



Team Salt Lake City 2014 Members (left to right): Holden Hensley, Jacob Couch, Luke Robinson, me, Rachael McCloskey, Elizabeth Richardson, & Melissa Blackmon

Team Announcements

This month brought THE big event that the class has been eagerly awaiting for months now. As most of you might now, team announcements were made, where the AIM staff told everyone what team we were on as well as where we would be going for our field time. The way this was done was very unique in that the team members were announced in front of everyone and then sent to Kris Smith's office. There, they were told where they were going and then the team told the rest of the class. This let the teams really take pride in where there were going and have the rest of the class see that.

Now, the team I have been put on is the Salt Lake City team. There are a total of seven people on the team, four guys and three girls, and we will also be joining a team of seven for the first few months we are there. SLC was my first choice as a field, and I also got all the teammates that I wanted to go with, so I cannot thank God enough for this and I am excited to see what He has in store for us.

Summary

This month was a quite a rush, from team announcements to coming home for the first time in over 4 months. My emotions and attention were flying all over the place, and time didn't bother taking a break to let me soak it all in before jumping to the next thing. With that said, this month was a good one and has really gotten me excited and ready for what is to come in these last few months I have here in Lubbock.

Classes

All the classes for this term wrapped up very nicely. There was much to be taken away from the excellent staff here at Sunset, be it learning about our spiritual gifts in Romans or going in-depth the biblical basis for having elders in the church in New Testament church. Acts really opened my eyes to seeing the work of the apostles in a new light and really understanding the bigger story behind the book in how the Holy Spirit interacts with all Christians.

The one class that had the greatest impact on my daily walk with Christ would have to be spiritual disciplines. Learning more about these ways to become closer to God is something that I would recommend every Christian to study more about, for as much as I learned, it did not encompass all there is to know on the subject. It was challenged be to be more proactive in seeking Him and that spirituality is not some far off goal that can't be reached, it just takes time and effort, and that I can't do it on my own.

These classes, and all the ones I have taken during AIM so far, have given me knowledge and tools that have helped me grow and hopefully will help others do the same as I encourage those I meet in life.



Always going to miss the view from my house in Alaska

Prayer Requests

- There are multiple classmates with family members who are battling cancer.
- Mission term is starting and the class will be adjusting to new living terms.
- My home congregation is working on selling their current building so they can finish construction on their new one.

Upcoming Events

Jan 5-6: Mission Term Orientation

Jan 7: Mission Term Begins/My Birthday

Jan 22-24: Camp Adventure Weekend

Jan 29-Feb 5: Mexico City Trip

Christmas Parade

In Lubbock, there is an annual Christmas parade that runs down 34th St, and since Sunset is a big sponsor of the parade, the AIMers volunteer to help out. It was a blast! We got to help get the floats lined up and ready, and even walked down with the parade passing out candy and helping collect toys for Toys for Tots. All the AIMers were helped really enjoyed it, and it was neat to see the community come together for this event.



Celebrating my birthday early before I leave Alaska

Christmas Break

Thanks to the convenience of modern air travel, I was able to go home to Alaska for the holidays. It was the first time I was back since I started AIM, and I was a little nervous to see how I would fit in since I had been gone so long. From the first day I got there, though it may have been 12:30 in the morning, everyone was very encouraging and happy to see me.



Members at my home congregation were eager to hear about my time and where I was going, as there have been quite a few AIMers from there as well as one who went to SLC. I had the privilege of leading singing the second Sunday I was there, which was just as uplifting as I remembered it to be. The church had their annual New Year's Eve celebration at a member's house and it was a good time to just hang out with friends and family while enjoying the turning of the New Year.

I don't think I realized how much I have changed until I came back home. I started noticing things in church that I hadn't before, conversations that used to interest me that didn't, and even inside jokes that I wanted to say, but then realized no one would understand. So while seeing everyone and the sights in Alaska was good, I am glad to be continuing with AIM now, and I will be seeing everyone again soon.

Challenges to Come

The break is now over, and it's time to get back to work. This next term looks to bring exciting and new experiences for our class as we lose access to most electronics and (probably the biggest change) our cars. I look forward to growing from this time as well as build very strong connections with my team as finish our training here and prepare to go to the field in May.

Though I won't be available as much, there are times when I can communicate, so if you would like to hear of my journey, leave me a message (or send letters) and I'll respond to you when I can. Thank you for your support and prayers!

**“OUR SOUL WAITS FOR THE LORD;
HE IS OUR HELP AND OUR SHIELD.”
PSALM 33:20 (ESV)**



The two most recent teams in Salt Lake City



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Me and Malia with Santa at the Christmas parade