

Here are a series of “articles” as it may be that I have written as I have not been doing Journals. This is because my learning in New Zealand has been justifiably different than it was in Taiwan and especially Kiribati. Instead here is an overall look at the things I have discovered about myself, New Zealand, others, and more importantly doing mission.

I’ll cut right to it. To start with my perspective of NZ (New Zealand) I have noticed as being very different to when I left. I guess this is just a result of the change of my character and knowledge from being overseas. The idea of doing mission in New Zealand is a hard one. As a Kiwi, and Pakeha at that, there are many difficulties involved with trying to minister to people due to historical cultural wrong doings (dawn raid, land wars) or the secularism that governs our society.

I really like this idea of ‘Ministering’ (and thus not just as an idea) because it is about healing, helping, and having a relationship. The idea of mission can become so clinicalised which is yet another struggle.

Terminology aside, a majority of time I have spent in Auckland has been at schools, to which the growing feeling is that education is important, and not just education as in school or university, as soon as we stop thinking about learning as a must to succeed in life it brings out so many new opportunities. This may seem strange, but I don’t believe forcing kids to come to school really helps a lot of them, and really all they seem to need is some love. When 10 kids are clamouring over you to hug you, or block the door so you can’t leave you realise that they need more people in their life that care about them, not their grades, not whether they have a higher than average reading age, but just them for who they are, as I kept digging deeper I realised that many people in my age group, older, or even myself could have been lacking the love they needed and it really does impact them as they group. The problem I find with looking at it like this is it often results in objectifying people or problems, and depersonalizing them. Meaning it’s a cause-result matter, like congested traffic because of a car crash, rather than caring about them because they matter, because they are human beings just like you and I, and unfortunately this can be a hard perspective to change (guilty as charged).

During this time I also spent time doing a mural with some of the other team. This was a challenging time for me, having done little painting of only other types it was a new experience and I was very nervous. It was amazing to have Faith encouraging me and the praise we received at the end was also a confidence booster, this programme is giving me a lot of confidence in my abilities and hopefully that confidence continues.

Another thing we did was spending time gardening for old people who can no longer take care of their own garden. I felt quite sad during this time, so often these old people are neglected, yet we should be thankful for them, they are the reason we are here today, I used to think a bit about what my grandparents would do every day, and inspires me to do as much as I can for as long as I can. Our lives are only so long. It also made me miss my grandparents more, especially my grandfather who may not live for much longer, I hope when I get back I will be able to talk to him and learn more from him. Lastly it was great to get my hands dirty. I mean I know I am lazy but once I get into a pattern it’s really good and quite enjoyable especially if there is a goal I can see in sight.

Still more that we did as placements and one of these things was part of the Crosspower afternoon programme, Crosspower is a youth programme about empowering the young (and generally troubled) youth, based in Otara. We went to two of their music programme sessions and I thought it was a lot of fun and well maybe I didn’t learn so much but something worth noting is a lot of these youth don’t get encouraged to do well, they are expected to fail and expect themselves to fail, this is so wrong and makes me sad, because everyone deserves a chance, everyone deserves to be loved,

to do what the love and to enjoy life while doing it. So yeah I tried to encourage them as much as I could.

There is so much more to include about our time in Auckland. Our mentoring sessions were really good and I think both Toantemam and I learned a lot about ourselves and each other during this time. Deborah has been really good at teasing out things and showing ourselves what we are saying in a way that we can understand more about ourselves.

During our time in Placement church's it has been a really cool time and hopefully when I'm next in Auckland I will have more friends and be able to visit the churches we went to. It was really interesting going to a combined Methodist/Presbyterian church, the two best things I did at both churches (I think) was singing with their youth choirs which was honestly just such an awesome experience and it reminded me that even if you don't have a super special individual voice, putting them together can create some pretty awesome sounds.

Lastly I'll talk about the lectures. Most of our lectures have been great, some have been extraordinary (Malcolm Gordon) and some less so, but all in all there has always been something to learn. One thing that has been a little frustrating for Toantemam and I is that some people will always pick at things if they don't agree with it, trying to prove them wrong and have debate rather than trying to understand from their point of view, different minds I guess but it is quite frustrating. I think that's everything from our Auckland Journey