
SOUTHEAST ASIA

All You Need to Know About Where Your Child Wants to Go This Summer



Your child has just told you that they want to spend a month in South Asia this summer on a mission trip with this ministry they've joined while off in college. I'm sure you have some questions. We understand completely. We respect your questions so much that we put together some information for you.

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WHO IS CHI ALPHA?

Chi Alpha is a campus ministry at the University of Alabama. Although it sounds like a fraternity or sorority, we assure you that it is nothing like that. We are a national movement on over 300 campuses in the United States who are simply trying to follow Jesus and teach others how to do it with us.

Our name comes from 2 Corinthians 5:20 which says, "You are therefore Christ's Ambassadors...". We take the Greek words for Christ's Ambassadors and abbreviate them to get our name.

Our staff team consists of six full-time ministers, all of whom have served on staff at other seasoned Chi Alpha groups in other states, and 5 interns. They have also each spent time overseas leading mission trips. Our campus pastor has even lived in Africa for a period of time, so your child is in capable hands. Our desire is to see your child grow and mature in their relationship with God in college, while building long-lasting friendships along the way.



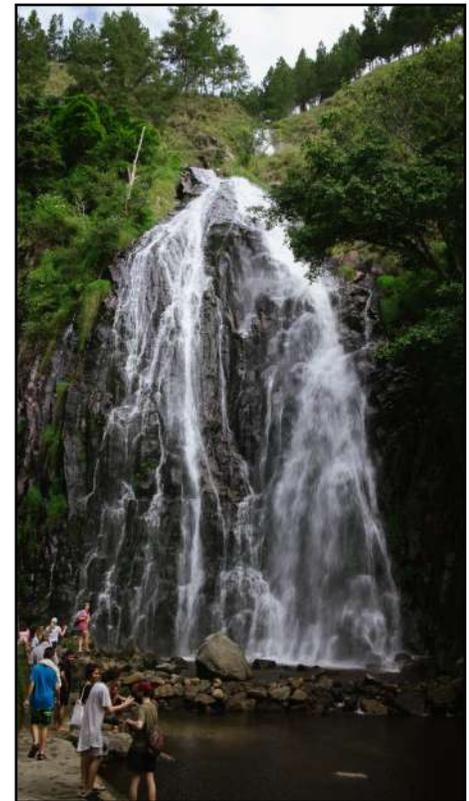
WHERE ARE YOU GOING?

This summer we will be taking three teams overseas - one to Indonesia another to Vietnam/Burma, and the third to India*. Chi Alpha has great relationships with the missionary families in each country, and they are eagerly looking forward to our service in their mission field. Some of the units we partner with are some of the only missionaries working in their mission fields, so there is a great need for teams to come in and serve.

Each team will be led by multiple Chi Alpha staff members, as well as members of the missionaries teams. During the trip, your child will have opportunities to visit several different areas in country while proclaiming the gospel to people who have never even heard the name of Jesus.

Undoubtedly, you have many questions on the specifics of the countries your child wants to serve in this summer, and while we have provided some information on each location, we are only able to provide a snapshot. Of course, you are always welcome to contact us with your questions and we will be happy to provide answers.

**At this time, we are still firming up the details of the third location. In January, several staff members will make a pretrip to India to see the work being done and make a final decision on who we will partner with.*





INDONESIA

Indonesia is the world's largest island country and is located in Southeast Asia. The island of Sumatra where we will be working first is the largest unevangelized island on earth. Islam is overwhelmingly the majority religion, making up 87% of the religious makeup. **Only 2% of the population in Indonesia identify with being Christian and most muslims have had little or no exposure to the gospel.**

The Indo team will split their time between two missionary families working on two separate islands. The island of Sumatra, well-known for its coffee, showcases several volcanoes, and its rainforests are home to orangutans, elephants, and tigers (don't worry, we'll be fine). The island itself is roughly three times the size of Texas, and has a population of just over 50 million people. The missionaries that we work with here lead a church in one of the major cities, but are also widely involved in the evangelization of the island as a whole. Some of the opportunities we will have are ministering to young boys in a boys prison, sharing the gospel with women entangled in prostitution, going into remote areas of the island to partner with local pastors in the spreading of the message of Jesus in their communities, and working with orphaned and at-risk children at a children's home and serving their needs.

After Sumatra, the team will hop over to the island of Java to partner with missionaries in Yogyakarta who are leading a healthy and thriving Chi Alpha at one of the universities there. Yogyakarta (Jogja for short) is the only Indonesian royal city ruled by a monarchy. It is rich with cultural heritage and is a "college city" with many universities attracting students from all over the country. Because less than 2% of Indonesians are Christian, these missionaries welcome several Chi Alpha mission teams each year to help reach their campus and encourage their students, many of whom have been cut off from their families for their faith.

Vietnam

Hanoi is the capital of Vietnam, located in the north, and this is where team 2 will be starting off their trip. Despite what you may think, the Vietnam war (there referred to as the American war) has left no animosity, and Americans are very welcome. Vietnam is a buddhist country with less than 2% of the population identifying as Christian. However, many people (especially younger generations) only identify with Buddhism on a cultural level.

The missionaries we work with in Vietnam are working to establish a Chi Alpha on the main university in Hanoi. Because most students want to practice their English, and because of their openness to talking about religion and their distrust of Buddhism, this is a very fertile ministry opportunity. All of our time will be spent focusing on university students and connecting them to the ministry team established there. We will share the gospel on campus to many students who have never heard of Jesus.



Burma

After two weeks in Vietnam, the team will fly to Burma to connect with a ministry team that is planting Chi Alpha in the capital city of Naypyitaw. This is the first Chi Alpha to have ever been planted in the country. Burma is a Buddhist nation with 5% of the population identifying as Christian. Where we will be working, the majority of the population is under the age of 30. This is a prime opportunity for campus ministry.

Burma is no stranger to conflict. Since its independence was won in 1948, Burma has struggled through a long civil war. There is still some civil unrest in the northern part of the country, but don't worry, we will be far from any danger. In fact, those areas are off limits for travel. Our team will stay in the city for the last 2 weeks of the trip. We are very excited about this new partnership!



India

This will likely be the location for the third team. Before we make a decision, several of the staff will travel to India in January to scout out some locations. We have relationship with several missionaries working in India that we will visit to explore the opportunities for a team.



Why Overseas? America needs help too.

There is a standing call on every believer's life to engage in missions. Acts 1:8 Jesus says to His disciples, "You will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." The gospel moves out in concentric circles until all have heard. Our students engage in the mission field here in America everyday on campus. But God's desire as expressed in scripture is that "all would be saved and come to a knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim 2:4). Close to home and far from home, we have a responsibility to take the message of the gospel to those who have never heard. As you have already seen, there is only a small population of people in the countries we will visit who have believed in Jesus. This is an opportunity to go the ends of the earth and participate in the fulfillment of the Great Commission to "go and make disciples of all nations".

"You will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."
Acts 1:8

Okay, so why South Asia?

Two of the largest unreached people groups in the world live in Indonesia. 98% of Indonesians have not responded to the gospel. Vietnamese youth (making up half of the population of Vietnam) are more open to the gospel now than ever before. More than 80% of the 56 million people who live in Burma consider themselves Buddhist. There are 400 million people in India who have never heard the name of Jesus. One-third of the world's unreached people groups live in India.

The countries we work in have very limited access to the gospel. The missionaries we work with are begging for people to come and serve with them. Romans 10:10 tells us that these people will never call on Jesus' name unless someone is willing to go and tell them. That is why we are committed to South Asia.



But why so long?

A month seems like such a long time for a mission trip, but we do have a reason for it. We want to be able to make a positive impact for the missionaries we are working with, and we want to really be able to embrace the culture. It's really hard to make significant investment in a place in a week or even two weeks. I know it's hard to believe, but this month apart will be good! God loves to use us outside our comfort zones!

Who will you be working with?

It's very difficult to have a lasting impact on any place in just a month, so we partner alongside missionaries who have already been established in their location for years. We want this trip to positively impact your child and the ministry in South Asia long term. The missionaries we will be working with have lived in country for at least one full term (4 years plus a 2 year associate term), several have worked in their country for over 15 years. They have been immersed in the culture and are deeply invested in the advancement of the Gospel in South Asia. In Indonesia (Sumatra), the missionaries we work with are involved in everything from church planting to partnering with orphanages in the area. They wear many hats and are seeing amazing transformation in their mission field. In Java, we are partnering with long-term missionaries who have done a little bit of everything but are now committed to Chi Alpha on a major university campus. In Vietnam, we work with a family who comes from a Chi Alpha group in Arkansas and are exclusively focusing on reaching university students. In Burma, we are connecting with a family who has been in Burma reaching young people through English conversation clubs and other church outreaches, but are now looking to plant Chi Alpha. The missionaries we are connected to in India are from Alabama and are doing a great job of reaching Muslims in their community. Everyone we partner with is an approved missionary through the Assembly of God World Missions agency and are working hard to spread the Gospel on a daily basis in sensitive areas.





You said "sensitive". What does that mean?

Vietnam, Burma, and India are considered to be closed countries (Indonesia is open). What that means is that even though they may have religious freedom on paper, the government does not want western missionaries proselytizing in their country. These countries all have registered churches who can own property (new for Vietnam!). Any persecution you read about is regarding local Christians and almost always means that they have been cut off from their family or weren't considered for a job because of their faith. The missionaries we work with have some sort of business visa platform, whether teaching English or running a textiles business, that gives them access to the country. We take special precautions on the trip to protect the missionaries we work with. If they were to raise suspicions they may be asked to leave the country and their passports would be blacklisted. Nothing would happen to us, but for the sake of the missionaries and the work they have invested their lives to we want to be sensitive.

Are you sure it's safe?

Yes.

In all the years we have taken this trip the most that has ever happened to someone is stomach issues. There was that time when a staff member got scratched by a monkey, but that was pretty bizarre. Americans are very welcome in the places we are going. In fact the crime rates in the areas we are working with are lower than most places in the US. Indonesia, while being a muslim nation, is very tolerant of other religions. The missionary we work with in Sumatra leads a church that meets in the largest mall in the city with over 700 people attending each week. In Vietnam, pickpocketing will be the greatest threat. According to the US Overseas Security Advisory Council, Hanoi is a low-risk travel destination with petty theft being the most commonly reported crime. In Burma, we will not leave the city of Naypyitaw which is also a low-risk travel destination according to OSAC. All that to say, we take safety very seriously and will not travel into any area that would be unsafe.

Okay, but what precautions are you taking?

We are glad you asked.

First of all, on a spiritual level, we are going to cover everything we do in prayer and trust the Lord to keep us safe throughout the trip. On a very practical level, we will be working with missionaries that have been there for years, so we will be under the wings of seasoned workers. The entire time we are in country we will be directly working with the missionaries, because they are experts at living in this country. We will use wisdom and take every precaution to avoid any foreseen danger. Your child will never be alone at any point on this trip. They will always be in a group and will always be with the missionary hosts or their team leaders. All of the team leaders are on staff with Chi Alpha and have experience overseas. We have checked all of the travel requirements and will review them regularly to make sure everything goes as smoothly as possible. The CDC recommends shot for Hepatitis A and Typhoid. Those will be covered in the cost of the trip, and we will set up a time to get those as a group. If between now and the time we leave the CDC changes its recommendations, we will make sure we are in compliance. Your child will always have enough food to eat, water to drink, a safe place to sleep, and will never be alone. We understand that your child's safety is one of your biggest concerns, and we assure you, it is extremely important to us as well. We can promise that we will take every available precaution to ensure your child's safety.

What if someone gets sick?

Chances are that most people will experience some bit of mild sickness from the adjustment to a new climate or diet. In those cases, we will pray for them and give them something to help. The team leaders will always have first aid kits on hand that will be supplied to treat most minor ailments or injuries. If someone gets seriously ill or injured, there will be quality medical care available at the hospitals. We will always be in close proximity to a medical facility. Included in the cost of the trip is travel insurance which will pay for whatever treatment is needed (up to \$2 million per person) and will even cover flights back to the U.S. should that necessary for treatment. While students will not be able to use a cell phone on this trip, the staff will have phones, and you will be notified if medical treatment is necessary.



No cell phones?

A month seems like a long time now, but when we are halfway through the trip we will look around and ask where the time has gone. Since our time is short we don't want students to have their attention divided between what God is doing and what is happening on Instagram. So we ask that students leave their phones behind. That does not mean that you won't get to talk to your child or that you won't be able to reach them in an emergency situation. We will have a few opportunities for students to contact home while on the trip, and the staff's international numbers will be available to you in case you need to get a hold of us at anytime. Closer to May we will invite you to a Facebook group where we will post updates and photos every couple of days so you will stay up to date on what the Lord is doing through your child!



What about the money?

Money is always a factor when planning a mission trip. We have fought to keep the costs as low as possible while ensuring that we are not cutting any unnecessary corners. **The cost of the trip is \$3500.** That includes all the shots, visa, paperwork, and travel insurance. It also includes every expense your child will incur from the time they get on the plane in Atlanta to the time they depart the plane in Atlanta excluding extra snacks and any souvenirs. That includes every meal, every transport or lodging expense, and even a couple of fun days. Your child will raise support in order to pay their way and will be trained on how to effectively and properly raise the financial support they need.

Raising Support

In Romans 10, Paul says that "All who call on the name of Jesus will be saved. But how can they call on the one in whom they have not believed? And how can they believe in the one they have not heard of? And how can they hear unless someone tells them? And how can they tell them unless they are sent?". Part of what Paul is saying is that for missions to happen, some have to go and others have to send. This is why we don't ask students to ask their parents for a \$3,500 check. We believe that God will 1: Provide for students and increase their faith in the process, and 2: Allow others to be connected to what God is doing in Southern Asia by financially supporting a student to go. Each Chi Alpha staff raises support on a monthly basis in order to minister to students at the University of Alabama, and we will walk with them every step of the way .

What about my unanswered question?

While we've tried to cover everything in detail that you would need to be informed, we understand that you may have your own question that we missed. If that is the case please, please, please do not hesitate to call, text, or email us.

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