

Reporting direct from the Los Angeles, California mission field....

Following are reports from the IOWAY team on July 7, 2010. They have been 'on assignment' for the past ten days.



**Adam Nahnsen, Immanuel, Schleswig:**

Overall, the trip is an eye opener. We see how the people live and they want to know how we live. Some people know some things about God and we are able to teach them more about the Bible. It's a good feeling as a Christian to know we are doing our part to help spread God's Word.



**Paul Nahnsen, Immanuel, Schleswig:**

One person asked how congested the freeways are in Iowa. My response: "Well, on the gravel roads near Schleswig, I might meet a couple cars." ☺ Their response is shock and a question, "What's gravel?" This is my second year on this trip and I thought I knew what to expect. The churches are in the same places and for the most part, the people are the same, but again, this year had a whole new set of surprises: different responsibilities, different team members, different lessons/themes, and different events. The key word is DIFFERENT but the outcome is the same. My eyes are opened to the problems of this country and becoming closer to the

Lord because of them. I have more respect for the people who actually stand up for what they believe, and I need to take more action. My eyes have also been opened to know that I have not appreciated my family or the blessings that I actually have.

**Andrew Reeve, Trinity, Glenwood:**

I have enjoyed going on this trip. I've enjoyed this is because I have met a lot of new people who love Jesus. I have also enjoyed going to a new place that I've never been to before. The main thing I enjoy is to help people learn about God and His Word. The people here appreciate our presence.

**Kodi Hawthorne, Pilgrim, Lake City:**

The trip means a lot to me because it really has opened my eyes to the advantages we have in Iowa compared to what we see people have here. We take for granted our food, clothes, cars, toys and money. This trip has changed me a lot by making me appreciate what I have compared to what I could have. I really recommend that people go on this trip.



**Paula Jolly, Shepherd of the Valley, West Des Moines:**

It is great to see so many young people from our District who are interested in sharing themselves and serving others. They want to tell others about the faith we have in Jesus. Watching the kids who come to VBS really 'get' the lessons and think through and discuss what they have learned. They are not just parroting back what we said. They understand it and it makes sense to them—the light goes on in their brains.

**Michael Rothe, Immanuel, Schleswig:**

This trip has made me more aware of what is going on in our country. It is amazing how badly we need to focus on our country to help us get back into the ways of God. We do a great job in other countries proclaiming God, but I feel that when it comes to your country, we just freeze and can't get the Word out. Also, this trip has made me aware of the fact that there is always someone in the world who has it worse than we do.

**Sonia Reeve, Trinity, Glenwood:**

I really enjoy being on this trip. This is my first mission trip and I am loving it. Faith Lutheran Church where I am working, has a lot of work for us. It is joyful to see all the people who are helping. This week we are teaching VBS. There are a lot of kids who are coming and they are enjoying it. Some of the kids who come each night are homeless. They still come to learn about God.

**Claudia Perez, Zion Hispanic Lutheran Church, Denison:**

This trip has changed my life more than I expected it to. It has made my faith stronger. Also, it makes me appreciate everything I have—family, home and friends.

**Angela Jolly, Shepherd of the Valley, West Des Moines:**

This trip means a lot to me because it took me out of my little bubble that I was in and showed me a whole different world. It makes me appreciate all the wonderful gifts that I have been blessed with. It feels great to know that the things that we are doing are changing many people's lives for the better. Most of all, it has brought me closer to God.

**Colleen Petzenhauser, Pilgrim, Lake City:**

Wow, where am I as of today? I have grown deeper in my faith through this experience. Some of it is because I have gained a new appreciation for the "little things" that I take for granted each day. This came as I saw a prostitute going through the garbage at the church. She was scraping the cheese off the pizza box that we had pizza from the day before. I am now very thankful for the food I eat each day.



My next awakening came when my daughter helped do CPR on a 9 month old who was having a seizure. I am thankful that she was in the right place at the right time and with the right training to help keep the baby alive! Another awakening came today while teaching Bible School to middle

school/high school students. We were talking about angels who told the shepherds of Jesus' birth. (Something that I have heard hundreds of times.) I asked them when we usually hear this story and there was silence. Not one of the 12 students said "Christmas." Finally one said, "Easter." Then another said, "No, Easter is the resurrection." I am thankful for being raised in a Christian home! I am also thankful that we are all here, teaching these kids about Jesus.

The last awakening I had was also today in Bible School. We were talking about ways to be heroes for Jesus and one of our high school students talked about starting in little ways, like smiling at people who don't like you and just to say "Hi"! I didn't think much of it until he said that is what another of our students who used to bully him did to him. Finally, his kindness made him stop and realize that this kid was really nice and they are now friends. I am thankful that this young man was so open! What a great role model for other students on how to be a hero for God!



**Mac Juergensen, Holy Trinity, Farnhamville:**

Since this is my third year on the IOWAY team, I thought I knew what was going on. That is 100% not true! Every year is so different. A person does not know what to expect. There are new people, new kids, and a lot of new experiences. This year at Christ Lutheran Church, we have a 2 year old student and just the fact that her parents wanted her to start learning about Jesus so young is great. It is interesting too that the parents came two years ago to LA from the Philippines. They were Lutherans there and the mother said when they got to LA she looked through the yellow pages for a local Lutheran church and have been happy members at Christ.

**Adriana Mendoza, Zion Hispanic Lutheran, Denison:**

At first, I did not believe that there were a lot of homeless, but when I got here, I saw people with shopping carts where they keep their stuff. The kids we are teaching are really nice. There is a girl that heard the alarm of a fire truck and she asked me if the police were coming. I told her "no." In my opinion, I think she has had contact with the police before.

**Derek Rothe, Immanuel, Schleswig:**

This trip has been an eye opener for everyone. The trip is a great way for us to reach out and help others strengthen their faith along with strengthening our own. This trip really makes us appreciate what we have. Also, we really get to see what God wants to do for us. Anyone reading this should encourage youth in your community to go out to work for God.

**Jessica Overturf, Shepherd of the Valley, West Des Moines:**

The benefits of going on this mission trip are really hard to put into words. It is just incredible! You get to meet so many amazing people who feel the same about God as you do. The people are wonderful. This is my fourth year on the trip. I appreciate what everyone has done for me to let me to be able to go on this trip. I would love to keep coming back for many years but I want to let others enjoy the great experiences that I've had. I want to especially thank my new home church, Shepherd of the Valley, for supporting me. Thank you very much.

**Cody Clausen, Immanuel, Schleswig:**

I've enjoyed this trip because it has been so life changing for me. Each day I enjoy being with a 6 year old boy named Daniel. He is homeless and lives with 8 or 9 others and one woman who act as a "mom." They lived in a hotel lobby last year, but now they live in a church that helps take care of them. All of the kids have been really special to me, but Daniel has been especially close to me. He sits on my lap and now calls me his favorite cousin.

**Payton Kalambokidis, Trinity, Glenwood:**

I liked this trip because I really got to help people. My faith has been strengthened. My main reason for coming in the beginning was just to help the city of LA and to help build a better place for kids in LA and to encourage them to go to church. I have been able to share with others and I think it has made me a better person.

**Doris Nahnsen, Immanuel, Schleswig:**

Many times in a small rural community, we don't think about the different societies, cultures, needs of people, etc. This trip has helped open my eyes to see that as a Christian we need to be people of action! There are so many people that need reassurance of God's great love and forgiveness.

**Baker Cambridge, Trinity, Glenwood:**

This trip has been an amazing trip for me, and I feel my faith in Christ has become much stronger. I am very happy to be with such a great group of people who are very fun and enjoy being together. It helps me also because I am with a group of people who believe the same things I do, which is a lot different for me. There is a man on the team, Paul, that I look up to. I am working at a very cool church where I get to bond with new people.

**Suzan Reeve, Trinity, Glenwood:**

This trip has brought me closer to my Lord. It has made me more confident in my ability to proclaim His Word. I have found myself accepting the challenges and obstacles that we as Christians are confronted with when others share their faith. Being with others who share my faith has allowed me to grow in my faith and my personal relationship with my Creator.

**Katie Petzenhauser, Pilgrim, Lake City:**

This trip to me means an opening, not only in my heart and mind enabling me to grow closer to the Lord, but also as a witness. I am able to comfortably tell people what I am doing on this trip and how amazing, fun and spiritually cleansing it is and people listen. Normally people look away and say that they are not listening to that stuff. This trip means seeing amazing kids grow in their faith or start coming to church as well as encountering kids who have never been in a church. "Amazing" is the only way to explain this experience.

**Jeff Reeve, Trinity, Glenwood:**

The trip was a good experience for me. I was amazed that there were so many homeless people on the streets with carts. God has given us so much and we often take it all for granted. My faith has grown since the beginning and I would recommend the trip to others. It will help them after returning to their home too.

On Saturday, July 10, the IOWAY team distributed food, clothes, health items and Bibles to people on Skid Row. That is an area in Los Angeles where between 8,000 and 9,000 homeless people live. The group returned to Iowa on July 12.

Thank you for taking the time to read about our mission adventures!

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