

New Dawn 2006-07 Journal

Date: 9/17/2006

Submitted by: Kyle Scobie

Journal Entry:

I woke up this morning in the usual way, rolling over and sighing because I had to get out of bed. Then I realized that I had just been commissioned the previous night by Doctor, Reverend, President, and Poet Larry Johnson. That meant that today (Saturday, September 16, 2006) was the first day of being in a full-time ministry position. I also realized that it was the first official day back in the real world. I guess a lot has happened since we've been gone in northern Minnesota for three weeks and another week at a camp in Wisconsin. I think last night was the first time I saw a television on since being at the airport in Detroit a month ago. It's weird to turn on the news and see continuing coverage of something you didn't know happened. Not knowing about progress of the wars in various places is interesting, because war is always a fast-paced news story that you can't just dive into at random moments and expect to understand it. Apparently the Pope made some controversial comments recently (go figure, the Pope, a major leader in the Christian faith, being controversial in a secular world). The other huge thing I was surprised by was that the Crocodile Hunter died. All due respect, however, when you make your living keeping dangerous pets, some things become less surprising. So begins the year of being out of the loop, yet still so involved that there's no time to be tired. Of course, there are so many interesting people to meet and greet that sleep isn't a priority.

So we began this morning by climbing in a huge van with a trailer filled with tons of stuff, pulling out onto the open road, and driving for three hours to our first destination, Onalaska, Wisconsin. We just finished our first program, which was a worship service where we lead the music. We also have two church services to do tomorrow morning at the same church, and then we have a program Sunday night in a town fifteen minutes away. It certainly doesn't feel like we're going all over the world yet, but with time I'm sure that we'll have more than our share of riding in a van.

God is definitely teaching me many things, mostly about myself, but also how to deal with and relate to all sorts of people. It's fun, ambiguous, and exhausting, but mostly exciting. So begins the year (which will more than likely turn into a lifetime) of ministry, and, hopefully, tons of God's grace. I need it.

Life is good, God is great!

-Kyle Scobie



Kyle Scobie

Date: 9/19/2006

Submitted by: Josh Tomac

Journal Entry:

Today we had a nice drive from La Crosse, Wisconsin to Wisconsin Rapids. During our stay in Wisconsin Rapids my host family was amazing and spoiled me with all the Mt. Dew I could handle. IT WAS AWESOME!!! We have been on the road for about a week, and I have enjoyed every minute of it so far. My team is a lot of fun, and I am glad that I joined team for a second time. Adios, until next time...



Josh Tomac

Date: 9/22/2006

Submitted by: Tara Oetting

Journal Entry:

It's officially been one week since we've been commissioned and it already feels like an eternity! We've been from central Wisconsin, to the Twin Cities, back to Central Wisconsin and then back to northern Wisconsin. It's been quite the whirl-wind tour so

far. Today we are in Siren, WI, a beautiful town just outside of Minnesota. The congregation had a potluck for us (I LOVE POTLUCKS!!!) and then we had a Family Night Program. The congregation seemed to have a great time singing with us and joining in with our goofy actions. Afterwards, the youth group presented us with gift baskets which were amazing and unexpected. The congregation was very welcoming and we have very much enjoyed our time here. The pastor also works for the local newspaper, so he was busy taking our picture and will write an article about us. We are celebrities already, but we are trying not to let the fame go to our heads.



Tara Oetting

Life on the road has been going very well. God has blessed us with amazing people and our host homes have been SO great. I think that is my favorite part of this ministry so far. Everyone has been so hospitable and welcoming, and I have really appreciated the conversations I get to have with so many different people.

I think tomorrow we are off to a Correctional Facility, which, I personally am sort of anxious about. Please pray for us and continue to keep us in your thoughts.

Date: 9/25/2006

Submitted by: Emily Beckman

Journal Entry:

Week numero uno is over...and yet somehow it feels like it's been a month already. I ran into my director at Sugar Creek yesterday, and she asked me when it was that we were in LaCrosse and I had to think about it for like two minutes because it's scary to think that it was only last week we were there. It feels like forever! But in a good way. Our week has been amazing; we've been truly blessed with wonderful host homes and great stories from the people we are meeting. Last night we got the pleasure of putting on our program at Prairie du Chien Correctional Facility for about 80 men. It was one of the best experiences that our team has had so far. It was so powerful to look out among the men and see some of them with their eyes closed and their heads moving to the beat of our music, just worshiping with us. It was definitely one of those times when you feel like you were ministered to way more than you did ministry yourself. I just thank the Lord for putting us in that chapel at that time because I know He was working on hearts in that room that night.



Emily Beckman

This morning I woke up and went for a walk with my host mom, Mary, and her huge dog, Bosco. While we were walking, I kept on thinking about how awesome of an opportunity this year is for all of us who are on team. How sweet is it to take a year out of your life and travel around the world, praising God and sharing part of your life with others? Never in my life would I get a chance to meet such amazing people and hear such amazing stories. Never would I get to see so many churches that are on fire for the Lord.

God is good...that pretty much sums it all up.

Date: 9/26/2006

Submitted by: Elizabeth Lord

Journal Entry:

Right now we are in Prairie Du Chien, WI getting ready to go to Evansville, WI. It was really good to have a day off yesterday. We were able to relax and get personal things done. For me personally, this week has been a roller coaster of emotions. It has been wonderful being out on the road and getting to know my teammates even more. However, I found out this week that a good friend from camp was in an accident and passed away this last Thursday. I know he is in heaven, but it's hard to understand God's timing sometimes. Death is always a hard thing to deal with even when you know they are in heaven.



Elizabeth Lord

But I can be comforted by remembering that God's timing is perfect and that He sees the big picture.

"I eagerly expect and hope that I will in no way be ashamed, but will have sufficient courage so that now as always Christ will be exalted in my body, whether in life or by death. For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain."

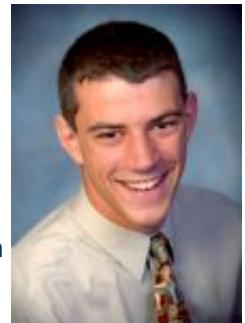
Philippians 1:20-21

Date: 9/28/2006

Submitted by: Kyle Scobie

Journal Entry:

Yay for Michigan! It's good to feel somewhat home. Actually, we're still in the U.P. of Michigan, and I'm a troll (I live "under the bridge") but it's good to see familiar ways of marking the highway system. We drove from Wisconsin into Michigan on Friday afternoon with a youth group from Tomahawk, WI. While in Tomahawk, we all stayed in this cabin in the woods that was owned by a doctor and his wife and kids. The doctor has run the Iditarod four times, so he had 30+ Alaskan Huskies (and months-old puppies!) They also had some horses, so we got to go horseback riding Friday morning before we left with the youth group. We camped with youth group Friday night in the Porcupine Mountains, right on the edge of Lake Superior, and we were with them through lunch on Saturday when we left for Ewen, MI, a small town with a huge heart. We went bowling with the youth in Ewen (my highest game of three was a 91) and then did two entire Sunday services at two different churches. We met some wonderful people in Ewen, which is fairly famous with past New Dawn teams apparently. After the Sunday service drove to Escanaba, a large town (relatively speaking for the U.P.) on Lake Michigan. Two great lakes in one weekend, pretty impressive. After a couple days in Escanaba, we go across the bridge to the Lower Peninsula, where we'll eventually end up at my house! Yay home, yay food, yay for not having to use a road map!



Kyle Scobie

The road has been good to us so far. I'm starting to learn how to delegate certain parts of my Program Coordinator job, like the stress. It's actually possible to delegate stress, I've discovered how (if you want the secret, send me a letter with a sum of money or something). As you can imagine, putting five complete strangers in a van after a month of what would best be described as mixers and get-to-know-you games can create some interesting side effects. These effects include, but are not limited to; unknown, unpleasant, and unclaimed odors; funny, strange, and awkward inside jokes; and dirty looks from the rear-view mirror. Perhaps the most important thing we have all learned, or rather, been pleasantly made aware of, is that in relational ministry, it is not only important to know what you're doing, it is also important to be prepared that what we may know about the day's activities could be completely wrong. So, in review, the two important things about relational ministry are, one, know what's going on; two, be ready for when what you know isn't correct. You may never know because instead of having a program tomorrow, you may have one within an hour of arriving at the church.

Life is good, God is great! (And so is Michigan, go Buckeyes!)

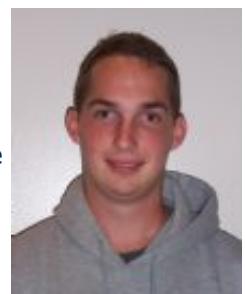
-Kyle Scobie

Date: 9/30/2006

Submitted by: Josh Tomac

Journal Entry:

Well, I have been having a blast! Yesterday we were up at the Porcupine Mountains. We spent time with an amazing youth group and saw some really beautiful country. Then today we went to Ewen, Michigan and hung out with another youth group and had a fun bowling, though my bowling skills are not all together there. The youth at this church were energetic, and it made the night a lot of fun. I also enjoyed making a new



two-year-old friend by the name of Anthony. By the end of the night, I think I played with him more than I actually bowled. Well, talk to ya'll next time. Until then, take care!

Josh Tomac

Date: 10/7/2006

Submitted by: Emily Beckman

Journal Entry:

Is it weird that I find nursing homes to be some of the best places to ever visit? I love them!! Our team just had their first two bookings at nursing homes, and they were such a riot! Not only do you get unconditional love from the residents there, but they love to sing along, even if they don't know that song! How wonderful! They aren't ashamed that they are singing the wrong words or that they are out of tune...they can feel the love of Jesus in their hearts, and that's all that they care about. I wish everyone could experience the wonderfulness that we have experienced from our nursing home ministry. What a passion God has for the elderly...it is truly inspiring. We just ended our time in East Jordan and Saginaw, Michigan and had to say a sad goodbye to Jimbo the Man (our on-the-road training staff). Good times were had by all while Jim was with us, and we can all honestly say that we wish he was on our team. Our team is having a great time just enjoying life and all that God has to throw at us, and Jim was one of those pleasant surprises. Now our team knows how to truly appreciate having only five people in a 15-passenger van instead of six or seven. We have learned to love being much shorter than 6' because our legs actually fit behind the seats of the van. And we all have learned a little bit more about Bob Saget and Luther Dell Al because of our time with Jim. Thank you, Jim...you will be greatly missed by all!



Emily Beckman

We wanted to give a shout out to all of our awesome host homes so far...we have had a great time getting to know all of you and hearing everyone's stories. Thank you for the use of hot tubs and washing machines and for allowing us to run around your house screaming about being BFFs (a special thanks goes out to Bridget Schumann for actually saying yes to me on the whole BFF thing...you are so cool!). We're looking forward to meeting you all again hopefully on our return tour. You rock our faces off!!

Date: 10/10/2006

Submitted by: Elizabeth Lord

Journal Entry:

We arrived in Jackson, MI Friday afternoon in time for a school chapel at Trinity Lutheran School. We soon found out that today was Spirit Day because Saturday is the Big Game between University of Michigan and Michigan State. So all the kids were either wearing blue and yellow or green and white. We had a lot of fun with seeing which one could be louder.



Elizabeth Lord

This continued on Saturday as we were at one of our host homes having a picnic watching the big game. None of us really were going for one or the other, so some of us said we were going for whatever team our host family was. But even that was kind of hard because some of the families were divided. Even though there was some rivalry it was a lot of fun. In the end, University of Michigan won.

God bless,

Liz Lord

Date: 10/10/2006

Submitted by: Kyle Scobie
Journal Entry:

(This one's convoluted, so bear with me!)

We left Michigan today, my house to be exact. It kinda made me sad, but I know that there are other states with good experiences. We'll be in Virginia for at least three weeks, so I'd better get used to another state for sure. I'm pretty certain that there are some wonderful people to be met and share in fellowship; God provides a number of things, including people. However, I seriously doubt I'll meet another host mom that can cook like my own mom, but that doesn't mean I shouldn't eat. In addition, I probably won't have another bed as comfortable as my own bed, but that doesn't mean I shouldn't sleep. The remainder of the tour won't be as easy as living at home. That brings me to a very important point, so bear with me. My point is this: If you are forced out of your box, you can't reserve yourself for only the things with which you are familiar or else you will you die, both spiritually and physically. Our Christian walk isn't supposed to be easy, and as full-time workers in the mission field, we are Satan's number-one target for inflicting pain and discomfort. Just as Jesus says in John 10, "I came that you may have life, and have it to the full." Life to the full, abundant life, crazy life! Jesus promises that in Him, we will be given a full and abundant life. Full of what? Good and bad, joy and pain, laughter and tears. Is there a storm raging in your life? It will pass. Is life going awesome, superb, and honeymoon-like? It will pass! Even though there's some moments of uncomfortable nature, Jesus gives us those moments so that we can have life to the full. Could be worse however, because we could have a ton of stuff going on, but not have someone to worry about it for us. God doesn't call you to do his work, and then not provide for you. He isn't a stingy war general, sending troops into battle without proper supplies. He gives us food and a place to sleep, every night. Eat and have rest, for tomorrow is a new day, and maybe a new state, but it's all the same battle field.

Life is good, God is great!

-Kyle



Kyle Scobie

Date: 10/18/2006
Submitted by: Tara Oetting
Journal Entry:

The fabulous five have been through four states in just three days. We went from Michigan, to Ohio, to Maryland, to Virginia and even got the chance to spend some time in Washington, D.C. We have been blessed with beautiful weather and amazing host homes. We also got the chance to see Cross Fire and will soon get the chance to see Watermark in action.

Team is good. I'll update again soon when I get the chance! <>< Tara



Tara Oetting

Date: 10/19/2006
Submitted by: Emily Beckman
Journal Entry:

Wow, I love Virginia. Who wouldn't want to be in a location where it is 78 degrees and you are able to walk barefoot on the beach while it is snowing back in St. Paul? Life is good! So we are now about half a week into our two week stay at Gloria Dei Lutheran in Hampton, VA, and we are loving it! This church is amazing! The people are so friendly, our host families are out of this world awesome, and we are getting to do some crazy fun stuff! God has blessed us abundantly.

Tonight was a grand old time with our team...we got to partake in a cutthroat game of Catchphrase with the Discipleship group at church. When I say cutthroat, I mean that I was pretty sure there was going to be some blood shed between Tara and Liz, it was down to the wire every time. I wish I had it on video, so good! And who knew that there used to be a TV show called Gary the Gnu? What



Emily Beckman

the heck is a gnu? Well, for those of you who don't know, I now have been schooled on the ins and outs of a gnu...it is some weird looking buffalo/horse/ram looking animal, but it looks pretty cool, so in case you ever run into one, you should name it Gary (although the TV version doesn't look anything like an actual gnu, weird). Our team is pretty pumped to get to do some more chapels tomorrow (three-year-olds have more energy in their pinky finger than our whole team combined, out of control), and on Friday we get to go to the famous Busch Gardens Hollow Screams. Not even joking, this could be one of the best times of my whole life. I have been wanting to do something like this for FOR-EV-ER and now it's coming true. We'll update you on that, don't you worry.

We're really excited to be ministering in this church; it should prove to create awesome bonds for us and allow us to dig a little deeper into our cultural identities. We thank God every day that we are blessed enough to be able to spend two weeks with the amazing people here in Hampton and will continue to pray that He opens doors for us and for them throughout the two weeks. Thank you, Gloria Dei!!

Date: 10/23/2006

Submitted by: Elizabeth Lord

Journal Entry:

Today was an amazing day. A little before noon, we went to the Sunrise House, which is an adult daycare center that was started by Gloria Dei Lutheran Church. We did a short program for them and then ate lunch with them. It was so good to see the smiles on their faces. After lunch, we headed back to the church/school to do a presentation on Papua New Guinea for the first graders. We taught them about where it was, what the land is like, what they look like, what they wear, and what they eat (we had samples of sweet potatoes for them to try). We also taught them some songs and words in Pidgin English. I think they all had a good time; I know we did. We hope to be able to talk to some of the other grades next week.



Elizabeth Lord

Shortly after that, we all loaded up in the van with some of our host parents and headed to Busch Gardens in Williamsburg, VA. Right now they have Hallow Scream going on, where the whole park is decorated for Halloween. We all had so much fun going on the rides and going in the haunted mazes.

God bless,
Liz

Date: 10/31/2006

Submitted by: Tara Oetting

Journal Entry:

We are still in Hampton, VA and loving every minute of it. The pastors and families here have been so welcoming and loving. I will be extremely sad to leave here, but of course I am looking forward to getting on the road again. Some of us are getting a bit sick, so pray for the health of the team. Yesterday, we met a woman at the homeless shelter we were doing a program at, and we were overwhelmed by her response to God's message. She raised her hands and was yelling "Praise Jeeeeesus!" and "Amen brother!" every other word. It was amazing to see such amazing faith in a woman who doesn't have a home or know where her next meal is coming from. She came up to us afterwards and was crying because, as she knew, the Holy Spirit was alive and active in that room. She hugged all of us and said, "I'll love you all to life." I was humbled in the way she was so open to the Holy Spirit in her life and how she showed Christ's love to us. I am daily humbled by how our team seems to affect people's lives so much, when often times I think-- it's just me. It's just a twenty-two year old kid from Canada. What do I know about loving people to Christ? Thankfully and by God's grace, it is not about me or the team or anything we do. God makes himself known in great ways, and we have been blessed to be a part of it.



Tara Oetting

Date: 11/3/2006

Submitted by: Elizabeth Lord

Journal Entry:



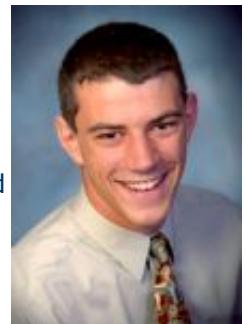
Elizabeth Lord

Today we are leaving Gloria Dei Lutheran Church in Hampton, Virginia. It has been weird being at one place for two weeks when we are so used to only being in a place for one to two nights. Although it is wonderful to meet new people every couple of days, it's been really nice to be in one place for a couple weeks so we can really get to know people. It started to feel like a second home. However, we are excited to head to our next church in Virginia, Reformation Lutheran Church in Newport News. We will spend a week there and then head farther south.

Date: 11/8/2006

Submitted by: Kyle Scobie

Journal Entry:



Kyle Scobie

Life on the road has been interesting, to say the least. Actually, until yesterday, we hadn't really been "on the road" for three weeks. Being in pseudo-Community-Based mode in Virginia and then going back out on the road for the remaining tour makes things interesting. I forgot how to sleep in a moving bed, I forgot how to live off of junk food, and I also forgot that what it meant to not really have a concrete schedule that extends beyond the next morning. However, I find myself to be a fast learner, so I imagine that it should be easy to re-learn some of those old habits.

I look forward to moving on, though. It was nice to be in one spot for a week or two, and I look forward to VBS season next year, but it's also good to move along and keep moving. When you're in one place for a long period of time, it can be easy to settle in, get comfortable, and relax too much. It can be all too simple to get a little lazy and lacking in the ministry department. I have to give huge props to the Community-Based Lifeline team, because I have a feeling they have already found out how much of a different ballgame it is. Not only do they get to plant some pretty important seeds, they get to be there when God does some gardening! That's one job that we as Christians can be thankful that we do not have, gardening. It can be hard to be just a planter, but it's a lot easier than pullin' weeds and pruning vines. Getting dirty, stained, and pricked by thorns is not a fun job. It reminds me of a sermon I heard from Vicar Bugg at Gloria Dei in Hampton. A couple of disciples ask Jesus for the best seats in Heaven, the seats at His right and left hand. Jesus responds by asking, "Can you drink from the same cup that I drink?" Can we pull weeds, trim the hedges, and take a few thorns in the fingers, or worse, the head? Can we drink the Cup? Can we wear the Crown? Only Jesus could wear the Crown, only Jesus can prune the vineyard. We only have to scatter the seeds. However, that doesn't mean the fields in which we sow are pleasantly filled with warm spring air and singing birds, but that's a different sermon.

Life is good, God is great!

-Kyle Scobie

Date: 11/15/2006

Submitted by: Kyle Scobie

Journal Entry:

Another town, another church, another host family, and another bed. It seems like it could all get very monotonous very quickly, but somehow it never seems to get old or routine. Each church, town, and host family is unique and amazing in its own way. It becomes harder and harder to pick my favorite booking as the days go by!

The past couple of days have been phenomenal. We got to meet some amazing

Christians in Weddington, North Carolina, as well as eat some fantastic Mexican food. Being back on the road is so great; I look forward to pushing on and going new places. For instance, we get to go hang out with my brother tomorrow, which I am extremely excited about. However, I hate to risk getting so excited about the future that I forget the task at hand, but that excitement helps you get through the not-so-amazing times. All in all, life's been busy, and therefore very fast. It's hard to believe that in a month we'll be home for Christmas break! God's work isn't so hard after all!

Life is good, God is great!
-Kyle Scobie



Kyle Scobie

Date: 11/22/2006

Submitted by: Emily Beckman

Journal Entry:

So we have arrived at Camp Victor down in Ocean Springs, MS...praise God for this blessing!!! Camp Victor is an old warehouse that was revamped to accommodate 200 volunteers, a distribution center, and a storage warehouse. We are lucky enough to get to stay here for a whole week and help out around the warehouse and at a site. Today we headed out to our site, this wonderful lady named Mary who is living in a FEMA trailer and has been for the past year. Her little trailer is no bigger than a typical living room, and there has been practically no progress on her house for the past year. It was pretty sad to go into her house this morning and see that there is still so much to do for her. Mary is such a positive person, though. She immediately told us that we didn't have to come until after the holidays when we got there and that she wanted to cook us a Thanksgiving meal even though she had so little herself. She really puts all of her trust in the Lord, and it is so wonderful to see. We got to mud her house (which of course resulted in me ending up with white hair and great looking jeans). Tomorrow we get to start painting and then we head out with the feeling of having met a fantastic woman who will have changed all of our lives.



Emily Beckman

If there is one thing that our team will take from this time at Camp Victor, it will be to trust in God's timing. Mary may not have all that she wants but she has all that she needs and has faith in knowing that there will be a time when God will reward her patience. There are so many wonderful stories that we are being blessed with while serving these people, and I can't wait for us to share them with everyone because there is truly the work of God here.

Date: 11/24/2006

Submitted by: Elizabeth Lord

Journal Entry:

Happy Thanksgiving! Hope all you had a wonderful Thanksgiving. The past two days have been two amazing days. We started off Wednesday morning by going to the house we are working on and finishing up mudding and sanding of the walls. We hope to start painting on Friday. Around noon we came back and cleaned up. We then headed to Gulfport, MS, which is about 30 minutes away, to have an early Thanksgiving dinner with some of my family that lives down here. It was a wonderful time for me because I hadn't seen some of them in a very long time. It was like a small family reunion for me. We then finished up the night by being part of Wednesday night service at Camp Victor. Thanksgiving day we decided that we were going to go and have three Thanksgiving dinners. Our first one was around noon at Camp Biloxi, which is a sister camp of Camp Victor. As we were in line, Tara got a huge surprise when she saw some of her friends and other students from her college. They were down here for a service project. We then went to a lady's house that Camp Victor worked on for our second meal. We had a wonderful time at her house; it was nice to be in a house on Thanksgiving. There was also a huge tree outside of her house that some of us had a lot of fun climbing. Our third meal was at Camp Victor, where we got another surprise when a couple we met at Camp Agape a couple weeks ago walked in the door. Come to find out his dad works for Camp Victor and his mom is pastor at Christus Victor in Ocean Springs. After we ate dinner, we decided to have a Jones Soda Thanksgiving



Elizabeth Lord

pack that was given to us by one of Josh's past teammates. It is five bottles that are flavored like turkey, dinner rolls, peas, sweet potatoes, and antacid. It was fun ,but we would not recommend it. Over all, it was two amazing days with some fun surprises along the way.

God Bless,

Liz

Date: 12/5/2006

Submitted by: Emily Beckman

Journal Entry:

Our first 1/3 of the year on team is coming to an end pretty soon, and there are so many mixed feelings that are tugging on my heart right now. There are, of course, the feelings of joy for getting to see my family again for longer than a day and hearing about all the blessings that have happened in their life while I've been gone. There are the feelings of not wanting to go home because I'm getting so much into the routine of things on the road that I'm afraid I'll miss it too much. And now the feelings of "Holy cow, when I come back from break, I'm actually going overseas!! They must be out of their minds to be sending someone like me to Papua New Guinea because I feel extremely unprepared. Lord Jesus, work in me!"



Emily Beckman

There have been plenty of times on the road that have reminded me of why I'm placed where I am and why I feel the desire to serve the Lord for this year. I thank God every day that I was given this opportunity because not very many people get to experience what these YE teams are experiencing this year. My heart is already so full of love from the people that we've met along the way that some days it's hard to believe that it will be replenished even more these next couple months! I CANNOT wait to see the love of Jesus in the children of PNG. I can't wait to teach in the schools, to play in the blazing sun, to sing and dance with the elders, to give of myself so much that it feels there is no more to give. God is going to work this year in all of us on team, and I pray that my experience will never be taken for granted.

Date: 1/14/2007

Submitted by: Tara Oetting

Journal Entry:

New Dawn is in PNG!!! We are safe and happy. Although the flight was ridiculously long, we had all day yesterday to rest. We are staying at the Lutheran Guest House in Port Moresby, and we will be heading to the highlands soon.

More updates to come.

<>< Tara



Tara Oetting

Date: 1/14/2007

Submitted by: Josh Tomac

Journal Entry:

Today we arrived in Papua New Guinea where we landed in Port Moresby. The flight here seemed ridiculously long, being that it took roughly 21 hours flying time that is not including our layovers. Our plane landed at 5 a.m., and I was surprised to find how hot and humid it was. Shortly after our arrival, I was already sweating

without ever actually doing any work. Me and my team waited at the airport for about two hours before our contact, Owen, picked us up. The people in Papua New Guinea are amazingly nice and helpful beyond anything that might even be expected of them. They carried our entire luggage for the most part both to the bus and into our guest house.



Josh Tomac

Usually upon arrival, past teams have been known to be put to work right away, however not us. Today has been given to us as a day of rest after our long flight here. Once we arrived at the house, it was obvious that we appreciated our day of rest because we all took a nap pretty quickly once we felt settled. After taking our naps, we learned that we were not living as extremely different as expected. In our house, we have a television that has multiple American shows, such as CSI and Law & Order. Following some tv, we got hungry, so we went out to dinner at a place called Big Rooster. Once again to our surprise, it was basically American food. My meal consisted of chicken, fried banana, fried pineapple and some french fries; it was delicious!

For our last main event of the day, we went and walked around parts of Port Moresby. I could not believe the reaction that people had toward us without having a clue who we were or what we did. As we walked the streets people would honk, shout, wave, show big grins and would say “apanoon” which means *good afternoon* in Pidgin. At times this kind of acknowledgement can almost make you feel as if you were famous; it was definitely a different experience.

I am happy I am here and I truly look forward to what God has in store for me and my team this year.

Date: 1/15/2007

Submitted by: Josh Tomac

Journal Entry:

So...my day began at 7 a.m. today with our morning breakfast; it was simple and yet again very American. We were served bread and cereal. The bread was a white bread that I toasted in a toaster, YEAH!!! Then they provided us with different spreads such as “Peanutter,” “Vegemite,” and other assorted goods. I personally stayed with the peanut butter which tasted very close to the American version of peanut butter. After breakfast we had our daily devotionals; today I led them. My theme verse for the devo came from Romans 8:28-39, which talks about being more than conquerors, for we know that all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to his purpose. If God is for us, then who can be against us? To end out the devotion, I had my team go and pray individually about any concerns or struggles that they think they might face over the next four months and lay them before the cross and leave them there. Only if I had known that I was that one that should have been concerned about something...I went outside to pray because it was beautiful and I walked away with mosquito bites as everyone else stayed inside and remained untouched.



Josh Tomac

Later that morning Lusanna, the manager of the guest house took us downtown for lunch because we were hungry. I happen to have had another American meal by ordering a beef hamburger, this was amazing and I know it is not going to last very long but that is okay, I do look forward to experiencing more of their cultural foods which will be happening within days for our team. After lunch we walked down to an Internet Café...YEAH!!! Did I mention, it is extremely hot and slightly uncomfortable for my Oregon style of living? Anyway, I paid for 15 minutes of internet time which seemed like plenty of time to write one email to my family, however though I was using broadband connection my computer was still moving very pokey. By the time I got to typing my email, roughly half my time was already gone. At that point, it

just became a race against the clock. When our time was up, we went and waited outside for Lusanna to come and pick us up. This took some time, but I was good with it for the most part because I enjoyed talking to people as they walked by. After awhile I felt like my skin was burning, and it became kind of uncomfortable, but God is good and God is great. I walked away with not a single burn.

Lusanna returned and took us to the PNG Parliament building, which was phenomenal and an absolutely beautiful building. They gave us a small tour of parts of the inside and greeted us with hellos, and then gave us cold bottled water which felt great. This is one place that I wish more of my own family and friends could experience because no matter how many pictures I take or stories I tell, I will never do it justice.

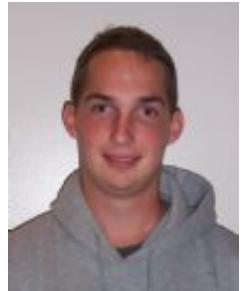
Upon returning to the guest house, we were able to relax for a while before dinner. I ended up falling asleep watching television right up to the point that we ate dinner. By the time that dinner ended it was probably 7 p.m. and I was exhausted. I lasted for probably another hour, then I went to bed for the night. Which I have to say was a very interesting night. I was told prior to coming here that the medication I am taking tends to cause vivid dreams; well, the second night here, I had one. In my dream some of my friends got themselves into trouble, and it ended up that they went missing. So...when the police needed to find someone to punish, they found me. In my dream, this all takes place the night before I am to head off to Papua New Guinea. At the end of the dream, the police were threatening to haul me off to jail. I have to admit that this dream really was scary and almost a little too realistic for my liking, but I was spared of having to finish out to the end because a huge rain storm woke me up. Then I went back to sleep for the remainder of the night...

Date: 1/16/2007

Submitted by: Josh Tomac

Journal Entry:

Today was another early start; our day started at 7 a.m. once again. After waking up, our group was served breakfast. We had bread and all the spreads, which at the guest house has become a standard. As usual, it tasted just like home, and at times even this early in the tour, it is kind of comforting as you are still adjusting to all the other culture shocks that you face all at once. Breakfasts here have changed in an unexpected way, and I am not sure why. Breakfast is always really quiet, and for our team, that is not necessarily typical.



Josh Tomac

Following breakfast, our day became relatively uneventful. My team continued with our daily devotions, which usually last no more than 15 minutes. Then after that we were able to relax for most of the day. Many of us used our free time and played games like Uno. Then some decided to read or play guitar, and we all were able to entertain ourselves.

The guest house does not serve lunch, so once again our team went out. We decided to eat lunch at a local hotel, and the food was amazing. I decided to order a Spanish omelet, not knowing what to expect, and I could have eaten many more of them. They were incredible! I was even lucky enough to be able to try part of Emily's sandwich, and once again the food was quite good and I would have loved to be able to order another round. I think the thing that amazes me most of all is all my stereotypes of what I thought Papua New Guinea had to offer. Before arriving here I expected there not to be any variety whatsoever in food or scenery. Then I got here...they have some amazing scenery, and their food is not entirely limited to sweet potatoes. However, in a few days we are traveling to some more remote areas, such as the highlands and some of what we were expecting as far as food may very well hold true out there. I have found a lot in the last couple days that the anticipation creates an overwhelming

amount of excitement.

The highlands are the next place that we are supposed to be going, and we are supposed to fly out on Thursday. Well, in order to do that, we took a little trip to the airport to purchase five tickets to Wabag. The lines at the airport were long and slow, but when we finally got to the counter, we found out that all flights were booked solid and the earliest we could fly out is ten days from now. Not knowing what kind of schedule they have planned for us that does not really work, so we are trying to research all other possible options. For some people on my team, this is probably a high level stress situation but God has always provided for us, and I know things are going to work according to His plan and purpose. To say the least, that was the most eventful part of our day.

Lastly, our team had a music rehearsal. This went pretty well and our team has begun learning more than the three Pidgin songs that we have been doing since the beginning of our tour. I look forward to seeing how our music develops as time goes on. The end!

Date: 1/16/2007

Submitted by: Kyle Scobie

Journal Entry:

So we're here in PNG (Papua New Guinea). We arrived after nearly 24 hours of flying from St. Paul, to Chicago, to Tokyo, and finally, PNG. I could immediately feel the moisture in the air as I walked through the door of the Air Niugini jet plane. The heat here, combined with the humidity, makes New Dawn a very lethargic group in the middle of the day. The relative humidity is as close to 100% as it can get without it raining, which it did twice today. This is the PNG summer, not much different from the rest of the year, except it is monsoon season right now! Surprisingly enough, I have not felt any effects of jet lag, and the culture shock has not been extremely difficult. Most people we have met in Port Moresby (the capital of PNG) have spoken English, and we've managed to find amazing food to eat in various places, including at Big Rooster, which is a fast food chain, with chicken in every entrée. The soda pop tastes a little bit different here, even though it's good ol' Coca Cola and Sprite. We're still trying to avoid non-bottled water as much as possible, and we haven't had to look at our plate yet and ask "What the heck is that?" so we're thankful for that. Also somewhat surprising is that we haven't seen a single one of the famed PNG sweet potatoes, which figures because we're not in an agricultural community at the moment. I'm pretty sure that within one week's time we'll have had our first of many breakfasts, lunches, and/or dinners made from the glorious orange vegetable. No worries, however, because today I prepped my stomach by eating a red beet on my hamburger, and I can't say that I enjoy beets. It also had tomato relish on it, which I tried with little success not to taste. I am by far the pickiest eater on the team, but I also have a rather large appetite. Who knows where that will lead me?

Overall things are going very well. For the most part, I think we're all still in phase one of culture shock (the "honeymoon" phase). Lots of things have made these initial few days fairly easy for us. We also haven't had any programs yet, which probably helps keep away the stress. The people here in PNG are very friendly and generous, and we've seen many diverse standards of living. I hope to continue this learning experience over the next three months, and I pray that God will continue to reveal himself to us in new ways every day. I also pray that God keeps us humble, gives us rest, and teaches us true patience with each other and the people here.

Life is good, God is great!

-Kyle



Kyle Scobie

Date: 1/17/2007

Submitted by: Josh Tomac

Journal Entry:

Wow, I am amazed that this is our fourth day here and it seems like we have been here so much longer, not in a bad way. I am glad that I am writing these journals everyday because the days totally start to blend together after a little bit, and it would be hard to remember what happened on which day.

I usually start out my journals talking about what we had for breakfast, but considering I am still at the Lutheran Transit Guest House, I am sure you have figured out the pattern. However, I did wake up this morning a little surprised because I have discovered more mosquito bites and to my knowledge nobody else on my team has got a single one yet....and for those wondering, yes, I have been putting on bug repellent. So as of today I have been more uncomfortable than usual, but once again I still find myself loving every minute that we have spent here. I honestly wish that family and friends could experience what we are able to experience because I truly believe that words will never be able to fully describe our experiences and/or the things that we have seen and the things that we will see as our tour continues.



Josh Tomac

So, after our morning routine of breakfast and devotion, we had more time to relax before our contact, Joanne took us on some errands around town. The first stop we made was to the airport. We found a flight that gets us within two hours of our final destination, since there are no available tickets to the province of Wabag until next week and next week is too late. At this point, the only thing that is now in question is how we are actually arriving to our destination, since any form of transportation is in question. With that, I just remind myself that God is going to use us however He wants whether it be according to our scheduled plans or not.

Today, I found the best lunch deal ever, I was in heaven. We went back to "Big Rooster" and found a deal that McDonald's will never be able to match--30 chicken nuggets for just over three dollars. The taste was great and whatever dipping sauce they used was also pretty good. I am pretty sure that today is our last day before we are truly immersed into most people's everyday living, both through housing and meals.

Lastly, we went to one of the many outside markets, which was pretty cool. There were times that I was unsure how to react as people stare at us but some make no facial expression, then when I did wave or say something I sometimes got giggles. This always makes me wonder if I am saying something wrong or if I just look like a goofball to them, which would not surprise me.

All of that concludes our events of the day, and the rest of the time we were able to use as we chose. I ended up writing some letters to family and friends. When I was not writing letters, I also chose to play guitar; it was fun. The end!

Date: 1/17/2007

Submitted by: Elizabeth Lord

Journal Entry:

Since the beginning of our time together as a team in August, God has been teaching us a lot about trust. During training, we weren't sure if we would stay together if we didn't get another male teammate, but we trusted in God and he provided. Then while we were traveling in the States, there were times when our schedule was uncertain. There were times when we didn't know what we were doing a couple days out, but we trusted in God and he always provided. We never went a night without a home to stay in or a meal to eat.



Elizabeth Lord

Now that we are in Papua New Guinea, we have to continue to trust in God. While in Port Moresby,

we had to buy plane tickets to our next destination of Highland Lutheran International School in Wabag. When we went to go buy tickets today, we found out that all the planes are booked until the 25th, but we need to leave in a couple days, so we trusted in God again and we were able to get tickets to Mt. Hagan for tomorrow, the 18th. Mt. Hagan is about two hours away from the school. We will then be picked up and taken to the school. It is a lesson we will take with us for the rest of our time together as a team and for the rest of our lives. Trust in God, and he will provide you with what you need.

Elizabeth

Date: 1/17/2007

Submitted by: Tara Oetting

Journal Entry:

It has been quite the journey these last couple of days here in PNG. I have never encountered such a beautiful place or such beautiful people. Everyone we have met so far has been so overwhelmingly generous and friendly--always asking if we are ok or just simply smiling and waving at these five strange, white, North American kids roaming their streets. I am a bit surprised at the reactions we get as we walk around the markets or streets; it is almost as if a celebrity were walking by or something! Cars honking, children reaching out to just touch our hands and then scurrying away with pleasure as if they had found something amazing. I almost want to just stop and tell them that I am just like them and I should be treated the same. I am almost embarrassed of my whiteness. I wish I could just blend in. Of course, I realize that we are different--we are practically from different worlds. Still, I wish to find so many more things in common with all of these people to outweigh the differences in skin color and economic status. I am struggling to find the common ground--the point at which we can reach out and learn from them and serve, while also allowing them to reach out, learn and serve us. I want to bridge this gap that is so obvious in our differences, and I want it to happen almost instantaneously. I already want more time here so that I can learn so much more about what is important to the people of Papua New Guinea. Is it family? Money? Religion? What drives them? Why are they working, or wandering the streets, or lounging under trees? How is God working in these people's lives? What can I give them or show them that will let them know that God loves them and so do I? How can I make the message of salvation real and applicable to people who are not white, middle-class North Americans?



Tara Oetting

So many questions and only three months to figure this all out. I am loving so many things about PNG. We are all safe and still healthy, praise be to God. The people here are taking great care of us. Of course, I miss home and my friends. And the other teams!!! International teams, keep on keeping on.

With love from PNG,

<>< Tara

Date: 1/18/2007

Submitted by: Josh Tomac

Journal Entry:

Today was a new day with some incredible experiences and not like that of the last four days. This morning we woke up at 6:30 a.m. and began our day. We started out with our normal morning routine breakfast and our morning devotion which was a great way to start the morning. My team and I had packed our bags the night before because today we would be flying to Mount Hagan. We left the



Josh Tomac

Lutheran Transit Guest House around 8:30 a.m. because our flight was to leave at 9:45. We did the airport routine and checked in our luggage and all other baggage. To me, it is amazing because in Papua New Guinea the security checks and baggage checks are almost nothing. As we have talked with the natives, we have found that they really don't concern themselves about things like we do in the United States. There are not many people who feel the need to do any harm because they are such a nice people and that is what their culture thrives on. It honestly amazed me because that is such a different thought of mind than the complex society that most of us live in every day.

So, we get on the plane, and we arrive in Mount Hagan an hour after our departure time from Port Moresby. I was a little shocked because as we entered a one room sized terminal there was a hotel bus driver waiting for us, and to my knowledge, that was not really part of the plan. However, we're flexible, so we just went for the ride, and a short one it was. So, we arrive at the hotel to find out that our main contact, Brent, in Wabag is going to pick us up at the hotel, but we must wait for his arrival. Right when the bus arrived, we had many staff from the hotel come and carry all of our heavy luggage for us; again I was a little surprised. After maybe 25 minutes, I started getting bored of doing nothing and I was unsure how long we were going to be waiting so I decided to go on a walk through the hotel garden or, in Pidgin gaden. As I walked through the garden, I met a young man, John, and we began to talk. He asked what I was doing in PNG, and I told him a little about what my group was there to do and he seemed very interested. However, seconds later, I would have him and roughly 15 other people all at one time and separately captivated simply because I said that I wanted to learn to speak Pidgin more fluently. The rest of the day I had all these people hearing about me wanting to learn Pidgin, so they all stopped what they were doing in order to me both what I wanted to learn and what they thought might be helpful for me to learn. At that moment I thought this was absolutely amazing, and later I realized how much of a blessing and gift it was to me. For hours, I learned Pidgin and they also taught me many things about their culture and the diversity within different provinces of PNG. One thing that I learned was that sing-sings, which are festivals, are not the same throughout Papua New Guinea. All the traditions are different from province to province. Things such as their costumes and native dress are different at many different sing-sings. Some of the men made jokes about dressing me up in their native garb, and they found themselves to be very funny as they would giggle at the thought of an extremely white boy in their style of costume and make-up. We had a great time telling stories of each other's cultures and learning from each other.

But the day does not end there. The time comes when my team and I must leave once again, and so I say my goodbyes to them saying, "Lukim yu behain." This phrase means "I will see you again," and that tends to be a pretty standard way of saying goodbye. Then we hopped on a bus for a two hour drive to Wabag where we are staying at the Lutheran School there. As I write this, I am almost at a loss for words because nothing I can or will say will ever fully capture the beauty of what we saw during those couple of hours. After 22 years of life, I have never seen terrain quite so amazingly beautiful every second along the way. Traveling here in Papua New Guinea feels like you're a part of National Geographic, it feels surreal so much of the time. I will say the only rough part of the trip were some of the roads we traveled on--we were doing a lot of bouncing up and down throughout the trip--but that is really pretty minor in the broader experience.

After the long but beautiful drive, we finally arrived at the International Lutheran School of Wabag. The school has had a lot of work done on it in the last ten years, and it looks incredible, especially when you compare the building to most others with in Wabag or PNG as a whole. This school has developed a well known reputation for being prestige. The school boards kids from the grades of kindergarten through twelfth grade. Ten years ago, our contact Brent moved here from Canada as a missionary. He then became the principal of the International Lutheran School, and the growth of the school through his leadership has been astounding. When the

school began under his leadership, there were only 30 students that attended here. Now ten years later, they have roughly 140 students that are registered for this upcoming school year that starts in February.

The last thing to end out our day, I found out that they have broadband internet, which means easier communication with loved ones and friends. I have been here not even a week, and I have felt extremely blessed each day.

Date: 1/19/2007

Submitted by: Josh Tomac

Journal Entry:

Well, where do I even begin? Today was another amazing day that I hope to never forget. I woke up early this morning to a bright sunny day, and it was a great start for the rest of the day.



Josh Tomac

This morning I was able to have time to adapt to a new setting with a different sense of tradition. I was able to eat my breakfast of toast and filtered water, and it tasted good. After breakfast, I was hanging out and walking around the school campus trying to acquaint myself with the general area a little better. During that course of time, I met a young man just barely younger than myself. His name is Daniel and he is 21 years old. I find it interesting how people will introduce themselves to Americans in Papua New Guinea. Daniel for instance told me this, "My name is Daniel, like the Bible." Many people seem to have biblical names out here, and that is how they commonly will introduce themselves. They also upon hearing your name may say something like, "Oh, Joshua, like the Bible." I honestly smile every time they say it, it makes my day.

Anyway, back to my main story. I met Daniel on the school grounds, and we began talking, and once again I mentioned that I was trying to learn to better speak the Pidgin language, and without hesitation, he said, "I will teach you, you will know Pidgin well." So after our brief discussion, I mentioned to him that I would love help translating my testimony from English to Pidgin, and he got excited. "Go and get your stuff, we will start," he told me. Today, we spent at least three hours translating and completing my testimony. He was so gracious with his time, and it meant so much to me that he would do that for a man he does not really know. After the translating was all said and done, then he and I went to go have a little fun. He came with me to the dormitory where Kyle and I are sleeping. He has a love for music, so I let him play my guitar and he loved it, as you could see through his expressions and his little glees of excitement. Once he was done playing guitar, I decided to let him listen to my discman, and he laughed and danced around with joy as he heard American Christian music by artists like Jars of Clay, David Harsh and Casting Crowns. I loved watching him as his excitement and enthusiasm almost became like that of a child. I smiled as he would try to sing the words along with the CD but not be able to keep up, so his words sounded more slurred than anything, but I began to sing along with him and he smiled as I did so. I believe that I made a lifelong friend today. At the end of our day hanging out, we exchanged names and addresses with each other because he wants to write.

After that, my day came to a pretty quick end, but our team had one more thing to do before we headed off to bed. We had the privilege of being asked to lead kids from the area and adults in song. We had a blast as kids danced and sang with us. I even led a song called, "Hey, Hey Mon." This song is completely goofy, and it is sung in English, but to my surprise once again they knew the song very well as they laughed their whole way through it. Their smiles and laughs are awfully contagious, and I love every minute of it. I also made a new little friend by the name of Stephanie; she is three years old and adorable. After singing she wanted to play, so

I threw her in the air and swung her around and let her fly as if she were a super hero. The fun continued for at least two hours before she had to say goodnight to me ,and it was very cute as she did not want to say goodbye. Tune in later for more stories from PNG, Wabag.

Date: 1/20/2007

Submitted by: Josh Tomac

Journal Entry:

Today is Friday, and I had an interesting morning wake up call. Early this morning, I was awakened by the sound of a very loud squealing pig. The people here were preparing a “maumau,” which is pronounced like “moo moo.” So really what I am trying to say is that around 6:45 a.m., they were killing the pig so they could have a feast later in the day...and so my day began.



Josh Tomac

After the squealing pig, well, I really was not able to go back to sleep. Therefore, I decided to go on a morning walk and enjoy the creation that God has so splendidly made. I also took a ton of pictures, which I look forward to sharing with those that are back home in the United States. Then after the walk I went to go investigate what the breakfast option was for today. Once again I had toasted bread...yeah, I know, this is not quite as rugged as I thought it was going to be either, but all is good. Then following that, we did our morning devotion. Emily led it today, and it was quite fun as she challenged us to use our creative side by drawing a picture of one way that God has touched you while being in PNG. I had fun, though my artistic abilities are lacking.

After our morning routine, Emily and I had a one-on-one. For those of you reading this and don't know what that is, I will tell you. Emily and I had an opportunity to spend 30 minutes together and just talk about whatever was on our hearts. We talked a lot about our experiences up to this point, and we also spent time taking pictures of the things that surrounded us. After a while, Emily and I were interrupted by a man who was carrying multiple sticks of sugar cane with him. He cut it up and gathered our team together because he wanted to teach us how to eat it. If you can't guess, I had a blast as I also had my little friend Stephanie sitting on my lap wanting to play. I have to tell you that this morning I think I had one of the best greetings ever. Stephanie saw me, then came charging at me and gave me a great big hug as she said good morning.

After awhile of chewing sugar cane, the team had a meeting with Brent. We had a discussion about some of the activities that we are going to be taking part in. The school needs a lot of prep work done before the kids return in a month. So, over the course of the next few weeks, we will be working hard to make this the best environment possible for the kids that will be attending this school, the International Lutheran School.

Today has been a good day, and I am sincerely looking forward to what tomorrow might bring. God's peace to all of you!

Date: 1/20/2007

Submitted by: Kyle Scobie

Journal Entry:

Guess what woke me up this morning?

In Papua New Guinea, it is common to have huge feasts to celebrate various events. This feast is called a “mumu,” and it consists usually of digging a huge pit, lining it with grasses or leaves, then putting in a whole pig, and various vegetables and greens

before covering it completely with hot stones. Then they cover the pit and let everything cook for three hours or so. Then they dig it all up and everything is ready to serve and eat. Now, we have not had a mumu prepared for us yet, however, the dorm at the HLIS where Josh and I are sleeping is right next to the fence that lines the edge of the school's campus. Right directly on the other side of that fence is a village. That village had a mumu today! Now, in order for this feast to be done by lunch, they have to start preparing early. Everything has to be ready to start cooking at nine, so the stones have to be heated, the vegetables have to be prepped, and the pit has to be dug and prepped for the food. Oh yeah, and the pig has to be ready too. That means they have to kill the pig. It isn't like you can go into town to the butcher and buy a pig all ready to toss into a pit, they have to do with what they have, and what they have is a bunch of pigs running around. So, if they want to have a big feast at noon, they have to start trying to catch the pig at about, oh, six-thirty or seven. I had my alarm set for seven thirty, which was about thirty minutes after the pig was caught. This means that at seven, when the pig was being caught, tied, and given its last plea, I was very much awake. At about quarter after seven, I was walking out the door of the dorm when they did the pig in. Up to this point in my life, I never had heard a pig scream. I have heard pigs grunt, snort, squeal, and make various other noises with the other end as well, but I had never heard a pig scream. For what seemed like ten minutes, but was really ten seconds, I heard a pig die. I knew exactly what was going on, and the concept of the event didn't bother me so much as the fact that I had had to change my underwear right as I was heading out to start my day. Now I really have to do laundry tomorrow.



Kyle Scobie

I also had some sugar cane today, the soft kind that you chew on and suck the juice out of. It was delicious.

Life is good, God is great!

-Kyle

Date: 1/21/2007

Submitted by: Josh Tomac

Journal Entry:

Today was another day that was full of activity. Upon waking up this morning, our team prepared to go to a church service where we would lead three songs. Well, that did not happen because we found out that an older gentleman in the community had died. Here is what I find both interesting and cool--they cancelled the service, and the funeral took its place as a bigger priority. In America, the Sunday service would not be cancelled for a death, the funeral would wait till an open date can be scheduled. The people in Papua New Guinea truly are a caring and flexible community and able to change gears on a dime. The one thing that I have come to discover is that I will never be able to have this culture completely figured out; every time I think I have a good idea, they remind me that I truly don't. I find that I can get into a very naïve train of thinking about how things function or at least how I believe they are supposed to function.



Josh Tomac

In my opinion, the word "culture" implies there will be difference from one culture to the next. However, every day I find myself believing that I will somehow wake up and things will be parallel to that of the westernized States. Does it surprise you that I am wrong every time? Even in the moments where I seem to be clueless, I have found that God guides my every step and uses both me and my teammates to His glory. I have honestly found that amazing and am glad that I have a God of grace.

Moving on into some of the activities that occupied my day...first, I was energized by the fact that when the service was cancelled the worship did not cease. What do I mean by that? The people of this school and parts of the surrounding community came together and still made time for a service of worship and meditation on God's Word. We had fun as New Dawn led in music, and we sang both English and Pidgin songs that brought the respect of two cultures into

one service. We also had a man from Canada who is an ordained minister lead us in the Gospel lesson and a brief message. So time came and the service came to an end and the day moved on.

After the service the rest of the day again was relatively relaxed. I had a fun opportunity to call my parents today and let them speak to Daniel who is a native in PNG. He wanted to talk to my family, so I made a quick little phone call back home and gave both my parents and Daniel a cool experience. I was also happy because I feel like I was able to physically share a part of this culture with family and not just share it through stories and pictures as great as they might be. In my opinion, it gave my parents the faintest ability to grasp a bit of what I am able to do for days on end. This honestly was probably my biggest highlight of the trip this far.

Tonight I also had my first feeling of disappointment sink in. I had to say my goodbyes to Stephanie and her family. She has both her mom and dad and two older brothers, or in Pidgin, "bratas." Tomorrow at 4 a.m., they are headed out for almost the whole remainder of the time that New Dawn is in Wabag. I am almost at a loss for who is going to play with me when I have energy that I can dispose of. I wish them the best on their travels and have enjoyed their company while it lasted.

Lastly, I have been motivated to create a website where my family and friends can go and see pictures that I have loaded from day to day and week to week. This hopefully will be another way that people are visually able to see the ministry that their support is going to and touch them in some way like I have been touched while being here.

We are one in the Body of Christ, and as I live with this community, I find that to be a beautiful and wonderful thing that God has created. The one thing that unites us to the people here day in and day out is our mutual relationship with our Lord and Savior. What a gift!

Date: 1/21/2007

Submitted by: Emily Beckman

Journal Entry:

Amazing. That is one of the only words that comes to mind when I think of where I am right now. Amazing. I still can't believe that I'm in Papua New Guinea and it's already been a whole week. Is that normal? The beauty that surrounds me is indescribable...actually, it's pretty darned describable but unfortunately, it's hard to even get across how gorgeous it is unless you're right here, smack dab in the middle of it. And I actually am. I'm standing in the middle of mountains and all around me is a beautiful aura of God's creation. Amazing. Just about every day, it rains here; maybe only for a little bit, but still, it rains. And every time that this happens, you can see the rain advancing from the far hills. When the rain finally reaches us, I look out to the mountains and all I can see is clouds covering the mountains. It feels like you're in your own personal bubble...and it's such a wonderful feeling. The best thing is that when it rains, you don't see everyone rush inside like you would in the States. Instead, you see everyone either pull out an umbrella and keep walking or you see them just look up to the sky and rejoice in the rain that waters their land. You see, when it rains here, it's God's way of providing for the people. Many of the people in the highlands of Papua New Guinea survive solely on the land. They grow what they eat and they love it. They are very, very happy people. Amazing. As I pass people on the road and see them sitting in the dirt with whatever little food they grow in front of them in the hopes that someone will come and buy it, the one thing that I notice is a smile on everyone's face. They love their life. And sure, they would like to see America, just to see what it is like, but I know that if given the choice between our land and their land, they would choose what God has given them any day. And who wouldn't? It is amazing.



Emily Beckman

I love life, and I love that life has given me this opportunity to live something different than ever before. I can't stop thinking "What did I ever do to deserve this? I must have done something really great somewhere in my life to get this blessing." But I know that God isn't rewarding me (although lots of times it feels like that) but rather God is showing me His love in such a way that I can't ever forget it and there is no possible way that I could ever NOT share it with other people. How amazing. I hope that everyone gets to see God this way at some point in their life...and I will continue to keep praying that same prayer every day.

Date: 1/28/2007

Submitted by: Kyle Scobie

Journal Entry:

Today has kinda been a long one.

We got up early this morning to walk to a nearby village to participate in the church service there. We sang three songs in English at their request (it was an all-Pidgin service), and then we did about six or seven songs in Pidgin, and Emily gave a little message while one of the local pastors translated for her.

We were gonna do another program at a different church in the afternoon, but right as the service was getting underway, Josh, who hasn't been feeling 100% the last few days, got up and went outside so he wouldn't make a mess on the floor of the church. So he ended up getting a ride back to the school before the service was finished. Liz and I have also been a bit on the sick and weary side, so we decided it was best not to go to the next place.



Kyle Scobie

We all needed a bit of a rest day as the last week has been extremely busy. I personally just need a day to sleep-in, but "no iken wari" or "no worries." It only adds to the experience, and it's not like we didn't expect to get tired, sick, or otherwise. No doubt the stories we'll have when we come back will only be enhanced by these moments. After all, Romans 5 says, "...we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope."

So we're hoping for good health, and hoping for restful nights as well.

Life is good, God is great!

-Kyle

Date: 1/28/2007

Submitted by: Tara Oetting

Journal Entry:

Today we had the opportunity to attend worship at Birip Seminary, outside of Wabag. It was the middle of the afternoon on a Friday, so I don't think any of expected to see a full house--women and children, old and young men--crowding the pews and sitting on the floors. We immediately drew a crowd when we started to sing and although I thought we did a good job, I didn't think that we deserved the praise and gratitude that we were shown. I feel very unworthy at times to be considered "the expert" on all things spiritual. Many people seem to hang on every word that comes out of our mouths, as if we have something more or better to share. I was definitely humbled when both the youth group and the women's groups presented us with a few songs. Loud and beautiful songs, one after the other came from these women and children. Each woman swayed with the music and beat a drum, each child with a huge grin on their face. I didn't barely understand anything that they were singing, but they praised in a way that I have never seen or experienced. It amazes me that they look to our team for spiritual guidance, when they are so clearly rich in faith. They hold nothing



Tara Oetting

back when they worship--raise hands, belting out beautiful songs or make a clicking noise when they agree with the Pastor. They say in unison "I tru", which would translate as "Amen." I continue to feel grateful to be in PNG and experience all of these things.

Please pray for our team health, as some of us are beginning to get a bit sick. Otherwise, things continue to be amazing and beautiful. There are really no amount of words that could describe what I see out my window every morning. God has certainly created a beautiful place.

Because of Him <>< Tara

Date: 1/31/2007

Submitted by: Emily Beckman

Journal Entry:

The joys of friendships overseas...it's such a beautiful thing. I think it's safe to say that all of us have developed great friendships with many of the locals here in PNG. My best girlfriend, Betty, is someone who has been such a blessing to us while here...there is no one that has been more eager to go with us everywhere and show us the sights. She is there to translate for us when needed, she's there to help us shop, she's there to just minister with us...she's pretty much the missing member of our team! There is something so refreshing to find people all the way across the world who you KNOW God has put you in contact with for a purpose. Betty and I have had numerous discussions about God and His amazing work here and back in the States. What a wonderful feeling to find a sister in Christ who comes from somewhere totally different but still has such a heart for Jesus.



Emily Beckman

Date: 2/5/2007

Submitted by: Elizabeth Lord

Journal Entry:

Since we have been here, a couple times for team devotions, we have gone around and told where we have seen God. I would like to tell you about one of those times.



Elizabeth Lord

So about a week ago, while the rest of the team went to Wabag to do a program, I went into Mt. Hagan with some of the guys from the school to run some errands. I had to get some more groceries for the team and go to the post office while the guys had to get some supplies for the school.

After I had gone to the grocery store and post office, I was waiting in the bus for the guys to finish when I started hearing someone talking very loudly. I couldn't figure out where it was coming from at first, but then I realized it was coming from the park across the street from the grocery store. I then realized that the person talking was a boy about ten years old. I couldn't understand everything he was saying, but what I could, he was preaching to the crowd that was growing by the minute.

As I sat there and watched and listened, I was so amazed by this boy and how excited and passionate he was about spreading the word of God at such a young age.

On my way back to the school and over the next couple days, I thought about what I had seen. I thought about how there are so many times when I am not very excited or passionate about doing to work of God, especially when I don't feel good or when things are just not going how I thought

they would, but no matter what, that excitement and passion is something I should strive for every day.

Have a blessed day,

Elizabeth

Date: 2/6/2007

Submitted by: Kyle Scobie

Journal Entry:

Back to School!



Kyle Scobie

This weekend has been a busy one here at HLIS. Students started arriving for the new school year, and projects are happening all over campus. We have been a part of the business in some ways. We have been getting the dorms ready for the non-commuting students, and welcoming the students as they have been bussed in. Tuesday is the first day of classes, so everyone here is a bit frantic and nervous and also very excited.

Each of us New Dawners are going to have a small "teaching" job for the first week of school, too. Since the school doesn't have an English teacher hired as of yet, we get to be overseers of the classes for the remainder of the time we're here. We won't be doing any real teaching; it will be more of a sub-like thing, but still very neat. I get to be in charge of the ninth grade class, which has about 14 students. Now I'll be able to say that I've had some overseas teaching experience. We're all pretty excited to play a major role in the work of HLIS, and no doubt we will never forget our time spent here.

Speaking of unforgettable experiences, we had one

today. This morning we went to a church about 20 minutes away in Yaramanda. Resurrection Lutheran Church in Yaramanda was the original LCMS mission congregation. We did a few songs during the service, and then we did a program after the service. It was really cool after our program because we got to hang out and play around with the kids. Josh started chasing them around the yard, and then they started chasing him, and then me! After a bit of horsing around, they fed us a huge meal. It was our first PNG potluck, and it was pretty good. We had huge pieces of fresh chicken, and some super-long green beans. Coke is very popular here, so we had that too, which is nice, but I miss Dr. Pepper. We also had some very fresh pineapple, which was very juicy and scrumptious. They had some cooked bananas available, too, but the nice thing about a potluck is that you serve yourself, so I didn't partake. I don't really like bananas, although I have eaten two in the last couple weeks, to be polite. Liz said they were really dry, anyway, so I'm sure I didn't miss anything. Then, on the way back to HLIS for the day, it started to rain. This is a usual occurrence here in the highlands of PNG, and by usually, I mean it rains every single day. So this didn't surprise us. However, it was rather inconvenient because we were riding back to the school in the back of an open pickup. Needless to say, we got a little wet. Our guide said he was praying for the rain to come so we could have a memorable ride in the back of the truck, one we'd never forget. He's probably right.

On Friday, Liz and I went to Wabag, the closest larger town near the school. We went to a market, which is quite an experience in itself. Picture a supermarket, without a roof, and every aisle is really just a muddy walkway past a bunch of tarps covered with all sorts of

fruits, vegetables, and various household items. Liz got some oranges and some various veggies, while I cleaned one lady clear out of hot peppers. I found the experience much more entertaining and enjoyable than what we have back home, but maybe because I'm a guy.

There was kind of a neat thing yesterday too. The principal of HLIS, Dr. Brent Kilback, gave a little speech at lunch about the year ahead of the students. He said it's a "new beginning" a time to start fresh and new. Then I thought, "Hey, our team name is New Dawn, which means a new beginning, a fresh start!" We must be in the right place...

Life is good, God is great!

-Kyle

Date: 2/7/2007

Submitted by: Emily Beckman

Journal Entry:

Well, I'm finally doing what I went to college for (of course I haven't graduated yet, and my major is now different than what I started with for the tenth time, but that's beside the point)...I'm teaching twelfth grade English here in PNG. Whoever would have thought that this would happen to me, and in a foreign country? God works in amazing ways. It's allowing me to see things in a new light. To start with, boys here in PNG are shy. If you call on a boy in class, he will most likely mumble (that's if you're lucky) and then put his head down on the desk and pretend that he is trying his hardest to disappear. And they are all so quiet in class. Hard to believe, right? The crazy thing is, they know the answers. They are smart kids who genuinely want to be here. But manners have been taught to them at a very early age, and they respect their teachers. It's great to see kids who love to learn, who work hard at learning, and who are appreciative of the classes that they are taking. It makes me smile.



Emily Beckman

Another thing that warms my heart is the laughter. One of the teachers said to us, "Listen to a conversation and count the number of seconds in between words that it takes before you hear someone laugh, and I guarantee that it will be less than ten seconds." And boy, was he right. PNG kids laugh, a lot. Girls will giggle just when they look at us, and the boys will laugh so often that you think for sure that you are dragging toilet paper or something out of your pants. It's so infectious and really creates an awesome atmosphere. I wish that I could bottle it up and take it home to share with the youth in America. We're all hoping that the PNG air will stay on our clothes long enough to infect some kids back home...soon you'll hear bursts of random laughter in classrooms near you.

We had a flag raising ceremony today, and the kids all stood in rows by grade and gender and sang

first the national anthem, then the school song, and then recited the school motto and the Christian motto. Willingly. It was such a wonderful thing to be a part of...once again, something that I wish could happen in America, but God is working patiently, no doubt about that.

One final thing that hit me today and made me smile was the group of younger kids here at Amapayak (that's the school's tribe name)...there were sixth graders who were singing the "Sheep Song;" and not only were they singing, they were belting it at the top of their lungs...with actions!! Maybe it's just the places that we've gone in the U.S., but try getting sixth graders to sing anything, let alone the "Sheep Song," and you'll get some attitude back. The joy of the Lord is definitely alive in the kids here, and it gets to all of us every day, and it will be something that we are all going to miss incredibly when we have to leave it.

God is good...

Date: 2/11/2007

Submitted by: Tara Oetting

Journal Entry:

We have almost completed our first leg of our tour, and I have to admit that I am going to be very sad to leave this school and the students. We have formed some really great relationships with the students, and we have become part of their experience at school. They eat with us, they sing with us, they play with us. We have become friends and siblings. It continues to amaze me that although we come from such very different places, God unites us and is the common bond between us. He continues to be faithful to our team and to the people of Papua New Guinea. I trust that He is faithful to you, wherever you may be reading this.



Tara Oetting

I am getting a bit homesick, but not because of the things I miss about the States, but because I wish I could bring all the people I love to PNG. I wish you could all experience these things--see all the things I see and taste all the things I taste. Shake the hands of the people you are praying for and worship alongside them. You have people here in PNG that send greetings to you and wish to express their thanks for sending us. You have people all the way across the world that are praying for you and thinking about you. I pray that you think of New Dawn often and keep us in your prayers.

Because of Him <>< Tara

Date: 2/12/2007

Submitted by: Kyle Scobie

Journal Entry:

So much to do, so much to tell!



Kyle Scobie

So much has happened, it seems, where to begin is quite the pickle! So we'll start with Saturday...

It started very nicely, me sleeping, then me eating breakfast. Quite a wonderful time. Then the girls went into Wabag to hang out and shop, and Josh and I stayed behind and helped the school with some technical issues

they were having. Josh is currently working on updating the website for the school, and I was working on making a couple of their computers run better and not be virus-prone. When the girls came back, Liz, Emily and I went to Mambis to visit the Lutz family one more time. It was a fun time with them, because we went on our first bushwalk (hike) through some gardens, through some deep ditch like pathways, and up and down some really steep, slippery slopes. We climbed up to the top of this one hill/mountain, and there was a radio tower up there, so a few of us climbed up that, too. It was really cold and windy up there, and Dr. Steve said that they sometimes fly kites from on top of the tower. I'd think they'd get blown off the top. The entire walk took a couple hours, I think, and we got to see some cool stuff, Emily got her whole foot stuck in a mud hole; it was funny. Then we had dinner with them and came back here to HLIS.

On Sunday we had a morning service here at the school. We did all the music for it, and Emily gave a brief message. Then we went to Sirunki, but we didn't have a ride back, so we had to do a brief program of only a few songs and catch a ride back with the guy we came with. However, before we left we had to go to another church in Sirunki because we were told they had some gifts for us. So we went there, and we found out they wanted us to stay and sing songs, but we didn't have time, so we sang one song, and they sang for us. Then they gave us a huge bag of veggies, and they gave us a nice new bilum (string bag) with the PNG flag woven into it, and a PNG colored cap, like the one I have. They also gave each one of us some fresh leis made from real flowers. The girls got red ones and Josh and I got orange ones. They were really cool, but mine was looking pretty sad this morning. The downside of real flowers, I suppose. It

was a really nice time. Then we took the long, bumpy road back to HLIS for the day.

Today we were going to go to a couple of schools to do some programs--one at a university and the other at a seminary--however, we couldn't arrange a vehicle, and we were rather unsuccessful in catching a PMV (Public Motor Vehicle), so we were left without a ride to our destinations. Luckily things in PNG are very flexible ("no worries" as most would say), and they don't seem upset if things don't quite work out. We ended up just hanging out at the school and playing with the kids here. So even though we didn't have any programs, we still got to sing some songs and have some fun. We also experienced a small earthquake, which was really cool for me because I've never felt one before. It didn't knock anything off the walls or anything, and it wasn't even jerky really, just a gentle sway. So yeah, that was really neat! Tomorrow we may or may not go to a couple of schools for some programs, depending on the vehicle situation. Everything is somewhat up-in-the-air at all times here, so we may have another day here with the students, which is really enjoyable, so we don't mind. It also gives us another chance to hang out with the kids before we leave early Thursday morning.

PNG is a learning environment, that's for certain. We're definitely learning patience, and also to trust that however things work out, that it's God's plan and that we'll be very well taken care of. By the way, PNG is locally referred to as "the land of the unexpected." We know exactly why.

Life is good, God is great!

-Kyle

Date: 2/18/2007
Submitted by: Elizabeth Lord
Journal Entry:

Last Thursday, we left the highlands. It was a very sad time because we had gotten to know the students at Highland Lutheran International School so well, and we are going to miss them very much. But it was also a happy time because we get to see a new part of Papua New Guinea and make more new friends.



We have been in Lae for three days now, and we have been amazed by the people here. We have done two programs so far at churches in Lae, and we are going to a local village today for another one; we will be staying the night there and then worshiping with them Sunday morning. This is exciting for us because this is the first time for us to spend the night in a village.

Elizabeth Lord

Since being in Lae, which is along the coast, I have noticed many differences between it and the highlands. One is the temperature; it is much hotter and more humid along the coast than in the highlands. It doesn't rain as much on the coast as it does in the highlands. Because of that, the roads are a lot better along the coast. The food is slightly different; they have more fresh vegetables in the highlands and more fresh fruits along the coast. Along the coast, the people don't have to grow as much of their food; they can get a lot more from the store. Another difference is the houses; most of the houses along the coast are raised up off of the ground.

These are just some of the differences that I have seen; I should be able to see more after being along the coast for the next month.

Please keep us in your prayer as we will be traveling a lot in the next month. Also please keep Highland Lutheran International School in your prayers. Thanks so much.

Hope you all have a wonderful day; God bless.

Elizabeth

Date: 2/24/2007
Submitted by: Tara Oetting
Journal Entry:

I am so hot and sweaty and tired. PNG is as beautiful as always, but I am sincerely missing the cooler weather of the highlands. We have taken every opportunity to go swimming in the beautiful freshwater pools and in the ocean. After just about every program, we ask the children to take us to "waswas" in the river. Usually, it's simply a stream or river where the whole village does their bathing and laundry, but there has also been the opportunity to swim in a waterfall-fed crystal clear pool. It has been so refreshing for me to experience that. It amazes me that we get the opportunity to experience all of these things while all of my friends and family are buried in snow. One of the New Guineans asked me if I am missing the weather at home, and I have honestly told them that no, I am not missing the blustery cold weather of the U.S. and Canada. I do miss my family and friends, though, and you are all constantly in my thoughts and prayers.



Tara Oetting

The people on the coast have been so overwhelming in their welcome and kindness to us. The children are **so** beautiful and fun. The mamas are sweet and so hilariously funny. The lapuns (older people) are wise and joyful. All of them have so much to offer us, and I often feel that I have nothing in return to give them. The other night we had the opportunity to worship with a group of children and adults that we had gotten to know really well. We sang some songs with them in Pidgin, and they totally blew us out of the water. They sing with so much passion, it's almost as if

they are screaming the words, but it comes out as beautiful singing. We have learned a song that says, "When we are Christians, we come together as brothers and sisters. Jesus Christ is the Head of the family," and we sang this song with all of these people, with their voices raising up the screaming hymn to God. I was in awe of God in that moment--that He has created all of us and we are so different in just about every way, except that we are a family. Jesus Christ is the Head of that family, and we have gotten the chance to worship and live alongside our brothers and sisters here. Praise be to Him.

Continue to pray for the health of the team, as some of us are getting a bit sick. Friends and family, I miss you and love you. International teams, soon and very soon, my friends. Keep on keeping on.

All my love,

<>< Tara

Date: 2/25/2007

Submitted by: Kyle Scobie

Journal Entry:

Oh, the busyness of PNG!



Kyle Scobie

Actually, I find it funny that in PNG, time isn't money, because we still seem to be up to our ears in stuff to do! On Thursday, we went to Suqan, where the people there did a singsing with us and we got to take part in it. A traditional PNG singsing involves lots of singing, dancing, and eating. Before it started, they took Josh and me and dressed us up like native PNG men. Then they initiated us as leaders in the community. It was kinda confusing when they were explaining the rituals of the whole ordeal, but it was really fun. Then we paraded up to the church, and Josh and I got to play some kundu drums (a PNG exclusive, and I bought two later). After they welcomed us, we did our program, and then ate some food, again. It seemed to go really well. I received a bilum and a really cool necklace, along with my kundu drums.

Friday wasn't nearly as busy, but it was just as hot. We went to Logawen Seminary early in the morning. The

campus of the seminary is at the top of a mountain in Finschhafen. We got there in the morning, but we didn't have a program until later that night. So we sat around a little bit in the air conditioning (actually, it was just an oscillating fan, but it felt good), and ate food, as usual. Shortly after lunch, we went swimming in Butaweng, where there is a very cool waterfall and a large pool at the base of the falls to swim in. It was very refreshing. After going back to the seminary and eating dinner, we did our program, which seemed to go over very well. Then we spent the night at the seminary in the dorms. That was interesting, but very neat. In the morning, they gave us two loaves of bread and peanut butter and strawberry jam to make PB&J's. It was great; I think I ate about four sandwiches!

Shortly after breakfast, we hopped into a truck and went back down the mountain to Dregerhafen Secondary School. When we got there, we hung around and ate some food, and then we went swimming in the solwara (Pidgin for salt water). We caught a blue starfish, a sea cucumber, and a sea snake (which was really gross). Then we collected some cool shells. After a quick dip, we rinsed in the showers and took our bags to the lodge where we would be sleeping. It was a really nice place with a real air conditioner and a really nice lounging place right on the beach. We saw about five dolphins swimming past the lodge, and caught a few crabs and tiny, gross-looking starfish. We did a night program again for the students, and then they lined up and walked by us to greet us and shake our hands. I got a bunch of bilums. Then they all asked us for our address, and autographs, so we spent the next hour frantically writing. We decided that Youth Encounter needs a shorter mailing address. Then we chatted with a few

students and went to bed in a nice, cool room.

This morning we packed up our stuff again and rode the PMV into Gagidu, the main town in Finschhafen. In Gagidu, we went to church at Bethlehem Lutheran Church. Since Josh has been sick, he hadn't come with us to anything since the singsing on Thursday, so when he showed up at the church this morning with the youth pastor, we were a little surprised. He seems to be getting better. We had the Sunday service with the congregation, and then we did our spiel after the service. After our program, we had a huge feast at the pastor's house. We had tons of chicken, rice, juice, papaw, pineapple, and just about every other PNG staple food. Potlucks are a universal thing for Lutherans, I think.

After we finally got back to Helsbach after being gone for a few days, I realized that Josh and I locked our keys in the room we've been staying in. So we had to become PNG raskols (pidgin word meaning juvenile delinquents) and take out a window to get inside. Spare keys are not common in PNG, apparently.

We're still eating very well, and sleeping somewhat comfortably. The heat can be a bit much sometimes, especially when you can't stop sweating for more than a few minutes. Oh well, soon we'll be back in Lae at the guest house where the electricity actually works (Helsbach has the infrastructure, but the power station is bagarap), and where we can shower and feel somewhat clean, and then fall asleep under a nice ceiling fan.

Life is good, God is great!

-Kyle

Date: 2/27/2007

Submitted by: Kyle Scobie

Journal Entry:

PNG, the land of the unexpected.



Kyle Scobie

We had every intention of getting up early this morning, saying goodbye, and rushing to the dock to catch the boat back to Lae. However, when we called to check on the status of the boat, we found out that it was broken. Then we prepared ourselves to stay another day. Then we found out that the boat was fixed, and would come later, so we arrived back in Lae very late. It's good to be back where electricity actually works, where water doesn't need filtering, and where food is a little more surprising. Not that I minded having three coconuts, two pineapples, and fifteen bananas every day, for a snack.

Tuesday was a very busy day for us. We had three programs, and Josh finally came with us after a lot of much-needed rest from his malaria, which seems to be getting much better. We had to get up early so we could catch our ride from Settleberg back to Helsbach to freshen up and pick up Josh. The first place we went was Simbang. It is the site where the first German missionaries came ashore in the late 1800's. We did a program in the memorial "hall" that was decked out in names and dates and very colorful paint. After the program, we had a "light" refreshment (we're beginning to realize that when they say "light" they mean we each get a coconut, a pineapple, a bunch of bananas, and usually some rice or sweet potatoes, too). After we

stuffed ourselves, we packed up our gear into some tiny canoes and paddled across the bay to Butaweng, where Braun Hospital is (Josh's favorite place). When we arrived, we had another "light" refreshment, this time of juice and cookies, lots of juice and cookies. That was amazing. Then we did our program and had a full-blown meal of chicken and rice and juice and kaukau. After *that* program, we went swimming in the waterfall near the hospital; it has become our favorite place to refresh ourselves. After heading back to the mission station at Helsbach, we ate dinner and prepared for our last program of the day. The station wanted us to do a special program for them, so we sang some kids' songs and did a skit and had a great time with the people. Afterwards, we lined up and the kids presented us with gifts (a common PNG practice). I got some necklaces and some basket things. It was really cool, but kinda sad knowing this was our last night with the kids.

This morning, before we left for real, we made one last trek down the mountain to a primary school. The students did a little singsing for us, and then we did a miniature program for them. We sang a few songs, did our skit, and then shook their hands. After that, we had another 'light' refreshment of one whole watermelon, and two coconuts. Then we went back to Helsbach, loaded up, and knocked off for Buki, where the boat was waiting for us. The boat ride was about three hours long, but it was fun to see the flying fish again, and ride along the PNG shoreline once again. I talked to a guy named Simon from Mt. Hagen for about and hour or so about America and PNG. Then he gave me a Bilum bag and asked for my address because he wanted to send me a Bilum with my name on it along with a handmade PNG cap. Pretty cool stuff, all because I talked with him

for a while.

PNG continues to bring unexpected things. We're slowly learning more and more how things work. This week was especially good in helping us learn Pidgin, because everyone wanted to teach us. Turns out, I was told I was talking in my sleep Monday night, in fluent Pidgin! Either I'm making good progress in being bilingual, or the anti-malaria medication is really stepping it up a notch.

Life is good, God is great!

-Kyle

Date: 2/28/2007

Submitted by: Elizabeth Lord

Journal Entry:

For the past eight days, we have been in the area of Finschhafen. We stayed in a village called Heldsbach and then went out during the day to some of the other local towns. Since we were at this village for over a week, we became good friends with the people living there. So when we had to leave today, it was very hard. This is not the first place this has happened; it was the same way when we had to leave the students and teachers at Highland Lutheran International School.



Elizabeth Lord

When we were in the States, it was always sad to leave host families who became good friends, but the thing is that some of them we will see again, and the others we could see again. However, the friends we make here, we might never see again, so it makes it even harder to say goodbye.

So even though it is wonderful being here meeting new people and making new friends, it is also very hard knowing we have to leave them too and might never see them again here on earth. However, we have to hope that we will see them again in heaven.

God bless,

Elizabeth

Date: 3/1/2007

Submitted by: Emily Beckman
Journal Entry:



Have you ever had those days when you just sit and sweat, sweat, sweat? I mean literally, you just are sitting, not expending any amount of energy other than breathing, and somehow you still are just dripping sweat from pretty much every pore in your body, including pores that you didn't even know that you had. It's truly amazing; I'm not sure how it works. Welcome to New Dawn's life. We have been in the Lae area for about two weeks now, and every day seems to get hotter and hotter. There have been many days when we have just bathed in the river, and the second that we get out of the water we can feel the sweat begin to bead up on our skin again. It's great, though, because we know that we are experiencing something that we will probably never experience again once we leave PNG. It is during these times that we are loving life. I know, it sounds crazy that we can all love sweating so much, but it means that we are out with the people, telling stories, running around with the kids or preparing food over the fire. Sweat means that we are dirty and need to take a shower, just like all of the locals. Sweat means that we are drinking more water than we probably ever will again. Sweat means so much more than just smelling bad and looking pitiful. It's a very beautiful thing.

Emily Beckman

It was about the second week that we were in Finschafen, and we were sweating for about the eightieth hour in a row that I realized how much I hate sweat and love it at the same time. At first, all I could think about was how gross I felt, how much I probably smelled, how terrible I probably looked with my hair plastered to my face and with dirt caked across my cheek. But then I realized all of the things mentioned up above...that sweat meant that I was out loving people and loving Jesus. Maybe it wouldn't mean the same thing back in Wisconsin, but here in PNG, sweat means life. And I appreciate that and it helps me to appreciate the people's lifestyle here.

If there was one thing that I pray everyone could experience once in their life it would be for them to be out in the garden digging up kaukau (sweet potato) in the midday heat with a huge bilum (bag) on their head filled with three watermelons. This is what we get to see every day here...and that's just life. It's the most overwhelming thing to see and yet the most normal thing to see, too. Many other things in life seem so much more mundane compared to this sight.

God will continue to show us these amazing sights, and He will continue to provide these moments while here in PNG, and I'm sure He will remind us of this life even after we leave, but I will pray that He will also show all of us His love for different cultures because it is so important to understand the way that people live, the way that they love, and the way that they laugh. Life is beautiful.

Date: 3/2/2007
Submitted by: Kyle Scobie
Journal Entry:



I lost something I love today.

In Melanesian culture, it is common practice that, if someone openly admires something owned by someone else, and the item isn't a necessity of life, or too expensive, that item is given away. We have mistakenly admired some things of people we meet a bit too openly and then received them as gifts a short time later. This morning we did a program at an English-speaking secondary school here in Lae, and it seemed to go very well. They laughed and sang and seemed to have a good time. After our program we usually like to hang around and visit with people, especially at schools, and they usually ask us for addresses or email, or to sign their shirts (we're big in PNG). So we're sitting on the edge of the stage, frantically writing to keep up with the massive crowd of students waving pads of paper and

Kyle Scobie

pens in our faces, and then, out of nowhere, a girl asked me something I never saw coming. "Can I have your hat?" There it was, right out and blunt in the open air. I was wearing my Dr. Pepper baseball cap at the time, a wonderful reminder of a glorious beverage that I have had to go without since arriving here in January. I was a bit stunned by the request, so innocently asked, yet so heavy with implication. In America, you couldn't just walk up to someone you didn't know and ask them to give you a piece of clothing. Maybe a small fee would be in order, if the person didn't find the request too rude. But here in the South Pacific, almost nothing you could ask would be considered rude. In fact, almost nothing you could say in general would be out of line. So the question hung out there, in front of my mind. I loved that cap; I wore it everywhere, even swimming in the crystal-clear stream and waterfall at Butaweng in Finschhafen. It was my daily reminder that thousands of cases of Dr. Pepper, the little soda from Texas that could, were waiting for me in Hawaii. It was my reminder that the very first thing I would do in Hawaii, was enjoy a tall, cool Dr. Pepper. I was faced with a big decision after that program. Should I keep my cap, faded and beautiful? Or rather, should I follow the local culture, and risk losing the ability to remember the smooth, refreshing taste of the soda with 23 flavors? In the words of Ron Burgundy, I was in a pickle. So for what seemed like ten minutes, but was more like three seconds, I made my decision. I'm not always a fast thinker of excuses when put on the spot. I felt my hand rise to the brim of the beloved cap. I felt the air rush through my hair as it was slowly exposed to the PNG sky. I watched as my sad, but generous hands, moist from sweat, extended my hat towards the anxious student. I could see the hat give a slight look of concern and flash a subtle frown in my direction. As it floated towards the girl, I could almost see the state of possession change, like a hologram tilted in and out of the light. "Take care of that hat." I said, "It contains many dreams that have yet to be fulfilled." (Actually I just made that one up about the dreams.) So now my hat is gone. I keep expecting to receive a fine from the Dr. Pepper Company, or at least a small threat. Don't worry, Dr. Pepper, I will not forget you. I will buy another hat and wear it all over, even in the water.

Life is good, God is great!

-Kyle

Date: 3/12/2007

Submitted by: Kyle Scobie

Journal Entry:

How does a rooster know what time to start crowing?

Karkar Island is a busy place; this is what we have determined. If I don't look skinnier by the time I get back home, it's because Hawaii has some very fattening foods. We all sweat about 30 gallons of water a day, and that's before we wring out our clothes.



Kyle Scobie

On Friday we got up fairly early to leave Mapor village to catch a ride to a primary school for an afternoon program. You may be wondering why we would have to get up early for an afternoon program, and the reason is that transportation here on Karkar Island is not exactly something that is in excess. It's not so much that Karkar is a large island. You can drive around the entire place less than three hours easily. However, getting the ride to begin with is the key! So we had to pack up all of our stuff and wait by the road because you never know when a wantok (friend or relative) will drive by so you can ask for a ride. So we had a nice wall to the road and a nice sit under the shade of a bunch of coconut trees for a while. We kept being warned to watch for falling nuts, but we didn't really think too much of it for a while. Then we heard some plant fibers snapping somewhere above us, and Liz and Tara almost got concussions. They were sitting about two feet apart and the milk-filled depth charge fell right in between them. We heard that about three people every year go to the hospital on Karkar with coconut-related injuries. What are the chances that two of those three would be done in by one coconut!

When we finally got a ride, we went to the school did our program, received a bunch of fruit as gifts, and answered tons of random questions. Every program, we like to take time afterwards to answer any questions people have about stuff. Usually we get asked about how we came together, what we got to school for, and what we think of PNG. We also get asked to tell about 9/11 and whether or not Osama bin Laden is still alive. After this particular program, everyone wanted to know about

outer space and NASA. Oh, what fun to be considered an expert on everything! Afterwards, we carried all of our stuff up a long hill to the village where Moses (our Karkar guide) currently lives.

Saturday was kind of a day off. Meaning we didn't have a program, just a long walk to talk to some people in another village to say we would see them for lotu on Sunday (if you haven't figured out by now, "lotu" means church service or worship in Pidgin). So we walked a long distance, sat for a half-hour or so, and walked back. Then we ate fruit for lunch and rested in the shade for a couple hours. Then, at about three p.m., Moses' wife started making dinner, and this particular supper would be a good one, chicken and rice! However, unlike the majority of homes in the United States, the chicken isn't quite as fresh as it is here on Karkar. When we arrived at Moses' house, he had seven chickens squawking around his yard. Shortly after dinner was being prepared, there were six. Guess who got to help with dinner? Yup, I killed a chicken for supper. After a few swift knife swipes, and some boiling water for efficient feather removal, I had a naked, headless bird. I can now say that I have seen a chicken in every stage of preparation, from start to finish. A short, palatable video exists of the first step, but I think I'll spare your curiosity for now.

Sunday we went back to the village we visited Saturday morning for the worship service there. It was a little strange because the pastor only gave a sermon for about five minutes (which is extremely uncommon in PNG) and then he looked at us and said he believed we might have something we want to say. Luckily I had a message translated into Pidgin with me, so I just read that. After the service we did an outdoor program and answered a bunch of questions again. Since I had told them previously in our program that I was going to school to be a teacher, they asked me what the history of education in America was, and what makes America's education system so much better. It was hard to think of something to say besides the fact that the government in America actually gets involved in education, relatively speaking, but I managed to say something different, fortunately. There's a fine line between self-esteem and "the truth hurts."

This morning was moving time. We move on to Tugotugo village, at the bottom of the hill. So we packed up our stuff and prepared to walk down. Before we went though, Moses wanted us to plant one coconut palm and a buai palm. In a few years, we can come back and see some nuts growing on our trees. We told him we were gonna start the "New Dawn Plantation" because the previous team in 2004 also planted a coconut tree. After our ceremonial planting, we huffed and puffed our fat, out-of-shape American bodies down to the next place we would be staying. It turned out to be a very nice guest house with real beds and a somewhat more modern outhouse (it had something to sit on, not just a hole in the floor). However, don't confuse the fact that we had a nice place to sleep this time with the idea that I've been sleeping well, or at all, at night. That would be false to assume that. Between the heat, loud bugs, hard floors, Josh's snoring nostrils of unmelodious nature, and the late-night toilet runs because I'm trying to stay hydrated, I figure I've slept about 20 hours total in the week we've been here on Karkar. Hopefully my luck will change in that department soon enough, but probably not.

By the way, the answer to my question about roosters knowing when to crow, you would think it would be easy. The logical guess would be that they know because the sun comes up. However, assuming anything in PNG should be against the law because the sun doesn't rise in PNG at 3:30 in the morning, but that's when most of them start yelling around here. You may seem uncomfortable that I seem more than happy to have helped prepare that chicken for dinner, but I would bet that most people would be more than willing to eat a whole chicken for any chance to sleep at night.

Life is good, God is great!

-Kyle

Date: 3/13/2007

Submitted by: Elizabeth Lord

Journal Entry:

I have experienced a lot of the new things since being in PNG. However, there is one thing that boggles my mind every time I experience it.



For some of the kids we met, we are the first white people they have ever seen.

Elizabeth Lord

It's so weird to think that I am the first white person a child has ever seen.

Liz

Date: 3/18/2007

Submitted by: Kyle Scobie

Journal Entry:

Karkar Island: The place of no return.



Kyle Scobie

Our time here on Karkar is winding down, but there is still much to tell, as usual. We left Keng village and went to a primary school run by a Catholic mission. The campus was right on the beach. In America, they would be sitting on a multi-million dollar plot of land, and they get it for free. If America ever finds out about the economic potential of PNG's real estate, this little country is in trouble. After our program, we piled into a truck, drove up the mountain a ways, got out, and walked up the mountain some more.

I thought I was gonna die from exhaustion. Once at the top, or as far as we needed to go up the mountain (Karkar Island, being an old volcanic island, has three directions, up the hill, down the hill, and around the hill), we did another program at a Lutheran mission school. We were really excited when we arrived because we saw a white student, which usually means a missionary is in charge and things will be somewhat more organized, but we later found out the student was an albino. It was somewhat strange, but cool at the same time. We were told that PNG has many albino people, but this was the first one we saw. Our program went well at this school, too, complete with plenty of interesting questions. After a little nap in the guest house at the school, we ate dinner with a teacher from the school, and then we had a little devotion with a local village. It rained pretty good later that night, as it usually does every night in PNG, but this time the thunder and lightning were pretty interesting. At the top of the mountain, there is a huge crater where the old volcano used to be; inside the crater is the smaller, active cone. The thunder echoes very sharply in that crater, so the sound is pretty spectacular.

The next morning we walked halfway down the hill and waited for a vehicle to take us the rest of the way. We were pretty excited because we were going to the hospital and sleeping there after a night program in a nearby village. It would be the first time since we've been on Karkar that we've had electricity. However, once we arrived, we discovered that they were not as ready for us there as we would have hoped, so we went straight to the village and stayed there instead. We had a very nice program on the beach and had some good fellowship with the village, despite our tough luck at the hospital. However, we seem to be attracting people who like late-night community devotions. It's really neat that the whole village will turn out for a night devo together, but sometimes my spiritual life seems to need sleep more than it needs an hour of talking in a foreign language. I fell asleep to some 12-year-old kid who thought I looked like Chuck Norris tell stories to Josh and I about something. I'm not really sure what he was saying; I was pretty tired.

Sunday morning we awoke to a breakfast of doughnuts. I'm amazed at the trends that seem to be universal. Coffee and doughnuts in PNG; who would have thought? (I haven't started to like coffee by any means, in case you're wondering. Call me a bad Lutheran.) After breakfast, we walked back to the hospital where the church is. We brought all of our bags with us because we actually would get to sleep within the hospital campus this time. The lotu service went fairly well. Not super well-attended compared to some other jam-packed churches we've been to, but the modest crowd seemed to respond well to my message during our program. It even corresponded to the Gospel text in the service. After the program, we met the husband of the missionary doctor from Germany that is practicing at the hospital. He came by the guest house with one of the plantation owners on the Island and offered to take us for a tour of his plantation and for a swim on his private beach. So shortly after lunch, we visited the wards of the hospital (a humbling sight for any western doctor I think) and went with the missionary and his two kids to the house of the plantation owner. After a short but very refreshing swim, complete with goggles for viewing the large reef nearby, we went for a driving tour around the 800+ hectare (1 hectare is almost 2 1/2 acres) cocoa and coconut plantation. We stopped a few times to look at the drying bins for the cocoa beans, and got to eat a

freshly dried bean; it was quite bitter. After the tour, he gave us a huge chocolate bar that a German company makes from New Guinea cocoa. It was very delicious, not bitter like the bean. Who would have thought that if you ferment a bean, dry it, and then grind it up, you get a taste-bud party-maker? That's a question for God, I think.

Tomorrow we leave Karkar Island for the mainland. The unofficial motto, given by the New Guineans, is "the place of no return." I don't know if that means people never want to visit again after visiting once, or if it means people like Karkar so much they don't want to return home. I have had both feelings in the two weeks we've been here. I'm sure I could handle it a second time, though.

Life is good, God is great!

-Kyle

Date: 3/21/2007

Submitted by: Elizabeth Lord

Journal Entry:

Let me tell you about our home for two weeks. Karkar Island is also known as "The Island Of No Return."



Elizabeth Lord

Karkar has two tok ples (local languages), Waskia and Takia, that are divided by a river. There are about three major and five smaller coconut and cocoa plantations. It takes about two hours to drive around the whole island. There is one high school and one major hospital, Gaubin. The island was formed from a volcano that last erupted in the 90's. There is a bilum (bag) design specific to Karkar.

We had two wonderful weeks on Karkar.

Liz

Date: 3/23/2007

Submitted by: Kyle Scobie

Journal Entry:

Another phase of our journey is coming to a close.



Kyle Scobie

We just finished our last program for Madang province tonight, and it was a memorable official exit for us. It was also a great close to another busy week. After the four programs on Tuesday, we were ready to crash, but Wednesday rolled around with five more (it was supposed to be four, but one was thrown in as a surprise). We did programs at a bunch of schools and with one congregation. Everything seemed to go really well, and we were again treated to light refreshments (the equivalent to a Lutheran potluck) everywhere. Needless to say, by the time we came back to the guest house for the night, we were dead. However, Thursday was a beacon of hope for us, because we only had one morning program and one night program, leaving plenty of time for shopping, internet, and sightseeing. The morning program was at a school near Bilbil village, which is apparently world famous for its pottery. After the program, we were all presented with at least two little clay pots from the students each as a memento. Then we drove to the actual village and were given a quick demonstration of the pot-making process. It was kinda cool, but we enjoyed hanging out with the kids at the school more. Since we got to go shopping, we bought stuff to make our own dinner. We got to have spaghetti and a bunch of fresh fruit (given by the students at the school--once again, more than we could hope to eat). We had all intentions of inviting some people we knew from HLIS for dinner because they are now in Madang, but we didn't have time to go see them to ask, so we ended up having twice as much food as we would need (as usual). By the time we went to our night program, we were so stuffed our bellies were hanging over our knees (Hi, Katie!). And then, not

much to our surprise by now, we were given about six bowls of various foods to eat after the night program. I tried to eat one plate full of whatever it was they were feeding us, but I must say I was rather unsuccessful. We were ready to burst the whole way back to the guest house. Oh well, such is the life in PNG.

Today was an equally great and busy day. We only had two programs again, morning and night, but we always have things to do. The first program was at a school, on an island. So we hired (rented) a boat for the day, because our night program was also on an island. We also wanted to go snorkeling, so since we had the boat, we got to do that, too! The morning program went well, despite being rained on during most of the time we were singing. Once again there was plenty of food to go around, twice. After the program, we climbed into our boat, and headed to the snorkel place. We rented all the equipment and set off for the closest reef. It was really cool; we had a whole lagoon to ourselves, and most of it was coral reef underwater. We saw plenty of tropical fish and every color of coral you could imagine. I may or may not have seen a small shark, too. I didn't try to get a close enough look at it to find out, and it was in a deep, dark spot. Anyway, whatever kind of fish I saw had a shark-like nose and tail, so I just decided to swim away. It was only about 1½ feet long, but that's big enough to eat a finger. We all got fairly sunburned on our backs, too, but that's what happens when you snorkel for three hours straight. After our little underwater adventure, we went to the island where our night program would be. Once we got there, we got a rinse from the sticky saltiness and were given some native clothing to wear with our western garb. The girls all got meriblouses (usually a dress-like gown that looks like maternity-wear) and Josh and I got laplaps (basically a bed sheet to wrap around our waists like a skirt). For the next three hours we felt very masculine, to say the least. The program went very well, and we were decked out with gifts and food. We also had a lot of group pictures taken of us with random people. We then had a huge crowd of kids walk us to the dock to get on the boat tonight to come back to the mainland. It's all just little hints of what it's like to be a famous rock star. I don't think I could handle being famous for more than a few months at a time.

Tomorrow morning we "kalap long highway bus" (jump on a PMV) and take the long ride back to Lae. We're very excited to go back, and begin a new, but very short, leg of our tour. We don't know the details of it, but within one week, we'll be back to Lae and getting ready to go back to the capital city, Port Moresby, before leaving the country on the 2nd. Despite the fact that we're still on "PNG time" (meaning everything will happen sometime, just not when it is scheduled to happen) time still moves as fast as American time. Word of advice to all you time-oriented people considering a trip to PNG: leave your daily planner at home, and your watch. When the sun comes up, you eat, when it goes down, you sleep. In between, you talk and walk and chew buai (that really nasty stuff that turns your mouth red).

This morning for team devotions lead by Tara, we re-wrote Psalm 23 to be New Dawn-specific. It turned out very nice, so I thought I would share it with you:

"The Lord is my Gutpela Wasman ("shepherd" in Pidgin, but literally "good watchman"), I shall not need to know what is going on. He makes me lie down under a mosquito net, He leads me beside Buterweng (beautiful swimming spot in Finschhafen). He restores my sunburned skin. He guides me on bush-paths of humility for His name's sake. Even though I walk through Tsak Valley (a very long day for us in the highlands), I will fear no falling coconuts, for You are with me; Your bush knife and spia (spear in Pidgin), they comfort me. You prepare a pizza before me in the Lae International Hotel (just a little taste of home). You anoint my head with rainwater; my wash bucket overflows. Surely Starkey, Reto, and Moses (a few of our guides while in PNG) with buai teeth will follow me all the days of my life, and Papua New Guinea will dwell in me forever."

Em tasol, na God blesim yupela. (That's all, and God bless you all.)

Life is good, God is great!

-Kyle

Journal Entry:

Aloha!

After four airports, three plane rides, two layovers, and one heck of a long time without sleep (about 36 hours), we are in Honolulu. We are also all ready to hit the wall. It seems odd to think that our time in PNG is over, but we're really looking forward to five whole weeks in this island paradise.



Kyle Scobie

After leaving Madang province on the 24th, we took the long bus ride back to Lae. This time, we didn't have to trek across a collapsed bridge, but it wasn't exactly a joyous ride either. We were really excited to get back to Lae and have mail and showers. Once we got back, we collected our mail, took showers, and went to the Lae International Hotel again for more wonderful pizza. We had a free weekend before taking the boat to Salamaua (on the southern coast of the province), so we rested up, nursed our blisters, did some laundry, and prepared for the trip. It would be our last week in PNG, so we tried to get as much stuff packed away as possible. Monday morning, we piled aboard a motorboat and set across the bay to Salamaua. We stayed in Salamaua for three nights, sleeping in a different village every night, and we walked everywhere we went, for the most part. We took a canoe one day to go to Salamaua High School, which ended up being a great program. We saw dolphins on the motorboat ride to Salamaua, and on the way back, it poured, so there were a number of memorable moments from the four day trip to the south coast. Everywhere we went we were welcomed warmly with a singsing, and our programs were fairly well received. Every morning when we would leave a village and move on to another, we were loaded up with gifts of bilums and necklaces. We also each got a conch shell will a hole cut into it so you could play it like a horn (I got four by the time we left), and we also got plenty of fruit. Each meal of every day consisted of rice, kaukau (sweet potato), pitpit (a corn-like tasting plant related to sugar cane) and tapioca (a potato-like tasting vegetable). We also got a lot of fish, whole fish with heads and teeth and lots of bones. Josh and I love fish, so we always loaded up on it. I think my favorite would have to be the Red Emperor fish, but it was all very good, and very fresh. Salamaua was a place greatly affected by WWII, and so there were some remnants of the war there. One time when we were walking, we passed a large cannon sitting beside someone's fence in the village. On Thursday, we took the motorboat back to Lae, excited to take a shower and nurse our blisters even more.

Once back in Lae, we only had one full day to do some last-minute things before flying to Port Moresby. We went to the bank, got some last few things at the store, and recorded some songs for the ELC-PNG to distribute. Then we were part of a farewell ceremony. A young woman from America has been working in the finance office for the past five

years, but has now been called to Guam, so she left PNG about the same time as us. They had a nice farewell potluck and devotional for us, and we said our last goodbyes. It was a really great fellowship time. What was really cool was that afterwards, a PNG man came in and wanted to talk to Josh. It turns out, the man went to school with Josh in Washington, and Josh never really got to know him very well at college, so they caught up and chatted. It's really funny, because the man had been the pastor of Starkey (our guide in Finschhafen) a few years ago. Josh was more connected with this guy than he originally thought. After the meal, an American professor at the local seminary in Lae came and gave us a little touristy drive around town. We went to the WWII memorial, where a lot of Australian, New Guinean, and Indian (REAL Indian from India) soldiers are buried. It was a really neat memorial. Then we went to the Amelia Earhart memorial. Lae was the last place Amelia was seen before taking off from the Lae airport with her flight director on that fatal flight in 1937. However, the memorial was less than elaborate. A simple stone monument with "Amelia Earhart" on it, surrounded by an overgrown flower garden, was all that had ever been put in place to keep her spirit in existence in PNG.

Saturday morning, we boarded a bus with everything we currently possess, and rode to the Lae airport, which actually isn't really in Lae. In the middle of Lae city, there is an old airstrip that was closed in the early 80s because of noise. About 30 minutes out of town, is the airport for Lae, called Nadzab. Most people think that Nadzab is just a PNG name, but we found out that it means North American Defense Zone Air Base. The United States had used that area as an air force base during WWII, and it had been updated and repaved in the 80s to serve as the new airport for Lae. We learn something new every day. Once we got to the airport, we went through security and got our boarding passes. The security check consisted of a group of officers feeling the outside of our bags and then looking at our IDs. An hour later, we were back in Port Moresby, the city we started this journey in. We went back to the Lutheran guest house we stayed at before, so it brought back some memories. I remember first arriving in January and not really wanting to be there, but now, we were all very excited to go back and stay there again. On Sunday, we went to church with a man from Chicago who worked for the ELCA in the global missions department. Then we had lunch with him and some people he was working with in PNG. We also met the Prime Minister's personal attorney, and he gave us a personal, behind-the-scenes tour of the parliament. It was strange, because when we went to the parliament in January, we were told not to take any pictures inside the chamber. This time, we could take all we want. I guess it's who you know. The man also happened to be the Chief Executive of Air Niugini, which we would be taking to Singapore. He also was going on the same flight as us to do some government business in Singapore. We were all secretly hoping he would hook us up with first class seats, but that didn't happen.

Monday morning we got up, ate breakfast, packed up our stuff, and went out for lunch. We decided to eat our last meal at the place we ate our first meal at, Big Rooster. For those who didn't read about it earlier, Big Rooster is the McDonalds of PNG. However, instead of everything being made with Grade D beef, everything at Big Rooster is made with huge, fresh chicken. After eating all of my meal, as well as parts of Liz and Tara's, I had consumed about ten potatoes worth in fries, and probably about one whole chicken. It was grand. After lunch, we headed back to the guest house, loaded all our bags into the van, and headed for the airport. When our plane took off, I wondered how long it would be before I would go back. Most people who visit PNG are said to get the PNG "bug" and have to return again. It's an easy country to want to visit again, the people are first class, and the experience is one of a kind.

Roughly seven hours after leaving Port Moresby, we touched down in Singapore. We had heard stories telling of the greatness and majesty of the Singapore airport. We eagerly exited the plane and entered the vast, wonder-laden terminal and began to discover its treasure. We arrived at 8 p.m. and didn't have our next flight until 6 a.m. After hitting up the McDonalds, we spent the next ten hours plundering the riches of free internet, flushing toilets, drinking fountains safe enough for babies, and unlimited places to take power naps. The one weird thing about the airport was the security guards. We found it a little strange that on the customs and immigration form, there was a note that said trafficking drugs into Singapore was punishable by death. However, we didn't expect to see security officers armed with automatic weapons. They didn't just have these little squirt-gun looking BB guns strapped to their backs, no. Each guard had both hands firmly gripped around a gleaming Uzi. I think they meant business about the drug thing. Luckily, they didn't find the one anti-malaria capsule I had in my pocket. What a relief!

After our adventure in Singapore, we took a morning flight to Tokyo, during which we were served the nastiest breakfast United Airlines has to offer. It was some sort of omelet thing, but airline food doesn't ever start out at the gourmet level. In fact, the only potential that exists in airline food is to get worse as it's served, which definitely applied here. However, I may be slightly biased in this particular case. After another seven hours aboard a flying tin can, we landed in the early afternoon in Tokyo. Tokyo airport doesn't have nearly the shimmer that Singapore's airport possesses. Fortunately, we were only there for five hours. I just kind of sat around and got my cell phone charged up and ready for our arrival in the United States. At about 7 p.m., Tuesday night, we took off from Tokyo and headed for Honolulu. It was a very empty and very bumpy flight. I tried to sleep, but that's something I don't do well on planes, I've discovered. At 7 a.m., Tuesday morning, we landed in Hawaii. It was strange to take off at night and arrive the morning of the same day. Let's just say I'm ready for it to be Wednesday.

Once we got on the ground in Honolulu, we went through immigration. It was kinda nice, because as the immigration officer signed my card and let me through, he looked at me intently and said "Welcome home." It was at that point that I realized that I was home. Even though home was really another four airplanes away for me, I was in America. Going through customs was a breeze. None of us got searched, questioned, or scanned, and we soon found ourselves outside by the pickup lanes, waiting in the fresh, Hawaiian air. Soon our contact arrived, and we were off to breakfast. Then we went to our place of residence for the next five weeks and took real showers and wonderful naps. After our nap, we went for dinner (we slept clear through lunch, and we didn't care). We found a Taco Bell, which is like an oasis of junk food, and very much amazing. The girl at the counter knew we weren't from Hawaii (nobody but the Polynesians are really considered Hawaiian) and asked us where we were from. I told her Papua New Guinea. I think that's gonna be what we say from now on, because it gets a much better reaction than "the Midwest."

So here we are, back home. A new journey, filled with potential of unknown variety. There'll be plenty of ministry opportunities here, and plenty of time to enjoy this beautiful place, too. Much like Papua New Guinea, we have a feeling Hawaii is also a land of unexpected events and memories. It's a new day, a "New Dawn" if you will, for our ministry. Surf's up, Jesus!

Life is good, God is great!
-Kyle

Date: 4/7/2007

Submitted by: Emily Beckman

Journal Entry:

The wantok system...something so un-American and foreign to me that I still have a hard time believing it truly exists. The definition of a wantok was given to us early into our stateside tour, letting us know right away just how special this word would become to us. "A friend, of one talk"...plain and simple. A wantok. To be of the same talk of Jesus, a friend. In PNG, a wantok is someone who you know dearly, someone who you've met only once, someone who your cousin's sister's brother knows. A wantok is for life. Now, as an American, it's hard for me to think of being a friend "forever" with someone who I barely know. Why would I ever call up a person who is distantly related to my cousin and ask them to stay at their house for a month? Is it even humanly possible to know that many people well enough to call them a friend? That person is your...what, the inlaw of your ex-brother's sister's friend in-law? What?



Emily Beckman

While traveling in PNG, we encountered the system of a wantok probably more than anything else. It seemed that everywhere we went there were at least ten people who our guide introduced to us as "my wantok." It wasn't too long before we were being introduced as "my American wantoks." We joked around at first, "Yeah, we're wantoks...awesome!" But as the months passed we began to really understand the full importance of being a wantok with someone. The joys, the patience and the sorrows.

The wantok system is essentially the family of Jesus. To live Jesus in our everyday life; to be a friend; to share our life with others. People in PNG can travel the whole island and always know that they have a home to stay in, someone who will be willing to serve them. If someone in their family dies, there will be people from all over traveling hours on foot to attend the service. If a man screws up a friendship more times than he can count, he can still count on his wantok to be there for him.

Jesus is my wantok. He is your wantok. He our one common talk. He takes us in when we have nowhere to stay. He communes with us on our days of sorrow. He never judges or condemns. The people of PNG have seen the way their wantok with Jesus has affected their life and have adopted that blessing into their earthly lives. To be wantoks is to be in a community...and what a joyous thing!

God has blessed us all with the joy of having friends, but do we all appreciate our friendships like the Guineans appreciate their wantoks? I thank God for showing my team what a wonderful thing His friendship is to us and how blessed our lives are because of our new wantoks. And I pray that He will grant us all the sight to see our fellow brothers and sisters in Christ in the light He sees them...as eternal wantoks.

Date: 4/8/2007

Submitted by: Tara Oetting

Journal Entry:

I'd like to paint a little picture. Picture this place where all the people are just a little bit shorter, dark brown and beautiful. Some of them have red/brown stains from chewing too much beetlenut (a Papua New Guinean habit comparable to chewing tobacco), and all of them look like they've been working hard their whole lives. Mothers look worn but strong. The men look like they are looking for adventure. The children are an adventure. The elderly look like they hold the wisdom in the world in their old hands. These people laugh and smile, more than most people I've pictured, and they will sit and just talk and laugh every night for entertainment. There is no talk of last night's episode of *Grey's Anatomy*; there isn't even talk about the war or elections or gas prices. They are concerned about their children, and their gardens, and their church. These are the things that drive these people.



Tara Oetting

Now picture a place. A place where the sun rises in beautiful purples and pinks. A place where that same beautiful sun cooks the land at about 97 degrees every day with an intensity that makes you want to hide inside and a humidity that makes you want to be in a cold shower every second. This place is a jungle, it's a mountain range, it's rolling hills, it's swamp, it's ocean, it's river, it's rocky, volcanic, wet, black soil. It's breathtakingly beautiful. Honestly, I am amazed by the genius and creativity that God showed when He created this place.

Picture a church, but not a steeple and pews. Picture a dirt floor and walls made of bamboo and reed. Picture a couple of worn pictures on the walls; maybe a tattered picture of the Lord's Supper or a carved image of Christ. Now picture the whole place packed with the people; all the people dressed in their beautiful meri blouses (women's dress) and Sunday best. They sit on benches, but mostly on the floor; some of the oldest and frail of them all, cross-legged on the floor. Some of them even raise their hands, but all of them raise their voices. A high-pitched wail that sounds like it would come straight out of a National Geographic soundtrack, coming from every man, woman and child in the place. There are hundreds in this church today, and it's only a Wednesday morning.

This is what Papua New Guinea is like; at least, the best way I can explain it without taking you there myself. It's overwhelming. Now that we are back in the States, I am missing it more and more. I appreciate it more. It is everything that I was hoping and praying for, and more than I could have ever hoped. I would recommend to anyone to go there--right now. Go. Go to PNG and experience all the beauty that God has created there. You will be amazed and blessed, as I have also been amazed and blessed.

Praise be to Him.

Date: 4/9/2007

Submitted by: Kyle Scobie

Journal Entry:

We only get four more weeks in Hawaii...



This past week has flown by for us here in Hawaii. Between shopping, sunning at the beach, eating plenty of long lost American cuisine, and or course, doing ministry, time definitely flies when you're having fun. We've spent the last week pretty much recovering from jet lag and a lack of greasy American food. We've also been buying new clothes, since the clothes we had with us in PNG have pretty much been retired from being "functional" attire (never mind the fact that we left most of our clothing in PNG because we needed the extra luggage space and weight). Today as well as Saturday we went to Waikiki beach for a little sun and relaxation. We all have horribly crooked tan lines from the various apparel we wore in PNG, and since we feel it is crucial to the ministry to become immersed in the local culture we are serving, we have to look the part. And really, how can you spend five weeks in Hawaii and not go to the beach?

Kyle Scobie

Many of you know from a past blog that I have a deep, basic need for Dr. Pepper (some people may throw around words like "obsession" or even "addiction," but I just ignore that kind of talk, which makes people use words like "denial" and "stubborn"...). Anyway, since I have this need for Dr. Pepper, I bought a 12-pack the first chance I got. This case of soda-pop only lasted a couple of days however, but luckily our contact has a membership at Sam's Club, and we now have bulk Dr. Pepper, so I'm quite comfortable.

Yesterday (Sunday), our ministry in Hawaii officially started. We did a few songs during the service and introduced ourselves and what we've been up to for the past few months. The church is quite interesting because the services are held on the second floor of an older hotel in Waikiki. Prince of Peace Lutheran Church is set up to be a church for tourists and is literally an international congregation. Next week we'll do the entire service for the church, so it will be interesting to see how things turn out. Everyone at the service was very friendly, however, and we were taken out to lunch by a couple from the church. We've been eating out a lot, actually, which is kinda strange, but I guess it beats rice and sweet potatoes every meal.

We have the next month reasonably filled with a variety of ministry opportunities at different places. We also hope to have some time to see the places that Hawaii is known for, like Pearl Harbor and the beach (all of them). None of us have any grand plans for taking up surfing, but we may come back with a few more slang terms in our vocabulary. Four weeks seems like a long time, but then again, so did 2 ½ months before we got to PNG. When it's all over, it seems much shorter. In no time at all, we'll be getting on a plane and heading for the mainland. I hope that our time here in Hawaii will be just as memorable as any other time in the ministry.

Life is good, God is great!

-Kyle

Submitted by: Emily Beckman
Journal Entry:

I'm not sure if I was just being naive, but when I thought about coming to Hawaii one of the few things I thought I had figured out was "There is no possible way you can get lost on an island...I mean, eventually you just come to the ocean or back to the same spot, right?" Apparently, this is totally not true, because I'm pretty sure that we have now driven around in complete and utter circles for about a total of one week of our two weeks here...this is NOT an exaggeration. There seems to be no rhyme or reason for the road system here on Oahu and the traffic is worse than in Chicago. How the heck can five million cars all be on the one mile stretch of the only Highway on Hawaii all at the same time? Impossible, but somehow, possible.



Emily Beckman

This is only one thing that has been frustrating for me in the two weeks that I've been in Hawaii. The others include, but are not limited to, tourists (haha, imagine me saying that since I'm one myself, but seriously, put some sunscreen on!!!), clothing (or lack of), kids' attitudes, time constraints, ambulances...most days I wish I was back in PNG where everything seems to have been so much more simple. The other day I was talking to one of my friends and he was asking how often I wore makeup while in PNG, and I said, "Um, never. I was sweaty, my hair was disgusting, I washed in the river or ocean every three days, I probably never smelled so bad in my life, and yet, I felt gorgeous." I loved knowing that I didn't have to worry about all the American things that I usually have to worry about or trying to "fit in" when I just wanted to be who I thought God was calling me to be.

Yet, as much as I wish I could be back in PNG and as much as I feel like I look like a slob compared to everyone here in Hawaii, there are those moments when God shows Himself to me here in Hawaii, and it is those moments that make me so incredibly glad that I am where I am right at this moment. Today, when we were stuck in traffic for the 13th time on H1, I saw my first Hawaiian rainbow...and I have to say that rainbows in Hawaii are different than on the mainland. They take my breath away, just like in PNG. And just like in PNG, the feel of sand between my toes can make me stop and say a prayer of thanks to our Savior for creating such a beautiful land for us to live on. And those precious moments of rain, knowing that if I step out into the downpour it will be a sweet relief from the heat...those are the moments that will live in my heart forever. I love God for giving me these times, and for showing me and my Team just how much He continues to love us. And then I remember how much I love life...

Date: 4/15/2007
Submitted by: Kyle Scobie
Journal Entry:

Time only seems to go by faster and faster...

It's been nearly a week since my last journal, but now that we're back in the United States, sometimes it seems that there are less things that seem worthy of sharing. Sometimes everything just seems too familiar to feel the need to go on and on about the stuff we're doing. Then, I realize, "Ha! We're in Hawaii and they're not!" Needless to say, the pace of the ministry is not quite as full as it was in PNG, so there is, in a way, less to write about, but I'll do my best.



Kyle Scobie

This past week has been kind of a blur, so I don't really remember what days we did what things. I think it may be because coming from PNG where everything is very new and different and vivid, it's easy to remember things because there are many distinct things from each day to separate them. Nevertheless, this past week found us in a few churches doing a few different things. We went to Our Savior Lutheran Church a couple of times. That's the church we went to for Good Friday service and the youth director intern is a former college classmate of Tara's from Concordia in River Forest. We were able to set ourselves up to do a chapel service for the day school they have, as well as a confirmation class hangout. The chapel service went pretty well. We sang some silly songs and talked a little bit about our time in Papua New Guinea. We heard from the intern that the students and teachers both thought it was the best chapel ever, so that was a boost for us! The confirmation class didn't go quite as well as the chapel, so we're glad for what it says in Isaiah about God's words not returning to Him empty. I just hope they were God's words.

But anyway, it amazes me how different the youth can be in America from the youth in PNG. I find it really interesting that most of the stuff I learned in my Elementary Education classes at college wouldn't apply in PNG because I learned about all these learning disabilities and social disorders that require hundreds of different teaching styles and strategies, but most of those things I learned how to compensate for simply don't exist in PNG. I find it interesting that a country with a renewed status as a third-world nation doesn't have half the student-related problems a Western society has. That's not to say that the education system in PNG is any better, because they are grossly under-funded at all levels and public education isn't free.

However, I heard one missionary teacher we met from Scotland say that if anyone comes to PNG to teach and has any problem with the job in terms of the actual teaching, they aren't fit to be a teacher. He said it was the easiest teaching job he's had because the students for the most part know the value of the education they are getting because of the monetary effect it has on their lives to be there. Needless to say, the confirmation class was a little bit less than attentive and a little bit more than goofy. We are definitely back in America.

We also went to Calvary by the Sea Lutheran Church a couple times, once to hang out with a confirmation class, and once to help out with the Angel Network. The confirmation class at Calvary went much better than it did at Our Savior, but the kids were pretty distracted and goofy there, too. The pastor at the church was on the Youth Encounter team New Vision in the 80s when that team went to PNG. So he has similar experiences to us and knows a lot about what it's like to be on a ministry team. We sang some songs and talked about what we did in PNG, and what we do in general. It was a lot of fun to sit in on a confirmation class and peek into the minds of junior high kids. On Thursday we went back to Calvary to help out with their Angel Network program. The Angel Network is a government-awarded program that seeks to help the homeless and impoverished families in Hawaii. There are a lot of homeless people in Hawaii, especially on Oahu. The Angel network was started to provide some much-needed care to those families. The ministry used to have a food pantry and secondhand store, and provide room and board, but now it is limited to being a food pantry and a place to get a hot shower. I imagine it's hard to believe a place like Hawaii with all its millions of

dollars coming in every day from tourism being a place any less than utopia, but there is a “dark side” to this island paradise as well. I would also assume that there isn’t much funding coming from outside Hawaii for programs like this because it’s so unbelievable.

However, we enjoyed helping out there and encountering some of the best faith stories imaginable from many different people. I might add that it would probably not seem like a surprise that the people most affected by poverty in Hawaii are the native Hawaiians or Polynesians. It’s too bad, really, because they were probably forced to be very generous with their land when the developers came in. I find that there are many things in Hawaii that are similar to the way things are in Papua New Guinea. It’s a good reminder of the blessings we have and the numerous resources we have. Oh yeah, and for those of you feeling the crunch from the gas pump, Hawaii was at \$3.05 per gallon today, and in PNG we found prices ranging from \$3 to as much as \$8 per gallon. Swallow that one as you swipe your credit card to take away some of the sting.

Friday we spent the day at Pearl Harbor. We didn’t get to see everything we wanted to, but the things we didn’t see are free, so we’ll go back again before we leave Hawaii, I’m sure. We got to go on the USS Missouri and tour the cabins and stuff; it was pretty cool. We also wandered around the museum a bit. We were going to take the boat out to the USS Arizona Memorial, but when we arrived at the park, the aircraft carrier USS Ronald Reagan was docked and was getting ready to leave. So by the time we were ready to go out to the Arizona, they had the whole harbor shut down for the massive carrier, loaded with billions of dollars in fighter jets and helicopters, to head out to sea. It was kind of a bummer that we didn’t have time to get out over the Arizona, but seeing the Ronald Reagan do its thing was

pretty neat. Definitely a great place to learn some U.S. history firsthand.

This morning we led the entire worship service at Prince of Peace. They had the typical Sunday-after-Easter crowd of 40 people, but where two or more are gathered, New Dawn will be there and ready for ministry. After the service, some ladies wanted to take us out for lunch and chat about our experiences, so we found a restaurant inside the hotel and had a nice chat. The people in the congregation at Prince of Peace are very first-rate. I don't think we have ever felt as welcome as we do there, not in the United States, anyway. Everyone wants to take a little bit of time and talk to all of us, which is great. It just goes to show that hospitality trumps funding when it comes to ministry. Next time you complain about your church having no money, think about how the disciples must have felt when they went out and set up churches everywhere. Talk about budget cuts!

Tomorrow is a time to relax, a true day off in Hawaii for New Dawn. We were going to go snorkeling with the pastor at Calvary by the Sea, but a member of his church decided he wanted to take us out on his yacht, so we're gonna do that instead. I wouldn't be surprised if we do go snorkeling, too; we'll probably just have a private reef to do it on instead (kinda like when we went in PNG). It will be a good chance to get a little more sun and enjoy the part of Hawaii we tend to think about back on the mainland. In any event, we'll try not to enjoy ourselves too much as to not offend anyone back home still grumbling about having a white Easter. If you wait three weeks, we'll be coming home and we can bring some nice weather with us, so long as you don't mind a daily rain or two. Oh well, not everyone is called to be a missionary in Hawaii. Somebody has to go to

Alaska too...

Life is good, God is great!

-Kyle

Date: 4/20/2007

Submitted by: Tara Oetting

Journal Entry:

At first when we arrived in Hawaii and had five weeks to go in our tour, I was thinking that I just really wanted to be home with my friends and family. But now, we have just two-and-a-half weeks and a schedule that is packed full of ministry opportunities. We get to do such a great variety of things--from working in a food pantry, to doing confirmation classes, to folding bulletins, to doing entire worship services. We have been blessed with great pastors who understand the need for missions, even within their own congregations, and we are happy to help. God has put really great people in our path.



Tara Oetting

I have really been missing PNG lately. I know, I should be so thankful to be in a beautiful place like Hawaii, but so much of me is missing the peaceful, slow pace of Papua New Guinea. I don't know how I'll ever want to go back to school next year! Deadlines? Being on time for class? Homework? Gross. Let me just go back to my little island where nothing ever happens on time and no one even knows what a deadline is.

I am pretty anxious to come home. New Dawn hits the mainland in two-and-a-half weeks. Watch out, here we come!

Date: 4/24/2007

Submitted by: Kyle Scobie

Journal Entry:

It was weird to think today that we have exactly two weeks left in Hawaii. It doesn't seem that long ago that we were in the shivering cold in Minneapolis, waiting to get on a plane and go someplace with natural heat. Then I look at pictures of our team from that time, with our pale white skin, excess body fat, and my hairless face. Time has definitely passed, just very quickly. We have come a long way; we have been on a long journey. To know that we only have two weeks left in this portion is rather refreshing. We have been greatly enjoying our time in Hawaii, but there comes a time when not even the daily presence of an ocean breeze can make you feel quite as



Kyle Scobie

rested and renewed like a bed in your own home. Until next time...

Life is good, God is great!

-Kyle

Date: 6/13/2007

Submitted by: Emily Beckman

Journal Entry:

So, today I was taking a run around Willow Lake located just outside my host family's house in North Aurora, Illinois. It was about 8:15, so the sun was starting to set and the hotness of the day had dissipated somewhat. The perfect time for a run, in my opinion. Of course, it wasn't the perfect day for a run as far as days have gone for me lately. For some reason, this morning I woke up feeling cranky for absolutely no reason. It's not like I took it out on anyone or was angry about anything in particular; I guess I just didn't want to get up and go do anything that involved moving. It was a very hot day, one of those days when you look for the nearest tree and just pop a squat there for the remainder of your time outside. Our BBQ at night didn't go as well as I had hoped it would (it's always so hard to sing for people who are eating because you get no reaction whatsoever). And to top it off, I weighed myself and realized that unlike all the rest of my teammates, I HAVEN'T lost weight. In fact, there might have been some gaining. Now, I'm not one of those freaks about weight but feeling not healthy is definitely a personal pet peeve of mine. Hence the run mentioned earlier.



Emily Beckman

So, there I was running, and as I made my way around the lake for the fifth time I saw five ducks take off from the lake, leaving just two, a male and a female. They slowly made their way over to each other, and started swimming around each other. A bizarre thought popped into my head when I saw those other five ducks fly away. "I wonder if this is just like in high school when you go somewhere with five of your friends and then some cute boy comes along and suddenly they all desert you, leaving you alone with Mr. Handsome." I'm not sure why that crossed my mind, but it left this feeling of fond memories in my heart. As I continued around the lake, I saw another male/female duck couple waddling towards the lake. Watching ducks is something that I truly enjoy doing because I remember hearing that when ducks mate, it's for life. That was something that struck a chord in my heart. Here is a creature of God's who loves for life. Gosh, I want to be that duck.

Team has recently taught me how much I am like a duck in my life, and how much I desire to be more "duck like" in my relationship with God. God has chosen me for Him. We will always be together; the love will never end. I want this in my life; this stability, this devotion, this desire of companionship. What a wonderful feeling to be God's "duck." I was just having a conversation the other day with a good friend about how I desire my husband to be first my brother in Christ and then my earthly companion. It's something that sometimes I feel I can't wait another day for...until I realize that I already have that companionship with God. I have been with someone who has never left my side, who wants to be with me forever. I love that when I look at a duck, I can see God in it. I love that I can refer to myself as a duck in God's eyes because of our forever bond. And I pray that more people can seek to be God's "duck." I hope that I will continue to run hard after God just as fast as a duck waddles after its mate. Because there is devotion there...and it's a beautiful thing.

Date: 6/20/2007

Submitted by: Elizabeth Lord

Journal Entry:

Hello everyone. We are back from a wonderful time in Papua New Guinea and in Hawaii. We have so many stories to tell, I wish we could tell them all.



Elizabeth Lord

We are now on our summer tour. The first week of our tour, we took a trip around Lake Michigan going to different churches, some we had been to before and some that were new.

Last week, we had our first week of Vacation Bible School for the summer. We were in North Aurora, IL, which is just west of Chicago. We had an amazing time at Avalanche Ranch with about

200 kids.

This week, we are in Port Byron, IL, which is by the Quad Cities, and we are doing a Vacation Bible School written by the Virginia Synod that is all about Papua New Guinea. We are having a wonderful time teaching the kids about Papua New Guinea.

After here, we will be doing VBSes for the next six weeks, so please keep us in your prayers as we do a lot of traveling and as we teach all the children about God and His love for us.

Thank you so much and God bless,

Liz

Date: 7/17/2007

Submitted by: Emily Beckman

Journal Entry:

It is entirely possible to find God in a pool. I love this thought. For those of us who have been swamped with VBS curriculums, kids hanging on us, and never-ending sweaty days with no rain in sight, the thought of jumping into a nice, 82-degree pool and not having to do anything more than keep yourself afloat is one that brings peace to mind.



Emily Beckman

VBS season has been fun, and it is definitely one of those times when you can't help but put your all into everything because the kids can give you such energy (although I guess only for extroverts). But amongst all the chaos and loveliness that is VBS, it's often very hard to find God. I know, that sounds crazy. How in the heck can you not find God in a curriculum that's based around Him and in songs that constantly remind you of what an awesome God He is? But it's pretty easy to reject all the simple things that God shows us every day and to lose sight of Him. That's why days like today are so incredibly vital for all of us; days when you can just relax in a pool and hear God in the gentle splashing of the water against the sides and feel His love upon us in the bright sunlight browning (or burning) our skin. One of our team's favorite songs to sing is "Chew My Gum with God." The song talks about how we like to do everything with God, whether it's tying our shoes, eating pork, or chewing bubblegum. And for me, I like to go swimming with God. The joy of Him renewing me through coolness and heat at the same time can put me in a prayer trance, thanking the Lord for this wonderful life that I'm living. I love it when God reminds us of His presence even amidst the busyness that is this world.

So, the next time you jump into a pool, a lake, a river, a bathtub (whatever it is that relaxes you), take time to soak in the presence of God and the peace that comes with knowing Him.

Date: 7/27/2007

Submitted by: Elizabeth Lord

Journal Entry:

Well, today is our last day of Vacation Bible School. We are in Hampton, VA, and we are doing Wantoks Long Jisas, which means Friends of Jesus in Pidgen English, which is the common language of Papua New Guinea. We have had so much fun doing VBS, not just here, but everywhere we have been this summer. I love seeing the smiles on all the kids' faces everyday. They are all so excited to learn new things and have fun doing it, and it is awesome to be the person to help that happen. I always loved going to VBS when I was growing up, and now I love it in a different way. We have met so many wonderful people this summer that helped make it an awesome summer.



Elizabeth Lord

We will be leaving here on Sunday to make our way back towards Minnesota. We will have only one more week left on the road, but I know that God will bless every second of it.

May God continue to bless you every day,

Liz

Date: 8/6/2007

Submitted by: Elizabeth Lord

Journal Entry:

Well, our year has come to an end. It's hard to believe that it's over already; it seems like just yesterday we were meeting each other for the first time. This year has been an amazing year that we will never forget. We have had the privilege of meeting so many wonderful people along the way, and we have been to places that we will never forget. Along the way, God has taught each of us so many things. We as a team would like to thank all of you who have supported us over the year both financially and through prayer. We couldn't have done it without you. We would ask that you would continue to keep us in your prayer as we go back to a "normal" life, that God would reveal His will for us.

Thank you again; may God continue to bless you every day.

New Dawn



Elizabeth Lord