

David's Discussions

“How did you become a Christian?” “Did God ever speak to you through a dream?” “What is the most difficult time in your life as a missionary in Taiwan?” Q & A time. These questions belong to 5th and 6th Graders from the Manahanim Elementary School. These are very serious questions. No one would expect these sorts of questions from any elementary school aged children.

I am here in Bekasi, Indonesia, visiting the Christian Education ministry of the Mahanaim Foundation, our host for our team. We are a group of twelve people from Holy Light Theological Seminary in Kaohsiung, Taiwan, coming to Indonesia to serve children from different areas around the cities of Jakarta and Bekasi. Today, our team members are scattered around different classrooms leading devotions for the day. This is a Christian school, and each class meets every morning for devotions before they start their day. I am assigned to the elementary English program consisting of children from the 4th, 5th, and 6th Grades. I am a little surprised with the questions, and pleased with their serious inquiry, considering the ages of these children.

Jesus said: “Let the children come to me, and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God. Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it.” (Luke 18:16-17)

These words of Jesus have gained a deeper meaning for me after my visit to the children of Indonesia. That day, with their questions, they truly helped me come to Jesus with a sense of awe and wonder, and with much humility.

During the next five days in Indonesia, our team members went to several places serving children in their different localities. We visited indigent children at a community center helping poor families from a nearby garbage mountain. We played with children from a small orphanage. We saw Muslim children dance. And on the last day, we were at this Mahanaim Elementary School leading devotions and teaching Mandarin Chinese to school children from K to 12th Grade. We learned so much humility. Every team member came back from a whole day of teaching with a sense of wonder and a deeper appreciation for God’s amazing grace and wondrous work here in Indonesia. These children belong to the kingdom of God.

Carmen's Corner

We asked Carmen if she would like to write an update for the newsletter. Although she has much she could tell you about, she is tackling a lot of writing projects at this time, so she asked to pass on this one. Instead, we thought we could share her Media 3 project which she completed last semester. During the course of the semester, students wrote, directed, and edited their own short film. The final product was submitted to a film contest, and the students are still waiting to hear the results.

To watch Carmen's film, "Childish Things", please go to the following link online:

<https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=j1xZBa7kVjo>

(Fun fact: Media 3 is taught by former Free Methodist missionary kid Mark Griffin.)

Sarah's Sentiments

Our Asia Area Missionary Retreat was held in Thailand January 29 - February 4. We are so thankful we had this opportunity to reconnect with old friends and get to know new missionary families.

One thing I noticed when we arrived at our hotel in Thailand was the language barrier. If I spoke to a hotel employee in English and they didn't understand, I felt my brain "switch" to Mandarin. But I stopped myself from speaking because we were in Thailand, not Taiwan. I didn't know the Thai language. It was uncomfortable for both of us. We managed to get our point across with some gesturing, and the interaction stopped there. I wished I knew how to communicate better.

On our flights back home, we noticed there were some people speaking Mandarin and that sounded good to us, like our brains were responding positively to a familiar sound. On our last flight, there were even more Mandarin speakers and we felt even more relaxed. When we arrived in Kaohsiung, we were back where we could understand what people were saying and we could communicate what we needed. It felt good to be home.

Why did this stand out to me so much? I think because we had just spent time with new missionary friends who are starting full-time language study, as well as missionary friends who are finishing their time of study. I was reminded how important language learning is, how thankful I am that we were given time to build a firm foundation at the beginning of our missionary service, and how we should all be praying for those who are beginning this important task of learning the language and the culture of the people with whom they will serve.

Jacob's Journey

We went to Thailand to meet up with some other missionary families. Two years ago, we did the same thing, except in a different location in Thailand. This time, we went to Bangsaen Beach to settle in the "Tide Resort". It had a bunch of cool stuff like a Fusion Cuisine, a huge swimming pool, and different varieties of rooms. Some families like mine stayed in two different rooms (kids in one, adults in the other), so that was awesome.

I got to meet up with some old friends at the resort. Like Corey, Josiah, Caleb, and Caleb! And yes, there ARE two Calebs. Anyway, they were pretty cool, and it turns out Corey and Caleb liked pretty much the same things on the internet that I liked without knowing it. So that pretty much meant we bonded more than ever on the trip.

When my family got back from Thailand, I had to do a bunch of homework. Well, not really a bunch, since there were only four school days I missed. Also it was Chinese New Year break! We just had one week off from school. I did some homework each day I was back, while I was also keeping up with the internet trends.

Before the trip, I was binge watching Steven Universe a lot. Steven Universe is about a kid named Steven Universe who lives under the roof of the Crystal Gems: Garnet, Amethyst, and Pearl. Garnet is the strong and silent type, Amethyst is the one always rushing the team, and Pearl is the salty and over-protective mother. The Crystal Gems save the world from evil and... stuff.

The series "finale" (there might be a Season 6) came out a week before our trip, and when I watched it I was bawling. I won't put out any spoilers for those who now want to watch Steven Universe, but Steven practically is at his weakest point when he is divided in half (gem half, human half) in the episode.

Oh yeah, I also broke my glasses on New Year's Eve and had to get new ones... yeah.

That's all for now! Thanks for reading!

Prayers and Praises

***** David will be in Chiang Mai, Thailand to participate in a pastors' training this February 25 - March 1. Lucia Delamarter will be leading the sessions. Pray for a time of encouragement.

***** Pray for the leaders of the Taiwan Annual Conference. They will have a series of meetings until the end of April to decide the next president of Holy Light Theological Seminary and the new superintendent for the Free Methodist Conference.

***** Pray for Higher Ground Church as its leaders continue to disciple Asian migrant workers in Taiwan.

***** Pray for Carmen and other Morrison Academy students as they attend a spiritual retreat, Vida Nueva, at a school in Hong Kong this March 29-31. Carmen attended last year as a participant, and this year she will return as an assistant leader. The plan is to have MAK host a similar Vida Nueva retreat later this semester, with Carmen and others serving as leaders.

Commitments

We remain committed to the task of providing support to Free Methodist pastors located in Asia, so they can be empowered to do church ministry and become dynamic leaders in their local communities. We want to thank you for partnering with us through your prayers and financial giving.

Thank you to those churches and individuals who have already registered financial commitments to our 2019 Missionary Support Account. Currently these commitments cover 38% of our budget. Our goal is to reach 100%.

If you would like to make a financial commitment for 2019, you may call the FMWM ministry center at 1-800-342-5531.

If you would like to make a contribution by check, please make it payable to "Free Methodist Church - USA" with "Clemente MSA" in the memo line and send it to the following address:

Free Methodist Church - USA
770 N High School Rd
Indianapolis IN 46214

Thank you and God bless you!

Love in Christ,
David, Sarah, Carmen, and Jacob Clemente

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