

Wayland students minister to children in England

August 27, 2009

SALTBOURN, England—The student mission group from Wayland Baptist University that journeyed to England was small in number, but students were able to make a big impact on the two-week venture overseas.

Organized by the Baptist Student Ministries, the trip included eight students and BSM Director Donnie Brown, who split into two smaller teams for the purposes of the mission work.

Wayland sophomore Daniel Bassing (left) oversees a game of “red light, green light” with children from an England church during a recreation time of the Holiday Clubs the mission group hosted. PHOTOS/Wayland Baptist University

Students spent their first day in England together in Saltbourn, a seaside village of about 6,000 located about three hours from London. The first team, led by Brown, stayed in Saltbourn, and the second team, led by BSM intern Katie Trimble, traveled to Middlesborough, about a half-hour away.

“We were working with Youth for Christ and the Teeside Valley, putting on Holiday Clubs (similar to the Vacation Bible School offered in the United States) in two churches in the towns,” said Brown, who brought his family along for the trip, as well.

“We would do the Bible clubs in the morning, then spend the afternoons working with area teenagers and university students.”

The Saltbourn group had about 40 children attend the Bible clubs, and the church partnered alongside them to support the effort and build relationships so they could disciple children once the Americans returned home, Brown said.

A highlight for Brown was seeing two young people—ages 12 and 17—attend church with the group on the final Sunday of their visit.

“This was the first time ever for either of those boys to go to church, so that was pretty cool to be part of,” he said. “I walked away from that trip just being aware of God’s hand in putting the teams together and each person’s role in the trip, how God used them all in specific ways in people’s lives.”

Trimble noted she enjoyed being able to really experience different cultures in person, and staying with a couple from Nigeria provided a particularly meaningful experience. For Trimble, a 2008 graduate of Wayland who has spent the last school year building relationships specifically with international students at WBU, the experience also made her more keenly aware of what her friends at Wayland have gone through to attend school.



Participating in the mission trip to England from Wayland were (from left) Hannah and Joshua Brown (children of BSM director Donnie Brown), Sareena Chandra, Shyla Ott, Louise Starcher, Lori Brown, Kristine Malone, Donnie Brown, Katie Trimble, Matt Johnston, Daniel Bassing and Tim Barnes.

“Just going through customs and traveling so far really helped me understand what they go through in coming here,” Trimble said. “I really loved visiting with the (English) students and learning about their lives. I really learned about how similar we really all are and how we’re all part of

God's kingdom around the world."

Senior Matt Johnston, a native of Alto, N.M., left a week before the rest of the group to visit a city in which he had spent Fall 2008 while on semester missions. But he admitted that this trip was a different experience in part because of the background of the children to whom he ministered.

"The church here had more young people who had grown up in the church and had more of the Bible in their background," Johnston said, noting that he helped lead the Bible study time for the Holiday Club at the church.

"One of the more memorable times was sharing the bridge illustration with the kids (the cross providing a bridge between God and sinful humanity). They were really excited about hearing it, and it was cool to see them be so excited about hearing the gospel presented that way."

Johnston, a religion major at Wayland, also preached at the church, hoisting his backpack on stage to illustrate the point of needing to lay down one's burdens in order to pursue fully God's purposes for life.

Molly Flowers, a member of the BSM leadership team who graduated in May 2009, also made the trip, serving on the Saltbourn team with Brown. For her first trip to England, Flowers admitted she was surprised to learn of the mission field that existed there.

"At first, I wasn't sure about what kind of mission work we could do there, but we talked about the percentage of Christians there, which is very low, and that opened my eyes and made me want to see what that culture was like," Flowers said.

"One of the main things for me was being reminded of having that childlike faith. They were so excited to learn and kept coming back. You could just see their curiosity and their joy. I also enjoyed the community we were in and the people. They live a more simple life there than in the city, and it's

more relaxed and comfortable.”