "touristing".

One highlight for me was that we watched low-flying Army Helicopters buzz over the Mall all day. Probably on their way to load or unload congressmen, and military generals, and who knows what other VIPs. I did get a picture by the end of the day, as they flew over the Jefferson memorial, making me feel as if I had played my own version of spy versus spy.

Favorite places are the FDR memorial and walking through the drained reflecting pool, not to mention trying to hop the fence to the Washington Monument, just to test all those security guys and their cameras. ;) Hopefully in the summer we will tour the Holocaust museum. That's all for now.

Date: 11/8/2003

Submitted by: Heather Carr

Journal Entry:

DC to Norlina, NC

This weekend has been a really fun one for me, mostly because of the great people we've met. On Friday night, we were at Christ Lutheran in DC, a beautiful old stone building on 16th St., which must have at least a hundred churches on it. =) After our program, I got to chat with a kid who has literally been all over the world with his mom, who is an AIDS pathologist and educator, and has done seminars and health tests all over the world. Wow! Then there's Elise, a great lady with a huge heart, who has worked at women's shelters for years. A woman we met last week works for the CIA, and one of our host moms worked for the FDA...my host dad here has a law firm, and our host mom sings in the National Cathedral Chorale, and their kids are clever, well-adjusted teenagers.... it just goes on and on. I feel like the closer to DC we are, the more vital and high powered everyone's jobs seem to be; it's like everyone we meet is engaged in some noble struggle to benefit someone's well-being. And while I do realize that there are all kinds of noble professions, and people all over the country doing vital things, it just seems like there's a higher percentage of them here. I also found it slightly ironic that one of our new program's focuses is on reaching out into our communities and taking on the challenge of seeing and experiencing just how large the Body of Christ is—and that tonight's program felt like it was even stronger than usual on that focus—in a church that is like an inner-city church, which has many outreach programs into the community, and also houses two other congregations, one Congolese, and one Ethiopian. I learned those things after our program, and I had to laugh to myself that it probably seemed like we were preaching to the choir with our program tonight. =)

Anyway, after saying goodbye to our contact, YE Alum Jill Mauritz (a certain Pugh's roommate, I hear!), we were off to Norlina, NC, and as we pulled off the freeway, I realized I recognized the road, and knew just which church we were arriving at—one of the ones my Cross Fire team visited four years ago! It's a beautiful little country church, with a gorgeous, wooden sanctuary, and where I can remember chasing leaves with a XF teammate during a 1-on-1 four years ago. It was so fun, and surreal, to be back at this church, especially meeting people that I remember from four years ago. Many of them remembered me, too, so there was a lot of reminiscing and catching up to do. Again, my hosts here were fab—they own a flower farm, and designed and built their own gorgeous stone-w/wooden-interior home. Beautiful. I got to watch the rest of the lunar eclipse on the porch with Zachary and Erin, host kids, secluded back in the middle of the woods....ahh, I love it. Sunday we went to Rocky Mount, and met a whole new crew of fun folks, such as Frances, our host mom who also housed Stephanie Kirkman last year when she was on New Dawn. It's kind of funny, I feel like we've been stalking New Dawn 02-03, retracing so many of their steps and staying with families they stayed with. =) Frances is a big sweetheart with a funny cat (he chased his own tail several times that night) and a whole bunch of fun stories, so it was a hoot to stay with her.

I'm really having a great time meeting people on the road this year—they make each new place unique and memorable, and I am thrilled at the prospect of getting to come back to a bunch of them next summer when we get back from PNG. I hope it works into our schedule to see as many of them as possible.



Heather Carr

Date: 11/11/2003

Submitted by: Bjørn Peterson

Journal Entry:

We had our day off in Rocky Mount, NC. I did two of my favorite things: wrote and

watched movies. Elise and I wrote a song for our team to sing. We've written two more since, almost one a day. That has been fun. Monday we saw the Matrix Revolutions, which I must say was everything I dreamed it would be. All you critics out there can keep your opinions to yourselves on this matter, nothing can ruin the Matrix Trilogy for me. I am tired so I will not say any more.



Bjørn Peterson

Date: 11/13/2003

Submitted by: Ruth Bowman

Journal Entry:

Rocky Mount, NC to Chesapeake, VA



Ruth Bowman

It had been a long day. Little chin-biting preschoolers in the morning, rowdy and energetic school kids in the afternoon, and then a family program that evening. Oh, but moments of the day stand out as glorious memories in my mind. I was standing in front of the group of 6 or 7 little wide eyed munchkins, aged at about 3 or 4 tops, trying explain the skit we had just done for them. "God is everywhere, all around us and in everything. I bet if you look at the person next to you right now you will be able to see God in them!" As I encouraged them to look at each other, the little dark haired boy in the front row, stared up at me and replied, "I can see God in you!" Talk about having a hundred baby hugs come and surround my heart!

After the program we were all pretty tired, but when Sandy, who was a joy to be with considering she had just been on New Dawn last year, suggested going to the beach, how could I refuse?! A chance to go to the Atlantic on a beautiful 70 degree Nov night? I am there! Heather and Joel came along as well, and we headed off on an adventure to find the beach. The sight we found when we arrived was breathtaking. Huge waves crashed against the softest sand I have ever felt. The moon was big and bright and reflected across the waves, and the stars poked through the drifting thin clouds... not to be forgotten. God held me there. You know how you get the feeling sometimes of just needing to be held? Well, I needed that then, and God held me, with the softness of the wind against my face. I walked alone down the beach, conversing with God and catching up. We were able to reconnect, and he refocused my heart and mind preparing me for more to come. It was a beautiful night. And just to let you in on a little secret, both Joel and I captured some water from the Atlantic and have a secret mission to connect the two sides of the country by pouring the water into the Pacific Ocean when we reach LA!! We shall be united! =)

Date: 11/15/2003

Submitted by: Joel Mailand

Journal Entry:

Ok, so we were in Conover, North Carolina a few days ago. What a wonderful fall day for an outside event! There were hay rides on a truck and trailer, a fire and s'mores, hamburgers and hotdogs. And my good buddy Chandler. I figure it was merely a bump, but my teammates argue otherwise. Chandler is about 10 years old and he loves sports and competition. Heather and I decided it would be fun to round up a few kids and kick the soccer ball around on the field. Everything was going well and we were all having a great time.... then the ball was passed to me. I ran down the left side of the field with Chandler close behind. I kicked the ball and slipped. It would not have been a problem without him there, but I ended up landing on him. I tried to brace my fall, but I ended up squashing him, slightly, and landing on his arm. I jumped up and he jumped up and yelled "It's broken!" I was petrified, and I felt horrible. Heather assisted him back to his parents, and they promptly took him to the hospital for x-rays. His dad reassured us that he gets bumped around all the time, and is no stranger to broken or sprained limbs. Meanwhile, my team believes that I am a heartless soccer player and reminded me that I need to "play nicely" with the youth group. Ok, so I guess I am going to try to make a different kind of impact with youth.... ;)



Joel Mailand

Date: 11/18/2003
Submitted by: Elise Coakley
Journal Entry:



Elise Coakley

We've spent the past few days at the Jarvis home in Powell, TN, home of Jennifer Jarvis from Kindred. They are such a warm and loving family, we have felt so at home and enjoyed so much being a part of this family for the weekend. Sunday we worshiped at Powell Presbyterian Church, which was such a blessing to worship in another setting. I was excited to see that Youth Encounter can reach out beyond the Lutheran church into other denominations and really celebrate the Body of Christ that unites us all. My hope is that more churches from other denominations will hear about or see Youth Encounter teams and events and want to be a part of them, as well.

Our team has changed the focus of our programs in the past month; while still sharing the gospel and the Good News of Jesus' love and grace, we have been focusing on the Body of Christ within the US and around the world. We aim to acknowledge how broken the church has become, separating and fighting because of differences over worship and traditions rather than celebrating and honoring the Lord and God of us all. Jesus taught us more than anything to love, and the Body of Christ should be the first place people go to be loved. We also celebrate the beautiful culture of Papua New Guinea and the thriving church that has been growing there for 100 years. We want to acknowledge this beautiful piece of the Body that is so easily forgotten and overlooked, and recognize how the people and the church in PNG celebrate and share the love of Jesus Christ.

In addition to changing the focus of our program, we've added several new songs, including a song that Bjørn and I wrote. I've been writing songs for several years now, but I've always been the only one who has sung them. I enjoyed so much writing a song with someone as talented as Bjørn and I love hearing my team perform it as well. It motivates and inspires me to write more and I really feel a calling to sing and write music. Bjørn and I actually hope to have enough songs written for an album by the end of team! So this has been a fun couple of days, as we've begun a new program and added some new songs, and I'm so excited to continue sharing this message over the next few weeks.

Date: 11/20/2003
Submitted by: Heather Carr
Journal Entry:



Heather Carr

Memphis, TN

I had forgotten how beautiful Tennessee is! Even along the interstate from Knoxville to Memphis, the drive was gorgeous, especially since there were still a lot of colorful leaves on the trees. I just love the woods, and I love that we get to travel through God's majestic forests in so many parts of the country—it's inspiring to me; a rejuvenation to rejoice in nature.

Another inspiration these last few days has been getting to spend time with one of my teammates from my Cross Fire 99-00 team, Jenn Wahl, who just became Jenn Reigel in August! It's hard to believe it's been 3 years since we've been together. So many things have changed, and yet at the same time, I feel like we've just seen each other, and that we've just picked up where we left off. And though it may seem like a small thing, what a giant blessing Jenn is to me! Even a few hours spent together rejoicing in her new marriage, and her calling, and what God is doing for her and teaching her....even that short time worshiping, sharing our hearts, and praying together has completely rejuvenated me. Jenn is like no one else that God has placed in my life—she is honest and no-nonsense, passionate and focused and committed, and more real and down to earth than anyone else I know. And besides being the Jenn that I know and love, that real quality is a welcome mirror for me at this point on the road and in team life, because my current team and I don't always remember to reflect each other to ourselves, either negatively or positively. I think that we have enough fun together that we forget to be intentional about opening up and being real and

honest with each other. I think that we can get to that point, but we haven't yet, and so I don't currently have any feedback about how I'm doing, or who I am, or what others see God doing with me or through me.

Yet being with Jenn for a few hours, she easily stepped back into that role, of offering compassionate encouragement and affirmation to me—and I realized how much I've missed that! Not only because I wish my team was to that level, but because I love Jenn, and I miss her and who she is to me. I miss my other teammates Angie and Mandy similarly, and being back on team emphasizes for me how important they are in my life, in a way I haven't thought about much since my last team ended. What a wonderful thing, to spend a year with people who can lift you up like that! I've never had someone compliment my character with such grace, compassion, and conviction as Jenn does—she has a beautiful gift of sincerity and honesty, and I thank God for blessing her with it, and me through it. When she speaks to me like that, I can tell that the words are not only from her, but from God, because she sees me with the eyes of grace—and that is a humbling and breathtaking honor, to be spoken of so lovingly and beautifully. And that is how God sees me! It brings me to tears to be reminded by my beloved friend how God rejoices over me as His precious child, how He delights in me and calls me His beloved, how He has plans for ME, because I am specially chosen for the purpose He has for me...these are the wonderful ways in which I've been blessed today, by God, through Jenn. I was blessed in a similar way around a campfire with Mandy and Angie a few months ago, as we worshiped and reminisced and prayed together....and I am reminded again of how good it is to have friends who know me, who speak God's words of love and truth to me, who bless me with their prayers and their time. Thank you, God, for blessing me with such friends.

Date: 11/22/2003

Submitted by: Bjørn Peterson

Journal Entry:

We stayed in St Louis with Joel's family for a couple days and had a chance to do chapel at the Lutheran Church of the Missouri Synod International Center. It was fun to talk to the chaplain who had done some mission work in Papua New Guinea for about twenty years. He was an amazing man. Joel's family was great and we got to visit some of his and Heather's friends. Then we went to Nauvoo, IL and had a great time there too. That's all.



Bjørn Peterson

(Postscript by Heather): Our lock-in with the youth in Nauvoo was a fun time—there were two youth groups who had come together for the event, and it was neat to see them sit down at the end of the evening to negotiate their next joint event, going skiing. I was happy to see these two churches combining their programs and working together to make their youth events more successful and dynamic...particularly since churches working together is a sub-theme that our team has taken to heart this year. Way to go, Nauvoo!

Date: 11/25/2003

Submitted by: Heather Carr

Journal Entry:

Ottumwa, IA -> Algona, IA

Sunday night we had a program at a beautiful old church in Ottumwa, which was mostly attended by youth who play in the praise band, and our host families. =) These kids, though—they were really fun! I bounced a beach ball around with a few of them, and got to sign a few guitars, too (wow, I feel like a rock star...weird); one for an aspiring young musician, and another for his young Padawan.



Heather Carr

Then I got to go home with a splendid host family for the next two nights (since Monday is our day off). Madison showed me her adorable miniature gerbil, and we played some cards (by the last game of speed, she finally beat me—way to go, the student surpasses the master!) =) I got to watch

some MASH episodes with Chuck, and have some fun conversation with Jennifer and Mackenzie about education, travel, cultural differences, etc....ahh, I love my days off. =) I also got my weekly TV fix, watching all sorts of well-known classics like MacGyver, Star Trek: The Next Generation, and the E! Hollywood True Stories about Johnny Depp and the Spice Girls... hehe. But best of all, I slept till noon, and then stayed in the house almost the entire rest of the day... I love not having to get dressed and go anywhere on a day off! Pajamas are definitely where it's at...

It's funny... we meet a lot of people on the road, and a lot of them, like Jennifer and Mackenzie, I get at least some time to sit down at chat with about team, and life, and the adventures that God has taken and is still taking me on. And I'm pleasantly surprised by how many times those conversations have inspired some real encouragement from them, for me, in that many adults are impressed at just what we're committing ourselves to, and sometimes even wish they could do it.

"Wow, what a great year for you, traveling and ministering—and good for you, doing this while you're still young, before you're tied down! I wish I had done something like this when I was your age." Honestly, I don't know how many times I've heard something to that effect from people who are living their normal, busy, day-to-day lives out in joy and thanksgiving. It seems to strike the heart of a lot of people, that small little regret, now that they're older, settled, and maybe have a family to be responsible for—that they weren't crazier or riskier when they were younger.... or that they didn't take the opportunity to do something like this, for which you need to be unattached and fairly free, to give up your life for a year. There's some level of pride and joy in those expressed regrets, too, that We ARE doing this.... "This is the perfect time for you to spend a year doing something like this, before you start a career or a family, and want to stay more stationary and stable."

Usually I respond with, "Wow, thanks for the encouragement—and it's neat to hear you say that. Do you want to call my mom and reassure her of that for me? ;) I know she gets nervous, wanting me to get settled and start a family, just like you said, and it'd be good for her to hear from another adult that there's plenty of time for all those other steps in life."

Love you, mom. =) Don't worry, I know what I'm doing, and I'm confident that this is God's calling for this year of my life. Thanks to all those angels who remind and reassure me that this is so! =) Peace.

Date: 11/27/2003

Submitted by: Joel Mailand

Journal Entry:

Thanksgiving at Bjørn's.

(Wednesday)

- Arrive
- Lunch
- Church service
- Hang out

(Thursday)

- Wake up
- Do nothing
- Thanksgiving dinner
- Hang out at Baileys
- Hang out

We have done a lot of hanging out for the past few days. I am beginning a slow slide towards midwinter training. I am really excited about getting back with other teams and catching up. Mentally it is hard to get focused on a program or meeting with host families.

Nevertheless, we had a chance to do some very cool things. On Thanksgiving eve (is that a recognized holiday?) we sang a few songs at the interdenominational service at First English



Joel Mailand

Lutheran, Cannon Falls. 12 local churches get together and sing, pray, and praise God together. It's nice to see churches getting along for at least one day out of the year. It would also be nice to see other denominations' churches become interested in hosting teams.

On Thanksgiving after dinner we drove to the Baileys, and met some of the Petersons' friends. A crowd was there, and we were asked to play a few songs and talk about our travels. I had the chance to meet and talk with Geoffrey, a guy from Kenya. It was great conversation about his observations of the United States. It was serendipitous that we had this discussion. Let me explain... I believe we can be taught by people we meet. Whether it is self-realization, or how the world works, but in sharing a story everyone has something good that we can take from them and the relationship. We have the power to influence people, or to be influenced in some way. Anyway, Geoffrey is at a local college and will soon go back home to his family. He has made observations while being here. We sat and talked about soccer and his children, about team life and global politics. Politics and global issues are really what seemed to fascinate him the most, so our conversation leaned in this direction. It challenged me to think about the message of the Gospel, and the cultural gap between our country and his.

He pointed out that the USA has vast resources, far beyond many countries, and this is often taken for granted. Not just financial wealth, but knowledge and technology, and social services, etc. Also, a great opportunity to help raise the standards of living in other places of the world. How is it that we can sit on such resources and not do anything -- or worse, hoard opportunities? We live in a self aware-world. In the US, people are trying to get more. Be more. Get ahead in their job. They have a certain amount of control over the type of work they do, and can choose to live where and how they want.

But in developing countries, people are looking for the next meal. Subsisting. Hoping the government will be stable. Maybe wondering if they will make it to the next day. Geoffrey pointed out that immigrants to the US are so hard working at all levels because they have seen poverty, and are aware of how much they have and where they have come from.

These are strong words that challenge us. There is an opportunity to show humanitarian aid, and build peaceful relationships as countries and as individuals. Geoffrey's view of God's presence in the world is that God does not like war, pain and suffering. God cannot stop these things or begin them. But he gives us the ability to be peacemakers, healers, and givers. There is some truth there, I am sure. Peace and justice and humility are not natural reactions to evil and hatred, but it is possible to learn these traits, or to choose them, or to pray for them through Christ. I am reminded of the prayer of St. Francis of Assisi.

We will soon become labeled Americans... missionaries... foreigners. I am an American who is middle class, has been overseas twice, and who really doesn't have a global perspective. I don't like the idea of labels, but it helps to organize our situation in people's minds. Funny—at this point in time I am not really aware of what the labels we place on ourselves really are, or what they mean; all I have is a broad, sweeping sense. But am I just naïve, or is this something that you really can never grasp or truly define? Hopefully we will see a glimpse of the truth as we travel overseas, as well as the calling that God has for us as a team.

Date: 11/29/2003
Submitted by: Elise Coakley
Journal Entry:

Cannon Falls -> Clearbrook, MN

It's hard to believe our fall tour is coming to a close. In about two weeks we will be leaving for Christmas vacation, and then it's only a few weeks before we leave for Papua New Guinea. As our departure overseas is closely approaching, many mixed feelings are coming out. I'm so excited to be going to this new culture that I have never even been close to before. The people and places of Papua New Guinea sound so intriguing and exciting that I almost can't believe we get to experience it. Over the past few months we've met several families



Elise Coakley

and people who have traveled to Papua New Guinea, and hearing their stories and seeing the longing in their faces for the country and the people excites me even more.

But of course, being the chronic worrier that I am, part of me is nervous and scared for this adventure. There are so many things we don't know about, so many unknowns about what we'll be doing and where we'll be going, and this is a culture so unfamiliar to me. I find myself afraid of the unknown. I know this will be a hard four months. We will be stretched and pulled and tested by God everyday. We will find ourselves going places we've never even heard of. We will be physically, mentally, and emotionally exhausted. And yet, I feel that God will do great things through us. I know this will be an adventure to remember and God will be working in so many ways through us, in us, and around us. And so, my excitement builds for this journey we will soon begin.

Date: 12/2/2003

Submitted by: Ruth Bowman

Journal Entry:

Clearbrook, MN

I am spoiled and I love it! We have reentered the promise land of Minnesota and I have the glorious opportunity to spend the weekend at my home church and doing a youth night, church services and a family night program! It has been so wonderful and relaxing being at home. The first thing I did after getting to my house was to unpack my clothes into my closet and dresser! My suitcase was thrown out for the weekend; I was on strike from it!



Ruth Bowman

Reentering my home life was as easy as it has always been coming back from college during breaks, except this time I wasn't leaving my other life behind, but brought them with me instead. I found out you can really learn a lot about yourself and how you relate to different people when you bring all the people together. My family was able to offer me insight as well, on how I was changing as they watched me interact with my team. It has also made me reflect on how team life is holding up to the expectations I had for it before I began this year. I had wanted adventure. I wanted to experience new things, meet interesting people and have a ton of stories to tell, that would all offer a little more to who I am and who I am becoming. I am experiencing and learning a lot this year, however it's definitely not the glamorous adventure I had been romanticizing in my mind. Yet, the truth of the matter is, it will never be. What is adventure when you are in the midst of it? Does the adventure come in the excitement before, or in the processing of what has happened afterwards? And what exactly can we classify as an adventure? Is it in the activity itself, or in the attitude that is behind it? I could walk to the grocery store on a normal afternoon, buy a carton of milk, chat with the check out person, and walk home, and be in a frame of mind to jump at every opportunity offered, and want to truly live that day. Or I could be hiking up The Great Wall of China on a hot afternoon and want nothing more than to go sit in the air-conditioned bus. Which would people be more impressed with; my walking to the grocery store or climbing The Great Wall? We have labeled the norm and don't appreciate the opportunities that those experiences could offer to our lives.

My dad did devotions for my team before we left Tuesday morning, and I was reminded how much I love him. Do you ever realize how those you love the most, you often times have to be reminded of how important they are in your lives? I have found this to be true for me, and it is now something I would like to change about how I treat those so dear to me. My dad reminded me of who I am, and the values and morals from which I come. It was refreshing. So, a personal note out to my entire family, friends, pello girls, and boyfriend – I love you!

Date: 12/7/2003

Submitted by: Heather Carr

Journal Entry:

Fargo ->Albert Lea ->Rochester ->White Bear Lake ->Midwinter Training

Whew! What a week! We ended up slacking off on our journal entries this past week, because it was so busy, and then we arrived at Midwinter training, and never got around to posting any entries. In fact, this isn't even getting posted on the web until a month later! Sorry about that.



Heather Carr

Anyway, back to the crazy week we had. Part of the craziness for me was seeing so many of my friends, all bunched into a few days. I'm sure Ruth felt the same way, probably even more so, since we were in her hometown and at her college—but luckily I got to see a bunch of people, too. For one, while at Ruth's I got to spend a fun afternoon with a college friend, Pete Midthun, who I haven't seen since we graduated in 2002—good times, made even more ironic by the fact that he grew up in Papua New Guinea, where our team is going. So he taught me some PNG slang, and shared some stories, besides getting to watch the extended version of the Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers in preparation for The Return of the King, which will be coming out in a few weeks—amazing. Then we were off to Concordia, Moorhead, where I spent 3 nights with Kressen, an awesome friend of mine from camp. I love hanging out with that girl—she's so fun! Add to that the fun craziness of impromptu camp staff reunions (like the one we had at evening worship at Concordia, when I got mobbed with hugs from all the surprised camp staff who go to school there.) =) Sweetness....I love this stuff. Of course, in the midst of all that, we did get a chance to do a program at a church in Fargo, at which we got to sing Christmas Hymns and some praise-songs-by-request with the youth (I was impressed at how excited they were about it), and also do special music at Thursday Chapel at Concordia. Whew! And all this was minus Joel, as well, because he was at home for his grandma's funeral—sad times, and we sure do miss him when he's gone.

Friday we drove down to Albert Lea, where we had a concert and lock-in at First Lutheran. The biggest surprise of the night was having Kindred walk in during our sing-along, escorted by one of my best friends, Eric. They were scheduled to do a coffee house later that night at St. Olaf, which was just up the road in Northfield, so Eric brought them down to surprise everyone else (I was in on the surprise, so I was the only one who didn't pause in shock when they walked in the door. ;) I love surprises!) It's fun to have friends at a program to laugh at all your jokes, and add that extra bit of energy....which we definitely needed for the lock-in that followed. There were a lot of kids there, and the most memorable part of the evening for me was jamming with one of the girls who wanted to learn some guitar, and then having a drum-lesson session w/Bjorn and a whole crew of other people....whew. Teaching simple drum beats to people who've never drummed before is a bigger challenge than I thought. =)

At midnight our duties at the lock-in were over, so we went back to Pastor Reggie's to sleep, and the next day we were off to Northfield to have lunch w/Kindred (AWESOME—Hogan Bros. rocks!), then on to Rochester for our next program. In Rochester, I got to spend a swell evening hanging out w/my HS-aged host sister Erin and her friend....chatting about school and travel and boyfriends and movies...just good, casual down-time with fun people. Our program ended up being 2 Sunday school hours the next morning, at which we did our normal program while munching on Krispy Kremes (from the youth fundraiser), and then headed up to White Bear Lake and the church that Bjørn worked at last summer. It was neat getting to meet so many of the youth that Bjørn has told us stories about from last summer, and to really see him in his element, hanging out with kids who obviously have a lot of respect for him. I enjoyed getting to observe some conversations among the youth who help with worship, discussing worship styles and leadership and musicality...it was fascinating to see the passion they have for it, and I was also impressed at the maturity of those involved. I can tell that they are doing amazing things at this church, and I'm excited for the passion and involvement the youth have.

Of course, the evening was also made extra fun by the fact that a ton of YE people were there (since the program was in the cities), including another best friend, Joy, as well as my brother Brian, and my Cross Fire teammate Mandy. It was a great way to end fall tour—high energy, music that even we were impressed by (thanks, God!), and a very clear feeling by all of us that God was truly present and working there that night. It left me with a really good feeling about the ministry that God has been doing through us, and that is what I'm most grateful for. =)

Of course, hanging out late into the evening with Mandy, my bro, and Joy, also added some joy to the event, especially the quality time listening to music in the car w/my bro. I'm always impressed when Brian is excited to spend time with me, and I felt immensely blessed by the evening, and the

whole week, for that matter. I have been blessed with so much—wonderful friends and family, a great team, talents that I am excited to use for God, and a calling that stretches and challenges and shapes me into a new person, becoming more and more like God every day. What could be better than this??

Date: 12/27/2003

Submitted by: Heather Carr

Journal Entry:

Spencer, IA

Well, here we are, back from our Christmas break, and back on the road, living in our big white van. =) It's been good to have a break, and it makes me even happier to see my teammates after being away from them for a while. Christmas break for me was partly relaxing, partly sick, partly stressful, and partly joyful. I don't know if anyone else can relate to those feelings, particularly around the holidays, but here's how my vacation was broken up:

RELAXING (FUN):

- *Hanging out w/great friends in the cities (Joy, Jessi, Liz, Ross & Richard, Cat & Steph—love you guys!) and at St. Olaf (QT w/Eric, Ryan, Rachel, Carrie, Matt, & the pod 'o crazy boys)
- *Seeing the midnight showing of Return of the King with the Oles
- *having tea with good friends from high school while at home (Hal, Aimee, Marc—sorry I missed the rest of you!)
- *vegging out and catching up with quality folks at the camp reunion, not to mention sledding down Hamburger Hill, and surprise arrivals by people who are supposed to be in Japan!
- *Christmas afternoon with extended family, opening gifts and just catching up and spending time

SICK:

- *getting the flu at the camp reunion
- *wanting to cough until my lungs felt raw on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day
- *completely losing my voice within 3 hours
- *getting my whole family sick, so that the holiday was miserable for them, too

STRESSFUL:

- *Christmas shopping
- *wrapping the presents you just bought
- *cleaning up my stuff/cleaning the house/packing for overseas
- *decisions of when to get together w/extended family, due to everyone having the FLU!

JOYFUL:

- *Christmas Eve midnight service
- *decorating the tree and other family traditions
- *listening to Christmas music while sitting in front of a blazing fireplace
- *playing in the snow with my dog, and cuddling with my cats
- *talking to my grandparents on the phone
- *giving gifts to those I love
- *spending time together

So that was my vacation. Coming back to team after Christmas is a little bittersweet, because the break felt too short, but it didn't take long to get back into the swing of things, and be happy to be on the road again—and only a few short weeks away from departure for PNG!

We spent tonight at the Reidemann's house in Spencer, after doing a few songs and our slide show for the sermon at Bethany Lutheran's Sat. eve service. I really enjoyed the pastor...he's funny in a very laid-back way. Every time he informed the congregation during the announcements that he wouldn't be doing the sermon, he prefaced it with "Now, don't applaud—but I'm NOT going to be



Heather Carr

preaching tonight." =) Funny. The Reidemanns were also wonderful to us—invited us into their home on the spur of the moment so we wouldn't have to sleep in the church, treated us to dinner on the town, and after some quality time at their home, even let us go out and have a team outing at the movie theater in town. (Mona Lisa Smile...good flick). =) As usual, I feel overly blessed, and so incredibly lucky for the grace we're shown by the people we meet on the road. God's good (all the time), and his love endures forever!

Date: 12/31/2003

Submitted by: Bjørn Peterson

Journal Entry:

The last two nights I have met a pair of truly wonderful men. Pastor Cliff Hoper of Osceola, NE and Pastor Lyle Knuth of Ellis, KS. Let me tell you that these two pastors are truly remarkable men. Their passion and wisdom about the Body of Christ has been inspiring. God is truly at work in these two congregations, in no small part through the work of these pastors. Pastor Hoper has a wonderful vision of what the Church should be and is obviously working as hard as he can to help the Church get there. You can see it in his eyes, the passion and pain that he shares with Christ for God's children and Christ's bride. Pastor Knuth has had an amazing ride over the years and has every reason from my point of view to question the goodness of God. But, his faith is steadfast and his love for the community is overwhelming. He was praising us and encouraging us and hugging us before we even entered the church. These two men are treasures in the ELCA and the Body of Christ as a whole. May God bless their ministries richly and may retirement be a long time away for the sake of the rest of us sinners. Praise God for them, and their wonderful, gracious spouses as well.



Bjørn Peterson

Date: 1/1/2004

Submitted by: Ruth Bowman

Journal Entry:

Garden City, KS

Happy New Year! Did I make a New Year's Resolution? Nope! I think I've given up on those, because who really remembers the resolutions they make anyway? I'll think about the resolution that I made for maybe 3 weeks if I'm lucky, but usually by the time the middle of January rolls around, any New Year's Resolution I would have made, would be forgotten. So instead, as I sat in the New Year's Eve service that we were helping with, I thought back on the previous year. Was there anything I regretted? Had I made the most of the year? Was there anything I had wanted to accomplish that I hadn't? As I was reminiscing over memories from the past year I was reminded once again how much I want to make this next year one that I will never forget. I never want to have to look back at a year and regretfully acknowledge all the opportunities God had given to me that I had passed up. Stuffed in the cracks or plastered on bulletin boards are opportunities and plans God has for us. I don't want to miss any of them, and I want to treasure them all!



Ruth Bowman

Date: 1/3/2004

Submitted by: Joel Mailand

Journal Entry:

Pueblo, CO

Last night we performed at the Youthful Offenders System (YOS) Facility. From the outside, it was daunting: 14 ft high security fence, curved and topped with double barbed wire. However, once inside, it seemed like a school campus. The grounds were



modern and spacious, and we were escorted to the gymnasium, which felt to me like a high school gym. As we walked, Col. Atencio explained that this program was designed about 13 years ago after Denver recorded alarming numbers of teen violence and crime. The youth here are between the ages of 14 and 22, and are here because they were tried as adults due to the seriousness of their crimes. Some have been here for 4 or more years, a few since they were 12 years old. This program is the break they got, since they ARE youth, and it gives them another chance, with such a pointed rehabilitation program. Currently there are 160 inmates and 560 beds.

Joel Mailand

Chaplin Lola, who had invited us, greeted us at the door with a warm smile. She started a dog training program here, and with great success the girls have a chance to care for animals that were found on the street or abused. Here they have a chance to turn around, too. Chaplin Lola has had YE teams in here for the past three years, and looks forward to having teams share their experiences. The two middle rows of bleachers were pulled out, and 15 minutes later they were filled with 60+ boys from all parts of Colorado, wearing the standard khaki pants, maroon knit shirts and black loafers. They were a bit talkative, but we held their attention for most of the time. They had a choice between our concert and a movie, so they were there because they wanted to be there. Nevertheless it was a little intimidating. We sang songs, performed our puppet show, and Bjorn shared a story and the Gospel. That IS what we are called to do, after all. God's Love is real and present in our lives, and we have the opportunity to share what it's done for us.

I had the chance to sit on the side under the basketball hoop and watch the whole thing. It's funny, because in this place the kids were taking it in, and the wheels were turning. I could sense that they were eager to hear words of love, and to hear of a loving God. Whether they knew it or not, it's what they wanted to hear, and need to hear. The whole experience kind of leaves me with more questions than answers. Why are they here? What do they think of us? What is God doing in their lives? Can our words help guide them? What is practical in ministry?

We ended with a question and answer session, and I was amazed at their pointed questions. How were you called to this ministry? What's it like being together all the time, and living in a van? Do you argue or fight? What are you going to do after team? In a lot of ways the questions reflect their own circumstances. Who are we that we are different from them? Again I saw the wheels turning in their eyes when we responded. Who are these people? What are they doing? Where do they come from?

We took a break before the girls arrived. There were only eight of them, and they were smiling and friendly as we had a 25 minute question and answer session. They told us about the dog program and the electronic baby program. They asked the same questions, and they seemed to thoroughly enjoy the evening. Chaplin Lola was right there smiling and laughing along. As we walked back to the check-in point, she mentioned that at this facility, the recidivism rate (how many are repeat offenders after leaving the program) is about half that of adult prisons. (This is a really good number) What a great opportunity the state has provided! And a blessing that church groups have an opportunity to witness to the great Love of God! Please pray for the youth at YOS—for positive role models, love, and caring people in their lives. Especially pray for the program, as the state is contemplating shutting it down due to lack of funds. It would be a shame for such a successful program to be closed simply because it is deemed "uneconomical." You can sense the hope that these kids have, dreams for when their sentence is served, and with such a high success rate, one can realistically believe that these kids are going to make it, are going to do great things with their lives. If this program is shut down, however, their chances lessen, and that would be a sad turn of events. Again, more questions: Who or what program will support youth in crisis situations? What are the criteria for judging success in a program or in the life of youth? God knows, and I have faith that He is at work here, so I suppose that is enough for the moment...but it still leaves me wondering...

Date: 1/6/2004

Submitted by: Elise Coakley

Journal Entry:

Albuquerque, NM

Well, it's the beginning of our second part of tour. We've spent the previous four months traveling around the US to different churches and other sites and now we're preparing to go overseas. At times I can't help but wonder what we're actually doing on team. I could of course quote Youth Encounter's mission statement here, and say we're here "to strengthen the church through the Christian faith and ministry of its youth," but what are we actually doing? We're traveling a lot, we're singing a lot, we're hanging out with youth and families a lot, but what does that mean? Every place we leave always thanks us so much for coming, but why? What are we really doing but sharing a few songs and spending a few hours there?



Elise Coakley

A few weeks ago, we received a letter from a youth from one of our programs last fall. The youth thanked us so much for coming and spending time at the church, and was obviously very moved by our presence at the church, and was even inspired to continue to stay active and go to more youth events. We're obviously doing something, but what and how? We only spend a few hours at these churches, how is that enough time to inspire people? Thankfully I received an answer last week from a pastor at one of the churches we visited. The pastor was thanking us for coming to the congregation and told us that what we were doing was so important because we were reminding people that God still exists and is still working in the world. It doesn't matter how beautiful our songs are, how funny our puppet show is, or how powerful our message is, we are proclaiming with our lives that God is still alive and working. By giving up a year of our lives to travel in a van and share a message of God's love and grace wherever we go, we are witnessing to a God who is alive and very powerful. I am so thankful and humbled at this revelation. What an honor to be living a life that witnesses to the living and loving Lord of us all!

Date: 1/8/2004

Submitted by: Heather Carr

Journal Entry:

Albuquerque, NM -> Flagstaff, AZ -> Kingman, AZ

Can you believe it's actually cold in New Mexico? Well, maybe you can, since it IS January, but I was sure surprised...here I thought NM was supposed to be tropical all year round. =) I guess that's what you get in the high desert.



Heather Carr

We just spent 3 days in Albuquerque at my Cross Fire teammate Jeremy's church, and it was great times! Aside from getting to see my teammate and his wife (which was a blast...lots of laughter and old stories, and I even beat him at Star Wars Trivial Pursuit! Woo hoo!!) we also got to spend some great time at a lock-in with the Sr. High youth. It was a laid back night, rock climbing and just hanging out, but there were also some real meaningful moments, too. We led the youth through an activity of examining some of their differences and similarities, and I was glad to see that it really hit some of them hard...made them think, examine themselves, and hopefully think about how they can love each other even better than they have been. We also had a sweet time of worship with them at midnight—I was surprised how many of the praise songs they knew and sang along with whole-heartedly, and that they even requested to sing longer when we gave them the choice to be finished. What a great crew! This is the kind of youth group that gets me excited about the ways that God is moving and working throughout the generations—as you get older, it can be easy to despair that "kids these days" are going down the tubes, losing their faith, dismissing God, and embracing the world and all its lies, but these kids made me rejoice and praise God for the passion he's working in their lives. Way to go, God!

After 3 great days in NM, with a host mom who even helped me sew my clothes, and some fun adventures of trying to avoid collisions with Albuquerque's cross-section of "not-so-good drivers", we headed to Flagstaff, AZ. We enjoyed a fine evening of food and conversation with our hosts, Virginia & Ed, then headed to Kingman, via the Grand Canyon. Upon arriving at the gate to enter the park, we were disappointed to hear that we'd have to pay over \$60 to get in—I couldn't believe how expensive it was! So, disheartened, we drove back to town and stopped at a gift shop to find out if there was any cheaper way for poor, itinerant volunteers to get in. =(The woman behind the counter was surprised that they wanted to charge us so much, and assured us that the price was supposed to be \$20 a vehicle, which gave us some hope. Then she said, "Who was at the booth?"

Was she Native? With long hair? Oh, that's my niece. I'll give her a call." Success! Someone sympathetic to our cause! So, Lolita put in a call, and after assuring them that we were all family, sent us on our way to get in to see the canyon. What a sweet lady! We bought some souvenirs & gave her a picture before we left, in thanks for all her help.

Once we found a place to park, we got out and went our separate ways...and all I've got to say is, "WOW." I've seen pictures of the Canyon many times, and I was even here when I was a kid, but it was breathtaking all over again. We had a few hours to walk along the canyon wall, and it was amazing, and humbling, to be reminded of my insignificance in the presence of such power and history and grandeur. The God of the Universe made this majestic work of art over thousands of years, and yet cares about little, insignificant me?!?! Me, barely a blip in the timeline of the universe, and like a speck of sand in the scheme of all things...and he died for me. Again, WOW. All the praise of a lifetime is not enough for that kind of love...yet, I do what I can.

Date: 1/14/2004

Submitted by: Ruth Bowman

Journal Entry:

Agoura Hills, CA

Greetings! You know there's the saying, "sunny California", well we'd all buy right into that because for the past week that we have been out in the LA area getting ready to leave the country, we have had some of the most gorgeous January weather I have ever seen. Although that doesn't really mean much being I come from Northern MN, but hey! It's gorgeous outside, and we are bustling around like busy little bees trying to get all our work done. Twelve hours from now (Central Time) we will be preparing to board our flight to Papua New Guinea. With those steps onto the plane there will no doubt be many emotions felt. Excitement, for one! I mean, seriously, we're going to a tropical island! But there will also be some anticipation for what is to come once we reach Papua New Guinea, and some reluctance at having to leave so many loved ones back in the States. I do have the pleasure, ne' the honor to write the final journal that will be posted from my team for a matter of months. We will from this time forth be in communication through hand-written journals (posted to the web months later) and newsletters. So I will take the liberty to speak on behalf of my team – There is the understanding that every step we take onto the plane will be filled with emotion, prayer, guidance, and acceptance of the call we have been given. Your prayers are so very much appreciated as we learn to adjust to a new culture, new relationships, and new adventures. With this closing journal entry before we embark on the adventure of a lifetime, we want to say THANK YOU to all for your prayers, your support, and your love. We Love you, and very much look forward to sharing the next four months of our lives with you when we return! God's Peace and Love be with you all!



Ruth Bowman

Date: 1/17/2004

Submitted by: Heather Carr

Journal Entry:

Location: Lae to Kainantu

Well, we made it to Papua New Guinea! After 33 hours in transit (van, airport, 12 hour flight, 3 layovers, more flying and bus to church) we made it to our guest house at the Evangelical Lutheran Church of PNG headquarters, and collapsed. Of course, collapse only came after being greeted with many beautifully scented flower garlands, by enthusiastic children and adults who live in the compound. At the head of the group was Faen Mileng (pronounced Fine... "How are you, Faen?" "Oh, Faen is fine." Great joke.), the National Youth Director for the ELC, who will be our main contact and point-man for the next 2 months. We also met Andreas, who cares for the house we stayed in, and also plays in the praise band, and is a great guy, and Ruth, who is the ELC's Overseas Affairs Secretary (she took care of correspondence leading up to our arrival). All three of these people bent over backwards for us in the next few weeks, and have done an amazing job of taking care of us, helping us get details (like e-mail and our visa



Heather Carr

extensions) taken care of, and just helped us feel at home and welcome.

So, after brief intros, we collapsed. I don't sleep well on planes, so I only got a few hours sleep in the last 33 hours—added to the fact that I didn't sleep at all the night before departure, so I had been awake for over 37 hours before we even left the country... if you figure in our travel time and the few hours I did sleep on the plane, I arrived in PNG having been awake for about 60 out of the past 65 hours!!! I don't even know how that's possible! Hey, I think that puts me into the range of legally insane at that point... good thing I didn't do anything crazy in that time... legally I could have gotten away with it, huh? Weird.

So, after the considerable stress of the last several days, not knowing until the day before departure whether or not we would get to go to PNG at all, we are here. Tired, exhausted from stress and sleep deprivation... but excited. We're here! After all the obstacles, all the doubt, all the last minute changes of plan... we have arrived in PNG to stay for three months. What a roller coaster ride... but getting our visas at the airport all worked out fine, and people were there to meet us where we were expecting them, and it looks like our schedule will be chock-full of busy-ness and adventure.

Adventure number one? Saturday morning we piled into a bus with Faen and a pile of delegates, and we rode six hours to Kainantu (in the Highlands) for the ELC-PNG's 24th National Synod Convention. They have them every two years, and this year we arrived just in time to head to the one hosted at Aiyura National High School, outside Kainantu.

But Bjorn will get to that tomorrow. Today, we still had our first day in PNG to take on... and it went really well. Ruth got sunburned from sitting next to the window the whole time, but otherwise the trip went without any hitches. We had to stop a few times to pour water into the radiator when it overheated from inching up the mountainsides, but it was nothing like a 22-hour ride in Togo (Eeee!). We stopped a few times to buy water and fruit at roadside markets (Tavinia helped us buy bananas and explained the market wares) and once to go to the bathroom (first time peeing in the bush!) and then we were there! The road was well-paved the whole way, so it wasn't even a rough ride, and our fellow passengers were entertaining and excited to tell us about PNG, the places we passed, and help us with our Pidgin lessons. The countryside we passed was beautiful, tropical forest, and we got some amazing views as we crested mountain tops to head into the next valley. All in all, a peaceful and restful first day as Faen eases us into being here. Praise God!

Date: 1/18/2004

Submitted by: Bjørn Peterson

Journal Entry:

Location: Kainantu—Aiyura High School

Today we went to the official beginning of the 24th Annual ELC-PNG Synod. It began at 9 am, and actually started at around 10:30. We marched with a large processional from the gate of the town. There were local villagers doing a huge singing. The men all had shields and wooden clubs and were dressed in the traditional warrior dress of their village. They danced and sang. We were second in the processional behind the assistant Bishop and some other big wigs. Then it was us and all other invited guests (they called us dignitaries...even Heather). The other guests included the President of the Lutheran Church in Singapore, the President of the ELC in New Zealand and Australia, and the President and Secretary of the ELC in Bavaria, Germany. We marched about a kilometer with these and about a thousand more delegates and their families.

Finally, we all arrived at a large podium/stage built specially for the Synod. We were joined by another 2,000 or so people who had come to listen in and cook for the delegates and participate in Lotu (worship) and hear preachers at morning devotions. The National and Post-Courier are the two nation-wide newspapers and both sent reporters. Meanwhile the national radio and TV stations taped the entire six hour ceremony and aired it nationally to the 5 million citizens and ex-patriots. I was called to represent the ELCA and LCMS during the ceremony. I spoke fourth in a series of 30-40 speeches given over the next 3 hours. I was given a bilum, as were other "dignitaries." We had no idea that the gathering would be so big, or that my speech would be so important, and so I had to



Bjørn Peterson

throw out what little I had prepared. But God was faithful and laid words on my heart that I was later told by many was the most heartfelt and sincere that were spoken that day. It was a very humbling experience speaking on behalf of the churches in America. Even when I am unfaithful, God is faithful.

Date: 1/19/2004

Submitted by: Ruth Bowman

Journal Entry:

Location: Kainantu

It was beautiful! After 6:30 am-7:00 am breakfast of bread with butter, eggs, and onions, we were able to go back to sleep! But the day took off from there. As we hung around the setup synod office at the National ELCPNG gathering, waiting to be called upon to sing, we decided to have a few adventures of our own. Elise and I went in search of the tambourine girls, of whom we had heard a rumor. We found them! Yeah! But, they weren't performing, Only a slight deterrent, as we found out!

This was when Timothy Luke showed up, who was an important man in the church. I casually mentioned that we were wondering when the girls would be performing again. He turned to one of the ladies, said something, and before we realized what they were doing, the girls set up to perform for us! Feeling like queens, we sat down for our own special performance. They drew a crowd and more and more people came to watch. What we witnessed was about 20 girls from ages 5 to 20 singing "Trading My Sorrows," while doing splendidly cool things with their tambourines! Their beat was remarkably on as they turned and banged their tambourines! It looked like so much fun, that once again Timothy Luke assisted us in getting us to be able to join them! Elise, Heather and I were stuck in the middle of the group and tried our best to keep up with them! It was a great bonding experience.

We wanted to give something back, so about 10 minutes after the crowd had left, my team sat down by the grass and began to sing worship songs. I was blown away by the response we got. Men, women, and children seemed to come from miles around as the crowd grew and grew. I kid you not, there were at least 200-300 people there! To look out over the lawn and see, literally a sea of faces, standing, sitting, and laying around just watching us. We praised God! We truly did!

Even after they told us to move because the crowd was too large and distracting the Synod meetings that were happening—oops—we worshipped. And it felt great. We saw our God. The God of Love who loves all, living through the lives and in the eyes of the people surrounding us who watched so closely. God began uniting us.



Ruth Bowman

Date: 1/20/2004

Submitted by: Joel Mailand

Journal Entry:

Location: Kainantu

I want to say that on Thursday in our rush to get through the security checkpoint in LAX I dropped my tape recorder. This means the 10 tapes I bought were wasted money. In the States it is difficult to repair anything electronic. And in PNG my thought of fixing, much less figuring out what was wrong with it were even more of a lost cause.

However, yesterday I spent a better part of the morning carefully opening the case.

Armed with a leatherman tool, I proceeded. With the skill of a surgeon I gently broke it open, found the microphone wires disconnected. Now all I needed was a soldering iron. Where would I find one in PNG?



Joel Mailand

Fortunately after talking with Leroy and making friends with him I was able to ask him if he knew of one. Leroy videotaped the opening ceremony and speeches at the 24th Synod Convention. He

talked with the electrician and there was a small chance he could find one. Today the electrician handed me a soldering gun, and with Ruth's help I was able to put the wires back in place! It's fixed! We now have a recorder. We will use it to record songs that people sing for us, conversations, and songs we sing. It allows us to document and give host churches a copy of our music as resources.

In other team news... Bjorn had a tooth that was causing him a lot of pain removed. We thought he would have to go back to Australia. But we found a local dentist at (SIL) Summer Institute of Languages who helped remove it. Wow! God be praised for this blessing! His mouth was a little sore this afternoon but he is better now.

I am amazed at our resourcefulness as a team and the resources around us, and what becomes important and what is not. In the land of throw away (America) I would have thrown out the tape recorder or returned it for a new one, or just been too busy with other things to care. But here it was important to get it fixed and I spent lots of time on a small project. In the land of plenty, there are dentists in practically every town. Here one doctor or dentist covers an entire region of towns and villages.

Pray for our safety and that God will continue to do great things thru us.

Joel

Date: 1/21/2004

Submitted by: Bjørn Peterson

Journal Entry:

Location: Kainantu to Medang

I am a fast driver. I get places in a timely manner. I believe that the center line is more of a suggestion than a rule. However, I do drive with a healthy amount of fear and I am always in control. It is, then, with some level of regret that I was not behind the wheel on our way today out of the Eastern Highlands from Kainantu down to the Markham Valley. The man who was in my stead had no earthy fears. No corner is too sharp for 60 mph. No switchback so tight as to constitute real caution. This man pushed the physics of driving to their absolute limit, and then created his own. Meanwhile, we all rode with half grins and wide opened eyes for a good hour. Our knuckles white and our heartbeats a bit irregular, we finally reached the bottom, believing our roller coaster to be done. It wasn't for another hour or so that we realized what an asset this man was.

About the time I had finalized plans in my head to get our driver to America to race up Pike's Peak in Colorado, the road closed in on us and we entered the jungle. Soon the pavement ended, the mountains began and we entered Rascal territory. It was then, when our divinely appointed driver began to show the extent of his skills. Up and down 20% grade hills and forging rushing rivers, traversing washed out roads and avoiding slowing down enough to let Rascals drag logs into the road, and still he drove. The journey was a gorgeous one but we welcomed the sight of Medang when we arrived that afternoon. Back into the tropical paradise of palm trees, white sand beaches and crystal clear Pacific water. Thank God for our drives in PNG.



Bjørn Peterson

Date: 1/22/2004

Submitted by: Elise Coakley

Journal Entry:

Location: Medang to Karkar Island

We had a slow start this morning, taking time to run some errands and relax a bit before we caught the boat to Karkar Island. Karkar is where Faen grew up, so it's a special treat to get to go visit. We took a small boat out to the island, through the



waves. Those of us sitting in front were quite jostled by the time we got there and those of us in the back were quite soaked. It was a fun boat ride, though, we got to see some coral reefs through the water and I saw a few flying fish. We landed at Karkar Island, which is a large volcano that last erupted in 1979 but is still active. We arrived at a hospital in Gaubin, the only hospital serving the island. This hospital serves about 50,000 people a year with only one doctor. There are several nurses but not nearly enough. The hospital would love to offer education to villages about healthy living practices that could prevent many of the illnesses that affect patients, but there just aren't enough people. It's amazing what only four or five people could do to help this place.

We toured the hospital and then sang a few songs for each ward. There were many people at the hospital because when a family member is sick, most of the family comes to the hospital to take care of them. The government doesn't provide any type of food for the patients so the family comes to provide food and help nurse them. The moral support has helped many patients recover, but it is still very taxing on the families who already have very little. It was hard to see a hospital with such poor support. We enjoyed singing, though, and most of the people who could followed us from ward to ward to hear us. We then visited the nursing school and met about ten students from around PNG all training to be nurses.

After our hospital visit we went to Faen's home. It is a beautiful hut right on the beach. There is no power, so it's pretty rustic, and the family lives mainly off the land. We enjoyed meeting his family and spending a relaxing evening on the beach.

Date: 1/23/2004

Submitted by: Heather Carr

Journal Entry:

Location: Outside Medang (Siar Village)

4 am... 6 roosters all crowing at once. AUGH!!! Right below the house... darn roosters. Where are my earplugs? Oh, great, I took them out in my sleep, and now I can't find them... probably rolled out the crack in the floor. Intermittent sleep, broken by crowing... I hate roosters. Unless, they're supper... guess I finally better get up.



Heather Carr

Oh, what's that inside my mosquito net? I touch it, still groggy and unsure in the half-light.... AUGH,, it's a 3-inch millipede! Nice... must have crawled in through the crack in the floor. Wonder if it crawled on me before it found the mosquito net to crawl up? So, I crawl out, careful not to disturb the little bugger, and thread my way through the spider web of our mosquito nets, so I can dump him outside. Ahh, morning on the beach of a tropical island in the middle of the Pacific. Memories of dinner and devotions by lantern-light the night before, sitting with Faen's family on the porch of their bamboo and thatch-roof home, listening to stories and traditional songs. Slowly gaining the trust of the two-year-old twins, Kylie and Benbet, who screamed and ran when we arrived, and waved and laughed by bedtime. Shell-hunting, watching the lightning over the ocean, picking a million grass-stickers out of my skirt... it's been a great time on Karkar Island.

After a much smoother boat ride back, we headed to Siar village, outside Medang, where Faen's wife (Sheila) and kids were spending summer holidays with Sheila's family. It was like a big family reunion—all the aunts and uncles and cousins were all gathered together... and the kids were excited to take us swimming as soon as we got there. Pile back into the boat everybody! We're heading over to the island—picnic-place for an afternoon of was-was (wash-up/swimming) at the beach. Another lazy afternoon of swimming, napping, talking to youth and practicing our Pidgin, jumping off a huge tree into the ocean with all the kids, tasting roasted bananas, and watching crabs scuttle in and out of the tide pools... I love it. Lots of sunburn, though... for some reason, the sunscreen just doesn't want to stay on my body when I'm swimming in the ocean or sweating a lot! Go figure. Of course, it doesn't help that our malaria meds make us sensitive to the sun, and places that wouldn't normally burn... now burn. Like the back of my hands... I've never had the back of my hands burn before. Crazy.

So, we swam, then came back and rested and ate dinner, etc. My favorite part of the day was

spending time with Nikki, Faen's three-year-old niece. As a three-year-old, she was definitely in the "I know everything and let me tell you about it" stage... and she was also the friendliest kid we've met. She spent time in each of our arms, actually requesting to be passed from one to the next every few minutes. And, best of all, she explained beetlenut chewing to each of us—from her own experience! To explain: beetlenut (or buai) is a large marble-sized juicy nut/fruit, which all Papua New Guineans chew... apparently from about the age of three on up. When mixed (in your mouth) with mustard vine and lime powder, it turns bright red and produces large amounts of red juice, which people spit whenever handy. It also stains their teeth red, so you can tell when people have been chewing it... and most do. It is a stimulant, so people chew it to feel awake, alive, refreshed... Bjorn and I tried it, to be "officially welcomed" to PNG...

In any case, Nikki instructed us in the ways (in Pidgin)... very cute, and some girls taught Ruth how to play "Last Card" (kind of like UNO), and we sang at the church for the community at night. Faen's goal for this week was helping us become accustomed to PG, and he is doing a great job... and I'm glad we got to stay with his family. Tomorrow, back to the big city...

Date: 1/24/2004

Submitted by: Ruth Bowman

Journal Entry:

Location: Medang to Lae

How long does it take someone to acclimate themselves to a culture? Well, presumably it's different for every person. Quite honestly, it's been a little difficult for me. Coming from a world of knowns—knowing what you are eating, knowing what to do at a gas station, knowing how to say thank you and even how to say goodbye. And especially knowing and being surrounded by those who love you. But the idea that every moment is a new adventure is definitely what keeps life interesting overseas. Because EVERYTHING we do is an adventure: driving, eating, shopping, speaking, listening, mailing a package, and even going to the bathroom.

The ironic thing is, that even though everything is new and different, the body can accommodate itself to an amazing number of situations. Oftentimes without even trying. I certainly haven't been giving it my full 100% to try to fit in and adjust. But amazingly enough my body's doing that for me. And God has been working on my heart. Giving me one more smile when my cheeks are sore, giving me interest to hear another story, or learn another word when my brain can't handle anymore, and most of all, giving me love when my heart is tired. But God insists on working in me, showing me another world and introducing me to my brothers and sisters here in PNG.

I was walking along the road one day, and as normal, greeting the people passing by. One man, as he passed by me, giving me a big smile, he greeted me with an "Abinun, susa"—translating to "Afternoon, sister." What a welcoming feeling! We are family. And we are—we all are. As brothers and sisters in Christ, we are called to love and support one another at all times and in all places. As for me, I pray everyday for a surrendering of my heart, as God shows me how to love His children.



Ruth Bowman

Date: 1/25/2004

Submitted by: Elise Coakley

Journal Entry:

Location: Lae-AMPO and Wagon Village

We were blessed with 3 church services today at 3 different churches. First we went to a service in Ampo, which is where we are staying, then we traveled about 20 minutes to a village on the coast for another service. Of course this turned into an all-day event. After the service, Ruth, Heather and I were escorted off by some women where we were given Meriblauses and Missionklos, two traditional dresses. All five of us were lavished with gifts by the villagers, their hospitality was amazing. We ate lunch at the village then went swimming



Elise Coakley

on the beach with the children. The water was warm and refreshing, but the sun was hot and several of us managed to get sunburn. Stupid doxycycline.

We enjoyed the afternoon swimming with the kids in the ocean, playing volleyball and frisbee, and resting in the shade while drinking coconut milk. We were then escorted back to a hut where we ate dinner with some of the villagers. We were given an hour or so to rest and then we were escorted to a youth worship service from several combined churches. We arrived at 7:30 p.m., the service had already been going for about an hour, and we didn't leave until 10:30 p.m., when they were still going and would be until 2 or so in the morning. It was truly amazing, the passion these youth had was inspiring. I don't know what I can say about the service to portray how it felt. Basically it was 150 young people gathered together for an evening of music, sharings, dramas, dances, and fellowship. And they didn't grow tired of it. I'll admit after the 5th sermon and the 10th time singing, "Bihpela Jisus" I was ready to leave, but they were so excited and wanted to continue worshipping. I wish I knew that enthusiasm and passion in worshipping our Lord!

Date: 1/26/2004

Submitted by: Ruth Bowman

Journal Entry:

Location: Lae

A day to ourselves to get some things done before we fly out to the islands. That was our dream, at least. But as we should have expected by this point, plans change. When we woke up, we found out a local missionary couple didn't want us to be "left at a loose ends," so they had nicely offered to show us the town. Of course, our thoughts had been that we wanted nothing more than to be left at loose ends, so we could actually have some time to get some team and personal things done. However, our reluctance turned to appreciation as they escorted us around town to all the places we needed to run errands—Air Niugini, food market, post office and the internet café. Oh, how great it was to get e-mail! The connection was fast enough and I got to read and send e-mails to my boyfriend, family and some friends. It was such a blessing to be able to connect in some way after a few weeks of no communication.

After the couple had dropped us off, Heather and I did have a moment of beautiful independence. We walked to the road, hopped on a bus and headed back into town! It was a glorious exciting feeling, but also had purpose and determination, for we had to get some things done! We found mini-speakers relatively easily to use for a pantomime in our program, but then I needed to mail a package. We headed first to a special mail packaging delivery service that someone along the way had suggested. After a few phone calls, they relayed the price of a small 5X8 inch envelope with a journal inside. ("Please don't be too much. Please don't be too much...") But nothing could have prepared me for the price I was given... 88 Kina! Which translated into \$ is about 26-27 dollars! Fortunately the people were kind and let me decline and try the post office, where I found to my great relief that they would send my package for 12 K. I was much more willing to pay the \$4! We crammed on a bus and rushed back to meet our teammates. We had succeeded! We had found our way around Lae on our own. Oh yes, I know. We are so good! God's peace!



Ruth Bowman

Date: 1/27/2004

Submitted by: Joel Mailand

Journal Entry:

Location: Lae to Kavieng, New Ireland

We are getting ready to board the plane for Kavieng. The departure waiting room is on ground level. A regular size passenger jet is parked 30 meters from where we sit. As it turns to leave we are blasted with the scream of the turbines and exhaust. I have to cover my ears to protect them from damage. It's been about two weeks now since we arrived, everything is still new and even the pre-dawn ride to the airport seemed like an adventure. We are in the land of the unexpected and we are slowly adjusting to the pace of life.



Joel Mailand

We met 2 professors for dinner at a local Chinese restaurant last night. They are a husband and wife duo, she teaches Greek and Hebrew, and he is a jack-of-all-trades, teaching whatever is needed that semester. She is American. He is Australian. They have been here for 9 years. There are relatively few ex-patriots (people who are living in PNG as foreigners) working at Martin Luther University in Lae. For that matter, there are few in the main cities. The ex-pats that we have met work mostly in the media, communication security services, and computer based services. It's the few places where money is to be made. And it is mostly foreigners who hold these jobs. It's funny, when I asked Joyce what the unemployment rate is she shook her head and said there are no numbers or statistics like that here. The best estimates are that 80% of all PNGers are subsistence farmers. They eke out a living growing vegetables and fruit on a plot of land and sell it or eat it.

Call it the last vestiges of colonialism, call it capitalism and the new world market... PNG is considered a developing country and a high risk investment in the private sector, and Government is reliant on foreign aid from Australia, New Zealand, China, Japan, and a few other countries.

What is interesting, though, is that in the past 28 years of independence (one year shy of being older than I am), the church has been run by PNGers. It has it's own seminary producing pastors, a strong leadership and youth program, and faithful congregations praising God and celebrating in community with each other. It is a growing, maturing church, and there are deep roots that trace back over 100 years of church planting. Church here provides stability in a changing world—one that has shifted from tribalism to the 21st century in just a few years. We can rejoice and praise God with our brothers and sisters in Christ and PNG.

Date: 1/28/2004

Submitted by: Bjørn Peterson

Journal Entry:

Location: Kavieng, New Ireland

I think that the fatigue I have been fighting for four or five years is finally beginning to win. I am constantly tired and my body, although strong and healthy, never feels rested. All it wants to do is sleep. My heart is full and my mind sharp but physically I am exhausted. I am so happy to be in Papua New Guinea but sometimes I look forward to time for myself. Time to sleep and write and hike. Time to let my body catch up with my mind. Next fall I hope to move to Eugene, Oregon to do just that. In the meantime I am content. I do what I can here in PNG and pray and trust that it is a blessing.



Bjørn Peterson

All I have ever done is just that. I show up and God works. If I don't believe that then I have run in vain. But God whispers words of quiet reassurance through a child's laugh or a cold drink of water and I have joy. And even when I feel I have nothing to give, I give that too. My nothingness. And that, I find, is the best thing I have to offer. For the past three years I haven't thought much about how painful and hard it was to be in Nepal for those months. But since I have arrived here I have been reminded as I am driven to my knees once again, and all that pain comes rushing back. I never thought the idea of overseas mission work was my desire. In truth, most of my time trying to get to Nepal and PNG, I spent begging God to send me somewhere else, like college. But that was only in private. In public I had to fight to defend that calling that I was so sure of, but didn't want to answer. I fought the temptation to listen to reason and the desires of my friends and family and my own. But God dragged me on. And I have been given blessings I never imagined I could have.

I suppose people might worry when they read this, wondering why my sprits are so low, fearing that I cannot handle being here and that I don't sound healthy. Others might question my ability to discern God's will in my life. And still more might wonder at my faith in these situations, asking themselves how someone can be so persistent in their calling. But all these have misunderstood. I am simply being obedient and obedience needs no explanations and no congratulations. When Christ calls a man he bids him come and die. Dietrich Bonhoeffer wrote that and I think it's true. And death is painful. But Paul hoped that if he shared with Christ in His crucifixion, he would also share in his resurrection and in that know Christ in the abundant life he promised. I am not full of faith but full of doubt. And in order to combat the doubt I push myself further into Christ, not to

receive his love but to know him more intimately. I have discerned his will for me—to love Him with all my heart and soul and mind and love my neighbor as myself. I am trying and I am learning.

Date: 1/29/2004

Submitted by: Elise Coakley

Journal Entry:

Location: Kavieng, New Ireland

PNG is in a different time zone, and I don't just mean they are so many hours different from the US. I mean time means something different over here than it does back home. For example, when they say, "We'll be stopping here for a few minutes," that means at least twenty, normally thirty. When they say something will last an hour, it usually lasts two or more. When they say they'll come by this afternoon, that could be anytime between 12:00 p.m. and 9:00 p.m.. They tend to be an hour late to start anything, and when they say, "We'll be done soon" that could mean anything from 30 minutes to an hour and a half. So this evening, when it was 9:10 p.m. and we had to be back at our guest house by 10:00 p.m. when they locked the doors, and the leaders at the church service told us we would be done soon, I was a little worried. Needless to say, we didn't make it home until 10:30 p.m., but luckily the manager was waiting to let us in. But I'm thankful we stayed at the service, because I was blown out of my mind.

Have you ever heard inmates sing about God's love and grace and fighting crime in four-part harmony at the top of their lungs? I have. We visited a prison a few days ago and had a program there, and tonight a group of prisoners came to the service we were leading and shared 7 heartfelt songs with us. It was wonderful. I'm so thankful for a God who can reach people through a group of prisoners. It brought me tears to see the love in their hearts and their want to spread God's love. I'm so amazed at a God who reaches to every corner of the world, even a small prison on an island in Papua New Guinea. These men had so much hope in their eyes, such a desire to serve their Lord... what an amazing example of devotion.



Elise Coakley

Date: 1/31/2004

Submitted by: Heather Carr

Journal Entry:

Location: Kavieng to Namatanaito Rabaul/Kokopo, New Britain

Wow... today we traveled from Kavieng, on the Northern tip of New Ireland, to Namatanai, on the other end of the island, and the trip was... well, it was,,,amazing. And by amazing, I mean amazingly bumpy. In fact, there were many terms used to describe our journey that day... but most of them aren't suitable for family viewing.

Just kidding... it wasn't so bad. (See what a good Minnesotan I am? "How was your trip?" "Oh, not too bad"!) I'd say the road was like nothing I've ever experienced before... except I HAVE experienced roads like this one before, in Africa, with Cross Fire 4 years ago. So, to me, it wasn't so bad. It was funny... as we began, on the beautifully paved, smooth Boluminski Highway, I was thinking of how lovely the road was, and how easy our trip was going to be if it was like this the whole way... and how excellent ALL of the roads were, really, that we'd traveled on in PNG so far... then the black top ended. OK, so we were on a pretty good gravel road, still slipping along... this is still pretty good. Then, the bumps started. They started small... a pothole here and there, slowing down to avoid a big puddle... and then it narrowed down to 1 1/4 lanes, and the real fun began. Earlier on the road, Joel had asked how the roads in West Africa where I'd been compared... and I had wisely shook my head and said that this was NOTHING compared to some of those roads. By the time we were half way done with our 6-hour drive, I had taken it back, and decided that this WAS a real bush-road after all. After another 3 hours of jostling, flying around inside our quite-crowded mini-bus (11 of the young adults from Kavieng decided to accompany us down the coast just for fun... for fun?? Are they crazy??), going over dips and bridges and potholes and tilted road at



Heather Carr

the speed of sound... we arrived in Namatanai—and there was much rejoicing. We all but FELL out of the vehicle at our guest house, and the more motion-sick of us collapsed on to our beds. Much to our relief, we were told we had the night to ourselves, to rest up, cook dinner, and get some sleep (God be praised!)... so that we could get up at 4 am to head across the island to the west coast to catch a boat to New Britain at 6 am. (Halt rejoicing... what was that again? 4 am? Doesn't anyone sleep in this country? ;) So, we cooked, and collapsed. Elise was already sick by this time, and Ruth was a little woozy from the drive, so we were more than happy to head to bed.

Of course, at 4 am, who was awake? Well, it certainly wasn't our driver, or any of the folks who were supposed to be escorting us. But WE were up! So... Bjorn and I cranked up the music on our new mini-speakers and waited to see how long it would be before they budged (they were all sleeping in various places around the yard).

5 AM, and we are finally ready to head out. Yep, PNG time is definitely different. Thankfully, though, we were able to ride THIS road standing up in back of the truck bed... which is MUCH better than sitting, because you can bend your knees and brace the shock... plus, you can see the whole forest canopy stretched out above you... and it's GORGEOUS.

Upon arrival on the coast, we hired an outboard-motor-boat, said goodbye to Joe and Jack and Leonnie and our hosts, and headed out to Kokopo/Rabaul, New Britain (3 hour ride on the open sea, in a small boat... well, at least the water was calm!). On the way, we saw flying fish, the volcano erupt (it buried Rabaul in ash 10 years ago), spitting a big cloud of ash up (apparently it does that a couple times a day) and by 10 am, we were in Kokopo (across the bay from Rabaul). Moxy accompanied us from Kavieng, helped us find the pastor, and we were greeted at the church by a sing sing and then taken to our guest house to have the night to rest. And it has air-conditioning!!! Wow... are we spoiled. Apparently the church knows the owner of the Seaview Resort, so they cut us a GREAT deal... Wow. Well, praise God for the end of our 2-day travel extravaganza... and rest.

Date: 2/1/2004

Submitted by: Joel Mailand

Journal Entry:

Location: Kokopo, New Britain

We arrived in Kokopo yesterday morning and were greeted at church with a singing. We will be here for 10 days, traveling in the east New Britain districts. There were all the formalities and greetings along with the singing. Meeting the district president, the church officials, bishop, youth leaders, women's group, church elders, etc. Lots of hand-shaking. It is just a way to greet people and say hello, and it's emphasized much more here than in America.

We sang in church today, except Elise is not feeling well, so she stayed back. Then Bjorn started not feeling well during church, so we were down to 3 healthy bodies. Please keep our health in your prayers.

After church, Heather visited with some ladies, and Ruth and I played guitar with some youth from the church. It was informal and relaxing. I look forward to these jam sessions, and hope it happens more while we are here. We had a chance to get to know each other and get past the introductions and hellos and make friends. It reminds me of our family vacations. My family toured the west in a motor home. When we would stop at a campground, my brother would inevitably find people his age and make friends, even if it was only for a day or two. It was always fascinating to me how easily he could do this. I am sure we are called to relationships. God gives us plenty of opportunities and time and places spending time getting to the places where we can spend time together.



Joel Mailand

Date: 2/2/2004

Submitted by: Ruth Bowman

Journal Entry:

Location: Kokopo

When you have a 5 person team, you have to adjust quite a bit when one person is sick. Now, when 2 people are sick, that brings the "healthy" people level down to, yes: $5-2=3$! And 3 people makes for an interesting program! Joel, Heather and I headed out to Landip Village with the full knowledge that we were going to have to pull off a 5 person program with three people (Bjorn and Elise were back at our accommodations, sick).



Ruth Bowman

Joel played Team Leader, as they welcomed us with a singsing, I played Program Coordinator as I pulled out some songs I thought we could do and Heather kept us all together. It wasn't the best program nor could it be called the worst. What it did do was make us very aware of how important each person on this team is. It's very easy to let yourself feel unimportant or unneeded on a team of such talented people, and I find myself falling into this trap of doubt more than I would like to admit, but as we continue to grow in love and trust for each other, we recognize the talents and gifts that all contribute to making our team what we are. God lead us, for we are the New Dawn team of 2003-2004.

Date: 2/3/2004

Submitted by: Joel Mailand

Journal Entry:

Location: Kokopo

The world is full of new technology. I spent a few hours loading pictures from the digital cameras. Pastor Mote has given us the use of his laptop. I suppose I could write about the computer and all the tools he has loaded on it, but I am sure that would put everyone to sleep. My teammates look at me and start to get a glazed look in their eyes. In any case, I was able to successfully transfer pictures to my mini hard drive. This is so exciting and I know my teammates could share in my happiness. I danced a jig for them. Because I am a super-duper fixit man! (That's Ruth's words, not mine).



Joel Mailand

Pastor has an e-mail account and talks with the Virginia Synod bishop occasionally. I would like to help him get set up with an internet access account, or just ask him if there are any programs he has questions about. E-mail definitely brings communication to a new level. I have been wondering how this technology can really help a congregation, a pastor, a district, and all of the churches in PNG. I would love to hear what people envision, or how new technology has helped their church, and how it can help the church in PNG.

Date: 2/5/2004

Submitted by: Elise Coakley

Journal Entry:

Location: Warangoi and Wonga Wonga

After having spent the past few days sick in bed, probably with Malaria (which is awful, by the way), I spent my first full day back with the team. We traveled to a small village up in the mountains of New Britain, Warangoi, where we had a short program that extended to two hours because it was pouring down rain and we were riding in the back of a pick-up truck. Today was the first of many delays due to the rain. We are in the rainy season in Papua New Guinea, and it rains at least once a day, with at least one downpour. The weather changes very quickly from sunny and hot to rainy and cool, I don't think it ever actually gets cold here. It makes driving on windy, bumpy dirt roads quite exciting.



Elise Coakley

So after waiting out the rain, we traveled to another small village on a cocoa plantation. Do you know what cocoa beans smell like when they're fermenting? I do. It stinks. And we did an hour program right next to a large building where the beans are fermented. The smell can be choking at times. It was unbelievable, that something that tastes so good, chocolate, has to smell so awful in the process. But, other than the smell, the program was great. It was pouring down rain and we were all crowded under a small shelter, but it was wonderful to share a night of fellowship with these Christians. One really cool thing this small village does is once a week all the Christians get together and worship, regardless of what church they go to or what denomination they are. It is so inspiring to see Christians who want to gather together in fellowship, not allowing their different beliefs to distract them from worshipping God together. There's so much the Christians in the US could learn from these people.

Date: 2/6/2004

Submitted by: Heather Carr

Journal Entry:

Location: Kerevat

Well, today was definitely run on "PNG time." We have perfected the scheduling technique of "hurry up and wait," which is what most of our day consisted of, beginning at 9 am, when we were ready to go... and they arrived to pick us up at 11:30. Pastor Hynna Mote joked with us the other day that PNGers aren't good stewards of their time, which is humorous because it's true, and everyone knows it and expects it. Today was a fine example... they said they'd be there (to our host home in Wonga Wonga) at 9 am PNG time... which typically means 10ish... but today was even later. No worries... we just chilled with our host family, Mary Aisuk and family, which was awesome. They have a small cocoa orchard, and Mary has a drying permit, so other cocoa farmers in the area bring their cocoa to her to ferment and dry, too. They showed us how the cocoa beans ferment for 7 days, being switched from box to box, and are put on the drier (fueled by a wood stove beneath). When they're done, they bag them up in 63.5 kilo burlap sacks, and bring them to the local buyer when the prices are up. It was fascinating to learn about how cocoa is harvested, and to know that we are new friends with some of the hands that help produce the chocolate we all love so much. So, a great morning... Linda, Mary's daughter, and I got to spend some time looking at my pics, and making hemp bracelets, and talking about college and team. She goes to Uni(versity) in Lae, and is studying computer/business affairs, and she seemed very interested in team ministry. Sweet! Maybe in a few years Youth Encounter will have it's first Papua New Guinean teamer! We gave her our e-mail address (and Sunitha's), and a team brochure, and she'll be in our prayers.



Heather Carr

So, once we took off for Kerevat at 11:30, we drove pell mell over a semi-paved road, arrived at Kerevat in record time (by 1 pm)... and then they mentioned that the church wasn't expecting us until after 3 pm... oh! So... we went to a beach and waited. Then we drove some more, got to the market, and waited. Then, to waste more time, we drove out of town for a while, came back to the church, and waited. By 4, we got to be greeted by the singing and we met Jack (the chairman) who assured us that despite his long beard, he was not a friend of Saddam Hussein or Osama bin Laden. We only stayed for about an hour, because we wanted to beat the rain in getting back to Mary's... plus, our whole day tomorrow will be back here in Kerevat.

So, we booked it home... but we didn't make it. About 15 minutes from Mary's, it started to POUR, and even though we'd spread a tarp across us, we were soaked. Luckily, another friend's home was on the way, so we pulled in and visited them for an hour to wait out the storm. Mary (Pahren's wife) and her daughter Karen and sons Jr, Darren, and Warren, greeted us warmly, and passed the time with us by playing 5-stones with me. (5-stones crosses the globe and takes over the world!). When we got home we got to eat taro, cooking bananas, chicken, rice, and pineapples by candlelight, and take a bucket bath by lantern light, outside in the palm-frond shower room. Crawl into the mosquito-netted bed... what could be better than this??

Date: 2/7/2004

Submitted by: Ruth Bowman
Journal Entry:

Location: Salat Mountain and Kerevat

At 6:30 am when I woke up I didn't know I would have my life flash before my eyes and Heather become my hero. We had turned off the tar road onto another road—a road that was not often traveled, for good reason, too! As we have experienced so far in PNG, many of the roads are rather, umm... interesting to ride on. This made the trip to Salat Mountain where we were headed very exciting for us. You see, we take turns as to who gets the front seats where you can stand—to lessen the bruising from the bumps.

It was Heather's and my turn to sit in back, so on this road we were having quite the challenge to keep from being tossed about. Well, at the moment when we had stopped to check out the ledge by the river that we were to drive on, until (as stated earlier) it became the river, and Heather and I were sitting on the ledge of the truck on the corners, by the tailgate. Now, I had watched Junior (our driver) get out of the truck, but I missed him getting back in, which turned out to be against my favor. For, sitting on the ledge, not paying attention and to my great astonishment and chagrin, the truck suddenly jerked forward and I definitely flew backwards! Just as fear was registering in my mind, Super Hero Heather reached out, grabbed my flapping arm and pulled me back into the truck. The relief I felt was true and genuine, and it took me a moment to recover. But that is why Heather is now my hero!

The day also held two programs, one hiking up to Salat Mountain after the road had died, and one in Kerevat. The rain started that afternoon and continued through the evening. We lengthened our program to wait out the rain, but when we knew it wouldn't stop, we wrapped ourselves under a tarp in the back of the truck like a burrito and made the long journey the guest house where we were staying that night. Bed certainly felt good that night! I thank the Lord for days like this one, that bring adventure and growth and understanding of why we pay so much in taxes to fix our roads.



Ruth Bowman

Date: 2/8/2004
Submitted by: Bjørn Peterson
Journal Entry:

Location: Rabaul and Sea View Beach Resort

Last night the owner of our guesthouse here in Kokopo invited us to his birthday party. At the party I met two gentlemen who live in the area who are leaders in the community. One was a banker and the other a police officer. Now I don't make it a practice to bring up politics but when the locals do I tend to oblige them. And although I tried to discuss PNG politics rather than American, they insisted. And, of course, they wanted to talk about America's involvement in Iraq. This was obviously a passionate subject for them to talk about and I soon learned that in the country of PNG (a country that is generally pro-America) that the public was confused about our reasons of going to war. Also it was assumed that all Americans support Bush, and his decision to go to war. Now regardless of how you feel about the situation in Iraq, it is important for us to remember how the world views us. These two men were not Christian and they, as do many non-Americans, assume that what America does is a reflection of the "Christian Nation" that we are. Unfortunately we are not a "Christian Nation" and the actions of our government are not always a reflection of our Christian beliefs. This creates a problem in world missions since people who are turned off by American foreign policy sometimes see it as a reflection of the Christian religion. At the very least it creates awkward situations and sometimes uncrossable gaps between us and the world of brothers and sisters we are called to fellowship with. Food for thought.



Bjørn Peterson

Date: 2/9/2004
Submitted by: Ruth Bowman
Journal Entry:

Location: Kokopo to Rabaul

We officially relocated from Kokopo to Rabaul today. Rabaul—a city built up by the Japanese during WWII and that was destroyed 10 years ago by one of the surrounding volcanoes. We stayed at a guesthouse that was down an ash street from the church, and towards the base of the volcano. One of the 3 volcanoes that had erupted still spews ash on a daily basis. This was a cool sight! The power and force in which the volcano would blow was awe-inspiring—especially standing just across the bay when it blows! The church people showed us around the town, and the history is amazing! Tunnels in the mountains where the Japanese stored submarines, housed themselves and kept POWs. There were underground bomb shelters where the officers stayed...



Ruth Bowman

It was this night as well when we met Neil McCloud—an amazing man from Australia. Now, this is a man with stories to tell, stories that make you question whether he is one man or 20.

This whole trip—the people we meet, places we go, reminds me over and over of how big our God is and how He is working everywhere. We narrow our understanding of God to what we know, putting Him in our world. What would happen if we all stepped out of our own little worlds and asked God to show us His world? Watch the adventures of today become history that affects the future. I am humbled to be even a tiny speck in God's creation.

Date: 2/10/2004

Submitted by: Joel Mailand

Journal Entry:

Location: Rabaul

Rabaul is a town that is slowly rebuilding after a volcanic eruption that buried the city in tons of dust and ash. The Hotel/Guesthouse we stayed in has before and after pictures. It is a ghost of its former thriving self.

We woke up this morning and Heather, Ruth and I had a conversation about our impressions so far of the Lutheran Church in PNG. I thought so much of the conversation that I taped it. We all agreed with Heather's statement. She wants to know what a PNG Lotu (worship) service would look like without any Western influence. The question is a little anachronistic: it's something we will never know. Most of the worship and church structure is influenced by Bavarians, Australians, and U.S. churches.

In a strange encounter we have met up with a veritable Renaissance man—Neil McLeod. He is collecting original tribal costumes and headdresses used in ritual and ceremony by some of the more remote tribes in the East New Britain Island. His views on organized religion are sharp and critical. He is outraged that the churches are telling tribes to stop the ceremonies and turn from traditions. It is cultural destruction, unabashed and unjustified. In some places the church has been a part of the culture for a mere 200 years or less. In most of PNG a far more deadly "culture killer" has taken hold: Technology, Machines, Industry. Where do we draw the lines of Respect and respect of values and traditions? Where does the church meet peoples' needs?



Joel Mailand

Date: 2/11/2004

Submitted by: Bjørn Peterson

Journal Entry:

Location: Rabaul to Kimbe, West New Britain

I took German and Greek in school. I was never naturally very good at either. Languages, in fact, have not, and I suspect will not ever be, my strength. Only when I have tons of time to put in can I begin to understand language. I do not have that time here. Tok Pisin is not a complicated language. I can understand most of what I hear, but



forming my own sentences is a real struggle. The language barrier, although not as bad **Bjørn Peterson** as some places we've been, is still quite frustrating since we are working directly and exclusively with nationals. We are not fluent in Tok Pisin nor are they fluent in English. It makes discussing schedules hard and trying to give different people what they want when words mean different things to everyone is very hard. On top of that, the pace can be excruciatingly slow and then ridiculously packed. The idea of rest is sitting for an hour in the middle of 150 people waiting for you to move or speak or sneeze. Originally we were scheduled for 4 months here in PNG. I don't think it's physically or mentally possible to keep this schedule for that long. Sometimes reminding ourselves we are servants is not enough. Sometimes, a lot of times, we just hurt through things and hope for the strength to do it five more times that day. I could live here, no problem, but to tour is a life that must be short-lived. I pray that our work is not in vain; I know that it is not.

Top Ten Movies I Miss

10. Zoolander
9. Moulin Rouge
8. 8 Mile
7. Rushmore
6. Dead Poet's Society
5. Tombstone
4. Les Misérables
3. Fight Club
2. Braveheart
1. Shawshank Redemption

Date: 2/12/2004

Submitted by: Elise Coakley

Journal Entry:

Location: Kimbe, West New Britain

There are a few things I have come to accept about our time in PNG in order to survive and not go insane.

1. I will always be tired. Rest just isn't rest here. There are either roosters and dogs making noise at all hours of the morning, mass amounts of children sitting and staring at us, waiting for us to be entertaining, or jam-packed days with little or no time to relax, not to mention constantly having to understand another language. I'm just always exhausted.

2. I will always feel a little bit sick. There are new smells and new tastes to get used to that don't quite agree with my stomach. Bumpy, twisty roads in a hot, humid van. 14 hour boat rides on the open sea with no stabilizers to keep the ship from moving with every single wave. Not to mention drinking water that is not always the clearest. I'm getting used to always feeling a little bit nauseous.

3. I will always feel hot. We're near the equator on a tropical island. It's just plain hot.

4. I will always be dirty. Dirt is magnetic here. You can step out of the shower and walk ten feet and you will be dirty again. My clothes are soaked in sweat, covered with dust and spattered with mud. We rarely have access to showers so I've just stopped brushing my hair, and who knows what's growing in there. It doesn't matter if you wear dark clothes or light clothes, they are always filthy. I'm going to need to be dry cleaned when I get home.

5. I will always be taken care of. We are constantly surrounded by people who love us and want to provide as much as they can for us. Whether it's cold water on a hot afternoon, a beautiful meal after a long day, safe driving on a treacherous road, or someone guiding us through a city we are unfamiliar with. The people of Papua New Guinea are so loving and friendly. I am confident they will always take care of me. It doesn't make my struggles and easier, but sometimes, rather than take away your burdens, God simply brings relief. "For you have been a refuge to the poor, a refuge to



Elise Coakley

the needy in their distress, a shelter from the rainstorm and a shade from the heat." Isaiah 25:4

Date: 2/13/2004

Submitted by: Heather Carr

Journal Entry:

Location: Kimbe to Bialla to Soi

I've been trying to figure out why this tour feels harder than the one in Africa with Cross Fire... why I feel more tired here than I did there... because on the surface, they're both very similar tours! Hot places, "developing nation" status, long dusty drives on bumpy roads, hordes of fascinated kids staring at you or shouting excitedly as you drive past, country churches with dirt floors and bamboo benches, filled with beautiful, devoted congregations who lift their voices to God in their humble surroundings as PASSIONATELY as the most sophisticated and modernized places back home... maybe even more so, for their lack of distractions. So, on the surface, this is VERY similar to Africa, to a Cross Fire tour, and I'm loving it... but why am I so tired?



Heather Carr

After some contemplation, I think I've decided that the difference is in having our tour run completely by leaders of the local church. This may not SEEM like much of a difference, but it really is, especially in comparison to having missionaries as contacts. One isn't better or worse than the other... it's just different. With missionaries (often Americans or Europeans or Australians) there is an innate understanding of the culture shock we're experiencing, of the difficulties with language and heat and expectations, and therefore there is usually less need to feel like you're "on" all the time with missionaries. My experience with missionaries in Africa was that they went out of their way to make sure we had plenty of time off, or at least away from staring eyes, to rejuvenate emotionally for another day of the trials of itinerant ministry. Working solely with national contacts, on the other hand, means that we end up feeling like we're "on" more often, as much from the basic communication struggles as from knowing that our CONTACTS are also the people we're here to minister to... even when we're given time to ourselves, if our contact is with us, I feel guilty secluding myself in a corner when I COULD be spending time with them... getting to know them better, being relational... you know, the usual. With missionaries that is also valuable time together, but again, even something as simple as being from the same place creates an immediate bond and understanding that can take weeks to cultivate with someone from another culture, and therefore down time is easier to take with a missionary.

So, that's' one thing that's difficult. I know we're not the only team that works with national contacts, so I'm not trying to claim we have it harder than others... I'm just trying to sort it out in my own head, make sense of my experiences.

It's just so funny, when we finally come to accept and expect that words like "rest" really mean quite different things to us and to our contacts... To our team of 4-out-of-5 introverts, "rest" means time alone, to be away from the ministry setting, and sleep, read, write, or stare into space (ideally even away from other teammates) in order to rejuvenate, To our contacts, however, rest means an hour of sitting in the middle of the crowd (50-150 kids and adults who are all sitting and staring at you because you're so fascinating!) before giving a program. My mind says I can't truly rest in that setting, because I should be doing ministry... and I wonder if the people watching us are wondering why we're just SITTING there instead of interacting with them! But my pidgin-fried, road-weary, heat-exhausted body says, "No, you DO need SOME kind of rest"... so I sit there.

Today was an example of some such weariness, and learning to work within a busy schedule and different interpretations of words like "rest." For one, we were all still exhausted from our overnight boat ride from Rabaul on Thurs... Ruth and Joel spent most of Wednesday night throwing up from sea-sickness, and none of us got much sleep... and when we arrived Thursday AM, we had a singing (welcome dance), a few hours of sleep before a bank-run (cashing traveler's checks) and a welcome program. We slept Thursday night, but we were all short... then we hopped in Wagai's PMV and drove the 2 1/2 hours (4 hours in reality) to Bialla, the other circuit in the Lutheran Church's area of West New Britain. We stopped several times for buai breaks, many more for the engine to die, another 1/2 hour to wait for the other vehicle with all our guitars and luggage on it to catch up

(it never did), and finally arrived in Biella. Sing-sing, fruit, and a "rest" later, and we were ready to head another 1/2 hour (=1 1/2 hours) to Soi for the night. In Soi, we had ANOTHER great sing-sing (they've all been outstanding), then sat under our palm-leaf shelter for an afternoon of "rest." Right... with all those kids' big brown eyes on us, waiting for us to breathe? So, Joel and Bjorn played soccer with them, in the rain, and they were thrilled. And I was thrilled to see them doing such good ministry! I love watching my teammates do ministry...

Then, we waited and waited for our stuff to arrive, so we could do a program... lesson of the day? The puppet curtain and guitars travel WITH us from now on. Just when we had decided that it was getting too late and we'd have to postpone till morning, it arrived. Wow... so, snap-decision to do a program after all (and snap-decisions are more stressful for some of us than others, especially when 1/2 of us are sick), and after a very strange reception (no clapping, no expression on faces) they wanted us to go for another hour... and it was already 10 PM. Good grief, people never sleep in this country! J That's because they chew so much buai... they don't eat breakfast or lunch, and they go to bed late and get up early... craziness J. After some additional closing songs to appease them, we walked over to the traditional home (thatch-roof and bamboo walls) they're building for the new pastor, to go to sleep. Of course, 1/2 the village followed us over, and then watched as we set up our beds, since the building is only 1/2 finished and 2 walls are missing. We hung some tarps and sheets to give some privacy, then tried to sleep with everyone milling around outside... good luck. The crazier part is, I don't feel like I have a right to be this tired when all we did all day was drive, and sit, and "rest" and only did one program!

The interim pastor made my day, though. After we did our program, he got up and gave one of the most passionate talks I've seen a Papua New Guinean give... he was a spitfire! Incredibly animated, and a grin that LIT his face up, like a kid with his favorite toy. He was so great! And what he said was sweet—That though our skin was different colors, that we were all one in Christ, united even across the span of an ocean. It's so true—praise God!

Date: 2/15/2004
Submitted by: Elise Coakley
Journal Entry:

Location: Biella, West New Britain

Shaking hands. In PNG it's like getting an autograph, except that while in the US normally it's only the big fans that ask for autographs, in PNG everyone wants to shake hands. They want to shake our hands after a program, after church, after any contact whatsoever that lasts more than 20 seconds. And actually, sometimes complete strangers will come up and shake our hand then leave. We're not sure if it's because they've heard of us and know who we are, or if it's just because we're white. Most of the time it seems like the latter.

After most of our concerts we shake hands. Sometimes it's only a few of the church elders, sometimes it's some of the youth we know, and most of the time it's everyone. So when after our program tonight where there were about 250 people in the audience, we were told they want to shake hands, we prepared ourselves to be there for another 30 minutes. We've got the system down pretty well right now, the five of us find a pretty central location and either sit or stand in the light, tonight it was the edge of the stage, and then we have one or two of our contacts organize the crowd so they can walk in a line right past us. Tonight we had each row in the audience come up one by one. Then we shake hands, hoping not to get too many people with really firm handshakes that crush your hand.

I will be the first to say that I am bad at short-term relational ministry. I'm bad at starting conversations with people I don't know. So I really like this. I smile, maybe say a few words in passing like "Bless you" or "Thanks for coming" and I'm able to touch so many lives. I can see it in their smiles, especially the little kids, they are so thankful for attention from us, and I hope they can see the love of God in our eyes.



Elise Coakley

Date: 2/16/2004
Submitted by: Ruth Bowman
Journal Entry:



Ruth Bowman

Location: Bialla to Tiaura to Sege to Kapiura to Buvussi

"This was a day that never ends, for it went on and on my friends.
New Dawn started singing not knowing all to come,
And then they kept on singing it forever, just because..."

Yes, the day was long. It challenged our patience, our voices, and our emotional and physical strength. 5 programs in 5 different towns in one day. It can be done! And we were even done by supertime! We could have fit a few more in! It was a very tiring day, but we met so many people and were able to worship with them all. I've learned that I would much rather be busy than not. For one, I love being busy, two, I feel like we are "accomplishing" something—experiencing a lot, and third, it keeps my mind focused in PNG instead of drifting back home. Communication to outside the country is very expensive and very limited—so although my team is great and the people we are meeting here are terrific, it's common for my heart to feel lonely for my fiancé, family and friends back home. I pray daily for God to fill my heart with love that I can share with the beautiful people here. But I am certainly not perfect. I doubt, don't trust, get frustrated and at times feel as though my heart is an open wound, that has salt rubbed in it during times of loneliness. But through this entire experience, God is making my heart stronger, and I continue to pray and I can feel prayers that are lifting up my team. So, thank you for praying.

Date: 2/17/2004
Submitted by: Joel Mailand
Journal Entry:



Joel Mailand

Location: Buvussi to Lakimatu Prison Camp to Sarakolok to Nahavio

Wow do we move around or what? Today got the better part of me. I was exhausted and just wanted to curl up in a corner where no one could find me for about 3 days. We did programs for 5 churches, prisons, and/or schools. Way too much. It's amazing that we sing in such diverse settings (except for nursing homes which is just a non-relevant concept here). We have been in almost every setting in PNG. We performed at a hospital on Karkar Island and have sung in a marketplace. Praise God for the freedom to sing anywhere and for anyone who will listen!

Today after our fourth stop, Wagai, our van driver and a youth leader, insisted we pick up towels and drive to the river to cool off. It seemed like a waste of time, but once we got there and got into the water that was quickly retracted. Since we have been here this is the 3rd cool experience I have had. The water was cold but not icy, just the right temp to cool off on a hot day, and the current was strong. I laid down in the river and just relaxed... it was perfect. Exactly what we needed, and I am glad Wagai made the decision to go and that we did not try to rush on to the next site.

So far no one has gotten really really sick but we have been especially wiped out in the past 2 days. Well, at least I know I am feeling exhausted. Keep our health in your prayers.

Date: 2/18/2004
Submitted by: Bjørn Peterson
Journal Entry:

Location: Kimbe

Today was a day of rest. After a week of sleeping in villages we moved into a bungalow on the beach east of Kimbe. Tomorrow we start the workshop in Kimbe. They are expecting more than fifty people. We are excited but very tired from an exhausting week. Today

was spent planning schedules, translating music, writing chords and scrambling to fill in the gaps. The workshop will be twelve hours long every day for three days. It is quite possible that our number of participants could balloon to 100. The five of us will be quite busy. But the waves on the beach are soothing tonight. We will do our best.



Bjørn Peterson

Yesterday I was really sick. I couldn't walk and my stomach was cramping. It's times like these that I don't want to be here. It's never fun to be sick, especially somewhere that's not comfortable to you. Comfort is a funny thing. Comfort isn't a matter of best or worst, it's a matter of you. In PNG people are comfortable in places, temperatures, and with foods that I have accepted I will not become comfortable with. At first that bothered me. I thought, "If they enjoy this and are comfortable in these places, then I should be, too." But I think God has a method to His giving us comfort. Comfort isn't evil, it's natural. Comfort is why they can eat foods with flavors most Americans stomachs might turn at. It's also why we can live in suburban jungles and eat only processed food rather than fresh everyday. It's why I love cold and they can thrive in ridiculous heat. It's how we survive. As long as comfort isn't used to isolate, it stays neutral. I don't know, maybe I am just babbling or trying to justify my intense desire for a cheeseburger. Just a thought, I guess.

Top Ten Things I Need

10. Steak Baja Gordita from the Bell
9. Sleep
8. Hot Shower
7. Hot Breadsticks
6. Garlic Mashed Potatoes
5. Steak (medium rare)
4. Large Supreme Pizza from Papa John's
3. Cajun Burger from Red Robin
2. Mellow Yellow
1. Professional Massage

Date: 2/19/2004

Submitted by: Elise Coakley

Journal Entry:

Location: Kimbe, West New Britain

Worship, it's something our team has talked about a lot in the past few months. And it's something we've realized needs to be talked about in PNG. Many of the Lutheran churches that we've visited have very closed minds about what worship is. Many think that worship must be the traditional hymns from the worship book, and that anything else is garbage. And while I respect traditional means of worship very much, that kind of attitude quickly draws lines and turns people away. So when we heard that we would be leading a workshop on music for a few days, I was excited to try and focus on worship.



Elise Coakley

The workshop started today, with youth from most of the churches we've visited in the last week and more, about 50 total. After a short devotion and introductions, I led our first session, "What is Worship?" We talked about what is worship, why do we worship, and how do we worship. The youth were full of ideas about worship and excited to begin a discussion that doesn't happen much here. I ended the session by playing some Christian music from the U.S., some hard rock and punk Christian music, and I asked what made the music worshipful. After some discussion, they realized that it is not the words or even the music that makes something worshipful, it is the heart. We can worship God just as much listening to rap as we can singing hymns, as long as our heart is doing the worshipping. I could see minds working and wheels spinning at this revelation, as many of the youth began seeing new ways to worship, with dramas, with fellowship, with dancing, with service. And I saw some relief in this realization, as they found more freedom to worship our Lord who is so big and so great that there is no right way to worship. As long as the heart is worshipping the Lord, God will rejoice.

"God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth."
John 4:24

Date: 2/20/2004

Submitted by: Heather Carr

Journal Entry:

Location: Kimbe, Bethel Lutheran Church

9 programs in 2 days, and then a day of workshops and an American program for 200+ people, and my voice is back to the point it was this summer at camp—almost completely gone. And we still have 2 days of workshops left! Actually, I guess that puts me at today, so let me skip ahead to Saturday pm, so I can reflect on the whole thing...



Heather Carr

Here are a few images to give you a feel for our last 3 days:

45 guitarists of varying skill, and only 12 guitars, which are all in different keys, ready for guitar lessons!

20 people who've never played keyboard before, all getting a VERY basic music theory and piano theory lesson from me during our lunch break, gathered around the 4-octave Casio.

The power going out every time I originally told the keyboard players we'd meet.

New Dawn, a microphone, a chalkboard, and 75 workshop members who understand English to varying degrees—and yet, and amazing amount of understanding being accomplished nonetheless!

Becoming an "expert" on everything from music to guitar playing to mixing sound... wow! Aren't we just little old New Dawn?

The lamest puppet scream ever, attempting to come from my completely hoarse throat... which sent all of us behind the puppet curtain into gales of laughter.

Singing Blessed Be (officially dubbed the "Whoop Whoop" song) in Pidgin with kids and adults rolling with laughter, and enthusiastically joining in "Amen!"

Lifting 75 voices in song to a newly learned tune of Three-in-One Praise or Living Water... absolutely gorgeous. These people can SING!

I could go on and on, but my journals tend to get long, and I still want people to actually read them! So even tho this is a 2-day entry, I'll try to be more brief.

To sum up the weekend and the workshop would take pages, so suffice it to say that it was amazing, and we were all blessed in wonderful ways, even though we're exhausted... and grateful to have made it through alive! I'll be sad to say goodbye to a lot of these youth... like our "escort group" who rode along with us during our super-tour last week, of all the outlying congregations... they even did a special song for us at the talent show! We have spent more time with this group (in the greater Kimbe area) than any other, and I feel like I know a lot of them fairly well... I love that! Joshua and Wendy and Giave and Jacob and Joe and Barry and John and many others, too many to name... they're good folks.

And so excited to learn with us! They responded fairly positively to our sessions on worshipping in spirit and truth, and challenges to improve their methods and styles of worship leading... and it was so fun to watch them put them into practice at the talent show. We could tell they were really excited to show us what they'd learned, and that was just as great for us to see as it was to see them smiling and making eye contact and moving to the music they were playing!

And they were thrilled about learning new songs—they gobbled them up, and by the end of 3 days we'd taught them 6-10 new songs with full harmonies, and several of the guitar players could play

along, too. The 45 guitarists got broken up into 3 groups, which was slightly more manageable, and every afternoon I jammed, teaching new chords, and new fingerings, and new strum patterns, and playing through songs again and again while calling out chord changes... man, I wish my fingers were made of steel—they kill! And what a humbling experience—I've never considered myself a "guitar expert" but I know that most of these guys did, and that was quite a learning experience in itself. It's neat, too, to realize how far I have actually come myself, in 6 years of playing... far enough, apparently, that it was a struggle for me to simplify some things I do in order to teach. Wow... I guess I have improved since my learning days around the campfire. I'm excited for these guys and gals to be inspired to go home and practice and mess around and improve their skills—they're going to be such great leaders and powerful examples for the kids in their congregations!

The capstone of the workshop was a closing worship on Saturday night, during which we praised God together for giving us many wonderful ways to praise Him, and for the chance to come together and explore some of them during this workshop. I was blessed by it, and by their response—they participated with their whole hearts! And the songs we learned together soared to the rafters and beyond... full-out harmonies, and enough volume to knock your socks off! I basked in it, and danced for joy with the rest as we closed with a rousing ending of Trading My Sorrows... again, we came to give ourselves in ministry, and we come away blessed. What a glorious God!

Date: 2/22/2004

Submitted by: Bjørn Peterson

Journal Entry:

Location: Kimbe

In the last seven days we have done over 40 hours of workshops, a church service, recorded 4 songs, and performed 13 programs. It's 10:15 pm and we just got done for the day. They thought we were getting supper on our own and we thought they said they were providing so we are eating right now. Grilled cheese, rice and a couple cans of spaghetti and beans. It tastes pretty good. The program tonight was only an hour so we would have our voices still tomorrow when we record some more songs. They are having us record an album that they will release nationwide. The first volume will go out in a year or so with 6 of our songs and 6 of theirs. Volume 2 will follow a year or so afterward. They took videotape of us performing also to do marketing on the national television station. We are already told everywhere we go that they saw us on TV from the National Synod in January. It's an effective way to advertise here. When we are in Port Moresby in April the radio station wants to record us to play regularly along with all the mainstream music they play. As far as our current recording project, the PNG youth that will do the other half of the album are really good. Hopefully our name will help them sell and get these guys national attention. They have written some really good praise music. PNG praise music is pretty big but hasn't been contributed to by the Lutheran Church very much. Hopefully this project will give them a foothold to start from. The profits will go to youth programs in the New Guinea Island District. So all our exhaustion is going to a good cause. If nothing else the youth (ages 16-30 in PNG) are definitely encouraged and excited about leading, performing and composing worship.



Bjørn Peterson

Top Ten Favorite Artists

10. Dave Matthews
 9. Jack Johnson
 8. Rage Against the Machine
 7. Five Iron Frenzy
 6. Jurassic Five
 5. Counting Crows
 4. Supertones
 3. Blues Traveler
 2. Waterdeep
 1. Caedmon's Call
-

Date: 2/23/2004
Submitted by: Ruth Bowman
Journal Entry:

Location: Kimbe

For those of you who know me well, have lived with me or have even had me stay at your home this past year, you may remember that I'm not the easiest person to wake up in the morning. In fact, some days I can be downright impossible! Sorry. But I have good news for you. I can now, for the most part and minus a few select incidents, wake up on time or even early without the use of an alarm clock. Granted, it's oftentimes the voice of a teammate waking me up, but more often than not it's because of all the other noises around me.

Oftentimes it's the roosters that like to think 4 am is morning. And just to clarify something for all of you that I learned here, roosters don't just crow one time in the morning when the sun comes up. They can begin crowing as early as 2 am and crow constantly until they feel like they have regained control of the world. The jingle "I feel like chicken tonight" has taken on a whole new meaning for me! But if it's not the roosters, it's the dogs who are guarding their territory or picking on some other poor stray mut that happens to cross their paths. Then there is the shrieking laughter of the kids, the loud talking, the guitar and singing of people who have been up all night singing worship songs, some of the most interesting bird cries I've ever heard, rain pounding against the tin roof, or finally, and one of my favorites, the sound of waves crashing against the shore. THIS is the sound that woke me today. Woke me to another day filled with opportunities. I pray often that God will show me opportunities. Wake me up and let me see the work He wants done. I've decided for now God is going to have to use a loud obnoxious alarm in order that I might grasp at situations in which I never dreamed God could work through. But God keeps sending me soft waves, and amazingly enough God seems to use even me, who doesn't know how to "wake up" in the simplest of situations.

Today we took team pictures and some of the locals spent so much time getting us dressed up in traditional, festive wear. We were hot, distracted with trying to figure out these pictures and took off the dress as soon as we could. I felt bad they had gone to so much trouble for such a short time—but they loved it. They were honored that we wanted to become and experience a part of their culture, who they are. I am SO thankful that though we "sleep" through many of the opportunities God gives us—He still is able to do His work.



Ruth Bowman

Date: 2/24/2004
Submitted by: Joel Mailand
Journal Entry:

Location: Kimbe

We are here in Kimbe for a few more days and concluding our tour of the New Guinea Islands—New Britain and New Ireland. Pastor Hynna Motec has been with us for a majority of the time since our arrival in Kokopo. He is fairly respected and popular with congregations. I had the chance to talk with him on the boat to Kimbe. He is easy going and I can see why he is well-liked and how much he enjoys being with regular church members. As District President he is required to be at meetings, conventions, pastors' conferences, district events—a full schedule. Last year he traveled for about 50 different meetings.

He was given a laptop computer by the Virginia Synod ELCA to help keep notes, minutes, schedules, etc. He says it gets used by him and other district members and staff. But THIS is where my mind clicked into gear—a computer. How fast? What kind? Is it connected to the web? This last question is probably the most important to me. I am a self-professed internet junkie—anytime there is a computer I'm dying to see if you can connect to the Web.

As we talked, I learned that it was a nice computer and not connected. There must be a way. I



Joel Mailand

relayed this information to my teammates—processor speeds and numbers, their eyes glaze over... With the Pastor's approval and interest I was able to connect to the internet. Over the course of the next two weeks together I showed him how to read/receive and write e-mail, set up an ISP account e-mail address, etc. A much-needed tool, and I was there to get him started. Except, it got me thinking, the whole way along the process... Was it selfish interest or the joy of accomplishment? I know I wanted to just check my e-mail and I wanted to help get the pastor started (and to say I made an internet connection in PNG). But I thought of other things, too—like, is the current transfer of information acceptable? Until now, Pastor Hynna would have e-mail sent and received by a church member who then would print it, give it to someone on the way from Kimbe to Kokopo by boat, pass it on to a congregation member, who then handed it to the Pastor. As Bjorn put it, "Information is passed casually." It gets done, just not at the hyper speed Americans are used to, because there is no need to be fast, and it seems to work just fine.

So more questions: Is it worth the cost? What is the internet used for? Is there a need or is it a PERCEIVED need? Can it be useful and useful in terms of ministry? Please write to me. I would love to hear what you have to say about this.

JoelMailand"AT"att.net

Date: 2/25/2004

Submitted by: Bjørn Peterson

Journal Entry:

Location: Kimbe

The smile in your night program is a huge deal. It takes 30 times the energy and will of the actual singing. It's 100 degrees F with 100% humidity. It's packed inside and out with tens, often hundreds of people who are so excited to hear you. It's 8:15 and you are finally starting the 7:00 pm show. The crowds have been patiently waiting since between 3 and 5 pm. You arrived at six, ate some boiled banana, rice, and sweet potato and are now ready. Earlier in the day you awoke to dogs, roosters, and children around 6 am. The first program of the day was at 7:45 and you have driven a total of 3 hours and done two more programs since. Exhaustion is normal now, but it sets in hard again around 6:30 pm. So now it's 8:20 and you have sung your first song and the second has begun. Can you smile? Trust me, it won't come naturally, even to the smiliest of smilers. If you can manage a smile or a wink, then I guarantee you will make someone's week. That's why Ruth is the crowd favorite. I know. I watched. It's the smile. No ministry is bigger.



Bjørn Peterson

Top Ten Reasons My Family is Cool

10. They do crazy things like camping outside to raise awareness for homelessness (Sue and April)
9. They are actively in the Word
8. They are funny
7. Anyone is welcome, always
6. They take care of me when I'm sick
5. They think I'm smart
4. They want me around
3. They know my weakness and still believe in me
2. They are proud of what I am
1. They know my past and love me no less

Date: 2/26/2004

Submitted by: Elise Coakley

Journal Entry:

Location: Kimbe

How do you say goodbye to someone you know you'll never see again? That is a question that we have been wrestling with since we've been here, meeting people only for a short time and knowing there's very little chance we will cross paths again. Tomorrow we will say goodbye to a group that has been traveling with us for 2-3 weeks. We jokingly call them our groupies because they know every song we sing, every puppet show we do, they carry, unpack, and repack all of our stuff before each program (incidentally, we don't think we'll remember how to pack our stuff when they're gone). They escort us everywhere. They have become our friends and companions and it will be hard to say goodbye.



Elise Coakley

So how do you say goodbye? It is somewhat awkward. You can just say "Goodbye" but that doesn't sound heartfelt; sometimes "See you later" slips out automatically, but immediately you realize it's not true. So, we've ended up just thanking people profusely for everything they've done for us, wishing them the best and praying that God's blessings continue to pour down on them. It's hard, saying such a definite goodbye to people we have come to love. The best we can do is be gracious for their care and be assured that we will meet again in heaven.

Date: 2/27/2004

Submitted by: Heather Carr

Journal Entry:

Location: Kimbe to Lae by boat

Today was the day we were supposed to be arriving in Lae, but as often happens in the "land of the unexpected," plans changed. The boat we were supposed to take, with Lutheran shipping, was a day late and the other boat was full, so we waited a day. At first I was frustrated at the delay, knowing we had a lot of errands to run once we got back to Lae, but by the end of the day I was so grateful that we had that extra time in Kimbe, because it was a perfect day of ministry! We've been here in Kimbe for 2 hectic, busy weeks, but now, with an extra day and nothing planned, we had a great chance to sit around and just relax with all our friends here. We had leisure time to buy food for the next few days, too... and then, inspiration struck. With our spare day, and in thanks for all the cooking our hosts had done for us, we decided to treat THEM to an American meal! We made pasta with red sauce, Minnesota Wild Rice Casserole, (authentic dish from our home state!), and chocolate chip cake for dessert (they don't usually have dessert here, so we wanted to introduce it to them). We giddily gathered up the ingredients, spent the afternoon cooking at Wendy's house (she has an oven), and then treated everyone—and they seemed to like it! They were especially impressed by the wild rice—they'd never seen anything like it, and said it tasted "sweet." So, success—treating our hosts, PLUS giving THEM a cross-cultural experience!



Heather Carr

And that evening, Ruth and I had a chance to just sit and chat until late into the night... and I loved it. So many nights I've been so exhausted by the day and the presence of too many strangers surrounding our guest house, that I haven't had the energy or the will to stay out and have a conversation... but tonight, I was relaxed and rested, and ready and willing to stay up—and we had great conversations! Some about kids, places we were still heading to, American customs, the unhealthy effects of cigarettes... everything under the sun! The most memorable conversation was with Pastor Peter Rokasi, which started with marriage practices, bride prices, and how he ministers to women who are sometimes not treated amazingly well by their husbands... and spanned from creation (Adam and Eve and God's intentions for men and women) to Revelation (how the world will end)—the epitome of a complete conversation! If it spans from Genesis to Revelation, you must have covered it all, right?

I went to bed in the early am, and drifted to sleep feeling SO grateful for this chance to do ministry—the setback in our plans, which God used for His glory, to bring His people from around the world closer together. I felt better about the ministry I was able to be a part of this night than most others so far... and something so simple as an evening of conversation! But sharing our hearts and passions and experiences are what opens us to each other, and allows us to grow close in our common bonds... and this was the blessing I was graced with tonight. Thanks, God, for messing up our plans, and inserting yours instead.

Date: 2/28/2004
Submitted by: Elise Coakley
Journal Entry:

Location: Lae

We were transported back in time yesterday, back to a time when traveling somewhere took days, not hours. At 10:00 am yesterday morning we boarded a ship to head back to Lae. We arrived at 10:00 am this morning. That's right, 24 hours. And it's not like a long train ride or even a plane; those are fairly calm and easy to relax in, especially if you have a good book or music. No, a long boat ride in PNG is incredibly bumpy. I say bumpy, but even that doesn't describe the motion of the boat that rocked and swayed not just front to back or side to side, but all directions. Walking anywhere was quite dangerous as I discovered when my whole body slammed into a wall on a trip to the bathroom. Luckily, we had beds, and I discovered that as long as I stayed lying down, I felt pretty good, the motion of the boat didn't affect me too much. Unfortunately the same was not true for Ruth and Joel, who managed to get sick again.

It was a long, uncomfortable, and somewhat boring boat ride, which I hope not to repeat again anytime soon. I am very thankful that we made it to Lae safely.



Elise Coakley

Date: 2/29/2004
Submitted by: Ruth Bowman
Journal Entry:

Location: Lae

Sunday. The day of worship. The day when we all come together to worship our God. Today was our day of rest so we walked down to St. Andrew's Church in Lae. This service was in English and was quite modern and contemporary compared to what we had seen in a lot of the smaller villages. I've decided that there's no way churches in PNG could have more than one service a Sunday! For this 8:00 am service (which really starts at 8:30, they just say 8:00 so some people will be there!) lasted until 11:30 am with refreshments following. I am really excited how involved the lay people are. Families will volunteer and take turns leading and planning the service, and the sermon is oftentimes rotated as well—having someone in the congregation with something on their heart preaching for that Sunday. My favorite part of the service was the very end when the pastor stated, "This was the beginning of worship for this week. Let us go out now in constant worship—serving, loving, and trusting the Lord." Sunday mornings should not be our fill of worship for the week, it should be our preparation with fellow believers to get ready to worship for the rest of the week. So much of life is about preparing ourselves for what is to come. It's the first Sunday in Lent and we have begun preparing ourselves for this walk through Lent.



Ruth Bowman

It's been a very humbling and oftentimes intimidating experience for us to walk into a village where they have spent hours preparing and getting ready for us to come. I question what we have to offer in return and whether it lives up to what they expect. But they understand and appreciate all we give. It's new and different for them. They embrace the preparation. Our culture has turned into a "I want something now, so I will find how I can get it now" culture. Even spending the time to prepare a good home-cooked meal has become a lost art, or something only for special occasions.

We are called as Christians to always be preparing our hearts, working towards loving God and each other more. Learning more. As I watch such dedication of the people preparing for us to come to their village, I pray that God will prepare my heart for whatever He has planned.

Date: 3/1/2004
Submitted by: Ruth Bowman

Journal Entry:

Location: Braun Memorial Hospital, Finschhafen

Imagine this...

You are hot and sweaty. The temp must be around 90 degrees Fahrenheit with the sun scorching down on your white skin. Your skin feels sticky and salty from the wind and spray of the ocean from the 3-hour boat ride you just took along the coast from Lae to Finschhafen. You are at this moment walking along a gravel road with 3 people who could be called friends or family, and you approach a bridge. Standing on the boarded makeshift bridge, you look out and down at one of the most beautifully refreshing sights. There standing before you is 10 feet of crystal blue waters, cascading down into a glossy pool below. About 10 different shades of blue echo into the varying depths of the water. In a refreshing moment of delight, you dive one at a time into the clean crisp water. The sun streaks down in light rays through the tropical forest and vines around you. A beautiful moment...



Ruth Bowman

A few days later in the small village of Kasanga, I had my first snorkeling experience. The coral reefs along the coast of PNG are gorgeous and we've been itching to get underwater and check them out. Our chance finally came one afternoon after we arrived by canoe to this small village. One of the ladies, Diana, who I had befriended, found some eye goggles for us and escorted us out into the water. Wow! Never in my life had I seen anything so magical and beautiful. I felt like I was in the middle of a Disney movie—I was looking straight at Nemo and all his friends! Bright, vibrant colors in the coral, a vast variety of colorful fish. 10-20 foot drop-offs that would conceal more hidden beauty below. I am definitely hooked! My eyes felt like they were feasting and couldn't take in everything fast enough. God's beautiful creation surrounds us daily and I treasure the moments we have to relax and take it all in.

Date: 3/2/2004

Submitted by: Joel Mailand

Journal Entry:

Location: Nasingalatu Village

12 guys with spears jumped out of the bush and attacked us on our way to Nasingalatu today. We were approaching the village being greeted with the usual singsing ceremony when it happened (it was part of the singsing, as explained below). Thankfully no one was injured and we were all able to complete the welcome by making it to the village house later (church) :).



Joel Mailand

I am starting to appreciate the types of singsings that are performed for us and tonight I had the chance to participate in one. After our program the guys started and invited us to dance with them. I took them up on the offer and got dressed in armbands, beads, and a head dress (sorry, no loin cloth). They gave me a kundu drum also to use. I was told that this was a practice session, many of the boys are learning from the older ones who are in their 20s. Women also participate—singing and dancing. There are a few different types of singsings: traditionally they are for welcoming, harvesting, weddings, fighting (see story above). They can also be performed as a social gathering, like an ice cream social or going out to a dance club in America. "Wow, they have ice cream socials in PNG?" you might ask? Yes, the German missionaries introduced them but they were quickly abandoned because New Guinea islanders' palettes were not used to such extreme colds. They tried ice cream and had a massive brain freeze. A whole village stood frozen, mouths and eyes wide open in shock. The missionaries quickly left and it wasn't until; another mission group arrived to introduce hot tea that the village was able to thaw. As we try new things from different cultures, some we like and are amazed by and other we shake our heads at and say, no, no thanks, I think I've had enough cooked banana. It's wonderful to step inside a culture and have a look around and try to catch a small glimpse of what makes it special, to come to an appreciation for things that are so different.

Date: 3/3/2004

Submitted by: Bjørn Peterson

Journal Entry:

Location: Lae (Bjorn)—Team in Kasanga

It is a bit after noon. I have just returned from the doctor again. Bad news. Despite the "miracle drug" my new best Swiss friend prescribed, my severe case of Giardia is no better than it was. So today begins another treatment. I am exhausted, hungry and alone. This is the second time I have contracted Giardia in my 47 days in PNG. I feel very acquainted with the medical system here. I have consulted 3 doctors, multiple hospitals, multiple pathologists, and one bush dentist. Giardia, heat exhaustion and one removed wisdom tooth. The doctors here, native and expatriots, are more than capable of helping with a varitable buffet of tropical diseases, viruses, and even dental hygiene.



Bjørn Peterson

They tell you, when traveling to developing nations, not to get any needles in you. I say, wait until you're in one to get all your medical needs taken care of. They are fast and very helpful, not to mention inexpensive and Lutheran. That's right! If you ask around you can probably find a copy of the small catechism right there in the waiting room. And that's not all, ministry can be done right there. The receptionist wants to go on team! So, do not be discouraged young International Team hopefuls. Even in sickness there is opportunity for ministry.

My Top Ten Favorite Restaurants

10. Chili's
9. Red Robin
8. Some Italian Place in Boulder, CO
7. BoJoe's Pizza Pies, Colorado
6. Old Chicago
5. Applebees
4. The Olive Garden
3. The Blue Moon China Buffet in Maplewood, MN
2. Timberlodge Steakhouse
1. The Macaroni Grill/Famous Dave's, Calhoun Square Minneapolis, MN

Date: 3/4/2004

Submitted by: Heather Carr

Journal Entry:

Location: Taemigidu Village

Tonight was absolutely surreal—in a beach-front village, on a moonlit night, watching a singsing group drum and sing and dance at midnight, with lightning flashing in the background. Is this real?? It was just beautiful, and so other-worldly... the high-pitched voices of the women, bustles bobbing as they circle the men, cut through the air like nothing else can. The Kundu drums beat in my chest, and the moonlight illuminates the men, dressed traditionally in loin-cloths, head-dresses, and dancing grass sticking out everywhere, as they move and sing and circle round and round. These songs, in their tribal tradition and regional tokples (language) bring me back 100 years, to a time when this singsing would have been preparation for something bigger... (maybe going to war, maybe a wedding, maybe a reconciliation ceremony...) something bigger than 5 goofy college-age Americans coming to visit, at least 1, something vital to their lives at the time. Singsings ARE still used for those purposes today, and that's another part of what makes it beautiful—even in rapidly-modernizing PNG, singsings are a throw-back to a time before white people, the West, and industrial development—and they are still authentic to that time.



Heather Carr

Ruth pointed something else out that made me feel blessed as well... tonight we got a chance to see and be a part of something that very few white people probably get a chance to experience! Although foreigners aren't surprising to see in the city, in villages like this it's still fairly novel to see

us. Most missionaries have been pulled out of PNG in the last 20 years, and those here are typically in the city-centers, so even they probably don't get to see much of this sort of thing anymore! What a blessing...

Plus, we got to join in, much to the delight of all the villagers. Joel got decked out, grabbed a Kundu, and tried to follow the men's steps, and Ruth and I circled them with the other 15 women, walking in rhythm to the Kundus. We danced 'til 1 am and exhaustion, and I went to bed happy with the ministry that can be done in such simple ways, through such basic things as joining people in their traditional celebration. Today was a good day, (Ruth) pounding casava in a mortar and pestle, touring the village, learning a local song, having lengthy conversations... God is good, and I pray the relationships we formed today spoke more strongly of the Gospel to these people than our simple songs and program did—the Gospel lived out in our lives, not only preached with our mouths. Would that we could ALL learn to live that out in our lives, wherever we are, whatever we are doing.

Date: 3/5/2004

Submitted by: Elise Coakley

Journal Entry:

Location: Busong Village

If ever I felt like my life had suddenly become a scene from a movie, it was this morning. It was a cloudy, somewhat misty morning when we set off on our journey to the next village, sailing in three hand-carved outrigger sailing canoes. I was in the last canoe, as I watched our caravan sail towards the misty mountains of Papua New Guinea. I felt like we were on some epic journey, sailing and continuing our mission to find or accomplish whatever it was we were sent to do. Of course, when the sun came out after an hour and I got badly sunburned, it didn't feel quite so romantic, but it was still cool.

I'm so thankful for the chance to experience how Papua New Guineans used to travel, sailing from village to village, being greeted with song and dance when they arrived at their destination. Riding in the canoes is one of the coolest things I think we've done here and I will always remember fondly. We get to sail along the coast, taking in the beautiful tropical jungles on the shore, and spying the amazing coral reefs below us. It is peaceful and soothing, being rocked gently by the waves as we sail along, and sometimes paddle when the wind isn't strong enough. It allows us to really experience what it's like to be a Papua New Guinean.



Elise Coakley

Date: 3/6/2004

Submitted by: Joel Mailand

Journal Entry:

Location: Busong Village

Busong Village is on the coast, and it is very hot. The sun comes up in the morning and burns off the cloud cover from the night. Heat warms the ocean water and the sand on the beach is hot. A breeze pushes warm air on the land. It is not strong enough to cool me off. My body slows down and I think of bears in hibernation. Maybe I will go into hibernation until it's cooler...



Joel Mailand

Pastor Yana has had 5 New Vision/New Dawn teams visit. "Wow," I can hear myself say, as he tells us the story. He is full of stories and we have listened to him as we sit around the table at meal times. He is retired now but is still called upon to preach. For 40 or so years he has been a teacher and pastor, held the title of District President, Assistant to the National Bishop, and District Bishop of the ELC-PNG. A living history of the Lutheran Church. But below that he is quiet and gentle and has an easy smile. Many years ago, while visiting the U.S., he was asked how he liked it there. He responded it was too fast-paced: everyone rushed around trying to get things done. He said this is because they are a day behind PNG. In PNG they do things slowly, waiting for Americans on the other side of the international date line to catch up. That pretty much says it all.

It has been a blessing to stay at the house of Pastor Yana and his wife. His wisdom and gentleness have been a great influence on the ELC-PNG. Pray that wise leaders would continue to rise up in the Lutheran Church in PNG.

Date: 3/7/2004

Submitted by: Bjørn Peterson

Journal Entry:

Location: Lae

Laying in bed sick today I was counting the hours till the return of my team. The days and hours are slow when you are completely without communication to friends or family. On Friday I checked myself into the hospital because the sickness wasn't improving. But after getting rehydrated with an IV I feel a bit better today, and the bugs seem to be getting out. And as I lay there this afternoon, I realized how much your team becomes like a family. In many ways you realize their value to you in their absence. The hours could not pass fast enough as I imagined how they would come in and what they would say. Tomorrow I will go home, I think, and Tuesday, healthy or not, I will go with the team and do my best to perform. Company is more important here than I could realize. I thank God for my teammates.



Bjørn Peterson

Top Ten Items in My Hospital Room

10. Window
9. IV
8. Water Cooler
7. Nurse Button
6. Pillow
5. Bed
4. Extra Pillow
3. TV
2. Remote Control
1. Air Conditioner

Date: 3/8/2004

Submitted by: Ruth Bowman

Journal Entry:

Location: Lae

Yet another day to run errands in the city. And another day to run frantically around like chickens—and wow the chickens here sure do run! (They're great at catching bugs, too, of which I am very in favor of!). This is the time when we return from the bush for one day and try to get a week's worth of errands done in the 6-8 hours that the stores are open.



Ruth Bowman

On this particular day, we were to move on to the next village—but unfortunately did not have nearly enough time to get everything done, so we stayed in Lae. Our main contacts are often found shaking their heads in amazement when we list off everything we want to get done. So we revert back to our fast paced frantic lives in America. I have definitely learned to slow down here. Life runs at a slower pace and time isn't placed at the high value we put on it in America. It's been good for me in a way—because I tend to try to take on too much, but the Papua New Guineans have helped me remember that the relationships we have, and being there for those you love is much more important than anything YOU want to accomplish. People we have met will miss 1-2 days of work just to come see us for 5 minutes before we leave an area. They truly live out the commandment to "Love others before yourself." They would do anything for a wontok (friend/family)—give money, time, energy, even give their life.

Date: 3/9/2004
Submitted by: Joel Mailand
Journal Entry:

Location: Ngarutzaniang (Kaiapit Circuit)

We left Lae for Kaiapit today: this will be a one week tour of Markham Valley. After negotiating with our contacts, we left today instead of Monday. There were so many things to get done, that it would have been a disaster to leave on such short notice. Also, we have Bjorn back with us! It's good to have a 5th teammate. We are now a team again.



Joel Mailand

I have learned that it is not unusual for things to start late or for people to leave a day after they planned to travel: so it is with our team. We are leaving a day later than we had planned. It's as if God were saying, "Joel, on this day, thou shalt learn the meaning of rest and flexibility. And thou shalt know that I am God of all time." In a way, it's necessary to make sure we are not trying to do too much. There are healthy limits to how much is done here. Ministry happens, and I am assured that God works through us for good. And I learn the ebb and flow of life here in PNG.

Today we drove to Kaiapit in a 15 passenger van. I missed those things. After spending a week traveling by canoe, power boat and sail canoe, having some protection from the sun is a welcome relief.

I talked with our van driver and navigator for part of the way. We talked in Tok Pisin and they told me a few jokes. I was able to laugh and say a few funny things to make them all laugh. I did not think I would be able to carry on a conversation 2 months ago. It was a struggle to form sentences and think fast enough. Amazing how far we have come. The van ride was 3 hours, and we are deep up the Markham Valley, surrounded by Mountain Range on the north and south. It's flat—a few trees. I looked up once in the van ride and thought we could have been somewhere in Washington.

Date: 3/10/2004
Submitted by: Bjørn Peterson
Journal Entry:

Location: Mampin (Sangong Circuit)

In Markham Valley there are many Christ in Culture groups. These groups are dedicated to keeping alive the traditions like dancing, costumes, and singsings. They have taken on the challenge of making Christ a part of these things without compromising the Gospel or making it inauthentic. We saw a number of singsing groups act out Biblical stories using traditional costumes, dance, and their native language and style of song. It was truly one of the most beautiful things I've seen in PNG. The Nau Culture Group was especially good. They are interested in coming to the U.S. to tour but cannot raise the funds. It's too bad. Anyhow, it is good to see the Gospel becoming a part of PNG culture separate from the German Lutheran system implanted in its beginning. As the ELC-PNG struggles to find National Identity, many believe groups like this are the key.



Bjørn Peterson

Top Ten Things I'll Do This Summer (other than Team)

10. Eat
9. Eat tacos
8. Eat a steak
7. Swimming
6. Sleep
5. Eat a Pizza
4. Sleep
3. Ride in our van
2. Eat then sleep

1. Get a professional massage

Date: 3/11/2004

Submitted by: Elise Coakley

Journal Entry:

Location: Mampim

Some of you reading this may wonder what we do with our time in PNG. We sing, obviously, we spend time meeting people and just hanging out with them, we eat, we travel, but most of all, we wait. I think waiting might be a national pastime, because everyone here does it and no one seems to mind, either. What do we wait for, you might ask? Just about everything. Today for example: we all woke early so we could be at breakfast at 8:00 am and then worship at 8:30 am. We get there, but no one else is there, so we wait for worship. We wait and we wait and by 10:00 am it still hasn't happened. In the meantime we're waiting for people from other villages to arrive so we can start the celebration, which was supposed to start at 9:00 am but doesn't end up starting until 2:00 pm. In the meantime what did we do? We waited. We talk to people, read, take naps, listen to music, whatever we can think of to do.

Now with all this waiting going on, I figure we must be learning something. For those of us who love schedules and sticking to them, this is probably teaching us to become more flexible and patient. For those of us who always want to be doing something, this may be teaching us to slow down and relax. Of course maybe I won't know what I should be learning through all this until I get back or even months later. I guess I'll have to wait and see.



Elise Coakley

Date: 3/13/2004

Submitted by: Elise Coakley

Journal Entry:

Location: Gabsongkeg (Wampar Circuit)

All year long we've been singing a song from PNG. We didn't know much about it when we came here, just that it was in one of 700 languages in the country. We knew the name of the village it came from, and we had a rough translation of the song in English. Once we got to PNG we learned much more about the song, such as the area it is from, the language it is in, and a more correct translation of the song in Pidgin and English. We sing it in almost every program and it is easily the crowd favorite. They love so much that we took the time to learn a real PNG song in a local language, and they request it over and over again. A few times we have run into people who knew the song or the language, but for the most part, it makes as much sense to them as it does for us.

This morning, however, we sang the Sago song for the village of Gabsongkeg, whose language is Wampar, the same language as the song. It was incredible to be able to sing the song for an entire village that can understand it. I was moved to tears and almost couldn't sing, and I'm not quite sure why. But I know that at that moment, I felt united with these people through it. We had come from the other side of the world to this small village to sing a song in their language and worship God together, and I suddenly felt the hugeness of God and how His love reaches to every corner of the world. I was so thankful to be able to share that moment.



Elise Coakley

Date: 3/14/2004

Submitted by: Ruth Bowman

Journal Entry:

Location: Gabsongkeg to Lae

I have been adopted! For a few days at least. During our stay in the small village of Gabsongkeg, we were split up into several different homes. I somehow managed to be the only one alone, which made me a little nervous at first, especially when my family spoke nothing but Tok Pisin to me and even started to teach me their local tok ples (language) right off the bat! But from the moment I tried to connect with the kids that first Friday night by reading them Bible Stories in Tok Pisin, the family welcomed me in as one of their own. Martha and Lini were the two adults I communicated with the most, and they made sure I was introduced to everyone in this large extended family, and that I knew who was related to who, how and why! Martha even gave up her bed for me and slept crammed in the children's room.



Ruth Bowman

My fondness grew as we sat together and "told stories." I heard tales of laughter and fun as we teased one another, stories of sorrow and pain as I learned of the death of a young mother/wife and how the family was working through this time of pain. I also began to answer to Ngkuwa—which is my name, Ruth, in their Wampar tok ples. I felt a part of this family and community as I walked across the village and would hear people call out, "Morning Ngkuwa!" I even heard stories of catching crocodiles with bare hands!

Sunday afternoon, they had a farewell singsing for us. Most of my family was involved somehow, and so of course I had to join them! I felt like I was back stage of a musical production! Ladies bustling around, getting in their costumes, the young guys playing with their spears, everyone taking their turn to get their makeup on. Within the hour we were all transplanted back several decades to the traditional PNG time period. And then we danced. Joel joined my family as well and we danced ALL afternoon. Heather and Elise found themselves in the midst of another singsing group as Bjorn ran around taking pictures.

Transport arrived late afternoon and 33 people jumped in the big PMV truck to escort the 5 of us back to Lae. Joyful singing erupted from our truck the entire 45 minute ride and announced our return to ELC-PNG headquarters for the last time. Thank you Father for giving me a family to love when I am so far away from my own. I know they will never forget me—for after all they've written down my wedding date! But likewise, I will never forget them.

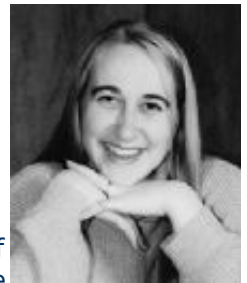
Date: 3/15/2004

Submitted by: Ruth Bowman

Journal Entry:

Location: Lae

I've seen fields of corn, beans, rice, wheat, sunflowers, and more, but not before today have I seen a field of crocodiles. Tens of thousands of crocs raised for the sole purpose of being harvested. A missionary couple from Martin Luther Seminary in Lae took us to see one of the largest crocodile farms in the world, right outside of Lae. We saw everything from the eggs, to 3-4 day old cute little baby crocs to the medium, adolescent aged teenage crocs, to the big, burly mama and papa crocs that tried to eat us J! It was sad to think they were all being raised to be killed and turned into a purse, belt, or jacket, but on the positive spin, the operation was bringing a lot of money into Papua New Guinea.



Ruth Bowman

I have been reminded plenty of times that there is always another side to the coin. In this instance, for example, I cringe at the thought of all those crocodiles dying so the rich of the world can display their wealth by wearing this expensive, desired skin. But on the other side, some of the money is going towards helping the small local villages, where the men hunt crocs by night with nothing but a torch and their hands to capture them alive.

So many times I have to remind myself to look deeper. There are always reasons and explanations behind behaviors and actions, and as much as I may disagree at times, I must not judge, but try to understand their reasons. This is a very important lesson to remember when dealing with cultural sensitivity. For, after all, if two people are both doing what they feel is right, then who's wrong?

Date: 3/16/2004
Submitted by: Joel Mailand
Journal Entry:

Location: Lae

This morning we visited with the seminarians at Martin Luther Seminary. Martin Luther is one of a handful of seminaries in PNG that provides education for pastors in the ELC-PNG. It also provides education for nearby countries like Solomon Islands and Philippines. We sang and performed a program for the students and had a question and answer time. It was here that we met Godfrey and he gave us a testimony of when he met his first New Dawn team in the Philippines. I sat down with him later and we shared some of the songs and stories.



Joel Mailand

He said that he was in 6th grade when they visited his school. While he and his friends were excited to see a music group from America, some were skeptical. They saw the short-term impact and doubted that it could have any significant value in ministering to youth. Godfrey, however, saw the teams' enthusiasm for the Gospel and the positive effects on youth. He formed his own youth ministry music team later on after university, and traveled throughout the Philippines, based on the team ministry model that he saw. He organized and led the group for two years before pursuing other ministry activities. He is now working towards becoming a pastor. Godfrey says that part of the reason he is at seminary is because of the ministry of the New Dawn team he saw back in 6th grade, and that you cannot know how a life will be changed in short term missions and ministry work.

I have met other people here in PNG who have seen previous teams. Some, like Pastor Yana, have had as many as 5 teams visit in his lifetime. The impact is revealed in a much different way. We don't know how the Spirit moves and how God will use us in this ministry. And in many ways I have to leave that to God and ask only that God would use me however He sees best.

Date: 3/17/2004
Submitted by: Bjørn Peterson
Journal Entry:

Location: Lae

Today was our last full day in Lae. I spent it running around Lae trying to figure out how to mail home all the gifts we've been given. In PNG, gift giving is extremely important. It is ingrained in all the many cultures here that visitors, whether PNG or ex-patriots, are given something when they come. Especially if the visitors do something for you. And these gifts are often their labor of love or the person's prize possession. And so, the unexpected ministry of receiving gifts and cherishing them as signs of love and oneness in Christ is as important a ministry as any we do here. It tells them that we are honored and that their best is not only good enough for us, but something we will treasure and share with our loved ones. So, when the bill to send some of these gifts home totaled over \$800, we scraped and scratched to find the money, knowing full well that the value of the gifts were nowhere near that. But when someone gives you all that they have, apologizing the whole way that they can't give you more, your heart is bound by that love. You will fight to save the smallest token.



Bjørn Peterson

Date: 3/18/2004
Submitted by: Elise Coakley
Journal Entry:

Location: Lae to Garoka

Driving is our main form of transportation in PNG and I'm sure it's been mentioned many times what an adventure it can be because of bad roads, run-down cars or crazy



drivers. So as we had another exciting drive today through the mountains on our way to Garoka, I realized a few things about driving in PNG. For one, I really don't like sitting in the front of the vehicle. My preferred seat is as far in the back as possible. This is not because it's more comfortable or because it feels safer, it is because I prefer to sit where my view of the windshield is as blocked and obstructed as possible. In this case, ignorance really is bliss. I don't like seeing just how narrow the road is as we speed around another sharp turn, or watch us narrowly miss colliding with a bus or nailing a group of pedestrians. And I'm sure the person sitting next to me (normally Bjorn) prefers that I don't see either, because then I don't dig my fingers into their arm as we narrowly miss another accident. I've come to accept that I cannot in any way improve the safety of our drivers, so there's no point in me pulling my hair (or my neighbor's) over something I have absolutely no control over. Which leads to the second thing I've realized about driving in PNG, I have to have an amazing amount of faith in our driver. Our driver has so much power in his hands it's quite unnerving, but I find that I almost always have faith that our drivers will get us safely to where we need to go. Even though they're often drivers who smoke and chew beetlenut while maneuvering through windy, narrow, mountainous roads, I believe that they will bring us safely through. And for those of you who know me and my wonderful personality quirks, me not worrying about something so big is an amazing improvement. Perhaps my faith in God's ability to protect me is growing, and my irrational worrying is starting to fade a little. Who knew that crazy driving in PNG could help me so much.

Elise Coakley

Date: 3/19/2004

Submitted by: Heather Carr

Journal Entry:

Location: Garoka to Mt. Hagen

Last night I slept in the softest, most comfortable bed in PNG. And it was even cold enough that I could sleep with heavy blankets piled on! That's because we're in the Highlands now, and it's chilly up here. Tropical island for 2 months has been nice, but also sweltering, so we've all been looking forward to the change in climate... and the cool breeze as we headed up the mountain didn't disappoint.



Heather Carr

To top off the joy of cooler weather, we're at a fabulous Lutheran Guest House here in Garoka, and we had the evening off. Joy of joys! So what did we do? Watched some TV, had an excellent western meal, and slept in soft beds... then woke up to hot showers and CEREAL for breakfast, and air chill enough to put on sweaters. After sweating non-stop for 2 months, this must be heaven...

Garoka is a pretty little town. We were given a tour of the 4-star Bird of Paradise Hotel, and were then given a tour of the coffee industry, which is one of the Highlands' main cash crops. It was a really interesting morning, and I learned all kinds of neat things about one of my favorite beverages... we saw coffee beans being cleaned, dried, sorted and bagged, learned about the different grades of coffee, how selling and exporting is done, and even got to taste some freshly roasted beans. Y-grade beans apparently have a slightly fruity taste, which is what Folger's prefers, and A-grade is the top, and is neutral in flavor (until roasted). A-grade is what Starbucks buys, and we also learned that they are very insistent on the best, sampling every carton shipped to ensure quality, AND that Starbucks insists on being able to track the coffee all the way back to the farmer, to make sure local farmers are getting what they deserve (fair prices). Well, what do you know... I guess Starbucks AREN'T big, bad corporation guys, and there's a reason their coffee costs so much :). That made all of us feel a lot more generous towards Starbucks. So, an interesting morning.

When we got back to the Guest House, however, we had to pack up and head to Mt. Hagen with Alung (Yabim District Youth Coordinator) to accompany us... but that meant saying goodbye to Faen. Faen is the National Youth Coordinator, and has been our main contact throughout the last 2 months. When the 2001 New Dawn team came, he got to travel all over with them, but this time he was too busy with his job to do more than show us around our first week, and then take care of us every time we came back to the ELC-PNG headquarters in Lae. But even though we saw him less than the last team, he has still been our "papa" while we've been here, and he has bent over backwards taking care of us in so many ways. Our first week here, he brought us to the National Synod Assembly, then down to Medang to see the town, and to visit his home on Karkar Island. We

spent 2 nights with him and his family, and had several long PMV rides to chat with and get to know him... and he's fun! A friendly, middle-aged man with a twinkle in his eye, a rolled cigar behind his ear or between his teeth, and a gentle heart and playful spirit. He has helped us learn pidgin, explained customs and history to us, had long discussions about youth work and attitudes in the culture and the church that need to change, not to mention telling us plenty of funny stories about the last team, and enjoying spending time joking around with us. I love that we can joke around with him, and even be sarcastic, and he gets it! He knows us well enough that he can laugh with us, admonish us, and exhort us, and that is fairly rare when 2 cultures collide. Most importantly, though, he's been a papa to us, and has given of his time and talents to us over and over again.

Today we had to say goodbye to Faen and several of us were crying, including him. I wished we had had more time to say goodbye to this man who has become so dear to us... but the PMV driver was impatient to be gone, so after a few pictures and tearful hugs, we pulled away. I was the last to hug him goodbye, and neither of us could really talk much for being choked up... and all I could think of was how HARD it is to say goodbye to someone when you know you'll probably never see them again this side of heaven. I remember the same kind of sorrow when we said goodbye to Henry and Nat in West Africa, two of the evangelists we'd spent a month with, and it still makes me sad. I realize there are few people I ever say goodbye to that I'll never see again... my friends and family in the States are all within reach, and I have made only a few deep connections with people around the world who I know may be OUT of my reach... and yet, Faen is one of them and I'm sad for ALL those I may never see again.

I also remember, however, what gave me peace after saying farewell to our friends in Africa.. and that is the assurance and joy that I WILL see them again in heaven... and what a party that's going to be! Life here on earth is fleeting, but heaven will be eternity, and there is going to be an amazing gathering of our bros and sisters from around the world up there! Some days, I'm so excited I can hardly wait! So, Faen... until we meet again, God's blessings. We love you!

Date: 3/20/2004

Submitted by: Joel Mailand

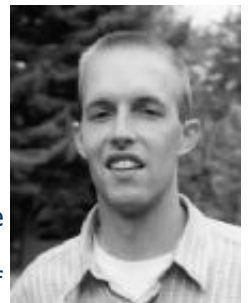
Journal Entry:

Location: Mt. Hagen

A day of sightseeing. We left Mt Hagen after breakfast to drive to Magu River for a bridge opening. This was a big enough deal for Sir Michael Somare (PNG's Prime Minister) to visit and give a speech, along with 29 other dignitaries and elected officials, and for all of them to get in on the speech-making opportunity. We drove about an hour to get there, and took a rest on top of a hill before arriving. As we climbed up to get a better view, a fleet of trucks and land rovers crawled towards us through the bush with police lights flashing. Peter, our contact, hurried us back to the truck to beat the parade. Just before the bridge, we stopped and let them pass: first a few police cars, then a white SUV worthy of any dignitary drove past. I recognized the face from the 50 kina bill: it was Sir Michael and I was within 5 feet of him. He smiled, waved, and said hello. I thought about approaching to give him a high five. But in my hesitation he drove past and I missed my chance. Of course, it's probably not a bad thing. Maybe my attempt at a high five would have been seen as an attempted offense. Who knows? Hopefully, though, he would have taken an informal greeting from an American with a smile.

The rest of the day was spent stuck in traffic that was stuck in the mud. The road back to Mt Hagen was badly rutted due to all the vehicles today. We sat and waited and sat and waited and watched trucks plow through the bog...

In the evening before our program we sang our warm-up songs, and Bjorn pointed out the Southern Cross on the horizon. It's our first sighting! I can check another thing off my list of "firsts."



Joel Mailand

Date: 3/21/2004

Submitted by: Heather Carr
Journal Entry:

Location: Mt. Hagen

Our drive to church this morning was one of the most beautiful we've ever experienced. Driving through the misted mountains, zipping up and down incredibly steep roads through mountain passes, flanked by gorgeous waterfalls and deep green rain-forested cliffs... breathtaking. I feel like I'm seeing National Geographic LIVE, and there's so much to look at that I have to just drink it in... and I still want more. Beautiful. What a blessing, to be here, experiencing this...



Heather Carr

The congregations we have met with these last two days have been beautiful, too. This morning's service was primarily in the local tok ples instead of Pidgin, and it was fascinating to hear something so foreign spoken so fast :). We sang a few songs, and got the whole congregation on their feet singing "Mercy is Falling," and shook at least 200 enthusiastic hands afterward. At the house where we ate lunch, the 3-year-old daughter was fascinated by us, and kept yelling out "white man!" and then ducking around the corner, screeching and giggling. :) Kids.

Last night's and tonight's programs were the most enthusiastically received we've had in all of PNG so far, which was great, since our energy was lagging. The crowd definitely livened us up, though—they would clap two or three times in the middle of some songs, when they especially liked them! That kind of reaction is a refreshing change from many of the congregations that have watched us with no emotion on their faces... it's always encouraging to have eye-contact and encouraging smiles, and nods of approval. Of course, the silent crowd can often be just as deeply moved as the responsive one, but it sure is easier to feel good about what you're doing and how God is working when you can see it on people's faces. Tonight, I am grateful for the boost it has given me—for the simple blessing of having a warm welcome from a responsive crowd.

Date: 3/22/2004
Submitted by: Ruth Bowman
Journal Entry:

Location: Mt. Hagen to Wabag

How do you say goodbye forever to someone who has touched a part of your heart? We have to say goodbye so often in this type of traveling ministry. At times it almost makes me afraid to get close to any particular person. Unfortunately or fortunately, I have defied this fear several times here in PNG, and today was another one of those hard days where I had to find words to say goodbye forever. Alung, who had been traveling with us for a little over two weeks, had completed his task of escorting us to the highlands, and now it was time to go our separate ways.



Ruth Bowman

Discussing as a team, the struggle of always saying goodbye, brought some comfort to me. Elise mentioned that remembering the relationship for what it was and why it touched you is most important. And I think she is right. I will always remember Alung for his bluntness! He was certain to give very honest critiques after programs and he definitely said that my sister was more beautiful than me (that's you Hannah!). But I will also remember staying up into the wee early hours of the morning talking about life and the struggles if oftentimes gives us. He provided a fatherly, protective, laid-back attitude for us—and as a team I know he blessed us greatly. So even though I will never see him again, his memory is in my heart and his life is in God's hands.

On a lighter note, we traveled and arrived at Amaptaka International School in Enya province, but as quoted, "As expected in the land of the unexpected, they weren't expecting us!" Which turned into a huge blessing, for we were able to arrange to stay at school for almost two weeks to help out in the classrooms, taking over some classes for all the overworked teachers. I get to teach in PNG after all! Yeah!! God continues to bless us with amazing opportunities!

Date: 3/23/2004
Submitted by: Joel Mailand
Journal Entry:



Joel Mailand

Location: Highlands International School, Wabag

Our second day here at the Highlands International School. The weather is beautiful, and by beautiful I mean cold. Today started out fine: the sun began to shine, clouds rolling away, dew on the grass. Then disaster struck, like a mighty hurricane—devastation everywhere. Ok, it was in my stomach, but I'm pretty sure there was a hurricane going on down there. I felt rumblings at about 9:00 AM and by 10:30 my world fell apart. I got sick by some bug (not a real bug, but a bacteria, or virus, or parasite or something) and it hit hard. For the next 6 hours my body ached like I had been beat up by thugs, I had the scoots (ask my mother what that means) and throwing up and rolling around in bed. The score was Bug—30 million points, Joel—0 points. Now I can add getting really sick to my list of firsts in PNG.

There were 2 comforting things through this whole experience: One was I moved from my room in the guys' dorm to the Director's apartment next door. Steven and Sandra are wonderful. They were kind of a home away from home, and gave me a quiet place and a couch to lay on.

The second was that Bjorn came over to the house and we sat and talked for a while. I was pretty wiped out, and for the most part sat in silence and waited for the storm to pass.

This is one of those things that happens in life, we get sick and we have teammates to rely on. They do get to see us at our best and worst.

I learned to rely on others today. Not an easy thing, and yet so important.

Date: 3/24/2004
Submitted by: Bjørn Peterson
Journal Entry:



Bjørn Peterson

Location: International Highlands School, Wabag

Marie is a teacher here at the International School near Wabag. She teaches 5th and 6th grade. Marie lives alone in the "Cold House" and Joel and I are her roommates for a few weeks. Marie is 68 and was a missionary in Africa for 18 years. She had a tumor the size of an apple removed from her stomach. She has had skin cancer and breast cancer. She graduated from high school in south Texas with Dr. James Dobson. And now she has recently moved to the highlands of PNG, right into the heart of tribal fighting to teach 5th and 6th graders in two classrooms more or less at the same time. She cares deeply for her students and worries about them all the time. Her greeting in heaven someday will surely be, "Well done, good and faithful servant."

Top Ten Teams I Will Root for in the 2006 World Cup

10. Germany, Nigeria, Mexico
9. South Korea
8. China
7. Norway
6. England
5. Italy
4. Argentina
3. USA
2. Iran
1. Brazil

Top One Team I Have Never, and Will Never, Cheer For

1. France

Date: 3/25/2004

Submitted by: Elise Coakley

Journal Entry:

Location: Highlands Lutheran International School, Wabag

Unpacking, it's a beautiful thing. Normally you unpack when you're finally home after a trip or vacation. We unpacked this week, and though we're not home, it's just as glorious. For the next few weeks we'll be staying at the Highlands Lutheran International School in the Enga Province. We'll be helping around the school in whatever ways we can, teaching classes, leading devotion and chapel, playing games, and just hanging out with the students. I'm so thankful for the chance to stay here awhile. Our last three weeks in PNG will be spent here, and I'm glad to be able to make a few deeper connections and more lasting impressions than just a quick program. Relationships are my ministry, by being a friend and an example I minister best, so I'm very thankful for the relationships we will make these weeks and it will definitely be with sadness that we leave.



Elise Coakley

Date: 3/26/2004

Submitted by: Heather Carr

Journal Entry:

Location: Highlands Lutheran International School, Wabag

We got two mail packets today! Woohoo! They've been waiting for us at the Bishop's house for us to get to the Highlands, and he finally brought them over today. We were like little kids at Christmas, tearing into a big pile of presents—getting mail on team, especially when so far away from home, is such a huge blessing! And what a pile of goodies we got... notes from other teams (and teamers' parents, like the fantabulous Torbit family ;), letters from family and friends, valentines ;) (yeah, it takes mail a while to get to us), funny and meaningful letters from our directors (and their assistants)... even a whole packet of notes and cards from our prep church in Agoura Hills, CA—thank you SO MUCH St Paul's! Thank you for your prayers and support, and especially for the joy of getting a whole PACKET of well wishes! You're the bomb.



Heather Carr

There were also random things, which made us smile—I got a BOOK from my friend Kressen—literally. She sent me "Bad Girls of the Bible," which is awesome (and even better for the fact that she sent it to me cuz it made her think of me ;). He-he...), but very cool. Ruth got a card that was a huge set of LIPS... very random. Oh, and the icing on the cake was a certain someone who received a letter addressed "To my schnooky-lumps." That was DEFINITELY the prize-winner, though I'll let the claimant remain anonymous ;).

So, our day was made... mail has made our day twice as good as it would have been otherwise. The rest of the day became a blur... we had some time for one-on-ones (wonder of wonders!) and then did some sing-a-longs and puppets for the elementary kids, and an "American" program for the High School students. It felt really good to be singing songs (AND explaining/gluing them!) in English, and to be able to give a message again aimed specifically at teenagers and the issues they deal with. Though our Pidgin program is also meaningful to give, sometimes it's hard to tell whether we've been understood completely, or whether we've even said what we meant to say! But in English, we can actually expound on our convictions a bit, and hopefully hit some points that the students will find meaningful.

I really like the feel of being back at an International School. And it is similar in many ways to the school in India I was teaching at last year... it's in the mountains, everything is in English, the material, curriculum, and students are all much more western than the surrounding communities... it makes for an all-around interesting place. It also makes for a very easy, comfortable setting for us to do a more relaxed, long-term kind of ministry. We get to hang out with the kids over a long

period of time, and have meaningful, challenging conversations, and also play with them. After our busy, in-and-out, pidgin-only experiences of the last 2 months, this is like a holiday, and for more than the fact that we've escaped the extreme heat. To do a form of ministry that we all feel comfortable and relaxed with, and yet still get to experience a new culture and learn a lot, is like the icing on the cake of our tour. Of course, staying in ONE PLACE for two weeks doesn't hurt, either ;).

So, tonight was a relaxed evening of American-ish fun: a game of Capture the Flag after dark (in the rain), and then sitting and watching a movie while munching on Ruth's caramel rolls, before checking out the dance party going on in the dorm, and rolling into a soft bed under warm blankets. Ahh... what a day.

Date: 3/29/2004

Submitted by: Ruth Bowman

Journal Entry:

Location: Highlands International School, Wabag

For the types of activities we do on team, I sometimes have wondered what good my 4 year college teaching degree is doing me this year. But at last it has come through for me, because while here at HILS we are teaching! I get to teach in PNG! I was able to teach a few subjects in Grades 5 and 6, Religion for Grade 7 and help tutor students in Grades 3 and 4 and 11. Teaching overseas someday has always been a dream for me, and the experience teaching here in the PNG Highlands has reinforced those feelings again. There's a different satisfaction or reward in teaching in another country—possibly because it's a whole new challenge dealing with other cultures and a new language.

My 5th grade class was the most fun for me. I taught the 9 students 5 lessons on verbs, and every day I had them write a short journal entry for me. On the day I asked them to write about "If they could go anywhere in the world, where would they go and why," one cute little girl, Mathilda, wrote in her journal something that touched my heart. She wrote, "... I want to meet you and your group (in America) because your group the New Dawn are gone I would be very lonely and I would not be a good student in English cause you are not there to teach grade 5. So please can you teach us for the whole year—please."

They are in need of teachers here. After most supplies were burnt in the tribal fighting, teachers are having to double classes up for lack of teachers, and most text books are few or non-existent, and copies must be made for the students. I was honored to have the chance to teach at this great school for a few weeks. My college degree isn't worthless after all!



Ruth Bowman

Date: 3/31/2004

Submitted by: Joel Mailand

Journal Entry:

Location: Highlands Lutheran International School, Wabag

A Lesson in Electricity

Ok, my assignment for the week has been to help test, load software and reset the date on some computers that have been donated to Highlands Lutheran International School. Brent Kilback, the Principal, worked very hard to bring them over from North America. The first part of my task required me to plug in each computer to see if it works. Not so difficult, right? I work independently of the rest of my teammates, in a back room behind the main office. It's quiet and a change of pace from the hectic traveling and meeting lots of people.

Back to the lesson. There are, in different parts of the world, standards for voltage in wall plugs. In some parts (North America) it is 100 volts, and in other parts (PNG) 220 volts. And now, the real-life experience. As I quietly and diligently worked, or "plugging away" so to speak, I picked a



Joel Mailand

computer, plugged it in and pushed the "On" button. This was followed by a POP! and sparks, a puff of black, sooty smoke, me jumping for the ceiling, and the Homer-ic exclamation, "Doh!". Brent came in to see me startled but ok. He said he had done it before, and it's easy to do. No harm done... just wounded pride. What's cool is that the overall mission field includes people needed in specialty areas, like computers or accounting. I'm glad to use my modest knowledge of computers as a ministry tool.

Date: 4/1/2004

Submitted by: Elise Coakley

Journal Entry:

Location: Highlands Lutheran International School, Wabag

One of the students at HLIS (Highlands Lutheran International School) told me that things were boring here before we came. They would just sit around and be bored, she says, but with us here everyone is just more enthusiastic and has more energy. I'm sure it's a nice change to have new people, and not just new but younger people who are closer to their age than most of the teachers. I'm sure it's exciting to be able to worship every night with new worship songs they haven't heard before. I'm sure it's exciting to have new people to play soccer with or sit and talk with. I'm sure glad we got to come here and bring a little excitement to a school that's definitely hurting and in need of support. I pray that the excitement we bring doesn't end when we leave and I pray that I can find a way to continue to support this school even when we're gone.



Elise Coakley

Date: 4/2/2004

Submitted by: Heather Carr

Journal Entry:

Location: Highlands Lutheran International School, Wabag

I had almost forgotten what a day of rest felt like... but today was definitely such a day for me. In fact, the last two weeks in general have been more rest than we've gotten in the last 2 months put together, due to staying in one spot, having normal, repetitive hours and routine, and just getting to relax into the flow of life at school. I have even had time to READ... for FUN. (Gasp!) I know, scandalous... and that's what I did, almost the whole day. Sat on my bed and read. Ahh... what a day. I finished one of the two books I've been reading this week, and gave the other one (Atlas Shrugged by Ayn Rand) up as too thick (in thought, not width) until I have much more time on my hands. It's fascinating, but I've been reading it in my spare time for 2 weeks, and I'm only half done.. and I've been ignoring other stuff I SHOULD be doing (like writing journals) to read it, so I've put it aside until I can buy it, cuz I'm afraid I won't finish by the time we leave. So, that's 3 (and a half) books I've read in the last few weeks. I love having a library close at hand—we all raided it our first day here, and have been soaking up the spare time we've had with the plethora of books we discovered we wanted to read. What a LUXURY.



Heather Carr

Of course, my teammates were all busy—they were still teaching classes today. Bjørn and Elise have been helping the principal with HS religion classes, Joel has been doing computer stuff with the H-schoolers and puppets with the elementary, and RUTH—wow. She has jumped right in—you'd think she was certified as an elementary teacher or something ;). So she's been teaching non-stop to all different ages—math and spelling to 5th and 6th, Religion to 7th, tutoring in English, crafts with little kids—she's done it all. I had some lessons, too... but only a few. I taught a music class each day Monday-Thursday to different ages, and I've been teaching jump-rope skills during recess, but otherwise my days have been pretty free. Today I had nothing but recess and reading... ahh... but by 3 PM I felt like a lazybug, so I went to find some excitement. I ended up talking to one of the volunteer teacher aides, Moriah, for several hours and had some really fun conversation. She's 19, from Canada, and is here for the year with her parents, who were asked to come help teach, etc, during the teacher shortage. She grew up between BC and Guatemala, where her dad taught for 3 years, and has had some interesting experiences, and is a curious and inquisitive, fun person to talk

to.

After dinner there was a game night for the high schoolers (they board here, so Friday nights are a par-tay) and it was a rip-roarin' good time. I won Scrabble (170 points to 125, my closest opponent... oops, I guess I had a little advantage, since I've been speaking English a little longer than the rest), Bjørn presided over a rousing game of darts, and there were tons of other fun little circles all over the room. Once the games were packed up and the students scattered to go talk, hang out or join the dance party in the common room, New Dawn went next door, to the dorm parents' house, and relaxed. We cooked ourselves some cookies, watched "The Count of Monte Cristo" (great movie), and just vegged out. See what I mean about a day of rest? ;) What a blessing today was.

Date: 4/3/2004

Submitted by: Joel Mailand

Journal Entry:

Location: Highlands Lutheran International School, Wabag

Today was quiet and uneventful. This past week we have been teaming up with teachers here at Highlands Lutheran International School. Some of us taught lessons on music and rhythm, others Bible classes, and information technology. It's quite a change of pace and we have been able to flex our teaching muscles. Everyone on team has camp experience or teaching experiences. We have been able to interact with kids, both in and out of the classroom, and gotten to know them well. Many students live on campus in dorms, and some come in from the surrounding villages. In the evenings students have study time, either in the library or at teacher's houses. It makes for a small, tight-knit community of students.

There must be some universal code for teenagers everywhere, because here (as in the States) we have heard the cries of, "This place is SO boring." The older students lament this, and spend hours listening to music cranked up to eleven on their stereos, or watching TV, like tonight, on the weekends. But there are plenty of things to do. Whether it's sports or a dance or games night, everyone participates. It's community time, and the youth here find ways to entertain themselves. We have been blessed to be here, and moreover, to be invited to join and take part.



Joel Mailand

Date: 4/4/2004

Submitted by: Elise Coakley

Journal Entry:

Location: Highlands Lutheran International School, Wabag

Palm Sunday. My first Palm Sunday overseas. I was excited to go to church this morning and see how PNG celebrates Palm Sunday. With their festive singing and dancing, I knew it would be exciting. So I was quite disappointed when church this morning had absolutely nothing to do with Jesus' triumphal entry. So, we took matters into our own hands and decided to lead a Palm Sunday service this evening. It was wonderful. We had some of the girls gather us some ferns, there are no palms in the highlands, and everyone had a branch. We were singing and waving our branches, rejoicing in remembering our Lord's entry. Palm Sunday is no longer just another holiday for me, I can feel the excitement and celebration. After being welcomed to so many villages with singsings, people dancing and singing at our arrival, I can imagine what it was like to see the Messiah, riding into Jerusalem. It was a party! There were no hints at the gruesome death or the heartbreaking betrayal, there was only celebration. And that's what it was for us tonight, a chance to celebrate our Lord together. I never thought Palm Sunday was that special, it was just another story about Jesus, but now I see that it was probably the biggest party Jesus ever went to and a chance to celebrate and rejoice in our hope in the Lord.



Elise Coakley

Date: 4/5/2004
Submitted by: Ruth Bowman
Journal Entry:

Location: Highlands Lutheran International School, Wabag

I'd be willing to bet many of us have heard stories of how children used to have to walk to school—uphill both ways of course, a few miles in stormy weather. I've always held respect for my grandparents as they related these stories to me. But I would like to introduce you to a new friend of mine, Andrew Mathew.



Ruth Bowman

Andrew is a Grade 11 student here at HLIS with whom I've had the chance to speak several times. He grew up in a small village up in the mountains, his family living off the land, as about 90% of PNGians do. Money is not necessary to survive here, unless of course you have high ambitions of education and city life. Andrew's family was very supportive of his school ambitions and did everything they could to pay the school fees. Once he reached high school, the only school was a good 3-4 hour walk away through the mountains. He would leave at 4 AM with a "torch" to light his way, a bag full of kau kau (sweet potatoes) and for as many days as his food would last he would sleep on the desks of the school, only to return home when he got too hungry. His life reflects his determination. When he was tested to win 1 of 5 scholarship positions here at the Highlands International School, he passed. His uncle bought him some shoes so he could fit in a little more, and now he is here studying 6 hours every night and some in the morning as well. He took time from his studying in order to sit down with me, to talk about life, God, dreams, and the future. I am honored to call such a disciplined young man my friend, and I know in my heart God has some amazing things planned for him.

Date: 4/8/2004
Submitted by: Elise Coakley
Journal Entry:

Location: Highland Lutheran International School

We've been blessed with free time the past few weeks that we have been at the Highland School, which has meant more time to read. The school has a small but decent library and we have all been continuously checking out books and reading them. One of the books I've read has an idea that really struck me. The book is called "Addicted to Mediocrity" by Franky Schaeffer, and one of the themes he addresses is the "Christian" life and the "secular" life. Often we split our lives between the times we are worshipping or serving God and the times we are not, and that often we are only Christians within our "Christian" life. He argues that God gives each of us one life, not two, and that everything we do should reflect our faith. Simple and everyday tasks can still be lived with a Christian heart and just because you aren't obviously praising God doesn't mean that you aren't. Our lives should be full of worship and reverence and thankfulness, even in the activities we would label "secular." Jesus doesn't ask for only part of our lives, He asks for all of them, therefore we should live our entire life for God.



Elise Coakley

Date: 4/9/2004
Submitted by: Heather Carr
Journal Entry:

Location: Highland Lutheran International School

Today was relatively uneventful... not at all a Good Friday-ish feeling day. We were basically on our own at the school today, and spent most of it rehearsing and getting ready for Australia next week. A productive day, in that sense, but otherwise, not much distinguished it.



Heather Carr

One nice part of the afternoon was that Sandra and Steve and Charlotte took us to the Kumul

Lodge, about an hour-long drive to a gorgeous spot with a nice view of the surrounding valleys. We had a drink, sat by the fireplace and chatted, and then headed back to pack and wrap up loose ends. Watched a few movies, stayed up too late, and said our goodbyes to this gorgeous setting—tall Eucalyptus and pine trees, green mountains stretching into the distance, vibrant flowers, and even the birds, with their unique calls, and the cicadas, with their ear-piercing whine. My favorite bird call was either the one that sounded like it was singing up a major scale, or the one doing vocal warm-ups with its triad arpeggiations... very interesting bird calls. Great place, all around., and the longest time we've had ANYWHERE since training last August... that in itself is enough to cement it in our memories.

Date: 4/10/2004

Submitted by: Heather Carr

Journal Entry:

Location: Highland Lutheran International School to Mt Hagen

It's almost the last round of goodbyes in PNG. I think one of the hardest things I struggle with about being on team is how we're constantly having to say goodbye to the wonderful people we've gotten to know. Sometimes it feels like a whole YEAR of goodbyes, said sooner than I would like, to fascinating, fun, and wonderful people that we've often just met. Just met, and already goodbye... one of the downsides of short-term ministry. I still love what I get to do for a year, but it doesn't seem to get easier to say goodbye to some of the families and friends that have touched us so deeply in our short time here.



Heather Carr

Bjørn has shared stories about several of them from the school, but in the last three days we've had to bid farewell to all of them... The students left on Wednesday and Thursday, after a farewell banquet and heartfelt thanks accompanied by some tears. A group of the HS guys stayed till Thursday AM, so Wednesday night we watched movies and Bjørn played darts with them into the wee hours. Thursday and Friday we spent some good team time getting stuff done, since we basically had the school to our selves, and this morning we gave our final hugs before piling into the PMV mini-bus to take us down the mountain. Stuart and Stanley were chowing down the last of the chocolate cake we gave them as they hugged us goodbye and thanked us over and over for the treat... what a couple of cuties. Charlotte pulled herself out of bed by 8 AM to see us off, and Merryn was there to make sure we were seen off properly and thanked with good hugs... and of course, Sandra and Steven, who gave SO MUCH to us these 3 weeks... use of their kitchen, TV, laundry machine, their kids to play with, their time to take us around, their keys to get us into the computer late at night... I'm going to miss these people. Moriah left yesterday (a Canadian teacher's aide who is our age, that I got to hang out a lot with), and her parents, and Marie, and Brent, the others were gone on holiday already... so at least our goodbyes were short ;). But, as I've said before, sad. I don't know if I'll ever see any of these people again... so I guess I've got a great party to look forward to in heaven! That's a consolation that gives me peace as I say final farewells to these members of the Body of Christ who have truly become my brothers and sisters. Farewell, and see you on the flip side ;).

Date: 4/11/2004

Submitted by: Elise Coakley

Journal Entry:

Location: Mt Hagen

Today was the most un-Easterlike day I've ever had. Okay, maybe I'm exaggerating, but it definitely didn't feel like Easter, at least not how I'm used to it. Like Palm Sunday, I was expecting celebrations and singing, just like all the sing-sings we've experienced. Instead we got a church service like any other Sunday, except for one or two Easter hymns and baptisms of many young children (in PNG they only baptize people a few times a year, Easter being one of those times). It left me wondering, "What was that? What happened to the glorious celebration of Jesus' victory? What happened to the joy and peace after remembering Jesus'



Elise Coakley

death? How was that Easter at all?"

Thinking about it, I see that my Easter this year, though strange for me, was perhaps similar to what the disciples experienced on Easter. They were expecting Jesus to enter Jerusalem and deliver Israel, expecting Him to finally fulfill His role as Messiah. On Good Friday their hopes were dashed as their Messiah was executed. I imagine they were wondering what had happened and how their leader could so quickly become a criminal to the rest of the world. And so on Easter, at the news of Jesus' resurrection, perhaps the disciples were more confused than anything. It would take time and the coming of the Holy Spirit before they would understand just what Jesus' death and resurrection meant. And so, that first Easter, I bet the disciples found themselves asking, "What was that?" The celebration wasn't clear and they weren't quite sure how to react.

While I'll be glad to get back to more familiar Easter traditions next year, such as joyous celebration with songs and words, I am thankful to have glimpsed what Easter may have been like for those who first experienced it.

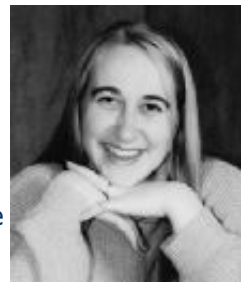
Date: 4/12/2004

Submitted by: Ruth Bowman

Journal Entry:

Location: Mt. Hagen to Port Moresby

We are beginning and ending—our transition has begun. We have begun to say goodbye to our time in PNG and are having to prepare our selves for yet another adventure in Australia. We flew out of Mt Hagen mid-morning to arrive in Port Moresby by lunch time. The local church leaders were there to pick us up and take care of us with all our last minute things we needed to do.



Ruth Bowman

We've done a lot of saying goodbye this year, and I wish I could say it gets easier, but it really doesn't. Anytime I am personally affected by a person or place, I leave a part of myself with them,. But I also take a part of them with me. So now again I was faced with the dilemma of saying goodbye, only this time to an entire culture and way of life. Thankfully we had the perfect opportunity. That night in Port Moresby they had arranged, to our surprise, for us to do a program. We arrived that evening to a packed Kiko Good Shepherd Lutheran Church! After the now familiar formalities, we began our last-ever program in PNG. We couldn't have asked for a better response from the congregation. They clapped, danced, sang, and worshipped with us. I looked around at all the beautiful brown faces with eyes that watched us with great intensity and I was able to say goodbye in my heart. Goodbye to a people and culture I had grown to love; goodbye to those special friendships that will have to remain in PNG and those that will hopefully carry over into my life after team; and finally goodbye to a chapter in my life and to an experience that will forever shape my view of the world. I left the church that night knowing it was finished. I had given it my all, with God pulling me along part of the time, but I had no regrets. My Father had successfully introduced me and taught me about my brothers and sisters of PNG, and I am confident I will always feel as though a part of my family exists in a small island just below the equator on the other side of the world.

Date: 4/13/2004

Submitted by: Joel Mailand

Journal Entry:

Location: PNG to Sydney, AUSTRALIA

Today was our last official day in PNG. God has blessed us so far in our journey. As we left the runway the nose of the plane lifted, reaching for the clouds scattered over Port Moresby. The sun was already an hour or so into morning. We had been up since 4:45 at the guesthouse, and left with little ceremony. It was a cool fall predawn, and the next door neighbors' dog barked as the van was loaded. It's a sound we heard so often



Joel Mailand

in the morning, along with the roosters, all 17,000 of them, and pigs rooting around in the scrap piles. When we arrived in January it was late at night, and humid. Ruth and her family and all the local kids in Ampo (ELC-PNG Headquarters) were there to greet us. Everyone was wide-eyed and tired from the trip from Los Angeles.

Now as we travel to Australia the mood is one of completion... not of closure—that will happen later. We spent some time on Sunday making lists (our team is big on making lists). We wrote down things that we will miss and what we liked about PNG, and things we are excited about getting back to.

Two things stand out in my mind that I wrote:

1) How did I get this far? Or how did the team get this far? God put some amazing people in my life, not only here in PNG. For the past three months we have met so many wonderful people, and as cliché as that sounds, it's not. The guys who invited me to sing with them showed me hospitality and culture and how important making friends is. We were brought together in and through the Body of Christ; how cool is that? I also have some awesome friends back in the States who encouraged me to step out of my comfort zone and apply for team (I'm sure it's fun for them to live vicariously through my experiences too ;).

2) I am a small part of the body of Christ. There are so many missionaries who came before me and there are so many Christians in PNG. Otto Hinge, who was a pastor here in the 1940s and 1950s, told us that he would walk 3 or 4 days from Mt Hagen to Markham Valley. Now it's about a 12-hour drive. Just last week I taught computer skills for students at Highland Lutheran School. As a part of the Body of Christ our work and our travels bring together different members and strengthens and renews faith in all involved. And I am reminded of God's presence and the sacredness of those acts.

Having to say goodbye so many times and to so many new friends while here in PNG was hard. Usually we would meet people, get to know them, and just about the time everyone was comfortable and enjoying themselves it was time to go. Plenty of times we wanted to sit and stay. There are lots of places we would love to return to.

The joy that we shared and that was said to us many times is, "If we don't see you again here, we'll see you in heaven."

How cool is that?

Date: 4/14/2004

Submitted by: Bjørn Peterson

Journal Entry:

Location: Sydney, Australia

Our first full day in Australia was spent sight-seeing in Sydney. We went to the famous Bondi Beach and enjoyed going in the many surf or souvenir shops and took some lunch to the park along the beach. Afterward we drove back downtown and walked to Darling Harbor. We are accompanied by Tanya, Aimee and Tim. Tanya and Aimee are our main contacts in New South Wales (the state we are in for our three weeks). They are great. The two of them run a Bible camp that is really the heart of the Lutheran Church in N.S.W. Tanya and Aimee have a great passion and vision. Tim is the president of youth in Victoria and has worked with Youth Encounter teams before. He's a lot of fun. They're all a lot of fun. It is nice to have people who understand our humor and to get some food we are used to. Driving on the left side of the road has been easier than I anticipated. All in all, my first impressions of Australia are really pretty good. I wish we had more time here.



Bjørn Peterson

Top Ten Things I Want in the U.S.

10. Mountain Dew

9. To go to a movie

8. Taco Bell
7. Professional Massage
6. A day to just sleep
5. Taco Bell
4. Mellow Yellow
3. Steak
2. Taco Bell
1. A real date with my fiancée'

Date: 4/15/2004

Submitted by: Elise Coakley

Journal Entry:

Location: Sydney, Australia

We've been in Australia for a few days now and I keep asking myself, "Why aren't I going through culture shock?" The change from Papua New Guinea to here was massive, things are so much different, yet I find myself very smoothly flowing into the lifestyle here. We're staying at a church right in the heart of Sydney and so everything is within walking distance: the Opera House, the Sydney Bridge, Darling Harbour, Circular Quay, the Tower. We're in the middle of everything and there's always something going on. I love it here. The city is beautiful and exciting and fun, the people are so friendly and have great accents, and the food is almost familiar. So why aren't I going through culture shock? Who knows but I am certainly thankful to be here.



Elise Coakley

Date: 4/16/2004

Submitted by: Heather Carr

Journal Entry:

Location: Sydney to Campbelltown, Australia

This afternoon we traveled out of Sydney for the first time, and ventured a little bit into New South Wales... to one of Sydney's suburbs. ;) But our time there was excellent and I especially loved my hosts—they were just like me! They were busy and bustling, and so talkative that I didn't even have to try to think of conversation. It just flowed naturally out of them... and it flowed FAST. It may have been faster than even I talk, and that in itself amazed me (and made my teammates laugh when I told them, since they have a hard time imagining ANYONE talking faster or more than I do). But it was perfect for me... I felt right at home and very welcomed, whereas some of my quieter teammates may have felt overwhelmed. But I LOVED it ;) Barbara and Peter's second son, Jurgen, is my brother's age (just a few years younger than me), and to add to the random fun, when he got home at 2 AM that night from the club, I was still up on the internet... so of course he and his friend convinced me to stay up another hour and hang out with them while they discussed everything and nothing in those great, Australian accents. Seriously, randomly fun, and I felt like I was in college again... staying up late, procrastinating, eating, and laughing instead of studying or sleeping... good times all around. Plus, it was casual and low-key, and I found it easy to just chill with them like I would with my bro and his friends... maybe just something as simple and ordinary as that was a small part of why Jurgen came to our program the next night though he certainly didn't need to, or maybe even want to. Or maybe a little, minor factor for why he decided to drive into Sydney for church Sunday morning, and spend the afternoon with the youth group or a friend who goes to that church, bumming around Sydney-town with us. It was a fun, casual couple of days... they showed us where the "woman in the red dress" scene from The Matrix was filmed and we took wacky pictures, they shopped and joked with us in the bargain souvenir shop, they traded stories, laughed, ate... and went on their way. Maybe nothing... but maybe something. Maybe the best ministry is done in just these ways... relating to people on their level. Spending an afternoon together doing not much. Sharing God's love in laughter and casual conversation that doesn't even get "spiritual." Planting a seed... or giving the one that's there the space, the permission, and the grace to grow on its own, without feeling threatened or pushed.



Heather Carr

Maybe that's what this whole idea of "relational ministry" is supposed to be about, some days.

Date: 4/17/2004

Submitted by: Joel Mailand

Journal Entry:

Location: Campbelltown, Australia

This morning I woke up and ate breakfast with our billets (host family). Had my first scone, and first crumpet. Crumpets are cool, like a cross between a pancake and an English muffin. Put some strawberry jam on top and It's excellent! We drove out to Wodlongong and spent the afternoon at the beach. Event though it's fall here and the water is cooler, there were still some diehard surfers and body boarders. Bjørn and Heather and I went in and tried tackling the waves, then coasting in on them and generally had fun, getting wet and sandy.

Some of our host family members came along with us to the beach, and so we got to know them. We watched Alice, who is 3 years old, feed leftover sandwiches to the birds. Surprisingly they like vegemite.

This evening we had a program at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church. Our first in Australia! The building itself once was used as silos and they have been converted into a kitchen, a nursery, office, and classroom space for the church.

Pastor Shuly and the congregation really enjoyed the program and we spent time visiting with them afterwards. We drove back to our billets in Sydney for the night.

I'm experiencing culture shock of having our own van and driving back and forth to church and home by ourselves. It's a strange freedom, but welcome nevertheless.



Joel Mailand

Date: 4/18/2004

Submitted by: Ruth Bowman

Journal Entry:

Location: St Paul's, Sydney

A walk around The Rocks Harbor area of Sydney, pizza in the park, topped off with some delightful conversations made up our Sunday afternoon. We had a chance to hang out with the "youth" (college +) after the two Sunday morning worship services. The whole day was excellent. This was our first Sunday morning worship in Australia and it was incredible. Praise songs, skits, puppets—we did it all, and I felt like I was worshipping. Pastor Fred, the pastor at St. Paul's, is a wonderful man who I thoroughly enjoyed getting to know. He reminds me a lot of my dad with the way he quietly demands respect, and has the silent humor that seems to come out of nowhere at times. As he teased me unobtrusively in the middle of the church service—I felt right at home ;).

The people have been amazing. I treasure the great conversations I had with my peers in the sun and while eating pizza on the green grass. And that evening added the frosting to the cake as we met with some amazing, dedicated, and giving people who run a coffee shop with free coffee Sunday night for whoever comes in. Normally people who are down on their luck come. This type of social work has always been a passion of mine and I was so glad we got to see many different sides of Sydney. Feeding the tree kangaroos (possums) in the park with Heather and Mike (a worker at the coffee shop) topped off the day. I am so thankful and privileged to have the opportunity to meet so many of God's beautiful people.



Ruth Bowman

Date: 4/19/2004
Submitted by: Ruth Bowman
Journal Entry:

Location: Sydney, Australia

I found Nemo!! And I'm not ashamed to admit that I was just as excited as all the little jumping bean kids around me. There, in the long, waist high glass pool was a real life little Nemo clown fish, with Dori right by his side! You remember them, right? The recent motion picture flick that shows a father and a short-term memory loss new friend, rushing to save little Nemo from the Australian dentist's daughter. They were so cute! Unfortunately they were having so much fun whipping around their home, that they wouldn't stop long enough for me to take a picture. I think Heather was able to get a good picture for me, though, and I will be forever thankful!



Ruth Bowman

Now, you would think that finding Nemo would have been the most exciting part of us visiting the Sydney Aquarium (don't tell Nemo this)--the shark exhibit was absolutely amazing. The observatory area was underneath the tank. Joel and I stood underneath this incredible underwater world for at least 30 minutes just gawking at the sharks that would swim straight towards you and then right above our heads. A shadow would fall over us when a huge stingray would swim above us. It was remarkable! I recommend a visit to the aquarium if you are ever in the area.

After spending the morning with the fishies we spent a lovely evening with a congregation in Epping, right outside of Sydney. Our team met with 15 of their church leaders and talked for several hours about new programs and inspiration for the church. It was an exciting meeting filled with excitement and new ideas! It was inspirational to witness a church that was searching for ways to better serve the congregation. I was impressed with their sense of vision and hope! It was a day to find things! I found Nemo and a hopeful church!

Date: 4/20/2004
Submitted by: Joel Mailand
Journal Entry:

Location: Sydney to Dubbo, Australia

Drive, Drive, Drive...

That's mostly what we did today. It's about a 5-6 hour drive from the coast inland. Dubbo is considered on the edge between civilization and the vast expanse of open wilderness in the middle of Australia. Hard to imagine the country is just a little smaller than the continental United States (there is so much more desert and open land here than back home). Again affirming the statement that Australia is not an island, it's a continent. Thankfully again our contacts, Tanya and Aimee, gave us fun things to do whilst we drove. Such as a bottle of bubbles, modeling clay, a box of Tim-Tams (by the way these are much better than Oreos, and I found out they were recently bought by Campbell's Soup Co.—ask me about a Tim-Tam Slam), a travel game and treasure hunt for the miles of countryside.



Joel Mailand

We left the city and buildings gave way to trees and brush. Farther inland we saw farms and pasture, horses, cows, sheep, and an occasional skip* of kangaroos. It's very dry right now as they have gone through a drought in the past few months.

Tomorrow is a big day, a kids' camp in the morning, youthful offenders detention center, and then a program at night. I am grateful to our contacts for making our schedule and filling it with so many events and such a variety. It makes today's long drive worth it.

* If anyone know the correct name for a group of kangaroos please e-mail us. I'd love to know.

Date: 4/21/2004

Submitted by: Bjørn Peterson

Journal Entry:

Location: Dubbo, New South Wales, Australia

This afternoon we went to a Juvenile Detention Center. When we went to church people asked how the kids behaved. It was probably a very innocent question but the fact remains that many of us tend to write people off that have had a run-in with the law. We assume that "those people" are inconsiderate, indifferent and uninterested. But we have found just the opposite. Most of the kids here in Australia and back in the States in Detention Centers are some of the best and most gracious hosts we meet. They have lots of questions, are incredibly thankful we would take time for them, and are always heartfelt in wishing us God's blessings and the best of luck. They are truly beautiful human beings. I am sorry that we are conditioned to expect less from them. Those expectations can be reflected in what they believe they are capable of in life. I am sorry that my misconceptions and prejudices go to the tearing down of their identities as children of the King. I am sorry I don't fight for the orphan.



Bjørn Peterson

Top Ten Favorite Actors/Actresses

10. Julia Roberts
9. Robert DeNiro
8. Jack Nicholson
7. Nicole Kidman
6. Denzel Washington
5. Robin Williams
4. George Clooney
3. Edward Norton
2. Morgan Freeman
1. Brad Pitt

Date: 4/22/2004

Submitted by: Elise Coakley

Journal Entry:

Location: Dubbo to Canberra, Australia

We had a long drive today from Dubbo to Canberra, about six hours. Tanya and Aimee, our wonderful contacts here who planned our whole trip, came up with a list of things to do in the car, which we of course added on to, so here is a glimpse of some of the things we did:



Elise Coakley

--We began by looking for a list of things to see, including a prehistoric bird and a large satellite dish from the movie "The Dish"

--We played the 80s music quiz prepared by Sarah in the office and enjoyed singing 80s songs. I think we had a pretty good chance of winning since we have the most team members who were alive and conscious for the majority of the decade

--We made up our own car bingo game with things such as tons of grasshoppers (there's a plague of grasshoppers right now and we hit so many that the windshield was covered in bug guts and we had so many wedged into the grill and the windows), 8 dead kangaroos (pretty sad), and a real Australian cowboy

--We finally saw a herd of live kangaroos and a few cockatoos

--We watched a beautiful sunset in the mountains

--We drove through Cowra, the tidiest town in New South Wales in 2002

--We saw the Parliament House in Canberra, the capital of Sydney

It was an exciting drive. Okay, not really exciting, but interesting. I enjoy being able to drive through Australia and see all parts of it.

Date: 4/23/2004

Submitted by: Heather Carr

Journal Entry:

Location: Canberra, Australia's Capital

Today we got to ride a rollercoaster. And enjoy death-defying twists and turns! And... by rollercoaster, I guess I actually mean a REALLY steep mountain, traversed in our much-swaying mini-van. And by death-defying twists and turns, I mean all the hair-pin curves at 20% grades, and narrow-misses with all the other vehicles attempting to navigate the narrow road ;). What an adventure! Add to that losing Pastor Mike for a 1/2 hour, who we were following to the coast for family camp (we DID find him again), and it made for an exciting day!

I'm really looking forward to this weekend... last night we had a meal with a bunch of youth from the church, which was good fun, and now we get a 3-day weekend family camp with the congregation! I am just looking forward both to getting involved with the families, leading songs and games... and also to free time, to rest and relax. I'm still a little low on actual rest, so it will be good to kick back.

Our first evening with everyone didn't disappoint my expectations. We played some games, had a time of praising, then went on a night hike to the beach for a devotion. It was a gorgeous night... the waves crashing, the moon reflecting off them, and new constellations to have pointed out... plus God speaking words of conviction through Bjørn's devotion, to TAKE the time to commune with God during this weekend of rest. To let this weekend truly be a renewal, a time of rejuvenation to prepare us to go back into the callings of our lives. It was a moving and powerful evening... beautiful.

And these people are beautiful, too. Nurelle gives the best hugs, and is a beautiful model of humble servant-hood, and Mike is funny AND a killer 500 player. ;) Their sons Kane and Mark were the only teenage guys their age there, but they mingled smoothly with the adults AND played with the kids, played cards, entertained themselves... they're just great guys. And Peter and Ros are just a hoot! Ros and Nurelle are cousins, so they pay each other out (Australian for "tease") a lot, and are great fun to watch. And these are just a sampling of the fun crew we get to hang out with all weekend. Woo-hoo! Bring on the rest and relaxation with Tuggy Family Camp!



Heather Carr

Date: 4/24/2004

Submitted by: Ruth Bowman

Journal Entry:

Location: Tuggy Family Camp, AUSTRALIA

I was surrounded and captured by the silky white sand that stretched for miles down the shore and a huge cliff of rocks that stood boldly against the huge waves that crashed into it. It was a magnificent place to reflect on life and on God's glorious creation. It was hard work camping on a paradise beach with 11 other beautiful families from Tuggy's Good Shepherd Church, but somebody had to do it! We had 3 glorious days with the Tuggy families. Every year they camp somewhere as a church and join together in community in the midst of God's creation. It was an honor to be included in this weekend and be adopted as one of their families. We were welcomed in—loved, teased, fed, and appreciated. And in return for this beautiful gift, we led worship. And wow—there was some definite praising going on!



Ruth Bowman

I was able to join in on Pastor Miles Bible Study on Ecclesiastes. There was some great discussion. We talked on what the purpose of life is—and how your idea of a good life changes as you age. Because I was one of the "young people" there (the rest being middle-aged and a few wise older people as well) I was able to hear another perspective of life from a more experienced point of view. We discussed what the "world" tells us is a successful life and how that oftentimes doesn't make us happy. I think about my life and how I have been sucked into the want to be successful, make money, and be looked at with respect. Moreover I am reminded more and more often that to love is the most important and meaningful thing in the world. Love is what makes life meaningful, for love is how we can know God.

Finally, for anyone from Tuggy Family Camp reading this, I thought you'd appreciate this:

Pastor Mike and fam were really great
Peter and Ros, just like mates
God bless you all
Summer and fall
Us meeting together must have been fate!

Date: 4/25/2004

Submitted by: Bjørn Peterson

Journal Entry:

Location: Ulladulla to Warrambui, AUSTRALIA

This morning we led a worship service for the family campers from Tuggy. Afterward we went to the beach and enjoyed the warm sun. The water was cold but Heather and I went in anyway. I learned how to boogie board and had a great time riding the waves with a few of the dads from the camp. We had a final time of worship and then drove about three hours from the coast over the mountains as the sun set. We arrived at Warrambui around 8 PM and met up with Tanya and Aimee. We will be here for the next few days working with their interns and relaxing a bit. We are one week from returning to the States. It's pretty amazing how fast it has all gone. At the same time it seems like forever since we left L.A. in January. We should have a good final week.



Bjørn Peterson

Date: 4/26/2004

Submitted by: Ruth Bowman

Journal Entry:

Location: Relaxin' at camp, AUSTRALIA

What's large, brown, furry, and hops everywhere it goes? No, I'm not talking about any of my teammates, but I am talking about Australia's famous kangaroo!! I got to see one! Well, I actually got to see quite a few, but of course the first few that you see are the most exciting. We just arrived at Warrambui Bible Camp where our lovely contacts Tanya and Aimee live and work, and were taking today as a day off. It felt great to relax! So to continue, at one point during the day I decided I would go for a little walk to begin the search for kangaroos. It wasn't long before I spotted one... dun dun dun—the quest begins—to get as close to a kangaroo as possible before it hops away. Attempt 1, as slowly and as quietly as possible I inch towards the kangaroo on the path. I stop about 30 feet away and we stare at each other, but then tragically he runs away. Attempt 2—I follow! And once again stop about 30-40 feet away. The sought-after roo had joined a few of his friends and after they had examined me and deemed me uninterested, they turned and hopped away. Feeling rejected I turned and walked back towards our house and decided to take a little detour off the path. Standing about 10 feet behind a fence was a beautiful mother and little kid kangaroo. Trying a different tactic, I waltzed right up to the fence making as much noise as I wanted and stopped right before the fence. The baby hopped off, but the mother stayed and watched me. We chatted for a bit, well, I did most of the talking and the roo just listened and made faces at me, but my new friend finally turned to leave when the baby came back



Ruth Bowman

to get her. I watched them hop away together wondering what thoughts God puts in the mind of a kangaroo.

Date: 4/27/2004

Submitted by: Joel Mailand

Journal Entry:

Location: Maxin' & relaxin' with the interns at Warrambui (Australia)

We arrived at Warrambui on Sunday night, so this is our second full day here. The best thing about being here, apart from being in the heart and nervous system of the New South Wales district of the Lutheran Church of Australia, with some very cool camp staff & youth ministries directors is...more than 2 nights in the same bed!!! Oh joy, oh rapture, oh bliss! I have had a great time already, getting to know the staff here: Fred, Inta, Colin & other support staff, and the interns—Matty, Ben, Nathan, Jade, Azelia, & Laura—as well as Aimee & Tanya, who were our main Australian contacts and set up our tour itinerary. It's easy to see how much this place has become special & holds a place in their hearts. Warrambui is a youth camp and retreat center. It's where churches come to refocus and rest, and that's what we are doing as a team here, now.

Today was spent meeting with interns—sharing a devotion, and talking about the differences and similarities of our two groups, frustrations & joys, adventures & challenges. We also spent time as a large group, and our own groups, doing team initiatives and team-building activities. It's hard to cover everything in 4 hours, but we were also spending time just hanging out and getting to know each other, too.

As a side note, these guys are crazy fun. Tonight we went out sheep chasing. Matty, Ben, & Nathan took me out to the paddock & introduced me to this sport. Basically, you go out as a team and look for a flock of about 15 sheep grazing late at night. The object is to catch a sheep. Sounds simple enough, right? The guys were pretty serious about how fun it is, so I naturally wanted to join in.

It turned out that we hunted for about 45 minutes in the first paddock in the pitch black, and then Nathan went to get a torch (flashlight). We resumed our search in the second paddock, and after searching 2 fence lines and climbing up the slope, we found them gathered. We approached in a half-circle to surround the group, but they started to panic & run down the hill as we closed in. Then Ben tripped, and so did some sheep. I heard him yell out "I touched one!" I was about as scared as the sheep, and watched them stampede by in the moonlight.

All in all, our mission was deemed a success & we walked back to the apartment like winners of a rugby game, retelling the play-by-play from our angle. What I like about the group of interns here is they know how to have good, clean fun, and know when to draw the line. There is a great deal of creativity for solutions (especially for ant hills. ;)) and I admire that.

Our team spent time in conversation and did some group initiatives, which is a way to open up and talk about important issues. It helped me see & express frustrations in a safe environment. Probably communications is the thing that people struggle with most on team, and in families, and in congregations. It's important to recognize, and even more important to approach each other in love. God gives us relationships with each other and with himself & shows us His love through his Son. Through our lives we testify to this Love when we are building & growing relationships in Christ's Love. I encourage you to take a look at your relationships & see how you can love those close to you in the way that Christ calls us to.



Joel Mailand

Date: 4/28/2004

Submitted by: Bjørn Peterson

Journal Entry:

Location: Jettin' round Canberra, AUSTRALIA

Today we visited our third national capital since we began touring in September. Washington D.C., Port Moresby, PNG, and now Canberra, Aus. It was a good day. We spent time at the National Museum of Australia and went to Capital Hill. When Canberra was built almost 100 years ago, it was an international competition that spurred its very precise layout of triangles and circles. A couple from Chicago actually came up with the plan. Although it is void of the skyscrapers and glamour you might expect, the layout is beautiful and takes advantage of the surrounding mountains, rivers, and lake. Tanya and Aimee took us to their favorite Chinese Restaurant in the small city of Yass. It was also Aimee's birthday so we celebrated. Tomorrow we will work some more with the interns as a school is bringing 4th graders for an overnight. It should be really interesting to see outdoor ministry here in Australia and compare to what I've done in the States.



Bjørn Peterson

Date: 4/29/2004

Submitted by: Elise Coakley

Journal Entry:

Location: Entertaining kids at camp! AUSTRALIA

We've had a relaxing past few days. We've been staying at Warrambui, a camp and retreat center run by the Lutheran Church. We've been blessed to have time to relax a bit, hang out with the staff here, and enjoy the Australian bush. There are wallabies and kangaroos that live here, so we've gotten to see quite a few, we've even fed one that was somewhat tame. It's amazing to see kangaroos just hopping through the field or wallabies coming up to the houses looking for food.

In addition to enjoying the beauty of this place, we've gotten to serve a bit as well. A school group came in today, so we helped a bit, doing a program and then participating in various activities. I helped with archery today, which was new to me, and I'm proud to say I got several bullseyes. Anyway, it was a lot of fun to hang out with the kids. They love our American accents and tried imitating them as well. It's fun to be so cool in someone's eyes.



Elise Coakley

Date: 4/30/2004

Submitted by: Heather Carr

Journal Entry:

Location: Warrambui to Newcastle, AUSTRALIA

Yesterday we had a chance to be a part of a programming day at Warrambui camp, helping the interns with a Catholic school group that came in for 2 days. Doing the programming for camp groups is one of the things the interns here do a lot of, in addition to/as part of spending a year in community and receiving mentorship. I get the impression that Australian camps run significantly differently from the American summer camp model—particularly since "camp" here is not run by and structured around "counselors" who spend all their time with the kids. Instead, many groups have their own program and chaperones arranged, and if the camp happens to have capable, fun, college-aged youth around to lead the activities and outdoor education, then that's an added bonus.

So, a new "camp" experience for those of us on New Dawn who have worked at them in the States before... and yet, it still felt incredibly familiar. 30 ten-year-olds, running around and screaming, yelling, playing, moving a mile-a-minute... it was breathtaking. (Literally... I lost my breath just listening to them ;). Now, although it's been a while since I worked much with this age group, and although my direct involvement with campers the last few summers has been smaller, being a coordinator... still, I found myself stepping back into it rather easily. I was surprised at how easily this age group will open up if you just LISTEN to them... and I had forgotten how much fun it was to teach "The Green Grass Grows" song! ;) Due mostly to these two ways of interacting with the



Heather Carr

group, I was immediately "adopted" by about 15 ten-year-old girls. Wow!

Saying goodbye at campfire last night, they had to hold up the marshmallow roasting explanation so that I could be surrounded by a whole crew of kids wanting to hug me goodbye. And this morning, again, as we were leaving for Newcastle, we went through the same routine. What a bunch of cuties! It is such a humbling blessing, to be loved so easily, by a child, and for no other reason than that you're there, taking interest in them and being involved in their life. A wacky song, asking them some questions, and I was IN... they wanted me to sit with them, and they "surprised" me with spontaneous (arranged) outbursts of the song... the little gestures that kids use to say "I love you."

Wow. Childlike love is just beautiful... and so simple. I know I didn't really do much to deserve such love from these kids, who I spent only a few hours with... and yet they bestowed it. On the drive to Newcastle I had a chance to be reminded again, why God uses children to teach us lessons about Himself. Because that kind of love, the simple, unassuming love-for-no-reason is the kind of love God has for us. We don't have to "do" something to deserve to be loved like that... He just does. Amazing... "and a little child shall lead them."

Date: 5/1/2004

Submitted by: Elise Coakley

Journal Entry:

Location: Newcastle, AUSTRALIA

We spent all day today with a congregation in Newcastle. We spent the morning basking—which is Australian for just singing on the street. We sang at a market that the church participates in. Then this evening we had a program with them as well. A pretty typical, day. Something that was not typical, however, was the congregation, they were made up of primarily retired people with less than ten children and only two youth in the congregation. What can we, five 20-something volunteers, offer to this congregation? Well, a lot. Just because this church is mostly over the age of 60 does not mean it's a dying church, as many would quickly label it. This church is actively raising money for many things in the district and is working at reaching out within the community to meet their needs. We were able to bring a message of hope and love and continue to encourage this church to keep reaching out. Bjørn gave a wonderful sharing about home and making the church a home for those who are turned away, lost, and homeless by the world. And so, we are able to encourage this church in the homes that they are making in Newcastle. It may not seem like a typical church for a Youth Encounter team to visit, but I am thankful for the chance to love this congregation.



Elise Coakley

Date: 5/2/2004

Submitted by: Heather Carr

Journal Entry:

Newcastle --> Sydney (Australia)

Today is our last day in Australia, and tonight we got to do something I've been hoping to do ever since we found out we'd be coming here...worship at Hillsong Church! I knew we'd be in Sydney for a bunch of our time, and I was hoping we'd get a chance to go worship there, but didn't know what our schedule would look like, or if it would work out. It turned out we had time, and what a neat experience!

First off, the place looks like a convention center, and there are even parking attendants in reflective vests to direct you to an open spot. Whoa....really friendly parking attendants, though. =) Inside, we sat down near the back of the mini-stadium-sized worship center, and watched the cutting-edge, state-of-the-art filler videos play on the giant screens, as we waited for worship to start. People who knew each other milled all over the place, and when the worship band came on stage, everyone moved to their seats...and started ROCKIN!



Heather Carr

Seriously, I felt like I was at a rock concert...one that was set up to be worshipful, but still a rock concert. And it was awesome! The band was the youth band, United Live, and they were all our age, and really good. A lot of the congregation was young, too, so I suppose Sun. pm services are geared toward the youth/young adults. The first couple songs were KICKING, and even though I didn't know them, the energy in the room was contagious, and I could catch on and sing along before they were over. What a worship service! I would love to be able to rock out every time I went to worship...and the rest of the service was nice, too. Some slower music, a nice message from the youth pastor about moving forward in our lives (and our lives with Christ), a low-key, non-threatening altar-call, and another worship song to close.

All in all, it was a nice service, and since worship music is what I'm most passionate about (and most picky about), I was really happy to get to FEEL worshipful for our last evening overseas. I mean, I've been to a lot of worship services this year, many of which we've led, and a few we've only participated in as congregation members, but most of the time I don't get a chance to feel very worshipful. Occasionally it will catch me, or a sermon or song will move something in me, but for the most part, when we're actually leading worship, it's hard to let YOURSELF worship...plus, in more traditional services, hymns and liturgy just don't do it for me. I value traditional worship, but it isn't my preferred style...so it was a real blessing to me to be able to sit back and allow myself to worship...not just with my head, as I usually do in a liturgical service, but with my heart, in a style that speaks to me and inspires me. And since I'm a musician, and musicality is something I pay close attention to, it was also sweet not to be distracted by paying attention to the music...when it's done at such a high-quality level, I can sit back and let it just soak in, instead of unconsciously critiquing it (I know, I know, I shouldn't...blame it on being a music education major. ;) But that was also a real blessing, as well.

So, I loved it. And it was a great way to close our time overseas...worshiping with our sweet contacts Aimee & Tanya...and good preparation for staying up ALL NIGHT to pack and head to the airport. =) Sleep exhaustion, 16-hour flight, and vacation here we come! Goodbye and God's blessings from the land down under!

Date: 5/11/2004
Submitted by: Heather Carr
Journal Entry:

Agoura Hills, CA

We're back in the states, and back with the rest of the team to begin prepping for our return tour! The last week has been our week off—we arrived back in the US on May 3 after an incredibly long flight across the Pacific, and once in L.A., went our separate ways to see our family & friends for a week of rest. Of course, my week wasn't exactly what I would call "restful", since I only got an average of 4-5 hrs of sleep every night...but that's mostly because I had so many people I wanted to try to see and spend some quality time with, that I didn't really stop moving and REST much. =) However, that's my idea of a vacation anyway (seeing a bunch of the family and friends I love), so I'm not complaining.

Now here we are, back in Agoura Hills at our prep church, to spend the week getting our return tour program ready, and having some sessions with our Youth Encounter staff person, about return culture shock, how our team dynamics are going, and all kinds of fun "maintenance stuff." This basically means we'll be spending all week in the church building, making it feel like we're not really in southern California at all, but alas...there's a lot of work to do! Our host family is cool, though...tonight they took us out in the driveway and we looked at the planets through the telescope as they came out at dusk. They're loyal subscribers to "Telescope & Sky" magazine, or something close to that, and have probably seen at least 10 complete solar eclipses. Intense. I learned a lot about the sky from them, too. Good times.

Pretty soon we'll be back on the road...it's weird to think that it's already May 11...in my head, it



Heather Carr

should be the 3rd still, since that's when I was last with my teammates. It's surreal that a whole week has passed, which isn't accounted for with some kind of team experience. We even have different stories to tell each other for the next couple days! Weird...usually all our stories are ones we all experience together, so having some new material from being away from each other is kind of fun in itself. =) It's pretty surreal to be back in the states, too....I feel like PNG was SO long ago...but then again, we did leave a month ago, since we spent the last 4 weeks in Australia and at our homes.... But that's part of the strangeness, too....here we are, just back from our big adventure, and everyone asks us what it was like, and I find I have to delve deeper than I thought I would to bring up my memories of it. I don't want them to fade so fast, but it seems to be inevitable. Hopefully once we get our program together, the memories will become more vivid again, as we share them every night. I'm excited for the next few months, as we return to a bunch of churches from last fall! Woohoo, summer tour, here we come!

Date: 5/13/2004

Submitted by: Bjørn Peterson

Journal Entry:

Agoura Hills, CA

We've been spending our days preparing new puppet shows, skits and music the last few days. It's exciting to have so many new cultural aspects to add to the program. The long days of planning are hard work, but rewarding at the end of the day. There are so many things that we will be able to do with our pictures since we took some 1500 digital photos and have a projector for our summer tour. Our program is coming together nicely but we have a ton of work left to do before our first program Sunday morning here in Agoura Hills, and then in Riverside, CA that night. We have high hopes.



Bjørn Peterson

Date: 5/15/2004

Submitted by: Ruth Bowman

Journal Entry:

We have been back in LA for almost a week now. Back to rehearsals, paper work and our home, the van. We've all had to adjust back to state side team life from our adventures overseas, and then our week of vacation after we flew in from Australia. Today was a busy day, packed full of rehearsals for our new return tour program and for the worship service the next day. Routine hasn't quite settled in yet, but the familiarity of being back in the USA has returned. The time overseas for me has already turned into sort of a dream. Did it really happen? Was I really there experiencing all the memories that I have in my head? I hold on to those memories tight, for I don't want to forget them. I don't want this experience to become a dream that I only casually bring up in an appropriate conversation. I want to be changed by the things I saw, experienced, learned and felt while in PNG and Australia. Yet I know it's dangerous to hold on to the past too tightly. I don't want to let the past consume me, but I want to treasure the memories, friendships and life lessons it has taught me. Currently, I'm more interested in the future, as I had another exciting adventure when I returned home for my week of vacation. My boyfriend who has been a constant support for me this past year proposed to me! (And I said yes! =) Let the wedding plans begin!! I must admit that it's a little bit harder to concentrate on team life now that I have a fiancé back home, but I wouldn't trade the opportunity to finish off this year with my team for anything. I look forward to making more memories and learning more, so I will always carry this year and what I've learned from it in my heart as we continue everyday into the future.



Ruth Bowman

Date: 5/18/2004

Submitted by: Joel Mailand

Journal Entry:

Riverside, CA.

(Monday)
wake up late
eat
check email
run with Ruth
laundry
nap
eat
watch a movie
go to the bookstore
sleep

(Tuesday)
breakfast
say goodbyes to host family
drive to Las Vegas (the meadows)
meet pastor
drive to host families
walk around on the strip
buffet dinner
go to host family
sleep

Cool host family in Riverside. We would have stayed with them before we left for PNG, but when we arrived at their home last January, they came out to the van and warned us that the whole family was sick with the flu. Rather than have us catch anything, we were redirected to the church to sleep.

This time around we spent two nights, just to make up for lost time I guess. This is an active family: twin boys age 2, three girls ages 12 to 18, and both parents are teachers. There were dance classes and work, and one of the girls not feeling so well. Then add the five of us at the house all doing our things as well...laundry, checking email, watching movies, talking with host sisters. Whew. Kind of makes my head spin. Maybe it's because I come from a small family. One thing I have learned about team is that you are like a fly on a wall sometimes. I picked up on one of the few things that is foundational to the family — reading from the bible and talking about the day at the dinner table. I was honored with getting to read a psalm, and we all had a great conversation during dinner.

Later on that evening our host mom took me to the bookstore. (It's one of those things that I missed overseas.) We had a great conversation. She is involved with her kids' lives, which is cool. She helps at church by coordinating youth group events. We talked about the upcoming youth gathering in Orlando, FL. I was supposed to work as a volunteer but ended up going on team. (I'm still trying to get our team to the gathering as musicians.) I am sure they have their struggles as all families do, but they also have a family that supports each other and has a safe place for the kids. It also draws strength in Christ. Praise God for families! I encourage you to tell your family how thankful you are for each person, and show them you love them.



Joel Mailand

Date: 5/20/2004
Submitted by: Elise Coakley
Journal Entry:

Not much happened today. We left Las Vegas and drove to Kingman, Arizona. We spent the morning working at church, and the afternoon in the van. Then we went to host homes for an evening off because there was no program. That's been our day, very exciting. Now I would like to talk about something else, completely off the subject.

Greetings to all of you from the churches of Papua New Guinea! I don't know if anyone on my team has officially said that or not, so I will. I can't even begin to express the excitement and



Elise Coakley

joy the churches in PNG had in welcoming and receiving a few humble visitors from the United States. To them it was such an honor and a blessing that we would travel halfway around the world just to spend a few days, and sometimes only as a little as a few hours, at their villages and churches. We were so often asked why we wanted to come to Papua New Guinea, a small country that most people don't even know exists, let alone where it is. It was such an honor to be able to respond, "We are here to spend time with you and to worship our Lord together." What a privilege to tell someone that they matter so much, that we would travel so far just to meet them. And so, I hope you all know how blessed the churches of Papua New Guinea felt to have us, how thankful we are for all the support you have all offered to get us there, and how excited the people of PNG were to offer their greetings and blessings to everyone back home. How wonderful to have a God who's love spreads to all corners of the earth!

Date: 5/22/2004
Submitted by: Heather Carr
Journal Entry:

Cedar Crest, NM

Last night we had a program in Flagstaff, AZ, and we got to see Jenny from the last ND team to PNG. She drove over from Phoenix, and although there were only a few people there that night, due to graduations, banquets, & end-of-school stuff, we did a few songs, showed our slides, and answered questions about our time overseas. It was very relaxed, and it was good to hear Jenny's take on her experience there 3 years ago. The pictures brought back a lot of memories for her, and she said that it was good to be reminded of all the GOOD parts of her experience there, because sometimes her more vivid memories tend to be the parts that were hard. It IS a tough tour in many ways, and yet there are also plenty of gorgeous sights, people, and experiences, as well, so I'm glad that getting to meet with us was edifying for her. It was also just fun to share memories of some of the same people we met, and laugh about some of our similar experiences.

Tonight we have housing in Cedar Crest, right outside Albuquerque, NM, and our hosts are so cool! They live up on the mountain, right next to a state park, and are nonchalant about the bears and mountain lions and coyotes that roam the woods close to their house. They're sporty and active (the dad biked 100 miles that day, and has broken both his legs (separately) in bike races), and we enjoyed chilling with them. They're also just really fun folks, and we had lots of lively conversation over dinner, especially with our host dad and his wacky stories. Have any of you seen the movie "Big Fish"? It felt a little bit like that, except that his daughter and wife were there to laughingly dispel the more fanciful versions of his stories. ;)

So, it's been a nice, relaxing couple of nights. I'm excited for tomorrow, as well, because after our program here, we get to go in to Albuquerque back to my friend Jeremy's church, for a coffee shop and day off. Part of my excitement for that, too, is that Jer's gonna help me go guitar shopping on Monday, which will be a ton of fun. And there are just a whole bunch of fun people that I'm excited to see back there... this will actually be the first church we've returned to since being back, (aside from our prep church), so I'm excited to share our stories with those folks. Ahh, return tour...what a great thing.



Heather Carr

Date: 5/25/2004
Submitted by: Joel Mailand
Journal Entry:

Albuquerque -> Pueblo, CO

Today we returned to the detention center in Pueblo, CO. Pastor Lola and Captain Ramirez were there to greet us. My outlook was not as apprehensive as when we entered the facility the first time. This was the first maximum security prison for youth that we visited last fall, after visiting some youth homes for low risk, abused and



abandoned children in Pennsylvania and Ohio. Here, however, the 14 foot high curved and barbed wire fence on the outside were intimidating, and the procedures for entry were enough to show nervousness in my laughing.

Joel Mailand

But this time around, we were excited to see the friends that we had made last fall. We wanted to find out how they were doing and tell about our travels overseas. There were about 70 boys so we had time for question and answer, like a talk show. If anything, I have learned that there is a real hunger here for knowing why we are doing what we are doing....questions that seem to be asked when you're living life as a child and as a prisoner. They asked us questions like "What are you going to get out of this?" And "What will you do after this?" "How has God worked in your life in this year?"

I could sense that these are things that, through counseling and group discussion, they have had a chance to talk about themselves, and so it's natural to ask these questions to others. Which is great, but a little intimidating at the same time. These are things that I barely think about, and when I am asked, I am caught off guard. Makes me wonder if I should be paying attention more to these "small" questions.

Since there are only about 9 girls in the program, when we had our time with them, we could talk more informally. They had a collective memory of our last visit and asked all sorts of questions about girlfriends, fiancés and jobs, and we were able to inquire into some of their activities that we remembered from last fall. Pastor Lola was there to see everything, since she was responsible for setting up the program. I wonder what it's like for her to see all of this happening. She has more insight on what the needs of these individuals are, and how this can be used as a starting point for discussion. Here is one point where the role of short-term and long-term care at YOS come together: New Dawn and a Pastor at a youth detention center. Both have a purpose and meet specific needs. One does what the other cannot. God works through us in our areas of ministry and delights in seeing the body of Christ working to proclaim the Gospel and be caregivers.

Please keep the youth and the youth pastors in the detention center in your prayers.

Date: 5/27/2004

Submitted by: Ruth Bowman

Journal Entry:

Wakeeney, KS -> McCook, NE

Hot Tubs. Man oh Man do I love Hot Tubs. Especially after a very long day, or let's say week, on the road. Our lovely host family in McCook, NE offered us girls the use of their hot tub that evening when we arrived at their home. The program seemed to have gone well, and we had had some long drives this week coming all the way from New Mexico, so we took them up on their kindness. There's something relaxing about sitting in a hot tub, with jet streams whipping around you, the slightly cool night air blowing on your cheeks, and the stars sparkling far above.

It was also a good spot to resurrect some memories. I have two distinct memories of or about McCook. The first is traveling to McCook for Volleyball meets when I lived in Goodland, KS, with my family during my first year of High School. I think we were pretty good from what I remember, although I was primarily used as the cheerleader on the team. But be assured that I had a great time cheering on my team from the sidelines with the rest of my teammates.

My second memory is a bit more scandalous. It all dates back to the Minnesota 1997 Spoke Folk tour. This was my first spoke folk tour, and I was a young naïve girl, having just finished my first year of high school. Now on this tour I met so many wonderful young men, that I naturally developed crushes on them! It was great! For the first time in my life I was exposed to good quality guys. So yes, one of the guys that I had developed a friendship with, and a liking for, lived in McCook NE. (I can say that now because I have a fiancé! *_*) So whenever I think of McCook NE I think of him. However, now I have more memories to add to the little slot labeled McCook in my



Ruth Bowman

brain. And the memories continue to be good!

Date: 5/27/2004

Submitted by: Heather Carr

Journal Entry:

Hello, New Dawn journal readers! In addition to the newest journals from the United States, new journals have also been submitted beginning on April 8th, wrapping up New Dawn's time in Papua New Guinea and the team's travels in Australia. Just scroll to page 6 to find April 8th, and enjoy! God's blessings!



Heather Carr

Date: 5/29/2004

Submitted by: Bjørn Peterson

Journal Entry:

Bob and Jo Peterson live in Osceola, Nebraska. They raised four children there and now have an empty nest. Bob owned the hardware store in Osceola for a number of years before selling it a few years ago. Now he does odd jobs as a bit of a handy man around town and works for a couple of farmers as they need him, and he loves it. Jo grew up in Osceola and is a teacher at a newly formed Christian school in town. These two were our hosts Friday and Saturday and they, like so many other host homes, took great care of us. The ministry so many of you do through hosting teams is such a blessing. You take us in and give us rest. Jesus told us that whatever you do unto the least of these you do unto me. Well, if that's true, then Jesus is pretty happy right now. Thanks for all you do!



Bjørn Peterson

Date: 6/1/2004

Submitted by: Heather Carr

Journal Entry:

Osceola, NE -> Des Moines, IA

This was a great weekend: I got to see my Cross Fire teammate Marc get married, we had a really fun morning worship service in Osceola, lunch with Joel's family, and then we had a lazy day off in tiny little Kimbleton before heading to Des Moines. Good times, great folks—I love team!



Heather Carr

So, we were scheduled for 2 nights of housing only in Osceola, before leading worship on Sunday, and since Marc's wedding was only a two hour drive away, I got to attend—and what a beautiful service! Plus, I haven't seen him in person for a few years, so I was really glad to get to come for the big day, and spend quality time w/another teammate, Mandy. We were the only two XF teammates who could make it, so I was glad I could represent—plus, my teammates are really dear to my heart, and I still love the infrequent conversations that we get to have, so it was great to have almost a whole day to spend with Mandy, catching up and praying together. You really get to know your teammates so much deeper than other friends in some cases, and it is such a HUGE blessing to be able to reconnect and share our hearts with each other. I love it.

Of course, then I returned to my current team, and we were blessed with a hugely enthusiastic crowd on Sunday morning—we did our service, even teaching them some songs from PNG, and giving the sermon, etc, and they responded really positively. I had several gentlemen approach me and say that they didn't realize anything would be different about this morning's service, and were pleasantly surprised by the change! =) They were all so gracious and kind—I even had a few little old ladies ask if we'd been using microphones. Apparently they thought we were really loud, loud enough to hear in the back, even—what a compliment!

From there we went out to eat with Joel's parents and relatives, and chatted over a great buffet, and they are fun folks. I'm glad we'll get to spend 5 days at their house next week, cuz it'll be nice to chill with them some more. Our day off for Memorial Day was uneventful, (except for Kindred standing us up on an offer to get together since we were both in Iowa), and then we headed to Des Moines for a fun evening of fellowship with a church that supports the Int'l school in PNG. That was a blast, too—little kids to play with, enthusiastic women with lots of questions, generous contacts and hosts who showered us with blessings—and TONS of laughs when our screen saver switched on while Joel was talking, projecting a picture onto the wall of his underwear hanging on a line! After we recovered from the shock of that unfortunate incident (and the crowd recovered from the great belly laugh they got over Joel's face turning purple), we wrapped up the lighthearted evening by praying for the ministry they support in PNG.

And I, for one, left with an extreme sense of thankfulness for the joys of team ministry. The silly incidents and funny stories that keep us laughing together, the beautiful people we get to meet and be blessed by all over the world, the fantastic scenery we pass, visiting so many cultures (even here in our own country!), making music together, and getting to know the hearts and passions of these people that we are crammed into a van with for a whole year—I love it! God is so good, so present, so evident in all these good little moments that mesh together into what becomes a year of team ministry—and in the hard moments, His strength is made clear in our weakness, and He sustains us to get through. I can't think of anything else I'd rather be doing this year than traveling around the world with a Christian band and getting to build relationships with tons of great people. What a blessing, to be able to use my gifts in this way! Thanks, God.

Date: 6/3/2004

Submitted by: Elise Coakley

Journal Entry:

We got to see something last night that we don't see very often, and that's a shame. We had a program at First Lutheran Church in Ottumwa, Iowa, and we started with a small crowd of about 6 or 7 people. Halfway through our first song, a youth group from another church in Ottumwa came in. There were about 20 of them, and they started clapping and dancing and singing along. It was wonderful to have a program that really was inter-denominational. To see the youth from two very different churches, together for a night, dancing and singing and praising God together was absolutely wonderful. How wonderful that these two churches are strong enough in their beliefs that they can come together in peace to worship. I wish this is something we could see more often: the Body of Christ being truly united under Him.



Elise Coakley

Date: 6/5/2004

Submitted by: Bjørn Peterson

Journal Entry:

This weekend we have been in St. Louis, MO. We got the opportunity to stay with Joel's parents in St. Louis and visit Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Manchester (not Manchester, England for I would not come even close to that city due to my lifelong disdain for Manchester United Soccer Club.... Go LIVERPOOL!!!! YOU"LL NEVER WALK ALONE!) Anyway, the folks at Good Shepherd were a lot of fun, and we all got to be housed together. Elise and I cooked for our hosts Saturday night in Manchester, and on Thursday, Friday, Sunday and Monday we stayed with Roger and Sharon Mailand. We also visited the LCMS International Headquarters on Monday. It was a good and relaxing weekend.



Bjørn Peterson

Date: 6/8/2004

Submitted by: Ruth Bowman
Journal Entry:

St. Louis (LCMS International Center)

Chaplain Otto Hintze is an amazing man. We had the opportunity to return to the Lutheran Church of the Missouri Synod International Center and do their Monday morning staff chapel. We had had a chance to share with them last November, so it was neat to go back, especially because this time when Chaplain Hintze spoke to us in Pidgin English, we could understand everything he said!



Ruth Bowman

After the chapel service, he treated us to breakfast and we shared stories. You see, he had served as one of the first LCMS missionaries to PNG in the 1960s, and was there almost 17 years! He was excited to find out that we had been able to travel through and spend some time in many of the places he had worked. Of course, times have really changed since then. He was one of the missionaries to help BUILD the roads, and so he usually had to walk for three days to get anywhere; whereas we had the convenience of roads, even if they were full of potholes! How cool it was for us to be able to tell him about the fruits of his labor and how God was working in PNG now, today. We moved around so much while we were there, we often wondered if we were doing any good. It would be a blessing to hear in a few years that I was able to impact someone during my time on team, in the same way we were able to encourage Chaplain Hintze. I have decided more than once this year that I am getting more out of this experience than anyone that I may meet. It's certainly a humbling thought, but it keeps my focus in the right place. A focus on God and the knowledge that I am nothing without His guidance, and my life is worth nothing without His love.

Date: 6/10/2004
Submitted by: Joel Mailand
Journal Entry:

Lutheran Youth Camp- Humbolt, TN

Ok, I just spent the last three days in the camp craft pavilion, making bird houses with Pastor "Crafty" (his camp nickname). Power tools! Wood! Kids with Power tools and hammers! Whooaaa, look out there, everyone! Is this the right thing to do?



Joel Mailand

Ok, maybe you are as frightened & skeptical of this whole idea as I was, and in response, I have one thing to say: when you are holding a nail in place on a bird house roof, and trusting an 8-year-old with a hammer, yes, you're probably going to get your finger and thumb smashed. Yeah! Chalk it up to being a "suffering servant" for Christ, or something like that. It hurts, but only a little bit, because they really don't have a lot of power behind the swing. I watched a few kids actually trying to push the nail in with the hammer head. They would take about 10 whacks and the nail stood there refusing to be driven down. I took pity a few times and "helped it along" to a point where they could have the satisfaction of getting it level with the wood. Most of the kids have never held a hammer before, so this is a good experience for them. Painful, but good. Overall, though, the kids had a great time doing this activity. I like being able to teach kids and watch them learn a skill, especially one like this, that they may never get exposure to anywhere else.

Pastor Crafty has 15-years experience in birdhousing. Sort of the Jimmy Carter* of birds. He came with a workman's bag of tools and three boxes of pre-cut 1/8 inch plywood walls, roofs and floors. He also had three other projects for kids- building a bug box, an autograph book, and a pile of scrap wood for making anything but swords and guns, which are very popular among the boys. Instead, they built "furniture." =) There were some interesting pieces, there...

The whole time we were there I enjoyed helping and hanging out with kids and teen counselors. We even had a mean game of four-square that lasted until the wee hours** of the morning. Please pray for Summer Camp Staffs and Children.

*Jimmy Carter- Founder of Habitat for Humanity.

**2-2:30 am

Date: 6/12/2004

Submitted by: Elise Coakley

Journal Entry:

Conover, NC

Today was a very rare day for New Dawn: we had the entire day to just relax and hang out with our hosts. We spent the morning sleeping in, the afternoon at the pool, and the evening eating a lovely dinner and watching movies. It was reminiscent of what Saturdays will be like when we go back to the real world. Oh, how I long for real Saturdays again. Two of our hosts, Amber and Rachel, are 20-something women, teaching and working in Conover, so it was really fun to spend the day with other people our age, another rare thing on team. It was just a really fun, relaxing day, and I'm thankful for a glimpse at what life will be like after August.



Elise Coakley

Date: 6/15/2004

Submitted by: Heather Carr

Journal Entry:

Conover, NC

Do any of you remember taking trips across the country to do a service project with your youth group when you were in high school? For me, those are some of my favorite memories, because the bonding with the group was some of the most intense I experienced at that age, and it was strengthened by the knowledge that not only were we having fun, we were doing something to help others. I think trips like this were also a significant part of what inspired my desire to serve others, fueled by my growing awareness & compassion for the need that is out there, and nurtured by the continued opportunities that kept opening up to serve.

So now, when I happen across a crew of high schoolers on such a service trip, I feel a special affinity for them and the work they're doing, remembering the ways that I was gradually affected by similar opportunities in those formational years. Our team had a chance to spend a few hours with a group like this on Sunday night, and it was a nice time to chat, share, and even for us to connect a bit, as they drew us into their group for the evening of games and mixers. They're here in Conover for a week, and our contact at the church also happens to be this group's contact, who set up their projects for the week. The 20 of them are from St. Louis, and they'll be doing some painting, demolition to prep for future projects, and spending time at the nursing home playing games with the residents, all of which had them really excited.

What got them even MORE excited was finding out that Joel had been a teacher at their school when they were in Jr. High, and several of them had been his students! Talk about a small world...and man, did they have some stories to share. Lots of memories of Mr. Mailand: that crazy birthday song he taught them...the times he gave them detention...stories about other students, and what they had grown up to do. Crazy...I don't know who was more weirded out— these HS sophomores & juniors seeing their Jr. High teacher in a new light (as a PEER, almost, on a relational ministry team)... or Joel, trying to figure out which munchkins-turned-football-players these kids had been in his 5th grade class. =)

There was plenty of time to play Four-on-a-Couch, have Q&A about Team and Youth Encounter, and hear stories about Joel's days as a teacher, and in our time with them, I was impressed. Of course, they were being wacky and flirty, and had all their group jokes and stories, but there was also a sense of maturity underlying all that fun. I find there is a sense of dignity that is bestowed by



Heather Carr

selfless action, and I think that offering young people a chance to serve others instead of serving only themselves (as the "material world" would tell them to do), nurtures charity and compassion, and a better understanding of the world as it IS, instead of solely how they've experienced it in their home town or congregation. I get a sense that doing something "noble", selfless, serving, grows a kind of maturity that not many other things do. This is why I think trips like this are so important, even necessary, for kids (and adults) to experience. God is working in so many ways, in so many places, and it can be a life-changing experience to have your eyes opened to it in a new way. So go on out into the world, y'all—step up and answer God's call to "love others as you love yourself!"

Blessings,
Heather

Date: 6/17/2004

Submitted by: Bjørn Peterson

Journal Entry:

Today we came back to Powell, TN, home of the Jarvis's (or Jarvi, as Crossfire and ourselves like to call them). Powell is one of our favorite places because it is home to Jennifer Jarvis, one of our favorite teamers (she's on Kindred). The congregation was so warm to us last fall, putting on a big thanksgiving feast and sharing an intimate program with us, and so we are excited to be back and to see all our friends here. That is the best part about return tour, seeing all the familiar faces. Even the new ones are more fun because there isn't as much stress when you only meet two or three new congregations a week. Return tour is the highlight of my year so far, and I am glad to be finishing strong.



Bjørn Peterson

Date: 6/19/2004

Submitted by: Ruth Bowman

Journal Entry:

Powell, TN à Rocky Mount, NC

People we know! It's great being able to go back to places where we were before we went overseas. I bet it's even more important to *us* to return to a church than for that church itself to have us back, for everyone in that church is continuing on with their normal lives. They see us for a night, but then life goes on. Whereas for us, we spent the entire year meeting and leaving people, so the idea of going back to a place where there are people we'll recognize, and people who might care about our experiences, is such a special thing. We have been able to return to several churches, and not to say that we haven't enjoyed going to new churches, because we certainly do—but there is something special about returning to one of our "homes". For after all, if we are in a place for longer than a day, it becomes home. Rocky Mount was one of those places to which we were able to return, and it was a joy to see all those People We Know. Praise God for Return Tour!



Ruth Bowman

Date: 6/22/2004

Submitted by: Joel Mailand

Journal Entry:

Norlina, NC

What a great day off yesterday. I woke up late, went running, picked 6 ticks off my



legs, showered, then napped and slept for most of the day. While I was doing that, our host family built Bjorn a stand for the djembe (our West African drum). They made it out of a children's-bike rim and some other metal framing. Bjorn did some final touches by attaching three foam footballs to the rim with black electrical tape, so that the drum can rest neatly in the hoop at about waist level. It's always amazing to me how people come up with building ideas. It's usually problem solving and knowledge of materials that are universal, but the final solution can be as different as snowflakes. And thanks to our host dad's intuition, we now have a cool drum stand!

Joel Mailand

Today we arrived in Chesapeake VA, at Sandy Wittman's church, for our return visit. We will perform here tomorrow and hang out with daycare kids. Sandy returned home after team last year (she was on New Dawn, too) and began working at her home church. I had a chance to talk with her about how the transition is from two years of team to living back at home. The transition is different for everyone, and it's something that we are thinking a lot about, since there are less than two months of team left for us. It goes by quickly.

This evening after dinner, our host dad and his son invited us to jam with him. He has quite the collection of guitars, bass guitars and amps. Now if I only played well! In spite of my mediocre skills, we still jammed and made some great memories.

Date: 6/24/2004
Submitted by: Elise Coakley
Journal Entry:

Chesapeake, VA to Philadelphia, PA



Elise Coakley

Oh the joys of planning for the future. As team is coming to an end, we are all frantically, and some patiently, beginning to plan for life in the real world. I thought I had a good idea of what I would do in August, but I find my plans are changing. This is somewhat frustrating, since I am the type of person who enjoys having a plan. And now I find myself just waiting to see what will happen, with no plan in sight. I wish that my year on team had helped me to have more faith that things will work out, or that I would learn to be more relaxed when I don't know what will happen, but I find myself stressed out and worried that I maybe I have made a mistake. Maybe God has opened doors and given me opportunities for my future, and I have shut them and turned away because they weren't exactly what I was hoping for. In my life so far, the things that I feel God calling me to are often the things I want to do myself, but maybe God's challenging me now to try new things, and I am being stubborn and refusing. So I'm now not only stressed about what the future will hold but stressed that maybe I am refusing to follow God's calling.

A conversation with a close friend recently has given me some hope. He believes that God works in many ways and that God may provide blessed opportunities for people, but God also blesses the decisions we make on our own. He encouraged me that as long as I love God, I will be following God's will. So I go forward, still with no plan in sight, but with a love for God in my heart, and a prayer that God will guide and bless the decisions I have to make as a new time in my life approaches.

Date: 6/26/2004
Submitted by: Heather Carr

Journal Entry:

Philly, PA to Hagerstown, MD



Heather Carr

Team offers so many unique opportunities, and sometimes I am just blown away by how lucky we are to get to do this for a year. Here we are, in a band, making music everyday and traveling all over the country/world... meeting fabulous people and actually getting to experience a small part of their real-life in a given place, by staying in their homes...being exposed to different cultures not only from other countries, but also different regions of our OWN country, and tasting their foods, hearing their music, encountering new cultural norms...being showered with generosity from hosts and churches who welcome us with loving arms into their midst...visiting historical sites and learning a little bit more about our own country's heritage and history...and of course, seeing God working in the lives of kids, youth, & adults; pastors, church workers, & lay-leaders; youth groups, camp staffs, & families...all cram-packed into a year and a van, with a team of fun friends. How did I get lucky enough to be called to do ministry like this?? I feel so blessed by the things that God is doing, and by the fun He is allowing us to have while doing them. I'm so grateful for a year of team ministry!

For example, this weekend has been another one of those historically informative visits to a place of importance in our nation's history—Philadelphia. We were warmly welcomed last Thursday when we arrived, and our hosts promptly insisted that there were a few "musts" to experience in order to say you've really been to Philly. On the top of the list was a visit to the Liberty Bell & Independence Hall, of course (where the Declaration of Independence was signed and read on July 4, 1776)...but a walk through history just isn't complete without a taste of a Philly cheese-steak, some hot pretzels, and a water-ice on the side. Once all those experiences were duly accomplished, we proceeded to the GORGEOUS, old, Lutheran church for a program & lock-in with the enthusiastic youth group. They frequent the Poconos YE events, and have teams on a regular basis, so it was a pretty good time chatting, singing, and playing till all hours of the morning.

And I've got to say, I enjoyed my first visit to Philly immensely—more so because of the chance to experience it at a more personal level. If I were to just come to Philly as a tourist, sure I could go see the Liberty Bell and sample the cuisine on my own...but I wouldn't really taste the culture, the feel of the place, or the CHARACTER (of the city *and* the people). The people are really what give a place its own culture, and I've never encountered one quite like Philly before...it's not "Minnesota nice," "California cool," "southern hospitality," or "home on the farm"...they have their own, specific place in the scheme of the country's cultural melting pot, and I feel doubly blessed to get to come and experience what I can first hand. Each place we visit only expands my understanding of just who God's people are, and the many different ways He is working in and amongst different groups, even right here in our own country. Being in the business of building bridges and connections among God's people all around the world takes on new facets of meaning with every church we visit, and I am blessed by the tapestry I see unfolding before me.

Journal Entry:

Saturday night we returned to Hagerstown, MD where I was sad to learn that Pastor Aarsand was resigning as pastor of the church. Pastor Aarsand has been a supporter of YE for 13 years, and has become a friend to me this year. He is going to run a philanthropic organization for a few years, and doesn't know where God will take him from there. It is a good decision for him, and I am sure God will bless it.



Bjørn Peterson

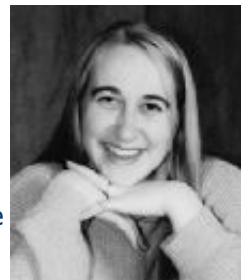
From there we went to Dale City, VA where we helped with the opening of their VBS. Monday we celebrated Joel and Elise's birthdays by going to a local water park (someone generously paid for our tickets), and Thursday we went to the WWII memorial in DC. All this week we will be doing music for the evening VBS in Dale City. It's the second longest time we have spent in one place since tour began, and it is a HUGE treat to be able to relax into a place that feels like "home".

Date: 7/1/2004

Submitted by: Ruth Bowman

Journal Entry:

The great thing about VBS is being able to stay in the same bed for a whole week at a time! Dale City was our first full official Vacation Bible School and I had the glorious opportunity to stay with the pastor of the church, who just happened to also be a Spoke Folk friend that I had toured with the year before. I was pumped! PJ, or Pastor Jim, is a man that I truly admire, and I was grateful for the opportunity to get to know him even more than what our initial meeting during Spoke Folk had allowed. During the day PJ played the role of chauffeur the majority of the time, as he so willingly drove me back and forth from home to the church to meet with my team. This gave us a neat opportunity to talk as we sat in traffic or cruised through the residential areas to avoid traffic. We talked about life, and it was good. Every now and then you come across a person in your life that through their stories or even their lifestyle causes you to reflect. I realized that I often times understand more of what I've learned through this year experience on team by answering some of those harder questions people ask, than by reflections on my own. I find it fascinating that I learn the most about myself through other people. Conversations and/or debates can reveal either my belief or opinion on a matter, or just how I respond to a particular action or comment. The people who come and go in my life have a lot of credit regarding who I am and who I will become. And as much as the idea of this intrigues and scares me, I have the assurance that my complete identity is given to me by my Heavenly Father. For I am a child of God! And so are YOU!



Ruth Bowman

Date: 7/3/2004

Submitted by: Joel Mailand

Journal Entry:

Dale City, VA

Today we woke up early and helped out as guest singers on the church's 4th of July float for the city parade. For the past few years they have participated, and have even won a few times. So we had some goals to meet. No pressure here! So what did we do? We sang three songs over and over and over and over again. Yea!!!! =) We stood up on the wagon, which was covered in wood framing, chicken wire and crepe paper stuffed into the



Joel Mailand

holes. The team, youth and parents all helped to sing and throw candy out. Instead of throwing out handfuls each time, I tried the more targeted approach: I got one person's attention and threw them a piece of candy. It took two or three more tries if I missed the first time. It was just my way of entertaining myself and making a connection with people who are otherwise having to stand through another parade, watching it go by. Oh, and it turned out all the hard work & preparation paid off—we won second place in the float contest!

It's been a nice weekend. After the parade I took a nap in the afternoon, and we all rested or went swimming. Last night we went out with the pastor, his son, and Heather's host brother to see Spiderman 2. It is a true summer blockbuster: action, a hero, a heroine, a villain, suspense, a few funny scenes, and a runaway subway car. (Yes that's important.)

The last day of VBS at Lutheran Church of the Covenant was yesterday evening. We finished with singing all the favorites that we taught them for the past week. Its going to be nice not to hear those songs for a while... =) Fortunately for us, we hid the standard favorites... (Think "I just want to be a sheep" and "Pharaoh Pharaoh"). They're catchy like the flu and as difficult to get rid of. We did not torture ourselves though, and came up with a completely new set of songs.

What I liked about the closing ceremony (the theme was "Son Games," as in 2004 Olympics) was that parents participated. I noticed that my host family was the first to stand up and sing along, and they are close to retirement age! It's great to see how much the congregation gets excited at youth and family events. It's a lot of work to pull off a successful VBS, trying to round up teachers, youth helpers, cookies, punch, make decorations, think up cool crafts for kids, and put it all on for just 4 hours a day for a week. I think what counts is that there is huge fun to be had by kids, and it also offers a ministry to families that are members, and maybe non-members too. VBS is fun because we make it fun, and we praise God because that is what we are meant to do. What a perfect way to celebrate our new life in Christ.

Date: 7/6/2004

Submitted by: Elise Coakley

Journal Entry:

Well, it's my birthday today—I am 23 years old. And how did I get to spend my birthday, you ask? How else but driving all day in the car? We drove from Dale City, Virginia to the Bronx, New York today, a drive filled with lots of traffic, many tolls and several bathroom and gas stops along the way. But it was SO exciting to get to New York City. We arrived at our host church in the Bronx, where we did a program for about 40 kids who had spent their day at the church's Day Camp. It was fun to spend time with such excited and enthusiastic youth, who asked questions during our program, eagerly suggested ideas and actions for songs, and danced around with us whenever they could. After our program we went home to our host families', and then took the subway into Manhattan. We went to Rockefeller Center and Times Square and just walked around for a few hours. So, my birthday evening was actually quite fun—I even got a free slice of cheesecake from a café downtown. What more could I want than a nice evening in Manhattan with a free slice of cheesecake and my fiancé? =)



Elise Coakley

Date: 7/8/2004

Submitted by: Heather Carr

Journal Entry:

Bronx, NY to Topton, PA

Well, yesterday I got to check something off my "To Do in my Lifetime" list—we saw a live show on Broadway! Our morning was spent chilling with the Bronx church's Day Camp kids, helping them tie-dye and play games, then our contact and hosts sent us downtown to enjoy the New York night life...including waiting in line for half-price tickets to "Chicago"! Bjørn and Elise did the honors, waiting in the sun at the front of the line to make sure we got tickets, so Ruth, Joel and I wandered around Times Square and up to Central Park, where we took a nap on the grass. I love that we could be in the middle of this huge city, and yet find a place peaceful enough to take a nap! Then we took the subway over to Little Italy, walked down to Chinatown, bought an "I love NY" shirt (for \$2.50!) and had some pizza before spiffing up for the show.



Heather Carr

And what a show! We had seats in the 10th row, and it was great—not what I was expecting (mostly because it was such a different style from the movie), but really entertaining. My favorite scene is still the marionette scene, which they did REALLY well, and there were some extra pieces that were fun, too. What threw me was that everything was black and white, (no color), and the small cast played all the parts, Vaudeville style. Very cool, I just didn't realize that's what the real show was like, because I've only seen the movie before now. Still, I loved it. Plus, Paige Davis from Trading Spaces played Roxie (which had everybody really excited), and Bjørn even got her autograph and a picture with her after the show! So, needless to say, it was a great night on Broadway. Top that off with our previous night's trip on the Staten Island Ferry to gaze at the Statue of Liberty and the NY skyline, seeing 42nd Street and Broadway by night, and buying a street vendor's hotdog, and I feel like I really got to experience New York City!

This has been a great couple of days, with sweet host families who wanted to make sure we got the most out of NYC while we were here, and fun kids to hang out with at the church—let's here it for a few days in the Big Apple! My first time...can you tell? Yep, I'm thrilled. =) Plus, then on Thursday we got to go back to Topton, at place we'd been looking forward to returning to, because the host families and contacts are great. God has blessed us this year in so many ways, and these last few days we have been showered with all kinds!

Date: 7/10/2004

Submitted by: Bjørn Peterson

Journal Entry:

We arrived in our twenty- ninth state today. The youth in Southbury, CT were doing the Thirty Hour Famine, and we got to hang out with them and do a program for them. We came from Topton, PA where we had been since Thursday afternoon. Topton is the hometown of Lucy Francisco, who was on the New Dawn team last year that traveled to Singapore and Hong Kong. She is preparing to go to seminary this fall at Gettysburg Lutheran Seminary in Gettysburg, PA. The big excitement while we were in the area was President Bush's visit to nearby Kutztown. We could see the Secret Service helicopters circling the area from our host home outside of Topton. I waved, but they flew away. I guess they were trying to be secretive.



Bjørn Peterson

Date: 7/13/2004

Submitted by: Ruth Bowman

Journal Entry:

Flourtown, PA

"What's your Myers Briggs personality?" This was one of Pastor Marcia's first questions of me when I arrived at her house that night after our program. "INFP" I replied. She looked at me and nodded liked she'd already guessed it and responded with "Me too." That was where I felt the first connection. Pastor Marcia was a confident, strong, motivated and devoted pastor who was single-handedly trying to put life back into the church she now serves. I admired her no-nonsense confidence as a gift that I've always wished that I myself possessed. Being a PK (pastor's kid) I could understand a lot of the lifestyle that was required of her as a pastor. This in itself, besides our similar personalities, provided for some great conversation. The timing was impeccable. The way in which she told me about herself and her life, provided perspective and wisdom as to how to approach difficult or joyous situations. I've found that as I've grown to depend on my team this year I have lost some of my independent and individual confidence. There are always those times that I would wonder why I was here. Why am I on team, what sort of good could I ever bring to the team or to any of the places or people that we meet? My head argues the ridiculousness of these feelings, for we often assure each other of one another's worth on the team, but there are still those moments, where my heart gets ahead of my head and insists that I am worthless, and misled; not understanding where or how God is leading me. Pastor Marcia provided insight that allowed me to reflect and pray on my life. My sense of worthlessness only comes when I deny the gifts and talents God has given me. Trust and faith in my Father's love is of utmost importance, for that is where my life has worth, and authority and confidence is given through the claim Christ has placed on me as His Child.



Ruth Bowman

Date: 7/15/2004
Submitted by: Joel Mailand
Journal Entry:

Jennerstown, PA

We are here at Camp Sequanota for four days visiting with the family camp. Although there are no scheduled programs for us, we are helping lead a worship service and singing during devotions. It's a nice change of pace, since we have been insanely busy lately, and it looks like in the next two weeks we will not have any days off. We are doing a program almost every night until debriefing—yikes, busy schedule. But for now, we are at camp, with plenty of free/rest time. The camp is in the deep woods of Pennsylvania and a quiet place to retreat.



Joel Mailand

The camp staff invited us to go rock climbing, so Heather and I went out to the boulders on camp with the family campers and staff. It's a short hike from the main camp, by a trail out into the forest. The rocks are piled together on the side of a mountain and covered with moss. After a few climbs my forearms ached and my fingers were cut from the sharp rock. I am used to indoor rock climbing gyms with easy handholds. Nothing like that here! It was a challenge keeping my hands in place, swatting mosquitos, and keeping the dirt from falling in my eyes. One of the family camp boys struggled for about 15 minutes in his climb to make it to the top. He ended up cutting up his knees and hands. I was exhausted watching the drama unfold. He tried different directions and handholds to grip the wall and still was unsuccessful. We coached him, and people gave him some encouragement, but the rock was too much. He ended up coming back down after making it only a few feet up the side. We all congratulated him and encouraged him in his effort. He looked defeated and all I could think was "Wow, what a great job he did!" Even though he was physically not able to make the climb, he had given a great effort.

I see it as a metaphor for life. There are struggles and rock walls in our own lives. We can often-times fall short of the goal, leaving broken relationships, and our own lives broken. We are physically not able to do everything on our own, to master our own lives, or be in control of everything. Thankfully, because God is faithful and keeps His promises, He sees past our mistakes and loves us, for all time. He is in control and is able to do what we are not able to do. He first offered forgiveness and love. Only then are we able to forgive and love others. The writer of Hebrews writes that we should throw off everything that hinders us and run with perseverance the race marked out for us. What great encouragement that is! Know that God is with you and does not break His promises.

Date: 7/17/2004

Submitted by: Heather Carr

Journal Entry:

Hudson --> Fremont, OH



Heather Carr

The pastor and youth director in Hudson are really amazing guys—I love that we got to come back to this church! Aside from the fact that our program felt really good on Sat. night, the folks who came were really responsive, and we had great host families, we also felt really blessed by having dinner with the youth director, who is great fun to talk to, and by our conversations with the pastor, who is one of the most dynamic pastors I think I've ever met. Over dinner, we laughed with Bob Brantch about ministry and pop songs and former teams and a million other things—he is so good at making people feel at ease, and I'm excited for his youth, getting to have him as a leader, and their time at the National Youth Gathering next week, which should be a blast for them. And then there's Pastor Tim Cartwright, who just exudes in-tune-ness with God. He is so intense that I almost feel on edge around him, because I'm never quite sure what new, surprising thing he's going to say—and that is exhilarating. I feel like when he speaks, I should pay attention, because this is a man who speaks the word of God (literally), and I wouldn't want to miss it if God wanted to say something to me through him.

So when he took the time on Sunday morning before we led the service, to make sure that he approached me and gave me some personal affirmation and encouragement, I really did feel like there might be more to it than just one man's approval. I think Bjørn felt that from him, too, because I know Pastor Tim gave him some encouragement as well. It is just thrilling to me some days, to know that God is working and speaking and acting and present, and that WE get to work for Him! What a great boss—and this Sunday service felt to me like one of the easiest to lead that we've done all year. Not because we didn't do much, because we did—but because I felt the presence of God so strongly that morning that it didn't feel like US doing anything—it felt like God was there and moving, and we could just step back and let Him work.

I wish I could say that that's what every Sunday service feels like for me...but in reality, I often find it really hard to step back and just let God work. I'm so good at getting *stuff* done, at doing the business of ministry, of making sure that everything fits into place just so, that sometimes it's hard to let go, and I may even get in the way because I'm trying so hard. And I know this dilemma is one of the struggles of full-time ministry, this problem of trying too hard to do God's work for Him... yet I still struggle with it. Of course, I know that God is still working even when I'm not paying attention, and that even on my most controlling days, God is still glorified—but some days it's more a matter of knowing that in my *head* than actually feeling like I'm letting it sink in and affect how

I minister. So this morning was a real blessing in more ways than one; a needed reminder that if I show up, God will work, but that it is GOD who is doing the work, and not me. "He must increase, I must decrease." - John 3:30. What God can do through the vessel of my life is going to be a million times better than anything I can do on my own, anyway—let it be a prayer for all of us, that we would allow God to do His work in our lives, stepping back to let Him increase.

Date: 7/20/2004
Submitted by: Elise Coakley
Journal Entry:

Fremont, OH



Elise Coakley

We are participating in our third different VBS this week, *Davy and Goliath's Camp Creation*. We have already done *Lava, Lava Island* and *Son Games*. We began to learn music for the week and I was pleasantly surprised to find that one of the songs is the coolest song ever! I'm not sure my team would agree with me, but I think the song *Why Not A Spark* is the best song. We learned the song and then put actions to the music, and I feel like I'm on *Seasame Street* every time we sing. I've always dreamed of being on *Seasame Street* someday, and I may still live out that dream. All of the kids at VBS loved the song too—they would hula with us as we sang the song, and often requested that we sing it. And although this song was definitely a gem, not all of the songs from this VBS were so blessed, so we got to work some magic and find ways to make songs that we didn't really like fun and exciting for everyone. Of course, crazy actions and dancing never fails. I think we succeeded in making the music exciting for the kids, and I'm so proud of my team for being so creative. And many parents informed me of how their kids would sing the songs non-stop because they liked them so much. Even though working with such little kids can be draining and exhausting, it is so much fun to see how enthusiastic and energetic they are, and I'm so thankful for such love.

Date: 7/22/2004
Submitted by: Bjørn Peterson
Journal Entry:

Fremont, OH



Bjørn Peterson

This week I had an interesting experience while praying. It was just before midnight on Wednesday night and I was reading "Ruthless Trust" by Brennan Manning. As I finished I felt God say, "Come talk with me." So I went outside and stood in the street in front of my host home and watched the lightning. God nudged me with a question, "Will you do it even if you don't want to? Will you trust me with this?" He didn't say what. "What are you talking about?" I prayed, hoping it wasn't about what I felt certain it must be. "You know." I thought about the weight of my answer. It would haunt me if I tried to back out after giving my word. It was only to Him. I could always claim confusion later. I couldn't deny myself though. "Ok, I'll do it." "I will change your heart to be where it needs to be. In time your desires will conform to the path we will take together. Meanwhile, let your obedience be your joy." I put out the clove in my hand and went back to the basement. I sat down on the couch and put my head in my hands. "Seminary," I thought. I swung my feet onto the couch and went to sleep.

Date: 7/27/2004
Submitted by: Joel Mailand
Journal Entry:

Grand Rapids, MI - Anglican Catholic Youth Camp



Joel Mailand

Our last day at the Anglican Catholic camp. We arrived on Sunday afternoon and met with Father Jerry and Father Barry, and they explained what exactly they wanted us to do for our three days at the camp. This is the seventh year they have put on the camp. The camp offers horseback riding, a day at Lake Michigan, Bible study, a day at a family fun park, and music with New Dawn. Our mission: hang out with youth, share our faith, and have fun. Nothing we have not done before. Ok so we had to endure going out to Lake Michigan. The water was icy, and I only waded, but I dared the youth to go out to the swim-area buoy. I ended up losing and gave four bottles of root beer away. Ouch. =) As skinny as I am I think I would have turned to a popsicle if I had gone out there. So we played frisbee, kids rolled down the sand dunes, I got sun-burned, and we buried kids in the sand up to their necks. I really enjoyed hanging out with the youth, and I am glad that it went so well. I got into playing chess with some of the campers, and that was another highlight. Their version of chess was to try clear as many pieces off the board and then try to get the other person trapped in checkmate. I tried helping them see strategy and how to plan an attack. Good times.

The week was also a time for education, as well. Father Jerry led the group through a video on Bible characters. Afterward, we split the team up and led small group discussions. It was informal, but gave us time to talk about personal faith and allow kids to ask questions. I enjoyed listening and encouraging during this time. A lot of times it seems that there just needs to be time for kids to express their questions, fears, understanding of the world, and how God works in their lives. It seems like we try to teach and instruct and drill, but leave little time for reflection and hearing what youth need. I am glad we had a great discussion. Ruth did a great job in leading the group through questions on the topic of Faith, and I think that they were all challenged, and hopefully learned some new things.
