

Everywhere a Mission Field

As most of you know, I returned from a 2 week trip to Asia where we were doing a variety of mission activities. This is the first time I have been on a trip like this to a location I have previously visited. As a result, I found it much easier to focus on the goal of sharing Christ and praying continually for the lost people around us. We had multiple opportunities to share our faith and to build strategic relationships that our hosts can build upon at a later time. There is one question that keeps coming to mind about short-term-mission trips: *Why does it seem that people have a much easier time sharing their faith on a 2 week mission trip half-way around the world than they do at home?* As I pondered this question I have come up with several possible reasons:

- 1. There are a higher number of lost people in places like Asia making you more aware of the Great need they have for Christ.** This is true. The people group we were trying to reach in Asia is less than 1% evangelized. However, the majority of people in our community are not saved. You don't have to "go looking" for people in our city that have a desperate need for Christ.
- 2. We don't face the fear of ridicule or being labeled a "Jesus Freak" in places like Asia. No one knows us there.** Having a fear of sharing your faith is typical. Some of this is a fear of failure. This is misplaced. The only way we can fail in this is by *failing* to share. It is the job of the Holy Spirit to convict people of their need for salvation. It is our job to merely tell. Others have a fear that they will be branded a "Jesus Freak", or "Religious nut". The reality is that this almost never happens. Most people will respect you for your beliefs when accompanied by a moral, ethical lifestyle. If you are called a "Jesus Freak", you should wear it as a badge of honor. Most of us are too deep undercover to risk this label.
- 3. There is a greater sense of urgency while on a short-term mission trip. If we don't tell them about Christ, how will they hear?** Yes, we do have a great sense of urgency on a mission trip. Sometimes we have only a few days to impact a lost culture. It is easy to take advantage of every situation. But is it any different here? If we don't tell those around us, how will they hear? We can't sit back and wait for someone else to do it. If God puts someone in your path, whether at home or abroad, you should be prepared to share with them.
- 4. Sharing Christ is our priority on a short-term mission trip. At home we are too busy with our own agendas and schedules.** This is in my opinion, the biggest reason for the difference in our evangelistic behavior at home and abroad. On a mission trip, you are consumed with sharing Jesus with those around you. You have set aside your routine and schedule to do this singular task. You have likely been spending time in prayer for the lost and for opportunities to share. Maybe for the first time, your eyes are open to the lost people around you. At home, our schedules, business, and life in general seem to get in the way. We are typically too busy getting to our next meeting or errand to even pray for the lost people in our path, let alone taking time to talk with them about spiritual matters. What it comes down to is selfishness trumping salvation.

So, how do we get out of this rut? First, we begin by praying for the lost in our community that we will encounter. Pray that God will open your eyes to those around us that desperately need Him. Second, just like on the mission field, we need to look at every situation as an opportunity to share with someone. Everywhere we go. Finally, we must get over the fear of sharing. The worst thing that will likely happen in sharing your faith is someone telling you that aren't interested in hearing about that. When compared with the fear of imprisonment, torture, and death that believers in parts of Asia face for sharing their faith, it seems like a silly excuse.

What thoughts do you have on this issue? Better yet, how have you taken advantage of opportunities to share this week on this mission field? Let me know.

Blessings,

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