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1st Place Essay: Bringing Revival to Central and Eastern Europe

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Prompt: If you knew you could not fail as a leader, what would you attempt to do for Jesus?

Word Count: 692

“Dobre, dobre!” commented one of the young Slovak girls, as she and her friend snickered at something on their phones. I listened to them laugh and talk while sitting on the train that hot, June day in Slovakia. I had just finished lunch and was excited to have some relaxing time to myself for the first time in what seemed like ages, but that isn’t what the Holy Spirit had in mind. I was putting in my ear buds when I heard “Talk to those girls” spoken in my mind. I knew in that moment what He wanted me to do.

If I was certain that I could not fail as a leader, I would work to bring revival to Central and Eastern Europe. Former areas of high religious influence, these ex-Soviet countries have been altogether stripped of their beliefs in Jesus Christ. As part of the regime of Communism, the positive mindset of religion was replaced with poisoning thoughts, such as Jesus was a fictional character, the church can’t be trusted, and there is no God. Those that were Christians in Slovakia, previously Czechoslovakia, during the time of Communism were looked down upon or punished for going to church. Christians had great difficulty getting into universities simply because of their beliefs.

Today, many people are still trapped in this treacherous mindset and are leading their children down the same path. According to Josiah Venture, a mission organization serving in Central and Eastern Europe, only about 1% of youth in this area have an active, personal relationship with Christ. This fact is frightening considering that the conversion of the youth is the greatest hope in reaching the calloused hearts of the older generations. I discovered this

firsthand while returning to Slovakia for a second time this past summer as an intern for Josiah Venture. Although my course of study is nursing, I felt called to return to Slovakia for two and a half months to further the work in spreading the Gospel amongst the youth of the nation. After living in Slovakia for only a short time, the need for revival is so evident to me and that is where I would want my unfailing leadership to start.

Josiah Venture seeks to equip leaders to shamelessly share the Gospel through the local churches. Similar to this mission, I would use my leadership to disciple a generation of Christian youth that would transform their society and world through the Gospel by building them up as leaders. The need for discipleship and encouragement for student leaders is great because there are not enough youth workers to reach every student. While interning, I learned that 97% of the world's youth are outside of the U.S., but only 3% of the world's youth workers are with them. Conversely, 97% of the world's youth workers are in the U.S. with 3% of the world's youth. Considering this, I would definitely use my unfailing leadership to train up student leaders because they can go and reach other students in places that are extremely difficult for adults to go. Leadership multiplication is the focus; making disciples to go, share the good news, and train up more leaders.

I hesitated to respond to the Spirit. I decided to compromise and begin talking to the girls when I had twenty minutes left on the train. The time finally came and I began conversation by first asking if they knew English. Their countenance changed slightly as they actually had to put into practice the language lessons they were learning in school. Nervous, but seemingly excited to talk to a native speaker, the girls and I talked about what they were

doing that day. As my time on the train grew shorter, I said, "I'm a Christian and I believe in Jesus Christ. Do you go to church?" One girl replied that her family went to church rarely, but the other had no belief at all. Fortunately, the Gospel was presented that day before I jumped off the train. With unfailing leadership, my attempt for Christ would include a revival of the Gospel across a broken land, starting with discipleship of the youth.