



KOINONIA

“Developing athletic influencers into Christ centred leaders”

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Netball -Passing it on - Spiritually.



Above: Leanna De Bruin wearing the wristband with the white cross in the game against Malawi.

In November, Sandra Thompson (AIA staff woman) and I (Frances) were involved in ministry with the Netball World Championships in Auckland. Sandra had been working closely as a sports chaplain with the Cook Islands team, supported by Ana No'ovao, the coach for the Cook Islands who was involved with Athletes in Action as a player. Sandra also did Bible Studies with the co-captains who she led to the Lord 4 years ago. These captains have been a great influence on the team, getting the team to pray before games and trusting God faithfully as they played. The team did great and came 7th, which was a great improvement in world rankings for them.

I (Frances) had 2 girls that are involved with Athletes in Action in the Samoan team, Linda Vagana, the coach and Anna Senio. The team administration were not too keen in having a sports chaplain so Linda decided to have morning devotions every day instead and got each of the girls to lead a devotion. It was a great strategy for getting the girls to think about God and their relationship with God. Linda was also approached by players from South Africa and England asking her about the Bible Society New Testament Bibles they had seen her in. Athletes in Action had helped provide testimonies for the Bibles. I managed to deliver these NT Bibles to Linda's hotel for her to give to the players. Anna Senio was talking to the coach of the Fijian side, when the coach asked about Bible Studies. The next morning, I was back to the hotel delivering Bible Studies to Vilimaina Davu, the coach of the Fijian netball team who was keen to do these with her girls. Samoa came 8th and Fiji came 9th in the World Champs.

Elaine Davis, a girl who was involved with Athletes in Action in New Zealand about 7 years ago, played for and captained the Jamaican netball team. After losing their first game in the quarter-finals she got the team together and prayed with them on national television! It was a great witness for God and showed how faithful she was in her walk with the Lord. I managed to catch up with her, gave her Bible Studies to do with the players. Jamaica came 3rd in the World Champs.

The New Zealand netball team had 3 girls that were strong Christians. I have worked with 2 of these girls in the past, but this year handed them over to Sandra to continue movement building. They had Bible Studies with Sandra and themselves led Bible Studies in the team and have been influencing the team for God. During the game they wore black wristbands with white crosses on (picture above) to remind themselves that they were playing for the Lord. This had an added benefit of being a real witness to those thousands who watched around the world. They came 2nd in the World Champs and lost the final to Australia by 4 points.

Although I wasn't able to watch any of the games live, I was encouraged by how God had used Sandra and I to build into these girls and how they have started to be spiritual influencers in their teams. Praise God!

Thank you so much for all your prayers and financial support for us. Without you, we would not be able to reach and minister to these athletes. God Bless you.



Left: The 2007 Athletes in Action World Leadership Conference group photo.

Athletes in Action World Leadership Conference 2007



Above: These are the Athletes in Action Oceania Directors from left: Jess Blake and Gary Speckman (AIA Australia), me (Timo -AIA New Zealand), Akuila Rawaqwa (AIA Fiji) and Ross and Roula Georgiou (AIA Oceania Area of Affairs Director.)

I (Timo) went to Pattaya City, Thailand for the Athletes in Action World Leadership Conference.

We had over 180 Athletes in Action staff representing over 40 countries! I heard stories of what God is doing through AIA from different parts of the world. I was so encouraged to see that we are not alone in using the platform of sports to see the lost reached for Christ.

Many of the Athletes in Action staff were asking how could they get copies of the **Related to God** series books that we recently published. They were very impressed by the content and the sports stories that were in the book. They were also very excited to see how this material equips sportsmen and women to develop spiritual movements in their own countries!

PRAYER REQUESTS:

- **Pray for** The Netball girls that Frances and Sandra had played a part in their spiritual journey. Pray for the Christian players in the Cook Is, Samoa, Jamaica, Fiji and NZ that they would be bold in telling their team mates and others about Christ.
- **Pray for** wisdom for our Athletes in Action staff team as we have our Athletes in Action staff retreat on the 13th &14th Dec. Pray that we can come away from the retreat with some good strategic ideas of how to win, build, train and send athletes to be movement builders.
- **Pray for** Wayne Turner who plays for the NZ Breakers Basketball team. Pray that he would stay strong in his walk with God, despite the major knee surgery he has had. Pray that his attitude would remain positive.
- **Pray for** Our family, that we would have quality family time throughout the Christmas and holiday period.