

The Vessel

An official International Church of Shanghai publication

NOVEMBER 2019

ICS Good Works

Beijing Christian Council Retreat

ICS Missions Overview

Kids Church VBS 2019

Parenting Course Outreach

Effective Disciple in the Marketplace



From the Editor's Desk

Welcome to the last print edition of The Vessel and the last one for 2019! In this issue, we feature some of the ICS ministries and what ICS has been doing to bless the community.

ICS was featured in Tian Feng's September 2019 publication with a review of ICS' Good Works projects and support to the community over the past decade. We included a translated version of the article to share with you the church's vision: "We are a Family Blessed to Bless the Community and the Nations."

Representing ICS, Pastor Daniel Ho was invited to speak at the Christian Council Conference in September on "Internal Management", as ICS has been recognized for operating in accordance with the religious law and regulations in Shanghai since 2008.

We also featured an overview on ICS Mission trips and the Parenting Course outreach program conducted by the Women of Faith Ministry at some international schools. Bishop Dale Bronner, a passionate and eloquent speaker, came in August to share with us how to be an effective disciple in the Marketplace.

A note to The Vessel readers: As ICS will be promoting the digital version of The Vessel and reducing hardcopy printouts, please visit the ICS website under "Resources" to get your digital copy.



Brian Lin

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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 ICS Singapore | Sunday pre-service prayer: 9:45am / English service: 10am
Hotel Fort Canning (Lavender Ballroom) | 11 Canning Walk, Singapore 178881 P: +65.9180.3280 | info@inchristsg.org | www.inchristsg.org

Pastor Says...

We have asked everyone who worships in ICS to make her their home church. We strive to provide you with everything that a church should have in order to enrich your journey with the Lord while you are here in Shanghai. We will definitely experience God when we choose to walk with Him, and also allow love to be shown to us by the body of believers.

Isn't it wonderful that we can continue to be a strong advocate, mobilizer, sender and participant in mission and good works while we are in Shanghai? Let us continue to love the Lord and the people whom He has placed around us. Welcome to ICS and I am glad that you are part of this body.



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

ICS' Decade Of Good Works Review

by Hao Sheng as featured in Tian Feng September 2019 publication

(translated by Fintje Wijono)

Reverend Daniel Ho is the Senior Pastor of the International Church of Shanghai (hereafter referred to as ICS). On May 16th, 2019, Pastor Ho received the third "Shanghai Humanitarian Philanthropy" individual award.

Pastor Ho, who is from Singapore, has shepherded the church with truth, and served the community with love. For the past decade he has led the expatriate Christians in Shanghai with donations to the Chinese churches and community totaling more than RMB 10 million.

In December 2008, when ICS was granted permission to register as a church, Pastor Ho and the brothers and sisters were full of joy and gratitude. At the same time, they began to ponder how might the expatriate Christians give back to the community? The church, led by Pastor Ho, currently has expatriate Christians from over 50 countries attending Sunday services. Pastor Ho said, "We leased a temporary place for our Sunday services. Should we relocate to another place one day, what could we leave for the community? The church is the gateway of Christ's love, we are not a lamp hidden under a bowl, instead we are the light and salt of the earth."



Love and Care for Chinese minority group students

Since 2012, and with facilitation from the Shanghai Changning District Education Bureau, ICS has been contributing RMB 20,000 annually to provide financial support for underprivileged students from minority groups at the Shanghai Modern Vocational and Technical School, as well as incentives for some students from minority groups in Shanghai who have exhibited academic excellence and character. In 2015, ICS, the Changning District Ethnic Groups Association and the Shanghai Modern Vocational and Technical School jointly signed a "Sunshine Education" tripartite agreement, to help students from minority groups in Shanghai to successfully complete their studies and to achieve personal development in life.



For six years, ICS has given a cumulative amount of RMB 4.5 million in student grants through the Shanghai Ethnic Groups Association and the Red Cross, where more than 300 students from minority groups in Shanghai (from more than ten ethnic minority groups) have benefited. The seeds of love were sown and begun to germinate in their hearts, which will help and inspire them to be good citizens to make contributions and help in the development of the nation through ethnic unity.

Aid to families living in poverty caused by illness

Golf is one of the favorite leisure sports for the expatriates living in Shanghai. How to merge passion for a hobby with compassion? Pastor Ho encouraged the brothers and sisters to show their love through action by holding a charity golf tournament. The annual Charity Golf Tournament has since been one of the major events, where ICS calls on the expatriate Christians to raise fund for charity. For the past ten years, RMB 6.32 million has been raised through such tournaments, and all the fund raised has been distributed to the underprivileged in the community as well as to the families or organizations in need.

Genesis 12: 3

And all peoples on earth will be blessed through you." This was the promise that God made to Abram when he was called by God. Today, Pastor Ho has taken these words as God's blessing and reminder to the church.

Through the bridging and facilitation of the Changing Committee for Ethnic and Religious Affairs, ICS has partnered with the Changning Red Cross on many occasions for several years based on the common spirit of "humanitarian, compassion and dedication." RMB 1.538 million was raised through the 2018 Charity Golf Tournament, which was used in a one-time donation to provide humanitarian assistance to more than 20 families living in extreme poverty due to illness. Accompanied by the officers from Changning Red Cross, the representatives from ICS visited the beneficiary families, giving them timely help to overcome illness and to help improve their living conditions.

At the donation presentation ceremony, on behalf of ICS, Pastor Ho expressed his thankfulness for the opportunity to give something back to the community, and to support in the construction and development of China together in some ways.

We are not a lamp hidden under a bowl, instead we are the light and salt of the earth

AID TO ORPHANS AND UNDERPRIVILEGED STUDENTS TO FINISH SCHOOL

In 2016, Pastor Ho led ICS to continue their partnership with the Shanghai Changning Red Cross to set up the "Love Education Fund." The plan was to give RMB 600,000 in total over three cumulative years, to support the orphans at Changning district schools as well as students from special-needs families who were afflicted with debilitating illness, to finish school. In 2017, under the guidance of the District Education Bureau, individual schools carried out selection process on potential beneficiaries through identification, screening, verification and application. After review by the project selection committee, a final decision was reached whereby 83 students from the elementary and secondary schools (including vocational schools) were selected to receive financial support, including 27 Tibetan students from the Tibetan class at Fudan Secondary School.

To ensure a standardized implementation of the project, the selection committee members were comprised of representatives from ICS, Changning Red Cross, Changning Education Bureau and Changning Committee for Ethnic and Religious Affairs, who jointly signed the donation agreement and implementation plan, to ensure the distribution of fund is carried out in a fair and orderly manner.

联合时报-用真诚践行“爱的约定”

用真诚践行“爱的约定”
——记长宁区虹桥基督教外国人英语专场礼拜负责人何志辉
2019年07月16日 王文佳 胡志敬

何志辉(中)组织虹桥基督教英语专场礼拜慈善高尔夫球赛 胡志敬 摄

何志辉是长宁区虹桥基督教外国人英语专场礼拜(以下简称“英语专场礼拜”)的活动负责人。英语专场礼拜是2008年12月经市政府宗教管理部门批准设立的外国人集体宗教活动地点,来自世界55个国家和地区的外籍信众在此开展宗教活动。

在在沪外国人的宗教生活提供服务的同时,何志辉经常思考,如何能更好地参与到地区的社会公益慈善事业中去,发扬基督教关怀社会、服务他人的传统。

2014年,经长宁区民宗办牵线,何志辉联系长宁区红十字会,希望以定向救助的方式帮助区内因病致贫的特困人群。2016年、2018年,英语专场礼拜举办的“慈善高尔夫球赛”所筹善款全部捐给了红十字会,用于因病致贫特困家庭的救助。何志辉及英语专场礼拜的善举得到了区红十字会的大力支持。在区红十字会和街镇红十字会干部的陪同下,英语专场礼拜的外籍信众还对部分受助家庭进行走访慰问。

2016年,在何志辉的提议下,“爱的约定”——长宁区红十字会帮助项目成立,项目承诺每年捐赠20万元用于区域内贫困家庭中再次一起践行“爱的约定”。

“地上的万族都要因你得福”
——记第三届“上海市人通博爱”个人奖获得者何志辉牧师

何志辉牧师是上海虹桥基督教外国人英语专场礼拜负责人,也是第三届“上海市人通博爱”个人奖获得者。他从事宗教工作多年,一直秉承基督教“爱人如己”的教义,积极参与社会公益慈善事业,为帮助贫困家庭、支持教育、关爱老人等方面做出了积极贡献。

何志辉牧师在长宁区虹桥基督教外国人英语专场礼拜中担任负责人,该礼拜自2008年12月成立以来,吸引了来自世界55个国家和地区的外籍信众。他不仅组织礼拜活动,还积极参与社会公益慈善事业,为帮助贫困家庭、支持教育、关爱老人等方面做出了积极贡献。

何志辉牧师在第三届“上海市人通博爱”个人奖评选中脱颖而出,成为获奖者之一。他的事迹得到了社会各界的广泛认可和赞誉。



Love and support for Chinese churches and their growth

Pastor Ho does not only focus on philanthropy in the community, he is also concerned for the healthy growth of the Chinese churches. In 2016, he led ICS in making a donation of RMB 300,000 to the Ai-De Bible printing ministry in Nanjing. In addition, he organized a visit to Ai-De Printing factory for the expatriate brothers and sisters so they could observe the Bible printing process on-site. The over 300 visitors there were impressed at the growth of the Chinese churches and the contribution they made to the church around the globe.

ICS is also involved in supporting the training and grooming of preachers in the Chinese churches, establishment of church pension benefits, sponsoring meal subsidies at the Fujian Theological Seminary, offering scholarships to students with academic excellence and character at the Heilongjiang Theological Seminary, providing financial assistance for the medical care of clergymen and pastoral personnel in Heilongjiang province, helping with the renovation of the school building at Zhongnan Theological Seminary, supporting the elderly in need at Shanghai En-Guang Nursing Home and others, with a cumulative donation amount exceeding RMB 1.48 million.

Pastor Ho and the brothers and sisters responded to God's calling with love. Throughout all these years, not only have they made contributions to fund education, special-needs, the elderly, and the churches, they were also involved and contributed to the Yunnan and Sichuan Ya-An disaster relief funds, the Shanghai typhoon relief fund, prosthesis donation for the disabled etc. They truly bear witness to Christ's great love through their good works.

In appreciation of all the contributions made by ICS to China's Red Cross, in October 2017, the president of China Red Cross, Mr. Chen Zhu, presented ICS with a "Philanthropy Award".

Light and salt bring warmth and blessings, as well as hope and strength to humanity. Pastor Ho and ICS, which he leads are striving to live out the love of Christ, to be the unforgettable blessing and help to the people around them. It is not only because they are thankful for receiving God's blessing, but also to be the messengers of God's love and blessing.

Christian Council Retreat

Held in Beijing
September 18th-21th, 2019

By Bristol Leung



It was my absolute privilege to be able to join the 2019 Christian Council Retreat (The Joint Conference of Foreign Language Speaking Services of Shanghai Protestant Churches) organized by the Shanghai Christian Council. This conference is organized once every two years, gathering all the officials from the Foreign Affairs Division, leaders of the Shanghai Municipal Bureau, Shanghai Three-Self Patriotic Movement, Shanghai District Offices, Senior Pastors, elders, and faculty of the foreign language speaking churches.

ICS 主要合作部门

上海民族宗教外事处
上海市基督教三自爱国运动委员会

长宁区民族宗教办事处
长宁区国家公安局
程家桥街道办事处

Key Departments ICS work with

Shanghai Municipal Religious Affairs Bureau
Shanghai Three Self Patriotic Movement and Christian Council
Changning District Religious Affairs Bureau
Changning National Security Office
Cheng Jia Qiao District Office

This is my second time attending the retreat and yet another eye-opening experience to learn from the various leaders and other senior ministers. The key objective of this conference is to discuss the application of Regulations in Religious Affairs in Shanghai. Madam Xiu Yanbin, the Division Chief of the Foreign Affairs Shanghai Municipal gave an elaborated speech on the revised religious regulations based on China's No. 144 Decree of State Council, and how these changes will affect the different levels of applications and the day-to-day operations of the foreign churches in Shanghai with the local government.

Representing ICS, Pastor Daniel Ho was invited as one of the speakers to share his personal experience on "Internal Management of Foreign Language Speaking Service". ICS has been operating in accordance with the religious law and regulations in Shanghai since 2008. ICS has the opportunity to share our experiences working with the local government on how we operate as a church administratively in terms of finances, decision making, and more.

Pastor Daniel also presented the various Good Works projects that ICS has cooperated with at the Shanghai municipal level, district offices, and other local community services. He concluded the presentation by emphasizing our church vision: "We are a Family Blessed to Bless the Community and the Nations." Being able to represent ICS and share why we do what we do is to be the Salt and Light of the world.

I have benefited in many ways from this conference and I got to refresh my mind through learning how the regulations have developed over the years. During the information exchange session, the church representatives shared their thoughts and future action plans. Based on what I heard from the different church leaders, I really appreciate the collaboration and communication that ICS has already been working on with the local government.

This humbling experience taught me how I should strengthen my daily work to better align with the changing season of ICS. As quoted in the conference, "Although these regulations have been implemented, how can we as International Churches support and adhere to these regulations, in order to better develop the spiritual needs of the expatriate community in Shanghai."

We as a body of believers who abide with the local regulations, are a positive way of representing Christ in the community, so that we can continue to shine in the Name of His Glory.

ICS Missions Overview

by Grace Chan

Why do we do missions? This is a basic Biblical principle as we are given a mandate by Jesus in Matt 28:18-20. "And Jesus came and spoke unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen."

In the book of Acts, we learn about the mission trips that the disciples and the apostles did. They traveled to different places, spread the good news and planted churches. This is a very traditional way of how we look at missions. However, this is not the only way we are called to do missions. We are called to do missions wherever we are. ICS has adopted the Go-123 mission track to help its members take part in missions and understand what it really means to be out there in the field. The following are the Go-123 Trips that ICS has been organizing every year:



Matthew 28:19-20 says "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you."



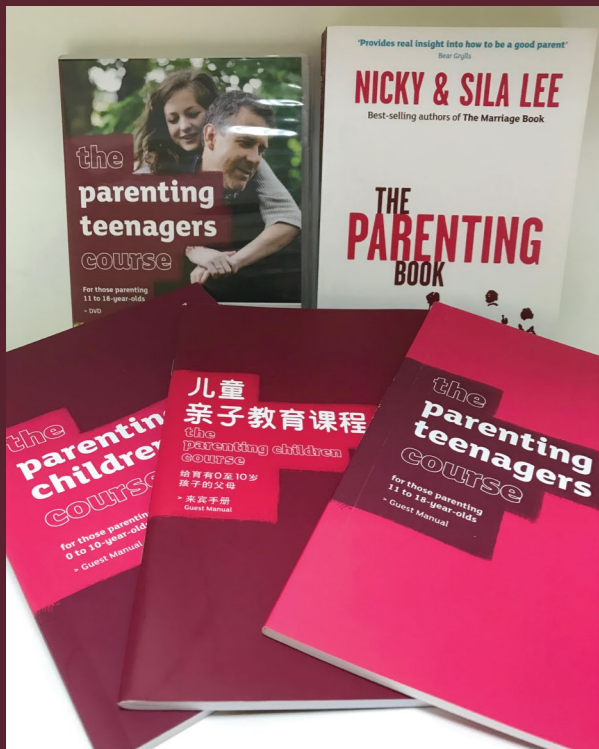
G1 is the entry level and educational trip, where we currently go to Chiang Mai, Thailand. This trip will introduce you to the local ministries and organizations that we work with on the ground. Part of the trip will expose you to the local community and culture by touring around the city, enjoying the sights and activities. This trip is suitable for first-time mission trippers who would like to understand what missions are about. Professionals, Youth, and Families with small children are welcome to join.

G2 is the next level and a hands-on serving trip to Bangkok, Thailand. This is a short-term trip where you will be serving as a team and working closely with the local teams in their ministries. In the G2 trip, you are required to be a good team player as you are likely to be assigned tasks that may be out of your comfort zone. You will also need to be open to unexpected changes and be ready to serve even at the last minute. This trip is suitable for the people who are interested in learning more about the local ministries and serving the local people with their different skillsets. Professionals, Youth, and Families are all welcome to join.



Missions don't just end with the Go-123 Trips. Let us not forget, Matthew 28:19-20 says "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you." We can also share the good news with people around us. We don't need to be sent to a mission field because wherever we are now, is our mission field.

Stay tuned for more information about Missions and trainings that will be available in the future.



ICS亲子课程外展事工

(服事人，却被更大地服事)

张斌 姐妹



ICS亲子课程外展事工自2016年9月开出第一期课程至今已四个年头。粗估开课超过20期，接触家长近400人次。主要集中在大上海地区国际学校和双语学校。

亲子课程由ICS“信心姐妹会”团队发起的外展事工。最早成立于8年前的信心姊妹会(Woman of Faith)由ICS主任牧师何牧师夫人Doreen女士创立，事工的异象是：姐妹

们被神的话语所建立，被圣灵所浇灌，不论住在上海，还是开始海外新生活，都能有信心面对生活中的各样挑战；姐妹们也能积极主动地服事神、服事人。

亲子课程选用英国李力奇和李希拉夫妇所著的《亲子教育课程》，包括儿童篇和青少年篇。这套教材包含课程DVD、课程带领者手册、课程参加者手册，系统非常成



熟，很容易上手。更重要的是，这套课程的内容以圣经价值观为基石，教导既实用，又归正，沿用至今，激动许多为人父母者的心。

在课程开展的初期，透过各个国际学校的协助之下进行规划和团队的成立，团队当中有进行课程带领的，有协助小组讨论的，更有幕后行政协助课程准备的，各司其职。课程为期5周，根据报名家长的人数服事团队安排相对应的人数来进行课程。姐妹们更会用祷告来拖住每位参与者。家长们会将自己在育儿过程当中经历的挑战列出，筹备团队便会分别时间为这些家长们提名代祷。在课程的进行当中和家长们建立关系更学习分担彼此的难处，彼此相爱激励。这些都再再显示行在爱里需要更多的操练。神更加倍极大的恩典和启示来引导团队如何帮助和建造家长们。

所谓“施比受更为有福”，姐妹们透过每次课程的准备，更多是对自己育儿经验的提醒。那些已经参加不下数次、对课程早已滚瓜烂熟的姐妹们，仍在每次的课程当中被提醒，更见证神的恩典。

亲子课程外展事工不仅呼召姐妹们的加入，更欢迎弟兄们来参与团队。不一定需要身为父母，有些参与者在尚未育有子女，也有未婚的。在参与课程过后，更多是预

备自己为人父母。课程不受语言限制、无须在意羞于在众人面前分享、只要有愿做的心，必蒙悦纳。

课程之后，总是能收到许多热烈回响。首先，家长们学到可实际执行的育儿技巧，回家立即运作操作。像是明白爱的语言之后，练习给孩子一个拥抱，一个及时的鼓励，立即就看到孩子们的回应带来正面的果效。我们深切地感受到家长们都期望能改善亲子关系。这更顾立团队们在这块禾场里继续开拓耕耘，给予小小的助力，使亲子关系回归到爱的关系。

借着育儿知识、理念和技巧的分享，将神的话语和价值，以润物细无声的方式，更容易进入人心。“爱、责任、委身、根基、生命”等等与育儿密切相关的理念，更将福音的美好默默地撒入人的心中！

为了更多祝福社群，未来透过外籍人士中心TEC (The Expatriate Center) 的介绍将进入更多国际学校，使更多家长受惠。在此我们要感谢何牧师Pastor Daniel，以及这个事工的创办人Sister Doreen，因为你们的爱和坚持激励我们分享爱，成为更多人的祝福，愿神纪念你们，也纪念团队当中的每一位。团队更呼召更多弟兄姊妹的加入，委身其中，一同奔跑神的异象，共同成长。

Kids VBS 2019 CHURCH

One race, one family, one Savior!

by Christine Kok

Just how different can we be? This July at VBS, we raced through Genesis 1-11 and explored the beginning of the human race and why nobody has run a perfect race through life!

There were more than 40 of us, called out of our comfort zones as volunteers to join hands with the 130+ children between the ages of 5 to 12 years old. We learned how the different races and cultures represent us.

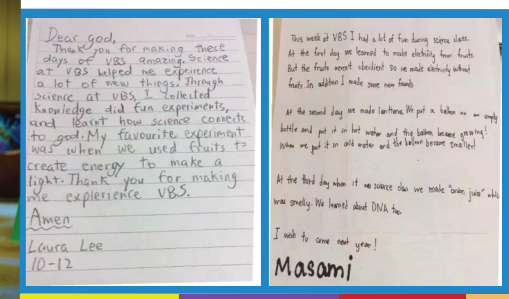
What does the Tower of Babel have to do with us today? Though it is a short passage, it is important for us today as it helps to explain the differences between us. Together we discover that we all look different but we are in fact one family. **We are all part of the same race - the human race**, descendants of Adam & Eve, and we all have the same problem: we are all in need of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior, in our lives!



We are a "shades of brown" Family!

Are you confused about the issue of race? Is this a sensitive topic? The CEO of Answers at Genesis.org said "No". The VBS lessons started with God's Word and addressed the issue of race in a fun way! Starting with the history found in God's Word, the kids learned the Gospel and historical biblical truths through a combination of fun games, songs, science and craft activities.

In ICS, our congregation is very unique with so many different skin colors and cultural backgrounds! Did you know that there is no such thing as a truly "white" or "black" person? We learned during a VBS Bible lesson that we are actually either brown, light brown or dark brown due to a pigment called melanin.



Hence skin color is just a matter of having different shades of brown depending on how much melanin you have.

The kids learned through biblical teaching that's there's just one race – the human race. "Jesus loves the little children, all the children of the world. Shades of brown from dark to light, all are precious in His sight." ~ goes the new version of the song, Jesus Loves the Little Children. **Jesus Christ and the Gospel are the only answers to racism.**

It was truly incredible as we raced from South America to Asia to Africa to Europe and to North America in 5 short days. What a revelation we all discovered together!

At the closing ceremony, we had several kids who came forth during the altar call. What a precious sight of "heaven on earth"! Luke 15:10 says, "In the same way, I tell you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents."

Mark your calendars for

July 06th-10th, 2020.

Come and be part of the helpers team!
You will be amazed with just how much more you can do.

Seminar

with
**Bishop Dale
Bronner**

“An Effective Disciple in the Marketplace”

by Catherina Chang

The day of August 24th started out bright and early with a wonderful session of worship with the presence of God. It prepared us to receive the sharing by Bishop Dale Bronner on the topic of “An Effective Disciple in the Marketplace”. Who would have thought that in church we would learn how to infuse the secular with the spiritual, the professional and the personal all in one full-day session.

Bishop Dale Bronner is a very skillful speaker and linguist. He quickly warmed the crowd with a story of how he had Asian DNA in his family background. The audience warmed up to his articulate demeanor as he shared his life experiences and nuggets of wisdom such as **“Save Your Self Time Energy Money” (SYSTEM)** that he kept on impressing us with throughout the day.

During the Question & Answer session, one of the questions led to Bishop Dale Bronner’s sharing about something that is quite contrary to our usual daily practice. **Instead of making a To-Do list, we should have a “STOP DOING” List - to stop doing certain routine habits before something new can take place.** It is like when people say “Less is More”. I should definitely apply more of this principle into my own life.

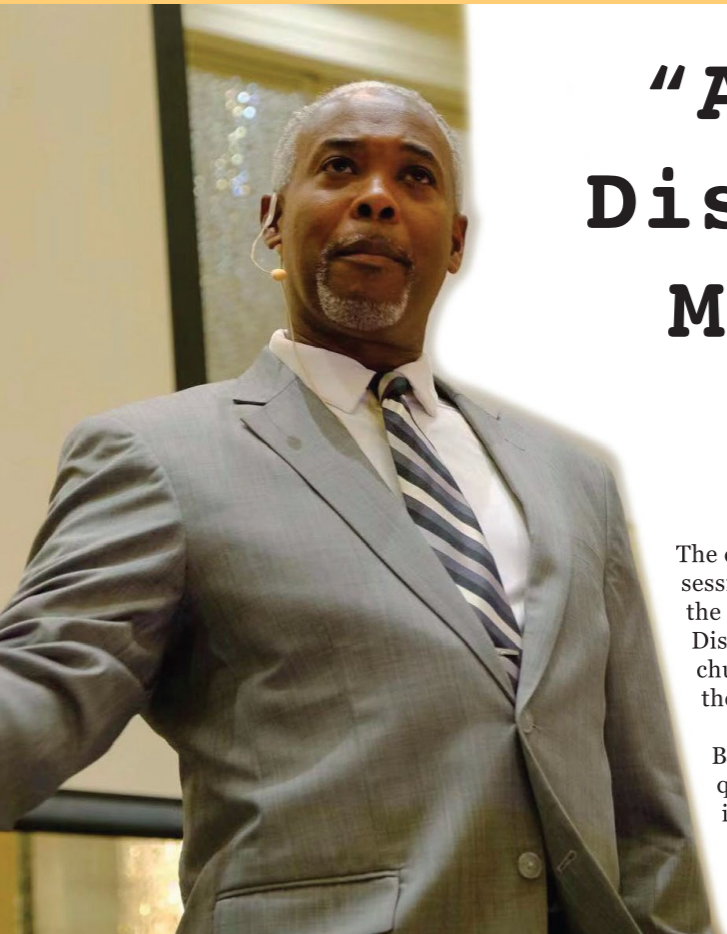
Although he did not have enough time to go through the slide “Ministry vs. Job” in detail, his notes clearly delineate the difference for us as Christians. Work is a ministry where the duties taken on are to serve the Lord, despite all criticisms, challenges, or even lack of assurance. Work is a ministry when we remain faithful even in the little things and seek to serve others.

Professionally, I have attended courses throughout the years to learn in specific areas and to improve on personal and leadership skills. These courses do not come cheap but it is simply amazing that the church has heavily subsidized the conference cost to make it more affordable so that more church members can benefit from it and run with the vision for all to be effective in the marketplace wherever we are called.

Moreover, in many of the professional development courses available out there, they hope to facilitate one to be visionaries or problem solvers. However, worldly teachings can never be as effective as what we have when we call on the name of Jesus and simply **“ask God when we lack wisdom, because He gives liberally and without reproach” [James1:5]**.

For many of us who attended the seminar, the session was definitely a well-spent Saturday, as we soaked in the presence and the Word of God. I look forward to more sessions organized by the Marketplace Committee to help all of us Lead Transformed Lives!

*Instead of making
a To-Do list, we
should have a
“STOP DOING”
List - to stop
doing certain
routine habits
before something
new can take
place.*



PETER LEE

I believe in the awesome power of prayers. Today through prayer with thanksgiving, the peace of God which surpasses all understanding keeps my heart and mind in Christ Jesus.

I am going to testify to the unfailing love of God. I want to testify to the amazing bond of love between Christian brothers and sisters. I want to testify to the power of fervent prayers in the corporate body of Christ.

On June 22, my BSF brother, Yeo Yuen Kee from Singapore picked me up at Senai JB airport to go to the house I was to live in. On the way home, a bus rammed into the back of our car. I was sitting in the back and it was like someone smashed right between my shoulder blades. We went to a local clinic where the doctor prescribed me with some medications. Thank God, my BSF brother was not hurt but got home in a tow truck.

The next evening during our family gathering, my youngest sister noticed that I was not quite myself and immediately drove me to a hospital for a checkup. After a series of X-rays and blood tests I was placed into the common ward. I was naive to think that after a couple of days, I would be discharged from the hospital. Unbeknownst to me, the doctors were discussing the procedures to remove the abscess in my throat and to drain the right half of my lungs. Moreover, it had to be done that Friday or else the risks would be high.

After six hours, I woke up in the ICU numbed by all the medication and tubes. I was not aware of the significance of what God had done for me - a second chance at the age of 81.

I testify to the unbounding love shown to me from the cell groups, MIC, Pastor Daniel, and my brothers and sisters in BSF. They helped my siblings pay for the expensive medical bills. ICS donated RMB 120,000. This is truly love expressed in action and in deed.

When MIC, the hospitality committee and my brothers and sisters heard about my situation, they bound together in prayer for my survival and recovery. I was in the hospital from June 23 till August 13 and they kept on praying for me. Pastor Daniel was among those who came to the hospital to pray over me. Lying on the hospital bed, it was not a pretty sight. God listened to our fervent prayers and I am recovering from the operation. Now I am recuperating at a care center to learn to swallow and to eat normally.

I praise God for His unfailing love and mercy. I was literally going through the valley of the shadow of death. His rod and staff they comforted me. I thank God for the love and care shown by my brothers and sisters in Shanghai and in Singapore. Their love is real and sincere.

I believe in the awesome power of prayers. Today through prayer with thanksgiving, the peace of God which surpasses all understanding keeps my heart and mind in Christ Jesus.



(Peter Lee - post surgery)

The Promise keeping GOD

Tania Kurian & Koshy Payikad

But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what they already have? But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently. (Romans 8:24-25)

Through our time in Shanghai, God taught us to hope for what we did not yet have and to wait for it patiently.

My husband Koshy and I came to Shanghai 4 years ago. We had been praying for a child for a while and felt it would happen soon, with the thought of having our first child in China.

Lying awake one night, I felt my spirit stirring, so I started praying in the Spirit. The Lord spoke saying "He will bless the fruit of my womb, in His right time". I was excited and waited, but nothing happened.

A few months later, a sermon on Faith at ICS really spoke to me. **Hebrews 11:11 "And by faith even Sarah, who was past childbearing age, was enabled to bear children because she considered Him faithful who made the promise."** God gave me a promise that night and He wanted me to trust Him because He is Faithful no matter what trouble lies ahead.

The real struggle started after we decided to seek medical help. The more the doctors investigated, the more problems were revealed. After praying, we continued treatments for 2 years, but still there was nothing.

I still remember the day I put the report stating we had very little chance of conceiving naturally, side by side with my journal where I wrote what God had promised us. Should I trust the facts or God's Word? **Hebrews 11:1 says, "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen"**. He was teaching us to hold on to His promise, despite the circumstances.

Our biggest pillar of strength was the body of Christ. I am grateful for the Women of Faith fellowship who prayed for us for each treatment and when I was contemplating with IVF treatment.

No matter how strong our faith stand, the pain and the doubt is also very real. Sometimes seeing family and friends have babies would crush me. Thankfully He gave us friends and a cell group family with whom we could openly share our struggles. We pressed on, believing that God would give us a child soon while we were in Shanghai.

Last October, we were praying together when Koshy received a Word from **2 Kings 4:16 Then he said, "About this time next year you shall embrace a son."** And she said, **"No, my lord. Man of God, do not lie to your maidservant!"**. The next day he received another from **Genesis 18:10, "I**

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will certainly return to you according to the time of life, and behold, Sarah your wife shall have a son."

We were certain God was going to fulfill His promise of a child. However, our God is a God full of surprises. A month later, we learned that Koshy had to be relocated to the US soon. It was difficult to accept the truth that we would be leaving Shanghai with the promise of having a baby unfulfilled. Nevertheless, God's plans are above ours and we are called to submit to His will.

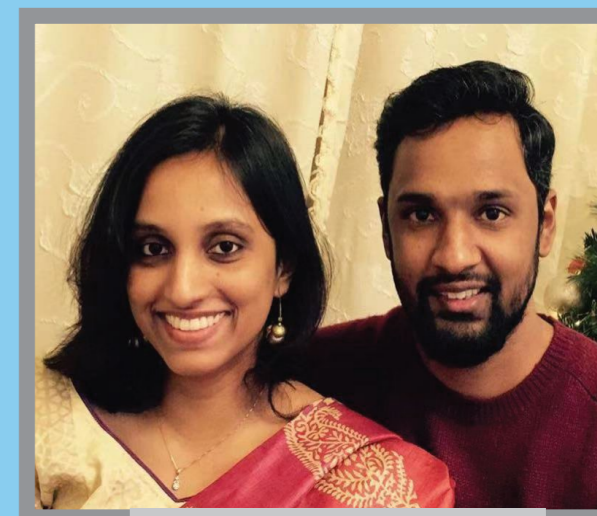
Many months passed after our arrival to this new place and yet nothing. I was devastated and felt hopeless. For many days, I did not pray or even allow myself to be encouraged. I doubted His unconditional love. Yet, even in my most broken state, He never stopped loving me nor working in His mysterious ways. He always makes a way and supernaturally brought back that small flame of hope burning in me.

He is a Miracle Worker, Promise Keeper and Light in the darkness. God kept His promise, made a way for us and worked in a miraculous way to bring light into our darkness. After 5 years of waiting, we learned we were finally going to have a child in May this year. What was impossible was made possible supernaturally.

In a moment, all the pain of waiting seemed nothing compared to the joy that God filled us with. He turned our ashes into beauty. Our joy is complete today, not in knowing that we are going to have a child, but in tasting and knowing that our Lord is good.

*God is not human, that He should lie,
Not a human being, that He should change His mind
Does He speak and then not act?
Does He promise and not fulfill?
Numbers 23:19*

Our Miracle that the Lord promised is on the way!



Tania Kurian & Koshy Payikad

*He is a Miracle Worker,
Promise Keeper and
Light in the darkness.
God kept His promise,
made a way for us and
worked in a miraculous
way to bring light into
our darkness.*