

July 9, 2017
Outreach is(n't) hard
Read *Philippians 1 :3-6*

Roots Reboot

What a wonderful experience we had just a couple of weeks ago. The Hong Kongers were here. They helped us out with VBS, and we were able to minister to some of them as well. I am not sure if you knew this or not, but some of those kids that we hosted from Hong Kong were not Christian. Before you gasp and start asking why we even bothered hosting them, think about this. We had them in church every night listening to God's Word being taught, and Jesus being proclaimed. What a wonderful opportunity we had to reach out to them in their need that they may not have even known they had.

Then consider this: those kids that didn't know Jesus were helping us tell kids from our own neighborhood about him. What a wonderful God we have, who is able to take us from sinners to saints, then use us to proclaim Jesus to souls who have never heard about him, and then through them to teach little kids about God's wonderful love in Jesus Christ. To borrow a phrase from VBS, only God could have made a plan like that. As usual, He set out to work His ways in a way that no one that I know of would have ever dreamed to attempt.

Now, even cooler than that (at least I think it's cooler) we have new partners in the Gospel in MCDH and Saint Matthews, the Lutheran Schools that sent those wonderful kids to us. We have more partners to help spread the Gospel both to those kids that were here and to their families through the experiences they had here and the ministries of those schools. So, we need to pull a Paul now. We need to hit our knees and flex our

"Thanks" muscles for those kids and the ministry we were able to accomplish through them. Not only that, but we also get to stay in contact with them to see how they are doing in their lives. We get to continue a relationship and a ministry from halfway around the world. And we get to support MCDH and Saint Matthews in their ministries if by no other way than prayer. How cool is that?!

But, do you see what outreach can look like? It doesn't have to be rigid program after rigid program. It doesn't have to be knocking on doors. Instead, outreach is as simple as opening up your heart (and maybe your house) to someone in need. Outreach can be as simple as providing an educational, Jesus-filled experience to some kids from the neighborhood. Outreach doesn't have to be hard.

Let me now ask you this: how can you build a relationship in your community? If you can answer that, you can answer how to begin to do outreach as well. I say "begin" for two reasons. First, outreach can't end with just a relationship. In order to do true outreach, we need to take Jesus' healing forgiveness to hurting souls in need of his mercy. Second, outreach might initially start with you or your church, but the Spirit might complete His work through someone else or another Church. In other words, it requires action and faith. We need to take action when we see a need or a way we can apply God's healing word and forgiveness in the world, but we also need faith to let God do the work in outreach. So, we have to pull another Paul, and trust that God will complete the good work he started in and through us.

Pastor *Carl O. Johnson*

