

A Day with Dad—Our Eastern Home Missionary

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It was our first day of spring break when Dad got my brother and me up at the crack of dawn to go out for breakfast. Well, what began as breakfast turned out to be a wonderful day with him at work.

I trudged my sleep deprived body downstairs at 8:30 a.m. (No, not exactly the crack of dawn, but it seemed like it. It was spring break!) only to see my father typing with rigorous concentration. “Oh, just a few emails,” I thought to myself. However, he barely offered me a glance as I stepped in to say good morning. “Must be some *real* important emails,” I thought to myself.

After my numerous efforts to wake Jon from his spring hibernation, he too was finally revived. We drove to Toby’s Restaurant for our two buck breakfasts while talking about Dad’s recent call to Edmonton.

“You know, it’s real cold up there,” exclaimed the owner of Toby’s, “but yeah, that’s alright though. There’s a Toby’s up there. Just make two lefts and a right, and you’ll see it.” Dad is a frequent customer at Toby’s, and it seems like the owner and his wife had already heard the news. On a regular basis, Dad eats breakfast here with one of the men on the steering committee. The wife, who is also the lone waitress, claims to be a Christian but has not visited our mission yet.

After our hearty breakfasts, Dad bargained his way into two free cups of coffee, and then we headed to his office for what was supposed to be “just one hour of work.”

Dad didn’t turn out to be the most organized person in the world and so required some of our help in his search for some old sermons. He needed one for his trip to Allentown that he was making the next day and twelve for a series on the Reformed Witness Hour. While Dad worked on a speech which he was planning to give in Bethel and prepared for his Bible study for that night, we looked for those sermons.

After the hard copies were discovered, Jon began his search for the sermons on the floppy disks while I sought to write out an explanation that the word “world” in [John 3:16](#) doesn’t mean everyone without exception. Dad wanted to see the simple explanation I might come up with because a contact in Allentown wanted the argument recounted to him.

Amidst Jon’s groans of frustration resulting from his little success in his search, the phone kept ringing every few minutes. A few calls were from a member of the group who was having some difficulties that needed pastoral attention and prayer. Dad talked to him and his wife for awhile and then offered a visit which was declined. However, after moments of encouragement and advice, Dad hung up seeming assured that things were well.

After Dad described to me an email from a couple who was planning on returning after months of absence from the mission, he got back to his speech and Bible study preparation.

No sooner had he began, however, when a single man who had been coming to the mission semi-regularly walked in. “I was in the area for a job interview and thought I’d just stop

by,” he replied. Dad could tell that he had something on his mind, and so asked if he wanted to talk. Soon, they had gone on a long walk, leaving Jon and I to man the mission office.

Before their walk, the young man, a teacher, had actually chatted with me while Dad was finishing up another phone call. He lives about an hour away and was looking to move closer to the mission. It turns out that on his walk with Dad, he expressed his desire to become a confessing member at the mission. Starting this coming Sunday, he would be coming to both services and mid-week catechism classes.

Since we were fully engaged in the work we were doing, it was a quarter 'til 3 before we realized. We were interrupted by a phone call from Mom reminding Dad of an appointment that he had at the high school at 3:30. “How about Hunan Palace for lunch, boys, as a reward for all your hard work?!” Dad exclaimed.

So, at 3:00, the three of us headed to the Chinese restaurant down the street for chicken, soup, rice, and squid. Of course, Dad knows the owner and waitress at that restaurant too, and so they served the food with gusto. As usual, my dad shoveled his food down with gusto as well. “When are you gonna come hear me preach again?” my dad usually asks between bites. The waitress serving us actually has visited the mission a couple times and does go to Ladies Fellowship.

During lunch, we conversed about the mission, all we did that day, and how we could use more members at the mission to help in the work. “If just one family from Michigan would move down, they could help in so many ways,” I remarked. My father didn’t have much to say about that comment. All I got was a sincere nod accompanied with the raising of his eyebrows. And I don’t think it was because his mouth was full of delicious substance.

After his quick lunch, my dad rushed off to his 3:30 appointment, and that’s the last I saw of him until dinner that night. Before he left, however, he made sure the bill was right—accurate and with his usual 10 percent discount! Don’t ask me—I don’t know how he does it.

Early the next morning, Dad left for Allentown. Jon dropped him off at the airport, and Titus, my youngest brother, went along as well because it was his birthday. Somehow, my dad was able to get a free sandwich at a restaurant there because it was Titus’ birthday.

Somehow, my dad and Jon also managed to strike up a conversation with a lady at the information booth about marriage and divorce. She was complaining about the divorce rate and recommending that Jon not get married until he was at least 25. This gave Dad a chance to enlighten her on the scriptural truths about marriage. She was grateful, accepted Dad’s business card, and gave Titus a free coloring book. I don’t know how Dad does it, but I earnestly pray that I, as well as many others in our denomination, may grow more and more mission-minded.

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