



The Open Mouth

Ezekiel 2:8

April 2004, Volume 1, No 2

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THE OPEN WHAT? So we think we have a title for our newsletter now, but it probably needs a little explanation. Many of you that have heard our story know how the second chapter of Ezekiel has had a profound impact on our journey. God has used this passage to confirm in a very personal way our call out of flying and out of the Navy and into full-time youth ministry, and He continues to use it to teach us to wait on Him. After the prophet Ezekiel receives his call and commission, God warns him “do not rebel ... open your mouth and eat what I give you.” (Eze 2:9) This verse struck as recently as we discussed where in the world God may be taking us (no, we still don’t know yet). We were convicted that our duty for now is not to plan out the whole meal ourselves, and prepare exactly what we want, but to simply keep our mouths open as God feeds us what we really need. We think we have been called to Europe, but we must always be willing to accept that the place God prepares for us is not where or what we expect. “The Open Mouth” reflects what we pray will be our continuing attitude of trusting the Lord to be our supply and to give us exactly what we need, whether it’s what we want to eat or not! Celebrating Palm Sunday this week calls to mind another meaning of this phrase in our lives. As Jesus entered Jerusalem for Passover accompanied by the loud praises of His followers, He told the disapproving Pharisees that “if they keep quiet, the stones will cry out.” Oh Lord, gives us **open mouths** to glorify you and share the good news of your grace with all those you bring into our lives!

IF IT’S TUESDAY, WE MUST BE IN TALLAHASSEE

Have you seen that recent hotel commercial featuring the song “I’ve Been Everywhere”? Well, that little tune describes how we feel after this past two months on the road. Since our last newsletter, we’ve been to Dallas, Salado, and Houston, TX, Memphis, TN, Montgomery, AL, Pensacola, Tallahassee, Ocala, Jupiter, Crescent City, and Jacksonville, FL, Charleston, SC, Raleigh, NC, Norfolk, VA and now (finally) back in Newport, Rhode Island. We’ve driven over 10,000 miles in three months. We have thoroughly enjoyed the excellent hospitality of all our gracious hosts, and our support level has been growing steadily (see page 2). Thank-you! It’s been a lot fun visiting and re-connecting with so many people, but it’s also been a bit tiring too. We are so thankful for the opportunity to spend the next couple weeks recovering in Newport and spending some peaceful family time before we resume the “road warrior” life style at the end of April.

Visiting Navy friends the Mulkeys in Dallas. Ryan, now 8 years old, was in our wedding at 3. He is so grown up!



WHAT DOES THAT WARNING LIGHT MEAN?



Home Sweet Van!

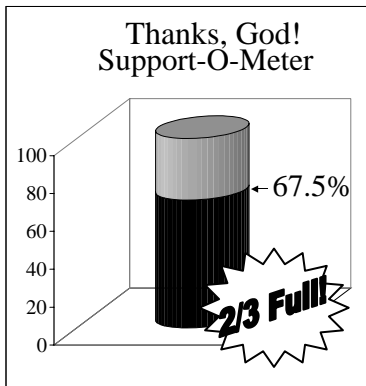
One of the features the Toyota salesman hyped about the van we bought last summer was its “run flat” tires – no spare needed or included. We were a bit skeptical at first, but boy oh boy were we thankful for them at the end of February, during a rush hour rainstorm as we left Montgomery. Upon consulting the owner’s manual, we learned that the unfamiliar caution light meant “Low Tire Pressure”. We drove to a service station and were surprised to learn that we had taken a nail and the front left tire was completely flat. We couldn’t even tell which tire was flat until we checked the pressure with a tire gage! The idea of standing in the pouring rain unpacking the insane amount of luggage jammed into the back of the van to get to a spare still makes us shudder. Thanks God for sparing us from that!



TANKER TUG! On Saturday, May 22, we will be joining several other current and prospective MCYM staff members and friends of the ministry at an airshow in Langley, Virginia, where we will be participating in a most unusual fundraiser – the “Tanker Tug.” Twelve of us will have five minutes to pull a KC-135 (that’s the very **BIG** refueling airplane pictured to the left) down a taxiway. We will be collecting pledges (in dollars per foot) for our efforts with proceeds going toward our support accounts. In addition to raising money, it will be a great opportunity to get exposure for MCYM on a military base that does not currently have Club Beyond. If you would like to

make a pledge for the Tanker Tug as a special donation, send us an email (schastain@x994.younglife.org). I have no idea what a reasonable expectation for such an endeavor is, but I understand that the maximum distance we are allowed is 12 feet, so pledges in the neighborhood of five to ten dollars per foot are probably reasonable.

EAT WHAT I GIVE YOU - THE NEXT SERVING (OR TWO) We plan to spend the rest of April in Newport talking with potential supporters, catching up on some personal administrative business, and making arrangements for more transition and travel. Steve is also enjoying the opportunity to return to the Naval Academy Prep School to do some volunteer math tutoring with his old students. They are quite amused to see him with a goatee and have a hard time not calling him “Lieutenant.” During the month of May, we will be living in our future brother-in-law’s (Shannon’s sisters’s fiancée, Ryan) condo in Norfolk, Virginia while he is deployed to Iraq as a Navy SEAL. We hope to have several more support-raising presentations with friends in the Norfolk and D.C. areas as well as in the Carolinas. Then in June it’s off to the West Coast. We pray we will be able to finish our support raising in California in June before heading off to Oregon for Young Life new staff training in July. It will be quite a while yet before we’re really “settled down” again. Thank-you for your faithful prayers during this extended time of transition!



Other Praises

- Shannon’s uncle and aunt have permanently adopted our dog Snow. We are so thankful that people we know and love will love and care for her, and it is one less detail to be concerned with as we prepare to transition overseas.
- Caleb and Joseph have been happy, healthy, and contented travelers for the past month.
- Joe is starting to sleep through the night!

Prayer Requests

- Safety for Ryan in Iraq for the next six months
- Continually renewed passion for reaching lost youth during this extended time of not engaging directly in youth ministry.
- About 25-30 more monthly support pledges
- Patience and wisdom in parenting a very lively two-year-old
- Please let Joseph continue sleeping all night when we hit the road again!!



Joe and Caleb watching student helicopter pilots at Naval Air Station Whiting Field, FL. Did you know that daddy used to fly those things?

Love in Christ,

Shannon + Steve