

SECOND ANNUAL
SPECIAL EDITION
SPOTLIGHTING THE SUMMER

MINISTRY OF TREVECCA STUDENTS

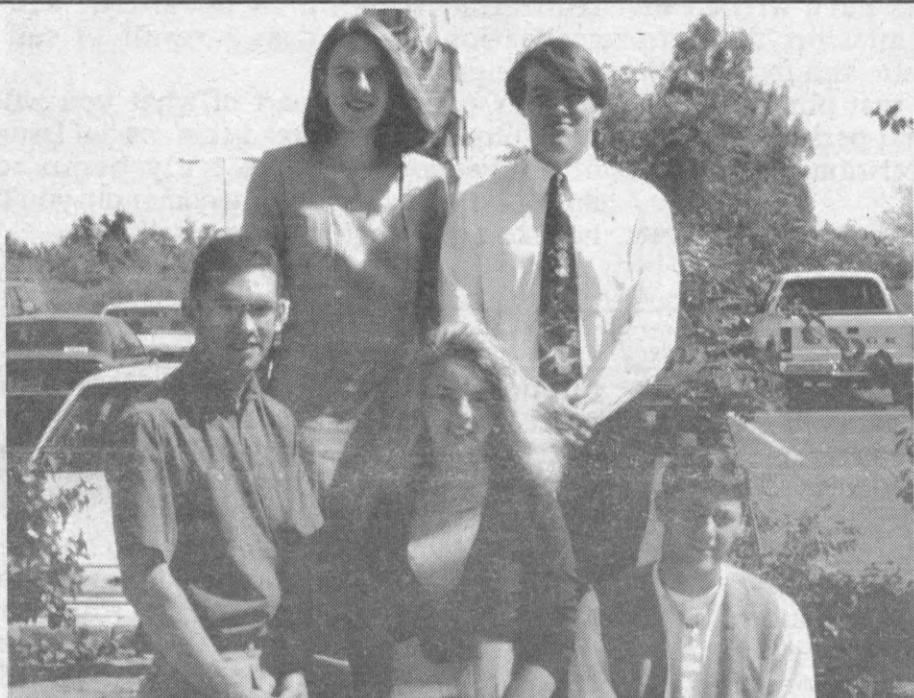
Trevechoes

The Student Newspaper of Trevecca Nazarene University Since 1944

Vol. #53

October 16-17, 1996

Issue #3



Five Trevecca students participated in YIM in 1996. BACK ROW: Katrina Quick (Montreal) and William McLean (Flint, MI); FRONT ROW: Kenneth Couchman (Russia), Lori McLerran (Australia), and Wes Furlong (Australia).

Youth in Mission enters 30th year of ministry

from NYI press releases

Now entering its 30th year, the Youth in Mission (YIM) program, sponsored by NYI Ministries and the Church of the Nazarene, is once again inviting young adults/college students to invest their summer in a life-changing ministry.

This past summer, 69 students from across the country shared the gospel in 17 different ministry sites around the world. Dozens of students take the leap of faith each summer and find that the entire process—from the fundraising and the training to the actual eight-week, on-site ministry experience—is one of the most challenging and stretching experiences of their lives.

This year, Youth in Mission will be offering five types of ministry opportunities: Frontline, Sports Outreach, International

Student Ministries, Health Care, and Youth in Mission Internships.

Frontline is a brand new ministry for Youth in Mission. Not everyone is ready to serve on the "frontline," but those God has called will find themselves in a variety of "site specific" ministries including: planting new churches, feeding the hungry, leading local church services, sharing Christ with the homeless, spending time with at-risk youth, and being Jesus to the lost of America. Possible ministry sites include: Los Angeles, CA; Scottsdale, AZ; Philadelphia, PA; and Flint, MI.

Sports Outreach, which began last year in conjunction with the 1996 Summer Olympics in Atlanta, is a unique method of evangelism. It is also a fantastic way to establish relationships

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18 TNU students and sponsors traveled to Brazil for CAUSE '96.

CAUSE '96 ministers in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

from NYI press releases

CAUSE is a unique short-term program. It is designed to holistically impact impoverished communities for the church and for Christ, to impact each person involved with a life changing and eye-opening experience, and to bring spiritual renewal and change to both the project areas and to the campus community as God works his transforming power through people's lives.

This past summer, the project site was Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Each of the nine Nazarene colleges and universities sent teams to Rio during the spring and summer months for 11-day compassionate ministry and work and witness efforts. Compassionate ministries can include many different responses depending on the place, the need, and how God would have teams respond.

Evangelism and construction are the two other components of CAUSE. Evangelism may take place through special services, campaigns, and films, but most often it happens by building relationships with the people of the community in which the teams are working. Construction can include schools, homes, health centers—again, it all depends on the needs of the community!

Over the course of the summer, teams from the Nazarene colleges worked in each of these three areas (compassionate ministries, evangelism, and construction). The combined team from Trevecca Nazarene University and Olivet Nazarene University distributed compassionate

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EDITOR'S PAGE

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Trevechoes

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An Invitation to Pursue a Paradox

by Kenneth L.
Couchman, Editor

There is an intriguing phenomenon associated with mission trips. No matter where the destination or what variety of activities may have been done, participants almost universally say the same things about their experience: "The people ministered to me more than I did to them."

This is a phrase we have heard quite often at Trevecca as students have written or spoken about their mission trips to destinations both domestic and foreign. In fact, you will even find that phrase in this issue as you read the first-person accounts of CAUSE and Youth in Mission experiences from this past summer.

It seems to me that we often find the most

fulfillment from the things to which we must give ourselves most. That would include everything from our commitments to principles (such as to good scholarship) to our commitments to each other (such as friendship and marriage). There is simply a strange transaction that occurs when people give of themselves to something or someone that is considered valuable: the givers find that they become receivers.

In fact, the givers who empty themselves, whether in a mission project or in a relationship, find that they grow and realize more of themselves because of their experience. This turns our American self-realization ethic on its head: true self-realization is found as a result of self-emptying.

This paradox is part of what you will hopefully see as you read this special issue of *Trevechoes*. But to truly begin to understand this strange phenomenon, you'll have to experience it for yourself.

Youth in Mission continued from page 1

with neighborhood youth through your love of sports. Our professionals will teach you how to run a sports camp and be able to share Christ at the same time. Sports Camps will feature basketball and soccer. Possible ministry sites include: Gainesville, GA; San Luis Obispo, CA; and San Antonio, TX.

Working with missionaries and national workers, you will be able to take the gospel into world areas with International Student Ministries. Specific ministries are determined by the needs of each site but could include: community awareness projects, youth camp assistance, assimilation of new converts, Vacation Bible Schools, recreational programs, and new church planting. Possible ISM sites include: Fiji; Kenya; Volgograd, Russia; Sydney, Australia; and Montreal, Quebec.

Medical missions often holds a certain fascination for those entering the medical community. Through YIM's Health Care ministry, you can experience first hand the joy of the "healing arts" in a unique mission setting. Possible sites include: Swaziland and India.

Youth in Mission Internships can include a variety of summer internships with NYI Ministries, Nazarene Compassionate Ministries, and the World Mission Division in Kansas City, MO., including on-site ministry during the 1997 General Assembly in San Antonio, TX. Other internship opportunities may include various international settings. Give your life away while learning valuable skills at the same time!

Participants applied for the program last fall and spent most of the school year raising funds and preparing for their two-month assignment. All YIM participants began their summer ministry at YIM Training Camp, June 2-9, at Orangewood Church of the Nazarene in Phoenix. Teams took part in various seminars and training workshops on topics such as personal evangelism, drama,

puppetry, ministry to youth/children, recreation, group dynamics, and cross-cultural interaction. Special Speakers and workshop leaders included Dr. Louis Bustle, Director of World Mission Division; Gustavo Crocker, Nazarene Compassionate Ministries; Dr. Gary Sivewright, Chaplain-Mount Vernon Nazarene College; Dr. Hermann Gschwandtner, Nazarene Compassionate Ministries—Eurasia Region; and Randy Beckum, Chaplain—Mid-America Nazarene College.

If the Youth in Mission experience sounds like something in which you would like to be involved, be sure to schedule an interview with the YIM/NYI Ministries staff while they are on Trevecca's campus October 16 and 17. You may also contact Kelly Frank, YIM Coordinator, at (816) 333-7000, extension 2210.

CAUSE continued from page 1

ministry packets (containing shampoo, toothpaste, bath soap, a toothbrush, a comb, vitamins, band-aids, and a t-shirt), engaged in door-to-door evangelism, painted at a school and hospital, served on a soup line, installed the floor and supporting columns for a future building, distributed clothing, and conducted sidewalk evangelistic services.

Also this year, a special health-care ministry team consisting of nursing, pre-med, and physician assistant students from four of the Nazarene campuses also traveled to Brazil. They engaged in cross-cultural health care ministry that included participation in women's cancer screening and testing at clinics, part of one of the largest health care projects ever in Rio.

The CAUSE 1997 ministry location is Belize. Read Trevechoes for reports on the selection of the team and their preparation for next summer.

CAUSE '96: Learning that God can use anyone

by David Hyman

Rio is a 10 hour flight?! I've never been on an airplane!

Raise \$1,300?! No way! I have a hard enough time paying my school bill!

Learn Portuguese?! I can't even get my English right!

Look, I'm just a quiet, ordinary person. How can God use someone like me?

Obstacles and questions such as these are what 18 TNU students and sponsors faced as they prepared to embark on the CAUSE '96 mission to Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. As if they weren't plenty already, even more problems presented themselves as we worried about how to keep up with 36 suitcases, find room for all the supplies we needed to take, and pass the customs inspection. But together, and with faith in God, we took a giant step out into a new world.

Rio de Janeiro, Brazil! Wow! What a beautiful place. Rio is known as the "marvelous city." It has about 10 million people and is the 8th largest city in the world. We were there to join the ministry efforts of the Nazarene church in Rio, which at the end of 1993 had 11 districts, 163 churches, and over 12,500 members.

Rio has a beautiful coast on one side and magnificent mountains on the other. However, just on the other side of the mountains there are favelas or slums. These places contain timber shacks built all the way up the mountain on trash piles and open sewers.

The favela at Morro Dona Marta was the first site at which we worked. To get there we had to climb uneven and oddly shaped steps for 30 minutes. Upon reaching the ministry site, we started constructing walls

and delivering supplies for a daycare center. We also witnessed to the people, played with the children, and presented the gospel of Christ.

Our second ministry site was Nilopolis Dois, which is a large area controlled by a drug lord. We were told that this area was so dangerous that other churches did not minister there. Still, we helped construct the foundation for a Church and a clinic. Also, we went door to door sharing the gospel through medication, clothes, and prayer. We then had a special street service celebrating the opening of the church.

Our third site was at Austin. Here we constructed a wall around the church and leveled the property. We helped with the soup line that the church provided for the community. We were also able to distribute clothes and medicine and share Christ with kids in a local private school.

Our Brazilian friends are very special to us. They accepted us the moment we arrived and were a constant reminder of what true friendship is. It seemed that we were always exchanging songs from our native cultures so we could translate them and sing them together. Our Brazilian friends worked right along side of us and never let us do more than they were doing.

The street services were always a highlight and joy. The community would be called together and we would tell them why we were there. More importantly, we told them what Christ had done for all of humanity. We would also minister through songs, mimes, puppets, clowns, salvation bracelets, tee-shirts, balloon animals, and by blowing soap bubbles.



Olivet CAUSE team member Britta Mitchell helps Brazilian children blow soap bubbles.

Worshipping together was always a wonderful time. When the atmosphere of praise and worship filled the air, one could not help but become excited. The services lasted for several hours. Usually, the song service would last for 1 1/2 to 2 hours. Then the speaker would give his message. It was unusual if he took less than 45 minutes. Another cultural difference we noticed was that the morning services had a small attendance and the evening services had a large attendance. The family is very important to Brazilians, so they usually spend time together at a park on Sunday morning. Therefore, the evening service also includes Sunday school.

The focus of a work and witness trip is witnessing, but it also includes work. It was always a joy to work with the people around us toward a common goal, whether it was moving dirt bucket by bucket or mowing the grass with a hoe. Even though we worked alongside people that did not speak our language, the work was a common language. And through the work we formed bonds that made our witness even stronger to the community. This was all a part of our first-hand discovery that



TNU's April Balwin and ONU's Adam Heinze clown around during a ministry outreach.

evangelism does more than simply tell others about Christ—it also makes Him more real in our lives.

God had helped us overcome our fears of flying, raising the money, and learning the language. He proved that he can use people just like us to make a difference. It was only after we made ourselves completely available to God that anything was accomplished.

CAUSE MEDICAL '96

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Christie Burney: It's the people that I will remember

There are so many things I could tell you about the magnificent city of Rio de Janeiro. I could paint beautiful pictures of mountains or spin splendid stories of Sugar Loaf Mountain and Christ the Redeemer Statue. If I did this, it would not in the least be untruthful. Rio is completely breathtaking, especially when you look out over the city and see the sun set over the Atlantic Ocean. But the beauty of the city is not what impressed me.

I could tell you about all the intimate friendships I formed with people I had never met before I got off the plane in Miami. I could tell you how God gave our team a special bond and blessed us with the gift of harmony. If I told you that their friendships were priceless to me, I would only be being honest. But my new friends were not my biggest blessing on this trip.

The medical experience I gained was remarkable. There is nowhere in the States where I could get the quantity or quality of experience I received in those nine days. The medical experience far outweighed anything I had ever done previously. However, the phenomenal knowledge that I now possess due to that week is not what I most remember about CAUSE 96.

All of these things are marvelous memories. I cherish each thought that enters my mind about Brazil. But the city's beauty, the new friendships, and the medical experience were all overshadowed by the people. The Brazilians are so trusting, so friendly, so completely open about everything. They would go out of their way to make us, who were strangers to them, comfortable. When we didn't understand, they were never anything but kind to us. We were tired and irritable, but they lightened our spirits by singing praise choruses. We felt inadequate to perform the task before us, but they encouraged us with their smiles. When we messed up, they shrugged their shoulders and said, "No Problem!" They were people, just like me, but they had a better grasp on the concept of happiness. They all helped to make life easier for everyone. They didn't worry about things that weren't really important. Instead, they were always concerned for their neighbors.

Brazil may not have all the conveniences or cutting-edge medical technology we enjoy here in the States, but when I think of my summer mission trip there, the most precious souvenirs are not pictures of beautiful landmarks or even experience to put on a resume. My most precious souvenirs are the memories that I carry in my heart of the people of Brazil and their smiling faces full of love.



TOP PHOTO: Trevecca's CAUSE Medical Team representatives Phillis Webb, Christy Burney, and Kimberly Weaver. MIDDLE PHOTO: Rosalind Hicks and Christy with some Brazilian kids at the Ciepe Clinic site. BOTTOM PHOTO: Malena Cambello, a medical student from Uruguay, holds a Brazilian baby.

YIM: MONTREAL

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Katrina Quick: Seeing the world from the inside out

"Katrina, your dad and I cannot pay for this; \$2,200 is a lot of money and we just do not have it."

This is the response that I received from my mom when I told her that I wanted to interview for Youth In Mission last fall. I knew that my parents did not have the money for me to go to Canada, but for some reason I was not worried about money. God had promised me that He would take care of everything, if I would only trust Him. I trusted the Lord and the week before I left for training camp I had all of the money I needed.

On June 2, I left for Phoenix, Arizona, for a week of training camp to prepare me for the rest of the summer. Once I arrived I met my teammates. There were five of us, and we were all girls. During training camp and for the whole summer we all got along great, because we had come together for one purpose: to be used of God however and whenever He

chose to use us.

Training camp was intense. In addition to seminars on foreign cultures and wonderful morning and evening services, we were learning Sunshine Clubs like the back of our hands. Sunshine Clubs are similar to children's camps. They are 30-minute per day programs that last for one week. Each day includes singing, puppet skits, balloon animals, and object lessons for the kids.

We left for our ministry site, Montreal, Canada, on June 10. We arrived at night, but had a chance the next morning to see the beautiful city of Montreal. We were informed by the District Superintendent of Quebec that though Montreal is a beautiful city, it is a searching city—a city that is looking for meaning in life. The people of Montreal have turned their backs on the church because until recently it was governed by the Catholic Church. In percentages, about 70% of the people do not go to



The Montreal YIM team at their first day of Sunshine Clubs (L to R): Diana Raney (MANC), Amy Johnson (SNU), Katrina, Melodie Ford (MVNC), and Bubbles (Michelle Fleece from ENC).

church at all. Thirty percent go at Christmas and Easter, and only 7% go to church regularly.

Another problem that Montreal has is suicide. The teenage suicide rate is very high. Many of the teenagers that we saw seemed unhappy, like they were missing something in their lives. We realized that we had a major task ahead of us, and we knew that we could never do it with our own strength. Phillipians 4:13 became an important scripture to my team: "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."

Throughout the summer we worked with three churches: Grace, First, and Franklin Centre Churches of the Nazarene. We did Sunshine Clubs at all of these churches. We would do two or three clubs a day. One of the challenges that we faced was the need to translate and learn the Sunshine Clubs in French. Only then could we be prepared if there were children who attended that only spoke French. I had thought my background in French was pretty good and that I would remember a lot of it when I heard it spoken. To my surprise, however, two years of French is nothing when trying to understand even a little bit of fluent French. Children that regularly attended the Nazarene churches and those who were bilingual became our translators. They did an excellent job of translating the Sunshine Clubs and helping us in conversations that we tried to have with the French speaking kids.

On this trip the Lord showed me in a real way a glimpse of how many people there are in this world that have never heard what a Christian is. When I would talk to the parents of children, they would have so many questions about the church and what we believed. I gladly

answered all the questions that I could, but sometimes I would have to tell them that I did not have all of the answers. I would try to refer them to other people that could help, but sometimes their questions were left unanswered.

The Lord blessed me with a team that was willing to work together. We strived for team unity. Anytime that there seemed to be tension within the group we would let each other have our own space. Later, we would come together to talk about the problem. One of my special memories of our times together as a team was our morning devotions. We would come together and lay out whatever we were thinking, whether it was about missing home or about spiritual aspects of our life.

This summer was a growing experience for me spiritually. It helped me to wake up and realize how many hurting people there are in this world. If you are thinking about interviewing for Youth in Mission and are wondering if it is the right thing for you to do, just pray about it, trust God no matter what (even if your friends think that you are crazy), and let Him have His way with you.



Bubbles the clown entertains children and adults in Montreal's Harris Park with help from Amy Johnson's puppet.

YIM: AUSTRALIA

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Lori McLerran: Rebuilding the foundations

I remember the day I left home to begin my summer journey because it was on that day that I took a step of faith that forever changed my life and relationship with Jesus Christ. On the way to the airport I was feeling overwhelmed with what lay ahead of me. I had no idea what to expect. I knew I would not be the same person when I came back home.

My mom was very comforting to me and reminded me of the promise that God gave to Jacob in Genesis 28:15, "I am with you and will watch over you wherever you go, and I will bring you back to this land. I will not leave you until I have done what I promised you." God truly fulfilled his promises to me this summer and it is only now that I am able to see how he worked in and through me.

At this time last year the Youth in Mission representatives were here on campus interviewing students for the program. I felt compelled to go and talk with them about the program. Several former college students had told me that the one thing they regretted not having done during their time at school was to go on a summer YIM trip. Being a new freshman I had no specific plans for the summer ahead and figured it was as good a time as any to apply. If the Lord saw fit to send me and provide, I would go. I had no preferences as to where I wanted to be sent, but I was excited to find out that my journey was going to take me to Australia.

I had heard very little about the country and was unaware of their desperate need for missionaries. Most people think that to be a missionary you have to go where there is financial poverty. Australia is a country where most of the population lives comfortably, but spiritually they are impoverished. Being a Christian is not common over there. Church is not a popular place to go.



A church service at Gauler Church of the Nazarene in Adelaide.

Knowing this before I left made me wonder how I was going to be received by the Australian people. To my surprise, I found that the people were very grateful to us for having come to their country. Most of our time as a ministry team was spent just sharing with families in their daily routine.

I was on a team with three other girls. At first we were frustrated with the "laid back" atmosphere of the Australian culture. We did not feel like we were doing enough. The church members with whom we worked in Adelaide would often take us sightseeing. They were very eager to share their culture with us. I soon came to realize that those times were what they needed. Instead of having a team to come and paint and build and clean (which is what one would normally assume would be done on a trip like this) they needed someone to listen to them and share time with them.

I remember talking on a trolley bus with the youth leader as we were coming back from the beach one day. We discussed how it might be possible to better reach out to the students at his high school and encourage them to come to church. I was able to share with him some of the things that my

youth pastor does that has helped my youth group. I know this does not sound like a very profound ministry opportunity, but I learned from it that the little things you do in your every day walk with Christ can be a ministry to others no matter where in the world you might be.

My team also had the opportunity to minister in school settings to young children through puppets, magic, music, and games. These were neat times to share the love of Christ with kids on their territory. They loved to hear the way we talked, especially when my puppet "Wordbird" would sing in a country accent. I learned many funny new ways to speak and use words in the English language.

Just as there are many ways to speak the same language, there are also many ways to live as a Christian. I asked the Lord to change me this summer. He did things for me through the circumstances of this summer that I could have never done for myself. Being alone that far from home forced me to closely evaluate my walk with Jesus. I discovered that I was uncomfortable with how I was feeling because I wanted too much control. I wanted so badly to spend every hour of the day in

full time ministry with the people. Instead, I found that the Lord had a different agenda in mind. He did use me there, but not as much as he used the people I met to help me.

I also realized that the foundation of my spiritual life was both sturdy from what other people had taught me and weak because of what I had not learned on my own. I have grown up hearing and saying all the Christian things but not actually understanding what some of them were all about. I had to unlearn some things about life and reevaluate where I was going in my walk with the Lord. I let him tear down my weak building and help me start digging deeper before building again.



Lori and one of her many Australian friends.

When you are on the mountaintop of life you know you can do anything, but it is in the valley that God often explains to us his vision for our lives. There we are at a place to let him take control. We can insult God with our eagerness to serve before we truly come to know him. If you want to go into the deep, you first have to leave the shallow. I share these words with you because I am in awe of what God is still teaching me because of my obedience to go on this trip. It was not an easy decision, but it became a priceless experience.

I encourage you to consider what opportunities God will open up for you this coming summer. I will also warn you to be prepared to allow him to change you. You cannot teach what you do not know, and you cannot lead where you will not go. My prayer is that I will continually allow God to teach me and lead me. His grace enables me to look at where I have been and who I have been as compared to where I have walked and grown to be now. Be careful what you pray for.

"I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus." Philippians 3:13-14.

YIM: RUSSIA

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Kenneth Couchman: receiving the chances of grace

It was an afternoon no different from any other. My Youth in Mission team had just returned to the church office in Volgograd, Russia, from one of our weekly ministry programs at a local children's club.

Before the two females on my team left to go to their flat for the evening, they mentioned that they needed to buy some groceries for supper. I volunteered to go with them down to the supermarket.

Upon our arrival at the supermarket, Lisa, one of my teammates, asked if I knew where she might find some baby powder. We decided to check the cosmetics store above the supermarket. She was in luck: they had 10 ounce bottles of Baby Powder for just 10,200 rubles (just under \$2). We paid for the Baby Powder and rushed back downstairs to the supermarket. I happened to be carrying the bottle, so I slipped it into my shorts pocket before entering the store. I suddenly had a strange premonition that I might regret not having gotten a receipt for her purchase. . . .

The three of us commenced our shopping. But before I got to the cashier with my purchases, the girls intercepted me.

"Ken!" they said. "They have Baby Powder here too! They're going to

think you're shoplifting with that big bottle from upstairs hanging out of your pocket!"

There wasn't much I could do. I stuffed the bottle down into my pocket, covered its cap with my crumpled shopping list, and got in line to check out. After I paid for the groceries, I bagged them up, put the change and receipt in my wallet, and made a quarter turn toward the door.

As I did I came face to face with a stocky Russian fellow with a frown, a piercing gaze, and an index finger pointed directly at my pocket—the one with Lisa's Baby Powder. . . .

* * *

My father is a retired U.S. Army master sergeant. I have lived my entire life near army bases and have seen countless helicopter gunships traverse the sky. I used to collect G. I. Joe action figures. Those were the Reagan years. That was my cold-war childhood.

Back then, the Soviet Union was the enemy. The press and the politicians told us that the United States was the only thing keeping the Soviet Union from overrunning the world with its totalitarian regime. The people were repressed, the government was atheist, and a dark cloud supposedly hung over the entire nation, casting gray shadows that sucked the joy and beauty

out of an entire continent.

But then the Berlin Wall fell, the Soviet coup failed, and the Soviet Union disintegrated. Soon we were reading about Nazarene missionaries being sent to Russia. Then last year, I read Christy Brummet's essay on her Youth in Mission trip to Kiev, Ukraine. It touched me—no, it punched me in the gut—at a strange level somewhere between curiosity, compassion, and "calling." I wanted to go to Russia. I wanted to see the people that I had grown up calling arch-enemies. I wanted to breathe the air, eat the food, stand in the lines, and look into the soul of a nation whose rich history is scarred by tragedy, bloodshed, war, and failed economic theory. Youth in Mission gave me that chance.

It gave me the chance to fly into Moscow and see, not missile silos and concrete oceans, but green trees, parks, and blue waters. It gave me the chance to walk across Red Square and tour the Kremlin (which I used to ominously refer to as "ground zero").

Youth in Mission gave me the chance to live for six weeks in Volgograd, (formerly Stalingrad), a city still haunted by the horrors of World War II. It gave me the chance to go each week with my team to a neighborhood kids' club, where the kids begged us to play soccer with them. It gave me the chance to share my testimony with them about how God has given meaning to my life.

Youth in Mission gave me the chance to go to the children's cancer ward of the Volgograd hospital, where we and our translators would do puppet shows, mimes, flannelgraph Bible stories, and sing songs with kids who know little of the world outside their not-so-sterile hospital ward.

Youth in Mission gave me the chance to participate with the



The "Mother Russia" statue overlooks Volgograd from the Mamayev Kurgan Hill war memorial complex. The statue is over 300 feet high.

Nazarene church in a baptismal service on the bank of the Volga River. It gave me the chance to put Russian picture Bibles into the hands of eager children.

Youth in Mission gave me the chance to lead a group of 10 children for two weeks of Bible school at the church in Volgograd. It gave me the chance to play games with them, smile with them, sing with them, and make them feel special. It also gave me the chance at the end of the second week to see all 10 of them raise their hands as wanting to receive Jesus Christ as their Savior.

But now, as I try to finish painting this portrait of my summer, I realize that Youth in Mission didn't give me the "chances" I have just described. I only had them because of the grace of God—the grace that reaches to me and promises life for an introverted perfectionist—the grace that calls me forward into "the great adventure"—the grace that went before me to

Russia and lit a spark in the heart of hundreds of kids, teens, and adults who may have never heard about Jesus before this summer. Might it be a grace that beckons you?

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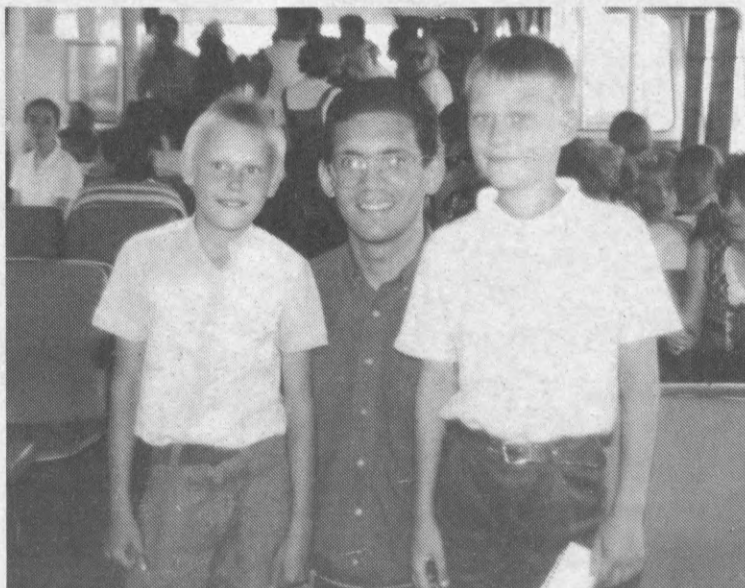
What was I to do? Since I couldn't speak Russian, I couldn't tell this supermarket security guy that Lisa had bought the Baby Powder at a different store and I was just carrying it for her. Slowly, I retrieved the bottle from my pocket. Deliberately, I pointed at the ceiling and said in clear, plain, (yet indiscernable) English that I had bought the product upstairs.

He looked at me. He looked at the Baby Powder. He looked at the girls, who were panicking. He looked at me again.

The horrors of Russian prisons flashed through my mind. I wondered whether they would let me call the embassy before they locked me up.

Then he handed the bottle back to me and waved me out of the store.

And I've been telling the story ever since.



Kenneth with two of the Russian youth from his Bible school group: Lona Berko and Koley Popov.

YIM: AUSTRALIA

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October 16-17, 1996

Wes Furlong: In the land of the Southern Cross

I remember the sensation like it was yesterday. I was sitting in the Phoenix airport within two hours of realizing a year's worth of hopes, dreams, anticipations, and fears.

I believed with my whole heart that by the time I would fly back to the United States in August, Australia would be revived and their blinded eyes would be uncovered to the truth. Naive? Maybe. But my prayers and hopes were centered on the fact that no one is out of the reach of God's merciful hand. Besides, isn't it the dry land that spreads the fire the quietest?

You may be surprised to hear of Australia as mission site. Maybe it sounds suspicious that students will be evangelizing rather than surfing or sunbathing. Indeed, most people picture this "land down under" as a vacation spot rather than a spiritually dry land in desperate need of restoration and revival.

It is a land that boasts a less than 5% Christian population. The effects of this are quite obvious. When most people think of poverty, they picture underfed and overwhelmed victims of third world countries. My trip to Australia has completely revised my definition of "poverty."

It has taken a trip across the world for me to realize that God calls us to be "road signs." It broke my heart to see people searching so hard to find what I have: the peace that passes all understanding. Gary Sivewright told us in training camp that there is "no need to create truth or even change it for that matter. [Instead, there is a need] to point people towards it."

Maybe it was because I was on a mission trip that I noticed and understood the hopelessness that

surrounded me. Regardless, it made me aware that we are each surrounded by people who are desperately searching for God. Maybe we need to take another trip up that dusty, narrow road to Calvary and sense the urgency to the calling we have received. Poverty of the soul is a chasm in every human being, whether in Australia, India, or next door, that can only be filled with the Holy Spirit. Jesus calls us to be the light in the darkness—an exhibit of hope and joy to a generation that has lost it—and the road sign to the narrow path.

A frightening sense of inadequacy also hit me while I was in Australia. I possessed neither the wisdom nor speaking ability to adequately minister to the people that were in such great need for revival. However, I no longer feel that my sense of inadequacy is a weakness. God reminded me of what he said to Paul: "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." It now seems to me that inadequacy is an ironic strength that God can use like no other. Only when we realize and admit our weakness will God "show off" his strength through us. God uses inadequacies to humble us and teach us to rely on Him. Presenting the radical message of Jesus Christ in a distinct southern "twang" to 100 critical teenagers showed me very quickly how unqualified I was. It was as if God was saying, "It's not your ability, Wes, but your availability that I'm interested in."

Waking up July 15 at 6 AM I remember praying that the week would go by quickly. The idea of spending 6 days at a condemned campsite with 30 untamed children just didn't really motivate me. Maybe it was the thought

of being the counselor, referee, cook, and speaker that made me a little weary. Another contributing factor had to be the reality that I had virtually no experience working or speaking to young children. That made me a little apprehensive to say the least.

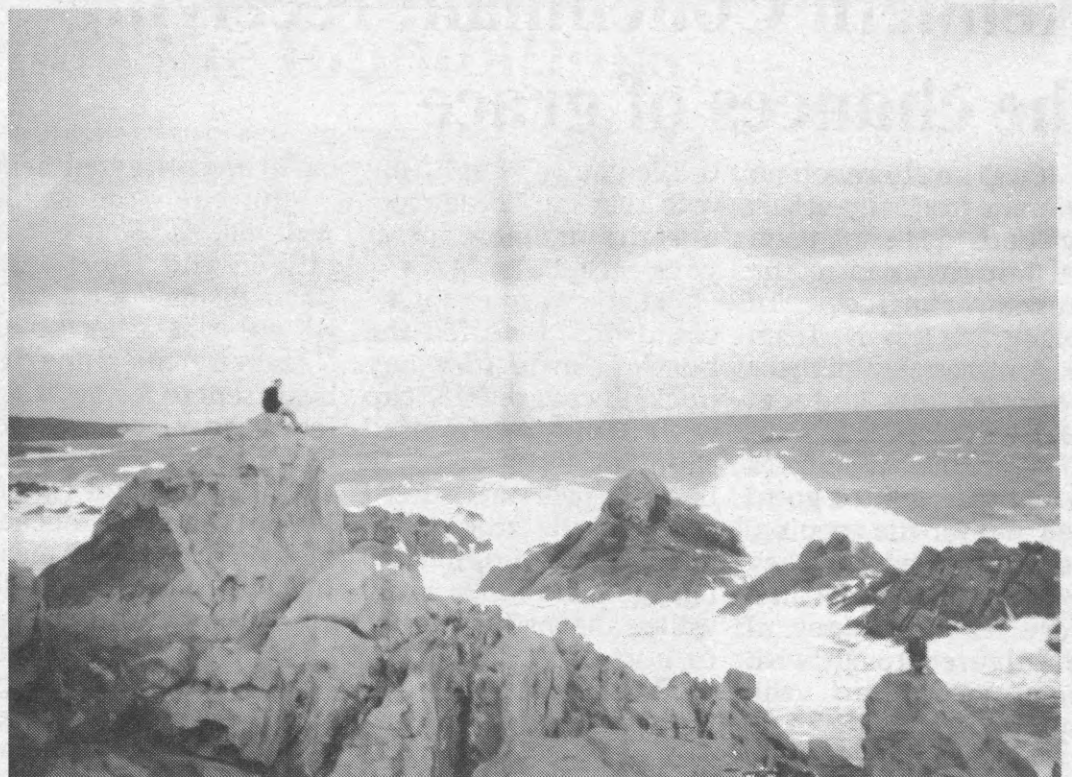
Never in my wildest imagination would I have expected a kids camp to be the best week of the entire trip. Ironically, the one week that I prayed would go by quickly, did just that. It is the only prayer I can ever recall regretting. The camp turned into a paradox for me. Walking into it, I would not have entertained the thought of possibly learning something from those kids. Walking out of it, I honestly believed I learned more from them than they could possibly have learned from me.

The children's camp also taught me about receptivity. From sharing jokes to prayer requests I sat in amazement at how tender and open the hearts of the children really were. None of them had made commitments for Christ. Only one even attended church regularly. Nevertheless, the children were not only open but also eager to learn about a God that loves them unconditionally and can divide a sea in half. Their prayers were simple yet

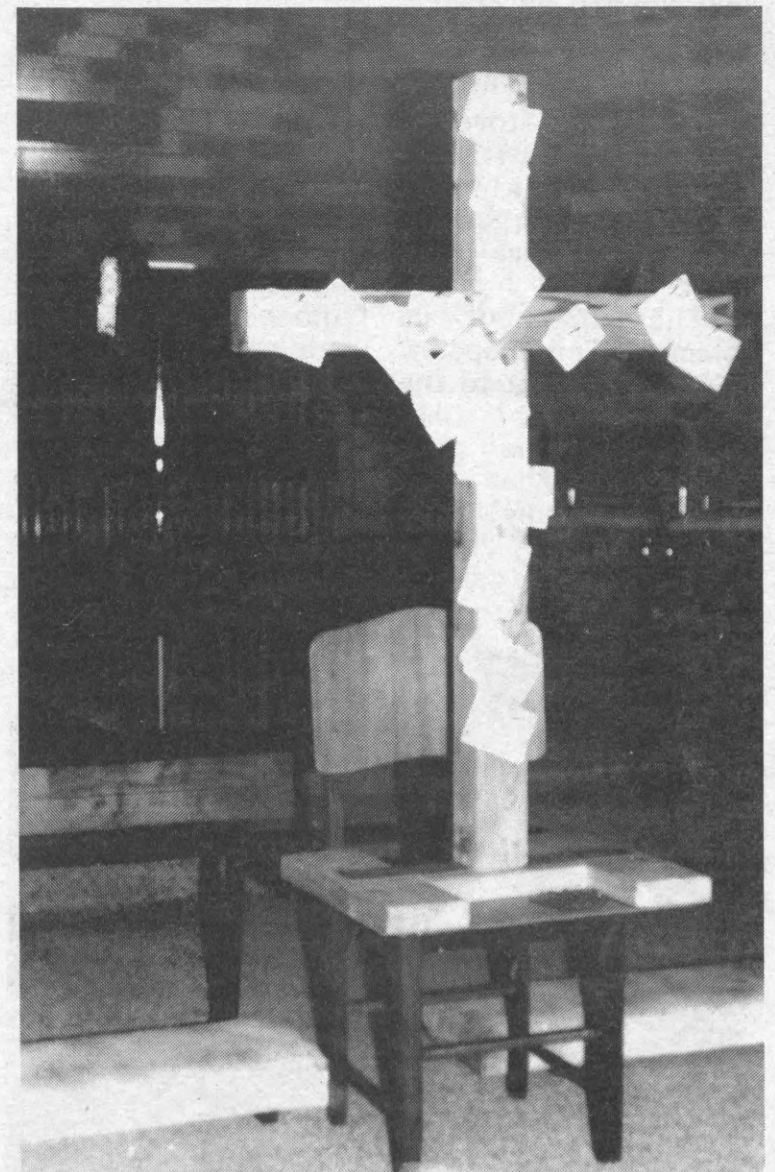
totally genuine. It was refreshing to see no pretense.

Further, I was impressed at how perceptive children can be. They present no fronts and can see right through anyone that does. Despite a dark, gloomy world on

the outside, their hearts were delicate and full of joy and hope on the inside. Far greater than any theological course, the "kids camp" opened my eyes to the heart of purity and sincerity that Jesus wants me to possess.



Wes looks westward across the Indian ocean from the rocky beach of the children's camp in Perth, Australia.



On the last night that YIM was in Perth, members of the Perth congregation "nailed to the cross" the things that were separating them from God.