

China Mission Trip

I have grown up hearing the phrase “America; God’s country.” However, after spending less than three weeks in the world’s number one up-and-coming nation, this phrase has been changed for me. Now it says “China; God’s country.” It appears that America may be losing its Christian identity as time progresses. Once known as the center of Christianity in the world, Europe has now become an atheist land. Unfortunately, America may be following that trend in its religious identity. Now, China, which recently had been known as the strict communist nation, is rising in its Christian numbers daily. In fact, I will still be considered a young man when China becomes the world’s leading Christian nation. By traveling to China as a short-term mission trip, I confirm that I have gained much perspective on my own religion. My life in the states has seen Christianity simply as part of the old fashioned American culture. In Los Angeles, Christian doctrine is an old way of life. In Abilene, Christianity is that thing everyone does on Sundays. However, in China, Christianity is something new and out of the blue. In China, I got to experience what it is like to walk in a country where Christianity is on the rise, an experience I have not had before. Three weeks in China has enabled me to see a broader picture of Christianity in the world. However, if I had simply gone to China on a fluke, my experience there would not have been nearly as beneficial. Looking back, I would say there were two main factors that contributed to my experience in China; relationships and preparation. I believe strong relationships and objective preparation made our mission a great experience.

Ever since high school, I have excited myself with the idea of mission work in another country. My first thought was Africa or maybe Papua New Guinea. My mind had never crossed East Asia before. Then I took Message of the Old Testament with Kilnam Cha. I grew up going to church, but I had never learned so much about the Old Testament before. It is three semesters later, and it still stands as my favorite course here at ACU. Through taking his course, my Sunday school theologies were appropriately challenged and I am now more capable to read the Old Testament on my own. Around the end of the semester, he told our class about his mission work in China. “A mission trip to China? Doesn’t sound as exciting as cutting through the forests in Papua New Guinea,” I thought. “A mission trip to China with Dr. Cha? It’s time to raise some money!” I am convinced that I would not be involved with China today if Cha had not been my professor. All this is to say that relationships are a main component in our field of mission work. Our relationships with each other in the group, with our supporting brothers and sisters, and with God are what enabled anything good to come out of our work in China.

In Cha’s Abrahamic Faiths class, one of the things we discussed is some of the faults that are found throughout the history of Judaism, Islam, and Christianity. This greatly contributed to my understanding of how the world views my religion. Perhaps for the first time, I acknowledged that if someone had a negative view of my faith in God, I couldn’t blame them. Not all of them, at least. Atrocities have been committed from within the body of Christians and

the world has not forgotten them. Now I realize that as a Christian, I have so much power to hurt people, and to hurt them without knowing it. The thought of a mission trip, which at first seemed to be harmless and obviously God's will, has now become something much more delicate and sacred. Evangelizing carelessly can end up hurting others instead of helping them. Now I see how important it is to treat a mission trip such as ours with much more sensitivity and responsibility. Taking Cha's Abrahamic Faiths class helped prepare our minds for the work we were to do in China. Prayers, numerous meetings, and discussions about the context of our evangelism in China were also essential to our preparation for the mission work. I believe this preparation positively enhanced my experience in China and enabled me to learn so much more while I was there. God is awesome, and I pray that all I have learned is relevant to his kingdom.