

COCM – England Trip

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Life is a maze. A maze has a beginning and an end, like any other maze. The problem with life's maze is, although everybody reaches the end eventually, some are happy when they find their end and some are not. The happiness in the end depends on whether you believe in God or not. Because my family and I had already discovered this secret, we decided to spread it, or the gospel, to the students in England. Therefore, we went on a COCM missionary trip to England.

This winter vacation rather than partying with their friends, like every other American, I was accompanying my parents to spread the gospel in England. Many would see this as a waste of a vacation, and nothing more than an over-protective parent's dream. I saw this the same way, if not worse. Some may see it as an amazing opportunity to be able to travel to England during a vacation, but I had never been more reluctant to do anything like that. I had been dragged along onto this trip, forced to go. It was initially my father's idea, but my mother supported it. Since I am only 16, I cannot be left alone at home. I begged not to go, to stay somewhere else, or to do something else but I failed in the end. Before I knew it, I was on an American Airlines flight to England.

Upon arrival at the COCM mission center, everything went downhill. Only old people were there, and not a trace of someone my age was around. (At this time the students had not yet arrived). The only good thing that happened to me on that first day was that I found there was internet access. The upstairs had eight computers with internet

access, and without them I'm sure I would have had much worse time. I sat by myself for all the meals that day, and my mood continued to get worse. I was like a human bomb, and the first day plugged in all the wires; I was just waiting to explode.

Day two as I was dragged along, I kept a mental note. I was secretly counting down the days until I could finally go back home. Day two was almost just as horrific as the first. My father thought it would be a good idea to bring us to the mall because of my complaints; little did he know it could only make the situation worse. Not only had he given me no British Pounds for shopping, he refused to let me browse the mall by myself. I was forced to shop within a five feet radius of my father, and ended up looking at cosmetics the entire time. I was a jalapeño pepper: ready to explode and anything that touched me suffered. My mother, unfortunately, took all the heat. Because I was scared of yelling at my father; I decided to take it out on my mother (despite the fact she had nothing to do with this). She actually tried to help me, but because I couldn't contain all the anger inside of me; I decided I had to let it out somehow. Poor mommy! That shopping trip ended in a clash and only made the already-terrible trip far worse for me.

As things got worse and worse, I was almost positive that this trip would be as awful as I thought. But as God works in strange ways, he always works in the best times. As the students began filing in, I met some very nice people and made my first friend. The miraculous part about all this was that I didn't have "FOB" (FOB stands for Fresh off Boat) friends before. Born in the US, I found some of Chinese cultures are hard to take. But as this trip progressed, I became friends with more and more of them. I was even surprised about how well I was getting along with them. My parents told me it was God's blessing, but I was too blind to realize it at the time.

The sermons were all wonderful, and one after another the testimonies really spoke to me. One in particular was Lily's testimony. It talked about a very personal issue that concerned her marriage. She told of when she was younger, she didn't really love her husband, and she fought with him very often. She began to break into tears towards the end of it and wrapped it up with a very powerful phrase, "because of God's love, we never say the word divorce ever again." I thought, "Wow. Not only was it a very touching and personal testimony, but also a very well written one. Their hearts now come across."



The worships were wonderful as well; a man who had majored in music served as the pianist and without his playing the worships wouldn't have been the same. It was because he was able to play so powerfully and improvise so gracefully that sometimes the congregation was brought to tears. What's even better is when I approached him, he simply said, "It's all thanks to God, everyone has their blessings and talents." His humbleness really surprised me because he was one of the best pianists I had ever met.

I think that without God, this trip wouldn't have been the same at all. It is because of God that I was able to meet these wonderful people and it was because of God that these people were wonderful after all. Their hearts were full love, and they all serve as a testimony to me that God is real. I realized it is not the Bible or the church that serves as a first step into Christianity but the love of a Christian, a human being. It is this

abnormal compassion that has allowed so many people to turn their lives to the Lord. It was a wonderful trip and in the words of Mary Wang, “I never regretted a moment of it, it has been a tremendous honor to serve God.”