perspective

fellowship of evangelical students

july/august 2012

Real Engagement: Challenging Our Comfort Zones

Project:Gratitude 2012

Friends, Faith & Fellowship

Leaving a Legacy

MICA(P) 003/03/2012

Real Engagement: Challenging Our Comfort Zones

From April to May this year, the FES staff interacted with a few speakers on issues relating to engagement with various aspects of society, The sessions we had were:

- ***Engagement with the Marketplace** by Timothy Liu, President of the Graduates' Christian Fellowship*
- ***Engagement with Other Beliefs** by L.T. Jeyachandran, Executive Director, Ravi Zacharias International Ministries (Asia Pacific)*
- ***Engagement in the University** by Vinoth Ramachandra, Secretary of Dialogue and Social Engagement, International Fellowship of Evangelical Students (IFES)*
- ***Discerning our Way of Engagement** by Kim Hong Hazra, formerly a lecturer at Trinity Theological College, and Gideon Yung, Associate General Secretary of IFES*

In these few pages, we share with readers a summary of these sessions.

Engagement with the Marketplace

'Uncle, one plate of *wonton mee*!'

'We often give thanks for the food, but hardly think about what is needed to make that bowl of noodles'.

This analogy highlights the many processes and interconnectedness of the wonton noodles, from processes of marketing for ingredients, to the distributors, importers, traders, food regulating bodies, banking systems and infrastructure to house the stall. Often, there is little realisation of the need to think beyond and see a bigger picture.

To engage with the marketplace, rather than merely focusing on 'making disciples', students also ought to see the 'larger' calling and scope of work and workplace, which is to participate in the mission of God, bringing about a 'shalom society'. The scope of participation should start in their own context on campus and daily interaction with their fellow students, for example, watching a movie, discussing on academics and life, reading the newspapers. Importantly students need to reflect on their subject of study, to observe life and society and ask how does their subject of study contribute to a 'shalom society'.

Shalom, or peace, is more than a serene feeling or attitude that 'surpasses all understanding'. Rather, it embodies completeness, wholeness, health, welfare, safety, soundness, tranquillity, prosperity, absence of disorder and unrest in all aspects of life and order. The book of Leviticus paints and invites us to imagine what a 'shalom society' with all aspects of life under the lordship of God could look like. Hence in the analogy of the *wonton mee*, it is to think of distributive justice by asking if the workers along the process were paid justly, resources were managed well, etc., and if not, how to seek shalom.

It is often overwhelming to be confronted with such a big picture of complex reality. This is followed by asking difficult questions like, 'What next? How and where do we start the transformation to a 'shalom society'?' The common perspective held to initiating transformation is to start from the individual, then to the family and subsequently to the society and the world. However, Scripture also paints the 'model' of starting from society, then to the family and to the individual as another 'alternative'.

The point is not to ask which 'perspective' or 'model' is better and more effective in engaging with the marketplace (since

both perspectives or models may not need to be mutually exclusive). Rather, it is to realise that there is more than one perspective, and these perspectives or models need to be held in tandem (and tension); that on one hand we will not be too 'obsessed' in continuing the common perspectives held, and on the other hand, not to feel defeated by the entire outlook and feel overwhelmed that this task of a 'shalom society' is so massive.

Engagement with Other Beliefs

Today, Christian students are losing relevance in their engagement with other beliefs. There is quickness to claim the rhetoric, 'Jesus is the answer' but not asking '*what is the question'.* Hence there is a need to equip students to engage meaningfully in the discussion of truth.

There are three main aspects in engaging with truth in a systematic manner:

1. **The four relationships between truth and error**
   (a) There is a need to realise that truth is absolute and contains no error or counterfeit.
   (b) Error or counterfeit is relative to the truth and always contains the truth.
   Every error or counterfeit must hence represent the original. An example would be how pornography is a counterfeit of sex depicted in the Song of Songs.
   (c) Error or Counterfeit can hence be seen as truth plus something or truth minus something. An example would be how since 2+2=4 (Truth, T),
   If 2+2=3, it is error #1 (T-1)
   If 2+2=5, it is error #2 (T+1)
   (d) The opposite of truth is always error. However, the opposite of error is not always truth but could actually be another error.

   As evangelical Christians, we need to spend more time to consider what the truth is and consider counterfeits; for without knowing the truth, we would find it hard to discern counterfeits.

2. **Aspects of the Original-God and Christ**

   Understanding God and Jesus is likened to looking at the cube in its three-dimensional reality. When placed in a two-dimensional reality, the image of the cube is a square. Hence when Philip requested for Jesus to show them the Father in John 14:8 and Jesus replied in verse 9 that whoever had seen Him had seen the Father, it is like saying he who has seen the square in two dimension has seen the cube in three dimension - that both cube and squares are 100% in their respective dimensions, so is Jesus fully God and human in His divine and human dimensions. Jesus is hence the image of the invisible God.

   Therefore as we think about the relation between counterfeit and truth, the desire to see God in a visible, human form is a valid desire, but not when we pursue counterfeits, since God sent His own image in Jesus Christ.

3. **Understanding truth**

   When we talk of Christ and His sinlessness, it often may not interest people as our approach is still talking about 'right', 'wrong' and 'absolutes'. However we need to consider that sometimes our absolutes may have nothing to do with real life! For instance, we often describe God in absolute terms such as infinite and

real, but in mathematics, the concepts of infinite and real are actually imaginary!

To be relevant is seeking to think of Scripture and theology as a narrative and that we ought to start thinking of 21st century parables to relate, dialogue and engage. When it comes to the relating of truth, it is helpful to note that the essential difference between the modern and post-modern audience is this: The modern sees that pure objectivity makes original, while the post-modern sees pure subjectivity as original. As we ponder on John 5, we realise that Jesus is the Incarnate *and* Written word. Truth is hence subjective-objective, as seen in the written *and* incarnate Word. Hence it may do us good to see that our definition of 'truth' is possibly inadequate today. Yet as we think of John 14:6, where it is said, 'I am the Way, the Truth and the Life', this Way, Truth and Life is not a definition, a set of formulae or a set road, but that this Truth, Way and Life is found in the *person* of our Lord Jesus Christ.

In being a prophetic community, it means looking to the Bible and realise that just as prophets questioned idolatry, evil and injustice in their society, students also need to look at the sciences, economics, technology, ... and ask if we are also guilty of worshipping these idols.

Engagement in the University

As we think of engagement in the specific context of the universities, we need to recognize that campus ministries are NOT youth ministries. Hence what FES does with the students in terms of training and discipleship must be contextualised and related to the world of the Universities, as this is the mission field. Areas of discipleship and engagement would need to deal with questions like, 'how does our reading of the Bible shape our understanding and working out of faith and academics? Or what is happening on campus with regard to relationships between local and international students? Where are the areas of injustice we see on campus?'

Engaging with the universities also means students need to study and learn how the university's own life and culture is shaping them. The difficulty is that students are socialised into that culture and hardly stop to think about this culture. For example, universities have a hand in shaping their students today to think that they are superior to others in society. There is also the notion that having a university degree is a passport to move ahead in life, hence graduates would aim for certain jobs and avoid other jobs. How 'Christian' are these views? For Christian students to think of stewardship, it would include studying and earning a degree for the sake of those at the bottom of society, and working out how to use their university training in education to actually serve the poor and underprivileged in society and wider world. These are ideas that universities in general do not encourage students to think about much.

In view of these university cultures, the community of Christian students need to learn and speak in a prophetic way, questioning and challenging some of the things being taught or done in the university. In being a prophetic community, it means looking to the Bible and realise that just as prophets

questioned idolatry, evil and injustice in their society, students also need to look at the sciences, economics, technology, etc. and ask if we are also guilty of worshipping these idols. As we seek to engage with the campus, are we joining conversations (in both informal and formal settings), contributing our thoughts and exposing to the campus that these are God-substitutes?

Christian students should want to be winning people with graciousness in how truth is shared, rather than the arguments we present ... We do not need to impress, or win an argument so as to defend God.

As Christian students engage with the university, our hope is not to just fish for Christian students in the university, band them together and make them 'church'. Rather, it is to honour God through the ministry by thinking how to make the university a more humane, flourishing, and just institution that will please God.

As universities are also places of diverse religions, Christian students also need to ask the important question of what reconciliation between faiths could look like on campus. Paul writes in Romans 12 verse 16 that we ought to live in harmony with one another; that as far as it depends on us, live peaceably with all. Paul was also aware of potential differences, but the main point is that Christians must take the initiative to reconcile and not break off relationships. The thrust is not to reconcile all faiths (which is impossible) but to reconcile between people from different faiths. Christian students still need to learn to respect and befriend people of other faiths, living in social harmony without diluting what we believe. Despite intellectual conflicts, we still learn to live with them and try to recognise areas where we can work with them, and areas which we cannot.

As Christian students seek to engage with the diverse groups of people on campus, there is a need to realise the different ways Christians can engage. Christian students should want to be winning people with graciousness in how truth is shared, rather than the arguments we present. There is room for creativity in conversations, and us being relaxed and confident in God. We do not need to impress, or win an argument so as to defend God. Rather, part of our witness in showing integrity could be in learning to say 'I don't know and do not have the answer', or 'I'm sorry for contributing to such a caricature of God'. There is immense value for Christian students to not obsessively dwell in methods and programmes when thinking about engagement with the university.

Discerning our way of engagement: Looking at our context

Across the different sections of FES ministry (English, Chinese & Indonesian), FES staff realised that each section brought up concerns that were unique and yet related to the society at large. For example, the English section realised that merely speaking and being educated in English gave some sense of elitism guised in meritocracy. There was also awareness of prizing in efficiency, the importance of finding and using efficient formulas, as well as having correct answers to life. The Chinese section brought up concerns on cultural issues, such as bilingualism and exposure to Chinese and Western

cultures, giving rise to possible multiple cultural identities.

The Indonesian section shared that though it was expected that integration into Singapore society would be a pertinent concern, it was not necessarily true, as most Indonesian students coped fine and were not particularly concerned with both Singaporean and Indonesian society.

FES staff also realised that engagement within Singapore itself meant having to consider the other ethnic minorities, and how various aspects of society shape and contribute to the definition of our perceived identity. An example would be how on one hand, we have our own stereotypes of ethnic groups across the board, and, the media seems to either echo or contribute to these stereotypes. On the other hand, the labelling by society and what is presented or expected as to who is Chinese, is hardly questioned by those who are Chinese, even though there is a wide spectrum, understanding, background and cultural diversity to what we mean by 'Chinese'. As we realise that the Singapore context is strongly defined by a transcendent state and at the same time, one with many contexts, whose contexts do we consider when we think about engagement? Bearing in mind that the challenge is that as we say something, the saying is immediately taken into the context of the hearer, who may not know anything much about the original person's context and background. As FES ponders her role in engagement, there is the realisation that with such a diverse community as ours, we strongly need to practise engagement by coming together regularly to discuss issues, realise and work out our differences in the hope of understanding one another and appreciating diversity.

... how many people can accept a man of God staying with a widow, or someone from the 'lesser' margins of society, much less be at the mercy of the person for our needs!

Discerning our way of engagement: Looking at alternative models

In Christ's inaugural speech in his hometown in Luke 4:16-27, which quoted two prophets, Elijah and Elisha, we see a model of 'ministry' that can shed light on possible models of mission for working with students.

1 Kings 17:7-16 saw Elijah approaching a widow for help, water and bread. It was possibly seen as absurd for God to have sent Elijah to a Gentile widow's house for three and a half years, in the light of the abject poverty of the widow, and still having the widow look after him! Upon pondering, we realise that staying with a widow meant that he was at the mercy of the recipient, and had little or no control over things in life. If we think in today's times, we wonder how many people can accept a man of God staying with a widow, or someone from the 'lesser' margins of society, much less be at the mercy of the person for our needs!

Matthew 10:11-16 described Jesus sending out his twelve disciples. The disciples were to look around in their town to see who was worthy, and that they would stay with the person till they departed. It was pointed out that this model was similar to Elijah being sent to live with the widow, as one who lived at the mercy of the recipients. It

was also such a paradox that the people that we are often asked to bless are the very people we are receiving from! Today, we wonder if the ones being sent would be comfortable with such a model, since the 'locus of control' is no longer typically with the sent, but with the one who receives the sent! The challenge is if we are willing to relinquish that kind of control to the ones we ought to be serving and blessing.

This posed several reflection points for staffworkers in engaging with students today. For one, are we able to re-look at wanting control in determining change in our students, and instead, let the students take control of the situation? A helpful analogy would be like the students 'ordering from a menu' and we staffworkers would just put together a meal and cook for them what they have given to us! Secondly, would this kind of engagement be too 'off-limits' for us? If so, why? We were then reminded that we serve not because we are better or more superior as staffworkers, but simply because the God who sent us to work among the students, desires that we serve them as servants. Thirdly, we were also reminded that as staff, we may sometimes get more and more used to running programmes. This may not be helpful, as we hope our students would be given space for more involvement and thinking.

... the Christian faith implores and compels us to constantly reflect and work out a Christ-centered redemptive engagement with the world.

Conclusion

At the end of these sessions, we realise that Christian engagement with the world at large is multi-layered and not as straightforward as it seems. For one, the vast scope of arenas for engagement and what praxis may possibly look like leaves one rather bewildered and perhaps helpless, not knowing how and where to start. Secondly, to engage with pockets of society or communities of people different from us also scares us at times, as hard work is involved in us being less quick to speak and judge. We also need to understand the people, their contexts and how society has painted them and us. Thirdly, it is also difficult as engagement would mean that we (both staffworkers and students alike) need to be willing to place ourselves in places of vulnerability, handing over the locus of control to people other than ourselves.

Difficult though it may be, it is needful because our God loves and cares for the world He created. In today's world, a 'shalom society' or nation serves as a sign and hope that reflects God's reign and rule which pleases Him. It is also needful because as we think of the God we love and worship, we come to realise that the Christian faith is not one of withdrawing from or rejecting the world. Rather, the Christian faith implores and compels us to constantly reflect and work out a Christ-centered redemptive engagement with the world. Only then will shalom, justice and compassion be seen in a society that would be flourishing and more humane. Indeed may we be found faithful in working out our engagement with the communities around us as well as the world that God loves.

Reported by Chieng Wei Shieng
FES Associate Staffworker

Project:Gratitude 2012

Project:Gratitude was initiated in October 2011, by a group of five students in NUS' Varsity Christian Fellowship (VCF) – Rachel Lim (Arts, Year 4), Amitha Pagolu (Arts, Year 4), Kelly Ng (Business, Year 4), Rachel Koh (Business, Year 3), and Zeng Hanyi (Law, Year 2). This group of students are passionate to see Christians in NUS engage with the school community – sharing our faith with our friends and even the school staff. This idea was pitched to the NUS VCF leadership, and a campus-wide movement to give thanks to the unsung service staff of the university was born.

The initial idea was for students to buy a piece of fruit and present it with a note of thanks to any of the service staff who had been a blessing in the students' daily lives on campus. The hope was that this small act by the students would spark conversations and forge relationships, bringing the campus community closer together.

The movement officially rounded up with *Splash Some Colour!*, a month-long art exhibition that told the stories of these unsung campus heroes. Running from 7 to 30 March 2012, *Splash Some Colour!* encouraged everyone to slow down in their busy lives and tune their hearts into the hopes and dreams of those around us. There were cards and stickers at the exhibition for everyone to participate in the art canvas and also share their stories.

Our Sticker wall that helps us engage with our friends

In reality, *Project:Gratitude* goes beyond just school and fruits. Project:Gratitude is a *challenge* to us to slow down and to appreciate our blessings; a *journey* in which we learn more about the world around us; a *lifestyle* to be incorporated into every moment of our everyday lives.

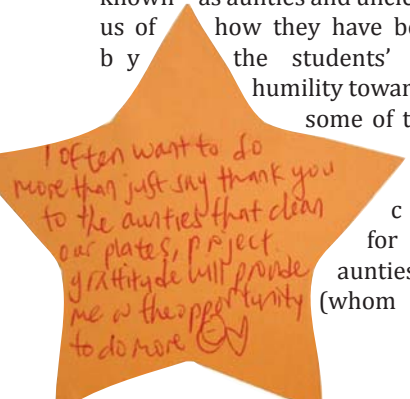
Students sharing their thoughts at our exhibition in U Town.

For many of us, whether a Christian or not, our interaction with the unsung campus heroes revealed another side of

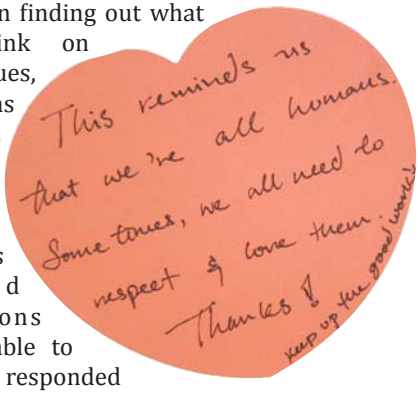
life of the campus staff. *Project:Gratitude* has changed our perspective of them. Their simplicity and endeavours have impacted us in different ways. For instance, many of us found out that a large number of the cleaners are Malaysian, and travel to and fro campus everyday, just to work in Singapore. The photo essays, during the exhibition, also reminded some of our friends that the unsung campus heroes are people with hopes, dreams and values that they hold close to their hearts.

Photo essays displayed at the exhibition

Project:Gratitude was not intended to be a one-time event. One of the ways in which *Project:Gratitude* would sustain itself is in a change of perspective that many CFers experienced. Mobilising an entire community to be grateful for the unsung campus heroes has brought this group of people to the forefront of our campus lives. Some of the service staff – fondly known as aunties and uncles – have told us of how they have been touched by the students' attitude of humility towards them. For some of the students, showing care and concern for particular aunties and uncles (whom have since become friends with the students), has changed the way the students value the campus staff.



For myself, as I listened to the struggles and dreams of the campus staff, it deepens my compassion for those who are marginalised in our society. Really, Christ is our hope in a life that can sometimes be challenging and tough. For others, *Project:Gratitude* became a conversational point in sharing our faith. Hanyi reflected on his conversation with a student of another belief about social action and religion – "It was not to go in seeking solely to share about my faith; but, in hindsight, when they sensed I was genuine in finding out what they think on these issues, simply as friends, they realised their beliefs and convictions are valuable to me. They responded in kind eagerly with their opinions and even more questions!"



The beauty in *Project:Gratitude* was really in meeting people where they are at, and yet challenging everyone to engage with the community. Whether it is talking to our friends about Christ, or blessing aunties and uncles with a listening ear, *Project:Gratitude* has been a journey, where our faith in God translates into courage, to be salt and light on campus.

Rachel Lim
NUS, Arts and Social Sciences, Year 4

Combined Polytechnic Freshmen Orientation

Background

As in previous years, the Christian Fellowships (CFs) of the different polytechnics organised a Combined Polytechnic Freshmen Orientation (FO) programme with the purpose of helping freshmen make new friends and have an awareness of the CF on campus. This year, FO events were held on three separate dates: 26 March, 2 and 9 April. As all the events occurred on Mondays, we called this programme *T.G.I.M – Thank God It's Monday.* About 35 people attended each event.

T.G.I.M Part 1

One week before our first event, the number of people who RSVP-ed on our Facebook Event Page was less than 20. Two days before the event, that number increased. I really thank God for the many freshmen who turned up and for blessing us with wonderful weather. Right after we finished our games, it started drizzling. Through this first event, it is evident that God really watched over us and this encouraged our team tremendously!

T.G.I.M Part 2

We had a lot of preparation to do for our second event, which is a T.G.I.M version of the *Amazing Race.* We had to recce around Singapore to plan the game route, spray paint the bandanas for the participants, and prepare the logistics so that the whole programme can run smoothly. With only four committee members organising the race, we were short of manpower and found the entire planning and running of the programme tough-going. In spite of these challenges, I think it is still worth it because we are serving the Lord and extending His Kingdom. Before the race, it was raining heavily and the subsequent traffic jams resulted in a few students not being able to turn up on time. Right after the race started however, the rain stopped. The weather was really good throughout the whole race! I could see that during the race, friendships were formed. The freshmen gave the feedback that they did not regret turning up for the race and that they had enjoyed themselves very much! In my heart, I really thank God for His presence with us during the race.

T.G.I.M Part 3

This time, it was an event where we had the chance to interact with students from Pacific Hills Christian School, Australia. We had this opportunity to collaborate with them because one of their teachers, Mr Royston Lee, was an ex-VCFer and his wife, Angeline, was a former FES staffworker. Each of us had to prepare and bring a "Singaporean" gift to exchange with the Australian students. At first, I was quite concerned that the freshmen might forget to prepare the gift or not many will turn up for the event. Thanks be to God, the event turned out well and everyone prepared a gift and most tried to interact with the Australian students!

Conclusion

Overall, I have really learnt a lot through organising these FO events. Friendships have definitely been formed; the freshmen even stayed on to hang out with us after each main event. I still remember that the objective for planning this event is to make new friends and indeed, I have made a lot of new friends! At the same time, I had the opportunity for growing and learning from our mistakes and things that we had overlooked. I have also forged a deeper friendship with the FO committee members, all of whom are from different polytechnics. Most importantly, I have witnessed how God watched over us, took good care of us and answered our prayers!

Lim Lihui
Republic Polytechnic,
New Media (graduated in April 2012)

Welcome Tea!

The Exco of the Student Christian Fellowship at Temasek Polytechnic (SCF TP) decided to do something different to welcome the freshmen this year – they organised a chain of welcome tea events, (held on 23 & 30 Apr, and 7 May) rather than a single event.

Welcome High Tea: For this event, the Exco decided on a retro high tea theme. We met at one of the canteens on campus, decorated the place according to the theme and catered tea time snacks to fill our tummies. Then the students were divided into groups of four and we played childhood games such as *Snake and Ladder*, *Snap*, *Donkey*, *Old Maid*, and *Five Stones.* Every 20 minutes, the games were rotated among the groups so that each group has a chance to play the different games. Each student was also given a mini Kaleidoscope toy camera as a souvenir. The students enjoyed themselves so much that they did not want the event to end.

Laser Tag: The second event was a game of laser tag conducted by a graduate, Amos Lim, at Bedok Reservoir, which is connected to the campus. Though not many students were able to come, we thank God for the three freshmen and five CF-ers who attended the event, not forgetting the graduates who returned to show their support.

Steamboat and Facial: This was a unique event where the students set up their own steamboat dinner at one of the canteens on campus, and end the evening with everyone washing their faces and sitting together to have a facial mask treatment. For some of the boys, it was a big step for them to take to have a facial done for the first time. Everyone had a good laugh and enjoyed themselves tremendously with many giving the feedback that they will attend the next CF gathering.

Hilda Ng
FES Staff Worker

If we desire to recover a Biblical perspective on teaching,
If we want the Word to shape the way we teach,
If we long to exemplify godly excellence in our schools,

How Then Should We TEACH?

An Overview

"A girl came in and flopped in front of a panel of interviewers. When asked why she wanted to be a teacher, she replied, 'my mother saw the MOE advertisement and told me not to sit at home and do nothing. That's why I am here.'" Ms Seah Jiak Choo, the dedication service speaker, recalled her experience as an interviewer as she gave the exhortation to about 120 teachers during the Teachers Dedication Service cum Seminar at Anglo-Chinese School (Barker Rd) on 26 May 2012. The former Director-General of Education encouraged the audience to remember and to hold on to the reason(s) they chose to teach. According to her, the purpose must come before the practice. Only when one is clear about the *why* will one be driven to look for the *how*, despite difficulties and discouragements.

Ms Seah went on to share three key principles (Aspiration, Beliefs and Change) that continued to guide her even after she left the classroom. She also reminded us that just as no branch could bear fruit unless it remains in the vine (Jn. 15:1–4), so too must teachers steadfastly remain in Christ in order that we may truly be useful vessels. Mr Peter Tan, principal of ACS (Barker Rd), then led the audience in the Dedication Prayer, which was followed shortly by the Recitation of the Christian Teacher's Pledge. The first segment ended with a song of response by the graduating batch of NIE student teachers.

The second segment was a panel session. The panel was chaired by Ms Lucy Tay, principal of St. Andrew's Secondary School, and the panelists comprised Dr Allan Harkness, Dean of Asia Graduate School of Theology, Mr Ng Tiong Nam, principal of Hougang Secondary School, Mr Alan Lim, Assistant Director of Outdoor Education and Ms Seah Jiak Choo. The panelists each shared for about 10 minutes, covering topics ranging from schools and the kingdom of God to a Christian's approach to discipline and nurture. This was followed by a 'Question and Answer' session where the audience fielded questions like "Should mentoring of students happen outside of school?" and "Should Christians shy away from the leadership track when policies conflict with personal beliefs?"

From left to right: Mr Ng Tiong Nam, Dr Allan Harkness, Ms Lucy Tay, Ms Siah Jiak Choo and Mr Alan Lim.

Looking Back

A year ago when I started my teacher training in NIE, I was sharing with fellow teachers-in-training, Dennis and Fiona, of having a student conference such as the one held by the NUS Law Faculty back in our VCF days. Amongst us, there was also a yearning for a better idea of how Scripture could impact the way we went about teaching. The idea gathered momentum when at the start of this year, Lisman Komaladi (the FES General Secretary) arranged for us to meet Lucy Tay, who is also the Chairperson of Teacher's Christian Fellowship (TCF). We discussed the possibility of resuming the annual Teachers Dedication Service that dates back to 1983 but discontinued after 2007. We also wanted to incorporate a panel segment into the programme to better address the wide range of questions related to Christians in the teaching profession. It was beautiful how God orchestrated the events leading to this seminar. Despite having such a small organising team and communicating mostly through emails, God provided richly and pieced everything together.

Reflections

After the event, a couple of teachers commented on what they have learnt from the dedication service and seminar:

"I was really encouraged to see so many teachers of different ages coming together for this event that recognises that there's an integration of faith and practice. It's the big picture that I myself hope that I will not ever forget or lose."

– Fiona Yeo, posted to Victoria Junior College

"Alan reminded us that it is God to whom we are ultimately answerable, not our colleagues, supervisors or even students, though these are important as well. That God knows the intentions of our hearts ought to cause us to constantly reflect and prayerfully discern clearly what the essentials of our teaching career are."

– Dennis Lin, posted to Anglo-Chinese School (Barker Rd)

My takeaway was more than just the content shared during the seminar. I was encouraged to see real people with real stories of their journeys in following Christ, whether in the schools or in the Ministry of Education's Headquarters. Their sincerity and passion could be felt.

TCF will be organising another meeting on 17 November 2012. Keep us and Singapore's education in prayer.

Patrick Ang Peng Siang
NIE, Post-Graduate Diploma in Education (Secondary)

Being a Disciple

Since late 2011, a number of Indonesian students from Curtin Singapore campus, together with the support of a few graduates, have been meeting regularly for fellowship. Initially they gathered at the void deck of the home of one of the students but since April 2012, the group has been meeting at Eternal Life Baptist Church. The Curtin Christian Fellowship had their first retreat from 12 to 14 April 2012, during the university's mid-term break, at Aloha Changi. The retreat was attended by eight students from Curtin and three students from other campuses. The theme of the retreat was "Being a Disciple" based on Paul's letter to the Colossians.

Since the group was relatively small, we had quite good interaction between the participants during both the informal and formal sessions. Through the four Bible expositions, we were reminded of our identity as Christ's disciples and our goal to reach maturity or perfection in Christ. We were brought to reflect on the process to reach that goal, in which challenges are present either because of false teachings, as faced by the believers in Colossae, or even the sinful nature of our old self. Thus, as we listened to the expositions on Paul's letter to the Colossians, we also pondered about the meaning of putting to death our old self and putting on the new self instead. These were the main messages shared during the retreat.

In between the sessions, we had informal activities, such as watching movies and playing card games. We also had a BBQ dinner on the second night. Overall, although there were not many participants, we had a fruitful time reflecting on the Bible passages and interacting with one another.

Victor Wibowo
FES Senior Staffworker

Friends, Faith & Fellowship

JCUS CF Inaugural Meeting

Friday the 13th may appear to be a seemingly inauspicious date to many people. However, for a batch of students at *James Cook University, Singapore (JCUS)*, it was a totally heart-warming date to remember, as pioneers of the Christian Fellowship at the university. Indeed, 13 July 2012 was the day where JCUS CF came together for its first official fellowship situated at its humble Upper Thomson Campus, bringing together about 30 people, including four FES staffworkers who witnessed the blossoming of a new fellowship!

The session was filled with much sharing, from the basis of the CF to words of encouragement, ice-breaking games, worship and of course, food and fellowship! We were certainly honoured to have the Dean's wife, Dr Robyn, in our midst. Her sharing has indeed touched many of our hearts, especially how the couple was led by God to come to Asia some six years ago to be based in JCUS. Her fervour in faith moved her entire cell group to engage in a prayer walk around campus some years back on a Saturday afternoon, in the hope that the campus will be blessed! True enough, the God who listens and provides has certainly reinforced much through the birth of JCUS CF.

"I will give you every place where you set your foot, as I promised Moses" (Jos. 1:3).

In addition, Dr Stephen Lim's sharing pertaining to the issue of anxieties (based on Mt. 6: 25–34) served as an encouragement to many students who were contemplating their commitment and involvement in JCUS CF. Indeed, if we "seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, [then] all these things will be given to you as well" (Mt. 6:33). What an appropriate reminder of the provision of God, right from the beginning!

Amidst all the planning and preparation for this very day, we are certainly grateful beyond measure for God's timely plan for JCUS CF to be born. Prior to our first fellowship, we had many meetings with the founding group. Through the sharing of testimonies and mutual support we have certainly been encouraged. JCUS CF will continue its weekly fellowship during the semester period. Please join us in praying for this new community, as well as for wisdom to handle other matters that may be new to us.

Let us all continue to hang in there in this new semester and trust in the Almighty One!

"Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own" (Mt. 6: 34).

Crystal Tang
JCUS, Psychology, Year 2

VCF 60th Anniversary Dinner

LEAVING A LEGACY

On 12 May 2012 about 300 people gathered at the NUS Alumni House for a reunion dinner of former VCFers (1950s to 2000s)-cum-celebration of VCF's 60th Anniversary. This event was organised by VCF alumni from 1975 to 1985. In these few pages, we will give you a glimpse of what was seen, heard and pondered.

Thanksgiving and Gratefulness, Reminiscence and Purpose

The evening started off with excited screams of recognition as long lost contemporaries caught sight of each other, The warm smiles and easy camaraderie belied many years of not being in active contact as folks made their way round the reception area in search of food and friends.

Sim Boon Ann (Arts & Social Sciences, 1982; Law, 1986) kicked off the evening with a medley of songs from *Sing Praise*, the VCF songbook published in 1974. A message by Bishop Dr Robert Solomon entitled "Leaving a Legacy" was followed by a testimony by Eugene Seow (Architecture, 1981), presently Director of Touch Services, Faith Community Baptist Church.

Eugene's sharing on "Living an Authentic Life" was bare-boned honest, captivating and inspiring. I will not forget his refrain – "My talk is my walk and my walk is my talk." How many of us can stand before our contemporaries to declare that this is true? He also shared that it was at the VCF Annual Conference at Port Dickson that God's call for him to go into full-time service was sealed when it became clear to him that "when God calls me, He will resource me". Like quite a few others, it was also through VCF that he met his future life partner, Julie.

It was heartening to also have the seniors among us who graduated in the 1950s to 1960s share in the cutting of the cake together with the current batch of VCFers. This visible line of continuity is a testimony to God's faithfulness but at the same time, as one of the emcees reminded us, also a clear reminder of how we are also a year group short of extinction if we do not take seriously this need to pass on the baton of faith.

The pleasant evening ended on a sober note as we pondered on all we have been blessed with and how we could continue to live lives of faithfulness and purposefulness even as age creeps up upon us unrelentingly.

Sarah Teo (Arts & Social Sciences, 1981)

My Exco was involved in VCF's 50th anniversary celebrations. To be present for VCF's 60th Anniversary Dinner was thus a special moment for me. The evening was a pause in time to remember with gratefulness how God has watched over VCF and former VCFers all these years. I'm not sure of many organisations that can bring back batches of members across the decades and still have commonalities among them. We must remember it's not just memories or even people that link us as one. Rather it is GOD, who has led us to be part of the VCF journey, in whom we are as one.

Elaine Seah (Science, 2004)

The oldest - Dr Gloria Lim (Science, 1954) - cutting the cake with the youngest - Zeng Hanyi (Law, Year 3)

It was good meeting old and new friends, to recount testimonies of the Lord's goodness and faithfulness, to learn about current VCF initiatives and needs, to hear God's Word through Bishop Robert Solomon, and to rejoice that "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever!"

Dr Ernest Chew (Arts, 1964)

Among the things that were said at the VCF 60th Anniversary Celebration, what struck me most in Bishop Solomon's remarks about leaving a legacy was his reading of Psalm 48:12–14.

> *"Walk about Zion, go around her, count her towers, consider well her ramparts, view her citadels, that you may tell of them to the next generation. For this God is our God for ever and ever; he will be our guide even to the end."*

It reminded me to look at the state of the English-speaking churches in Singapore today and cast my mind back to the churches in the 1950s. With a few exceptions, the main English-speaking churches then were mostly liberal in their theology, even denying the deity of Jesus. It was this prevailing liberal, non-biblical theology that led to the formation of VCF. Look at the churches today. What a difference! Most of today's congregations would not tolerate the liberal theology of that time. There are many reasons for this change. It is undeniable that VCF is one of them. The students who went through university and who were shaped and influenced by VCF played a key leadership role in the churches in bringing about this change.

It would be good for us as VCFers to look at the English-speaking churches in Singapore today, to "go around her, count her towers, consider well her ramparts, view her citadels", and remind the next generation what our God did through those who started VCF."

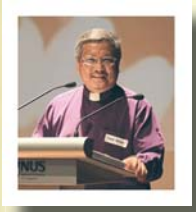
S. Dhanabalan (Arts, 1960)

The anniversary gathering was most special as it provided a rare glimpse of the VCF campus community of yesteryear, the kind of songs they sang and the things they remember about their time in the VCF. It was interesting to hear the conversations and dialogue that took place among VCFers of a generation past and it got me thinking about what conversations the VCFers from my generation would be having some 20–30 years from now. In a sense, witnessing such a gathering also gave me renewed hope and conviction that the VCF community that we were part of while still in the university can endure beyond graduation and remain committed to the vision, spurring each other on to be salt and light in society.

Lester Chua (Economics & Law, 2010)

Memorable Reunion – In a small island-state like Singapore, it is surprising that it takes an event like this for old friends to meet.

Meaningful Reflection – Against the backdrop of old VCF photographs flashed on the screen and the presence of the "pioneers" who had already made their legacy in their own fields, the evocative words of "Find Us Faithful" brought to mind the many others who endured in the faith "only for a time". Only God knows the attrition rate of those who came to Christ in undergraduate years.



Momentous Resolution – Bishop Robert Solomon's quip on our "invincibility until our work is done" is a stark reminder of our ongoing "fight" against the "deceitfulness of riches and the desire for other things entering in and choking the word of God". We have to continue "working out the passion" instilled in VCF days.

Rev. Canon Dr Louis Tay (Dentistry, 1972) and his wife, Priscilla (Science, 1972, University of the Philippines)

On my way to the anniversary, I was somehow afraid, at a gathering such as this, that someone would stand up and whisper, "My friends, there has been nothing countercultural about our lives" and I was afraid that it would be true. It certainly felt true of my life. My fears were gently calmed, as I saw at the gathering, person after person, many who have lived lives of integrity and gentle, radical submission: they have cared for the poor, defended the weak, grappled with the truth, given much, and loved much, in Jesus' name. Some spoke at VCF meetings when I was in school, and fired my mind with stories of lands afar, and a God constantly near. Some have continued to live lives of gentle obedience well into their old age, showing me that He carries us all the way. I gazed from a distance, and I wished I could speak with them, and thank them for allaying my fears with their lives. I hope that fearful whisper of mine will again be turned away, gently, in successive 70th, 80th, 90th, 100th and more anniversaries by the lives of the men and women of generations to come. God, find us faithful. Keep us tenderhearted.

Gabriel Koh (Arts & Social Sciences, 2004)

I am not a prophet, but I must admit that I sometimes do find myself falling into the "Elijah Syndrome". Most days, I feel overwhelmed by the world as it is today: its numbing, dehumanising pace of life; the violence of its pervasive competitiveness; the injustice of its mindless and heartless appetite for "more", and the sheer lack of peace (shalom). Things are just "not the way it's supposed to be".

... But ever so often, God still "works in mysterious ways" ... Amidst the celebration of VCF's 60th Anniversary though, I heard a still, small voice speaking: "Yet I reserve seven thousand in Israel – all whose knees have not bowed down to Baal and whose mouths have not kissed him" (1 Kgs. 19:18). Gathered in that ecclesia, were those whose walk and talk are one, whose lips and lives praised Jesus, who bore testimony to God resourcing them when He called them, and who lived to "Declare His Glory". For a brief few hours that night, the curtains of history were drawn back. We were invited, through the witness of the saints gathered, not only to believe, but also to KNOW that God is still at work in His world, through his "little Christs" who are "scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia". There is still a cloud of witnesses who are living their lives under the summons of the King.

When Elijah knew that God still had a remnant in Israel, he went out and found Elisha plowing in the fields. Elijah threw his cloak around Elisha, causing the latter man to burn his bridges to follow the call of God (1 Kgs. 19: 19–21). I went to the gathering that night feeling like an "Elijah". I left however, realising that perhaps, "Elisha" was more appropriately my name. After all, through God's preserving grace, there were at least five decades of "Elijahs" who had gone on before me as the risen King's witnesses, looking for the next generation of "Elishas", over whose shoulders, they would cast their cloaks.

"Throw your cloak around another" (support a Staffworker!) or "Burn your bridges to follow the Call" (become a Staffworker or be the next generation of salt and light in the world!). However God has touched and spoken to us that night, or is touching and speaking to us even now, may we be quick to obey – may the Spirit quicken us to joyful obedience.

Winston Tay (Arts & Social Sciences, 1998; Science, 1999)

JESUS CHRIST IS THE SAME YESTERDAY, TODAY AND FOREVER

This 60th anniversary celebration is truly an occasion for thanksgiving to God for His faithfulness to VCF as well as to each of us. As I reflected on these past years, I realised that so much have happened. In the 1950s, Singapore was a British colony; today, it is an independent sovereign state. The population then was 1.4 million; today it is 5.2 million. On the campus scene, Singapore had only one university (known as the University of Malaya); today we have four full universities plus nine other foreign universities that have set up local branch campuses. The student population then was 1,500; today it is well over 80,000.

Truly, much have taken place over the past 60 years. But one thing remains unchanged: we have an unchanging Saviour – **"Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever"** (Heb. 13:8). When our founders decided to set up VCF, they chose this verse as one of their mottos. It was their conviction that the Saviour who had walked on this earth 2,000 years earlier, was the same one who had sent them to the university. Their coming to the university was not an accident of history. Christ had given to them an unchanging mission.

First of all, *it was a mission of sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ with others*. Many then did not know the Saviour. Today, about 18% of our people identify themselves as Christians. But in the 1950s, no more than 5% were Christians. Plainly, VCF had to be bearers of the Good News to others. Secondly, *their mission was to prepare students to be salt and light in society* (Mt. 5:13–16). Much teaching was given to members as to what it meant to be a Christian in the world. Today, you will find Christian graduates fulfilling their roles in professional life, the academic world, government and administrative service, the marketplace, etc. I would like to believe that our graduates have contributed to much of what Singapore has turned out to be. Finally, *their mission was to encourage the members to identify themselves in their churches*. Over the past 50 years, I have had the privilege of being invited to minister in different churches. What a joy it is to see our graduates actively serving in the churches – as Sunday school teachers, youth workers, deacons, elders, pastors, etc. This is what we are all called to be – active members in the body of Christ.

I do not know when our next anniversary celebration will be held. But one thing I do know – Singapore would have changed even more! This is an island that never stands still. But one thing we can be assured of – **"Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever".** The Saviour who moved our founders to set up VCF will continue to remind us of His unchanging mission as we move further into the 21st century.

(Closing address, VCF 60th Anniversary Dinner, 12 May 2012)

Dr Bobby Sng (Medicine, 1962)

COMBINED NUS AND NTU GRADUATES' CAMP

The FES Chinese Work (FESCW) annual combined NUS and NTU Graduates' Camp for graduating students was held from 31 May to 2 June at Jubilee Presbyterian Church. The objectives of the camp are to:

- equip graduating students (with a Biblical worldview, time and financial management, church integration)
- experience fellowship after graduation (by providing a network to support pilgrims on the same road)
- provide space to the students for deep reflection and re-dedication before the Lord.

During one of the workshops, Rev. Thong Tang Hiong from All Saints' Church, shared many simple yet insightful tips on working life. Below are some highlights:

- Be faithful in accomplishing what has been bestowed upon you
- Clarify ambiguous job scope
- Develop a responsible and trustworthy character

Rev. Thong also touched on the topic of 'giving in', which spurred the students to probe deeper into the negotiable and non-negotiable principles that a working Christian should uphold. He brought to mind the life of Eric Henry Liddell, a devoted Christian who refused to run in a 1924 Summer Olympics heats that was to be held on a Sunday (the Christian Sabbath) because he wanted to honour God.

As Christian soldiers involved in spiritual warfare, we should be cautious so as not to end up winning the battle but losing the war – the war on bearing our faith and testimony to obey and honour the Father.

On the last night, a forum was organised where graduates shared about their struggles, decision-making processes, convictions, passions and spiritual journeys in the marketplace. Both the graduates and the graduating students engaged actively in the 'Question & Answer' session. This was indeed an extremely warm and beautiful scene of brothers and sisters-in-Christ who had toddled the path before the students, and had turned back to encourage, guide, help and illuminate the way of those coming after them. We can draw a similar parallel in Luke 22: 31–32, when Jesus encouraged Peter in view of his impending failure:

> *"Simon, Simon, behold, Satan demanded to have you, that he might sift you like wheat, but I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned again, strengthen your brothers".*

Before the camp was brought to a close, the graduating students reflected upon what they had learnt and penned a mission statement to re-dedicate their lives for the Lord, with a special emphasis on the marketplace.

My brothers and sisters, we earnestly urge one another to keep the "saltiness" in the salt, because this saltiness denotes the very essence of conforming into the image of God and His likeness. Be also the light that illuminates the world, so that the Father will be glorified with the glory He rightly deserves.

Jackson Lum Guan Ting
FESCW Associate Staffworker

Jeremiah giving a talk on 'The Challenge of the Internet Community' at the 2011 IFES East Asia Regional Conference in Singapore.

Since joining FES as staffworker in 2009, ***Jeremiah Goh*** *has served with VCF at NUS, primarily in the hostel ministry, and international students at Singapore Management University. He is also the 'IT guy' in FES – he designed and developed the FES website as well as some media tools for student conferences.*

This is now my fourth year and second term as a staffworker with FES. Recently, a student asked me, "So why did you decide to become a staffworker?" After some deliberation and hesitance in answering, I decided that the more important question now should be "Why are you continuing on as a staffworker?" With that question many reasons came flooding in, but only two I can share in the space here.

Training students in Inductive Bible Study

The global exposure I have had with FES has been incredibly formative for me. In the past three years I have had close experiences with the spiritual and working cultures of the Filipinos, Koreans, Americans and British, just to name a few. I have found abundant joy working in such cross-cultural contexts, not because they were free of differences and disagreements, but in observing how Christians relate to each other despite the problems. This has served to broaden and deepen my understanding of the faith as I continually wonder how we can all profess "one Christ, one God", in spite of the diversity of personal and national backgrounds.

. . . in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving

I also absolutely love being immersed in an academic environment. Through the university ministry, I have discovered education not just as a means of getting a decent job and leading a comfortable life, but as a battle of ideologies, worldviews and lifestyles. Why we educate is as important as what is in our education and how we do it. Christian education, in particular, has to be able to stand out and be relevant to modern issues in order to engage with the current and future generations of Christian and non-Christian students.

On a more personal note, please pray for me as I:

- transition to be a staffworker for NTU CF, and all the time it would take in terms of ministry and traveling, yet still be able to be with my wife and family.
- come to the stage in life to think about family, housing, finances, further studies and direction in life as a family.

Darryl Andriyan Putra *joined the FES staff team in November 2011. He serves with the Indonesian students at NTU CF.*

let your requests be made known to God.

Recently I had the opportunity to go with a student from the CF for an exposure trip to Cambodia. One of the highlights of the trip was the field conference held then. We were involved in taking care of the children while their parents, who are missionaries, attended the conference. To be intensely involved with kids for an extended time was a new experience for me. My experiences with the kids taught me not only on how to take care of them, but also on how to 'enter' into their world. By doing so, I received various responses from the kids – sometimes these responses hurt – which also brought great joy, as they came from honest hearts. I was able to see aspects within me that need to be shaped from these experiences.

I was also able to observe the kind of life that the missionary families have when serving there. Some of them, who initially may have been well-prepared for such fieldwork, were challenged when faced with unexpected trials such as accidents or sickness. Through these observations, I realise that when we do God's work, it is always remarkable to see how God shapes His people according to what He deems fit. Our hearts also need to be prepared and willing, so that bit by bit, our dependence is not placed on self but on God. After the trip, one question that lingers is, "Are there aspects in our life that we are overly proud of and think that they are sufficient for our ministry?"

Darryl, back row extreme right, with the student committee members and Associate staffworkers

I thank God for the eye-opening experiences. At the same time, I pray that such challenges will be addressed so that I can prepare for the ministries that lie ahead.

Please pray with me for:

- courage and wisdom as I take on increasing roles in the campus ministry.
- good time management as I handle my ministry responsibilities, preparation work and studies.
- unity and joy in the student committee as they serve together, and that the fellowship is not run with an 'ought-to' and 'that's-how-it-is' mindset.
- the welcoming event for freshmen to be held in early August – that friendships will grow from there.
- all the committee members and the other CFers to grow in Christ-likeness.

***Lim Chee Tat**, who joined FES in 2009, works with the FES Chinese Work (CW) postgraduate ministry. He has also recently taken over the role of Editor of **Follower**, the FES CW newsletter.*

I would like to thank God for allowing me to serve in this ministry for the past three years. It is a gift from Him that I do not deserve.

As I reflect on my service, there are a few points that I have found worth pondering on:

- We cannot do without prayer in ministry.
- It is essential for us to have a heart which abhors sin, longs for holiness and follows God wholeheartedly. This applies not just to staffworkers but also to student leaders and members.
- We need to rely on the Holy Spirit to strengthen us and direct our ministries.
- When we work amongst the intellectuals, besides knowing our Bible, it is also important to have a good grasp of theology and a reasonable understanding of apologetics.

Chee Tat (front row, fourth from left) with FES CW students and alumni

And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding

Prayer points

- Currently, I work with a postgraduate group in NUS and NTU campus. Pray for the students in each of these groups to understand the meaning of student initiative and be willing to take up more responsibilities in the ministry.
- As there are not many postgraduate students who join the Chinese-speaking postgraduate ministry, pray for more Christian postgraduates to see the need to come together with other Christians to pray, study the Bible, discuss issues and reach out to others even as they pursue further studies in the various disciplines.
- Pray that in the long run, God will send a female co-worker who can help to minister to the female postgraduate students.

Fuji Yew *served his first term with FES from 2000-2003. He re-joined FES in 2006 and currently heads the FES pioneering ministry.*

"All of life is a coming home. Salesmen, secretaries, coal miners, beekeepers, sword swallowers, all of us. All the restless hearts of the world, all trying to find a way home." Patch Adams (movie quote).

Many people have the perception that pioneering ministry is a daunting uphill task. For me I consider it a privilege and joy to be able to journey with students. Each student is truly a gift from God to me. My role as a staff is just to be a signpost pointing students to Christ and venturing alongside them on the journey to Home. In the process, I have gained many insights and learnt valuable lessons about myself and my calling.

No ministry is easy nor smooth sailing. There are hardships and difficulties along the way. Going through these circumstances has taught me that I can draw strength from God and His community to overcome adversity. It is my conviction that every step along my journey provides a new opportunity to learn, and each lesson contains biblical truth that I can share with others to help them in their own journey.

will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus

Philippians 4:6,7

Having a family and serving in this ministry has helped me to realise that my family and ministry has to be integrated in my day-to-day life. I have also learnt that relational work is essential in pioneering ministry. Being real and transparent to students and graduates will inspire them more deeply to have an authentic faith and a transforming relationship in Christ

Fuji having a meal with students from Informatics CF (top picture) and celebrating a birthday with NAFA students (bottom picture)

"My dear children, for whom I am again in the pains of childbirth until Christ is formed in you" (Gal. 4:19)

Prayer points

- In pioneering work, we need to plan a few steps ahead. Pray for leadership succession in Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts (NAFA) and Informatics CF, so that the ministry will have continuity.
- Pray for creativity and opportunities on campus to connect with students. Currently meetings are held at these times and venues:
  1. East Asia School of Business (Hostel ministry, every Tuesday evening)
  2. Informatics CF (Prayer meeting: Wednesday, 12-1 pm; Fellowship meeting: Friday, 12-1pm)
  3. NAFA (Fellowship meeting : Friday 1-2pm)
- Pray for spiritual growth among the volunteers and staff so that the ministry can grow in depth and breadth.

What is our Responsibility?

Once, I happened to glance at the display on my desk. It has been there for months, but the words written on the display – a familiar saying, often called *The Parable of Responsibility* – spoke to me more aptly this time:

This is a little story about four people named Everybody, Somebody, Anybody, and Nobody.
There was an important job to be done and Everybody was sure that Somebody would do it.
Anybody could have done it, but Nobody did it.
Somebody got angry about that because it was Everybody's job.
Everybody thought that Anybody could do it, but Nobody realized that Everybody wouldn't do it.
It ended up that Everybody blamed Somebody when Nobody did what Anybody could have done.

In our life – work, family, and ministry – similar stories could occur. When things go wrong, it is easier for us to blame other people, circumstances, or anything else other than our own actions. When projects are delayed or sales deals are cancelled, we quickly find a scapegoat. When children do not behave or perform well in school, either the father is blamed for not spending enough time with them or the mother is accused of not setting a good living example. We believe that *right teaching* and *right living* are both important for the church. When both are not evidently seen, we condemn our pastors for not delivering sermons that are thoughtful enough or we blame the harsh life in Singapore that makes "right living" nearly impossible.

Finding fault is not new. In one of the first written communication between God and humans, the innuendo was already there. When the disobedience was discovered, Adam blamed Eve, who in turn held the serpent responsible. But praise to our gracious God – He does not fall into the blaming trap, so prominent in the parable above. Finding fault does not serve His end, but instead He plans the solution – the salvation history of which we now experience and celebrate. Our Lord, Jesus Christ, who was considered a *Nobody*, took the blame of *Everybody*, so *Anybody* who trusts in Him, could become *Somebody* who would seek and establish His Kingdom on earth. The riddle of "who is responsible" has been solved.

What a great lesson we can learn from the way God deals with our deep-rooted problems! Not only does He initiates, He also assumes responsibility. The question is not just merely who is to blame (although God also perceives sin seriously), but more importantly, what can be done to restore the situation or make it as what it was intended to be.

As the second line of the parable says, *"There was an important job to be done";* here in the vast world of FES ministry lies plenty of "important jobs" to be done as well. Therefore, in this context,

- ❖ Instead of finding fault each time things go wrong, let us explore how things could be done better the next time.
- ❖ Instead of focusing on finding "the culprit" and then comfortably isolating or vilifying him or her, let us instead, despite discomfort, seek to have "the culprit" transformed and flourished.
- ❖ Instead of questioning why students are now more difficult to handle, let us challenge ourselves to find out what other creative ways can be done to nurture them.
- ❖ Instead of censuring wealthier graduates who have not supported the ministry financially, let us plan how we may be more shrewd as stewards of the few resources God has entrusted to us.

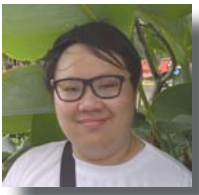
- Instead of putting down others in the ministry whom we think are not as capable, knowledgeable or committed compared to ourselves, let us look up to Him, who calls each one of us to carry out His work in a unique and different environment and at the same time, work together to bear each other's burdens.
- Instead of endlessly complaining, whining, and blaming others, let us "count others more significant than ourselves and look not only to our own interests, but also to the interests of others" (Phil. 2: 3–4).

Let us then amend the question: not *"Who is responsible?",* but rather, *"What is our responsibility?"*

Lisman Komaladi
General Secretary

Farewell

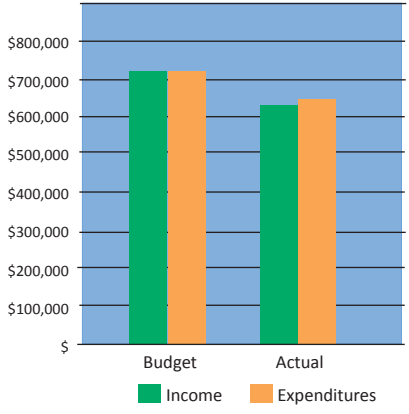
Jasmine Foo left FES at the end of May after nearly seven years of service as staffworker to the VCF. More recently she was also involved in training the polytechnic CFs in doing and leading Bible studies. Jasmine has now joined the Subordinate Courts of Singapore as Assistant Director of Training but will continue to be involved in FES student ministry as an Associate Staffworker.



Reuben Ang, who had been serving with the VCF Hall ministry as well as NTU CF left FES at the end of July. Moving on, Reuben will be taking up the challenging task of helping to run his family catering business and also serving as an FES Associate Staffworker.

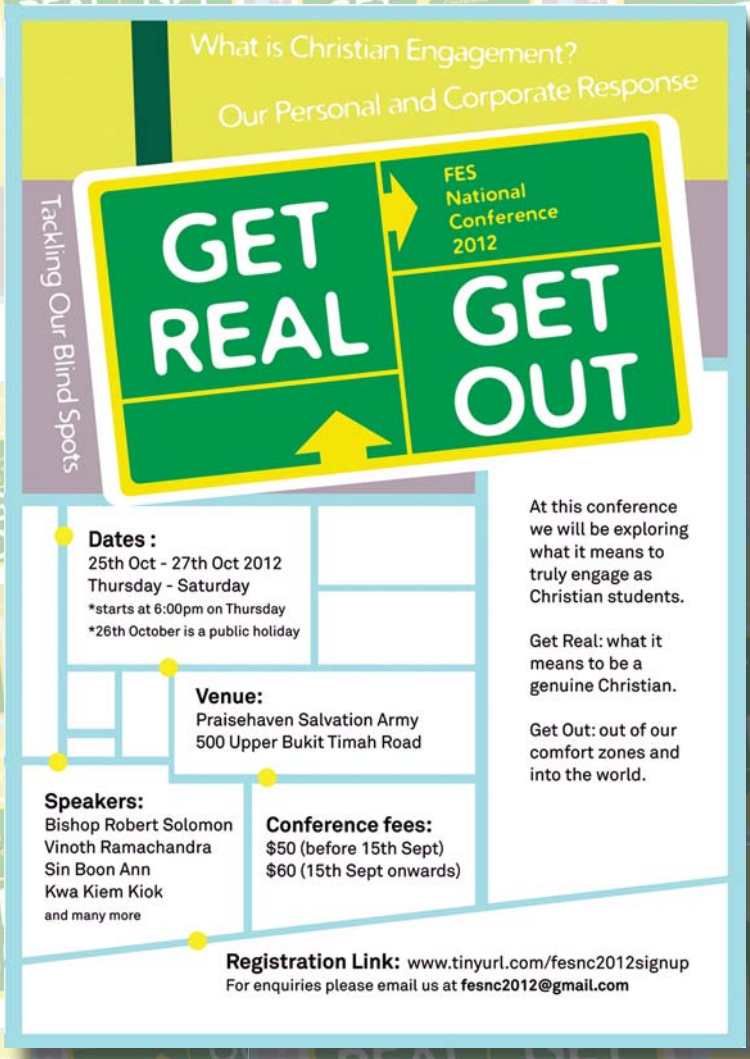
We thank Jasmine and Reuben for their faithful service with FES and wish them God's blessings in their new careers.

FES Income and Expenditures 2012 (Jan-Jun)



	Budget	Actual
Income	$718,506.50	$ 626,215.09
Expenditures	$ 715929.00	$ 643,387.05
Surplus/Deficit	$2,577.50	$(17,171.96)

- Breaking it down, the English Section and Indonesia Ministry is in the black ($20K and $5K surplus respectively). However, the Chinese Work and MCF are facing a rather rough financial situation ($31K and $11K deficit respectively).
- The second half of 2012 may potentially have higher expenses due to the FES National Conference from 25-27 October 2012.



FES Perspective July/August 2012
Published by Fellowship of Evangelical Students

Editorial Team Chong Yun Mei, Lisman Komaladi
Esther Yap Yixuan
Design Chong Yun Mei
Cover Photo VCF Project:Gratitude 2012 Exhibition
Printer Kairos Design

Views expressed in this publication do not necessarily represent the position of FES Singapore.

FES 420 North Bridge Rd #05-05 North Bridge Centre
Singapore 188727 Tel: 6338 3665 Fax: 6338 2054
Email fes@fessingapore.org Website: http://fessingapore.org

FES Affiliates
• Nanyang Technological University Christian Fellowship (including National Institute of Education Christian Fellowship) • Singapore Institute of Management Students' Christian Fellowship • Varsity Christian Fellowship (National University of Singapore) • Ngee Ann Polytechnic Christian Fellowship • Polytechnic Christian Fellowship (Singapore Polytechnic) • Students' Christian Fellowship Temasek Polytechnic • Informatics Christian Fellowship • James Cook University Singapore Christian Fellowship • Military Christian Fellowship • Graduates' Christian Fellowship • Nanyang University Graduates' Christian Fellowship

FES President • The Right Rev. Dr John Chew
Vice-Presidents • Dr Ernest Chew • Dr Lawrence Chia
• Rev. Dr Choong Chee Pang • Rev. Timothy See
• Bishop Dr Robert Solomon