

■Mamoru Tsujigo (TLEA Tokyo Antioch Church)

Hello everybody. I am grateful that I can testify my experience about Israel dispatch. I am Tsujigo, who belongs to Tokyo Antioch church. Thank you for your precious prayers for the team. I used to pray so that I could go to Israel once. However, I was about to give up going to Israel after time passed by. And I gave thanks for that. And there was a happening that I had never imagined before the registration of team dispatch was announced. My wife's family sent us money. So I was able to sign up for the dispatch by special grace of God. I came to have strong faith that God really hears our prayer. I had done my passport renewal, had obtained the certificate of Covid-19 vaccination, and I did the PCR test and submitted them through the website of the ministry of health, Israel with the help of TLEA's mission staff. It has been hard work for me, but people around me helped me. God spoke to me "Ask, and it will be given to you" while I was working on it.

We departed to Israel by God's grace and stayed at Dan Jerusalem Hotel on the first day. It was a gorgeous hotel with nice and rare food. We had deep prayer time at Golden gate and at Mt. Olive near the hotel. From Mt. Olive, I could see a long castle wall and many tombs where dead bodies of those who are waiting to be risen at the time God's mystery will be done. The scenery from Mt. Olive was just like those in the Bible 2000 years ago in my impression. Jesus said, "Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. You will be baptised with the Holy Spirit." Acts Chapter 1 Verse 8 says, "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."



Evangelist Tsujigo (left)



Through this word, God spoke to our church which is mission centered, that overseas mission is important. While I was praying and pondering about world media, which reported that the cause of the world's suffering by this Covid-19 pandemic is possibly a human error, God gave me the scene of the Bible in John Chapter 21 Verse 5. When Jesus stood on the shore, He called out to them, "Friends, haven't you any fish?" "No," they answered. Verse 6 He said, "Throw your net on the right side of the boat and you will find some." When they did, they were unable to haul the net in because of the large number of fish. Here we can see the veteran fishermen could not catch any fish after throwing the net to the point many times throughout the night. They must have tried out human ideas, abilities, and abundant experiences to catch fish. However, there seemed to be no fish. When they obeyed Jesus' instruction near the harbour, they had a big catch. When we obey God's guide, we will get blessed. Pondering this Bible scene, I remembered that I was there in Israel in order to begin obeying God, have faith firmly and start my steps out as a spiritual Israelite.

After we received blessings of the Holy Spirit on Mt. Olive, we had a new year worship service at the Sea of Galilee. We received word from God for the new year, listening to the wave sound of the beautiful Sea of Galilee. After that, we passed Armageddon and saw the Mediterranean sea. The brilliant beauty of the scenery made me feel like I was healed. I was touched by the beauty everywhere in Israel, because I felt like seeing the scenes in the Bible stories. I give thanks to God, who had protected this Israel dispatch team to the end.

■ Naomi Kamidate (TLEA Tokyo Antioch Church)

I thank God for your intercessory prayers. I joined this year's Israel team and there were many things I experienced there. Honestly speaking, I had no intentions of joining this year's trip. As the deadline became closer and closer I felt strongly that I had to join so I did. I knew God had a specific thing he wanted me to do there. I didn't have any strength and I didn't know how I was going to do anything but miraculously I was able to go.

My two new jobs this time were to assist the mission staff and to be a translator which were both very nerve-racking for me. I did many things like translating during the travel, talking to the people of the Immanuel tours, communicating with the hotel staff and so on. In that time there I was given the task of translating for Pastor Leon's church service. I was really nervous and didn't know whether I could do it or not. I was worried and I thought I didn't deserve this task. It was my first time translating outside of our church and I didn't think my first time translating publicly would be in Israel. But God works through our weaknesses and I was able to see his great works through this experience.

There was some thing that my mom told me after watching me translate at that service. She remembered when I was six years old we moved to America and I cried from home sickness for two weeks straight. I really didn't wanna move away from Japan and I was really really sad. I did not like living in America and I really did not want to be there. I always wondered why it was going to come of this situation. I never thought 18 years later that me moving to America would be used in this kind of way.

I really felt that God has a plan for each and every person before they were even born and that his hand is really over each person's life. It was the first time in my life that I felt that everything comes together. It was a moment where everything fell into place and I knew my purpose. God looks at things from a longer span than what we're able to. His ways and His thoughts are much higher than ours.

I knew that overseas mission work was a mission that I have in life and I knew that I would be going overseas more and more but, through this trip I was able to see

Naomi (right) translating for Pastor Paul Akimoto



what I would be doing on those trips. I not only understand it with my thoughts but this time I was able to physically do them and see myself working in those situations.

The plan that God had for me before I was born, I want to be able to accomplish that. I felt that strongly this trip. I want to serve, I want to obey, and I want to keep going to different places. I want to be able to be in the best position to complete God's will as this ministry continues to grow. I give all glory to God and I give things to him as well.

