

That night, we met together for our group Bible study time. I was asked to speak. I took some time between dinner and our study to think about what God might be teaching us, the Lord led me to these verses in

Psalm 77:

- 16 When the waters saw you, O God,
when the waters saw you, they were afraid;
the very deep trembled.
- 17 The clouds poured out water;
the skies thundered;
your arrows flashed on every side.
- 18 The crash of your thunder was in the whirlwind;
your lightnings lit up the world;
the earth trembled and shook.
- 19 Yet your way led through the sea,
your path, through the mighty waters;
though your footprints were unseen.

We read these verses together. They became our own.

2009 Youth Summer Mission Report

**Stories of missions:
stories of God's provision**

Bradley Stokes:

This past summer our youth group went to the DR and had many life changing experiences. The time that had the most impact on me was the last night in Santo Domingo. We had stayed in Santo Domingo working in the barrio and staying with various host families for about three days and nights, but it was the last night that I most remember. It was a blast!

First, we went off into the streets recruiting people to come to the Vida Joven (Young Life) Club. We then had a gathering with kids from the neighborhood that was similar to our Sunday night youth group.

We sang, danced, and heard the gospel from one of the leaders. Once we finished we joined all of the kids and adults in the streets outside the building to just have fun. This is what they do every time they meet - so we just joined their games and talked with them in the streets.

I stayed with some of the guys and we played some games. And the interesting thing was that the games we played were games that my friends and I play here in America, taps and soccer. I still have scars on my feet from playing soccer in the streets barefoot!

Looking back - the thing that impacted me the most was that the people and kids there were just like us. I had this vision going in that it was going to be a whole different world down there. In some ways it was. But what I learned is that the people are almost exactly like us. They may speak a different language, but they play the same games, listen to similar music, and act

let out a yelp! I arrived at the waterfall behind most of the students. They were jumping off the side of the waterfall into the pool below. I sat on a rock, watching the students. It was perfect.

Roy Clifford, head of Pico Escondido, the Young Life Camp in the Dominican Republic, was standing in the pool. He was assisting the students from the pool below the waterfall to the rockside that bordered the pool. After about 15 minutes, Roy recognized the water height and pressure increasing as the rains poured more water into the mouth of the river. He yelled at the last few students up on the wall to come down quickly and signaled to the leaders to start moving the kids away from the waterfall. About 30 of us funneled into a crevice of trees lining the riverbed. It was slow going. I was toward the back of the line. We realized of course that we could not make the journey back down the river; the water had gotten too strong. I looked over my shoulder to see the once calm inviting waterfall become a rush of water that kicked debris and rocks onto our backs. The water rose quickly and by the time the water surface nearly covered the rocks of the river bed, we pushed our last few up the side of the river bed. We made it! We stayed put, tucked among the trees some 7 feet or so above the water that was now racing down the channel that we had just finished hiking. The students reacted very differently but all were deeply moved by the experience.

The two church youth groups, polarized in theology, politics, worship and just about anything else, merged as one. The students and parent chaperones hugged one another, certain of each other's affection for the other.

Adam Davis:

On the Middle School trip, I remember how hard the students worked. Whether it was go break these rocks, lay this pipe or dig this ditch (and it was “dig this ditch” for the most part), they were up for the task! One night in particular, we had finished another long day of digging, returned to camp, had dinner and were ready to go outside and play ultimate Frisbee or some other exhausting sport. Just then it started to rain. The students looked at each other, then back at me and asked, “Can we go out in the rain?” “Sure,” I said. They did not let a little rain stop them from having a great time, they did not let three days full of ditch digging dampen their spirit, they did not let cold showers keep them from getting clean, they did not let my mediocre guitar playing skills to quiet their praises.

On the High School trip, it is hard to recount the numerous opportunities of service, worship, change and intimacy and choose only one. From the crazy bus rides maneuvering around motor cycles and pedestrians to the morning quiet times tucked under the shadow of thousands of trees I can not help but speak of our hike up the waterfall. It was a glorious hike. About 4 miles or so up a slow moving snaking river. We climbed over rocks and trudged through water hiking back up the river toward its mouth, where there was a 25-foot waterfall. We had hiked about 3 miles when the rain started pouring down into the river. The view was breathtaking. Sun shined through the drops of rain that beaded on the rocks and spilled into the river. We walked in and out of sunlight and shadow in the deep valley river bed lined with soaring rock walls. The students in front me

Terry Oberle:

I have many lasting memories of our mission trip to the DR, one of the most indelible being the spontaneous "festival" outside the Club in Santiago on our last night there.

But one of the Pico Escondido (Young Life Camp) experiences that has stayed with me was the quiet time we had each morning. I have always enjoyed some time alone, and use our mountain house to that end. But it has always been sporadic -- once a week, every two weeks... At Pico, it was daily, and it was a time when I could hear myself and hear God talk to me through that beautiful place.

My morning ritual has been two cups of coffee, newspaper and radio music, usually Oldie Goldies. I still have the coffee and what's left of the Journal, but no music. I have an hour, at least, of quiet time every day.

Alex Emken:

As you all know, this summer KBC's middle schoolers embarked on a trip to Asheville, NC to do some mission work. The group organizing our work in Asheville was Re-Creation Experiences. Re-Creation had several other churches in their "facility." Our rooms were rather large, so we shared one with another youth group.

Every day, we went out to a family that had 10 kids, 12 including mom and dad, and dug a very large septic system to replace their current, failing one. We did this for three days, and we definitely grew closer with the family. We learned some things, too. Like how when your mom tells you to put on sunscreen, you do it. (We all learned that the hard way.) And don't even start me on needing to drink water (drink lots of it). Even though I did one of the most meaningful things I have ever done in helping these people save lots of money, probably the best experience of the entire trip was the other kids in our room.

We did everything with these guys. We shared a room, we shared showers, we ate together, and we worshiped together. Some of them were quiet, some were boisterous, some were just plain beyond explanation. I enjoyed getting to know kids from other youth groups, but this was more than that. I learned a more than critical skill: living with other people. Like them or not, we had to live with them. This is what I really derived from our incredible excursion to not an island country, or the rainforests, but to Asheville, NC.

and I worked side by side with our assistants and really created something! I could tell he took great pride in what he was able to create and I must say that I shared his pride and I think that he and I understood each other in that way.

On the last day there, Meredith and Liz helped on the rock wall and they did an excellent job! Meredith was good with her Spanish – mas rocas and mas cemento.

After finishing our rock wall work on the last day, I ran up to our cabin and pulled out my favorite (although well worn but clean) T shirt with the phrase "Live United" on it. I brought the shirt to him and with someone that knew him well helped me communicate that this was a special T shirt to me and that I wanted him to have it. We hugged each other and both got a little teary. I will never forget that moment.



Clyde Cash:

Live United

At Pico Escondido, we were asked to volunteer for different types of work to be done at the camp. I volunteered to work on the rock wall.

The purpose of the rock walls were both functional and decorative. Since the terrain is hilly at Pico, the use of rock walls is an excellent terracing structure and it adds beauty throughout the camp. A Dominican gentleman who was in his 30s, could not speak or hear much at all. He had recently acquired large hearing aids which allowed him to hear slightly. His speech was more like a humming noise.

I had never worked on a rock wall before and he was an expert. I kept close by his side and learned his trade. He would look over the work site and figure out what needed to be done: (1) shoveling sand to mix cement; (2) hauling rocks up to the ledge where we were working; (3) placing string across the side of the hill to make sure the rock wall stayed even (and slanting back slightly). I followed him wherever he went and did what he did. He was a real workhorse. Since he did not speak and could only slightly hear, he did not have the usual distractions that we have. He did not stop to chat, etc. He would point with pursed lips, which we learned was a unique Dominican trait.

After working with him a day or so I received one of the biggest compliments I could imagine. We had several Dominican teenagers working with us. When we began work on the 3rd morning, he motioned for two of the Dominican teenagers to help me with my work. He



Susan Coburn:

The first thing that came into my mind when thinking back to our summer mission trip to the Dominican Republic was the waterfall incident. First of all, I didn't know that I could climb 15 feet up a mountain in 30 seconds. I am also shocked that I didn't break any bones during my multiple falls coming down the mountain.

Then there was Jorge, a Pico worker that took a hard fall off a ladder and had to get sutures and a CT scan. He needed antibiotics as well, but could not afford. My "just in case" antibiotics ended up coming in handy after all. I was also very glad I got to go with him to the hospital.

One thing I've continued since the trip is morning Bible time. I have read the entire New Testament since we've been home.

Sylvia Oberle:

A meaningful aspect of the trip to the Dominican Republic was being able to experience it with my family. Individually, Terry, Ginny and I have done service-related activities, but going together on this mission trip heightened not only the experience, but also the lasting meaning for us, together as a family memory and also spiritually.

In addition to the wonderful, personal connections we made with individuals in the DR, we were able to pray together upon our return for Aldo, Felix, Katherine, Ramon, Annie, Rafa, and on and on. We had meaningful dinnertime conversations about how we had changed as a result of our trip, and we indeed held each other accountable for not forgetting our new friends and our experience.

Before we left, I had prayed silently that it would be a special experience not only for us but for those with whom we labored. I had hoped that it would change us as a family. And indeed it did.

My prayer for Knollwood is that we would stretch ourselves as a church community, to offer more opportunities for families to experience life-changing mission trips together and to take a risk to get outside our comfort zones. I know that it has made a lasting difference for us.

Thanks be to God!

Lasley Cash:

The trip to the Dominican Republic this summer was a life-changing experience for me. Not only did I get to learn about a different culture, I got to experience a new way of living. One memory from this trip that I will never forget was the home stays. Going into the home stays, we were all very apprehensive and had no clue of what to expect. However, it actually ended up being the highlight of the trip for me. We were all taken into someone's home, being complete strangers to them, and we were received so warmly and treated like part of the family. The families that we stayed with had very little material things, but they had the most joy in their lives that I had ever seen before. I think that this showed me what happiness truly is and that it comes from just being around people who love and care about you and who share your same faith. I also learned that the Dominican families were rich in so many other aspects of life. For example, their love and worship of God. This experience really taught me so much, and gave me a completely new perspective on life.

Although we didn't speak the same language, didn't look the same, and lived in very different habitats we were all able to come together through one thing, which was our love for God. It was our faith that was able to unite us all together.



Weston Henderson:

While on our Middle School mission trip, I realized just how important it is to be grateful for what God has given me. I have my life, Knollwood, my family, my home and my needs met every day. God provided for our group by sending people to prepare food for us and shelter for us to stay in. We met some interesting people. The family we worked with was large - 12 people in all. The mom almost always brought us snacks and one of the sons and I had something in common: the love of baseball. The family didn't have a working indoor toilet at the time, so I felt that God sent us there to help. God provides in many ways.

Working beside my friends, chaperones and the family caused me to see that while hard times come, God helps us through it. Just like this family made the best of it, knowing how their situation was, I realized that they were a strong family. The more I thought about it, the more I became grateful for what I have and what God provides.

Ginny Oberle:

This past summer, I went to the Dominican Republic with both my mother and father. Whether this was good or bad remains unknown, but the experience definitely changed all three of us in different ways.

The waterfall incident (near-death experience, life-changing experience; whatever you want to call it) changed the way I confronted other experiences on the trip. Before our trek to the waterfall, this trip was an excellent chance for me to genuinely help other people, to spread my horizons, and to learn a little Spanish. However, after scrambling up a cliff and hunkering down in a mess of trees, I was able to be open-minded when confronting other experiences on the trip, hoping that each one would move me as much as the waterfall.

Meeting the people of the Dominican Republic was truly inspiring. Another aspect of this mission trip was ministry; hypothetically, KBC was ministering the Dominicans. Yet, we left them with a few doors and a few phone numbers while they left us with something truly incredible, the ability to see beyond socio-economic status and see the happiness that can be found in everything. One day we were literally cleaning the streets of dirt, trash, and animal poop, and I remember thinking how happy I was doing it. It was a direct result of being around the Dominicans. They are the happiest people I have ever met, and they make sure that happiness is contagious. I invite you to be motivated more by how they changed us than what we did for them. There is not a word strong enough to express how much I LOVED the Dominican Republic, although I have been tempted to make up one.

Rachel Wiggins:

The following is an excerpt from my journal on the DR trip:

Psalm 19:1 The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands.

There is a giant (holds 4 people) porch swing in front of the office and kitchen where I am sitting. I can smell the breakfast and hear the cheerful chatter in Spanish of the workers as they cook. They are always pleasant and helpful and I've learned some basic communication with them. I'm surprised to realize that I'm sad to be leaving here today. I guess I don't always know what I love until I have to give it up. It's just so beautiful here and the experience with our group has been extremely positive.

You take away the trappings of the world. You see the beauty of the people living a simple, but meaningful life. You watch with wonder as everyone is transformed to become more like this place. And you start to think about a strategy to pack it up and take it home with you.

I've been to a lot of pretty places and I know God is always there, but I'm not always paying attention.

Erin Spencer:

This past summer I went to Asheville, North Carolina to camp at Recreation Experiences. While I was in Asheville my youth group and I dug ditches in rock hard dirt while it was 90 degrees every day for four days. We were digging a septic tank field for a family with 10 kids. At first, I just wanted to go home and relax in the air conditioning. The work was tiring and I was sweating so much my clothes were stuck to me. I did not like being there what so ever, but every day the family would come out and talk to us. One day they gave us cookies. On another they came out with ice cream sandwiches. They were so appreciative even though they didn't have much.

It gave me a warm feeling knowing that I was helping somebody and changing somebody's life. At night when I was sweating some more due to the nonexistent air conditioning, I couldn't wait to get up at 6:00 and get to work. When I arrived home to my air conditioning and a mother that complained about my new white Nikes that are now red due to the dirt and mud, I began to feel empty and bored. The family we helped is still in my heart where it will forever stay. My trip to Asheville was life changing to me and everyone else involved. The look on the family's face and memories that will last forever was well worth four long work days and a few calories lost. I can't wait to see what this year has in store for me. I accept the challenge.