

**Cornerstone University Chorale
Europe 2013
Student Journal Excerpts**

“If I hadn’t gone on this trip ...”

Relationships

- I never would have come to understand what real “Christ Love” is. Until I traveled with this group, I never fully grasped what it meant to love like Christ did. It is amazing to me that after spending so much time with these people I only love them more.
- I would have still locked up my mind socially to Chorale and to the many friendships that were revealed to me through this trip.



Personal Spiritual Growth

- I would have missed seeing God’s faithfulness. He demonstrated to me that I do not need to worry or even think about the things that could go wrong in life. If I am dwelling in Him, He will take care of my needs. On the third night of this trip I could not sleep and I felt very sick. But I prayed that God would heal me and He did.
- Being away, beyond the boundaries of school, home, country, and language, God made me quiet my mind and think about the life I’m living. He gave me time, space and atmosphere so that I could discover that I was being selfish and ungrateful. He let me see this for myself. He didn’t force anything on me. For me, this trip was the arrow that pierced Achilles’ heel. This once in a lifetime opportunity was what I needed to see how much God is blessing me. God is showing me that he wants to do great things with my life. He’s telling me, “I have you. And I love you.”
- I would not have seen how God can move mountains with music. I would not have seen how the gospel can be spread despite language barriers. My heart would not have been broken for the hurting people in Europe. The Lord used Europe to change me and seek his will in every area of my life. Thanks be to God!



- I wouldn't have had a reawakened love of Jesus, life, people, and music. I haven't been fulfilling the potential the Lord has given me. I've been praying for God to move my heart and give me something to care about. On this trip, God answered my prayer and even gave me more than I could ask for. He hasn't just given me one passion or one person to care for, but rather an entire group of wonderful people who also care for me, and on top of that a reawakened joy through singing, prayer, and worship.

- I would not be as caring. My eyes were opened to see what others need around me. I saw depravity, chaos, brokenness, darkness, and heartache. I witnessed lost gazes and gestures. My heart was broken for the people around me. I wanted so badly to speak to them in their language and share how much I care for them. I wanted to show them a way into light. This sparked a flame inside of me. I now desire to show others Christ's love. His story is too amazing not to share.



- I would not have discovered my true love and been renewed in my sense of purpose. I realized that my true love is found in God, His people, and ministry. Before this trip I had gone through a difficult situation that left me hurt and rejected. Months before the trip I began the healing process. I did not expect God to continue that process on the trip. He built me up where I had felt torn down through His grace that I saw each day and night in concerts and host homes. No words can describe the joy I feel inside for God allowing me to go on this trip. I continuously repeat that my life has been changed.

- I wouldn't have grown closer in my relationship with God. Before going to Europe, I felt like my spiritual life had been running on auto-pilot. The experiences I had on tour woke me up to what God is doing in my life. For the first time in a long time, I wanted to participate in prayer times. I also spent time digging into God's word and listening for His leading. This tour also brought me closer to some people that I didn't really know much about before. I can now say that I have developed lasting relationships with people in the group that I hope to continue to develop.

Ministry Opportunities

- I would not have been able to connect with and show Christ's love to the people for whom we performed.

- Without this trip, my faith would not have been stretched and grown by what I experienced. God was constantly working to show us more of Himself. One lady testified that she could not hear music due to some hearing loss but was able to hear us clearly. A Chorale member testified that she was feeling really bad, but after a local person prayed with her she felt the stress and pain leave and she felt God come in. The most common testimony from concert goers was the simple gesture of a hand over the heart showing that they were touched by the performance. There were many experiences which were individually tailored to each Chorale member. Mike got to see his brother in Bratislava; I got to stay with a host who liked to play percussion and jam; after praying for it, my roommate and I got the privilege of staying with a host family when most of the choir stayed in the music house. God chose to grace us with those small gifts just because he wanted to see us take joy in them.



- I would have missed the chance to love each and every person in this choir. I would have missed the chance to love complete strangers in Europe. We came from partway across the world to these people, who welcomed us with open arms.

New Insights—Lessons Learned

- I would not be as aware of God in my life. I have not been very aware of God lately and I really noticed it when everyone was sharing the first few days all of the things they were seeing God do in them. After that I have been trying more and more to see places in my life where God is showing His awesome power and love to me through all circumstances. God has revealed himself to me in so many ways on this trip and I have grown in Him as well. Starting this trip, I knew that amazing things were going to happen, but I could have never expected this kind of impact on so many people and myself.



- I wouldn't have felt the love of new friends, deepening of old, and experienced a passionate heart to serve by singing and making music with my entire soul. God has shown me his love for me through each Chorale member and given me a huge heart full of love, compassion, and service. We were able to truly minister to people largely through singing and now I feel so much more prepared for an entire summer of ministry to youth groups. To God be the glory forever and ever.
- I would have missed a chance for God to reveal Himself to me through my friends in Chorale who loved me, prayed for me, spoke truth to me and encouraged me. God tried to reveal himself to me this past semester at Cornerstone, but I had not listened. I have been emotional, depressed, stubborn, mad, and confused. God taught me on this trip to rely on Him and His strength alone. I learned these lessons from God through my amazing friends in Chorale. Thanks be to God.

- I would not have had the chance to get to know so many wonderful people. I had a lot of “firsts” with a number of my friends on this trip. Before this trip, for example, I had not prayed one on one with most of the people in the choir. It was a huge blessing to be able to take part in each other’s relationships to the Lord—something that is incredibly deep and personal. It was great to be able to bear my heart before God with other believers and allow them to do the same. I suppose, ultimately, I have been realizing more and more how communal a Christian’s relationship with God needs to be. It is way too difficult to bear burdens on our own. We often end up despairing because we convince ourselves we are alone in the struggle. We are to bear each other’s burdens and sharpen each other, bringing us all closer to the Lord. There is so much encouragement and love to be had in the body of Christ.



- I never would have truly understood what “culture” means in various countries. People all over the world have praised God, their Maker, for years and years. I got to see a part of that. If I hadn’t gone on this trip I would not have had a small glimpse of what heaven might be like—different people in different languages with the same focus: giving glory to God. It is almost as if I visited a part of heaven on earth. God is so good for revealing Himself to me and my group. We get to do something like this for eternity someday!

- Firstly, I would have missed the growing experience to rely on the Lord financially. I never had to do that before; he has blessed my family with financial stability and I am unaware of any money troubles. I did not know where the trip money would come from but the Lord provided it through generous donations from my church family and people I have not seen in a long time. By praying for the Lord's provision, I learned that an active prayer life makes me more aware of the Lord's presence and also much more thankful for his blessings. Secondly, I would have missed fellowshiping with my brothers and sisters in Christ—in Chorale and from Hungary, Slovakia, Czech Republic and Germany. Our sharing times on the bus encouraged me a great deal. Hearing how the Lord moved in the hearts of my friends and how he worked through them was inspiring and affirming to me. Those moments reminded me that the Lord was with us; though we weren't building anything material, we were building his eternal kingdom. Thirdly, I would have not had the opportunity to see the Lord overcome language barriers by moving so visibly through our music. The reaction of the audiences, the tears and the hugs, astounded me. I did not expect the listeners to be so touched. I truly believe that the Lord was working in the hearts of those who listened to us.



- I would not believe that unity in Christ is real. Within the community at Cornerstone I do see some measure of unity. But unity in Christ is much different than Cornerstone's community. Though I deeply long for the same unity on our campus, we do not have what I experienced with brothers and sisters I met for only a minute long conversation. Even with language barriers and cultural differences, our mutual love for Jesus Christ was more than enough to touch the deepest parts of my heart by our family in Europe.
- I wouldn't have been reminded of who God is. I have been lacking in spiritual discipline and my walk with the Lord this year. I had forgotten about how entirely good the Lord is and how He wants to give me good gifts. I have been reminded of God's supernatural power and how He uses His power to bring people to Him. God has been teaching me lessons during the trip and has revealed to me how selfish I am. This trip has been a great way for me to practice lessening myself.
- I would never have seen the all-sufficient, inexhaustible, unfailing, unsurpassable faithfulness of God in quite the same way. From the first dollar raised, to the last minute spent in Frankfurt, God proved faithful. Now I look back at my first journal entry and I am knocked off my feet at how completely God cared for my every need and worry. Time and time again, when I felt at my lowest, most helpless moments, *He* remained the one thing holding me fast. Every day on the tour was a new day in which God showed us his faithfulness in a new, bigger way. As Lamentations 3 declares, his grace and mercies are new every morning. (Words on church: A mighty fortress is our God.)



- I would not have . . .
 - Experienced the wonder of being in a cathedral.
 - Grown in my understanding of the world.
 - Stepped out of my comfort zone in new ways.
 - Met Silas, Lisa, children in Prague, Leni, or the Hungarian children.
 - Held Johanna's hand at the senior center in Heidelberg.
 - Grown as a person—I matured having experienced so many new things.
 - Met my Slovak host family and been blessed by them.
 - Grown musically in ways that only this trip could have done.
 - Looked down on the lights of Budapest in the rain.
 - Formed friendships with people I probably won't meet again until I get to heaven.
 - Learned to appreciate everything more.
 - Learned to trust God in new ways.
 - Listened to sermons in German and Hungarian.
 - Sung at the funeral of a German princess.
 - Met a German prince.
 - Grown closer with my Chorale family.

