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“Then the LORD passed by in front of him and proclaimed, ‘The LORD, the LORD God, compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in lovingkindness and truth;’”
Exodus 34:6

Greetings from our home to yours! Much has taken place since we last wrote to you... Colby and his team traveled around the globe to Central Asia, students have been to our home to study the Word, ministry with EMU football has been full and fruitful, and we took much needed vacation time with our kids to Minnesota and northern Michigan to visit our families. I will save the most space in this letter for Colby to share about his adventures in Central Asia, but I also wanted to include a few pictures of our local ministry, as well as our kiddos! We are grateful that you are a part of all of this!!



Pictured with us on the left is Bri, one of our faithful EMU leaders. Bri leaves this month on a two-year mission with AIA to Puerto Rico where she will be taking the gospel to student athletes there. We are so proud of her! The center picture is the group of EMU & UM students who gathered in our home for our last summer Bible study before we kick off our fall programming later this month. On the right is Jaydon and Mikyala, two of our college kids who moved back home for the summer. We have SO enjoyed having everyone home with us for the past few months!!

Central Asia

I (Colby) had the opportunity to travel to Central Asia for 12 days with a team of three others... Meah, an AIA intern in Detroit, and two Eastern Michigan students, Tristen & Nick. This was my fourth year going to this country and it has been encouraging to see how the AIA presence has grown and come alongside nationals to assist in sport training so that sport can be used as a platform to build relationships and talk about Jesus.

One of the ways we were able to partner with them in this was with rock climbing. Some of our friends organized an afternoon at a rock wall and invited young people they have been building relationship with to come and climb. After testing our grip and strength and laughing over rock wall failures and successes, we had the opportunity to eat dinner together.



During dinner our friends told us that Meah could share a bit of her life story and talk openly about her faith in Jesus Christ because they had built relationship with these 20 young people. This was a bit of a risk in this Muslim country, and some of the young people left in the middle of Meah sharing because she was explaining why she has faith in Jesus. The fruit of the testimony is unknown, but our translator – a young Christ follower in a church we partner with -- was encouraged because he had never been able to translate for someone sharing openly about Jesus. We praise God for seeds that were planted in those young hearts!

The primary focus of our trip was to provide teaching and encouragement for young followers of Christ. To do so, we traveled several hours from the capital city into the mountains where our group spent 4 days and 3 nights camping – a space where we could teach and worship openly because it was a secluded area. We taught from Exodus 3 and 34 looking at Moses' journey with trusting and knowing God and being willing to do what God asked of him. We also emphasized the importance of making disciples through time in God's Word and community. It was humbling attempting to encourage them because I often don't face near the challenges or persecution they do in seeking to make disciples. Hearing them process over God's Word while in camp chairs and around the fire was inspiring to me. God is on the move in and through their young lives!

The mountains where we camped were beautiful! Snow capped peaks in the distance and a rushing river next to our tents was the backdrop. The mountain face directly across the river reminded me of Isaiah 6 – blinding sun glistening off the face at times, fog rolling in one afternoon like smoke around God's throne, and stars burning like Seraphim around the face one clear evening. It was a Holy, Holy, Holy space to bring God's Word to the young followers of Jesus.

On our camping trip a consistent theme for me was trusting the Lord. Tent camping on the ground can be difficult for me, and we needed to hike up the mountain to retrieve water from a spring that could be filtered for drinking. I didn't realize how the conveniences of comfortable sleep and free access to water could negatively impact my attitude when they were taken away. Trusting the Lord with that was a challenge at times and exposed opportunity for growth in my trust in the Him.

I am so grateful for the time our team spent with these young Central Asian believers. May God continue to work in and through them for His glory!



Above: a teaching time on the camping trip.
Middle: me on my trek up the mountain to fetch water. Right: our team in front of the magnificent face of the mountain.



Colby, Meah, Tristen & Nick

Please pray...

...for Bri, who is traveling to Puerto Rico to serve alongside AIA. May her team be united, her adjustment to an unfamiliar culture go smoothly, and opportunities to share the gospel open up.

...for believers living in Central Asia. May their faith be strengthened by God, and may He work through them to bring their nation to Christ.

...for discernment as a new year begins at EMU and U of M. Our student leaders need strength, hearts need to remain open to Truth, and God's guidance is needed to find the freshmen He is already reaching.

...that, through an especially full season, Jesus remains at the center of our attention.



I (Sarah) love that I captured this shot. It's of Colby sharing a video with Brennen & Nicky, our former UM students who had been serving with AIA in Central Asia until November when they had to unexpectedly return to the U.S. for their daughter's cancer treatment. In the video a good friend of theirs they had to leave behind is sharing a greeting in their native language. It was precious to see their faces light up upon hearing his message!

As we begin a new year of ministry, we are ever mindful of the blessing of your partnership. Thank you!