

# Watermark/Germany 2005-06 Journal

**Date:** 9/20/2005

**Submitted by:** Melissa Seybold

**Journal Entry:**

So now we're in Greenbush, Minnesota, 30 minutes away from the Canadian border. It's been a bit of culture shock for me, traveling around small towns in northern Minnesota. Living the last 10 years in a city of half a million people has definitely colored my perspective. It seems very strange to spend time in a community of mostly farmers, where everyone knows everyone else. But as I talk with the people we meet, I consistently get the same response, that they thoroughly enjoy living in a small-town community. Coming to these towns has given me a greater appreciation of a life without distractions, where things like the Internet, television, and other media are not as accessible. I've also appreciated the generous hospitality our team has experienced; in each new town I have felt welcomed, rather than a stranger just passing through. Greenbush is one of the towns that I really felt this welcoming presence—our contact Janine did everything possible to make us feel comfortable at a home away from home. Today was one of my favorite program days so far, especially our visit to the local nursing home. Janine asked that day if we wouldn't mind popping into the home to do a quick program, so we weren't even expecting this opportunity. I'm beginning to see that the impromptu programs will be ones where God has the best plans for us. It was wonderful to watch the faces of the residents light up as we sang to them and shared about ourselves. One woman in the front row was simply ecstatic during each song we performed, clapping her hands and smiling from ear to ear. Every time I would look at her, I couldn't help but break out into a smile. After the program was over, Katja let her play on the djembe; her joy could not be contained. As much as we brought joy to the residents by our presence, their reception of us was equally, if not more, encouraging to our team. I'm looking forward even more nursing home programs this year!



**Melissa Seybold**

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**Date:** 9/22/2005

**Submitted by:** Benjamin Bottke

**Journal Entry:**

Tonight we gave a program and a lock-in at a church in the town of Oslo in northwest Minnesota called Zion Lutheran. A lock-in is where the kids stay at the church until late at night. The ages were 5th grade to 9th grade. I was very impressed with these kids. They were very well-mannered and kind-hearted. Sure, they got loud and had fun. But, they seemed to all care for one another in some way. I didn't hear any cutting down of others, bad language, or disrespect. The experience I have had with groups of kids is that there are usually a few who take pleasure in being the rebellious ones, causing ruckus to stir things up and saying foul things. I know because I tended to be one of them. But when an adult was speaking, these kids all turned their attention to them and gave their respect. It was very nice to be with a group of kids who had themselves under control. I have to give the parents credit at this time. You have raised these kids right.



**Benjamin Bottke**

The town of Oslo was quite small...about 400 people. A lot of the kids were from farms. I don't know if they had a lot of chores to do and this discipline kept their attitudes in check and under control or what. I think the small town has something to do with it. I come from a town of over 20,000 people. There is more to do and more trouble to get into...but I don't know how this would make a difference. I can't really pinpoint it. The kids just had better attitudes than what I know of kids...especially when they all come together and join forces of rebellious nature.

As far as how the program and lock-in went, they were just fine. It was our second

electric full program, so we are still stressing and having to be rather conscious of everything during the program to make sure it stays together and flows. I am excited to get past this, and we will soon, I can already feel it.

The lock-in was fun as well. We played a few games in the church that the kids ate up. Once again though, our team is young and still binding together and learning how to work together and hang out together. I can already feel this happening too...as time goes by, the team will become a much more effective machine, and be able to be more effective. I am a little disappointed that we aren't there yet but excited to watch us get there!

God bless you all – Ben Bottke

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**Date:** 9/25/2005

**Submitted by:** Katja Arnold

**Journal Entry:**

We are in Fosston, Minnesota. After one week being on the road it is already difficult to remember where we have been two days ago, with whom we stayed, what we did and what happened. But nonetheless the people we meet have a big impact on our ministry and our personal lives. Sometimes maybe more and sometimes maybe less.



**Katja Arnold**

For me this morning was a "sometimes maybe more" experience. After a night of not so good sleep cause of my teammate taking more space in the bed than she should have and with that pushing me to the edge of my side of the bed...I got up before everyone else, took a shower, and went upstairs into the host home kitchen to get some breakfast before changing into the nice Sunday worship service clothes.

In the kitchen my host mom for one day was reading her Bible and a devotion book, and while we had a few struggles with the coffee machine we talked about different things like family, ministry work, God working in each of our lives, Christians judging other Christians instead of loving them in first place. My host mom for today shared a very deep story of her family that included mistakes, struggles, faith, trust and God even using the bad things we may be doing for something good. For a minute or two, we both sat at the table in silence; it may have not even been that long...I was thinking of all the things I struggle with and the mistakes I do, some small ones even every day, some big ones once in my life but with a lasting affect on my life or other people's lives.

We both glanced about how amazing God is loving us even though we do so many mistakes, hurt people, do bad things...and how even more amazing HE is in using even those things to do something good with it. God truly is amazing.

As we sat in the kitchen, Michael W. Smith singing his worship songs in the background, I also shared my concerns about my family not being Christian and what that means for me being a Christian and me trying to plant little seeds in their heart for God but being disappointed and discouraged by planting and planting but not seeing any fruit coming out of it. We talked about the ministry her husband as the pastor of the congregation is doing, the ministry we as Watermark are doing and not too often having the chance to really see what fruits the seeds we planted bring. My host mom found a great metaphor for that as she was talking about parenting, the patience that is important for that and continuously planting seeds in the children which fruits you don't see till they are 20 years older.

As we talked about all these things that were on our minds and hearts, time, as it usually does in good moments, flew by and Michael W. Smith was almost at the end of his worship CD. I hurried to get dressed to be ready for the church service where we were going to do the music. As I came back into the kitchen, my host mom was sitting there with two of my teammates and she told me that as she flipped her every day calendar it totally spoke into the conversation we just had.

Here is what the calendar page for today, Sept. 25 says:

***"No ray of sunshine is everlasting, but the green which it awakes into existence needs***

***time to sprout, and it is not always granted to the sower to see the harvest. All work that is worth anything is done in faith."* - Albert Schweitzer -**

I think this quote does speak into the ministry work we as Watermark are doing and all the other teams that travel around the States and the world. But it is also something that can be said into every person's life. As paid ministers, as volunteers in the local church, as parents, grandparents, neighbors, friends, sisters and brothers, husbands or wives...we try to plant little seeds of our faith, of our love, of our values in the people we meet, love, and care about, but most likely we are not allowed or able to see the fruits the seeds bring right away but maybe 10, 20 years later or never.

But God wants to use us right where we are through small and through big things. And He even can use the bad things, failures, sins we are committing to do something good in people's lives.

Isn't that great?

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**Date:** 9/27/2005

**Submitted by:** Bryan Sawyer

**Journal Entry:**

Today we are driving to our next program town, Wellington, MN. Yesterday we had the day off. It was good. The past couple of days have been a hoot. We have been jumping from town to town. We jumped from Oslo to Fosston to Ulen in a matter of a day and a half. In all the crazy busyness, we have been having fun. We spent yesterday at Pastor Jeff's lake place. It was fun. Having some down time to just chill and connect with God was awesome. I also had the opportunity to have a good sit-down conversation with Jeff. I have never had the chance to have a talk with a pastor one on one. It was enlightening to say the least. For only being on the road for a matter of just over a week, we are having a good time. It's great to see smiles on the faces of people when we show up. Also, having people come up to you and tell of how your testimony touched them makes this worth while. A couple more days, and we will be in Nebraska. Umm, more flat lands. ;- ) Well, until next time, God's PEACE- Bryan



**Bryan Sawyer**

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**Date:** 9/29/2005

**Submitted by:** Benjamin Bottke

**Journal Entry:**

So we are now in Omaha, Nebraska. I like it here. It is large city, but it is not overwhelming like Chicago or Minneapolis can be at times with traffic, etc. It has been nice to be in a larger, more modern area after being in rural Minnesota for a few weeks. I just feel more of a connection to larger areas, where people seem to be up to more.

This is a good time for the team. It just feels like there is a lot of energy in a larger town like this. I look forward to our travels to the West Coast where this is even more prevalent. Next stop, Colorado. Denver is the second stop, and I'm psyched! Should be cool.

Drop the team an e-mail sometime. [watermarkgermany@youthencounter.org](mailto:watermarkgermany@youthencounter.org)

PEACE – Ben Bottke



**Benjamin Bottke**

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**Date:** 10/1/2005

**Submitted by:** Meghan Adney

**Journal Entry:**

Hey everyone! After a long (long, long) drive from Omaha, we arrived in Sterling, Colorado. All of us were really looking forward to being in the Denver area, as half of the team has relatives here. We sang with a group of kids at the church where Melissa's aunt goes, and then all seven of us got to stay at her house. My grandmother was able to come over and visit me, and we spent a lovely evening together. It's good to see some familiar faces! Well, that concludes my first journal entry. Much love to you all!!



**Meghan Adney**

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**Date:** 10/3/2005

**Submitted by:** Jim Matthias

**Journal Entry:**

Aurora, CO, USA

This is my account of the events of October 3, 2005, involving myself and my teammate Melissa.



**Jim Matthias**

We decided that it would be a good idea to climb a 14,000 ft mountain on our day off since we are now in Colorado. We decided to do Mt. Evans just west of Denver, since we thought it was closer to us than driving to the Springs to climb Pike's Peak. It ended up that we didn't arrive at the base of the mountain until 12:30. As we put stuff in our packs and headed toward the entrance, we noticed that the road had been closed going up to the summit. We briefly talked to the gatekeeper to make sure it was still safe to climb. They said it was, so we began.

We made it to the shelter by mile 3 in about 50 minutes and stopped for a brief lunch. We then took the shortcut trail to mile 5, which still took 40 minutes because it was much steeper than the road, but it was still shorter and made the road hiking seem much easier. We stayed on the road the rest of the day, hit mile 6 at 2:35 and Summit Lake Park, close to mile 9, a little before 4:00. Strangely enough, this park was not at the summit, but still a five-mile hike from the summit, making the total trip slightly over 14 lateral miles. Hiking was still going well at this point, but the 14-mile task started to seem overwhelming. We continued nonetheless, hitting mile 10 at 4:15. At this point I started to question the intelligence of this situation, but who climbs up ten miles only to turn around? Motivation and pride overtook reason, and we continued on. Still doing 20ish-minute miles, we kept going in spite of my developing headache, my decreasing ability to walk in a straight line, and Melissa's growing coldness. Both Melissa and I were wearing shorts and only two or three layers on top, not expecting it to be as cold as it was.

We hit mile 13 at 5:30 and in spite of the temperature beginning to drop as the sun fell in the sky, and in spite of having the worst headache of my life, and in spite of nearing exhaustion, we felt like we could slow our pace and do the last mile in a half hour, giving us a little time to take pictures and hopefully make it to the base, where our van was by 9:00, close to the expected 8:30 sunset time. Well, around 5:55 I started slowing considerably, a few feet later stopping altogether. Melissa turned around and asked if it was time to stop. We determined it wasn't safe to continue, despite being a half mile from the summit. We snapped a few pictures and started our descent.

We were moving down the mountain much quicker, and we were both beginning to feel better, however the reality of the 13-plus-mile descent started to sink in as the sun began to set on the other side of the mountain. Most of the day the temperature was 60+, but now was nearing 50 in the shade plus winds that were becoming very strong and piercing. Around mile 12 we determined it best to call the forest services for someone to come pick us up. As it connected, my phone died. So we picked up the pace to keep warm and kept moving. We made it to Summit Lake (mile 9) at 7:15, and having remembered seeing a building on the other side of the parking lot, headed to it in

search of a payphone or something to keep us warm. There was no phone, which wasn't surprising, but the door to this building was unlocked.

It was a stone walled building with a normal roof, four small rectangular windows, a fireplace, and a door. Other than that, it was just a dirt floor with a few rocks (and there were a few outhouses around the back of the building). We stopped here to warm up, but at 7:30, we decided our best option for survival was to wait in the cabin until we were reported missing and someone came to look for us. It was in the 40s by this point with a wind chill in the 20s. Remember that Melissa and I were not dressed for cold weather. We put some heavy rocks in my backpack and put it in the middle of the road. We put my mini flashlight in the window of the hut, and then we huddled together and waited. We were nearing the point of unstoppable shivering around 11:00 and our extremities were fairly numb (and my flashlight had died). Fortunately, this was when the forest ranger pulled in and we saw his headlights shine through the window. Slightly disoriented, we gathered our things and climbed into his warm truck. We warmed up fairly quickly and by the time we reached our van, we were almost back to normal. Neither of us had any lasting medical issues because of the cold. We were safe.

Melissa's aunt and uncle (our host family), along with our teammates, began to worry about us when we didn't return at 5:00 like we originally thought we would. Serious concern hit around 8:00, and they ended up calling the forest service at 10:00 to report us missing. Shortly thereafter, they were informed that our van was found but we hadn't been located. This led to some highly emotional time for our teammates, but they were informed of our safe arrival to the van shortly after 11:00. We arrived to the house at 1:00 a.m. to much rejoicing.

The most important lessons learned:

I am not as strong as I think I am.

My pride and my motivation can easily get in the way of me listening to God, or even using common sense.

It's hard for me to admit I have failed.

Well, not the best story in the world or the smartest, but a bedtime story nonetheless. Some advice: If you're going to climb a 14,000 ft mountain, start early in the morning and pray a lot before you go!!!

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**Date:** 10/7/2005

**Submitted by:** Katja Arnold

**Journal Entry:**

My first time in Arizona, and I am totally impressed by those huge and really red Red Rocks that we see while driving from Colorado to Arizona. I always thought that Arizona pretty much is a hot desert with lots and lots of cactusessssss....

So that made a big impression on me.

The next impression followed as we stopped at 4 Corners, and I got to be in four states at the same time: Utah, Colorado, New Mexico and Arizona. What a moment. We also played Frisbee, one of our team most favorite activities, while having team members in four different states at the same time! (We decided to stop playing as we almost hit a man who tried to take a picture...)

We had a long drive but finally made it to Manyfarms, which is a town in a reservation where Native Americans live. What shocked me most was the way dogs were treated that didn't belong to anyone. It reminded me of what Heather, our International Team Director, had told us about her experience in India and how dogs are treated there 'cause of the fear that they could spread diseases...I just couldn't really believe that this is happening here and now. I have quite a big heart



**Katja Arnold**



for animals and their treatment, my reason for being a vegetarian, and I felt really helpless and sad about that.

But a very positive thing followed that experience...our program in the Navajo church. It was amazing. We came from a program at a detention center in the nearby town of Chinle and had a too tight schedule, so we just made it back on time to Manyfarms to start our program right away. We knew that we wouldn't have much time to eat, so we all ate in the van while driving back to the church. Coming there I was totally surprised by the calmness everyone had. There were already people sitting in the pews and waiting for us and our program, but our contact and many helpers had prepared a great dinner for us. We all sat down and ate and of course were running late for our program, but nobody seemed to be bothered with that.

One of the moments that touched me the most was when our contact prayed the opening prayer of our program in the language of Navajo. It sounded beautiful. I could not understand what he said, but I could feel the love and warmth of his words and his heart. I was very touched by that. Plus, isn't it amazing and wonderful that God can understand everything language that exists in this world?! Even though I may not be able to understand a different language cause a lack of knowledge, but God understands it. Not just every language, but every person in its specific situation and with its very own personality. God is great and as we are able to experience every day, God is good in so many ways.

All in all it was a special experience being in a Native American reservation and being able to be united in Christ together, to live community, to share God's word with each other, and to grow in faith with each other. For me it was like going to another country. It was like a totally different environment, culture, language and being. It was a great blessing to experience that, and I pray that God will continue to bless all the people there with their unique culture and unique way of living in God's light and love!

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**Date:** 10/26/2005

**Submitted by:** Meghan Adney

**Journal Entry:**

Well, time has been doing some crazy things with my brain. It's unusual when I know what day of the week it is, and I say to myself, "Self, do you know where you were yesterday?" And I have to reply to myself, "Self, I have no idea." This confusing intro leads into our experience in Medford and Eagle Point, OR. I'm not sure if we were there a week ago, two weeks ago...you get the picture. Irgendwie...so I had an awesome time in Medford. We didn't actually have a booking there, but we made some connections and I think they will be really excited to have us back. We stayed at the church but spent the day with Pastor John and his family. His daughter Sophie was just the cutest little adorable etc. thing. He (the pastor, not Sophie) was really eager to talk to us about spiritual matters. It was awesome. The next day we were in Eagle Point (like 20 minutes away). Bryan and I stayed in a host home where the father was completely deaf. I got to use the sign language I thought I had long since forgotten, and Bryan put his acting and gesturing skills to use. It really gave us a taste for what it's going to be like to communicate with people overseas. You have to have a lot of patience, maybe talk a little slower, but know that they appreciate the effort you make to speak their language, and will overlook the mistakes. It makes me soooo excited to do some intercultural communication. So that's it for now. We are currently in Portland again, and just did a Family Night Program. I led an interactive Bible story for the first time, so that was exciting. God's blessings and peace!

Love, Meghan



**Meghan Adney**

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**Date:** 10/28/2005

**Submitted by:** Cristina Popa

**Journal Entry:**

Wohoo! This is my first journal entry...I've made it!

We are in Oregon, and the last three days we were in Portland. Besides rain, this place is the most inviting I've been to in the U.S. It is awesome. It's not that I didn't like the other places we've been to, but Portland has a very unique air to it. When you walk on the streets in downtown, you get this inexplicable desire to enter a library and read a good book. The active people, coffee shops and bookstores tell you that it's a place of artistry. It also gives you a romantic feeling when you walk in rain, with the beautiful trees and flowers, that make you wanna spend time with your loved one, just hang out and enjoy the environment.



**Cristina Popa**

The time we served at Prince of Peace Lutheran Church, God had prepared us a surprise and a lesson. We arrived there in the afternoon and started unloading our equipment and get ready for the next day, but the thing was that we had to move everything in the basement and then the next day bring it all up to the sanctuary, which meant extra work, rather than just unloading and setting up, not having to move stuff from the basement to the place we had to set up. After all the hard work, our contact Amy Upchurch prepared us a wonderful dinner. The surprise I was talking about was the live band that we got to see that night. Amy brought us to a place where we could enjoy a band and listen to someone else than Watermark. We had a wonderful time that night.

Workday has begun, so we had to set up fast, because we only had little time till the service started. We did our best and managed to set up to do a quick sound check. Everything went as planned until our sound board went off...so we had to play acoustic. After all the work, God has thought us that we shouldn't rely on our own strengths and abilities, but be prepared for every situation. That is what makes you a warrior. Fortunately we handled the situation well, and everyone enjoyed the worship.

Personally I had a wonderful surprise from the Lord. I met a special lady who took my breath away. Her name is Margie Klaumann and she is 94. Through the entire program she was clapping, dancing and being the most active person in the crowd. I was so amazed by the energy she had. If it was for me, I might've slept the whole program, but no, she clapped and sang through it all. It was amazing. We had a pleasant talk, hugging and holding hands, about baby powder and how it can help you in some afflictions of your toes. She even read me some of her poems. She had such a sweet spirit that made me think of how sour hearted I can be. When I started year I thought to myself, "Well, I'll try to be a good minister to people," when in reality people are ministering to me. God has softened my heart through this lady, because I saw her innocent heart, just like a child's. I'll never forget my time here. A time full of lessons and surprises.

I'm really excited to see what God has in store for us the rest of the year. I hope that by the end of the year we will be changed into better persons, more sensitive towards people's needs and true servants of God. Until next time....La revedere! (Goodbye in Romanian)

God's grace to all of us,  
Cristina

P.S.—"I am only one, but I am one. I cannot do everything, but I can do something, and what I should do and can do, by the grace of God, I will do."

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**Date:** 10/31/2005

**Submitted by:** Jim Matthias

**Journal Entry:**

Klamath Falls, OR, USA

Today was quite an encouragement to us in reminding us that we are God's tools. We were at a quaint little church in Klamath Falls (in a really stinky part of town due to the food processing plants, but that's beside the point). Anyway, we arrived at church planning to do our typical three or four songs and a puppet show. When we arrived at church, however, the power was out in that part of town. No big deal, but the church could not use its organ and they didn't have a piano. I do not doubt that God wanted us to be in this church on this Sunday! We were asked to play some songs from the hymnal on our guitars without having heard



**Jim Matthias**

these songs before. I know that the music wouldn't have been pleasing to many people on this earth, but despite our wrong chords, tempos, and words, it was pleasing to God. I know that in my heart. The congregation was very relieved to have us there to offer the music for the service, and knowing God used us here was very encouraging to us.

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**Date:** 11/1/2005

**Submitted by:** Katja Arnold

**Journal Entry:**

"Tell me why I don't like Mondays..." this is a pretty famous song. I am not quite sure if the Mamas and the Papas sang it, but somebody did, and it is commonly known that Monday is usually the day that nobody likes. Monday for the most people means the weekend is over, back to work, a full week of work lies ahead, means dentist appointments, homework, stress...and no time to breathe in between...



**Katja Arnold**

...for me and my teammates, Monday means a day off. We usually work the hardest during the weekend and can't wait till Monday comes. For us, Monday means: take time to write letters, postcards, emails; call family and friends; take some extra long naps and have some extra long sleep in time in general; take time for walks and "not scheduled" one-on-one time with a teammate or two; do laundry, take some extra deep diggin' time to read God's word; play games ...

So, for us Mondays are good days without any real responsibilities nor scheduled things to do.

As Cristina already said in her last journal (and her first one—woohoo, way to go Cristina!), it rained a lot in the Portland area! On Sunday we arrived in Warren, OR, which is like half an hour from Portland. We did a Family Night Program and got to stay in RV's. The guys had one and the girls had one. It felt like being on a "one day vacation." And the rain made us stay in the RV's or the church pretty much the whole time of our day off. I like rainy November days, when you have the time and the chance to stay inside, watch movies, write letters, read a good book, talk to a dear friend on the phone, play games, have a good conversation...that is pretty much what I did the whole day off.

A day off for me is time to get in touch with the people I love from home and get recharged through this for my time and ministry with my teammates. Just as I would do at home on a Sunday. And I love to use that time to write letters and postcards so that all my sponsors and friends still can be a part of my life, even though most of them are about 10,000 miles away from me.

In the Bible we read in Genesis that God made the seventh day as a Sabbath so that we can be recharged for the week ahead with all its trouble, work, challenges...

I like our day off cause it gives me time to recharge and focus in a new and fresher spirit on the new week that lies ahead. I hope you have at least one day off in a week to calm down, to get recharged, refreshed and renewed by God, by love from family and friends and just by having a fun time.

Blessings to all of you, Katja

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**Date:** 11/2/2005

**Submitted by:** Cristina Popa

**Journal Entry:**

Hey again...it's been awhile since I have last written...in my last entry I was talking about our time in Portland...and I also said that I cannot wait to see what God has in store for us. Well, one thing is for sure...surprises and challenges. We were in Auburn some days ago at Messiah Lutheran. Our contact Katie Bombardi waited for us, and I was surprised by her excitement. We spent three days in Auburn, which is unusual, 'cause we don't spend more than two days in one place. Well, the Lord has really blessed us with a wonderful time. We have needed so badly time for rehearsal, and this was the place where our prayers were answered. We got to rehearse, almost three hours (a record!!!).



**Cristina Popa**



It was awesome to spend time with each other and just rock out. After all the excitement, we had a pancake dinner, where kids were paid for how many pancakes they ate. I thought that was a funny way to raise money, just sit back, eat and get paid for that. The kids were so fun, and the parents, even though they weren't paid for that, were racing.

The pancakes were delicious, we ate a lot, but right after we had to perform, so we prayed all goes well. Rock and roll time came, and it was so awesome to see the Lord working through us. Our sound system sounded like never before!!! The Spirit was present, probably that's why. We headed after to our host home, and Becca Jaquish, our host sister, introduced us to her house. That night was a night of bonding and getting to know each other better. It is amazing how much we people have in common. We played a lot of games and had a blast. The coolest thing was that I found out that our host brother (who was away for college) is a state champion in Tae kwon do. He had some very cool pictures with kicks and stuff. For those of you who don't know, I practiced Tae kwon do too, and I just love it. The next day, we started off with meetings and preparing for the upcoming Quake. Our Quake Director, Jeromy Dorsing, joined us. We got home again and played games again. Now we played something different, so we had new air blowing around. My host mom Mary Jaquish showed us how to use stamps and colors to create nice greeting cards and bookmarks. So I got to create for the first time my own card. I was so excited to do that, to really work for that card and use my imagination. We had a great time in Auburn, and I will keep those moments in my heart. I hope to go back someday and have a blast again. Seattle Quake is coming up, so better stay tuned!!!

In His grace,  
Cristina

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**Date:** 11/6/2005

**Submitted by:** Melissa Seybold

**Journal Entry:**

This past weekend our team participated in the Junior High Quake at Seattle, WA. This was my first time going to a Quake, but I was expecting a lot fun since I had gone to Congresses way back in the dark ages when I was in high school. However, I couldn't quite prepare myself for what it would be like on the other side of an Event, being "in charge" rather than a participant. It's definitely more stressful than just showing up as a kid, but there was fun for us grown-ups, too. My high point of the Quake was definitely the fact that my parents showed up unexpectedly! Just to remind you, my hometown is in Virginia, a good 3000 miles from Seattle, so they weren't just in the area. I had no idea they were coming or that I would be able to see them all on the road this year. I was very happy that they could see what our team was up to and have an idea of what our year would be like. (Plus, they brought me sweaters so I could stay warm.)



**Melissa Seybold**

Other high points for me were being invited to spend time with youth groups, leading a Trek, and the evening of wacky costumes. There were so many neat kids at the Quake, wanting to hang out with all of us, and really enjoying our music. I had a great time leading a Trek with them (my first time doing that), and having it go over so well. Meghan and I did a Trek on being a part of the body of Christ where we had our participants work together making machines with their bodies and complete a task where each person was a different body part. I think all of the groups had a fun time with the activities, and it prompted them to think about how they could begin to see themselves as valuable members of the church body.

I was very tired by the end of weekend, but all in all I thought it was time well spent, getting to connect with some kids, and having a blast with them. I think we could say Watermark's Event of the year was a success!

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**Date:** 11/7/2005

**Submitted by:** Benjamin Bottke

**Journal Entry:**

So I have been reading this great Christian book. It is by Richard J. Foster, called

Celebration of Discipline—The Path to Spiritual Growth. I highly recommend checking it out for any of you out there who crave to develop your spiritual Christian soul, and learn the different ways there are to grow.

Right now I am in the chapter on Simplicity. It goes into talk about the commandment about coveting. Foster says, "The tenth commandment is against covetousness, the inner lust to 'have.'" I can really identify with this inner lust. Actually, I can even see how he calls it a lust, because the feeling of it has commonalities with the sexual term, the spiritual downfalls.

Money, property and things can easily become one's idol. It is like you are a slave to them. Man, is the Bible TRUE! A very good example of this is found in the many different things available to do on the computer. Instant text messaging was of the first enslaving inventions, right alongside with downloading music. I can remember staying up for hours in high school talking to girls online, and looking for every song that I have ever wanted to listen to. How much reading of the Bible or spiritual books to enliven my soul did I do? A little...none.

Oh man, are we sinners. And Satan has blinded us to much of what we do. The blinding has us confused with what we are doing is really wrong, or for some people, "Do I even do wrong...I think I'm a pretty good person." Well buddy, take a look at the many different sins that are in the Bible... look at them real hard and deep, and then tell me you are not a sinner. I suggest getting a dictionary and looking the different sins up, to learn exactly what they are, not just your personal understanding of what you have learned from our modern culture. Take a look in Galatians where it talks about the fruit of the Spirit, "Love, joy, peace, kindness..." Above them it lists the sinful nature's qualities.

And for some people, if they don't particularly identify with a particular sin they dismiss their case as if they have not committed the sin. But look deeper, friends. God tells us that hatred towards a person is the same thing as murder...and do not murder is one of the sacred 10 commandments.

In New Testament era, the law is still very useful. It is useful to show us how wrong we are in how we go about living our daily lives...it shows us how much we need God to come in and clean up our mess.

Seriously...I challenge you to take a look at the different sins that the Bible lists and really study and unpack them...it will open your eyes!



**Benjamin Bottke**

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**Date:** 11/9/2005

**Submitted by:** Benjamin Bottke

**Journal Entry:**

Last night was a program near Seattle, WA. It was a great congregation. They were in great spirits, and the kids were all real cool to talk and relate to.

I stayed with a family by myself. The 16-year-old son Jared was a very good electric rockin' guitar player. We jammed for a while at his house...me on the electronic drums and him on the screaming Van Halen style guitar (I wish I had some of the licks he's got in his back pocket. I hope this kid uses this gift!)

After some sweet jamming of Aerosmith's "Walk this Way," Van Halen, and more out-of-control thrash, he showed me some music on his computer. It was a great bonding experience. His parents said he hadn't talked that much in quite a while. We had a lot of common musical tastes, so it was simple to talk.

In the morning the father made me an onion, turkey and cheese omelet and wheat toast. It was awesome. This family was sweet to stay with. Thanks guys, if you read this.

Hope everyone is growing in their spiritual walks with God. I keep striving to.

PEACE -



**Benjamin Bottke**

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**Date:** 11/13/2005  
**Submitted by:** Katja Arnold  
**Journal Entry:**



**Katja Arnold**

If I were to find a headline for this journal entry, then I probably would pick something like "feeling home" or "children—God's amazing gift" or "a bed without unnecessary sheets" or "when sleep is not necessary" or many other things that would describe my experience in Chimacum.

Coming to Chimacum, I was really, really tired. The night before, we had a lock-in in Marysville, Washington, and we didn't go to bed till 1 a.m. Arriving in Chimacum, Jim handed me the Host Home sheet with all the addresses and extra information, and I read: Claudia and Don Pieper. Plus, I read that they had three children...ultimately I thought of the time that I may will spend hanging out with the kids and not really getting sleep which I really needed. Then a few minutes after discovering that this couple had three children, I found out, reading the bulletin for next day's service, that this was a pastor's couple.

To my shame I have to say, ultimately I thought of an elderly pastor, boring...and I just thought that I didn't really feel like staying with the pastor that night. But God in His gracious, surprising and changing ways used this family to bless me in very special ways.

I really loved the kids. Christopher was a little more calm than his two sisters Melanie and Nicola, but I had a blast with all of them. They in their own individual being recharged me, gave me joy and touched my heart with their spirit. They danced during the program, they smiled with total joy in their hearts, they hugged and just loved me and my teammates right away without really knowing us.

Being at their home, we sat down in a prayer circle before the kids jumped into bed. First, it was Melanie's turn to pray, and then her dad Don prayed cause it was his turn also. Then we were "done" when all of the sudden Nicola laid her hand on my shoulder and started to pray for me. I could see and hear and feel that she was moved by God's spirit. It was an awesome experience and very humbling for me, too.

Then the kids had a hard time going to bed and continued to come out of their room and give me and their mother another hug. It was so cute.

Claudia came from Germany about 10 years ago, so she knows about "German beddings" which are in some ways very different than American beddings. So, for me, Claudia made a "German bedding" with just one bedsheet and a covered blanket. I felt like home when I went to bed at 1 a.m. after having a great and interesting conversation with Claudia and Don. It was a blessing. During that time, if it wouldn't have been for the English language, I kinda felt like visiting someone I haven't known before in Germany.

Another great experience for me was the second service we held on Sunday. Nicola had decided to sit with the Watermark members, half on my chair and half on Bryan's chair. During her father's sermon, she sat down on my lap and hugged me, held on to me and just looked for her being close to me. This reminded me a lot of my godchild's sister. She used to sit on my lap every once in a while when I was at my home church's service or when I visited them. It just really reminded me of her and of my godchild Matthias, and I thought a lot of my godchild's family and the dear ones that are back in Germany.

It was a blessing getting to know the Piepers and to spend some quality time with them cause it strengthened me for the ministry by giving me a glimpse of having and being at home.

Thank you so much Claudia, Don, Melanie, Nicola, Christopher and Snickers, and a BIG Thank YOU to all the host homes and host families and host parents we had so far. For me, it is mostly that I am very much blessed by them and their caring and love for me, a person that they not even knew till "5 minutes ago".

Thank you, God, for taking so good care of us by providing us with the love and care of so dear people.

God bless you all so much!

In Christ, Katja

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**Date:** 11/15/2005

**Submitted by:** Benjamin Bottke

**Journal Entry:**

We just left a sweet Lutheran church. It has a submerging tank in the middle of the "sanctuary" for baptisms...AWESOME! A woman was actually baptized at the contemporary service we attended. It was really cool...I had never even seen a submerging tank, let alone see a full dunk baptism. I will leave my comments on baptism out for now, but there are distinct different ways of going about it, and that is strange among people of the same faith...you think that the Bible would tell us to do it a certain way at a certain age, and everyone would take part in the sacrament in the same way for the same reasons.



**Benjamin Bottke**

The pastor has really directed this congregation in a very genuine manner. I was told that about three years ago he began to have experiences and encounters with the Holy Spirit, and it opened him to gifts of the Spirit, such as healing and speaking in tongues. They are not a charismatic church, as people often call denominations such as Pentecostal, Assemblies of God, etc.

I just don't understand the division between people. I mean, I have even talked to Christians that say that the miraculous Holy Spirit gifts are dead today and don't happen such as healing, speaking in tongues, prophecy, etc., as well as such things as exorcisms and people being possessed by demons. If these things are happening in the world today, and even in our own communities, how can we deny that they are real and relevant today? I just don't understand how some Christians don't pay attention to things dealing with the Holy Spirit as much as others. It's as if they are missing part of God...the acting part that we can feel, and that changes us from the inside out.

The congregation was very warm and inviting. I stayed with a couple who took great care of me and gave me everything (my own room with a king-sized bed and an electric blanket, and an iMac). I also had some great conversations with a younger couple, also very warm and friendly, opening their lives to me. They spoke to me about how the church has been really great for them, encouraging and shepherding their lives, and about how the Holy Spirit is alive and thriving at the Lutheran Church! They talked to me about healing...and I am still thinking about it. They told me that sicknesses and diseases in our body have a spiritual root and can be greatly improved or cured by dealing with sin in your life, or perhaps a demon messing with you. It makes sense. The pastor and author that has taught them a lot is Henry Wright from a church in Georgia whose book is called

[A More Excellent Way](#)

. I am anxious to get it and check it out.

I don't really know how I am to tap into this power and be able to be open to whatever the Spirit wants in me. Prayer, obviously, but if I pray and don't really have my spirit genuinely feeling and desiring what I am praying for, then the prayer really isn't completely true, is it? That drives me crazy when people pray and don't completely desire what they are praying for...who am I to judge that for someone else, but I know it happens in me. I just don't know how to get my spirit on board with where I know I need to go and what I want and need from God. Stupid Satan!

If anyone has any thoughts or ideas on what I said, I would greatly appreciate them. My personal e-mail address is [bbottke@hotmail.com](mailto:bbottke@hotmail.com).

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**Date:** 1/7/2006

**Submitted by:** Katja Arnold

**Journal Entry:**

Happy new year to all of the journal readers! I pray that you will have a great and

blessed new year and that God will give you everything you need--health, wisdom for all the decisions that you will have to take this year, and strength and faith for all the challenges that will come this year!

Today, I want to share with you two short stories. The first one talks about the family we as Watermark have in all the former team members, so called alumni.

In Arkansas, we were invited to stay at the church that Reid Matthias is an intern at. I know Reid and Christine since almost 10 years. They were on the first Watermark team I got to see in 1996. They and their team mates had a huge impact in my life.

In fact, through them I heard from Jesus for the first time in my life. Through them, I got to meet the main contact in Germany for Youth Encounter, Johannes and Roselinde Paessler, who became my "faith parents," and their children, Cecily and Anne-Cathrin, who are my age and their younger brother Michael.

Through them I became, with many ups and downs, a member of our local youth group and was baptized when I was 19 years old.

In St. Louis, MO (one day after we left Arkansas) I ran into another Watermark Alumni, Paul Roggow and his wife. That was a huge surprise.

Cristina and I were actually staying with another Watermark alumni, Martha Mitkos, and the three of us went to a contemporary worship service in a bar. As I stepped into the dark room, almost fell about the crayons that were lying on the floor, I couldn't see anything nor anyone. I sat down, lucky to have seen that chair as a person jumps in front of me. It was Paul. I haven't seen him for about three years, and we didn't know that we would meet at that place. It was a great surprise for the both of us!

For me, being in touch with all those people who have been on team before, who understand where I and my teammates are at, how it is to be on team, the good and the difficult sides, the challenges...everything, is a great help and a great support! I feel understood. And they have many words of wisdom to share from their own experiences on team. Plus, for me it makes this big world a lot smaller. You can find team alumni almost everywhere in the world. It is a connection that no one else has; they are not just brothers and sisters in Christ, but brothers and sisters through Youth Encounter. For me those connections also are a great gift from God and make the ministry being still affected, even when the people are not on team anymore. They are still ministers in my life and help me to grow in my faith.

I thank God for alumni--yeah!

My second story for today is not about an alumni but about a relative of a team member (who also is an alumni), Jenny Brockman (Watermark Denmark).

Last night, we had a program in Cedar Falls, Iowa. Ben's hometown and church. After the program, I got to talk to a lot of people, but for me the one that left a great impression was the conversation I had with Jenny's grandmother who was there.

First, we talked about Jenny and her team and a little bit about her childhood and all those fun stories, which grandmothers have to tell about their grandchildren. I had seen the passion in Jenny's grandmother's eyes during the program. The way she followed each part and seem to suck up every word we said. It was awesome to see an "older lady" rocking out during a program, I can tell you that!!! I could see that same passion while we were talking about Jenny, music and children.

Then I got to share a little bit from my family and how much I look forward to have the chance to minister to them through our ministry. For me, this is one of the main things I am looking for while being in Germany, to reach out to my family. You have to know and you may have experienced that it is always harder to minister to people who really know you. The good and the bad sides, and how you have been before you became a Christian, and who went with you through your wild and not so Christian times...for me this is my main challenge in life, to minister to all my family because they were all raised under communism where the regime tried to get rid of God in many ways. So, they don't know God, and my goal is to be a tool of bringing God in their lives so they will be saved by HIS grace.

I got to share all these thoughts with Jenny's grandmother. I could see the tears coming up in her eyes and the passion she has for ministry and the Gospel and for the joy she had that I will have



**Katja Arnold**



the chance to minister to my family. It was awesome, and even though we just had a few minutes to be a part of each other's life, she left a deep touch in my heart just by who she is and her passion and love for me as a stranger she never met before. (Jenny, it is my grandma now, too.) We couldn't but hug each other again and again while saying "goodbye"...

It is amazing for me to again and again meet people on the road that have a deep impact in my life, even though we only meet them very briefly. I sure hope I have that same deep impact in other people's life. I thank my God for all the people we have met and meet on the road, for their support, love and caring. We as a team are blessed with so many things, with so many people that love us like we would be their own children. We get far more than we deserve; actually, we don't deserve anything we get, it is just through God's amazing love and grace that we don't have to suffer and that our self-sacrifices are so little compared to what we receive.

Cedar Falls, and many other places we went to the last year, has been a great example for that. We had great host homes that told us "just make your self feeling at home ..." that wanted to pamper us, make us feel like being on a 12-hour vacation with hot tub and lots and lots of food, a queens sized bed just for me with electric blankets, with an own bathroom, all sorts of work out machines, a Sunday like breakfast ... and many other nice things!!!

I want to take this journal to thank all of you who support us through prayer, through opening your home for us, for feeding us, for sponsoring us, for giving us things we need (like male and female shavers – a huge THANK YOU to Mr. Bottke!!!), for being there when we need someone to talk, for loving us, for caring for us, for giving us hugs and pats on the back, for encouragement, for words of wisdom and everything else I may not even think of right now. THANK YOU SO MUCH!!!! And please keep us in your prayers as we are heading to Germany, Romania, Poland and the Czech Republic!

Love in Christ,  
Katja Arnold

P.S. Sorry, it didn't turn out as short as I thought it would be ...

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**Date:** 1/9/2006

**Submitted by:** Jim Matthias

**Journal Entry:**

Taylors Falls, MN, USA

How am I doing? Well, I'd say I'm holding up okay. Having your independence wiped away isn't the easiest thing to handle, but God's been growing me through it, too. He's shown me that I'm not too old for youth ministry, which is good to see. I've also learned that being on team with only guys (my first team) was easier than being on a co-ed team. I am very excited to be going overseas to Germany, Poland, the Czech Republic, and Romania. It'll be great to experience Europe, to be taken out of my comfort zone, and to have our team see another cultural perspective. It's going to be a really great time, and God will be doing some cool ministry through us.

We have just finished our wonderful Christmas break and are now fully beginning the preparation process for going to Europe in mid-January. It will be a long couple of weeks getting ready. I am looking forward to God taking us out of our comfort zones and using us in unexpected ways. Only He knows what opportunities are in store for us in the next four months. It is definitely a combination right now of excitement and apprehension for these upcoming opportunities. I'm excited to see who we become when we are stretched and challenged, when we are misunderstood, and when we are forced to support each other. It'll be good. I am not, however, excited to experience culture shock, within myself or in my teammates. I must trust that God will provide, and I'm sure He will.



**Jim Matthias**

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**Date:** 1/16/2006  
**Submitted by:** Jim Matthias  
**Journal Entry:**

Sprökhovel, GERMANY

Germany is great! Well, of course I think that, we just got here. Our days of cultural immersion have been very good. My German skills are obviously lacking in comparison to full-speed, authentic German speaking, but it's okay. I've learned important phrases like "Ich habe mein Kaffee geklinkt," which means "I spilled my coffee," and "Kann ich mehr Kaffee bitte haben?" which means "Can I please have more coffee?" and "Kann ich mein teammate für mehr Kaffee bitte wechseln?" which means "Can I trade my teammate for more coffee please?" I'm learning many important things. Jet-lag has long passed, and I am enjoying the German culture of the entire family eating together at the table, and many times remaining at the table after the meal to talk. I thought the table was just a place to pile up papers. Who'd've thunk? Erin and Nikas, our contacts for immersion week, have been amazing to us and have done a great job teaching us German culture but yet allowing us to be Americans (well, and Katja to be German, and Cristina to be Romanian). Anyway, it's been really good, and we are excited for some good times here in Germany.



**Jim Matthias**

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**Date:** 1/19/2006  
**Submitted by:** Melissa Seybold  
**Journal Entry:**

Location : Nierenhof, Germany

Today was our second day of visiting English classes at the local schools. Our team was invited to a Gymnasium in Laugeberg; the German school system is a little different from the school system in most of the United States. Grundschule can be considered like American elementary school. Junior high and high school are combined in German schools, and students have three options for where they can go to school. Hauptschule have students completing their education at tenth grade and then going into the workforce. Realschule also goes from sixth grade to tenth grade, but with more emphasis on preparing students to be working adults. Gymnasium goes from sixth to thirteenth grade, and is mostly attended by those students who wish to go on to college. For the past two days we have been visiting the same Gymnasium, and today we were working with mostly upper-level students. Since being in the schools, it seems strange for me to be able to share about Christianity, under the premise of being English-speakers. Another surprise to me was that most of the students are not Christians, some not even having any knowledge of Christianity. The older students asked our team a lot of tough questions about our faith, like if we thought other religions were wrong, or why we even had faith in God. It was challenging to think of answers and to give answers in a comprehensible manner. Although it made me uncomfortable, I really enjoyed our discussion with the students, and hopefully it will encourage them to come to our concert this Saturday.

We stayed at the school until 1 pm, and then were invited to have lunch with one of the families from church. I am really enjoying the German traditions around meal times. It is expected that you will spend time enjoying your meal through conversations with the other diners; meals generally last no less than one hour. All of our hosts have generously provided for our meals, and it is the most relaxing part of my day. I feel the most a part of the families here when we all gather around a table and spend quality time together.



**Melissa Seybold**

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**Date:** 1/22/2006  
**Submitted by:** Benjamin Bottke  
**Journal Entry:**

Location: Niernhof

Wow, Germany is awesome! I am just kickin' back, thinking about all of the amazing things that have happened to me and also the whole team since we have been here. Saturday night we had a concert at the church here. It was amazing! We had a good solid 300 or more people, all standing up in front of us loving every minute of it.



**Benjamin Bottke**

The family I am staying with here is simply amazing. It's always a situation that's up in limbo, waiting to see what kind of a family you will be staying with and how easy it will be to interact. This family has been nothing but kind and inviting to me. I feel so much at peace while spending time in fellowship with them. Watching the family interact shows how much respect they have for each other as well.

The food over here is amazing as well. They eat a lot of bread, which to the American Atkin's dieter would sound bad. But the bread is fresh and healthy. No preservatives here, folks. And the bread is not made with enriched white flour like Wonder Bread or any white sandwich bread is. I mean, take a look in the Bible. These people were eating bread all of the time...it was the main food in their diet, as it is here. All of the fruits and vegetables taste so delicious and healthy as well. I am a health nut, so this goes a long way for my enjoyment of the culture.

The kids here are so friendly, and I feel love coming out of their ears, there is so much coming at me. A few of the little girls wanted to sit on my lap, so they did and I bounced them to high heaven playing horsey. It is fun trying to communicate across the language barrier. I don't speak much German, and my accent is terrible, so it is funny to them to hear me speak. I just laugh it off, and it's usually a good way to bond with the kids and break the ice.

Today was Sunday, and Watermark played all of the music full set-up for worship. After the service was a classic time of fellowship. I sat with the kids who were eager to joke around. After the meal, we walked as a group of 20-30 to the train station to go to Koln (pronounced like cologne). There is a huge cathedral there. It was incredible. This thing is enormous. I'd say about as big as a professional football stadium, like the Superdome. And it was built in the 1200's. I think I am going back to go up to the top of it on Wednesday and look down into the sanctuary. I think we are also going to a castle. Sweet!

You will hear more from me soon. I will say that the team's life is healthy, and even better when everyone just chills out and soaks up what's going on in front of us. I am so at peace here. Now I just need to get a little more sleep and exercise, if possible.

Peace out!

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**Date:** 1/23/2006

**Submitted by:** Katja Arnold

**Journal Entry:**

Our first day of work in Germany. The past three days have been pretty relaxing, getting adjusted to being here with different workshops from Erin and Nikas. But today, we got to experience what it means to minister in Germany. At 7.30 a.m., we met to drive to a school nearby in Langenberg. It is a high school where we had our first classroom experiences.



**Katja Arnold**

At first it was kinda strange for me because everyone expects U.S. citizens to enter the class, and then I appear with five U.S. citizens and one Romanian. I was asked a lot how I ended up in that band (we are not seen as a team in Germany, but most people think we are a Christian band from the USA—we even got asked if we are really famous in the US). We all were really excited and highly energetic in the classrooms. We did "On a

Day Like This" about 30,000 times and still enjoyed it because the kids enjoyed it, and we were good at answering questions and talking to the students.

But we also experienced how tiring it can be to be in school all morning till afternoon, run to eat at somebody's place lunch, and then run to the next setting, like a kids' group at church. It seems like we are about three times more busy here than we were in the States, and it seems like there is way less time for other things like reading my Bible. Plus, Wednesday seemed to be the starting point where more than one teammate, including me, felt like getting sick, which made the ministry a little harder. All in all, the first day of being in school was challenging but also pretty good.

In the evening, we were leading a Bible study group of the local church in Nierenhof called D-team. We did songs, and Cristina led a Bible study about Ephesians 5,1+2 and 8-21, which was really good. We even ran out of time because we had to be on time for a dinner with the new host families receiving us that evening.

All in all, our first day of full time ministry in Germany was: busy, fun, challenging, interesting, tiring, long, exciting...and blessed by God.

Please remember to keep us in your prayers because, as you can read, our days won't get any less busy! Thank you!

In Him,  
Katja

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**Date:** 1/23/2006  
**Submitted by:** Jim Matthias  
**Journal Entry:**

Nierenhof, GERMANY

So here's a cultural phenomenon. In German school classes, when the bell rings the students stay seated quietly and wait for the teacher to finish! I thought rushing out of the room at the bell was universal. Guess not. We later found out that German schools allow anywhere from five to 25 minutes in between classes. I only got three when I was in school!!!



**Jim Matthias**

Today was a day that we got to sleep in a bit! That was really nice. We did our normal team things in the afternoon and hung out with some really cool youth over some Döners (it's like a gyro), but the thing that sticks in my head about today was being able to be a servant to my teammates. It's rare for me for God to give me a strong heart to spend my free time doing something for my teammates, but He did. I arrived at church early and spent an hour or two organizing sound equipment to make my teammates' lives easier. I don't tell you this to pat myself on the back, but rather to share how cool it is when God gives you a servant heart and you don't ignore it. It was not an act that took energy or joy out of me; instead, I was filled by allowing God to serve my teammates through me. I truly hope that God can continue to serve and work through me, both to my teammates and to all that we interact with this year.

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**Date:** 1/24/2006  
**Submitted by:** Meghan Adney

## Journal Entry:

Somewhat early in the morning, we drove into the little town of Hattingen to do some singing on the street/promoting of our concert that evening. I'll admit that I'd been dreading singing in the streets ever since I first learned that we'd be doing it. I don't know why, but it was just something I wasn't happy about. We played for about 20 minutes, but the weather was so grausam that we headed into a little chocolate restaurant to get warm and have some hot chocolate. Hot chocolate definitely has a cheering effect--even on my tired, grumpy, and sick-with-a-cold self. Moods were a lot higher when we sang again. Lunch was spent at the church in Nierenhof with the volunteer construction workers who are adding on to the church.



**Meghan Adney**

We set up our still-new-to-us equipment. We had to borrow some supplies from the church as we didn't have everything that was needed. But what I love about the new stuff is that it's all so light and easy to carry!!! Now I can set up the mains (big speaker things) all by my little self, a feat that in the US required two people, with one of those people being a Big Strong Man. Panic rose as the time for our First Concert in Germany loomed closer. We were all down in the youth room frantically rehearsing the lines to our skit, which we were performing for the first time in German. Katja and I had spent some time in Minneapolis translating.

We got to the stage and it was just like a rock concert. Lights and everything. There was only standing room, and it was just a huge menge of people. We've never been so nervous before a program before, and we've done dozens of them by now. But God calmed our nerves, and things went pretty well. Afterwards, we were being chased by kids who were trying to collect all seven of our names on CD covers, t-shirts, and even cell phones.

Back at home, I was able to relax with my Gastfamilie (host family), and we looked at pictures of Dave, who had stayed at their house the last time Watermark was in Germany. They made me bacon in his honor.

Well, that's it for now!

Love, Meghan

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**Date:** 1/25/2006

**Submitted by:** Meghan Adney

## Journal Entry:

Whoo hoo! So, our first day off since being in Deutschland, and Bryan, Jim, Melissa and I were all set to have a Super Fun Day and explore the nearby big city of Köln. It was pretty cold, but we did a little sightseeing, climbed to the top of the big cathedral. (Stairs. Not with climbing ropes. Just so you know.) Did some shopping...we were tired and ready to go back home, and we arrived at our van and my first thought was, "Who left the window open?" My second thought was, "Oh, look at all the glass all over the place." My last thought was, "Ahhhhhhhhh!!!" So, yeah. Our van was broken into. Someone came along with something big and heavy, smashed out the passenger side window, and made off with a lot of our stuff. We lost our backpacks, which unfortunately had iPods and the team's/Jim's computer. Also travelers' checks, American cash, and Euros...upon totalling things up, we lost \$4,000 in personal items. So Jim and I went to find the police. We drove the van there. They gave us a police woman who didn't speak English to write up our report, and as Katja wasn't with us, I got to be translator. I must inform my German teachers that they should teach us more police type vocabulary. So that took a couple hours to figure out. The Bad Guys stole all our team papers, so we had to call the



**Meghan Adney**



embassy, since the copies of our passports were gone. Rawr. We had to drive back in the freezing cold, since the window was gone. So yeah, the day didn't so much turn out as we had hoped. We're hoping God has some lesson in all of this. Oh, more bad stuff happened. We couldn't get to our Gastfamilien because the roads were so icy. So Melissa and I knocked on our contact's door at two in the morning and asked to sleep on her floor. Yay for German hospitality.

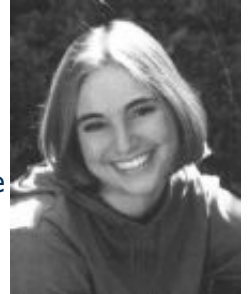
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**Date:** 1/28/2006

**Submitted by:** Meghan Adney

**Journal Entry:**

We did a Christian disko thing with a lot (LOT) of kids for nine hours. Yup. Nine hours. Dancing, singing, hanging out, etc. I led an interactive Bible story in German, with a little help from Katja. This is a short journal, because my hands are getting tired. Love you all, and thank you to everyone who is praying for us. And Watermark-Denmark, we got the pictures of you eating our fish. You schtinkers!!!



**Meghan Adney**

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**Date:** 1/30/2006

**Submitted by:** Jim Matthias

**Journal Entry:**

Netzschkau, GERMANY

Today was a drive day from Görlitz to Netzschkau. It was a typical lax drive day. One thing that is different in our tour, however, is that we are now in what used to be the GDR (former East Germany). Life here is much the same, but you can tell by the buildings that it is different from the western part. Many buildings are identical to the neighboring buildings and are very simple in architecture. Many of them are obviously in disrepair. Our first day in the east showed us a stark contrast to our previous time in the west. I've seen many worn down buildings right next to beautifully restored ones. We've also had to chance to hear first hand stories of life in former East Germany. You really can't say these stories are "good," but I have appreciated the willingness of our hosts to give us an accurate perspective on this history. This, along with some good Bible study time, has helped me put last week's loss of material possessions in a different light. We are called to be servants and God is doing a good job of showing us our need for humility.



**Jim Matthias**

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**Date:** 2/1/2006

**Submitted by:** Katja Arnold

**Journal Entry:**

Dear journal reader ...

It has been a very busy and exhausting day. The most interesting and very new thing for us as a team was to experience being split up in two main teams going to two different schools.

Team No. 1 was Ben, Melissa and me.

Team No.2 was Bryan, Meghan, Cristina and Jim.

I can only tell for our time in the school in Zeulenroda that it was pretty good and fun. We enjoyed our time together and our time with the kids in class.



**Katja Arnold**

Tough questions like "Do you like Pres. Bush?" and things were asked. But also team things and God came up in their questions.

I think what I liked a lot, too, was that not just the students but also the teacher enjoyed having us there and listening to our songs and what we had to say to the questions that had been asked.

After a long day in school, we went to our contact Andrea's place to work on team things and go for a walk in the beautiful Göltzschtalbrücke (26 million brick stones – the biggest brick stone bridge in the world) region ([www.fvv-noerdliches-vogtland.de](http://www.fvv-noerdliches-vogtland.de)) until the sun sat down and the air got to cold to be outside and watch the little children going downhill on their slides.

After that, we went to the local youth group, which was super excited to have us there. We had a pretty fun time with the youth, getting to know them and their life better and being able to share a little of who and what we are.

Thanks be to God for taking so good care of us every day.

One of the special things for me here is that I am able to stay with a very good friend from college Madeleine. We know each other for six years. It is special for me because she is a friend that knows me in many ways, my good and my bad sides. Today, the two of us had to get up really early for our work and we started our day with reading God's word. It said: "Ich gehe einher in der Kraft Gottes des Herrn; ich preise deine Gerechtigkeit allein." (Psalm 71,16)

Madeleine said that especially the first part tells us again that it is not us that walk alone in what we do. But we walk in the power of God, our Lord. We are not walking and working or what ever we do by our plan, by our will, by our strength, by our power but we walk in God's power. We don't have to walk alone! Yeah!:)

God rocks!

I pray that you can experience HIS power in your life. I know sometimes it is hard to see. Sometimes it seems like HE is not there, like there is no power from HIM in what we do...I experience that just like you do. But as our song "Never Alone" goes, I "trust in the unseen" and in what God tells me through HIS word. HE is there, no matter what.

Blessings to you!

Katja

(Wednesday, 10:32 pm)

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**Date:** 2/6/2006

**Submitted by:** Jim Matthias

**Journal Entry:**

Pausa, GERMANY

Culture shock stage 2! Many of you know what this is; for those who don't, it's when you hate the things that are different in the new culture. I'm not going to go off on everything now, but there have been some definite moments of hatred. I'm writing this journal in retrospect, so I have since given up the frustration that originally was there. Let's say there are certain things about America that I appreciate more now. Here are some examples. I like American roads that are straight and wide enough for two cars. I like that American highways use North, South, East, and West instead of the name of the town or village they lead to. I like watching TV in English. I like fish that is fried or baked, but not covered in tomato sauce. I like American bratwurst and sauerkraut (doesn't really taste the same here). I like ranch salad dressing. I like American light switches. I miss Target, and finally, I miss Starbucks and Caribou Coffee. All of these have been frustrations here, but as is usual, I am learning to accept things as different and not weird. Overall, I am enjoying



**Jim Matthias**

my time here in Germany, though.

Well, in the midst of culture shock, ministry must still go on. Today we had school classes in the morning. They were good, but nothing out of the ordinary happened. During school, Katja had about enough of fighting off sickness as she could handle and went home for a much needed rest. This was fine for the day, but had us questioning how we would survive an evening concert without our drummer. Ben had resigned himself to playing drums on some of the songs that we only need one guitar part on. As we were discussing our situation, Michael, the nice young man setting up the lights, informed us that he plays drums! After a short time of contemplation, we asked if he'd be willing to play a song with us. We practiced it, it was good, and one song quickly turned into four. Much rejoicing henceforth ensued. God has a weird way of blessing us when we don't expect it or deserve it. Why we continue to be blessed in this ministry is still a question in my mind, but we have been blessed indeed, and not only by randomly provided drummers, but by warm hearts, warm homes, delicious food, unexpected coffee, safety, love, and joy. God IS good.

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**Date:** 2/13/2006

**Submitted by:** Jim Matthias

**Journal Entry:**

Gebirge, GERMANY

Today was a much needed day off for us. Five of us, along with Faulk, Claudia, and Matthias from Gibirge drove to Praha (also known as Prague, in the Czech Republic) and explored the city for the day. We expected this to be a day off that you need a day to recover from, but it wasn't like that at all. Walking around a very historic city and taking too many pictures just refreshed me in a quite unexpected way. Maybe it was my \$2 "cashmere" scarf that I bought, or maybe it was God knowing what was best for us and providing. We had the chance to see a few old churches (not like there's really any new ones, either they are old and restored, or old and eroded by the relentless waves of time--slightly poetic, huh?). Anyways...old churches with some amazing architecture and just overflowing with history so thick you could smell it. And when I wasn't smelling history, I was smelling my coffee. Really, what could be better? Maybe fireworks! Okay, we saw fireworks over the big river that flows under the Karlsbrücke (that means Karl's bridge; I don't know the name of the river). It was a grand old time--not just great, it was grand.



**Jim Matthias**

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**Date:** 2/17/2006

**Submitted by:** Meghan Adney

**Journal Entry:**

So it's not my day to write a journal entry, but I thought the day was interesting enough to write about. We visited two schools and did the typical "We Are Here So You Can Practice Your English" thing. The first class was really prepared. They had had to translate our biographies ahead of time, so they were already really interested in us as individuals. For our mini full-set-up concert we were in a little room. After the concert was over, I happened to mention to one of the people in charge that I could speak sign language. She immediately took me to this kid who is deaf and encouraged us to start a conversation. Well, that was interesting. I wrote a couple of months ago about meeting Patrick, who was deaf, and we had a great time understanding each other. German sign language just happens to be a little bit different than American Sign, so right off the bat I was like, Huh? Also, when you sign, you speak at the same time. So there I was trying to remember long forgotten signs and combine that with spoken German, something I



**Meghan Adney**

didn't do very gracefully. There were so many times, especially at the beginning, where I would have just given up and considered it hopeless. But he kept encouraging me, and by the end of the night we knew a little bit about each other, and he was even showing Melissa and me some break dance moves. (Which I still can not do correctly...) So my big lesson of the evening was that even when there are times when I give up, God still isn't done with me yet. I've been encouraging my non-German speaking teammates all along to just speak what they know of German, knowing that people will appreciate the effort. Well, I had to eat my own words. So that was our concert. Please pray for the husband in my host family, who is currently in the hospital with a crushed left arm.

Love, Meghan

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**Date:** 2/18/2006

**Submitted by:** Meghan Adney

**Journal Entry:**

We got to sleep in a little today. (Any day where we get to sleep until 7:30 is sleeping in.) And then we all met in the center of Wittstock for a brief tour of the city with our contact and host families. Our first stop was at the big historical church, called Marienkirche. It was fairly cold outside, and inside we might just have well gone on a tour inside a refrigerator. It was freezing! They only use the church for services a few months out of the year because it's so cold no one would come. Our guide explained all the little details inside the nave of the church. The ceiling had at one time been decorated with beautiful pictures, but when the Reformation came, they were painted over because they were seen as something too extravagant and worldly. The coolest part was when we got to climb up under where they were rebuilding the roof. Beneath our feet was the ceiling of the church, and above us super old walls made of brick looking ready to crumble. Our tour continued in the street, and we learned about the wall that went all the way around the city, so a lot of interesting historical stuff. Melissa went home sick, and the rest of us continued exploring.



**Meghan Adney**

Back at the church, we spent a couple hours with a confirmation class. After having dinner with them, we went over to where our concert was. (In another church--luckily not so cold.) We had just found out that Melissa wouldn't be joining us for the concert, so we quickly tried to figure out (10 minutes before the concert) what we would do about a bass guitar part. Jim did most of the songs, since Ben could hold his own as the only guitar, and I also had some quick instruction on how to play two songs. For "Silence", I had always played the bass while Melissa did keyboard, so I took over keys again and quickly taught Cristina how to play the three notes on the bass. It wasn't until we prayed that we realized we didn't have a replacement for Melissa in the skit, so we quickly roped my host sister into playing a part. Melissa's vocals were missed.

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**Date:** 2/20/2006

**Submitted by:** Jim Matthias

**Journal Entry:**

Klaber, GERMANY

Today was a really good day with some big challenges. We did schools for the morning, as is typical, followed by lunch, team time, and some good chill time with our host homes in the evenings. The challenging part of the day came in one of the classes that the "B" team (Bryan, Meg, Cristina, and I) had the opportunity of being with. Oh, we've had some classes before that were inattentive, loud, or disinterested. Saying that this class "takes the cake" doesn't really



**Jim Matthias**

describe the feel of it. I'd say they more or less pried the cake from our hands, smashed the cake on the ground, scooped it back up, and then ran away with it. We are typically content to let the teachers handle the discipline and control the class so we can just focus on our ministry to them. Well, on this day we tried to help the teachers out but with no avail. After which we counted the seconds till the bell. It felt much like high school in that way. We survived, and we know that some good seeds were planted. The rest of the class times that day were very good!

P.S. I throw a snowball at Cristina last week during one of the best snowball fights ever, and it hit the side-view mirror of the van. I must've thrown it too hard because it shattered the mirror. (Lucky Cristina.) I better not have seven years bad luck! It's not like it's an actual mirror; it's made of plastic with a thin shiny piece of glass on top. Besides, I cut my finger on it, and I had to pay for the replacement, and let me tell you, replacing a mirror on a Mercedes van ain't cheap. It cost me like 20 coffees. (I've decided that if a universal currency ever develops, it should be based around the average cost of a cup of coffee. Just thought I'd share. The story that is, not my coffee.)

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**Date:** 2/22/2006

**Submitted by:** Katja Arnold

**Journal Entry:**



**Katja Arnold**

"What is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him?" Psalm 8,4

Am I worthy to stand in front of all the kids in school, in front of young and old people of a congregation? Who am I to represent Jesus, the Gospel, God, the Church...who am I?

These are thoughts I have been thinking about lately. In one of the classes while singing "On a Day Like This" or "Blessed Be the Name of the Lord" or

"My Redeemer Lives", this thought struck my mind and I almost was carried away by thinking of this while looking at the kids. I almost forgot that I was singing and playing the djembe.

Who am I?

Katja Arnold—a sinner, a doubter, a Christian that can't keep the commandments, a wrong turn-taker, a selfish creature that prays to God for miracles, a deaf person who asks God to speak louder...who am I to stand in front of people and tell them how much God loves them when my inside is doubting, sometimes, that God truly can love me with all the things I do wrong...who am I to be loved by God?

We have had some discouraging experiences in schools lately where so many things, like the negative behavior of the kids, seem to change our attitude and mood and the passion to share God's love and the message of the cross.

Talking about God, wanting to spread His word was never easy. People die for it, and reading from Cross Fire made me feel like a chicken of what we complain about here...but still I get discouraged, frustrated and weak.

But God doesn't leave anyone alone. He spoke to me through last Sunday's sermon in Klaber/Serrahn when He said, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." (2.Cor.12,9)

No, I am not perfect, I fail, I sin, I misunderstand, I hurt, I break, I distract, I annoy...I will never be perfect, even though I strive for it, never will I be without sin—only in God's eyes. Never in mine and never in the eyes of other people ...



Me, Katja Arnold, I will always be weak, but God can make me strong. Strong for life, our ministry, hard days...I am nothing without God.

Knowing that, I still have my hard days, doubts, fears...I will stay imperfect, but I know the One to turn to and the One who loves me with my imperfection and my weakness and I know the One who can make me strong: GOD!

Blessings to all of you!

Katja

(Feb 22nd, 1:43pm - Autobahn on the way from Serrahn to Neumünster)

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**Date:** 2/27/2006

**Submitted by:** Jim Matthias

**Journal Entry:**

Drive to Zeithain, GERMANY

Today was a fairly simple day. We spent a majority of the day in the Beast and were more than ready to arrive in Zeithain and finally meet our main contacts, the Päßlers. After a series of insignificant but noticeable wrong turns, we found ourselves seeing one of the most disheartening signs ever. In the typical white triangle sign with a red border was a picture of an out-of-control auto careening off a cliff into a lake. "Yaaay," we thought. "We should try that." This was our first clue that we were not on the correct road, but we continued, and sure enough, soon came a sharp turn in the road, which we handled quite safely, and out our window (where a guardrail probably should have gone), we saw the sharp drop off into the lake. It's a good thing that sign was there!



**Jim Matthias**

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**Date:** 3/10/2006

**Submitted by:** Cristina Popa

**Journal Entry:**

Today was a sad day for us. We had to leave the beautiful town of Jena. Cool place, amazing architecture, and awesome people. Greetings to our contact Philip, who took real good care of us. In the morning we arrived at the EC (*Enchieden fur Christus*-Decided to live with Christ-a German organization that works with youth) to tear down our system and load up the van. The police told us to move our van because it was parked in a non parking street (even though there were a lot of other cars parked on the street), but we obeyed and moved the van, which wasn't that cool because we had to carry all the heavy equipment down across the street. Well, it was a good workout for us, as we don't really have time to do that. We finished to load everything and it was time to have lunch. I brought my own sandwich cause my host sister packed Meghan and I something to eat. I enjoy so much European food. It really tastes different and reminds me of home where we eat the same as here in Germany. The rest of the team went to eat Subway, they missed it so much. Since we are in Germany, they haven't got the chance to get one, mainly because unlike USA, Germany doesn't have so many fast foods, so you cannot find fast foods everywhere around the corner. They do have the Turkish Donner, which I think it tastes so much better than fast food. Anyways, it was good to see my teammates' excitement when they got the chance to enjoy one big Subway sandwich. I stayed at the EC club, where I talked to our contact about our lives, where God wants us to be, and how sometimes we as Christians think that God is playing tricks on us. We figured out that we end up always where we're supposed to be, and that every time we think we don't know where God wants us to be, He already knows what we are going to do in the future. Philip happend to be my host sister's brother, so I got to know his family, and the day before, my host sis and I watched a DVD with Kirk Franklin and Salvador, a Latin worship band. It was awesome!!! It reminded me so much of the time I spent back home with my best friend. We used to watch a lot of



**Cristina Popa**

DVDs with music, sometimes even 4-5 DVDs continuously. It was a lot of fun. By the time we finished all of them, we forgot the first we started with. We thought that is hilarious.

After *mittagessen* (lunch in German), we drove to Philip's house to pick up the guy's baggages. Till they packed I had some fun with the bass guitar. For those of you who don't know, I got really passionate about learning to play the bass. It won't be easy, especially because we are all day busy doing other stuff. I don't know how far it will get me, but as much as I can I will learn and use every moment practicing. When I'll go home I will take more time practicing. Till then, God's grace will be sufficient for me. Hehehehehe. On our way to the next place in Gotha, we stopped to visit the beautiful city of Weimar. Last year it was chosen as the Cultural Center of Europe. The reason why they did that is not because of its beauty, but because Goethe and Schiller were born here. Germany's greatest poets were born and lived here. I could see where their inspiration came from. Very special town is this Weimar. God has blessed us with a wonderful weather, too, and we could enjoy it more. I met in a store a lady from Greece, and she had the sweetest girl ever. The little girl was shocked when I talked to her in Greek. She got so shy that she didn't even want to answer. It was so good to hear a language I am passionate about, and it brought me a sense of summer, because Greek language for me represents summer, sand, sun and sea.

After our time visiting Weimar we left to Gotha, where German people as usual expected us with open hearts and arms. I am excited to see what God wants to use us for here. I pray every one of you are doing well, and having fun.

In Christ,

Cristina

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**Date:** 3/11/2006

**Submitted by:** Meghan Adney

**Journal Entry:**

Saturday in Gotha, Germany. The five Americans on team (Cristina was doing business stuff and Katja was sick) had the opportunity to go to Wartburg Castle with our contact, where Martin Luther translated the Bible into German, and where, according to legend, he saw the face of Satan and threw a bottle of ink at the wall. So it was a morning of historical learning. The guided tour was in German, so I gave a brief translation after every room, with a bit of help from the paper guide the lady gave us. Back in Gotha, we got ready for our concert that evening. The concert itself was a bit strange. The boys in the front two rows laughed and talked the entire time and were just basically little *Schtinkers*. As Katja later said, though, we have no idea what plan God had in mind for them by having them be there. So much I am reminded that I can't go into a ministry setting expecting the kids to be the perfect model of someone ready and willing to receive the word of God. I have to be ready to show them by my own example and joy what being a follower of Jesus is all about.



**Meghan Adney**

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**Date:** 3/15/2006

**Submitted by:** Katja Arnold

**Journal Entry:**

Hey, it's Wednesday again...my journal day. Being in charge of journaling about one day in the week makes you see how fast time goes by.

Well, today was a busy day and a day that I spent outside a lot.

In the morning, we had street ministry downtown Gotha while snowflakes



**Katja Arnold**

were falling on us, an advertisement Easter Bunny (a real human one) was jumping around, and the guys from the Siloah community invited people on the street to come to this year's ProChrist. After that at noon, we drove to Friedrichroda. We set up in a Lutheran-Methodist church. Everything seemed to be a little unorganized and chaotic, which taught me and the rest of my teammates to really trust in God, to work on our servanthood attitude, and to take the situations as they come and deal with them the best we can.

One of the most chaotic situations Ben, Bryan, Melissa and I experienced was when, while setting up, the pastor came and said that we need to run to a school to invite the kids. So, we walked there and all the kids were gone. Then we tried to rush to another school which was on the other side just to find out that the principal doesn't want us to be on the school property and the kids didn't have any relationship to us because we were standing outside half frozen with our guitar and hand drum, not playing because it was just an awkward situation...looking like weirdos that invited for a strange concert...let's just say it was really weird.

Then we had a pretty good Bible study where we talked about where and how we are and talked openly about the things we need to change or work on in our ministry and our attitude, and through this, God really refreshed us. After this, we had another street ministry. It was still snowing and still cold...this time Jim and Melissa and I were standing while two women from the congregation handed out ProChrist and Watermark concert invitations. It was fun, and we also played in a store for underwear and knitting and in a cafe where we got invited for a Grog, which is hot red wine...we said NO, thank you! But it was fun, and the three women that were there really liked it. (Even though I don't think any of them came...)

Then in the evening, we had the concert in the church. Our spirits were high and we enjoyed what we did. God is good. That is all I can say. What was the best for me was that there were quite a few kids from the school we had visited the day before in Gotha. They enjoyed it and that helped us to be energetic. What touched me the most, though, was how just God uses us. Right after the concert, a girl came to me and she reacted like we would know each other. (You never really know if you know someone cause it is hard to remember all the faces and names, especially. When we were at schools...20 to 30 faces in each class...times 5 or 6...well, I never was good at math, so you count.) So, we started talking and I found out that she is the daughter of the teacher we had the English classes at the day before. She was interested in our ministry and how I ended up being on team and so on. At the end we were also talking with her mom and said that they don't really go to church, and the girl said that the last time she was at a church was two years ago...when we said goodbye, I said to her, Thank you for coming to church today!

I hope and pray that God will move her heart and continue to place situations like that in her life to touch her and change her and to make her HIS!

Okay, since my time on the computer is really limited right now, this should be all for now. (Not every journal entry can be a deep thinking one ...) Thank you for checking in again and for being a part of our ministry. God bless you very much! See or read you next Wednesday; until then, enjoy the journals of Meghan, Jim, Ben, Bryan, Cristina and Melissa.

Blessings, Katja

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**Date:** 3/17/2006

**Submitted by:** Cristina Popa

**Journal Entry:**

We had a busy day today at the Joe Polowsky Gymnasium. Up to seven classes that have been amazing. Let me describe a normal class at the schools we visit. When we arrive there, someone is usually waiting for us with coffee or tea and cake, and they lead us through the labyrinth which is called the school, in classes where the kids stare at us probably thinking: wow, Americans! Even though I am Romanian, they sometimes ask since when do I live in U.S.A. and how is life there. Anyways, we split up occasionally into two or three groups, so we can attend to as many classes as possible. It is the best thing to do that because the kids are not so intimidated by our seven-member group, so they are more opened to ask questions and interact with us. We start with singing "Blessed Be the Name of the Lord," a song that has become the most popular one, because they keep on asking for it, and then do a sing-along. This is my favourite part. Everybody acts silly, dancing and fooling around, making all these weird actions, so by the time we finish, everybody is relaxed and engaged into a possible relationship. That's what we are hoping for every time we visit a class: that we would make friends who would come later to our concerts and rock out with us. It is really hard to convince the kids to come to a full set-up concert when in class they only see two guitars and a djembe. We make sure to tell them all the time that at the concert we will have loud drums, electric guitars, bass guitar and all the sound equipment, so they won't think is going to be boring. After singing the songs we have a "question-answer time," and here is when the kids can ask us questions like: how did you come together as a group, how old are you, have you got a pet, what's your favourite colour, do you like President Bush and the war? We know already who is answering which question. It's kinda funny in a way. The most interesting part is when we are asked challenging questions like: do you believe in life after death, why do you believe in Jesus, do you think people who commit suicide go to Heaven, or why don't Christians accept homosexuals?



**Cristina Popa**

Today in the Joe Polowsky Gymnasium at our last class, we were asked some very heavy spiritual questions that were very hard for us to answer. I noticed that the kids who usually ask these kinds of questions they want to know The Truth to be answered in a single proposition, which is very hard to satisfy since not even we Christians get to understand. Plus there was this lady from the radio station asking us for an interview about how we ended up in Germany, and how is it God related. The most interesting question that she asked was: how do you know God's will? How does He talk to you? Bryan answered saying that he has a gut feeling that never fails him—if it sits well, if he feels peace, then it's God's will; if not, then there's something wrong. And her reply was: So that's the secret?

The rest of the day went fast before our eyes. The next place we visited was Caffè Zinna. It was pretty interesting. It was actually a disco behind a coffee shop. Like a secret door that you open and there it is (tam ta ra ram): the disco!!! I could feel the cigarette smoke in the air probably from last night; it had penetrated the walls and everything around us. We did a mini concert, which was okay because the room had a good acoustic, so we actually didn't sound bad. I hope some of the youth

there will come to the concert next week.

Later in the afternoon we went to a youth group in Audenhain a little town near Torgau, the place we are at. We had a fun time just playing 20 questions, eating and then doing a short music time. It was great. Sometimes it is very tiring such a day, but today I don't know why, it was different. We were all relaxed about hanging out with this youth. The easy thing was that some of them we met in the classes we visited at Joe Polowsky.

I hope all of you are doing great! To all of you out there, God's peace!

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**Date:** 3/18/2006

**Submitted by:** Meghan Adney

**Journal Entry:**

Um...where am I?...oh, got it. We are in Torgau, home of the first Protestant church. It's in this awesome castle with a way cool spiral staircases thing. But the bestest best part of the castle is the bear pit. They have two bears that curious tourists can gape at. So on this particular Saturday, we had a lovely Day Off. We'd had a really long and *angstrengend* (strenuous) day on Friday, and this bit of rest was a gift from God. Katja and I are being housed together, and we have our own little apartment. We did some shopping in the morning. In a burst of femininity I bought a little bottle of nail polish, and also finally bought a backpack to replace the one that was stolen two months ago. Once back in our apartment we prepared for We Love Our Development Liaison Day by writing postcards. Cecily Päßler came over to visit, and we played Zilch, the dice game taught to us by Watermark Denmark back at midwinter training. I carry dice around with me everywhere in the hopes of finding people to play with me. Jim came over in the evening (he is staying a street away), and the three of us watched "The Day After Tomorrow," one of my favourite movies because I love those futuristic kind of stories. Yeah, so it was just a nice relaxing day. We got our mail packet two days ago, and it was really awesome to read the journals from the other international teams. It is really inspiring to read of your adventures with God and with all the people you are meeting. The journals from Cross Fire I have especially loved reading. Well, that's it, I guess. We are about to leave for our second Sunday service of the day.



**Meghan Adney**

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**Date:** 3/29/2006

**Submitted by:** Katja Arnold

**Journal Entry:**

"Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance."  
(James 1:2-3)

"Today has been a pretty strange day, Lord." that is how my personal journal (talks with God) start. And yes, it has been a pretty strange day for me. I don't like those days. We had classes in the morning and, actually, they were great. The kids of the 10th or 11th grade asked great questions, deep questions about faith, God, hell and heaven, Jesus...and I felt like I wasn't able to answer any question. I felt dizzy, cold but then hot again...it was strange. As I look back on that day, I see the devil trying to attack me. It was like he mixed up my thoughts and my body to stop me from ministering. (Thankfully, we are a team and there are six other people who can answer!!!)

After the school, I had time to call a friend. This was a great help to me. I talked about all the things that happened that morning and how I felt and stuff and that it was so strange, how I didn't seem to be able to answer the questions from the kids, how I felt weak and confused and stuff...my friend was a good help and support for me. We prayed and talked about a few topics which gave me back strength and calmness. My friend, maybe in a funny way, said that I should, like Luther, say, "Go away Satan, I



**Katja Arnold**



love Jesus and Jesus loves me!" and maybe throw something at where I think Satan is standing. It made me laugh, but it also reminded me of Luther's life and his fight to find a merciful God. And yes, Luther found the loving, caring, and merciful God that forgives our sin and helps us to grow more into the direction of God...Yes, God is good.

Those days really suck, you just want to get out of them the moment you realize that this day is strange and shakes yourself. But you can't...I was happy when I was able to go into bed and to think over that day and give it all once more to God. But also those days give you something. I got out of this that it drew me closer to God, it made me seek Him more and rely even more on His help and guidance and His Holy Spirit in me. It also shows me that there is a side contrary to God. A side that constantly tries to convince me that I am not worthy to be loved by God, that tries to rule me by my sins, that tries to stop me from ministering...and yes, there are times when I give in to that, I know. That makes me pray even more and seek God even more.

Looking for something to find what Luther had said about Satan trying to get a hold of our life, I found one book that was given to us a bit ago in Torgau with speeches or short phrases that Luther had said. One that goes with my day I would like to share with you: "Der Glaube ist niemals stärker und herrlicher als dann, wenn Trübsal und Anfechtung am Größten ist." (Martin Luther) It translates into something like: Faith is never stronger and holier (?) than when trials and things like that are the biggest.

I pray that even when Satan is trying to get a hold of you, you even stronger seek God and His guidance through His Holy Spirit! AMEN!

In Christ,

Katja

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**Date:** 4/1/2006

**Submitted by:** Meghan Adney

**Journal Entry:**

April 1 in Schriesheim, Germany. They have April Fool's Day over here, too, only it's called Aprilschatz. When we went to classes and invited kids to come to the concert, we kept having to say, "Die Konzert ist kein Aprilschatz." (The concert is not a joke.) In the morning, we did some singing in the street, and since it was a Saturday, people were selling food and stuff in the Markt---like a Farmer's Market kind of thing. This nice Turkish man even let us sample some of the cheese he was selling, since we had been serenading him and his customers all morning. Following that, we had some team time to do a Bible study, which was on the topic of Communion. We've actually been meaning to have a conversation on this topic since Sterling, Colorado, way back in September. But heh, better late than never. Communion turned into a discussion of Baptism, which led into a discussion of lunch, and whaddaya know, it was time to eat.

When Aufbau (set-up) time came, we realized the stage was barely big enough for Katja's drums, let alone the rest of us, so we got some help and built the rest of it up. We had a little time after dinner to relax. The team has gotten pretty literary. We've got quite a book collection going on in the Sprinter, and when we stay with families, we borrow whatever books they may have in English and try to get them finished by the time we leave. Jim bought a book two weeks ago AND IS ALMOST DONE!!!!!!!!!!!!!! For those of you who know Jim well, the man does not like to read, and teased Melissa and me for reading so much. But now he is a part of the reading 'cult' as Melissa calls it. When there's a free moment, the whole team is either reading or sleeping. When we're not writing postcards, of course.



**Meghan Adney**

For the concert, I whipped out a chicken hat in honor of Aprilschatz. I'd been saving it since December, just waiting for a prime opportunity to surprise my teammates with it. Haha. The looks on their faces.....

So there you go. Preparations are in full swing for our departure to Romania in five days!!

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**Date:** 4/3/2006

**Submitted by:** Jim Matthias

**Journal Entry:**

Pleinfeld, GERMANY

So once again, a day of school with some team time. We did have a good dinner at a Germany brewery in the evening. Much rejoicing was to be had. But the thing that caught my attention the most today happened when I was alone running errands with the van.

I was listening to German radio, which is fairly hit and miss as far as my taste goes. Most songs are in English, which makes our life a little better. What caught my attention was a song that really made me upset. Someone took the hymn "What a Friend We Have in Jesus" and changed it. Not only did they put it to weird 80's reggae/pop rock/cheesy children's/self-produced background music, but they also changed the words! Instead of talking about Jesus, it had the words "Everyone goes through changes, and the world carries on" as it's main line! Wow, that really brings people hope. What's really sad (unless it was satirical) is that someone heard this song when it was done and said to themselves "This is really good." Who thought this was a good idea!!!! Sorry, I was a little upset.

So, my afterthoughts on this little fiasco pretty much center on why people try to take Jesus out of everything. Can't we just be happy singing about him instead of making everything so worldly? I noticed this week some schools that had crosses on the walls. I thought they were public schools, so I asked, and sure enough, they were public schools. Wouldn't it be great if we could have a cross on the wall of a public school in America? We did it that way for over a hundred years, we sang "What a Friend We Have in Jesus" for over a hundred years. Why change it now?



**Jim Matthias**

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**Date:** 4/8/2006

**Submitted by:** Meghan Adney

**Journal Entry:**

Cluj Napoca, Romania

Today was a pretty big day for us, as the three months in Germany were now over, and the time had come to travel to Romania. The day started at 2 a.m., when we woke up to make sure that everything was ready to go by 2:45. Thus began the drive from Pleinfeld (near Nuernberg) to Berlin. Jim and Bryan were our drivers. I moved up to the front with them (there are three seats, and the heater is up there...), and we kept each other awake with discussion about the Nazi museum in Nuernberg. We arrived in Berlin a little early to be checking in for our flight (but better than late!), so we started the negotiations for getting all of our luggage onto the plane. The trouble was, we were only allowed to bring one checked bag at 20 kilos, plus one small carry-on. Well...we had nine bags to check among the 7 of us, (because of music equipment acquired on the way) and a couple of our bags didn't



**Meghan Adney**

quite make it under 20 kilos. Knowing this, our carry-on bags were also as huge as we thought we'd be able to get away with. Then on top of all that we had to try to "sneak" on-board five guitars, a briefcase with pedals, and a hand drum. The plan was just to hand the guy the ticket and nonchalantly walk through. Well, it almost worked. Everyone got through except for Bryan, who was carrying Melissa's bass. Melissa decided to leave it behind with our contact, and we would somehow get it later. The guy checking our passports was an interesting dude. He made it a point to scrutinize all the stamps we had acquired while making weird faces to show appreciation of where we'd been. Ben and Bryan starting joking about how he must have done well at Passport Stamping School. And he had done well. The stamp he made is definitely the most beautiful and neatly done of all of my stamps. So, all of us and our instruments made it on to the plane, and we began our flight to Budapest. We were getting pretty darn hungry by this point. It was only 11, but we had been up already for nine hours, but we hadn't had a chance to stop and eat. The plan was to eat at the airport once we reached Hungary. Well, that didn't work either. The bus driver that Cristina had hired told us that he was driving right over to pick us up at the airport, that we could leave our things in his trailer, and that we could get a meal at the bus station where he was meeting his other passengers.

So we got some food, and were all very grateful that Cristina speaks both Hungarian and Romanian. Bryan went back to wait with the trailer, not trusting the other passengers not to leave our stuff alone. Well, after Koeln, we have been a lot more protective and watchful of our things.

Thus began the seven-hour bus ride from Budapest, Hungary, to Cluj Napoca, Romania. Wow, that driver was going fast! A lot of the time we were just hanging on...as he drove really fast over potholes...as he passed other cars...as he quickly braked to stops...it was a loooooong drive. Cristina and Melissa made friends with a little girl on the bus. (And later she and her mom came to our concert!)

Border checks took forever. They were a little suspicious of Cristina entering Romania again after being away for so long. From the way Cris described it, the government does a lot to make sure the people stay in the country.

We finally arrived in Cluj and got to meet Cristina's family. They took us to the apartment where the other six of us are staying. It's in a pretty run-down part of town, but we were very grateful for a place to lay our heads. We'd been up for 22 or 23 hours.

Thank you to everyone for your prayers. It was a long trip, but we have arrived safely and with everything that we brought with us. Romania is new and strange to us. Here in Transylvania, a lot of the people are Hungarian. So it's hard to pick up on a language when they keep switching back and forth. For the first time, Melissa, Jim, Katja and I are understanding what it was like for Ben and Bryan the last three months--we can't understand a word of the language(s) that are being spoken around us.

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**Date:** 4/12/2006  
**Submitted by:** Katja Arnold  
**Journal Entry:**

Today, we had the privilege to go to Cristina's school. It was a fun experience seeing the hallways she used to walk and the classrooms she used to sit in. We had the opportunity to visit two classes which were actually German classes. To my surprise, I think their German was almost better than mine. The first class was quite interesting because one guy had a lot of questions about U.S. foreign politics and the war in Iraq. The kids were so interested in us that the whole class joined the next class which we visited and many of the kids also came to visit us at the concert yesterday.



**Katja Arnold**

I have to say, though, that by now I am kinda tired of classroom visits. Not because of the kids but mostly cause of the same questions again and again. But I guess that is just a part of team tiredness. The three months in Germany have been pretty intense and busy, and right now I feel like being ready for a vacation.

After the school we stopped for lunch in a cafe that looked like a torture chamber. One fun thing that happened was that almost half of us wanted pizza, and as we were ready to order the waitress came and said that they don't serve pizza yet. We all picked something else—not a prob, we are flexible, right? After that, I went to the bathroom, and as I came back, I walked by a table where there were two people just being served two fresh made pizzas.

After that we left for Zalau, or as the Hungarians would call it, Sila. It was a crazy and slightly frightening ride with Romanian rules of driving...it was foggy and raining and curvy and hilly...and fun...well, while Meghan thought we all are going to die, I fell asleep on her shoulder. Sometimes all you can do is trust.

In Zalau we spent time in a community house. First, it was said that we are going to do a sort of Bible Study, which turned out to be an acoustic concert—no prob, we are flexible, right? It was fun cause even though my Romanian consists of maybe seven words, my Hungarian in comparison is two words. (Igen and nem.) And I learned a third word, koesnenom.

The kids were fun and interested and some of them truly on fire, especially our contact Aggi. She is great; if you ever want to go to Romania, make sure you visit her, and if you want a Romanian to go on team again, make sure you ask her first.

Afterwards, the contact person from the house had told us that like 3/4 of the people that came were not from the house but from the outside. That was encouraging to us. We had some fun conversations, even if all you can say is "nem" or "igen" or "koesnenom"...but smiles always work. I had the chance to talk to a German teacher who wanted to practise her German; that was good and easy for me. Later on, we and some of a Bible Study group went to eat pizza where we learnt a lot about the

Romanian/Hungarian history.

Things I definitely take out of this day:

1. Hungarian is harder to learn, to speak, and to understand than Romanian. 2. If people say it takes two hours to get there, it really only takes one hour

when Istvan, our dedicated driver, is driving. 3. Never use a bathroom when there are repairs on the water pipe going on. 4. One Hungarian pizza is plenty for two Watermarkans. 5. True love is to love and to be loved no matter what. 6. Read 1 John 4,7-21 (it is good for team and life in general!)

God bless you all a lot and strengthen you for whatever you go through and whatever is on your schedule! Keep the faith and stay strong in the Lord because everything else may fall, but he stays strong! He is our God, yeah!

In Christ,

Katja (WM/G)

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**Date:** 4/15/2006

**Submitted by:** Meghan Adney

**Journal Entry:**

Cluj Napoca, Romania

The girls minus Cristina, who was staying with her own family, spent the night at our contact's apartment, just for some fun girl time. We played games, played guitar, got some much needed and appreciated emailing done...and just had a good old time. I was much teased for my sleeping ensemble. My pjs were in the wash, so I was wearing my long underwear bottoms that had snowmen on them, my Turkey Day t-shirt that we got somewhere in Minnesota, and a red top with dogs on it. I thought it was classy. At breakfast, we were offered vegetable salad to go with our bread. Katja and I opted for just bread and butter.



**Meghan Adney**

The three of us girls later walked into town--it's about a 30 minute walk, to meet Cristina for Girls' Bible Study. She took us to an awesome Christian cafe that she and her friends often frequent. We finished 1 Corinthians, and then headed back to our apartment for an Affirmation Session. We hadn't done one in a fairly long time, and certain team members don't like them at all, but by the end we were very glad that we had done it. It was good for boosting morale, and for finding things in common with teammates that maybe we don't have as much as common with.

God has been good to us here in Romania. We are not as busy as in Germany, and are all catching up on some much needed rest, and it's been wonderful to have the chance to actually catch up on e-mails and job work for the office.

God's Blessings! (No idea how to say that in Romanian or Hungarian. We don't have a chance to pick up on the local language, because they keep switching it!) Love, Meg

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**Date:** 4/18/2006

**Submitted by:** Benjamin Bottke

**Journal Entry:**

Hello everyone from Cluj Napoca, Romania. This is Cristina's home (our lead singer). It feels a little bit like Mexico, but bigger than where I have been...the Romanian language even sounds a bit like Spanish.

So here is what I have been up to. I have been reading the Bible every day. It's not a serious discipline of mine yet, but I am working on making it one. I think every Christian should work on reading the Bible once a day. It fills you with the truth about God. I have read a few Christian books during this year, but when I do, I don't read the Bible. I guess I thought since I was reading a Christian book it was the same as the bible. But these books are secondhand knowledge about God and are someone's interpretation. For me I think if I read another Christian book, I will try to read the Bible first.



**Benjamin Bottke**

I think the Bible is especially important for the Christian who has not read it all, or is not familiar with the overview of what the Bible is. I have found myself in this category lately, and that is why I have such a passion. I am almost ashamed that I haven't read some of the books of the Bible. I just finished Acts. I think God has serious things to teach us through reading the Bible...especially when reading them for the first time. Reading Acts exposed me to the beginning of the Christian church and the Apostles spreading of the word about Jesus all around. These guys were all studs! How relevant for me traveling in ministry.

Also this passion for God and the bible is called ZEAL. God has really stirred this zeal in me. The Spirit of truth (Holy Spirit) is very much alive and at work in me. I really felt the Spirit a lot once we got to Romania about a week and a half ago. I think feeling God at work in you is a sure sign that you are on the right track!

I also have learned a bunch about the Holy Spirit. If anyone wants to know, Acts speaks about it and how the Apostles were all filled with the Spirit. Jesus speaks quite a bit about it in John 14-16. The Holy Spirit is the acting part of God that lives within us. It's kind of cool...there is a chain of command when the Holy Spirit works. God the Father



speaks to Jesus, and Jesus directs the Spirit in us.

PEACE out - Ben Bottke

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**Date:** 4/19/2006

**Submitted by:** Katja Arnold

**Journal Entry:**



**Katja Arnold**

"Carry each other's burdens..." (Gal 6,2) My watch word for today. In many ways I could experience this line written by Paul today. The most impressive one was when we went to do a children's program in a children's home, Dorcas, here in Turge Mures. Before we did our program, we were shown the house and had lunch with the kids. I was impressed and surprised by their English. Some were so easy to talk to! It broke my heart to see that they have no family to belong to but the one that they are given by the other children and care takers of the children home. Yes, they have each other and they carry each other's burden by living so close with each other and by sharing not just a room and a bathroom but a whole childhood. There were some cute ones, and I wish I could have taken some and give them a real home, but I know this is not my time to do that since I don't even have a home right now. But I have been thinking about becoming foster mom one day. This experience in the children's home strengthen the thoughts I had already about this before.

It was a small room where we did our program which limited our actions, but most of the kids had fun. It is hard especially for me as the Program Coordinator to really be able to plan things ahead because you never really know how the setting will be and who is really awaiting you. The two children's homes we did were the hardest because we had an age range from 4 to 18 years.

In the evening we were supposed to have an acoustic concert for teens in the Philoethea club here in Turge Mures. The whole program got prescheduled and especially I was a little stressed out again. I had wanted to practise two songs that I had wanted to sing in the concert. It didn't work out the way I had wanted it, and my "burden" was to rearrange parts of the program, which was carried by my teammates. The concert did go well, and I think the most impacting time was the time we were able to spend with the kids afterwards. Ben was jamming out with a bunch of kids, I had a long German conversation with Betty who a few days later showed us around in the city, and all of us were involved in something. I would say it was a blessed time for all of us.

As you read this journal and the next one from April 20, I want to ask you to pray with me for those children in the two children homes here in Turge Mures, but also the children around the world who live without a family and a real childhood.

Dear Heavenly Father, you have made each one of the kids that we were able to meet. You see and know their need for love and shelter, care and guidance, hope and faith. Please, be with each one of them and put your love in their hearts and let it overflow. Give them people in their lives who share your love with them and thank you for each of the caretakers and volunteers in the children homes. Protect the kids and guide them Lord, so that they don't search for "help" in the wrong things but help them to lead good lives. Send your Spirit in their hearts and help them to receive the gift of your love and grace and forgiveness. Bless these two children homes with the right people and enough money to continue the work. AMEN

God bless you all,

in Christ,

katja

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**Date:** 4/20/2006  
**Submitted by:** Jim Matthias  
**Journal Entry:**



**Jim Matthias**

Torgau

Today was a pretty normal day other than one children's program which was about 100 more kids than I expected (about 160 in all). It was fun!!

But what I really wanted to tell you happened a few days ago. My host dad wanted to show me a beautiful lake in the area close to Torgau, and being the amateur photographer that I am and it almost being sunset, I agreed to a short walk along the lake. Well, we drove the five minutes to get there, and I got some really good shots of the lake and the sunset, and we walked, and we walked a little further, my host dad practicing his English and I my German. About a half hour into our "short" walk, he asked me if I wanted to turn around and walk a half hour back, or if I wanted to walk around the lake, being about two hours further. At this point a strange thing happened, I became convicted of my recent lack of exercise and I did the unthinkable and agreed to keep going.

This may seem strange, but I was really happy to keep going. We saw some cool scenery and talked a lot and enjoyed the creation around us. It soon became too dark to take pictures or to really see anything since we were now primarily in a forest. Now, about an hour into this walk (at a point where I knew we were as far from the car as possible), he said, "I think we need to go this way." We're in the middle of a forest in Germany in the dark, and it's cold out, and we don't know which way to go?!!??? In the back of my mind was a little voice that kept saying "Mountain, mountain, mountain..." I quickly suppressed this thought (for those of you who don't catch the reference, see my journal for October 3). Anyway, we did go the correct way and kept walking.

A few minutes later came the part that made it all worth it. There was a break in the trees of a hundred feet or so, and when we came to it, I stopped in my tracks at the sight before me. It was a gorgeous meadow with a stream running through it and a fence. The sun had set a while ago but had left behind a soft pink glow just bright enough for us to make out the shape of some distant trees and the horizon. With the stream arose a gentle fog that hovered above the ground. It was a great sight, and I wished to have been able to keep my camera steady enough to take such a picture. My host dad, having not stopped, was a bit ahead of me, and I caught up with him and continued our walk. I couldn't help but think that this amazing scene was directly related to team and to life. How many times have we done something that was uncomfortable, painful, tiring, or burdensome to find something breathtaking on the other side? I knew that there was no other way that I could've seen that sight than to walk over an hour through a forest at dusk in chilly weather, and it made it all very worthwhile. I hope to return there someday, and I've seen it in my mind so many times that I know exactly where it is.

We did make it back to the car safely. We also stopped at a pub that used to be an old hunting lodge for one of the kings. It was, however, in the middle of the woods and by far the oddest location I have ever run across a pub. So, three hours, nine kilometers, and one beer later, we returned to our car and drove home for some tea. It was such a great day.

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**Date:** 4/21/2006

**Submitted by:** Benjamin Bottke  
**Journal Entry:**

Hello readers! Just wanted to let you know that we will be posting some previously unreleased journals from as far back as October, so keep your eyes open for some new/old journal goodness.



**Benjamin Bottke**

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**Date:** 4/21/2006  
**Submitted by:** Meghan Adney  
**Journal Entry:**

Targu-Muresh, Romania.

So I just wrote a journal a couple of hours ago, and we just got a mail packet an hour ago. (!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!) And reading all of the journals from the other teams made me remember some of the things I had meant to write before. When we first arrived in Romania, I felt like I could identify with the teams that visit developing nations a little better. People live in run-down apartment blocks, dirt is everywhere, we don't speak any of the languages, and stray dogs are everywhere. Now that we are in a smaller and cleaner city, it looks a little bit more like the Europe that we have gotten used to. We are again staying in an apartment on our own. (It's been great to cook for ourselves and for each other). Mark's journal from Rainbow of Promise about driving in India sounded very similar to driving in Romania. The drivers go at break-neck speed downhill through the fog, they careen wildly around the peasant drivers with horses and carts, and you sometimes don't feel safe even on the sidewalk. But we're all fine so far.



**Meghan Adney**

Another fun thing about our apartment here is the alarm clock. Between the two girls' rooms is a room that is locked, and punctually at 10:50 am and pm, an alarm goes off and doesn't stop until a half hour later. Now it has become another effective way of knowing the time. It bothers Katja the most. She is our light sleeper with the sensitive ears.

Well, that might sound like negative stuff, but it's been great. We are learning to live without the comforts of Western Europe, and the people are wonderful. It's been nice to have a challenge and watch the team pull through. I think we were whining too much in Germany, and now that we actually have more to whine about, we keep quiet. Like the driving. If any one of us before made a driving mistake or put the brakes on too sharply, people in the back would make sounds to show their discomfort. Now we shut up and hold on.

that's it

love meg

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**Date:** 4/22/2006  
**Submitted by:** Meghan Adney  
**Journal Entry:**

April 22 in um...somewhere in Romania, let me get a map. OK. Around Brasov (Brashov).

Once upon a time there was a musical ministry band called Watermark. The band members loved to sing and they loved God, so they decided to share their loves with the people of Romania. Not only did they enjoy the people of



**Meghan Adney**

Romania, they also loved the beautiful things that a plucky and determined tourist could do and see. So one fine April 22 somewhat rainy Saturday at 7:30 in the morning, the little Watermark team jumped on a bus with some friends and set off for a mystical adventure. Tales of a bloodthirsty count who could transform into a bat had reached them in the far off land of the United States of America, and the little band members longed to see Dracula's castle for themselves.

They traveled bravely through many dangers. They drove through forests. They gazed with wonder at the distant Carpathian Mountains. They breathed in the glory of God's great goodness.

And finally, after many months (OK, actually it was five hours, but still...), the little Watermarkians finally arrived at the place where so much anticipation had been placed. They solemnly crossed the maze of tourist traps up to the looming gates. Dracula's castle glowered over them in the mist. They timidly approached the knight who guarded the entrance to his master's home. (OK, well, a tour guide. Do you guys want this to be interesting or not?!) They waited eagerly for the words of wisdom the man could tell them. They waited in breathless expectancy as the man opened his mouth...."It's closed."

WHAT????!!!

Yeah, so we were in Transylvania, AT DRACULA'S CASTLE, and we didn't get to go in. Rawr. But the outing wasn't a total loss: I got a t-shirt of a smiley face with fangs, which I think is just awesome.

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**Date:** 4/26/2006

**Submitted by:** Katja Arnold

**Journal Entry:**

Tuesday started with a lot of traveling which ended this Wednesday. We started from Targu Mures to go to Cluj, where we waited for a few hours and had the chance to meet Agi and her sister Judit and their roommate Edit again. That was a nice surprise, and we enjoyed our time. Then our bus to go to Budapest left at 10.30 pm. We had a long long long drive. Seven hours to get to Budapest, with two hours waiting at 1.30 am at the border from Romania to Hungary ... then with God's help and his huge blessing on our journey, we arrived in Budapest two minutes before the bus to Krakow left. We jumped out of the one and in the other bus. We were very thankful that God took care of all things and we didn't have to wait nor take the train with all our stuff.



**Katja Arnold**

After another 7h, we arrived in Cziechien (no clue how you write that right). There a nice young woman awaited us; just as it started to rain the mini VW van showed up. We were quite surprised how much stuff you can fit in that mini van, but it all worked out, and God once again blessed all our travels and arrangements!

From Cziechien, we drove another 15 or 20 minutes to get to the CME house where we had dinner and later were driven another 10 or 15 minutes to get to the house where we would sleep the next days.

We were very thankful and happy when we finally could fall asleep in our beds. God had blessed us very much during those travels! Thanks be to God.

One thing that took my attention was on the last piece of our journey when we drove by many people that were working on the fields or in their garden, planting, sowing ... it reminded me of parts in the Bible, like in Genesis when God says that you need to work on the field with your sweat ... or the story of the man that sowed the seeds.

All right, seems like work is calling me ... this is for now.

God bless you!

Katja

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**Date:** 4/29/2006

**Submitted by:** Meghan Adney

**Journal Entry:**

Krakow (Krakov) Poland

So we are in this lovely city, named for a dude King named Krak, who slayed some dragon who lived under the city by exploding him with sulfur. Yup, I thought it was a pretty good story, too. We are at the Eurim conference, where a lot of pastors and older type people have come from around Europe. From...Finland, Norway, Denmark (they remembered the Watermarkians! They were talking about you, Pfrogner!), Lithuania, Ukraine, Poland, Germany, Austria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania, and I'm sure there's more. So there's a ton of languages happening here. The lectures are given in either German or English, and then you can get a headset if you want to hear the opposite of the language being given. It's been really interesting and fun to meet people from all over the world. We attended some of the sessions they are doing here, even though our presence is not required. The theme for this year is Islam in Europe. It's sparked some good discussion and has gotten me excited about possibly taking a world religion class. Anyway, I love Poland. I don't really have any good stories to tell....sorry.



**Meghan Adney**

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**Date:** 5/3/2006

**Submitted by:** Katja Arnold

**Journal Entry:**

We have our day off cause people in Poland are celebrating a national holiday. That also means that no internet cafe and no hairdresser is opened ... good for the people here in Polska, bad for team stuff and hair cuts ...

God bless days of rest!

Blessings,

katja



**Katja Arnold**

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**Date:** 5/6/2006

**Submitted by:** Meghan Adney

**Journal Entry:**

Dzegielow (something like that...) Poland

Today we said good-bye to two of our teammates, as Melissa and Cristina took the bus to Budapest, Hungary for the start of the Long Awaited Vacation. It was a strange parting, as there was some confusion with bus times, and we sent them off, praying that they would make it successfully to their destination.



**Meghan Adney**

For those of you who don't know, Cristina does not yet have a visa for her return to the United



States. Part of her vacation will be spent in Bucharest, in the hopes that they will grant her one and that she will be able to continue her ministry with us.

God has been teaching me a lot this year, and I think the biggest lesson I have learned is TRUST IN HIM. So many times on this tour, something stressful would happen, or things would not go exactly the way they should, but in all of these times I was able to lean back and think, "It's OK. It's not in my hands. Everything will be taken care of. I don't need to worry." It's not that I didn't care about what was going on around me, it's just that I felt a peace in knowing that someone a lot bigger than me was making all of the arrangements. So that is what I have always felt in regards to Cristina getting a visa. I have never doubted that she would get a visa. Naturally, there has been a lot of stress over the issue, but I am comforted in knowing that God has everything under control, that He sees our team and knows our needs, and that He will do what is best.

Team life has been a little sober, with all of us thinking, what if this really is the last time that we see Cristina? She has blessed us with so much. I see her loving and giving spirit and the forgiveness that she so willingly offers. It's hard to imagine finishing the year without her.

Cristina: We love you so much.

Readers: Please be praying for us and for Cristina, that everything will go smoothly in that office in Bucharest, and that we will all be reunited in a week.

Vertraue Gott!! (Trust in God.)

Meghan

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**Date:** 5/29/2006

**Submitted by:** Bryan Sawyer

**Journal Entry:**

I am not sure how long it's been since I wrote a journal entry. So I figured I had better start somewhere. For those persons who are daily vigilant in reading our journal entries, my sincerest apologies. I hope to make up for my lacking in this area. Well, here goes. We are in a Bible camp in North Dakota called Red Willow Bible Camp. Planted on the edge of a small little lake, it's the most beautiful part of ND I've ever seen. Tomorrow we will be leaving to go to a boys' treatment camp near Minot, ND. I am definitely looking forward to that. I hope to get in some great fellowship with the young men. As for our time here, it has been really relaxing. We are laid up here in between bookings. We were greeted last night by a group of cool young counselors and got to know them over supper. They are a pretty great group of people. They are definitely blessed with an incredible facility. This afternoon one of the counselors offered us a nice peaceful afternoon hanging out at her aunt and uncle's place across the lake. When we got there, they offered us places to just chill in the sun, take out the paddle boat, or go for an intense tube ride behind the big boat. I was sold. I jumped at the chance to get wet. We had a long cold winter in Germany, so this seemed like a good way to warm up a bit. We had a total blast. I enjoyed watching Meghan and Katja get bounced off the waves ending in a major wipe out. Simple pleasures.

On our time being back in the U.S., it's been refreshing. Our team did some great ministry with our host church in Taylor Falls, MN. With a decent sized group of youth and a few parents, we showed them what we encountered overseas. Wanting to tell all of our stories, it was great to see them enjoy and be encouraged by our mission. Also we spent four days back at Luther Dell doing training for VBS. These few days were really great. It was just the International Teams that were there, so we had the chance to see everyone's cultural program. It was so awesome being able to catch up with the other teams. What comes to mind most was a worship session on Wednesday night. Anybody who wanted to could go up and play. Al, the camp director, gave a great insight into the



**Bryan Sawyer**

power in God's name. I really felt the Holy Spirit resting on that time of praise. The worship sessions held at Luther Dell during regular team training and recently at VBS training hold a special place in my heart.

Well, I hope now to be writing more often. God be with all who are backing this ministry. Know that it is incredibly powerful, and that we are daily shown God's wonderful graces.

Peace. –Bryan Sawyer

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**Date:** 5/31/2006

**Submitted by:** Bryan Sawyer

**Journal Entry:**

### Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch

What's up? I just found some time to write before supper and our program tonight. I just wanted to tell about last night. We did the program at the boys and girls treatment ranch, as I had previously mentioned in my last journal (wow, it's cool I can finally say that), and it was better than I anticipated. We arrived to a very large, muscular man in a camo shirt greeting us as the pastor at the ranch. Cool, a bodybuilding spiritual leader! Sye Maanen, looking in his early thirties, was totally on fire for Christ. He was thrilled that we were there to share with these kids Christ's message. After practically carrying our entire sound system on his back, we had everything inside ready to set up in no time. While setting up, we had pleasant surprise from previous Watermark'er and YE alum, Pat Torbit. He and his girlfriend, my host sister and also previous Captive Free teamer, Allison Schwarz, came to welcome us back to good ol' Minot, ND (thanks, guys). After a quick set up and sound check, we had dinner with some of the youth. I asked to sit next to a couple of young men and their counselor and was gladly invited. Talking to the guys for a couple of minutes, I was totally stoked to hear them tell me right away that they were Christians. This set a cool mood. They asked me what I was there to do. My reply sent one of the boys, Brian, jumping nearly out of his seat. He told me all about how much he loves listening to Christian rock. I definitely agreed. So after supper, they parted promising me that they would show up. Sye gave us a tour of the compound and sharing with us a general idea of where most of these kids come from. My heart went out to these children and young adults. I wanted to show them that in this world the arms of Christ are the only true comfort.

So with a crowd of just over fifty we kicked it off with a rocker. Not to sure how they would react to a sing-along, we decided to save it until later. It brought a huge smile to my face as so many of crowd



**Bryan Sawyer**

sang with me on "Boulevard of Broken Dreams." I could see that these youth were singing the verses of loneliness about themselves. It was some powerful stuff. Later during our puppet show, we had everyone in the whole place laughing as we did a classic rendition of a forgiveness message. Though most of it was improve, we got our point across, and after the program, I had a young man come and tell me he liked it. For not being a big fan of puppet shows, he told me ours was the best he'd ever seen. I thanked him for the compliment.

"When We Worship God" was a big hit. Ditching my sound-tech duties, I rushed up to the front to join in the madness. Laughter and praise filled the sanctuary as we sped up the pace and got a little crazy. I was so thankful to see that everyone was getting involved.

The program ended with hoots and hollers, and Sye giving the blessing. Conversations with all the youth started almost immediately. The small foyer was filled with kids and band members. I talked to few youth about all the kinds of music they liked, and they told me how much they enjoyed the concert. All in all, it was a tremendous experience. I was a little unsure of how the night would unfold, but in the end was really energized by the kids. God really put his hand on our team and those youth last night. I ask that anyone who reads this journal to please pray for these youth. They have endured things nobody on earth deserves. God be with them and the treatment camp as a whole. Sye is one guy that these kids need in their life to give strength and guidance. I pray that God would keep him strong in his ministry, spiritually anyway, because I think he can handle about anything on the physical end of things.

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**Date:** 5/31/2006

**Submitted by:** Katja Arnold

**Journal Entry:**

We are in Minot, North Dakota.

Since we are still waiting for Cristina's return, I took over her job as a sales lady for the time she cannot be with us. I really like to be behind the table and have easy conversation starters through a random comment on the things we sell or how this would perfectly fit the person standing at the table ... it is especially fun with teenagers.

So, while we had a few minutes left before the program started, there were already quite a few teenagers gathering around the sales table. We talked and laughed and joked about the different use of a duct tape wallet. It was fun.

After the program the same teenagers came back to the sales table. I didn't have so much time to



**Katja Arnold**

talk with them right away because even though I had great help from my teammates with the sales, there were quite a few things to do and a few autographs to sign. As the crowd had left, only a few handful people were left. Our contact person Allison with Pat (from a previous Watermark team), host parents and two teenagers.

The teenagers were actually brother and sister. We started talking about different random things and laughed. It was fun.

At one point I saw a button that had a picture from a young man in it on her jacket. I asked her who that was out of pure curiosity, kinda expecting her to say that it is her boyfriend. She told me that it was a friend, both of herself and her brother, who had died of a heart attack while being out at track practice. Out of our fun conversation we jumped right into the deep stuff. But the interesting thing was that there was never this "burdenful" silence, not at one point I felt awkward. They shared a few things about their friend, and I had the opportunity to share about my cousin who had died a year and a half ago. We shared our thoughts and emotions and I hope that God could encourage them by using me.

We also talked about their new steps in life and what lies ahead, and I could feel a certain trust that had developed through this short time we talked. A trust that I believe can only come from the Holy Spirit who connects us with God. Therefore we were connected us through God and His Holy Spirit.

For me it was a blessing and I hope for those two as well.

The reason why I am telling you this is not to show you how great I am 'cause I am not. Way not! The reason why I am telling you this is that I long for those conversations. I like when as Watermark we do a program and maybe every single bit speaks to someone and encourages them or moves them. I like when we share and people come and say "Yes, I have experienced that as well ..." or "that really has touched me..." (It just doesn't happen that often.) For me a personal conversation with one or two people or maybe a small group is the best.

I am not everyday in the mood for that, I have to admit that. But when I look back at the months that we have spend in Germany and Romania and Poland and before that in the States, I kinda wished that I would have had more of those conversations with kids or adults that came to a program. In Germany it seemed like the kids were always seeing us too much of a rock star to really talk with us right after the concert. It is now that I get emails from them asking me faith questions or how to read the Bible and different things. Yes, we did have very deep debates in classrooms but this to me seemed more like "the Christians against the non Christians," the "ones who know 'everything' against the ones who don't know 'anything'" (which is not true!) ... it was not a with each other, it seemed more like an against each other (to me).

I am sure that what was said in the classrooms God can use in any way to touch people's heart, but for me it became clear that I am a more "personal relationship" person. (Sorry, my grammar doesn't seem to be awake yet.)

I was truly happy about that chance to meet two great teenagers that day in Minot and to have the opportunity to talk with them. It was interesting, too, cause I think during the day I talked to Allison and Pat about how I miss to really have time to sit down with one person and talk about God and faith and struggles ... cause even though we had a few chances while being in Europe, it always seemed that the autograph signing interruption was longer than the actual time to talk with the person.

Long story short, I see this moment with the two teenagers as a blessing for me and a way from God of telling me "I want to use you!" It is amazing for me how God still uses us even though we are broken, even though we sin, even though we fail, how we don't have to be perfect for Him to be able to use us. It is great.

Be encouraged, even though we may not feel worthy enough to be used by God, He is still gonna use us cause He has plan, He sees our heart and He loves us.

Read: Isaiah 41, 10 "fuerchte dich nicht, ich bin mit dir, weiche nicht, denn ich bin dein Gott. Ich staerke dich, ich helfe dir auch, ich halte dich durch die rechte hand meiner Gerechtigkeit."

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**Date:** 6/11/2006

**Submitted by:** Meghan Adney

**Journal Entry:**

Wilsall, Montana

This is our second time in the Livingston area. It's been great to see people and hosts that we had before. I am staying with my old host family, the Arthuns--they have an incredible view of the Crazy Mountains outside their front door.

This morning we did about 20 minutes of music for the church service here. It's a tiny town, but the church was full, and they enjoyed having us there. The big event of the weekend is that it's rodeo time. There was a parade going on while we were setting up our equipment for tomorrow's VBS/program activities. My host sister timed the parade: it was 14 minutes long, and they were going slow this year.

I love being back in my home state and seeing the mountains again. It revives me. Tomorrow we welcome Cristina back to team. She'll be flying into Billings, and Bryan will be picking her up from the airport while the rest of us do VBS. She's been absent from us a month now, and it will be so wonderful to see her again. Thank you to all of you that prayed for her return to us.

In Christ, Meghan



**Meghan Adney**

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**Date:** 7/22/2006

**Submitted by:** Katja Arnold

**Journal Entry:**

Today we were on the way from Lodi, California to Grants Pass, Oregon. It was a long drive, and it was a lot of stuff to take care of before we left Lodi, CA because on the first night we came to Lodi, some "schtinkers" decided to steal our trailer from in front of the house some of us stayed in. It was a shock to all of us, and everyone at first said "You're kidding me." Everybody thought it was a joke. But it wasn't. So, we lost all of Youth Encounter's sound equipment. All of the personal instruments and sound stuff we brought from home, some of our luggage and personal belongings, all of our resource stuff, sleeping bags and mats and, yep, everything that was in the trailer....



**Katja Arnold**

So, on the way to Grants Pass, we stopped at a place that had Starbucks for those of us who admire coffee, and right next to it was, for those of us who admire Subway, Subway. Melissa and I went to Starbucks and were joined by the others a little later, and right across from Melissa and me, sat a guy with a girl. I had ran into the guy when I had ordered my drink and just thought that he is pretty social because he was introducing himself to the Starbucks drink maker and had the guy tell him his name, too. Later, it happened that Meghan had turned to that particular guy who was still sitting at the table across from Melissa and me, and asked him what state we are in. This started a whole conversation about what we do and what we sound like and where we go and so on, and also about our stolen trailer that was and still is hanging on our hearts, not like extremely badly, but we keep on remembering stuff that was in the trailer when it got stolen. The guy, his name is Levi, asked what he could do and Jim said, "Well, prayer is certainly a good thing." So, Levi decided that right now, right here in Starbucks would be a great time to pray. We gathered in a circle right by the Starbucks tables and prayed. And he was definitely not a person that prays shyly or so...it was a very touching moment and great to experience that we truly have brothers and sisters in Christ everywhere we go, and it was very encouraging experience for me to not just say "Okay, I will pray for you..." but to pray right when things come up. I already do it when somebody drops me a line saying "Please pray for me," but it also encouraged me to do it whenever it happens. Because it is always the right time and the right place to pray!

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