



Fall 2007

Family and Ministry Update

Well, as it usually does, summer has come and gone quickly, the kids are back to school and Awana clubs across central and western Kansas are in full swing!

As we begin the fall and look forward to an exciting year of serving clubs and churches in our territory, Kris is experiencing a job-change adventure. In July, she started a new part-time position as the Children's Ministry Director at our church here in Newton. She is very excited about the opportunity, but is a bit overwhelmed as she learns her new position and leads the many children's ministries that have started up for the fall (there are over 400 children attending one or more of the ministries at Grace Community). She will serve as the Sparks Director again this year until she is able to find a replacement.

The kids have had a very active summer and are all doing well. As you may know, they attend school at Berean Academy in Elbing. Ben is a junior this year. He is in the middle of his soccer season and is a class representative on Student Council. Over the summer, he was busy mowing lawns and doing other jobs that included landscaping, life guarding and refereeing youth soccer. Emily recently turned 15 and is a sophomore. She is running cross country this fall at Berean and will likely run track in the spring. She recently won her second cross country medal of the season! Megan is 12 now and is a 7th grader. She is the treasurer for her class. Megan began learning the flute last year and enjoys playing in the band. Katie is 10 and is a fifth grader. She is learning to play the trumpet. She simply loves anything that involves being outside. In fact, we joke that we only see her for meals and bedtime when the weather is nice! All three girls continue to take piano lessons. Ben, Emily and Megan are very active in our youth group at Grace Community. It has been a tremendous blessing to see how God has worked in the lives of each of our children with our move from Ohio to Kansas three years ago.

This past spring, I (Mike) had the privilege of attending a 16-week mission's class called "Perspectives" and plan to pursue my Master of Divinity degree in 2008. My work with Awana brings me in contact with so many pastors and denominations that I feel this will be most beneficial in serving them more effectively. I am in the process of seeking God's direction in selecting a university to pursue my studies.

We are very excited that Awana continues to grow in our territory and pray that it would continue to grow to even greater numbers. We rejoice that several new churches are using Awana this year with a handful of others still considering it. However, there are still several counties in our territory with no Awana presence. We pray that every county in our territory would have Awana, knowing it is a solid tool to reach boys and girls with the gospel of Christ and to disciple them in their growth.

We praise Him for....

...travel safety this year as we have driven many miles to visit clubs, attend events and participate in various conferences. We sincerely appreciate all of you who pray for our travel safety. It is vital to our ministry.

...great family time as we took our first real vacation since arriving in Kansas this past summer that included stops at the Grand Canyon, Petrified Forest, Bryce Canyon and Arches National Parks. Mike's parents and his brother's family were able to join us for part of the vacation, which was a real treat for everyone.

...the **wonderful opportunity** God gives us to meet many pastors, club leaders and clubbers!

...Kris recently accepting a part-time position as the **Children's Ministry Director** at our church here in Newton. This is a tremendous answer to prayer since her income will almost totally take care of the kid's tuition at Berean Academy this coming school year.

...allowing Mike so far in **2007** to make **23 club visits**, attend one Grand Prix event, two AwanaGames, and four Bible Quiz events, lay four Awana game circles and give Awana **presentations** at 11 churches. Mike also had the privilege of giving the message during nine Sunday services and conducting two basic trainings.

...the nine **new club** starts this fall and at least two churches still considering Awana.

...for wonderful fall leadership conferences in Newton and Garden City again this year. Combined, we had **approximately 550** leaders, children's ministry workers, youth leaders and pastors attend our conferences this year! We appreciate all the leaders who volunteered their time and talents to teach and for **our dedicated ministry team** who without them these events would not happen.

...the addition of another Bible Quizzing event for clubs in northwest Kansas.

...launch of a **Ministry Care** program (shepherding/care groups of churches led by ministry team volunteers) to better serve the Awana clubs across our territory.

We ask prayer for...

...the nine churches **starting Awana** this fall and that many boys and girls will be reached for Christ.

...that God will bring us **more volunteers** for our ministry team to help us with the many demands in serving Awana clubs across our territory.

...planning that has begun for the new **Commander College 101** field training to be held in Overland Park in January 2008.

...more churches and individuals who will partner with our ministry financially to help us achieve **100% of our needed monthly support**.

...growth of **Hispanic** churches using Awana in our territory.

...traveling mercies as we drive over 20,000 miles for Awana this year across their territory.

...for wisdom as we begin the process of considering **potential colleges** for Ben to attend.

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