



ISSUE #2

iGO 2010

going deeper into the Father's heart

What does iGO mean?

The “i” stands for Island ECC church as well as “i” the individual. Without the individual, there would be no story. GO stands for Global Outreach, and also “to go,” in accordance with the Lord’s Great Commission: “Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” (Matthew 28:19).

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editor’s note

Welcome to the second issue of the iGO booklet. This book is about individuals mostly from Island ECC, coming together to form teams and embarking on short-term Global Outreach missions. It is about the community of support behind these individuals and teams, providing prayers and resources. It is about the church body blessing and supporting our brothers and sisters in other nations, for Jesus’ prayer was: *May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.* JOHN 17:23 Most of all, it is about God’s love for each and every single one of us.

Our first issue published last year was a survey of all the different trips that Island ECC sent out in 2009. For this issue, which we have titled “iGO 2010: going deeper into the Father’s heart”, we felt that it was time to do just that — to go deeper into people’s experiences, into God’s work in our lives — as many first-timers from last year went on their second, even third mission trips; as some stepped up to be leaders; as experienced leaders continued to grow in their journey. We have grouped the stories by themes, and this collection is only a small percentage of the countless stories that God is continuously weaving, especially as team members return to their lives in Hong Kong.

The iGo Team is incredibly blessed to publish these testimonies. We are grateful to all those who have contributed their stories here. We hope that you will be encouraged by these accounts. They show that when we step out in faith, we will be personally transformed, and that transformation will impact those around us. It never ceases to amaze me how wondrous and powerful testimonies are — I am reminded that God is not only the author of the grandest narrative in history, but He weaves our own lives into a beautiful story and gives it meaning. *And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.* ROMANS 8:28 May you read the following with an open heart to receive the role God wants to give you in your own life story.

stories of our people

In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind.

The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. John 1:4-5

identity

Hey God, there you are!



Andrew

Andrew had been attending Island ECC for five months before going on the Uganda mission trip. “When I arrived in Uganda, I was a non-believer searching for some answers. When I left, I had accepted Christ as my Savior.” Here is Andrew’s story...

I had been working in Hong Kong for 2.5 years, and things were humming along — I had a great job at a great firm, health was good, had a great time with my friends around the world, and family was doing well. A long-term relationship had just ended and this was very difficult, but as tough as things got, I knew it wasn’t the end of the world. All in all, no great calamities in my life — but something was lacking.

A friend of mine had invited me to the IECC dragon boat land training at the Happy Valley fields, and wanting to get some exercise and meet some new people, I decided to go. It was a refreshing

experience — I had some great friends from work, school and from other walks of life, but these “good, church-goin’ folk” as my friend put it with good-natured humor really put me at ease.

After a few weeks of seeing me enjoy myself, my friend mentioned that I should check out the Sunday service at IECC sometime. He didn’t say it was going to dramatically change my life; he didn’t say that I needed to have God and Jesus as my Savior; he just told me that it was something he thought I might like. Without thinking too much about it and because I trusted my friend, I agreed and said I would go sometime. It felt like the right thing to do.

I wanted to go immediately, but I always ran into time conflicts. Finally, a few weeks later, I was able to attend. I remember being completely blown away by Pastor Brett’s sermon. I don’t even recall all the details now, but I remember relating to many of the issues discussed by Pastor Brett, about surrendering to God, understanding my place in the world, and serving God. With each story he told, I gradually felt this growing peace in my heart. The following weeks, every time I attended service, I attained the same peace of mind. However, there was still a nagging voice that said, “That’s great, Andrew — you’ve reached a point in your life where you’re successful, you’ve achieved a lot of what you set out to achieve, you’ve had a great deal of fun in life and seen a great deal of the world, but now you’re just having a mini-existential crisis and wondering what the meaning of life is.” Was I just having a post-30s mini-crisis?

This was what was going through my head when my friend later told me about the Uganda mission trip he was going on. The moment I heard about it, I knew I had to go. It wasn’t about going to Africa to see new lands — I had been to Uganda 7 years earlier on a 6-week backpacking trip — it just felt like what I needed to do to get some answers. It was late in the process though — the “Love Uganda” team had already been preparing for months and we were just a few weeks away from departure. However, my friends checked with the team leaders, and 2 days later, they approved me to join and I was in.

The obstacles had not all been overcome yet. Two days before we were supposed to leave, a deal I had been working on had to be finalized and I wasn’t sure if I could still go. But my work team assured me and took care of everything and, as though someone was looking out for me, I was thankfully still able to go as planned.

From Day 1 on the mission trip, I was immersed in a new world. Worship, devotionals, praying out loud, even people that spoke of God and Jesus Christ as though He were a school friend — all were new things to me. But I opened my heart and soul and embraced them all.

Perhaps sensing my enthusiasm, the worship team asked me to join them on many nights to lead worship, even though I didn’t know any of the songs. They told me, “It’s ok, Andrew, you’ll pick it up really fast,” and I did. During devotionals, my heart was moved by the sharing and the opening of hearts of my fellow brothers,

who just a week earlier had been total strangers. When asked to pray with the group, I didn't really know what to do, but I just imitated everyone else — I opened my heart, thanked and praised the Lord, and then asked Him to protect us all. "Amen!" As you can imagine, as someone who grew up in a non-religious, secular, intellectually progressive and liberal environment, the entire experience was all so very new and foreign, yet surprisingly comfortable and paradoxically familiar at the same time.

On the 4th or 5th day, the same friend who invited me pulled me aside and said, "Andrew, a lot has been going on. Do you know what you are doing?"

"Honest answer. Kind of?" I replied, "...but yes, everything is happening really fast."

He looked at me and said, "You seem to be adjusting pretty well, but have you had time to take it all in?"

That got me thinking — it was time for me to take a deep breath, reflect a bit on all that had happened, and then take stock of where I was in my life. Just like it was planned, I bumped into one of the team leaders as I left my friend's room. We promised we would speak the next day.

The next day we were in Gulu, building schools for the children of the Watoto ministry. As promised, the team leader grabbed me after lunch to go for a walk. I remember the day very clearly. It was a gorgeous day, with the bluest of skies, and a few wisps of white clouds to keep us honest. The children were playing in the distance, just beyond the earthy-toned walls of

bricks, that would soon become their paths to education and a new life of salvation in a God-fearing world. I could feel God all around me — His Presence, His Creation, His World. I came to realize that it was simple — He'd been with me all my life, and now showing Himself. I had a great talk with the team leader, where he basically said, "Well, Andrew, if you believe all the things you just said, then all you need to do is repeat after me — accept Jesus Christ as your personal Savior and that He died for your sins." Putting aside any intellectual doubts in my mind, I took a leap of faith, and just like that, I became a Christian.

In the months since I became Christian and came back from Uganda, I've had my times where I walked closer and other times where I could feel myself straying a bit in my walk with God. I'm still getting the basics — just making sure I find the time to attend Sunday service, reading through and absorbing passages of the Bible, and remembering to try to pray more often — but what has not wavered is my faith in Him and the importance of His role in my life. Although I know I still have a long way to go, I feel like it's just the beginning and I'm super excited to step up and receive everything God has in store for me.



identity

Kenn

I came to Christ through the Alpha course in Spring 2010. I was going through a very tough time in life, trapped in a university course I had no interest in and was afflicted with crippling anxiety attacks, to the point where I dreaded any kind of interaction with the world. During the Alpha healing session, someone in my group offered to pray for me. I was taken aback and felt quite nervous but I agreed. She started and before I knew it several people were surrounding me and asked God to open up my heart. Halfway through, I felt a sense of warmth engulf me and I accepted Jesus as my Lord and Saviour. From then on I was able to rejoin society. When a hint of panic starts to settle in, I immediately start praying for it to go away. I signed up for the Local Outreach camp in Tuen Mun after a friend at church asked me if I would be interested. At the time, I had only recently come to Christ and was unsure of what I could bring to the camp. In addition to that, I was also hesitant because it had been a while since I had interacted with children. I had never thought of myself as being good with kids. But I've always been quite empathetic in nature, so I had a passion to help other people, appreciating that not everyone is as blessed as I am. I thought it might be a good opportunity to serve God.

One of the first things that struck me was how deprived these kids were. To illustrate, at the beginning of the camp, we had a pile of children's designer clothes donated by parents of our church. I asked the kids in my group if they needed some to last the four days they will be at camp and most of them said that they did not in fact have enough. During the camp itself, I started to get to know the kids better and learned more about their family backgrounds. It was shocking for me to hear about how broken their families were and how little they had to live on. However, seeing their smiles and hearing their laughter during those days were a testimony to how God's love transcends all worldly needs and can redeem lives even in light of the failings and neglect our society has shown them. One of the problems I had was establishing rapport with them simply because our lives were so different. It made me appreciate what God has given me in abundance and I feel as if by doing so, He has conferred upon me more responsibility to spread His word.

Being fairly new to Christianity, I admit that there were times when doubt crept in. It would be much easier if one could see God, but then it would contradict

Now it is God who makes both us and you stand firm in Christ. He anointed us, set his seal of ownership on us, and put his Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come. 2 Corinthians 1: 21-22

His omnipresence. At the camp, I saw His work and His love. I could feel Him. It brought me much closer to Him. It made me question how I would fare if I were in their shoes and I did not have God in my life. It still amazes me how God can transform pain and suffering into love and happiness. I am pained by the neglect these children face and I feel like there should be more love shown to them, especially by those who are Christ followers. I find that most people, through occupational myopia, tend to make their own lives a priority, letting worldly obsessions preoccupy them and distort their judgment. When I find myself falling into this category, I feel a need to remind myself to be more Christ-like; to be selfless and not to answer to anyone but God. After all, our presence here, however rich and fruitful, is at most transitory. God has granted me the peace I need to do everything. Whenever I am faced with making tough decisions, I feel prompted to pray beforehand and look to the Bible for guidance. I have learned that as long as the only person I answer to is God and am able to keep Him at the center of my life and answer His calling, I will be fulfilling my purpose in life. Restoring God to His rightful place in my heart is the best defense against panic and anxiety attacks.



family

Christina

Christina's background: Christina and her family escaped from Cambodia just days before the Khmer Rouge took over Phnom Penh. Growing up, she never heard much about her parent's suffering, as they wanted to protect her and therefore avoided talking about their painful past — of losing their home, wealth, family and friends, in order to start a new life in a foreign country.

This was Christina's first mission trip to Cambodia and it was precious that she could go with her husband, Norman. "[Norman is] someone sharing my life — to be on the mission trip together and letting him understand a part of me were very special. I wanted to learn more about my native country and Norman did as well. My mom was happy that I was going back to learn more about my roots, but she still refused to talk about her life there, she still wants to just forget the pain."

Although prior to the mission trip Christina had been back in Cambodia as a tourist, she had always avoided certain places, like the S-21 Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum, where 17,000 Cambodians were tortured. However, that was the first stop for the team upon arrival into Cambodia. "As I looked at the pictures taken of people before they were executed... the thin and terrified faces... I realized that it could have been me." She cried and started to question God: "What is your plan for them? Where is your justice?" God slowly revealed His

answers to her questions through encounters with partners serving in Cambodia.

The team met Bee Ngoh, a Singaporean lady in one of our local partner organizations, Love Cambodia, who gave up her comfortable life in Singapore to live in the Cambodian village. She learned the language and assimilated into Cambodian culture. Christina said, "I look at this woman and I see God. Her life is a testimony in itself."

The trip was also special to Christina and Norman for another reason: Christina's older brother works and lives in Cambodia, so the trip was an opportunity for them to visit her brother as well. He joined the team for devotion one night, and he even invited the whole team to a delicious buffet dinner on another occasion. Christina hoped that her brother could eventually see how God works even in a place with a dark history like Cambodia.

Through meeting all the different ministries in Cambodia and seeing all the overwhelming needs, Christina came to really understand that God is Jehovah Jireh — the Lord who provides, always and abundantly, whether it be people, opportunities, resources, grace, love, mercy.

In November 2010, Norman was one of the leaders of the Cambodia team. It is Christina and Norman's desire to serve together in Cambodia again, year after year, to see the vines bear fruit.



**"Return home and tell how much God has done for you."
So the man went away and told all over town how much
Jesus had done for him. Luke 8:39**

family

Flo

For Flo, the Sichuan trip was about family. Firstly, families who lost their loved ones in the earthquake, or in the aftermath — Flo met a woman whose husband died falling from their house he was trying to rebuild. It was also about Flo's own family, as her older brother Michael also came on the trip, his first mission trip ever.

Michael's decision to go was not finalized until 4 days before they were scheduled to leave for the trip. When he asked Flo why he should go, she replied that she wanted him to come because she was going and wanted to share the trip with him, and that she trusted that he would come back learning something. "We realized that the last time we went on a trip together was more than 12 years ago."

On the last night of devotional, Michael surprisingly said that he would like to share. Michael started by saying that he was glad to be there, that he didn't expect to be there. He started relating his family history — something that he hadn't spoken about in more than 10 years. He spoke about a bus accident that took place in China nine years ago that killed their mother and left their father crippled. For the first time, with the rest of the team present, Michael and Flo shared about this tragedy in their family history, what they had each been going through individually. They had never really done this before with each other.

From the sharing that night, Michael realized that he had mistakenly thought all these years that Flo came to Christ only after the accident. Flo was able to finally clarify that she had become Christian at 14 but had walked away from God after the death of their mother. "I didn't get to say goodbye," Flo shared. "She wasn't Christian, she died in a horrible way. My dad was crippled. I walked away for 2 years. I asked a million 'why's'. 'Why did He allow that to happen? Why didn't both parents die? Why leave one crippled?' He didn't answer me. I have to live with that every day. Walking away from God was the stupidest decision I had ever made but He showed me that He was still with me during those 2 years I left. He was the one who brought me back like the parable of the prodigal son. He orchestrated every single thing around me to bring me back. Because I certainly had no reason to go back by myself: every time I walked into church I regretted going. They were saying: 'God is good, praise God, hallelujah!' and I was thinking: 'God isn't good, no praise God, no hallelujah.'"

But God's transformative power was evident in Flo's life, and she attests to God's unfailing love that did not let her go.

Flo ended her sharing by telling Michael that her only prayer for him on the trip was that it would be part of God showing Michael who He really is, a glimpse of His character. "We cannot blame God for every single person who dies. Some will die by fire, some by natural death, by cancer, by accident. If we blame Him for everything the question is not: is there a God, but, who are you, God?"

She concludes her Sichuan experience with what she continues to witness about God's character: "Like some of the Sichuan people, I might have also lost the person I love most in this earth, but He has shown me that no one loves me as much as my heavenly Father does. He not only loves, He is love."



Michael: Everything in my eyes I concluded in two words: Cause and Consequence. I came to this trip and ultimately learnt and felt it happening under my eyes. End of the trip, I learnt what was being learnt by my daughter in kindergarten in phonics: everything is "C-are". Brotherhood care, sisterhood care, heavenly care. Amen.



My sacrifice, O God, is a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart you, God, will not despise. Psalm 51:17

healing



Priscilla

Working at the church, I have heard many stories of extreme poverty, injustice, international trafficking, and I was certain that God was going to break my heart during my trip to Rwanda. In fact, I know I must have missed something or something would be terribly wrong if my heart wasn't broken at least once. "Break my heart for what breaks yours" was my prayer before I left. On the fifth day in Rwanda, a woman brought her six-year-old daughter, Love, to our leader Praise. Praise grabbed me on my way out to ministry time and said, "We need to pray for this little one." I wasn't sure what was going on, but I started praying while Praise held this precious little girl in her arms. Our partner, Sylvan, went on to translate and explained that Love had been raped by a youth in the neighborhood 3 weeks before our meeting. She was tested negative for HIV but positive for an STD. Her mother was asking for financial support to pay for the STD shot Love needed to have once a day. Without hesitation, I pulled money from my money bag and paid for her medical cost. I stood around Praise and Love for the whole afternoon not knowing how to process the harsh reality or even how to interact with Love. For one of the only few times in my life, I felt

completely and utterly powerless towards the evil I was facing. I didn't even know how to pray. I remember just asking God, "What's your purpose in breaking my heart this way?" We went back to the village the next day, and I was still a walking zombie not knowing how to process it all. However, I was really hoping to see Love again. After we started playing a movie for outreach, I felt a little tug on my arm. Love had found ME in the midst of the village crowd, and she raised both her arms wanting me to hold her. And for the rest of the night, she was on my lap. At the end of the movie, Sylvan did an altar call asking anyone who wanted to commit their lives to follow Jesus to come forward. I was overwhelmed by the people raising their hands and coming forward. But I was most blown away by the little six-year-old sitting on my lap. Love had her right arm straight up in the air and her left arm covering her eyes. She started praying in Kinyarwanda after Sylvan. At the same time, I started crying like a baby. I felt that the Lord was saying to me, "I AM the redeemer. I AM the healer. I AM hers, and I AM yours. There is nothing you need to do for this little one. I love her more than you do and I will take care of her. Healing is in my hands... not yours! Her name is the proof. No separation from Love." Holding this little one, I was awestruck by God fulfilling our team theme: Ntangutandukana N'urukundo. It means "No separation from love" in Kinyarwanda. Not only was I able to witness God's healing and redemption in Love's life, He healed and redeemed my soul through hers.

healing

Gigi

After watching “Uganda Rising” at one of our team meetings, I began doubting how God could really heal the people of Uganda who have undergone so much pain in their lives. I used to play with kids as they are so adorable and are great gifts from God. I used to volunteer as a babysitter at church when I was in college. Five years ago, I had an ectopic pregnancy surgery at the Sanatorium. I could not complain about it; I erased the experience from my mind. Two of my best friends and my sister-in-law got pregnant within three months. I tried to ignore the pain that surfaced every year when I attended their birthday parties. Last year, my husband’s friend gave birth at the Sanatorium. They invited us to visit them. While I was walking into the baby room, my body began shaking as memories of my surgery flashed back. I wanted to cry but there were no tears. I realized that my heart was in tremendous pain. When I signed up for Uganda, my leaders put me into teacher training and medical outreach. I had no teaching experience, but they asked me to sort out coloring materials for different bible stories. I loved it as I grew up in the church, and coloring was my favorite activity. The first night after devotion, I realized I was signed up for both ministries but as they were in different locations, I asked my leaders which one they wanted me to be at. When they asked me which one I preferred, my heart just jumped right into medical outreach. Both God and I knew that it was only because I was just trying to avoid coming into close contact with kids. The next day, we had a chance to worship with the kids. One of the mothers, whom I had met the previous day, brought her two children to play with me. I was hesitant to hold their hands but finally gave in seeing how excited the rest of the team was, as they interacted and played with the children. After worship, my accountability partner asked to pray for me. My tears immediately started pouring out non-stop as she asked God to heal my wound, to take off my bandage and to touch my heart. I felt better afterwards but it turned out I was to play and interact with the kids while teacher training was going on. God put me right back into my duty to serve! After that we

He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds.

Psalms 147:3

took a bus journey to Gulu to build another classroom, which also included a safari outing — and I have a phobia of animals. On our way, I opened up and shared with my leader and was prayed over. At a beautiful spot that looked right across the lake, she asked God to take my hurt and pain, to fill my wounds, and for healing. While praying, the word “Noah” flashed into my mind. I was staying in a room called “Noah” in the Watoto guest house in Kampala. Noah was very obedient and followed all of God’s instructions to build the Ark, preparing for the flood. He brought a pair of every kind of animal into the Ark with him. I began to cry as I thanked Him for bringing me on a safari to

heal me. This was the best place for my rehabilitation! I finally realized the trip for me was not about serving, but about healing! I also had prayed that if this was the place for me to be freed, whether I could have some quiet time on the bus to rest and get ready to serve Him again in Gulu. God is amazing — after lunch, everyone fell asleep on the bus! And for the first time in my life, I began to appreciate the animals that He had created! The next day, I was further reassured of His healing in my life as the feelings of pain did not return when I was playing with the children at Baby Watoto and the Watoto Village. He had restored my heart to love children again! “Time will heal” is an old

saying when we are trying to deal with loss and grief. But only God can perform miracles and heal even the deepest hurt and pain one can harbor for the longest period of time. I have been healed and set free! God is faithful and never forsakes His children! I praise Him for being an almighty, awesome, compassionate, gentle, and loving God!



calling

Siew Ling, a co-leader for this summer's Mongolia mission trip, has decided to spend three months of her sabbatical break in Mongolia.

Siew Ling

This is part of her story written five months into her sabbatical break:

Sabbath is “the most wonderful opportunity for experiencing God and the timeliness of the Kingdom, for letting ourselves be reclaimed, revitalized and renewed ... Primarily the Sabbath reclaims us because it enfolds us in the grace of not doing work, of not needing to accomplish anything, of not having to be in control, of living of God's values instead of society's. The Sabbath revitalizes us because it gives us an entire day to be open and waiting for God's new life to fill us and be developed in us. It renews us especially by giving us all kinds of rest and then the deep Joy of fine feasting.”

The above quote from “The Sense of the Call – Marva J. Dawn” was given to me during the same week that I decided to take this sabbatical break. Sabbath is a great gift from God, a blessing that I have done nothing to deserve.

God has placed several desires in my heart for years, one of which was to take a break from work. There was also a constant nudging for me to decide whether to choose Him or the various idols in my life. A floodgate of confirmation signs was provided after making the decision to take a sabbath. In hindsight, there was no other perfect timing to do so.

In the past few months of searching for God's purpose for my life through the Oxford apologetics course and the summer mission trip, I have come to realize how little I know about our God. But what little knowledge I possess has already brought me down onto my knees to realize how awesome He is and how much He loves us. God has clearly spoken to me on several occasions that He has only one simple purpose for my life, which is to worship Him — to praise and seek Him! It is not the long hours of work nor the mission trips or social work or church duties, but to worship Him from the bottom of my heart!

Being a doer, I was ready for a list of items that He wanted me to accomplish. How ignorant I was. God in His very nature is able to do everything without me! His grace allows me to participate in His work.

God has graciously opened many unexpected doors for me, one of which is to head off to Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia for three months. At this moment, I am not sure which mission field best fits me — the investment banking environment in a city or the humanitarian development work in a developing country or being a stay-at-home wife/mother. Mongolia is a completely foreign country, in terms of environment and the work I will be doing. However, as God has called me to be there, I shall obey Him and continue to bless His name.

In the next few months, I will be staying in a ger district and assisting a non-profit, non-governmental organization which serves the local community. My main focus is to visit families and help with activities



outside the organization, such as leading studies, organizing girls' seeker/fellowship group, visiting an outreach for sex workers, and exploring various business/employment opportunities for the single mothers. None of these activities falls under my “comfort zone,” especially since the family who runs the organization are away on furlough during the period I will be there (amazingly, they had been praying for more workers in Mongolia!). My only pillar is God. It is a great privilege to be given a front row seat to watch Him work.

After one month in Mongolia:

This experience is definitely different from the one-month visit this summer. Through spending more than 90% of my time with the locals, I have gained a better understanding of their culture. This did come with some struggles for me, as all relation-building requires communication, patience and love.



Family Visits

There is so much brokenness in the families, and dropping a bag of food supply is not going to resolve the complexity of issues that surrounds each family. It is not unusual to find a family of five children with each child by a different father. Ulaanbaatar has transformed in the past few years with the development of the mining industry, but unfortunately there is still much brokenness which prosperity cannot heal.

Family visits are physically and emotionally tiring. I remember the day that I cried with one of the ladies as her husband had gone back to alcoholism and how it broke her heart! To be honest, I have recently thought about giving up on family visits. I was struggling with my own selfish thoughts. I am ashamed about this, as I have learnt that I have started to rely on my own wisdom instead of God's.

Living in the ger district has made me understand further the challenges that the single mums face each

day. I am blessed to be surrounded by Mongolian men who have taken very good care of me, including making fire several times a day and fetching water from the water station. I salute those mums who have to do all this alone, alongside making a living and raising their children.

Orphanage

There have been three outings to the playground with the children at the LET centre (a government-run orphanage) so far. It is so beautiful to see the children having a fun day and just being a child again! The smiles on their faces are priceless! Without fail, some of the kids would fall asleep in the van on the way back to the orphanage, because they played so hard that they are simply exhausted!

Alcoholism

Alcoholism is a major issue here. It is good to hear that the government has banned the sale of alcohol on the first day of each month and on a particular day of each month in each district. However, more still needs to be done. It is a common sight to see drunken men

walking in the ger district or sleeping at the side of the road. It is heart breaking to see them and to think of the pain that they and their families face.

Blessings

It has been a blessing for me to be in Mongolia. I have gotten to know several new people during this month, and I am humbled by what these people are doing for the locals. It is quite amazing how I have requested for a three-month visa, and by God's grace, I have obtained a one-year visa. Getting a visa is a significant challenge for most people, and it was just given to me! At this moment, I have decided to return to Hong Kong in December before deciding on my next steps. My prayer is to serve with humility, seek God's wisdom and submit that all things work in His timing and for His glory.

fellowship

**Dear brothers, let us not love with words
but in action and in truth.**

1 John 3:18



The Crew

For most mission trips, miracles usually happen before or during the trip, but for the 24 of us who went to Sichuan this year, the “biggest” miracle was the birth of a care group after the trip.

We formed a care group called the “CREW” (we are the crew that serves God) and two-thirds of the team have now become a regular attendee of the care group. It was never part of our plan as leaders to form a group but after the trip ended in April, we kept meeting regularly and praying together. Then slowly but surely, the desire to form an official group grew and eventually the group name and identity followed.

We knew it was more than friendship that brought us together. After all, we are very different individuals who share almost nothing in common except a hunger to grow deeper in our relationship with God. The group would not last if it wasn't His will for us to stay together.



One of our members shared, “Fellowship is not a membership or a status. It is not about being together but it's about doing something together in the spirit of God. We have a relationship being in Christ. We also have a relationship of being a part of the Christ body. But fellowship is neither. It is not being in or being part, but it is doing with Christ. It is our partnership with Christ in fulfilling the will of God.”

In fact, the group was brought together in the first place because God was calling us to do something together in His spirit in Sichuan. God's will for our group was to put together a 2-hour variety show for the Sichuan people. This all started because our partner in Sichuan told us the people in the village felt forgotten. Even though most of the rebuilding has been finished and the villagers' lives seemed to be back to normal, deep down there was still much emotional healing that needed to



take place. The villagers needed love, to be reminded that they are loved.

The theme verse for this year's trip was *Dear brothers, let us not love with words but in action and in truth.* 1 JOHN 3:18. So the leaders took a leap of faith and said yes to our partner to put on the show. And God is faithful. As we prayed, we saw the “puzzle” slowly being pieced together. First it was finding musicians. We didn't know we needed musicians until the week before our first meeting and we were so blown away when we found out almost half of



the team could play some kind of musical instrument. In the end, we had a full band playing keyboard, drums, guitar and flute! God even gave us a song composer and lyric writer who wrote a song for the team called “Amigo.” God also gave us a brilliant professional performer who had extensive experience in drama, singing and stage management to help us with the show rundown and stage design. There were many more talents God gave us — language skills, dancing skills, acting, the list goes on.

It was more than just having the right people on the team. The success of the show also depended on many other factors that we had absolutely no control over, like the weather and electricity. The venue was outdoors so if it rained, the show would have to be cancelled. The weather on the day was beautiful, and uncommonly warm, even! There also wasn’t enough power to run the sound and lighting equipment so we needed to rent a power generator from across town and those people almost didn’t show up because it was a long way to travel.

The government officials could also call off the show at any time and for any reason and we had to show the government official our rundown the night before to make sure the content was appropriate. Most importantly, the audience — we had no idea if anyone would even show up. The only promotion we got was an A4 size poster taped on the wall on the main street in town. But the crowd was packed, with almost 1000 people watching the show.

It was these obstacles and challenges that brought us closer to each other and to God. Everyday we were on our knees praying for each other and for God’s provision and by nightfall, we were praising God for answering our prayers. It was through prayers we learned how to depend on God and on each other. It was through carrying each other’s burdens we learned how to let down our guards and allow other brothers and sisters to carry our burdens with us.

On the last day of the trip we had our final devotion in a small hotel room and we opened our hearts and shared with each other the

deepest hurt and toughest struggles in our lives. For some it was to forgive someone who might have hurt them deeply; for some it was to release the pain of losing a loved one; for some it was the freedom to admit weaknesses without feeling condemned; for some it was the reminder that God loves us just the way we are, knowing His amazing love and that grace will never cease.

I recently read this in a book which beautifully sums up the purpose of fellowship: “The purpose of spiritual friendship and spiritual community is to listen to one another’s desire for God, to nurture that desire in each other and to support one another in seeking a way of life that is consistent with that desire. Spiritual friendship is not for advice giving, problem solving and fixing. It is not even about Bible study. Rather it is to assist one another in paying attention to the movements of God in our lives through the spiritual disciplines and to support another in responding faithfully to God’s presence.”

transformation

Ricki came to Christ on the Sichuan mission trip Easter 2009.

Ricki

I used to rely on positive thinking and natural optimism whenever I faced difficulties or challenges. But I was not happy. Something was missing in my life. I wanted meaning for my life. I wanted to know my purpose. It was August 2008, two months after my biggest promotion ever to the position of retail manager for a retail branch. I was getting a lot of stress from my new job and I started to have sleeping problems. My health was deteriorating so I decided to quit. After I quit my job in December, I spent my time trying to figure out what I wanted to do next. I did a lot of traveling and I thought I would have an answer in a few months. Then I decided to go to Sichuan for a short mission trip. I thought I was going there to “help” people. Little did I know that I would end up being the one getting “helped”. It was on the second night during the trip that I received Jesus Christ and surrendered control of my life to God. I came to realize God is the missing piece in my life. I tried to use money, human love and materials to fill that emptiness in my

heart but none of it worked. Still jobless, I started volunteering at church with Global Outreach. Volunteering became a full-time position as head of the Volunteers Ministry at Island ECC but God put a passion in my heart for missions. I waited on God for how this passion was going to be fanned. A few months ago, an opportunity arose and I moved to work in Global Outreach. In 2010, I went on three mission trips, co-leading one of them, and helped organize many others. I look back on my life and marvel at how God had planned everything, from my friends bringing me to Island ECC, to my leaving my retail job, to where I am now. He has shown me what it means to surrender my heart, my life, my everything to Him. I am so excited to see what will happen next.



transformation

This is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight. Philippians 1:9-10

Kristine

I accepted Jesus Christ as my personal Lord and Saviour at the age of 7. At that tender age I was “on fire” for Christ and I wanted to become a missionary and win souls for Him, inspired by the stories of missionaries that gave up their lives for their love of Christ. I grew up in Mindanao, one of the major islands of the Philippines which is considered by many as predominantly Muslim and listed as one of the most dangerous places for tourists or foreigners to visit. Born and raised in Mindanao, I didn’t actually feel that, but was often confronted with those issues of kidnapping, bombings, killings, and church burnings by the media through television and newspapers, and I would always put the blame on those troublesome Muslims. Little did I know I was being brought up in a culture that actually resents the Muslims without understanding or even caring to understand who they really are. An important part of this background is that I am part of the tribe called Ilonggos, a major tribe that fought aggressively with the Muslims, and caused the late dictator to declare martial law in the Philippines because of the war that was going on between Muslims and Christians in Mindanao. Having explained my position on my perspective on Muslims I will now begin the story.



I came to Hong Kong in 2007 to work as a landscape architect. I have been living in Hong Kong for more than a year and had been church hopping before I finally found Island ECC. The church gave me a semblance of the community I had back home and I regularly went to service but my heart wasn’t into it. I then tried to immerse myself to doing volunteer ministry and eventually met Erny, who introduced me to a care group. In that care group, I was amazed that these people actually knew the place I came from and had even actually been there. Blessed by wonderful church friends, I finally began looking into mission trips and opted to go to Mongolia. God in His infinite wisdom didn’t permit the Mongolia mission trip to come into fruition because of health reasons and I eventually ended up looking for other mission trips to go on. I read on the church bulletin that they were looking for volunteers to teach English in Indonesia. At first, I wasn’t really keen on going to Indonesia because I felt that it would just be the same as going to my birthplace and I was reluctant but signed up anyway and got accepted. Prior to the trip I got into all sorts of trouble like my finances didn’t tally, and my dad went berserk when he found out I was going to a Muslim country reiterating that I am a woman and he feared for my safety. There was also the spiritual struggle that I had with the enemy feeding lies into my mind with the fear of being on the trip with people I barely knew in a strange and foreign land.

All these anxieties and troubles prior to my trip gave me a clear picture that the enemy was really against me going to Indonesia but our God is a powerful God, and with prayers and advice from friends, all those troubles disappeared one by one. The trip to Indonesia was an amazing journey of God’s greatness as He showed me His mighty love. I went to Indonesia thinking that I was helping out the Muslims but I came out a changed person. I came to Indonesia with all the preconceived notions of who and what Muslims and Islam were but was taken aback by God’s wisdom. God simply showed me that these people

were no different from me; these people were just like me, they needed love and Jesus in their lives too. This thought came to me when I was having painting lessons with Muslim women and we were heartily sharing thoughts on how to do things and laughing at our mistakes or teaching each other what colors would look best. The power of God's love just embraced me and I cry every time I remember one of the Muslim women coming up to me, hugging me and thanking me for the time I'd spent with them. That simple act of love broke my heart and showed me that they were like me. That alone erased all the hatred that was planted in my heart from when I was young. I now see them through the eyes of Jesus — they were my neighbors but I didn't love them; God showed me that before I could become a missionary and before I could give my life to Him I have to understand how to love my neighbors as I love Him. The lesson of loving my neighbors and loving my enemies had been taught to me but never had I understood what it truly meant until I came to Indonesia and saw God's powerful love in that simple embrace. The experience that I had in Indonesia gave me a new insight into God's love and it is changing my life up to now. The mission trip actually woke me up from my slumber on my Christian faith and made me realize my worth and goals that I clearly understood at the tender age of 7 but eventually forgot as I was swallowed up by the world. I now see myself from a different light and am asking God to direct my life according to His will. I value myself and learn more about loving myself as God loves me, knowing what is really important and seeing the world with eyes that are not of this world. I am praying that God will show me His plans, for I may have plans to serve Him but God's plan and timing are always perfect.





**In him we have redemption through his blood,
the forgiveness of sins, in accordance
with the riches of God's grace. Ephesians 1:7**

next generation

Melanie

I really wanted to go to Rwanda this year because I went last year with the adult team.

It was a hard decision last year. The youth group was going to India and I had been to India the year before, and since I really loved it and had so much fun I wanted to go back. But for some reason I thought God was calling me to go to Rwanda, and I thought, "No, I wanted to go with my friends! This is an adult team, this is 2 weeks and it is in Africa!"

But in the end I decided to go although I was scared and nervous. During the trip God showed me so much.

The first time I was in Rwanda (in 2009) I would say I learnt a big lesson about faithfulness and having big faith and dreaming big. Back in 2009, it was around the time that I needed to decide what I wanted to study in college, and I still did not have much direction on where I wanted to go. On the second night, I talked to this guy named David, he was from Kenya and was in Rwanda doing Discipleship Training School (DTS). He asked me what my dream was and I replied, "I don't know, I enjoy this, I like this, I don't know." He was giving me this weird look, so I asked him what his dream was. He said he wanted to open his own music company in Rwanda. I said, "That's really cool, do you play an instrument?" He said, "No, but it is my dream, I don't know whether it is going to happen, but I know it could."

Every person I talked to in Rwanda had a dream, even when they have no evidence of resources that would support that ever happening. They have so much faith that it could happen if it is God's plan; they figured if it wasn't God's plan, He would have something better. This really challenged me the first year and made me think: What was the dream that I have suppressed my whole life? What is it that I really want to do? What fascinates me? That was when I decided I wanted to go into film and apply to film school. It was something that I was always interested in but have no experience in; I was always saying, "It is too risky," "it's like the arts." But from what I learnt in Rwanda, I trust that God can do anything in your life, I just need to have the courage to act on it.

This year I was torn again between going back to Rwanda or going with the youth. So I was very relieved when I found out that the youth was going to Rwanda. I did not know what to expect going back a second time, but in my mind I expected it more to be me observing how my youth group was growing.

Having the youth there made it quite different already, as teenagers react to things differently and ask very different things. I was happy to be with people my age. I definitely did not expect much though I did ask, "Why am I going back?" I had a very good experience the first time, what could possibly happen this time? But God taught me so much, so much more than I expected. Once again, I was humbled.

This year, the biggest lesson I learnt was redemption. I didn't realize this until a few weeks after I got back when I was reading the Bible. I realized I had not thought about the word "redemption" before. I remember asking my mom what redemption means, and she said, "I think it is God bringing good from bad." So I thought about it and realized that was completely what God had taught me in Rwanda.

When the team was in the genocide memorial, I really struggled to go back because I was asking myself, "Why am I back here? I already saw this once, I know about it. Why am I putting myself through this again and making myself sad? What has changed since when I came last year?"

When we were outside the memorial praying, I asked God those questions. When I closed my eyes, I saw a really dry land. It was like a desert, sort of like a savanna, cracked and dry, and there is no life. And when I opened my eyes again and closed them once more, I asked God the same question. All of a sudden this HUGE rain begins to fall all over the land. It was everywhere, not only filling the cracks, but it also overflowed and made all the dust into mud and there is life and things started to grow. I felt that God was saying: "This is my plan for this nation, and this is my heart for this nation. It is not only to fill the cracks, but to overflow the cracks and make growth happen. In spite of what happened, I am going to use this and to bring glory."

I started having hope about what was going to happen, that the number of lives that will be saved will overcome the number of lives that have been lost during the genocide.



Sylvan, one of the Youth with a Mission staff, works with the widows and HIV patients, and left a lasting impression on me. This year as I was applying to film school, I made a documentary on Rwanda and I interviewed people about their thoughts on suffering and God. Sylvan's answer was one of the most profound. When I asked him why God allowed suffering, he said, "We are like bow and arrow in the hands of God. God will stretch us at the back of a bow and it will feel like pain, but the further He stretches us, the further He can propel you and the further He can use you." It was back to the lesson where God was teaching me about redemption. How there will be pain so that God can use you. That you are always in God's hand, and He will never abandon you.

next generation

Aidan

We should invest in the next generation, for the youth will inherit the earth. When I went to Rwanda, I had an opportunity to meet Enrique, a 16-year-old Rwandan who started his own youth group of 30 people, now all on fire for God. It showed me that I could do the same thing, that I should not be discouraged just because I was young and inexperienced. One night during devotional, Jonathan and I felt compelled by the Holy Spirit to share with the team what we had learnt from our parents. This was mainly receiving the gifts of the Holy Spirit. We got past our initial fear of rejection, and since it was late, we asked only the people who were willing to receive to stay. Jon and I were glad to see that about 10 people stayed because they were interested in what we were talking about. In the end, we ended up prophetically praying over multiple team members, and I believe that every single person was blessed enormously. I suppose this is another one of those “passing onto the next generation” moments, where Jon and I, 15-16 year olds, decided to come out to the group and told them what we believed God wanted them to know.

And afterward, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions. JOEL 2:28



Garland, Aidan's mother

I was filled with hope and anticipation of what God would reveal to my son, Aidan, on his first mission trip. Would he miss home? Would he appreciate his lifestyle in Hong Kong all the more? Would his passions be awakened? In the end, my most consistent prayer was: Lord, please bring the team home safely. While the teenage years are exciting, it is also an embarkation into a world that is challenging, even threatening. How does one stand on the Rock when everywhere there is shifting sand? My hope for every child is that each would have a personal story to tell about encountering God: to see God's power at work, to hear His words, to feel His love, to know His peace, to receive His healing, to be reconciled with Him. Anyone who has been touched by God is never the same. The apostle John tells us the power our personal testimony has. Aidan obeyed God's promptings to pray for others, even though he was fearful. God's spirit of revelation revealed pride in his heart, which he asked God to take away. This testimony is not something that a parent can design, though I wish I could. I wish I could map out his spiritual life complete with all the spiritual disciplines that we know of. It would be my design but not God's. So, then, I entrust Aidan into God's hands, and he lives under His grace, day by day. And so do I.

next generation

Justice

At 13 years old, Justice was the youngest member to join this summer's Uganda Team, aka "Love UG." He did not know what he had signed himself up for when his mum, Grace, suggested to him to go. Grace's hope was that this trip would be a time of realignment for Justice, especially after encountering many changes and challenges in his first two years of middle school. This would be Justice's first time to Uganda and his first mission trip. On the trip, he was thrown into the deep end: building, praying, worshiping and serving with other brothers and sisters on the team and amongst the local Africans. "Howard, one of the leaders, kept on asking me to pray and I felt bad saying no to him so I prayed." Justice was given opportunities to step out of his comfort zone and came face to face with unfamiliar facts of life, amidst poverty and injustice. He was especially moved when he visited ladies at Living Hope, a home for victims of the civil war and physical abuse. When Justice returned to Hong Kong, he realized what a privileged life he leads. Grace asked him, "Do you think God only meets you on a mission trip or also in your daily life in Hong Kong?" Justice admitted that in Hong Kong, it was much harder to see God in his daily life of routine. "When I was in Uganda and we were with some kids and they started singing, I could see their relationship with God was close. Seeing that in those kids made me really want to have that kind of a relationship with God too. I saw that relationships are held together by God." When asked what he had learned on the trip, he answered, "I realized I needed to surrender. I learnt to speak better. I learnt to pray." He wants to keep growing in trust, in his relationship with God and in his prayer life. Justice represents a group of youth who grew up in Christian families but have not had to examine their faith outside the comforts of home. Through an experience like this Uganda mission trip, Justice could taste and see that his relationship with God is alive and real. For his mum, she knows that Justice now has a point of reference of "real faith," as he experienced it from people he met on the trip who are living examples of how to live an authentic life in Christ, even while facing challenges and questions. As our youth face the test of living their faith in their schools and amongst their peers, we pray that they will be bold and encouraged, just as Justice saw in those young children in Uganda who were joyful in the relationship they had with God. We pray that the blessings of growing up in a privileged environment can overflow into other people's lives, especially the next generation. Grace is grateful to the leaders of the Love Uganda 2010 team. Their willingness to take along a "little brother" turned out to be an immense blessing in Justice's life and relationship with the God of his family, Hong Kong, Uganda, and all nations.

Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity. 1 Timothy 4:12



breakthrough

Chloe

I always had a desire to serve God full-time, which I realized after my first mission trip to Sichuan in 2009. This passion grew after going to Cambodia in the following November but it wasn't confirmed until I returned to Sichuan this year.

I was inspired and challenged by the local missionaries, especially one of the key leaders there called Stone, and my conversations with the local people. From them I really felt that God has a purpose for everyone. I was convicted that if God called me at such a young age and gave me this desire, I should really respond properly and give Him the best while I'm young.

I always thought that I would do some long term full-time mission work only in the future one day, perhaps when I'm 40 years old. But in Sichuan I saw so many young people dedicating their lives to serve God. When you are young you can do so much more for God. We can give God our best at our prime age.

When I first returned to Hong Kong, I kept thinking about going back to Sichuan, at work, walking on the street, on the bus — I kept thinking about the Sichuan people, how they were, how I could go back. My heart would beat wildly whenever I thought about it. It's like the feeling of being in a

relationship and you can't stop thinking about that person. Whenever I had a bit of blank space, I kept thinking about Sichuan. There was a strong passion in me to serve God, and I felt a calling to go back to Sichuan in June.

While I was waiting to go back to Sichuan in the months between, God also brought my father through a big heart surgery and healed him. More importantly, he accepted Jesus when he was in hospital.

I went to Sichuan again by myself in June, but I was a bit lost, because my expectations and the real outcome of the trip were quite different. "What happened to my passion and vision?" I wondered. After coming back to Hong Kong, I went to the Gateway camp in the summer and I had a conversation with God. He confirmed He has a plan for me, and I just have to be patient and He will reveal the plan for me. When the time comes I will know. He confirmed through prayer and I received the verse Jeremiah 29:11 five or six times from different people.

When I was first deciding whether to go to Sichuan or not, the Lord said to me: "Go, and I will be with you." I went, and I was never the same again. Now I can tell God, "Yes I'm all in!" I have learned to surrender 100% of myself to the Lord.

"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." Jeremiah 29:11



breakthrough

Patrick

During the trip Patrick was asked by one of the group members: “Why are you on this trip?” Patrick found himself at a loss for an answer.

“In the past ten years I have been on several mission trips. I knew I was searching for something but I was not sure exactly what. Mission trips were like a soul-searching trip, to rough it out a bit and try to do good deeds so I could score some brownie points with God when the day comes. I never imagined I would find an ‘answer’ by the end of the trip.”

On one of the days during the trip, the team visited and worshipped with the Discipleship Training School (DTS) students. “That was where I felt the Holy Spirit for the first time. It was like drinking three cans of Red Bull. I felt a ‘force’ inside my body filled with energy and joy.”

After a day of well-digging where Patrick was one of the most determined members of the group, encouraging the team to push through and get the process done before sun down, the team came together for devotions in the evening. It was Patrick’s turn to share and he began by speaking about the well,

and it became clear to the team that he had been touched by God. “Well digging is like our walk of life and with God, sometimes the drill gets through each layer smoothly, other times the drill gets stuck digging through hard layers. You need people around you to help you through.” He spoke of how he realized the importance of having a community of fellowship and to reach out to each other for help.

Patrick’s faith was further strengthened when one team member had a word of wisdom for him: “Walk with God and leave everything behind.” The fellowship Patrick continues to enjoy now that he is back in Hong Kong is the result of a very real revival and not just some spiritual high. “Now I am very excited about my walk with the Lord!” he exclaimed.





stories of our short term outreach leaders

This is their story

by Will Pritchard

As Island ECC's Director of Global Outreach, I have had the privilege of being part of a team that has helped mobilize Island ECC, as a church, to do missions. In 2007, we had four Short Term Outreach (STO) teams, all led by women. Three years later, we have a total of sixteen STO teams led by both men and women of Island ECC. In this journey, the number one thing I have discovered about God is that He uses the lives of those that are willing and available to be used for His Kingdom. I have observed how every STO leader has grown in their faith in Jesus. Their trust in God has deepened because of the lives that have been transformed under their leadership. Their faith has matured from seeing the Holy Spirit at work in and through the lives of our Partners and our STO team members. A number of individuals have come to

faith because of their sacrifice. Our partners have been blessed because of their servant attitudes. Island ECC, as a church, has been blessed because of the newness of the faith of the team members. What does the life of a STO leader at Island ECC look like on a daily basis? The majority of our STO leaders are full-time professionals who work in Hong Kong. Some are investment bankers, lawyers, managers of their companies, teachers, IT, to name a few. They are all from diverse professional and cultural backgrounds, but they all have one thing in common and that is their willingness to be used by God. What does it look like to lead a missions trip at Island ECC? I have interviewed the majority of those that have led one of our STO teams to speak for themselves. This is their story, and I am proud to witness it and tell you about it.

“Leading an STO team has deepened my relationship with the Lord. I don’t think you can lead without truly surrendering your agenda and seeking God’s will for your STO team. Basically, you become a steward of God’s calling for your team. Therefore, it has driven me to totally trust in the Lord.”

“Leading an STO team is like putting a puzzle together. The only person who has the complete picture of this puzzle is God. Thus, leading an STO team has caused me to completely trust in God.”

“When I am leading a team, I have no time to enjoy the trip because I am taking care of my team members.”

“I am in awe at how God changes and reveals Himself to my team members. I am completely humbled to see the way God changes people’s lives through this STO team.”

“I am humbled to be used by God in this way. When I hear how God has changed my team members’ lives, I stand in awe, thanking God for using my life this way.”

“I love the relationships that have developed in my STO team. People I didn’t know before our first team meeting are now my brothers and sisters in Christ. We have a deep bond because of this STO experience.”

“Leading an STO team is tiring, rewarding but a very necessary part of my growth in my relationship with Christ and as a member of the Body of Christ.”

Some of you reading this article have already come to know Jesus as your personal Saviour and Lord, or have grown in your faith in Christ because of the lives of our STO leaders. Our partners in Hong Kong, throughout Asia, Africa and the Middle East are and will continue to be immensely blessed because of the sacrifices made by the team leaders and members. This is how they have glorified God’s name and will continue to do so in and beyond Hong Kong. As the hymn writer perfectly puts it: “This is my story, this is my song, praising my Saviour all the day long.”



stories of our iPartners

Brothers and sisters, in all our distress and persecution we were encouraged about you because of your faith.

1 Thessalonians 3:7



Charia

Cambodia, through the eyes of Christina Sou

SO ABRAHAM CALLED THAT PLACE THE LORD WILL PROVIDE (JEHOVAH JIREH). AND TO THIS DAY IT IS SAID, ON THE MOUNTAIN OF THE LORD IT WILL BE PROVIDED. GENESIS 22:14

Charia and her husband run Water of Life, a daycare center and school located in the middle of the rubbish dump, for families who make their living picking through rubbish. The couple started the ministry with almost no funding, but they kept praying about it and really thought that God wanted them to start the ministry. “How will we do it with no money?” they thought. One day, as they were sitting in a local cafe, a girl they didn’t know came up to them, and said, “I don’t know why, but God told me to come tell you Jehovah Jireh”. Jehovah Jireh means: The Lord will provide. Knowing this was the confirmation from God, Charia and her husband started Water of Life, built on faith in the Lord’s provision.

As the team sat in a circle and listened, Charia shared with tears streaming down her face about how they started the ministry, how good God has been and how the lives of the families who lived on the rubbish dump were being transformed, when kids who learned and played at the daycare center would go home and share the gospel with their parents. One team member said, “It seems they know that God will provide so they will keep doing their ministry until God tells them to stop, even though they could only celebrate Christmas on the rubbish dump.” We pray that the Lord will continue to provide for their needs and that their faith will continue to be strengthened.



Stone

Sichuan, through the eyes of Chloe Lo and Mitch Law

Stone is from Taiwan, he has been with CAVA since 2008 as a Regional Supervisor, leading 11 CAVA Service Centres.

I first met Stone at the Chengdu airport when he came to pick me up, as I was not travelling with the team. During the 5-hour car ride to Chaping where the rest of the Island ECC team was, I had a lot of one-on-one time with Stone. I can say that his humbleness and servant's heart truly inspired me. Leaving his wife and 2 teenage daughters in Taipei, he came to Sichuan to serve and love the people in need. But his service was not limited to Sichuan people; he also trained and ministered to the local volunteers, and served visitors like us (Stone actually travelled 5 hours from Chaping to pick me up, then another 5 hours to get me there).

Every one of us on the 2010 team received inspiration through Stone's words. At a point when some of us were feeling a little lost about the true purpose behind our actions, Stone encouraged us that every little thing we did during the 6 days would make a difference in people's understanding of the Christian faith, despite the fact that we were not officially allowed to evangelize.

When the team told Stone how much we appreciated him for serving the 25 of us, he replied, "That is not necessary, we are all part of God's grand plan, it's just that you came later than me, and are leaving earlier than me." Stone was due to return home this fall after serving the volunteers at these 11 centers for the past two years. We pray that God will be with Him as he departs from CAVA.



Jashi Gobu

Qinghai, through the eyes of Priscilla Hui

WHAT IS MORE, I CONSIDER EVERYTHING A LOSS BECAUSE OF THE SURPASSING WORTH OF KNOWING CHRIST JESUS MY LORD, FOR WHOSE SAKE I HAVE LOST ALL THINGS. I CONSIDER THEM GARBAGE, THAT I MAY GAIN CHRIST. PHILIPPIANS 3:8

Jashi grew up in the jungles of Malaysia, graduated from Harvard, gave up everything and traveled to Tibet wanting to be a lama. God caught his heart and led him to move to Qinghai for the Tibetan people. The first time I met Jashi Gobu was at one of the pre-trip meetings for the Qinghai mission trip this year. I also met his 3 children and his wife, Rebga Jil. He shared with the team about his organization Love QTRA and a home he runs for over 70 Tibetan orphan girls. The next thing I knew, I was traveling with him for over 12 hours, up 4800m into the mountains of Qinghai to visit these orphans. During these 12 hours, not only was I able to witness the glory of God's creation, I also experienced the glory of God through Jashi's testimony and faith. I still remember clearly Jashi was sharing about the persecution of Tibetans Christians. He said, "Do not pray that persecutions will go away. Pray that our faith will grow strong as we endure persecutions." Even though the people he is trying to reach are known to be backward and stubborn, and even though it takes over 12 hours one way to travel into these mountains, Jashi's persistence, faithfulness, and obedience to God's calling in his life really inspired me. His life encourages me to boldly take my stand for the Lord, *counting everything as loss* PHILIPPIANS 3:8 and to *run with endurance the race set before us by fixing our eyes on Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith.* HEBREWS 12:2.

Kelvin Shek (Stoneboy)

Local outreach, through the eyes of Carl and Katie Gouw and Ivy Tam

When I met Kelvin Shek (Stoneboy), my first impression was that he is a typical "well-behaved" kind of Hong Kong youth. As I began to know him much better through working together in ministry, and when we talked to each other, prayed with each other, we "grew together" in the love of Jesus. Even at the relatively young age of 26, Kelvin gave me a lot of insights and knowledge into the local culture of our city, the struggles of our youth as well as what's inside their hearts and minds, especially those living in less favorable circumstances. Having observed how Kelvin started and led a youth leadership program called "Follow Jesus," discipling more than 10 upper-secondary/university students, I greatly admire his faithfulness, boldness, obedience and spiritual discipline, which make me humble before God. I believe that how we met and the ways we worked together is just a small part of a grander plan by God to unite people together and transform our city of Hong Kong.



Serieux

Rwanda, through the eyes of Praise Ma

Serieux is a leader of ministries for youth and streetkids. He has grand dreams for the youth group, many of them orphans of the genocide. They now train in singing, dancing, acrobatics, drama, and know Scripture. These youth who may not have opportunities to attend university will be able to have skills to find jobs. Serieux said he wanted to raise leaders among the youth to help him, because he was doing this ministry alone. So I committed to pray with him and within a year four of the youth had discipleship training and helped lead that group. Today they are leaders of their own ministries. The second year, I prayed with Serieux by empty buildings he hoped could be turned into a training area for his youth, thinking, how is he ever going to have the money to rent this? Yes, there are setbacks and obstacles, but the vision of Serieux is being realized. Seven years later, from that youth group came one of the top music producers of Rwanda and also a group of guys that formed a film company after the film they helped make screened at Cannes in 2007. This film company is generating income and spreading messages of hope. Another young man danced on the national traditional dance team of Rwanda and recently had a chance to further his dance training in the US. I'm encouraged because God showed us He gave Serieux a vision and against all odds he kept at it.

Through working with local partners, they have taught me to have faith in what I cannot see. When street kids that I personally know went from living in cardboard boxes to walking the red carpet in Cannes, that increased my faith to know that, with God, impossibility becomes possible.



Brian

Uganda, through the eyes of Angela Chan

Watoto is an amazing organization that helps to rescue Ugandan orphans in the hopes of rebuilding the nation by raising its future leaders. Partnering with them again this year, and not unlike other years, our team had the wonderful privilege and blessing of meeting and working alongside some great hosts. Brian Mulondo was one of them. Brian's love and dedication to the Lord were evident in his constant joyful and spirited disposition. Having waited for us for almost six hours at the airport as the team collected and dealt with missing luggage, he greeted us warmly and enthusiastically despite our fatigue and jet-lag. He made sure logistics and arrangements allowed for easy and smooth transition for our team to serve at different ministries, and his sincere and heartfelt love for and embrace of his African brothers and orphans as well as to each team he hosted pointed to His love for the Lord.

A lasting memory of Brian was when we prayed for our Watoto hosts on our last evening at Gulu and Brian, being somewhat of a celebrity in his own right from his own lifestyle TV show, simply asked that we pray that the Lord would keep him humble and grounded, yet another testament of his character.

The Lord loves Uganda and its people, and He has great plans for this beautiful country. This is evident in His raising and building up of such individuals and His using them mightily for His kingdom purposes.

Indonesia
August

The Sundanese are the largest unreached people group in Indonesia. Its population of about 31 million people is predominantly Muslim. Our team will visit national workers in Java and learn the challenges they face. We will serve them in a variety of ways, including working with our partners in developing business strategies, providing advice for local business owners, and conducting business seminars for students as well as local business owners. Our aim is to return to Hong Kong with a better understanding of how the Lord wants us to be involved in expanding His kingdom in Indonesia, the most populous Muslim-majority country in the world.

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Philippines
September

Two great Philippines-based organizations are working together in providing the platform for reaching the poorest of the poor in the Philippines. Partner alongside both International Care Ministries (ICM),

with various programs such as Feeding, Medical, Education, Livelihood and Church Empowerment, and Gawad Kalinga (GK), who provides lasting and secure homes for those unable to provide for themselves, that profoundly changes the face of poverty within slums. This trip will have two main activities in the Philippines: construction with GK and outreach with ICM. Specific skills are not necessary (though will greatly help); just men and women with a heart to demonstrate God's love for the needy. Families with children over the age of 7 are welcome.

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Egypt
November

Have you ever wondered what it would be like to travel back to the time of the book of Acts when the disciples were being sent out? What would it be like to be welcomed into people's tents, sit on the ground, and talk about Jesus with an entire family while sipping a cup of freshly brewed tea? What would it be like to witness animal sacrifices and remind people that Jesus was the ultimate sacrifice? What would it

be like to see people's faces light up when they tell you how grateful they are that you traveled from a faraway place to share with them that Jesus loves them? Join the Egypt team in bringing the gospel to people who are eager to know how to have a personal relationship with God. We will serve alongside experienced national workers who will inspire you with their faith in Jesus Christ and their love for him. Highly recommended for STO leaders, mission trip returnees, and individuals who want to share their faith.

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Cambodia
End of November

Cambodia is a country that has been ravaged by years of civil war and poverty. During the Khmer Rouge regime, over 1.5 million people were killed, leaving 42% of the population now under the age of 14. In the midst of poverty and seemingly little hope, we see God's beauty breaking through the darkness. We will spend time encouraging local Christians, doing community projects in the village, outreach to children by bringing them joy and

love through games, songs and drama, visiting slums and the poor who live and work in the rubbish dump, and encouraging students. Come to understand God's work in healing His people. Walk alongside our other partners to minister to both the spiritual and physical needs of the Cambodians.

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**Youth Trips
Philippines**
(Middle School)
22 - 25 April

In partnership with International Care Ministries, youth aged 11 to 18 are invited to share the love of Christ with those in need in the Philippines. While we will focus primarily on constructing homes in the slums, our heart is to build relationships within the community, to bring the hope we have in Christ to many who feel hopeless. In addition to mixing cement, leveling ground, laying bricks, and transporting materials, we will visit homes, sharing encouraging words and praying with families. We will also spend time at local churches and preschools, help out with feeding programs, and encourage

individuals at the Care and Recovery Shelter. This trip is designed to be a safe, first-time mission experience. Students are sure to meet God in a real way as they show His love to the people of Bacolod.

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**Youth Trips
Rwanda**
(High School)
End of June - Beginning of July

Although much of the media coverage has ceased, the scars from the 1994 genocide remain. However, despite the obvious challenges, there is hope. By the glorious grace of God, Rwanda is being rebuilt one person at a time. Youth are invited to get out of their comfort zones and bring the love of Christ to widows, orphans, street kids, AIDS victims and others still feeling the effects of the genocide. As we spend time encouraging them, worshiping with them, sharing our testimonies with them, and praying for them, participants can expect to be amazed at how God's love so powerfully heals and strengthens the hearts of those who have endured such great devastation.

Join us in witnessing God's redemption in the nation of Rwanda. Due to the nature of this trip, participation is restricted to students aged 14+. Preference will be given to students with previous missions experience.

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Other Trips
Philippines Trips
with ICM Kids Camp
April

contact:
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**Hubei Love English
Summer Camp**
July

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I pray that you,
being rooted and established in love,
may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people,
to grasp how wide and long and high and deep
is the love of Christ,
and to know this love that surpasses knowledge
— that you may be filled to
the measure of all the fullness of God.

Ephesians 3:17-18

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