

A Faithless Man in a Faithful World

Claude Goree, 2016-17 NBA XPLOR Resident in Hiram-Mantua, OH



NBA XPLOR: an association to give young Disciples of Christ and other Christian followers a chance to further enhance their faith while doing godly works in the community. However, what does this mean for a person such as myself who struggles in his beliefs?

To struggle with my faith is probably an understatement. Faith in religion and of a god has all but vanished from my reality. Of course, I knew that coming into a program FILLED with faith and God would be a challenge. Especially if I was intent on keeping my belief. I was immediately met with these challenges. My first challenge came in the form of three people. Although the words “three people” changed over the course of a few weeks. People changed to friends, and now family. “Three” increased to four, ten, and now still counting.

This second challenge was an unfair one. This challenge tore down any wall I put up with ruthless, easy effort. That challenge came in the form of love. The love of a community, love of a church, and love of friends.

If I found myself in a rut, there they were. When I was down and out or even stuck in a snowy ditch in six-degree weather, they were there.



I couldn't get away from this love. I didn't want to.

Although I felt all these things, I wanted to pull away and stay in my reality. I didn't want to be caught in this idea that I needed this. That I had to believe in God just to be allowed to live this way. It was my initial thought that I couldn't do a substantial amount of good in the world without having to believe in a higher being, one that I felt failed me already. I was immediately corrected on this thought.



“You don’t have to believe, Claude; I don’t need you to.” Words that struck my very being. The words of a beautiful friend that I didn’t expect to hear. This God-fearing friend who dematerialized my faithless attitude and the thought that I could do no good without faith.

So, the question is: What does a Faithless Man do in a Faithful World? He lives with the thought that he is faithless; all the while, he continues to do faithful works.

NBA XPLOR** is a 10-month service residency opportunity for young adults ages 21-30, with the purpose of empowering young adults to discern and develop a “heart for care” as they live together in simple community, engage in direct service and justice work, engage in leadership development, and discern their vocational calls to honor the various communities they are called to serve. **Learn more and apply at nbacares.org/xplor.