



Laurel – 3 months

The Open Mouth

Ezekiel 2:8

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The Chastains

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Behind the Scenes Our work with Club Beyond generally falls into two categories: relational ministry and program management. Most of our shared stories naturally focus on the former, the times we've had the privilege of seeing teens' lives come in contact with Christ. They are the more compelling stories, the ones we assume you most want to hear, and indeed represent our purpose for being in the Netherlands. However, it is a reality that all too often, I (Steve) spend more time wearing my "program director" hat: managing budgets, attending meetings, making flyers, writing reports and submitting purchase orders are also ministry. Here's a glimpse into that realm of our life.



In October, Beth and I concocted the idea of doing a middle school weekend camp in Paris, including Disneyland Europe one day and sightseeing in the city of lights the next. We aggressively promoted the camp throughout the fall, but as I began to plan the actual details, I had a hard time finding suitable lodging. Compared with German youth hostels, which are used quite a bit by school groups and very well suited to Christian youth events, hostels in Paris seem to cater more to the partying college-aged backpacker crowd. Many don't take guests under 16 because they have bars. It looked like we were going to have to book a hotel, which would be much more expensive, more limited in sleeping arrangements (we prefer 4-6 per room), and would have questionable to non-existent group meeting facilities. Extensive

Internet research and contacting within my personal network resulted in no good facility leads. Out of desperation, I resorted to "cold calling" – I emailed every church, para-church ministry, or school in Paris for which I could find an English website, asking for any information they might have on camps, retreat centers or any other sleeping options. A few of them wrote back to say, "Sorry, we can't help;" some I never heard back from. We made a hotel reservation just to have an option, but I wasn't sure we could actually afford to pull it off financially. After Christmas, our family departed for the U.S. to attend the Young Life All-Staff Conference, not really knowing where we were going to hold this camp just two weeks after we got back.

When we returned to Europe, one of those cold calls yielded fruit! Greater Europe Mission did not themselves have lodging to offer, but suggested I contact Rob with Word of Life Ministry. Turns out, Word of Life had just purchased a rambling old seventeen bedroom house in suburban Paris and had begun renovating it to provide exactly the kind of ministry resource we were looking for. Though not officially open for business yet, they would be able to house a small group of American middle schoolers for a weekend trip. The house was, shall we say, very rugged, but it suited our needs perfectly – two meeting rooms, a good kitchen, large sleeping rooms with guys and girls in separate wings – and we had it all to ourselves. The price? Fifteen euros per person per night, about a third the cost of our hotel! And here is the beautiful irony of God's timing in all this. Right now the house can only hold 25 people. In December, we expected this two-community camp to be 40 to 50 people. Had I found the house then, I might have overlooked it as too small, but it was ideal for what ended up being a group of 22!

So it was that a bunch of American military kids from Holland and Belgium had an unforgettable weekend in Paris together, celebrating life, building community, and hearing stories about God's love and faithfulness that we pray planted seeds of transformation in their lives. They never heard the story of the administrative adventure and delightfully answered prayer behind the weekend, and they probably wouldn't really have cared. Maybe the whole thing just worked out to help *us* trust God more.



Just for Fun Here's Valentine's Day Club game. Teams of guys and girls write a "love letter" – one word at a time. Standing in single file lines, the first team member writes one word and then runs to the back of the line. The cycle continues for five minutes, one word per person per turn. The results: **Sweetheart, I love you so much that...**



...I would jump over cows for money for charity and people like you! I would go crazy over your beautiful fingers and nostril hairs. We love your eyes, complexion, and smell. Yes, you really think well of your radiant lovin'. Step into my office of love and affection! The Boyz!

...My heart sings to your teeth but I know you will always love the way you sing that song makes dinosaurs dance. I cannot imagine life without coconut candy or you dear. However, I will marry you!



Slam Dunk Contest at "March Madness" edition of First Friday. Those judges are tough!

In their Own Words One of the prominent tasks of this season in the ministry year is getting high school students registered for the spring break service project to Slovakia. This trip is designed as a growth event for Christian kids but we actively recruit non-believing or uncommitted students as well. The application includes the question, "Explain your spiritual journey (to this point) and what Jesus means to you." Here are excerpts of their responses, forming snapshots of 14 hearts:

I am unsure how to measure the journey in words ♦ Jesus means savior, guardian, leader, the voice in my heart ♦ I know what I was without Him. A mess. He's my best friend ♦ Last year, on this same trip, is where my spiritual journey began ♦ Jesus is everything to me and I live for him always ♦ Jesus is our savior from God but he is also a symbol of hope to remind me of how good I have it ♦ I'm now talking to Jesus as a friend, a big step from last year where he was still new to me. We're on our way ♦ My journey is still developing ♦ I have been a Christian all my life and I really want to get to know him better ♦ I haven't found it yet ♦ To me he provides guidance to the right paths in life ♦ I just go to Club Beyond stuff because I want something to do. I'm not involved in any religious form of it ♦ Jesus is a role model to life and I try to live this life as best I can ♦ I still need a lot of questions answered...

Please pray for these students, and the rest of the 40 teens and adults from our community traveling to Slovakia March 23-30, as each of them, regardless of their individual stories, participate in living the life of Christ by serving his creation.

*In Christ, Steve, Shannon
CALEB. L O Zachary + Laurel*

MCYM: Building the Church, celebrating life with teens, introducing them to the Lifegiver, and helping them become like Him.