

Athletes in Action

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“My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one...may they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me...”

John 17:20, 21a, 23

Happy 2015! Since we usually send out a family Christmas picture in lieu of a newsletter in December, it seems like forever since I have sat down to write our monthly newsletter. It feels odd to miss a month of communication with you...when I write I feel like I am writing to dear friends letting them in on what is important to my heart and family. Thank you for taking time out of your busy schedule to read our updates and lock arms with us in life and ministry. Where to even start...well, we had a fabulous time as a family over the Christmas break travelling to Minnesota to see my family and then up to Holly, MI to be a part of the Keefer Christmas. The older we get, the more we appreciate the love and support our families give us and are beyond grateful for our parents' investment in our lives. There were definitely some great memories made! Then it was back to campus to kick things off here...and what a fun start it has been. A big focus of our December staff planning meetings was how we are going to continue to reach out to the freshman class. I think the Lord heard our prayers as there were 14 new freshmen at our first weekly meeting this month — wow! We are excited to continue to get to know them, love them, and prayerfully see them come into a relationship with Jesus. Another way we are meeting freshmen is through our bible studies. Just tonight Colby came home from the football bible study where 12 guys, including a brand new freshman showed up. They weren't able to get the meeting room they had planned on, so they met in the middle of the football common area with a bunch of the other guys all around them. One of the other players said, “Hey, I didn't get the memo about this...I want to come next week!”. January is also a big recruiting month for us as our annual winter retreat with student-athletes from all over the region is coming up. We look forward to updating you next month on how God changes lives there. And, if all that isn't enough to keep him busy, this semester Colby has decided to begin to pursue a seminary degree :) If all goes as planned in a few years he will have earned his MA in intercultural and urban studies through Moody Theological Seminary. Going back to school after all these years hasn't been the easiest, especially as research methods have changed so much since we were in school. But, I know my crazy-smart husband will figure it out soon enough and all will go a bit more smoothly! I am so proud of him for being faithful to what he feels God has called him to do!



Colby turned 40 over the break!! Here is he on a birthday hike with all the kiddos.

Can you believe how grown up Mikayla is looking these days??? She may be the tallest 11 year-old I know!



The Lenses Institute

A strong value within the Athletes in Action ministry is a focused effort toward helping our staff be cross cultural learners and ministers in the diverse world of athletics. To that end, our president has asked all of our staff to attend one of the many Lenses Institutes our ministry is conducting around the country. Lenses is a five-day intensive training that addresses the mind, heart, and will, as it looks at a biblical picture of diversity and unity in the kingdom of God.

When I (Sarah) heard that I was required to go to one of these trainings, I looked at the calendar and picked the warmest spot in the middle of winter — Los Angeles in January! Honestly, going into the week I hadn't thought too much about what I was going to learn...just that I was going to get away to place that had 70 degree temperatures :). But what happened there last week for me was a work of God's Spirit that I did not anticipate.

Through the training, God revealed to me that I have a lack of understanding and appreciation for cultures that are different than mine. My upbringing is such that I have lived and worked around people that look and act like me almost my entire life. Without the diversity of cultures around me, I am realizing that for years I have regarded myself as "normal" and everyone else who does not think and act like those I grew up around as wrong. I confess that I have often thought (though unaware of those thoughts until now) things like "everyone should be like me", "my values are best", "other cultures should learn from mine", and even "God reflects my culture".

I see this now as the ugly sin of pride once again revealing itself in my life. God, in His great love for me has, as His Word says, been able to humble those who walk in pride and graciously showed this sin to me last week at the Lenses Institute. I see now that He wants to set me free from my ignorance toward other cultures and the elevation of my own...and I desperately want to grab a hold of the freedom His is offering.

I left the week with some action steps to work toward a deeper knowledge and appreciation for other cultures. I am deeply thankful for the opportunity I had to take time out to allow God to work in my heart in this area. May I be every mindful to work toward oneness with other cultures for His glory!



Give Jairus a ball and he will be happy. This is how he walked around after finding these two in his stocking! Moriah turned 6 on New Year's Eve. We had a party complete with pumpkin pie...her favorite. Below: What's a trip to MN without a stop by the Mall of America? The kids had a blast!



Please pray...

...for the freshmen athletes on our campus. Pray they would sense a longing in their hearts for something "more", and be open to seeking out the Lord.

...for the football bible study and other team studies that are kicking off soon. Pray God's Word would penetrate people's hearts and life change would occur.

...for Colby's sanity balancing ministry and seminary. Pray for wisdom in both!

...for our hearts to grow in love and appreciation for other cultures, and that our ministry here would be diverse and reflect the heart of God in that way.

...for our kids to walk with Jesus for a lifetime.

Please know that we are beyond grateful for all that you do to make this ministry possible. May God bless you richly in 2015 in the giving of your prayers and finances!