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# WITNESS



A publication of Christ Methodist Church

# Crossing Cultures

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## EDITORIAL TEAM

CMC Communications Chairperson **Michele Soh** | Editor **Elena May Gudgeon** | Layout Artist **Christine Teo (First Printers)** | Pastor-In-Charge **Edmund de Souza**.

**CHRIST METHODIST CHURCH** | 597 EAST COAST ROAD | SINGAPORE 429082 | TEL: 6345 3934 | [WWW.CMC.ORG.SG](http://WWW.CMC.ORG.SG)

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A word from the  
**Editor**

**Elena May Gudgeon**

Have you ever tasted Mulligatawny? It's an Indian soup that was adapted by the British, and I'd never even heard of it until a local chef made available her version of it on the menu a couple of months ago. Blew my mind. As did many of the regional vegetarian dishes that my housemate from India whipped up in our kitchen recently without ever once referring to a recipe.

We live in such a richly diverse and colourful world that it would be such a shame to never venture beyond the comfort of our known culture to experience the amazing things other humans have created.

Food may be the easiest to connect with, but there's also textiles, music, art, dance, hairstyles, cleaning methods, healing remedies, gadgety things, theology, language, literature and a whole host of intriguing non-verbal communication that other cultures have developed.

Our God is so wonderfully inventive and multifaceted that his children all over the world reflect different aspects of who He is and what He values. If we can only train our mind to focus on searching out reflections of Him in each brother and sister that we meet, then it will never be too daunting to connect with someone of a different culture or appearance.

Many of the stories in this issue illustrate this, and give courage to those of us yet to embark on our planned overseas missions. They also inspire us to consider all there is to gain from venturing into the unfamiliar, hand-in-hand with the one who created it all.

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To submit feedback, story ideas, or testimonies to this magazine, please email [elena.gudgeon@cmc.org.sg](mailto:elena.gudgeon@cmc.org.sg)



A WORD  
FROM YOUR  
PASTOR

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# FEARLESSLY MAKE KNOWN

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BY **BARNABAS CHONG**

The supernatural walk of a believer in Christ is not only all about the exciting stuff like prophecies, healing, miracles, signs and wonders. It is also about being a fearless witness of Christ, making known the gospel in uncomfortable and unfavourable circumstances! Honestly, I do not know of many believers who would do that today.

The Apostle Paul was a man full of the Spirit and he demonstrated the power of the Holy Spirit in his ministry.


**“Pray also for me, that whenever I open my mouth, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it fearlessly, as I should.”**

**~ Ephesians 6:19-20**

Here he asked the Ephesian believers to pray for him so that whenever he spoke, words may be given to him by the Lord so that he will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel. And this request was made when he was actually in prison for preaching the gospel! Nothing and no one could stop him from telling others about Jesus. Why? It is simply because Paul was full of the Spirit.

But how many people who claim to be Spirit-filled today would preach Christ fearlessly like Paul? The Christian faith today can be rather consumeristic – with an unhealthy fixation on receiving and being blessed rather than giving and blessing others. The result of it is that churches can, and have in some cases, lost their passion for the lost and have allowed it to be replaced by a passion for church activities that merely excite Christians but do not convert souls.

The heart of the Christian faith is about Jesus, who came to seek and save the lost. If our Christianity does not involve seeking and saving of the lost, then we have lost the heart of the Christian faith. And all our Christian/church activities are meaningless no matter how cool we look and how vibrant our church may appear.

Let us pray that you, me, and all Christians may truly walk in the fullness of the Spirit, and be fearless witnesses of Christ and all He has done. May the Holy Spirit restore to us a passion for those who are lost so that the church will never be a luxury cruise but always remain a rescue boat. 

*Extracted from entries #114 “Fearlessly Make Known” and #182 “The Heart of the Christian Faith” in Daily, a Devotional by Barnabas Chong.*



# Crossing Cultures

BY ASHWIN SAMUEL & ELENA GUDGEON

Chai  
3:16

**WHAT COMPELS A PERSON TO TRAVEL TO EVERY COUNTRY IN THE WORLD (INCLUDING ANTARCTICA) IN THE SHORT SPAN OF 6 YEARS, 6 MONTHS AND 22 DAYS, AND BREAK THE WORLD RECORD AS THE FASTEST MAN EVER TO VISIT ALL 257 COUNTRIES IN THE WORLD?**

Dr Benny Prasad strongly believes there is a pressing need for the hope of Christ in all countries in the world, and that someone needs to tell them about it. So he did.

“In some places there is a need because they’ve never heard the gospel before. Other places have many nominal Christians who have never had a personal encounter with Jesus and do not have a personal understanding of salvation. And then there are places where people have known the gospel but they have backslidden, fallen away from God, and they need someone to encourage them to come back.

But Benny didn’t start out in life as the most likely candidate to become a globetrotting musician and evangelist.

Being a sickly child who also continuously failed at many academic endeavours, Benny grappled with deep depression and thoughts of suicide in his teenage years. But after experiencing the life-transforming power that followed his first encounter with Jesus, he set out to encourage others in every nation to believe God for miracles and purpose in life.

He has performed Christian worship music on the bongo-guitar (which he invented himself) in front of presidents and Olympians, and although he lives without a full set of healthy lungs, he often also plays the pan flute at his concerts to testify to the fact that nothing is impossible with God.

Although he is often introduced as a musician to the crowds, he keeps his Christian testimony as the centerpiece of every performance, taking more time to tell his story than he does to perform music.

“My music has been secondary to my testimony. Even though everyone loves music and every people group has music, it can be quite subjective to individual’s tastes. Some people might like rock music, some like jazz, some like classical, so even though I am a musician I can potentially put off a listener who doesn’t like the genre of music I play. I have seen a greater positive response towards the stories I share about my life’s journey.”

In order to connect with people across different cultures and traditions, Benny employs a principle called ‘using the known to reach the unknown’. He first tries to find some common ground between himself and the person he is conversing with. “If I meet a footballer, I could talk about my performance at the FIFA World Cup. If I meet a scientist or innovator, I could chat about the processes of inventing a guitar. Then I start to bring in the aspect of who Jesus is to me and how my life changed after I met him.”

Where there are significant language barriers, Benny relies on translators or videos that are in the local dialect. He whips out his mobile phone and loads the video, offers them earphones and says “hey, can you watch this story?”


These days, Benny spends more of his time in his hometown of Bangalore at café Chai3:16, a non-commercial, 400 seater café which he set up as a venue for frustrated students and young adults to come and have a free cup of tea and chat with trained counsellors and Christian volunteers.





Volunteers from around the world and from all walks of life serve as waiters and waitresses there, and take time to listen to the problems of patrons. Their goal is to have them leave the café feeling loved and valued, the way Jesus loves and values all of us. The facility also has 10 rooms that can accommodate 20 full time staff and 7 rooms for 28 people who wish to serve on short-term mission trips.

Partnering him in this ministry is Zanbeni, who comes from a small, picturesque Indian state called Nagaland. They married in August last year after what Benny jokingly refers to his “40 years of wandering in the desert.” They first met at a Youth With A Mission (YWAM) event and their relationship blossomed as they worked together on the Chai3:16 project.

“She sings but I can’t. I play an instrument but she can’t. I can talk. She can listen well. So this ministry of testimony sharing and listening and music is really a beautiful God-given blend in our efforts to reach out to the lost.” 



**Join Benny and Zanbeni in their efforts to bless the well-educated young people of Bangalore this year by signing up to be part of the team that CMC is putting together to visit Chai3:16 from 28 July to 2 August.**

Check our website [cmc.org.sg/gonations.htm](http://cmc.org.sg/gonations.htm) (Trip code: INB1) for more information and online registration.

You can also visit [chai316.com](http://chai316.com) or search YouTube for more information about the café outreach project.





**ASHWIN** is originally from India (Chennai), and relocated to Singapore in 2011. He has found that the joy of being in the Lord's presence is something all God's people share and celebrate, no matter which country they belong to.



**ELENA** was born in the UK to an English father and Penang-born Chinese mother, and has learned that love can overcome even the most challenging cultural differences.





# TOAST & BUTTER'S *Bintan Adventure*

BY SARAH TAN AND T&B CARE GROUP

**I belong to an IGNITE youth ministry care group called Toast & Butter (or T&B for short).**

We are a small group of 19-year-old growing Christians shepherded by two incredibly patient young adults, Sean Teoh and Odelia Lim. The bulk of us have just begun our final year in our tertiary institutions, and the others will soon be

embarking on a new journey in different universities.

On the second weekend in March we set off on our very first outreach trip to Bintan as a care group. This was the Saturday after most of us had just finished our last exam paper of the season. We were all excited but also a little fearful – it was the first time many of us had done something like

this, but we also knew God had incredible things in store for us in Bintan.

We filed up the Tanah Merah Ferry Terminal jetty with passport in hand, guitar slung over the shoulder of our most musical member, all of us still trying to remember the song lyrics and dance moves we had learned a couple of days ago.

The main focus of this trip was children's ministry and we had been asked to prepare three worship songs with dance actions to go along with them for a session of children's worship. Hui Yan took care of preparing PowerPoint slides for the songs, Rebecca cooked up the dance moves, and our musically gifted guys Kendrick and Daniel were selected to lead worship using a portable set of speakers. The rest of us... well we were the 'extras'. (But we didn't mind!)

When it comes to children, you could split T&B nicely into two groups – the 'Swooners' and the 'Walk-Away-ers'. I was excited to see how God would use the bunch of us to engage the children regardless of our preferences, and I was not disappointed! My CG mates rose to the occasion and got the Bintan kids to join in with the singing and dancing.

By the end of the worship session, most of us were drenched in sweat! Kendrick even unknowingly managed to rally a group of young 'followers' who would chase him around the village and challenge him to multiple handstand-offs.

Not everything went perfectly according to plan though. When we reached the village, we were told there had been an electricity blackout since the previous day. That meant that we could no longer use our PowerPoint slides or portable speakers as planned. We thanked God for the mahjong paper and markers that were handed to us in the nick of time, and guitar we had decided to bring along.

The team had also planned for a video to be screened after the worship segment, and there was really no way to show it to the huge crowd of except by using a projector. But without electricity that was useless.

I uttered a quick prayer for electricity before worship started, and then we launched into the handwritten songs. Right after we had finished singing the last song, I noticed the fan in front of me suddenly begin to oscillate! That meant the electricity was back and the video lesson was saved! This incident was such a great reminder to all of us that God is closer than we think and that in His time, everything will be made perfect.

The following day, one group of us visited homes to chat with locals, while another group explored the village on foot and prayed. I was in the latter group. As we walked around, it dawned on me that almost every house I passed had a piece of red paper stuck above its entrance, indicating that a Buddhist or Taoist family lived there. But then we came to a house that looked different – they had stuck a cross above their main door.

I felt God impress on me that the cross was there because someone had been praying for this family. Then I realised each of us could make a significant difference to the village because one more person praying meant an even louder cry to the heavens.

We all left Bintan touched by God in some way, with different lessons in our hearts. Before going there I had asked God for a testimony to share when I came back. I thank Him for being able to share this with Witness and at Ignite youth service. 🙏



**TOAST & BUTTER** has a CG catchphrase that goes like this: "Our life is a zoo and Jesus is our zookeeper." Sarah still gets confused by that catchphrase every now and again.

**IN PAST YEARS, WHENEVER I CONSIDERED GOING ON AN OVERSEAS OUTREACH TRIP, THE THOUGHT ALWAYS TRIGGERED A KNOT OF PERPETUAL DOUBT AND SELF-QUESTIONING: I DON'T KNOW THE GOSPEL WELL ENOUGH. WHAT DO I HAVE TO SHARE? I'M NOT GOOD WITH WORDS.**

These thoughts were coupled with uncertainties about the mission field that further held me back: Will there be clean toilets? What if I get rejected?

Stanley and I had committed to serve and grow together in our walk with Christ after our wedding last September, but neither of us had ever been on a mission trip and struggled with inertia about it. But during the GoNations conference we attended at CMC in January, I found my heart stirred by speaker Joseph Chean's challenge for us to step out of our comfort zone and answer our Father's call. In particular, I was struck by the question, "have our blessings become a stumbling block for reaching out to His nations?" Surely, this is not our Father's intent.

We signed on to be part of a group of 20, including three children, which was led by our church staff Hoi Kok Fu. The 2-Day 1-Night trip was focused on giving free medical care to locals but there were other roles which did not require medical training.

Stanley was assigned to 'glucose screening' while my role as 'befriender' was to chat with locals waiting in line to be seen by one of our doctors. As the locals in the village primarily spoke Bahasa Indonesia and Teochew, I doubted if I could converse with them. But I was reminded of 2 Corinthians 12:9 and 1

Corinthians 1:27-29, which assures us that God does not call the equipped but rather He equips the called. Furthermore, we were not alone but supported by many other CMC team members on the trip, as well as a local facilitator.

On the morning we set up the medical clinic, queues

# Blessed

## BY BINTAN



had started forming at the registration counter even before we opened. It was heartwarming to see how every CMC team member sprang into action and gave their all to serving these people.

Throughout the day children from Singapore and Bintan played and bonded with one

another through a game of Jenga despite not speaking the same language. And even when one villager came by after we had closed the clinic for the day, my fellow team member Doctor Sunil went up to the door and ushered her in saying “Come! Come!” Clearly God was at work in our midst.

I was deeply impressed by a family of three that I met on one of our home visits. This is not the nuclear family unit that we are used to – a 60-year old grandmother was living with her two grandchildren, aged five and three. I later learned that the children had been abandoned by their father even before the younger was born.

Their mum is only 23 years old and works as a performer to make ends meet, so she is often travelling and has to leave the children in their grandmother’s care. I was deeply impacted by the innocence of these two children and how attached they were to their grandmother as the main caregiver and comforter.


Our translator, Ah Gim, also shared that this grandmother had decided to dispose of all religious altars in her home and disassociate herself with her past beliefs after she came to know Christ through caring friends. Her neighbours had frowned on this decision, but she had boldly declared to them that love and sincerity



demonstrated by the church during her time of hardship is what convinced her that Jesus is the true way. Praise the Lord!

With God’s grace and strength, Stanley and I have taken the first step to untie the knot of doubt and self-questioning we had been wrestling with for a long time, and step out of our comfort zone to bless others.

In return we have both been abundantly blessed by the testimonies of locals we met in Indonesia. We learned so much from the children there who worshipped freely and gave us their undivided attention when we shared stories with them.

Will you too open your heart to answer God’s call to be a blessing and be blessed? 

BY CHIN CHAINN MIIN



**CHAINN MIIN** is married to Stanley Cheok, and both are seekers of spicy food and scenic treks. They are part of WAH! (Walking

Alongside Him) Care Group and serve as CG leaders with IGNITE youth ministry. They are also happy ‘parents’ of two dogs named Koko and Rocher.



# CHRIST METHODIST CHURCH IN THE FIELD



BINTAN



NEPAL April 2017



THAILAND March 2017





CAMBODIA May 2017



# Rustic Thailand

BY GENESIS LIM

## A PORTRAIT OF RURAL LIFE IN THE HIGHLANDS

**FAR FROM THE TOURISTY AND CROWDED BEACHES OF PHUKET AND THE STREETS OF BANGKOK, THE THAILAND HIGHLANDS ARE AN OASIS OF GREEN FORESTS AND FRESH MOUNTAIN AIR.**

Here you will discover a diverse mix of local people groups holding firm to their traditions and preserving a unique culture that has endured many centuries in this remote corner of the world.

The 3-hour journey by jeep up to the mountains is akin to the windy turns of the Singapore Formula One race except the road is unpaved, and so the ride is a little bumpy and dusty at times. Once you have reached the top, be prepared to be welcomed by curious and excited locals, some dressed in colourful handwoven tunics.

Known to be hospitable, they will open their homes to you, one after another, and invite you to sing and fellowship with them. Their simple homes are perched on stilts, with split bamboo walls and floors, and thatch roofs. A fair number of chickens, cows and pigs are kept under the houses at night.





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*“Go out with joy and be led forth with peace. The mountains and hills will burst into song before you!”*

*~ Isaiah 56:12*

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As you talk with them you'll learn that the tribal folks living in these rural parts have limited access to medical treatment, and so many of the elderly suffer from persistent coughs and body aches without relief, while the children suffer from severe toothaches. If you are a medical professional or have a background in medicine, these villagers greatly need your advice and help.

Meal time is a homely and casual affair, with everyone seated in a circle on floor mats. Although the food prepared by a local family is simple, one can definitely sense warmth and generosity as the meal is shared.

Sleeping bags, soft yoga mats and warm pajamas are strongly recommended as the night is chilly and there are no mattresses up in these highland villages. (Imagine trying to drive a big mattress up the mountain road!) But although the sleeping conditions are different from home, you can also expect a wonderfully memorable surprise as night falls in the rural highlands.

Looking up at the night sky, you will be filled with awe at the vast number of stars visible to the naked eye, and if you are alert enough, you may even spot a shooting star or two! What you've read in Genesis 15:5 will begin to really come alive: "Now look toward the heavens, and count the stars – if you are able to count them," God said to Abraham.



CMC is running a number of outreach trips to villages in these Thailand highlands this year which involve visiting local churches, running activities for children and giving free medical consultation to villagers. If you set out to visit Thailand with the intention of being a blessing and showing God's love to locals, I guarantee you will be amazed how God works in lands different to ours, and you will return from the trip greatly blessed!

Visit [www.cmc.org.sg/gonations.htm](http://www.cmc.org.sg/gonations.htm) for more details. 



**GENESIS** is part of a Care Group called "5 Loaves and 2 Fishes" and has a 'twin sister' in church called Odelia (actually not twins, just sisters, but people often mistake them for each other!). Genesis is pictured here with a new friend from Thailand.

# Leading Ladies

ONE OF CMC'S NEW PARTNERS IN BLESSING THE PEOPLE OF URBAN THAILAND IS KLONG PAED METHODIST CHURCH IN THE THANYABURI DISTRICT, JUST NORTH OF BANGKOK. THIS FLEDGLING CHURCH HAS ONLY BEEN AROUND FOR A YEAR AND A HALF AND IS HEADED BY A STRONG TEAM OF YOUNG LADIES WHO HAVE BECOME FRIENDS AND PARTNERS WITH CMC IN RECENT MONTHS.



## MISS SARANYA RABINJET

*Affectionately known to her flock as "Pastor Kuk"*

I have been a pastor at Thanyaburi Klong Paed Methodist Church for 1 year and 6 months. We have about 30-40 worshippers at our Sunday service, and we also run a Wednesday evening cell group. Our vision for this year is "We must go out and serve others because God loves us." My desire is to make disciples that make other disciples.

I have a team serving with me, but because I am the only full time staff, it has been a

challenge for us to meet together and get things done. For example, we started a Saturday class to teach English to children, but we had to stop this activity because our church members were unable to continue running it.

I also need to go out and visit the homes of people who stay near our church, to get to know them and invite them to our church. But because I am a single lady, I often need to wait for church members to be free to accompany me on these visits, especially when I am visiting men.

We have many youth in our church but they are so new that they don't know much about how to plan or execute activities. This neighbourhood is quiet so we need to do children's camps and English classes to attract the children to us. Hopefully they enjoy themselves and learn so much that their parents will trust us to send their children to church regularly.

We also need help discipling our youths so that they become spiritually mature as they serve in ministry. Some of our worship team members just play instruments, but I want them grow in their spiritual walk too.

Please consider coming to partner with me in growing our young congregation, and teaching English to our neighbourhood children.



### **MISS WANJAKREE SRIPRAI ('Aey')**

*Worship Leader and worship team manager*

"I come from a non-Christian family. When I was a university student in Chiang Mai, I met a Korean missionary family that took care of me very well and that was when I decided to receive Jesus. My family didn't accept me being a Christian and as a result we fought a lot. In fact, I was kicked out of the family until about 5 years ago, but never mind, I believe Jesus will heal the hurt in me and that He will always reaffirm my worth. Today I am good with my family, but they are not Christian yet. I believe a seed was planted in them through me, and I hope that one day my family will come to know Jesus too."



### **MRS VENUS SAIPROMJEA ('Kwang')**

*LCEC chairwoman and ice cream shop owner*

"I try to use my ice cream shop to reach out to people in this neighbourhood. Last year we organized a Christmas party and announced that we were giving away free snow ice desserts. A few hundred people turned up and I had the chance to share the gospel with them. Many showed interest in Christianity but we didn't have enough manpower to follow up with them one by one after the event. They have already heard the gospel, but we need some assistance from your church teams to visit and follow up with them, and invite them to church again."



### **MISS PORNTHIPHA SAKSRISUWAN ('May')**

*LCEC secretary and children's ministry leader*

"I am from a non-Christian family. I accepted Christ at age 17, but it took a long time and a lot of patience to prove to my parents that my decision to become a Christian was a good one. Thank God for the brothers and sisters in Christ who took turns to visit my mother at home, over several years, and show her God's love. She finally agreed to open her home for our Christmas caroling activity, and finally, in 2015, she came to church with me and accepted Christ. I continue to pray that my father will understand what the love of Christ is, be open to coming to church, and that the whole family can one day worship together."



**GOD SEES TO ALL OUR  
NEEDS AND CARES FOR  
ALL HIS CHILDREN.**

# IF I CAN, so can you!

BY **EVELYN KHOO**

**GOING ON TWO OUTREACH TRIPS TO INDIA IN 2015 AND 2016 PROVED TO BE A GREAT BLESSING TO ME, AND HELPED RID ME OF MY INHERENT FEARS, PREJUDICES AND RACISM.**

Before I left on the first trip I was full of fears. To encourage and help me, God gave me a caring and prayerful roommate who even prayed over our bedroom in India! On the second trip I shared my room with a young, God-fearing university student. Both these room mates were such a blessing to me, as I am in my 80s and not as quick on my feet as I used to be!


In the mornings we visited villages and distributed rice to needy families. After sharing God's word and love with the crowds gathered there, we offered to minister to locals who asked for prayer. One of my greatest fears was praying for the sick, but we had been given training on how to pray for healing, and it was very heartwarming to see how Jesus healed the blind, enabled the lame to walk and brought relief to many who had other physical ailments. We also had students asking God to help with their studies, couples asking God for help to conceive, and many others who just desired anointing or blessings from God. I was very touched to see the great faith these poor people had.

On one occasion, a lady with a very feverish baby asked me to pray for her little one. In Singapore we parents would be very frightened

if any of our children had such a high fever! I felt compassion for this mother and child, but all I had to offer at that moment was prayer. So I reminded myself that it is God who heals, not us, and then I just prayed. After my prayer, the little baby lifted her head and smiled at me, and I thanked the Lord and praised His name. O what joy I felt!

How blessed we all are here in Singapore!

When I saw the conditions in which many Indians live, I asked God to forgive us for complaining although we have so much. He even provides for us outside of Singapore when we are on mission. In 2015 our team managed to depart the Chennai airport just before it was shut down due to heavy flooding and bad weather. In 2016 He provided an alternative venue for one of our night rallies when it began to rain heavily.

Don't worry about your safety, comfort and inadequacies during a mission trip. God sees to all our needs and cares for all his children. If I can manage a trip, so can you! Join our CMC outreach efforts while you are still in good health and your legs are still able to walk. 

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**EVELYN** is an active granny who loves travelling, cooking, sewing, and experiencing life to the fullest. She went on 3 mission trips to Cambodia and India while in her late 70s and early 80s, and though she is a little less mobile now, she still desires to serve God in whatever way she can. She has 4 children and 11 grandchildren (whom she regularly serves as chauffeur).



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**COMMIT EVERYTHING  
TO GOD – THAT’S WHAT  
MY JOURNEY HAS  
TAUGHT ME.”**

# Through the Darkest Storm

BY **JENNY TAN**

**LILA AGUSTIRANA WAS IN HER EARLY 20S AND PREGNANT WITH HER FIRST CHILD WHEN HER HUSBAND DIED IN A TRAGIC ACCIDENT IN BALI. SHE SHARES HOW LEANING ON GOD AND FAMILY HELPED HER DEEPEN HER FAITH DURING THIS DARK PERIOD.**

“I grew up in Bali living with my parents and sister. Life there was simple, but very happy. My mother is a Christian and my father is not, but he gave us the freedom to choose what we want to believe in. So I followed my grandmother to church from the time I was young, and believe that Jesus is the one who has held me up during the darkest times of my life.

In 2013, I married a young, hardworking man from Surabaya who was employed in Bali. We were so in love! But shortly after our marriage, his motorbike crashed into a truck and he died instantly. At a young age, I became a widow.


I cried so much and could not eat for days. I would often visit the church, sit in the sanctuary by myself and cry. At the time nobody knew I was pregnant, but when friends eventually found out, some advised that I abort the child because I was young and still had many years ahead of me. Life can still go on, they said. Perhaps I would have the chance to remarry.

I know that if I did not have Jesus in my life, at that point I would have crumbled. Their advice seemed logical, but it was not something

I could go through. Knowing that God was with me and that a child was growing inside me gave me strength I never knew I had. Slowly, I found the courage to accept what had happened, and took small steps to move on after grieving.

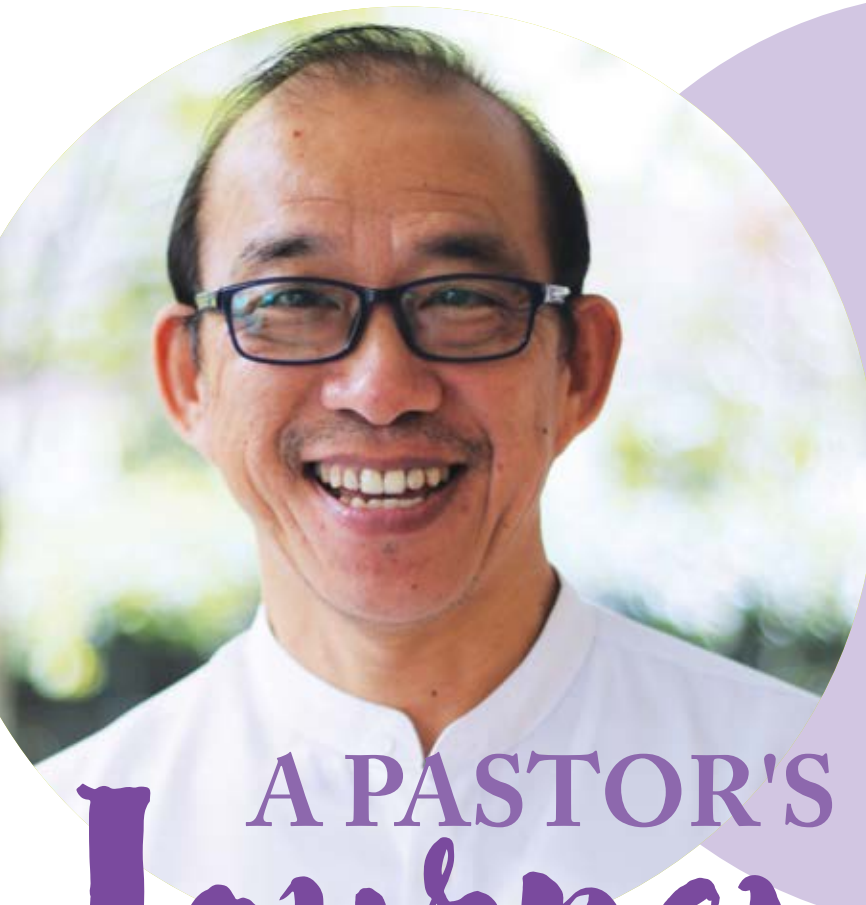
I really thank God for the family I work for in Singapore, who helped and supported me a lot during that difficult season, waiting patiently until I could settle all my problems before getting back to my duties. My sister and friends back home also helped me out financially, because of the many medical check-ups I had to go through during my pregnancy. It really takes a village to raise a child.

My baby girl is now almost 2 years old. I am contented with life and came to visit Christ Methodist Church this year with my employer. It is nice to be able to worship God with a church family.

Sometimes, people ask me if I will get married again, but it is not my focus. For now I am devoted to my child and my family, and even though I have no husband, I know that with Jesus I can be strong in character, love others and grow in the fruit of the Spirit through any adversity”. 



**JENNY** attends Bethel CG and has been working in the Food & Beverage communications field for 15 years.



# A PASTOR'S Journey

BY **ASHWIN SAMUEL**

## GETTING TO KNOW THE EVER CHEERFUL PASTOR VINCENT GOH!

### WISDOM ACCRUED:

55 Years

### KAMPONG DAYS:

Pastor Vincent grew up in a multi-generation household of four families that lived together in a Chinatown shop house. His father and uncle owned a rattan business together.

### TUMMY DELIGHTS:

He names spicy Peranakan food like ayam buah keluak as his favourite cuisine.

### INCLINATIONS:

You may find it hard to believe that Pastor Vincent is by nature an introvert, but he actually looks forward to spending quiet time by himself, with a good book and a cup of coffee. Oftentimes he morphs into an extravert in order to

connect with and effectively minister to others.

### THE MISSUS:

He first met Shu Yann when she was managing a Scripture Union book store that he frequented, but it was only when he was seconded to New Life College in Bangalore that they really connected. Her mission team visited India, and the 16-hour train ride from Bangalore to Goa gave them the opportunity to talk and get to know each other better. Their relationship blossomed in the mission field, and they have now been married for 27 years. (Lesson: if you're single and ready to mingle, try a mission experience!)

### THE PROGENY:

Pastor Vincent and Shu Yann have two children – Abraham, 26, works as a civil engineer, and Grace, 25, works full-time at Bedok Methodist Church.

### MYSTICAL THRILLS:

Vincent was exposed to multiple religions at a very young age because his non-Christian parents were serious about their personal religion. As a youth he assisted in a Chinese house temple and spent nights at the temple, but also learned to say prayers like Hail Mary and the Lord's Prayer during his education in Roman Catholic primary and secondary schools.



### ENCOUNTERING CHRIST:

In his pre-university days, he was befriended by many earnest Christians who met together to pray, made it known they were praying for him every day, and persistently asked him to visit their church. He resisted for many months but finally relented and had his very first church experience, at which he was unexpectedly drawn to the Lord! He said yes and committed to give his life to Jesus right there and then.

### THE STRUGGLE:

Becoming able to live out that commitment was not an overnight process for Pastor Vincent though. There were many days he would go to church in the morning and then visit the Chinese house temple in the evening. He even progressed to become assistant to a Chinese medium there, but the spiritual duplicity was wearing a hole in his heart. He was so tired of living two faiths, and one day at a temple festival, as the drum beats and chanting began to lull him into the usual trance-like state, he asked Jesus to deliver him from the terrible struggle. When he regained clarity, he realised that he was standing on the other side of the road, opposite the temple, and drenched in cold sweat. He had no idea how he had gotten there or even crossed the street! So he ran home



and surrendered himself completely to Jesus.

### GOD WILL PROVIDE:


Pastor Vincent sensed God calling him to full-time ministry but was reluctant at first. He tried applying for many other jobs, but none worked out. His last desperate attempt to avoid God's call was applying for a job as a car wash attendant, which he was totally overqualified for. But even they rejected him! So he approached his pastor, who advised that he be equipped in bible school. Vincent told him that he had no means to pay the school fees. His pastor simply remarked "God will provide" and asked him to go ahead. On the day of his admissions interview, he brought his application forms but no fee. To his amazement, he was granted an exception, and told he could pay later. Over the next 4 years, God provided for him financially and in many other ways that humbled and prepared him for a life of full-time ministry.

### LIMITATIONS:

Pastors do not have the answers to every spiritual or life question. When someone from the congregation asks for advice, they don't always know the answer and feel torn between wanting to help and wanting them to experience God's providence. But Pastor Vincent has learned over time that our human limitations also help strengthen our faith as we journey through life and realize that God is doing most of the work.

### WISE WORDS

#### FOR THE NEXT GEN:

"Love life. Desire life. See life as a gift from God and decide to live it to the fullest!" 



**ASHWIN** and his wife Jiamei are brand new members at CMC and part of the Almond Tree care group. Ashwin is now finding his feet within the communications ministry, with a keen interest in Witness Magazine.



If you happen to call the church office on a weekday and hear a cheery male voice on the other end of the telephone, it probably belongs to Mr Sun Tianfu, a 24-year-old man who grew up in CMC's mandarin ministry and recently joined our staff team as a full-time administrative assistant.

## WALKING ON

# Sunshine

### LAND OF ORIGIN:

Liaoning, Liaoyang, North-East China

### ADOPTIVE HOME:

Tianfu arrived here at age 11, accompanied by his mother, to pursue an education in Singapore through Peixin Primary School, Yuying Secondary School, and Temasek Junior College.

They happened to be living in an apartment right next to CMC when they

first arrived, and someone from our dialect outreach ministry invited them to a free breakfast one weekend morning. Tianfu and his mum later began attending the Cantonese service, and when our Mandarin Ministry was launched in 2003, Tianfu found himself at home with the other PRC youths there. He was baptised at the Christmas Mandarin Service in 2006, and his mum returned to China in 2013 when he enlisted in National Service.

### SWITCHING CULTURES:

As a kid he was able to adapt to a new culture pretty quick, although he did feel home sick at times. Initially he was only comfortable interacting with other kids from China, but as time passed he started befriending Singaporean kids too. It helped that schools here have cultural integration programmes like 'Racial Harmony Day' and guided excursions to places like Little India and Chinatown, which give

students better understanding and appreciation of the many people groups that live in Singapore. It took him some time to get used to Singlish though, and he's grateful that many Singaporeans are bilingual so he could express himself in Mandarin and still be understood a lot of the time.

#### **FACING PREJUDICES:**

Despite the educational aids and many cultural similarities that were in his favour, Tianfu found that it was still difficult to be fully accepted as a foreigner at times. He remembers an incident where a classmate made fun of him and attempted physical abuse while they were walking back to the classroom from the canteen.

#### **HONEST OBSERVATIONS:**

A couple of negative encounters like that at school are more than enough to adversely affect a young person's worldview forever, but by God's grace Tianfu grew to appreciate life here so much he decided to stay on. He insists that Singaporeans are generally well mannered, friendly, and welcoming towards strangers. He recalls a day when he and his mum asked a local man for directions and ended up being personally escorted to their destination by him.

As a PRC who grew up in Singapore, Tianfu is in a unique position to comment on interacting with our brothers and sisters from mainland China. He feels both Singaporeans and Chinese can still make greater effort in letting go of their preconceived notions and prejudices towards one another, and be more sensitive in the way they speak to and about each other.

#### **PERSONAL GOALS:**


As a student, his dream was to become a doctor, but he confesses to "slacking off" too much during junior college days to be able to realise that dream. The desire to impact lives for good never left him though, and as he practiced the spiritual disciplines of Word and prayer that are highly encouraged by the Mandarin ministry, Tianfu began to see that God had been shaping him for a life of ministering to others through his career. He started working in our church office as a means to self-fund studies in music production with Orita Sinclair School of Art and New Media, and hopes someday to minister to tribal children in East Asia through music.

#### **CHURCH FAMILY:**

Tianfu's attitude and life goals have been inspired by our

dialects ministry coordinator, Mr Alvin Teh, whom he has observed to be "a preacher that practices what he preaches." For example, Alvin taught all the young people under his charge (like Tianfu) the virtue of humility by rallying them to wash the toilets every week in our former church building.

CMC's Mandarin Ministry was also instrumental in helping Tianfu develop a joyful and thankful spirit despite life's hardships in school and at home. Even though he has no family living with him at the moment, now, he counts Jun Han, Hao Ran and Caleb from the Mandarin Ministry among his closest "brothers", and Pastor Alvin Teh as a role model and father figure in his life.

Tianfu desires to grow in intimacy with the Lord, learn more about different expressions of worship and praise, become a better guitar player, and eventually write and produce his own music. He hopes to meet that special someone God has prepared for him and build a family too. Do keep him in prayer as he labours on in our church office, answering queries from the congregation daily and supporting our huge GONations initiative this year. 

# WELCOME TO THE FAMILY!

## EASTER 2017 8 & 9 April

### BAPTISED

Master Aaron Sim

*Son of Mr & Mrs Kelvin Sim*

Master Elessa Jean Marc

*Son of Mr & Mrs Marcel Elessa*

Master Evan Say

*Son of Mr & Mrs Gerald Say*

Master Gilead & Gideon Ho

*Sons of Mr & Mrs Glen Ho*

Master Marcus Sia

*Son of Mr & Mrs Mitchell Sia*

Miss Thea Ng

*Daughter of Mr & Mrs Benedict Ng*

Miss Theresa Mae Thuemmel

*Daughter of Mr & Mrs Robert Thuemmel*

Ms Acila Acilar Asistido

Mr Alan Tay

Ms Genesis Lim\*

Mr Glen Ho

Mr Kee Cheng Teng

Mr Lim Han Boon

Ms Lim Hui Yan

Mr Lim Shing Shen

Ms Nellie Yee

Ms Sara Wee

Ms Sarah Quah

Mr Song Yinyu

Ms Sylvia Taslim

Ms Tanya Tay\*

Mr Terril Tan

Ms Valiente Jeannilyn W

Ms Vivian Ki

Ms Wirasneny Fangiono

\*Reaffirmation of Baptism

If you are keen to be baptised in CMC or make a deeper commitment to CMC by becoming a member, our Christmas baptism and membership season runs from October through to December 2017. Candidates are required to complete a course titled 'BASICS', comprising a series of short sessions on Sunday mornings between 9.30am and 10.30am. For more enquiries please call our church office at 6345 3934 during office hours, or email [info@cmc.org.sg](mailto:info@cmc.org.sg)

Do note that joining the membership of the church requires that you have been worshipping in CMC for at least 6 months, and have attended at least 6 sessions of a Care Group.



## RECEIVED INTO MEMBERSHIP

Mr Albert Wee  
Mr Alvin Lau  
Mr Ashwin Andrew Samuel  
Mr Chew Beng Hui  
Mr Daniel Yeo  
Mr Ern Minn Lim  
Ms Gerri Wong  
Mr Glen Ho  
Ms Grace Ann Chua  
Mrs Jiamei Samuel  
Ms Jess Tang

Mr Lainal Lai  
Ms Nicole Chan  
Ms Nicole Low  
Mr Lim Shing Shen  
Mr Patrick Hong  
Ms Sarah Quah  
Ms Sherah Tan  
Mr Tan Zhong Kai  
Mr Terril Tan  
Ms Tanya Tay  
Ms Vanessa Ong

## TRANSFERRED MEMBERSHIP

Ms Adeline Bek  
*transferred from Wesley Methodist Church*

Ms Carrie Koh  
*transferred from Faith Community Baptist Church*

Ms Patricia Yong  
*transferred from Faith Community Baptist Church*

Mr Timothy Tio  
*transferred from Mt Carmel Bible-Presbyterian Church*



# Join Our Team

**CMC IS GROWING AND WE ARE LOOKING FOR PEOPLE WITH PASSION AND RELEVANT EXPERIENCE TO SERVE AS FULL-TIME STAFF IN THE FOLLOWING AREAS OF MINISTRY.**



## FAMILY LIFE

Do you sense God calling you towards the ministry of counselling hurting individuals and families? In addition to personal ministry work, this position also gives you the opportunity to educate and equip different segments of our congregation on issues like marriage preparation, parenting, work-life balance, ageing issues and basic counselling.

## YOUTH MINISTRY

Are you a passionate advocate of youth concerns and needs? Do you delight in personally mentoring persons aged 13 to 21? In this position you will be deeply involved in the areas of worship, fellowship, discipleship, serving and outreach at our weekly youth services and care group meetings. You will also be preaching to over 100 youths on a regular basis.



**VISIT [CMC.ORG.SG/CAREERS.HTM](http://CMC.ORG.SG/CAREERS.HTM) FOR MORE DETAILS.**

If you sense God's call for you to work full time with CMC, send your CV to [info@cmc.org.sg](mailto:info@cmc.org.sg) or mail it to us at **597 East Coast Road, Singapore 429082**, attention **Mr Earl Tan**.

For enquiries, please call our office at **6345 3934** during office hours and speak with either **Mr Earl Tan** or **Ms Mabel Wat**.



## CARE GROUPS & DISCIPLESHIP

Do you have a desire to work with small groups to lead and nurture Disciples of Christ? In this role you will supporting our pastors in strategic planning and promoting the work of the 'GROW' department in our church, as well as developing events and curriculum for the spiritual health and growth of our congregation.

## ACCOUNTING & ADMINISTRATION

Have a flair for numbers and business administration? We are looking for someone to provide administrative support to our church ministries and church office accounts department. This includes maintaining membership databases, processing payments, caring for office stationery supplies, and some corporate communication with church leaders.



## CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

Do you deeply desire to see children experience the reality of God in their lives? Your role here will be to provide leadership in planning and administrating the total work of our children's ministry (Christkidz). This includes working with children, teachers and parents to run the weekly Sunday children's church, raising leaders, developing teaching materials, and ensuring children transition well into our youth ministry.

# Bless

## MIGRANT WORKERS IN SINGAPORE



IF YOU ARE UNABLE TO PARTICIPATE IN AN OVERSEAS MISSION THIS YEAR OR WOULD LIKE TO SERVE GOD BY CARING FOR FOREIGNERS IN OUR LAND, CONSIDER VOLUNTEERING YOUR TIME AND FRIENDSHIP AS AN INDIVIDUAL, FAMILY OR CARE GROUP IN ONE OF THESE UPCOMING LOCAL MISSION INITIATIVES.

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### EVENT CALENDAR

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<b>Carnival</b>	Sun, 23 Jul, 2.30 – 6.30pm	300 migrant workers
<b>S.E.A Aquarium Outing</b>	Sun, 24 Sep, 10am – 4.30pm	45 domestic helpers
<b>Deepavali Outing</b>	Wed, 18 Oct	200 migrant workers
<b>BBQ and Treasure Hunt</b>	Sun, 26 Nov	45 migrant workers
<b>Christmas Celebration</b>	Mon, 25 Dec	80 migrant workers

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For more information, please email [gonations@cmc.org.sg](mailto:gonations@cmc.org.sg), chat with someone at our Info Counter on Sundays, and look out for a volunteer sign-up booth on Level 1 in June.