

Happy New Year MKs!

I remember growing up in the Netherlands, where New Years' Eve was the big celebration of the year – filled with lots of fireworks! It was the only night of the year that you could legally do fireworks. It always seems kind of quiet to me celebrating the New Year in the United States. I don't hear the far off fireworks (or the ones that I am setting off). I miss that about Holland! You will find that when you move back to the States, there will be certain things about where you are that you will miss.

I wanted to write all of you about the upcoming changes to School of Missions. At the bottom, I ask for feedback, so READ ALL THE WAY! As you know, there are some drastic changes to SOM. The main change is the amount of days. SOM has been from a Tuesday night the first week, ending on a Thursday night the next. We had Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday of full MK activities. The actual program was only in session for seven days. This has been the schedule for quite a few years. The Executive Committee (EC) has changed the length of SOM to be from Sunday night to Thursday night – that gives us Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday of full time MK activities – four days.

Obviously, with the change in schedule, the MK program will have to change to reflect those dates. You need to know that the MK program is going to be awesome once again next summer. I do not believe that these changes will be too drastic on the program. We will still have a day at Silver Dollar City, and we will still have at least three evening services together (even though the parents don't have evening services). We will still have our daily fun activities as well. The biggest challenge will be that we simply have less time together as friends, bonding. While we used to have the weekend to “hang out” with each other, we don't have that anymore. What that means is that we will have to maximize our time together that we do have.

One other area that is changing is the Reentry program. Reentry is a VOLUNTARY program. Your family can choose to attend or not. Reentry will run from Friday evening through Monday evening. That gives us another three full days of MK activities with you! I believe that the days we are losing for SOM, we are regaining during Reentry. Some of the things that we typically did during SOM, we will now be doing during Reentry. We would LOVE for all of our MKs that come for SOM to stay for Reentry. That is something you will need to talk to your parents about. If you believe that you need more time with MKs, and the MK program – have you parents register for Reentry. Believe me that it will be well worth your time! I am already excited about it!

While change is never easy or fun, sometimes it is necessary. The EC has made these changes to help your families with itineration and the whole financial aspect of it. They are also changing the focus (which is why they are changing the name from SOM to Missionary Renewal). Instead of looking at this as a negative thing, I am challenged to see how we can be more effective in what we do! If you look at a youth camp in the States, they also run four days and five nights. In that amount of time, they are very effective in building relationships and powerful altar services. Those of you that were in

Costa Rica at the youth retreat this year will remember how awesome one week together can be!

What will make ours unique will be that everything is focused on MKs and MK issues. Can we be effective in that amount of time? I believe we can! Can we build meaningful relationships in that amount of time? I believe we can! Are we going to take out critical parts of the ISMK program? NO WAY! We believe in you, and we want what is best for you! We will work with the time that we have to make it an awesome time.

I would love to hear your thoughts on this. I believe that discussion is great! We all have ideas, and this would be a great time to throw them out there. What would you like to see happen with SOM (Missionary Renewal)? How would you like to see the MK program change within this time frame? What events would you change? I will see if I can set up some kind of a discussion room on the website. If you want to write on my wall on Facebook – that would work as well!

We love you all and we are praying for you!

Bwana Chad