

Joel & Veronica Culberson
E. KS / W. MO Awana Missionaries
2008 Annual Awana Ministry Report

1 Timothy 1:12 I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has strengthened me, because He considered me faithful, putting me into service.

What a privilege it is to be serving in Awana and seeing lives changed for eternity. We, along with our Ministry Team, have done many presentations and trainings for churches over the past year. We trained over 250 leaders at regional and local Orientation and Role Trainings. We continue to thank the churches that host these important trainings for new leaders. The biggest blessing was hearing about 600 known decisions for Christ in our area. We estimated that we had 1500 salvations throughout our territory. Praise the Lord for these souls as well as the ones that were instrumental in leading them to Christ.

As our year progressed, we had 22 new Awana clubs start in Eastern Kansas and Western Missouri. Unfortunately, we had 24 churches that dropped Awana, due to church splits, lack of leadership and churches needing program changes. This is the most drops we have had since becoming missionaries over 7 years ago. We know that God is in control and we pray that God will open up many doors in 2009. That puts the total number of churches we serve to 273.

The CARE Group ministry continues to be an effective tool of communication to meet the needs of the clubs. We have 18 groups across the region and are praying for more to start in 2009.

We praise God for allowing us to meet our goals at our conferences this past fall. We had 700 leaders attend one of the three conferences which was an increase of 65% from last year. A little over 36% of the churches were represented. Thank you for your prayers!

We had a great event season in the spring with the three Regional Bible Quizzes, two Regional Sparks-a-Ramas and AwanaGames, and the 24/7 Ministries competition. There were approximately 450 boys and girls that participated in quizzing over material in their T&T books. We had many "quiz-outs" (*perfect scores*), which was a testimony to all of the hard work the clubbers, leaders and parents do during the club year. In the AwanaGames and Sparks-a-Rama competitions we had a total of 72 teams that participated in our region. At the Midwest Regional YouthDay, we had our 3rd annual volleyball tournament and pizza fellowship on Friday night before the Saturday activities. There were approximately 170 youth that attended on Friday night. On Saturday, there were 21 Trek and 37 Journey Quiz teams and 12 Trek and 18 Journey AwanaGames teams with close to 400 youth in attendance. We continue to praise God for the growth of this event. What a joy to see teenagers that are excited about their walk with Christ!

In May & November, we attended our Regional Conference in Chicago. It was a great time of fellowship with the other missionaries as well as a time of renewal for our ministry.

Joel continues to volunteer each summer at Red River Valley Honors Camp in Arkansas as the High School Director. There were over 175 campers with 55 supporting staff. Our area was represented by 100 of those campers. He also volunteered at the national Summit competition in Jacksonville, Florida as a Bible Quizmaster and AwanaGames Line Judge.

The field structure change of the Awana missionaries continues to be a work in progress in our area. Joel is the Team Leader for Kansas and Missouri and works with two other missionaries. The Kansas/Missouri Team works together so we can be more effective in helping churches reach more children and youth with the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

We are so grateful for all the prayer and financial supporters that believe in our hope, vision, and mission. We thank you for each and every gift we receive. Our financial support is 88% and we can't express the joy in seeing churches and individuals working with us in this ministry. We trust the Lord will meet our needs and will bless us as we serve Him in Awana. Continue to pray for our travel safety and our volunteer Ministry Team. They continue to work with us in coordinating events, presentations, trainings, club evaluations and ministry visits. As a team, we will be focusing on building our relationships with the churches in our area. Please pray for the new and experienced Awana churches that their focus will remain on reaching boys and girls with the Gospel of Christ and training them to serve Him.

Our Hope
That all children and youth throughout the world will come to know, love, and serve the Lord Jesus Christ

Our Vision
To be a strategic partner with churches in Kansas and Missouri to ensure the opportunity for all children and youth to be evangelized and disciplined in Christ

Our Mission
To work with our pastors and commanders in giving our leaders the proper tools and training that will equip them to evangelize and disciple children and youth for Christ