

Watermark/Denmark 2003-04 Journal

Date: 9/23/2003

Submitted by: John Foster

Journal Entry:

In my life the word "hospitality" as I have seen it thus far has changed. It's not that people have never shown me hospitality before, but this is a new kind. It is hard for me to imagine being taken into a home the way that we have been. A family of four became a family of six for one night. Maybe it will be something that along the road I will get used to, but at this point it is very extreme. They brought us along to their favorite place for custard, played us in ping pong and shared their pasts with us. In frustration, I often feel that there is little kindness left in this world, everyone busy with their own plans. I know that if I ever am back in that mindset again, I can think back on the host families and be reminded of kindness overflowing.



John Foster

Date: 9/25/2003

Submitted by: Kate Tripoli

Journal Entry:

I lose things a lot. I was so excited to live this year with a minimal amount of stuff because I figured it would be so much easier to keep track of my things. Not so, friends. Since coming to training, I have lost (and then found again) my bath towel, a small ring I was holding for a friend, my weekly planner, my only pair of jeans, my purse, my Bible, my deodorant, and my way through Des Plaines, Illinois. I have also lost (and have yet to find again) all the extra batteries I brought, my program coordinator kit, and my address book. Spending a lot of time in the past few weeks of training and the first days on the road looking for lost things (and thinking about why I seem to lose more things than anyone else on my Team) has brought to mind the parable of the woman sweeping out her house to find her one lost coin.



Kate Tripoli

The more I thought about it, though, the more I realized the most important difference between me searching for my deodorant and Jesus searching for me. My deodorant was not lost of its own volition. My stick of Secret did not suddenly wake up one morning and say to itself, "I think I'd be better off somewhere else than with Kate," and resolve to hide in the van until it could make its great escape at a gas station stop. My deodorant was lost because I was careless. But when Christ comes to seek the lost, it is not because He did not keep track of us closely enough. We were determined to seek our fortunes elsewhere rather than allow God to care for us and keep us. My deodorant was misplaced; I myself was truly lost until Christ revealed Himself in my life. And just as there was rejoicing on my Team when I found my deodorant again, there is abundant rejoicing in heaven when Christ brings us back into His keeping – not just the first time, but every time.

Date: 9/30/2003

Submitted by: Nate Peterson

Journal Entry:

I have lost all sense of time. We've been on the road for a week. The time goes by quickly and at the same time, it seems as though we've been on the road forever. I don't really have any need to know the date, because I never know what all of the scheduled events are for the next day. Even when we have a schedule, the times are certainly subject to change. We are learning how to be flexible. We heard about it at training, but it has become a definite reality.



Nate Peterson

We arrived in Battle Creek, Michigan yesterday afternoon. We had provided music for four Sunday morning services in Grand Rapids and were ready to do a program for Michigan Youth Challenge

Academy (MYCA). We pulled into town around 3 PM and waited patiently for around 3 hours to begin setup. It's really great for me personally to see myself be more comfortable in uncertain situations. I've been a worrier throughout my life, and have even spent time worrying about my worrying ways.

When I heard about the program for MYCA, I was pretty pessimistic about the response that we'd get from the youth. These were 16-19 year olds, mostly male, who were in this military style program designed for troubled teens. They watched us and ate as we set up our sound equipment and went through a sound check. Then the program started, and they were by far the most energetic crowd yet. They were dancing and clapping, singing along and having fun. When the program ended they wanted us to play for another hour. Some of the cadets came on stage and jammed. It was so fun to see, and they were really good. Afterwards, seven of them helped us put away the equipment, and then we hung out for awhile. They were so much fun to talk to. They were wonderful people. We're so blessed to meet wonderful people every day. I'm so glad we were able to go to the MYCA program and share Christ's love. I'm so glad that they shared love with us. I'm so glad that I can be flexible enough to at least accept the unexpected blessings in my life. To my family and old and new friends – I love you. To all – God Bless You.

Date: 10/2/2003

Submitted by: Tracy Apps

Journal Entry:

Surprises. Unexpected events. Small glimpses of God's power and love. Surprises to us, not so surprising to God. Within a week's span, we have had a vast array of experiences. We performed a program for teens on a military base, jammed with a youth group praise band, sang with seniors at an assisted living home, hung out with youth at a juvenile detention center, and now we have quite a bit of relaxing free time here at a Lutheran camp in Pennsylvania.

Tonight we head to a church to perform only our second 'family night program', and our first lock-in experience. It's hard to believe that we have only been on the road for two weeks.

One thing that really strikes me from our week of new and exciting experiences, is that God loves to surprise us. It's those times when we pull up to a place, wondering "What are we doing HERE?" when God rocks our socks off. How do we, as a Christian group, get into government run facilities? And how is it that God does the most amazing things in those places? Is this a hint to us as Christians who enjoy staying safe inside our churches and fellowship groups? I think it is. God has no limits. God doesn't just work in churches. He is present everywhere, and yes, even in the juvenile detention facility. And yes, God works through people, even us. Even as we have thoughts of "What are we doing here? Do we really have to go in and play music for these people? I'm sure they're just gonna laugh at us anyways." In fact, when we have these doubting attitudes, the Holy Spirit comes in, takes over, and we are always left with our jaws to the ground, scratching our heads and wondering "What just happened?" May we all catch a glimpse of God's unlimited love! (And share it!)



Tracy Apps

Date: 10/7/2003

Submitted by: Elisabeth Nejsum

Journal Entry:

The last couple of days have just been a time of relaxing, host home encountering and ... nothing really! Sunday morning we played a few worship songs during a service and went on to Baltimore where we stayed with the Torbit family whose eldest son, Patrick is on Watermark Germany. We had a great time just hanging out, jamming, playing games and eating all the delicious food they cooked for us. On Monday we all slept in (some more than others) and some of us went to Washington, D.C. being tourists while others just stayed at the house to recover from a week of hard work. At night we played a special Torbit family gift game where we played for all kinds of good-to-have-on-the-



Elisabeth Nejsum

road things they bought for us – and of course Nate, who was visiting his aunt and uncle at that time, ended up with all the girly stuff like Sweet Pea Body Wash etc. Nice! Today after a good brunch and a tearful parting from Karen and Steve we're on the road again heading for our next host home.

Date: 10/9/2003

Submitted by: John Foster

Journal Entry:

For the last couple of weeks, I have been trying to finish my application for admission to a Christian college. The part I got stumped on was when it asked me to explain my relationship with Christ. I had worked through it several times, and each time it felt fake. Finally I realized something. I had become so busy trying to serve Him that I had forgotten to spend time with Him. My life has been full of "Martha and Mary" moments (Luke 10:38-40). I sit there and complain that I'm not feeling God's presence, rather than just crawling up into His love and enjoying the joy that is Him. It's funny how He used the application to bring me back to Him. In the searching I did to answer a question on an application, I found God right where I had left Him – sitting with a smile on His face, waiting for me.



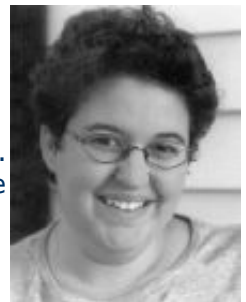
John Foster

Date: 10/11/2003

Submitted by: Kate Tripoli

Journal Entry:

Team is a great way to prove to yourself that you aren't as mature as you liked to think. Our past few host homes that have had the opportunity to house all seven of us at once have tried to figure out which of us is the oldest (Andy's 26) and which of us is the youngest (Elisabeth's 19) and where the rest of us fall in the middle (Tracy, Nate, Lisa, me, and John – in case you were wondering). And most of them have guessed that I am the oldest. It's probably my short haircut more than anything else, but when I ask, "Why did you think it was me?" people like to answer, "It must be because you're so much more mature than everybody else." We all have a good laugh at that, but as I'm laughing, I'm saying to myself, "You'd better believe I'm more mature than anyone else on this Team. I've long held the theory that the more vigorously you have to defend your maturity, the less actual maturity you probably have. ("I'm mature! Really! I am, I am, I am!") My theory is now coming back to haunt me. The other day, one of my Teammates made a comment about the amount of stuff I have in the van. I felt he was being unfair and taking out his frustrations on my personal belongings, and I couldn't believe he could be so childish. Later on when he wanted to sit in a chair I had my feet on, I refused to move. How very mature of me.



Kate Tripoli

At a recent chapel service at Nyack College in New York, I heard a message preached about true maturity. The speaker said that maturity can be measured by the amount of love and integrity you display in your relationships with others. He is right. The mark of maturity that I am striving for this year is the ability to forgive and forget, to remember that my Teammates are more important to me than the things they occasionally do to frustrate me. When I stop priding myself about how mature I am, I will actually have grown up.

Date: 10/14/2003

Submitted by: Lisa Bonordon

Journal Entry:

We just entered Delaware!!! Another state I've never been in – how exciting. The last day and two nights we were in Virginia, another place I've never been. We were in Fredricksburg, VA. This is a place with a tragic history. The land has held battles during the Civil War, recent battles with the "D.C Sniper" and more recently with Hurricane Isabel. There is also celebration in this town. We had a program with over 40 youth in



attendance. We had a fun spaghetti dinner beforehand with all the kids and then worshipped together during our program. It was super fun. During training we talked about how we aren't going into lands where God is absent. God is working in people of all ages, of all cultures, and of all life experiences. It has been fun to see God's glory in the congregations that we've been a part of for just a short time. The encouragement that they've given us is part of God's plan to keep us going. In the nine states where we've had programs, I have seen the body of believers. Many congregations have invited other church families to take part in our programs. It excites me to be a little bridge in unifying the whole body of believers. This is a celebration.

Lisa Bonordon

P.S. (20 minutes later) Now we are in New Jersey!!!!

Date: 10/21/2003

Submitted by: Nate Peterson

Journal Entry:

This journal entry is tardy, for reasons you either already know or will soon find out. I had begun to write an entry before the following events transpired. It began like this... "Just when you think things couldn't get any worse...." I wanted to write that God is bigger than any problems we are ever going to face. How ironic that I was about to learn that lesson firsthand.



Nate Peterson

Disclaimer: All of the times, distances (and some quotes) in this report are approximate. The events, from my perspective and as I remember them, are factual and completely objective. (If any of the following facts seems subjective, you are mistaken.) I am a really cool guy...

Thursday, Oct. 16 (4:00 PM) Watermark arrives at their destination in Edison, NJ. Upon arrival at the Holiday Inn Express, the trailer and van are divided. Andy, Tracy, Lisa, Katie and Elisabeth enter the hotel, while the Vehicle Safety Manager, Nate, and his partner John drive to Home Depot to pick up a trailer security device.

(4:02 PM) After meticulously checking the van doors to assure their security, N & J proceed to enter Home Depot. Following a brief debate, Nate buys a Master lock for approximately \$8US. They think New Jersey is a pretty swell place to be.

(4:12 PM) N & J attempt to return to the 1998 Ford E-350 15 passenger van (light blue). They fail. Nate fears the worst. John suggests that their funny teammate Andy is pulling a prank. N & J decide to make sure that it wasn't just a prank before reporting the incident to the police.

(4:16 PM) N & J arrive at the hotel. They are breathing heavily from the run. Their worst fears are confirmed. This was not a prank. The van was stolen.

(4:18 PM) Nate talks to the Edison police. They deploy a unit to Home Depot.

(4:40 PM) Police finally show up. Nate has been talking to Erik Hummel at the Youth Encounter office while others questioned workers and Depot patrons. They are informed by one friendly worker that N & J are extremely foolish for parking far from the entrance. "Of course your van is going to get stolen!"

(5:00 PM) Watermark meets in the hotel lobby. They decide to settle into their rooms and then to get groceries.

(9:00 PM) Andy, Nate and John return to the hotel after getting lost and walking 15 miles. (The scenery is amazing!) With no other conceivable way of returning within a reasonable time, they finally decide to walk on the shoulder of a 4 lane highway. Facing no shoulder for a brief period of time, they were forced to sprint 40 yards while no vehicles were following. That was very frightening...don't try this at home!

Thursday night - Watermark spends time talking together, calls loved ones and goes to sleep while

watching the 1920's gangster movie "Road to Perdition," starring Tom Hanks.

Friday, Oct. 17 (9:00 AM) Nate eats breakfast with John. The breakfast at the Holiday Inn Express is wonderful!

(10:00 AM) Nate, John, Tracy, Lisa and Katie go shopping with their wonderful (I'm serious this time) contact. These Watermark members buy some musical instruments and books, including Bibles.

(3:00 PM) Andy, under authorization from Erik, rents a stylish SUV along with our accommodating contact. Watermark concludes that it is very cool. It is equipped with a hitch mount which could possibly allow the team to continue to haul the trailer. There was some fear that Watermark, unable to haul their electric setup, would become an acoustic team without acoustic instruments, as three acoustic guitars and a djembe (African drum) were in the stolen van.

(4:00 PM) The guys, after some searching, purchase a hitch and attach it to the SUV. Wild clapping of hands ensues.

(5:00 PM) Watermark arrives at the church, and eats a wonderful dinner served by members of this compassionate congregation. Watermark's hearts are warmed, and many smiles are shared.

(7:15 PM) Watermark's program begins 15 minutes late. It is high energy and a lot of fun. The congregation treats Watermark so well and is very generous with them.

(9:45 PM) Watermark arrives at the hotel after chatting with the church-folk and tearing down their electric setup. They have a quiet evening together, and go to sleep.

Saturday, Oct. 18 (8:00 AM) The phone rings in the guys' room. Andy answers. Erik is on the other end. He reports that our van is at a towing company in Newark (20 miles away). Note: An apology to my mom and a thank you for working so hard to try to get a hold of us. I love you very much. The guys make a couple calls to the Newark and Edison police departments, get directions, and drive very fast up to Newark.

(9:45 AM) Nate waits in line for 1.5 hours among 20 other victims of similar crimes to obtain a release for the van. J & A, meanwhile, go to the towing company to see if they can get into the van. They also make a few phone calls to YE staff to try to figure out how to obtain the van. They cannot get the van, but will try again the next day to get the proper forms. What a run around!!!!!!!

(1:00 PM) The guys return to the hotel, where the girls had been waiting in the lobby. They had cleaned and checked out of the rooms, and been waiting patiently. Watermark departs for Stratford, CT.

(5:03 PM) Watermark arrives at the church in Stratford, and sets up with the great help of some church folk.

(5:35 PM) Watermark receives faxes from Erik. Included is the necessary paperwork to get a police release for the van.

(5:45 PM) Nate gets a ride with one member of the congregation (the guys' host dad) to visit another member, who is a notary. Finally, Watermark is in possession of all things necessary to retrieve the van. Dinner is also very tasty.

(7:15 PM) See Friday, Oct. 17 (7:15 PM)

(11:00 PM) After a pleasant evening with the host family and reading, Nate goes to bed.

Sunday, Oct. 19 (6:00 AM) Nate arises. This is very early for Nate.

(6:30 AM) Nate and Andy depart for Newark. Andy drives fast, and they get there quickly. The police station opens at 9:00 AM. They arrive before 8:00. Coffee is a necessity at this point. Starbucks opens at 8:00 AM. They order coffee and drive around for awhile.

(9:00 AM) After waiting 30 minutes in the brisk Jersey air and seeing some shady things, N & A are first in line at the release window. Ten minutes later, they are on their way to the towing company. Nate (Watermark's treasurer) pays their monstrous fee (> \$200US) and N & A are allowed, one at a time, to visit the van. It is not a pretty sight. The driver's side lock had been smashed in and the ignition torn off. Most of Watermark's valuables have been stolen. Many personal items are also missing. Things are strewn throughout the big blue (now) garbage can. To avoid another gigantic towing fee, Andy starts up the van with a screwdriver.

(11:00 AM) N & A arrive at a Ford dealership. They proceed to clean out the van completely, throwing away the junk and putting the rest in the rented SUV. Since it is Sunday and the dealership is closed, they decide to write a note and leave the key. They put them between the locked doors and leave the van in the parking lot.

(2:20 PM) N & A arrive back in Stratford, and make a couple of phone calls. Watermark departs for Stafford Springs, CT.

(5:00 PM) Watermark arrives at the church in SS. They are welcomed heartily by Kate's family and friends. There is much help setting up. Dinner is wonderful.

(7:15 PM) See previous two programs. Personally, this is Nate's best program yet. The small church was packed and there were many familiar faces for a few of the team members.

(10:00 PM) The girls and Nate arrive at Kate's house. After some good conversation, they go to bed.

Monday, Oct. 20 This has been a wonderfully relaxing day off. I heard from Erik that the Ford dealership, with permission from the YE vehicle guy Dan, has ordered the necessary parts and will commence work ASAP.

These are the events leading up to press time.

Like an Oscar-winning actor, I want to thank: the generous and kind congregations we have been with the past few days; our friendly and accommodating host families and contacts; all of my family and friends who care...especially Mom (I love you); the YE staff, especially Erik Hummel, who has been such a help and has worked so hard; my teammates, for their undying commitment in the face of adversity (there has been almost no bickering, complaining, or blaming. Everyone has grown closer through this, and we have truly been working and playing as a team. These people know what's truly important); and, God, the creator of all things. He has given us strength. He has been our source of hope. He has forgiven and saved us. He has pulled us together and is working through us. He loves each and every one of us. I'm not just talking about Watermark, but everyone in the entire world. God bless you all. Much love, Nate

(Editor's note: We recovered the van on Tuesday and returned the SUV. New guitars and percussion instruments have been furnished by our own bank accounts and by generous contacts. Life is pretty much back to normal. Only the word "STOLEN" written on the windshield reminds us of the craziest week of Watermark's collective life – so far.)

Date: 10/23/2003

Submitted by: Tracy Apps

Journal Entry:

This Road :: by: Ginny Owens
A million miles away from anything familiar
A thousand places I would rather be
So I choke back the tears and try to find the brighter side
Though I find it hard to see beyond my suffering
In my heart I know Your plan is so much bigger
But this small part is all I can see
And I believe You haven't left me here to wander
Still I can't help but ponder



Tracy Apps

Where You're leading me

And I ask why this road?
Why this way? And this load?
Tell me how far must I go?
'till I see, 'till I know
Why this road?

A million miles away from anything familiar
What was it like to be so far from home
Though You came in love
The world misunderstood You
There must have been some days when You felt so alone
But You endured, 'cuz there was joy before You
Joy that came because You sacrificed
Since You gave Yourself just to spend forever with me
Surely I can trust You'll lead me through my darkest times

When I ask why this road?
Why this way? And this load?
Tell me how far must I go?
'till I see, 'till I know
Why this road?

From here I cannot see
Why You'd choose this path for me
But I don't have to understand to believe
That You know why, this road
Why this way and this load
You know how far I must go
'till I see, 'till I know
Why this road

How fitting is it that I chose thisroad.org for a web page? Wow. So let me tell you how much this song by Ginny Owens is speaking my thoughts right now. Throughout this whole 'stolen van' and loss of 'stuff', several times I just wanted to be home, among familiar things, familiar faces, and people who knew me better, and who truly would know what I was going through. I just got off the phone with a friend, and I realized how much MORE I value my friends at home, being so far from them. Having the chance to just sit with a friend, and not have to speak, but have them know what I'm thinking, or at least a little bit. It's hard, but our team has grown closer through this situation. We may not have chosen these particular people to be our friends, but God chose all of us to be together for a reason. I have learned more about myself by having to try to express my feelings through words while being around people who don't think like I do.

We have been blessed by the people we have met, and all the generosity and kind words that people have shared with us. I can't complain about our situation. God is bigger than all the 'stuff' that was taken. It's only stuff. It's drawn us closer to God. My heart hurts. But God is using that to bring me closer to Him.

I don't know God's plan. I can only see right where I am right now. I don't know why within two weeks I have cut my hand badly enough to not be able to play the drums for a while, lost all my most valuable stuff and my work, and gotten a terrible head cold..... but God sees the whole road that I'm walking on.

Date: 11/2/2003
Submitted by: Lisa Bonordon
Journal Entry:



Lisa Bonordon

It's November in the Northeast. The leaves are still vibrant with color, and we have had a great couple of days. On Halloween we were in Bronx, NY. We had a sing-a-long program at 4 o'clock, and then we went trick-or-treating with some of the kids. It was a lot of fun! It was such a different Halloween – when I was a kid, it seemed to be always a rainy (sometimes snowy), cold night. This night was warm, and the sky was clear. I especially enjoyed walking around to the houses and small businesses around the neighborhood to get some candy – and "aw-ing" at all the cute kids in their costumes.

The next day we helped with the church's yearly tag sale. Amidst the bustle of the crowd looking for cooking utensils, clothes, and random junk, I got to chat with some great girls from the church and eat some Toni's Ten Bean Soup (Women's Bean Project). It was so fun! God reminded me of the beauty of the city – moving, working, and being with many people. Cities are great for exploring the local restaurants, watching the diversity of God's people, and developing a smaller community within the huge community.

This small Lutheran church in the Bronx was so welcoming to us and so fun to be around. It was a place of gathering where one could come and escape the craziness of the city – a place where people know each other and are welcomed to be in a sacred place to worship the One who gives Life. I think it is important for everyone to find sacred places to be in community and to experience solitude. Being on the road, this place is not physical for me, but it is a realization of how big God is and how He inhabits the praises of His people.

Date: 11/6/2003
Submitted by: Kate Tripoli
Journal Entry:



Kate Tripoli

Warning: spoilers ahead.

Last night, we were in Jefferson, Maryland. We had no program, and we were sleeping in the church and in the Sunday School house next door. So, we did what any group of young adults with free time would have done the night of November 5. We went to see *The Matrix: Revolutions*. I wouldn't say it was a great two hours in cinematic history, but I definitely had a good time. What struck me the most about the movie was how far it had strayed from my original perceptions of the first movie. Now, if you're reading this, and you knew me in college, you probably know that I watched *The Matrix* about once a week for almost an entire semester. (I cut down to once a month my next year of school.) I heard every single "Christianity in *The Matrix*" parallel there was. Neo was the savior, multiple references to Jesus and other biblical figures were made around him, he was submerged and pulled from the water shortly after his awakening in the real world, one of his companions betrayed him to the authorities, he died, came back to life, and was given authority over the laws of the Matrix, etc. However, those parallels stop after the first movie. (At this point, if you don't want to find out the end of the third movie, you should stop reading. Maybe you could go read Kindred's journals instead. They're a nice Team.) In *Reloaded* and *Revolutions*, Neo is much more like Superman than he is like Jesus. He has supernatural abilities when he is plugged into the Matrix, and some of those abilities carry over into the human world. He never takes or gives anyone else credit for the things he is able to do, and he encourages others to look to their own inner strength for survival. He gives everything he has until the very end of the third movie, where (seriously, Kindred's journals are pretty fun) he destroys the rogue Agent Smith program by allowing Smith to destroy him in turn. And then that's it. Neo gives it all, and then he's gone. There's some vague hints at the end about "expecting to see him again someday," but I think that was more to leave the door open for more sequels rather than to indicate Neo's actual immortality. The whole experience just drove home the fact that I am glad

that Jesus is my Savior and not Neo. Jesus died once for all and rose again for all. Death isn't going to be able to take Him again. Jesus doesn't turn us aside and tell us to save ourselves when we look to Him for help. Jesus is alive today and forever. Seems pretty basic, but I'm always glad for a reminder from the Lord of His great love and the fantastic news of the Gospel – even when the messenger is Keanu Reeves and the Wachowski brothers.

Date: 11/10/2003

Submitted by: Tracy Apps

Journal Entry:

Here I am, in Ascension Lutheran Church in Towson, Maryland. We played a program here last night, and we are packing up now and heading to our next destination to do another program tonight. We ate Chinese food last night, which was SOOOOO good. I thought I was going to explode because I ate so much! But things have been going good here. The Torbit family (the parents and sister of Pat Torbit, who is on Watermark Germany) came to our program last night and Grandma Torbit donated 'The Club' for our van! We are all VERY happy about that. :-D



Tracy Apps

You know, every so often I take a step back from my life right now, and I can't believe that this IS my life. It's strange to think that I have been 'living on the road' for around two months, and that this is only the beginning. The people we have encountered have been amazing! When people say, "Oh, these kids gave up a whole year of their lives..." I keep thinking, "'Gave up?' How is this 'giving up' something?" I get to travel, play music, eat free food, sleep in people's houses, be treated to the most awesome hospitality, and meet new people every day. How is that giving something up? This year is a tremendous blessing to me and all the other teamers. We get the opportunity to experience life in ways that most people don't have the chance to. At the same time, we get to be stretched,

formed, and built by God. I felt that I've gained much more than "given up" this year. MUCH more!

God is so good. Blessings to you!

Date: 11/13/2003

Submitted by: Elisabeth Nejsun

Journal Entry:

Yay for journals!!! Now, we've actually had some great days ... not that that would be surprising, but I guess it allows me to tell you that the energy level has been kind of low. After a hard set up and a great dinner I must admit that the last thing I wanted to do was sing the "Hippo Song" and be relational, and many times I've begged Jesus to take me home before 7 o'clock. But we've had a blast. Thursday, the Super Host Family, the Torbits, showed up, and there was much rejoicing – yaaaay!!

We've had a couple of days in Maryland (the land of merry people) and then we returned to Long Island to warm up the people in an icy cold church.

Hmm... yeah, I know it sounds as if I'm getting really bored and our life is pretty much routine. But God is never getting boring, and life with Him is never routine. He is teaching us new stuff every day, and I'm really excited to see what He has in store for us!



Elisabeth Nejsun

Date: 11/15/2003

Submitted by: Lisa Bonordon

Journal Entry:

Things I'm thankful for:

New places
Host families

Cartwheels on the beach with my host sister
 Granny Smith apples
 New Hampshire
 Kids dancing in the aisles at our programs
 Potluck dinners
 Teammates
 Laughter and hugs
 Sunshine
 Massachusetts
 Back massages
 Funny pictures
 Rain
 Diversity in our team
 www.thisroad.org
 Driving (I guess riding in my case)
 Phone conversations with friends and family
 Camp Calumet in New Hampshire
 Taize worship at Dartmouth College
 Scenic walks and runs
 Peanut butter and banana on whole wheat
 Spending two nights in Vermont!
 Other teams' journals
 Stopping in Rhode Island (even if it was just a gas station next to the Interstate)
 God's faithfulness and ever-present help -- especially when Kate was sick
 One on ones with teammates
 Prayer shawl – a wonderful gift we received in Middletown, Connecticut
 Getting notes and letters in the mail
 Lord of the Rings cast commentary
 Solitude
 God's grace



Lisa Bonordon

Give thanks to the Lord for He is good! His love endures forever!!! Psalm 136:1

Date: 11/18/2003

Submitted by: Nate Peterson

Journal Entry:

One of the comments I often hear from people on the road is: "What a great sacrifice you're making...giving up a year of your life for ministry." I don't think I'm making much of a sacrifice, though. In fact, there are new blessings every day. One of the many blessings is seeing new places.

The latest treasure has been the Atlantic shoreline. One day in Massachusetts, I was sitting on the solid, rough granite, watching and listening the waves roll in below me as the tide rose. The only other sound I could hear was the call of seagulls and other birds. Less than a mile away sat a small island adorned with two gorgeous lighthouses. Between the island and myself, seals occasionally stuck their heads up to get some air and to look around. The sun's rays leaked through the mostly cloudy sky; as it began to set, everything shone even more radiantly. I had planned on reading, but all I could do was admire this small portion of God's beautiful handiwork. I imagined what it would be like to play with seals, to explore the ocean. The following night in New Hampshire, Andy, John and I walked to the sandy beach about 30 miles north of our previous location. The beach seemed to be perfectly flat at low tide and looked like a frozen lake. The waves were breaking and inching forward by the time they reached these three cautious guys who didn't want to get their feet too wet. Though very different from the other shoreline, this was also quite beautiful. The bright shining stars didn't hurt. How majestic is the Lord's creation, how enormous and how far beyond anything I could ever create or even imagine! The size of one ocean is too much for me. There is so much unknown, but the more I see, the more I want to explore this beautiful planet. I want to see more of God in the things He has created.

So, as I visit new places and meet new people, I can hardly think of myself as making a sacrifice.



Nate Peterson

While sometimes difficult and tiring, this life of new places and faces is a wonderful one in so many ways. God bless you all. I love you. Nate -- Genesis 1

Date: 11/20/2003

Submitted by: John Foster

Journal Entry:

Trust. Definition: a firm reliance on the integrity, ability, or character of a person or thing. Sounds simple enough. Why does it end up being so complicated? I often try to believe that to trust in God is to have no trust in man whatsoever. This has been an easy wall to hide behind to not let people see the real me or let them into my life. I was quite successful for most of camp this summer. I learned that if you let people in far enough quickly, they think they know the whole you. This situation (being on Team) is a lot different than camp, though. These people live with me in the van and deal with my odors.

God recently revealed something to me about trust. How do I trust in Him? There is a story about a man who was in a flood. He asked God for help. First, a neighbor came in a car and yelled to the man to get in so they can drive to safety, but the man said he was waiting for God to save Him. As the waters rose, a friend came in a boat to save the man, but the man had the same response. Finally, the water was so high that the man was on his roof. A helicopter came by and tried to help, but the man stayed true to his idea that God would save him. He died. When he got up to the Pearly Gates, he was mad. "Why didn't you save me?" he asked God. "I tried," said God. "First I gave you a car, then a boat, and then a helicopter." My teammates are here to help me and for me to trust.



John Foster

Date: 12/29/2003

Submitted by: Tracy Apps

Journal Entry:

Midwinter was just what I needed, and exactly what I didn't. But all in all, it was amazing. God is good. Highlights from Midwinter included seeing all the other Teamers and realizing how much of a blessing it is to have that larger community of people who know what I'm thinking/feeling, because they are thinking/feeling many of the same things. It's such a loving and accepting community of people, and the worship is AMAZING! I get chills every time I hear all the Teamers sing songs together. It's like having a choir surrounding you, and actually, it kinda is. And while I'm so amazed at how our songs sound at Training, that's only a TASTE of what heaven is gonna be like! It's hard to imagine anything more beautiful sounding, yet I will. And I find that kinda cool. (OK. REALLY cool.)

And as for the low end of Midwinter... our Team is now a six person Team. After hours of tearful discussions, Andy left team due to personal reasons. It's so hard to see a beloved member of our "WMD family" leave. One of my biggest fears lately on Team has been that when all seven of us departed, we would not be on "good terms" and wouldn't keep in touch. With Andy leaving early, I felt that fear really creep up on me, but God is good! We all had the chance to talk to Andy before he left, and I, personally, was tremendously relieved to hear that he will still keep in touch, visit us, read the journals, etc. That brought a lot of peace to my heart. We love you, Andy. And we'll miss you lots!

Also throughout Midwinter Training, I could see many weary eyes, many exhausted Teamers, many changed hearts, broken, tired, but all with peace. Seeing God working through these people on the road, but also seeing them ready for a break, I'm just reminded of the passage, "We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed." (2 Corinthians 4:8-9) Man... what an honor to be stretched, broken and formed by the Creator of the universe. God is really working... in my life... through my life... through my Team... through our hard times... through our



Tracy Apps

good times. Ahh... God is good.

"We have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us." (2 Corinthians 4:7)

Amen. :-)

Date: 12/30/2003

Submitted by: Lisa Bonordon

Journal Entry:

We just got back from our Christmas break! It was a bit weird to be away from people that I had seen, lived with, and worked with every day for the past four months. It was nice to have the break -- as you can imagine. It was especially needed after a grueling Midwinter Training week. The past two weeks for me were spent with my parents, my sister and her husband, grandmothers, relatives, and friends. I also got some quality me-time and sleep! One of my biggest highlights was to hear the heartbeat of my niece or nephew that will be born in early March. Yes, I'll be in Denmark at that time - sigh. The next time I see my family there will be a baby!!! How exciting!!!



Lisa Bonordon

What a time we've had so far since getting back! We've been in Tracy and Nate's state of Wisconsin, where we see huge signs that say CHEESE all over the place, where they have Tyme Machines instead of ATMs, and where the people are very friendly.

After our break, we met back again in Rio (pronounced r-eye-o - oddly enough) on Saturday. After singing Christmas carols in a Saturday night worship service, hanging out with some wonderful people, and leading the international worship service the next morning, we headed to Pell Lake, WI (near Lake Geneva). This church was very generous to us as we plowed through so much Team stuff on Sunday and Monday. We had a very productive and fun day on Monday. In "Youth Encounter Team Ministry World," Mondays are our sacred days off when there are no programs or Team business duties to be done. However, since we had just finished a long break, we decided to make Monday a working day. We talked about personal and Team feelings, challenges, and changes since we are now without our Teammate Andy. We worshiped together, practiced, and discussed what the next four months might have for us and our ministry. We laughed together and ate a great dinner -- prepared and served by the guys! It was wonderful!!

Another day is here, and we are on our way to Bristol, Indiana. As I reflect on the past few days I thank God for my teammates. It is really nice to be back - to talk, to laugh, to hug, to pray! I am thankful for this fellowship of believers - for this family of God.

Date: 12/31/2003

Submitted by: John Foster

Journal Entry:

So let me set the scene. In the small hills of southern Wisconsin lies the little harbor town of Lake Geneva. Just about a half a mile off the lake lies a rare sight, one of the few surviving Wal-Marts. It is there that our story takes place. We were staying just a few miles down the road from Lake Geneva and decided to have a Team night and get a board game. This pre-stated Wal-Mart was the best location for the purchase of said board game, so off we went. We thought we knew what was ahead of us at the Wal-Mart; having to choose a game as a Team seemed like it could be quite the trip, but really we had no clue what was ahead of us. We pulled in to the parking lot, focused on the task of game selection that was ahead of us. We were so focused that we hardly even noticed the other 15-passenger van with a trailer. We left our van in the parking lot (brilliant eh?) and began the journey in. As we passed through the outer doors and into the area where the pop machines and video games lie, we heard a call -- "Nate!" There in our sight was another Team. Captive Free East Lakes was staying just a few minutes from the Wal-Mart and decided to make a run at the same time we



John Foster

did. Of all the gin joints in all the world, they would happen to be in this one. I've been trying to think of the number of different places we could have been at that very second, but the number is infinite. Being on the road with Youth Encounter is different than any other thing I have ever done. People always ask about what the road is like and all sorts of questions like that, and that is what makes running into other Teams so much fun; they know. East Lakes has been doing the same things that we have for the last few months; they know the highs, they know the lows. We talked to them for a bit and then continued on our goal for a game, but with a different spirit about us. God is good; He lets us see friends.

Date: 1/1/2004

Submitted by: Elisabeth Nejsun

Journal Entry:

Oh, happy day off!! Much fun we had watching Lord of the Rings 3 – yay!! It's been an awesome day off, sleeping in, relaxing, going to the theatre and just hanging out with my host parents – who, by the way, were the coolest!! We just had coffee and talked about Denmark, which got me kinda homesick, and at night we had a great dinner together – crab legs, yum yum!! It was good having a break after a loooong Christmas break . Yeah – Tracy and I were pretty busy, but we had fun! (Don't believe the pictures on the web – they're fake!) It's really good to be back with my homies ... I actually missed them, and I really look forward to dragging them to Denmark and showing them everything! Momma, I'm coming home!!!



Elisabeth Nejsun

Date: 1/2/2004

Submitted by: Nate Peterson

Journal Entry:

We met up with WMGCR2 (Watermark-Germany, Czech Republic and Romania) at Kat Goglin's home church in Ohio yesterday! We didn't expect to see them again until next August, so it was a very pleasant surprise. It was so much fun hanging out with them and teaming up with them this morning for youth time and special music at the worship service. All 6 guys even got to stay in the church together – some of us in beds! While the other 4 guys were jamming and recording themselves, I had a fun time hanging out with Dave. We talked about music, what we're doing after Team (have you heard that one before, fellow Teamers???), and other random things.

Let me rewind a couple of hours to a basketball game in which Dave hurt his finger. Hopefully it's not serious. Dave is a pianist, a very good one, and one's fingers are pretty important to playing the piano. For those of you who don't know, fingers strike the keys, which cause a hammering action on the strings, which make the beautiful sounds that come from the piano. I also am a pianist. Vital to our ministry is our ability to play music.

Today I was talking with John about what would happen if one of us happened to break a finger. Of what value am I on this team if I am unable to play the keyboard? My simply asking that question shows that I am uncertain of my value in other areas. In what other ways can I reach out to people with the love of Jesus? Am I overlooking other ways to minister to people? Am I simply belittling these?

I already know the answer to my questions. God can use anyone, no matter how beat up, no matter how small. God can use me! I have many valuable gifts that I must use to reach out to others, and so does every single person that's reading this. I'm reminded of the Great Commandment. It's not "play good music." Jesus said, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all you mind; and your neighbor as yourself." (Luke 10:27) That's what I'll strive for.



Nate Peterson

Date: 1/3/2004

Submitted by: Kate Tripoli

Journal Entry:

My loyal readers out there in Journalville may not know this, but I have been known to enjoy Lord of the Rings from time to time. And by that, I mean that I have seen the three movies a total of fourteen times in the theater, own the extended versions of the first two, and have read the books at least ten times in the last ten years. I'm what you might consider a "fan." I have been a fan for so long that I sometimes forget that it's not really natural to know as much about a fantasy novel as I know about this one. I mean, I don't speak Elvish, and I didn't go to any of the movies in costume. However, if you ever went to one of these movies and sat in front of somebody who said, "That's not how it was in the book!" more than twice during the course of the three hours . . . yeah, it was probably me. (Sorry about that. Feel free to contact Youth Encounter about possibly getting the price of your ticket reimbursed. I mean, I can't guarantee anything, but they might at least feel bad for you.)



Kate Tripoli

Being on Team, it's been hard to really indulge in my nerdity since nobody else on my Team shares my fixation to quite the same degree. But on New Year's Eve, I met a true kindred spirit, a young teenager named Sarah. We spent three hours with the cards from her brand new Lord of the Rings Trivial Pursuit game, zipping through the answers with a speed that made my Teammates and her parents and friends shake their heads and roll their eyes in what I can only assume was extreme admiration and pride to be associated with us. We didn't care, though; we were having a blast. We talked about our favorite scenes, tried to talk like Gollum, debated whether or not Aragorn was more attractive than Legolas (I said absolutely, she said no way), and made fun of how easy the questions were for us. Now, if I asked you, "What was the name of Eowyn's father?" you wouldn't know that it was Eomund unless you're a HUGE GEEK LIKE ME. But since I am that much of a geek, I thought that was an easy one.

What I'm trying to get across here is that I know a lot about Lord of the Rings. Something that struck my conscience a bit after the trivia marathon, though, was how little I know about things that are a lot more important. Like my Teammates. We've shared a lot of stuff with each other, but I'm lucky if I remember their parents' names, and I've actually met most of them! I'm about to spend four months of my life in Denmark, and one of the five things I remember how to say in Danish is "I am a horse." Or what about God and His Word? How often have I found myself saying, "I read this somewhere in the Bible, but I don't remember where"? How much time have I spent lamenting the fact that I don't know what God's will is for my life when really the fault lies with me for not seeking Him diligently? How awesome would it be if I invested as much time and energy into learning about the people and things that are shaping who I am every day as I've invested in this random made-up story? Truth is not only stranger than fiction, but it's far more glorious, more useful, and . . . well, it's just more true. In Philippians 2:8, Paul says, "Finally, brothers, whatever things are true . . . meditate on these things." The more true something is, the more worthy it is of space in our brains and priority in our hearts. What a great way to ring in the New Year. (Heh heh . . . sorry again.)

Date: 1/5/2004

Submitted by: Tracy Apps

Journal Entry:

What?! We're leaving in EIGHT DAYS?!?!?

Wow. Where have the first four months gone? Is it really true? Are we really gonna be leaving in eight days, flying to Denmark, and not going to be back in the States until May? You know, no matter how much I talk about it beforehand, I don't think I'll truly BELIEVE it until I'm on that plane. And that time is fast approaching.... I'm getting a little nervous, but UBER GEEKED at the same time.



Tracy Apps

So here we are, outside of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania on our day off.

Yesterday we were in Novelty, Ohio, with WMG, so we were *dramatic

music* WATERMARK SQUARED *echo.. echo... echo*! We had a blast being housed with them, and we even got to share instruments as we both played for Sunday School and the Sunday morning service. In fact, when we were playing for the Sunday School we kinda made a massive 'joint effort' for most of the songs and other "Watermarkers" picked up random instruments and played with the other team. It was super fun. :-D I uploaded tons of pictures from our adventures as the massive

Watermark team and they are on my webpage, www.thisroad.org.

In other news... John, Elisabeth, and I went shopping today on our day off. I bought two new CDs, Elisabeth bought some jeans, and we had a blast just hanging out. Last night I had an amazing phone conversation with a friend back home, which was a great time to catch up on each other's lives. Ya know, it's such a blessing to have friendships where you can not talk for a really long time and then when you do talk you can pick right up where you left off. It makes me realize that while so many things in this world change... people change, people's locations change, people's schedules change, etc., but a relationship that is built on Christ - who is UNCHANGING - are those that stand through all the changes.

God is so cool like that, isn't He? :-D

Date: 1/6/2004

Submitted by: Lisa Bonordon

Journal Entry:

It's a beautiful day in Pennsylvania. We are on our way toward the Bronx after staying with a friend of Tiffany Schmader's sister in Pittsburgh. Tiffany was on Team twice and is one of the two National Band directors. I love all the YE connections we find throughout the United States!!! It's especially fun to visit churches that have YE alums. I remember one day when we were at a church in Long Island, a man came up to me and told me his cousin was on the first Cross Fire. The next morning at the church service, he gave us a cassette tape of that Team. He told me that other members of his family had been on Teams, too, and he and his family have been powerfully affected by Youth Encounter. God is awesome, and these stories have encouraged us throughout all of our days.



Lisa Bonordon

Time is flying so fast, and soon we'll be over in Denmark. It's so hard to imagine being in a different place for three and a half months. We meet people all the time that have connections with Denmark. It just shows that the world is much smaller than we could imagine. God puts people and places in our paths that are not coincidental. The things that come our way are set out by God. If we continually have that on our mind, we may just live differently. I hear people saying to "Live each day like it's your last!" or to live with the mindset of "reckless abandon" (Dangerous Wonder by Michael Yaconelli). There is a passage in the Bible that reminds us that life as fleeting - some translations say it's like a mist. Yes, life often feels this way, and God is urging us to take each moment given by God and use it for His glory. Jesus is quoted in John 10:10b saying, "I have come to give you life and have it to the full." What is holding me back from living each day like this? Most of the time it's myself, but God continually puts abundant life in my path - in the big things like traveling to Denmark or in the small things like creating a beautiful sunset. Throughout my days, God is showing His promise of faithfulness and love, if I just remember to open up my eyes and see the things God has for me!

Date: 1/10/2004

Submitted by: Kate Tripoli

Journal Entry:

New Jersey.

Two words that, for the last three months, produced many tears of grief and shaking fists of rage among the members of Watermark Denmark. For it was in the fabled Garden State, as you may recall, that our van, the beloved Blue Hooty, was cruelly wrested from our collective grasp by some enterprising band of ruffians with nothing but a coat hanger and the ability to spot the out-of-state suckers in the Home Depot parking lot. Even after we recovered the van and replaced most of our belongings, and despite the incredibly generous treatment we received from the church members in Edison (where it happened), the wounds remained fresh. The entire state of New Jersey became anathema to our Team, I regret to say. Simply passing by the welcome sign on the highway became occasion for at least one Team member to remind the driver to put on The Club (thanks again, Grandma Torbit!) as



Kate Tripoli

soon as we exited the vehicle, or perhaps even while still on the highway. We would take no chances. New Jersey broke our hearts once. We weren't going to get fooled again.

Last night, we had a program and a lock-in at a church in Brick, New Jersey. I am pleased to report that the state has been more than redeemed in our eyes, thanks to the amazing kids and adults we got to spend the night with. Not only did we enjoy helping them plan their first youth-led worship service, playing volleyball and Sardines with them, and generally hanging out and getting no sleep, but they also treated us to our very first audience conga line across the stage during a performance. They are an energetic and exciting bunch of kids, and a face-rocked-off good time was had by all. As we consider what we're going to tell people in Denmark about what we've learned about the United States so far in our lives, I feel confident that near the tops of our lists of great things about our country will be the people of New Jersey.

New Jersey. Yeah.

Date: 1/19/2004

Submitted by: Tracy Apps

Journal Entry:

Pinch me . . . I'm in Denmark.

It took me 3 minutes to figure out how to plug things into the wall; I'm not used to sitting around so long to eat; it took me a while to figure out how to flush the toilet; I'm still adjusting to the three extra keys on the computer keyboards; I have to keep reminding myself that DOWN is ON (in regards to the light switches); dark bread first . . . white bread last; I made a fool of myself at the bank when I stood with a blank look on my face when the teller spoke to me in Danish; I am thoroughly confused by the Danish language, and now even the English language (even though I have been speaking English all my life!). . . but also I am in awe of God's beauty here in Denmark, not only the beautiful land that we have driven through so far, but also the people. We have had the awesome opportunity to meet the most amazing people, and we haven't even been here a whole week yet. I'm excited to see what awesome things God will be doing here.

Right now we are in Nykøbing, which is on a smaller island called Falster, just south of where København is (or Copenhagen for all you back in the States). Nate, Lisa, Elisabeth and I spent the weekend at Elisabeth's house in Fjellerup. I had such an awesome time hanging out with the Nejsum family. There are LOTS of Nejsums, since Elisabeth has 6 brothers and sisters. All of them are older, many are married, and some have kids of their own. While the house was full of action, noise, laughter and playing, it still was an amazingly peaceful environment, and perfect for a day off! We also had the chance to walk on the beach, see the Baltic Sea, and take a stroll through a troll forest. (Pictures of all this, and more, are on www.thisroad.org.)

I am having a blast here in Danmark. When I first arrived, I felt very out of place, very lost, even useless. But God reminded me that He put me here for a reason. God is good, He can even use me. (Even when I don't know how to flush the toilet.)



Tracy Apps

Date: 1/20/2004

Submitted by: Lisa Bonordon

Journal Entry:

The last few nights have been about relaxing and getting to know the people here. Danes like to sit around a table or living room, drinking coffee or tea with candle light and some cake. The term they use is hygge. The purpose is to be cozy and enjoy one another's company. Some of us had some great hygge at Elisabeth's home this weekend. Then last night Tracy and I had some hygge at the Sørensen home with our 18-year-old host sister Elisabeth. She is going to a school called gymnasium (grades 10-



Lisa Bonordon

13th I believe). She is in her last year and knows English very well and so do her parents. We talked with her for a long time during and after dinner and as she translated the newspaper headlines to me. On the front page there was a Des Moines article. The headline was Valgkamp eksploderer I Bush-had. Now that it's a new day I don't remember exactly what she told me it meant. By looking at the article and picking out words I recognize, I think it is talking about John Kerry's ads against Bush. Anyway, it has been neat to say "Jeg hedder Lisa, jeg kommer fra Iowa, USA" and people actually nod their heads, having heard about the lovely place :) Quite exciting!!!

A little about our upcoming week- Jesper Iverson is the contact that is with us now until Sunday. Yesterday after we met him he asked us to share our testimonies with him and our expectations for the week. My expectations are that we will meet many wonderful people. I hope I can get to know them a bit and that God's love is poured out on them through us. I also expect to be asked questions about God and about the USA. We will be stretched in many new ways, and we are up for the challenge! You may follow our schedule (it is a rough outline) on the Innermission website. <http://www.indremission.dk/musik/watermark/tur.php> Thanks for keeping us and the people we meet in your prayers.

Date: 1/21/2004

Submitted by: John Foster

Journal Entry:

So there are a couple of rumors about Denmark that I wish to dispel, and a couple that I wish to confirm. First off, it is true that Danes do love puppets! At a concert for college age students, every one that I talked to believed that the best part of our concert was the puppet show. The second confirmation is that, yes, Danes do drink A LOT of coffee! I mean A LOT! We sat down for dinner on Monday at about 7 o'clock, and we didn't leave till around midnight.



John Foster

Now for the dispelling of rumors. First off, though Elisabeth does love him, most Danes have no connection to David Hasslehoff or his music. In fact, some Danes don't even know who he is. Secondly, Amsterdam is not in Denmark. Neither is Oslo. Finally, I have heard it said that people from Europe are rude. I know that to be a lie. People in Denmark have invited us into their homes, told us stories, and shared their hearts. I am thankful to be in Denmark!

(Editor's note: While shopping today in Nykøbing, we saw a kid-sized Night Rider that you could ride briefly for a few Danish crowns, and it had David Hasslehoff's picture on it. So at least there are some Danes besides Elisabeth who think he's pretty hot stuff.)

Date: 1/24/2004

Submitted by: Kate Tripoli

Journal Entry:

Well, we've been here for a week and a few days now. Elisabeth and I are sleeping in the library of our host family, and every morning I wake up looking at the book titles, wondering if this will be the day that God miraculously gives me the gift of knowing Danish. So far, no dice. But I am surprised at how much I can pick up in a conversation or a newspaper article. I've almost learned all of the prepositional words, so I know if something is on or in or with or by or from something else. And listening to Elisabeth translating our puppet show during the concerts has helped me recognize the phrases "say the alphabet backwards," "do ten one-handed push-ups," and "jump on this trampoline." So you can imagine the depth of conversation I've been able to have with most of the Danes I'm meeting.



Kate Tripoli

Actually, I think that not knowing Danish has helped me in some way because it forces me to think harder about the English words I am using. A lot of the people we meet know at least some English, which they have been learning in school since fourth grade. Most of their English, however, is

reinforced by pop music, movies, and television from America and England. Now imagine how often in any given episode of "Friends" you might hear the phrase "Jesus Christ was crucified for our sins." I used that phrase when talking with a bunch of young teenagers, and they just gave me a collective blank stare. The words only confused them. What are sins? What does it mean to be crucified? I realized how much I was assuming they would know. So I backtracked and tried to explain my relationship with Jesus from a different angle. Instead of focusing on humanity's general wretched state of being without Christ, I talked about the first boy I ever loved, how special it made me feel to know that he loved me, and how awful it was to have my heart broken by him. There were knowing looks all around the table. Then I got to tell them about how much better it is to be loved by Jesus, and how He will never ever break their hearts. I am grateful for the language barrier that allowed me to remember the simple goodness of the Gospel in a new way.

Date: 1/27/2004

Submitted by: Lisa Bonordon

Journal Entry:

Before coming I had met maybe three people from Denmark and a handful of people who I knew were at least part Danish. All my friends who knew Danes also thought they were fantastic people -- so I was pretty confident I would like Denmark and like the people. Sure enough!!! It is true. I'm loving it and feeling like God wants me here and is teaching me a whole lot. Some things that God is teaching me are:



Lisa Bonordon

I cannot do things on my own!! Some days I think I have everything down pat! nope. I make bad decisions and don't think through things enough. And I'm always thinking "well, now I know for next time!" SO I cannot do things on my own. I need God. I need my teammates. I need Danish host families, confirmands, boarding school students and our tour managers (yes, we have great tour managers that set our program schedule, go to our programs and help out in huge ways!!!! They work with Indremission in the areas we visit -- so they have and make good connections with the kids). This ministry isn't about me - go figure!!!

Here's another thing I'm learning - The youth I've met are phenomenal!! We've been staying at a Christian boarding school all week. These are 15-17 year olds. All of the students I have had the privilege sitting down with at lunch or dinner or break time in the mid morning or mid afternoon :) have so many awesome things to say. They are full of wisdom. Some things we've talked about -- wearing "masks" to be popular, feeling empty without God, difficult family matters, drinking, Bible reading and journaling -- these things the students brought up to me! They aren't just about small talk - they really dig deep. Have no fear - we've talked about lighter things. Let's see -- US education, politics, food (they think the sound of peanut butter and jelly is the worst thing ever!!) Instead they eat cheese and jelly - yeah, it isn't my favorite. We've also talked about Lord of the Rings, travelling, cheerleaders, football, handball and of course exchanging certain Danish and English words and phrases.

I've learned a lot so far in this short two week period. I'll be adding much more to the list of things - but I'll wait for another day!! Love in Christ! Lisa

Date: 1/28/2004

Submitted by: John Foster

Journal Entry:

Lately I have been panicking whenever it is time to talk to kids afterward a program. All I want to do is talk to them about Jesus, find out their doubts, and talk to them about God's love, and all I do is talk to them about the weather and school. Not that it is bad to talk with kids about the simple things in life, but God's love supercedes all things. So there I was at a confirmation show, one song away from taking a break in the middle of our set, and I decided I was going to go up to the pack of boys in the back who didn't appear to be listening and ask them what they thought about Jesus. As the song ended, all the boys headed for the door to go have a snowball fight. Here I had made my plan, gotten all



John Foster

ready for it, and it was being ruined. So I sulked as I headed outside to join the snowball fight. After a few seconds though, I had gotten myself into a fierce battle between Denmark and the USA that lasted through the break in the program. As we went back inside, I started to get down on myself for not talking about Jesus. As we began the second half of our set, the boys in the back row were listening to every word we said. I could have kicked myself. I got so caught up on what I was doing and the way I was trying to minister that I forgot that God has such a bigger and more perfect plan. God is good all the time!!

Date: 1/30/2004

Submitted by: Nate Peterson

Journal Entry:

Life is good here in Denmark. The end.

Just kidding.

If you've been reading the most recent of my fellow Watermarkers' journal entries, you already know that we've been staying at a Christian boarding school this week. In my humble opinion, it is a wonderful place and has been a lot of fun! We've gone to other places this week but have spent most of our time at the school. Therefore, we have gotten to know the wonderful young students a little better than most of the people we meet. It's fun to just hang out with these people, whether it's playing football (not American) and basketball, singing and playing music, pool, or just talking and hanging out. Today was our day off, and I did all of these things! I love trying to speak the little Danish I know, and many kind Danes tell me I'm doing a good job. The food is good here in Denmark, whether it's traditional Danish food, "Manhattan Pizza" in København, or noodles with hot dogs. I really do miss all of you wonderful people who are reading this, but I am loving Denmark!



Nate Peterson

Date: 1/31/2004

Submitted by: Kate Tripoli

Journal Entry:

Sometimes the grass is greener on the other side of the ocean, you know? Last week, we got the chance to share the Gospel in a public school classroom (on local TV, no less). This week, we got to play music and talk about Jesus in a "soldiershome." Now, we didn't really know what this soldiershome was before we got there, so we all had our own ideas about what and whom we might see there. I thought it would be a veterans' home, full of career military guys who served their country their whole lives and now were reaping some retirement benefits. Some of us thought it might be a military hospital, or maybe even the home of a particular soldier who had requested us for a private concert. What it turned out to be was, of course, something none of us expected. Denmark has seventeen military bases in the country, and there is a soldiershome on base at each of them. These are restaurant lounges where soldiers who are living and training at the base can eat some good cheap diner-style food, buy soda and junk food, watch sports on a big screen TV, play video games and board games, and generally hang out. The "homes" are run by a Christian missions organization that provides these comforts for the soldiers as well as sharing the Gospel with them every evening after dinner in a brief devotion. Tuesday nights are also discussion evenings, open to anyone interested, usually with a Biblically based topic. The soldiers are not forced into attending the devotion or the discussion, but no attempt is made to disguise or avoid the Christianity of the place.



Kate Tripoli

I thought the fact that we are allowed to preach Christ in public schools and military bases was incredible! I cannot imagine a similar thing happening in the States; at least, not without a great deal of protesting and lawsuits and such. Yet most of the Danish Christians we have talked to feel that Denmark's culture is very hostile to Christianity. What's more, they think that America must be very Christian-friendly, with many people attending church every week and producing all sorts of Christian books and music, only a small part of which is available in Denmark. One pastor I talked to was amazed when I told him about all the different English Bible translations and variations

available; I was equally amazed when he said that there were only two versions of the Bible in Danish, the easy version and the hard version.

So who's got it better? It's impossible to say. I know that I am grateful for the opportunity in Denmark to speak the name of Jesus in places it would not be welcomed if I were in the States, but I am also grateful for the abundant resources and widespread culture of Christianity available in the U.S. Every day, both of these countries are shaping how I think about Christ, His people, and how best to serve them.

Date: 2/4/2004

Submitted by: John Foster

Journal Entry:

Undskyld mig, Danish for excuse me. I speak very little Danish, but this is a word that is heard from me a lot. I find it to be very useful. It is common for me to be continually bumping into people, so I use it then. In a foreign culture, I often feel as though I have insulted someone, or a group of people, so I use it then. One might think that my use for this word does not stretch too far beyond this, but it does. I am beginning to use it at all times. It is actually pronounced in such a way that it sounds a little similar to saying "It's cool," so I find it helpful that if someone bumps into me and says "undskyld mig," I can say it right back to them, meaning "It's cool, don't worry about it." I am also using it in general when I do not know how to answer a question. When someone says something to me in Danish, I just mutter back to them with a blank stare, "Undskyld mig," and go on with a stupid look on my face. So if any of you are coming to Denmark soon, remember to learn that all important and all useful "Undskyld mig."



John Foster

Date: 2/5/2004

Submitted by: Elisabeth Nejsum

Journal Entry:

Wooooooooooooow!! I'm in Denmark – that's so cool!!! We're working from early morning to late night, playing for stone-faced confirmation kids and in crowded, noisy, smoke-filled soldiers' homes – you gotta love it. And I do! It's so awesome to get to talk to people who aren't Christian about Jesus, and I really feel that what I'm saying makes a difference in their lives. And then, of course, I like the country in itself. I really feel like a stupid tourist who just freaks out every time I see something really beautiful ... I just don't let my teammates know. We've been to places I've never seen before and I just love the small islands and the cute little bridges over the frozen fjords – Aaaaah!



Elisabeth Nejsum

It's also been nice seeing my family again after six months!! I had one day with my huge family ... well, only like 14 of them were there, but it was cool and fun to introduce them to my teammates.

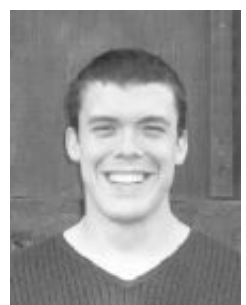
Yeah, all in all I'm having a great time here. I get a bit stressed out at times, but God is good all the time and He's really just shows me His goodness and love for me through it all!

Date: 2/6/2004

Submitted by: Nate Peterson

Journal Entry:

This one's coming at you from Bornholm, an island with a circumference of less than 150 kilometres (100 miles). It is far away from the rest of Denmark; in fact, we had to drive through part of Sweden yesterday to take a ferry to the island. The ride was short and very comfortable. We played a concert at a Bible Camp last night for a raucous group of confirmation kids. The energy was very high, and I had a blast. Today was a



day off before a very busy week, and John, Lisa and I went sightseeing. The rocky shoreline is beautiful on the north side of the island, as are the ruins of the old castle Hammerhus. We spent some time wandering around each of two sites and I especially enjoyed watching the waves of the beautiful Baltic Sea crash against the rocks. Hammerhus is a really beautiful and interesting place, but the vastness, agelessness and majesty of the sea and the cliffs are so much more enchanting to me. There is a song by Steven Curtis Chapman entitled "God is God" in which he contrasts himself with God. "Can I form a single mountain??....Can I even take a breath without God giving it to me???" He created these awesome wonders. All humans can create are some castles (you can think of your own modern equivalent) which last awhile and are sometimes really cool, but still can't compare with God's magnificent creation. The steps, which led down to the sea from the cliffs, were almost repulsive to me. They took away from the beauty and wild mystery. The litter was another case altogether.

Nate Peterson

So I wonder, can humans do anything to make the world more beautiful than God created it? It seems odd that we would only have the ability to make the world worse than the original creation, but I think that's the case. God created everything and said, "It is good." And the Garden of Eden was a perfect paradise. Then people like you and me had to go and mess things up. I think that we can help make the world a better place than it is now (I sure hope so... what a mess!). No matter how hard we try, though, we can never compare with God, His creation, His glory, His beauty, His might, His love. I'm left with no other choice than to trust in Him, rely on Him, worship Him, work for Him, and love Him. Much love to all of you! God Bless You!

Date: 2/9/2004

Submitted by: Tracy Apps

Journal Entry:

We are in Bornholm! I've heard stories about this island. I've heard that we will have a busy week. But I've also heard that we will have a great week.

Yesterday was our day off. Half of the team went sight seeing, while the other half relaxed and slept in. I was definitely a part of the 'resting and sleeping' group. I watched a DVD on my computer, and I turned on the Danish subtitles just because I could.

Today we had two acoustic programs. One was at a gymnasium (this was our first time playing at a gymnasium, and no, I don't mean a gym, it's a school), and the other was at a soldaterhjem (soldiers home). When we were at the gymnasium, we were playing in one of the commons areas with the soda machine and some tables scattered around. There were lots of people sitting around, walking around, and talking. We had some chairs set out in front of us, facing the wall where we were playing. Kate turned to me and said "If people don't sit in these chairs, I'm gonna feel pretty dumb." I agreed because it would feel pretty weird playing for a bunch of empty chairs. But sure enough, when class let out, the chairs filled up, and the tables in the other areas of the room were filled up too, mostly with people talking to their friends, but several times I noticed people turned around and listening to what we were saying. I felt that our voices weren't loud enough to be heard in the room, but God's voice can be heard in any environment.



Tracy Apps

Date: 2/10/2004

Submitted by: Lisa Bonordon

Journal Entry:

Hello family and friends and more! We are in Bornholm – the most eastern part of Denmark. It was 32 days ago that we were in the US. I remember when we were travelling in the Northeast and we were ten minutes from Maine, and I wanted to go so badly because I've never been there. Unfortunately, we did not go, but in May we will be that close again and will surely go. Well, being excited about going to another country is also very exciting. So we had to go to Sweden on Saturday to get to this tiny



Lisa Bonordon

eastern island. How cool is that? Now I have been to Canada (maybe for a day), Mexico (for a few hours), St. Croix, VI (a week), Holland (for a few hours), Tanzania (one month), London (airport), Denmark (32 days), and Sweden (90 minutes)!!!! I feel like such a kid... but that is okay – they have more fun anyway! Jesus said -- and still says to us... change and become like little children to enter the kingdom of God (Matt 18:3). It is hard to do this. Many times the schedule and the fact that there is always something to do weighs me down. But...God wants us to rest in His mighty arms and remember that He has everything in control. Tak Fader i Himlene! Thanks Father in Heaven!

Date: 2/11/2004

Submitted by: John Foster

Journal Entry:

So let me tell you a little bit about my birthday present from God. Well, not my birthday of the day I was born, but my birthday of when I started my life with Christ. It was two years ago as of the 10th, and last night at our concert God gave me the coolest gift. We had played two concerts at confirmation classes and we were in the middle of our third concert. The long day had made me tired physically, and recently I had been spiritually tired also. Some kids had asked me questions about my faith and I was unable to answer them. Since that point I had been somewhat lost, trying to remember why I believed at all; needless to say, not a good way to spend a birthday. We were playing a song in which I play the bass and my mind started to wander. All of a sudden I realized it; God loves me. I had been told it so many times, and many times I had felt it a little bit, but God really loves me. Not only that, but He is letting me work for Him. Yeah, the God of the universe is so awesome that He can even use me, as wrapped up in sin as I can be. So many times I forget about His love. I get too tired to think about it, or I get too busy to want to deal with it. Thank goodness that He has the patience to work with me. God bless.



John Foster

Date: 2/13/2004

Submitted by: Nate Peterson

Journal Entry:

I haven't been doing so well emotionally since last time. It's weird, because I really love Denmark. We have had a busy week full of playing many concerts. I have enjoyed these and speaking with groups and individuals very much. John and I have stayed with another wonderful family. But I am tired. I am struggling to keep my focus on the ministry at hand. There are a lot of times when I don't feel like doing anything worthwhile. Sometimes I just feel like being lazy, other times I feel like doing anything except that which I am supposed to do. It's got me down, and it's a difficult thing to go in front of a group and play music and talk about the love of Jesus when I'm feeling like a wreck myself. I don't think people really want to listen to someone who's visibly depressed, so I put on a happy face. (Playing concerts usually cheers me up anyway so it's usually not fake...but sometimes it is.) Why do I do that? Why do people do that? Why can't we just be? I think that being a poser makes me more frustrated and depressed than anything else. I don't want to do it...I simply cannot do it. I've done it far too much. Like everyone, I want to be loved. This desire has been the fuel, in some way, for most of my life's pursuits. I've always gotten good grades, because I knew that I would be admired and praised for them. The only thing it left me with was the desire to get more good grades. I wanted to be cool as a teenager, so I drank and did some pretty shady stuff. I didn't want my parents to be disappointed, so I tried not to let them find out. How little integrity I had! When I had girlfriends, I looked to them to provide the love that I had been searching for. I wanted to be everything that they could ever want, so that they would love me as much as I wanted to be loved. So I posed. I felt so great when we were together but the ends left me disillusioned, depressed and bitter. The funny thing about the ends, in retrospect, of course, is that they were the best things for me. Those relationships were built far too much on my desperate quest to be loved,



Nate Peterson

and for that reason weren't healthy ones.

So where do we find the love that we're searching for, that unconditional love that loves us more than we can possibly comprehend, that loves us unceasingly, infinitely, never decreasing, forever? You guessed it...God is the only place where we can find that love. He loves us so much that He sent His son Jesus to die for us! That is amazing to me. I can't understand this love. And He loves the real you; He has no use for the poser. That's good, because I hate being a poser.

John 4:4-26, Romans 5:6-8 Read it. Think about it. Let me know what you think.

Date: 2/16/2004

Submitted by: Tracy Apps

Journal Entry:

So here we are in København -- or Copenhagen for those crazy Americans :-). We had some extra free time this weekend because of a miscommunication of when we were leaving Bornholm and when we were arriving in København. I'm definitely not complaining, though, because it gave us the chance to find an English-speaking church service to attend on Sunday. And boy, did we ever! We ended up having church for over 3 hours. It was great to hear people talking around me and being able to understand what they were saying.



Tracy Apps

Today we celebrated John's 22nd birthday. Also with the surprise of the birthday cake and presents, we were also surprised with the arrival of Kate's parents. It's great to see more people seeing this beautiful culture for the first time. It seems strange to say, but I also enjoy knowing more about the Danish culture than someone else for a change. It's been about a month of asking questions and making mistakes in order to learn about how to do things around here, so it was nice to be the one to help explain for once. I guess that means that I have learned some things. :-)

Bornholm was a crazy week, but I loved it. I love being busy like that. Maybe I'm crazy, but I really enjoyed our first 'three electric programs in one day' day. :-) One thing I miss from home is seeing familiar faces. I knew that Danmark is a small country, and that I would probably see some people more than once, but when it actually happens I'm surprised. I felt very at home on that small island. We saw familiar faces many times, some up to FIVE times in one week. From this past week, I'm reminded how God's family has no physical limits. I have had the awesome opportunity to meet more brothers and sisters.

Date: 2/18/2004

Submitted by: John Foster

Journal Entry:

So there we were, setting up just a short time before we were to play at Confirmation camp. As the puppet curtain came out, we realized something. The coach puppet was missing an eye. This was not unexpected as it had been falling off for weeks, but now it had actually happened. The first thought was that we could cover the puppet's eye with a hat. Then we realized that one of our other puppets, Bella, is already doing that, being that her eye had fallen off weeks before. After a few minutes of thought, the idea came to us. With the addition of some black tape in the form of an eye patch, the Coach has become Pirate Bob. God has been throwing us many curve balls here in Denmark. During last week in Bornholm, we had 11 programs in five days, and each one threw us for a new loop. Instruments go out of tune, strings break, and puppets' eyes fall off, but the show always goes on. God is good, all the time, even if we are in a state of chaos.



John Foster

Date: 2/20/2004
Submitted by: Nate Peterson
Journal Entry:

This is a great weekend! After 5 weeks of very little time to myself, I have had an abundance of solitude this weekend. It is something I have been craving, and I feel great about it. It has been cool to meet all the Danes, and I love my team very much, but I simply need time by myself. I have spent the time reading, praying, running, eating, playing the piano, thinking, and simply staring out the window. I have never in my life had so little time to myself as I've had here in Denmark, and I can see more clearly than before how much I need it and want to make it an intentional part of my daily life. Only in the quiet of solitude can I clearly recognize my own thoughts and feelings, organize, and analyze them. It's also nice to step back and realize why I do the things I do. I think we all need some time to ourselves. Even Jesus needed time away from the crowds. (Mark 6:31-32) Anyway, if you couldn't tell, I'm doing well. I'm ready to get back to "work." Much love to you all!



Nate Peterson

Date: 2/21/2004
Submitted by: Kate Tripoli
Journal Entry:

If you've already read Tracy's journal entry for this week, you know about the sudden and surprising arrival of my parents in København on Monday, which was John's birthday. (What better gift to get on your birthday than a visit from somebody else's parents?) I had a good time with my family here. They saw a couple of our concerts (and got to be puppet curtain holders -- good job, Mom and Dad!), and we got to spend my free day together in the city. We shopped a little and ate a little, but mostly we just walked and talked, and sat and talked. I hadn't realized until they came how much I had been missing conversation with people that have known me longer than six months. I mean, to be honest, my team knows me pretty well. I haven't held much back from them since we met, but it's still only been less than a year. And even though they are great people, there are still times when team can feel like the loneliest place to be. When you just start to crave time with people that know you and understand you, not because it's their job, but because they are already like you. The older I get, the more I realize and appreciate how my parents have influenced me and shaped who I am -- my values, my tastes, even my personality quirks. My team is constantly teasing me for the wild (yet very precise and descriptive, may I say) hand gestures that I use while I talk, which I never really noticed about myself before. Having my mom in the same room for the first time in months, I understood why I do that. I've been on the road for so long with people that I've known for such a short time, moving constantly from home to home, changing cultures and languages and vans. It's great to be able to remember that I came from somewhere, and that there are people out there who love me and appreciate me not because I can do something for them, but just because I belong to them. Thanks for coming, Mom and Dad! I love you lots!



Kate Tripoli

Date: 2/23/2004
Submitted by: Tracy Apps
Journal Entry:

Praise God for weekends off. What did I do, you ask? I relaxed. I enjoyed having a room to myself. I enjoyed listening to music instead of playing it. I enjoyed hanging out with some awesome (and crazy) Christians at the Bible school in Børkop. I called people back home. I slept. I ate. I slept. I ate. I slept. I slept some more.

You know. I love team. I am really loving Denmark. But praise God for a weekend off. I needed it. I feel rested and ready to face another busy week. Ready to be amazed at how God uses 5 crazy Americans and one crazy Dane. God is so good.



Tracy Apps

Date: 2/24/2004
Submitted by: Lisa Bonordon
Journal Entry:



After eating a certain food or too much of that food, have you ever felt sick . . . and that you don't want to eat anything ever again . . . especially what you just ate? Here it is, 11:30 at night, and I still feel the cake that I ate an hour and a half ago just sitting in my stomach. Ugh. I love cake, but the thought of eating it again, or anything sweet, EVER, makes my stomach churn even more. I am not horribly sick with food poisoning but I still don't feel well.

Too much of a good thing! Yeah! I'm reminded that "No one can live on bread alone but on the very word that comes from the mouth of God" (Matt 4:4). I think being fed God's way is something we can never get tired of, and it won't make us sick. So, why don't I ask God to "feed" me more often? While it is such a natural thing to eat breakfast, lunch, and dinner (and coffee, tea, and cake for the Danes), why isn't it as natural to go to God and be spiritually fed? Do you ever think about this? I do, but not often enough. **Lisa Bonordon**

Next time I am super full and think I want a piece of cake or have a second piece, I want to remind myself how awesome God is -- after all, worshiping God is better than gold, than much pure gold, it is sweeter than honey, than drippings from a honeycomb (Psalm 19:9-10) and in Psalm 63:4-5, David sang, "I will praise you as long as I live, and in your name I will lift up my hands. My soul will be satisfied as with the richest of foods; with singing lips my mouth will praise you."

I could go on and on about this subject! Like how good dessert was last night. We were at a confirmation camp, and we had a ice cream cone on a plate. Picture a waffle square and a slice of ice cream on top. Here they don't use an ice cream scoop that often. Instead, they completely unfold the box of ice cream and then take a big knife and slice it into servings. Oh, it was so good. Wow, how much I like food. I love to eat it, make it, bake it, give it, enjoy it! BUT, God is much better than anything in this world! As I look forward to eating a good meal, let me be even more excited to read God's word, worship, serve, and live with God!

Date: 2/25/2004
Submitted by: John Foster
Journal Entry:



Since my last journal, there have been some startling changes in the world of puppetry. Recently our well-loved (though slightly scary) Bella puppet has gotten her eye put back on -- the eye had fallen off and took several weeks to get back on due to lack of motivation. While this may sound like a good thing, it does have a negative side. Our dear friend Pirate Bob is now our only puppet with only one eye. He didn't used to care all that much when he wasn't the only one with one eye, but now that Bella has her eye back, his life is changing. It's not that any of us or the other puppets look at him any differently, but he thinks we do.

Just the other night after one of the concerts, all the other puppets were hanging out, and he was nowhere to be found. Finally I found him out in the van. I asked him why he wasn't hanging out with the other puppets, and he said that they didn't like him becuase he only had one eye. I brought him in, and we had a little puppet intervention to help him to remeber how cool a puppet he is. All the other puppets talked about their favorite things about Pirate Bob, and they even brought up the idea that his only having one eye helped the puppet show to be funnier.

What does all this nonsense mean? I often act like Pirate Bob. I find things about myself that are not perfect, sometimes little things and sometimes big things, and I degrade myself with them. I forget that God loves me, not because of what I can do or cannot do, but becuase He is God. That is something that is important for people and puppets to remember. Here is a Bible verse to memorize. 1 John 4:16 -- "God is love." May He bless your days. **John Foster**

Date: 3/1/2004

Submitted by: Tracy Apps

Journal Entry:

Last week was a great week. We played at mostly schools, which I really enjoy. It's awesome to be able to go to public schools and preach the Gospel! One of my highlights was going to a commercial school. (I'm not sure how to explain it. It seemed like a 'tech' school, the students were older, like 17-20 or so, lots of people with laptops, etc.) We played in a lecture hall.

I heard from past experiences that people would walk out when the name of Jesus was mentioned. A couple of people walked out right away, but most of them stayed. And not only that, but they listened. I did the sharing at that concert, and it was awesome to look at the faces of these people, seeing in their eyes. Ministering to this age group is my passion. God has given me such a deep love for teenagers and college aged people, it's amazing.

I had begun to get discouraged when no one talked to us after the concert, but then that night when I opened up my Bible, God reminded me of something very important. "I don't think the way you think. The way you work isn't the way I work, for as the sky soars high above earth, so the way I work surpasses the way you work, and the way I think is beyond the way you think. Just as rain and snow descend from the skies and don't go back until they've watered the earth, doing their work of making things grow and blossom, producing seed for farmers and food for the hungry, so will the words that come out of my mouth not come back empty-handed. They'll do the work I sent them to do, they'll complete the assignment I gave them."



Tracy Apps

Date: 3/2/2004

Submitted by: Lisa Bonordon

Journal Entry:

Yesterday, after a concert for 250 public school 6th through 10th graders, Elisabeth and I were in front of a class of some 8th graders. Our class time started in a usual fashion. We introduced ourselves and told a little bit about who we are and what Youth Encounter is about. Then we asked the class for questions. Like many times, there were none...at least right away. We talked a bit about how big the U.S. is compared to Denmark (Denmark could fit inside Lake Michigan). We usually answer a few questions about the war and the President Bush. Then we usually ask if they have any questions about God. Still no questions. Finally Elisabeth asked, "Are any of you Christians?" No one raised their hand. I asked, "Do any of you believe that there is a God...something more than just us?" At least one boy raised his hand. Then we got into a discussion about evolution and Christianity. The teacher answered the question too! She said that God to her was not something up above but was in treating others well. And she called herself a Christian. Elisabeth and I were thinking the same thing. Doesn't Christian have Christ as the root? We were a bit confused, and I think her students were as well. Christ is our root, he is our foundation. We are followers of Christ. He is why I am here in Denmark. He is why I am on this crazy ministry team. He is why I stand up in front of a confused and questioning group of students almost every day.

I don't know all the answers, and I do not claim to have the perfect answers. But, I am here as God's vessel, and I have to believe He is working through my imperfections. During this class, we had the opportunity to hear what others believed and also to share our beliefs. It is great that the class has been talking about God and having discussions far before we got there. I pray that the students keep seeking out God and have more opportunities to hear God's message of Christ!!! God is amazing, He is mysterious, and He is mighty.

God, let my words be pleasing to you. Let your will be done. Be in the hearts and minds of the youth that we met and those we will meet. I pray that we can be a little part of showing Christ to them. Let them see that you are not an old figure above the altar of a church, but let them understand and give them a desire for the full Life that you want us to



Lisa Bonordon

experience!!

Date: 3/3/2004

Submitted by: John Foster

Journal Entry:

So I think the problem is with my memory. I get things confused and mixed up often. We have been in Denmark for almost 2 months, and I cannot remember which one is the men's bathroom and which one is the women's. I can think of several occasions on which this has come up. The first one was at a soldiers home. I stood there, staring at the doors until someone came out of one of them. I then proceeded. The other time I remember was just last week. As I stood there staring at the doors like a moron, a child of about seven walked by, glanced at me and laughed and directed me to the right door. I believe the problem is that both words are similar to English words. One of them is Damer, the other is Herrer. To me it sounds like dame and her, and I never know which one to pick. I have actually put quite a bit of thought into this and have remembered something from my past. When I was about 9 I walked into the wrong bathroom only to be in a busy female bathroom. Looking back on the long list of embarrassing things I have done, that was near the top. It's so nice to laugh at myself every once in a while.



John Foster

Date: 3/8/2004

Submitted by: Tracy Apps

Journal Entry:

This week we will be staying at an efterskole (boarding school), but last week we lived on a pig farm. All six of us were staying together with some of Elisabeth's family. It's really cool that we get to experience Denmark from all different angles, and last week just happened to be from the pig farm angle. :-D

So last week we were in Nordjylland (North Jutland). It's been super fun all week, but some highlights that I have to include are the schools we played at and an open jail. I must say that I LOVE going to public schools with the message of the Gospel. It is so awesome to have the opportunity to do that, and the fact that God trusts us to spread His Word is amazing to me! When we play a concert for public schools and then get the chance to go into classrooms in small groups to answer questions, it's awesome to hear the things the students have to say. I'm amazed at the great questions they have about the United States and about Watermark, but most importantly, their questions about God. I love standing in front of a class of students, answering those difficult questions about why I believe in God, and seeing them really listen. God is so good!



Tracy Apps

Friday night we played a concert at a church (well, not in the church itself, but a building owned by the church), and finally had the chance to meet Kirsten Najbjerg, who was on Watermark last year. I felt as if I already knew her, since I read her journal entries last year ALL THE TIME! I didn't know what to expect coming on Watermark, so instead of getting nervous, I would just read the journal entries of the Watermark team. So it was great to stand around and exchange Watermark stories. :-)

Saturday we had a day off. It was also Jesusfest in Viborg. All of Watermark went and enjoyed LISTENING to music for a change! There were over 1,000 people there, and it was a nice surprise to run into people we knew!

One of the things I was most excited about last week was playing at our first prison. It was an open prison and looked more like a "summer camp" than a prison. It had open areas, many buildings, and even a church right on the prison grounds. We set up our equipment in the church and played two concerts for two different groups of prisoners. The first group was a "closed area" group, so they didn't have the privilege of walking around the prison grounds freely. There are only 19 prisoners in the "closed area" group, but more than half of them came to the concert! Praise God! And not only

that, they loved it. They were smiling, nodding along to the music, and just generally a pleasant crowd! After our concert, we had a chance to talk to them, and I had the most awesome conversation with one of the prisoners. I had done the message during that first concert, and he shared that many of the things I said, he really related to. :-) That was just so awesome to hear. God is amazing like that. Even when I think I have nothing in common with someone, God likes to point out how wrong I am. We are all created by God, and we all need Him in our lives. So that makes all of us more alike than we think!

Date: 3/9/2004

Submitted by: Lisa Bonordon

Journal Entry:

Today was such a great day!!! We hopped on a ferry and went to a really small island called Æro -- by the way, I LOVE ISLANDS!!! It was a great ride; actually, I slept most of the way (we were on the road at 6:20 am). We had our concert for the students and then split up into classrooms. The classroom time still proves to be one my favorite parts of our time here in Denmark. Elisabeth and I again got into great conversations and had a lot of fun in the two classes we visited. They had so many great questions for us, and they had great answers to our questions!! After lunch we had our regular (but never stagnant) devotion and check-in time and then got back on the ferry.



Lisa Bonordon

When we got back to Fyn (the larger island we are on all this week), we went directly to a sailor school. I NEVER thought I would be in a school for sailors...it just has never occurred to me. I mean, I AM from Iowa. But the school was great!!! With the local Indre Mission youth group and the students, we had a packed house. It was a lot of fun! The most fun I had, though, was before and after the concert. I talked with a few people about sailing, what made them decide to be sailors, and so forth. Then...it came up that I was a Christian, and they were fascinated and wanted to share what they believed.

People ask us all the time how we are received by people since labelling yourself a Christian here is pretty radical and many times looked down upon by others. I tell people that we are received well. We haven't gotten any rude responses, except for some skeptical looks, like, "You really believe that!?!". However, I am so excited to share with others about Christ and to hear from others what they believe. I think if our (Watermark's) minds were set on just telling people what we believed, they would look down on us.

Faith sharing is something I love to do, but it cannot happen if you are not willing to hear what others have to say. So, the day ended in a great way. I was having some great talks with some students!! I was sad when we had to leave because our conversation could have lasted for a long time. I hope that in some way I can get a hold of them, and we can pick up where we left off (at least through email). That is my prayer. Well, I'm off to go to sleep...ahhh! Sove godt! (Sleep well.) :)

Date: 3/10/2004

Submitted by: John Foster

Journal Entry:

So recently I have created a fictitious meeting in my head between me and Jesus. In the meeting, I come home to my apartment, and He is there waiting for me. This isn't the first time He has been there, but I have just started to notice Him. In fact, He has always been there. I have heard the stories, but until this point in my story, I have just never cared. So I take a moment to decide whether I want to continue to ignore Him, or whether it's time to talk to Him. I decide to talk to Him. I go into the kitchen to collect my thoughts and make some tea. Even while I am in the other room, I can tell that He is smiling at me. As I sit down and pour Him a glass of tea, which He takes with some



John Foster

sugar, the shrewd buisness manager in me kicks in, and I begin to think in terms of what I can get right now. In my arrogance, I begin to ask Him what He can offer me.

"Can you offer me happiness?" "Sometimes," He responds, "but there will be times of more sadness than You have ever known before." Not the answer I wanted, but I go on. "Can You offer me security?" "Eternally, yes, but while here on the earth you will face hardships." "Can you offer me prosperity, wealth, fame?" "No, at least not the way you see them." "What then can You offer me, Jesus?" "I will always love you. I will always be faithful." At this point I break down. This story that plays out in my mind often speaks of how sometimes I wonder what God can "do" for me. God plays along for a little while, then He just blows my mind with His love. God is so good, even when we try to bring His love down into economics.

Date: 3/12/2004

Submitted by: Nate Peterson

Journal Entry:

Earlier this week, after a long hiatus, I was back on the basketball court. I was playing 2 on 2 with some pretty good young players from the island of Fyn, the second largest island in Denmark. My team was trailing 6-1 in a game up to 7. Fortunately, we were playing "make it, take it," which means the team who scores gets the ball again. With the score tied 6-6, it all came down to one shot. I made that shot, but I never had the chance to celebrate. While attempting to jump, I stepped on one kid's foot, and my ankle collapsed. I heard some crunching sounds and felt pain shoot through my whole foot as the ball left my hand. (If you're worried now, don't be...I'm OK.) I'm learning a few things from this experience. The first and most obvious lesson that I continue to learn is that there are more important things than winning. Of course, I already know that concept in theory, but I am learning it through a slow and tedious process. This offered me an opportunity to examine my priorities. Obviously, having healthy ankles is more important than winning a game of basketball. And although my mind is preoccupied with my physical health, I know that there are even more important things than that. When I define my priorities, I see that nothing can even be compared to the importance of God. I see the need to put Jesus before everything else. Another thing I'm learning is humility. And, as my teammate John has recently said, being humiliated can lead to being humble. This has been quite a humbling experience. First of all, I got hurt against some 15 year old kids. About 20 minutes later, I walked back to the court, announcing that I was OK. Ironically, as I spoke, I stepped on an uneven surface, and my ankle caved in again. Those kids sure thought that was hilarious. I have been walking tenderly the past few days and have been limited in carrying the sound equipment. I want to do that job, but it's simply better for me not to do it. I've had to heed the advice of my teammates and accept that I'm just not fit for the job. I've had other experiences as of late that have challenged my pride. I was sick this past weekend and was pampered by everyone around me. Also, my voice is currently very tired, and I am having trouble singing. Although I may be fragile and weak, I have a solid rock to stand on. Finally, I'm so thankful for my teammates and all the people in my life. When I need to stay off my feet, they do more labor without complaint. Similarly, when I can't sing, they fill in for me or do other songs. I am dispensable. This group could function without me. This world could function without me. But God chooses to put me here and to use me for His glory. What a great source of joy that is for me! It sounds like a cliché, but nobody can replace me (that is, I am the best possible person in the world at being me) or you. I hope that you all are fulfilling your purpose, and if you are without purpose, look to God. Read the Bible, talk to a pastor, pray earnestly with faith and confidence.



Nate Peterson

Date: 3/13/2004

Submitted by: Kate Tripoli

Journal Entry:

Hey, we're back at the Indre Mission Bibelskole in Børkop, Jylland after a Fyn-filled week of fun . . . or a fun-filled week on Fyn. We had some early mornings this week and one

very slow ferry ride, but we also had a good time with some sailors (People! No!), so overall, Fyn was fine. Heh.

Yesterday we got to participate in a street service in the middle of the shopping district in downtown Odense, the city right in the middle of all the Fyn. (Sorry. I'm done now.) When we arrived, we were surprised and amused and a little bit nervous to find that we were setting up the banner that invited people to take an interest in their local church right next to the string of bright orange t-shirts that said "Boycott Israel." Indeed. Next to us was a man with a small table full of pamphlets and brochures with information on American and European involvement in various parts of the Middle East, and he was inviting the passing shoppers to a demonstration in København. I didn't worry about it too much until people started asking us why we were boycotting Israel, and if the Danish folk church was boycotting Israel, and why had some Americans come all the way to Denmark to boycott Israel, and so on. I started to get nervous that the combination of messages would prove to be too much for people, and they would just ignore both us and the man at the table next to us. But he took down his stuff and left just before the service started.



Kate Tripoli

In a Fynny way, I'm grateful for the presence of this man on that day. (Hm. I guess I wasn't done.) I sometimes get really nervous about preaching the Gospel in places where it might not be welcomed; in other words, the places where it needs to be preached the most. I fear rejection, not just of myself, but also of our message. What if people are turned off because of the way we present ourselves? What if somebody who really needs to hear about God decides not to listen because we're just a bunch of Jesus freaks on a street corner? Shouldn't we stick to churches and mission houses, where people are prepared to hear about religious things? I wondered if similar thoughts were going through this man's head. What if people just dismissed him as a nut because he was choosing to deliver his message in the street? Yet there he was, all by himself (as opposed to me, being surrounded by Teammates, our contact, the two guys holding the banner, the pianist, and the pastor), getting out the word that he felt was too important to keep to more "appropriate" venues. When I consider the courage of this ordinary man fueled by a strong conviction, I realize that although I am just as ordinary, I am fueled by a strong God, and because of Him, I have every reason and every ability to take His message everywhere I can.

Date: 3/15/2004
Submitted by: Tracy Apps
Journal Entry:

I feel like reflecting on something God has been teaching me on team. First off, while life on team is always amazing, it isn't always "happy-go-lucky" fun. There are a lot of challenges that we all face every day. One of them being living so closely with people who are different than us. I find it hard to live without my friends back home. It's a challenge, and even when in a van with 5 other people, I have felt really alone. There are times I have wanted to just be at home, call up a friend, go out to eat, talk or just hang out. Being in a completely different country, I am unable to do such things. But through this experience, I realize how much more I need to rely on God. I know that as Christians we say that we rely on God, and that He is all we need, but it's hard to actually LIVE. I don't have it completely "down pat", and maybe if I work at it my WHOLE LIFE I might get a better grasp. It's HARD. But God is always faithful.



Tracy Apps

So on my day off, while I was feeling down and lonely, I read in God's Word, "Friends, when life gets really difficult, don't jump to the conclusion that God isn't on the job. Instead, be glad that you are in the very thick of what Christ experienced. This is a spiritual refining process, with glory just around the corner."

Funny how God does that eh? :-P God is good!

Date: 3/16/2004

Submitted by: Lisa Bonordon
Journal Entry:

Begonias, street malls, and MORE!!!

So many things are going well. This week we actually have some time to practice, talk, relax, sleep and eat...of course eat!!! This weekend was a good and relaxing one, but we have also gotten things done. I love it :) We are practicing some great new music and getting ready for a "new" program for the second half of our Danmark tour.



Lisa Bonordon

If you go to this website www.bbb-boll.dk/index.php?action=13 you can see where Tracy, Elisabeth and I are staying for these few days. It is among many greenhouses full of begonias!!! They are beautiful. If you look very carefully, you can see the orange roof among the greenhouses...yeah, that's the house that we are in!!! Pretty cool, huh?? We are here until Wednesday morning.

Yesterday was a great day - I slept in, enjoyed the weather... it's SPRING!!!! We practiced some music, tried to see the house where H.C. Anderson was born...with no luck, but we saw his neighborhood!! It was cute!! This morning we had a program for confirmation students. It was an acoustic program, which is always more challenging for us than electric, but overall it was good. It was fun to talk with the kids afterward. We practiced more afterward and then had some free time in the city. The streets are narrow and made of brick. We walked through the street mall and by where we had done our street service a few days back. Walking through the "mall," there are great smells of the bakery, kebab restaurants, flowers, and people!! The Watermark girls stopped at a kebab restaurant. The store had a huge slab of meat rotating around on a big skewer. It was nothing I had ever seen before. Elisabeth got her much desired kebab, which is like a gyro that you can get in the US - pita bread, meat, etc. After about an hour and half, Elisabeth and I ran across a statue of a former King. When I say former, I mean FORMER!!! He reigned in 1080 - 1086, and that is so hard to comprehend. After a few hours of walking around, I was ready for some rest! Thanks to God for giving me opportunities to see Denmark, its people and shops, and to take a nap every once and awhile! :)

Happy 85th BirthWEEK Grandma Mueller (March 13)!!! Love, Lisa

Date: 3/17/2004
Submitted by: John Foster
Journal Entry:

Youth Encounter alumni once talked about how after a while people on YE teams begin to see everything as a sharing or testimony. I now believe that I may have reached this point. We are in southern Jutland today, having a nice relaxing day just to practice with no concerts. This morning I was up around 6:30 and couldn't sleep anymore, so I decide to do some reading and maybe send an email or two. Our host dad is outside, so I go to say good morning to him, and he mentions that we have a flat tire. As I look out the window, I realize he means very flat. Our van is sitting in its rim. So our host father helps me to jack up the car and take all the lug nuts off. Then it happens, the tire won't come off. There are no more lug nuts holding the tire on the van, yet the van doesn't want to let go of the tire for some reason. Then the sharing comes to me. We are the van; Jesus is the guy changing the tire. The flat tire, our sin. Jesus has freed us from our sin, we no longer have to deal with the flat tires of our lives, yet for some reason we often hold on. I have trouble sometimes giving my all for Jesus, and I fall short. He is there comforting me, "I have freed you, just let it go." I have no reason why I don't go full-in, I just don't sometimes.



John Foster

Life on the road is very good, though. Yesterday we were at a meeting for all the Indre Mission staff, and we got to see some of our old contacts. I think the neatest part of the whole night was getting to present a song for everyone. We played "Creed" by Rich Mullins, a song that we had never played in front of people. Playing music for people is becoming a new passion for me! Most importantly, God is teaching me about love, and I'm working hard to keep His love in the front of my thoughts.

Changing a tire was actually just what I needed this morning. I love physical work!! Whoever may be reading this, say out loud, "God loves me." He does!!

Date: 3/24/2004

Submitted by: John Foster

Journal Entry:

Morten. I think his name was Morten. We played a teen camp recently, and he was there. We played a concert in the early afternoon, and after that, we were hanging out with the kids. I heard from the gym the sound of a ball hitting a wall, so I went in to see who was there. Morten was in the gym by himself just kicking a soccer ball against the wall. I am not much for the game of soccer, but I decided to join him. We kicked back and forth for a while; some of the time other kids were in the room, but most of the time it was just the two of us. We traded off playing goalie, and we also traded stories a bit. Whenever I began to talk about Jesus, he became uneasy. He kept trying to change the subject. Sometimes I feel so helpless.



John Foster

One of my favorite cartoons growing up was (and still is) Calvin and Hobbes. In one of my favorites, his teacher, Miss Wormwood, is trying to tell him something, and he says, "You can present the evidence, but can you make me care?" This is the way I feel some days in ministry. All we can do is present people evidence; we can force them to think nothing. I will never see Morten again in this world, but my current prayer is that I get to see him one day in heaven, and we can praise God together for his great love.

Date: 3/27/2004

Submitted by: Kate Tripoli

Journal Entry:

This week we've been in Southern Jylland, where they say something pronounced like "moin" for "hello" and "goodbye." It's sort of a slurred form of "morgen," which is "morning." I think. Anyway, they only say it here, so we've been using it as much as we can, since it's fun. It makes me think of the seagulls in Finding Nemo that can only say "mine."



Kate Tripoli

One of the most notable moments from this week was when we visited a Christian free school (not affiliated with the Danish folk church). We gave a concert for what felt like the whole school, we visited some classrooms afterwards, and we signed about seventeen thousand autographs. I've been having some trouble dealing with the autograph signing part of being on Watermark. We try to use it as a ministry opportunity by including Bible verses for kids to look up, or by signing "Jesus elsker dig" or "Gud velsigne dig" or "Jesus sparker røv." (Those mean, respectively, "Jesus loves you," "God bless you," and "Jesus kicks butt." Approximately.) But still, I feel very uncomfortable when kids ask me for my autograph. What are they going to do with it? Why do they want it? Does this mean that they only remember us as a band, and that they didn't pay attention to our message? Would Jesus sign autographs if people asked him to? In Team training, we were told about how we were to do our best to practice "duck ministry." Meaning that when people looked at us being in front and performing, we were to duck (figuratively speaking) so that they only saw God. Signing autographs doesn't feel very much like ducking to me.

But maybe, in a way, it is. Signing an autograph gives me the chance to smile at somebody, look them in the eye, and maybe even speak a little bit of Danish to them. It's a chance to connect, however briefly, and to do something for a kid to make him or her feel like somebody that I want to do something for. If they keep my autograph for years or if they lose it in an hour, I hope that what makes a more lasting and important impression in their hearts is that I was there, I was not distant, and I was able to give them what they asked of me.

Date: 3/30/2004
Submitted by: Lisa Bonordon
Journal Entry:



Lisa Bonordon

Last week we were in Sønderjylland (the southern part of the peninsula). We played in two soldiers' homes there (a hang out spot and eating place for people in the army, run by Christians). Our first couple of soldiers' homes for us were very intimidating. Most people had been talking with their own people, and I felt really strange going up and talking with them. But now I really look forward to them. This last week I got into some wonderful conversations with a few soldiers. We have talked about faith in Christ, faith in faith (in anything), why go to church (can't you have church anywhere), is God all-powerful, etc. It has been intense and really, really good!!!

Right before our second soldiers' home concert of last week, Tonny (our contact/tour manager for the week) took me on a walk to see an old castle and to see the coastline of Germany from across the Baltic Sea! I really enjoyed seeing Germany, even if it was from a distance. Unfortunately we couldn't visit Germany because our passports are with the visa people. Too bad . . . another time in my life, I guess. I emailed Kat on Watermark-Germany, and they were 6 hours from the border, so seeing them was out of the question too. I have found that God has plans for us, even when we think we want to do our own thing. So, I had a really nice time getting to know Tonny a bit this week. He is a lot of fun to hang out and talk with. It is wonderful to see him sharing God's love with so many youth.

This week we are going to Århus and surrounding towns, about 45 minutes away from the boarding school we are now living at (Elisabeth's old boarding school and her hometown). She has two siblings and a brother-in-law that work here, and they are wonderful. This school is also about a mile from the sea! There is a great view just stepping out the door! I have had a TON of fun with the students here and good conversations, and it is only our second day with them!!! Thanks for all your prayers and support of us!! We GREATLY appreciate it!!!

Date: 4/3/2004
Submitted by: Kate Tripoli
Journal Entry:



Kate Tripoli

I think last night was the most fun I've ever had screwing up. We played at a Teen-Crash in the mission house in Århus. There were about twenty teenagers there for this fish-themed event. The planners had decorated one room to look like an aquarium, and we ate fish and chips and played Fish Bingo. Fish Bingo is a very sophisticated lottery-type game wherein a small fish swims around inside a bowl with numbers painted on it, and if the fish is on your number when the timer runs out, you win. Good times.

Before the fish fun, we gave a concert. Not really having any fish-related songs, we opted to play our normal set, which starts out with "My Glorious," a song by delirious? that we have played for about eight months. It's one of our best. We've got it down. We've even got the words on an overhead, in case the audience wants to sing along. However, when the lights in the room are too bright, it makes it difficult for people to read the overhead, so two of the organizers of the Teen-Crash went to the back of the room to dim the lights while we started singing. This was where the trouble started. First, the lights went out entirely. Then, they came up full again. There was a brief whispered conference at the light switch, and the lights went out again. Then they came on again. Then they went out. Then they came on very slowly. Then they went out very slowly. By this time, we were at the first chorus, and I was laughing so hard that I could hardly sing. So the rest of the band tried to keep going without me, but they ended up playing the second chorus, which is longer than the first chorus, which messed everybody up when we got to the bridge, etc. It was one of the most chaotic performances of our collective musical career, and all I could do was laugh and laugh and laugh.

For those of you that don't really know me, that might seem natural. It was a funny situation, made funnier by the fact that it was also the kind of situation where you really shouldn't be

laughing. Like, you know how when something funny happens in church, you want to laugh more and more and more simply because you're not supposed to be laughing? It was like that. But for those of you that know me, you might appreciate the fact that I could only laugh by the grace of God. I am rather a perfectionist. I think I've become even more of one since coming on Team. I'm very concerned with Watermark appearing professional. I've been known to chew out my Teammates who do the puppet show because I thought they laughed too much behind the curtain. Not because I think we should present a serious show with no fun in it, but because I think that if we allow ourselves to be silly enough that it distracts us from what we are doing, we lose the audience's attention and possibly their respect for our message.

Nights like last night remind me that, really, we're not the ones doing the work. Even though we totally screwed up the first song (which is also our first major chance to make a good impression), God was still praised. The love of Jesus was shared. We made some new friends, and everybody had fun. I don't know if I'm ready to say that we should try to mess up during all of our programs (baby steps, you know), but I'm glad we did last night. It just might have been the best thing that happened all night.

We won't be posting any journals next week because we're going on Easter Break! Yeah! We're going to six different places, and I think we are all greatly looking forward to getting a rest from each other and from our busy schedule. I'm going to Greve (near København) to spend the week with an AWESOME host family, the Henriksens. We'll start doing journals again after Easter, but you might be able to find some new entries in Tracy's personal journal on thisroad.org. I hope everybody reading this has a meaningful Holy Week and a joyous Easter!

Date: 4/17/2004

Submitted by: Kate Tripoli

Journal Entry:

Well, another week down. Only two more to go. As Tracy says, "Sad day on my face." This week was another great one. We lived at Grejsdalens Ungdomsskole (another name for a boarding school) in

Vejle, a cute little town in the middle of what might be the only hills in Denmark. We got a surprise visit from Watermark Germany at our concert yesterday, which was a fantastic boost to our flagging energy. It was especially touching when they told us that they hadn't had a real day off in a few weeks, and that it was about a three hour drive to get to us and then a three hour drive back to their host homes in Germany. What a huge sacrifice of their precious night off -- just to see us and bring us love!

This week I've been trying extra hard to focus on being where I am, doing what I am doing right now. It's hard for me not to look ahead to the future. What will we have for dinner? What am I going to do on my day off? What if something happens to our plane going home? What will our program be like when we get back to the States? Should I go on Team again next year or do something else? When will I ever get married? I think about this kind of stuff a lot, and knowing that our time here is short makes it even harder for me to stay in the moment.

On Team, I have learned about myself that I like to be either at the beginning of things or else completely done. I do not enjoy being almost done, so whenever I am almost done with a period of time somewhere, I want to rush to the "completely done" part because it feels more comfortable. But who knows what I might miss as I'm trying to get more comfortable? God is present in every moment of every day, and within each of those moments is a chance to learn about Him and to spend time with Him and to love Him and His people. Being comfortable might not be the best.



Kate Tripoli

Date: 4/21/2004

Submitted by: John Foster

Journal Entry:

After three months in another place, it is odd what becomes normal. At this point, to go into a church around 500 years old and set up an electric sound system and play a "rock" concert is almost normal. Hearing another language that I cannot understand has also become quite normal. I used to hear people talking and think that I could understand them if I focused enough, which I now know to be completely untrue. I have picked up enough of the language to understand general topics for conversation, though not enough to follow where the conversation goes. It's weird to think that I am coming back to the USA so soon. I feel very removed from the USA right now. I have spent three and a half months talking about the USA as if it were a friend who is not in the room. "The USA does this," or "I like this about the USA," or "I don't like this about the USA." Sometimes I talk so much about it that I forget that it is home. A little while ago I stayed up talking to my host family about American politics. I felt so removed from everything, almost as though it was a country that was not where I came from, maybe just a country that I have studied. It's a good reminder, though, that it is not my home, that my home is with God, and everywhere I go while here on earth is just a temporary dwelling.



John Foster

Date: 4/23/2004

Submitted by: Nate Peterson

Journal Entry:

Denmark has become quite a normal place to me. I have a lot of trouble now distinguishing any real differences between Denmark and the United States, with a few exceptions. The Danish language (duh), a more laid-back lifestyle, healthier food, eating more often, abundance of coffee and tea, older buildings, boarding schools, and minor driving differences. Except for the Danish language, all of these things have become normal and comfortable.

Travelling from place to place, meeting new people and staying at new places has become second nature to me. Singing and playing and speaking in front of people no longer makes me nervous. (I suppose I don't have enough energy to be nervous as often as we do programs.) The life we live is scheduled, and I have grown accustomed to only knowing what time we need to meet. Nevertheless, it is still exciting to be in another country. I know that I am a part of an important ministry here. I know that I'm sharing the love of Jesus with people in a way that can connect with many. People are always telling us that they love our music, and people even ask for autographs, so I'm quite sure that they are interested in what we're saying. Danes tend to be very open to discussing anything, including Christianity, so we have all had some wonderful conversations with searching souls, Christians in need of encouragement, Christians encouraging us, and many others. I hope and pray that the little we do with each person we meet will have a positive impact on their lives of faith. I hope and pray that they will find new joy, hope, and love. I love Denmark, and after 100 days here, it feels like home. I'm somewhat nervous about returning to the United States, as I have heard stories about reverse culture shock. Of course, I'm excited to return home to see family and friends and to return to the churches we visited in the fall. I love you all -- God bless you!



Nate Peterson

Date: 5/2/2004

Submitted by: Kate Tripoli

Journal Entry:

The last week in Denmark has come and gone, and we are headed for home in two days. We've had a good week at Frøstruphøve Efterskole in western Jylland, but it's been really hard to keep my mind on anything except the fact that I'm going HOME! Back to being in the same time zone as my parents, back to newspapers I can read, back to cheese pizza and Vanilla Coke, back to understanding how much something costs without having to divide by six in my head every time, back to being able to pronounce the names of people and towns



Kate Tripoli

without getting laughed at, back to a van with room to stretch, back to never being asked to set our gear up at seven o'clock in the morning, back to a country that has never heard of "rød grød med fløde" and where nobody will ask me to say it every single day of my life!

On the other hand, I'm leaving behind a pretty wonderful place. I'm going to miss the cosy atmosphere of hygge, playing "Six Degrees of Elisabeth Nejsum," the amazing youth workers who have been our tour managers and extra teammates every week, answering questions about God in classrooms, chilling at soldiers' homes, hearing a bunch of youth singing Danish praise songs, the water-saving toilets, the beauty of a national landscape unspoiled by billboards and suburban sprawl, the showers with temperature gauges, coins with holes in them, light switches that go down to turn on, getting fed every two hours, the small triumphs of being able to use the few Danish phrases I know, spending an entire week with a host family and getting to know where everything in the kitchen is, turning a corner on a country road and seeing the ocean, being able to find everything you need in town by following the signs that say "Centrum," and just generally enjoying the confidently peaceful atmosphere of a country that has been around long enough to know what "culture" really means.

It's been an unforgettable time, and I'm really excited to try and bring a little bit of this fantastic country to another fantastic country. Except for the corn in the salad. That's just weird.

Date: 5/21/2004

Submitted by: Nate Peterson

Journal Entry:

After spending a couple days in the college town of Hanover, N.H., Watermark made its way across the state to a beautiful place called Camp Calumet. Life has been a lot less busy since returning from Denmark, and I am grateful for it. This weekend is a slow, restful one. We are playing some music and doing a workshop about the power of music, but other than that, we're just hanging out. The nature is so beautiful here. Canoeing on the still lake with small green mountains nearby, listening to the music of birds chirping and a motorboat in the distance is quite a feeling. It's great to have these times to slow down and relax, and especially to take time to pray and read the Bible. I don't take enough time in my everyday life to just rest in God, with God, hang out with God. But I'm glad for the times that I can. It's at those times that I can let go of any junk that's weighing me down and enjoy God's presence.
Peace and Love,
Nate
Matt. 12:28-30



Nate Peterson

Date: 5/25/2004

Submitted by: Lisa Bonordon

Journal Entry:

Returning to familiar places has been so much better than I imagined. All along we've said, "We start our year touring the Northeast, then we go to Denmark, and then we come back to some of the same places and churches and share about our experiences." I have said that so much that I had forgotten or didn't realize just how cool it would be. Three out of the last four host families are people I had stayed with before! These return visits have been so nice and refreshing. Reconnecting after at least four months and finding out how the families have been in the meantime are such great moments.

During our break I got to go home and see my new niece Tara. She was wonderful, and I miss her



Lisa Bonordon

so much. My sister Jody and my brother-in-law Dan let me stay with them for a few days. I asked Jody what advice she had for me for my Return Tour because she was on New Vision (the team sent to Australia a few years ago). She told me that I shouldn't be too disappointed when I am unable stay with the same host family as I had before because it is bound to happen. I am thankful for that dose of reality, and I am preparing myself now. After all, I am convinced that my time with each family has been planned perfectly. Why would that change now?

But in the meantime, God has really blessed us with a great Return Tour. We were just at Resurrection Lutheran Church in Fredricksburg, VA (the place of many Civil War battles). We had a fun dinner with the youth group again like the last time, and then we got to show them how God is working in Denmark during the concert. It was really fun! The crowd encouraged me through their laughter, singing, and dancing throughout our whole program. As Greg (the senior high youth director) said after our concert, God is the same in Denmark as he is in the United States.

I hope our contacts, friends, and host families know that I enjoy sharing about Denmark so much. Thanks for planning and taking part in our experiences in that great country. Thanks for your time, your amazing gifts and your ministry that continues to be fueled by the same Spirit. Ephesians 4:4: "There is one body and one spirit – just as you were called to one hope when you were called – one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and father of all, who is over all and through all and in all."

Date: 5/29/2004

Submitted by: Kate Tripoli

Journal Entry:

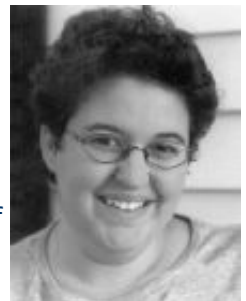
Hey, remember when our van got stolen? Who can forget? It was one of the defining moments of our Team life, a milestone that we still talk about to this day. We had just left a beautiful little town in central New York called Walden to enter the urban jungle of Edison, New Jersey. Upon returning to Walden a few weeks ago, we joked that we'd better be extra careful with our van when we leave this time, just in case. Would you believe that on the VERY EVENING we left Walden, we parked on a busy, well-lit street in Baltimore, Maryland, and our van was broken into and two backpacks were stolen???

It's true! My bag and Elisabeth's bag have disappeared into the wild. Nothing as valuable as an acoustic guitar or a computer or a passport went missing this time -- just CDs, CD players, Bibles, and journals, as well as some small items of sentimental value. We bemoaned our bad luck and mourned our losses. However, our frustrations were quickly turned into amazement, gratitude, and rejoicing when we reached Fredericksburg, Virginia for our day off. Our contact and my host dad, Greg, offered to take us shopping so we could replace the things we had lost. As we strolled around inside Borders, Best Buy, and good old Wally World, Greg began calmly plucking things out of our hands and paying for them himself. Our jaws were on the floor. Despite our protesting, he seemed to think it was only right that he and the church do what they could in return for "all we had given them."

So here I am, faced with a question that I ask myself over and over again. Have we really done all that much? We show up at a church, move their furniture, eat their food, play some music, chat with some church members, and then go to somebody's home where we chat with their family, eat more food, and sleep in beds that often turn out to belong to somebody that lives in the house who has elected (or been elected) to sleep on the couch that night. We take and we use and we disrupt people's lives, and we are constantly thanked for it. If the impact we have is really so great as to warrant this kind of service, I'm glad I'm not aware of it. It would be harder to be grateful if I felt we deserved what we received.

Thanks again, Greg and family! You guys rock!

P.S. -- We return to Walden again this week . . . wish us luck. We might decide it's safer if we don't leave this time.



Kate Tripoli

Date: 6/8/2004
Submitted by: Lisa Bonordon
Journal Entry:



Lisa Bonordon

Hey everyone! It has been awhile since I have written, so I'll try to catch you up with what is happening in my life. I am having a great time being on team. It is amazing to me that I've been to so many fun places and met so many great people, and the year isn't over yet. Wow!!! A few highlights from the past month or so:

We were at the Southwest Pennsylvania Synod Assembly and Tony Campolo was the keynote speaker. Wow - it was so good. He really inspired me and reminded me of my place in this world. As a child of God, a caretaker of the land, a giver to those in need. I was and am still challenged by what he said.

We went back to the Bronx! We split into two groups during our day off and toured Manhattan. During the day we passed a park where people were setting up equipment for a concert for that night - Broadway Under the Stars. So after meeting up with the other three teamers and going out to eat, we got to hear some music that wasn't our own!!! Then most of the group went back to the Bronx, but Elisabeth and I decided to walk around Manhattan a little bit more. It was dark so we went to the Brooklyn Bridge and saw the skyline. It was incredible!

Other great highlights -
Host families have been wonderful!

Went to a movie - Shrek 2

Went to West Virginia (I have only driven through a section of it before)

I ate a cheesesteak twenty minutes outside of Philly, the closest I've ever been to it!

Found out Watermark-Denmark will be having a program in Waverly (my hometown!) July 23rd so - those in the Waverly area, mark your calendars!!!

VBS starts tonight in Bowie, Maryland!! Woohoo. John and I get to be the characters in the skit each day - crazy. I've looked forward to VBS for a long time because I loved doing day camps during the summers at Okoboji and Riverside Lutheran Bible Camps! They are FUN!!!

Well, now I am becoming more serious in looking for a job that I'll start in a few months. So I better get searching - if you have any ideas for me, I would love to hear them! I am considering social work or youth ministry type jobs - in the midwest somewhere (preferably in a big city in Iowa or in the Twin Cities). Thanks for all your prayers!!!

Date: 6/10/2004
Submitted by: Elisabeth Nejsum
Journal Entry:



Elisabeth Nejsum

Hallooooo! Yes, I'm still alive ... and well! My mood is taking some serious ups and downs, but all in all I'm having an awesome time, and I enjoy being back in the States. One thing I missed while we were in Denmark is wonderful Starbucks, and our host-mom, Peggy (you gotta love that woman) has now taken us out for coffee there twice. People like her is what makes me excited about Host Home Encounter - she rocks my face off!! And not only her - everybody's just so nice to us, they let us swim in their pools, make us pancakes, wash our clothes, give up their beds for us and change their entire schedule just for us! And if you ask me, we brats simply don't deserve it! We are so blessed in so many incredible ways, and I just need to remind myself of that when I want to curl up in a ball and cry like a little baby because I wanna go home to my mom or I just want my own room. I'm the one everybody from home envies. I get to be in a band, travel around and see the world for free, and get spoiled rotten at the same time. When I tell my family, "Aaarh, maan! We have a 7 hour van ride to Virginia tomorrow," they go, " Duuuuude! You get to go to Virginia -

that's so coooooo!!!" And I guess it is ... so what am I doing in front of the computer?!? I'll get out and get the best out of it ...

Date: 6/12/2004

Submitted by: Kate Tripoli

Journal Entry:

After almost two weeks, we've finally got John back! Yay! For those of you who don't know, John has been at home visiting his grandmother, who has been ill since just before we left Denmark. It was a real challenge to do our ministry without him. We've had similar experiences before, both in the States and in Denmark, where somebody from the team has been unable to join us for a period of time, and we've had to fill in the missing places. I think all of us have been out at some point except for Nate. (Go Nate! Stay healthy!) Because it's tough with somebody missing! You don't realize how much each person does during set-up, or how much their personality fills a need in relational ministry, or how much you like talking with them until they are not there anymore. It gives a little taste of what life will be like after Team. I'll have tons of inside jokes and nobody to share them with. I'll get in the back seat of my car and then realize that I have to drive myself to work. I'll break my toaster and not have somebody who can fix it. I might even have a particular spiritual struggle that none of my friends can really identify with. In Denmark, we liked to remind our audiences and ourselves that God is the same in every place of the world. I have been reminding myself that God is the same in every time of our lives. When my teammates are gone, when my friends have moved away, when nothing in my life is like it is now, God will still be the same. Good news!



Kate Tripoli

Date: 6/16/2004

Submitted by: John Foster

Journal Entry:

New York, New York, the city so nice, they named it twice. One of the neatest things about Team is all the places we get to go. Not only have we toured around Denmark, but we also have gotten to see the Northeast portion of the United States, which I had hardly ever even been close to. This last Monday was an incredible experience with a chance to go down to Manhattan and see the Big Apple. What a place, and what a day. Our day was long and crazy, so I will give it to you in brief. Nate, Lisa, and I started off by walking the Brooklyn Bridge, seeing Ground Zero, and going to Battery Park, where you can look down to the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island. We then headed for Central Park and spent a little time hanging out there. We met up with the rest of the team, had dinner, and then got to see part of "Broadway Under the Stars," which was a bunch of Broadway songs sung out in a park. We had packed a lot into the day, and as I was falling asleep, something started to hit me. We had passed by a lot of homeless people, and something Jesus said popped into my head. "To the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of mine, even the least of them, you did it to Me." (Matt 25:40) This is right after Jesus says something about feeding the hungry. I walked around all day trying not even to make eye contact with people, not willing to give them a smile, much less a buck. What am I going to do with a dollar? I'm probably going to waste it on nothing important. Two people struck me more than any others. They were both young women, and they were both sitting in the same position. They were sitting with their knees up and their head between their knees. They each had a sign. The first one we passed I could only read a few words of before I almost burst into tears. "I'm sick, I'm lonely...." For some reason that just hit me hard. I don't know her situation, but I know what it's like to be sick and lonely, maybe not to the same extent, but I know some. We continued on our way and within just a block or so we passed the next one. Her sign said, "I'm hungry, I'm hot" (it was warm out), "I'm broke, and I'm hating life." There is so much of this world that I do not understand, but I am beginning to see that there is no hope in it. In this world we are all lonely and sick. Whether it be on the street in Manhattan, in a million dollar condo, on a Youth Encounter band or in a nursing home, we are all lonely and sick. Our disease is our loneliness. We are missing God.



John Foster

Date: 6/18/2004
Submitted by: Nate Peterson
Journal Entry:



Nate Peterson

When I signed up to join Watermark, I didn't know what to expect. All that I knew was that I would be traveling with a group of Christian musicians around my age, playing music and telling people (young people in particular) about Jesus. I had no idea how difficult it would be. I had no idea how rewarding it would be. I had no idea how exciting it would be. I had no idea how much fun it would be. When I began this year, playing music in front of people was a frightening thought, but it has become a joy. Meeting so many new people and sharing some time and our lives with each other has been a great experience, opening my eyes to a bigger world than I had known. Seeing new places, each one so beautiful, so different yet not completely foreign, has helped me to greater appreciate God's creation.

A brief summary of the past 7 days:

- Synod Assembly in Pennsylvania...Hung out with 40 high schoolers, met the bishop and heard Tony Campolo, a fiery and thought provoking speaker.
- Went back to Pastor Ruby's church in the Bronx (Calvary) for the fourth and final time. Played an outdoor concert, went to the Bronx Zoo, and got a wonderful visit from the Fyfes!!!!
- Sight-seeing in Manhattan, saw Broadway Under the Stars
- Returned to Brick, New Jersey, the most excited and joyful crowd we've ever played for. Went to a minor league ballgame and swam in the pool.

I never expected to have so much fun meeting all these people and never expected to have so many opportunities to do such fun things. God has blessed me greatly and I am so thankful. He wants us all to be filled with joy, to experience this world of His with a glad and grateful heart. God bless you all today as you remember all of your blessings.

Date: 6/26/2004
Submitted by: Kate Tripoli
Journal Entry:



Kate Tripoli

Hello all . . . it's rather late here, so I will be brief. We've been in Bowie, MD all week, doing our very first VBS ever! It was an exhausting time of memorizing skits and teaching sing-a-longs, and we've got three more consecutive weeks of it, only with different skits and sing-a-longs every week. Wheel! This week was very enjoyable, though. The kids never lost their enthusiasm for the music or for hanging out with us, and I don't know which bowls me over more. As I struggle with (and seem to fail at) becoming more like Christ, I am constantly confronted by the ugly side of my personality. Do these kids want to be around me because they don't know that ugly side exists? Are my Teammates sick of being on Team because they have seen that ugly side one too many times? Is there anyone who can spend so much time around such a nasty, cruel, selfish wretch and yet still want to be around me? You bet. Jesus Christ. When I remember this, I have to thank God for just being who and what he is -- totally in love with me, for better or for worse.

Date: 7/4/2004
Submitted by: John Foster
Journal Entry:

At our Virginia Beach Vacation Bible School, I received a gift. A little girl from the five year old class handed me an envelope with the name Emma on it. As she handed it to me, I told her that my name was not Emma, only to realize that the name of the giver was on the envelope, not the name of the intended receiver. I

thanked her for it and placed it in my backpack and then received a hug from her. I didn't open it yet, though. This Friday I was in the airport in Norfolk. My grandma passed on last week, and I was headed home to see my family and attend the services. As I sat in

the airport, I opened my bag to look for something to pass the time till I could board my plane. I saw the envelope from Emma. I opened it to find two things. One was a piece of dolphin stationery, folded and cut out the way we all used to make snow flakes. The other was a folded up piece of paper. I was almost in tears. This was one of the most beautiful gifts I have ever received. In fact, it reminded me of a Bible verse. "For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved, it is the power of God." (1st Corinthians 1:18) Most people who would see my gift would think it to be foolish. To

me, it means so much. I do really understand the gift, and I can only begin to understand the heart of the giver, only that it was a gift out of pure love.



John Foster

Date: 7/19/2004

Submitted by: Tracy Apps

Journal Entry:

What a day Saturday was! I had a late night Friday getting pictures done and online from our week in Catasauqua, then up early in the morning (well.. we left around 9:30am) to say our final goodbyes to our host families in Catty, then we hit the road. While I was taking a nap in the back of the van, I suddenly awakened to the van being stopped along the side of the road. "What's going on?!" "The trailer blew a tire, and the wheel well is down the road." "Oh." Yes. We finally got to use that spare tire that has been floating around the back of our trailer. It was pretty funny to see John walking along the side of the freeway with the fender from over the trailer wheels. And yet what I think was the most humorous part of this adventure was the fact that there was another car, broken down, on the side of the road, RIGHT behind us! As John was changing the trailer tire, I took pictures (for those of you who know me.. this should be of no surprise to you) and a tow truck was coming to pick up the car behind us, John thought of the website idea "stuckalongsidetheroad.com", and then we hit the road again. Back to sleep for me. Then I woke up a couple more times for gas stops and rest area breaks, and finally, around 3 p.m., we reached our next destination. We played two programs at a juvenile detention center and shelter. We had been here earlier in our tour (and i mean REALLY earlier -- it was within the first month of us traveling together as Watermark), and when I heard that we were going back, I couldn't have been more excited! I remember the first time we went there, I was so scared, confused and couldn't figure out WHY we would be playing THERE. How in the WORLD could God use us in a place like that? Well, God completely rocked my socks off last time, and sure enough, He did it again. I just had so much fun talking to several of the girls from the shelter and detention groups. We played some old songs that we hadn't played in a while, and all went well. It was just such an awesome time hanging out with those kids. I haven't laughed that hard in quite some time. :-) And I am STILL amazed at how God can use us in situations like that, how walls can be broken down and, instead of seeing the 'hard', emotionless and/or angry kids from a juvey hall, we see the heart of some of God's precious creations, just going through some crazy times. (Yet, no 'crazy time' is too big for God, which I think is pretty cool.) All I could say as we pulled away from there was, "Man, I love those kids." And to think, God loves them even more. God's cool!



Tracy Apps

Date: 7/24/2004

Submitted by: Lisa Bonordon

Journal Entry:

I am at home!!!!!! There were many points during the year in which I didn't think I was ever going to have a home concert in Waverly, Iowa. One of those points was yesterday - the day set aside for the big drive to Iowa. As you've heard from Tracy's last journal, Saturday a trailer tire blew out. Well, Wednesday afternoon we drove into Holland, MI with some not-so-lovely



sounds coming from the hood of the van. Turns out something is wrong with the rear differential and some other things. When I thought 10:00 AM was late enough for getting out of town to go to Iowa, the auto shop at the earliest was going to look at our van 11:00 AM. So, thankfully we were able to crash at someone's home nearby - we were all pretty tired from the lock-in - and wait. Nate and I (but mostly Nate) spent this time talking to team directors, Dan - the YE vehicle guy, the mechanics, and car rental places in order to get us out of town. We finally found a good deal on a rental SUV to pull our trailer, and we got on the road at 4:30 PM, driving by Gary, IN, Chicago, and all the way home.

When we had to change another trailer tire about 30 miles from Iowa, I couldn't believe it. But at that point it was almost humorous. Fortunately, the rest of the trip went quite quickly and smoothly, and I was home by 1:00!! I saw my mom, sister and my sleeping niece and went to bed. We had our concert tonight (Friday) and now I'm home again - drinking it all in before we leave tomorrow morning for Tracy's beloved Milwaukee.

I just want to thank all of my family and friends that were at the concert tonight - it was so nice to see you. Thanks to all my sponsors and prayer warriors!!! It is truly good to be home even for a little time...and to share with everyone what has happened in my life this year. We even got a great surprise visit from the Henriksens - a wonderful host family from Denmark. God is good!!! Through the many tears and disappointments, my mom is right, "miracles do happen."

Date: 7/28/2004

Submitted by: John Foster

Journal Entry:

It's really weird to think that our last VBS is nearing completion. I was thinking that as the year drew to a close, it would seem as though time was going slowly, but actually, time has been flying. This week, I have had the opportunity to be with a really fun host family. I have two host sisters and a host brother, and I think that my experiences with my host brother especially have renewed my desire to go into youth ministry. He is high school aged, and we have gotten the chance to hang out some. We have four wheeled and played some video games, and last night Nate, my host brother, one of his friends, and myself stayed up and played Risk, the game of world conquest. It's just such a cool experience to be part of a unit, to be a friend. On the road it's often times hard to feel like you can meet new "friends." We meet lots of acquaintances, but there is usually not enough time to really get to know them. It has been an excellent chance to get to know folks more than normal. I think that is my favorite part about VBS and something that I am looking forward to once team is done - stronger relationships.



John Foster

Date: 8/2/2004

Submitted by: Lisa Bonordon

Journal Entry:

God is so good. It has been such a blessing to feel God's touch from our friends in Denmark HERE in the United States. Thanks to Scott - last year Watermark member - and his wedding last weekend, we got to have some wonderful surprises. I am so thankful that it worked out for us to see Iversen, a contact of ours from Denmark. Our contacts in Denmark were like new seventh teammates each week, but we got to spend two weeks with Iversen. So when he surprised us on Friday at John's house, it was such a cool thing (even though John and I knew about his coming beforehand). We all took the El down to Michigan Ave in Chicago and saw the Chicago Tribune building. It was really fun to see it because it has rocks sticking out of the building from famous buildings all over the world. We got to see a stone from the Wartburg Castle in Eisenach, Germany (I went to Wartburg College, so that was great to see) and then we



Lisa Bonordon

saw a stone from Hamlet's Castle in Denmark! We had a great time, and I even got to spend Friday night with my best friend Katie. On Sunday we got to spend more time with the Henriksens (who had surprised us at my home church last week) before they traveled back to Denmark. These final two weeks are super hard, we are really ready to be done with Team. However, seeing my family last week, talking with some Danes, and seeing my friend the other night have kept my spirits up. I have been rejuvenated by our conversations and inspired by their love. I thank God every time I remember them, and that is many, many times!!
