

East Asia: 'We are sisters now'

January 18, 2016

I spent Christmas in East Asia, meeting university students and spreading the gospel to more than 100 people who never had even heard the name Jesus. Going to East Asia at that time of year opened up a huge window of opportunities to share with students the true reason we celebrate Christmas. Our outreach included meeting students on campus, inviting them to join us for lunch and to attend the Christmas parties we had during the two weeks we were there.

Building relationships

My biggest concern for this trip was meeting students. I figured it would be impossible to meet someone willing to have lunch or come to a Christmas party with a stranger. But because of God's good plan, building relationships with students after one conversation was incredibly easy. Thanks to these encounters, more than 100 people attended events such as two Christmas parties; one English corner; a movie night where we watched "Martha," which explains the story of Christ; and multiple smaller lunch meetings or touring days, spent with individual students where we were able to develop some deep relationships.

An encounter with a girl named Melinda really deepened my relationship with Christ. Before I met her, four other girls had become daughters of Christ after having conversations with other girls on my team. At this point, I was filled with excitement for our new sisters in Christ, yet part of me felt discouraged because I had not been present in witnessing one of those conversations. Realizing my feelings of disappointment at not being present were normal, but not ones I desired to feel, I gave them to God, asking him to give me his peace as he continued to use me.

Movie night

On New Year's Eve, we hosted a movie night when we watched the "Martha" film. When we went to meet students, to walk them back to our place, I noticed a girl named Hadley, who I ran into my first day on campus. I ecstatically ran up to hug her, since I had been trying to connect with her since we first met. She had a friend with her, Melinda, who was rather shy but drew my attention immediately.

When we returned to the apartment we greeted everyone with warm homemade cookies and began the movie. During the movie all the students were attentive for the most part. However, our American team started to feel pretty discouraged. We all were concerned that they would not be interested in the movie due to it being an older movie about some Jesus guy they had never heard of before. I spent the duration of the movie just begging that God would work in their hearts.

Different responses

I noticed Hadley seemed very interested in the video and planned to talk with her afterwards. I also watched Melinda and noticed she did not seem as interested and spent some time on her phone. Once the movie ended, I went to talk with Hadley, as I had planned. She proceeded to tell me she had been to church before and knew all about this Jesus guy but did not believe in it.

I noticed Melinda looked very withdrawn, so I went to check on her. To my surprise, she said she had never heard this story before, but she could feel something tugging on her heart immediately. I asked her if she was willing to learn a little more before she went home and with eagerness in her voice she said, "Yes." We walked through the basic story of the gospel together and read through the Four Spiritual Laws together. At the end, she told me that all of that was so beautiful, and that she wanted Jesus to be the center

of her life, but she needed more time to think. Before she left, I told her how she could accept Jesus into her life and let her read what that prayer might look like, and then prayed over her. She asked when we could meet again, and I invited her to breakfast and Bible study on our last morning there.

Different person

When she showed up that last Saturday morning, you could tell she was a different person. She was not shy at all and was so excited to read from the Bible with us. She spoke with such beauty and insight as she read aloud and answered questions. We all were so confused to how she was so sure of the truth, even though she had never made a decision with us to follow Christ. We asked what kind of relationship she had with Christ. She responded by saying: "I am a daughter of Christ. When I left here the other night I went to a park and prayed and asked God to come into my life and to start a new relationship with him in the new year, leaving my old sinful self behind." We were all so shocked but so happy about the work that God had done in her life. When she closed in prayer, we all broke down sobbing so in awe of our amazing God. During our last goodbye, she hugged me and said, "We are sisters now, so I know I will see you again one day."

Melinda melted my heart and taught me something so important. No matter what activities we host, words we say, or seeds we plant, God is the ultimate harvester, and he is in control. It is a beautiful thing to witness someone coming to know Christ, but more than that, it's so humbling to know that the reason those seeds have been harvested is through God's love and desire to have a relationship with us. God's timing is perfect.

God has transformed my heart. He has placed a special kind of love for those people on my heart, has revealed to me the great need for planters of his truth around the world, and has filled me with the peace to be able to trust that he is good and in control. No matter what I may have planned,

his plan always prevails. We have a good Father who is constant in drawing all near to him. I am excited to hear about the work God continues to do in East Asia and the growth of our new sisters in Christ. Please pray for those who are lost among the nations. Seek what it is God is calling you to do, and be bold in sharing his Good News in your daily life.

Becca, a student at Texas A&M University-Commerce, served with Go Now Missions in East Asia. Her last name is withheld for security reasons.