perspective

fellowship of evangelical students

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STUDENT LEADERSHIP

Why student initiative is an essential element at the core of the IFES ethos

By Ramez Atallah

Introduction

I experienced my first earthquake in 1992 in Egypt. I was in my office when the building started shaking. Terrified, all of us quickly ran down the stairs and out of the building. Seeing the extent of the damage wreaked by the earthquake and the dismay it caused, I resolved to do something. I gathered my staff members and shared with them the plan: To compile a selection of Biblical scriptures with references to earthquakes, as a means of encouraging and communicating a message to the Egyptians. Within three days, 300,000 tracts were produced and sent to every church in Egypt to distribute. The tracts were read by Egyptians everywhere – on the subway, in people's homes – and it was an effective way of bringing God's word into Egyptian hands quickly after a terrible tragedy. While my staff members were supportive of the plan, they find the instinct to respond uncommon. On the other hand, it was natural for a crisis to spur me to action and response. This difference in attitude lead me to reflect on what is it that made me think differently from my staff members.

The response of my staff members brought back memories of my time in the Christian Fellowship as a student at McGill University in 1967. At that time, student power and liberty was at its height. Once, a pornographic article was published in the student newspaper causing a furor among the university administration (in 1967 Quebec, the *Playboy* magazine was not even on sale). The administration investigated the student newspaper and demanded the offensive edition be withdrawn. That caused indignation amongst the students and they staged a strike. Consequently, problems were caused and a crisis arose. The Christian student leaders came together to discuss appropriate actions they could take to moderate the situation. To address the issue, we decided to write a tract (with Scriptural references), and distribute copies of the tract to everyone on campus the next day. We printed the tracts overnight, and by morning, we were at entrances all over the university. Overall, we distributed 5000 tracts. On the back of the tracts, we had the name of a Christian student from every faculty in the university. The crisis made our group speak up on the issues, and that made an impact on the university.

Upon reflecting, I realised the reason for the difference in response of my staff members in the first story and the student group in the second. When I was a student at McGill University, the InterVarsity staff members helped us understand that it is the responsibility of student leaders to reach out to our campus and respond to issues on campus. Thus, my response to the earthquake incident in Egypt was a direct influence of this vision that as a student, I had been taught to have a vision for my campus. It is no surprise then that the focus of my address is the importance of student initiative or leadership. A student's time at university is probably the most formative time of his or her life. The principles and convictions one develops as a student will last for a lifetime, and nowhere else is a place more conducive to nurturing and developing them than at the university.

Today, IFES (International Fellowship of Evangelical Students) has movements in more than 150 countries. There is often the temptation to have the full-time staff achieve what students should be doing. We need to resist that idea and stop assuming that students nowadays are not as mature as they were in the past. In today's context, student leadership and initiative is essential, effective and economical.

At the recent IFES World Assembly in Poland, students shared the challenges faced in their countries.

Student Leadership is Essential

Student leadership is essential because I believe that students who do not learn to be Christian leaders as undergraduates tend to be passive members of their churches later on. As I look back on my life, I realise that most of the principles and convictions that I live by now were acquired when I was a student 40 to 45 years ago. Let me share with you six convictions that I developed as a student, and which still form the basic foundation of my life now.

... it is the responsibility of student leaders to reach out to our campus and respond to issues on campus.

1. The first one is the principle of *responsibility*. I am responsible to reach out to my campus, to my nation and to the whole world. That has been one of my principal convictions, and still is.
2. The second one is the concept of *leadership as delegation*. I was president of a student group twice and I learnt a lot by being a leader. It is unfortunate that one of the crises we have in leadership now is that the presence of a good leader often creates weak followers, because the leader does it all. In my student group, I was taught that a successful leader is one who is able to delegate responsibilities to others to do the work, and not doing it for them. I tried to put that into practice by delegating the responsibility of our Christian group magazine to a new student. He was an enthusiastic architecture student and I offered him the task of producing the magazine. Considering his architectural background, I thought he would do well. Instead, the first edition of that magazine was bad; I was upset and embarrassed by it. I was tempted to remove that student in charge of the magazine and take

Student leaders during 'Student Day' at the IFES World Assembly

over the publication myself. I recall how the other student leaders and I agonised over what we could do to salvage the magazine. Eventually, we decided to let it be. It was better to have someone learn at our expense, and have the opportunity to grow. It was a good decision. Over the next few months, the magazine improved considerably. The student in charge printed it in colour, introduced new changes, and overall, impressed all of us. If I had removed the responsibility over the magazine from him, he would not have been able to develop the way he did. He's now a Christian leader in Canada. Leadership is thus allowing people to make mistakes, rather than doing the things yourself. In all my different positions as a leader, I have had to learn to hold myself back and let others go forward.

3. The third principle is that *faith must be integrated to one's life*. Reading books published by InterVarsity Press on different topics helped me grapple with various issues. It is important for students not to stay out of touch with current world issues, and equally important to exercise our mind as Christians.

4. The fourth conviction I learnt is that we as Christians should be committed to *living a simpler lifestyle* and *living less than our means*. One way to do that is through what is called the graduated tithe. As a very poor student without a salary, I was taught the concept that when my income increases, the tithe percentage increases as well. I also learnt that what you give is not important, but rather, how much is left after you give. While we were still students, my wife and I made a lifetime commitment to increase the percentage of our tithe every few years, starting with 10 per cent. Once we committed to it, it became easier to practise, because it was gradual.

... we as Christians should be committed to living a simpler lifestyle and living less than our means.

5. *Inductive Bible Study (IBS)* is another thing I learnt as a student, and it is one that has impacted my life and which I'm passionate about. I believe that IBS is central to the

IFES ministry. Through it, I learnt to study and understand God's Word. It is not merely a method of studying the Bible. IBS also helps one learn the importance of listening, group dynamics, respecting the opinions of others, and believing that others can discover in the Scriptures gems and truths that you have not seen.

6. The final principle I learnt as a student is how to *accept and respect people from different Christian traditions and denominations.* Working with IFES enabled me to work with Christians from various backgrounds and it led me to believe that God's truth is not limited to just one denomination. As we listen to them and see their passion for the Lord, we realise that the truth is not just with us. For the past 30 years in Egypt, I have been involved with different churches in helping them in Bible engagement. The reason why I have been able to do this as an evangelical is because of my interdenominational training as a student.

Since I've graduated from the university in 1968, I believe my life as a Christian consisted of the outworking of these six principles, regardless of the context or ministry. Be it with GBU[1] in Montreal, or with IFES, in the Bible Society of Egypt or with the Lausanne movement for world evangelization, I have consciously or unconsciously applied the principles I learnt as a student in every ministry I served in. Through my personal experiences, I am convinced that we should allow students to lead and take the initiative. Allowing them to serve and lead in a ministry while learning from the mistakes made along the way will equip them with principles and skills that will last for a lifetime. It is unfortunate that Christian students nowadays are quick to learn facts, but find it difficult to distill those facts into principles. I've shared six principles I learnt as a student. It is my hope that you will leave this World Assembly today not just with facts (because facts are easily forgotten) but with principles (which endure). As a student, what are the principles and convictions that govern your life and will carry you on for many years?

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Student Leadership is Effective

Allowing students to lead is not only essential, but also effective. One of the dangers in staff-led student groups is that the programmes tend to reflect the interests and agendas of the staff members, rather than the students. For example, a staff member may feel a particular issue is important and plan a programme around that issue. However, the students may not be of the same opinion and will not be able to relate to the programmes planned. On the other hand, students are better able to relate to the programmes planned by other students, because those programmes are pertinent to their needs. It takes other students to know and understand the problems and issues their fellow students are struggling with. Moreover, allowing students to lead and to take responsibility over the ministry will enable them to

1 GBU refers to Groupes Bibliques Universitaires, which is the name of the student group in French-speaking movements in the IFES family.

develop personally. By instilling in them a sense of ownership, they are more likely to feel the sense of urgency in reaching out and serving others because if they do not do it, no one else will. The student group thus becomes 'our group' and the campus becomes 'our campus'.

There are many instances of students who have developed and benefitted greatly from student leadership. I have worked with these students at one time or another, at different stages in my life, and I have seen how God has blessed them as they serve Him. While working with them, I never imagined who they will become today. For example, in 1967, the McGill Christian Fellowship had two vice-presidents, Don Carson and Becky Wilkinson. Don was a challenging man to have in a group as a student. But today, he is one of the leading New Testament scholars in the world. Becky was an American student, who back then I thought was more interested in dating. One would not have thought that she has spent the past 30 years working with the garbage collectors in Egypt, championing their cause and making them known to Christians worldwide. Coincidentally, she is also my wife.

In every particular period of your life, discover and decide what is God's calling for you and commit your life to it.

There also other recounts of students who benefitted from student leadership. There's Willy Kotiuga, who was a student from Concordia University. While at university, Willy had such a conviction and vision for student ministry that he extended his four-year engineering course to five years. He took fewer courses to have more time to lead the Christian group. As an undergraduate, Willy received an award for 'the most contribution to the university' from the university's president twice. What is notable is that when the president gave Willy this award, in front of the deans and trustees, he mentioned Willy's Christian involvement as well. Willy is now a world specialist in electric power grids, and has installed electric power grids in various countries all over the world.

Unfortunately, it was not all successes. Jane (not her real name) was a close friend of mine, through whose family I came to know the Lord when I was a foreign student in Canada. Jane was a girl who loved the Lord and was passionate for him. Unfortunately, after she married, obtained her PhD and settled down, she left her Christian faith. She left her husband, and the church. There was also Carmen, an enthusiastic and visionary girl. Carmen was one of our key students who organised gatherings and Bible Study groups for GBU students from all over Quebec. One day, I visited her campus, and asked her about the group meeting for that day. To my surprise, she replied that there is no group meeting. Upon asking her the reason, she replied by declaring that she does not believe in God anymore. It was then that I realised that as a staff worker, I had burned out Carmen. I was too busy working with her in the student ministry, but I had not cared enough for her, nor been aware of the issues she was privately struggling with. Sadly, she left and she had never returned to the faith since then. These are just some examples out of the many that I experienced in student ministry.

Student Leadership is Economical

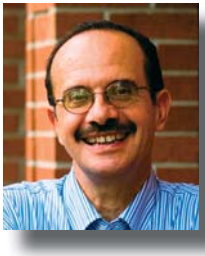
Student leaders are not just essential and effective, they are also economical. Student movements will never have enough paid or volunteered staff to serve all the students in their universities. On the other hand, students are an unlimited, free and renewable resource. Moreover, they are usually highly gifted and trained. Bear in mind that the university goes through a selection process before choosing its students. Hence, it is no surprise that these students are smart and talented. Not only that, students generally have unlimited access to the campus. At the same time, IFES staff benefit from the students too. Because students are not professionals, they do not always need to defend their raison d'etre, and by interacting with the students, staff members learn not to take themselves too seriously.

Conclusion

In conclusion, as student movements grow and expand, there is a tendency for student leadership to be neglected, and replaced by professionally trained staff who 'know it all'. We have to avoid the temptation of taking the easy road of staff leadership and, although it is more challenging, maintain student leadership. I also have one piece of advice to the students before I end. Looking back at over 40 years of service and the people I met throughout that time, I noticed that all of those who were successful in their ministry had one main characteristic: they were task, not gift, oriented. We live in a narcissistic world today where everybody desires to use and express their gifts. Consequently, we work hard to place ourselves in positions where our gifts can be utilised well. However, the person who only seeks to make use and show his or her talents and gifts can never be satisfied. This is because we have more than one gift, and we get frustrated when not all of them are used. We will always be yearning to express all our gifts, trying to develop them all and eventually not mastering any. Therefore, the best advice I have is: In every particular period of your life, discover and decide what is God's calling for you and commit your life to it. Focus on the task at hand, and direct all your energy and talent to it. People who are focused, and dedicate their gifts for one focus rather than try to express their gifts in various ministries, tend to be more successful because they excel in their one task. Stick to God's calling to you and be prepared to say no to things that will distract you from what God wants you to do.

May God preserve you to do the task God has called you for and may He give you the strength everyday to resist the things that will distract you from it. Amen.

(The above article was first presented as the Presidential Address at the IFES World Assembly held in Krakow, Poland from 26 July – 3 August 2011.)



Ramez Atallah was born in Egypt but spent his teen years in Canada. He became involved with InterVarsity while a student at McGill University and at one time served as Quebec director with IVCF Canada. After 18 years in Canada, he and his family returned to Egypt. He served as IFES Regional Secretary for a number of years until 1990 and more recently was Honorary President of IFES until 2011. Ramez is currently General Secretary of the Bible Society of Egypt.

I Survived A CF Camp

From 4 to 7 October, students from different polytechnics, came together for a combined camp with the theme *I Survived A CF Camp* held at Aloha Changi Chalet. There were many "firsts" in this camp. Quite a few of the campers were in their first year, some were helping to plan a camp for the first time, and many of the programmes were run for the first time. God is good and was working among us. We would like to especially thank NTU CF, VCF, graduates and friends who so lovingly supported us in our fund-raising, prayed for us and helped us in many ways! Below is a brief write-up of some of the camper's reflections.

I attended the workshop *I Buy Therefore I Am*, by Chieng Wei Shieng from FES. It opened my eyes to see how we just throw away our electronic gadgets without thinking about where all these things go to. Two videos shown to us struck me the most: the manufacture of chocolate and the disposal of E-waste. Most chocolates are actually made from cocoa harvested by children trafficked in some Third World countries. These children work for long hours and are paid very little. Furthermore, once they are sent out to work, some of their families never hear from their children again. Often we throw away our gadgets once new models are introduced. This wastes a lot of resources. We need to be careful at how we dispose and consume our resources.

Andrew Tan Boon Chuan
Nanyang Polytechnic, Chemical and Pharmaceutical Technology, Year 1

I learnt a lot about doing things out of my comfort zone. My group was posted to *Peace Connect Neighbourhood Link* for the social action field trip. This centre provides activities, support and care for the residents of Kampong Glam. Many of the flats in this area are one-room flats and rented out to families who are mainly senior citizens or are on financial assistance by the government. We were assigned to visit some senior citizens and bring food and other daily necessities to them. We also spent time chatting with them. Visiting the place was a great experience for me as I never knew that mixing around and talking to the old folks can be so fun, entertaining and meaningful.

Justin Tan Zheng Jie
Ngee Ann Polytechnic, Business Studies Year 2

Survival was the theme for this camp. The focus was on the importance of persevering through trials and challenges, and surviving the tests thrown at us in our lives. During the main sessions, Christopher Ho (a former FES Staffworker) shared with us about surviving as Christians based on the book of James. He stressed on the necessity of persevering in our faith; applying God's truth fully and consistently loving God with all our hearts.

The workshop led by Dr Stephen Lim, entitled *2012: Will the World End Next Year?!*, truly challenged our beliefs with regards to the end of the world. Though slightly overwhelming at first, the workshop opened my mind to new concepts like pre-millennialism, a-millennialism and post-millennialism. It was a great learning experience!

Sarah Quah
Singapore Polytechnic, Diploma in Applied Drama and Psychology, Year 2

A Home Away from Home

The Hall ministry in NUS' Varsity Christian Fellowship (VCF) always proves to be a dynamic endeavour brimming with activities, a high turnover of students and well, just being unique. By God's grace, we currently have a presence in all of the six halls in NUS, in Prince Georges' Park Residences, and including the newly inducted University (U) Town community, working among local and foreign students who stay on campus.

Pioneering Work

This year, as the U Town opened its doors to see the first batch of students occupy its Residential Colleges, VCF joined in to start a ministry to reach out to students who work, live and learn there. We are glad that the group of students there has been steadily meeting but through the process, we also learnt that the needs of the Halls, Residences and Residential Colleges are quite diverse and a little more complex due to the difference in activities, time-table, objective and culture.

What's Up

Being a home away from home, residents in NUS's Halls study, play and live together with their hall-mates for most of their varsity life. It is in this close proximity that the place of a holistic Christian mission is pertinent and effectual. In line with the fellowship's direction, the push is for VCFers to be effective salt and light by engaging the campus through prophetic word and deed. This means that CFers staying in Halls need to be involved in the activities of their respective Halls and through these interactions, engage their neighbours to address and redeem all endeavours, making God's kingdom a priority. It also calls for CFers to be sensitive to their community's unique culture and with boldness live radically as God's people that He may be glorified.

Besides weekly Bible studies and sharing-cum-prayer sessions, CFers engage the larger community through activities like visiting injured residents, especially during the competitive inter-hall games season, and encouraging one another during the exam period. Much effort has also been put into fostering friendship and a sense of community between different hall ministries. This can be a great encouragement for each ministry, especially when the ministry presence in different halls can be quite contrasting, both in terms of size and challenges met. Being used to functioning individually, CFers from the different Halls met during their mid-semester break in September for a day of fellowship and games. This informal inter-halls gathering proved to be an encouraging session of building new friendships and a peculiar sense of identity for the Hall ministry as a whole. The Hall ministry has also begun to pursue activities and plans that specifically address challenges faced by CFers in a Hall environment. We have planned for an inter-hall event in November, where one of the Hall Masters will be sharing on the life of a Christian in a community and how CFers can best engage those around them.

Challenges

CFers staying in Halls constantly face the need to take part in their own Hall activities to secure a room for the next academic year. With all that hustle and bustle, they often feel hard pressed for time. Do pray for strength that they may be effective wherever God has called them to and for courage to be that prophetic community in all circumstances.

All glory, laud and honor, to Thee,
Redeemer, King

Reuben Ang
FES Staffworker

Revisiting Faith and Academics:
Faith of a Christian Student in Engagement With Knowledge and Student Life

On 11 October, VCF held their second monthly Fellowship Teaching. The guest speaker for this session was Mr L T Jeyachandran, executive director of Ravi Zacharias International Ministries (Asia-Pacific) Ltd, who spoke on the topic, *Faith and Academics*, with a focus on how Christian students should approach their studies and quest for knowledge.

Man and Creation

In his message, Mr Jeyachandran pointed out that God in His wisdom created man and granted him authority over the rest of creation. He also alluded to the wonders of creation and the gift of human creativity as basis for mankind's pursuit of knowledge in various disciplines of academia. Finally, he uncovered how our view of the Fall and salvation of man can only be complete if it is in seen in the light of our present creation (Gen. 1–2) and that of the new creation (Rev. 21–22). He also provided insight into why we study what we do today.

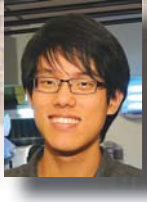
Learning Points

Mankind was given the command to "rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground" (Gen. 1). In order to rule over nature well, we have to study it. The pure sciences, for example, are based on the foundations laid by God at creation, upon which we students study and through which we are able to gain knowledge about God's wondrous creation.

Man was made only "a little lower than God, and [crowned] with glory and majesty" (Ps. 8:5). Furthermore, Psalm 139 states that we are "fearfully and wonderfully made". Sometimes, in our concern for the preservation and study of nature, we diminish the value of ourselves as man. God created humans with the gift of creativity, one through which and from which we can appreciate the beauty of God's creation. The view I have had of myself and humanity was that we were weak and sinful by nature. Mr Jeyachandran helped me see that God created mankind not to be weak but strong, and not to be shameful but beautiful, worthy of praise too.

Mr Jeyachandran also brought up the issue of reductionism that has invaded the world of academia, where over the years, there is a oversimplification of the knowledge we have. With scientists saying, "We are nothing but molecules", and philosophers saying that "Everything is an illusion", they compromise the wonderful complexity of God's creation.

At the end of the talk, what I took away was this: as students, we should see our academics as an avenue through which we discover the intricacies of God's creation, and our natural reaction would be to worship God, amazed at its magnificence.



Zephy Wong Kai Yi
NUS, Arts & Social Sciences, Year 1

Dialogue Sessions with International Students

This semester, the Nanyang Technological University Christian Fellowship (NTU CF) organised a few dialogue sessions with international students to provide opportunities for CFers and international students to have an exchange of ideas on current affairs or topics of common interests. So far, we have had discussions on topics like *Science and Faith*, *Meritocracy* and *Consumerism*. Through hearing the views shared by our international friends, we have been able to get to know them better and even learn from them. These dialogue sessions have also been a humbling learning experience for CF members as through the process, we have learnt more about ourselves and our faith.

Xing Xi
NTU, Maritime Studies Year 2

NTU ISCF Welcome Tea

On 19 August 2011 the Indonesian Students' Christian Fellowship (ISCF) of NTU CF held a *Welcome Tea* for new students. About 40 freshmen attended this event with 15 of them indicating that they are willing to join a cell group. This number has more than doubled since then. We are thankful to God for this response. With the enthusiasm of the freshmen, a 'happy' result is that we need more cell group leaders who are able to commit to this ministry. Pray for the availability of more cell group leaders and for the freshmen to persevere in their commitment to be part of a cell group during their undergraduate days.

Christian Wahyunus Pangestu
NTU, Physics and Applied Physics, Year 2

37 Days in the Philippines

In June this year, five VCFers – Joshua Seet (Law Year 3), Samantha Sim (Business Year 4), Goh Daolin (Pharmacy Year 3), Daniel Goh (Medicine Year 1) and Rachel Ong (Social Work Year 1) – spent 37 days in the Philippines on an exposure trip as part of the FES G Cube Missions Programme. The team was attached to Care Channels Incorporated (CCI)[1], a non-profit organisation that seeks to help the poor through a holistic approach. During this trip, the team:

- joined a camp for youths sponsored by CCI. The purpose of the camp was to teach the youth more about the Christian faith and what it means to grow in Christ.
- visited the slum areas where CCI provides work, like making bookmarks using pressed flowers, which becomes a form of livelihood for the people. Besides learning how to make such bookmarks, the team also participated in medical missions work there.
- travelled 10 hours to Ifugao, a mountainous rural area in the northern part of the Philippines. The Ifugao community is a tribe that historically practiced witchcraft and idol-worship. Though some of the Ifugaos have turned to Christ, the historical baggage is still a very real challenge for them. The team joined the local church for their 15th anniversary celebrations where the pastor reminded the congregation (as Joshua did in the Bible) not to turn back to the gods of their forefathers but to choose to worship Yahweh.
- was involved in the work of Naval Base Christian Church at Baguio, participating in one of their prayer meetings and also conducting Bible studies with families that the church pastor would usually visit. They also helped to run a programme for a child care centre located in Ambiong.
- spent six days in Morong where they saw how the church there helped the poor by running a feeding programme every afternoon for undernourished children. The youths from the church were involved in teaching the children Christian lessons before distribution of food. Every day for five days, the team assisted in the feeding programme by teaching the story of David and Goliath, exciting the kids with a new action song, and teaching them how to fold paper hearts.
- travelled to Mandaluyong and was hosted by Christ the Living Word Church (CLWC). CLWC is primarily involved in reaching out to the people of Welfareville, the biggest slum area in the Philippines with more than 100,000 inhabitants. Exposure to the

1 CCI, in partnership with other organisations, offers community projects, micro-enterprise development, projects that provide a livelihood, educational sponsorships and health programmes.

work included navigating through narrow corridors and dank alley ways to hidden rooms and corners to participate in the numerous house churches conducted every week (the church currently has 50 house churches in Welfareville).

Personal reflections from:

Samantha

My time in the Philippines has truly been a "mission exposure" trip in all sense of the term. As God exposes me to the way missions is being done in Philippines, He also challenges and encourages me about His work in Singapore and elsewhere too. One thing that particularly stood out for me was how lower-middle class families would not only reach out to people within their social class, but also to people in the slums within their neighbourhoods. For example, a church that we visited had their vacation Bible study for their church children and youths in the mornings, and then conducted vacation Bible study outreach to the children living in the slum areas in the afternoon. From my perspective, what struck me was how this outreach felt simply like a part of their everyday life, without any differentiation or segmentation between the two groups.

Daniel

In Mandaluyong, we saw how Christ the Living Word Church was called to minister in the local slums. Through the tireless efforts of church members to establish house churches in each "block" of slum, such impoverished communities came to know Christ. While it was a new experience for us to travel through flooded roads, dark alleys and haphazard paths to reach these places, I was sombrely reminded that this was a daily affair for those who willingly devote themselves to "bring the church" to the people.

Most of the time, the "house church" was a simple gathering of five to eight people who come together to read God's word.

There were no elaborate instruments to praise God, but praise God they did. There was no pulpit to share from, no anointed pastor to give the message, but delve into God's word as a body of Christ they did. In these houses no bigger than the smallest of meeting rooms in our churches, I learnt to see how the church should be more than a majestic and solemn place of worship. It is where His people gather to worship and to seek Him. I am overjoyed to see how these brothers and sisters have made their homes a place for their neighbours and their community to come together to know God.

Rachel

On this trip, God really showed me what it meant for Him to be a Father, and His heart for His children in the Philippines.

I saw this especially when we went up to the mountain area of Ifugao. The journey to our host's home took us about five hours up by coach, then another ride by jeepney, then by tricycle. When we visited the homes in the area, it took us 15 minutes to walk from one home to another, through rice terraces and fields. I wondered to myself, "How on earth did everyone know where their neighbours are? How did Care Channels even know this little neighbourhood exists?" We also found out that four years ago, the government had promised to fix the irrigation system for them but eventually, the promise was forgotten.

On the other hand, God called a missionary who lives an eight-hour bus ride away to this place. She knows where every house is, who is in every family, what their story is and she knows them all by name. To me, that was our Father God in action, taking care of His children. He placed a burden in a missionary's heart so that His love might be shown to the people whom others had forgotten. Even though the families there may not be financially rich, they survive because God gives them good harvest from their crop of vegetables and fresh spring water to drink from.

All these reminded me of the verse in Matthew 6: 25–26, "Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes? Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they?" If He would clothe the grass of the field, how much more would He provide for us, His children?

Joshua

One of the things that struck me was the amount of passion and heart that the people have for God. We've met numerous people who have so willingly placed God's kingdom and work first before all else. In Mandaluyong, we met Annalyn, a student who is currently studying software engineering. Even though she's my age (24), the way she serves as a light and testimony to God really made me reconsider how I myself am making God known. I first met her during the medical missions session in the Mandaluyong

slum area, and as we both sat under the tent for hours helping out with the registration of dental patients, she shared with me amazing stories of how God has worked in her life. For example, she mentioned how God gave someone a dream of her being ordained as a full-time minister in the Church. Another dream Annalyn herself had involved fighting the forces of darkness and leading multitudes into the gates of God's kingdom. After opening up and sharing her life with me, I realised how important this was, and how much I was lacking in this area of being open.

Daolin

As we talked to a few of the Filipinos working as missionaries in their own field, we were shocked to know that many of them came to Singapore as domestic workers before, with not all having the best of experiences. They sacrifice being mothers to mother our children, they sacrifice being daughters to nurse our fathers but yet, they are not given the same respect, the same clothes and the same dignity of being recognised as human beings. I began to question, "How else have we participated in these systems that propagate such injustice?" Granted, many of these people have problems not merely because of such systems but also because of corruption and bad policies. But how many of us can say that we have not taken advantage of these for our gain and pleasure? In fact, how many of us even care?

One of the thoughts that really caused us to pause and consider our "what next" after the Philippines trip was that of our interaction with the foreign domestic workers back in Singapore. We could talk to Filipinos as equals while we were there but can we do the same for foreign domestic workers here? As I consider these points and look at myself, I realise that while I have understood these lessons in my head, I have not understood these lessons in my heart enough for it to change the daily actions of my life. I wonder also, how do my individual actions make much difference to the system?

G-Cube (God's Global Glory) is a training programme to deepen mission awareness and commitment amongst Christian students. It consists of systematic lectures, compulsory readings (books and articles), Bible studies, missions research and a training camp.

The training is divided into two phases with Phase 1 covering a period of three months and Phase 2 lasting about six months. The programme includes important elements in mission education like: Historical perspective of mission; Meta-narrative of God's glory in the Bible; Cultural aspect of missions: and Strategies and skills involved in missions.

At the end of Phase 2, the participant goes on an exposure trip to an Asian country to be involved in student ministry or a related ministry, working in partnership with the missionaries or mission agency there. The end goal of this programme is to further challenge the students to consider their own specific role or involvement in the area of missions, be it as a sender, supporter, mobiliser or even as a 'goer'. Ultimately, our desire is for them to bring this teaching back to their home churches and CFs, that is, to share this passion and vision for missions as well as educate and encourage others in this area.

Every four years, students, staff and board members from IFES (International Fellowship of Evangelical Students) student movements from various countries come together in celebration of what God is doing in campuses across the world. Together, these people represent the 136 member movements of IFES, as well as the groups in another 24 countries who work closely with IFES. At World Assembly (WA), the members of IFES worship review and plan for the future together.

2011 IFES WORLD ASSEMBLY

Jesus Christ: Lord of the universe
Lord of the university

IFES WA 2011 took place from 26 July to 3 August at Jagiellonian University in Krakow, Poland. Four students and seven staffworkers from FES Singapore were among the 600 participants from 100 countries who attended this conference, which centred round the theme *Jesus Christ: Lord of the Universe, Lord of the University.*

"We could never have dreamed of hosting World Assembly twenty years ago", was a message our Polish hosts told us on the opening night of the WA 2011 in Krakow. The growth, strength and reach of ChSA, the Polish IFES movement, is testimony to God's abundant goodness. This was something I learnt again and again as I heard stories from all over the world: that our God is working.

The IFES family at World Assembly

Each morning we had a *Scripture Engagement* session where a speaker would delve into the Word and cause us to think biblically about Christ as Lord of the universe and Lord of the university. The first two mornings touched on the throne room scene in Revelations, where John turns to look for the Lion of Judah and sees the Lamb on the throne. The power of Christ's sacrifice and his call that we follow in his footsteps was an amazing reminder to start the day with. Wherever we are in the world, his call remains the same and though we face different challenges in student ministry, acknowledging that Christ is Lord over our lives and over our universities was a profound starting point for me.

As I continued to learn through Scripture engagement, forums and talks, I started to consider what I could bring back to NUS VCF. Apart from learning to cultivate a culture of sharing, I was challenged to realise the potential of student ministry. In many countries and even in our own CF history, the student movement has been used by God to transform the culture around it – both within the Church and without. From thinking about how we can use the arts in ministry, to seeing how we can reach out and dialogue with ideas in the university, this World Assembly brought me to imagine and truly see Christ as Lord of the universe and of the university.

Amitha Pagolu
NUS, English Literature Year 4

One of the things I was reminded in World Assembly is the purpose of "doing" ministry as well as how we define success in ministry. Many a times when we make plans for the ministry and execute them, the programmes and events become the centre of our actions and all our efforts are spent on "making" the events happen. At World Assembly, much time was spent on Scripture engagement to re-focus our attention back to the cross and our Lord Jesus Christ.

Jiale (extreme right) with his small group

Putting Christ in the centre and evaluating our programmes to see if what we do is in His will, help us to keep in mind the kind of movement God wants us to be on our campus. It will also prevent us from being overly concerned with what people deem success to be – be it having a huge turn-out at the events we organise or having a big CF membership. One phrase which I remember clearly and which was mentioned is: "*God did not call us to be successful; he called us to be faithful*". May all of us be mindful to put Christ in the centre of all we do and be a faithful movement, yearning to advance God's kingdom on campus and beyond.

Caleb Chin Jiale,
NTU, Chinese Year 3

Listening to the testimonies and stories of students and staff from other movements helped me gain a deeper perspective on what life as a Christian really is. In Singapore, we are permitted to show Christian love and pray openly with and for each other but yet, we struggle to do this. In contrast, the student movements in some other countries are struggling to stay "alive". Some of them face the risks of being tortured, jailed or even put to death because of their faith. In Singapore, students complain that having too many prayer meetings makes life boring but for students in some other countries, they delight in the opportunity to gather to pray. We find it a chore to pray while they regard prayer as their most invaluable weapon against anything.

Christ and sports bring people together!

The session that impacted me the most was the Pre-Conference Students' Gathering when we gathered in small groups to share and pray for the struggles faced in each others' national movements. It was very encouraging to know that students around the world also face similar problems we face back home. But it was also sobering to know that many students face difficulties and challenges that we are spared from here in Singapore. Hearing the news directly from the people of these countries themselves, made me realise that not everything we read in the newspapers actually happens on the ground.

Jeremiah Chan
SIM, Economics and Finance, Year 3

Hanyi (2nd from left) with his group which had at least one person from each continent.

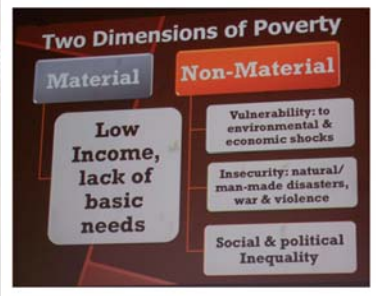
World Assembly has revealed many blind spots to me. The biggest blind spot is how we in Singapore naturally tend towards the pragmatic, to the extent that we compromise things that should have been worth exploring or persevering with. We need to be realistic, but not to the limit where a fear of failure and of disturbing the status quo transforms that into a pragmatism that paralyses.

It is going to be a challenge to encourage our student leaders to be realistic yet not too pragmatic, and to be imaginative – to imagine from Scripture what God's kingdom on earth would be like. And that imagination process cannot be separated from prayer. A powerful way to kick-start this process is through stories – stories of blessings and thanksgiving, of ideas and passions from other movements or ministries.

Perhaps more emphasis can be put on the sharing of such stories – and FES is positioned to facilitate this. I think it is also important that FES do more to give student leaders a sense of the history of the local student ministry they are a part of, as well as the broader picture of IFES, in terms of the IFES and FES vision, and so on. On one hand, you do not want to stymie student initiative, but it is also necessary to expose student leaders to a systematic and planned long-term vision, which they can then decide whether to follow or not. If not, student ministry will likely be a stop-start, reactionary thing (as it seems to be now to me), swinging from one end of the pendulum to another, as each generation of students enters leadership.

Zeng Hanyi
NUS, Law Year 2

The session on *Global Economic Justice* left a deep impression on me. Today hundreds of millions of people suffer starvation, hunger and malnutrition. Many are homeless, lack protection from the raw forces of nature, and live in unsanitary conditions. The only appropriate response for Christians is to cry from a compassionate heart, "Oh Lord, how can we help? What can we do to feed the hungry, clothe the naked and protect the vulnerable?"



Poverty has been explained in a variety of ways: chance or fate, natural causes, personal irresponsibility, God's judgment, etc. Some or all of these are possible explanations. But one of the underlying reasons that have been forcefully brought to our attention is that poverty is also created by structural evil. Inequities that are guaranteed to favour some or a few, but would be oppressive to the majority, have been institutionalised.

It is difficult to raise this subject, but it is even more difficult to provide some clear direction in coping with it. I would like to challenge all of us, in the face of the problem of poverty and disparity, to submit and commit ourselves to the kingdom of God in Christ and to His redeeming and serving power. We need to understand justice, rights and duties; love, compassion and charity; production, distribution and consumption; labor, capital and value – all as God decrees and defines them, and as He reveals the truth about them in His Word.

Kevin Chia
FES Staffworker

Through many of the sessions, I was reminded of the importance of placing Christ in the centre of our lives. This involves having a real understanding of our Christian faith and what it really means to be a child of God. The symbolic act of Christ's sacrifice on the cross and the living out of our genuine faith should transcend the cultural, social, economic and political barriers that exist between people. An example of this was given by Daniel Bourdanné, the IFES General Secretary, when he shared how he was detained and searched at a customs checkpoint during one of his travelling trips, because of his skin colour. I was deeply touched as he recounted this incident in tears, but ultimately the reminder to all of us is that in Christ, all people stand equal before Him, regardless of race, skin colour and social status.

Siah May Lan
FES Senior Staffworker

From left: Adrian, Reuben, Kevin, Amitha, Jiale, Hanyi, Hilda, Jeremiah and May Lan.

During one of the sessions, we were given pastoral care tests which helped to give us a good gauge of the holistic well-being of a Christian worker and also caution us on the underlying dangers of neglecting our spiritual, emotional and physical health. I found these to be useful self-shepherding methods that are easy enough to administer so as to be able to monitor the state of our health on our own.

I also spent some time in the Arts Department and viewed the works showcased. Some of the IFES movements have a good footing in the area of fine arts. As FES is pioneering work at Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts (NAFA), it will be great if there is some way we can tap on their resources to help our local students have a deeper sense of vision for student ministry on their campus and integrate their faith with their studies.

Hilda Ng,
FES Staffworker

When I was a student, I used to think that it is more urgent, important and "holier" to be involved in building God's kingdom on campus through my involvement in the CF. I did not see the need to integrate my subject of study with my Christian faith. I simply could not bring the redemptive aspect of the Gospel to my academic life as a student in the context of the discipline itself (in my case, engineering), including the academic interactions with my professors, tutors and classmates. In my mind then, they were mutually exclusive. FES Singapore's attempts in the past few years to ingrain a more holistic view of mission, that is integral mission, in the students' minds have now set in a deeper effect on me, at least on a worldview level.

Adrian Nugroho
FES Staffworker

Jasmine Foo, *staffworker assigned to VCF (Varsity Christian Fellowship) in NUS, has been working with FES on a part-time basis since September 2005. A 2004 Law graduate, Jasmine also works part-time as a Legal Associate.*

Jasmine, second from right, at the VCF Freshmen Orientation Camp in July.

As I enter my seventh year in FES, I was faced with somewhat of a mid-term crisis. Having gone through many batches of new students with the same agenda and facing similar issues, I was wondering what the value and purpose of my work is. How do I keep afresh that sense of calling and meaning in what I undertake, presumably for the Lord?

God spoke to me through three different incidents. One of them was, interestingly, when I read Mr Chen Show Mao's maiden speech in Parliament, where he quoted Adam Smith, a Scottish philosopher and economist, who wrote about investments in a person, such as by the acquisition of new talents: "Such acquisition of talents always costs a real expense, which is a capital realised in his person. [but] Those talents, as they make a part of his fortune, so do they likewise that of the society to which he belongs."

. . . in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving

To be honest, I do sometimes struggle with the unquantifiable nature of my work. You can never see the fruits of your labour in a profit-and-loss account at the end of the year. It is tempting to wonder, "To what end am I labouring?" Perhaps this is my Singaporean mentality of failing to realise that every individual student I work with is an investment, and a very precious one at that. In challenging university students to love the Lord in every aspect of their lives, especially in their academics; and in preparing them for the challenges of the working world, I am making an investment in the lives of these students. Thus, the profits of my investment are when more Christians out there are ready to be counted for the Lord. May the Lord look upon these labours and affirm that they are not in vain.

Prayer items:

1. Pray for a greater sense of mission, vision and joy in ministry.
2. Pray for God's grace through my transition into married life.
3. Pray for the students to be more willing to invest time and effort (amidst all the complaints of busyness) to being the next generation of Christian thinkers who will be effective salt and light in all spheres of society.
4. Pray for VCF's Annual Teach-In Conference (26–31 Dec), that God will continue to use it to leave lasting and life-transforming impact in the lives of the students.

***Sherry Hua**, FES Senior Staffworker, coordinates the English section of the polytechnic ministry. She also works with fellow staffworkers Kevin Chia and Hilda Ng in the CF ministry at Ngee Ann Polytechnic and Temasek Polytehcnic respectively.*

let your requests be made known to God.

One of my favorite verses is John 15:5, when Jesus said, "I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing." To me, this is an empowering verse, and also serves as a warning to me. There have been many moments when I felt down and wondered if it is time to leave this ministry. Seemingly, we have been facing obstacles and there has not been much progress in the ministry. Perhaps I am the one stopping it from progressing. Perhaps ... thousands of reasons ran through my mind. I really wanted to give up, but our Father never fails to lift me up again. During these tough moments, I experienced God's refreshment and prayers being answered. I have to confess that the number of answered prayers was so overwhelming that I started to doubt whether they were my imagination or mere coincidences.

Sherry, seated third from right, hosting students from Temasek Polytechnic at her home.

Of course, our Father always has ways to rebuke such insulting thoughts. What I had done wrong, I should admit and change for the better. The words *grace* and *mercy* are not clichés but very dear to my heart. These words reminded me not to take Him for granted and not to have such negative thoughts. I started to meditate on God's promises to get rid of these worrying thoughts and resolved to strive, not by my might but by His power and guidance. Indeed, in this journey of faith and hope, an intimate relationship with Jesus is the key to a fulfilling life which will impact other lives, thus bringing glory to the Father.

Prayer items:

1. Pray that I will be an effective and efficient staffworker to the students and glorify Jesus through it.
2. Pray for the students to desire to read God's Word, be diligent in praying, and be courageous to preach the Good News.
3. Pray for the CF to be wise in selecting and electing new student leaders to serve for the 2012/2013 academic year.

Sherry, back row third from left, with fellow staffworkers Kevin (to her left) and Lifang, the Chinese CF staffworker (to her right) with the Ngee Ann Polytechnic CF Exco.

And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding,

Chu Tseng Nan *has been a Senior Staffworker with the FES Chinese Work for nearly 10 years. He works with NTU undergraduates and graduates, including graduates from the former Nanyang University (Nantah).*

Recently, I attended the IFES East Asia Senior Staff Training held in Jakarta. In all honesty, I did not put in much thought for the camp as I was busy trying to complete certain tasks before leaving for Jakarta. Hence, I reached Jakarta with a tired mindset. However, the repeated call by our spiritual director, Mr Goh Keat Peng, to us to have "time alone with God" squarely reminded me of my lack. The quiet time spent alone with God refreshed me. Through the camp, I also picked up two more terms which helped me to re-focus my role as a staffworker in FES; that is, to be a *scaffold* and a *teacher of life.* To fulfill these roles, I must continue to grow towards *holy wholeness* , which again points to the need to have time alone with God.

Prayer items:

Tseng Nan and his wife, Kim Lian

1. Give thanks for God's gracious providence to me and my family. Pray for wisdom in discerning my future direction in ministry.
2. Pray for the NTU Chinese Christian Fellowship (NTU CCF) committee, that they will have perseverance and wisdom in handling mounting pressures from their studies and CF work.
3. Pray for the CF mission team as they plan and prepare for the mission trip to be made in December.
4. Pray for the Combined NUS CVCF and NTU CCF Uni-Bible camp to be held from 3 to 6 January 2012. Pray that wisdom and godly working relationships to be upon the joint committee as they meet to plan for the camp.

Tseng Nan with NTU CCFers at a cell group discussion

Michael Senjaya Kang *is the staffworker assigned to the Indonesian Students' ministry at Singapore Institute of Management (SIM) Students' Christian Fellowship and Singapore Polytechnic (SP) Christian Fellowship.*

As I reflect on my ministry as a staffworker in FES for the past three years, I can see that God has been shaping me through the ministry. These first few years as a staffworker are in a sense, 'an introduction' to help me get a glimpse of what it is like to be a staffworker; to gel with the campus ministry as a staffworker; and to learn to manage my personal, family and local church responsibilities. It has definitely been a new experience for me. However, it has been an exciting journey as well. As I have just committed to another three years in the ministry, I yearn for God to shape me further to be more established in my maturity and stature as a person; in my knowledge and skills as a Bible-believing and Bible-centric teacher; and in my experience and understanding as a mentor to the students.

will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus

Philippians 4:6,7

Prayer items:

1. Please pray for my wife Cindy and me as we become parents to our first child in late November. Pray that both the mother and the baby will be healthy and strong. Pray for me that I will be prepared to take up my new responsibilities as a father, as well as the wider ministry responsibilities in the coming year.

2. We are in the midst of re-building the Indonesian students' ministry at SP. Pray that through the few students who have been attending the meetings regularly, we may reach out to a greater circle of students in SP.

Michael and his wife Cindy (back row, 6th and 5th from the left respectively) with SIM ISCF students.

3. Pray for the leadership succession in SIM ISCF (Indonesian Students' Christian Fellowship) as we do not have enough intermediate (2nd year) students to assume leadership roles in the next academic year. However, we are hopeful that the freshmen will be motivated and prepared to take up the roles.

VCF Alumni 1975/1985

What do 50-year olds do when they meet? - They reminisce of course!

Back in 2007, during a small group reminiscence, Kua Wee Seng (1979/1980 VCF Chairman) suggested we organise a reunion of fellow VCFers. The thought of organising a reunion was impressed on him after our late brother Daniel Soh (VCF Chairman 1978/1979) was called home to the Lord in 2006. It was almost 30 years since we graduated and we all had much to thank God for. The ROT (Reunion Organising Team) was hastily formed and by God's grace we managed to pull off a gathering of more than 150 attendees.

Four years on, a segment of this late 70s to early 80s group continues to meet on a quarterly basis at *The MOE Dairy Farm Adventure Centre*, courtesy of Leong Kwok Peng. Having our own "clubhouse" was key to the continuance of the Alumni. Kwok Peng's hospitality is a form of his offering and response to thank God for the rich years he experienced in VCF. This is true also of the commitment of each and everyone involved in the Alumni – be it the planning committee, those who provide food and refreshments, the guitarists as well as the programme co-ordinators. Such commitment has sustained the Alumni till today.

Most of us continue to attend these meetings because of the feeding and encouragement we receive from the speakers, many of whom are ex-VCFers. Topics were specifically chosen to cater to the current cycle of our life. These have included: *Half Time (lessons from the life of Moses)*; *Finishing Well*; *Remaining in Christ: Old Lessons for a New Age; The Story of Our Life* etc. We meet for fellowship as many of us know each other well and look forward to catching up with each other. We also enjoy singing praises, especially those songs we used to sing in VCF.

For me personally, the meetings have turned out to be a journey of faith and trust, believing that the God of our youth is still working in us today. I remember a lingering fear initially before every gathering. "What if no one comes? It is a weekend after all…what if the topic is not engaging?" The Lord has proved me so wrong – the attendance at each session always surpassed expectations, each session was supremely edifying.

Sometime after the first year and prodded by the talk on "Half-time", Sin Boon Ann brought up the challenge of adding meaning and significance as a group. At about the same time, FES highlighted the need for a full-time staffworker on campus. For a generation that has known no fewer than three full-time staff workers during our Varsity days and the

1975 1976 1977 1978 1979 1980 1981 1982 1983 1984 1985

integral part their mentorship played in our lives, the calling to support the cause was crystal clear. We are currently at the end of the three-year commitment to partner with FES to support Jeremiah Goh as he serves as VCF staffworker, and reviewing our commitment for another three years. Just as Jeremiah must be looking forward to what humble service God will bring over the next three years, we, as an Alumni group, too are looking forth to how the Lord will lead, equip and strengthen us for better works for Him.

"Declare His glory among the nations
Through all creation His triumph sing
'Til all earth's peoples bow in adoration
And Jesus Christ be everlasting King. "

Tan Poh Hong on behalf of The Alumni 1975/1985. Poh Hong graduated from the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences in 1980. She was involved in the VCF Care Subcommittee during her student days.

FES IM Family Day

The FES Indonesian Ministry (FESIM) Family Day 2011 with the theme, *It's Our Race, It's Our Journey*, was held on 15 October. This event was organised to enhance a sense of belonging amongst Indonesion students and alumnus of various tertiary institutions, as well as to remind us that serving our Lord God, Jesus Christ is a continuous race and a journey in life. More than 200 students and alumni participated in the one-day programme, which included a time of praise and worship, a short message delivered by Mr Lisman Komaladi, the FES General Secretary, display of exhibits, presentations from various ministry representatives, and a lunch reception.

Christine Simeon
NTU Bio-Engineering graduate 2011

FES CW Big Family Gathering

This year's FES Chinese Work (CW) 'Big Family' gathering was held on Friday, 21 October at True Way Presbyterian Church with about 130 graduates and students in attendance. The highlight of the evening was the sharing on the efforts being made to support the student ministry. It was indeed heart-warming to see the desire to further strengthen this collaboration between the alumni and student groups even though some of the efforts were still in their experimental stage.

Lai Sze Khiong
FES Chinese Work,
Head of Ministry

Catching up with our ASWs!

Besides having full-time staffworkers to assist and support student work on campus, FES also has a team of Associate Staffworkers (ASWs) who help in an assigned area of ministry. These ASWs are graduates who had been active in student work and served as student leaders while they were undergraduates. Recently, ***Perspective*** *had a chat with two ASWs, Dr Linus Chua (LC) and Miss Myrtle Lee (ML) to find out what motivated them to continue serving in the student ministry even after graduation.*

Why did you take up this area of service after you graduated?

LC: I learnt a lot during my time in VCF and came to realise the great impact that student ministry can have in shaping the faith, character and worldview of university students. I wanted to continue to be part of this strategic ministry.

Linus (6th from left) with the Medicine Subcommittee

ML: I was encouraged by a good friend who was still serving in CF to visit them more often upon graduation. It was really through God's help that though I already started work, I *had* the time to join IFG (International Friendship Group) as well as the CFers. So, it came naturally when May Lan, the staffworker, asked if I would like to consider taking up the role as an ASW. Only after understanding the role that an ASW can play to support the staffworkers and the Executive Committee, I agreed to become an ASW. Moreover, the CF and IFG were like a second family to me. So, in a sense this was a *natural, progressive* and *unhindered* decision. It was truly God-*given*.

What are some differences in the way you work as an ASW as compared to the time when you were serving as a student leader?

LC: As a student, I was more directly involved in the leading and planning of activities. As an ASW, my involvement is more indirect as I take a backseat in planning and take on more of a mentoring role in the subcommittee.

ML: The CF is a student-led ministry and when I was a serving as a student leader, there was a lot of work to be done on the ground. As an ASW my role is less administrative and more to being nurturing and offering a listening ear to the people around you.

Relate one instance when you have been encouraged in your service as an ASW.

LC: I'm encouraged when I see previous batches of student leaders that I worked with step up to impact their community in practical ways or

champion particular good causes (like the IFG, advocacy for social injustice, etc.) on their own accord.

ML: Honestly, starting out as one made me a bit apprehensive as to how much I can give, in terms of the spiritual aspect. However, I've realised that I was quite caught up on the giving aspect that I almost missed out on the receiving part. That was something I did not think I would have gained in my time here in CF. I've learnt from the CF-ers many things about God, His love for people, and sharing His love to others. I've also learnt about humility: although I might be "older" in age, there are still many things my younger contemporaries are teaching me.

What are some challenges you see in CF campus ministry in general and/or in your area of ministry in particular?

LC: There is the perennial problem of "NOT ENOUGH TIME" among the students of today. With so many good events or activities to go for, students these days need to have the drive and discipline to manage their time and commitments well to produce constructive growth. Many students are caught up in the flurry of activities in their lives (the leaders especially), that they lose vision and direction, and subsequently, the activities lose their meaning.

In the same vein, it's also a challenge for these busy students in CF to build genuine relationships without agendas. Meeting up with friends should not just be "for Bible study" or "for subcommittee meeting", but also to "chill out" and "catch up". That's how real community can be built.

Myrtle (front row extreme right) having fun with SIM SCFers after a Bible study session

ML: The new digital age! Smart phones and social media networking platforms will definitely change the way we relate to students. On one hand, it's useful; though we may not be present in school that often, media seems like a tool to take advantage of. On the other hand, I believe if we get lost in it, we may lose our focus and become less personable to each other, which in a fellowship of believers, is something that should continually be nurtured.

Linus graduated from NUS' Medical Faculty in 2008. While a student, he was the VCF Medicine Subcommittee Chairman from 2006 to 2007. He is currently the ASW assigned to the Medicine Subcommittee of VCF as well as the FES Missions Committee.

Myrtle was a Business student and graduated from the Singapore Institute of Management with a RMIT Business Management (Marketing) degree in 2008. While an undergraduate, Myrtle was the IFG coordinator. Myrtle served as an ASW with SIM SCF from 2008 to 2011.

Staff Development & Training

KIVF Media and Me

This year, from 29 March to 15 April, I spent three weeks in Korea with KIVF (Korea Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship). I was there to conclude my preparations with their media team for the East Asia Regional Conference 2011, and at the same time, learn how they set up their media team and how they function.

KIVF has a Media department?

Yes! The Media department was started 10 years ago by a couple of KIVF staff, who felt that KIVF needed to focus on developing media resources to better engage their students. I felt blessed to hear stories from one of the founding staff of how the Media department was established, the numerous difficulties they encountered and how they pulled through, particularly financing woes since media equipment can be expensive to acquire. It is currently eight people strong, led by Head of Media, Kim SeongHan, and split into three departments – Video, Design and Web.

Jeremiah (2nd from right) with the KIVF Media team.

So how has the Media team contributed to KIVF?

They primarily serve to support the main work of campus ministry by producing video clips of various kinds, such as event coverage and reviews, showcasing of graduate lives, mini-documentaries and even a board game designed for icebreakers! But what's cooler is how the students contribute to each of these projects – through filming, acting, researching, and post-editing. Some of the students even started their own initiatives, such as podcasting (online radio) and teaching students how to play the guitar and sing through online videos. Quite often, the students themselves will propose a project they are interested in, and the Media staff will serve as advisors.

Students design work

Are we going to have a Media department for Singapore?

Perhaps not as a department on its own, but definitely in supporting the current campus ministries. The major problems are the lack of staff and funds to do this on a big scale, so we are currently managing this on a smaller scale, one small project at a time.

One of our major projects is the FES website – currently being revamped – which would better integrate all three sections in FES, as well as provide a discussion platform for staff and student leaders. Ideally, the new website will allow for more consistent updates across ministries and be a useful, complete and accessible resource base for everyone.

A key direction that FES Media can take is to develop content for use across ministries; in other words, more videos, animations, infographics and publications, as well as improving existing communication channels. I think this will go a long way in engaging those involved in our ministries and those who wish to find out more. Besides developing content, I'm always keen on studying how communications and media influence culture and behaviour, and what all these mean for us who communicate the Good News.

Sounds real ambitious!

It does, and I can only hope that there are students out there who have creative ideas and skills, with a wish to use them (if you do, please drop me an email!). At the moment, how the Media department is going to take shape is still a little fuzzy. All I can say is that the little projects that we start now can all combine and progress into something significant in the near future. An ideal direction will be the establishment of a concrete base of media content available for everyone to use, and a presence of a vibrant community that contributes to that media base, as a means to encourage and build each other up.

Jeremiah Goh
FES Staffworker
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IFES East Asia Senior Staff Training

From 3 to 10 October, about 25 staffworkers from the East Asia region were at Villa Lodi, Bogor, West Java in Indonesia for the IFES East Asia Senior Staff Training. Seven staffworkers from FES Singapore, namely, Yvonne Choo, Chu Tseng Nan, Lai Sze Khiong, Siah May Lan, Sherry Hua, Victor Wibowo and Michael Senjaya Kang, attended the training, which had the theme 'Strengthening Your Stakes (Isaiah 54)'. Victor, who is Acting Head of the FES Indonesian ministry, shares with us some of the lessons he learnt there.

Victor (back row, extreme right) with fellow participants at the Senior Staff Training.

Through the morning sessions on spiritual direction, Mr Goh Keat Peng, who has had long ties with student and graduate work in Malaysia and IFES East Asia, led us to meditate on Isaiah 54 and a few parables of Jesus. After his brief expositions, he gave us time to be alone with God to meditate and find the relevance of these messages in our own lives. He emphasised the importance of being directly connected to God through

time alone with God and Scripture meditation, and encouraged us to live 'in tension with tensions' as we continue to be faithful in our service to God.

Annette Arulrajah, the IFES East-Asia Associate General Secretary, led the sessions on staff development in the afternoons. As we reviewed the content and approach to staff development in our own movement, Annette prompted us to take into account the generational differences when we execute the development process.

In the evenings, the sessions were focused on 'training the trainers'. One of the speakers, Sutrisna, a Senior Staff of Perkantas (the IFES movement in Indonesia), emphasised the importance for a trainer to be a 'scaffold' whose function as a supporting framework, is temporary. He also brought us to think about the approach of training which would encourage the trainees to internalise the training content. Annette prompted the senior staff to consider our responsibility to be stewards of our journey, which is richly filled with experiences of blessings and struggles in our ministry. These insights would be beneficial to the newer staff when we share it with them. In addition, Annette reinforced the illustration about the scaffolding by saying that the senior staff or a trainer should be a catalyst to unleash the potential of the trainees, be it students or junior staff.

Through the discussions, we saw the need for FES Singapore to review, develop and implement the current staff training programme that it may be applicable for all junior, intermediate and senior staff. The team also proposed that we should work on determining our core values in ministry which includes work ethics and relational ethics among the staff.

Victor Wibowo
FES staffworker

Welcome

Darryl Andriyan Putra joined the FES staff team on 16 November. Darryl graduated in Mechanical Engineering from Nanyang Technological University (NTU) in 2008. After graduation he worked as a Project Officer at NTU and at the same time, served as an Associate Staff assigned to the Indonesian student ministry at NTU. Darryl decided to join FES as he sees the importance of student ministry on campus and wants to be part of this strategic work on a full-time basis. At FES, Darryl will be assigned to the Indonesian Ministry. He worships at the Reformed Evangelical Church Singapore and serves in the Audio-Visual team.

Congratulations

FES staffworker ***Jasmine Foo*** married Nelson Goh on 20 August 2011 at Barker Road Methodist Church. We congratulate the couple and pray for God's grace and blessings upon them as they begin their journey of marriage.

REMOVING THE STUMBLING BLOCKS

The opposite of apathy and ignorance is joy and compassion. During this coming Christmas season, we are reminded again of the greatest good news to humankind: God was once among us in Jesus Christ. This good news brings joy to us and compassion for the world. This good news is the antidote to apathy and ignorance.

In relation to this, the FES Leadership Team has started to ponder on the focus and direction God wants us to take in the coming year. Using the FES Vision 2020 as the guiding framework, we have discerned and decided that **Communicating the Good News of Jesus Christ** will be our **ministry emphasis in 2012**. Allow me to share several important elements of this focus.

Recently I came across an account pointed out by a prominent Christian thinker that the two major obstacles hindering many thoughtful and morally sensible people to coming to Christ are the **shallow beliefs** and **hypocritical lives** of Christians. The world witnesses mindless Christians everywhere. The world over and over again encounters Christians who lack integrity. Sadly, instead of many lives brought towards Christ, our lives more often than not, pushes them further away from Christ.

Looking at these obstacles in our context, I concur that they are indeed preventing our efforts in communicating the Good News of Jesus Christ to and among the students, from being effective and fruitful.

Hence, **removing these blocks** should be our starting point.

We must dig deeper into the Word and train our minds to have a biblical perspective on all aspects of life. We must truly listen to the crying world with its injustice and moral challenges. We must look within for any detrimental but unseen blind spots in our ministry approaches and programmes. We must learn to share the Word and our life with one another humbly and genuinely, especially towards the marginalised groups, the minorities, and "lepers" of our society, with godly acceptance and engagement.

Ultimately, we hope to inculcate a creative and clear communication of the Good News of Jesus Christ proclaimed in word and demonstrated in deed, through authentic relationships, within and across cultures.

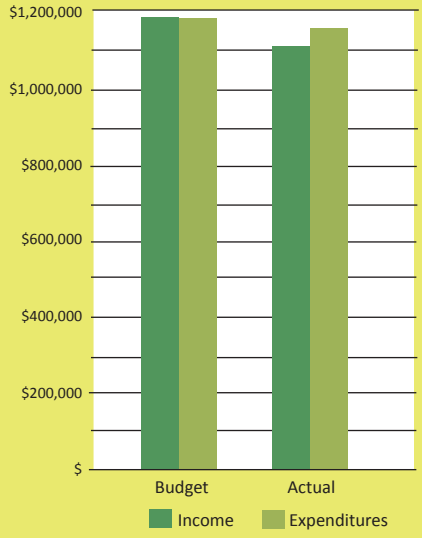
Let me end this letter with a prayer raised at the very end of the Franciscan Benediction.

And may God bless us with
enough foolishness
to believe that we can make
a difference in the world,
so that we can do
what others claim cannot
be done ...

For the sake of Christ,

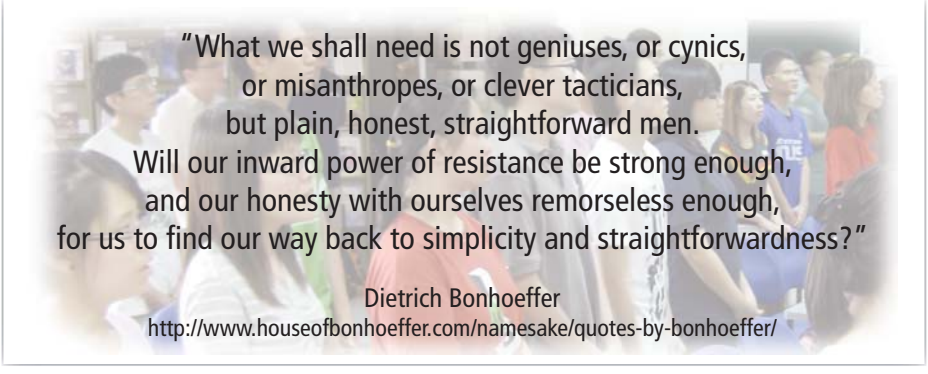
Lisman Komaladi
General Secretary

FES Income and Expenditures (as at 31 Oct 2011)



	Budget	Actual
Income	$1,181,310.67	$1,011,271.94
Expenditures	$1,179,107.33	$1,101,179.65
Surplus/Deficit	$2,203.33	$(89,907.71)

- The actual income has been much lower than targetted due to lower contributions, especially in the last quarter.
- Tight control on expenses was carried out – expenses was $70K less than the initial budget.
- The figures presented above exclude the accounts of the Military Christian Fellowship and the one-time settlement for the unit at Bible House.
- There will be a fund-raising appeal at year-end for Staff AWS.



"What we shall need is not geniuses, or cynics,
or misanthropes, or clever tacticians,
but plain, honest, straightforward men.
Will our inward power of resistance be strong enough,
and our honesty with ourselves remorseless enough,
for us to find our way back to simplicity and straightforwardness?"

Dietrich Bonhoeffer
http://www.houseofbonhoeffer.com/namesake/quotes-by-bonhoeffer/

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