

Wolfgang and July 4th -- You Do This Every Year?

Christ the Redeemer Church
July 4, 2010
Sixth Sunday after Pentecost

John 10:16-20
Rev Gary L. Smith
www.christredeemerchurch.com

The disciples were rejoicing at how much power to change lives they had in life after they started following the Lord.

Wolfgang was a good friend to Daniel when Daniel was in school for a year as an exchange student in Germany. Wolfgang is Korean. His father has a doctorate in Korean History and teaches at the University of Soul. His mother has a doctorate in History and is near completion of her second doctorate in Psychology. She and Wolfgang currently attend a university in Germany. They have the ultimate Geographically Separated family situation. They so value Wolfgang's education that they have chosen this lifestyle in order that he may obtain a degree from a German university.

He has been in California for this year as a university exchange student. He wanted to visit Daniel here in Texas for four days prior to returning to Germany.

I was disappointed that we had so many obligations in life during his visit. He arrived Saturday night and had to fly out Wednesday.

We had worship Sunday morning and Vacation Bible School on Sunday night, Monday night, and Tuesday night. We had a softball game Tuesday night at 10 pm. There was no time to take Wolfgang anywhere so we invited him to do what we do here in town...church and softball. So we handed him off to Cameron on Sunday...now that will give Wolfgang a uniquely American perspective on life, hanging with Cameron for a few days!

Wolfgang told me after church on Sunday that he really enjoyed and appreciated my sermon about the Mountain (Lookout Mountain). That surprised me greatly that he could come to this foreign land and get so much out of a very short sermon.

He is just like Americans...the shorter the sermon the better it is and the more folks like it. He was the last one to leave the Arts and Crafts Table at Vacation Bible School.

He was mesmerized by the EMS helicopter that flew in and landed at our church on Monday night at Vacation Bible School. He had never been that close to a helicopter. Same with the three fire trucks. The pilot, the EMS personnel, and the fire men all gave him private tours. His genius mind was absorbing every thing taking place at CTRC.

He asked me after the helicopter flew away, "What do the helicopter and fire trucks have to do with VBS?" I told him we are trying to help the kids to learn how they can spend their lives helping others. He smiled and said, "I know this is for younger kids but I am very much enjoying it all." And he thanked me again for inviting him to VBS and to church.

Prior to the 10 o'clock game Tuesday night Daniel took him dancing to Country Music at Gruene Hall, the oldest dance hall in Texas. Wolfgang got three different Texas cowgirls to dance with him. He loved it all.

I asked him if he wanted to play softball Tuesday night. He grinned and said he would love to have that experience. What an experience he had! Colton Smith looked at Wolfgang, whose parents are both Korean, and said, "You don't LOOK like you are from Germany!"

I asked Gang again at the game if he wanted to PLAY and he grinned and said he would love to play but he did not know how. I told him some of my players do not know how either! So I substituted Gang to run for me at second base with Karl James at bat, assuming Karl would hit a home run and therefore give Gang a safe chance to score in his first and probably only softball game EVER in his life. He is visiting from Germany and had never even been ON a ball field. Karl did hit a home run but I forgot to tell Gang WHERE 3rd base was located and so he ran toward Berry the third base coach and missed touching 3rd base by three feet at least, Berry grabbed him and pointed him toward HOME plate and pushed him toward Home and Gang ran home as Karl and another player on base caught Gang...Gang missed home by a mile not even knowing WHAT Home was or that he was supposed to touch it at all...we stopped him from coming into the dugout and led him back to Home to touch it. Other team appealed to plate umpire saying "The runner never touched 3rd." Umpire, knowing what was going on, said, "Which player did not touch third?" (All 3 were running bumping against each other). Opposing pitcher said, "The last player." Wrong answer. Ump called the Last Runner (Karl) "Safe" thus allowing the FIRST runner Gang to score, along with all three players scoring since the pitcher named the wrong player for missing third.

Lisa's mom Priscilla, recovering from recent cancer treatments, mastectomy, and retirement from a life-long job she loved, wrote me this week: Dear Gary, Just a note to say hi. I decided to send you a clipping from my retirement party on Thursday May 26. It was a fun day. Lisa and I have a poem we love called Normal Day.

Let me be aware of the treasure you are.
Let me learn from you, love you, savor you, bless you before you depart.
Let me not pass you by in quest of some rare and perfect tomorrow.
Let me hold you while I may for it will not always be so.
One day I shall dig my nails into the earth or bury my face in the pillow or stretch myself
taunt or raise my hands to the sky
And want more than all the world your return.

Next treatment on July 8. Please continue to pray for me. Love, Priscilla

Dear Gary, How are you? This is Wolfgang.

Thank you very much for the nice time in Texas! The rootbeer-helicopter-firetruck-night, the softball game and, above all, your sermon about the mountains are sure to enrich my memories of the United States forever. Hopefully, we will have the chance to meet again soon.

Greetings to your wife and all church members. Sincerely Yours, Gang Paik

Wolfgang asked me after VBS, "Do you do this EVERY year?" I said we did. He was so amazed. We are blessed to live in this country where we can have churches and opportunities and freedoms that we do. You have the power to heal and to help people.

Jesus said to not be so excited about the power you have as you are to be grateful for the chance

to part of God's creation. The beauty is in the Normal Day, as Priscilla and Lisa say. Amen.