

September 12, 2011

Dear State Leaders,

Greetings from Birmingham, Alabama, and national WMU!

We pray that God is blessing your work and your state as you continue to fulfill the Great Commission and impact churches for His kingdom.

As promised, I'm emailing to update you on where things are in the transition of RAs and Challengers. A good bit has taken place since my last communication with you and I've also had the opportunity to hear directly from many of you.

Here are some new things you might want to pass along to leaders in your state:

- 1) As I mentioned in the last email, the decision has been made that when RAs transition back to WMU, we will produce one student piece, titled *RA World*. While the magazine will address boys in grades 1–6, we recognize that first grade boys are different from sixth grade boys. So, as we layout the magazine, we will maintain a distinction in the material as it relates to younger boys (Lads, Grades 1–3) and older boys (Crusaders, Grades 4–6).
- 2) There will be some changes in the material found in *RA World* and *RA Leader*. Beginning with the Fall 2012 issue, you will notice a coordinated approach with RAs and GAs, building upon the belief that gender-specific education is a valuable way to teach missions. (Many of these changes were already in the works with NAMB prior to the transition in March 2011.) Here are some of the changes to expect:
 - a. RAs and GAs will coordinate missionaries, areas of the world studied, and Scriptures that are memorized.
 - b. Beginning in September 2012, RAs and GAs we will focus on one city a month. (The focus for 2012–2013 will be upon cities—an important focus both for the International Mission Board and the North American Mission Board.)
 - c. Beginning in September 2012, there will be one major Scripture verse each month. In our research, we discovered that having four verses a month was a little confusing. For our monthly Scripture verse approach, we are using the familiar RA Virtues that have been used for years. While our writers may suggest additional secondary verses to go with the memory verse, I think you'll see the new monthly Bible verse and missionary story blending into each monthly unit.
 - d. Beginning in September 2012, there will be one major Bible story each month, coming in the first unit. The Bible story will help provide the biblical foundation of missions.
 - e. Each month, you'll find the monthly units divided this way:
 - i. Week 1—Biblical foundation of missions
 - ii. Week 2—Missionary #1 focus
 - iii. Week 3—Missionary #2 focus
 - iv. Week 4—Focus on mission action/mission projects.
 - f. Beginning in September 2012, there will be a change in the number of featured missionaries in RA material, down from the current 4 to 2. GAs will go from 1 to 2 missionaries a month, using the same missionaries as studied in RAs. By coordinating missionaries this way, a much more extensive approach/feature can be given to a particular city and missionary. Plus, families will find that the coordinated approach to missionaries, Scripture, cities, and Bible study will allow for greater family discussion and interaction.
- 3) Let me offer an update on our work with Challengers. The answers here are still much more fluid than they are for RAs at this point; however, there are some pieces I can share:
 - a. WMU will produce a printed Challengers piece for leaders. The new leader work book (yet to be officially named) will be available on May 1, 2012 for the 2012–2013 year. Our plan is to include 12 monthly units, divided into 48 weekly sessions. We will also provide

4 other sessions that can be used in months that have 5 weeks. The monthly units will focus on:

- i. Bible Study
 - ii. Missionary Focus (the missionary will be one of the missionaries studied by RAs and GAs)
 - iii. Spiritual Growth
 - iv. Missions Project
- b. WMU has enlisted 4 seasoned Challengers leaders/writers for our first printed leader piece. Manuscripts will begin to arrive in mid-November, and we are excited about what these men will produce!

Over the last few weeks, I have heard that many of you are meeting with your state WMU leadership to discuss how this transition will work in your state. We, at national WMU, are praying for you and your folks as you process the changes that are coming. If I can help in any way, please let me know.

Just so you are aware, national WMU's executive office produces a weekly email that is sent to our state WMU offices, state WMU presidents, the two missions boards, and to national WMU staff. To help our state WMU leaders know what is being shared with those who have RA and Challengers responsibilities, the emails I send to you will become a part of the email our state leaders receive. Our hope is that by sharing this information with both state convention leaders and WMU leaders that we can help in the overall communication taking place on both a national and state level.

I am here to serve alongside you. If I can help in any way, please let me know.

In His Name,

Steve

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