

AlaskAwana November 30, 2010

October 2010 marked the beginning of our 20th year as missionaries in Alaska. We have ventured into the training season with convictions of the radical effect His Gospel has that prompts us to serve and train with the Lord's imminent return in view.

A simulcast training conference was added to the schedule this year in the Interior. 30+ leaders enjoyed input from nationally renowned speakers and a local Alaskan workshop session. One week later, 200+ leaders in Anchorage enjoyed and grew in commitment and experience at the annual Awana Ministry Conference for children and youth servants. Requests have been coming from those that attended to make available the inspiration, encouragement, and hands on practical teaching of these sessions to those who could not attend. Our desire is that all leaders in our state would be inspired and equipped to carry out the Awana prayer statement: "That all children and youth around the world will come to know, love, and serve the Lord Jesus Christ." Awana is celebrating its 60th year; enjoying where we have come from, and looking into the future to the blessings and opportunities God affords those involved globally and locally.

Every May, Geraldine and I, attend training and update procedures at Awana Headquarters. Further, every 2-3 years all North American Awana Missionaries join in synchronizing, acquainting, and celebrating our passion and goal in a conference. We have recently returned from that one-week conference held early in November. This year's theme, "It's all about Jesus and His Gospel" was enjoyed, as we were refreshed in God's Word reminded to "keep the main thing the main thing". The Gospel transcends all aspects of our daily walk; whether it involves sharing it with a kid, a neighbor, or coworker. Its power is enjoyed in a victorious daily walk that is Holy Spirit driven and continually challenges us to change and grow more like our Savior. Working towards these goals and seeing growth in leaders and children gives us encouragement as we work to carry out scripture's directives in II Timothy 2:2 and 2:15.

We are asking the Lord and now soliciting your teamwork effort to help us recruit leaders and prepare for a specific training we believe will help individuals and their churches implement all the aspects of Awana. Commander College, is training, and experiencing the comprehensive uses Awana affords individuals, their churches, and ultimately their communities. There is expense involved, time committed, and sacrifice necessary to attend this training of 3+ days in January from the 27th through noon the 30th. The aspects involved in being the

commander of an Awana Club can be daunting. The roles of Leader, Administrator, Shepherd, Advocate, and Communicator will be explored. With the help of Ed and Kim Gossien, Lead Missionaries to the Northwest US, we will break down these aspects, roles, or hats into 14 segments over the course of these days knowing it will change the lives of those that will be there.

You can imagine the angles Satan will be working on with these targeted people and their spouses: work schedules, missed work days, family commitments, logistics at home, financial constraints churches are experiencing, attitudes that question the need, and transportation will rear their heads. We beg your prayers!!! The Lord is capable of overpowering any and all of these hurdles and more that may not be mentioned. Communication regarding this upcoming Commander College to every pastor and commander in Alaska is our current priority. I am confident that the Lord wills every commander, children's ministry coordinator, children's pastors, and if married his or her spouse, plus any others that demonstrate potential in any of these roles at churches using Awana to be part of this training.

At the threshold of status change in our Missionary role (part time to full-time), the Lord keeps adding prayer warriors and financial partners. We long to improve and be better resources to our 50 churches, 800 leaders, and 3500+ kids around our great state. Geraldine and I have never been more challenged and excited to be serving in this position the Lord has placed us.

His servants,
Dan and Geraldine Bylsma