

Christopher Immanuel Goh (History) - Summer 2018, Zambia

With the generous assistance of a travel grant from Pembroke College, I participated in an 18-day mission to Zambia with Holy Trinity Church, Cambridge from the 2nd to 20th July 2018. A team of 2 staff and 10 students from the church travelled to Zambia to work with the Jubilee Centre founded by Pastor Lawrence Temfwe, spending our time in the cities of Lusaka and Ndola.

In our time there, we mainly conducted seminars for Zambian youth from diverse backgrounds - some at university, others in secondary school, and still others who were not regularly attending school. These seminars, whose content we repeated in different locations to different groups of youth across Lusaka and Ndola about three or four times, touched on topics like the role of Christian youth in national development and cybersecurity. There was also a session on Christian leadership that we delivered to Zambian youth in Ndola's Junior Parliament programme, for which I drew upon my experiences as a platoon commander in the Army to deliver a relatable, personal framework for the discussion. We worked very closely with the Jubilee Centre's staff, who were the ones who consistently ran such a programme of meetings and sessions for these groups of youth, and learnt a lot from them when it came to the management of such seminars and discussions.

We also worked with the Jubilee Centre's Compassion and Justice team, a group of housewife volunteers who worked with sick, bedridden patients, or HIV/AIDS patients. The Jubilee Centre had brought us in to talk to their volunteers about the prevalence of gender roles in this field of volunteering, as their volunteers were overwhelmingly female, and they were expected not to allow their volunteering duties to encroach on their provision of food and labour for their husbands and children at home. It came as a shock to these female volunteers when our team mentioned that in England, our fathers sometimes did the cooking and cleaning, as they could not envision their husbands ever doing so. The Jubilee Centre hoped to get more men to volunteer or else relieve the burdens of their volunteering wives at home, and were extremely grateful that we had provided new, personal, first-hand perspectives and food for thought for their volunteers, who were also pleasantly surprised when the boys in our team took on the washing of dishes after lunch.

We also had the rewarding experience of worshipping in a Sunday service in a church in a small community in Chifubu, on the outskirts of Ndola – the very church we had painted for 2 days prior. While we were far from professional painters, the pastor was very grateful for us because she said we had saved the community about US\$400 by removing the need for them to engage the services of professional painters. She saluted us on behalf of the community, then presented us with handmade Zambian clothes at the close of the service, a truly touching gesture given how little the community had. It was a wonderful feeling to both bless others but also be reciprocally blessed myself, and also experience the exuberance of a church service that, while different in style from Western churches, was still the same at its core; focused on worshipping Jesus.

The just over two weeks I spent in Zambia have been an amazing experience and have opened my eyes to a culture and circumstances I had never been exposed to before, yet seeing the same constant of faith running through the Zambians we encountered, my English teammates and myself. I am very grateful to Pembroke College for helping me out with this opportunity.