

# **New York: A conversation on the doorstep**

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Between Christmas and New Year's Day, I was blessed to serve with other students from Texas and several other states to spread the gospel in New York City. Together, we served many Chinese churches by handing out flyers and little gifts or simply having conversations with the locals. One congregation my team served—the Lighthouse Chinese Church in Brooklyn—was very small but willing to spread the good news with the locals.

To be honest, it was very difficult for me—as well as some of the others—to understand how simply passing out flyers would benefit the church or help the community know about Christ. I wasn't very excited about going out to random streets and handing out bags that contained a card with the church's information. I was willing and happy to talk to people and let them know about the church. Unfortunately, not many of us got to experience that. After my group walked for about an hour and a half, we had yet to come across someone to talk to.

On our walk back, I decided to go up to a house and knock on the door. No one answered at first, so I left a bag on the doorstep. As I walked down the steps, a man came out the side of the house. He asked if I was looking for someone in particular. I explained we were there to invite people to the Lighthouse Chinese Church. The man, Richard, was very curious why we wanted to invite people to a local Chinese church, since we weren't even Chinese ourselves. I explained to him we were college students from several different states, working with this church, and we also wanted to share with people a little about our faith.

I asked Richard about his religious background and what he believed. He told me he was Catholic for a while, but he wasn't anymore because he didn't agree with some of the church's teachings. I told him I believe in God, who gave up his one and only Son on the cross for our sins. He said he couldn't understand that, but he respected it.

I asked Richard what he did on his everyday life, and he said, "Nothing, really." He said he was very close to his family once, but everyone had either died or moved out of the country. He also mentioned the love his family showed to one another. This interested me, so I asked how he felt about that now. Richard said it was a bit depressing and sad really, because he didn't have that any longer. I explained to him that us as humans, we long for love and that there is One greater than any other love who would satisfy us eternally. I told him love comes from God alone. Again, he wasn't very receptive to that, but he respected it.

We had about a 20-minute conversation about what he believed and what we know to be the truth. I could tell Richard was hungry for the truth, but he was also cautious why everything we said pointed back to God. I closed our conversation by saying: "Richard, we are servants of God. And we strongly believe this is no coincidence that we are here now talking with you. God put us here at this specific moment to share our faith with you. We care about you and that is why we have been here talking to you. Is there anything we can pray for in your life?"

At that moment, a lady and another man came out of the same house screaming that he had a very important phone call and to get inside. He immediately turned away and said, "I have to go." The expression on his face said to me, "I'm still curious about what you guys are saying."

Once again, I felt disappointed because we were going to return to the church as we had gone out, without a person to talk to and pray for that he/she would come to know Christ. So we stepped off Richard's property

and off to one side then started praying for him. I prayed God would continue to use others to reach out to him, for God to work in Richard's life and prepare him to be a person of peace. Throughout the rest of the day, my heart was heavy as I wondered if I had done enough for that man. Through constant prayer and communication with God, I was reminded that even through the smallest gesture of obedience, God can work miracles. It was not about what I did that day or any other day but rather what God worked through me. The New Testament talks about us being God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do his work, which he prepared in advance. Now my heart is at peace, knowing God will place someone else to continue his perfect will in Richard's life.

This moment helped me understand that everything we do for God's purpose, whether small or big in our eyes, is enough for God to continue his will. God worked through our little acts of service in every place we went and, with whomever we came across, whether at a church, or out on the streets, at a restaurant or on a subway.

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