

Kindred 2006-07 Journal

Date: 9/19/2006

Submitted by: Molly Lytle

Journal Entry:

So we are just getting started on our trip around the United States (and man, are we going to cover a lot of it!). Our first booking was in Willmar, MN, and we went to La Iglesia Luterana Paz y Esperanza (Peace and Hope Lutheran Church) for a program Saturday night and a worship service on Sunday. It was an amazing place. The church had a very high percentage of Latinos, but there were also people of many other descents. The pastor and church members were all so very friendly, and the kids joined in with our music using instruments that were kept in the sanctuary. There were few middle school through college-aged kids, but there were several smaller children who were a great joy to be around!

I decided to try to fumble my way through a sharing in Spanish during our program Saturday. I managed most of it, but there was definitely some English included in it as well. But we all got to practice our Spanish quite a bit while we were at Paz y Esperanza, and that was fantastic.

Sunday night we headed to Olivia (about 45 minutes away), and we had a program at the Christian Community Outreach Center, and it was incredible to talk to the lady in charge there and hear about all the amazing ways that God is using the Center. They have a really sweet after school program for kids that gives them time to hang out and do homework, and it's set up in a way that they are all able to help each other with homework and ask for help, which is AWESOME, especially when some of their parents don't really speak English very well and so are not able to help with homework.

Our host families have been amazing so far--it is great to hear about their families and life stories, and the host home that the three of us girls stayed at the last two nights was really cool--the house was built in 1919, and our host mom knew all sorts of fun things about the original house. It was so fun to hear about all the ways they have fixed up the house and really tried to emphasize the house's original features.



Molly Lytle

Date: 9/24/2006

Submitted by: Eric Selle

Journal Entry:

After spending a week in western Minnesota, it was a lot of fun to come back to the Twin Cities (my home) one last time before we head out for good. Spanish speaking people from many different countries are well represented in Minneapolis and St. Paul. It's a very diverse metro area! El Milagro (translated "The Miracle") Lutheran Church is located in a neighborhood of Minneapolis where many Latino people call their home.

On Saturday evening, when we arrived, our team was greeted immediately with warm welcomes, Spanish conversation (with Warren, a church worker there, and David, a kind member of the church), and some wonderful food prepared by Jose. After dinner we were joined by the praise band at the church and were treated to an evening of many up-beat, ethnic songs. They shared with us their favorite worship music, and, let me tell you, they know how to praise God! The next morning Warren took us to a neighborhood market where we bought plantains, eggs, avocados and beans which we prepared at the church for breakfast.

On a normal Sunday morning at El Milagro, there are two worship services: a service in English at 10 am and a service in Spanish at noon. Today, however, all members worshiped together at a bi-lingual service at noon. We (Kindred) shared some of our music, and also joined with the praise band we had met the night before to play music of the service music. It was a wonderful cross-cultural experience, each person praising God in his or her own language, yet as one people united in Christ; perhaps a little taste of what is to come in Heaven.

El Milagro is a gem in the city of Minneapolis. Whether you enjoy great conversation with kind people, flavorful Spanish music that praises God, or just great food, you should visit this church. I hope our journey brings us back to El Milagro so we



Eric Selle

may worship with this wonderful group of people once again.

Date: 9/30/2006

Submitted by: Camille Wilhelm

Journal Entry:

We've been on the road for two weeks now, and it has flown by! We have mostly been traveling around Minnesota, and now we are in Iowa, visiting Molly's home town, Harlan, IA, (but she will tell you more about that!). Minnesota and Iowa are so beautiful this time of year. The weather is amazing; I love it when it's cool and crisp in the morning. Having lived in Texas for the past four years, I have missed the entire fall season. The leaves on the trees are changing colors, and the air is crisp and cool. Our drives from one town to the next have been absolutely gorgeous. God created this earth to be beautiful and so different throughout each time of year!



Camille Wilhelm

It's been really amazing to see the crops ready for the fall harvest, something I haven't seen much of at college or in Colorado. Seeing the harvest in the beginning stages reminds me of the call for ministry we all have from God. In Luke 10, Jesus sends out seventy-two men ahead of himself to prepare the towns. "He told them, 'The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.'" Luke 10:2. Jesus tells his disciples that the harvest is ready (just like the fields here). In John 4, Jesus says the fields are white (ripe) for harvest. Here, he tells the seventy-two that God will send workers into the fields. The harvest is God's work done through His people. His very next word in verse 3 is **GO!** In verse three Jesus says, "Go! I am sending you out like lambs among wolves." Jesus tells them that it will not always be easy, but the harvest will be fruitful. He is calling us to go and proclaim the message of his love for all people. When I see the corn fields ready for harvest, a freshly plowed field, or a farmer driving a combine I will think of God's call to all of us to harvest His fields.

Date: 9/30/2006

Submitted by: Molly Lytle

Journal Entry:

On Thursday morning we left Marshall, Minnesota, and we arrived in Harlan, Iowa, late in the afternoon (yay for going home!!!). It was great to see my family (about 2/3 of the crowd at our program were my relatives, and there were about six people there that I don't know really well). So it was lots of fun to do our program in Harlan on Thursday night. After we left the church, we all went back to my parents' house (where all four of us got to stay together!) and--SURPRISE!!!--we had company, and there was an ice cream birthday cake on our kitchen table since Bethany's birthday is on Monday. I think I was more excited about the guests who were there than Bethany (all people who have been very important in my life), but we had lots of fun just hanging out and talking.



Molly Lytle

On Friday we had a "fun" day. Mom took us all to the Omaha Zoo, and we spent about half the day there, checking out some of God's amazing creations (I just have to say, the most incredible part for me was that there were TWO octopi and they were BOTH moving!! I've only ever seen one octopus before, and I've only seen that one move ONCE!). After the zoo, we went back to the church for some work and rehearsal time, and then we went home (well, home for me), and had some yummy casserole that my Grandma V. had made for us. And then I got to do the coolest thing of all: I rode in the tractor with my dad. If you have never ridden in a tractor (or, even better, ridden in a combine), I highly recommend that you try it. It's rare that I get much one-on-one time with my dad, but that is a place I can always spend time with him and it's always high-quality conversation (plus it's just plain fun!).

This morning we left early to drive to Clermont. I wasn't quite ready to leave, but that's okay because God has more things for us to do. More people to meet and more places to go.

God bless!

Date: 10/5/2006

Submitted by: Bethany Schwartz
Journal Entry:



Bethany Schwartz

We are in Stevens Point, Wisconsin, staying with some of the college students from UW Stevens Point. It has been such a blessing to be here. When we first arrived we had "English Cafe", which was a time for students with English as a first language to meet with those who speak English as a second...third...fourth language. We got to meet Nati from Colombia, Joe from China, and Andre from Indonesia. What a blessing to be able to talk about various things in our American culture and in their home cultures. We also had a school chapel here in Stevens Point for a K-8 school and did a Vespers service for some of the college students. We have met such a variety of people here in Stevens Point just in the past 48 hours, and it has been such a blessing. We touched base with ISM, International Student Ministry, which facilitates the English Cafe program. It excites me to speak with people from so many different walks of life. I learned a little bit about Colombia, China, Indonesia, and fencing (thanks for teaching me some quick basics, April!). I am excited to go to Peru and Bolivia and really get to know the people and the culture. What a privilege it is to have the opportunity to share in ministry with the churches of Peru and Bolivia. What a privilege it is to be able to share in ministry here in Stevens Point, Wisconsin.

Date: 10/7/2006
Submitted by: Eric Selle
Journal Entry:



Eric Selle

These first three weeks of our team being on the road, God has blessed us with the chance to experience small town life. We have met so many wonderful people who have taught me much about life outside the big city. As we approached Russelville, Missouri on State Route C, I was anticipating another small town ministry. What we experienced, however, was so much more. I think I can sum it up with these three words: "genuine Southern hospitality."

Pastor David greeted us in the front lawn of the parsonage and immediately invited us into his home. After some introductions we walked over to the church, and Pastor showed us around. It was a beautiful sanctuary; almost 100 years old! Dinner at the church (homemade pizza and sweet tea) before the program offered us a wonderful chance to get to know members of the congregation, especially the youth. What a blessing it was during the program to see all the youth we just met in the front rows of the church! That night was very memorable. We had some great kids in attendance.

Sunday school was a blast the next morning. We got to say hello a second time to all our young friends! After leading the congregation in a Service of Global Worship, we were treated to a true Southern dinner at a local restaurant: fried chicken and fish, mashed potatoes and gravy, fresh baked bread, and ice cream for dessert. What an experience!

As we left Russelville on winding country roads, watching the beautiful fall scenery pass by, I felt that we were transitioning from one leg of our journey to the next. Behind us, we were leaving the small town life that God so richly blessed us with for the first three weeks of our ministry on the road. Ahead of us we were quickly approaching the interstates and expressways that would hurry us along to large, bustling metropolitan areas. I knew that I would miss the small towns where so many wonderful memories were created. What will the future hold for us on this new leg of our journey? Only God knows. But one thing I am certain of is this: God will go with us, and we will be blessed by new experiences to come, and wonderful people we have yet to meet.

Date: 10/15/2006
Submitted by: Bethany Schwartz
Journal Entry:

Surprise!

I love it when God surprises me. He did a lot of surprising this week. We had a two night slot without a booking, and we didn't find out where we were going to go until the day before. Surprise! We were headed from Dallas to San Antonio.

Surprise #1: That meant we would get to drive through my hometown of New Braunfels. I hadn't been there for over two years, and I was itchin' to go home.

Surprise #2: While we were driving through New Braunfels, we got to stop and have our devotion for the day, and I got to choose the location for the devo. I chose a spot by the Guadalupe River. There's just something about the sound of the rapids of a river and a chat with friends about the power and purpose of prayer that just makes a girl feel good.

Surprise #3: When we arrived in San Antonio, we got an incredibly nice evening. We hung out with Matt, a former Kindred member, who not only kept us laughing, but jammed with us and taught us some Spanish songs. He also took us to the Riverwalk and Alamo in San Antonio.

Surprise #4: We found out Matt was interning at a church that I had heard about all last year on Cross Fire. The infamous Dan and Jessica, team members from the preceding Cross Fire team to French-speaking West Africa, had interned at the same church last year. And they had led a group of people back to Togo shortly after we left Africa last May. Now here we were at this church having both done ministry in the same small country with the same contacts and friends. We saw pictures of our friends, we played with their souvenir West African instruments, and we marveled that we had the same friends from across the world. It was so good for my soul to hear more stories and see the faces of my Togolese friends again.

Surprise #5: Homeless ministry opportunity. We had the opportunity to join some people from the community underneath a bridge for some Christian fellowship. There was food being served, music being sung and played, and lots of conversations centered on Christ. It was an awesome atmosphere. When we got out of the car, I couldn't wait to jump into a conversation. I got to talk with Juan for over an hour about his experiences with Christianity and Christians and the Bible. I love being in churches, I love working with the people that we do, but there was something refreshing about being in a different atmosphere. The experiences of these people in this place were very different than my own experiences and the experiences of most of my friends and acquaintances. And I loved it.

SURPRISE! God makes me happy.



Bethany Schwartz

Date: 10/19/2006

Submitted by: Camille Wilhelm

Journal Entry:

Howdy from Midland, Texas! The past week and a half has been tons of fun travelling through Texas. We got to spend the weekend in College Station (Gig 'Em, Aggies!). It was TONS of fun for me to go back to my college town and see many friends and lots of family. It was such a joy to lead worship at University Lutheran Chapel again, something I enjoyed being involved with throughout college. Thanks to Lauren for introducing the girls to a great unofficial campus tradition--fountain hopping!! Good times in Aggieland!

Last night we did a family night program in Richardson, Texas, north of Dallas. Before the program our hosts Christie and Shoba, both of whom were on Rainbow of Promise, took us out for Indian food! What a fabulous cultural experience for all of us. The food we ate was amazing, and it was really fun to learn about the Indian culture. (Tip: If you find yourself at an Indian food restaurant and don't know what to order...try Chicken Tikka Masala, it was recommended by Christie and it was GREAT!) It was also a joy to hear about Christie and Shoba's experiences on team in their home country.

The last time I was in Dallas (a week ago), I stayed with Elizabeth, who is from Sierra Leone. That night we talked about her home country as we looked through pictures of her family, friends and the village she grew up in. It was neat to not only learn about another culture but also to see pictures of Elizabeth's family.

God is using this year and the many people we meet to teach me more about other cultures. As we as a team learn more about Peru and Bolivia, we have had unique experiences to learn about other cultures as well. I am



Camille Wilhelm

excited to see who else God puts in our paths and what other cultures we get to learn about.

Date: 10/21/2006

Submitted by: Bethany Schwartz

Journal Entry:

Nursing homes are treasure chests full of hidden treasures.

Midland, TX

I had the chance to discover a few treasures at our first nursing home visit of the year. Anne grasped my hand for ten minutes and told me about her childhood in Scotland and then in Pittsburgh, PA. We sang "Just As I Am" by request from a man that Camille talked with. We had never sung the song as a team, but even without practice, the smile took over the man's face as he closed his eyes and sang along.

I took Florence back to her room after the program, and she proudly told me that she would be turning 100 years old next month. She loves to color and do arts and crafts. Her wall was covered in things that would remind her of Jesus, including a poster with part of my favorite verse, Zephaniah 3:17. She told me that sometimes she wondered why the good Lord had left her on this earth for so long, that she was ready to go home to Heaven. But every morning she knew that if God had allowed her to still be here, then he must have a purpose for her, so every day she asks God to use her in some way, even if it's just waving at someone. Her soft royal blue robe with images of the heavens, the sun, moon, and stars said so much about her beautiful heart.

I met Georgia and Sandra. Georgia had a wisdom in her eyes, a quiet kindness, and Sandra had only one eye, but it shone with laughter. Sandra had a contagious, easy laugh that made anything seem joyful.

Then Mary Davis joined the table with Georgia, Sandra, Camille, and I. Mary is a writer. She writes poetry and short stories. She used to write for the newspaper, highlighting community members and their achievements. She has always wanted to write a book, and has started numerous novels. The book hasn't yet been finished, and she says the right book hasn't yet started. But when I told her that I would keep my eyes out for the first published book by Mary Davis, her eyes danced. I wondered if she would begin writing again as soon as I left, or maybe she would forget and go on with her normal routine. It doesn't really matter because for a moment, she had a glimpse of her passions. She remembered something that inspired her, and that made her heart soar. And whether she has a pen in her hand right now or not, whether I ever see that book on the shelves at Barnes and Noble or not, her face was transformed while we spoke, and that is all that matters to me. She joined the table neutral, but by the time I had to leave, there was a new life in her expression, an eagerness to do something that she loved. And in seeing that, I, too, wanted to write. I, too, wanted to do the things I am passionate about. Thanks, Mary Davis, for inspiring me.

Nursing homes. A place for the forgotten? To some. A home for great stories and inspiration? Definitely.



Bethany Schwartz

Date: 10/23/2006

Submitted by: Molly Lytle

Journal Entry:

I think maybe everyone has something they are passionate about. For some people, it is sports. For others, music. And for still others, it might be video games or school. But for some, it is something much bigger. I don't mean to say sports and music aren't important, because I know that they are very important to very many people. But if your football team loses the big game, the world isn't going to end tomorrow. And if you screw up on your music tryout, it doesn't mean you should never sing or play an instrument again. But there are people whose passions go deeper than these. They are terrible passions—not because people shouldn't care about the things they do, but it



Molly Lytle

should not be there to care about. We encountered one of those here in El Paso, Texas.

But I'm getting ahead of myself. We arrived in El Paso this afternoon (half an hour early, after a leisurely lunch, since ALL of us totally missed the fact that we were changing time zones today until we were about an hour into our drive this morning), and after getting a brief tour of the church, the pastor showed us the way to *La Frontera* (the border between Mexico and the United States), where a vigil was being held. Our team did some of the music, while the rest was from a Mariachi band (who, amazingly, both Camille and Eric had both seen before and met the leader and his wife). There were people on both sides of the fence, and people spoke and prayed in both English and Spanish (and everything was translated to the other language, so everyone could understand).

Why have a vigil? The people in the El Paso area (which is as far west in Texas as you can get plus a little bit of New Mexico) are very passionate about loving their neighbors across La Frontera. Our team has learned that over the last several years, there have been a number of murders in La Ciudad Juárez, Mexico (which is just across the border—actually, if there weren't a fence and a lot of people in uniforms separating them, El Paso and Juárez would just run into each other, the way that St. Paul and Minneapolis or Dallas and Fort Worth do). The speakers at the vigil focused mainly on the hundreds of women who have been murdered, mutilated, or disappeared, *los desaparecidos*. They were calling for the countries involved in NAFTA to create an agreement about human rights and social justice—one of the ladies who spoke commented that very few of these murders have been satisfactorily investigated, despite the fact that some of those who have disappeared or been murdered were U.S. citizens. It was so very sad. Such issues should not exist for people to be passionate about.

Perhaps I am a bad person, but hearing about *las injusticias socialistas y derechos humanos* (social injustices and human rights) that the vigil focused on was not what hit me the most while we were at *la Frontera* today. It was the fence. I want to explain, just in case you have never been to the U.S./Mexico border, that fences run along it (my host took me past *la Frontera* within El Paso, and it is two rows of fences, with barbed wire at the top), but the vigil was held just outside a suburb of El Paso in New Mexico, where there was a single fence with no barbed wire. We stood on a platform when we played our music, and when I climbed up onto that platform, I was within two feet of Mexico. And yet I could not go to Mexico, nor could the people in Mexico come to New Mexico. We were separated. By some wire. We could even pass microphones through it so that the pastor on the Mexico side could speak. But we could not be joined together.

I looked at that fence, and I saw all the silly things that separate us from each other. Sometimes they are physical, like a wall or a fence or long distance. But sometimes they are things that we create and cause ourselves: anger, hatred, and prejudice, pride...so many ways we separate ourselves.

At the end of the vigil, we were all given balloons and let them go together. The balloons were black and white, and I watched them float up, high into the sky. And the wind was blowing towards Mexico (sadly, I cannot tell you which direction "Mexico" in that particular place means), and the balloons floated up and over La Ciudad Juárez, much like the prayers we heard so many people speak, and know that so many more hearts lifted to God, today and every other day. And I wished we had tied our prayers to the ribbons on the balloons, because it would have created a very tangible symbol of our prayers. And somewhere those balloons will land, and maybe someone will find them. And maybe reading those prayers could have been a source of encouragement to someone, somewhere.

I watched those balloons float until I could only see little white spots in the sky and, if I looked closely, the tiniest black specks...and then I could just barely see the white balloons...and then they were all gone. Our prayers, our hopes, our love, floating up into the sky, over La Ciudad Juárez. But even all the love of the people on both sides of *la Frontera* today doesn't cover nearly as much as God's love, for we know that God's love covers everything.

¡Dios se bendiga, amigos! (God bless you, friends!)

Date: 11/14/2006

Submitted by: Bethany Schwartz

Journal Entry:

Sometimes it is the little things. Like a Panera bread bowl. Or a Jones Cream Soda. Or a coffee to accompany a driving shift. Clean laundry. Internet access. Two towels. Cookies. Sometimes it is the little things that reveal bigger things. Like a host

mom that is so full of smiles and laughter, revealing a home full of love. Little things. Big things. Days off spent exploring San Francisco with Captive Free West Coast. Friends and making new memories with friends. Finding old friends along the road and catching up on the years past. Remembering to go to God with struggles, questions, thoughts, ideas, interests, dreams, etc. Lots of things.



Bethany Schwartz

Date: 12/4/2006

Submitted by: Camille Wilhelm

Journal Entry:

With Mid-winter Training less than a week away, I am doing a lot of reflecting. We have spent the last two days at my house in Littleton, CO. What a blessing to be at home for a few days to relax and hang out with my parents. I can't believe Fall Tour is almost over...we leave for Peru and Bolivia in just over a month! While that thought is so incredibly exciting, it also means we still have a lot of preparation left. I am excited to become a WHOLE Kindred when we join Danny, our fifth teammate!



Camille Wilhelm

God has been so good to us this fall. We have had so many gracious hosts and contacts who have opened their homes, hearts and lives to us. God has used these people to bless us so much. God continually shows me His grace and love, and His mercies which are new each morning. I sin each day, and need His grace. He uses people and situations when I least expect it to show me something new.

Yesterday in church the Old Testament reading was from Isaiah 55:10-11, and since we did three services, I got to hear it a few times...so good. "As the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish, so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater, so is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it." It made me think about touring this fall and the ministry that we do. God will accomplish what He desires in each person's heart, and in our own hearts, every time we share the Gospel. We merely need to be vessels for what the Lord is doing, not relying on ourselves, but on grace. Praise God!

Date: 1/11/2007

Submitted by: Camille Wilhelm

Journal Entry:

"It's here, it's here, it's finally here!" So says Adelaide, our caterpillar puppet on the "big day" of the circus. "It's here" for us as well. Tomorrow we leave for four months in Peru and Bolivia. We are so excited to meet Danny, our fifth teammate and complete our team--we have been looking forward to meeting him for so long. This week we also welcomed our new teammate, Kristin Rice, after saying good-bye to Molly Lytle, who went home for personal reasons. We were sad to see Molly go, but we are looking forward to seeing how God uses these changes for His glory.



Camille Wilhelm

Our bags are packed, our instruments are put away, we are randomly practicing silly Spanish phrases, and we are ready to go. We'll see the sunrise on our drive to the Twin Cities (it's EARLY!), hop on a plane and head to Lima. And we will begin our international adventure! Hasta luego y vaya con Dios.

Date: 1/13/2007

Submitted by: Eric Selle

Journal Entry:

Life is beautiful. It's true. God has blessed us with so many beautiful people to

accompany us in life. Helene, Preben, and Danny are three such people. The four of us, Camille, Bethany, Kristin, and me, saw their three smiling faces (and a beautiful "Kindred" sign) in a sea of people when we passed through customs in the airport in Lima. They helped us with our baggage, guided us through the masses of people and brought us, by taxi, to an apartment in Miraflores (a suburb of Lima). It was during that moment, in the taxi, at 12:30 a.m. after a long day of traveling, that I felt truly at peace. We were all safely together as a team.



Eric Selle

What a blessing Helene and Preben Koefoed Jespersen (missionaries from Denmark) have been to our team! They will be with us for two more days, teaching us about Peru, showing us parts of Lima, and working with us on team building. They have shared with us so much already. It is so wonderful to meet more of our Christian family here on earth. They will soon return to their home city, Chiclayo, while we remain in Lima for another week, rehearsing, growing as a team, and preparing for our first programs in Peru. This is a blessing that I'm sure few international teams get: a chance to spend some time together--only ourselves--for a few days to get our bearings. With Kristin and now Danny on board, we are a very different team, with much to learn about each other (not to mention a lot of songs to teach). God has already blessed our efforts. In what other ways will God show himself to us? Through what other beautiful people will God give us another glimpse of His presence? I'm excited to find out. Life is beautiful.

Date: 1/14/2007

Submitted by: Bethany Schwartz

Journal Entry:

The candle illuminated the dark room, casting light on what was important and hiding the frivolous in shadow.

We sat around a candle in song, engaged in worship as Kindred, finally complete, and our two missionary friends, Helene and Preben.



Bethany Schwartz

As we praised, I thought of the many things for which I am thankful. We have a beautiful home to live in for a number of days. We are five members of Kindred finally together. We had a rehearsal today that mixed five voices, two guitars, a drum, two shakers...what full sound! I ate some of my favorite foods today. We attended church here in Lima, Peru. It was our first Sunday here, and it was a pleasure to be able to understand some of the words and liturgy, even though it was mostly in Spanish. I am thankful for my teammates, for this place, for this time here, for those we have met. We were shown the place we will live next. It is nice, above the church, and I found a perfect spot in which to worship my Lord. What a blessing.

As we sat around the candle tonight, I had my eyes closed for awhile, seeing the shadows of the light dancing in my eyelids. When I opened my eyes, I saw two feet illuminated by the candle's light. One belonged to a member of our team. That foot had walked on soil from the United States and Peru just this week. That foot had been called to service for a year. Beautiful. The other foot belonged to our missionary contact Helene, a kind friend and mother. Her foot had also been called to Peru to serve. Denmark, Peru, Kenya...all have been touched by the willingness of the feet to serve her Lord. Those feet, so beautiful, (regardless of what one teammate who hates feet would say), belonging to two of different backgrounds, called to be in the same place at the same time.

I am learning from these feet. I am learning that to be a missionary one doesn't have to be able to do great feats. One must only be willing to continue the walk. To be a missionary doesn't mean any extraordinary gift has been imparted. I see our two new missionary friends, Helene and Preben, and I see God using the little things to produce great changes. Perhaps in many cases, sharing God's love only means spending time with God's children, and He will do the rest.

Date: 1/15/2007

Submitted by: Kristin Rice

Journal Entry:

Hello world. I have to admit, this transition back into team life has been a lot easier than I anticipated. Well, I suppose since I have participated in a couple programs, it counts. However, next week as we finally begin to travel the Peruano countryside, I will fully know how prepared I am for this. It has been a very relaxed and laid back time in Peru so far. Rehearsals, siestas, and discussions of team life have dominated most of our time. I have really been enjoying getting to know Camille, Eric, Bethany and Danny. It seems we have much in common, but at the same time will learn a lot from each other.



Kristin Rice

Camille is full of stories and is a bundle of energy, always seeking to learn more. I find if I am around her, I can soak in some of that as well. Bethany is always quick to laugh and tell a really good joke. Eric has a passion for health and music that is infectious. And Danny has a heart of gold. He is patient with me as I pretend to speak Spanish. He is always laughing.

It is great to be part of community that loves first and foremost. I am so excited to see how God will show his love through my teammates while we are in Peru, Bolivia, and back in the U.S. I thank Him every day for pushing me to join this crew, because He will be showing me how to love and to challenge, as well as being challenged in a new culture (not just Peru, but Kindred as well).

Hasta Luego, vaya con Dios! (Until next time, go with God)

Kristin

Date: 1/17/2007

Submitted by: Danny Romero Castillo

Journal Entry:

Hi everyone. My name is Danny Romero Castillo. We are in Lima, and I am very happy to be here with my teammates, because together we are Kindred! I am excited to share the Gospel with different churches with my teammates. I am enjoying practicing new music and the puppets, too! We've eaten every day at a restaurant called "La Olla De Juanita," a small restaurant in Miraflores. The food is very delicious. It makes me feel at home to eat there. This coming week will be very busy. We are going to different churches doing programs, talking with people in the churches and sharing our faith with them. I am excited to learn from them, too.



Danny Romero Castillo

Date: 1/18/2007

Submitted by: Camille Wilhelm

Journal Entry:

God has really blessed our team this week. We have gotten to stay in an apartment in Miraflores, a section of Lima, to get to know one another, rehearse and get a lot of team things accomplished. What a fun week it has been. We have talked a lot and laughed a lot and praised the Lord a lot. It is amazing the bond that is created amongst the members of our team when we rehearse and sing songs to Jesus. We were also very blessed to have Helene and Preben, our missionary friends, with us for part of the week.



Camille Wilhelm

We start programming in nine or ten different churches this upcoming week. I am excited to meet people, learn more about the culture and city, and to share the Gospel in so many places and ways. I am excited to see the ways that God that God will share the Gospel with the people we meet, and within Kindred.

Date: 1/22/2007

Submitted by: Kristin Rice

Journal Entry:

Time

Peruano time is definitely not U.S. time. I have decided that it is an equation of sorts. Time as we U.S.ians know it is X. Peruano time, therefore, is $X+30(\text{ish})$ minutes.

For example: we were told to be ready by 11:30 this morning for the guys who were picking us up. 12:45 ($X+75$), they arrived. We took a taxi to the section of Lima where we would be doing our program. But first, we were dropped off at a house. Of the two guys who picked us up, Antonio and Julio, neither lived here. We entered the house, were told to sit down and relax, lunch would be about 10 minutes. $X+45$ minutes later, we were eating potatoes, rice, and chicken. (I should mention at this juncture that we seriously eat potatoes, rice, and some sort of meat every day. Not an exaggeration). Lunch was fun, as always, with the everyday misunderstandings of our version of Spanish versus the real thing.

Then we were told our program would start at 3:00. $X+60$ minutes later, it sure did. And after the program was done, we played with adorable children who taught us some games and climbed all over us. Junior (a friend from the church we visited yesterday), Julio and Antonio took us back to Cristo Rey, our current residence. We didn't know it, but they wanted to hang out. And hang out they did, for about an hour and a half.

I don't want to sound so negative, because it was not that bad. More of an interesting observance that I, being used to a schedule being kept within 10 minutes or so, will have to get used to. I think that this experiment of time will do me some good, as I tend to be grossly early always. And why do I feel like I need to rush around all the time? We are not used to waiting for things--life is instant for us.

But I need to remember always that we ARE waiting--for something much bigger. We are waiting to see Jesus again; we are waiting to be reunited with our sisters and brothers who have gone home before us. We are waiting for answered prayers. God is not a fast-food God. God's time is not mine. I am reminded of one verse I love, *"He has set eternity in the hearts of men."* (Ecclesiastes 3:11) We know that time is infinite because God wants us to always be waiting in the wonder and mystery of it all.

Con amor, Kristin



Kristin Rice

Date: 1/23/2007
Submitted by: Eric Selle
Journal Entry:

What do three hour bus rides, a stampede of sheep and 20 little Peruvian children singing all have in common? It's a typical day on a YE International Team of course! Today is day four of our eight straight days of programming. Pastor Armando and friend Beto guided our team of five through the city of Lima via taxis and onto a commuter bus which would take us on the three hour trip to Huacho, located north of Lima on the coast of the Pacific Ocean. We certainly enjoyed some fantastic views of the sea and desert coast along the way! Once in Huacho, we got off the bus and quickly were shuttled into two more taxis.

We stepped out of the taxis with Armando and finally our journey of four hours was complete. The church's name was Galilea and is located on the outskirts of Huacho. We stepped through the gate to find a humble courtyard and structures. What it lacked in material possessions, the church made up for it three-fold in kindness and generosity. We entered the building to find the room full of children, ages 2-16. How long had they been there waiting for us? I never found out. It was after 1 p.m. when Pastor Armando introduced us. The kids must have been famished! That didn't stop them from singing us a welcoming song (twice, actually, when one of the adults jokingly reminded them that beautiful singing is rewarded with extra food). We were all seated and lunch was served. Adults brought plates of rice, yucca and duck. While it smelled fantastic, the kids all patiently waited until everyone had food before them. These were some of the most well behaved kids I'd ever met!

After lunch we had a chance to see more of Huacho. Up the hills we went, with all of the children, until at last we had a breath-taking view of Huacho and surrounding desert, with the ocean far



Eric Selle

off on the western horizon. As we walked back down the hill toward the church, one of the dogs who had been following us decided to have a little fun. He started chasing six sheep that had been grazing in a nearby lawn. It was fun to watch until the sheep started running towards our group! All the children scattered. I'm happy to say it all ended well. All in a day's work!

Tired and sun-burned as we were from the hike, we all enjoyed the program. The kids enjoyed our sing-alongs and loved the puppets. All too soon, we had to say good-bye and begin our long trip back to Lima. As we traveled south by bus and watched the sun dip into the Pacific Ocean, I asked myself if the day could end any better than this. How about a spaghetti dinner? That's exactly what was waiting for us at the church! It was a complete surprise but a perfect example of life in Peru: you just don't know what to expect next. God is so good!

Date: 1/24/2007

Submitted by: Danny Romero Castillo

Journal Entry:

Hi from Peru. We are living in a church, Cristo Rey. We live in the third level. Our days are so busy, but I'm glad because I am meeting many new people. We talk, eat lunch, play some games together, etc.

The other day I was thinking about going to the town, Huacho, and about how we would get there. [Editor's note: Danny is in charge of calling contacts and helping to arrange transportation]. God knows the future. Why do I say that? I didn't know many details. There were many questions in my head: What means of transportation are best for the team? How far away is this place? Is it safe?

It turns out that going to Huacho was different than we thought. We took a few taxi rides and a three hour bus ride to get there. But during the bus ride to Huacho I said to myself, "God is the taxi driver, He knows the way. Ok, is time to take a nap."



Danny Romero Castillo

Date: 1/25/2007

Submitted by: Camille Wilhelm

Journal Entry:

Day 14 in Lima began with team time, followed by a pizza lunch with a German pastor living in Lima, Pastor Claus. Pastor Claus had lived in Peru for 13 years and right now, he splits his time between two congregations, both in Lima. We spent Monday at the first congregation (see Kristin's journal), called Cristo Salvador. The second congregation, Vida Nueva, is located in an area called Pampalona, and Pastor Claus told us an amazing story about the youth there. I will try to tell it as best as I remember it:

Pastor Claus wanted to start a young adult ministry amongst the youth in the area. He didn't know exactly how to do it, so he asked a boy who always came and sat in the corner to meet him the next week and to gather some other youth to join them. Not expecting anyone to come, Pastor Claus was surprised to find out that 20 youth came. Not really knowing what to do with the boys, Pastor Claus asked them what they wanted to do, and they said play futbol (or soccer). So, off they went to play a game of soccer. During the game, some of the boys from different sides started fighting. Pastor Claus asked why they were fighting, only to find out that they were two gangs fighting one another.

Pastor Claus did not really know what to do, but he prayed to God for help. And, God was very faithful to him. Very slowly, things started to change with the young adult ministry. God provided soccer to give the boys something to do, and instead of getting caught up in the disagreements, they get caught up in the game. After three years, there are 12 teams. There is still fighting, but God is working in the hearts of these guys.

God is also working in the church in Pamplona. Pastor Claus and others have started a building project, and it is nearing completion. We did a program in the middle of the road in an attempt to raise



Camille Wilhelm

awareness about the church and to praise the Lord. What a blessing it was to gather with the people of the community, some sitting on benches, others watching from a distance and still others peeking through windows, to see God working in so many ways.

Date: 1/26/2007

Submitted by: Bethany Schwartz

Journal Entry:

Philadelphia. The city of brotherly love. Philadelphia. A congregation in Lima, Peru.

Twelve-year-old Estefani helped our taxi find the church, about an hour's drive from Cristo Rey, the church in which we have been living for a week. When we arrived, we walked around the neighborhood, walking with two of the cutest two-year-olds holding hands and enjoying the walk. The program: a neat challenge. Eric hasn't been feeling well, so he didn't come with us. It is always bittersweet to do programs without a teammate. It feels empty, and I really appreciate what the teammate brings to the program. At the same time, it is a chance for the rest of the team to adapt. When someone is missing, I am always so proud of the way the rest of the team steps up their game and makes things happen. We missed Eric, but it helped me to see that God can use us even in situations where I may feel weak and lacking.



Bethany Schwartz

I have been questioning a lot this week. I have seen so much wealth and so much poverty as I have traveled with Youth Encounter. It is hard to go back and forth between those situations. It makes me question who I am, what I believe, whether my truth is actual truth or simply knowledge accepted as truth. I question my purpose in life, in traveling with Youth Encounter, in my future goals, etc. So many questions. Questions that I had last year in Africa as I encountered so many things for the first time. Questions that I had forgotten about as I got used to living in the U.S. again. And questions that I have again, this time with the shame that even after I had seen so much in West Africa, even after I had thought my life would forever be so different, I would never take advantage of the luxuries I have in my own country...I had forgotten. I had forgotten the questions. I had forgotten that there are people living in poverty while I squander my wealth. I had forgotten that some people don't have enough food and water, their shelters don't provide air conditioning in the summer and heat in the winter, large comfortable beds, or pantries full of food. I had forgotten. I want to find a balance. I want to be able to live in either setting, to be aware of the world around me, both outside my front door and thousands of miles away. I have so many questions as we dive into this new culture. I have so many joys. I love traveling because it makes me so aware of everyday things and teaches me about things that I may never have otherwise encountered or understood.

After our program at Philadelphia, we were given a huge gift. We had some time to speak with the congregation and answer questions, and I was once again so proud of my teammates who are doing so well with speaking in Spanish. And then two of the adults in the congregation came in beautiful cultural outfits and danced for us. It was so beautiful. I had been so used to dancing in West Africa. But once again, I had forgotten what an incredible role dancing can play in a culture. I sat there and watched them dance such a beautiful dance, and my cheeks hurt from smiling. It was one of the best gifts they could have given to me. And then, to my surprise, the man and woman came up to us and took our hands and we danced together, first in partners, then in one large group. So fun. I hope that I get a chance to learn how to do these dances. I hope that I can bring this knowledge and appreciation back with me.

One thing I definitely missed about being overseas was waking up and having no idea of the adventures the day would bring. That aspect of life is back. I love it. It can be scary to think about, but I always look back at my day and I shake my head in disbelief. Wow, God, you are so good.

Date: 1/27/2007

Submitted by: Kristin Rice

Journal Entry:

Confundido

I was hoping at this point of the game, all of the Spanish I learned nearly ten years ago would have come back. Guess again. I find myself constantly wearing the quizzical look of ¿que? (what?) when anyone speaks to us. Point and case being today.

We had scheduled ministry with a youth group this afternoon. First, we didn't really know what we would be doing, and we expected a major ton of kids. We arrived an hour and a half late due to **confundido** on the part of the pastor. And we saw about 20 teenagers from three different churches that we had visited this past week.



Kristin Rice

They were doing some sort of practical exercise (**estoy confundido**) and then wanted us to sing a few songs. We picked ones we knew people generally could sing with or do actions to.

Enter more **confundido**. After the songs, they said we were going to play some games. Or at least, that was the motion. At this point of the day, ¿que? was my reigning face. I only moved when pulled or pushed, and I had no idea what was going on. Except...we played Electricity, a game we are familiar with (thankfully!). Great, I thought, I know this game so I don't have to strain trying to understand the directions. Perfecto. Not quite. Somehow during the game, signals were completely mixed, there was a lot of shouting and yelling; not in anger, but in high-spirited adrenaline. I have no idea why.

But what really had me **confundido** was what happened after the game. The winning team (not mine, I should mention) stood with their hands against the wall, and the body making a bridge of sorts. Danny told me that we were going to run and pat them all on the backs. Whoops.

Confundido. Really, the team that did not win had to run under the bridges while they patted us on the back. I was so **confundido**.

I imagine that the disciples may have felt **confundido** when Jesus spoke, especially in parables. Seriously--they are always asking questions. "Lord, I don't get it!" He was speaking a whole new language. His language was of love, forgiveness, kindness, hope. And Jesus' language was not for a select community or group. He speaks for **everyone**, and he is still speaking to us. I don't always understand what it is God wants for me. But I don't doubt His love. I don't doubt his grace.

I am learning to trust what I am told in Spanish. I know I will continue to be **confundido**, perhaps for the next four months. But despite that barrier, what needs to be said will come across through action more than spoken word. My hope is that above all else, when all I can do is have the ¿que? face on, Love will still be the resounding response.

Con Amor (with love),

Kristin

Date: 1/30/2007

Submitted by: Eric Selle

Journal Entry:

Yesterday we all said good-bye to Lima and hoped on a bus to head for Trujillo. During the 10-hour bus ride (which we were served two meals, had comfortable recliner chairs, and watched three awful American movies) I had plenty of time to sit back and reflect on all that has happened to us so far.

God has taught me so much already here in Peru. He has taught me so much in the last three years. One thing that my eyes has been opened to is how Satan manipulates the blessings and ministry that God has in store for us. I'd like to share with you some important observations I've made, even in the last two weeks! You see, I did not participate in programs on Friday and Saturday. Why? I was stuck at home, sick with a fever of 101F and upset stomach. I could do nothing but lie in bed, sleep and read (with an occasional frantic sprint for the bathroom). What I learned is that God gave me exactly what I needed: a chance to rest and be spiritually refreshed. I read words from the Bible, and I read the book Wild at Heart by John Eldredge. The book spoke to me in powerful ways. Eldredge shares how God has created us as unique genders: male



Eric Selle

and female. I was shown some of the deep desires of our hearts, and God's beautiful intentions for these desires. Eldredge also explains how we are deeply wounded as well, and how Satan attacks us in these our weak spots.

Satan attacks us physically, mentally, and spiritually. I'd like to give some examples of how I've felt attacked here in Peru. Physically: everyone on our team has been sick with diarrhea, fever, and headaches. We've only been here for two weeks! It is difficult to be in ministry when you are sick, or when you are afraid to drink the beverage placed in front of you as a guest. It's difficult to share Christ's love when you are frustrated and tired. Mentally: there are thoughts that are placed in our heads that are not positive and are not our own. For example: "You can't reach these people's hearts because you can't speak the language well enough." Or, "You're doing a rotten job." It's the voice in our head that always has something negative to say about the situation. It's a lie! Spiritually: these burdens add up, and suddenly there's no time for devotion, no time for Scripture, no quiet time to be alone with God. Or, when there is, it's not enough.

God IS faithful. He is with us every day, fighting for us, and giving us his peace and love.

Why are you downcast, O my soul?
Why so disturbed within me?
Put your hope in God,
for I will yet praise him,
my Savior and my God. --Psalm 43:5

My request to you: PRAY FOR US! Pray for us right now as you are reading this. Pray for physical health, communication, and patience. Pray for us often. You are a part of this ministry as well. We all are. We are one in Christ.

Thank you so much. God is faithful, and we WILL yet praise him, our Savior and our God.

Date: 2/1/2007

Submitted by: Camille Wilhelm

Journal Entry:

Magdalene de Cao, Peru

Our second venture into the Peruvian countryside came yesterday when the five of us piled into a "combi" (a twelve-seater van) with our backpacks, guitars, drum and other miscellaneous stuff, our two new German missionary friends, Inga and Kathrine, their overnight bags packed for a few days, Jorge, our contact from the Trujillo area, the combi driver and a teenage guy. Whew! Even though the van was designed to seat eleven or twelve people and we only had ten, we were packed! We drove about an hour's drive through the countryside to Magdalena de Cao and settled into our home for the next few days, the home of a Peruvian woman and her nine children.

What an experience staying with a Peruvian family was! There were twelve people living in the house, four of which had gone to the homes of their suegros, or parents-in-law. Four people gave up their room in order that the three Kindred girls and our German friends, Inga and Katherine, would all have a place to stay. I am continually amazed at the generosity we first encountered on the road in the United States and now further here in Peru.



Camille Wilhelm

Date: 2/2/2007

Submitted by: Bethany Schwartz

Journal Entry:

Magdalena de Cao, Peru

When we arrived in Magdalena de Cao, a small town north of Trujillo and a few miles from a famous historical site called El Brujo (featured in National Geographic), I was full of thoughts and wanted to find my journal. In that endeavor, I locked up a bag that held all of my stuff and lost the key. I was a bit upset about that, but I used the experience to get to know two of the family members at the home where we were staying. I met the mother of nine and one of her sons, Eduardo. We never found the key, but that is ok. (I figured out how to get my stuff out eventually, so the bag is now empty but still locked.) Eduardo had studied English. We got the chance to speak



Bethany Schwartz together about our families, and he taught me some Spanish words. I took my journal to a park in the center of the small town, which was three houses away from our home. While I was there, I met an Australian English teacher, whose name also happens to be Bethany! It is so cool to meet such random people. Though I was still upset about the locked bag at this point and not being able to wash my face, brush my teeth, change my clothes, etc., it was good in the long run. We were blessed to be in a home with a wonderful family, and we were blessed to be fed by a wonderful woman named Maria, who was a member of the church. Maria even let me help her prepare some of the meals! Magdalena de Cao was the smallest town we have visited so far, but we met a lot of great people. And hey, at least I had my journal to write about it.

Date: 2/3/2007

Submitted by: Bethany Schwartz

Journal Entry:

"Don't ask yourself what the world needs. Ask yourself what makes you come alive, and go do that, because what the world needs is people who have come alive." Gil Bailie

What makes you come alive? What makes you feel alive? My friend shared this quote with me just before I left for Peru. I think of it often. One thing that makes me feel alive is travelling. My senses are alive as we travel and see new things. There are always questions, always clues. Figuring life out in Peru is a fun game. There is so much to learn. This week I have relearned how to find, use, and preserve water in places without running water. Here in Chiclayo, I am learning how long-term missionaries live and work among the people, but create living environments that embrace both the Peruvian culture and their own native cultures.



Bethany Schwartz

Another thing that makes me feel alive is connecting with people. I love to learn about people, to listen and gain a better understanding of them. That has been a struggle for me in the past three weeks in Peru. I don't speak enough Spanish to say anything more profound than "I have two brothers. I want to teach children." I don't know enough Spanish to understand very many people when they speak to me, either. (The first phrase I learned here was, "You don't understand me?"). I want to understand, I want to learn, I want to connect. I so desperately want to be in and among the people, to listen, to learn.

I am thankful for the things I can learn despite my elementary Spanish. Danny is always so willing to explain things to me. I am thankful. Camille is acting as my personal Spanish-English dictionary. I am thankful. Playing with the kids here makes me feel alive. I love to laugh and play and be silly with them. They are so willing to teach me and overlook the language barriers. I am thankful.

What makes you feel alive? Big or small, do something that makes your heart sing today.

Date: 2/5/2007

Submitted by: Kristin Rice
Journal Entry:



Kristin Rice

Chiclayo, Peru

It's a day off. Oh boy, a day off! Today is an exceptionally good day off. I start with some Quality Kristin Time—a good morning of God time, sudoku time, and solitaire-the-card game time.

Benedikte, a Danish missionary the girls are staying with, asks if we want to go see downtown Chiclayo. I am totally game, because I need some things from a stationary store. Sweet. It took a combi (public transport unlike any the world over) and a ten-ish minute walk before we arrived at the store.

I am accustomed to this process being, oh say, five minutes more or less, especially when I know exactly what I want. However, when in Peru, do as the Peruanos. Most stores are laid out in a way that screams distrust (I will explain later). This store was shaped like an upside-down U, a glass counter keeping us away from that which we desire. So, to purchase anything, we require the assistance of a clerk. Gravy, I dig.

However, while Benedikte is more or less fluent, and I can barely ask where the bathroom is, we are a little stuck not knowing the exact words for what we needed. The clerk hears us describe an object (a notebook, perhaps), asks if we wanted to see one, runs to the back of the store and returns with a notebook she believes meets our descriptions. Here is where the fun really starts. Literally nine times out of ten, it is not quite what I need. Half an hour later, we are still in the store, so close to being done. But wait, there is more.

Once we are certain we have what we need (which for me becomes "this works, it is fine, not exactly, but I am tired" need), the clerk then proceeds to handwrite the receipt, descriptions and prices of each object. Cool, I am good with that. She even adds it up by hand and double checks it with a calculator. I am handed a pink receipt and have to go elsewhere to actually pay. The store owner checks the math again, takes my money, gives me change and a free pen for shopping at her store, and I return to the counter.

The clerk then puts my purchases in a bag, while another clerk double checks to make sure I am getting what I paid for. And I am done.

Whew, what a process. Benedikte told me later that this process is for two reasons: first, it actually creates more jobs, but moreso out of a system of distrust. The store owner does not trust her employees with money, so she is the only one who can accept any sort of payment. The clerks are not supposed to trust each other to do a good enough job, or the right job, so they are constantly holding each other accountable. And no one trusts the customers. I really hope that this is purely a business tactic, and not a personal relationship mentality.

Somehow, this experience has become an out of the way reminder of God's greatness. Seriously, it is so awesome that we can always, always, always place our complete trust in the Lord because He is always faithful to his people.

Psalm 111:7-8: "The works of his hands are faithful and just; all his precepts are trustworthy. They are steadfast for ever and ever, done in faithfulness and uprightness."

Amen.

Con el amor de Dios, Kristin

Date: 2/6/2007
Submitted by: Eric Selle
Journal Entry:

Chiclayo, Peru has already been a fantastic place for Kindred to be. It's like a fresh breath of new life for our team. For starters, it's Danny's hometown. He is so happy to

be here with his friends and family. All the rest of us can relate: we've each had an opportunity to be with a home crowd in the States for at least a couple days. But it's more than Danny's home; it's ours, too. Before leaving the United States, all of us knew about Chiclayo from a friend of ours: Abby Dawkins, a student at Concordia University, St. Paul. Abby served here in Chiclayo for two years as a student intern with the WMPL missionaries. Abby has met our team a couple times--both while on the road, and at the Youth Encounter home office--and has shared with us many stories about Chiclayo! In addition, Helene and Preben Koefoed-Jespersen, Danish missionaries here in Chiclayo, are our main contacts in Peru, and have become the team parents. They were the first people to meet us at the airport in Peru. It's so wonderful to be with their family now as well. Chiclayo truly is our home away from home!



Eric Selle

I'm enjoying a short break after lunch right now. In three hours, we will have our first program in Chiclayo, which promises to be a big event with lots of hustle and bustle. But now everything is so calm. Mathias (the youngest Koefoed-Jespersen boy) is watching TV and snacking on cereal, the birds outside are taking a break from their constant chirping, Cookie the dog is enjoying the "leftovers" of Mathias' snack that have appeared on the floor, and Midnight, the cat, is mothering her children. That's right, there are four new additions to the Koefoed-Jespersen family: four little grey kittens! I had the opportunity, yesterday morning, to witness one of God's greatest gifts: new life. Life is an amazing thing! To me it demonstrates the awesomeness of God's creation. We belong to a God who not only brought us into this earth, but has given us a means to live life to the fullest, with the knowledge of our Savior, Jesus Christ, and with the assured hope of everlasting life with Him.

When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."--John 8:12

God's gift of new life brightens our days! It brings meaning and purpose into our lives. And it is a gift too amazing to keep to ourselves. Praise God for the opportunities He gives us every day to share that joy with others!

Date: 2/8/2007

Submitted by: Camille Wilhelm

Journal Entry:

Chiclayo, Peru

I have learned so much since coming to Chiclayo. Helene and Preben, our national contacts for Peru and gracious hosts, as well as the other missionaries who live in Chiclayo, have taught me so much about being a missionary and really giving to the people you are working with.

Two little Peruvian girls came by the house the other day selling purses that their mother and sister had made. They knocked on the door, and Helene invited them into the house. We, the Kindred girls, had just bought purses from another Chiclayano woman earlier and didn't need more. Instead of just telling the girls that we were uninterested, Helene invited them in for a moment, gave them each a glass of drinkable yogurt (a new phenomenon for Kindred) and then sent them on their way with recyclable goods that her family had been saving. She then explained to us that the girls might not have had breakfast that morning, and that instead of buying something from them, she could give them the recyclable items that they could redeem for a little income. Helene is ready for moments like that with little ways that she can help those in need. I learned again that day that there are so many ways that God calls us to give. We can give money, but we can also give in other ways. Helene showed me that when we do give, we are sharing a little bit of God's love with people.



Camille Wilhelm

Date: 2/13/2007

Submitted by: Kristin Rice

Journal Entry:

Chiclayo, Peru--Another day off. I seem to always have the day-off journals. That is fine by

me. However, I do not want to deceive you. This was not completely a day off. Yes, shopping was done, yes, we slept in, and yes, we were leisurely in action. But this evening, we were also part of a welcome celebration.

A group of families from Incawasi, a mountain village, are here in Chiclayo. This is the first time most of them have left their village. They were invited by a worker of the Las Brisas church we have visited several times in the last week. And we, Kindred, were invited to participate in the welcome celebration for the visitors. We were also told that many of them were not Christian, so this was a great chance to share the Gospel with them. Awesome (or ¡Que cheverre! as we would say).



Kristin Rice

We were able to sing a few songs for the group, as well as share. This was perhaps my favorite part of the evening. Bethany spoke on the Gospel, and why Jesus is the reason for it all. He is our link to God, and it is through Jesus we have received grace and a chance to be reconciled with God. She had already translated this message into Spanish. However, most of the group only spoke in a dialect of Kechua, a language that is dying out here in Peru. I believe that this language can be traced back to the Incas. So here was my teammate, speaking from her heart in an already foreign tongue, being translated into another foreign language. It was incredible. Tower of Babel, right?

God was there tonight. He was working through us, and through the church in Las Brisas. Coco, a friend of ours, also gave a message; and while I was not quite able to understand most of what he was saying, I did not have to in order to see the Spirit working through him. I saw the faces of the people tonight; some of them changed from emotionless to a smile, and some began to sing along with us. Everyone clapped with the music. We were able to laugh together when someone would forget they needed to be translated; for the people of the village who are Christian already, I hope it was an uplifting evening to find they have a family here as well. A couple of the women and the translator also sang a song, which was a very unique experience. It was in Kechua, and I believe a praise song as well.

The best part is that this was not originally part of our schedule. We could have said no. But we said yes, we want to celebrate together. We want to keep learning about Peru. And it is a great reminder to me that Peru is so much more than just desert cities and pueblos. We are covering a lot of area in our two months here, but there is so much left to do here. I want to encourage you to keep our brothers and sisters in Christ in your prayers, especially the ones we might not see or know are there. It can be the same way in the U.S. too, I fear. Keep your eyes open and be always ready to share your faith and rejoice together.

Con el amor de Dios, Kristin

Date: 2/15/2007

Submitted by: Camille Wilhelm

Journal Entry:

Chiclayo, Peru

Yesterday we had the opportunity to lead a workshop about worship. The team sat down ahead of time and talked about what worship is to us and then came up with important points to share with the people. I enjoyed leading the workshop because we had the opportunity to not only talk about worship but also actually lead the people in various forms of "alabanza," or praise. We lead some sing-alongs, some praise songs, and Eric led some Taizé music. We also had fellowship with one another and ate cake (another way to praise our Lord together!). It was fun to share the various ways we can praise God with the people in Las Lomas.



Camille Wilhelm

We are preparing for a weekend-long retreat with "jovenes," or youth anywhere from age 14-30. I am excited about the chance to hang out with my favorite age group (high schoolers!) and about the various things we are leading during the weekend: games, a concert, a devotional and a drama during the Sunday service. I am also excited to get to know the youth we have already met from Trujillo, Magdalena de Cao, Chocofán and Chiclayo on a deeper level.

Date: 2/20/2007

Submitted by: Kristin Rice

Journal Entry:

Chiclayo, Peru--We just spent the weekend on a retreat in Saltur with about 50 youth from around Northern Peru. They were all from places we have visited in the last couple of weeks--Trujillo, Magdalena de Cao, Chocofan, plus the three churches here in Chiclayo. Most of them did not know one another outside of their groups, but I felt like I was seeing some old friends again.

This was a great chance to really witness how God is working in the lives of our friends. It was also a lot of fun to practice Spanish and really build relationships with people we have been meeting.

Perhaps, though, my favorite part of the weekend was being dirty. We arrived on Friday and left on Sunday, not a long time. But I didn't shower. Gross, yes, perhaps. In those two-ish days, my feet were so disgustingly dirty. My face was sweaty and sunburned. My clothes smelled like campfire. I did not care. No one else smelled like a bed of roses. It was great. I love going back to nature. Our retreat was in the middle of a desert, with a couple small mountains around. During the heat of the day, it was close to 100 degrees in the shade. There was not much running water, so we hiked into Saltur for bottled water. Everything we did took a lot of energy, thanks to heat and lack of sleep.

We were able to sleep outside the second night, and I was enthralled. That is another favorite activity of mine, and I was stoked at the chance to sleep underneath the Southern sky. It was incredible. I maintain that there are more stars down here than back in the Northern hemisphere.

Our food was cooked over an open fire. A group of four women were constantly around that fire, it seemed. They were always cheery, and were able to make so much food that tasted great! No one went hungry this weekend.

I really enjoyed building the relationships with people. It was a little intimidating since my Spanish still leaves a lot to be desired. But the group I spent the most time with was very patient, and helped me learn and laugh at some of my mistakes. I was also able to teach them some English. We joked around a lot, played music together, relaxed together. And we were dirty.

I love dirt. It's true. I do. And what I love best about dirt is that it seems people are more open to being themselves when they are dirty. Hear me out. Too often physical appearance can be a hinderance because it limits space, the place, and can intimidate. But when we are dirty, sweaty, and incapable of changing that circumstance, walls are broken down. I felt more free to be me, to be crazy and to spend time with people I might not have spent time with otherwise. Don't get me wrong, I love being clean as much as the next guy. But dirt can open so many doors.

"...for dust you are and to dust you will return..." Genesis 3:19b

We are made from dirt, and we will be dirt again. Why not spend time in that original state from time to time?

Con el amor de Dios,

Kristin



Kristin Rice

Date: 2/21/2007

Submitted by: Bethany Schwartz

Journal Entry:

I'm on a plane that will soon land in Arequipa. The window shows a beautiful, hilly desert. Mountains in the distance. Arequipa lies at their feet. I have just been reading journals from the other International Teamers. They seem to be enjoying being in new cultures with new experiences and new surroundings. I, too, am often finding myself thinking, 'Wow, I am in Peru.' As the plane descends into Arequipa, and I can begin to see the details of the land, I abruptly notice the buildings. Wow, I am in



Bethany Schwartz

Peru. The rectangular brown brick buildings, windows large and dark, so different from a typical landscape in the States. The beauty of the landscape tainted by a street littered with trash, a vacant lot littered by piles of old bricks and weeds. The beauty of the landscape magnified by the knowledge of the people that live here, each person a masterpiece created by the artist who makes no mistakes.

This experience is different for me than my time in West Africa last spring with Cross Fire. Last year I was so impressed by the newness, the differences, the similarities. I was ever aware of various and fluctuating stages of culture shock. I loved the ministry of doing programs and interacting with people, but I think at most times the trip was more about the change of lifestyle I encountered. Everything was so new, my senses were overwhelmed, and dealing with life often overcame my desire to be with the ministry. I needed to find food, exchange money, find water, filter water, wash clothes by hand, figure out transportation needs, and I was often consumed by trivial things. This year the novelty of being overseas is wearing off. Kristin mentioned that it wasn't weird anymore to wake up and find herself outside the United States. I agree. I am getting used to this lifestyle in many ways. As the novelty wears off, I need a new focus, and I am finally realizing the purposes for which I am called here. It isn't about finding cool souvenirs or having grand adventures to tell about later; it is about being here with the people. I am called here to be with the people. I am called here to work with the churches. What are the churches' needs? What are the people interested in? Can I engage myself in meaningful conversations without knowing much Spanish? What constitutes meaningful conversation? I was told that sometimes the most important thing is to just be with the people. I am finding that to be true. It is still a struggle for me sometimes to see beyond myself. But this year I feel the need that people have to just be heard. Just to be loved. To know that someone wants to get to know them. We have been blessed to have some time for team needs such as rehearsal, devotions, team meetings, etc., but as we do those things, I always find myself itching to go out and meet people, to do programs, to interact. It is in the interactions with the people here that I find fulfillment. What a blessing! In every program setting there has been at least one person that I have felt a connection with. God has really been blessing me in sending people that I can relate to with the little Spanish I know, or at times with no verbal communication at all. I look at these mountains surrounding Arequipa, and I wonder what God has in store for us here. I know that whoever we meet, we will be blessed.

Date: 2/22/2007

Submitted by: Camille Wilhelm

Journal Entry:

Arequipa, Peru

Arequipa has been dubbed "the white city," and rightfully so. After meeting with our contact, Jose, and finding out that we had the rest of the day to relax and prepare for the week ahead, the team decided to head downtown for some food. After exploring some of the options near our hostel, we were told that there would be more downtown. So, we headed to the "Plaza de Armas." I have learned that almost every town in Peru has a Plaza De Armas, whether it is a town the size of Lima (population: 8.3 million) or Chocofan (no idea the population, but much smaller). However, Arequipa's Plaza De Armas is much different than any other we have visited.

Many Plaza de Armas in Peru center around a fountain. This is the case in Arequipa as well. Surrounding this fountain on three sides are long white buildings and on the fourth side, a huge white cathedral. All of it is absolutely beautiful. In the center, near the fountain, there are hundreds of pigeons running around, looking for food with children (and the occasional Kindred member) chasing them. After some jokes about wanting to move permanently to Arequipa, we went to lunch.

Arequipa is very touristy, but while downtown today, I was reminded of two things. In Arequipa, we have seen the first mountains in Peru. Arequipa is surrounded by big beautiful mountains and a volcano. There are also beautiful plains. I am continually amazed by the differences in landscape, all in one country! God's creation is so beautiful.

There are also many two- or three-person groups that walk around downtown, making their money



Camille Wilhelm

by playing for tourists. While seated at lunch, a group came up to the window next to us and started playing. They had a guitar, a quena (a recorder-like wind instrument), a charrango (a small ten-stringed instrument) and zamponia (a pan-flute instrument). One of the guys played the last three instruments, while the other played the guitar. Not only was it fun to hear cultural music from Arequipa and the mountains, it was fun to see all the different instruments. I have enjoyed learning about all the new and different instruments here in Peru. Seeing many different instruments reminds me of many Psalms of David, but one in particular where he writes about the various instruments we can use to praise God. Psalm 150:

Praise the LORD. Praise God in his sanctuary; praise him in his mighty heavens. Praise him for his acts of power; praise him for his surpassing greatness. Praise him with the sounding of the trumpet, praise him with the harp and lyre, praise him with tambourine and dancing, praise him with the strings and flute, praise him with the clash of cymbals, praise him with resounding cymbals. Let everything that has breath praise the LORD. Praise the LORD.

Date: 2/23/2007

Submitted by: Bethany Schwartz

Journal Entry:

Arequipa, Peru

We just finished a program in Arequipa. It was our first program in Arequipa, and it was a really cool experience for me. It started with talking with Anayeli, a six-year-old that I met outside the church. Then Melissa showed up on the roof of a home across from the church. (It is common to be on the roof here, as roofs are used for hanging laundry and other things.) Melissa came down and joined us, and I noticed right away that she couldn't speak. She only made noises. But her noises were full of joy. I loved interacting with her during the program, and then afterward I got a chance to play with her. We made hand puppets by drawing faces on our thumbs and forefingers. Soon, all of the kids in attendance had hand puppets. We played with each others' hair, giggled, and had a great time. I was so impressed by the way Melissa was included, despite the fact that she couldn't talk to us. She interacted with smiles and noises and laughter. And the children included her. After the impromptu puppet shows we did with our hand puppets, Kindred was invited to the Vargas home for drinks and "hot cakes" (small pancakes). Pastor Felix, his wife Julia, Joel (14) and Paola (9) were so incredible. They housed the last Kindred to Peru (three years ago) for a whole month! They gave us Coca-Cola, pancakes, tea, and great conversation. We even got to see pictures they had from the last Kindred's visit. I would have loved to stay there and get to know them even better. They are an incredible family.



Bethany Schwartz

Date: 2/26/2007

Submitted by: Camille Wilhelm

Journal Entry:

Arequipa, Peru

Today was a day off for us, and can I just say that we have been so blessed with consistent days of here in Peru? We travel, sing, play and work a lot during the week, and I am thankful for the chance almost every week to rest, pray and rejuvenate for the next week of ministry.

Days off like today are the best. Yes, we got to sleep in and yes, we got to sightsee, but in the midst of it all, we also got to do some ministry! Our contacts, Jose and Jose, offered to take us in a car around to three famous Miradores, or lookouts, around Arequipa. I love the chance in more laid back settings to do ministry. We had the opportunity to get to know our contacts better as well as to learn from them. They were knowledgeable about each place in that they knew a little bit of the history and culture of each place. We also saw some llamas, one of which spit at anyone who came near (including Pastor Jose and Bethany), so we all had a good laugh. How blessed we were today to see some interesting things but continue the ministry. God really blessed us in that way.



Camille Wilhelm

One interesting tidbit about today (my teammates told me I needed to share this story, so here goes...). We were at the second Mirador, called Yanauara, a Quechua word, and there was a musical group making a music video of sorts. Well, let me rephrase: they had instruments that they were pretending to play and a jukebox was blasting their songs. Just as we were about to leave, the guys came up to Danny and told them that they needed a girl with green eyes, because they had a song about a girl with green eyes. Danny asked me if I would be in their video. After lots of laughing and joking with my teammates, I agreed. It was fun because we just laughed the whole time. It just goes to show that you never know what each day overseas will bring!

Date: 2/28/2007

Submitted by: Eric Selle

Journal Entry:

A Tale of Three Cities (or maybe four . . .)

It was the best of times, it was the worst of times...It was so difficult to say goodbye to our friends in Chiclayo; after two weeks, God blessed us with some amazing relationships. There were many people that came to the airport to send us off. So amazing. So hard.



Eric Selle

Our flights to Lima and then Arequipa were very quick (each flight only one hour). That beats the 20+ hour bus ride we would have taken. Arequipa is so different from Chiclayo (desert, near the coast). We stepped off the plane and experienced a sensation that we had almost forgotten: cold. Arequipa is approx. 2500 meters in elevation, and when the sun is covered in clouds, it is quite cool. Arequipa is surrounded by mountains--some beautiful peaks are visible in the north and east: Chachani, Misti (actually a volcano), and Pichupichu. The climate is interesting; in the morning it is clear, sunny, and hot. By noon there are clouds covering the mountain peaks, and by 3 p.m. it is cool with a good chance of rain. This is normal for the summer months (January-March), the locals say. The green grass and trees are a welcome change as well from sand and rocky hills.

We met so many wonderful people in Arequipa. Kindred 03-04 spent nearly a month here, and were loved very much. I had many wonderful conversations with people here about past Kindred teamers. I was a little sad that we could only stay for less than a week in Arequipa, but the people made a profound impact on us nonetheless.

On Sunday, from Arequipa, we took a day trip to Mollendo on the coast of the Pacific Ocean. We left at 5 a.m. and returned after 6 p.m., but it was an incredible day. I'll only give some highlights; you can email us for more stories if you're interested! At 8:30 a.m., we said hello to the city of Mollendo via the Christian radio station! At 10:00 a.m., we led a two and a half hour program for the congregation. In the afternoon, we traveled to a nearby village where all the youth were working (and therefore missed the morning program). It was wonderful relational ministry. We played some songs for the youth (who were able to take 5-10 min breaks from work) and shared stories about our experiences and the past Kindred team.

Juliaca is next. We traveled here yesterday by bus. Juliaca is at 3800 meters (roughly 12,250 ft). The trip here was beautiful. Driving north we passed to the west of the snowcapped peaks of Chachani and Misti. Driving through the mountainous countryside, we saw herds of alpaca, mountain streams, a beautiful lake, and small pueblos (very different from the villages we've seen so far!). The people that live here in the mountains are different. Peru is a very diverse place. What new adventures does God have in store for us? Who will we meet, and how will we touch their lives (and they ours)? What more is our Great Teacher going to teach us? Only God knows. It will be revealed to us in His time.

Date: 3/1/2007

Submitted by: Camille Wilhelm

Journal Entry:

Juliaca, Peru

After traveling five hours and up many meters in altitude, we are in Juliaca. Today we went into the city to find lunch, and we rode in on trici-taxis. Trici-taxis look like backwards tricycles (meaning one wheel in the back and two in front), with a cart in the front to carry things or people. They are quite fun and we are told unique to Juliaca and the Puno district of Peru. It was quite the adventure as our trici-taxi driver maneuvered us through tight places and as we at one point hit the back of another trici-taxi. Nothing was said of this minor incident, we just continued on. I decided that our drivers must have really strong legs and lungs, as this is their living, and at 3800 meters, no less!



Camille Wilhelm

I loved riding through Juliaca today. We've seen a different part of Peruvian culture since arriving in Juliaca. One of my favorite things to see is the women in Juliaca. Their dress is very different than anywhere else we've been to. They are often dressed in skirts with tights on underneath (because it's cold!!). They also often carry babies or other things on their backs.

There is one woman who sells snacks out of a cart outside the door to the school where we are staying. Every day we say "hola" or "buenos días" to her, and she just gives a smile. I am curious to know more about her. I love to watch the women with their children. I hope to get to know them more here.

Date: 3/2/2007

Submitted by: Bethany Schwartz

Journal Entry:

Today we were scheduled to do a program on the streets. In my team experience, that has meant a number of things. In Africa, that could have been said about most programs on most days, and it may have meant singing two songs for each house in a large neighborhood area, or it may have meant doing a whole program for a church group under a tree. It could have meant a number of things. So far in Peru, it has once meant singing on a street that was up on a tall hill overlooking Lima, where no cars were driving, but a few volleyball games were being held in the streets, nets strung straight across the streets. We have had concerts outside (I say concerts rather than programs here because they have been done with huge electric setups that we as Kindred as not so used to, and they were blasted through the neighborhoods). But when we were told we would have a program in the streets here in Juliaca, I wasn't expecting the experience that we had. We loaded up our two guitars and one drum into trici-taxis, which are bikes that have a two-seater bench attached to the front (but I have seen them hold four people), and they are a very popular mode of transportation here in Juliaca. We found ourselves in the middle of a street used for street market purposes, with a lot of vendors selling various wares. This street market was just outside a more enclosed market accessible only by foot, which was much larger than I would have expected for this town, and even reminded me of a past teammate's description of markets being like crazy Wal-Marts. We got out of the trici-taxis and were told we would sing right there. We were in front of three-story buildings, which had porches where people stood above us, watching us from behind. On the ground directly behind us were meat vendors, women sitting on the ground preparing meat to be sold. In front of us was a street and a small space, which, before we had even started singing, was filling up with people who were curious about why we were there. Our contact told us to start singing now, so we did. We did a few songs, the contacts with us passed out flyers for the Lutheran church, and they talked about the church during the program. After being in so many churches, encouraging the churches and the youth groups, it was a surprise to have this change of venue. I love both settings. Here we were surrounded by people, surrounded by people who may not have been members of churches, who were hearing the music and stopping by to see what was going on. They were hearing the Gospel message, and God was busy planting seeds. I love to think about all of the possibilities that God had during and after that program. Maybe there were Christians there with non-Christian friends who then had the chance to talk to each other about their faith. Maybe parents could teach their children about Christ, or maybe the kids there could return to their parents and tell them about what they heard. Jesus Christ died and rose for our sins. He loves us. He wants us to believe in Him. He wants us to have eternal life. All we have to do is believe. God is faithful. I know He spoke there on the street in the market. I love that I got to be a part of it.



Bethany Schwartz

Date: 3/4/2007

Submitted by: Eric Selle

Journal Entry:

Today, Sunday, was our busiest day of the week (no surprise, since Sundays are busy for us in the USA also). We awoke early, ready to leave by 8 a.m., then we actually left at 8:45 (welcome to Peru). After a short trici-taxi ride to the market, we trudged through the mud to where the passenger vans were waiting. After a few hitches (and another trici-taxi ride), we found a van traveling to Puno (45 km away from Juliaca), so we hopped in. A half hour into the journey we were looking at Lake Titicaca, located on the border of Peru and Bolivia. It's the highest navigable lake in the world. Very cool! If we were tourists, we would have spent some time looking, but instead we headed straight to the Lutheran church in Puno for the service that began at 10:30 a.m. The congregation was so excited for us to be visiting their church! At about 12:15 p.m. the service finished, and we began our hour-long program immediately afterwards. After saying good-bye and grabbing a quick bite to eat, we were back in van for the return trip to Juliaca. We arrived at La Revelación Lutheran Church just in time for the 4:00 p.m. program to begin. They were very excited to have us visit as well. The church was all decorated, including balloons which spelled "Kindred" in the front! A musical group from the church opened and closed for us. After our program, some people appeared out of the back, carrying trays of waffles and coffee for us to drink! (FYI: coffee here in Peru is often a little watery and VERY sugary!) It was wonderful hospitality. We were taking pictures afterwards when the lights went out. An entire district in Juliaca lost power that night. No problem. Within minutes, there were plenty of candles for everyone to see. We returned home tired, but feeling feeling great. We encountered so many wonderful people today. It just feels right to be busy with ministry.



Eric Selle

Date: 3/8/2007

Submitted by: Camille Wilhelm

Journal Entry:

Moho, Peru

After getting up and leaving for Moho early (6:30am or so!) and driving through washboard-type dirt roads for three hours, we were welcomed to Moho by some of the women in the community hugging and kissing us on the cheek and throwing confetti in our hair. Our contact, Helge, told us that this was a very special Peruvian welcome. I knew at that moment it would be a special day.



Camille Wilhelm

Right away, we felt at home with the people of Moho. One of the women who was preparing lunch stopped for a little while to teach Eric and Kristin some Aymara phrases and eventually a song in Aymara. Pastor Fidel pulled out his mandolin and played along, with my teammates looking on and learning the song. While this was going on, Bethany had made friends with a few of the women and was helping peel potatoes. After videoing the impromptu Aymara sing-along, I joined her. It was fun to hear the women speak in Aymara, and occasionally smile at our efforts and then continue peeling the potatoes (they are so quick--zip zip zip--and the potatoes are peeled!). It takes me much longer, and I am convinced I waste lots more potato! But, it was fun to listen to the women and bond with them over the cooking.

After a while, we walked to the Plaza de Armas, or center of town to do a concert there. I have loved doing "open air concerts" as they are called. It is during these times that I am aware that we never know who is listening to the music and the words and who is hearing the message of the love of Christ.

I loved watching the people during our program: the children gathered around the fountain, curiously listening and sometimes participating; the woman seated under the shade of the tree, seemingly asleep, but occasionally opening her eyes and smiling; the men walking quickly through the town square, apparently on business, but slowing down to listen; the women seated behind the puppet curtain, able to see everything that is happening and just laughing at the sight of the puppets with their puppeteers.

I never know how God will work each day, especially when we do programs such as that one, but I know that He brings each person that He wants to hear His word and His love.

Date: 3/10/2007

Submitted by: Kristin Rice

Journal Entry:

Crucero, Peru--I woke up this morning and thought, "Dude, this day is going to rock." This should be a thought I have every day. I admit, it is not. But today was one of those days. Like most days, I usually do not know what is going on. Yes, there are programs; yes, I will meet people and speak with them; yes, I will be exhausted when 9:30 comes around. No, I do not remember any of the times (thankfully my teammates do); no, I do not know what our program will be and who it will be for (thankfully, some of my teammates do); no, I do not think I will be able to eat another plate of food after that delicious bowl of soup (thankfully, my teammate will be able to).

Today marked an incredible day. We did two programs, one in the morning and one in the evening. Our morning program was in a town about 20 minutes outside of Crucero. We were brought to this park with an amazing slide, sheep grazing, and a fish pond, as well as the usual futbol field and volleyball court. A couple people from Crucero came with us, including Maria.

Oh, Maria. She was a person I really connected with today. Before our program started, I decided to talk with her. I guess I just felt drawn to her. She told me about her two daughters, one who we had met in Puno last week. I told her a little about myself. And bless the woman, she tried to teach me some Quechwa. I have it all written down, but pronouncing it is kind of a beast. Quechwa, I found out, is nothing like Spanish, and rightly so. It is the language the Incas used some 500 years ago. Most of the people we met today speak Quechwa first, Spanish second. What a great opportunity to try and learn!

Carefully reading, I can say "Hello, my name is Kristin. Today we are going to sing." "Wallyllacho, nogy sutyiga Cristina. Kunan punchay nogayko takisayo." Good luck. What will continue to amaze me here in Peru, and Bolivia in a week, is God's ability to use us despite our weaknesses. Language is a huge weakness for me, yet I have been able to get to know people I never thought I could. Altitude has been a weakness for all of us (Crucero is at roughly 13,000 feet above sea level). I could barely play with some kids yesterday, and singing through an entire program is really difficult. But the message of Jesus is still getting across.

Especially on the days when I do not know what is going on, I know that I can trust in God's abundant love to provide the answers I need. I can trust in God's amazing strength and promise that His truth prevails and transcends our understandings. I am seeing it in my teammates and in myself as we meet people where they are at.

Today I met Maria. Not many words were spoken, but smiles were exchanged and shared across the distance. I will never forget her. She is my sister.

Bendiciones, Kristin



Kristin Rice

Date: 3/11/2007

Submitted by: Camille Wilhelm

Journal Entry:

Crucero, Peru

We never know when we wake up in the morning what adventures we will have that day. Today was a day filled with adventure. First of all, Crucero has been such a blessing to visit. It is a small town about a four hour drive away from Juliaca. It is a beautiful drive through the mountains to get to Crucero. Friday we had no electricity, so we got a chance to spend time getting to know our missionary contacts, Giermond and Helge, by playing Phase 10. Then we had an evening candlelight praise service. Saturday we met



Camille Wilhelm

many people and did a concert. It was fun to see the men, women and children who gathered and to sing songs and smile and laugh with them. The people we have met here have been incredible, so generous and gracious.

We were told when we arrived that we would have three programs in Crucero, two Saturday and one Sunday in the "campo," or countryside, of Peru. On Saturday night, I sat down with our contacts and pastor to discuss what we would be doing on Sunday morning. As it turns out, as a result of much rain (and some hail) in the past few weeks, the river had risen too much for us to cross by car. So, he informed me that there would be six horses waiting at the river in the morning to take us to church.

When we woke up on Sunday morning, we were told that we needed to leave earlier than planned in order to get to the church on time. So, we ran around getting ready, hopped in the van with the pastor's wife and son, and drove about 20 minutes to the river. Upon arriving at the river, there were no horses waiting for us. After asking a passing man, and a shepherdess with a flock of about 500 alpaca, it was determined that we could pay a bag of bread for us to have a horse take us across the river. After a while, for reasons I still don't know, it was determined that we could not take the horse. So, we all took off our socks and shoes, rolled up our pants and waded through the water: guitar, drum and all. We linked arms and just walked through the thigh-high water. It was cold, but fun.

When we got to the other side of the river, the pastor was waiting with a horse and a motorcycle. Kristin took the motorcycle with the pastor to the church first, while Eric mounted the horse and the rest of us walked alongside. Then, it was my turn to ride the motorcycle. After about five minutes of riding, the chain came off, so we stopped, pulled part of the motorcycle apart and fixed it. Then, the pastor left a covering along the side of the road and we continued, finally arriving at our destination. The others were shortly behind and we started the service.

The service was half in Quechua and half in Spanish. I am continually amazed at the many languages we worship our God in. I loved listening to the pastor's message, though I couldn't understand all of it. He had some beautiful pictures of people kneeling and praying and the foot of the cross.

After the "culto," or worship service, we were invited to stay for lunch--bistec alpaca. That's right, alpaca. It was delicious. Mealtimes are very important in Peru, so I often enjoy when we can share a meal with the people whom we have just worshipped with.

Just another day...

Date: 3/15/2007

Submitted by: Camille Wilhelm

Journal Entry:

Cusco, Peru

Today is our last day in Peru! While we are excited to go to Bolivia, there is some sadness in leaving Peru. We've had such wonderful contacts and met so many wonderful people.

Cusco, as well, has been one of those great places. When we were planning our travels to Cusco, we realized that our contacts had planned a day off for us right before our trip to Cusco. So, after some planning, we realized that we could go to Machu Picchu! It was absolutely incredible to get to see something so amazing. The buildings and the city is amazing, but so is God's creation surrounding the area. As we travelled to Machu Picchu by train, we travelled into the Peruvian jungle. It was so beautiful.

In Cusco, we've had some neat ministry opportunities. Yesterday, we went to the local college campus to do a program. It was fun to see the college students, on a break from classes, gathered to sing songs and even participate in our sing-alongs! After that, we got to talk to some of the students and invite them to our program for tonight.



Camille Wilhelm

After going to the college campus, we went to a street corner to play music while our contacts, Soren and Alice, gave out pamphlets about the church and our concert. It was fun just to play and sing for people in the middle of town. We also got to go to lunch with Alice, which was fun for all of us. It was great to talk to her about being a missionary and the ministry in Cusco.

Today we had the chance to go to a private school near to the church to do two programs during breaks between classes. It was crazy! There were kids running around and playing soccer, while some were listening. The kids laughed at our puppet shows and some sang along with our songs. It was fun just to see the kids laughing, knowing that God was working despite the craziness.

Tonight we will have our last program in Peru. The ministry here has been so good. God is working in mighty ways all over Peru. We have been so blessed to be a part of the ministry here; we have all learned so much.

Date: 3/16/2007

Submitted by: Bethany Schwartz

Journal Entry:

The first time I woke up, a New Dawn 05-06 song was playing on my headphones. 3:21 a.m. The next time it was 4:23. 5:38, I woke up to a view of Lake Titicaca. I watched the Peruvian landscape for what would be the last time for awhile. At 7 a.m., the bus we had travelled on through the night from Cusco had reached the border of Bolivia. We had one hour to do the normal paperwork of exiting Peru and entering Bolivia. As gringos, we were ushered through in our own foreigner lines. The process was fairly quick and easy for us. Then we had time to buy breakfast. We found some salteñas. It was our first time to try this food, which is a bread pocket with potatoes and some kind of meat in it. It was so good! As we waited for the bus to come across to the Bolivia side, we got to see some of the crazy chaos of the border area, which was full of people trying to cross the border, people trying to sell things, people fixing food to serve for breakfast, carts full of things to sell, bicycle carts available for transportation (called trici-taxis...in the chaos I was hit in the heel by a wheel of one and surprisingly it didn't even hurt or leave a mark!), and tons of buses. Once we got on our bus again, we had a great view of the Bolivian countryside, which is similar to that of Peru so far, but had more snow-capped mountains on the horizon. When we arrived in La Paz, we were on top of a huge hill, so as we came to a turn and then travelled down the hill, we had an incredible view of this huge city. Apparently, there are a few million less people here than in Lima, but it sure seems just as big. It is situated on hills, so at night you can see beautiful lights that almost look like the stars have fallen and are just laying low in the sky. It is beautiful. After a time of resting at our new home for the next 10 days, as well as a trip to the bank, the San Francisco Cathedral, and a tourist market, we went to a dinner that we had been invited to. The dinner was a celebration of the work that has been done through a group here called Amor en Accion (Love in Action). It is a ministry with the people they called "Street People" here in La Paz. There we met some wonderful people, including members of a music group that wrote a song that we sing called "Señor de Amor," and we ate some wonderful food, which included cow stomach and tongue. We got to sing a few songs for them with one of their guitars, and then the music group sang three songs for us. It was so awesome to get to know them and hear some more of their music. They are incredible musicians, and so far we have only met and heard half of the group! I am excited to get to know the people here in La Paz. It is a new adventure to learn about this culture, to know how some things are similar to Peru, and to find the things that are unique to Bolivia or maybe just La Paz.



Bethany Schwartz

Date: 3/17/2007

Submitted by: Kristin Rice

Journal Entry:

La Paz, Bolivia - Yeah, we're here. Crazy!!! The last two months just flew away.

La Paz is a gorgeous city. Situated in a valley and home to about one million Bolivians, the

interesting fact for the day is that the altitude fluctuates from one street to the next. The girls are staying with the Groffs, a U.S. couple who have lived here for nearly 20 years, and Eric is staying with the Voriels, a Bolivian family. From our house to his is about a 2,000 foot difference. I am so thankful that we have been acclimated (more or less) to the altitude.

I am still exhausted from yesterday's travel adventures (see Bethany's journal). It's rainy and cold, and a day I just want to stay in bed. Alas, that is not so.

We were invited to lunch at the home of Coki and Mickey. What an incredible family. They lived in the U.S. for a year while Mickey was doing work at the Navy Academy in Annapolis, MD. The whole family speaks English pretty well. Martin and Mauresio, their sons, had some interesting stories from their times in the U.S. Martin actually was able to help serve the police force in New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina hit. Mickey is full of jokes and likes to tease. Coki is just so sweet and fixed a huge and fantastic feast for us. Her mother, Gloria, was with us as well. Please keep her in your prayers as she is awaiting surgery for breast cancer.

This evening as well had the promise of adventure. El Redentor, a Lutheran church here in La Paz, has an incredible ministry called "Amor en Accion" (Love in Action). Every Saturday night, a group of youth plus Eric's host parents, hit the streets. They bring food to people who live in the streets. There are also volunteers who have been trained in medicine; their purpose is to patch up wounds. I, unfortunately, had to miss out on that portion of the evening because I was so tired I thought I was getting sick. But Eric and Camille did and were just amazed at God's work here with this program.

As well, Amor en Accion opens up the church on Wednesdays during the day. Many of the same people who are served on Saturdays come to the church for a quick shower and chance to wash their clothes. They are also served a healthy meal and have an afternoon worship service.

I am so excited to see how else God is working here in La Paz, and in Bolivia. Yet I still cannot believe that we are already here! In no time at all, we will be leaving South America. I, for one, am NOT ready to go, and I don't anticipate being ready in May either.

Dios te bendiga (God Bless You) Kristin and Kindred



Kristin Rice

Date: 3/21/2007

Submitted by: Bethany Schwartz

Journal Entry:

I have met a two-year-old girl that may have changed my life. She lives on the streets of La Paz with her parents and a two-week-old baby sibling.

Youth Encounter is a ministry that works with other ministries that are already in place, so it gives teamers a chance to be a part of a variety of ministries around the world. In working with various ministries of Peru and Bolivia, I have been in awe of God's work and the many ways He shows His love in different situations. However, I am not sure my heart has been so affected as when I met Alejandra. Kindred was to join a ministry called Amor en Accion (Love in Action) for the day to see the things they were doing and to help out in any small way that we could. People who live on the streets come to wash their clothes, take showers, eat a nutritious meal, and attend a worship service. While we were there, I saw large scars on faces, arms, and legs; I saw a woman with a limp who wouldn't look anyone in the face; I saw the amount of clothes owned by these 20 people was less than I have in my closet at home. Through the course of the day, I saw friendships and alliances that had formed. I saw a 16-year-old girl helping an 18-year-old girl with her two-year-old son. I saw men sleeping on each others' shoulders after long, late nights on the streets. The scars that I saw tell me the streets are dangerous. But here in the safety of the churchgrounds, I saw people having the freedom to sleep, to play, to wash their clothes in safety...

As we prepared the meal, I had a two-year-old angel named Alejandra helping me. She gave me green beans to cut. She would ask, "Uno mas?" (One more?) as she handed me handfuls. With her help, I think more ended up on the floor than in the bowl. But the process was adorable. When we finished cutting the vegetables for the soup, we went outside.



Bethany Schwartz

I was talking with someone when I noticed Alejandra walking away from the laundry area, crying and sucking her fist. I watched to see if anyone would help her. At this point, I still didn't know who her parents were. She was entirely alone yet surrounded by people. I watched her crying until I couldn't stand it any longer, excused myself from the conversation, and went over to her, unsure of what her reaction to me would be. She melted into my arms. I picked her up, her clothes were soaked, her face covered in tears and dirt, her fist still in her mouth. We sat together until she calmed down, and then she started playing with my hands, my arms, my watch. She is just a normal two-year-old. She cries, she laughs, she wants to help in the kitchen, she needs to be loved. But she lives on the streets, where there is no place to be safe, no place to cook, no place to wash, no place to be a normal two-year-old. Instead of learning her alphabet in school, she will probably learn how to beg for food on the streets.

Long before I was ready to leave, we had to go somewhere else to have lunch. Alejandra walked with us to the gates of the churchyard, seemingly fully expecting to be able to go with us. I left her with a woman at the gate, and as we left, I looked beyond her precious face and saw a man watching, calling her back. It helped me to be able to leave her to see who her dad was, to see that he knew where she was and that he wouldn't just let her leave.

We came back to do a program for these people two hours later. They were already in the church, and when we came into the back of the church, Alejandra came running down the aisle to hug us. She was in fresh clean clothes, her hair was clean and redone, and she looked just like all of the other beautiful children we have met here. She ran back down the aisle to her mom then came back to check out our puppets. I picked her up and asked her if she knew who Jesus was. She said yes. My Jesus knows her. I pray that He keeps her safe.

During the program she came up to us two times to hold our hands while we sang and to see if she could get away with banging the drum. As we sang and I held her hand, I thought, "Okay God, I am not sure what you are doing in me right now, but you sure did get my heart with this little one."

After the program, the people left. I saw Alejandra holding her mom's hand while her dad held the two-week-old baby. They walked out as a family. Alejandra was crying; I am not sure why. And they disappeared through the gates and back onto the streets of La Paz.

Date: 3/24/2007

Submitted by: Kristin Rice

Journal Entry:

La Paz, Bolivia -

This afternoon we got to play with kids. Lots of kids.

This evening we got to serve our brothers and sisters who live on the street. We had met many of them earlier, on Wednesday. El Redentor Iglesia has an amazing ministry aptly called Amor en Acción. This ministry is focused on the people of the street. Saturday evenings are for meeting people exactly where they are. Amor en Acción brings food and medical supplies to the street, along with open arms and open hearts.

At the church, the group gets together for devotion and preparation. A few people were cooking soup, others were getting med kits ready. What I enjoyed was seeing and being with people we have gotten to know this past week in La Paz. I know that they are striving to live as Christ did, and this ministry is proof of that. Two members of the group, Inés and Ismael, are medical students; every Saturday they tend to the wounds, no matter how serious or deep, the best that they can. Pablo and Maurisio, it seemed this night, were all about the entertainment. Quick with a joke, I witnessed seeing their hearts being poured into the people we met. At one point, I saw Pablo talking with a person who just needed someone to listen to his story--and then they prayed together as well.

But perhaps my favorite aspect of tonight was singing. Yeah, we sing every day. Sometimes all day. Tonight, however, it was unplanned and it was worship. Since many of the people had been to a worship service with us earlier in the week, they remembered many of our songs, especially the action songs. At the top of our lungs and with arms flailing, "Su Amor Rebosando", "¿Quien es el Rey?", and



Kristin Rice

others rang throughout the street. Guadalupe, Bethany's friend, even made up a new verse for one of our songs. It didn't matter that we sang each song a million times—they just wanted to be with us and keep that connection. Every person at that street corner tonight comes from a different life story, a different circumstance of how they came to be at that corner.

But the tie that keeps us bound, as always though I forget often, is Christ. We know and believe with our hearts that He is what keeps us together. He is why we do what we do—whether it is visiting La Paz for ten days as a member of Kindred, or spending a Saturday night helping someone who needs it, or singing as loud as one can despite what the others will think.

En el nombre de Jesús, Kristin

Date: 3/26/2007

Submitted by: Camille Wilhelm

Journal Entry:

La Paz, Bolivia

Yesterday we had the opportunity to be involved once again with Amor En Acción. Along with going to the streets every Saturday night, the group opens up the church each Wednesday to let the people from the streets come to wash their clothes, take showers, eat a meal, and attend a church service of sorts.

Kindred was invited to come to see what happens on Wednesdays and to participate in the church service. So, Wednesday morning we arrived at El Redentor church to participate in the ministry. We ended up talking with some of the people we had met on Saturday night and helping to prepare lunch. Later in the afternoon, we led part of the church service.

It was so neat to be a part of the ministry twice, and we will again on Saturday. Seeing the same people with the same struggles and hurts makes me wonder about each of their stories. I wish I had days to talk to each person, to tell them about Christ. I am thankful that Amor En Acción has a faithful group who are committed to their ministry. God will use them in mighty ways.



Camille Wilhelm

Date: 3/29/2007

Submitted by: Camille Wilhelm

Journal Entry:

Potosí, Bolivia

Potosí is named the "techo del mundo," which literally means the rooftop of the world, because it's located so high! At almost 13,800 feet above sea level, Potosí is the world's highest city, and it is beautiful. We have gotten to see some amazing landscape in both Peru and Bolivia, and Potosí is no exception. The mountains looked like they touched the sky; the joke here is that you are closer to God because of the elevation.

Today we did a school program in the morning for 200 very excited children. It is always fun to do school programs because the kids are excited that we are there and ready to participate. These children were loud and fun, and after the program they bombarded us and our contacts for our signatures. I love looking down into the faces of the children who are looking up at you expectantly, arms extended, with the word "Chau" (like the Italian word "ciao," meaning, "good-bye") on their lips, waiting to hug you and kiss your cheek good-bye. Greetings, both hello and good-bye, are some of my favorite parts of the culture of the two countries we have visited.

Tonight we did an evening program. Some of the children from the school came, so it was fun to see them again and see their smiles singing the songs they already knew. A funny anecdote from tonight's program: sometimes we lend out our hand percussion instruments to children during some of our sing-alongs. We were moving back into a more serious part of the program, and Eric went over to a two year old to get our egg shaker back to use it, and she just would not let go. Instead, she took it and whacked him in the head. While this was minorly funny, the ironic part was



Camille Wilhelm

thirty seconds later, another two year old took a whistle from her and wouldn't give it back. Both children were screaming in the front row of church...it took all we had to keep singing and not laugh during the song.

Date: 3/29/2007

Submitted by: Camille Wilhelm

Journal Entry:

Potosí, Bolivia

A song written by Bethany, Kristin and I en route to Potosí (sung to the tune of the Paul Coleman song, "The One Thing"):

Here I sit on a San Miguel bus^[1]
Getting to Potosí is a must!
Well, I see this life, its unexpected things,
You never know what a teamer's life will bring!

Chorus:
But the one thing that I question is this,
Why the bloqueo^[2] that we hoped to miss?
I really feel that it's a Bolivian dis.
Just hold on...hold on...

Well, I got my stuff out from under the bus
And I had to hurry, we were being rushed^[3].
We got our stuff, we were ready to go,
But what's going on, we just don't know...

An hour's passed, so we'll write a song,
Because we could be here all night long.
The bus started moving, it's quite a zoo.
Say good-bye to Poopo^[4], we're about to get through!

Bridge:
Only one thing doesn't change,
Still here this bus remains.
I hope at the end of the day
That we'll be on our way!^[5]

^[1] San Miguel bus: the second leg of our all day trip to Potosí

^[2] Bloqueo: Spanish for "blockade." We aren't entirely sure why this blockade occurred, but we think it because of lack of clean water. Blockades are a common way of peacefully protesting things, often lack of gas. They sometimes make traveling in Bolivia interesting!

^[3] Most of our stuff was in one compartment under the bus. We were told we were going to walk the 200 yards or so with all of our stuff past the blockade...we were glad when they told us to put everything back on and we drove across the blockade!

^[4] Great name for a place, don't you think? There's a lake *and* a town by the same name!

^[5] We were on our way after an hour and a half delay or so...quite the adventure!



Camille Wilhelm

"But God demonstrates His own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us."
Romans 5:8

Date: 4/2/2007

Submitted by: Eric Selle

Journal Entry:



Eric Selle

I don't know exactly why, but travel always excites me. There's always bound to be some adventure! On Monday we traveled from Potosí (one of the highest cities in the world) to Tinguipaya, not even on the map! What would we encounter in this small remote village, tucked away in the Andean mountains, that only has one telephone for the entire village? Possibly an adventure!

Traveling there by bus was quite the ordeal. When we arrived at the bus station in Potosí, we saw a vehicle we had not yet encountered. Picture a tiny, green school bus from the USA (complete with the "emergency door" in the back) that could comfortably seat 30 small elementary school students. Now, put a luggage rack on the top (jam-packed with chicken cages, bags of potatoes and corn, and random luggage), add about 15 more people (for a total of 45 adults), and fill the aisles with 2-liter pop bottles, more bags of agricultural goods, and several old women sitting on the floor (knitting ponchos at breakneck pace) and you have a better idea of what we traveled in. Cool! Our little green 'engine-that-could' slowly plugged away up and down the hilly terrain. The road quickly changed from pavement to gravel to dirt. We were really in the middle of nowhere, crossing rivers (no bridges) and pausing for sheep and llamas to cross the road, and yet we still made frequent stops for people to get off (and for people to fill their places). The snow-capped mountains on the horizon reminded us that we are still in the heart of the Andes mountains. God's creation is absolutely spectacular!

We could see Tinguipaya about 45 minutes before we arrived. It's tucked away in a valley, and the last part of our trip was spent slowly and carefully navigating switchbacks (complete with a beautiful waterfall!). What a peaceful village! We spent two days at the Lutheran "internado," which is a dormitory for children to live in while they attend school. Most of these children's families live far away in the countryside, making it necessary for the kids to stay in town during the week. The path from the village plaza to the internado is not one that I will forget soon: a beautiful narrow alley paved with stone which quickly became a rock path cut into the mountainside, lined with a stone wall, cacti, and other foliage. The students take this route four times a day and certainly get a workout doing so! We had a great view once we finally got to the top.

The kids were both curious and shy at first. All of them spoke Aymara, with Spanish being their second language. It's very likely we were some of the first "gringos" (white people) they had ever seen. They quickly warmed up to us, though, and we soon found ourselves teaching them words in English, and teaching a few how to play guitar. Our time passed quickly there, doing programs for the schools in the village.

While we were in the village the second day, doing a program at the high school, the power went out...for the entire valley. How long would the village be without electricity? No one knew. Meanwhile, when we returned to the internado, we learned some more interesting news: the bus didn't arrive that afternoon. There were gasoline problems in the city and no one knew if a bus had left or not. With no bus, we wouldn't be able to return to Potosí the next day! No problem, we'll just have to call our contacts there and explain the situation. But wait! Apparently with no electricity, the *one phone* in the village doesn't work! We were completely isolated. I found the situation somewhat humorous.

We spent the evening by candlelight, eating our dinner and hanging out with the kids. Outside we could hear the village band practicing by firelight for the May 15 celebration (the anniversary of Tinguipaya). It was that evening that we had a bit of luck. It turns out, there were two buses that had arrived that night, so we had our pick of which one to take the next morning. "One bus will leave at 9:30 a.m. and one will leave at noon," our contact explained to us, "but they both will arrive in Potosí around 3:30 p.m." Why the difference? "Well, the first bus that leaves early is very old and it climbs hills very slowly. Plus it's very cramped and uncomfortable; you wouldn't want to take that one." It turns out, that was the green school bus we arrived in! So we chose the second bus, which we found out the next morning that it actually left at 8:30 a.m. So we sprinted down the hill with all our equipment to arrive in time to embark on our journey home.

Nothing much else happened, except for that we encountered a blockade (a peaceful demonstration), making us have to deboard the bus and walk along side as it drove through cornfields and rivers and take an alternate route, after which we encountered a *second* blockade around the city of Potosí, which we got past, but then were stuck in the city for another day due to bus driver strikes, but THAT is another story. Needless to say, we're all safe and sound, and enjoying a little extra rest at an elevation of 14,600 feet. All in all, a typical day in Bolivia...

Date: 4/6/2007

Submitted by: Bethany Schwartz

Journal Entry:

For Good Friday we got to tour Sucre a little bit. We visited a dinosaur place! Just outside of Sucre, dinosaur tracks have been discovered. They have set up a nice area where you can get a tour and learn about the dinosaurs that were believed to be in the area. They have some pretty cool models of some pretty cool looking creatures. We were blessed to have a tour guide who spoke English. I can do pretty well in some areas of Spanish, but I haven't yet learned my dinosaur vocabulary, so I was pretty thankful. At the end of the tour, you get to view the wall that contains the dinosaur footprints. There are around 350 meters of footprints. They were apparently preserved within a hill, and when people were dynamiting the hill for some sort of construction purposes, they found these prints. After we visited this dinosaur place, we went to a seminary. We met people there from Ecuador, La Paz, and Peru, and found out we had many mutual friends. We did a regular program, drank Api, a drink made from purple corn, and talked to people for quite a while. How fun to discover all the people that these people knew as family and friends, that we now also call friends after three months of time here.



Bethany Schwartz

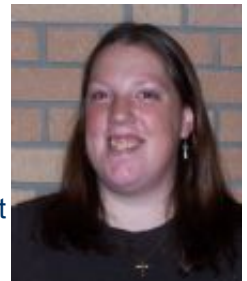
Date: 4/7/2007

Submitted by: Kristin Rice

Journal Entry:

Sucre, Bolivia -

Not only am I writing from the world's highest capital city, I get the pleasure of writing about our crazy day of ministry here, which also happens to be my 24th birthday! Please refer to your local *The Beautiful Letdown* album by Switchfoot to find my theme-song for the next year, aptly named "24."



Kristin Rice

Today was a crazy busy day. We had three full programs today, and my teammates found it highly amusing to insert the number 24 as many times as they could into the first program. They also bought a lot of candy and mustard (I love mustard), as well as made me blow out the gas oven. (Not really, Mom, just for pretend. Eric shut off the gas before I even blew once.) It was otherwise a low-key birthday, which I really appreciated and enjoyed.

Our first two programs were associated with the Lutheran Seminary here. We have met people from many towns we visited in Peru, as well as a few people from Ecuador who remembered having Kindred teams in their towns. (They were excited to hear that Kindred is going back to their country next year-- as well, they send hellos to the last few Kindreds who have been to Ecuador.)

We were invited to lunch at Luillermo's house, and so we experienced our first and likely only taste of Ecuadorian food. Yummy, though not much different than what we have been eating. We got to rest at the house as well; that was a huge blessing to sleep and be inactive. The second program was in the afternoon for a group of niños. They were a lot of fun, as usually the kids' programs are.

Juan de Dios, our contact here in Sucre, picked us up and brought us back to the church we are staying at. And in the evening, we had a program here as well. In the last 24 hours alone, we have met some amazing people that we hope to continue growing in friendship with. There were a lot of people from the seminary for this last program and it was fun to spend time with them again.

After the program, Juan de Dios, who had heard wind of my birthday, had the congregation sing to me "Cumpleaños Feliz." I was thankful that was really the only time I had to hear it. As well, we sang to Eric, whose birthday is in five days as well. Aptly, his birthday is also the Bolivian Día del Niño, Day of the Child. I don't know much about why this is such a recognized day and what all it entails. Perhaps we will see.

All in all, it was not a half-bad way to celebrate twenty-four years on Earth. In fact, I would dare say it was exactly what I would want in a birthday. No fancy obligations, nothing ultra embarrassing...just good times with incredible people. An awesome day to remember and recognize the blessings God continues to give me and my teammates while we are here in Bolivia.

Date: 4/8/2007

Submitted by: Eric Selle

Journal Entry:

On Easter morning here in Sucre we awoke at the bright and early time of 5:30 a.m. to be ready to go at 6:00. Pastor Juan de Dios (our contact here in Sucre) drove us to a small stadium where we participated in a huge all-Christian praise and prayer event. There must have been over 4000 people in attendance! The event was in Spanish and Quechua (many people from the countryside traveled for miles to be in the city for the celebration). We participated by leading a couple songs and presenting a skit. At 9:00 a.m. the entire assembly (including ourselves) left the stadium to march through downtown Sucre. It was a sight to see! By now there were over 5000 people (lead by a drum corps) marching through the streets, waving flags, shooting off firecrackers, singing songs, and shouting "¡Christo Vive!" (Christ Lives!). The parade finished in front of the theatre downtown. The entire mass of people knelt down and prayed for the city right there in the streets. Incredible. Immediately following the march, Kindred was whisked away to a church downtown where we ate breakfast, led an hour program, and witnessed three baptisms. Very cool. The pastor and his family invited us over to his place for an enormous feast afterwards. Needless to say, when we got back to our rooms at 3 p.m., we were ready for some rest! What an incredible way to celebrate the day of our Lord's resurrection!



Eric Selle

Date: 4/11/2007

Submitted by: Kristin Rice

Journal Entry:

Sucre, Bolivia –

What a day! Potentially one of my favorites, although really, one cannot compare.

This morning started off bright and early with us going to a Taller (workshop). This workshop is for adults with special needs, already a high for me. These incredible people come to this workshop every day and create amazing crafts while learning other important life skills. They do macrame, batik, stained glass, t-shirt printing, sewing...just a whole slew! We did a program for them, which was a lot of fun. Everyone really got into the songs and puppets. Afterwards, we shared in a yogurt snack from a bag (always a treat here). And then we were shown around the different areas. Pocho is this hilarious guy with Down Syndrome; he was so excited to show us every thing that he had made and was working on. This experience really just reminded me that wherever I am in the future, I want to work or volunteer in a setting like this.



Kristin Rice

In the afternoon, we were driven to a school/church place with about 200 children or so. Tomorrow is Bolivia's national Día del Niño. They were having a special party to celebrate children, and we were the entertainment. It was a bit of a tough program in that it was hard keeping their attention, and we did not have a microphone. However, what made this a banner experience was what happened after the program. For all you teamers, churches, and sponsors who partook in the ¡Fiesta! VBS last summer, this is for you. Every single child was going to receive one of those amazing Orange ¡Fiesta! Blankets that we worked so hard on. It was absolutely special to see this ministry being placed into action.

Thank you to everyone who had a part in the magic of ¡Fiesta!

This evening, Camille and I also went to eat with our seminary friends Juan Carlos and the Pedros. None of us are from Bolivia. It was a kick and just a great relaxing chance to build those friendships.

Love Sucre, Love Bolivia.

Love, Kristin

Date: 4/13/2007

Submitted by: Bethany Schwartz

Journal Entry:

Today we had a party for Eric's birthday with many of our friends from La Paz. We arrived in La Paz in the early morning after travelling all night on a bus from Sucre. It was so good to see our friends from La Paz after being away for two weeks. We had quite the celebrations this week since it was Kristin's birthday on the 7th, Eric's on the 12th, and our friend from La Paz Justina's birthday on the 13th. After we girls took a trip downtown to shop, everyone came over to the mission house and we had some of the best food ever. It was pot luck style, which ended up producing three incredible types of sandwiches, some potato chips (which here often have purple in them from the potatoes), a thing like bloated Cheetos, and some great cake. Then we had the blessing of learning some traditional Bolivian dances from our friends. We had no idea how well they could dance! I loved it. We taught them some of our dances as well, but those were more representative of Kristin herself than the cultural dances of the United States...

God's blessings!



Bethany Schwartz

Date: 4/13/2007

Submitted by: Eric Selle

Journal Entry:

Friday the 13th. Some people believe this day is unlucky. For me it is significant for other reasons. For one thing, it's the day after my birthday! As it turns out, April 12 is also "El Dia del Niño," or "The Day of the Child." We did an hour program at an elementary school that morning: sing-alongs, a fun skit, and a couple of puppet shows. Then, as a surprise, the 100 elementary school children sang, "Happy Birthday" to me in English! That was a first to me: Bolivian children singing to me in English on my birthday.



Eric Selle

There's another reason Friday the 13th is significant for me: it's the day God allowed me the opportunity to meet the child I sponsor through Compassion International. While in La Paz for the first time, I learned that my sponsored child, Jorge, lives in El Alto (a neighboring city of La Paz). Once we knew our schedule for the rest of our travels in Bolivia (and learned that we would be returning to La Paz) I went to compassion.org to set up a visit. After a few emails, phone calls, and a little patience, everything was set for Friday the 13th!

Just after 10:30 a.m., at the missionary house we were staying at, the doorbell rang. Two men and a 17-year-old boy were standing outside: Israel, the director of one of the La Paz Compassion sites, Edgar, a teacher, and Jorge. God first introduced me to Jorge almost three years ago. I was attending a Christian music concert that was promoting Compassion Int'l. Compassion works to promote aid to children in need by pairing them up with a sponsor. The sponsor gives a monthly donation to help cover the costs of food, medicine, and education for the child in need. It's incredible how far our dollars go to provide aid! I was shown a picture of Jorge at that concert and our correspondence began through letters, pictures, and prayer. And now here I was, for the first time in person, giving a warm Bolivian greeting to Jorge: a handshake and a hug. Our three hours together went quickly. We took a taxi to his home in El Alto. There I got to meet the rest of his brothers and

sisters. His mother, who was at school for the day, studying to teach reading and writing to the Aymara speaking people, called me on the phone at the house. "Thank you so much," she said, over and over again. "And God bless you!"

Jorge and I shared a lot at his home: I brought some pictures (those that I had not already mailed to Jorge) of my family, friends, and activities I enjoy, such as music and theatre productions I'd been involved in. And he, in turn, showed me some of his pictures. I learned more about him: he too enjoys music, and is learning to play the zamponia (Bolivian pan-flute). He's in his last year of high school. In university, he wants to study medicine. We exchanged gifts: I gave him a CD of our group and a t-shirt from the States. He gave me some beautiful ceramic ornaments and a native Bolivian stocking cap! We also exchanged favorite Bible verses. Then, his older sister came out of the kitchen with a traditional Bolivian dish: corn, meat, two different types of potatoes (there are over 300 different types here in South America), and fried cheese. It was a feast!

All too soon, it was time to leave. We took a bus back to La Paz. During the 30-minute trip we had more time to talk. What a blessing that my visit to Jorge came after three months of traveling in Peru and Bolivia! By now my Spanish had improved so much, and we were able to talk about a lot of things! We arrived back at the missionary house in La Paz and took one more picture together. Then it was time to say goodbye. I thanked Israel and Edgar and shook hands. Then I turned to Jorge and instead of the traditional Bolivian greeting/farewell, he gave me a big bear hug: the sign of a close, dear friend. I don't think I'll ever forget that moment. God is truly faithful in His promises. "I am sure I will see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living." (Psalm 27)

Date: 4/14/2007

Submitted by: Kristin Rice

Journal Entry:

La Paz, Bolivia –

Who loves a good, unplanned day off to rest and relax? Kindred does, especially when it has been way too long since we had a true day off.

We are supposed to be heading to Caranavi today, but instead God has ordained a chance of mini-independence. Camille and I went downtown for some shopping and COFFEE (see Kristin's bio to understand).

And tonight, Camille also cooked us some mac and cheese—yup, the real stuff—and we watched five episodes of *Friends* as well as *The Matrix*. Nothing too exciting, just a slight chance to live in Bolivia while pretending to live in the U.S. We'll be home soon enough, but a break after three months is pretty good.

Con Amor, Kristin



Kristin Rice

Date: 4/16/2007

Submitted by: Bethany Schwartz

Journal Entry:

Caranavi. This is our last stop for ministry here in South America. Even so, as I wrote that, I still thought to myself, 'Wow, I am in South America!' Caranavi is quite possibly one of the most beautiful places I have ever visited. We are on the edge of the rainforest, surrounded by gorgeous green hills that are covered in fruit trees. We can see two rivers converge from the incredible view we have from our house.

Though we are pretty high above the rivers and the town, we can still hear the river.

The weather is warm, finally warm, after two months of cold weather. It is absolutely beautiful. We are staying with two missionary families from the States. It is a taste of home, what with the mix of



Bethany Schwartz

both Bolivian and "United Statesian" interactions, culture, and friends. We will start our ministry more fully tomorrow. Today we filmed a short commercial for the television station here, which we will be working with a lot. The missionaries have a radio and television station, with a children's program that we will be involved with called ABCKids. The missionaries have also been doing a number of other things around the town, including starting a pizza restaurant and a snack shop. We only have three weeks left in Bolivia, as of this morning. I think it will go by all too fast. I am excited to get more involved in the ministry here and meet more and more people. Oh, and by the way, we took what was once the most dangerous road in the world to get here. Half of it has been redone, and the views were pretty awesome. Praise God for his creation and travelling mercies!

Date: 4/20/2007

Submitted by: Bethany Schwartz

Journal Entry:

Setting: Bolivian jungle. Two rivers converge around a flat airstrip. Hills covered in exotic vegetation surround us. Bananas, tangerines, and other fruits grow in abundance. A cement building houses a small four-seater airplane, a family of seven, and multiple construction workers. It is the family that catches my eye. As we sit by a grill and excitedly prepare for a swim in the river, a five-year-old face peeks over the roof ledge. She is beautiful. She is Ana. She watches curiously. Later, two of her sisters appear after returning from school. Lea is eight, Noemi ten. They have just walked two hours to school, studied for awhile, and walked two hours home. Now they have a property to watch over, for that is their job while their father works to construct a new building on the property. We are there with missionaries, owners of the property, who have so generously been housing us in Caranavi, Bolivia. They are now family to us. I play with the girls. I enjoy the beauty of the place. Magnificence. It isn't until I get home that I realize there were construction workers working hard while I relaxed and drank in the beauty. How many men were there? Do they have families? Where do their families live? Have they ever heard about Jesus? I never once stopped to greet these people, to say hello or perhaps eat a tangerine with any of them. I never once thought to smile or thank them for the work they did. Nor did I even think about finding some way to share Christ with them. All they knew is that we were missionaries. I wonder what they thought of that after I ignored them.



Bethany Schwartz

Date: 4/21/2007

Submitted by: Kristin Rice

Journal Entry:

Today was definitely a day. Wow, that is profound.

This morning, Kindred had its television debut. One of the ministries we are working with here in Caranavi is ABC Kids, a children's ministry. (ABC means "Amor y Bondad en Cristo," or Love and Living Kindness in Christ.) Saturday mornings, they have an hour-long, live program that features clowns, games, songs, and chaos. We had practiced a bit yesterday, but today we were live and in living color.

After a half hour "preshow" where we attempted to teach the kids actions to the songs, the cameras were on. I admit, it was a little awkward and hard not to feel stressed and completely blinded to what was happening. But that hour flew by so fast! It was really no different than another program; we just had to focus on the cameras instead of the kids.

Then, in the afternoon, Nick, one of our contacts, Lidio, a worker at RTC (Radio Television Caranavi), and the four of us packed into a car and drove three hours deep into the jungle to Teopunte, a little town that used to be a gold mine.

We got to the church, dropped everything off and set about with a speaker on top announcing tonight's program. Nick was hilarious, stopping to chat with people, all while still using the mike. Our program was in a church that on Sundays rarely has 20 people, but tonight, I would say at least 60-75 showed up, even people who just hung on the windows outside. I hope and pray that they heard



Kristin Rice

God and not us.

Tonight we sleep on straw mattresses. Should be exciting.

Bendiciones! Kristin

Date: 4/23/2007

Submitted by: Eric Selle

Journal Entry:

Sin is like eating a bowl of popcorn. This afternoon, our first day off here in Caranavi, I found myself in front of the TV watching the movie *Superman Returns*. I had yet to see this newest installment of the Superman series and so was enjoying myself inside during the heat of the day. One of our hosts, Nick, an American missionary, made us a HUGE bowl of popcorn, and, of course, it found its home on the table *right* next to me. At first, it tasted great. It was buttery, warm, and salty. I wasn't even hungry, but I shoveled handful after handful into my mouth. I had passed the point of being satisfied, but I found myself continuing to eat. The popcorn no longer tasted so good, but I couldn't stop. I didn't even want to eat the popcorn anymore, but automatically my hand kept wandering back to the bowl. I knew at this point it wasn't good for me to continue, but that sure didn't stop me. I had to have more.



Eric Selle

After the movie, I found myself pondering this analogy of popcorn and sin. How often do I find myself trapped in a harmful pattern contrary to the way God intended me to live? One moment I will be in fervent prayer, truly asking God with all my heart to give me strength to do what is right, guidance to live my life according to His will, and love to share His message with others. Then the next moment, I will do something that I *know* is against God's will and actually harmful to myself and others. I lose my temper. I speak rash words out of annoyance or anger. I selfishly act to meet my own needs ahead of others. During these moments I hate myself. I feel so ashamed and unworthy to be a child of God.

The story of the Israelites in the Bible is quite similar. God promises to bless them and prosper them. He rescues them out of Egypt, teaches them in the wilderness, and gives them the land in Canaan. They reject His ways, time and time again, and God forgives them, time and time again. Finally, to demonstrate His great love for them, God sends his only Son to earth, and the Israelites crucify Him. And yet, through this greatest act of sin against God, God brings us new life, salvation, forgiveness and reconciliation. That is God's way. His love is boundless, and His forgiveness is never ending.

When I feel ashamed of who I am, trapped in this body of sin, I am reminded of how this is so similar to how Paul felt. He describes this wicked pattern of sin in Romans chapter 7.

"I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing." (verses 18 & 19)

Finally, when I am at my lowest, I feel myself crying out:

"What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? Thanks be to God—through Jesus Christ our Lord!" (verses 24 & 25)

That's how incredible our God is. He will never tire of rescuing us from the mire of our sinful selves. We have incredible worth in His eyes, not because of what we have done, but because we are God's beloved creation. Thanks be to God!

Date: 5/28/2007

Submitted by: Kristin Rice

Journal Entry:

Somewhere in the U.S -

My apologies for not posting sooner--time sure has flown for us!!!

We just wanted to let everyone know that we are back in the States and are very excited to share our stories and experiences this summer. We are also ready for the



Kristin Rice

action of Vacation Bible School and hope that it will be a great time of sharing Jesus with kids.

I promise we will be better at posting once we are back to a "normal" schedule (because really, what is normal, anyways?). In the meantime, thank you for your continued support of this ministry and our parts in it.

Come back for new stories and journals!

Kindred

Date: 5/31/2007

Submitted by: Bethany Schwartz

Journal Entry:

Strawberry Point, IA, home of the world's largest strawberry, which sits atop a tall pole. Camille and I stayed with Ev and Jean, two great people who taught us a lot. Ev took us hiking on his property and showed us many different types of trees and plants. I realized how little I know about this stuff. The hike was great, a beautiful trek through woods, around small meadows, across homemade bridges...We saw some beautiful wildlife as well. We saw frogs, a baby fawn, and a snake that was probably at least five feet long crawling up a tree. It was a ratsnake, Ev said, not to be confused with a rattlesnake. Ev took us into his cabin on the property. Instantly, I was taken back into the times I have visited old homesteads or places like Abe Lincoln's cabins that we saw when I was a kid. The smell of the wood is overwhelming and so rich. The cabin was made from the wood grown and cut on this property, a fireplace with rocks from nearby, bunk beds made out of tree trunks and rope...I loved it. Then we went by a lake and just listened. How long has it been since you just listened? That is one of my favorite things to do these days. I love to hear the wind blowing through the leaves, to see how many different animals and bugs I can hear, to listen for the sound of water trickling or rushing by. I love to listen when I am outdoors, to hear God's creation. I think about when God wasn't speaking to Elijah in the mighty wind, the earthquake, or the fire, but in the gentle whisper. Most of my day is filled with my to-do list screaming at me, friendly faces to greet and get to know, team business to attend to. With all that, how often do I take time to just listen to God's creation? Who knows, maybe while I am doing that, I will hear that gentle whisper. Thanks, Ev, for giving us that chance.



Bethany Schwartz

Date: 6/2/2007

Submitted by: Camille Wilhelm

Journal Entry:

Grayslake, Illinois

I love visiting teammates' houses. In the fall, we had the opportunity to visit Eric's house in Arizona. It was so much fun to meet his family, see pictures from him as a little boy, and to get to know him better. Since we have only known one another for this one crazy year called "team," it is great to get to know teammates in a different capacity, a life outside of team.



Camille Wilhelm

This weekend we got to visit Bethany's house in Chicago. It was such a blessing to meet her parents, spend time relaxing at her house, and be in ministry with her church. I enjoyed chatting with her mom and dad and meeting people from her church. I slept in Bethany's room, so it felt like a slumber party again! It was great to be in a place that is so supportive.

Date: 6/5/2007

Submitted by: Eric Selle

Journal Entry:

Yuma

Vacation Bible School! Today was our very first day of VBS for the summer. This week the theme of VBS is "Quest for Truth," where the children find clues out of the Bible to determine who Jesus is and what he has done for us. I'm really enjoying the kids, presenting puppet shows, and leading a bunch of sing-alongs (including the theme song for the week that sounds suspiciously like the theme song to Indiana Jones). The main characters in this curriculum are Dakota Joe (do you catch the similarities here?) and Digger, his faithful dog. The kids absolutely love it, and that's what makes it fun.



Eric Selle

Quick fun story for the day: Kristin volunteered to operate the Digger the Dog puppet this week. The kids really love the puppets, and they are always shouting out, "Where's Digger?" And, can I just say, Kristin is hilarious with Digger the Dog, whose favorite pastimes are "digging for bones...and Truth." I don't know why, but it makes me smile every time I think of that. I guess you have to be there.

Another big plus for our summer VBS schedule is that we get to spend an entire week in one location. This is a big change from our fall schedule, when we were traveling from church to church almost every day. It's so nice to really get to know people throughout the week. God has truly blessed us this year by introducing us to so many wonderful brothers and sisters in Christ. It is truly an encouragement!

Date: 6/9/2007

Submitted by: Kristin Rice

Journal Entry:

Yuma, Colorado--Wow, VBS has been a kick this week. Truly, we have just had an amazing group of kids to play with. Camille and I have been leading games, which has enlightened my day. The little kids, preschool and kindergarten, love to just run. So we play "Run for it" without ending. Literally, I tell the kids to run across the field and back. That's the entire game. And they do it, time and time again. It's a no-nonsense game designed more to tire them out than anything else. But I think they like it because it's a way to be free--no rules, no winning or losing--just pure running and love for moving.



Kristin Rice

I have to admit that I am currently in a place of complacency in regards to my relationship with God. I am not on a mountain or in a valley, just status quo. This is not necessarily a bad thing. But I feel like those kids--running because it's fun and I know that it is fun. I may not exactly see the point of it, but I know that at the end of the day, I am worn out because of my running, that it served a purpose greater than I could understand. Perhaps I should exchange the word "running" for "faith" or some other word I cannot think of at the moment. I am not worried for I know God is using me and my teammates to spread His love and message. But today I am doing it on a plateau.

Kristin

Date: 6/9/2007

Submitted by: Bethany Schwartz

Journal Entry:

I had so much fun this week in Yuma, CO, helping with Vacation Bible School. We were on a Quest for Truth (TELL THE TRUTH!), and boy, was it fun. We had about 50 kids who were so excited to play with us and were so well-behaved. Eric and I taught music, Camille and Kristin led games. We also had a lovely time with our hosts. We girls stayed together and even got to ride our host mom Nancy's motorized scooter around the town. This morning we were off to the Denver



Bethany Schwartz

area. Though it was hard to say goodbye to Yuma, I was pretty excited (and I wasn't the only one!) because we were headed straight to Camille's house for lunch with her parents. What a blessing to be with family eating great food and relaxing. Then we traveled to Wheat Ridge, CO, about a half hour away, to set up for church and our next VBS. We met so many wonderful, friendly people. It looks to be a really nice week. Eric's host family took us swimming, where I learned a new favorite pool game, underwater telephone. It was a really nice day.

Date: 6/12/2007

Submitted by: Camille Wilhelm

Journal Entry:

Wheat Ridge, Colorado

I didn't really expect anything special for my 23rd birthday (that's right, I had my birthday this week!). I mean, 23 isn't that big of a deal, is it? We are leading a VBS in Wheat Ridge, Colorado, so I am staying with my parents. That has been special in and of itself. But, my teammates tricked me so that we could have some fun on my birthday! They got me to agree to meeting at the church earlier than normal (with great reluctance) before starting our evening VBS. I went to lunch with my parents and headed to the church. So, upon arriving, they informed me of the sneakiness and conning they were doing to get me to the church early. We went out for coffee (mmm, caramel lattes) and just hung out laughing and talking and playing Phase Ten. It was tons of fun. Then, at the VBS all the kids wished me Happy Birthday (super cute from the littlest ones) and sang. On Wednesday we did a youth event: Wendy's and bowling. After bowling, we went back to the church and there they had cake and sang again! It was really neat. Glory of God Lutheran was such a blessing to our team in so many ways, but especially for making my birthday memorable.



Camille Wilhelm

Date: 6/14/2007

Submitted by: Eric Selle

Journal Entry:

Wheatridge

This week has been great. My host family lives literally three blocks away from church, AND they let me borrow a bike so I can ride to and from. It's great to be on a bike again (it sure beats driving in the van every day), and, of course, I love staying in one place for the week, to get to know church members and host families a little bit better.



Eric Selle

There are a lot of middle school and high school youth helping out with the VBS this week. I've really enjoyed getting to know them the past several days. Last night (Wednesday), we hung out with the youth at the bowling alley, and they came back to the church for some cake for Camille's birthday (which was Tuesday). Most memorable for me would have to be two high school youth, Dan and Jake, who are twin brothers. They have been doing the skits every morning during opening: playing the roles of Captain Crash (always trying to rescue someone but a little bit clumsy...) and Fearless Leader. The little kids just love these two guys! It's inspiring for me, too, to see the youth really active in helping with VBS. What a blessing to get to work with these young adults!

Date: 6/16/2007

Submitted by: Kristin Rice

Journal Entry:

Flagstaff, AZ--I am completely amazed and in wonder of God and His creation. Today we drove

from Cortes, Colorado into Arizona. In the last twenty-four hours, we went from snow-capped Rocky Mountains to desert plateau; forests upon forests to sandstone megaliths. How does He do it?!

I thought I was over the nature-shock of God's handiwork after being blown over by mountains in Peru. Nope. My mountain-dance of craziness has returned, as uncontrollable as ever. This time it is everything I see, including Black-eyed Susans (flowers) on the side of the road when we entered Arizona.

Besides which, I think humanity is pretty funny as well. We had a nice leisurely drive which allowed for a couple "touristy" stops. "Four Corners U.S.A" is a monument of sorts, located where the borders of Utah, Colorado, New Mexico, and Arizona meet up. It is the only place in the entire U.S. where four states share a common corner. Kind of cheesy, yet I can now claim I have been in four places at once. Someone thought this was important enough to make a monument out of it. It is advertised for miles before you reach it. We consider it worthy enough to stop and take pictures.

Yet, I also saw some incredible sights that I would love to just sit and gaze at for hours on end. But because we are driving on an interstate, one is prohibited from such an action. And so I am not allowed to enjoy the things I perchance would like to, things from our Creator God. Yet I can spend *mucho tiempo* in a man-made creation. I don't know where I am going with this, but I guess it saddens me that I may be able to share more in common with people when I say I stopped at the Four Corners than saying I saw this amazing rock formation off the side of Interstate 160.

Kristin



Kristin Rice

Date: 6/19/2007

Submitted by: Bethany Schwartz

Journal Entry:

Deep in the middle of the VBS season, here in Flagstaff, AZ, we had a fun morning at the G-R-E-A-T B-I-B-L-E Reef. I am helping out with crafts this week. Today's theme is God's People Help, and we made some pretty cool crafts. One was a picture that used sand paper, a transparency, contact paper, cardboard, glue, and fun ribbons. One was a little jar that contained not only aqua blue "ocean" water, but also the components of the story of Naaman, who was healed from his leprosy by washing in the river seven times. After VBS, the fun didn't end. Eric's hosts Ed, Denise, Nicole, and Colton threw a luau. Decorations were everywhere; it was so festive. Lots of people from the church came, many that were helping out with VBS. It was great to get to know people better. I have been in the craft room, so I haven't really met the people helping out at the other stations yet. At the luau, we had fantastic food, including a fruit salad in a watermelon that had been cut to look like a whale, great burgers grilled for us, and some delicious root beer floats. We have gotten to play with some great kids this week and are having a lot of fun. In the VBS season, sometimes it can seem like all we are doing is playing. But as we play, we often get to see God at work in conversations, in interactions, in relationships that are formed...God speaks to us at various levels, and we don't have to be having deep intellectual or theological conversations to be experiencing God's presence and joy. It is a privilege to be able to play with kids and lead them in various VBS activities all at the same time.



Bethany Schwartz

Date: 6/21/2007

Submitted by: Camille Wilhelm

Journal Entry:

Flagstaff, Arizona

This week we are in Flagstaff, Arizona, doing VBS once again. While driving to Flagstaff, Bethany declared that she thought we ought to go to the Grand Canyon while we are here, because it's only like one and a half hours away. We decided to do that for a team outing. Wow, it was amazing. I've never been there before, so it was awesome to be able to go. I have seen so many pictures of it, that it looked just as I imagined, but 100



Camille Wilhelm

times more incredible, and something you can never capture on film.

Going to the Grand Canyon definitely made me appreciate God's creation. Sometimes, I forget to praise God for His creation until I see something like that, and then I remember the majesty of what He's done. We have seen lots of beautiful scenery in driving across the United States. It's been fantastic to see it all. We sing a Spanish song called "Salmo 8," or "Psalm 8."

O, Jeovah, Senor nuestro, cuan grande es tu nombre, En toda la tierra, aleluya.
De la boca de los ninos, y de los que maman, fundaste la fortaleza, aleluya
Cuando miro a los cielos, la luna y las estrellas, me pregunto, "Que es el hombre?" aleluya.

Translation:

Oh, Jehová, our Lord, how great is your name in all the earth, alleluia.
From the mouth of the children and infants, you have founded the stronghold.
When I look at the skies, the moon and the stars, I ask, "What is this man?" alleluia.

I had this song in my head all during our hiking and visiting the Grand Canyon. I couldn't help but think of God's majesty when seeing the creation so amazing. I am continually reminded of God's goodness through His creation.

Date: 6/23/2007

Submitted by: Eric Selle

Journal Entry:

Being that my mom lives in Arizona, you would think that I knew Flagstaff a little better, but it really is new to me. The Phoenix area, or the "Valley of the Sun," is incredibly hot in the summer, while here in Flagstaff it's really quite comfortable this time of year. On Monday, June 18, I decided to go exploring a little bit outdoors. Now, if you didn't realize that I like "mountaintop" experiences, you'll have to read our first Kindred newsletter. Nowhere do I witness the beauty and power of God than in His creation, so, since Mt. Elden was practically in the backyard of Living Christ (the church we're visiting this week), I absolutely HAD to go hiking. The trail is three miles from bottom to top, with the goal being a ranger lookout station at the top, some 2,500 feet above the trailhead. During the hour and a half journey to the top, I saw some beautiful views of the desert and forest surrounding Flagstaff. I also got to see some lizards, beetles, rabbits, and even four mule deer crossing the trail. Excellent! Finally I reached the summit and found the ranger station, high above the trees on high stilts. The sign said, "climb at your own risk," but I wasn't about to turn back after I'd come this far. I clung tight to the rail as the wind gusted around me. When I reached the top, I was surprised to see that the lookout station was occupied! A fire watcher beckoned me to join him inside. Ed Piker was his name, a friendly gentlemen, if a little bit quiet. He told me he was a retired elementary school teacher who enjoyed working as a fire watcher. He answered my questions about the equipment he uses to spot fires and report the exact coordinates to the other ranger stations. He also shared some interesting stories, such as the many times lightning has struck the lookout tower while he was inside! (Don't worry, the building is well grounded--the only thing that happens is the phone blows up.) I couldn't enjoy the company (and the incredible view!) for too long, since it was already late in the afternoon. I couldn't help but smile and laugh as I climbed back down to the ground. Why? I guess it was because it was an unexpected surprise at the end of a neat adventure. God never ceases to amaze me at the end of the day!



Eric Selle

Date: 6/26/2007

Submitted by: Kristin Rice

Journal Entry:

Dillon, MT: VBS Week #4.

It has been a kick here in lovely Montana. For starters, I have never been to Montana. It is gorgeous here: we are surrounded by mountains and the biggest sky I have ever seen. No wonder Montana is known for being the "Big Sky Country."



Kristin Rice

We have been diving into the Great Bible Reef for the second week in a row. It is kind of nice not having to think up everything new again for openings, closings, and music time. We get

each group of kids (there are eight) for fifteen minutes. The time really flies, but it was great. The littlest kids just love to jump around and make the loudest sheep sounds. The oldest kids just have a great energy, no matter what song it is. Even the middle kids, though slightly more rowdy, really get into singing and having fun. This has been a great week so far.

I think we feel very fortunate to not have any crazy stories to report. Life is fairly status quo on the road. We go crazy during VBS, relax in the evenings, and still get the team stuff done, too. Some days the time goes too fast, and some days it just does not go fast enough. But in the back of our heads, August is coming faster than we imagine. I know we are looking forward to so many different things; it continues to be my prayer that as we keep on keeping on, we are able to relish in the last few weeks of our time as Kindred.

Blessings!! Kristin

Date: 6/28/2007

Submitted by: Bethany Schwartz

Journal Entry:

Life is beautiful and it's getting better all the time.

I stole these words from a book at Barnes and Noble. Which leads me to wonder yet again, is that glass really half full or half empty? There is so much to be thankful, but I am also saddened by a number of things right now. I have been blessed to stay at some incredible host homes this summer. Various people have taken me in and shared their lives with me for a week at a time. Kids have reminded me about the joys of play and make-believe. Pastors have reminded me of the absurd truth that Christ offers me a saving grace that I cannot work for. Why are gifts sometimes so hard to accept? We live in a society of compensation, where men are created equal, charged equally, and expected to repay equally...yet God's grace is free. Wow. The Youth Encounter lifestyle is fantastic in so many ways. I love traveling, seeing the world, meeting people, becoming a part of a community for a week at a time. Thanks to my parents and team life, I have now been to every state of the contiguous United States except the six in the very tip of the northeastern U.S. What a blessing. Our country is beautiful.

I am struggling right now with the fact that the team year is almost over. I have bonded with my teammates, and I am not ready to say goodbye to them. I have bonded with this lifestyle, and I am not ready to settle into a steady, full-time job with all of its benefits and curses. I love summer; I drink it in like a thirsty man in the desert drinks precious water. In a few weeks, I will be facing the end of team life, the end of endless and addicting travel, the end of summer heat, fun, and adventure.

And then we meet someone new, and they kindly ask the dreaded question, "So what are you doing after team is over?" I wish I knew. Oh, how I wish I knew. Life is beautiful, and it's getting better all the time. Well, I really want to continue doing some of the things I have experienced on team. I am just getting my feet wet in certain areas, and I feel drawn to continue in them. Overseas ministry. Homeless ministry. Music ministry. Children's ministry. Social ministry. Maybe I will go back overseas. Maybe I will find a job that excites my passions here in the States. Maybe I'll find a way to continue living as a nomad. It is a beautiful lifestyle. I don't know yet what doors will open for me. All I really know is that I pray about it daily and that God is in control. What is it He wants me to do? How can I serve Him and others? Where does He want me to live? The world is mine for the moment. I can follow any path. Life is beautiful. And it's getting better all the time. Praise God, from whom all blessings flow.

When I got back to my host home tonight, the kids were eagerly waiting to eat ice cream with me. No matter where I go or what I choose, I hope I never forget the little joys. Maybe that's what I will do next year. I am going to eat ice cream with a seven-year-old. I am going to go down the slide over and over with an eighteen-month-old. I am going to twirl a three-year-old. I am going to go to an amusement park with a nine-year-old. I am going to shake a friend's hand in church, look her in the eye, and listen to her story when she starts speaking. I am going to do something nice for a



Bethany Schwartz

stranger just because. I am going to tell my mom I love her and help her around the house. Large scale plans aside, life continues to be beautiful, and, though the road ahead is mysterious and maybe even scary, life is getting better all the time.

Date: 7/2/2007

Submitted by: Eric Selle

Journal Entry:

Salt Lake City

This is our first week without VBS since we started four weeks ago in the beginning of June. Our mission this week: to travel from Montana to Albuquerque, New Mexico. No problem! And we have a little bit of time to see the sights along the way (instead of zooming past like we did last weekend when we drove from Flagstaff, AZ to Dillon, MT in two days). Today we decided to venture over to the Great Salt Lake, just to see if it's really all that it's cracked up to be. This morning, with the temperature already approaching 100 degrees, we jumped in the van equipped with sun screen, swimsuits, and water to embark on our little adventure. The Salt Lake is very unique...and very smelly. Apparently there's not too much that actually lives on the lake, except for some small shrimp-like creatures, and millions and millions of bugs. As we approached the water, traveling over the very salty, hot sand, our ankles were bombarded by droves of these pesky little insects. So, we hurried into the water to find some relief...and more bugs. Well, to make a long story boring, we waded out quite a way and then found that you really *can* float quite effortlessly in the super-saturated salt water, but didn't stay out too long due to the heat, smell, and bugs. We waded back and stood along the bug-infested shore just long enough to snap a picture of our team before we hurried back across the hot sand and rocks to the safety of our van. Our whole adventure (travel time included) only lasted about an hour. Ahh, the excitement!



Eric Selle

Date: 7/3/2007

Submitted by: Kristin Rice

Journal Entry:

Grand Junction, CO -

In the last five years, I have never spent the Fourth of July in the same place. I have been very lucky to visit and travel often and see some fun festivities.

It is just so amazing to me how grandiose our nation is. This is a HUGE country, and we are able to freely move about it, from town to town, county to county, state to state. In theory, all I have to do is just decide, "Hey, tomorrow I want to drive to Washington. I can." (Sidenote: the responsible person in me screams, "Kristin don't write that in a journal because it is not really true for most people." Oh well.)

We are very lucky to live in a place where things can happen like that. Yet, in our lives of faith, it is not necessarily always the case. If the Son has set you free, you are free indeed. Free from the burden of sin, free from death, free to live an eternal life in praise and worship with the entire Family of Christ. NOT free to sin whenever I want because Jesus already took care of it. That is where responsibility comes in.

Our freedom in Jesus is a freedom to love and live as He did--trying to be self-less, open-armed, and in the Father's will. Jesus' freedom to talk to His Heavenly Father (**our** Heavenly Father) meant that He was more in tune with what God wanted and needed of Him. And He never said no, even when it cost His life.

Perhaps I challenge myself, and others as well, to seek **that** sense of freedom--to be in constant prayer, not just talking but listening--of hearing and following through what it is God calls of us. Many of us heard the call to be on team this year (or part of the year, as it may be for a few of us). I



Kristin Rice

pray, fellow teamers, that you continue to seek God's purpose in your life always. And non-teamers, you as well are called to great and important things, though they may not always be great and important in the eyes of the society in which we live. Take joy in following God no matter what this world says about it.

Kristin

Date: 7/5/2007

Submitted by: Bethany Schwartz

Journal Entry:

Everyone has a hidden talent or two. Some people know about the talents that they possess and they never tell others; others haven't even discovered some of their hidden talents.



Bethany Schwartz

We are staying at Camille's house for a couple of nights. It has been a real blessing to return to Denver, see familiar sights, and hug familiar loved ones. The last time we were here, Camille's mom asked Camille if she wanted to go out and throw "booms." Not knowing anything about this, I kind of let it slip by when the timing for it didn't work out. However, this time, Camille and her dad went out to throw boomerangs, and Kristin and I went with them (Eric had gone with them the night before). I haven't had much experience with boomerangs, so much of my mental picture included things I had made up throughout my life. I was surprised to learn a few things...

- Camille is really good at this art of throwing and catching a boomerang.
- There are different kinds of boomerangs, shapes differing both slightly and drastically.
- The boomerang does actually come back to you if you throw it right.
- There is actually a right way to throw a boomerang.
- It feels really good to see the boomerang catch the wind and turn in a wide circle to come back to you.
- It feels even better to catch the boomerang, even though sometimes it hurts a lot and you get bruises.
- Sometimes you can put little glowsticks into the boomerang and continue throwing it even after it gets dark.
- Even when you have the glowsticks in, if the boomerang gets stuck in a tree, you can't always get it down.
- Sometimes it doesn't matter how much Mr. Wilhelm throws a baseball at a boomerang stuck in a tree, it just isn't going to come down.

Turns out it's true--you can learn new things every day.

Date: 7/10/2007

Submitted by: Camille Wilhelm

Journal Entry:

Albuquerque, New Mexico

Albuquerque: Hot Air Balloon capital of the United States, perhaps even the world. Annual host city for "Balloon Fiesta," one of the world's most photographed events. Balloon Fiesta boasts media coverage from over 50 countries across the globe, including live satellite broadcasts to Japan and multiple television documentaries. Hot air balloons are seen daily in Albuquerque, making their grand appearances in the morning, when the air is cool.



Camille Wilhelm

It's always amazing to me to see unusual mediums that God uses to show His love to His people. This week we are working with Pastor Jay Mason and his wife, Vicky. They, for eight years, have had a ballooning ministry called Lift High the Cross. They go out across the nation and do outreach evangelism, using the hot air balloon as a tool for the ministry. Pastor Jay and Vicky arrive at a

church and train groups of people (40 or so) in hot air ballooning and outreach evangelism. They then do various flights in the balloon, teaching the people about Jesus and his atoning sacrifice along the way.

It's so neat to see how God brought Pastor Jay and Vicky to this ministry, to the town of Albuquerque, "The Balloon Capital," and is using them in a church, but also in a unique ministry to reach people and share the love of Christ with them.

Date: 7/10/2007

Submitted by: Eric Selle

Journal Entry:

Another week of Vacation Bible School, this time in Albuquerque, New Mexico at Our Savior Lutheran Church. The theme is "Take the Plunge." Kids plunge into Faith, Obedience, Worship and Service. Kristin and I get to lead games this week: a good way to get to know all the kids and stay active throughout the day!

In addition to meeting kids, we get to spend time with our hosts, gracious people who open up their homes to us for a week. For the first part of this week, I stayed with Pastor Jay Mason, his wife Vicki, and their son Travis. What a unique family! For over 10 years now, they have been involved in a *hot-air balloon* ministry called "Lift High the Cross." It's pretty intense and took quite a step of faith to begin. Ten years ago, Jay and Vicki (along with their three school-age children) started traveling 12 months out of the year from church to church. Their "in" was the hot-air balloon decorated with a huge LCMS cross. Every church they visited would gather 30-40 volunteers to be trained in hot-air balloon logistics and (more importantly) outreach ministry. Then the church would host a community event, inviting people to come for hot-air balloon rides and other activities. The trained volunteers would share their faith and listen to the stories of people who arrived at the event. In addition to sharing the gospel with the community, the experience of "Lift High the Cross" enables the church volunteers to grow closer together as a family. The Mason family lived much like we do this year: on the road constantly, graciously receiving food and support from hosts, and dedicating their lives to their ministry. Today they travel about five months out of the year (although they are taking a year of rest currently). For more information about the "Lift High the Cross" ministry, visit this website: <http://www.lhtc.org>



Eric Selle

Date: 7/12/2007

Submitted by: Kristin Rice

Journal Entry:

Albuquerque, NM -

I have been absolutely amazed at the stucco phenomenon here in Albuquerque. It's kind of neat, since most of the houses with stucco actually kind of blend in with the natural desert of this part of New Mexico.

Stucco: fine plaster used for coating wall surfaces or molding into architectural decorations.

It appears at times to be uneven and putty-like to me. In fact, sometimes I fear that if I stick my finger into a wall or house, I will lose it into the putty mass.

Yesterday, I went run-walking and found a wall that had stucco on it. It was a thin layer, and so the bricks underneath were coming through. Despite the original appearance, I was able to see the very strong and durable structure.

Lately, I guess I have been feeling a lot like stucco. At times, I seem to just blend in with my natural surroundings; but even more so, that there is an exterior hiding the internal truth. My faith is not rock-solid; I am not a "super" Christian. I have just been lucky to be on team for the better part of two years. I am tired, worn-down, and ready live in a place for longer than five days. This last month on the road is going to be very hard for my spirit, but I pray and hope that God will continue to strengthen me every single day at a time. And in the process, if I do stick my fingers in stucco, I hope it does not get stuck, but will reveal the truth underneath it all.



Kristin Rice

Date: 7/13/2007

Submitted by: Eric Selle

Journal Entry:

Today began the first day of our two-day long haul from Albuquerque, NM to San Jose, CA, over 1100 miles in our van in two days. Luckily, we forgot about the fact that, upon entering Arizona, we received an extra hour of time. So, we found ourselves driving through Flagstaff, AZ with time to spare, so we called our friends we first met three weeks ago (the *first* time we were in Flagstaff). We ended up visiting Pastor Kacey Hahn at the Campus Ministry Center in the University of Northern Arizona campus. What an unexpected treat! We probably only visited for about a half hour, but it was a good break from driving, and a gift to spend more time with Pastor Kacey, who has been such a blessing to us.



Eric Selle

Our next treat of the day came when we arrived at Grace Lutheran Church in Kingman, AZ, our destination for day one. Brandon, the youth director, gave us directions to a Christian coffee house in town that had live piano music that night. Very cool! It had been such a long time since I'd heard live music that wasn't our own. We arrived with great anticipation, but the concert was a little different from my initial expectations. The performing artist played on an electric keyboard with his own CD providing back up rhythm, accompaniment, and vocal harmony. Not exactly the live "piano" music I was hoping for, but we stayed anyway. I'm glad we did. He sang a lot of praise and worship songs that we knew and could sing along with. The man's passion for worshipping Christ really came out in his singing, and it turned out to be an enjoyable event.

Back at the church, I was playing piano in the youth house when a girl approached to listen. Youth group had just gotten out, and she was waiting for a ride home. Her name is Rachel (but her friends call her "Becca"), and she knew we were from Youth Encounter. I was a little surprised, until I remembered that their youth group had just been to the Las Vegas Quake recently (the Youth Encounter theme from Galatians 1:3-5 was posted in the youth room).

"So, that must have been Captive Free West Coast that you saw," I told her.

"Of course," Becca replied, then continued without a pause, "Naomi Nelson, Dave Minster, Sarah White, Anthony Elder, Alex Schatz, and Michelle Meulemans."

"Yep, that's the one." I couldn't help but smile at her enthusiastic response. She really looked up the West Coast band that played at the Quake. It was great to see the impact they have had on others. God has blessed team ministry this year.

Date: 8/3/2007

Submitted by: Bethany Schwartz

Journal Entry:

Saginaw, MN

We finished up our final five-day three-hours-in-the-morning VBS in Saratoga, CA two weeks ago. We had a good time in Monterey, CA leading three church services and enjoying our host homes. Then we began the four-day jaunt back halfway across the US, driving about eight or nine hours a day. In that time, I began to feel closure on the year. Things seemed to be wrapping up. I was ready to head into debriefing. There was just one thing...we still had a lot of ministry to do in Iowa and Minnesota. Looking ahead at our final week, I thought there was no way I could handle all of the things to come. I was tired. I was ready to sleep. And we had some things ahead that we as Kindred had never done before. We got to lead worship for a few days at Lutheran Lakeside Camp in Iowa. Though I was excited to go to a camp atmosphere and to see a friend, Kyle, who works there, I was still nervous because I had no idea what to expect. And right after that...we had a 24-hour lock-in VBS to lead. WHAT? I had never heard of such a thing. How could that ever work out? It just sounded like pure craziness to me...



Bethany Schwartz

It was wonderful. Both the camp experience and our first lock-in VBS went wonderfully. At camp, we got to rest and enjoy a great retreat from the craziness of the summer. We got to meet some

fantastic camp counselors and play with lots of excited campers. I also got to go sailing for the first time in my life, which was absolutely wonderful. I can't wait to do it again. I was sad to leave, still dreading the intense ministry to come, but again, I was blessed. We stopped in Minneapolis and saw friends/hosts we had met last September. We got to go swimming, play games, relax, and catch up with them. Again, a wonderful surprise blessing. Then we went up to Saginaw, home of the only lock-in VBS I have ever heard of. We started almost as soon as we got there. The kids arrived, set up their tents, we roasted hot dogs and marshmallows, and began an incredible time of fun songs, puppet shows, skits, crafts, games, bike-riding, campfire, a great hayride, lake swimming, great food, and more. It was a wonderful atmosphere and a great time for families to bond and relax, church relationships to grow, and God to bless us all. I never would have guessed our last week of new ministry opportunities could have been so great. Being close to Duluth, MN, some of us have gotten to see the beautiful Lake Superior, and we even get to have church at a beach tomorrow! I shouldn't be surprised anymore, but I am continually surprised by how God blesses us. He has granted me strength when I have had none, energy when I am super tired, and relaxation in the midst of busy-ness. I am going to miss this lifestyle.

Date: 8/4/2007

Submitted by: Kristin Rice

Journal Entry:

Thank You

For all of the family, friends, sponsors, partners, and people we have met along the way in the past year:

Thank you

....for supporting us and the ministry we were called to do as Kindred

....for showing us Jesus Christ through your actions, words, hugs

....for feeding us and giving us a place to rest for the night

....for sticking with us even when updates were hard to come by

....for giving us hope for the future, wherever it may call us to

....for the love and care we were able to give and receive in turn

....for the many things we cannot even begin to name here for fear of a ridiculously long journal and

Good-bye (and I, for one, do not like long good-byes)

It has been a year of trials, joys, wonder, excitement. We have been so blessed to be part of this Youth Encounter/Kindred legacy. We have seen more of God's creation and have grown in ways we cannot begin to distinguish. We have been able to meet people and learn things beyond the scope of any other experience.

The last couple of weeks have been filled with our last VBS in Saratoga, California at a church Kindred visited in the fall. As well, we spent four long days from California to Iowa, where we will have our last week of planned ministry before we regroup in Minneapolis with the other 10 teams to debrief and say good-bye.

Come August 12, look forward to seeing new Kindred faces. God is calling them to an incredible mission.

As for us, the next few years are still a little unclear as to where God is leading us and calling us. But for now, this is where and what you will find us doing:

Bethany will be pursuing education and experience in international social work. She is open to whatever God has in store and will throw at her.

Camille will be getting married in October in Texas, then shortly after, moving to California to live at Edwards Air Force Base. Her fiancé is a second lieutenant in the Air Force. She hopes to pursue youth work in Southern California.



Kristin Rice

Eric plans to spend time with family in Arizona before returning to Minnesota as part of the training staff for the upcoming new YE teamers. When he finishes with training in mid-September, he plans to serve God, hopefully involoving teaching, church music, and/or Spanish language.

Kristin is moving to Chicago to begin studies for her Masters of Arts in Muslim-Christian dialogue (or something along that nature). She is excited to live in the seminary community at Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago, surrounded by people with incredible stories and life experiences.

We ask for your continued prayers as we begin the arduous task of fitting this experience into the rest of our lives. We will all be making some big life-changing decisions in the future and will appreciate prayers for discernment and peace, wherever God takes us. With that, we bid you Adios, Dios te bendiga y te guarde. Ustedes son en nuetros oraciones y corazones siempre. (Good-bye, God bless you and keep you. You are in our prayers and hearts always).

Kristin, Camille, Eric, Bethany
