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## A journey through biblical landscapes

April 01, 2010 | Marcelo A. Quarantotto

While many Liberty students traveled home to spend time with their families for the Christmas break, a group of students and some family members (48 in all) decided upon a different destination — Israel. The trip proved to take its travelers to more than just new geographic locations.

For Kathryn Lewellyn, a junior voice performance major, the journey began during a fall convocation where Campus Pastor Johnnie Moore (also LU's vice president of Executive Projects and Media Relations) announced the trip to be lead by himself and Campus Pastor Dwayne Carson (also LU's vice president of Spiritual Development).

Lewellyn had been waiting for the day when suitable scheduling and a trustworthy organization would accompany the opportunity to see the Holy Land. With everything but her finances in place, she committed to go.

“After much prayer and God’s unbelievable provision,” said Lewellyn, “this possibility became a reality and literally a dream come true.”

At the onset, she thought of the trip as a “privilege” and made it her goal not to “miss anything or any bit of information ... soaking up every single part of the experience.”

Moore confirmed the sentiment: “When you travel to Israel, every rock means something. It’s like the land is a text. Every place you go is infused with meaning.”

From Dec. 27 to Jan. 6, the group visited dozens of sites known for their biblical, historical and cultural significance.

They started at the region of Galilee. A boat took them out onto sea where Moore preached about Peter's life and faith. When dark clouds came rolling in, Carson said he and the others thought of the scene of Jesus and Peter walking on water in Matthew 14.

"The Scriptures were being painted in a whole new light for me," said Lewellyn. "They were in color, instead of black and white and the occasional red, and took on sort of a different texture ... God's word is very much alive."

Some of the other places they visited were the Dead Sea (where, of course, they floated), the Mount of Beatitudes, Yad Veshem (the national holocaust museum), Caesarea Philippi, the Valley of Armageddon, and what is believed to be the Upper Room, where Carson taught about the Lord's Supper.

While at the Mount of Olives, Lewellyn said they "sat staring at the scene of redemption. There was an attitude of reverence and worship that seemed to come over the group. This is where it took place! This is where we as believers were set free from the bondage of sin and death."



Their last experience in Israel was receiving communion in the Garden tomb. "Standing in the empty tomb of Jesus is just a staggering experience," said Moore.

Carson, Moore and Lewellyn all agreed that by the end, lives were changed. People built new relationships and affirmed old ones. Moore stated that the trip was especially meaningful for those who went with their loved ones. His wife Andrea (they married last year) traveled with him.

"Hearts were changed and eyes were opened," said Lewellyn. "It is one of those experiences that I will look back on and make the statement: 'That changed my life.'"