

Shared Accomplishments

Reflecting back on my stint as a missionary in China, I would say that the most major achievement was the fact that my family and I were able to influence the Chinese people's lives in a positive way. More importantly, we could to provide close friends with a knowledge of salvation through Jesus and an understanding of God's word (The Bible - John 3:16; John 1:1). Sometimes missionaries may be tempted to doubt the fruit of their labours or even their ability to be used by the Lord. However, since returning to Europe it is certainly encouraging to know that you played an integral part in a fellow missionary currently ministering to your previous efforts. Mrs S (See Picture 1) is such an example of somebody that we could lead to Jesus and who is now studying with a fellow labourer.

Picture 1:



Picture 1: Studying salvation and other topics with newcomers to Jesus

Not too Easy

Perhaps the most challenging aspect of being a missionary in China was that the infrastructure, standard of living and protocol was not was I was used to. Flooding was fairly common as the drainage in the roads had not been finished due to corrupt Politian's bagging the allocated funds for this purpose (See picture 2). The driving mentality was such that I refused to drive in China, depending on public transportation, which was safe and strangely comforting. Additionally, the presence of e-bikes; a type of scooter with no engine and battery powered, on the pavements were disconcerting an upsetting. Finally, the seeming lack of manners were also difficult for me as being from England, I am used to a certain conduct. However, I learned that this behaviour was not intentional, and often the locals were very apologetic.

Picture 2:



Picture 2: Flooding Improvisation

Unknown Jesus

The fact that many Chinese people have never heard about who Jesus is, makes the country a unique mission field. Initially, this was quite surprising for me as in Europe almost everybody has had some exposure to Christianity in one form or another. For example, my wife had an experience with a lovely Chinese friend who was curious about why and how we were such 'nice people' and what we had she wanted for her daughter. We were then able to pray with her to receive Jesus into her life and heart (See picture 3). Other friends had many questions regarding why the world appears to be deteriorating and in moral decline to which we were able to explain that without Jesus as the centre of people's decisions the state of the world was inevitable. As God's word exhorts us to acknowledge Him in all our ways and He will direct our steps (The Bible - Proverbs 3:5,6). A further observation was that as Europe and the west has been steeped in Christianity throughout the centuries, the fact that China has not seems to provide an almost tangible spiritual darkness that is also perhaps responsible for the Chinese receptivity to the truth.

Picture 3:



Picture 3: After praying with a close friend to receive Jesus

My China

My overall perception of the people in China is that they are eager to make friends with foreigners. This can be advantageous at times, especially in directing them towards the Lord but at other times it can be misleading and time consuming as at times I felt as though I was the object of somebody's desire to improve their English and understanding of a foreign mentality. Additionally, I was somewhat disappointed that the country appears to have 'sold its' soul' for materialism, industry and gain which has resulted in the beauties of traditional China having given way to a superficial concrete jungle lacking character. One such example is that while visiting a city in the south of Yunnan I discovered that the traditional looking town centre had been built five years previously, which had prior to that been a more western looking town centre which before that had the original traditional town centre.

On a more positive note, China appears to be open to almost anything under the guise of progress which can make for a unique and adventurous ride.

What Does It Take?

I am certainly no expert in helping people to find God's will for their lives. However, I can share my experience of the prerequisite to knowing God wanting me there was a strong desire, an almost knowing that this was a definite purpose for my existence. My wife also had the same 'burden' or desire. This is not dissimilar to how the Bible indicates that the godly desires we have are from Him and that He makes them come to fruition (Psalm 37: 4,5). I propose that this is the first step. Below is a picture of my wife and son in China (See picture 4). Additional requirements for China is that as mentioned before, there is an almost tangible spirit of fear and it can be easy to lose your temper due to the lack of manners and driving protocol. This can be countered by pacing yourself and not trying to do too much in one day. I had to learn fairly early on that accomplishment orientation is less important than patience and consistency.

A final piece of advice is that at times it can be tempting to have had enough of living in what can at times seem like another world. A strategy that my wife and I hit upon was to not act on impulse but to wait 48 hours before making any hasty decisions.

Picture 4:



Picture 4: My wife and son at home with friends

Final Thoughts

As I look back on my decision to go to China as a missionary, I feel grateful to God that I could do something with an eternal value for a part of my life as we can become so entrenched the material world that we have no time for these activities. Additionally, I believe that God speaks to us all in different ways as we are all different so please take anything that I have written here to the Lord in prayer before implementing into your life.

I hope and pray that this short account of my experience has been a blessing to you and should anyone have any specific questions please direct them towards the website. God bless and keep you. Thank you for reading.