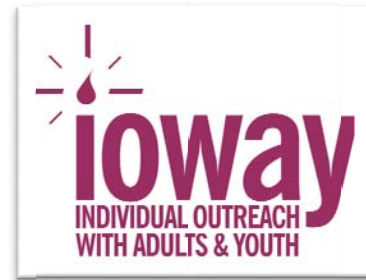


February 2010

Different Experiences, Same Jesus



The IOWAY team of twenty six recently experienced sharing the love of Jesus in two very different venues: in beauty and in poverty.



The one week mission trip to California offered many opportunities to share the love of Jesus with others. We were able to appreciate the beauty of God's gorgeous flowers and the power of the mighty Pacific Ocean. We also had a unique experience and our eyes were opened to a very different world: the world of life on Skid Row where between 7,000-10,000 homeless people of all ages live.

Kathryn Sprecher, Trinity Des Moines IA, an IOWAY team member for the past five years reflects,

“A box is a simple geometric figure. It can come in all sizes and shapes. We can put presents in them. We can mail gifts in them. They can store things in an attic. The word ‘box’ can also conjure up different ideas: a boxing ring, to feel boxed in, a voting box, a lunch box, a mite box, a tool box.

“To think ‘outside the box’ is to think differently, unconventionally or from a new perspective. That is what the IOWAY team (Individual Outreach With Adults and Youth) did while working in the Los Angeles area. The week began by meeting Gerald and Kimberley, leaders of a Skid Row ministry, and sorting thousands of items collected by the team to be distributed on Skid Row. (More on this later.)

“The first two and a half days of the trip were spent in Pasadena working on floats for the Rose Bowl Parade. We were part of the 4,000+ Petal Pusher volunteers working with Lutheran Hour Ministries. Petal Pushers work on different floats and work with a variety of flowers in a variety of new ways. We found that silver-leaf and eucalyptus leaves can make an object look like a street pole. We learned the importance of using sticky glue rather than oasis glue to glue carnation petals on the letters of the Lutheran Hour sign.



“On January 1 the group enjoyed watching the parade and seeing the finished floats. The Lutheran Hour float is the only Christian float in the parade. This year the float, under the theme, ‘The Ten Commandments – Jesus Fulfilled,’ included eight men carrying the Ark of the Covenant. The float also featured the Ten Commandments and three crosses.

“All of this was nice, comfortable, and ‘inside our boxes.’ Then the students, farmers, housewives, employees, retirees, and pastor all found themselves in a totally new environment – taking us outside of our boxes.

“In church, we confess that our care has too often been limited to the holiday season and charitable donations. We have failed to be God’s hands and feet to visit and relieve the plight of the hungry and forgotten around us so that they may magnify the Lord with us. We asked God to open our eyes for opportunities to serve in His name.

“This became evident as we distributed lunch, backpacks, hygiene items and underwear to over 200 of our brothers and sisters on Skid Row. Due to limited space, the first 40 people in line spent time at a worship service and they received a marked New Testament. We then served them a hot meal, gave them a backpack with hygiene items, underwear and other clothing. The underwear and hygiene items were brought by the IOWAY team members in their extra suitcases. The clothing was provided by another local church which assists with the Skid row outreach each month.



“‘Thank you’ and ‘God bless you’ were the words we heard over and over again. The words were from people who had barely more than the clothes on their back. How often do we thank those who serve us? Do we remember to thank God for all of His gifts – a fresh slice of bread, a bar of soap, a warm home, clean clothes, our job? Each IOWAY team member has come home with a new appreciation for what our awesome God has done for each of us as He is a ‘cut above the rest’ (Rose Parade theme). Our boxes have been opened to look at His people with new servant eyes and hands for serving.”

Cheryl Larson, Immanuel, Livermore shared, “Being a part of IOWAY and the Petal Pushers have been experiences that helped me grow as a Christian witness. The more bold we are, the easier it becomes, and we can truly say, ‘I love to tell the story of Jesus and His love.’ We don’t always know the effects of our witness, but the Lord will use our words as He changes hearts.”

Ann Carrick, Faith Lutheran, Adel noted, “We know that singly we might not make much of an impact but together we are able to do so much more. Being together gives us a confidence that we can share the good news of salvation and also allows us to grow so that we can witness when we are back in the ‘real world.’”



Craig Carrick, Faith, Adel, shared, “I was surprised at the mechanics for the framework of the floats and the large amount of time the operators and drivers spent inside the float.” For photos and updates of the team’s events and members’ thoughts, check out IOWAY at www.idwlcms.org

Mark your calendar and make plans to be a Petal Pusher December 28, 2010 to January 4, 2011.

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