

An aerial photograph of Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada, taken during the golden hour of sunset. The city skyline is visible in the background, featuring various high-rise buildings. In the foreground, there is a large park area with many trees, some of which have turned yellow and orange, indicating autumn. A river flows through the park area. The Manitoba Museum, a prominent building with a curved, metallic facade, is visible on the right side of the image. The sky is a mix of orange, yellow, and blue.

POST-MISSION REFLECTION WINNIPEG

WRITTEN BY

Lauren Lee

April Chia

ST. TIMOTHY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH



WINNIPEG INNER CITY MISSION

We had the privilege of spending two weeks living in the heart of downtown Winnipeg. During this time, we were exposed to many different social issues and we were able to really get a feel for what the community at Anishinabe Place of Hope Church and Winnipeg Inner City Missions (WICM) were facing.

During the two weeks, we conducted a community assessment with the goal of creating an organizational report for WICM. We visited several organizations in the downtown core to learn more about the programs and services that they offer. We also had the opportunity to interview participants of the programs that WICM offers, the staff members, and members of the church community.

ANISHINABE PLACE OF HOPE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Winnipeg Inner City Missions is a mission of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, which branches out to help those living in the inner city of Winnipeg. Both Christian and Aboriginal traditional Spiritual teachings are welcomed at Anishinabe Place of Hope Presbyterian Church. There is also a Sunday School for ages 2 and 13, during church service after the family action songs and story time.



WHAT ARE SOME MOMENTS THAT STAND OUT TO YOU, AND WHY?

One of the biggest moments that stands out to me, is being able to interview everyone. One person in particular is Karen. Karen talked about the residential schools and what reconciliation means to her. Karen explained that her parents attended a residential school. Since they had a terrible experience, they turned to alcohol and became alcoholics. During Karen's childhood, she went through a lot of verbal and physical abuse due to this. This influenced the way that Karen raised her own children. She also believes that there is a long way to go with reconciliation, and that this is just the start. After talking to Karen, I learned a lot more about how people are still affected by residential schools to this day, and how present this issue is in Canada.

April Chia



WHAT ARE SOME MOMENTS THAT STAND OUT TO YOU, AND WHY?

We had the opportunity to listen to Rev. Margaret and some of her stories and the reason behind her ministry. I think that it was something I resonated a lot with and something that really stuck with me throughout the trip. Rev. Margaret leads a ministry that is based upon unconditional love and acceptance. She said that Anishinabe Place of Hope Presbyterian Church strives to provide love for the "unloved" and "unlovable". I found it so heartbreaking to hear of the things that some of these members of the community were going through. There were very high child suicide rates and because of the sheer amount of loss in some of these families, they turned to addiction to get away from it. It honestly broke my heart to hear stories like this. But, I think in a way, it was something that connected me to the people in Winnipeg. I feel like there is a lot of brokenness in their community and I can see glimpses of that in our church community too. I've been inspired by Rev. Margaret. I hope to become someone that can provide courage and hope, giving unconditional love and acceptance to anyone I can.

Lauren Lee



HOW HAS YOUR PERSPECTIVE ABOUT ISSUES IN OUR SOCIETY CHANGED AS A RESULT OF YOUR EXPERIENCE?

I personally never knew much about residential schools, I'm not sure if it's because I didn't pay attention during History class, or maybe I wasn't exposed to it during my childhood. Before this internship started, I didn't even know that the PCC was involved. Before going to Winnipeg, we studied about residential schools and the PCC's apology. After listening to people's stories in Winnipeg, my mind was opened to how the Aboriginal people are still struggling with the aftermath of residential schools and the 60's scoop.

April Chia



HOW HAS YOUR PERSPECTIVE ABOUT ISSUES IN OUR SOCIETY CHANGED AS A RESULT OF YOUR EXPERIENCE?



The Winnipeg mission trip has really opened my eyes to our own communities. There are so many issues within our own cities that need attention. I keep thinking back to how poverty seems like a never-ending loop. The aftermath of residential schools and the 60's scoop on the Aboriginal people is still very prominent. So many children have parents who are deep in their addictions. Families were and continue to be broken and torn apart. This mission trip has raised my awareness on the social issues that many people living in the inner-city face. We always think of the issues happening far away from us, and it's crazy to think about how there are many issues happening in "our own backyard!"

Lauren Lee

HOW HAVE YOUR EXPERIENCES SHAPED YOUR VIEW OF FAITH AND GOD?

This experience has made my thoughts on my faith more concrete. I am a big believer that everything happens for a reason, whether that means God's plan or fate. I think that God blessed me and let me go on this mission to open my eyes to everything that is going on. Reading something online, or watching a video is one thing, but to be able to talk to people who have personally gone through the experiences they have, is another. God has a plan for everyone, and I can firmly say this now. When talking to everyone, they have been through so much, yet they're all at a better place now. They are able to talk about their experiences with people like Lauren and I, and affect us in ways I can't explain. I am excited to see what is next and what God has in store for me!

April Chia



HOW HAVE YOUR EXPERIENCES SHAPED YOUR VIEW OF FAITH AND GOD?

I think this mission trip has allowed me to really see God's grace in this ungracious world that we live in. I've learned that He is such a compassionate God; a God who loves us and accepts us unconditionally and provides so abundantly. He gave the people in the community so much, despite how little they have. Through this mission trip, I've also realized that God doesn't put us through things that we can't handle and he doesn't make us do it alone. During our suffering, there are two paths we can take, one leading to despair and the other leading to hope. I think many people in that community have walked down the path to despair, but I trust that he will show them the light and the way. I think that my faith in God has strengthened over this summer. I trust that if I endure, God will lead me to hope.

Lauren Lee



HOW HAS YOUR UNDERSTANDING ABOUT YOURSELF GROWN THROUGH THIS EXPERIENCE?

After going on this mission trip, I learned that I am still unaware about the issues in the community and in the world. There's so much more to this world, and even the communities around us. This experience has definitely opened my eyes to not only the city of Winnipeg, but also my own community. This whole experience has helped me learn that I need to educate myself more on everything going on.

Before going on mission, whenever I read stories or watched videos of things happening around the world, I had the thought of "This will never happen to me". Maybe this is arrogance from being privileged enough to live the life I do, or maybe it's just me being unaware and naive. I am very grateful that I was able to learn and grow from this mission trip. It has made me more aware of everything that is going on, and how it also affects the community around me.

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