

An aerial photograph of the Montreal skyline at sunset. The sun is low on the horizon, casting a warm, golden glow over the city. The sky transitions from a pale blue at the top to a deep orange near the horizon. The city's architecture is silhouetted against the bright light, with various skyscrapers and buildings visible. In the foreground, a dense forest of trees with autumn foliage in shades of green, yellow, and orange is visible. The overall mood is serene and contemplative.

POST-MISSION REFLECTIONS: MONTREAL

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INTRODUCTION

This year we were very fortunate to be able to go on mission to Montreal. When we were there, we were given the opportunity to serve as well as learn about the history and legacy of Christianity in Montreal. Through this experience, we were able to grow, appreciate different points of view, and learn about a context that is very different from our own. We are very thankful for this opportunity, and we hope that we can continue to make an impact wherever we go. These are some of the reflections that we wrote after our trip that we wanted to share with you.

- Sarah, Josh and Jocelyn



REFLECTION

Describe some moments that stood out to you. Why do they stand out to you?
How do you think they altered your perceptions or thinking?

I think the moment that stood out to me the most was the time when I went to Tyndale and one of the girls, Celena, wrote on the blackboard; "I love my life." It was interesting to see especially since Rev. Joe Reed told me to think about what that means for me, as I am on this mission trip. I never really thought about that but once he mentioned it, it really put things into perspective. The children at Tyndale Community Centre probably didn't have the best upbringing, but they were still smiling and able to enjoy their lives. What does it mean to love your life? How can you love your life? It must be hard for the kids at Tyndale to forget about their worries and troubles at home and go to summer camp and enjoy themselves, but for them to always be there with bright smiles and wide eyes is such a wonderful thing to see.

- Joshua Chung

Something that stood out to me was when Jonas, one of the people that we met, said something like, "you guys are Presbyterian, we're Catholic, but we all worship the same God so why does any difference even matter?" This really stuck with me was because being Protestant and Catholic are two very distinct concepts in my head, but after going on this mission and hearing a Catholic person say something like that, I realized that there really is no difference. Maybe there's a difference in the way we express our faith, but the root of why we worship is the same.

- Jocelyn Chung



I think the moment that stood out to me was the first time we worked at Le Chaînon, which is an organization that cares for struggling women by offering them food, shelter, clothes, and supplies. It was the first typical mission experience we had, and the first time we got to see what mission was in Montreal. What stood out to me was the guy we were working with, Étienne, who was very animated and enthusiastic. He went to culinary school, but was so happy to be working in merchandising, away from the kitchen. His attitude towards his job was really eye opening. He seemed to be genuinely happy doing it even though it's tiring, and he was definitely overqualified for it. This made me think about my own attitude in serving others and what it meant to be happy with your life. In Etienne's case, it didn't take a lot and to make others happier. What does it take for me to do the same?

- Sarah Choe



How do your experiences shape your thinking about the idea that “For God so loved the world” (John 3:16)?

Something that all three of us can agree on was that the people we met in Montreal are some of the nicest and most welcoming people we’ve ever met. They showed us unconditional love, and even though our French was not the best, they still put in the effort to bond with us and get to know us on a deeper level. We met so many people who sacrifice so much of their time, energy, and money every day to help others. I think the idea that “For God so loved the world” was shaped when we saw how boundless and borderless God’s love is. The people around us showed so much of it, and they were such a blessing to us and many others. Since we got to see so many organizations in Montreal, we got to see just how much people help those who are in need. We were able to truly see what is going on behind the scenes. We know that God does love this world because we saw it in the volunteers and directors of these programs. Their hearts are so big and are always reaching out to those in need.



What did I learn from spending so much time with my team members? What does this teach me about the joys and challenges of community?

I think that we were very blessed because everyone that was on our team was very outgoing and friendly. No one was quiet or reserved, not that that's a bad thing, but we all had enough energy within ourselves to keep going no matter how tiring and hot it was. We were able to truly bask in each other's presence and become a crutch for one another when things weren't going too well. We realized that the people you are with can really have an impact on not only your mood, but also your productivity and your overall attitude towards what you're doing. It's really easy to complain about too much work, or not liking the work you're doing, but being with each other every day really helped us have a different outlook on what we were doing each day.



Community is something that is so important. All of the programs that we visited were essentially run by the community out of love. People saw an issue and wanted to create a solution and through this, they were able to share love between them. The joy of community is that we can stand in solidarity with one another without any barriers between us knowing that we are all the same. I think we also grew a really deep joy and understanding about how amazing it is to be a part of the St. Timothy community. We used to only rely on each other for things like fellowship and having fun, but after going on this trip and developing deeper relationships with each other, we learned how to rely on each other in a more meaningful way

How does this experience shape your thinking about God and God's calling for your life?

God called us to go to Montreal. Even if we weren't ready to go out and serve another community far away, He called us to. We're thankful for this calling because it taught us that even when we're not ready, God has a plan for us. Just like how Abraham was called by God, God called the three of us to go out into Montreal to learn and serve. After having experienced it, we can say with absolute certainty that it was such a gratifying experience, and it affirmed the knowledge that God has a plan for us, and when we answer His call, then we will be able to live full lives.

We worked with a lot of organizations that served the vulnerable in Montreal. What they do really helps others and lifts up those that they work with and it is part of God's plan for them and for the community. They were able to find what they were passionate about and they could serve others. We really saw how one person can really impact someone's life, especially young people. Having seen this concretely, we hope to be able to do the same in our own way.

What are some of the things you are thankful for from this experience?

We were really lucky to have had such kind and open people there to guide us, host us, and take care of us. We're thankful that Ernest and Monique so graciously opened their home to us so that we could stay together. We also want to thank Jenny, Rev. Joe Reed, and Pastor Simon for coordinating this trip for us. It would not have been possible if it weren't for Pastor Simon reaching out and the hard work from Jenny and Rev. Joe to welcome us to Montreal. We are also thankful for those that we could be a blessing to within the Montreal community, whether it be the little kids that we had the chance to play with or the adults that we had conversations with. We felt really comfortable in a city so different from our own and it was largely due to them and their welcoming attitudes and spirits. We hope that we can still be a blessing, more than ever now since we were able to learn more about ourselves. We were given so many different opportunities and we are really thankful to have had such diverse experiences. We hope that we made an impact on the places and people that we visited, and we are also very thankful for everything we've learned.

