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“I [Paul] planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth...For we are God’s fellow workers.” 1 Corinthians 3:6,7,9a

Happy Spring! It’s in the upper 70’s today in Michigan, and as I write this I am sitting on our front porch listening to the birds sing and marveling at the blossoming tree in our front yard. I don’t have a green thumb by any means, so pretty much anything growing in our yard is there not because I planted it (or even have taken care of it very well!), but is the work of someone who came before me. I do my best to prune and pick weeds, but I really have no idea what I am doing. This tree I am looking at now off my front porch is bursting with gorgeous pink blossoms that are overflowing onto one another, cascading down from the branches. It blooms like this every year for about a week before the wind comes and sadly blows away all the blossoms. Why am I telling you about my tree? Because I feel there is a spiritual parallel here somewhere :) In my feeble efforts to take care of this spring thing of beauty, it’s not in my power to cause the flowers to blossom. Some would say Mother Nature (I would say God) causes the growth. And the same is true for my feeble efforts on campus. I can definitely bring God’s truth to these precious students and encourage them in their faith, but truly only God can cause their lives to be transformed and build His Kingdom in their hearts.

This month we did a special project with the Michigan student athletes. It’s graduation at the beginning of May and we asked our AIA seniors to write a short testimony about what God has taught them during their time here, as well as a bit of wisdom they wanted to pass down to the underclassmen. Moreover, we asked the underclassmen to submit stories of affirmation for seniors they knew, highlighting ways that seniors had touched their lives during their time at Michigan. I had the privilege of compiling all the stories and affirmations (of which there were nearly 275!), and it was absolutely beautiful to read what was being said. To hear people share how others have influenced them in their faith was HUGELY encouraging, and it felt like I was literally reading the fruit of our labor. Colby and I diligently pour into these students and sometimes you don’t always see the results. But God is doing transforming work, and we are truly seeing disciples make disciples.

Be encouraged as you read about a small snippet of the work God is doing here! This is the fruit of your partnership. Thank you!



While this letter highlights Michigan athletes, we also want to point out the incredible work God has done in the EMU seniors! I wish you could have heard the stories of transformation they shared at our last large group meeting there this month!



In case you are wondering what my tree looks like :)

There's absolutely no way I can adequately capture the words of the seniors and of those who affirmed them in this short newsletter. Enjoy hearing about a slice of the Lord's work here!

Senior AIA leader

"My freshman and sophomore years, I wanted to be liked by my teammates and was terrified to voice why I don't follow the norms of society. I cared so much about what others thought of me and I didn't want to stand out in any way, so I was shy about my faith in the Lord. The Lord showed me time again that living your life in fear of what others think is 1) exhausting and 2) meaningless. Living your life for the Lord is the only thing that truly matters...In giving up my desires to be liked by all my teammates, I felt overwhelmingly free and confident to live boldly for Christ. The fear of what others think about me left as I know that the God of the universe calls me His beloved" ~Avery, soccer



"Avery, I am so thankful God brought you into my life. Coming to Michigan I was so nervous to make friends and how the transition would be, but you made it so easy...My prayers were answered when you invited me to that first d-group over the summer and I'm so glad you did. AIA and d-group have actually changed my life. You have introduced me to such an amazing group of people and I truly cannot think of what my time at Michigan would look like had I not met you and taken you up on that offer." ~Erin, soccer



"Avery, you've shown me what true life looks like through the Lord. I remember when I first met you—you made me feel like I belonged. You've been such an inspiration in my life, helping me grow so much in my faith. Your love for the Lord and commitment to His Word is so beautiful, and you carry an aroma with you that others can't help but notice. Even if you didn't know it, you challenged a little freshman to think about life differently. To see the world through a new lens." ~Campbell, soccer

"Hey Liddy! I know our interactions were shortlived through D-group this fall, but I just wanna say thank you. Coming in as a freshman I was kind of straying from my faith, debating whether or not it was something that I'd want to pursue and you are actually the reason I chose to go all in. Something about your passion for Christ, the humility, and your constant friendliness; it all just gave me a shove in the right direction." ~ Erik, a freshman baseball player writing to a senior football player



Please pray...

...for the graduating senior from UM and EMU (42 of them!). Pray God would direct their next steps and that they would be salt and light in whatever places they go next.
...for wisdom as we plan the spring & summer semesters of ministry.

Senior new believer

Growing with God this past year has given me tremendous insight into my purpose as a person and not just as an athlete. I've experienced so much love and support in my journey, and my understanding of God, his love, and his light has grown massively. If I have one piece of advice it's to not compare your spiritual journey to someone else's. Everyone learns at their own pace and there is no deadline on when you must be the "perfect" Christian. Follow the light in others, and be the light for others. Don't be afraid to ask questions, nothing's silly, and nothing is too simple. This is the best thing at Michigan, take advantage of it!" ~Carla, rowing



"Carla, watching you step into your faith this year has been one of the greatest blessings in my life. Your journey—new, bold, open-hearted—has reminded me of the beauty of child-like faith. The way you approach God with curiosity, joy, honesty, and reverence has opened my eyes to things I'd never fully seen before. You've helped me fall in love with the wonder of it all again. Your presence in D Group has been nothing short of a gift." ~Maddy, Carla's AIA student D group leader



"Carla, in this new faith-world, you were probably the biggest reason why I chose to give D-Group a try. Maddy invited me and I was sort of on the fence; but when I heard that you were showing up, I knew that I could take the leap too. It really is almost impossible to describe the impact that this group has had on me in words. Much of that credit goes to you in some sense. There are still days when I show up and feel hesitant, but I know I'm not alone in the growing pains thanks to you. If I've had half of the impact on you as you've had on me, I would consider that a massive win." ~ Halle, rowing



Above: women core leaders...Erin, Sydney, Alyssa, Jordan, Avery, Maddy, Kelsey, Jadyn
Left: Lawrence, Colby, Bera, Owen...faithful men!