

When “Do Your Best” Becomes a Burden

By Adrian Toh

Parenting, Expectations and Our Children

There are few things parents want more than for their children to do well.

We want them to develop their abilities, take responsibility for their work, make wise choices, and have opportunities that perhaps we ourselves did not have. When examinations draw near, these hopes can become especially visible. We remind them to revise. We ask whether they have completed their work. We arrange tuition, buy assessment books, check schedules, and worry when they seem less concerned than we are.

Much of this comes from love.

Yet love and anxiety can sometimes become difficult to separate.

A parent may say, “*I just want you to do your best,*” intending encouragement. A child may hear something rather different: “*I must do well, or I will disappoint you.*”

Between these two experiences lies an important question: What do our expectations communicate to our children?

Expectations Are Not Necessarily the Problem

Psychological research does not suggest that parents should expect nothing of their children (Liem et al., 2025).

Recent research with secondary school students in Singapore found that when young people perceived their parents as believing in their academic ability, these expectations were associated with stronger academic self-beliefs (Liem et al., 2025). In turn, these self-beliefs were related to motivation, perseverance, engagement, optimism, and happiness.

There is something powerful about a child knowing, “*My parents believe I can do this.*”

Healthy expectations can provide direction. Children benefit from knowing that effort matters, that responsibilities should be taken seriously, and that their abilities can grow. Indeed, parental guidance is part of parenting.

The difficulty arises when expectation becomes pressure, and pressure becomes something the child begins to carry inwardly.

Singapore researchers who developed the Academic Expectations Stress Inventory found that young people experience academic stress not only from their own standards, but also from concerns about failing to meet the expectations of parents and teachers (Ang & Huan, 2006). Items in the measure include feeling stressed when parents are disappointed with examination grades, blaming oneself for failing to meet parental expectations, and feeling inadequate when one’s own standards are not reached.

A recent nationwide Singapore study found that higher academic-expectations stress was associated with more severe symptoms of depression and anxiety among young people who were studying (Chua et al., 2026). Both expectations from parents and teachers, and expectations young people placed upon themselves, mattered.

This distinction is important.

The question is not simply whether we have expectations. It is how those expectations are experienced.

The Pressure Parents Carry

Parents themselves are not untouched by this pressure.

Research with Singapore families has described the difficult balance parents try to maintain (Göransson, 2025). They want their children to succeed, yet they also want them to enjoy childhood, develop resilience, discover their interests, and remain emotionally well.

These desires can pull in different directions.

- “If we push too hard, will our child become stressed?”
- “If we do not push enough, will they fall behind?”
- “If we do not provide tuition, practice papers, enrichment, or additional help, will we regret it later?”

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the team

Editor ~ Chia Gaik Bee

Writers ~ Ng Keng Gene, Lewis Tham, Lim Sook Fun and Noah Tan

Sub-editors ~ Debbie Chai, Dorothy Tan and Wang Su Chen

Elder-in-Charge ~ Eld Wan Kum Tho

Art Direction ~ Serena Lim

Coordinator ~ Choo Wai How

Printing Co-ordination ~ First Step Communications

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A Personal Note

Anniversaries

This September, PSPC celebrates its 183rd anniversary. We also celebrated the 145th anniversary of the Presbyterian Church in Singapore (PCS) in July. It was uplifting to have the opportunity to worship together with congregants from all the other Presbyterian churches in the English and Chinese Presbyteries.

Wait a minute, you say. The math doesn’t add up. How come PSPC is 183 years old but the PCS is only 145 years old? How could PSPC predate the PCS? Here’s a brief refresher. PSPC started off as the Malay Chapel in 1843, as sung in our Anniversary Hymn: “In 1843 Keasberry came, built a chapel in this place.” Rev Benjamin Keasberry was a missionary with the London Missionary Society (LMS). Together with other LMS missionaries, he was in Singapore awaiting the opening of China to mission work. However, while in Singapore, Keasberry was burdened to reach out to the Malay people here. When China opened, instead of leaving with the other missionaries, Keasberry resigned from the LMS and started the Malay Chapel as an independent missionary. If you look at the plaques on the walls of the sanctuary that celebrate some of our church pioneers, you will see Sophia Cooke, an Anglican, and Charles Phillips, a Wesleyan who was instrumental in bringing the Methodist Church to Singapore. When Keasberry passed away in 1875, Rev William Young took over for a few years until his retirement in 1885. Enter Rev JAB Cook. The English Presbyterian Mission sent Rev Cook to Singapore in 1881 to work among the Chinese. This was the founding year for the PCS: 1881 + 145 = 2026. When Rev Young retired, Rev Cook took over the Malay Chapel, and it came under the English Presbyterian Mission.

Unlike previous years, this year’s anniversary service is not a combined service, as the sanctuary is closed for the Building Renewal Project (BRP). The sanctuary was built in 1930 – almost 100 years ago and has to be carefully restored. We have been passing through the enclosed walkway each week – what is going on inside? Catch a glimpse of the renovation works and Eld Andrew Ong’s spiritual insights on pages 5 and 6.

These insights not only apply to buildings but also to our own spiritual lives. Are we continually being renewed by His Word as we go through our daily lives? Are we being sanctified daily as we await Christ’s Second Coming? We have spent many months dwelling on the gospel of Matthew. At the end of the day, will we be found ready when the Master returns? Are we faithfully living according to the Great Commandment (Matt 22:36-40) and carrying out the Great Commission (Matt 28:18-20)? Or are our lives like ‘whitewashed sepulchres’, tombs that look beautiful on the outside but are full of dead bones inside? May we be faithful and fruitful for the Lord, as He has been faithful to PSPC!

Chia Gaik Bee

September 2026

If you have any feedback on *The Messenger* or would like to be part of the writing team, do let us know at pspcmessenger@gmail.com

These worries become especially intense around major educational transitions. One parent in a Singapore study described the PSLE as “the big crossroad” (Göransson, 2025). Parents spoke about the growing emotional and practical effort involved as examinations approached: more tuition, more monitoring, more comparison, more conversations among parents about what everyone else seemed to be doing.

There was also a recurring fear of parental regret: “What if my child could have done better, and I did not do enough?”

This is understandable. Parenting carries real responsibility.

But responsibility can quietly become something heavier when we begin to live as though our children’s futures depend entirely upon us.

Children Are More Than Their Results

Christian faith gives us another way of seeing our children.

Scripture certainly does not present parenting as passive. Parents are called to teach, guide, nurture and discipline. Paul tells fathers to bring children up “in the discipline and instruction of the Lord”, while at the same time warning them not to provoke their children to anger (Ephesians 6:4).

Christian parenting therefore holds together authority and tenderness, guidance and restraint.

But beneath these responsibilities lies something even more fundamental: our children are not ultimately ours to manufacture.

They are received.

Christian reflections on parenting repeatedly return to this idea. Children are gifts entrusted to parents, persons created by God with lives and purposes that do not originate in our ambitions for them. Parenting is stewardship, not ownership.

This becomes especially important in a culture where achievement can easily become a measure of worth.

We may never consciously tell our children that their grades determine their value. Yet children learn not only from what we say. They learn from our faces, our reactions, our conversations, our comparisons, and what seems to matter most in the home.

What happens when the examination results arrive?

Do we first ask about the score?

Do we immediately compare it with previous results, classmates, siblings or cousins?

Does disappointment fill the room?

Or can the child still recognise something deeper and more secure: whatever this result may mean, I am still loved, known and received here.

One mother interviewed in Singapore encouraged her son to “work hard so that you don’t regret it” and to fulfil his potential, while also assuring him, “No matter how well you do, we still love you. You are still our son” (Göransson, 2025).

Perhaps this is one of the most important distinctions we can give our children: disappointment about an outcome need not become disappointment in the child.

What Are We Forming?

Christian parenting also asks us to look beyond achievement to formation.

The question is not only, “How well is my child doing?” but also, “Who is my child becoming?”

Research on Christian parenting has highlighted the importance of everyday parental example. Faith is formed not only through formal teaching, but through ordinary rhythms such as conversations, prayer, Bible reading, mealtimes, bedtime routines, church participation, and the ways children observe faith being lived at home (Olorenshaw & Holmes, 2025).

The same is surely true during examination season.

Children are learning more than mathematics, science or languages.

They are learning what failure means.

They are learning what success means.

They are learning whether mistakes can be spoken about safely.

They are learning whether another person’s achievement diminishes their own worth.

They are learning how the adults around them respond when plans do not work.

And perhaps they are also learning something about God.

If faith is spoken about on Sunday, but from Monday to Friday the atmosphere of the home communicates that academic achievement is what really determines approval, children may notice the contradiction.

This does not mean examinations are unimportant. Results have real consequences. Opportunities may genuinely be affected. To tell children otherwise would not necessarily be helpful.

But importance is not the same as ultimate importance.

A result can matter without becoming the measure of a life.

Perhaps We Can Expect Something Deeper

There may therefore be another way to think about parental expectations.

We can expect our children to make an honest effort.

“...disappointment about an outcome need not become disappointment in the child.”



We can encourage perseverance when something is difficult.

We can expect responsibility for work that belongs to them.

We can help them recognise their strengths and acknowledge areas where they need support.

We can provide appropriate structure and guidance.

But perhaps we can also hold expectations about things that no examination can fully measure.

Can our children learn to respond to disappointment without being destroyed by it?

Can they recognise that another person's success is not their failure?

Can they ask for help when they need it?

Can they remain kind when they are stressed?

Can they learn that effort matters even when outcomes are uncertain?

Can they discover that their identity rests somewhere deeper than their achievements?

Research with Christian families suggests that children's character and faith development are shaped through parental modelling, relational guidance, and everyday faith practices such as prayer, Bible reading, conversation, and shared routines (Lapon & Iwanggin, 2025; Olorenshaw & Holmes, 2025). What we desire for our children therefore cannot be separated from what they repeatedly see and experience in us.

If we want them to face examinations without being consumed by fear, they may need to see us learning to manage our own fears too.

Releasing What We Cannot Control

Perhaps one of the hardest parts of parenting is accepting that we can influence our children, but we cannot control their lives.

“
...accepting that
we can influence
our children,
but we cannot
control their lives.
”

We can provide opportunities, but cannot guarantee outcomes.

We can encourage effort, but cannot produce motivation on demand.

We can advise, but cannot make every decision for them.

We can pray, teach and model faith, yet even their relationship with God cannot simply be manufactured by parental effort.

There is humility in recognising these limits.

It does not make parents less responsible. It allows responsibility to sit in its proper place.

We do what has been entrusted to us, and we entrust what lies beyond us to God.

As examinations approach, perhaps our children need to hear more than, “Do your best.”

Perhaps they also need to hear:

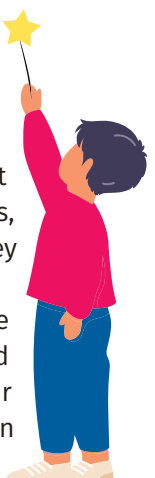
- “I believe you are capable.”
- “Your effort matters.”
- “I am here if you need help.”
- “One examination will not tell us everything about who you are.”
- “And whatever the result, you are still deeply loved.”

These words do not lower expectations.

Perhaps they place our expectations where they belong.

Our children may indeed achieve many things in life. We can rejoice when they do. But before they are students, examination candidates, future professionals, or bearers of our hopes, they are persons entrusted to our care.

And one of the greatest gifts we may give them is the freedom to grow, strive, succeed and sometimes fail, while knowing that neither our love nor their worth hangs on a number written on a page.



Adrian Toh is a Clinical Psychologist and currently serves as President of the Singapore Psychological Society. He is involved in clinical practice and teaching, with a focus on making psychology thoughtful, practical and accessible.

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PSPC BUILDING RENEWAL PROJECT (BRP)

Progress Update [September 2026]

By Eld Andrew Ong
(Chairman of BRP Steering Committee &
Elder-in-charge of PSPC Children's Ministry)

We thank God for His continued provision and protection over our Building Renewal Project.

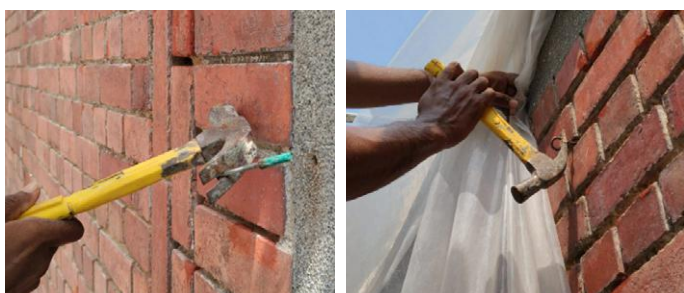
Over the past few months, good progress has been made across multiple areas of our church building restoration.

Satu (1) : Firstly, the internal plaster hacking works have been completed. Removing plaster from historic brick demands a precise, non-destructive approach. Because historic bricks can be physically softer than the plaster coating them, aggressive mechanical force can slice open the brick's protective outer skin (the arris/face), leading to structural spalling or moisture damage.



We might ask, why change the plaster? To the naked eye, the old plaster wall might have looked smooth and intact, but beneath the surface, hidden moisture and age have weakened its bond with the foundation. Leaving the old layer on could trap moisture and decay, causing more serious structural damage later. Is there a Sunday School lesson here? Yes! In the same way, **true spiritual renewal requires us to go beyond surface appearances. God often has to carefully strip away the compromised, old layers in our lives – the things that no longer hold – so that we can be firmly grounded on Christ, our solid rock foundation. But I digress... back to BRP.**

Dua (2) : Secondly, the nails (no, we have not nailed this project... yet). Iron nails left inside the red bricks can oxidise when exposed to humidity. These can then potentially expand, causing internal pressure and cracking the soft red bricks and mortar joints. Even small,



embedded nails must be carefully removed. The resulting hole is gently brushed and flushed to clear out rust flakes and dust. The hole is filled with a compatible, breathable material matching the historical original in colour, aggregate size, and strength. Another Sunday School lesson? Yes! **In our spiritual journey, we often carry small, unaddressed grievances or hidden wounds that quietly erode our spiritual foundation and walk with God. By removing these 'hidden nails' with care and replacing them with God's grace, we ensure our church remains sound inside and out. The only nails left are our nails – we nailed Him to the cross with our sins. Again, I digress... back to BRP.**

Tiga (3) : Thirdly, brick patching is in progress at our external brick wall façade. The lime mortar material used for patching needs to be "breathable". I was also told that this lime mortar possesses dynamic "self-healing" micro-properties: as rainwater penetrates micro-cracks, dissolved free lime reacts with carbon dioxide in the



air to recrystallise and seal tiny fractures over time. One more Sunday School lesson – external brick patching reminds me of God's design: the materials used must be allowed to 'breathe' so trapped moisture doesn't destroy the wall from within. Similarly, **our faith needs room to breathe through prayer and authentic fellowship. When we try to seal ourselves off behind hard, impermeable exteriors, we trap our internal struggles within and alone, where they can fester. God's grace works like breathable lime – protecting us from external storms while allowing internal healing.**



Empat (4) : Fourthly, other works, such as stripping off old paint at the Oasis room, are in progress. Over decades, our building might have accumulated various layers of modern synthetic paints (alkyds, acrylics, and oil-based enamels). These non-breathable layers can form a plastic film over the original lime plaster, trapping moisture, causing blistering, and obscuring original wall details or historic stencils/signage. This paint stripping can be a painstaking process, as there are certain National Heritage Board procedures to follow that largely involve manual work. I am so tempted to say that in our spiritual walk, we can unconsciously develop self-reliance, or routine, which gradually obscures the original work God did in us. Somehow, this delicate

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stripping process reminds us how God wants to gently peel back our added layers so that His original design and glory can shine through clearly once more. But I fear I might have overstated my Sunday School lessons.

There is also restoration work being done in parts we cannot see and for most of us will never ever see. I'm referring to the restoration work taking place near the roof – levelling high ledges and securing structural bearings. These require the exact same standard of care for such unseen spaces as for the main facade. I'm not going to hide the Sunday School lesson here – **this is a powerful reminder of how God works in us: He cares just as deeply about the unseen corners of our hearts and minds as He does about our public lives. True renewal isn't just about what people see on the outside, but faithful integrity in the hidden places.**



Lima (5) : Finally, we are happy to report that progress is also being made on our windows and the installation of a new roof-level catwalk. However, for those harbouring thoughts of a fashion runway show, do note that this catwalk stays hidden safely above the ceiling – reserved strictly for roof inspections and maintenance! Adding a hidden catwalk in the roof void ensures that those caring for our Sanctuary can inspect and repair issues before they become major leaks. **In Proverbs 27:23, we are reminded to 'know the state of your flocks, and give attention to your herds'. Preventive maintenance is simply good stewardship – ensuring that even the parts of church life no one sees are faithfully looked after.**

We are thankful for the good safety record. Like Nehemiah, who relied on God's protective hand while rebuilding, we ask for your continued prayers. Please continue to pray for safety for all workers and consultants on site. Please continue to pray for wisdom and unity for all of us, and for the works to continue to progress smoothly according to plan. "Unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labour in vain." (Psalm 127:1).

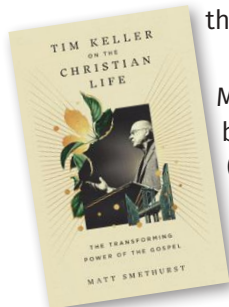
PSPC MEN'S MINISTRY WORKSHOP REFLECTIONS

When Faith Goes to Work and Rest

Words by Eld Adrien Chia

A Necessary Check-in: A Season of Reflective Learning

It has been over three decades since I first started working, and perhaps this is the season of pre-retiring (or re-tying from high performance tyres to all terrain ones). This recent season of learning and reflection was the reason for the necessary check-in.



Nothing prepared us for the surprise Mentimeter quiz based on Matt Smethurst's book, Tim Keller on the Christian Life, (where the speed of your responses or lack thereof affected your scores and overall ranking) by the speaker, Preacher Kenneth Teo from ORPC.

What We Learnt

Kenneth started us off by asking the question of how we normally introduce ourselves, and how we think about our primary and secondary identities. Do we introduce ourselves with our names, followed by what we do at work? This was worth pondering about. Thankfully at PSPC, the context for introductions usually involves our names, our families, and the ministries we are serving in.

The afternoon talks were organised into three main parts: Our identity at work as elect exiles, our purpose at work as a royal priesthood, separated by a case study for group discussion about a young man named Daniel, who has to navigate his faith and career, for a seat at the table.

Our Identity at Work as Elect Exiles or Elite Insiders

Whether we are informed by the Singapore dream, our parents' anxieties and aspirations, or our organisation's career plans, the question for reflection was, "Where does climbing the ladder lead to"? The short answer is it leads

to nowhere. This may involve studying hard, getting a good job, building a career portfolio, and retiring comfortably; it may also involve building an audience as an influencer, monetising influence, and staying relevant; or changing the world by finding your purpose, making a difference, and leaving a legacy.

The trajectory of 1 Peter is growing downwards and being raised to glory, where suffering precedes glory. 1 Peter 1:1-2 reminds us that our identity is formed by God the Father, the Holy Spirit, and we belong to Jesus.

We are chosen by grace (1 Peter 1:3-5) and not by performance. We have been liberated by the grace of God, to experience the reality of His love and the freedom of being his children. We live as exiles, present in society but belonging to God's kingdom. As we are called to be holy (1 Peter 1: 9-14), we are not to be conformed to the passions of our former ignorance (v14), but to conduct ourselves with fear throughout the time of exile (v17), because we were ransomed from the futile ways of our forefathers (v18). An example raised for being conformed to our former ignorance is the driven work ethic, which is a blind spot in our culture and worldly paradigm. After looking at a number of causes for work depression, the question posed was, "How can we as Christians be God's light at work?"

Purpose at work – Doing Good and Suffering Faithfully

Three levels of questions were posed:

- **Personal:** Am I doing my work faithfully?
- **Relational:** What kind of neighbour am I becoming through my work?
- **Structural:** What kind of world is this work helping to create?



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Do we treat people as image bearers, or is this a dog-eat-dog world?

Living as elect exiles and a royal priesthood at work (1 Peter 2:1-5) involves honourable conduct among Gentiles (1 Peter 2: 11-12), doing good to put to silence the ignorance of the foolish (1 Peter 2: 13-17), because Christ suffered for you (1 Peter 2: 18-25), and by his wounds you have been healed (v24). Peter's refrain in doing good was, "Am I loving God and loving others"? Kenneth explained that work is not only service, it is witness. Doing good can lead to questions, which may surface opportunities for the Gospel. The key verse highlighted was 1 Peter 3: 15, to honour Christ as holy and being prepared to make a defence for the hope in you with gentleness and respect.

Using a redemptive-historical lens to examine doing good at work, a few questions posed included:

- What good thing is this work meant to cultivate, protect or produce?
- How is that good thing distorted by idolatry, exploitation or disordered desire?
- What bears the cost in this workplace, and how might I use my power to bear rather than transfer costs?
- How can I use my position, authority, and capital sacrificially for the good of others?

Entropy is not ultimate, as Christ risen allows us to work for good as we bear witness to Him. Work matters because creation matters. We are in the world, but not of this world.

Doing good means discerning the idols within work. In the following bullet points, creation good (on the left) is contrasted with idolatrous distortion (on the right):

- Excellence versus perfectionism
- Responsibility versus control
- Profit versus greed
- Influence versus domination
- Competition versus rivalry and contempt

Applying this Framework to Retirement

Retirement is not to be viewed as retirement from creative vocation. It can expose idols. Retirement is a time of sacrificial generation rather than withdrawal. It is a phase where it is neither the final reward nor meaningless decline. Retirement frees us from relevance-anxiety and comfort-idolatry. In short, we are still here to serve God and His purpose on this side of heaven.

The final challenge posed to the participants was: *Whose Kingdom will you represent on Monday morning?*

The Case Study of Daniel, and the Seat at the Table

The case study assigned to the participants was about guiding Daniel, 31, who works at a large professional services firm, in managing expectations at work and building a career to become an elite insider through networking (and being invited to participate in a prestigious regional project), as well as wanting to be faithful to God.

Our group comprised older working adults and those who are near retiring or attempting to retire. We reframed the assignment to, "How would we guide this young man called Daniel"? But the discussion soon moved to, "How would we have valued guidance when we were starting out in our careers?"

A perspective to adopt is to have an integrated view of practising our Christian faith in life and at work. There should not be an artificial delineation between life, ministry and work. Scripture reminds us that our work ethic should be informed by Colossians 3:23, "Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men".

An idea included having an assessment to identify our spiritual gifts, our strengths and natural abilities, as well as our work competencies. Having someone more mature with the relevant assessment competencies would have been valuable, to provide a check-in and an informed assessment for ministry involvement and career guidance, at different points in our journey.

Another idea included involving one's immediate reporting officer in decision-making for new areas, where the reporting officer would appreciate being consulted in novel decisions to provide inputs for consideration before decisions are made. This could provide opportunities for deeper conversations and witness.

Real World Implications as Stewards

The talks, questions and interactions provided a framework for reflective practice (to identify behavioural patterns and reviewing it against God's Word, as well as seeking repentance and growth), through the lens of Scripture. Thankfully, we journey together as a community of faith.

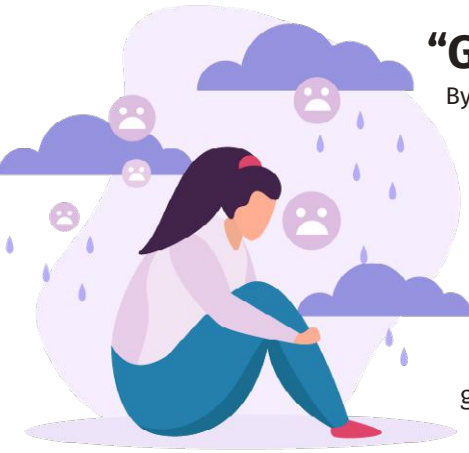
As we navigate an increasingly complex post-pandemic world, with constant technological disruptions and the degradation of viewing and treating people as image bearers, how might we re-focus our mental and spiritual lenses to collectively strengthen our walk as elect exiles, faithful to the calling that we have? Perhaps these are worth pondering and prioritising as stewards, entrusted with Kingdom matters.

"Trusting God Through Transitions"

- An Awareness Talk [18 July 2026]

"Grief is Hard, But It Need Not Break You."

By Joan Swee, Founder-Director of Whispering Hope Singapore



Regardless of our age groups, loss and grief are part and parcel of life — and yet, so much of what we have been told or taught about loss and grief is wrong, and does not serve us well.

Let's begin with my story to uncover the misconceptions many of us have about grief, and learn new life-giving insights about life, loss and grief.

Where Do I Begin?

Henry and I met through Singapore Youth for Christ, an after-school club. Our group of friends attended Faith Methodist. After church, the whole 'gang' would hang out together at the old market at Commonwealth Crescent for our favorite hawker fare. After graduation, we took separate routes in the working world, but continued faithfully to serve in different ministries in church. Subsequently, we started dating, got engaged two years later, and married in 1982.

Life Together in Hong Kong

Immediately after our wedding, Henry began travelling to Hong Kong to prospect for business there. In 1985, we moved there where he was tasked to build up the Hong Kong and greater China business, as well as oversee business ventures in Japan and South Korea.

The Lord God blessed us with two sons, as we continued living in Hong Kong, serving with the international church there. We decided we did not want our sons to be raised by domestic helpers, so although we had help, we would do the night feeds and the diaper changes ourselves.

Henry's work was intense, but he always made time for his family. He was my best friend, and we could talk about anything. We were soulmates. I guess you could say Henry was the perfect husband. That's not to say that we had no challenges, but we worked on our marriage, and it was most fulfilling.

And Then Illness Struck

In 1992, when our sons were aged 6 and 4, Henry was diagnosed with stomach cancer. The news was all the more shocking because there had been no particular symptoms nor warning signs. His whole stomach had to be removed.

On his fourth day in intensive care, he developed a high fever, which meant infection had set in. The doctors said there was nothing they could do. But as pastors, church members, family and friends prayed, the Lord visited him in the hospital room.

Henry described his miraculous experience this way: "I felt the hand of God, about five times the size of my hand, touching me and massaging me. After that, I felt my body lifted up, and cool water being poured down my body, like a marathon runner being refreshed by chilled bottled water."

After that divine visitation, Henry recovered speedily. Within a month, he was well enough to travel to his company's annual conference, which was held in Penang in December 1992, and could even enjoy a whole bowl of Penang prawn noodles without choking.

However, the surgeon and oncologist told us that there were microscopic cells which no scientific method or machines could detect. [The PET scan was not yet invented then.] After consulting the Lord God over a week of personal prayer, he opted for no chemotherapy. Henry knew that he was "living on borrowed time given by the Lord."

Recurrence & Surrender

Fifteen months later in March 1994, the cancer returned, this time in the bile duct. This time, it was inoperable. We were devastated. We spent a week, pouring our hearts out to God, asking for His miraculous healing. Finally, we came to a point of surrender and said, "Your will be done."

Upon the advice of doctors, we returned to Singapore to be near family. Henry was admitted into hospital. A week later, he slipped into a coma. The end came on 19 July 1994.

Transiting back to life in Singapore: widowed and fatherless

It was a major struggle to relocate to Singapore, to adjust to the Singapore education system, and to manage the volatile emotions of my sons.

My two boys, then aged 8 and 6, struggled with new life patterns of living in Singapore, a place they had never known as home. They were in emotional chaos, and full of grief and anger, and they acted out their pain in physical ways, such as throwing tantrums, and breaking cups and plates when they were unable to control their emotions.

A Shelter from the Storm

I was grateful and blessed that my in-laws were

(Continued on Page 10)

generous and loving. We lived with my brother-in-law, his wife and their three sons for nine months. Their home was a shelter from the storm. Their kindness was medicine to our souls. My sister-in-law would just hug my sons and love them. My brother-in-law quietly helped me with finding my new home. We were gradually nursed back to health, and I am forever grateful for their compassionate love. I could not have asked for a more nurturing grief recovery environment than their home and family support.

Everything Changed

The months following Henry's death were unbearable. For the first six months, my pillow was wet with tears every night as I tried to forget the nightmare, and erase the vivid memories of hospitals, blood test results, conversations ... the final months, weeks and moments. No words could express how I felt. No human comfort could address the pain.

A Life-changing Book

There was no one in my circle of relatives, friends or acquaintances who had lost their spouse. I was the only widow I knew. It was a most awful and lonely place to be in.

One day, as I walked into Crest Bookshop at Far East Shopping Centre, I scanned through the shelves and my eyes were drawn to one book. I picked it up and the title was, "My Daddy Died and It's All God's Fault." How apt!

The book became a healing balm for the boys as it helped them to open up and talk. Helping children grieve normally and giving a voice to their pain is vital for such great loss.

Being a Widow in a Couples' World

For the next one and a half years, I was an only widow in a couples' world. I was very lonely. I sought pastoral and professional counseling, and that helped me tremendously.

Then in 1996, I met a widow for the first time. Finally, someone just like me! This widow had an informal group of five to six widows who met occasionally. I volunteered to organise a regular support group for them. The group met in my home. In October 1998 — four years into my widowhood — we co-founded a non-profit organisation to provide bereavement support in a more structured way. Along with monthly support group meetings for widows and children, we put together a grief recovery weekend for the widows and we facilitated it twice a year.

Slowly but surely, the wounded parts of my life began to come together. I could glimpse the purpose amidst the pain. The comfort that I had received from God, now became the comfort I gave to others, whether they were of the same faith or were from different faith backgrounds.

In 1999 I returned to a corporate training career, making the transition from expatriate wife to working mother. I was finding more of myself again. I was discovering that there was life beyond bereavement, after all.

In time, I became a certified life coach. About 10 years later, at age 50, I set out to obtain a Master of Science in Professional Counseling — while still working as a corporate trainer and volunteering in the non-profit organisation. I pursued these avenues of training and development because I wanted to become more effective in helping others out of grief. I had found my calling amidst the pain.

Searching for Answers

Over the two decades from 1996 to 2016, I met and counselled widows of all ages, ranging from age 20+ to 70+.

As I walked with many on their journey of grief, I was perplexed by why some remained stuck in their grief, unable to move beyond the pain. I was not able to help them. I cried out for answers: Why, God? What's the key? What was I missing?

I was on this quest when I came across the Grief Recovery Method®. I found out that it was the only evidence-based method to have been verified by university researchers. It had a proven track record, having benefited more than 500,000 people, having been used in countries such as Australia, Sweden, UK and USA.

Hallelujah! Could this be what I have been looking for?

Excited, I went overseas in March 2016 to attend the training to become a certified Grief Recovery Specialist with the Grief Recovery Institute. I was convinced that its structured approach, its practical tools, and the insights I had gained from my own personal journey of grief would make for a powerful solution.



Educating Society on Grief

Back from the learning trip, I began using the Grief Recovery Method with individuals and groups.

True enough, I saw clients, who had been 'stuck' in grief, experiencing breakthroughs in their recovery process. The difference was visible, and their recovery was obvious.

This encouraged me greatly, and so in 2017, I founded Whispering Hope SG, an organisation whose aim is to help Singaporeans learn to recover from grief. Whispering Hope is the only consultancy in Singapore that specialises in the Grief Recovery Method.

Our goal is grief education: to equip people with the language and tools they need around the concept of grief, so that they can move forward to pursue their hopes and dreams, finding joy and fulfilment despite life's losses.

Today, besides working directly with private clients, I speak at seminars and churches.

Dealing with All Life's Losses

Central to the Grief Recovery Method is the concept of loss. Any major change in our lives and relationships is a type of loss. As such, this model is applicable to the full spectrum of losses, including:

- Bereavement from death
- Bereavement from suicide (suicide survivors)
- Divorce/Relationship break-ups/betrayals
- Abuse (from childhood, in marriage, in family)
- Job losses (missed promotions, retrenchment and retirement)
- Health losses (loss of health/limb/sight/speech/hearing, and the accompanying loss of mobility and freedom)
- Empty nest syndrome
- Financial losses (dissolved business partnerships, investment losses, scams).



Equipped with the central concept of loss, I began to move beyond working with widows. A group that I had a heart for were parents who had lost their young adult and school-going children to suicide. These parents had undergone many therapy and counseling sessions to cope with their very painful loss (and I do recommend working with therapists and counselors!)

If grief is not well understood, then the grief and pain of suicide survivors become doubly hard. But I saw something break through when these suicide survivors began to identify the myths and misconceptions they had believed about grief.

They were able to bounce back in their mental well-being and emotional resilience, and were able to turn their pain into a new sense of purpose. So wonderful, and how precious!

But what made the difference?



Stuck in Mud

I have come to realise that many people are stuck in grief because of the myths they had been told about grief. These include:

- "Be strong"
- "Don't feel so bad/sad. You will get over this."
- "You will feel better in time. Time will heal everything and make it all okay again."
- "You're still young. You can find another romance/ You can conceive and bear another baby."

While well-intentioned, such myths and misinformation about grief are not rooted in truth, and do not serve us well. When these individuals broke free from those myths and learned powerful new truths about grief, they began to make visible progress.

We can all move beyond loss and grief, towards recovery, resilience and restoration. We can treasure past joys, but we can take steps to discover new joys, new beginnings, new dreams and new relationships.

Life to the Fullest

I am turning 69 this December 2026. It's been 32 years since I was widowed. I am happy with my life as God has faithfully blessed me till now, and I am living it to the fullest!

As a believer and follower of Jesus Christ, if I trust that everything that happens to me is allowed by God, that would include Henry's death.

The real question then is, "If I knew Henry was going to die young, would I still have married him?"

My answer is a loud YES! We had such a wonderful marriage for close to 12 years. I have absolutely no regrets.

Concluding Remarks

Faith & Grief: Grieving is not a loss of faith. Faith is spiritual. Grieving is a human emotion. A human experience. Look at these scriptures on grief:

Psalms 34:6 (NIV) "The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit."

Psalms 147:3 (NLT) "He heals the broken-hearted and binds up (bandages) their wounds."

Baptism [26 April 2026] - Ng Swee Meng 黄瑞明 By Ng Chern Nee

"Please come over... I need to go to the hospital. My UTI (urinary tract infection) is very painful." That was the cry for help from my dad on 22 November to his caregivers, who are my sister Carol and me. So, armed with a bottle of water and a power bank, we rushed to my dad's home, ready for a long day at the A&E department.

When we reached my dad's home, we found him sitting and looking relaxed. So we asked him how he was feeling. He said, "Aiyah...no need to go to the hospital. I will take medicine from my GP and will get better." Rather than being exasperated with our dad, both Carol and I smiled and decided to take him to the kopi-tiam for tea instead.

Just as we were wheeling him into the lift, my dad suddenly said in Hokkien: "I think I want to believe in Jesus Christ." Both Carol and I dropped our jaws when we heard this, as we couldn't believe our ears. We then calmly told our dad that we would chat more when we were at the kopi-tiam. And that was when my dad shared with us what he had been thinking, and he knew that Jesus Christ is a good God and he wanted to believe in Him. He also admitted he had sinned, and that he believed Jesus Christ would cleanse his past sins. He went on to say that each time he went to church, all the church people were very nice to him and very friendly, especially our cell group friends and the Chinese pastoral team. He even went on to say that after he became a Christian, his funeral rites would be a Christian service, and not Taoist or Buddhist rites. Furthermore, he asked if he could continue buying 4D, to which I smiled and said, "No need, as God will provide all that you need." Just to be sure that he was of sound mind, we asked him once again, and he replied affirmatively once again.

A bit of background - my dad started joining Carol and me for the 11am Mandarin service in 2019. Back then, he was motivated to have Sunday lunch with his daughters; we then invited him to join us for Church service, to which he quite readily agreed. Even though he may not have fully comprehended the sermons, he always dutifully stood up to sing the worship songs. Even though he nodded off to



sleep more times than he would like to admit during sermons, we knew God would work in His miraculous way with my dad. Over the years of caring for my dad, we also took the opportunity to share with him how good our God is, and how He died for our sins and rose on the third day.

The Chinese pastoral team also gave my dad (and other believers) gifts which symbolised Christ's love for us. One memorable gift was a keychain that showed white as the light of heaven, black as the colour of sin and how Christ's dying and resurrection transformed the colours from black to white. Each time I asked my dad if he wanted to believe in Christ Jesus, his answer was always, "Aiyah, all gods are the same. I am not a sinner as I worked hard and raised a family. I also did not kill anyone." We remained encouraged, knowing God would touch my dad's heart in His perfect time, and we continued praying for his salvation, surrendering him to our good and mighty God. And in a fashion we certainly did not expect on that day, my dad offered his life to Christ Jesus.

Fast forward to 2026, with the approval of the church leadership and the Chinese pastoral team, Pastor Wan Xian conducted a home baptism for my dad on 26 April 2026. It was a joyous and meaningful ceremony. One of my friends gave a cake to celebrate my dad's new birth. Two of our church friends gave my dad a baptism present, which he was very pleased to receive. He definitely saw the love of the Church manifested through our cell group friends, church friends, Pastor Wan Xian and team. Carol and I are very grateful for each of you who showed love and care to our dad.

A final word of encouragement: do not underestimate the gift of fellowship that we extend to the people God places in our lives, be it friends or strangers. It could be a kind look, an encouraging word, a visit to the hospital, a hug, or even a greeting. Our mighty God may well be using us and our loving actions to bring more lost sheep into His kingdom. So let us continue to show Christ's love to people around us, just as Christ first loved us, and let us be witnesses of and for His glory.

Transfers [13 September 2026]



Neo Ao Zu Liu 敖祖留

大家好，我是敖祖留，来自中国福建，到新加坡读博。很高兴能在磐石堂认识大家。我从2025年8月来到磐石堂，已经超过1年，还有4年博士的时间要和大家一起度过。这一年有很多感动和忏悔的时刻，青年组的弟兄姐妹们陪着我一起度过，无条件支持我，感谢主安排你们的陪伴。接下来的时光，我希望能和长老会磐石堂和大家一起服事，让我们一起靠着主的力量，互相支持，一起荣耀主的圣名。



Zhuang Yinuo 庄以诺

家人们好，我是庄以诺，来新加坡第四年了，到长老会磐石堂参加聚会的时间也大概三年。在这里我认识了许多热心的大小朋友们，每次来聚会都能看到你们关怀的笑容。希望我也可以和你们一样给来到磐石堂的其他人带来这样的感受，也和你们在主里一同成长一同服侍！



Joyce Li 李华俊

大家平安，我是李华俊。很高兴我可以转会加入长老会磐石堂，来这里的这段时间，我有积极参加青年团的活动，也参加了今年的海外教会营，很享受和弟兄姐妹一起学习、分享和团契的时间。但愿在接下来的日子，我可以更多的认识上帝，也参与中文崇拜的服事。

ART & FAITH SERIES

Art in the Reformation

By Clifford Chua

When Luther nailed his 95 theses on the church door in Wittenburg in 1517 and sparked off the Protestant Reformation, he did not merely ignite a theological debate about ecclesiastical abuses, but effected a worldview shift that would eventually transform Europe's social cultural milieu and fundamentally alter its artistic culture by redefining the purpose of art, the role of the artists and the nature of patronage. The medieval Church had long been the artists' greatest patron. Architecture, altarpieces, sculptures, frescoes, stained glass and icons filled churches and monasteries, serving as aids in worship and catechism to a largely uneducated congregation. The veneration of images, which had been a source of tension throughout the church's history, once again flared up and escalated into a crisis that irrevocably split the church. The reformers rejected the use of religious images and saw their veneration as idolatry, in violation of the second commandment. Churches in many Protestant dominated territories found themselves targets of unbridled puritanical fury and were subjected to the systematic destruction of religious artifacts. Zealots whitewashed murals, ransacked religious buildings and even demolished entire churches. The purge which began in Flanders (modern day France/Belgium) soon gained momentum and spread across Europe and plunged Christendom into a period of violence and destruction known as the Great Iconoclasm.

THE RISE OF THE PRINT

The invention of the printing press in 1450 revolutionised the transmission of information and was a critical factor in the spread of Protestant ideas across the continent. By the time Luther came onto the scene, artists had developed wood cuts and engravings into highly sophisticated works of art that were easily reproducible, accessible to and enjoyed by the masses. Amongst the greatest artists who exploited the print as a medium of artistic expression was the German artist, Albrecht Durer. Born in Nuremberg, Durer was a contemporary of Leonardo da Vinci and Michelangelo and one of the most celebrated masters and thinkers of the Northern Renaissance, well-known for his oil paintings, drawings and watercolour paintings. But the power and technical sophistication of his print works helped establish his fame far and wide and elevated Printmaking from a craft for printing books to an art form of great artistic expression. One of the most important works Durer contributed to the history of Printmaking is 'The Apocalypse', a series of 15 prints illustrating events from the book of Revelation. Out of

these, the most recognised image is the 'Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse'. The image shows the four riders Pestilence, War, Famine and Death thundering across the page with unstoppable momentum in a frightening execution of judgement in the last days. The terrified expressions of the men and women trampled underfoot add to the dramatic intensity of the scene. Durer was not a Protestant reformer in the political sense, but he admired Luther greatly and, in his writings, revealed profound appreciation to him for the recovery of the gospel, particularly the doctrine of justification by faith.



The fourth woodcut of the Apocalypse series, The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse (1498)

Hearing of his arrest after the Diet of Worms, Durer prayed that God would 'preserve this Christian man who helped him overcome so many difficulties'.

Although the Great Iconoclasm did great harm to religious art, the reformers did not reject the validity of the arts and its place in human culture. That Calvin had a cautious view of the arts, particularly its use in worship can be attributed to his zeal in guarding the church against idolatry in its various forms. In truth, not only did he have a high regard for the arts, he also encouraged people to understand and appreciate the arts as one of the richest gifts of God to mankind, "All the arts come from God," he says, "and are to be respected as divine inventions. As a direct gift from God, Art must be free to pursue its high calling before God. Art must be in service to God but that does not necessarily mean art should be subservient to the Church." It can be argued that far from destroying Christian art, Protestant Reformation instead freed the arts from its servitude to the church and allowed it to flourish independently to reach different heights of achievement.

As patronage shifted



'Praying Hands', pen and ink, Durer, 1506

(Continued on Page 14)

increasingly from the church to the state as well as the wealthy merchant class, artists working in Protestant-dominated regions began to explore the sacred through the ordinary; portraits celebrated the dignity of all men created in the image of God, landscapes invited contemplation of divine creation, still life paintings reflected the transience of earthly pleasures and the reality of human mortality. Amongst the talented artists of this period, no artist was more able to express the spirit of the age than Hans Holbein the Younger.

‘THE AMBASSADORS’

Hans Holbein the Younger began his career in the city of Basel which was the intellectual centre of the Northern Renaissance where Reformed ideas took root. With the surge of iconoclasm spreading, commissions for religious paintings had virtually disappeared and Holbein was forced to seek employment elsewhere. Through his friendship with Erasmus, he soon found himself in the service of the English court, becoming principal painter to King Henry VIII. His portraits have been praised for their extraordinary realism, psychological insight and meticulous attention to material details, but it is his painting ‘The Ambassadors’, now hanging in the National Gallery, London that best captures the spirit of the tumultuous period.

The year was 1533 and Henry VIII had secretly married

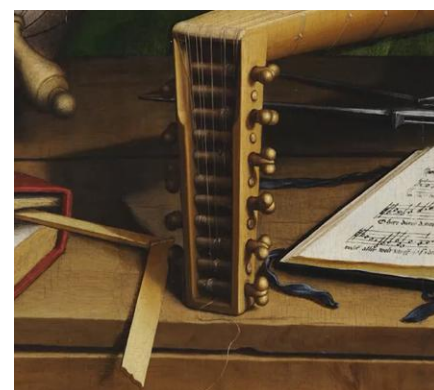
Anne Boleyn after seeking an annulment from Catherine of Aragon. Pope Clement VII refused to approve the annulment and Henry VIII would soon declare himself supreme Head of the Church of England. Francis I of France found himself in a delicate diplomatic position as he sought alliance both with England and Rome, in a bid to balance the political power of Charles V, the Holy Roman Emperor and king of Spain. The subjects of this double portrait are of Jean de Dinteville (*standing on the left*), French ambassador to the court of Henry VIII and Georges de Selve, Bishop of Lavaur, humanist scholar who served Francis I as a diplomat. On its surface, the painting is a fine example of Northern Renaissance’s celebration of Humanism in its technical finesse; two beautifully-dressed men flank a shelf of instruments rendered with almost photographic precision. The upper shelf contains the instruments of astronomy; a celestial globe, sundials, quadrants and a torque tum (medieval astronomical device). These represent humanity’s efforts in the study of the heavens and the harmony therein. The lower shelf holds the instruments of earthly knowledge; a terrestrial globe, a set-square, a book on arithmetic and a lyre and a box of flutes sitting alongside an open hymnal. These objects are the worldly components of a Renaissance humanistic education and their inclusion here can be read as representing earthly pursuits, and Humanism’s confidence in reason and science. Together

the objects serve as triumphant emblems of the achievements of the Renaissance man in their pursuit of harmony between the celestial and terrestrial realms. Closer examination, however, reveals more than meets the eye.

One string on the lute is broken. Broken strings symbolise discord, disunity and disharmony. All is not well. The hymnal lying beside it gives us a clue as to the source of the trouble. It is a Lutheran hymnal, and the page is opened at the setting of music for the hymns ‘Come Holy



‘The Ambassadors’, oil on wood panel, Holbein, 1533.

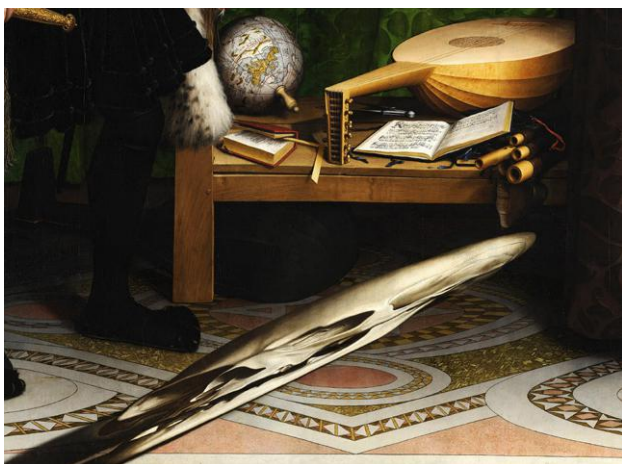




Spirit and *'The Ten Commandments'*. The red bound book on the left, Peter Apian's arithmetic book for merchants, is wedged open to a page on long division. These subtle references point to the instability of the times that despite the extraordinary learning that propelled the advancements made

throughout this pivotal period of human history, Europe was divided and being torn apart by theological conflicts, political rivalry and military ambition. Both diplomats, serving the still Catholic France, standing together amid the objects symbolising the triumph of Christian Humanism, could see these ideals fracturing before their eyes.

Perhaps the most bizarre element in the painting is the strangely distorted skull floating obtrusively in the foreground. Seen from the front of the painting, it is incomprehensible. Only as one views it from the extreme side does one see a perfectly proportioned skull. This anamorphic skull is a memento mori, a reminder of death lurking behind worldly achievements. Placed beneath the emblems of a fracturing Christendom, it reads as a comment on the futility of the ambassadors' mission. It is a visual reminder that death is the unavoidable destiny of all men; neither human achievement, political power or diplomacy can conquer it. It is the inescapable vanity of everything done under the sun.



In the upper left corner and partially hidden by the green curtain, a tiny crucifix is visible. The crucified



Christ, often hidden from view by the pomp and parade of human pride of station and achievement, is nevertheless the omnipresence behind the scenes in all human affairs. One can only speculate on Holbein's intention of including the crucifix in the painting and placing it in such obscurity. It may be Holbein's quiet theological statement

that for all the Humanist learning and culture, political diplomacy and manoeuvring, man cannot escape the inevitability that death brings. The hidden crucifix suggests that Christ remains the centre of human history even when human culture relegates him to the margins and that the hope and true solution to the problem of death rest solely on what was accomplished by His sacrifice on the cross.

The legacy of the Great Iconoclasm remains with us today in the ambivalence towards art and culture displayed by many of our Protestant evangelical denominations. Contrary to popular criticism, the Reformation did not destroy Christian art but transformed and redirected it towards different trajectories of excellence that have come to characterise the Baroque. Hans Holbein's *Two Ambassadors* stands as a visual commentary on the events in church history that have profoundly shaped how we understand our faith today. But more importantly, the work continues to serve as a warning against the temptation of relying on the world's metrics of success towards addressing the issues of the day without due consideration for the weightier matters of our spiritual reality. When we draw away the curtains of our self-sufficiency and place the cross from the fringes of our lives to its centre, we begin to view life through the lenses of eternity. In that way, whatever crisis we may face in our lives which were before large and insurmountable will begin to take on its proper proportion, and we can rest in the crucified and now risen Christ for He is our peace and the peace for all nations.

Clifford Chua has a background in Fine Arts and Art History and is currently the Academy Principal of the Singapore Teachers' Academy for the aRts (STAR).

PSPC Pickleball Friendship Event 2026

By Eld Lisa Theng



ED.Com organised our first Pickleball Friendship Event on a Sunday afternoon at Ignite Academy at 356 Tanglin Road. We had 60 people turn up to exercise and fellowship. Half of the attendees were not part of the PSPC community. The youngest was a 4-year-old and the most senior person there was a 76-year-old grandfather. It was wonderful to see people of all ages, all skill levels, and different backgrounds come together to play and to get to know one another through play and some light refreshments.

We partnered with **Our Daily Bread**, which supplied us with resource materials to cater for all ages, from children to seniors. We had a resource table where our guests could pick out relevant materials and have a conversation over them. The resources included “Growing Old? There is Hope Ahead”, “Help! I’m Stressed Out”, “Finding Strength for Tomorrow”, “Finding Your Purpose in Life”, “Is Being Good...Good Enough?”, “#LifeGoals”, and “Kids Bible book”, “Bible Story books”, “Give Us This Day” (for youths), and “Why Jesus” (from Alpha resources). We also partnered with **Ignite Academy**, which sponsored our use of eight pickleball courts, complimentary coaching clinics, and equipment for the outreach event.



Overall, the feedback was positive. Many felt it was a good way to introduce pre-believers and friends beyond our church community to our people and our faith through building meaningful friendships.

Some feedback from those who attended and brought guests:

“It was my first time playing pickleball. I enjoyed it very much and perspired a lot. I’m thankful that the coach taught us how to hold the bat, hit the ball and serve the ball. A big thanks to Ignite Academy and ED.com for organising this free event, which included fun, fellowship and food. My sister also enjoyed it and made new friends from PSPC. To express her gratitude, she made a donation to the church.”

- Doris Lim

“My family and I enjoy pickleball and we play together a few times a month. When the PSPC Pickleball Friendship Event was publicised, I thought it would be a great opportunity to bring my pre-believing relatives. On the event day, my aunt and uncle came and were warmly welcomed by the ushers/welcome team members. They shared with me that they enjoyed the games and conversations. My children, aged 4 and 6, also came and enjoyed their time on the courts with the friendly uncles and aunties. This friendship event was very well-organised as there were clinics for beginners and the social play games were grouped by levels so everyone could have a fun time. All in all, all of us had a great time and we are already looking forward to the next one!”

- Siau Ek Ping

“I invited a few friends to join me at the recent Pickleball Friendship Event, and it was a joyful opportunity to enjoy the sport together outside of our usual mahjong sessions.

Beyond the games, the event provided a welcoming space to meet new people, build new friendships, and strengthen existing ones. It was especially meaningful to introduce my friends to the community and watch them connect so naturally with others.

The Prinsep family extended such warm hospitality, making my friends feel genuinely welcomed through their kindness, encouragement, and friendly games. We all left with aching bodies and joyful hearts, grateful for an afternoon filled with laughter, fellowship, and meaningful connections. It was a wonderful reminder that fellowship often grows through simple moments of fun, hospitality, and shared experiences.”

- Jin Chan

“The Pickleball Friendship Event allowed me to invite my cousins whom I seldom see. So glad I had that opportunity to touch base with them again this late in life! Praying for more opportunities like this!”

- Audrey Tan



“It was a great opportunity to invite our non-Christian friends to a church event. It was friendship evangelism lived out. Besides sharpening our pickleball skills and getting a good workout, we got to mingle and chat with new friends. I got to know King Ing’s sister and her husband, whose daughter I had mentored in PLH years ago. We were glad to pass some reading material to our friends and pray that the seeds planted will grow.”

- Eld Jack Lum

“Seniors and youths high-fiving over a 3-ft net? That was the scene at our recent PSPC/Ignite Academy outreach.

Compact and easy to pick up, pickleball proved the perfect play medium for PSPC congregants and their invited guests to bond over.

Between patient coaching, friendly match-ups, gracious gamesmanship and discovering hidden talent, everyone got caught up in the skills and thrills of a truly fun and engaging game.

Fuelled by generous refreshments and great sideline fellowship, the day showed how a simple paddle and a “holey” ball can bring people together and provide fertile soil for missions through sport.”

- Dn Shaun Lee

“Very enjoyable pickleball event; met and made many new friends.

The coaching clinic was definitely a plus for beginners.

Thanks to PSPC and Ignite Academy for a very well organised event.”

- Kok Leong (Shaun’s Dad)



Mid-Year Teaching Camp 2026

Sharing by Sybil Lim



From 24 to 26 July 2026, the YACHT young adults gathered at a Changi CSC Chalet for our Mid-Year Teaching Camp. Away from the busyness of the city, time spent with fellow brothers and sisters at the brief retreat refreshed us, as Dr Jimmy Tan introduced us to Spiritual Formation.



Much was learnt from his three talks. We each gained a deeper understanding of our personalities and preferences, and we explored how we could use that to enrich our spiritual walk so that we can relate to God and our neighbour better. Then, we learnt about spiritual practices, among which

two were focused on and practised during the camp: a time of Silence and Solitude and Lectio Divina. Hearing about the role that silence plays in one's spiritual life was insightful; it facilitates the connection of the attitudes of our minds with our intentions and actions. In contrast to the more analytical methods of reading Scripture during Bible Studies, practising Lectio Divina exposed us to an alternative way of reading Scripture. It was one that encouraged us to be silent and listen closely to God's voice, allowing ourselves to be mastered by it as we go about the tasks of the day.

Apart from the spiritual food, we enjoyed the food from the nearby hawker centre and had a delicious BBQ dinner on the second day. We spent time having fun playing sports and watching a movie together, and we also enjoyed rich and edifying conversations over meals, one of which lasted well past midnight as we savoured our supper dessert.



We left the chalet on Sunday morning with hearts full, and each with a new book that well complements the camp's focus and encourages us to walk more closely with God every day. Thank God for the great camp experience, and thank you to the YACHT Leadership Team and the mentors for organising it!



Marketplace Commissioning [9 August 2026]

Photo by Julian Ong



I recently graduated from Nanyang Technological University with a degree in Environmental Science. I have been aspiring to go into environmental outreach, but I continue to seek God's direction on the specific subfield to enter. Please pray that God will guide me through this time of waiting, and for me to keep walking closely with Him. - **Gavin Chew**



I recently graduated from Nanyang Technological University with a Bachelor of Communication Studies. I'm currently exploring opportunities in the media and communications industry, particularly in content creation. I would really appreciate prayers that I'll continue to trust in God's providence, seek His direction, and remain faithful wherever He leads me next :) - **Cheryl Ho**



I studied Business at Singapore Management University, and I'm currently working in corporate banking. I hope I'll be able to be a good testimony at work; praying for God's wisdom, strength and love to be felt and embodied through me as I begin a new chapter in my life! - **Joanne Ho**



I recently graduated from SIM-RMIT with a Bachelor of Business (Finance). Please pray for my strength, guidance and trust in God during this new phase of life! - **Benjamin Lee**



I recently graduated from the National University of Singapore with a Bachelor of Laws and am currently studying for the Singapore Bar examinations which will take place this December, after which I'll begin my traineeship at WongPartnership in 2027. Please help me pray for God's wisdom and sustenance as I continue to navigate this new phase of life. - **Emily Ong**



I studied Public Policy in Sciences Po at the University of Tokyo. I will be starting work at the Ministry of Education (MOE) as a policy and communications officer. Please pray that I approach my work with God's wisdom, love and compassion as I learn to navigate an area sensitive and important to many Singaporeans. - **Esther Ong**



Children's MINISTRY CORNER

By Pr Carol Ng
Sunday School Superintendent

Sunday School's Missions-in-Focus Sunday: Love Carries the Heart of Jesus [26 July 2026]

Our Sunday School (the kindergarteners to P6s) gathered for a meaningful Missions-in-Focus Sunday where the children learned about God's heart for the nations through the theme "Love Carries the Heart of Jesus". The lesson, anchored on the theme verse, "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news" (Romans 10:15), reminded us that God calls His people to share the gospel with the world.

Our Sunday School children learned that missionaries faithfully bring the message of Jesus to people from different cultures and languages, often serving far from home. Why do they go? It is because of their love for God that they carry the heart of Jesus to many parts of the world, sharing His hope and salvation with those who have yet to hear the gospel.

During the programme, the children watched a special presentation entitled "Hello from Our Missionaries". Through the slides, they learned about our PSPC missionaries, where they serve, what ministries they are involved in, and how they can pray for them. It was a wonderful opportunity for the children to understand that missionaries are real people who serve God faithfully and need our encouragement and prayers.

The children also wanted to bless our missionaries by showing them that they are remembered and loved. Each Sunday School class prepared a specially designed card introducing themselves by sharing their favourite food, favourite places in Singapore, activities they enjoy with their parents, one

word that describes Jesus, and a question for their assigned missionaries. These thoughtful cards gave the children an opportunity to connect personally with the missionaries and to express their appreciation for their ministries.

The children also recorded short video greetings to encourage our PSPC missionaries and let them know that they are remembered, loved and prayed for. Along with a class photo from each class, these cards and video greetings will be sent to our missionaries as a reminder that their church family, PSPC, is

standing with them in prayer and support.

Adding a special touch, the Sunday School also sent the missionaries a recording of the children singing "Jesus Loves Me, This I Know" and "God Is So Good" in different languages during worship.

Missions-in-Focus Sunday was a meaningful reminder that "Missions" is not only about those who go, but also about those who pray, encourage, and partner in God's work. Even our youngest members can participate in God's mission by learning about missionaries, praying faithfully for them, and sharing the love of Jesus with others.

May God continue to grow in our children a heart for Missions — a heart that loves God, loves people, and carries the heart of Jesus wherever He leads. May our PSPC missionaries be encouraged and blessed as they experience God's love through the prayers, encouragement, and love of our Sunday School children.



GIRLS' BRIGADE (GB) 7TH COMPANY

~ 3rd Quarter Update



By Sharin Huang
Captain
7th Singapore Company

Over the past seven months, GB 7th Company has been actively involved in a wide range of events and activities during every parade. Throughout the year, the girls were given opportunities to plan and execute various projects, enabling them to develop their leadership skills while completing their badgework in accordance with the GB curriculum. Despite being a small company, each girl's strengths has shone through as they have grown in confidence, taken on greater responsibility, and built stronger bonds with one another, becoming a more united and supportive team.

Here are a few sharings from the girls:

Corporal QISYA



Being in the Girls' Brigade has given me many meaningful experiences and helped me grow as a person.

One of my favourite activities was visiting a cat café. At first, I was very afraid of the cats. My squadmates noticed how nervous I was and kindly moved the cats away from me so I would not panic. They encouraged me throughout the visit, and little by little, I became less afraid. I was grateful to have such caring and supportive friends.

Another memorable experience was the Girls' Brigade Singapore Friend in Deed (GBFD). My buddy and I packed the delivery items and delivered them to our beneficiary. Although our beneficiary was not at home, I still felt happy because I knew the items would make a difference to someone in need. After completing our delivery,

my squad planned a budget-friendly dinner, bought some snacks, and enjoyed a movie night together. It was a simple but meaningful way to spend time as a team.

I also enjoyed fundraising for GBFD. At first, I was nervous about approaching strangers, but many people were kind enough to donate and chat with me. We even exceeded our fundraising target within a short period of time. This experience helped me become more confident and taught me the importance of stepping out of my comfort zone.

Overall, these experiences have taught me to be more confident, caring, and willing to try new things. I will always treasure the memories, lessons, and friendships I gained through the Girls' Brigade.

Lance Corporal AMARA



There have been many experiences, memories, and challenges throughout the first six months of this year, including GBFD, Enrolment Service, and many other activities. Among them, the most memorable were NCOTC, the Annual GB Camp, and, coincidentally, the Uniformed Group (UG) Camp. Although the camps were exhausting, they were also incredibly enjoyable because they gave us the opportunity to spend quality time with our friends while working together as a team. We took part in many fun activities, such as early-morning exercises, bingo sessions, and movie night, during which we went out to buy snacks together. The delicious food at NCOTC also made the experience even more memorable.



The CCA Fair held by my school back in January was one of the biggest challenges I faced this year. It was not easy to capture the Sec 1 girls' attention and persuade them to join the Girls' Brigade, especially with so many other CCAs competing for their interest. However, that experience taught me the importance of perseverance, confidence, and clear communication. I also learned that things do not always go according to plan, so it is important to adapt to unexpected situations, stay prepared, and face challenges with confidence.



(Continued on Page 22)



Lance Corporal JANNAT KAUR

Over the past six months in the Girls' Brigade, I have experienced so many memorable moments that have helped me grow in confidence, leadership, and friendship. Looking back, I'm grateful to be part of such a supportive and caring company.



One of the highlights was taking part in Friend in Deed. It reminded me that even small acts of kindness can make a difference in someone's life. It was meaningful to serve others as a team and to learn the importance of caring for the people around us.



I also attended several camps, including the Non-Commissioned Officers' Training Camp (NCOTC), the Uniformed Group Camp, and our Company's camp. Although the camps were physically tiring, they were also a lot of fun. They taught me resilience, teamwork, and how to encourage one another through challenges. These experiences helped me step out of my comfort zone and become more confident.



Another memorable event was our Chinese New Year celebration. It was a wonderful opportunity to celebrate together, learn about different cultures, and enjoy spending time with one another. One of the best parts of Girls' Brigade has also been meeting new friends from different schools

and different companies. Even though we all came from different backgrounds, we quickly bonded through our shared experiences.

What I enjoy most about Girls' Brigade is the warm and welcoming environment. Every meeting is something I look forward to because there's always something fun to do, and of course, the snacks are always a nice bonus! Over time, I've also found the atmosphere to be more relaxed and comfortable, making it easier to talk to the Officers, Seniors, and my friends. It really feels like one big family where everyone encourages one another.



As we continue the year, I'm especially looking forward to the upcoming Drill Competition. We've been practising hard to choose the songs and decide the marching steps, and I'm excited to perform together as a team. No matter the outcome, I know it will be another valuable experience that will help us grow and create even more memories together.

These past six months have shown me that Girls' Brigade is more than just a CCA. It's a place where I've learned to serve others, build meaningful friendships, grow in confidence, and strengthen my faith. I'm thankful for everything I've experienced so far, and I'm excited to make even more memories and continue growing throughout the rest of my two years in the Girls' Brigade. At first, I felt a bit hesitant to join the Girls' Brigade because there weren't many people in the CCA, and I wasn't sure what to expect. I wondered if I would fit in or enjoy it. However, after spending the past six months in the Girls' Brigade, I can honestly say that joining was one of the best decisions I've made. The friendships I've built, the experiences I've had, and the lessons I've learned have made me look forward to every meeting. Girls' Brigade has become a place where I feel welcomed, supported, and encouraged to grow, and I'm truly grateful to be part of such an amazing company, the 7th Coy.



GIRLS' BRIGADE (GB) 8TH COMPANY

~ 3rd Quarter Update



By Jess Goh
Captain
8th Singapore Company

My experience in GB so far has been great. Most of our CCA sessions are quite long but always memorable. With my supportive and empathetic Officers, I feel more assured and welcomed in every CCA lesson. They always engage us in discussions and try to connect with us. Despite all these fun times, there are times when they have to discipline us. Instead of being dejected, I take it as constructive feedback to further improve myself! If it weren't for them, my GB experience would never be the same. I hope my juniors have the same eventful experiences in GB as I have had through the various activities and Officers.

– CPL Papachammagari Anvikha Reddy



GB Day 2026

My journey in the Girls' Brigade has been a smooth one. Though sometimes there are downs, such as during camp, when I could not do the yo-yo, I still had my friends and teachers to support me. Most of the time, Girls' Brigade helps me cope with the real world, teaching me self-discipline during drills and cheering me up when I feel down. In conclusion, I think this CCA helps me in my journey through life.

– CPL Crysta Koh



Anvikha giving her best shot



Drill lessons with help from BB Officers



Crysta (middle holding the diapers) and her friends buying gifts for beneficiaries

Being in GB has been very fulfilling for me. Ever since joining in P3, I've learned new skills, made new friends, and come to understand myself better. Experiences, such as raising funds, buying items for beneficiaries and giving them out, have taught me to sympathise with the less fortunate, to be humble when asking for donations, and how to interact with people I don't know. GB has many activities both within and outside school, such as making games for a vape-free campaign and camp. These activities have broadened my knowledge outside of just school academics. In a nutshell, my years in GB so far have been a lot of fun, as I've been able to meet so many new people and experience many things.

– CPL Shaine Teo



Shaine, a GB girl since P3 made her the best in Drill



Our GB Friend in Deed Fund Raising during recess time with badges and flowers made by the girls.



Archery lesson during our annual camp



Learning to spin plates



Welcoming the Secondary 1 girls with games

My experience in the Girls' Brigade has provided me more joy than I ever could have anticipated. When I first joined, I was unsure if I would enjoy it, considering the drills involved. However, over time, I found myself enjoying it more with each session, especially when our first batch of juniors joined! Aside from their adorable, young, innocent faces, I have better insight into what the younger generation enjoys nowadays. Although it makes me feel old, having juniors in the CCA really brightens up every single session we have. During camp, we had the chance to get to know our juniors and fellow girls better through activities like plate spinning! It was enjoyable to watch my friends show off tricks they learnt. I would open my mouth in shock as I watched the yo-yo fly up into the air. Overall, I feel like the Girls' Brigade is an amazing place to bond with girls around your age, especially since we have many opportunities, such as camps, competitions and charities!

– CPL Olivia Lam



Olivia (left) with her buddy, Shi Xuan

BOYS' BRIGADE (BB) 1ST COMPANY

~3rd Quarter Update



THE BOYS' BRIGADE

By Ho Yew Keong
Captain
1st Singapore Company

We had a very fulfilling 3rd quarter, successfully completing a good number of events.



2-3 June 2026: Standard First Aid course for Sec 2 Boys. A total of 24 Boys took the two-day course and passed all the requirements. They were awarded the First Aid badge and a two-year certificate.



22-24 June 2026: We held our Adventure Camp in the school compound this year. A total of 47 Boys and 22 Officers and Helpers came for this camp. Among them were Benedict Lee, Lewis Tham and some other ex-BB Officers and their wives. We had to complete the Adventure Practical module, which consisted of basha building, outdoor cooking, knot-tying and foot navigation. We also enjoyed dragonboating, bubble soccer and basketball sessions to keep the Boys running. We thank all the Teachers, Officers and Helpers who came forward to help at this camp.



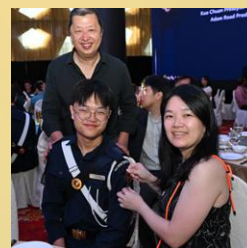
27 June 2026: Three of our Sec 4 Boys were awarded the Highest Award in the Senior Programme, the Founders Badge. These three Boys completed all the necessary steps which qualified them for the award.



SSG Adharsh



WO Alden Koh



WO Jose Liao

School's National Day Observation Parade

The Boys had been practising for the school's National Day Observation parade since the start of July. The parade was held on 7 August in the morning, followed by a celebration in the school. Nine of our Boys marched together with others from NCC and NPCC to form the Guard of Honour contingent, while the rest of the Boys were in the supporting contingent.



New Officer

Thank God for another church member, Tan Hiap Sing, who has agreed to join us as an Officer. He will be attending the Basic Officer Course in October. Pray that God will fill him with love for the Boys.

Musketry Badgework

A SAR21 arm drill practice was conducted after the National Day celebration for the Musketry Badgework. We also sent two teams for the Character Quest competition on 29 August 2026.

Prayer Points.

1. Pray for the Boys as they prepare for their year-end examinations right after the September school holiday.
2. Pray that we will be able to complete all our planned badgework.
3. Pray for wisdom and strength as we guide and nurture the Boys.

BB Alumni 1st SA Singapore Visit to BB Thailand

11 Alumni from BB Alumni 1st SA Singapore visited BB Thailand from 22 to 30 July. They were hosted by Lim Kien Ann, Executive Director of BB Thailand. They visited two BB Companies there, had a good exchange, and even visited and prayed for the upcoming Learning Centre which BB Thailand is going to build.



Praying for the Learning Centre



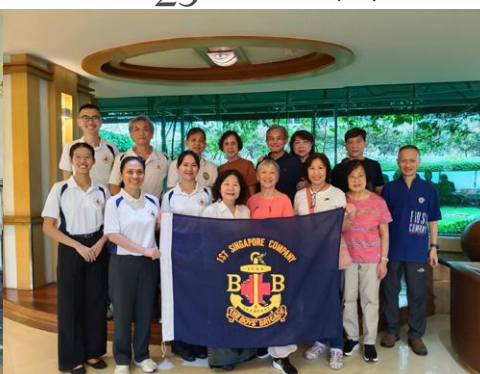
At the Thai Christian School, the sponsoring school for the BB 1st Bangkok Company. (The late Rev Carl Blanford was a key figure in the building of the school.)



Having a fun time with BB 1st Bangkok Company



Joined the members of the BB 1st Chiang Mai Company in distributing food to the community



Connecting with Tse Yuen and staff of Wycliffe Foundation Thailand

IN & AROUND PSPC

Weddings



We are **Caleb Lee and Esther Ong** and we got married on **22 August 2026**. We met in 2022 through a mutual friend and dated long-distance almost all the way until marriage. Caleb has been attending the Chinese service since 2025 and Esther grew up in PSPC (although she's been studying abroad for the past 5 years). We look forward to serving others through our marriage. Please pray for us as we adjust to married life and figure out what God's plan is for us as a married couple!

We are **Ng Keng Gene and Gillian Chong** and we got married on **18 July 2026**. We are thankful for our cell group and the greater church community, and for how they have journeyed with us in different stages of our relationship. At marriage prep class, we were asked to draw an animal that represents each other – Keng Gene drew a sloth because of the slow, controlled manner in which Gillian climbs, and Gillian drew a stick insect because, well, it's self-explanatory.



We are **Justin Choy and Megan Teo** and we got married on **25 July 2026**. We thank God for His faithful guidance in our lives, from our growing-up years in church to the joyful day of our wedding. We are deeply grateful to our church family and mentors who have prayed for, encouraged, and walked alongside us through every season. As we rejoin the church family as a married couple, we look forward to continuing to grow, serve, and walk in faith together with you all.

"Being confident of this, that He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus." — Philippians 1:6
Let us press on together in faith!

The Arts Fellowship
& Creation Care
Art Jam Session
[29 September 2026]



PSPC Updates

(Aug 2026 - Present)

DEATHS

Alice Heng Guek Khim
17.08.2026

Chew Sung Hue
22.08.2026



Our youth worship leaders, Samantha and Owen, leading the congregation with an opening prayer.

My Experiences at Church Camp 2026!

By Isaac Wat

I went to the church camp this year in Johor Bahru, and I'd like to share my experience. I couldn't quite follow the talks, unfortunately, but I'm grateful to my buzz group for helping me grasp the gist. We had meaningful conversations about the talks' takeaways, and it was eye-opening to hear what others learnt. It was encouraging to hear about my friend's experiences of encountering God.

The Lighthouse youth went out together for a few activities: KTV at the nearby mall and sports at XPark Iskandar Puteri. I was initially apprehensive about KTV, but I'm glad I went. Despite my horrendous singing "ability", I enjoyed singing different songs together with my friends. At XPark, I thoroughly enjoyed playing futsal and badminton with friends. I had never played futsal before, but I looked forward to it regardless. Badminton was fun as always, and I had a blast and a good workout to boot. I really enjoyed the activities with the Lighthouse youth.

Theme night was fascinating. It was fun seeing how different groups created costumes based on the given theme: "Construction Zone: Building memories together". I was rather impressed by the creativity shown. A memorable part was definitely the game segment. Four teams from different age groups were given the task of building "PSPC" using the given materials in 5 minutes, with each member assigned a different limitation. It really showed how each member of the church has different strengths, and we all had to work together to successfully build the church, which was no easy feat.

To conclude, I thoroughly enjoyed church camp this year. I thank the church camp committee for doing such a wonderful job this year, and would strongly recommend people to attend church camp next year.



Our Lighthouse youths having an intense game of bubble futsal!

Known and Loved: Reflecting on Youth Sunday

By Chloe Cheam

Attending the Youth Sunday service at Prinsep Street Presbyterian Church (PSPC) was a special and memorable experience. When the worship team began to play and the congregation started singing together, it made me feel at peace. Watching the youth and young adults serve together, whether by leading worship, reading Scripture, or serving behind the scenes, was very heartwarming. Although I was not part of the worship team or the service team for Youth Sunday, I found their passion for service very inspiring. It made me reflect on my role as a writer for the Messenger newsletter's PLH section. It was a clear reminder for me that God uses many people, regardless of their gifts or abilities, to serve our church community for His purposes.

The music was lively and upbeat, helping me focus entirely on God's love. When the sermon was shared, I found the message clear and the testimony relatable, and it made me think about my own daily walk with God and the anxieties I've shared with Him. The sermon emphasised

God as our great comforter, who meets us where we are and loves us unconditionally. The closing worship song, Known and Loved, was most comforting. It is assuring to be seen and cared for by God, even with our struggles and insecurities. I left the service feeling grateful to God and to the caring community of PLH, where we can all grow together in faith, no matter how young or old we are, and no matter where we are in our journey with God.



Chloe (right) and her sister Jacqueline, showing support for their friends in the youth worship team.

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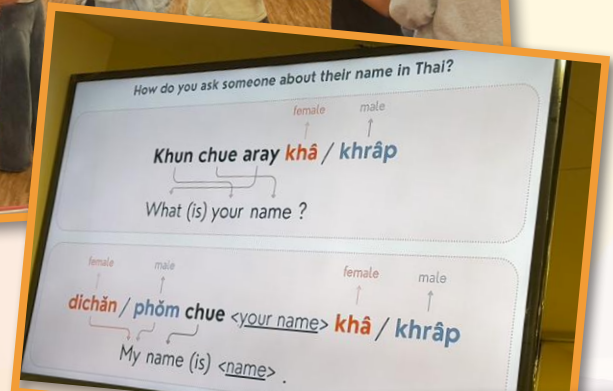
Missions is For Everyone

By Ivan Tay

In July, in line with the church-wide Missions-in-Focus emphasis, PLH organised a series of activities where youths learnt about missions in its various permutations. These included Uncle Tse Yuen sharing about his work in Thailand, writing notes of encouragement to missionaries, and another session where Dr Looi enticed us with beautiful pictures from her ministry in Blue Mountain Kelong. Much laughter also transpired when PLH youths learnt to worship God through Thai action songs.



Learning to worship God through Thai action songs



The session that really impacted me was the one where a handful of PSPC young adults shared about their mission trip to Northern Thailand last year. As I am not really familiar with what these short-term mission trips actually involve, the sharing was an eye-opener for me. I listened with interest as they shared details of the various activities the teams were involved in in Chiang Mai and Chiang Rai, and their honest appraisal of the difficulties and challenges on these trips, like the language barrier with locals.

Seeing that the mission teams were made up of people of a variety of ages taught me that age should not stop us from participating in mission work. I also appreciated the clear presentation, which greatly enhanced my understanding of what PSPC's Northern Thailand mission trips entail. My main takeaway from the sharing was that mission work may have a greater impact than we think, and that anyone can participate in God's mission.



Hearing the heartfelt sharing by short-term mission trippers

For enquiries, please contact Dn Shaun Lee at shaunlee@pspc.org.sg