

Thomas Tribune

Volume 2 Issue 3
October 2007



Tim, Sherry, & Kyle Thomas

What must I do to be saved?

From July 31st to September 22, we did 6 Orientations and club specific (role book) trainings, in Madison, Oconomowoc, Racine, Sheboygan and 2 in Janesville. In all there were 159 people trained from 27 churches. During the Orientation we discussed how to present the Gospel clearly (especially to children), the importance of ministering to children, an introduction to Awana clubs and roles, and finally reaching out to families.

After receiving training on presenting the Gospel, which includes clear and confusing invitations, one mother came up to us and told us that recently her family was watching a television movie in which a woman's life is spared because she received a heart transplant. During the movie her young son asked, "Mommy, if the lady who died was a Christian and they gave her heart to that lady who lived, then which one gets to go to heaven?"

I do not doubt this boy's salvation, but it does make me wonder - Did this young man really understand what it means to be saved? Who explained to him what it means to trust in Christ as your personal savior? And what training had this person received?

I wish that this had been an isolated incident, but time-after-

time we continue to hear accounts such as this of children confused about salvation.

In another incident, a five year-old boy was told that all he needed to do to go to heaven was to ask Jesus into his heart and was led in a repeat-after-me style prayer. He was told that if he prayed that prayer and really meant it then he was a Christian. Later, when he had doubts about his salvation adults asked him, "Have you asked Jesus into your heart?" When he said that he had done that as a child, he was told that he was saved! Go in peace! The only problem was that he was not saved.

I know for certain the second boy was not saved because, you see, the second boy was me.

It was not until I was a teenager that I understood that I was personally responsible to the Creator of the universe for my sins and that salvation comes by trusting in a person, not a prayer.

I came from a Christian home, went to church every time the doors were opened, even spent six years in Awana, memorizing hundreds of Bible verses, but I was not saved.

Please see Saved on Page 2

6 Churches Start New Clubs

The following churches have started new Awana Programs in our area:

- Trinity Alliance Church, Manitowoc
- St. Paul Lutheran, Sheboygan Falls
- New Life Church, Twin Lakes
- Harvestpoint Church, Delavan
- West Layton Assembly of God, Greenfield
- Grace Bible Church, Mineral Point

Please pray for these churches as they get their programs up and running.

Project Update - Almost There!

Phase 1 of our office equipment project is completed and we recently purchased the new computer we needed for our office. Now we are in the final stages of phase 2 - a new copier/printer/fax. God was good and we saw over \$600 donated at our ministry conferences. Now we are less than \$500 away. Please prayerfully consider how you may help us finish off this project.



Ricoh MP 161SPF Copier

Saved

Looking back I wonder, what training had these children's workers received?

As we begin our second year as Awana missionaries, the theme for our ministry continues to be: 'Equipping for Ministry'. Our ministry verse is 2 Timothy 2:2 which says, "You have heard me teach things that have been confirmed by many reliable witnesses. Now teach these truths to other trustworthy people who will be able to pass them on to others."

During the 6 Orientations we did this summer, we were able to train several people who in addition to training churches, will be able to equip others to train.

This year we added a second ministry conference to make it more convenient for more of the churches to send their members to receive the training they need.

In January we are holding another training seminar in which churches will receive training on how to best minister to the families of the children who attend their church. Parents will also be trained on how they can begin to teach God's Word to their children in their own homes. This is the way God planned it (Deut. 4-6).

Please continue to pray for us as we endeavor to minister to those who minister to children.

Life and Times

What a busy event filled summer we had. From late July to late August, Sherry and I did six regional basic trainings in five cities on eight different days. During the same time there were seven "On-Target Sessions" in seven cities. "On-Target Sessions" are regional meetings held three to four times a year to inform, train, and create a community of the churches in our area.

After these meetings were over, all of us flew down to Orlando where we spoke at Daniel & Kammie Anderson-Ferre's Awana Ministry Conference on August 25th. The following week was spent visiting with three of the churches in central Florida who have had a major role in preparing us for ministry - Palm Springs Drive Baptist Church, Altamonte Springs (who allowed us to stay in their missionary house during our visit); Fort Smith Boulevard Baptist Church, Deltona; and our sending church, Deltona Alliance.

We were also able to visit with our sons David and Stephen during that week. On Labor Day weekend Wendy and her husband Ryan flew down from their new home near Tacoma, Washington to spend the weekend with us. This was the first time that all six of us (now seven) had all been at the same place at the same time since Wendy joined the Army in April of 2006. What a wonderful time we had.

Immediately upon returning from Florida I had arthroscopic surgery on my left knee to repair a torn cartilage. Healing was slow and hindered by me trying to do too much too fast. Thankfully it is feeling much better now, although I am not running or jumping yet. Not that I did a lot of this before the surgery.

At the same, Sherry was having pain in her right arm and wrist. For someone who does sign language this kind of problem is serious. She was diagnosed with tennis elbow, which is funny because none of us play tennis. After several weeks of physical therapy she is also doing better.

This brought us right up to our own conference season. Last year we hosted only one conference in Milwaukee. This year in order to better serve the churches in the western part of the state we added a second conference. The first one was held on October 6th at Spring Creek Church in Pewaukee, WI where there were 325 in attendance. The second was held the very next Saturday, October 13th at High Point Church in Madison. 250 people attended that conference.

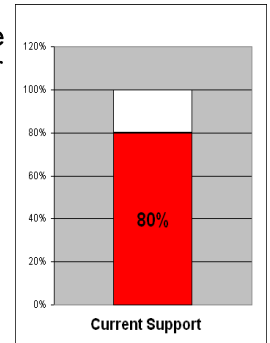
On October 14th I was at the missions' conference for one of our supporting churches, Kenosha Bible. Last weekend, October 19 & 20 I setup a display at the annual meeting of the Wisconsin Association of Regular Baptist Churches and this weekend we will

Support Update

We praise for God for our new ministry partners who have helped bring our support level to almost 80%. However with ministry costs on the rise, we will need to raise an additional \$300 per month to stay at 80%. If we do not, our support level will slip down to almost 75%. Since it takes 70% for us to stay on the field we are actively looking for additional ministry partners

Currently we are receive regular support from:

- 39 Churches,
- 20 Individuals,
- and
- 1 Corporation.



be attending a missions' conference at another of our supporting churches – Open Door Bible in Port Washington.

On November 3 we will in be speaking at a conference in Wausau. This one hosted by our partner missionaries in Wisconsin Roy and Betty Koopman.

Then we're off again – Sherry and I to the North American Awana Missionary Conference in Monterey, Ca. Kyle will be going to visit Wendy & Ryan in Washington (thanks to a gift we received from Palm Springs Drive Baptist Church in Florida).

Then we hope to get some rest over the holidays, because it all starts again in January with another training conference followed by Bible Quizzing, AwanaGames, and our Jr./Sr. high event the 24/7 Expo.

Previous issues of the Thomas Tribune, Awana Tell 'Ya, and our Prayer & Praise Reports are available from our website:

www.awanaswi.org/newsletters.html