

Today marks 12 weeks having been studying at the Discipleship Training School in YWAM Los Angeles! With only one more week left until I go off on outreach mission to Kenya, I thought I'd share with you all a bit more about how things have been going so far, a little what I've learnt and what we've been preparing for the next few months!



It's scary to think that I've already been here for just under three months and how much has happened in such a short amount of time. From incredible testimonies from our local outreach, to classes on the Kingdom of God and Father Heart of God, he truly has been with us, transforming us, equipping us and teaching us so much during this lecture phase of the school.

I hope you have been able to stay up to date with the odd short updates I send out every now and then, as well as the video which I uploaded recently showing a little about the visuals of what it's actually like on base which can be found here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BrgrOeDpQtE>

It's true what they say about how time in YWAM seems to go much faster, but living in Christian community with some incredible people really helps you to feel part of a much greater family than just those in your school. After finally getting used to living in this trailer with the 8 other men in my school, we'll only have one week left to spend together before we split off into two

different mission groups for the next few months. Living, eating and doing life with these guys everyday week after week has helped us grow so close to each other even over such a short period of time and I think you could compare it also to our relationship with God, by spending longer with him each day and being able to devote more of my time to listening to him as well as learning about him, I've grown a lot in my faith as well.

As part of our serving in the community, I have been involved in the humbling job of working in 'Grounds' which has actually been great fun! Though the work has been fairly tedious such as removing the burnt material in the base from the fires last year, resurfacing gardens with stones instead of bark, and cutting the grass. I have enjoyed spending the time talking with Jesus and it reminded me of how, straight after Jesus resurrected, he was found in the garden (most likely gardening)! As well as this, it has been great to work with some of the other guys who I also live with on these jobs getting to spend more time with them.

We've had plenty of opportunities on the weekends to go out with friends in the group to different areas of the city. Some of the places we've been able to explore have been Downtown Los Angeles, Hollywood, Malibu, and Santa Monica.



Classes

Hearing this you may be asking the question 'well, is he actually learning anything?'. Rest assured the classes have been incredible, we've had Speakers from France, Montana, Canada, Seattle, Kenya, Chile and plenty others.

WEEK 2 – THE CHARACTER AND NATURE OF GOD BY PETER WARREN.

Peter along with his wife have lead the Denver YWAM base since 1984. This week was all about having both a healthy view of God and a healthy view of how God sees us.

WEEK 3 – RECOGNIZING GOD'S VOICE BY HANNAH EASTWOOD.

Hannah has been on staff at YWAM Montana for the past 12 years with her husband. She reminded us that hearing God's voice shouldn't be complicated and that lack of hearing His voice should never result in us feeling unworthy of a personal relationship.

WEEK 4 – THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH BY TREVOR AND HILARY HORN.

Hilary has been good friends with Harvie our base leader here in L.A. stretching back to when she did her DTS in Kona. As church planters themselves, they shared about how the whole Bible points to what Jesus shared in the great commission and how it is our responsibility as the church to continue this vision through to Revelation.

WEEK 5 – FATHER HEART OF GOD BY DUDLEY WEINER.

Dudley a YWAM base leader in France taught us about the Father heart of God, and the way he spoke framed God in an easier to understand way that his love isn't beyond anyone's reach but that we can actually come to him as our 'Papa'.

WEEK 6 – HEALING AND RESTORATION BY PAT CAVEN

Pat Caven from Atlanta was part of YWAM for more than 5 years, and has been a professional counsellor for 40 years. This week was emotionally draining, and brought up and helped us deal with a lot of past shame and brokenness in our lives.

WEEK 7 – HOLY SPIRIT BY JEM OOI.

What a testimony she brought to our class! Jem did her DTS in Kona Hawaii 6 years ago and is now living in The Congo working with refugees. Her main focus all week was for us to live another dimension and by that she meant to live by the Spirit. When we allow ourselves to be in tune with the Spirit we receive a different lens to see, feel, and think in the spiritual realm.

WEEK 8 – IDENTITY BY OUR SCHOOL LEADERS, CHRISTIE AND JAVIER LOPEZ

This week, our whole DTS went to Mexico for our lectures and week of missions. They taught us the power of speaking God's truth over ourself no matter how foreign it feels at first. I have spoken and believed lies about myself for so many years and it really has effected what I think my identity is.

WEEK 9 – RELATIONSHIPS BY MIKE CRUZ

We expected a lot from this week, and Mike sure delivered! Mike Cruz, pastor at the Stirring Church shared on honouring God in our relationships, both in our dating and friendships and brought some blunt truth to all of us about Godly living.

WEEK 10 – KINGDOM OF GOD BY CARLOS PENNING

Moving into the final part of our lecture phase, Carlos from YWAM Chico got us fired up for outreach and compassion for others in the midst of giving us a vision for what the Kingdom of God looks like on earth.

WEEK 11 – JUSTICE BY TROY SHERMAN

Probably one of the most hilarious speakers we had, Troy Sherman shared about Justice and Injustice, shifting our perspectives of what active compassion really looks like and opening up about his experience and passion for ending Human Trafficking.

WEEK 12 – MISSIONS BY OUR BASE LEADERS ROBERT AND JENNY BARBER

And finally we came to the ending week of our lectures, Robert and Jenny Barber, the base leaders at YWAM Los Angeles moved us into action by commissioning us and baptising 2 of the students in our school.

Local Outreach

Each week on Fridays we would spend the day in Downtown Los Angeles, Skid Row, and Hollywood loving people by giving out hugs and food, listening to people and their stories, sharing the good news of the gospel and praying with them.

Every trip there were new stories and testimonies to share of what had happened, from people responding to words or pictures we had for them, to thankfulness, and some who chose to start following Jesus and feeling encouraged by what we said.

In Skid Row, we got to chat to so many people who had been homeless, many for most of their lives and had no real hope of getting off the streets. Though we weren't able to give them money, what we could give them was our time, our attention, our lunch, our believe that they are important human beings. It was incredible to hear their stories and many were happy for us to pray for them and the situation they were in. Some also paid a great interest into what we had to share about how Jesus deeply wanted a relationship with them. One guy who I met who lived in the park there on the first night I became good friends with, over time he showed me his family and we shared about faith and the struggles he had come across in his journey. Just for me to remember his name each time or pay attention to him made him feel so loved. Each time I met him we prayed together and over time I was able to share more of the gospel with him, even though we never get to see the fruits of these labours, I still pray that the Holy Spirit continues to help them and prompt them on their paths.



In Hollywood, we had days where we went on prayer walks, days where we gave out free hugs and prayer which was very popular, and a day when we approached specific people that God had given us pictures of beforehand. Though many of these interactions were shorter, people really felt blessed by the acts of love we were showing to them and were encouraged on their journey of faith as we prayed for them and spoke with them.

On the last Thursday of our Lecture phase, we were dropped off in a city far away from the base with 4 other people in our outreach team as part of a team building and mission exercise. Without any belongings, phones or money we

were to complete challenges like sharing our testimony with someone, buying a drink for someone who is homeless with money raised whilst being there and praying for particular people. God provided for us in so many ways, from the people to speak to, to the generosity of those who gave money to us. We got to share the gospel with several different people and bless others in prayer and with the drinks we were able to buy. By the end, we had raised enough for the 5 of us to get the bus back to the base, but as we were waiting, I called out to some driver and he offered to give us a lift home. We got talking with him and he was very helpful insisting he didn't want any money and that any time we wanted a lift to give him a call. When we got back we invited him in to join us for dinner and we got to talk more about YWAM and faith in Jesus.



In many ways, as well as the help we were able to do locally, these experiences have also given us some more practise for when we are on mission elsewhere especially internationally for our outreach.

International Outreach

These last 12 weeks of study have been incredible and, as well as deepening our relationships with God and growing our understanding of mission, it has been preparing us for the second part of the Discipleship Training School, the International Outreach Phase!

As you may have heard, 10 of us from my school and 2 staff are part of Team Huruma (Meaning compassion in Swahili) who will be going on mission to Kenya for 4 weeks then the Philippines for 6 weeks. Each week we have been spending time meeting together, learning about the culture and praying for the contacts and those that we will meet when we go.

Though we are unsure of exactly what work we'll be doing whilst we're there, we know that it will most likely involve some preaching, sharing testimonies, loving kids and families, painting and some other manual labour.

In our meetings we have also been learning the language and practising some skits and dances as well as kids worship songs for when we are there.

Easter weekend has been mainly spent packing and preparing for our travels as we leave at 4am on Monday 2nd April! We are all very excited if not a little nervous, but we know God will be guiding us every step of the way.

Firstly we will be in Kisumu and Awasi in Kenya involved in ministry there. Whilst we're on outreach I will have very little contact online and with you all but I'll endeavour to send updates when I can. The best way to follow our travels whilst we're away is probably on our team website at <http://huruma.strikingly.com>



Prayer Points

- Protection whilst we travel, it will take 3 days to arrive in Awasi with different layovers and changing transport.
- God's guidance as we follow his lead in what we will be doing on mission when we are there and that what is prepared can be used most effectively for his kingdom.
- Unity within the team by the Holy Spirit, that we would be able to continue encouraging each other with the gifts they've been given and not fall out with one another.