A New Thing is Upon Us
Bobby E. K. Sng

Camps:
• SWAT 2015
• Sacrificial Pilgrimage
• Sin, Justice, Grace
• Refiner’s Fire

FES Story Project

VCF 1971–1975
Reunion Dinner
The sixties was a time of great change and uncertainty. The Cold War, which divided the nations of the world, was at its height. Escalating violence in Vietnam threatened peace in Southeast Asia. The Cultural Revolution in China convulsed the country causing neighbouring countries to wonder how this would impact them.

For the Christian church, probing questions also unsettled its members. Episcopal theologian Joseph Fletcher’s book *Situation Ethics* (1966), called for reform in morality, questioning the validity of absolute ethical standards. The translated works of Dietrich Bonhoeffer (1906–1945), German pastor and martyr, started to appear in the post-War years and inspired thousands. But his call for a “religionless Christianity” raised controversies. The appearance of Anglican Bishop John Robinson’s book *Honest to God* in 1963 called for a rejection of the idea of “God out there.” He is no more than the “ground of our being”. The book unsettled the church but it became an instant bestseller.

The Sixties also saw the rise of vibrant student groups in the campuses of East Asia. They sought to proclaim Christ in the midst of a changing world. This article first appeared (under a different title) in the International Fellowship of Evangelical Students (IFES) East Asia journal *The Way* in 1966. It sought to encourage students to maintain faith in a time of uncertainty.
Never in human history have changes swept through the world on such a grand scale as we have witnessed over the last half century. The impact of change is felt on all fronts. No domain of humanity has successfully repelled the thrust of our relentless pursuit for a better life. From whatever angle we look at it, there is no denying that this transformation staggers the mind. It unsettles the older generation; it challenges the newer one.

An outcome of this present revolution, as of all previous ones, is that traditionalism is called into question and often, where found wanting, thrown overboard. Conservatism must give way to progress. Orthodox beliefs and practices must be buttressed by a rational and critical substratum before their continued validity can be accepted. This is especially so in our Asian context where the traditional fabric of our feudal society is being ripped apart. As Dr Won Sul Lee, a well-known Korean historian, noted:
Undoubtedly the most profound and dramatic change that will eventually reshape the future destiny of the world is taking place in the so-called developing countries, especially in Asia ... Forces of change which, since the Renaissance, have gradually transformed the West are now working simultaneously in Asia.¹

Sandwiched between the twin problems of having to produce enough food to feed an ever-expanding population on the one hand, and having to catch up with the more sophisticated West on the other, the emerging nations inevitably have to resort to drastic measures that will effect the maximum change in the minimum time. Stagnancy and traditionalism have thrived for too long; acute problems require radical solutions.

**Change and religious attitude**
The winds of change have not bypassed orthodox religion. Traditional concepts of the ‘established’ faiths are being put through the crucible of rationalism. Age-old myths and obscurantisms are constantly being purged that a more refined residuum may emerge. Bishop Robinson (1919–1983), whose book *Honest to God* sought to restate orthodox Christian thinking for modern times, has put it thus:

> “The very fact that the basic truth of Christianity is itself at issue, that even God is at hazard, and that nothing is being left unquestioned, is surely a sign that a new thing is upon us.”²

If this ‘new thing’ frightens some, if the winds are found blowing too harshly, it is because traditionalism is always less demanding. It is far easier to repose in the shadow of the past than to live in the challenge of the day.

I do not, for a moment, suggest that we should embrace all that this ‘new thing’ offers. But is there not a place for a reappraisal of orthodox beliefs and practices in order that a more virile faith may emerge to meet the demands of our contemporary society? As we have noted, what is confronting orthodox Christianity is but part of a much greater phenomenon in which everything traditional is being put to the test. In other words, the conflict today is not so much ‘rationalism’ versus ‘Christianity’, as ‘rationalism’ against ‘traditionalism’. And it would be foolish for the Church to ally itself to the latter simply for its sake. This was the Church’s mistake in a previous generation, when it unconsciously allied itself to the then-traditional, but retrogressive, Aristotelian view that the earth is the centre of the universe, with the result that “when the authority of Aristotle in the sphere of astronomy or physics was called into question, it seemed as though Christian truth itself was being impiously assailed.”

No place for God?
Is there a place for God in today’s world? Can we do without God? On the surface these questions seem impertinent, but they are part of the ‘new thing’ which disturbs modern society. We have seen ourselves making giant strides in the fields of science and technology, such that the concept of

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3 Alan Richardson, *The Bible in the Age of Science* (1961), 11.
God seems, to use Robinson’s phrase, ‘intellectually superfluous’. Bonhoeffer wrote from prison:

*Man has learned to cope with all questions of importance without recourse to God as a working hypothesis. In questions concerning science, art, and even ethics, this has become an understood thing which one scarcely dares to tilt at any more ... everything gets along without ‘God’ and just as well as before. As in the scientific field, so in human affairs generally, what we call ‘God’ is being more and more edged out of life, losing more and more ground.*

Suddenly, we find that God is redundant. He needs to be jettisoned. It is not difficult to see how this situation has arisen. Through the ages, humanity has resorted to God only as an “explanation to elucidate his ignorance. God is a convenient means of explaining gaps in our knowledge of the world and of life”. Thus, the flash of lightning betrayed the anger of God and the death of a child was an act of judgement. But with the discoveries of the principles of electricity and the isolation of viruses and bacteria, these acts of God took a new turn. God was elbowed out. This is to be expected, for

*once God is seen in this way filling in the gaps in scientific knowledge, the theologian is necessarily engaged in a process of continual retreat. Every new discovery squeezes God a little further out of His universe.*

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6 Ibid., 31.
Can we do without God? In a way yes, if we only call him in to “fill in the interstices of our knowledge ... (but) the Bible does not encourage us to think of God as a mere *deus ex machina*, to be fallen back upon when other explanations fail.” The moment we try to pin him down as an ‘explanation’, the ‘x’ in the equation, we set ourselves the task of locating his whereabouts. And when we land ourselves ‘there’, we cannot find him. Little wonder that Julian Huxley (1887–1975), English evolutionary biologist, remarked:

*The god hypothesis is no longer of any pragmatic value for the interpretation or comprehension of nature, and indeed often stands in the way of better and truer interpretation.*

God is no celestial manipulator, playing a game of hide-and-seek among the galaxies. If God is so redundant that we cannot even find him a ‘place’ in the natural world, what hope or what reason is there for us to ever seek after him? Should we not go on our own way with no thought of God?

**Pinned down in history**

I have mentioned that God cannot be ‘pinned’ down, but this is only partly true. For God has deliberately allowed himself to be pinned down in history. Herbert Butterfield (1910–1979), Regius Professor of Modern History at Cambridge, pointed out:

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7 Alan Richardson, op. cit., 28.
Traditional Christianity claims to be an historical religion in a more technical sense; for certain historical events are held to be a part of the religion itself – they are considered to have a spiritual content and to represent the divine breaking in upon history.\(^9\)

It is this ‘divine breaking in upon history’ that has pinned God down once and for all; the elusive God has left a trail behind. He has become a space-occupying Person. The incarnation, the crucifixion and resurrection bear down on humanity with an almost frightening effect. For although they are events which happened in time, yet they bear the imprints of eternity. A portion of eternity has been captured in time, as it were. It is, therefore, not in the world of science that God is to be found, but in the Christ of history.

The place in which the revelation of God is to be found is not nature but history. It is only in man and his history that the personal God can be revealed, not in stars and galaxies, crystals and molecules.\(^10\)

In other words, God can be pinned down in history but not in science. When Pierre Simon Laplace (1749–1827), the great French astronomer, was questioned by Napoleon who had heard that he had eliminated God from his astronomy, he replied, ‘Sire, I have no need of that hypothesis.’ And he was probably right. But he was then speaking as a scientist and not as a person. God may be dispensable in science, but not

\(^9\) Herbert Butterfield, *Christianity and History* (1960), 156.
\(^{10}\) Alan Richardson, op. cit., 29.
in history. He has chosen to involve himself in the affairs of humankind, and we cannot ignore that: God has come into our midst and because he has so come, we can never be the same again.¹¹

When people say that they can do without God, what they mean is that much of the world can be understood without bringing in a god hypothesis. They can confront the world of economics, science, psychology, politics, and ethics without depending on God. That may be so, but they cannot deny their needs as persons.

For we are not just things; we are persons. We are more than just conglomerations of organs and hormones. Paul Tournier (1898-1986), a Swiss physician and well-known counsellor, has finely said:

> There are two worlds, or ways of looking at the world, of entering into relationship with it, depending on the spirit in which we approach it. We may see in it nothing but things, mechanisms, from those of physics to those of biology and even of psychology. Art, philosophy, religion can also become things, collections of concepts, formulae, definitions. On the other hand, one can lay oneself open to the world of persons, awaken to the sense of the person.¹²

As persons, we possess self-awareness and the capacity to enter into dialogue with another. It is this property, the consciousness in us of an ‘I’ and a ‘Thou’: that distinguishes us from being just another animal.

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Getting to know God

You can know a thing by gathering information about it. You can know a person only by communion with him or her. It is only through dialogue between the ‘I’ and the ‘Thou’, the self-disclosure and commitment of one to the other, that we come to know each other. When God broke through into human history, he came as a Person, the Christ. He is, in the words of the Apostle John, ‘the Word’ of God (John 1:1), God’s word to mankind. The writer to the Hebrews expresses this thought even more vividly: [God] has spoken to us by his Son ... (1:2). God can therefore be known not as an effect, a cause or an explanation, but as a Person in Christ. To know him is to enter into dialogue with his Son.

Sad to say, the story of humankind is one of continual flight from God: man runs away from the dialogue for fear of discovering and revealing his person as it really is\textsuperscript{13}. Jesus has declared this more bluntly: For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his works should be exposed (John 3:20). It is this fear of self-disclosure and exposure of what we really are like that keeps us away from God. No sooner had Adam fallen than he hid himself from God. Since then, the unrelenting question with which God confronted the fugitive has been reverberating down through the ages, “Where are you?” (Gen. 3:9).

It is here that we begin to see the significance of Christ’s work. He has done for us what we have been unable to do for ourselves. He has restored us. He has bridged the gap that separated us

\textsuperscript{13} Ibid., 159.
from God. We need no longer be estranged from God. The death of Christ upon the cross was God’s triumphant answer to our predicament. He has exposed sin and in so doing has inevitably exposed us. Our shame became his shame, our judgement became his judgement. The barrier is removed, the way is open. No longer can we remain indifferent; we must make a choice.

The revelation of God in Christ is not only a historical event, it must also become an experiential reality. You cannot enter into dialogue with someone in history; you can only commune with someone in the present. Christ is not just a historical figure; he is an eternally living Person. His resurrection makes him contemporaneous with each generation, or, as Butterfield put it, “every generation is equidistant from eternity.”

We began by saying that we are living in an age of unprecedented change. The pace of renewal quickens with each new discovery. Things cannot be what they were two decades ago. But, in a very real way, the gospel has always remained the same. Two thousand years of history and change have not blunted or invalidated its message, for it addresses itself to the needs of the human heart – the one unchanging province in an ever-changing world.

This article, which first appeared in The Way (IFES East Asia, 1966), was published under the title ‘A New Thing is Upon Us’ in the book Changing Times, Unchanging Word by Bobby E. K. Sng, jointly published by Bible Society of Singapore and Fellowship of Evangelical Students (2014).
Over the six days spanning 10–15 December, Nanyang Technological University Christian Fellowship (NTU-CF) and National University of Singapore’s Varsity Christian Fellowship (VCF) came together for SWAT (Studying the Word All Together), a year-end camp at Majodi Centre, Johor, Malaysia, to study, discuss, and deliberate on God’s Word as a community of believers. This is the second time SWAT has been organised, the first being in 2013. Almost 200 participants joined in the camp this year including a few international friends from sister movements in Cambodia, the Philippines, and Malaysia.

The camp was an opportunity for campers from different universities to interact with each other, undergo Inductive Bible Study (IBS) training as well as pick workshops relevant to university students living as Christians in the world. Annette Arulrajah, IFES East Asia Associate Regional Secretary, delivered the nightly expositions on the book of Haggai, challenging campers each night, and encouraging them to seek the God who dwells, rather than the dwelling of God.

Two students share their thoughts on what the SWAT camp was like for them:
Though it was my first time attending SWAT, I had the privilege to serve as a group leader. This gave me a chance to have a peek at gear works behind the scenes of SWAT through both the nightly debrief sessions and interactions with the camp committee. Their dedication, hard work and love for both the Lord and His people were very inspiring for me. Coupled with the God-fearing people I met during the morning prayer meetings and in my group, it was truly eye-opening and refreshing for me to see so many God-chasers gathered together in one place. It really stirred my spirit and spurred me to continue serving with greater zest in my own church and wherever the Lord leads me to.

**Theme Talks**
This camp was aimed at stirring the campers and pushing them to look beyond “building their own panelled houses.” The theme talks on Haggai were truly well-packed and definitely delivered a punch to all the campers who easily lose themselves in the whirlwind of university life. The reminder that if the Lord is not the one walking with us through every step, our constant source of support, guidance and wisdom, then everything would mean nothing because it would just be the work of human hands. Even if we were to build up an empire of diamonds up to the stars, if the metaphorical house of the Lord in our lives was still in ruins, then you would have achieved nothing. You would be nothing but a stupid fool storing up treasures and honour on earth, while your home in heaven is wilting under the weight of dust and cobwebs.

Now, even after being punched in the face with truths that we so often choose to ignore, the camp didn’t just end there, leaving you bruised and bloody. The theme talks were truly anointed with wisdom, because the speaker went on to show us how to walk the narrow road. The way was simple, through the power of the Holy Spirit living in us. The power of the Holy Spirit is accessed primarily through the reading and understanding of His Word.

**IBS 101**
Not many Christians actually know how to study the Word of God, and we don’t always get revelations when
we read the Bible. I took Inductive Bible Study (IBS) 101, and during those sessions I came to understand the full importance of commentaries. Presumptions were that these commentaries were for serious Christians into theology and doctrinal studies, but no, commentaries actually help us understand the historical context of the book being studied. They also provide discussions of difficult texts and possible answers to the questions we may have.

**Rest and Reflection**
The long days were separated with much-appreciated siestas that served not only to refresh us but as times of reflection as well. Times where we could stop, quieten our hearts and speak to the Lord, seek His face, His wisdom, and His guidance. Though we are weak, He is strong and knowing that He is with me really reassured me that no matter how hard it is to live the Christian life, I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.

Show me Your ways, O LORD; Teach me Your paths. Lead me in Your truth and teach me, For You are the God of my salvation; On You I wait all the day. – Psalm 25:4–5

There goes an old African proverb that says, ‘What you help a child to love can be more important than what you help him to learn.’ An evaluation of my experience at SWAT has revealed to me a truly beautiful and powerful message. In the light of everything I’ve seen and heard at camp, one thing that struck me immensely was the revelation of the incomprehensible magnitude of the Lord’s love and His faithfulness to His people. In every regard, as I considered the many things I had experienced at SWAT, I find that our heavenly Father speaks to us in the most unexpected ways.
In a time where my life largely consisted of exam cramming, 4:00 a.m. McDeliveries and badly-made decisions, the exposition on the book of Haggai was a timely reminder of my own lacklustre spiritual life. As Annette spoke of a people who made the building of their own lives and homes their priorities and neglected their Maker and Provider, I was greatly burdened by the way I had been living my own life. The book of Haggai depicted the Lord’s wrath and anger against the false-hearted and the disobedient, and told of the consequences of sin. But one finds that God is also truly faithful where His people are faithless; He rewards the obedient, and blesses those who please Him. The study of the book of Haggai thus proved to be not just a condemnation of the sinful, but also offered a source of comfort to the weary and downtrodden, and one could see how truly vast our Father’s love for us was and still is.

In His grace, God also placed in my vicinity godly people who changed my perspective of the Christian experience forever. I met people who have faced trials and suffering greater than I’ve ever known, and yet trust in the Lord with courage and faith, have unexplainable measures of confidence of His deliverance, and love the Lord with immeasurable joy and passion. In these Christian brothers and sisters I truly learnt what it means for one to rejoice in His sufferings, and to take up His cross to follow the Lord.

As I contemplated all that I had seen, heard and learnt at camp, I found that the Lord truly grants peace and understanding to those who seek Him and call on His name. He delights in the humble in spirit, and does not despise a contrite heart.

A Sudanese saying goes: One thread for the needle, one love for the heart. My experience at SWAT not only taught me the importance of knowing our Lord, of learning His Word and obeying His teachings, but it also revealed to me the true significance of what it means to love our heavenly Father. I learnt to yearn for His presence and direction in my life, to take joy in His immense love for us, and to make Him the one true desire of our heart.

Amanda Tan
NTU, Wee Kim Wee School of Communication and Information Year 1
Preparation
This was my first time taking on a major role in an event committee. I rarely participated in any event committee and even when I did, I had only been a subcommittee member. Therefore, I was afraid when I decided to chair the camp committee. At the same time I know that God will equip those whom He calls in His own time and in His own way. I really thank God because He led me in every preparation for this camp through the people around me, such as the staffworker, the chairperson of NTU-ISCF, and the rest of the committee members.

D-Day
On the first day when we arrived at Majodi, we were welcomed with a good lunch. After that, we continued with some ice breakers followed by the opening session before moving on to the first main session. In the camp programme, there were five main sessions, two small group sessions, a movie screening, games and performances, and finally, a dedication service.
From the sessions held, we learnt what it means to present our bodies as a living sacrifice, trusting in God only (that is, not putting our hope in other things except in God); the challenges we face in our journey with God, especially in our field of study; and the centrality of the cross in Jesus’ ministry in His call for us to bear our own cross. To analyse deeper the challenges we face in our field of study, we were divided according to interest groups based on the topics provided, namely Science and Engineering, Art, and Information Technology.

For the movie-screening session, we watched the film, “Courageous.” There are many lessons we can learn from the movie but one thing that I found very interesting is how the film portrayed the importance of being a good father to our children. Previously, I had thought that fathers play a less significant role when raising their children compared to mothers, and that the main responsibility of fathers is to work to get money to support the family, but it’s not like that.

For me, the most significant aspect of this camp was the dedication service. I was reminded to be faithful in our pilgrimage because we usually make many promises to God after joining a camp like this, but after a few weeks or months, we would forget everything. During the dedication service, we were also asked to write down some commitments to God. We looked for accountability partners to keep us accountable to our commitments. I do hope that what we have learnt in this camp will help us make changes in our lives to become Christ’s ambassador wherever we are.
The 2016 Chinese Work (CW) Combined University (Uni) Bible Camp was a camp where the Chinese-speaking fellowships at NTU, NUS and SIM gathered for some intensive Bible study training. The camp was held at Eden Bible Presbyterian Church from 4–7 January 2016. By the grace of our Lord, there were 32 participants at the camp, which was a bigger number compared to the previous year.

The theme of the camp was *Sin, Justice, Grace*, which was the first topic of the four-year cycle of the Bible camp where the Old Testament was taught. The books covered included those from Genesis to Ruth. The camp had four main sessions: Overview of the Historical books; Intensive Reading of the Bible; the method of Observation, Interpretation and Application (OIA); and Application of the OIA method in the Old Testament. We had an additional lesson on the book of Psalms, where hymns and lyrics from the Bible were taught, and we also learnt how it can be used as a platform for prayer and praise to the Lord.

The overview of the Historical books brought us through the origins of the Bible, the time-frame of when the Bible was fully compiled, as well as the main stories in each book. During the Intensive Reading of the Bible session, we were taught some techniques of reading the Bible, such as reading between the lines and reading with background knowledge of the time when the Bible was written. The OIA method of studying the Bible introduced us to the elements needed to observe and interpret the Bible, using the book of Numbers as a learning tool. Lastly, the Application of the
OIA method allowed us to relate the moral of stories from the book of Ruth to our lives. We also played bonding games and had sharing and devotion sessions as well.

Personally, the most meaningful part of the camp was to hear the testimonies of other campers in relation to the theme of the camp. The discussions regarding our views of the Bible helped me see the need to think critically of the words expressed in the Bible and the context in which it was written. I also learned to use Bible commentaries to help me understand the more difficult passages of the Bible. We all had a great time of sharing and through these sharings, brothers and sisters were able to demonstrate how God has worked in their lives in various ways.

Tan Xing Fang
NTU, Chemistry and Biological Chemistry Year 1
Singapore Institute of Management - Students’ Christian Fellowship (SIM-SCF) held its 1st Bible camp, Refiner’s Fire, from 29–31 January 2016 at Sembawang Boys’ Brigade and Girls’ Brigade Campsite with around 50 participants. The objectives of this camp were for the CFers to grow together in the Word and to make room for God in our lives. The book of Haggai was chosen for our study as it most closely mirrors the current situation of SIM SCF. The speaker, Dr Calvin Chong from Singapore Bible College, went through three exciting theme talk sessions with us where we were given additional reading materials to dig deeper into the context of Haggai’s timeline.

I have two main takeaways from this camp. Firstly, we all have to rebuild our own temples for God. Before Jesus came, temples were very important as one of the main reasons they were built was to usher in God’s presence from heaven. As we purify our hearts, prioritise our time for God and develop a more intimate relationship with Him, we can rebuild our own temples to usher God’s presence into our lives and hence, develop obedient hearts to fully commit to His ways and love Him more each day.

My second takeaway comes from two pictures Dr Chong showed us. The first was an ancient picture showing God’s temple as the tallest building of the time. The second was a picture showing the world’s tallest buildings of the previous few decades. In the past, people focused so much on God they wanted the tallest building on earth to be of God. However, times have changed. The world’s tallest buildings now are buildings of power, finance, money, politics and nothing of God. Hence, I feel there needs to be a spiritual shift for mindsets to focus on God. Dr Chong emphasised that God is a shaker and stirrer of nations, countries and economies and so, it is quite evident God is already in the midst of it. Of course, not many of us are in government positions to affect this but we all have a part to play also. We need to put God first in our lives, show love to everyone around us, pray for governments who will follow God and most importantly be salt and light to the world. This will enable God to let His kingdom and will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.
Besides the study sessions on Haggai, participants also had the opportunity to attend a workshop of their choice – “Stewardship of Time” or “Being in the Marketplace.” Other activities included a morning run, times for reflection, letter-writing, as well as a campfire as the camp finale item.

What was particularly significant for me was the campfire on the last night. Most of the camp was filled with speaker sessions and we received a lot through the teachings in the form of burdens or convictions. However, there were few avenues to translate these convictions into tangible action points. Furthermore, due to the nature of the camp, there was little time for fellowship as a CF community. With a time of games, worship and prayer during the campfire, the camp wrapped up well by allowing participants to not only respond to what they learnt in the speaker sessions, but also to gather in one voice to give due praise to God and intercede for things that matter. The “I’ve got peace like a river” routine we learnt was very heartwarming too, for it painted a picture of God’s beautiful community. The ignited fireplace itself,
whose flame burnt steadily throughout the item, was also a realistic representation of our camp theme – Refiner’s Fire – having a heart that is passionate for God’s kingdom and beats in tandem with His.

Being part of the camp committee, I also gained further insights into the development and arrangement of the camp from scratch, and grew to appreciate the process of it. Committee members worked well together and made planning generally smooth. In spite of some ups and downs experienced as a committee, it was nevertheless a joy to contribute to this camp in whatever way possible. I also made new friends in the process. I thank God for making this camp a success by helping participants deepen their understanding of His Word, as well as for going before us and making His presence known through His people during the camp.

Lim Zi Ying
SIM UB,
Psychology Year 3
I would describe this Bible camp as one of the most intense time of studying the Bible that I have ever experienced. With the many extra readings that Dr Chong sourced for us, and by reading and studying the two chapters of Haggai, I gained a much deeper understanding of the book. In the process I realised that small details such as the different names and the sequence of events made an impact on the event.

The lesson on misplaced priorities is something I can relate to. It was a very apt reminder for myself as I am always distracted by many different things. Another thing I took away from this camp is the importance of remembering the glory and the presence of our Lord in our lives. Most of us tend to forget this especially when we are going about our daily lives. One last thing that I also found interesting was part of the first session where we did a study on the prophets. This is something that I never really bothered to go in depth to understand but I am glad we did.

Apart from that, this was my first time leading a group at camp. Though initially apprehensive, I eventually found this experience really enriching. Some of the people in my group were new to CF but I was really encouraged by their sharing and their willingness to share with the whole group. I have always liked to hear how other people experience their walk with God, as each story is different. On top of that, I felt really refreshed by how they wanted to make changes in their life to grow closer to God, like setting aside time to spend with God or how to improve it. It was pretty amazing to see how God works in all of us. I hope that by the sharings done in the group, we all realise that we are all not perfect but we can walk and grow together spiritually, to be more Christ-like.

Chiam Jia Ying
SIM-UOW, Psychology Year 2

... THE IMPORTANCE OF REMEMBERING THE GLORY AND THE PRESENCE OF OUR LORD IN OUR LIVES.
A Meeting with a Purpose and Direction
This was no ordinary meeting but one with a purpose and direction. There was a need for a clear vision where every student leader, every CFer and members of the community can articulate and relate to. There is a desire to not just limit the vision to what the NSC can do within our respective CFs and campuses but to extend beyond our communities and even region. Based on the above inclinations, the NSC was spurred to recapture the theme and ethos of the existing NSC vision.

The session was kick-started with a time of devotion, worship and an icebreaker game, followed by a time of vision sharing that was communicated in the languages of our three ministry groups namely, English, Bahasa Indonesia and Mandarin to reflect the diverse demographics of the FES student population and to allow students from different native language backgrounds to capture its essence.

Earlier this year, on 23 January, the National Student Council (NSC), which comprises student leaders from the various FES-affiliated groups across different sections and different institutions in a leadership council, gathered for a day of vision sharing and encapsulation.
Then we had a time of fellowship and brainstorming where every NSC leader played an integral role in providing his or her feedback. To ensure continuity of vision passing, certain key issues and tasks pointing toward the vision were suggested and highlighted. The proposed themes were recorded and further taken into consideration.

Glimpse, Realisation and Potential
These vision-passing structures, when in place, allow greater continuity and stronger bond among student leaders of different institutions and backgrounds. This session also helped us realise that we are not alone as a CF but we belong to a bigger NSC family, allowing us to relate to one another the common issues. As recounted by Charmaine, from SIM-SCF, “It [the brainstorming] was not as easy as we thought it would be, but this opened up avenues for me to hear and learn what other CFs were doing on their campuses. Praise God for such opportunities!” It also gave us a glimpse of what the NSC together can do and achieve at a macro level.

When asked how she felt about the meeting, Charmaine added, “It has been a privilege to be part of this family. NSC has grown so much in this past one year, and I really appreciate and thank the NSC committee for persevering through the past year. I’m excited for what more God has in store for our National Student Council. Greater things have yet to come!”

Closing
Truly, the days ahead are exciting and a need for a vision to guide our future direction is strong. As the NSC proceeds with this plan, let us continue to pray for the Lord’s direction as they plan and work towards the task ahead.

‘The heart of man plans his way, but the LORD establishes his steps.’
– Proverbs 16:9

Chia Bing Xun
JCU Singapore, Psychology Year 4
FES will be celebrating its 60th Anniversary in three years’ time. As we look forward to celebrating 60 years of God’s goodness, we are also trying to look back to remember and document how God’s grace has sustained this ministry and impacted the lives and discipleship journeys of our graduates. In the light of this, we have embarked on the FES Story Project that aims to:

- document the chronological history of FES
- identify major impressions and lessons learnt at different periods of FES’ history that has a bearing on witness in the student world
- preserve and document these historical events, impressions and lessons learnt that will serve FES’ continuing life and witness in the student world and also allow FES an opportunity to contribute its learning experience to the Church in Singapore
- publish the FES Story Project

The committee members of the FES Story Project are as follows:
Lisman Komaladi, FES General Secretary
Chong Yun Mei, Head of FES Communications and Resource Ministry
Kim Hong Hazra, former FES and IFES staffworker
Kwan Qi Xiang, former VCF Chairman, FES Associate Staffworker
Lok Jian Wen, former VCF student leader, FES Associate Staffworker
Dr Bobby Sng, first General Secretary of FES (Consultant to this project)
How can you be part of the

**SHARE your stories**
from your student ministry days.
Use the form located at
http://www.fessingapore.org/the-fes-story-project

**PASS us old documents**
like CF newsletters, reports, publications and photos
especially those from the 1950s–1980s.
Write to us at fes.story@fessingapore.org and let us know
what you have.

**PLAN a reunion** among your batch of graduates and
invite us to join you so that we can get to know you and
hear your stories.

**JOIN us as a project volunteer**
if you have time and experience as a writer or as an interviewer to talk
with former CFers who wish to share their stories.

For enquiries and more information, contact us at
fes.story@fessingapore.org
A warm buzz started at the NUSS Guild House at Kent Ridge on Saturday, 2 January 2016. It was a gathering of VCFers from the years 1971–75, during the Chairmanship of William Wan, Koh Poh Kian, Joseph John and Roland Cheong. It was also the years the two instigators of the Reunion, Yeo Cheh Hoon and Wong Siew Kwun, spent their four years on campus and in the VCF.

Faces were forty years older, but still recognisable, and exclamations, hugs and handshakes were the order of the day in the Foyer, as guests arrived, collected their very essential name tags, and Reunion packs. Guests included 78 ex-VCFers, 12 spouses, FES staff of our time, Dr Bobby Sng and Thomas John and their wives. Agnes John was a member of our VCF cohort. We
were honoured to have lecturers with us, who inspired and supported us during our VCF days: Dr and Mrs Lawrence Chan, Drs Aw Swee Eng and Eileen Aw, Dr and Mrs Lawrence Chia, Prof. Wong Hee Aik, Mr Tan Soo Jin, Dr Chen Ai Yen, and Rev. Dr Quek Swee Hwa, a frequent speaker at our lunchtime meetings, and Missioner for Varsity Mission 1976. Three current FES Staff helped with our book table, and some were there to eavesdrop on the happenings of our era for the FES Story Project that is underway. We were also very happy to have as our guests, eight current VCFers.

Two VCFers, Alan Tan (Engineering) and Daniel James (Medicine), flew back from Australia for our Reunion. Special greetings were read from Koh Poh Kian (1972–73 Chairman) and Sally Wong, as
they were travelling. Rev. Howard Peskett, frequent speaker and Missioner for Varsity Mission 1973, also sent a message. David Yap, (VCF Vice-Chairman 1971–72), aided by music team comprising Tan Sin Liang and his wife, Ethel Seet, and Steven Choo, led us in rousing, nostalgic singing of VCF songs of our time.

A Walk down Memory Lane in faded photos galvanised memories of this window of VCF history, producing several firsts. 1971–72 Rag and Flag day saw the first VCF float – “He’s got the whole world in his hands”; VCF’s yellow caterpillar stood out in the fund-raising Walkathon that followed. Under the leadership of Chua Choon Lan, VCFs Contact Group System was launched. A stage play, “Patterns of My Life”, written by Maurice Choo and directed by Irene Wee, and the “Search” musical in 1974, written and directed by Jonathan James, showcased the talent in VCF, and touched many students. Mission trips and IFES conferences enlarged our vision of mission needs.

Five titles at the book table, all authored by people present, who donated the proceeds to FES. These were Dr Bobby Sng’s “Changing Times, Unchanging Word”, William Wan’s “Further Pastoral Reflections”, Lee Soon Tai’s “Journey to the Holy Land”, Wan Chee Wan’s “Healing: a Pastor’s reflections” and “In Pursuit of New Life”, co-edited by Dr Chen Ai Yen and Wong
Siew Kwun. A thanksgiving offering was taken up for FES, and a total of $17,637.37 was collected for FES, including book sales.

Dr Bobby Sng rounded off a wonderful evening with a short exhortation on the theme, and William Wan pronounced the benediction.

Wong Siew Kwun

Siew Kwun graduated from the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences. She served in the VCF Exco 1972–73 and 1973–74.

IN PURSUIT OF NEW LIFE
Chen Ai Yen and Wong Siew Kwun (Eds.)
Ethos Books 2016

In Pursuit of New Life, edited by Chen Ai Yen and Wong Siew Kwun, is a collection of stories of 14 families who left China in the Chinese diaspora in the late 19th and 20th centuries to settle in South East Asia. Many found new life in Jesus Christ over the years, besides building a new life in these parts.

This book is available at $20, through the FES office; mail-order (include postage and packaging) through Wong Siew Kwun (Hp: 98777572) or Chen Ai Yen (Hp: 97582140), or online at https://www.ethosbooks.com.sg/products/in-pursuit-of-new-life
FES, together with Dr Tan Lai Yong published *Twist and Wait* in honour of Rev. Dr Chua How Chuang who went home to be with the Lord on 5 March 2015. How Chuang was an active student leader, serving in both VCF and NIECF (then called IECF) in the early 1980s. It was during this time that he went on a FES/VCF mission trip to Japan which planted the first seed of his calling to long-term service in Japan. How Chuang also served as an Associate Staffworker of FES for many years after his graduation.

*Twist and Wait* is a collection of devotional essays and reflections written by Lai Yong over a span of 25 years. Many of these essays had the input of How Chuang, especially in matters relating to Greek and Hebrew. The book also includes some essays written by How Chuang during his association with FES.

The theme of this book is one way to remind us that while we are “waiting” in this world, we can grow stronger in fulfilling His calling in our life, until, in Lai Yong’s words, “the day when we will all be gathered into the joyful presence of Jesus Christ our Lord, He will have the words to comfort us.”

This book is available at the FES office at $10 per copy.
You keep him
in perfect peace
whose mind is stayed
on you,
because he
trusts in You.
Trust in the LORD forever,
for the LORD GOD is
an everlasting rock.

Isaiah 26:3-4
Varsity Christian Fellowship (VCF) – a community of Christian students in NUS who have committed to and are committed to making and building disciples of Jesus Christ who will be effective salt and light of the world on campus and in society.

This year we have opted for a rediscovery of the heart of student ministry. This has resulted in the exploration that we are pilgrims, prophets, pioneers and poets, come witness, go witness. For example, each of our 33 Contact Groups (CGs) across the halls and faculties were sent to choose a particular aspect of this year’s direction (i.e. “poet” or “pioneer” etc) and given space to explore and work it out as a CG over the next two months. Various parts of VCF were also trying out new things and exploring new ways of living truths. As a whole we are exploring what unique part of the body of Christ we are, as a parachurch student movement in a university.

This has led to interesting discussions and activities, for example the recent joint Bible camp with Nanyang Technological University English CF where we invited students and staff from our sister movements from East Asia to join us, or the series of seminars that are coming up covering a range of issues from caring for the caregivers to the dignity of the poor. It has also led us to explore a new role in the executive committee – the coordinator for campus and global engagement. This role has been put in place and will be open for nominations which has started. There is great potential for this role, not just now but for years to come.
Prayer Points

In the light of the above, we would deeply appreciate prayer:

• for courage and conviction to explore new things as being led by God into unknown territory is not easy.

• that all of us will ground ourselves in the Word of God and allow the Spirit of truth to lead us into all truth. Pray that God will convict and give us courage to obey.

• that our love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment, so that we may approve what is excellent, and so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God (Phil. 1:9–10).

Council is the group of all the chairpersons of the subcommittees and exco. This is a picture of the council with Yvonne, our staffworker (middle of first row). Something we are thankful for is that this council is not just a business group but a place where real love is given and received.

Le Park, one of the initiatives by VCF’s International Friendship Group (IFG). CFers bring international friends where they spend an enjoyable afternoon in the park together.

This year’s direction: “pilgrims, prophets, pioneers, poets - come witness, go witness!” This was an artistic rendition of this direction by our School of Design and Environment subcommittee chairperson, Yuqi, for our CG guide.

Esther Phua
NUS, Philosophy Year 4
SIM ISCF celebrated its 9th birthday on 24 February 2016. Looking back, we are really grateful that despite all the challenges, God has never stopped showing His blessings and guidance to the CF all these years. It has also made us realise that there are many more things to be done by the CF which aims to be His living witness and be a blessing to students in SIM. As part of our plan to build momentum, the theme for the fellowship on that day was *Why ISCF?*. This was to highlight the importance of having ISCF on campus and to explain the vision of ISCF to the members.

“CF will continue to exist as long as there are still non-members out there.” This sentence struck me the most from the sermon. SIM ISCF is a small-sized fellowship, and although we know that quantity is not everything, it is not rare for the Exco to feel discouraged by the number. However, the small number can be

> “There is no one holy like the LORD; there is no one besides You; there is no Rock like our God.”
> 1 Samuel 2:2
seen as an encouragement to us rather than a discouragement. It can motivate us further to know that there are still many Indonesian students in SIM who can be blessed through the presence of the CF, and it is our job as leaders to introduce the CF to them and share the blessings.

From February to April, SIM ISCF is focusing on building momentum by holding talks and inviting speakers as well as friends from other CFs. In between the talks, we still conduct our regular fellowship meeting. Our fellowship size currently varies from eight to twelve students each week. We really hope that through our efforts in building momentum, members and newcomers will realise the importance of being part of a Christian community within the secular world and campus.

Prayer points
Pray for:
- our plans to build and sustain the momentum in SIM
- the new coordinators of SIM ISCF to serve with humble and passionate hearts
- our programme planning for the new term
- all of us who will be having our final examinations soon
- the final year students including the Exco, as we look for jobs. Pray for us to continue serving God wherever we are.

Stephanie Juanita
SIM, Business Management with Communications, Final Year
NPCCF’s theme for the 2015-16 academic year was “靠基督打美好的仗”, which means, relying on Jesus in our battles. We selected this theme, based on Ephesians 6:10–18, as the committee wanted the CF to learn how to battle against our daily sins by putting on the whole armour of God and depending on Him.

Around 10 to 15 of us meet regularly for Bible studies, talks conducted by various staffworkers and bonding sessions. We are very thankful that God not only watched over us but was with us when we were serving Him throughout the two semesters. More specifically, we thank God for giving us a wonderful new batch of first year students. Due to their love and care, our fellowship has become more vibrant and loving.

We are evermore thankful that over the course of the year, the various challenges faced in the fellowship allowed our committee to learn to rely on Jesus when we needed Him the most. One challenge faced was that most of our committee members could not attend the CF due to industrial attachments and school projects. However, in our last programme for the year, we thank God that most of the committee members were able to gather to worship and have fellowship together.

Last but not least, the new committee has already come out with a new theme for the coming 2016-17 school year. The theme is “从心动到行动”. 心 (Xīn) to love and to care, 信 (Xīn) to have faith and believe in The Lord, 醒 (Xǐng) to be alert in our surroundings and also to God and
Lastly 行 (Xíng) to grow to be more Christlike. In the first semester, the CF will be focusing on the first two characters and in the second semester they will continue with the other two characters.

Prayer Points

- Thank God for His care and love for the CF the past academic year.
- Pray for a good response from freshmen at the combined Polytechnic Chinese CF Freshmen Orientation Camp from 12–14 April.
- Pray for our next committee to have wisdom to seek God wholeheartedly in their service.
FES COMMUNICATIONS & RESOURCE MINISTRY

In FES, the Communications and Resource Ministry covers a wide area.

For the communications aspect, we:
- produce publications and publicity materials to support and promote the work of FES
- develop videos for publicity and training purposes
- maintain and develop the FES website.

‘Resource’, as the name implies, has to do with putting the resources we have to good use and continuing to build them up to support the frontline work amongst students. This includes:
- maintaining the FES library,
- organising resources like articles and teaching tools for the ministry,
- promoting as well as encouraging the reading of good Christian books.

Challenges

As a support ministry that serves students and staff from different campuses with different concerns and backgrounds we need to be attentive to the context in order to shape our content (message) so as to communicate with relevance.

With reading (even e-books) on the decline, the challenge before us is to find ways to encourage reading to grow the Christian mind and life.
Prayer Points

We are thankful to have been able to attend *Littworld 2015*, an International Christian publishing conference, held in Singapore last November and was organised by Media Associates International (MAI). In different ways, the conference encouraged and refreshed us for the work that God has placed before us in FES.

Pray for creativity, wisdom and good coordination as we work on the different publications and the FES corporate video.

We are grateful for the graduate volunteers who have been helping us in various aspects of our work. But we do need ‘new blood’ and people with the technical expertise especially in IT and new media to be in this ministry as well.

Pray for the ongoing FES Story Project – that God may lead and sustain us as we research and document the history of FES, and how God has used this ministry for His purposes.
Having served in FES since 2007, it has been a time of both ups and downs. I am thankful for the new tasks and experiences I had the opportunity to be exposed to and learn from.

However, it is often the difficult situations that are harder to cope, like having to do last minute tasks, being judged and misunderstood by others. In such times, comfort can only be found in God’s Word.

The lyrics of the following song have also ministered to me:

Lord, make me an instrument of Your peace
Where there is hatred
Let me sow love
Where there is injury, pardon
Where there is doubt,
Let me sow faith
Where there is quiet despair, hope

Where there is darkness,
Let me sow light
Where there is sadness, joy
Lord, make me Your instrument of peace

The words speak of the fruit of the spirit, taken from Galatians 5:22–23. To grow more and more like Christ is to remember the fruit of the spirit and seek Him daily in our lives during times of trials and tribulations. Then He will shower us with love and turn our sadness to joy.

Lilian Tan
Administrator
I give thanks to the Lord for another year of life in 2016. I am also thankful that I was able to spend a three-week Christmas holiday and a two-week Chinese New Year holiday with my family, in Melbourne and in Indonesia respectively.

Even though I have been doing administrative work for FES Indonesian Ministry for almost 14 years, and ministry to Indonesian domestic workers for 11 years, both on a part-time basis, I believe that God still has things for me to do in these areas of ministry that He has placed me in. Anyone who has been working in the same areas for that length of time would be prone to feel bored, stuck or complacent. Work becomes routine and I just do what I am used to doing. When faced with challenges in the ministry, I feel that nothing can be done to change the situation. Pessimism so easily creeps in.

Please pray for me that God will continue to be my leader and my strength. May God give me the courage and wisdom to continue carrying out His work. I also ask for a sensitive heart to follow wherever He leads me.

Thank you.

Rika Widjaja
Senior Administrative Assistant

“I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.”
– John 15:5

Without God abiding in me, it is impossible for me to step into my sixth year of working in FES Chinese Work. I thank God for His grace in sustaining me throughout my journey of serving together with other faithful brothers and sisters in FES.

May God continue to guide me in FES, church and the alumni fellowship that I belong to.

Please pray for:
• discipline to reflect and quieten myself before God regularly, so that I can have a clearer knowledge of His will as I serve Him in these different platforms.
• my family in Pontian, Johor especially my parents who are getting on in age and have some health issues.
• good physical and spiritual health, so that I can serve God well with a joyful heart.

I sincerely thank you brothers and sisters for upholding me in your prayers.

Kong Ling Fang
Senior Administrative Assistant
This August I will begin my fourth year of service in FES. Many questions have come up as I ponder on the work that I have been involved in. I believe many of us (not limited to fulltime Christian workers) would have asked ourselves these questions at some point of time:

- In what ways have I grown in maturity and competence? What are my weaknesses?
- What is/are my calling(s)? Has it remained clear or has it changed with time?
- What have I done correctly, wrongly and efficiently?
- What does God have to say?

As I consider these questions and reflect on my ministries in FES, I am reminded of four areas in our Christian Fellowship (CF) groups which we must not cease doing: praying for others, having hope in Christ, meeting together and encouraging one another (Col. 1: 9–10, Heb. 10: 23–25).

The CF continues to be packed with weekly activities each semester and vacation period. Without a doubt, we are not lacking in programmes or activities but more importantly, these should translate into spiritual growth and maturity – both for the people serving and those at the receiving end.

**Prayer Points**

- Thank God for one very committed student at Republic Polytechnic Chinese CF. Pray for her growth and for more students to come onboard.
- Chinese Varsity Christian Fellowship (CVCF) is in the midst of forming its 50th Executive Committee (Exco). As we are still short of two persons in the Exco, pray for willing brothers or sisters to step up for the positions.
- Grace and I thank God for the smooth delivery of Esther, our second child on 8 November 2015. Pray for God’s providence and wisdom in taking care of the family and bringing up Josiah and Esther during their formative years.
- Thank God for a house of our very own that God has given.

Jackson Lum
FES Staffworker
Like a potter moulding the clay with patience, love, and enough pressure to shape the clay, so does God mould me throughout my journey serving as a staffworker for the past one year. It has not been a smooth journey, full of ups and downs, but nevertheless I thank God for this roller coaster ride and for allowing me to see His amazing work through fellow staff, students and alumni. Indeed I am blessed to have the opportunity to interact with all of them.

I am also encouraged to see that SKETCH (Indonesian Students’ Christian Fellowship for NAFA and LASALLE students) has grown in numbers and warm fellowship has developed among the members. Thank God for His hand in taking care of this small fellowship.

Another area that I am excited about is to be able to take part in FES media ministry projects such as doing the layout and design for the FES Indonesian Ministry’s newsletter, PISTOS, producing animation and other design-related work. I thank God for this design talent.

“Whoever serves, [let it be] as one who serves by the strength that God supplies—in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ.”

- 1 Peter 4:11

Prayer Points

• Pray for the students from SKETCH to know God and make Him known. Please also pray for the Exco and I not to get caught up with the busyness of planning and running activities, but to spend time humbly sitting at His feet, serving Him joyfully out of love for God and His people.

• Pray for good time management as I juggle between field ministry and media work.

• As I continue to serve God, pray that I will keep trusting Him in every moment especially during times of uncertainty; and not to be anxious or to depend on my own strength. This ministry does not belong to me but to God and I am just His vessel.

Yanti Agustin
FES Staffworker
eternity when I was involved in the VCF Music Ministry during my first two years in NUS. This was followed by a year in the then FES MEET (Missions Education and Exposure Training) Programme. In the ensuing three years, my liaison with FES continued as a volunteer MEET supervisor.

I am immensely grateful to God for sending me back to Singapore to be involved in student ministry as an initiation to full-time ministry work. Currently I have been assigned to help in pioneering work and the International Student Ministry. I pray that my years of experience being in a secular job and as a parent of two lovely undergraduate girls will help me in ministering to students on campus.

Starting a new job, in a fresh area of work, with an opposite-side-of-the-globe move is not what most new empty nesters would envisage life to be when the kids leave home for college. Work brought me to the US for the past 16 years and His ministry brought me home to Singapore. When God called me to be involved in His Kingdom work, it came with a dose of His humour; a secondment to FES Singapore (from InterVarsity Christian Fellowship US) involving a return to the country of my birth and growing up years.

I graduated from NUS in 1991 with a Bachelor’s in Business Administration. Whilst in NUS, I was given a glimpse of how it would be like praising Him for

We welcome **Billy Seah**, who has recently joined the FES staff team.

![Billy with his family from left to right, younger daughter Marianne, wife Fiona and older daughter Melanie]

**Staff News**

We welcome **Billy Seah**, who has recently joined the FES staff team.

**Staff News**

We welcome **Billy Seah**, who has recently joined the FES staff team.
The triennial International Fellowship of Evangelical Students (IFES) East Asia Graduate Conference (EAGC) is a time where graduates from IFES-related movements in East Asia gather for a time of mutual learning and encouragement, in the midst of the unique challenges they face in their own countries.

EAGC 2016, with the theme *Soulciety: Connect to Impact*, will be held in Thailand from 5–9 August. It aims to unite all God’s ambassadors, who share the same faith and have the same soul, to move forward together to bring the truth of Christ and create an impact in every arena of life.


To register, download the application form at [http://www.eagc2016.com/application.pdf](http://www.eagc2016.com/application.pdf) and send it to Simon Chia at gcfsing(gcf.org.sg)

**Closing date of registration:**
31 May 2016
If you would like to find out more about supporting the FES ministry, go to http://www.fessingapore.org/participate/support-us
ROCK OF AGES, CLEFT FOR ME, LET ME HIDE MYSELF IN THEE

There is a saying: “The only thing that never changes is the change itself.” It is not only true in most occasions, but also in the changes that take place everywhere and more so in the student world.

The profile of each generation changes more rapidly than before. The way a student behaves now differs greatly from how it was only four or five years ago. Hence, to find a relevant approach to minister to students requires constant effort to evaluate, adjust and re-calibrate. Challenges arise when circumstances change unexpectedly. One campus that has allowed access may suddenly reverse its decision. The dynamics of the various student leadership committees has never ceased as it is part and parcel of learning and growing up. However, it still gives an unsettling feeling.

In the midst of changes and uncertainties, it is consoling to know that in the Bible our God is often revealed as unchanging and unshakeable. A metaphor often used is: “The Rock, His work is perfect.” (Deut. 32:4) or “The Lord is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer, my God, my rock, in whom I take refuge.” (Ps. 18:2). One theologian says that God as our Rock does not mean He is static or rigid, but “reliable, trustworthy, indispensable, immutable.”
With the above understanding, I am grateful and reassured each time I feel helpless at the ever changing waves and quakes in the FES ministry. Let me share two recent matters that has given me anxious moments.

Firstly, the vast increase in academic workload and commitments of a typical student has resulted in lesser time given to the ministry on campus. The challenge remains to convince students who come to our Christian Fellowship (CF) of the value and purpose of student ministry on campus. The CF still appears to have a “senior-attrition rate” where seniors are usually absent from CF activities. Such phenomena raise the question of whether students truly understand that the CF does not exist merely for her own sake, but as a blessing to the communities around her (of whom she is also part of).

Secondly, with an addition of six new ministry staff in the past one year, we celebrate how God has provided beyond what we can imagine. However, at the same time six new staff constitutes to almost one third of our total ministry staff team. There is the challenge to raise additional funds for their salaries. We also need to allow time for each individual new staff to learn, grow and adapt to the ministries they are assigned to.

When I reflect on the reasons for my anxiety, I realised that it is because I am not able to be in control of these situations. I am not able to reduce the workload and busyness of our students. I cannot ascertain or accelerate the way our new staff learn and grow without potentially reducing them to mere impersonal objects of pedagogy.

At this point, I am reminded of a much-loved Christian hymn “Rock of Ages” written in 1763 by the Reverend Augustus Montague Toplady.

Rock of Ages, cleft for me.
Let me hide myself in Thee.
Let the water and the blood,
from Thy wounded side which flowed,
Be of sin the double cure;
Save from wrath and make me pure.
While I draw this fleeting breath,
when mine eyes shall close in death,
When I soar to worlds unknown,
see Thee on Thy judgment throne,
Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
let me hide myself in Thee.

Traditionally, it is held that Toplady drew his inspiration from an incident in the gorge of Burrington Combe in the Mendip Hills in England. There is a rock cleft that Toplady once took refuge in during a storm. However, the story is probably apocryphal.

Regardless the polemics, the song serves as a timely reminder for me that as long as I hide myself in Him, the Rock of Ages, even “when I soar to worlds unknown” now or when I “see thee on thy judgment throne” in the future, I can be fully secure.

We do not need to be always in control. We do not need to be even able to anticipate changes. Our God, the Rock of Ages, who was there, is here, and will be, will never fail us.
FES is an interdenominational Christian organisation serving among tertiary level students in Singapore. Our vision is to see a community of Christlike leaders who are salt and light on campus, in church, and in society for the glory of God.

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

**Pioneering work** at Nanyang Polytechnic, Republic Polytechnic, Curtin University, Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts, LASALLE College of the Arts, East Asia School of Business, Management Development Institute of Singapore and Singapore Management University

**FES President**
- Dr Lawrence Chia

**Vice-Presidents**
- Dr Ernest Chew
- Rev. Dr Choong Chee Pang
- Rev. Timothy See
- Bishop Wee Boon Hup

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