

Clemente Newsletter

February 2018

David's Discussions

“What can we say the kingdom of God is like? How shall we put it in a parable? It is like a tiny grain of mustard-seed which, when it is sown, is smaller than any seed that is ever sown. But after it is sown in the earth, it grows up and becomes bigger than any other plant. It shoots out great branches so that birds can come and nest in its shelter.” (JB Phillips NT)

Everyone knows that investing one's money in a bank is a good thing. You make deposits because you know that in the future you will withdraw your money back with interest. This is very similar to the Free Methodist (FM) work in Asia. We make deposits by building relationships with existing Christian ministries in the region. In places where there are no church witness, we reach out to people in need and connect with community leaders in the hope that we will gain their trust and have access to the local people's love and friendship. In some of these places, there is resistance to the gospel and political opposition to Christian missionary work. However, these do not stop us from finding creative ways. We still go and make investments in these areas. Sometimes we send English teachers to work in universities. Sometimes we use child sponsorship to connect with families in cities and villages. In a few cases, we work from a neighboring country and cross the border from time to time and provide training to local Christian leaders in the hope that they will train their own people and nurture them to Christian maturity and leading them to a life of fruitful discipleship.

This May, I will be going back to Nepal. Just like last November 2017, I will be there to provide assistance to our partners in the area. Just like me, there are other FM pastors who are coming in March, August, and October of this year, with the same goal of helping our Nepali church leaders prepare for pastoral ordination in the Free Methodist Church. We come and teach courses that encourage these pastors to get deeper into the Word of God. We hope that they will make a decision to join the FM work in Asia. Some from the city of Kathmandu have already made a strong commitment to become FM members. Others around the country are still in the early stages of understanding our FM heritage and exploring future possibilities of partnership. Whether or not these leaders have made a final decision, we keep on investing, building relationships with local pastors and visiting with them and encouraging them as Jesus would. Making deposits in the Lord's work is a good thing, even if there are no visible results yet.

Carmen's Corner

Imagine this: your muscles are aching from head to toe, beads of sweat are trickling down your face, and you're running short of breath. Your head is pounding every time the basketball hits the floor. You're about to give up right then and there, but your head turns and focuses on the stands. There are little elementary kids screaming and holding up hand-drawn posters with drawings of red and black sharks and words like "Let's go!" and "Jia yo!". You hear the cheering and roaring of the crowds, all of them watching you with enthusiasm. Your focus returns to the court and you finally know what you're here to do: to play basketball. This is what most of our basketball players felt like in Chiang-Mai, Thailand.

For the girls' team, there were only seven people available to play, so we only had two subs in every game. On top of that, people were getting injured and still fighting to play their best. For most of the

guys' team, this was their last basketball tournament in their high school career. I think it's safe to say this tournament meant a lot to everybody who went.

For the girls, our first game was against the Seisen Phoenix. We lost that game, but came out with new friends and cheering partners. The second game was against the CRICS Flames. After an enduring fight, we came out victorious. The next day, we lost against the EIS Flames and won against the GIS tigers, placing second in our pool with a 2-2 record, which put us in the final four. On Playoffs day, we lost against the ICS Eagles, who went on to become champions. Later that day, we played against the CMIS Eagles for third place. We fought hard and played an unforgettable game, but lost in the end. Overall, the fact that we only had seven players, played through injuries, and still ended up in the playoffs was a miracle in itself.

In the end, I felt like going to Chiang Mai wasn't just about competing in a basketball tournament. It was so much more than that. We became a family, and that is something I will never forget. This has definitely been an amazing basketball season for me and I can't wait for next year.

Jacob's Journey

So far, 2018 has been good. My class and I went to the Xi En Orphanage to see some babies on February 9. We were assigned some jobs to improve the orphanage. My group (me, George, Yien [pronounced like Ian], Daniel, Christopher, and Ezra) was assigned to wash cars. Our Bible teacher, Mr. Kadow, helped me and Yien wash one of the cars while the rest of our group worked on another. It was pretty sad to see all the babies in the orphanage. It reminded me of the time my family took care of Lucy, who was from Xi En, too. Now she's with a foster family, so we can't visit her anymore. One of the babies likes to play peek-a-boo, just like Lucy, so I guess that was an upside.

Back in November 2017, I released a Minecraft map called "Colors of the Rainbow", and I was pretty surprised to see that it actually made its way to the Minecraft Maps website. I thought that was it, but then people started making videos on playing my map. Well, non-American people, that is. It took a long time to find Americans playing my map on YouTube. The Minecraft Six website even made an article on my map saying it was "phenomenal" and "top-tier".

Those are basically the main things that were happening to me from December to this time. Besides the fact that we had family movie night every night during Chinese New Year Break. Happy New Year!

Prayers and Petitions

***** Pray for Pastor Daniel and Pastor Cham, leaders of the Cambodia Free Methodist Church, as they lead the work of the new Provisional Annual Conference of Cambodia.

***** Pray for David's trip to Phnom Penh, Cambodia, February 24 - March 2. Pray for the other FM leaders who are coming to visit and witness this historic event for FM work in Asia. The conference will be held February 26-28, 2018.

***** Pray for the students of Holy Light Theological Seminary. This school year, there are 173 students, twelve of whom are international students from outside of Taiwan. Pray for their continued adjustment to life in a foreign country.

***** Pray for Sarah as she continues to serve as a part-time teacher's assistant for the Kindergarten class at MAK this school year.

***** Pray for Carmen and Jacob and their classmates as they grow together in wisdom and maturity and the love of Christ.

***** Pray for peace, strength, and healing for Sarah's father, John, and David's brother, Tito, as they both fight and live with cancer.

Faithful Finances

We are happy to report that we ended 2017 with a healthy balance in our Missionary Support Account (MSA). Praise God!! Thank you to everyone who prayed with us and to those who sent financial support to help us meet our goal.

If you would like to contribute to our financial support for 2018, please make a check out to "Free Methodist Church - USA" and write "Clemente MSA" in the memo line.

Mail to: Free Methodist Church - USA, 770 High School Rd, Indianapolis, IN 462214

Thank you for your prayers and partnership!

Love in Christ,
David, Sarah, Carmen and Jacob

If you would like to write us a letter, please mail it to:

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