

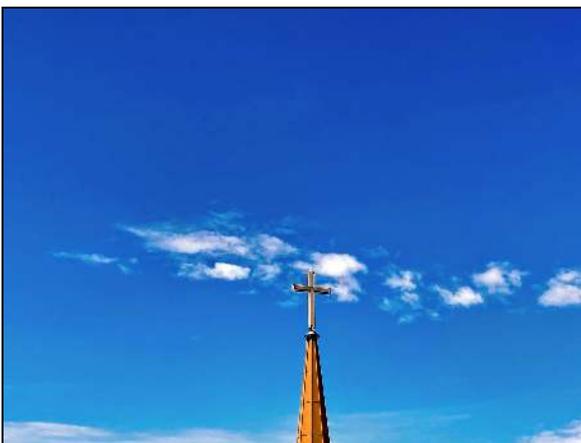


New Faces: Dosan Dream International School

Dan's Newsletter

The Latest and Greatest from South Korea

Today a man told me to shut my mouth. It was my local barber. He wanted to cut my hair without my mask on, so he used gestures to show that he wanted me to remove my mask. He tried to tell me (in Korean) to keep my mouth closed, but when that failed he simply said in English, "Shut your mouth." I smiled and obeyed. I've been doing a lot of talking lately, and it was a blessing to have to shut my mouth and be quiet.



The photo above shows one of the reasons why I have been talking so much more lately. Through a series of connections, the pastor who oversees the Dosan Dream International School (DDS), a private, Christian, alternative school, contacted me and asked me if I had a few hours I could spare each week working with his students. They are all learning English for further study at a Mennonite high school in Virginia. He wanted me to preach in the English chapel service and teach a few English classes. It sounded like a good ministry opportunity, so I said yes by faith.

Every Thursday from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., I volunteer at DDS. I have 19 students ranging from grade 4 to grade 9. Some speak English well, but others almost not at all. It is a big challenge for me and I must rely on God for guidance, patience, and wisdom. For the past month, I have also been conversing one-on-one with some of these students in the evening after they return home from school. This is an opportunity for them to improve their listening and speaking skills and for me to get to know them better. These times give me insight into the lives of Korean school-age young people and help me when I share the word of God with them during Thursday chapel times.

This year, members of my church and I volunteered to participate at Yeomyung School's summer

English camp. This was another opportunity to get to know these students better. We had fun playing games, eating together, sharing simple Bible lessons, and having an outing at a local amusement park called Lotte World. Times like these are helpful when I am trying to build relationships and target issues that are relevant to the spiritual needs of these students.

In October, I performed my first wedding ceremony ever on the outdoor terrace of a rooftop hotel

restaurant. I was asked to officiate the wedding of a Canadian English teacher that I had gotten to know over the course of six years at KONIS, the

English-language kindergarten where I have been doing staff ministry for the last seven years. She and her Korean fiance came to our church a couple of times in person and then again by Zoom. They agreed that I would be the best pastor for their non-traditional Korean wedding ceremony. I was nervous, but trusting God for the outcome, and all went well, of course, because God does all things well. They are now on their way to Côte d'Ivoire to work for Habitat for Humanity.



The other first-time event for me also happened in October, one week after the wedding—a baptism! We had been planning to have a baptism ceremony during our July summer conference on the rooftop of our church, but coronavirus regulations prevented that from happening. Patiently we waited for the regulations to be relaxed, but as August and September passed without any change, I thought we ought to find some way to have the ceremony before the weather got cold.

I had two baptismal candidates—Hannah, a high school student, and Hongjoon, a college student—and we had already had the baptism class back in July. They were eager to be baptized, so I asked Pastor Sejun if we could set up our tank on the roof and have a small ceremony. It turned out that a rooftop ceremony was still not possible, but we could incorporate the ceremony into our Sunday morning service and have the baptismal set up on the stage.

That Sunday morning, I dressed to baptize and spoke a message on being baptized into the body of Christ. At the end of the message, the three of us slipped out to dress for the ceremony while the congregation sang a song. I stepped into the tank with Hannah, and she gave a beautiful profession of her personal faith in Jesus Christ that touched even her brother's heart in Upton, Indiana where he watched via Zoom. Next, Hongjoon stepped into the water and told how he had been given an opportunity to share his faith on his university campus when friends asked him why he was never available to hang out on Sunday mornings. What he told them was amazing for someone who is a new believer. I managed not to drown either of them, and the presence of the Holy Spirit was so strong among us that day, knitting our hearts together in oneness and love.



For the past two Friday afternoons, I have been teaching Bible lessons to kindergarten students. I feel as though I have slipped back in time to my days leading chapel service at GGCA in Baltimore, only *all* the students are the youngest ones, and English is not their first language. I have to adjust my vocabulary, my volume, my speaking rate, and

try to use my body language and what can be seen of my face (due to the mask) in order to communicate a simple message. I learned at GGCA that humor keeps attention and makes a message memorable for little souls, so I have been working hard to fill my 15 minutes of teaching. I have so much to learn... I am at KONIS and at BCMA on alternating Fridays after teaching English Bible class at Yeomyung School on Friday mornings. Pray for goodness and mercy to follow me to all the schools I teach at.

If all goes according to plan and all my vaccination records and COVID tests are acceptable, I will be coming home for Christmas this year. The plan is to arrive in Maine on December 17 in time to meet Samuel Jung who will be coming from Indiana to spend Christmas with my family. After Christmas, I will be driving to Baltimore with Samuel and my parents to visit my brother Doug's family and attend the New Year's Eve service. Travel is not easy these days. Both the going and the coming back are filled with complications. Please pray that nothing hinders my travel in both directions.

I'll close with a photograph of my blood donation here in Korea. It took a while, but I finally found a way to donate blood here by having a volunteer translator meet me at the Red Cross. Blood, sweat, and tears are all part of being a missionary, right?

Thanks for your prayers and financial support.

Much love,

P. Dan

