

The Vessel

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AUGUST 2018

Bangkok Trip

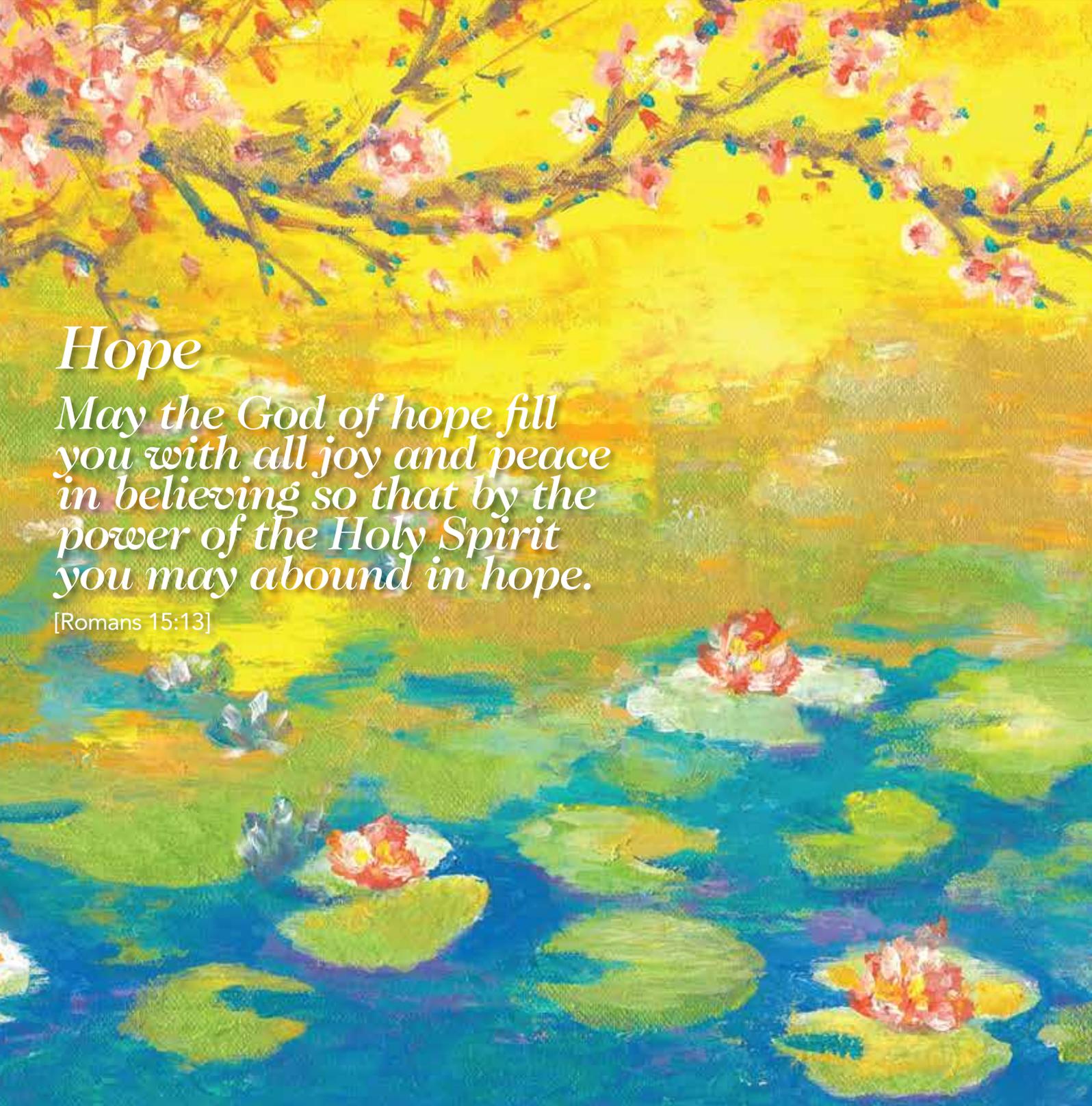
ICSG 2nd Anniversary

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Hope

*May the God of hope fill
you with all joy and peace
in believing so that by the
power of the Holy Spirit
you may abound in hope.*

[Romans 15:13]

From the Editor's Desk

Last December, a team of four members from ICS went to Bangkok on an outreach event. Together with the team from LIFE Church Bangkok, they set out on a journey to celebrate and share the true meaning of Christmas with the locals. Find out how God revealed to them the value of community and His sovereignty in this issue of the *Vessel*.

As a church blessed to bless the community, we are called to humble ourselves and faithfully use the gifts that God has given us, to do His will. Whether it is giving back to the community, or making a difference to the people around us, there are ample opportunities for us to serve in our bi-annual ServeFest.

Find out how the staff and members of *In Christ Singapore* has journeyed together these two years as they celebrated her second anniversary last May. Read about how God's grace and presence were with them all the way as the congregation and ministries grew steadily.

The children at ICS Kids Church were taught the

true meaning of Easter as they participated in the Easter egg hunt activity. Through this event, many children were convicted and a total of 14 children gave their hearts to Jesus! Praise the Lord! At the end of the day, we are sure that our children went home not only with the "passport" of heaven, but more importantly, they brought Jesus home with them.

Here, we find out more about *Dynamis World Ministries* headed by Pastor Christopher Alam, and also get an idea of what is involved in their annual healing crusade in Africa. The story of Pastor Alam's baptism will also touch your hearts, reminding us that being able to freely worship our your Lord from where we are is by itself, truly a blessing.

Grace Chan

Why The Vessel?

Conceived from the verses of 2 Kings 4:1-7: "Go, borrow vessels from everywhere, from all your neighbours - empty vessels; do not gather just a few...", the newsletters are to be the vessels of His supernatural blessings and providence. With faith in the Lord, the blessings will not stop, but will instead overflow, so that we can, as vessels, catch and share with others the goodness that God has bestowed upon His people.

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Pastor Says...

You have made a difference in ICS. Just like any medical student will be amazed by how our body functions when they begin their studies and being houseman in the hospital. Every part of our body has a specific purpose in order for the body to function well and stay healthy. Similarly, a healthy church will also be dependent on the entire body ministry.

Ephesians 4:16: "From whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love."

You will witness a lot of preparation work if you happen to come early for church service on Sunday. Everything ticks like clockwork from hospitality to Kids Church. You will definitely be greeted by the hospitality team. You will hear the worship team practicing and the AVA crew making adjustments. You will probably not be able to see the Holy Communion stewards making preparation, nor the offering counters because all of them are working tirelessly behind the scene.

Let us continue to serve the Lord faithfully as we look forward to the day when we appear before the judgment seat of Christ.

Daniel Ho
Senior Pastor - ICS
The People's Republic of China

Bangkok Trip Reflection

In December 2017, I went to Bangkok with three other ICS members. There, we and the Swedish team supported a Thai church – the LIFE Church (founded by Swedish missionaries pastor Daniel and his wife) on an outreach event. Throughout the trip, God revealed to me the value of community and His sovereignty.

As we met with the Swedish team at the LIFE Church office, we sat at the table and started to discuss the Kingdom's work. We talked about what is the most effective way to reach the lost, the importance of fasting, how to pray for the younger generation in Thailand, how to serve faithfully regardless of the circumstances, and so on. It was a joy to watch and listen to the discussion, and to see a group of people dedicating their lives to the Kingdom and putting the Kingdom's work as the most important thing in their lives. **God does not need us to win people's hearts, but He gives believers the privilege to work together as a family**, to experience the good and the bad, as well as to have abundant life.

Servants of Different Personalities

I attended a talk (given by pastor Daniel Ho) back in October 2017 that introduced me to the DISC personality types (for a brief description, please see the table below). Throughout the Thailand trip, I saw servants of very different personalities, yet the differences did not pull the team apart. Their different talents were used by God and perfected in His ways. Pastor Daniel B. is the "dominant and influential" type. He is a great director who oversees outreach events. He is also an influential speaker whose preaching and prayers touch people's heart. On the other hand, pastor is not as good in managing details as his teammate, Lu Lu is a detailed-oriented manager who sorts out all the logistics of the events. She is quick and down to earth. She goes right to the problem and solves it. Paulina B, pastor Daniel's wife is the opposite of pastor and Lu; she does things at her own pace, approaches people with grace and humility, gives praises to Jesus even in the midst of emergency. The rest of the team members have their own ways of doing things; it will take another 20 pages to describe all the differences. As I worked with the team, there were no arguments. Discussions take place when differences arose. There was patience, apologies, and forgiveness. The team truly lives out what Romans 12 depicts: "do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the faith God has distributed to each of you. For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others." We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. Helping out in the outreach team of LIFE Church allows me to reflect on the value of a community. A Christ-



centered team provides believers with a safe place to practice the teachings of the Bible. A place where mature followers demonstrate the fruits of the spirit and where young followers observe and imitate their walk with the Lord. Together, everyone in the team grows in their faith under the guidance of the Holy Spirit and shares the joy of serving the everlasting King.

His Sovereignty

Growing up in Hong Kong and Macau, I have seen Buddha statues, but never as many and as prevalent as those in Bangkok. My heart was troubled as I saw idols in almost every corner of the street and in every taxi that we rode. I even asked God how He feels about that. In the core of my worry, I was doubting whether God knows the spiritual condition of the city! As naive as I was, God used Psalm 113: 4-6 to comfort me: “The Lord is exalted over all the nations, His glory above the heavens. Who is like the Lord our God, the One who sits enthroned on high, who stoops down to look on the heavens and the earth?” It was a relief to be reminded that God looks at every one in the city, whether believers or not, with compassion and mercy. One day, He will destroy Satan, who has tricked people to believe in lies rather than the truth. As I read those verses, I was also reminded that **victory belongs to the Lord**, and there is no reason to worry. I can sit back and relax as I interact with locals, because I can be sure that my Lord is a sovereign Lord who is way more powerful than the challenging spiritual condition of the city.

As I look back at the pictures of the trip, I feel grateful that I had the opportunity to work with followers from all over the world. It has been a joy to learn from them and to serve the Lord with them! Go team Jesus!



1
Paulina introducing different ministries from Bangkok Life Church to ICS members.

2
Christmas celebration at Scala.

3
ICS members sharing the love of Christmas in Bangkok.

In Christ Singapore Just Turned



1
Water baptism conducted by Pastor Sandra.
2
Happy 2nd Anniversary ICSG!
3
WOF flower arrangement workshop.
4
ICSG 2nd Anniversary celebration after service on Sunday 27 May, 2018.

This is good, and pleases God our Savior, who wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.

[1 Timothy 2:3-4]

May 30th, 2018, with gratitude and thanksgiving, In Christ Singapore celebrated her 2nd anniversary with an overwhelming celebration service, spirit-filled worship, blessed kids' church activities, group photo session, followed by a lunch reception at a nearby residence. Senior Pastor Daniel Ho came in from Shanghai with a team of Kids Church helpers to make the celebration extra special. 100 members from the church congregation attended this celebration.

We stood in awe of the powerful presence of God throughout the journey of planting the church through the last two years. We have been encouraged by amazing events and celebrated the first

fruits of growth of the congregation. It has been a privilege to be part of this incredible journey, seeing God's will revealed and his step-by-step encouragement. As I shared in Shanghai in April 2016, the idea of planting a church in Singapore was not instantly understood, as there are already so many churches in Singapore. The initial core group prayed extensively, and in the end came to agreement that it is God's will, not just a whim of Pastor Daniel! So, we embarked on this amazing journey. Now, looking back, we have all been tremendously blessed through being a part of the journey. God's provision and guidance have been constant in all aspects - finance, venue, willing hearts and hands, as well as other resources.

Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding, in all your ways submit to Him and He will make your paths straight.

[Proverbs 3:5-6]

After two years, we are proud to see the beginnings of the church's structure taking place; with ministry activities such as Youth, Kids, Nursery, Worship, Hospitality, Outreach, Women of Faith, Market Place ministry and Flower ministry. Our service is conducted in English with simultaneous translation to Mandarin. We rejoice at the five cell groups that are now operating and particularly celebrate the Filipinos' cell group which is led by Christoffer and Pastor Sandra. This group is growing rapidly both in numbers as well as in spiritual maturity. **ICSG strives to be a truly Christian family which welcomes and embraces all.**

Although we are small in number, we are delighted to be intimately involved as members of the family. As individuals, there are times when we grow weary, but we experienced the loving support from one another and from the Lord. We have also been blessed through organising outreach activities and events such as parenting course, pre-marital course, pool-parties, family day, flower arrangement sessions, Easter celebrations, and special Christmas services. In addition, we have hosted special events with guest speakers such as RT Kendall (Total Forgiveness) and Christopher Alam (healing session). We have also held two

baptism services welcoming 7 people into the family of Christ. I know this number is not huge by comparison to the numbers experienced in ICS Shanghai, but our Lord is the Good Shepard who leaves the 99 to rescue the one lost sheep. We celebrate every soul that our Lord saves.

For it is God's will that by doing good you should silence the ignorant talk of foolish people.

[1 Peter 2:15]

In these two years, we have evolved an initial understanding of why there is a need for ICS in Singapore, despite there being so many churches already here. ICSG welcomes all: returning Singaporeans who have evolved their perspectives from their time abroad, Singaporeans who have always been anchored in the communities here, and expatriates who are all dislocated from their families and friends at home, who are cut off from their home culture and vulnerable to the policy changes and attitude swings that may occur. ICSG has a unique mission: to welcome and embrace all. We are one family,

together.

In the past year, God's mandate for us was to grow closer to Him and deeper into His teaching, to grow strong roots. The year ended with our first Church Camp, with over 50 people participating - hallelujah! We had a really blessed time together while learning about the 'Blood Covenant'. During the year, the number of regular attendees of Sunday services grew from over 30 at the beginning to now over 80 people - that's almost 250% increase! Hallelujah! God is great! This year we believe that God is preparing us to expect growth in numbers of regular attendees; in particular, the marketplace ministry and flower ministry are very active. We are so excited to see what God has in store for us, and we feel blessed to have been called to participate in planting the church. May the glory of God be known to many. We are indeed 'blessed to bless others', and we are filled with excitement and anticipation to see what God will do next with ICSG. Praise be to God - may His will be done on Earth as in heaven, in our lives and through our work.

ServeFest

Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying: "Whom shall I send? And who will go for us? And I said: Here am I. Send me!"

Isaiah 6:8

After all the festive celebrations like Christmas, New Year, and the Lunar New Year have past and everything settles back to normal, let us ask ourselves how we can serve our neighbours in the way God calls us to. If we take some time to look around, we will see that there are many ways in which we can show our love.

ICS's bi-annual *ServeFest*, which was held at the main foyer of Hongqiao Marriott on March 4th attracted quite a crowd. Believing that we are **blessed to bless the community**, it is no surprise that ministry booths with available positions to fill were constantly greeted by eager members, wanting to know what each ministry is involved in and how they can contribute. If you are still undecided, or have not signed yourself up for any ministry, I hope my observations below can help you find your right fit.

ICS is extremely blessed to be able to worship comfortably in Shanghai for the past nine years. To show our gratitude and also bless the local community, we have been

organising an annual charity golf event. The funds raised from this event are donated to the Red Cross in Shanghai/Changning, which will be used to support needy beneficiaries who require financial assistance after a series of health issues. Whether you are an avid golfer or, like myself, have zero knowledge about the sport, there are opportunities for you to volunteer as a committee member. The operations team ensures that the event is executed smoothly, marketing team helps to raise awareness on the cause of this event, and sponsorship team goes out of their way to get corporate donations. If you have a flare for delivering excellent sales pitch, coupled with the gift of speaking at lightning fast speed, we have a spot as an auctioneer just for you! This event ends with a much anticipated charity auction, a final chance to push across the finishing line of our fundraising goal.

Our next *ServeFest* will be held in September. I do hope all of us will continue to find more ways than one to make a difference. See you there!

WORSHIP & MEDIA

Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, and into His courts with praise. Be thankful to Him, and bless His name.

[Psalm 100:4]

Our songs of praise and worship are like fragrant incense to the Lord. It is no wonder many came forward to offer their time and services in various musical talents that they are blessed with, to join the Praise & Worship team. Also a team filled with people from very diverse cultures, it is a good representation of how music helps connects cultures. Just as in God's kingdom, regardless of our race or culture, we are all precious in His sight. May our praise and our worship continue to be acceptable and pleasing to our Lord.

Also working closely with the Worship team is our unsung backstage hero – the Media ministry. The media team uses high-tech equipment to provide quality audio and visual presentations during each service. Service recording is also available for those from the comfort of their homes, if they are unable to join us. Just so you know how amazing our team is, ICS service recording is being broadcasted to countries as far as Russia!

MISSION & OUTREACH

Declare His glory among the nations, his marvelous deeds among all peoples.

[Psalm 96:3]

This one's for you if you have a love for travelling and passion for sharing the gospel with people outside the walls of our Church. Our past mission trips cover countries such as Thailand and Africa. Testimonies from members who returned from mission trips often paint a much larger view of God. It is through such trips that they saw Him working His wonders through multiple cultures.

HOSPITALITY

Typically the first contact point for visitors to ICS, our greeter's and usher's warm and enthusiastic smile is the first thing you will notice at the entrance of all our events or services. The Hospitality team demonstrates Christ-like humility by humbly serving to meet the needs of our members. Other positions available include collection of offering bags and distribution of Holy Communion elements. If you have the calling to serve, you will find many rewarding opportunities in the hospitality ministry.

SPECIAL EVENTS

Our Special Events team works faithfully behind the scenes to put together ad-hoc activities for both our church family as well as the community. Some of their activities include Easter celebrations, our annual anniversary celebration, and Christmas banquet. They are constantly looking for volunteers with the passion and ability to organise fun filled activities. Whether you have the gift of event planning, designing, photography, or writing, sign up to be a part of this ministry. You will find yourself working with a team of people with different and complementing abilities.

KIDS & YOUTH

Start children off on the way they should go, and even when they are old they will not turn from it.

[Proverbs 22:6]

Here at ICS, we believe that the children and youths are our future. Teach them well the ways of the Lord and they can then lead the way. The children as well as youth ministries are committed to run programs in a fun and safe environment which help kids and teenagers from ages 3 through 18, understand the Word of God. If you are energetic, enjoy nurturing and watching kids grow in the knowledge and wisdom of the Lord, why not sign up for either of these ministries. The immense satisfaction and sense of achievement you get seeing the little ones bloom into a faithful servant of God should be more than enough to convince you to join this ministry if you are still undecided.

Easter Maze



1
Children from ICS Kids Church listening to a story on what the true meaning of Easter is.

2
Praise and worship during Easter in ICS main service.

Easter is a celebration that children always look forward to. With almost 300 children in attendance, the children came with expectation to have a great time celebrating this joyous event.

The theme for this Easter at the Kids Church is "Love". The usual focus on egg hunt during Easter was shifted to the love of Christ. Through the preaching of the Word, the children learnt what sin is and where it came from. The story of Adam and Eve eating the forbidden fruit is a story the children are familiar with, but this Easter they realised how **disobedience** affected all mankind and that all of us have sinned and fallen short of His glory. Before we were even born, Christ died for our sins so that we can have an intimate relationship with Him once again. During the preaching of the Word, many children were convicted and a total of 14 children gave their hearts to Jesus! On top of that, many children from our Kids Church made a dedication to the Lord that they want to truly recognize Jesus as

their personal Lord and Saviour and build a closer relationship with Him! All praises to God! Jesus said: "Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of heaven." [Matthew 19:14]

After the preaching of the Word, the children moved from station to station throughout Marriott Hotel for the Easter Maze. At the stations, they learnt that there is power in the blood of Jesus and His blood makes us righteous in the presence of God and in Him we will have an abundant life filled with peace and joy. After each station, the children received a stamp on their "passport" and received items symbolizing abundant life, joy, righteousness, blood of Jesus, and peace. Finally, the children completed the maze with the golden egg which represents eternal life. The children went home with the "passport" for the Kingdom of Heaven and most importantly they brought Jesus home with them. This is the true meaning of Easter!

Dynamis World Ministries

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me... to proclaim good news, recovery of sight for the blind... set the oppressed free and proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.

[Luke 4 and Isaiah 61]

As I sat in my office, I recalled a Sunday at ICS with Pastor Christopher Alam. He came to our church, ICS, and shared the gospel of Christ Jesus with great authority and confidence. As he showed us pictures of a crusade in Mozambique, I sat amazed. I heard him saying "the blind man sees. The deaf hears. The crippled and those in wheel chairs, they are standing and walking, and the dead rise to life!"

At this point, you are probably thinking how can this be true? Are these stories real? Where do all these powers come from? Have I seen these miracles in my own Christian life?

Scriptures began to flood my heart

and my spirit. "You are hidden in Christ; the same power that raised Christ from the dead dwells in you; you are seated with Christ in the heavenly places; these signs and wonders will follow you; we are blessed with every spiritual blessing." At this moment, my own faith was inspired and challenged to believe God all the more. As people hear the gospel, they receive the truth of God's spoken Word and faith arise in their hearts.

The crowd in Mozambique heard the Word, received it by faith, and they walked to the stage to receive from the Lord.

God Almighty is always faithful in power and in might. His kingdom invades planet earth. Lives are transformed, hearts and lives are forever changed. Stories of God's goodness, mercy and kindness flowed out. God is praised by the people of the nation of Mozambique.

These crusades are more than just big gatherings. There is a story behind each crusade that takes place somewhere between June to August each year. Let me share with you some essential points I discovered behind the crusades:

- All church leaders attending the crusade in Mozambique spend sever-



al weeks studying God's truth about healing. Prayer and fasting is an essential part of their preparation. Each of these church leaders consecrate themselves for the crusade.

- All leaders work in unity to support the Bride of Christ in Mozambique. When a conversion happens, cards with the names of new believers are collected during the crusade. The church that is geographically closest to that family, will be responsible to shepherd and disciple the new believer.

- **Accountability** is key to the longevity of this ministry (*Dynamis World Ministries*). Pastor Christopher Alam, who heads this ministry, has journeyed through life with a selected few brothers. These brothers in Christ will pray for him, ask him hard questions about his daily devotion and intimacy with Christ, family questions, and lifestyle questions. They share the Word of God with Pastor Alam, pray for him and his family, and also share the same vision for this ministry as he does.

The final story which Pastor Alam shared with us was about his own baptism by a missionary in the Middle East. After he was baptized, Pastor Alam left the country to begin his life in Sweden. He later found out that the missionary who baptized him was martyred not long after his baptism.

Since his baptism, Pastor Alam has lived each day for Christ and His purpose. Like the apostle Paul, he counts all things as loss in comparison with the knowledge of knowing Jesus Christ.

Reflecting on my time with Pastor Alam, I am very inspired and blessed to have met a man who walks humbly with his God. He lives his life by faith and seeks the face of God. Everything he does is for the glory of God. My prayer for all of us is to have a deeper understanding of His love towards us as well as greater faith to do the tasks in His kingdom, as servants of the living God.



perspectives.

Pavel once said that we should never stop learning and even if you are a theologian and holding seminars, there is still a lot to learn. I fully agree, and I think we should all have such attitude to humble ourselves and stay hungry for the Word of God.

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled.

[Matthew 5:6]

Apart from filling our mind with the knowledge of the Word of God, we also set time aside to pray and worship together to experience Him in a tangible way. Pavel taught us the six types of prayers which are found in the Bible. They are the Prayer of Praise, Contemplative Prayer, Prayer for Forgiveness, Prayer of Consecration, Petitionary Prayer, and Deliverance Prayer. He explained verse by verse and gave us the context and background of each prayer. It has certainly deepened my understanding of those prayers and I find

myself able to relate to the pain and despair of those who prayed those powerful prayers.

Among the six sessions of prayers, the one which left a deep impression on me was the Prayer of Praise, which is Hannah's prayer found in 1 Samuel 2:1-10. Hannah was mocked by the fruitful wife of her husband for being barren. In those days, procreation is considered a blessing and procreation was one of the main purposes of marriage. Barrenness was considered a curse or punishment. Hence, Hannah would have seen as failing to fulfill the primary expectation of her social role. I can imagine the excitement and moment of joy when God granted her prayer by giving her Samuel. Yet, Hannah did not start her prayer by thanking God for Samuel, but she lifts up the name of God as Yahweh and recognized His separateness as our Creator with a moral perfection. Her whole prayer reveals that she truly knows her God as she speaks of His character, power, and might. Her prayer also declares that God will look after little Israel which may be small but she shall become a mighty nation under the kings whom Samuel will anoint and this has come to pass! The Prayer of Praise is a powerful prayer, and the following are ten points summarized for the prayer. You can also try praying through them and watch God work out your miracle for you!

Discipleship Track

First, what is discipleship? Christian discipleship is following Jesus and His teachings and living them out. Discipleship is very important not only for new believers, but for long-time believers as well. Once we have accepted Christ into our lives, it doesn't end there. We should learn how to live life as a follower of Jesus Christ, and how to practice the truth of the Word of God in our day-to-day life. To become a disciple of Christ, it requires work and commitment from the believer. When we live out the Word of God, we are considered **doers of the Word and not hearers only**.

But be doers of the Word, and not hearers only.

[James 1:22]

ICS has given us a great opportunity to learn more about what it means to be a disciple of Jesus Christ. The discipleship track offered by Pavel Hoffman – a theologian from Sweden, has been a huge help for my spiritual growth. Pavel's teaching style and explanation of the Bible have deepened my understanding of the Word and strengthened my faith. I am not only impressed by the depth of Pavel's knowledge of the Bible, I am also impressed with how he handles difficult questions when it comes to different perspectives from people, especially those with differing denominational

backgrounds. He is always friendly and patient, bearing with one another in love as it's said in the Bible. This attitude is crucial in a multi-denominational international church like ICS!

I would like to share with you some of the topics during the series that I felt were particularly meaningful to me. The discipleship track started with a *Cornerstone* series, where Pavel taught the basics of Christianity and discipleship. This series has helped me gain a deeper understanding of the basic concepts and practical applications for my life such as how to hear God and what it means to be empowered by the Holy Spirit. The series not only talks about how to be a disciple, but also covers the history of Christianity in terms of its development and major changes it went through. These helped me to understand the situation Christianity faces today.

The second series was *Servanthood*. We learnt about God's plan for us and the process of sanctification. We were challenged with the question "are you willing to live for Christ or lose your life for Him?" We were also taught the importance of mentorship and that we are all mentors to someone in one way or another which can benefit our spiritual growth. I enjoyed listening and sharing thoughts and opinions with the group during the sessions. The diversity of the group expanded my horizon to see things from new

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- 1 PRAISE GOD FOR MY SALVATION.
 - 2 PRAISE GOD THAT HE IS THE HOLY ROCK AND NOTHING COMPARES TO HIM.
 - 3 YOU ARE ALL-KNOWING AND I CONFESS THAT YOU ALWAYS KNOW BEST.
 - 4 YOU ARE ABLE TO CHANGE MY CIRCUMSTANCES UPSIDE DOWN.
 - 5 YOU FILL ALL MY NEEDS AND YOUR PLAN WITH ME IS PERFECT.
 - 6 YOU HAVE GIVEN ME ETERNAL LIFE.
 - 7 YOU GIVE ME ABUNDANCE OF EVERYTHING.
 - 8 I AM SEATED WITH YOU IN THE HEAVENLY PLACES AND INHERITED ALL THINGS.
 - 9 YOU PROTECT ME AND YOUR PLAN WITH ME WILL NOT GO ASTRAY.
 - 10 AS THE JUST GOD, YOU PUNISH SIN AND REWARD RIGHTEOUSNESS.

WoF-Serving God and Journeying Together



In a cosmopolitan city like Shanghai, people come from different places and all walks of life. We leave our families, friends and lives that we are familiar with to adjust to a new way of life. For most of us, **ICS has quickly become our home away from home, where we find our family in Christ in Shanghai.** The Women of Faith ministry in ICS has been my support group ever since I came to Shanghai. I still remember the day that my friend brought me to WoF on a Wednesday morning. Very quickly, the ladies made me feel welcome and comfortable. It is such a blessing to have godly women encourage and lead you in your spiritual walk, and also share in the fun and joy of fellowship. At Women of Faith, we worship our Lord together, share our daily challenges, help each other, pray for each other, study the Word together in small groups to learn what God has to tell about our challenges and, moreover, journey together as women of God full of faith and the Holy Spirit.

The last season at WoF was a blessed time with many new experiences and activities. Every new season we engage in a book study and we spent the last season studying 'Getting a Grip on the Basics of Serving God' by Beth Jones. The study clearly showed the importance and purpose of serving God. Hebrews 12:28 says: "Let us have grace, so that we may serve God

acceptably, with reverence and godly fear." God wants His children to understand their part in His great plan and be equipped to serve Him with a heart full of love and compassion. We need to humble ourselves before God and adopt a servant heart. God has planted us in our local church where we can use our gifts and talents to bless others and, thus, His kingdom. It is amazing how in WoF ministry alone there are so many areas where we can serve God: leading worship, organizing events, teaching in small groups, being a prayer warrior, and so on. God wants to use us in so many different ways to bear fruit with the gifts and talents that He has blessed us with. We just need to be willing. The study even included a personality profile testing and session to better understand our gifts and callings. It helped us all to step into His service with a deeper commitment and effectiveness.

¹ John 3:18 says: "Let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth." Hence, being a woman of faith without action is futile. It is the difference we make in the lives of others that will determine the significance of the lives we lead. A beautiful experience at WoF last season was the visit to the old folks' home in Hami Road. Interacting with them, playing games, sharing snacks, preparing and doing simple crafts with them, and through all this sharing the love of Christ, was truly fulfilling. The ladies even practiced and sang worship songs with them. These simple outreach programs are a great way to use God-given gifts and talents to serve others and, thus, serve God, bringing Him glory. **Caring has the gift of making the ordinary special.** I believe a little time spared to love and care for those elderly people made a huge difference in both our lives and their lives.

¹ Su, one of our members, sharing tips on how to care for our skin in Shanghai's climate.

² Another ICS member, Evelyn, demonstrating how to make your own lipstick during the WoF outreach craft morning.



There were many other outreach events organized by WoF. Beginning and end of season celebrations invite many new people, where ladies share their personal testimonies followed by lunch and fellowship. Praise and worship morning was a new addition where the whole morning was spent in glorifying our Lord. We also had a great time on craft morning where ladies were invited for DIY sessions and a beauty talk on "love the skin you're in" by our ICS member and skincare specialist, Su Lim. After all, we are all fearfully and wonderfully made by God [Psalms 139:14]! Not to mention that numbers poured in :) It was a fun time with sessions on candle-making and homemade organic lipstick making conducted by our talented ladies. WoF women are equipped to do everything; a true Proverbs 31 woman!

Martin Luther said, to be a Christian without prayer, is no more possible

than to be alive without breathing. And that is why prayer meeting is an important part of WoF fellowship. Every Wednesday after the meeting ladies gather together to pray for the church and its work and for each other. All things are made possible in Christ through faith and prayer. Every time I attend this prayer meeting I go back home with a sense of being part of God's army and His great plan. As children of God, the most powerful and effective thing we can do is to pray for the advancement of His kingdom. As Billy Graham put it "prayer-less Christians are powerless Christians", and we sure do not want to be powerless women of God. It was heart-filling to hear at the end of season celebration the testimonies of many ladies; the answers to many prayers. God is so faithful, and all praise and glory belongs to Him. May He continue to guide, strengthen and equip His daughters to serve His kingdom together.

Testimonies



Akia Knowles

Since December last year, I have been really sick. I won't go into details, but it got so bad during the last 2 months, I was only capable of crawling out of my bed to do my job at night and crawl right back into it.

On April 16th, the Holy Spirit led me on a 21 day fast. And on the seventh day of my fast, I was lying in bed praying, when I heard the Holy Spirit said "go to church".

When I got to church, the Praise team was on their last song. Shortly after praise and worship, the announcements were being made.

During the announcements, there was a briefing on Church Camp. I instantly got a quickening in my spirit that I had to go. In fact, while they were still talking about it, I went on my WeChat in an attempt to sign up for it, but the registration was already closed. I got really disappointed and thought maybe I missed what God had said.

After church, I ran into a few people and began telling them how I was so sad that I couldn't go to Church Camp and that I really wanted to go.

To cut a long story short, after I made my request known, they made it their business to see if there was anyway that they could help me to get to Church Camp.

I didn't hear from them on Monday and I didn't hear from them on Tuesday. But on Wednesday, the 25th of April, I got a message saying "Akia we were able to get you registered to go to Church Camp". That message just confirmed that that was where God wanted me to be.

I need to mention that during all of this I had been suffering from terrible **reflux**.

I came to Church Camp on Sunday morning for the first session and after it I really just wanted to go home and lay in bed. My chest was on fire from the reflux. So I asked God if I could skip it and go home to

rest. He said one word: **disobedience**.

I attended the second and third sessions and I was so glad that I did. The testimony shared was so powerful. However, I was still having terrible reflux and was in a lot of pain.

The next day, I attended sessions 4 and 5; after the sessions, I felt like a brand new person. I still had the terrible reflux and my chest was on fire, but I was energized.

When I got home the reflux got really bad. I have never felt such pain in my chest in the past. I said "Lord could I just rest and not go to the worship service tonight", but He said "go".

As I walked into the worship service I felt an overwhelming presence of the Holy Spirit. I had to sit down because of the reflux. The atmosphere was so thick with prophetic worship, that I ended up standing and worshipping.

Halfway through worship, Pastor Daniel took the microphone and said "**there is someone here tonight suffering from reflux. Come forward so that I can pray for you.**" I didn't even wait. I was the first one there.

Both Pastor Daniel and Doreen prayed for me. As they began to pray, the burning in my chest went down. It felt like someone poured coolant on my chest.

Two days later I messaged Doreen to tell her that I didn't have any reflux issues since they prayed for me and I still haven't.

I wanted to share my testimony with you all because sometimes it doesn't look like what God spoke to you is going to happen. But remember: God's timing isn't our timing. In my situation, He used the very last service to fully heal me. What if I had been disobedient and missed the last service because I was not feeling well enough? I would have missed His timing.

Because I was obedient, my energy was restored, I have no reflux and all of the other issues that were going on in the inside of my body have completely disappeared through the power and blood of Jesus.

I'm extremely grateful for that ICS put so much time, effort, and resources together to present such an amazing Church Camp. I got more than you would ever know, and I would encourage everyone to sign up for the next Church Camp. You will truly be blessed.



Charis Choong

Buddydog

In 2009, after stepping down from a corporate job, I started 'Buddydog' with a Singaporean friend and a local Chinese. We started it out of our **great love and passion for dogs**. We were not exactly looking for a business that will give us huge returns. We simply wanted a safe place that owners can leave their dogs when they travel, help dogs with behavioral issues, and enjoy our time being surrounded by these wonderful creatures of God.

From the beginning, my partners and I had been talking about donating a portion of our profits to charity. We started helping stray dogs through charity organisations and from personal rescues. In my mind, I know that I should put people before animals, as God first created us. In His image, we are His children. I told my business partners that I wanted to give to good works which involves helping people. I am very glad that both of them are very supportive of this idea.

I started looking for opportunities to give, but I was often wary because of the many integrity issues I heard about. In the end, I volunteered my time more than contributing financially. One day I was approached by ICS to sponsor its very first charity golf event. I was very excited as I felt that God has given me a great opportunity. Finally, **I have an avenue to give without concerns**. I trusted ICS to use the donations meaningfully and responsibly.

After the first charity golf event, sponsoring it has become something that Buddydog never miss each year. I remember Pastor Daniel's sermon many years back about being blessed by God for blessing others, so I prayed for protection over Buddydog's staff and dogs. I prayed that all would be free from harm and danger. This is always my top concern about the business and is also my number one prayer for Buddydog. God kept Buddydog on His radar. He watched over us and blessed us with more than I asked for.

We did not ask for huge financial returns from this business. Our only hope is that we have a sustainable business that will continue for years to come, so that we can carry on with our passion. But praise the Lord, we received so much more than what we asked for. Our business grew steadily, with no lack financially. We provide decent jobs and steady incomes for our staff. Personally, the financial reward makes it possible for me to stay out of a full time job comfortably. As a result, I get to spend quality time with family and friends, helping those in need. I was able to spend several weeks accompanying my dad through his

operation. I also spent two months caring for my sister in the UK, which resulted in both our faith being strengthened. On another occasion, I spent a month with my mom as she went through her knee replacement surgery in Singapore. Through this, I was able to witness her acceptance of Christ as her personal Lord and Savior. I am more involved in ministries as well as enjoying my personal holidays! All these would not be possible had I not chose to trust God and leave my corporate role.

God kept Buddydog on His radar. He watched over us and blessed us with more than I asked for.

Most of us know how difficult it is for a joint venture to work out. Many fail because of differences in opinion among business partners. God blessed me with a local partner whom I can trust completely and enjoy working with. I started the business unsure of how long this joint venture will last. My dad, a businessman, has always warned me about partnership failures. At the start, we did have our differences, in terms of work habits and mentality, but through these differences, God molded me with patience to guide and to teach. By His grace, I am also transformed and am now a mellow person. My partner accepts and adopts my work principles. This to me, is of utmost importance, so as not to compromise our integrity. His wife has also come to know Christ personally through our relationship. I believe that one day, he too, will acknowledge God as his Lord and Savior.

Our staff and dogs at Buddydog are very well protected. Over the years, we encountered many challenges and accidents. There were times when I wanted to give up, but God encouraged me with His wisdom and grace. We pulled through all our incidents and emerged a great deal wiser. I have peace in my heart knowing that **God's hand is upon Buddydog** and He is watching over us. I can cast my cares upon Him.

Buddydog is a small business, but we pledge to give faithfully. God never thinks that our contributions are too small. He delivers His promise to take care of our needs while we bless others. I always remember this simple verse from Acts 20:35: "It is more blessed to give than to receive." This is indeed so true!

Proverbs 19:17 says: "He who is kind to the poor lends to the Lord, and He will reward him what he has don." It is such a privilege to be able to give.

Just like ICS and Charity Golf, this year Buddydog is celebrating its 10th anniversary. I thank God for His faithfulness in keeping His promises. The more blessings God gives me, the more I will use them to bless people in need. We are truly blessed to bless.



Esther Zhou

Gnashing of Teeth and Weeping

Early last year, I took the IELTS test for my college application. On the day of the test, my mother and I arrived at the venue an hour earlier. When I checked in, I was not allowed to sit for the test as I did not bring my original identity document. My mother hurried back home to get my ID. However, when she returned, it was already five minutes past the check-in closing time. We begged the checkers to let me in but to no avail. I was neither allowed to take the test nor apply for any transfer or refund! We stood there with my mother gnashing her teeth while I wept. Later that day, we tried to find reasons for an appeal. However, the rules were clearly written on the admission ticket, right at the beginning under 'what to bring': *"If you fail to present the required ID document before check-in closes, you may not be allowed to sit the test, and will not be eligible for transfer, cancellation, or any refund."*

The gnashing of teeth and weeping experience reminded us of similar parables in the Bible about people not knowing or obeying God. They were thrown outside the gates of Heaven, into the darkness, or blazing furnace. Thankfully, I was only locked out of the test room. We do not want anyone, especially our beloved friends and relatives to miss the clearly written Truth in the Bible, to end up with gnashing of teeth and weeping outside the Heavenly gates.

Yes, Jesus is the only way to Heaven! Such an exclusive statement may be a grate to the ears, but it is true nonetheless. The Bible teaches that there is no other way to salvation than through Jesus Christ. Jesus Himself said in John 14:6: "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." He is not one of many ways; He is *the Way, the one and only way*. There are many other places in the Bible supporting this. In Acts 4:12: "Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved."

Dear friends, we pray that you will make a decision for Christ if you have not because of what you have read here.



Sunny Zhu

2017年加入WOF信心女士时我带着初且一试的心态选择了英文组。而每次聚会的敬拜中我都深受感动，在读书会分享神的话语和彼此的代祷也都让我获益良多。

去年下半年事工领袖 Gillian 姊妹询问我是否协助带领读书小组。当下我的感觉是自己还没准备好，信主年岁八年的我来到ICS之前甚至没有读过英文圣经，也有将近五年没有使用英文对谈。而在祷告当中，上帝很清楚要我顺服并接下这个服事，我选择顺服，虽然心里仍有个声音说“你不行”。

紧接一周后，Ser Yan 姊妹又鼓励我带领敬拜，当下我的回应也是：我唱歌不行；而Ser Yan 姊妹也鼓励我。过去我一直羡慕美声歌手，而我的妈妈就有副美妙的歌声，但我似乎没有遗传到她的音乐细胞，小时候也会因此令她感到失望，一首歌就简单的几句能唱。再加上声带因先天性闭合不全容易失声，音域也窄，而最令人担忧的就是会怯场的问题。想起第一次被圣灵充满就是在敬拜当中经历；而7年前负责接待牧者时分享这段经历他们当时也对我说要去带敬拜，我简直觉得不可能。而上帝这次似乎要拿掉我心中这一切的不可能。

在WOF聚会的第二次带领敬拜只唱了一首歌，在会后有位不认识的姐妹对我说“我感受到你有一颗敬拜的心”；似乎被鼓励的我很受感动，像是收到来自上帝爱的鼓励。接下来的每次带领分享或敬拜服事，都让我更亲近神，对我来说服事是生命走向成熟的快速通道。在服事的过程中，神也不断改变洁净我。

上帝又带领我加入国际学校亲子课程的服事。我记得第一次的参与服事的有四位姐妹，而来的家长有六位，世界的价值观就跑出来，我心里犯嘀咕，忍不住对神抱怨这太没有效率，难道因为是服务性质就这么不受重视吗？神温柔地调整我的眼光，让我看到就算为了一只迷失的羊它仍然倾尽全力。最后我们送上每位家长一本约翰福音，我自己也被祂喜乐的灵激励。

最近我更是被主教导，我们被呼召，不是为了要完成某件事，我们被呼召，是要先来到主的跟前，进到耶稣基督里。更多祷告寻求祂的心意，更多体会祂的道路高过我们的道路。服事最大的喜乐就是与主建立新的亲密。就像是满怀爱意注视爱人或孩子，你会看起来越来越美；更何况是注视我们的主？在服事的最后，我收到一个杯子作为礼物，上面写着“以大爱行在小事中”，让我感动因为我知道这是主对我的提醒。专注他的无限大能。

不可叫人小看你年轻。总要在言语，行为，爱心，信心，清洁上，都作信徒的榜样。而祂必兴旺，我必衰微。

A decorative border of various flowers and leaves surrounds the text. The flowers include daisies, tulips, and large multi-petaled blooms. The leaves are simple, pointed shapes.

I have

LOVED

A heart shape containing a large flower with many petals and a stem with leaves.

You
with an



EVERLASTING

Love



- JEREMIAH 31:3