

by Suzanne White

By land and by sea – a mission experience

Before August 2004 my idea of missions was sharing the Gospel in a faraway land where I most likely did not know the language or customs. However, after my experience on the B.C. Mission Boat, I realize that missions occur right here in Canada, and more specifically, often in our own communities.

I was introduced to the B.C. Mission Boat by Pastor Aaron Rubach. He knew I would have a six-week break from my employment during July and August. I was interested in going to Cameroon, but he also suggested the B.C. Mission Boat would be a good mission opportunity.

The B.C. Mission Boat Society is headquartered at Our Saviour Lutheran Church in Parksville, British Columbia. Founded in 2000, the society offers boat missions, whereby different crews board a leased boat for seven separate weeks in the summer, and land missions in communities that can be reached by road. I spent two weeks with the B.C. Mission Boat, on both land and sea.

Week One

I lived on the boat with my fellow crew members visiting remote communities along the beautiful coast of Vancouver Island. We visited several bays and small villages where we met many people. Our three-day stay in Kingcome Inlet impressed me most. There we conducted a vacation Bible school for the very interested children, and church services for the adults. Sadly, the areas we visited have no access to regular church services and activities, and it is apparent the harvest is great in those areas, but the workers are few.

The faithfulness of the people who lived in these isolated areas,

but still remained committed to God despite limited possibilities for Christian fellowship challenged me in my own Christian walk. The Bible verses that summarize my experience that first week are Matthew 11:28-30:

“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”



A dockside sign announces a mission boat activity for children

I learned that, despite the challenges of missions, and the effort required by those who have limited access to the fellowship that many of us take for granted, God will help us if we hand our concerns over to Him.

Week Two

My second mission week was a land mission in Oclucje, Vancouver Island. The team was invited to hold vacation Bible school for the children attending the Northern Regional Summer Games. We also held devotional times for interested adults. The key Bible verse for my time on the land mission in Oclucje was Philippians 4:13: “I can do everything through Him who gives me strength.”

This verse was a great comfort as I sometimes struggled to learn how to respond to different needs,

and learn about the values and customs of another culture. I also learned to throw away my misconceptions about missions. A significant part of missions is about service, learning to meet people where they are and helping with a particular task that will make another person’s life easier. In the end, I particularly appreciated the hospitality of the people who went out of their way to make us welcome.

During both mission weeks, the crew members had fantastic

opportunities to grow spiritually, as we encouraged one another and learned from the people we met.

I am grateful to Living Faith Evangelical Lutheran Church in Orangeville, Ontario, our sister congregation at Immanuel Lutheran Church in Georgetown, Ontario, and my employer, Carter & Associates PC for providing my sponsorship. Everyone who graciously donated toward my mission experience was part of a worthwhile and highly effective ministry.

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For further information on the B.C. Mission Boat’s boat and land mission teams, please see: www.bcmissionboat.org or call the B.C. Mission Boat at 250-248-5300.