

More trips

Going to the Dominican Republic with Jessica and little Booker was fun for Patty and me. Never a dull moment with a toddler in a foreign space and few amenities, but hey, 2014- it worked. I've been privileged to travel the world as a missionary with Jews for Jesus. And often, I get to stay for a short while on the front or back end of a trip to enjoy the local amenities.

Places like Seoul, South Korea, where I've been three times in the time since I moved to Australia. The last of which was just October in 2025. But getting to speak at the world's largest church, at Yoido Full Gospel Church, was pretty significant. Eleven thousand people heard me at once, and then their regional campuses heard me later on. It was an enormous honor and helped me to know that sometimes I get to speak in plenty or in positive, major places. But the next week, after being at Yoido, I spoke at Mowbray Church, where there were 40 of us, and that made perfect sense to me. That no matter whether I abound or am in want, I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.

I've been privileged to go to Japan in 2017, and Patty and I went there. She took a holiday while I went to a conference. And then we joined on the front end and back end of that conference to do some things together, including going to Hiroshima. What an interesting place, and

sad. We've been to Thailand, as I wrote, and I've been to Singapore 10 times.

I don't know that I'll go there ever again. But it was pretty significant to go. I remember the first time in 1999 or 2001. You see, I remember the era, but not the exact date. And I had a good time sharing with various Christians who wanted to support the likes of Jews for Jesus. On that Saturday morning, I went with my friend Andrew, who organized my tour, and now lives in Cambodia. Andrew and I went and sat in the service. It was a three-hour service, and that was really long. But I fit right in because of my Orthodox background. The songs were somewhat similar, but not all of them. The rabbi gave a sermon on Sodom and how their sin was not being hospitable. I think there are some other sins involved, but that's the one he chose. And then, at the end, everybody retired to the back of the hall, back of the sanctuary. Where in those days, they had chicken rice for lunch. In these days, they have built the new Palace Center, and up on an upstairs floor, everybody gathers. But in those days, it was at the back of the sanctuary. I sat with the men at the men's table, and there were ladies sitting at a ladies' table. There were no signs, but you just knew. One of the fellows next to me said, 'So what do you do for work?' And I said, 'Oh, look, you don't want to know.' Sure enough, he did not want to know. Then the second guy on my right said, 'No, really, what do you do for work?' And I said, 'It's Shabbat. We shouldn't talk about business.' And he was okay with that. Maybe five minutes later, the fellow across the table said to me, 'No, really, what do

you do for work?' And I said, 'Okay, I'm a missionary. I work with Jews for Jesus.' Well, none of them flinched, and we just kept talking about anything and everything.

But at the end of the table, sat a man who had just come that weekend, also from Australia. He was visiting from Melbourne. And he ran and turned me in to the rabbi. The rabbi then motioned toward me, to come over and called for me. I thought, 'Me?' He said yes, so I came to him, just a few meters away. And he said, 'I understand you're with' - and he wouldn't say Jews for Jesus. He just sat there and waited in silence. I didn't feel like helping him, so I just sat and stood in silence. Finally, I said, 'Yeah, Jews for Jesus.' He goes, 'Well, I'd like you to leave.' I said, 'Here's a fascinating thing, Rabbi: I've been here three hours, and you haven't greeted me once. But today's sermon was on the sin of inhospitality.' He said, 'Well, I don't care. I'd like you to leave.' I said, 'Would it be all right if I finished my lunch?' He said, 'Yes, it would, and then please go.' I said, 'Okay.' So I went back to my table, and the fellows next to me wanted to know, 'What did he say? What did he say?' For this was a new rabbi who had come in just the year before. And I said, 'He told me I had to leave.' They said, 'What?' They were upset. And I took an extra portion of chicken rice. I finished it, and then I shook the hands of those fellows and left. I did go back 18 months later and was welcomed that time and every time since when I've returned. Later that afternoon, I spoke at a Prayer for Israel group led by a Chinese lawyer, who was very welcoming. In fact, when I arrived at the hall where I was scheduled to

she opened her arms wide. 'Brother Bob,' she cried. And I felt this joy of being accepted by the brothers and sisters there, over against the rejection that I'd had in the synagogue.



Evangelism training with future CLIMs and volunteers 2005 Singapore



Sing Prayer meeting 2005.



Kyoto austerity 2017

Feeling Loved and Embraced

Love is such a funny word. Ironic may be a better adjective. A word we use at all times and all places. It's in pop culture and culture of our museums. It's in religion and on the baseball field after a World Series victory. It's on Valentine's Day cards and little sweets in kindergarten and it's at the Old Age home. Besides its ubiquitous presence, it really is the most important characteristic in any relationship.

Feeling loved is a longing within every human. And that includes being noticed and accepted or at least recognised. And yet feelings are tricky; they aren't necessarily accurate or observable according to the scientific method.

We old hippies longed for love, whether it was free love or 'all you need is' that love. But the word has lost a lot of its punch. We love our dog or our iPad. We love our sports team and our grandchild. It is so overused that it feels empty at times. But it's the most relevant and misunderstood reality out there.

Like so many things in our lives, people reshape it to fit their own meaning and needs. But when John 3.16 is shown under a footballer's eyes or in rainbow man's signage, it brings back to the memory, perhaps the most famous bible verse on any given Sunday involving a sports

scene. "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son that whosoever believes in him should not perish but have everlasting life." That giving is love. It was an action, not only an emotion. And that action produced a commensurate feeling in me the first time I read the verse and the most recent time.

As Walter Trobisch wrote in 1971, "Love is a feeling to be learned."