

As I was on my way back to Deni and Dori's, the kiwi fruit came to mind. Sounds a little strange, I know, but there was a reason. Part of it is that I want to remember the fact that God is at work whether I see it or not. But, I'll get back to the kiwi in a bit . . .

This was going to be my last Sunday out evangelizing in the Italy piazzas before going back to the States for 3 months. Since I'm "vehicle-less", I planned to bike to the train station and take the train to Adria in order to evangelize there. When I arrived at the station, I found that the scholastic train schedule had just changed over to the summer train schedule. I was unaware of this until I got there and found I'd missed an earlier train and would need to wait a while for the next one. Was it worth it? I almost decided to turn back. I called Deni to talk it out and decided to go in the end. When time is put in terms of "even 15 minutes would be worthwhile if it means sharing with people about Christ" then it's hard to turn around, even if my flesh cries against it. Which it did! I had such a valid excuse! Late train, tired, too much hassle . . . well, I thought I had a valid excuse in there somewhere ... Praise the Lord for the exhortation of other believers (Deni in this case) to spur us on.

I had ridden my bike to the station with the intention of bringing it on the train with me, which I did. However, I had never done that before so of course I caused some mild confusion when one of the train conductors asked for my bike ticket. What bike ticket? Well, he let me go without paying but he did sit down across from me in order to patiently explain that I needed a separate ticket for my bike which could be purchased at any station, etc. He was very kind. That was a grace of God's because I could have been fined! After explaining everything and answering my questions, he asked me where I was from (the accent always betrays me;). Then he predictably asked why I was in Italy. I had an opportunity to share with him about Christ and that a relationship with Him is the only thing which matters in life. He asked if I was Catholic and when I responded "no", he held up his fingers in an "x", as if to say "anything non-Catholic is off limits with me!". However, he did accept a tract willingly and with a smile. One tiny seed. Now it's in the Creator's hands.

Despite arriving late in Adria, I went out for about 45 minutes on my own. Dori had worked that afternoon and wasn't able to come with me. I'm always amazed when I read about men like the apostle Paul, Robert Chapman, Martin Luther, etc. Men who went out solo oftentimes to preach the gospel and evangelize. Let's be honest. I find it much easier in two. I want to ask for prayer regarding future evangelistic endeavors. Prayer for my own heart. Prayer for boldness. And prayer for a possible "buddy" to come with me, considering Dori is unavailable at the moment.

I was able to hand out a few tracts to a couple different groups of two and three people but I didn't have any in-depth conversations that evening. I hesitated a lot more being on my own. I was still able to plant a few tiny seeds here, a few tiny seeds there, but oh, there is still so much room to grow in greater dependency upon Christ and not others (i.e. evangelistic buddies)! Like I said, I would appreciate your prayers.



Anyway, I kind of shuffled my feet on the way back to Deni and Dori's apartment but then the Lord brought the kiwi to mind and I was greatly encouraged. You see, that was a few more tracts and points of contact, a few more "encounters" with the truth about Christ than those people would have had otherwise if someone hadn't gone out at all.

So, this is where the kiwi comes in. Take a look at the picture on the left. Can you see the seed on my finger? Look how tiny it is!

The picture on the right shows several kiwi fruit hanging from the vine. This picture was taken at a neighboring farm where they grow rows and rows of kiwi. Although, there's at least a dozen kiwi in the picture, I know from passing by that farm often, that this picture only represents a very small part of all the kiwi fruit which are grown there.



The final picture shows a bit more of the plants and the farm. This was taken when my mom and my sister, Alexa, and my dad, came to visit me in Italy. They are standing in front of rows and rows of kiwi plants and of course the picture doesn't do the plants justice. There are hundreds if not more!



I asked Marco and Sherrie the following day if one tiny black seed taken from a kiwi fruit could be used to grow a plant. Yes. Really, it's astonishing! Our Creator God can make kiwi after kiwi after kiwi grow from one little black seed (and lots of care!). Is this not incredibly encouraging? A word here, a tract there, integrity in the lifestyles we lead, an in-depth conversation, a Bible study, prayer. All of these are means of sowing tiny seeds.

I thank my great Father, that because of who He is and how He has mercifully opened my eyes to see Jesus Christ and cling to Him

as my Savior and Lord, that I can rest in His perfect timing and sovereign work in lives. We don't know how God will work but we know our purpose as His children. May we do our part to make Christ known, being faithful as His ambassadors upon this earth, planting our little black seeds wherever we go.

Planting and rejoicing,
Ashley