

NEWS FROM UTAH

AIM class of 2011

April

Salt Lake City

Hello from Utah! I hope you are all doing well.

This month has been a learning one, God has used different

situations to challenge the way I see things. Beyond that, he has used the people here to draw me closer to him and be more serious about continuing to seek Him.

What I've been up to lately...

In my last newsletter, I talked about my Mormon missionary friend who I've been talking to since last year. I met her in Salt Lake City, awhile later she was moved to Washington for a few months. Well... she is now back in Salt Lake City. When she had a free moment, she used that time to call me and let me know she was back in Utah and that she was praying for me as I prepare to leave the states. How awesome is that?! It encourages me to see God working in our friendship. My prayer is that He continues to use me to reach her on a spiritual level.

The food bank at our church is going fantastic! It has been hard because no one really knows our location, but not that more people are hearing about us we're able to help more people. Its encouraging to see some of the people we've helped come to church on Sunday. The church family is doing very well with connecting with the people that come through and putting themselves on the same level as them. What I mean is this, a lot of times when someone comes in to get food, their pride is hurt because they can't provide for themselves, and then they feel bad about coming in. Our goal has been to make them feel welcome and to have them leave feeling better about themselves. Though we aren't allowed to put any religious tracts in their bags, we've made an impact with just trying to love them.

My ESL classes are going very well. My student is a very quick learner. In fact, we've made it through all the material and are now just reviewing and practicing for when she will take her citizenship test. Now I've really seen God work through this friendship, I'm so excited to tell you how. When I first started teaching, Soma was very quiet, me being at her house made her uncomfortable. Slowly, she started to open up and talk about her country(Afghanistan) and what she did or didn't like about America. As of a couple of months ago, she felt comfortable to tell me about her religion and then ask about mine. I told her, and she proceeded to tell me everything she didn't understand about what I believed, but gave me no chance to explain anything. I was afraid that once she found out I believed in Jesus as our saviour, she would stop our classes or ask for someone else to come teach her. I'm grateful that she did neither. The classes afterwards, she'd bring up religion again but still give me no opportunity to talk. This frustrated me for a long time, I thought, by not saying anything, I'm denying Christ. At our last class, I walked in while she was cooking, and we ate a meal together. During the meal, we were able to talk about religion and I was able to explain why I believe what I do. We spent almost 3 hours talking about this!

I am preparing to leave the states tomorrow and make my way to Romania to see and visit my biological family. Though I am very nervous about this trip, I pray that God uses me however he will to reach my family there and the people I come into contact with.

What God has been teaching me....

This month, I can't stop thinking about what it means to be comfortable where you are. I really struggle with wanting to be comfortable and stay in my comfort box, when God didn't call me to that. A friend called me the other day, talking about this, and said they felt like they should move to a different location because they were comfortable where they were at. Now I've always looked at being comfortable where you are as wrong, I've felt that since God doesn't call to a life of comfort, I'm doing something wrong by being comfortable. And that makes me think that I need to constantly do things to make myself uncomfortable, within reason of course. I'm still not positive on how to look at this, I'd love to hear your thoughts on this or verses that help you better understand.

Something else God has opened my eyes to is how good our Good News really is! I see this through our food bank at the church. It is great news to a lot of people who struggle financially. I know this news and it helps me, but if I don't tell anyone else about it...how will they know? I can't help them if I don't share this news with them. I see this the same way with sharing the gospel: I know this news and it helps immensely, but if I don't share this news...how will anyone know?

Prayers....

Please continue to pray for my team and myself as we continue to work here. The work is hard and sometimes tedious, but God is using us to reach the people here.

We are becoming more involved with working with the youth group here. Though at times it feels hopeless, I'm confident God will work in them. Pray that we stay focused on them and that we all grow closer to God. Here are the names of the teens we are working with and a little bit about them:

Will- he is the strongest out of all the teens, him and his family are very involved.

Gaby- her and her family are not very involved; her parents go to the Spanish congregation

Daniel- like Gaby's family, his family isn't very involved; Daniel struggles with drug abuse

Mariby- she comes from a single parent home and is the oldest of 5 children, when she isn't at school, she spends that time caring for her siblings while her mom works.

Odalys- she comes from a very broken family

Chelsy- also from a broken home; not involved with the youth group at all

Most of these teens are about 16 years old. Please pray for them.

I would request that you pray for my trip to Romania and that everything goes well.

Thank you all for your prayers and support. I couldn't do the work here without your help. God continue to bless you!

With much love,

Beta Katkus

Hi! Its that time again! I hope you enjoy this newsletter and are able to see God working. One thing I forgot to put in my newsletter, is that I will be finishing up in Utah early October. I will go to Alaska for a few months, and then move back to Utah at the start of the New Year to start college and continue to work with the people here.

God bless!