

Clemente Newsletter

December 2018

David's Discussions

“How do you leave a lasting impact on someone when you know that you are going to see that person only for two hours or so?” This is the question I ask my students here at the seminary. We are getting ready to leave for a mission trip to Indonesia, and I am helping these students prepare for a time of service and ministry. I am sure many people have different answers to this question. My resolution to this dilemma is to focus on hospitality as a way of service, a means of helping others in a short period of time.

Henri Nouwen describes hospitality as an offer of friendship. “Hospitality, therefore, means primarily the creation of a free space where the stranger can enter and become a friend instead of an enemy. Hospitality is not to change people, but to offer them space where change can take place.” (Reaching Out: The Three Movements of the Spiritual Life.1975:71) When viewed from the understanding of hospitality, an hour of help to another person could mean the world to them. Every little act of service could leave a lasting impression on anyone because the focus is on experiencing hospitality and love with freedom and spontaneity.

Every year I visit different places in Asia and spend time with church leaders and pastors. Most of these times, I am only in country for a week or two. After I am done with my teaching and training sessions, I make it a point to visit the homes of my hosts and their friends. I become the recipient of their hospitality. This is also a time when I offer hospitality to them in whatever small ways I can think of. Maybe, we enjoy a meal or some local delicacies, sing songs with their young people, or play a game or two with their children. The whole point is that we come together and have fellowship in mutual encouragement and through the freedom that God’s Spirit gives to both of us.

“The paradox of hospitality is that it wants to create emptiness, not a fearful emptiness, but a friendly emptiness where strangers can enter and discover themselves as created free; free to sing their own songs, speak their own languages, dance their own dances; free also to leave and follow their own vocations. Hospitality is not a subtle invitation to adopt the lifestyle of the host, but the gift of a chance for the guest to find his own.” (Nouwen 1975:72)

Carmen's Corner

Thank you so much for the birthday wishes! Being 17 years old is great so far. The week leading up to my birthday on Sunday was amazing, because it was during my Junior Impact Trip.

For our Impact Trip, we went on a missions trip to Cambodia, which was so moving and eye-opening to me. The most meaningful part of the trip were the camps and classes where we got to hang out with the kids. It was meaningful to me, because even though there was a language barrier and I couldn’t communicate to them through words, I was able to learn how to communicate with them through body language and genuine care. For example, I wasn’t able to tell the kids how much fun I

was having or how much I loved them. Instead, I had to smile extra big, hug them really tight, and make hand motions to them to say "I love you".

There was this one girl who was very active when it came to dancing and playing with others. At the end of our last day in the slums, I started to break down crying because I was so sad about leaving, and I didn't want this to be the last time I get to see them. She came over and hugged me while I was crying, and kept displaying that huge smile on her face. She then grabbed my guitar case and pretended to play the guitar, which made me laugh and feel better. She then noticed a yarn string tied to the case, which was my family's so that we know in airports which suitcase is ours. She pointed at it, and I assumed that she wanted it. At first, I was hesitant, but I got over that and gave the string to her. The girl then pointed at her wrist, so I tied the string around her skinny wrist. Using the best hand motions I can, I pointed to the string, then to my mind, then pointed to me, trying to say, "When you wear this, remember me." She nodded and gave me one last hug.

That same day at the team center, I heard that there was an opportunity to go back to the slums, which I was really excited about. When I went there, that same girl ran up to me with a huge smile and hugged me. She then pointed at her wrist, which displayed the bracelet I gave her, with huge smiling eyes. This made me really happy, and taught me that something so simple, like a piece of yarn string, has the potential to impact someone's life. And yet it's not about that object, it's about the relationship.

I have more stories of the English camps and classes that I will always remember and will not hesitate to tell.

Sarah's Sentiments

With Carmen in Cambodia and David in the Philippines, there was plenty of room for Jacob and I to welcome Katie Bergman into our home for a week. Katie is the Director of Operations and Communications at The Set Free Movement, and this was her first visit to Taiwan. I was happy to accompany her as she met with our Taiwan Set Free Team, spoke at Higher Ground Church, and spent time with the women's discipleship group. She also addressed a group of FM pastors, asking them the question, "Why should slavery matter to the church?"

Carmen returned from Cambodia having learned of its history and the struggles that people face, especially poverty. She expressed that she was afraid of jumping back into her daily routine and forgetting what she had experienced. She wanted to **do** something. One thing Katie had shared was the fact that all of us -- whether a mother in a foreign land or a teenager with a passion for filmmaking or a CEO of a company -- we can all take whatever talents and gifts God has given us and use them in the direction of justice.

Jacob's Journey

(An 8th grader's perspective on Impact Week at Morrison Academy Kaohsiung)

On Monday, we prepared for the Impact trip a little bit, and we also prepared for Tuesday's Christian Service Learning (CSL) day. To be honest, my group was kind of doing bad but kind of doing good at the same time. Our job was to teach little kids English at a local school. They basically knew the alphabet and other things; they just didn't know some words like bike or ball and stuff. When it came to CSL day, we actually did pretty good. We kind of got to know the little kids a little bit, and we went with them on a hike, too. It was pretty cool.

Wednesday was the start of our Impact trip. First, we took a short bus ride to Ackerman camp. There was this long group discussion, then we got to the group activities. We were divided into two groups. The other group's challenge was to go through a spider web thing without touching the strings. Our group had to balance all of us on a balance boat. We were kind of doing bad until they decided I should go first with the other one closest to me in weight. And we did pretty well! We got it on the sixth try. Next we did this rock climbing activity. I kind of had a hard time with it because it was so high, so I kind of got out of doing it.

On Thursday, we did this flying thing where there's one person that is going to fly and all the rest of us had to pull that person up with a rope. So all of us had to run and since all of us were running and pulling, the person who was flying would fly into the air for some time and then he would be lowered. It was fun!! Then we got to do this tightrope activity, which I was pretty scared at. I was so scared once I got to the top. It was really high. It looked easy, but it wasn't easy. It was actually quite hard. But I managed to pull through! We also went on this balance beam one, like a log, which was the same height as the tightrope. It wasn't that scary because I already knew it was going to be that high.

On Friday, we went river tracing. It was pretty fun. I got to climb down a waterfall, and I actually slipped and banged my helmet on the ground a little bit, but I was OK.

We also cooked our own meals throughout the trip. First we cooked chicken nuggets, which were McDonald's style and we actually did better than McDonald's! The next thing was something with spaghetti. (I'm not sure what it was.) On Thursday for breakfast we had eggs. For lunch we had this soup thing. And for supper that day it was like chicken with kabobs. On Friday for breakfast it was hamburgers and then we left for the waterfall and then went home. That was basically the Impact trip.

The theme of our Impact trip was "Do Hard Things". This made an impact on me because now I'm not as afraid of heights anymore. I can tell because there's this jungle gym/monkey bars thing at a neighboring school that I never really wanted to climb on. But now after the Impact trip, I tried climbing on it a little bit. I wasn't really afraid of heights that much anymore.

Thanks for listening!
Jacob

Prayers and Praises

***** Thank you for your prayers for David when he was in Thailand for meetings with our Asian country leaders. These leaders went back to their countries renewed and inspired to continue serving God through our FM ministries. Please continue to pray for them.

***** Praise God for His visit at the Philippine General Conference (PGC18) last month. Bishop Alan Bacus was re-elected. Pray for Bishop Alan and the eleven Conference Superintendents as they continue to lead the Free Methodist Church in the Philippines.

***** Pray for the eight students from Holy Light Theological Seminary (HLTS) who are preparing to go for a short-term missions trip to Jakarta, Indonesia January 18-24. Pray for the fund-raising and other details still needing to be done. Pray for David as he helps lead this team.

***** Pray for Carmen and Jacob as they juggle school activities, projects, and final exams for the first semester. Pray for Sarah and all of the teachers and staff at Morrison Academy.

***** Praise God for the prayers and faithful giving of our partners in ministry. We are still in need of extra giving at the end of this year. Please join us as we pray for God's provision.

May God bless you this holiday season!

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

David, Sarah, Carmen and Jacob Clemente

PO Box 450 Xinxing
Kaohsiung 80099
Taiwan

