Be a Christian Who Travels

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Study Abroad Essay Contest Winner'14

Be a Christian who travels and God will transform your idea of who you are in this great big world. He will reveal himself through ancient ruins, snow capped peaks and language barriers. He will wow you with stunning views, sweltering temperatures and close call after close call on the highway.

Be a Christian who travels and God will make it clear that there is more to life than you. This much will be obvious when you're standing on an empty platform, your train just minutes past you. You will feel it as you fumble for money at the local supermarket. The cashiers are clearly talking about you and laughing, but you can't understand what they're saying. It's humiliating in more than one way.

Be a Christian who travels and you will need to live with less. Your experiences will not give you a choice. Be ready for this transformation, and don't allow yourself to slip back into old habits of 20 minutes showers and weekly online shopping sprees. This new outlook on life will probably cause uncomfortable moments with friends back home. They may not think twice about driving two blocks to church, but you will. You'll remember friends you met who walked an hour to work at midnight because they could not afford a car.

Be a Christian who travels and you will fall in love with the multitude of cultures that God has created. Rather than dismissing the classmate who can't eat meat, you'll want to ask about the history of her culture. You'll crave a kebab at the oddest time, and remember the man with the thick accent who served one after you had been lost for hours. You will be happy to help an international student celebrate a holiday, because you know what it feels like to be away from home while your family celebrates.

Be a Christian who travels and God will teach you how to love. Welcoming people into your home will be a tribute to the gracious hospitality you received in your journeys. You'll find that going out of your way to make someone feel comfortable can impact their life in ways that you will never know. You will be slow to judge and quick to curiosity. You will find that people who dress, eat and worship different than you, can be your closest friends.