

I LOVE TAIWAN MISSION CAMP – TAIWAN

JULY 2015

RACHEL WALKER

In July two representatives from COSY (Church of Scotland Youth) attended the annual international mission conference in Taiwan. It is hosted by the Presbyterian Church of Taiwan, who were celebrating their 150th birthday. Sarah MacDonald and Rachel Walker spent 3 weeks exploring what mission is; sharing stories and experiences of God's grace with people from over 40 countries including Canada, the US, Germany and Fiji.



The programme was titled the Sign of Grace and consisted of two camps for the 150 delegates to share experiences and worship together and a local church experience for 10 days in the middle. The first camp was held in the Presbyterian Christian College in Taipei, the capital city. Here, the youth were introduced to Taiwan, the programme and even had time to do some sightseeing. There was time to share and discuss LGBT, politics and youth engagement, women and their place in society and education in different sessions where you could learn of the differences from the international delegates as well as more about Taiwan's culture and society.

After the introductory camp we split into groups of 2-7 to go and volunteer in a local church environment with young people from Taiwan and many other countries. Rachel visited Changhua, a city location, where she helped in a holiday club for P6-S3; tutoring English and playing football. Followed by a youth focused programme discovering more of what it is like to be a youth growing up in Taiwan as well as exploring Changhua. She was blessed to visit the famous scenic tourist location of Sun Moon Lake and spent a night staying and worshipping in a local church there before visiting a theme park aimed to celebrate the aboriginal culture of the country. The programme was very busy so there was not much free time but when there was it was spent chatting about all of our backgrounds over board games and Starbucks or learning dance routines to perform at the culture night when back together with the rest of the ILT delegates. Rachel became close friends with two girls one from Malaysia and one from Hong Kong as well





as a guy from California which she still talks to regularly and has possible hopes to visit in the future, as well as a strong bond with the youth of the church and would love to return. Sarah visited one of 12 aboriginal tribes in Taiwan and enjoyed living in and learning of the different culture and community.

Rachel thoroughly enjoyed the experience and recalled the last day of the trip when there was a day of sharing the mission experiences in Taiwan followed by a culture night; a cross-cultural display of all the countries included in the programme and what mission means to them. There was a lot of song sharing which was a great opportunity to experience how worship varied across the world and in different denominations. Getting to appreciate the cultural dress of the different nations and enjoy learning some of their language and traditional dances was a really fun experience that celebrated the diversity of our world and how the grace of God could overcome barriers and instead celebrate our differences to come together as one, a true display of the wonder of mission.

The girls attempted to teach Scottish country dancing with help from friends from the United Reform Church in England. They also shared Scottish delights like shortbread, irn-bru sweets and macaroons which were complimented for the sugar rush needed to complete the busy but inspirational 3-week camp. This was a fitting end to a fantastic mission shared with many different cultures and wonderful people.

I feel blessed to have been part of such an amazing experience and would encourage anyone who gets the opportunity to visit the PCT in Taiwan to do it. I have made friends and memories I will forever cherish whilst growing closer to God and seeing his grace at work through what was an unforgettable mission experience. I can now truly say I Love Taiwan and want to thank COSY, World Mission, PCT and the church in Changhua for making this possible.

