

## TRIBUTE TO FRAN & Paul HIEBERT

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One of the first things that struck me about the Hieberts was their choice of their home church – they belonged to a small Mennonite Brethren Church in East LA, where the pastor was an ex-gang member, and ex-convict. They both were so like Jesus in how they embraced those on the margins of society, placing them in the center of their hearts. My first quarter, in an Urban Anthropology class, Paul told us of spending his Saturday, repairing the floor of this little church. They were greatly loved there, and also greatly loved the congregation.

This capacity for embrace I saw again the next year, when as a TA, Paul and I took a group of students to skid row in Los Angeles to share a meal at Union Rescue Mission. There was really no place to park, and it was dark, so Paul offered to stay with the cars. (Now that there is the Gold Line metro, I am sure he would have recommended we take public transportation) When we returned, he was deep in conversation with a homeless man, listening to his story. In class, he would speak of the importance of listening to people's stories, and here he was, doing just that on the streets of skid row.

Fran shared this capacity for welcome. Each month during my time as an MA student, the women in the School of World Mission (now SIS) came together in the Hiebert home to be together, to share stories, to learn and grow together. Fran opened her home and also her heart to women in mission.

My life will be forever enriched by the welcome and embrace of Paul and Fran Hiebert.

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