



So the woman left her water jar and went away into town and said to the people, "Come, see a man who told me all that I ever did. Can this be the Christ?" John 4:28-29

American Homestay - "Come and See"

From February 11 - March 6, I had the amazing opportunity to staff an American homestay program sponsored by Student Impact (Japan Campus Crusade for Christ). During the program, students not only experienced American culture and had a lot of fun, they also got to come and see what it was like to live as a follower of Christ and experienced Jesus whether they knew it at the time or not.

Everywhere we went, the students heard about Jesus - and we didn't even always plan it that way! I LOVE talking about Jesus and will never tire of sharing the gospel, but I was a little worried it was too much. After having individual conversations with a few of them, really communicating love and building good relationships with all of them, it became clear that God had everything under control and prepared their hearts to hear about Himself. I asked Natsumi (a Waseda student pictured below) what she thought of everything since I knew she really hadn't been exposed to Jesus before homestay. She replied, "Before I had a negative image of religion and did not know about Jesus. But because of all the Christians I met I'm interested to know more. I want to study the Bible." Natsumi's one of the girls I talked with the most about Jesus - in fact I got to share the gospel in depth with her on four separate occasions because she's so open and has so many questions!



What Natsumi said truly summed up the whole homestay experience. Jesus poured out his love to us through our host families from Orangewood Presbyterian Church in Florida, the UCLA and USC student hosts in Los Angeles, Kermit's family in Las Vegas, the Las Vegas Japanese Community Church and my family in Los Angeles and Las Vegas. It was overwhelming to see how the body of Christ came together and gave of whatever they had - time, money, energy, resources. And truly it was for the glory of God.

As amazing as homestay was, I'll be honest in sharing that it was also a tough few weeks. I missed my STINT team back in Tokyo and wasn't used to working with a new leadership team. I discovered more of my weaknesses (like being well-organized for big projects like this). And our staff team (Cam, Ayumi, Kermit and I) experienced some good, old-fashioned spiritual warfare at times in the forms of disunity, communication breakdowns and crazy circumstances. Thankfully a lot of you and people back in Tokyo were praying. By God's grace everything worked out for the best. I just wanted to let you know that your prayers really do mean a lot and are being answered.

"Free" Gospel Choir Tour

They said to the woman, "We no longer believe just because of what you said; now we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this man really is the Savior of the world." John 4:42

From March 11 - March 15, Natsumi (from homestay) and I traveled to Osaka and Kobe to help out with Tokyo Student Impact's Free Gospel Tour and to meet up with another homestay student who lives in Kobe. The gospel choir, led by Jeremiah, has been one of the most effective ministry tools of Student Impact. Students love singing gospel and when they join the choir, it's like they're joining a family. Many students join not knowing Jesus, but after singing praises, performing at concerts where the gospel message is given, and getting to know the other Christian students in the choir, they often come to know Him. This tour, from March 12-March 22 is giving the choir a chance to bond even more. Every day while on tour, two students share their life stories with the choir and every morning they have a devotional time to start out the day.

The first night in Osaka, one of the members, Mika, (in the right center picture) shared her life story. She shared that she wasn't a Christian and before joining the choir in January she hadn't thought about God. But since joining the choir she's become interested in God and hoped that during the tour she could learn more from others. The next night, during the concert, Mika accepted Christ! And Midori, (pictured singing above) also accepted Christ! Watching the tears of joy on the members' faces after Midori and Mika prayed to receive Christ was overwhelming. Some of us have prayed for Midori for over a year so we were shocked and overjoyed when she raised her hand when Jeremiah asked if anyone would want to receive Jesus. Midori's been given so many chances and she's always said she was just waiting for something big to happen. Nothing "big" happened, but for some reason the Holy Spirit and people's prayers really moved her heart that night. I took the picture shown above right after she prayed. Songs that the choir sang after, like "Let the Redeemed of the Lord Say So!" meant so much more.

As you can tell, much is happening and I'm barely scratching the surface. You're just as much a part of this as I am so thank you for your sacrifices in giving and praying and letting me have the privilege of sharing about Jesus in Japan! Until next time. . .



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