



The Lutheran Church Missouri Synod

The Taiwan Times

Summer 2022

Andrew and Noel Schaff Missionary Newsletter from ChiaYi, Taiwan

"Then Jesus told his disciples, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it."

Matthew 16:24-25

Costly Discipleship

Sometimes as a sinner, it is easier than I would like to admit taking the awe-inspiring beauty and power of the Gospel for granted. Having grown up in a country, community, and home where the Gospel message and the Bible were regularly taught and held in high regard allowed me to be surrounded by many who held similar beliefs. Many of my friends and family had zeal for Christ. I spent hours every week studying the Bible. I was brought to worship in my youth and had lots of opportunities to worship in different churches. I even had options to choose when to worship at different times of the day or week.

I have noticed a trend more recently in the Church to stop attending. Rather than seeing the blessing and gift that the Risen Lord has given us to be in His presence in the hearing of the Word and the receiving the Lord's supper; it seems for so many it has become more of a chore. Others have told me they are turned off by behavior that they have witnessed in Christian members of the Church. Dear Friends in Christ, I admit that I am always blessed when I attend worship for numerous reasons. At the same time, I am the Chief of sinners when it comes to this struggle. I could spend much time writing about how it is difficult for me in the mornings with my chronic GI problems which require me to be near a restroom. Or I could talk about chronic fatigue which I also experience. These, however true, are excuses that deny me the gift of public worship.

Taking Christ's work on the cross for granted can sometimes be as subtle as one's awareness of falling asleep. What I see in my attitude makes me remorseful. What I see in the lack of enthusiasm of many makes me sad. I wish that those turned off by the Church understood two things. Firstly, that Christians are sinners. All the Salvation that happens, happens outside of oneself. Worship is a gift whereby we are given God's life-giving breath through the Word and Sacraments. Secondly, what some people, self-included have witnessed in some churches is not what is true for so many around the world.

Taiwan is one example. About four percent of people in Taiwan are Christian. The way that most towns, even villages here have a church on

every corner, Taiwan has a temple or shrine. The entire yearly Taiwanese calendar revolves around the temple's lunar year. None of the holidays that Americans are familiar with celebrating such as Thanksgiving, Christmas, or Easter are holidays. Children grow up being brought to the temples where they learn to baibai or worship by bowing down to statues or pay money for luck. When an elder in the family dies, children and grandchildren are expected to worship their ancestors to prevent that relative from being caught in limbo and to allow them to enter heaven. Thus, when a Taiwanese person does become a Christian he or she is often ostracized by the family. Few people have heard the name of Jesus.

For these reasons, the Taiwanese Christians I know rarely take the Gospel for granted. Perhaps one of the strongest examples of this was a friend of ours named Gloria. She belonged to another local church in Chiayi, but was very involved in serving and giving in her congregation. She attended every Friday Night Bible Study at Salvation Church and shared enthusiastically in class.

Gloria faced regular torment from her family. They refused to see her or speak to her much of the time. When they did communicate, they told her that they thought she was insane. At one point they tried to have her committed for giving to the Church. Gloria understood what a privilege and blessing it was to meet in Bible class and worship. After facing a challenging journey, Gloria was called to be with Jesus. She remained faithful in spite of persecution to the end.

As I look at brothers and sisters who walk by faith in worship, I am both humbled and moved to take another look at my sinfulness and to look at my Savior. We do not baibai to please a little gold inanimate scowling god. Instead, we have a Living God who became man, hung bloody on a cross and was pierced out of love for us, overcame death and calls us by name as His own. We celebrate His coming to us even now in His Word and Sacraments.

UPDATE

Andrew visited the States for the first time in three years. We presented in in Norfolk, Nebraska and spoke at Mission Central on July 26th. Andrew has returned and I will be returning to Taiwan for another year of service at CMS and Salvation Church.

Please Pray

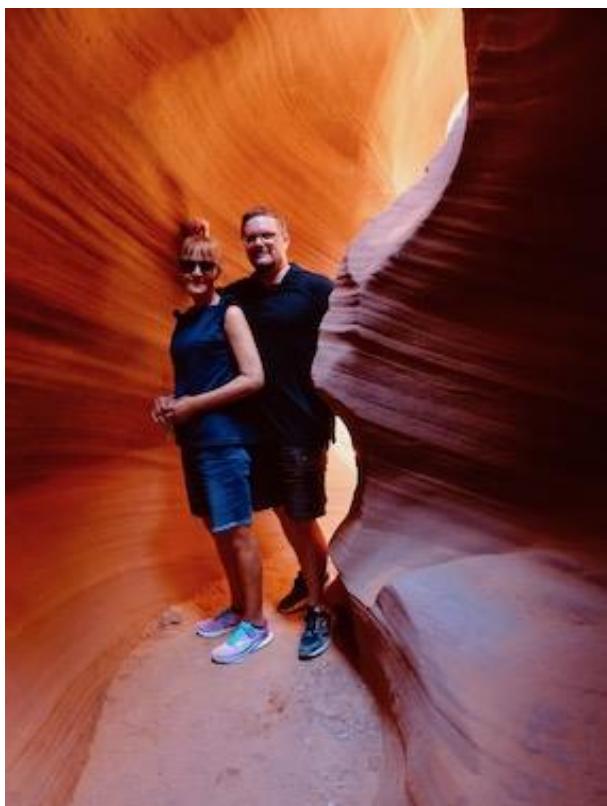
- Please continue to pray for young Christians in Taiwan and those who face persecution from their families for their faith.
- Please pray for Andrew as he begins a new semester at CMS and me as I begin tutoring once again. Pray that as we have opportunities to share the Gospel, the students' hearts are prepared to hear and that we are faithful and bold in our proclamation.
- Please pray for the Church around the world, that the Lord would strengthen our faith to worship and serve together regularly.
- Please pray specifically for Eric, Leonardo, James and Victor and their families. Pray that any boundaries would be removed and that the Lord would work faith in their hearts.



Gloria in Friday Night Bible Study many years ago. 10th grade Bible class the week school ended.



7th grade class and some art after reading Anne of Green Gables.



Activities this summer in Arizona and Valentine, NE.





We Thank God for You!

Your prayers and encouragement are greatly appreciated! If you would like to financially support the ministry in Taiwan, please make checks payable to LCMS World Mission, clearly designating for Andrew and Noel Schaff, and send to:

The Lutheran Church Missouri Synod
1333 S. Kirkwood Road
St. Louis, MO 63122-7295

Or adopt us as missionaries through Mission Central in Mapleton, IA. You can contact our friends at Mission Central using the following address:

Mission Central
40718 Highway E 16
Mapleton, Iowa 51034
Phone: 712-882-1029
You can email Gary at Gary.Thies@lcms.org

**Pray for Us
Andrew and Noel Schaff**

"I always thank my God as I remember you in my prayers, because I hear about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints." Philemon 2:4

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