

Greetings Church Family & Brothers & Sisters in Christ,

As I type this letter, I have difficulty comprehending that I have been with YFC for only a little over a month. Before I get into that, let me share with you what is happening in Tanner's world. I recently went to one of the most incredible weddings of my life. At the ceremony, the bride and groom prayed for one another (but no one could hear them), and then, before their kiss, they had a creative handshake. To top that all off, the colorful fall leaves began to fall around them in the end; it felt like something out of a fairy tale. As I said, it was a fantastic wedding. Driving back to North Dakota was just as great. For some reason, I felt like I was driving on a Mario-Cart map because of the scenery, the hills, and the turns. Luckily, there were no crashing into cars. College is going well. Although I will not lie, I thought it would be easier. I find my schoolwork eating up my free time. Sometimes, I leave work early to prepare for an exam.



Speaking of work, let us discuss why you are reading this letter. You must be curious about my first month. I can describe it with one word: a roller-coaster. Okay, that is technically two words, but you get my point. There were so many bumps and curves, an adrenaline rush of fear and excitement all rolled into one ride! I have been working with teenagers from Dakota High School, Liberty Middle School, and the Alternative Learning Center in Moorhead. Each place is uniquely different, and so are the challenges.

Firstly, I have Dakota High School. Walking into that building was weird- I felt like a high schooler again! We came in and prepared lunch for the teenagers to eat, and then we spent some time hanging out with them. I made my first mistake there; I decided to play Basketball. Let me just say the teens thought I "was holding back." That game demolished my pride; it was also ironic because my team still ended up winning. Working with teenagers at first was difficult. Establishing relationships with them was also tricky, but they are slowly improving. Recently, I was playing a game of Spicy Uno (I hope you know what game that is) with some teenagers, and suddenly, they were talking about depression and saying they use humor to cope with it. Their words reminded me why I am here: to be a light to these teenagers and help them navigate life's difficulties by showing them the love of Jesus.



*Coworker William & I
dressed up for Liberty
MS Spirit Week*

Then, I have Liberty Middle School. This school is entirely different. Dakota has about 100 students, but Liberty has over 1,200! Yup, it's completely different. With the age difference, while the high schoolers were hard to talk to, I can't say the same thing about Liberty. The greatest difficulty, however, is the overwhelming mass of students flowing in and out of the cafeteria. At first, I thought becoming "popular" via candy would be cool. Why? Before my coworker and I went to Liberty, we stopped at the gas station to grab lunch. When kids see you have food, you almost immediately become the center of their attention. I decided to play trivia with the kids and promised the winner some candy, which may not have been the wisest decision. It worked out well

at that time; I held their attention. However, while talking with a young student(s), kids ask me, "Sir, do you have candy?" They are now referring to me as the "Candy Man." I am not Willy Wonka; I gave them candy once, ONCE! Okay, maybe twice. But on a serious note, I noticed a few kids who sat by themselves. I have been trying to talk with them. One of them is struggling deeply; the only tricky thing is it is difficult for him to open up about it. However, he won't admit it, but when he sees me come and talk to him, he gets this big smile on his face. It's cool to make an impact on the life of another teenager. Just pray that I make the right kind of impact.



Ran into some Olympians at the Eiffel Tower this summer's on my missions trip to France.

Finally, Bethel, where I really impacted a teenager. We take the teens from the ALC (Alternative Learning Center) and transport them to a church where we do a youth group. Recently, I had one teenage girl ask questions about Christianity, and God used me to answer them. Good thing I like questions! When she was beginning to open up, we couldn't finish our conversation because the youth event was beginning to end. She then told me that I was an open person and because of me, she would be willing to come back again. I had no idea that she was planning on no longer attending. Thankfully, God intervened.

These are all the beautiful things God works and does in the lives of teens using Youth for Christ. Firstly, thank you to those who have been praying for me. A new prayer request is that I continue to grow and be an example to these teens. That they don't see me, but they see Jesus (John 3:30). Also, I am praying to get into the Juvenile Detention Center, but it is going slower than I anticipated; the process will take a little while, but I am excited to see what God will do! I would also ask that you pray the teens will be open and vulnerable with the staff so we can make a more significant difference in the lives of others.

Finally, thank you to everyone who has generously given to the ministry here at Youth for Christ. The goal YFC has set for me is \$1,500 per month. As missionaries, all of us as staff rely on the generosity of God's people to be able to do the work we do. I have had some one-time gifts given, for which I am so thankful. Please consider joining me as a Monthly partner as God leads you. Donations can be given online at <https://redriveryouthforchrist.givingfuel.com/giving> and selecting "TD" or through the enclosed envelope. All donations should be written to Youth for Christ and are tax deductible.

I am beyond blessed to know that I have your support and prayers. Thank you for taking part in this journey with me, and I look forward to seeing what God will do this month!

Till next time,

Tanner Drath
Youth For Christ Ministry Staff