perspective

fellowship of evangelical students

march 2011

unity in diversity

battling biblical illiteracy

How to Remain Evangelical

NTU CF Bible Camp
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IFES Bible Study Consultation

MICA(P) 147/03/2011

How to Remain Evangelical

Introduction

At the Commissioning Service for FES' 5th General Secretary, Lisman Komaladi, on 14 January, *Bishop Dr Robert Solomon*, a Vice-President of FES, gave the exhortation for the evening. He began by pointing out that many things have changed since FES was first founded.

Two critical changes stand out. First, the landscape of dominant ideology has changed from modernism to post-modernism. Truth and morality have become relativised and with it, all the challenges that come with evangelism and discipling. Secondly, the scope of FES' ministry has widened. The world of tertiary education has expanded and become diversified, and today we have many more educational institutions than before. It is in this context of change that we have to deepen our evangelical roots and adapt our methods in order to continue faithfully in this ministry that has been entrusted by God into our hands.

We have a great wealth of evangelical heritage that we can profit from. It is a heritage born out of centuries of evangelical expression from the lives, testimonies and the ministries of the many faithful men and women who believed in Jesus Christ and the gospel of Jesus. It is especially in a time like this, with all its trials and challenges, that we have to draw from the wealth of our heritage. Our heritage provides us with the foundation from which we are able to orientate ourselves. It

Bishop Dr Solomon addressing the audience at the Commissioning Service.

is important that we do not neglect to re-calibrate our lives so that we remain faithful to the Gospel that was given to us.

There are four characteristics of evangelicalism, as established by Scottish Christian historian, David Bebbington:

1. Biblicism: the authority of the revealed word of God.
2. Cruciform: the centrality of the cross. This means that atonement was made for the people of every race, tribe and tongue, thus making it relevant to everyone.
3. Conversionism: the eternal gospel must be appropriated in personal faith. This comes through repentance; a discernible re-orientation of the sinner's mind and heart toward God.
4. Activism: the Gospel truth must be demonstrated in evangelism and social service.

More recently, another British theologian, Alister McGrath, added a

fifth characteristic: Christo-centricism, which means making Christ the centre of all things. Christo-centricism can be said to be implicit in Bebbington's quadrilateral.

A Word to the Scattered, Suffering, and Strangers in the World

Having introduced the key characteristics of evangelicalism as the framework, Bishop Solomon then went on to expound on the passage taken from 1 Peter 1:13-2:3. Peter's epistle was a comfort to the ancient Christians, many of whom were scattered and living very difficult lives at that time. Peter wanted to encourage the Christian diaspora wherever they were, through the truth of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, which gives strength and stability to those who were suffering.

In the introduction in 1 Peter 1:1-2, Peter stated that it is the Father who has chosen us through the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ by the sprinkling of his blood. We see the triune God in action, whereby our whole experience and reality were created and maintained by the Trinity: through the Father's choice, the Son's sacrifice and the Spirit's perfecting and sanctifying work. This is essentially the mission statement of every Christian.

... teaching the Bible has to be an urgent priority

Peter's introduction points us to the primary goal of our lives and mission. Bishop Solomon shared that 1 Peter 1:1-2 is a great way to define ourselves. "Who are you? I am chosen by the Father to be obedient to Jesus Christ through the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit." To him, that verse is a wonderful definition of our goal, one that is Trinitarian and points to God's saving grace in our hearts, lives and world. In 1 Peter 1:9, Peter says that 'the goal of [the] faith [of Christians] is the salvation of [their souls]'. Such great salvation has been given to us that Hebrews 2:3 warns of the consequences of ignoring it. Therefore, it is a salvation that needs to be appreciated, cherished, celebrated and embraced at all costs. It is in this context that we find the key evangelical characteristics highlighted in this text.

The Enduring Word of God

Our salvation should be God-centered: the result of the combined work of the Holy Spirit, the Son and the Father. It is this glorious view of salvation coming from the triune God that is important in our evangelical tradition. In 1 Peter 1:23, Peter quotes Isaiah 40:6-8 and contrasts the transience and the glory of men with the enduring Word that "stands forever". It was this Word of God that was faithfully preached to the Christians (v.25). This aspect of God's enduring Word is an evangelical heritage that we must never neglect, especially in our day and age.

While times have changed, the authority and timeless relevance of God's Word has not. This then begs the question: what does it mean for us today and the new generations of Christians? There are new challenges today in terms of using God's Word for reaching

and discipling new generations of Christians. There is growing biblical illiteracy among many sectors of the church. As written in v.25b, "this is the word that was preached to you", *teaching the Bible has to be an urgent priority of the church.*

One of our main challenges in present time is our belief in the authority of the Scripture. We will be sorely tested on our understanding of the authority of the Scripture, or on our faith and our practice. Bishop Solomon singled out a book *Misquoting Jesus* (Harperone, 2005), which was written by Bart E. Ehrman, a New Testament scholar. According to the book, the New Testament cannot be relied on. This is because there are 30,000 textual differences in the Scripture texts according to an author who wrote a few centuries ago and whose findings were referred to in the book. These, however, are clearly scribal errors or amendments, many of which are inconsequential, and the remaining ones do not affect our Christian doctrines and teachings.

In the face of such situations, church members are very vulnerable because they generally hold simplistic ideas about the origin of Scripture. Instead of avoiding the subject, churches ought to tell the truth about the transmission of Scripture. Churches should teach their members that Scripture was transmitted by scribes who were very careful about accuracy. They should teach members about the thousands of manuscripts available, telling them about some of the textual differences and explaining their nature. This is so that when their members read such cbooks their faith will not be shaken. There is a need to educate Christians, especially those studying at tertiary institutions because they have the ability to understand such matters and teach others. If they are not made aware of all these, they will not be able to stand up and defend themselves, and consequently will be silenced on this matter. Bishop Solomon's prayer for FES is that it will continue to produce biblical scholars who will be able to defend and meet any challenges to the authority of Scripture. Christians who are confident about the Word of God would be likewise confident to preach the Word of God so that people may be saved.

Bishop Solomon also expressed concern over an atheist who commented in a newspaper that Scripture is not necessary for morality. He questioned our ability to respond to such comments, especially when it becomes more prevalent in public spaces. How are we to continue to defend the veracity and authority of God's Word? Needless to say, there is a need for Christians to learn to 'creatively engage' with those who struggle with faith. Apologists like Ravi Zacharias whose approach to engagement is 'very civil, winsome and persuasive', are needed.

In Hebrews 4:12, the author likened God's Word as living and active, sharper than any double-edged sword. In other words, nothing is hidden from God (Heb. 4:13). The Greek word the author used for 'laid bare' refers to the baring of the trachea, which has origins from the tradition of gladiator fights. Scripture thus likens the power of Scripture to a victorious gladiator, with

his foot placed on his opponent's head, poised to bring down the sword on his exposed neck. However, God's Word is not a gladiator's sword, he clarified. Instead it is a 'surgeon's knife'. God's Word does not destroy but it heals and redeems.

The Precious Blood of Christ

Bishop Solomon also brought our attention to 1 Peter 1:19. In his letter, Apostle Peter stressed the role of the crucifixion in achieving redemption for mankind. The atonement is the key to evangelical understanding of the cross. Christ on the cross is the core of biblical preaching along with the resurrection (v.21).

... there is a need for Christians to learn to 'creatively engage' with those who struggle with faith

Highlighting a trend in the church today of a growing emphasis given to the Holy Spirit, Bishop Solomon described this as a 'wonderful' recovery of historical Christian understanding and teaching. Such an emphasis is good as long as Christians are rooted in their biblical and historical traditions. However, there is a need for caution as there is the risk that in some quarters, the Spirit is dissociated from the Word. What is most dangerous is that in other circles, the Spirit is dissociated from Christ. Such a development is contrary to the teachings of the Reformation writers and early church fathers. There is also a possibility that churches today are increasingly singing 'bloodless' songs, avoiding the issue of the atoning crucifixion of Christ. It is in this context that the writer tells us that we were not saved by perishable and transient things of this world; in other words not by gold or silver but rather by the blood of Jesus Christ.

This is a concern not only because the atonement of Christ has to do with the matter of redemption. It is also the path to true Christian sanctification. In 1 Peter 2:21, Peter says 'To this you were called, for Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps'. Living the crucified life that leads to sanctification is an important aspect of the evangelical heritage that we must continue to faithfully teach and practise. It is the model of the true Christian life and the power to live it. But it is challenging to teach people today to live the crucified life of Christ.

In an age of self-expression and self-indulgence, it becomes difficult to teach the necessity of the crucified life. Obedience, as emphasised in this text, is disfavoured because it is deemed old-fashioned and connected with immaturity and the loss of freedom. This is contrary to Christian calling and identity, where obedience to Jesus Christ is at the core. Obedience is in fact the greatest freedom and the deepest form of maturity. This needs to be communicated in preaching.

We have been Born Again

The third evangelical characteristic of importance lies in 1 Peter 1: 23: 'You have been born again'.

Conversion involves repentance and the changing of hearts and minds. Bishop Solomon highlighted the book *Conversion to Modernities,* by Peter van der Veer (Routledge, 1995), which studied conversion stories and patterns in churches worldwide. The conclusion was that many cases of conversions globally were not true conversions to Christ. They were conversions to different forms of modernity provided by the church. It is possible, then, that many church members and even pastors have actually not quite undergone conversion.

Moreover, conversion is a continuous process. Christians who have walked with Christ for some time know that there is still so much sinfulness in their hearts. Many of us still have aspects of our hearts and lives that need conversion: biases and prejudices, bad habits and wrong baggage that we have and harbour in our lives and hearts. Yet God in His grace continues to convert us as we continue to obey Christ and place ourselves at His disposal, to reshape us so that we can take on the likeness of the Lord Jesus Christ. *True conversion thus has to do with the transformed life of holiness.* This means living with a radical love of God that is sincere and deep.

Prepare for Action

In 1 Peter 1:13, Apostle Peter also exhorted Christians to prepare their minds for action. Emphasis has often been placed among the evangelicals towards evangelism, so much so that the terms evangelistic and evangelical are often used interchangeably in the secular media. There is a difference although both terms are closely interconnected. What tends to be forgotten is the equally important, if not more important focus on disciple-making (Mt. 28:18-20). In the Great Commission, the Lord Jesus commanded us to make disciples of all nations. This is a call to biblical activism.

To prepare our minds for action must certainly mean that we stay in to disciple, but also go out to evangelise, to reform society and to care for the poor and needy. It is encouraging that evangelicals have been recovering their lost heritage on social reform and action. However, activism without the contemplative life is often dangerous.

Many of our students are potential leaders, policy makers, and professionals in the future market place. Our challenge is to train them effectively so that through them Christ will be made known and his kingdom will be revealed. Yet all these must be rooted in a contemplative Christian life.

All of us are called to abide in Christ. It is the abiding to that calling, and consequently being active in our actions that stems from abiding in Christ, that makes a wonderful combination that has allowed evangelicals to make such a great impact in history around the world. As he concluded, Bishop Solomon urged his listeners to "continue in that holy rhythm of contemplation and action." In that way, God's will can be accomplished in their lives.

Reported by Esther Yap

NTU CF Bible Camp

"Sometimes, unanswered prayers are not a sign of God's neglect."

Such were the concluding words of Mr Winston Tay during NTU (English) CF's Bible Camp. Mr Tay, a pastoral ministry staff of Telok Ayer Chinese Methodist Church, was the theme talk speaker during the three-day camp held in mid-January at Aloha Changi. In alignment with the theme, *The Silence of God*, the seldom explored book of Malachi was selected to provide campers with a general biblical scope about Israel, the reticence of God, and the underlying reasons propagating His withdrawals from His people.

Malachi greatly resembles a mirror reflecting the frequent doubts and questions that contemporary Christians harbour about God's love and presence. Our scepticisms are often difficult to assuage, especially when instantaneity is the rudiment expectation in many aspects of our lives. Patience and the discipline to wait are now rarities. Hence, we need to be reminded of the beauty of retreating into His word, and reduce our obsession with instantaneity. This study is indeed a timely one. Other noteworthy learning points were extracted from the screening of the movie *Religulous*. The title – a hybrid of *Religion* and *Ridiculous* – portrays the movie's aim in mocking religions and religiosity. The post-movie group discussions allowed us to raise our views about its credibility and the many thought-provoking issues mentioned in the movie.

The camp programme also included workshops on contemporary or personal growth issues with God. After much deliberation, I attended the one on God's silence. This workshop analyses

Workshop on '**The Old Testament God**' conducted by Mr Gabriel Koh.

the intertestamental period. Many participants encountered difficulty in relating God with the complicated historical events spanning the 400-year timeline. We were clueless as to why the Lord allowed for their occurrences, and majorly assumed that this period was a true illustration of His withdrawal.

Through the hands-on activity and final conclusion, I discovered that God was actually preparing for the birth of Jesus Christ. These events, which we conclude as God abandoning Man, were mandatory and in alignment with His plan. I am truly awed by His great ingenuity.

The group at the session on **Studying the Epistles.**

Lastly, the entire camp concluded with Bible study sessions under the direction of FES staffworkers. Campers can choose to attend either the session on *Studying the Epistles* or the *Inductive Bible Study*. In the latter, Bible reading was brought back to its basics. It was indeed refreshing to equip ourselves with the knowledge of interpreting and analysing scripture in varying perspectives.

Overall, I felt that the Bible Camp had helped me to heighten my knowledge of God and His word, increase my skills for reading the Bible, and, most importantly, build an intimate and closer relationship with the Lord.

Candice Choong Wen Qi
NTU, Communication Studies, Year 2, NTU CF Teaching Coordinator & Co-organiser of the camp

Integrating Law and the Christian Faith

On 19 February, the inaugural *Law Students' Conference 2011: Integrating Law and the Christian Faith,* organised by the Law Faculty Varsity Christian Fellowship (VCF), took place at the National University of Singapore's (NUS) Faculty of Law, Bukit Timah Campus. Speakers from almost every practice of law addressed the participants over five sessions, which included a panel discussion and a small group discussion of hypothetical situations.

The audience of approximately 250 people comprised law students from NUS and the Singapore Management University (SMU), law professors, and law practitioners. The presence of God was clearly felt by the audience during the Conference.

We were blessed to have Mr Richard Magnus (Chairman of the Casino Regulatory Authority) deliver the keynote address, and Mr Gregory Vijayendran (Partner at Rajah and Tann LLP) to wrap up the Conference. The sessions were led by Dr Kwa Kiem Kiok (lecturer at the East Asia School of Theology), Dr Tan Seow Hon (Associate Professor of Law at the SMU School of Law), Mr Paul Seah (Associate at Tan Kok Quan Partnership) and Ms Jasmine Foo (part-time FES staffworker, part-time Legal Associate). Six law practitioners from the Lawyers' Christian Fellowship, each from a different area of the practice of law, led the Panel Discussion.

Despite the crowd, God nevertheless knew how to touch our hearts personally

Dr Tan Seow Hon addressing the audience on "Law and the Christian Faith".

– it blows my mind to think about it! No words can adequately express how each session left my heart echoing with deep, impactful words; how I could feel Jesus whether in the auditorium during the sessions or in the hallways at lunch; how I was repeatedly humbled by the way my fellow committee members worked with such tirelessness for God.

Micah sums it all up most beautifully: "*And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God*." (Micah 6:8, NIV)

To act justly

What could be a more appropriate way to kick off a law students' conference than to remind us of our Lord's perfect healing and restorative justice? Dr Kwa did just that, and opened the Conference with a comprehensive insight as to how God is working here on earth. As we struggle with the world's ideas of justice in our little cocoons, what a gratifying reminder it is that our role as lawyers can be complementary to what God is doing in the world! We are being equipped with skills to do His work, if only we will, and *actively* choose to *act* on it.

To love mercy

This has always puzzled me. How are we to love mercy? There is no one for us to execute, much less to exercise mercy upon. Are not those reserved for someone as powerful as God? The two questions Dr Tan posed to the audience stabbed at me instantly: *Has God invaded your world? Has He ravished your heart?* So that is how we are to love mercy! In our every day lives, God should be in every nook and cranny. We are to *live* loving mercy.

Lawyers from the Lawyers' Christian Fellowship leading the panel discusion.

To walk humbly with my God

Nothing could be more apt to summarise the practical advice liberally dished out during the afternoon sessions. Stepping out into the working world does not mean God had to take the backseat: no, quite the contrary. All it takes is our conscious decision to choose God, to "pray until you are praying", as Mr Seah put it. In the busiest, most stressful moments, our time with God should be longer, harder, more intense: for utter, complete dependence. To fear God, not Man; to soak ourselves in His word, and meditate on it day and night. To wait on God, *walk with God.*

Lynette Lim
NUS, Law Year 4
Main committee member of the Law Students' Conference

You've Got Mail (from Heaven!)

The Chinese VCF and NTU Chinese CF held a combined Bible Camp in early January. Around 40 students, 20 from each CF, attended this camp which had the theme *You've Got Mail (from Heaven)!* At Bible camps, students are normally exposed to the different ways of studying Scripture. This year the focus was on studying the *Epistles.*

Happy Anniversary!

On 21 January, about 76 people gathered to celebrate the 11th Anniversary of the Indonesian Students' Christian Fellowship (ISCF) at NUS. Mr Cahyadi Tjokro, a graduate who was formerly from NUS ISCF, spoke on the theme *FELLOW-ship* and reminded us of the importance of fellowship and teamwork as we press on in serving God and reaching out to fellow students on campus.

SIM ISCF had their 4th Anniversary celebration-cum-Exco handover on 18 February. A number of alumni came by to join in the celebration programme which included sharing by some alumni as well as a video presentation done by three alumni. The outgoing Exco of SIM ISCF also shared their testimonies to encourage the incoming Exco. This year, SIM ISCF has a small Exco. Nevertheless, we give thanks to God for His faithfulness and for the members He has given to us.

Passing the Baton

The Ngee Ann Polytechnic Christian Fellowship (NPCF) and Singapore Polytechnic Christian Fellowship (PCF) held their Annual General Meeting (AGM) on 26 January and 1 February 2011 respectively. At both meetings, about two-thirds of the CF membership (NPCF has about 46 members while PCF has 61 members) was present.

For NPCF, the elected executive committee (Exco) members comprise Khoe Wei Jun as President, Michelle Teo as Honorary Secretary and Tan Yong Liang as Honorary Treasurer. The PCF Exco members elected are Samuel Tay as President, Shawn Shantilal as Honorary Secretary and Lydia Lim as Honorary Treasurer.

We are very pleased and excited that both Excos have representatives from the English and Chinese sections of the CF, and consist of students who will be second or third year students in the next academic year. This gives us the opportunity to provide fresh insights as well as experiences in managing the CFs. In the days to come, we will be co-opting students to take up the remaining portfolios in the Exco.

In both CFs, each language section (English, Chinese and Indonesian) is managed by its own sub-committees. Initially, the English section faced problems in leadership succession. Students seem keener to be Bible study leaders rather than to serve in sectional sub-committees, which are associated with doing the "dirty jobs" of planning and executing the directions and programmes of the CF for the entire academic year. Some students are concerned about their busy schedules while others feel a sense of inadequacy to serve.

Initially, the out-going leaders were disheartened by the response received when they approached students who had the potential to be Exco members. To help the students have a better understanding of leadership, we did a Bible study on leadership with them as we wanted to remind them how God's presence was with Moses when the latter led the Israelites through the wilderness towards the Promised Land. Over at NPCF, we invited speakers to share on the value of student ministry as well as their testimony on serving as former leaders in the CF. The students then spent time praying for the AGM that was approaching.

We praise God for the students who responded to the call of leadership to serve God, His people and the campuses where they study. We are also thankful to the many that prayed for us and encouraged us during that period. This is a true expression of partnership in the student ministry. May we continue to work together to bring glory to God on campus.

Sherry Hua
FES Senior Staffworker & Coordinator of Polytechnic Ministries.

VCF Postgraduate Group

Beginnings

The VCF in NUS has primarily been involved with undergraduates from different faculties and halls on campus with a wide range of ministry varieties – from contact groups to faculty or hall committees and even camp committees. In recent years, there has been an increased presence of foreign exchange undergraduate students and more significantly, foreign postgraduates who pursue their advanced degrees here between two to five years or more. As such, there is a need for a Christian campus ministry catering for such a group, to provide a platform for fellowship, discussion, growth and outreach.

Standing, from left: Alan Koh, Allan Lee, Dean Koh. Seated from left: Joni Boh (FES staffworker), Xiao Quan. Not in the photo: Tang U-Liang, Ngoc Linh Truong and Robert Lasley

Vision

The vision of the postgraduate group is to reach out to postgraduate students on campus, to plant and nurture the seeds of the Christian faith in them and to make the Bible relevant as well as engaging in their everyday lives.

Calendar of Past Activities

2010

August: Postgraduate Welcome Tea
September: Orchard Road Tour
October: Launch of Postgraduate Host Family Programme
December: Postgraduate Group Retreat
December: Christmas event

2011

February: Chinese New Year event

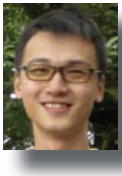
Mission

As fellow postgraduate students on campus, we feel we are in the most ideal and effective position to reach out to our peers as we share similar experiences and issues. As Christian academics and potential leaders in professional fields, it is of imperative importance that we seek to integrate biblical principles with the realities of everyday lives. Over the Christmas and Chinese New Year period, we were also able to have some informal gatherings with international postgraduate students. We hope to have more opportunities to interact with them in future.

Challenges Ahead

As our ministry is at its infancy stage, our group is still relatively small in size and limited in capacity. We pray that we will be able to grow in strength and capacity in the new year and semester. As there is also the issue of continuity and leadership succession for the group, we pray for God to call those who are willing and able to step up and participate in this relatively new area of ministry in the coming academic year.

Dean Koh
NUS, Masters in Sociology (final year)
Leader of Postgraduate Group



Commissioning Service of FES' 5th General Secretary

Archbishop John Chew leading in the prayer for Lisman.

On 14 January 2011, FES held a commissioning service for its 5th General Secretary, Lisman Komaladi, at St Andrew's Cathedral. The service commenced with a short session of praise and worship followed by an opening prayer. Bishop Dr Robert Solomon, a Vice-President of FES, gave the exhortation, *How to Remain Evangelical*, based on 1 Peter 1:13-2:3.

The commissioning service was then presided over by the FES President, Archbishop John Chew. Upon declaring that he will discharge his duties with faith, integrity and truth, Lisman was installed as the 5th General Secretary of FES in the presence of supporters, students, graduates, staffworkers, and leaders of other Christian organisations. Archbishop Chew then invited all the Vice-Presidents and Chairpersons of the FES affiliates to move forward and lay their hands on Lisman while he prayed for Lisman.

After the prayer, Lisman gave his maiden address as General Secretary. He told the people present that although these are challenging times, the original vision of FES remains the same: to see students become a community of disciples with the gospel in action within each of them. He also used his address as an opportunity to lay out his goals – outlined in the booklet, *Vision 2020* – for the student ministry for the next 10 years. He envisions a student ministry that is reaching out, integrated, engaged and cooperative, with all committed to achieving the same goals. Lisman ended his address with an encouragement from 1 Thessalonians 5:24 that the God who calls them to service is faithful and will remain so.

After Lisman's address, Informatics Christian Fellowship gave a short, energetic performance as a tribute to Lisman's appointment as General Secretary. An offering was taken up after the performance, followed by a closing hymn and the benediction. As the last verse of the hymn died off, Lisman was surprised with a procession of female students, who went up to him one by one to give him a stalk of rose. He sportingly held up his bouquet of roses, to the delight of the audience, lending a touch of humour to the proceedings.

Esther Yap
NUS 2010 Arts & Social Science graduate, former VCFer

Hilda Ng *is one of the staff overseeing the ministry at Singapore Polytechnic Christian Fellowship (PCF) and Temasek Polytechnic Student Christian Fellowship (TP SCF).*

Hilda, (holding the cake) celebrates her birthday with the student leaders at the recent combined Poly Exco retreat.

"Is there anything I have not done well because there are no successors for our CF?"

This is the question that Timothy asked me during one of our conversations. Timothy, though not perfect, was a student who gave his best shot in doing what was required of him as a chairperson. He was willing to try, even when it required him to step out of his comfort zone.

The problem does not lie with him. When students do not catch the vision, there is nothing we can do except to pray and trust that God will make things right in His time. This is the down side of a student-initiated ministry.

Through this conversation, I learnt that, by stepping back, room will be created for students to catch the vision and take ownership of their campus, developing into "a faithful evangelical witness on campus and in society, making and building disciples of Jesus Christ who will be effective salt and light of the world".

. . . in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving

Prayer items:

- With the new academic year beginning in April, pray that God will bring in a new batch of students to all the CFs in the respective polytechnics.
- Pray that, from this new batch, God will raise humble student leaders especially for TP SCF.
- Pray for the new student leaders to practise servant leadership and allow God to mould and direct them.
- Pray that God will move the hearts of the Polytechnic CF graduates to support FES through its financial deficits.
- Pray for the salvation of my father, mother, younger brother and his future wife.

let your requests be made known to God.

Chieng Wei Shieng *has been working two days a week with FES since 2007. On the other weekdays, she works as a Genetics Counsellor at National University Hospital (NUH). Together with two other staffworkers, Wei Shieng oversees the VCF ministry focusing on the work in the Science Faculty, School of Design and Environment, and Engineering Faculty.*

It has been a fun and challenging time since I have been part of the FES work. I thank God for the CFers placed in my path and what we went through together – the 'painful' brainstorming during Exco meetings, Bible studies, and not fogetting the laughter, food, boy-girl-relationship chat and anime talk – all these have enriched my life and understanding of God, His mission, community and the world!

From April 2010, I was overseeing the work in NAFA as well but since February this year, this has become difficult as their meeting times clashed with my working hours.

Prayer items:

- Pray that VCF will continue to think through and work out God's mission, persevere in the work of changing mindsets, be courageous to face paradigm shifts, and serve the campus – loving both God and their neighbour.
- Pray that the desire to "perform" and "strive" for excellence, as defined by the current system and competitive culture, will not become an obsession for the students. Pray that the Christian community will be courageous to demonstrate a contentment that displays God's sovereignty as well as provision for His creation.

Wei Shieng (back row second from left) with the Science Faculty Sub-committee.

- Pray that Christian students on campus will continue in an ongoing journey to read the Bible on their own. May they uncover refreshing truths and a bigger picture about our God, and continue to be relevant in their campus.
- Pray that the students from NAFA CF would be able to meet over a longer period; that more Christian students

from other departments (and not just Music) would be part of the CF; and that the CF would venture to redeem the Arts space for God.

- At my workplace at NUH, pray for me to continue serving patients faithfully, wisely and with compassion.
- Pray for Stephen and me – for the many things we need to attend to as we prepare to further our studies overseas in the latter part of next year.

Melinda Loe *is FES' staffworker attached to the Indonesian Students' CF at Singapore Polytechnic (SP ISCF) and Nanyang Technological University (NTU ISCF).*

It is so great to know that God is completely sovereign and in control of all things. His purposes are always perfect. I have had a number of opportunities to meet various people during these few months. I thank God for these opportunities, especially those with non-believers, as they broaden my perspective on ministry and the kingdom of God. I am also challenged to re-think my calling and re-focus my ministry. I do believe that God never moves without a purpose and a plan. As God brought me to meet these people, He must have specific plans that are yet to be revealed in my life and ministry among the students.

And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding,

Melinda (standing second from left) with the NTU ISCF Exco.

Prayer items:

- Pray for the efforts to reach out to more Indonesian students in SP. Pray for the students as they prepare for the Welcome Tea in May. Pray also for God to send new students for the next academic year.
- Pray for the leadership succession at NTU-ISCF. May God help the students to have the courage to come out of their comfort zone and take up the responsibility as student leaders to spread the gospel on campus.
- Do pray that I will be more sensitive to God's leading in my life, especially now when I am preparing for a new phase in my life and ministry (I will be leaving FES at the end of

June to return to Indonesia to work and at the same time, complete my Doctorate in Ministry programme). I am constantly encouraged by the reminders of your prayers for me. Thank you so much.

Lai Sze Khiong *is currently the staffworker in charge of CVCF. He also oversees the postgraduate ministry in the FES Chinese Work section.*

Prior to re-joining FES slightly more than a year ago, I had spent seven years serving in the church pastoral ministry. I am still adjusting to this transition that God has brought about in my life. Even as I work amongst the students and graduates, I find that there are likewise some things to relearn and unlearn. As I also serve as a volunteer with Prison Fellowship and preach regularly in church, there is a need for me to balance all these commitments.

Sze Khiong (extreme left) with some of the campers at the recent combined Uni Bible camp.

Prayer items:

- Pray for wisdom to enable me to reach out to the students and prison inmates. Pray that I will be a faithful steward of God's Word in His church.
- Pray for the CVCF nominees for the new batch of Exco – for God to win their hearts to minister to the students on campus.
- Pray for the follow-up to the recent CVCF musical. Pray for God to guide the students who are conducting evangelistic Bible studies and that those who have accepted the Lord Jesus will be willing to be discipled.
- Thank God for the collaboration between the different Christian groups in NUS thus far with respect to the postgraduate ministry. Pray for more churches to be aware of the need for undergraduate and postgraduate ministries so that we can work together to extend His kingdom on campus.
- Thank God that my mother's health condition has improved since the beginning of this year. We covet your prayers for God's healing on her spine.

will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus

Philippians 4:6,7

Two staff left FES in December 2010. *Mark Lai*, who had spent a year with us under the Graduate Assistant Programme working with polytechnic students, left to pursue further studies. *Carlyn Wee*, former Administrative Assistant of the FES Chinese Work, resigned to take a break from work. We thank Mark and Carlyn for their service with FES and pray for God to bless and guide them in their future plans.

Kong Ling Fang joined the FES staff team in January 2011 as Senior Administrative Assistant with the FES Chinese Work. Ling Fang, who is from Malaysia, came to NUS to study Life Sciences in 2004. During her student days, she was actively involved in the Chinese Varsity Christian Fellowship, and has served as programme coordinator (2005-2006) and evangelism coordinator (2006-2007). After graduating in 2008, Ling Fang worked in a blood laboratory in National University Hospital for one year, before becoming a Chinese Language teacher at Fairfield Methodist School (Primary) the following year. She is a member of Joyful Grace Presbyterian Church at her hometown in Pontian, Johor. In Singapore, Ling Fang worships at Queenstown Baptist Church.

Michael and Cindy

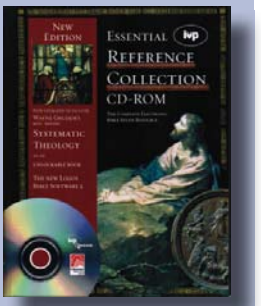
For the first time in FES history (as far as we know), two staffworkers held their wedding ceremonies on the same day – 5 March 2011 – but in different countries. *Michael Senjaya Kang*, Indonesian Ministry staffworker, married Cindy Stephanny Octaiva in Bandung, Indonesia. *Joni Boh*, staffworker for International Friendship Group and Postgraduate Ministry, tied the knot with Alan Wong at St Andrew's Cathedral, Singapore. We congratulate both couples and pray for God's grace and blessings upon them as they begin their journey of marriage.

Joni and Alan

Jeremiah Goh, staffworker assigned to VCF and SMU Diaspora, will be attached to the Korea Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship (KIVF) for three weeks from 29 March to undergo training in Media ministry. He will also have opportunities to join the KIVF staff for various programmes during that time. Currently, besides his campus responsibilities, Jeremiah also handles the technical aspects of the FES website. Pray that he will have an enriching time of learning and equipping in this area of ministry, as well as safety and good health during this period.

Bible Study Resource

The Essential IVP Reference Collection CD Rom (WIN, New Edition, IVP 2007)
This electronic tool integrates reference material from over a dozen award-winning IVP reference books. With a versatile and user-friendly search engine, it is ideal for anyone who is serious about studying the Bible. This significant upgrade will further enhance personal Bible study and theological reflection.



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The Christian Worldview Integration Series

The Christian Worldview Integration Series, edited by J. P.Moreland and Francis J. Beckwith, seeks to help Christians in the academy rise to the occasion and recapture lost territory in their field of study for the cause of Christ by promoting a robust personal and conceptual integration of Christian faith and learning. The series includes junior and senior level textbooks focused on individual academic disciplines such as education, psychology, literature, politics, science, communications, biology, philosophy and history.

Titles Currently Available
Authentic Communication, Tim Muehlhoff, Todd V. Lewis (IVP 2010)*
Education for Human Flourishing,Paul D. Spears, Steven R. Loomis (IVP, 2010)*
Politics for Christians, Francis J. Beckwith (IVP 2010)*
Psychology in the Spirit, John Coe, Todd W. Hall (IVP 2010)*
Business for the Common Good, Kenneth L. Wong, Scott B. Rae (IVP 2011)
Christianity and Literature, David Lyle Jefferey and Gregory Maillet (IVP 2011)

(The above product information is taken from the publisher's website.)

NOTE
* Titles are available in the FES Library. (The FES Library is open to students and graduates of FES-affiliated CFs. Email: library@fessingapore.org)

For **price** and **ordering information**, contact the ***Book Corner*** at Biblical Graduate School of Theology (Tel: 62276815, Email: books@bgst.edu.sg)

IFES Bible Study Consultation

In the book *The Pursuit of God*, A. W. Tozer wrote, *"A generation of Christians reared among push buttons and automatic machines is impatient of slower and less direct methods of reaching their goals. We have been trying to apply machine-age methods to our relations with God. We read our chapter, have our short devotions and rush away, hoping to make up for our deep inward bankruptcy by attending another gospel meeting or listening to another thrilling story told by a religious adventurer lately returned from afar."* According to Tozer, the result of this will be shallow lives and a trust in religious externalities. Tozer's prophetic words strike a chord with the concerns and discussions of the International Fellowship of Evangelical Students (IFES) Consultation on Scripture Engagement.

From 9-14 February 2011, two delegates from each of the 11 Regions of the IFES movements, gathered here in our little island for the purpose of the Consultation. This Consultation sprung from the centrality of Scripture in the IFES movement. In World Assembly 2003 in the Netherlands, this truth was put forth, "What happens to a movement and preserving it, often has something fundamentally related to the place of Scriptures in the movement." Thus, the IFES Living Stones Vision states unequivocally that one of the three core commitments is Scripture Engagement, where "we grow in our relationship with God through personal Bible study and deep theological reflection", and "become believers who wisely apply biblical truths in our lives".

"How do we engage students in Scripture meaningfully?"

One of the areas of focus of this Consultation is "Scripture Engagement in a Digital Age".

> *"Christianity is fundamentally a communication event. The religion is predicated on God revealing himself to humanity. God has a habit of letting his people know something about his thoughts, feelings, and intentions. God wants to communicate with us, and his media are many: angels, burning bushes, stone tablets, scrolls, donkeys, prophets, mighty voices, still whispers, and shapes traced in the dirt. Any serious study of God is a study of communication, and any effort to understand God is shaped by our understanding — or misunderstanding — of the media and technology we use to communicate."*

This quote by Shane Hipps from *Flickering Pixels* (Zondervan, 2009)

was to me very insightful on how to approach Scripture Engagement, especially in an age where the world is significantly shaped by technology. We often critique the times and lament how students are not as before. Yet, I am growing to realise that most obstacles are guised opportunities at the same time. The challenge is really how to engage students in Scripture meaningfully when there are tons of alternatives vying for their attention.

From left: Ilaitia Finau (Fiji), Jasmine, Ana Miriam Peralta (Mexico), Sevag Kouyoumijian (Lebanon) and Lucas Owako (Kenya).

It is not easy to find some kind of conclusion to the many issues raised at the Consultation, especially so given the diversity of the cultures and needs present. What leaves to be done is the challenge of contextualising the thoughts and issues for each region and movement of the IFES body. Yet what has arisen from the Consultation is a renewed sense of commitment and passion to meet the challenges of the times.

If we will take a step back to critique the degree of literacy or even interest in Scripture today, we ought to be alarmed and concerned. We are trying to reach a new generation: a generation that has not even read the Bible once through; a generation that receives information in piecemeal and understands the Bible in 'verses'; a generation that appears too busy for deep theological reflection. The task is critical and urgent because of the fast-changing world we are ministering in.

Scripture was given to capture the hearts and minds of the people of God, to give them a lens through which to see the reality of God's world, to inspire them with courage to usher in God's transcendent reality. I believe that Scripture still has that same power today. FES needs to respond to the task of awakening the senses of the people which has been dulled by the images and noises around us. God is still trying to communicate to this new generation. Let us be faithful in being and in transmitting the media through which God speaks.

Jasmine Foo
FES staffworker [VCF and Polytechnic Ministry (training)]

Flickering Pixels, Shane Hipps (Zondervan 2009)
Flickering pixels are the tiny dots of light that make up the screens of life — from TVs to cell phones.They are nearly invisible, but they change us. In this provocative book, author Shane Hipps takes readers beneath the surface of things to see how the technologies we use end up using us. Hoever, not all is dire. We are only puppets of our technology if we remain asleep. *Flickering Pixels* will wake us up. (Book description taken from the publisher's website.) This book is available in the FES Library

Singapore 25-31 May

EARC 2011

Wake Up and Dream – the Time is Now!

As the date of the IFES East Asia Regional Conference (EARC) draws closer, we value your prayers and support for the following:

- Thank God for helping us confirm various aspects of the conference. Continue to pray for smooth finalisation of accommodation and programme venues as well as the conference programme.
- Pray for the sub-committees that are working on areas like media, programme booklet, food, logistics, hospitality and the actual programme, for example, the worship, communion service, small groups, games etc. Pray for God to grant the team wisdom, creativity and sensitivity.
- Pray that the entire Singapore delegation (150-200 students, staff and graduates) will be exemplary hosts as we welcome around 400 foreign delegates to this conference.
- Pray for smooth visa applications for the foreign delegates.
- Pray for all the speakers to have good health and clear minds as they prepare their sessions so that many will be blessed by God through them.
- On finances, the EARC organising committee currently has a anticipated deficit of about $60,000. This stems mainly from the increase in accommodation fees and the need to raise subsidies for students and staff from less established movements to enable them to attend the conference.
- For our local FES needs, we are also in the process of raising subsidies for some students who are unable to pay the conference fees in full.

With the recent earthquake in Japan, the IFES student movement there, KGK (Kirisuto-sha-Gakusei Kai), is facing many challenges. Mr Ryuichi Yamazaki, the General Secretary of KGK, writes:

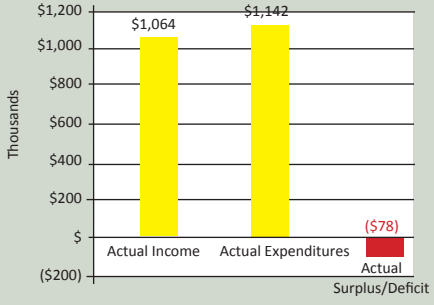
'The earthquake hit the Tohoku region of Japan, an area with a long history of KGK involvement where there are many students and graduates ... With the coming EARC it will be impossible for the students from this region to be financially able to participate in it and to gain understanding from their families to allow them to attend the conference.

Please pray that we will be able to send students from this region to EARC so that they can be deeply encouraged through the fellowship of students from other IFES movements. We hope that through this fellowship, the students, as ambassadors of Christ, will bring back the hope of the Gospel to the Tohoku region."

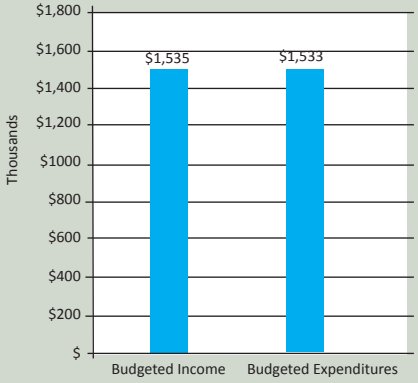
Should God move you to participate in supporting EARC, you may send a cheque to FES indicating "For EARC - other movements' subsidy" or "For EARC - local subsidy" on the reverse side of the cheque. Further enquiries may be directed to FES at fes@fessingapore.org

FES Financial Update

FES Actual Income and Expenditures for 2010



FES Budget 2011



Comments:

- The FES 2010 consolidated financial result is rather worrying. As seen in the graph presented above, we have a running deficit of $78,000.
- The FES 2011 budget has a considerable increase due to the inclusion of the IFES East Asia Regional Conference (EARC) events into the FES budget.

A Note from the Editorial Team

We hope you have found the new format of *Perspective* a refreshing change. The usual pages with our prayer news, *Prayer Point*, are also presented differently. Besides prayer items about the CF ministry, we have also asked the staffworkers to share some personal prayer requests as well as reflections on their ministry.

FES Serving God amongst Students and Graduates in Singapore

perspective March 2011

A Publication of Fellowship of Evangelical Students
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Views expressed in this publication do not necessarily represent the position of FES Singapore.

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• Rev. Dr Choong Chee Pang • Rev. Timothy See
• Bishop Dr Robert Solomon

A Hedgehog's Dilemma

Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. (Gal. 6:2, ESV)

Hedgehogs have hard spines thus they can easily hurt any creatures within close proximity. During cold weather, they need to huddle together for warmth. Yet, in so doing, they will injure each other.

Secular psychology acknowledges that this predicament is applicable to humans as well. Schopenhauer and Freud did extensive research on this. Schopenhauer held the extreme view that, to solve this dilemma, one must have sufficient internal warmth to avoid the risk of "giving and receiving of psychological discomfort, which results from social interaction".

I think this should not be the case for the Christian community. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, in his book *Life Together*, inspired by the verse above, argued that "the brother is a burden to the Christian, precisely because he is a Christian. And it is only when he is a burden, that he is really a brother; and not merely an object to be manipulated". Fulfilling the law of Christ is to bear one another as our burden.

Each of us may have one or more difficult or impossible people in our life. I, too, have some. They could be someone who has the opposite opinions or characters with us. They could be our siblings, office colleagues, hostel friends, fellow workers, and even our closest ones, like parents or spouses. The easy way is to exclude them from our social circle. We choose to leave them "cold" and "alone" so their "spines" will not hurt us.

However, we are to imitate Christ. He loves us. He bears our burdens – He died on the cross two thousand years ago bearing our sins, and continues bearing with us till we achieve complete maturity in Him. We must live in a similar way to one another – especially to those whose "spines" are hurting us the most. Hugging a "hedgehog" may leave us bleeding, but it could eventually pacify the hardening of its "spine" and ease the hurting. That is how we can fulfil the law of Christ.

Allow me to commence a campaign, "Let's hug our 'hedgehogs' today!"

Lisman Komaladi
General Secretary