



Graceland
CBCSD Newsletter #34
Oct 16, 2022

"But the land you are crossing the Jordan to take possession of ... is a land of the Lord your God cares for; the eyes of the Lord your God are continually on it... (Deuteronomy 11:11-12)

Words from the Editor:

In this issue, we continue exploring the theme "Actions to Renew." In addition to introducing the Afghan Refugee Ministry, we interviewed brothers and sisters at the "Missionary Conference Expo" booth. Some youth also shared their experience serving in VBS this summer. Thank God for the further expanding of our church ministries and for the breakthroughs in our brothers' and sisters' spiritual life. I hope everyone will be inspired and together praise the Lord!

Actions to Renew III



CBC Afghan Ministry
Interview with James Poon,
CBC Missionary

By Emily Xu

Q: Could you please give a brief introduction of you and your family?

A: God began calling me to be a missionary in college. In 1992, I quit my job, responded to God's call, and went to Sudan for two years. While in Sudan I met my wife, Wonhee. I returned to the US in 1994 and went to Golden Gate Baptist seminary in the San Francisco Bay area. In 1997, after I graduated seminary, we went back to the Middle East and stayed until December 2020, when God brought us back to San Diego and gave us a new ministry aimed at reaching out to Muslim Arabs in El Cajon and Afghan refugees in San Diego. We have three grown children. I would say that the key to serving God is to know God's calling in your life. In order to discover God's calling in your life, serve Him in the church.

Q: What brought you to this Afghan ministry?

A: It is definitely the work of God, as I never expected to work among Afghan refugees. It all began a few months ago when

churches from Washington D.C. and Los Angeles got in touch with me and told me that they were reaching out to Afghan refugees. Then, Pastor



Lam introduced me to a pastor from New York who was interested in reaching out to Muslims. This pastor came and stayed in San Diego for five weeks to get our church connected to the resettlement agency. Through this resettlement agency, we were able to minister to Afghan refugees. So I would say that our church's ministry for Afghan refugees was started by God through the pastor from New York. What I learned from this experience is that when we commit our lives to serve God, He will lead and guide us and take us to places we never dreamed of and get us to serve Him in ways beyond our expectations. And this makes ministry quite exciting.

Q: Please tell us about the Afghan refugees and the role of the resettlement agency.

A: Since August of last year, thousands of Afghan refugees have come to San Diego, with more on the way. These refugees escaped their home country with nothing except what they could carry on their backs. They really need a lot of help. Furthermore, almost all of them have never heard about Jesus since Christianity is illegal in Afghanistan and any Afghan who comes to know Christ will be persecuted or killed. The US government sends all refugees to "official" private resettlement agencies (RA). These are responsible for resettling the refugees in the United States. This means that if we want to minister to Afghan refugees, we have to go through the RAs.

Q: Why is it important to minister to the Afghan refugees when they first arrive in San Diego?

A: It's important for us to reach out to Muslim refugees when they first arrive in San Diego because this is when they are the most open to the Gospel. This is because they are quite vulnerable and need lots of help in the first three months after arriving in San Diego. If we can show God's love to them by helping them physically, this will open their hearts to the Gospel.



Furthermore, this is also a great opportunity for us to do cross-cultural missions right here in our community. In the past, in order for us to do cross-cultural missions, we had to go to another country. Now, God has brought people from other countries to our community. So we can now engage in cross-cultural

missions and discover God's calling in our lives without going to another country.

Q: How does our church go about ministering to the Afghan refugees?

A: The RA that our church is partnering with has developed a program that matches how we should share the Gospel to Muslims. I believe that this is a miracle from God, considering that the RA is not a Christian organization. The program consists of:

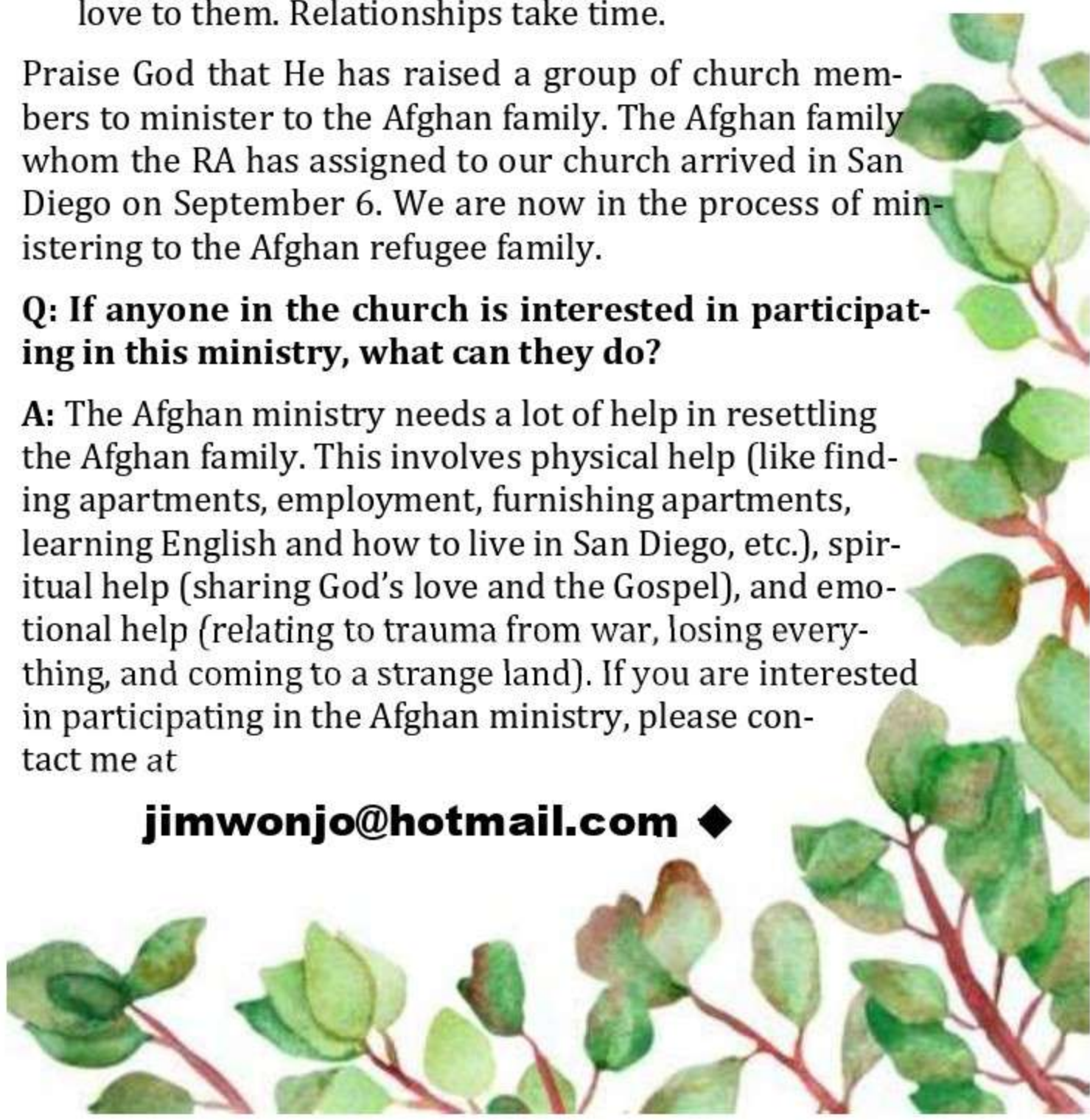
1. The RA will give our church one Afghan family. When evangelizing to Muslims, we cannot share the Gospel to a group because no Muslim will stand in front of other Muslims to show interest or accept Christ due to persecution. Hence, we can only minister and share the Gospel to one Muslim family at a time.
2. The RA asks that the church ministers to the Afghan family as a community. In Muslim culture, they operate in community. The Muslim community has a strong hold on Muslims. This means that for the Muslims to come to know Christ, they must experience and engage with a Christian community. So our church must minister to Muslims in a community setting. We need a group of Christians from our church to minister to the Afghan family.
3. The RA asks that the church build relationships with the Afghan family. Muslims have been in conflict with Christians for more than a thousand years. In order for Muslims to become Christians, we have to build relationships with them and show God's love to them. Relationships take time.

Praise God that He has raised a group of church members to minister to the Afghan family. The Afghan family whom the RA has assigned to our church arrived in San Diego on September 6. We are now in the process of ministering to the Afghan refugee family.

Q: If anyone in the church is interested in participating in this ministry, what can they do?

A: The Afghan ministry needs a lot of help in resettling the Afghan family. This involves physical help (like finding apartments, employment, furnishing apartments, learning English and how to live in San Diego, etc.), spiritual help (sharing God's love and the Gospel), and emotional help (relating to trauma from war, losing everything, and coming to a strange land). If you are interested in participating in the Afghan ministry, please contact me at

jimwonjo@hotmail.com ◆



A Collection of Interviews from CBCSD Mission Conference Expo

By Michael Hsu

As we bid farewell to a hot summer of rapid crop growth, we welcomed the arrival of autumn, the season for bountiful harvest. Similarly, CBCSD held a 3-day Mission Conference at the end of August, where Rev. Lawrence Fung, Missionary Care Envoy from Gospel Operation International, and Rev. Stephen Ho, a project missionary, presented keynote messages about the Lord's Great Commission. These resonated very well with the brothers and sisters who attended the Expo, and many expressed that their hearts felt called and eager to become God's messengers, just as He commanded, to spread the Gospel to all the nations of the world. While our editorial team went to great lengths planning to capture the voices and thoughts of all brothers and sisters, we found ourselves overwhelmed by the great turnout and only randomly interviewed a few, as summarized below:

Angie Wang, Core Member of CBCSD Missionary Department

Angie, a core member of the Missionary Department, shared that this Expo was 6 months in the works before it was finally realized. Each CBCSD campus targeted different nations for missional work, with a focus on unreached people groups. Angie also took us on a tour to various booths that featured distinct nations and their unique cultures, including their music, costumes, and foods. She hoped that brothers and sisters would get a glimpse of the lives of frontline missionaries through their experiences at these booths and join in on the action in the future.



Hugh Henry, CBCSD missionary to Uganda and other Creative Access Nations



With a heart full of joy and thanksgiving, Hugh shared that he had been a missionary for 10 years in a creative access country (countries in which the public proclamation of the gospel is restricted. Evangelistic efforts

in these countries can pose dangers to one's life, well-being or freedom). He started off by holding Bible studies that, over time, attracted more and more people, both nearby and from afar. So many people would show up that he and his wife didn't know how to handle it in the beginning. Eventually, they learned to pace themselves better until they no longer felt overwhelmed.

He also shared his experience in Uganda. The living conditions there are nowhere near those in the U.S., yet they overcame this with the help of the Lord. His wife shared the Gospel with neighbors while she taught them how to sew, and God brought many more to listen to her. His wife and he went to the capital of Uganda to train pastors from remote areas; these pastors went back, newly equipped with knowledge and tools to better serve their congregations. According to Hugh, some issues in Uganda still needing to be addressed are water pollution, a shortage of electricity, and a lack of medical supplies.

Erica Leung, Cantonese Congregation

Erica and some other coworkers hosted a booth about Israel, a country we all know very well for being where Jesus lived and preached. Many brothers and sisters visited her booth, bringing questions as well as ideas and observations of the displayed items. Erica shared the status quo of Israel; most do not believe in Jesus Christ as their Savior, despite being God's chosen people. What a shame! Erica also showed us gifts suitable for people of Jewish descent. These gifts were inscribed with a website address of missional work so that Jewish people could browse on their own. What a great way to spread the Gospel!



Corina Sun, Main Campus

Corina hosted the booth for Cambodia. We learned that she went on a short-term mission there with CBCSD. She also briefed us on the life of Cambodians and treated us to some of Cambodia's specialty tea, helping us feel like we were in Cambodia.



Maddy Tse, Cantonese Congregation

Previously, Maddy has been on 4 mission trips to Brazil with other brothers and sisters from the Cantonese congregation. These trips were typically two weeks and focused on reaching out to Chinese immigrants living in Brazil. Maddy has joined 4 mission trips to Brazil along with some other brothers and sisters from the Cantonese congregation. She shared what the spiritual background of those immigrants was like and how they were faring in their adopted homeland, which helped us understand Brazil better.

Keith Kwan (KK), CBCSD Missionary to Tijuana, Mexico



KK and his wife, Pastor Wendy, are both missionaries in Mexico. They shared their work and experience in Tijuana and thanked God for surrounding them with the armor of protection and peace wherever

they went. According to brother KK, most of the Chinese nonbelievers in Tijuana currently worship Buddha. KK also shared how God has paved the way for their mission work in Tijuana and granted them a very smooth visa clearance experience.

Trevor and Samantha Deck, CBCSD Wycliffe Bible Translators

Trevor and Samantha help translate the Bible for peoples who have never had a Bible in their native language, which made us realize how many ethnic groups still need a translation. This is a such an urgent matter! From Samantha, we also learned what bibles for the hearing-impaired and blind look like. We were so touched and inspired by their selfless service and dedication.

Erin Pan, Coworker of the College Fellowship, North Campus

Erin went on a mission trip to Naples with a team of brothers and sisters from North Campus. She described the different spiritual background the locals have and their repulsion to Christianity. For example, the Hindus there regard oxen as their gods; therefore, oxen being sacrificed to God in the Bible often hindered their path towards truth. Erin also asked us to pray for the continued operation of the local Bible schools and their provisions.

The above are excerpts of our interviews. In summary, this Mission Conference Expo helped many brothers and sisters to experience and see mission in action. We pray that God will lead an even greater multitude of brothers and sisters from CBCSD out of their cocoon of comfort and join in the action to carry out the Great Commission.

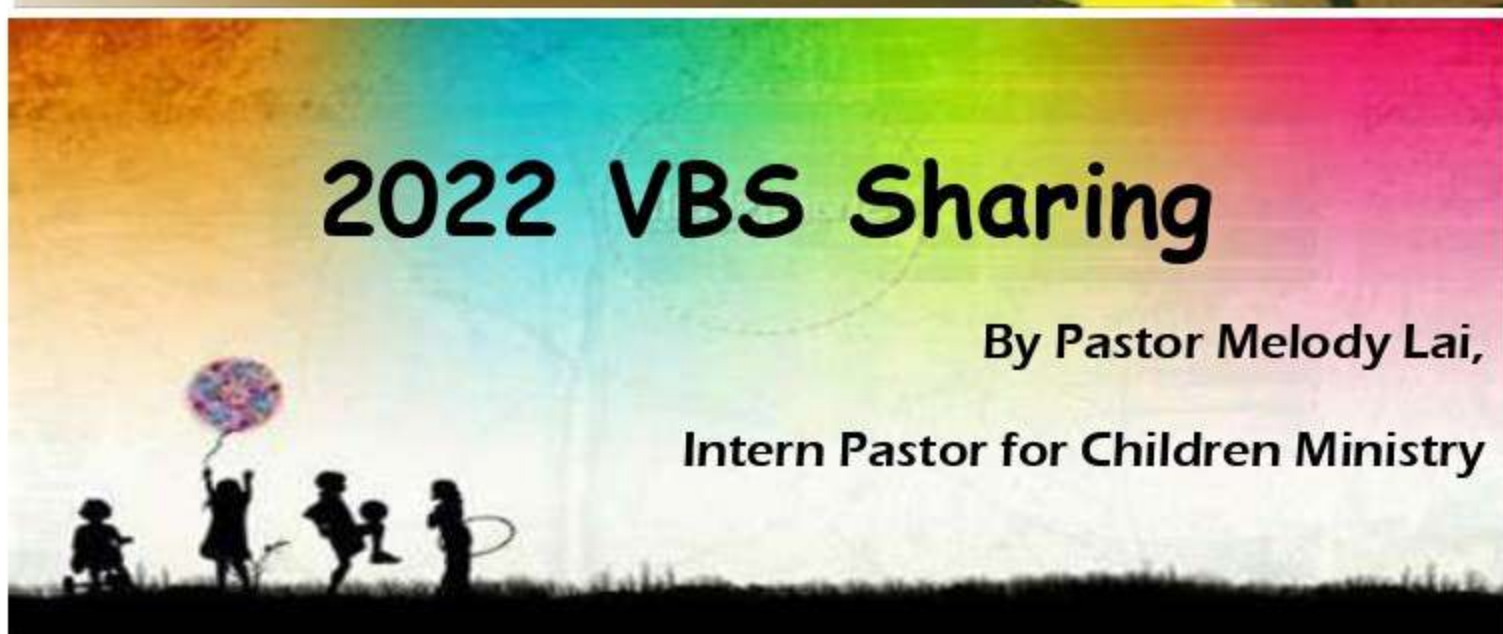
Note: Photos taken by Chiamu Chang ♦



2022 VBS Sharing

By Pastor Melody Lai,

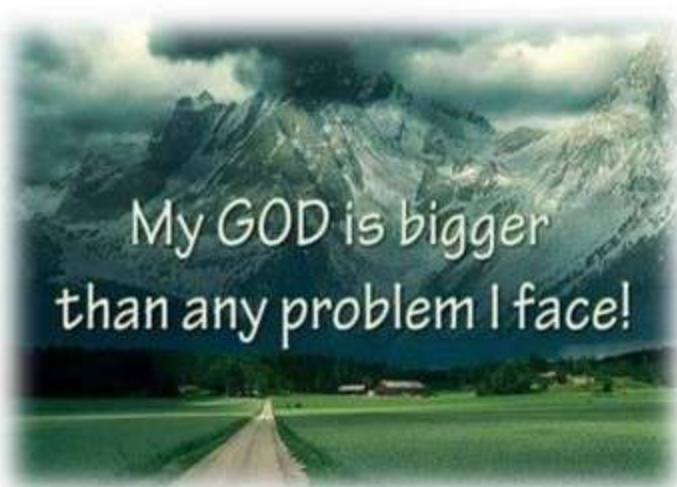
Intern Pastor for Children Ministry



Our God is Bigger than Big! Our youngest, Team 45, presented this song we sang during VBS at the closing ceremony, and it really sums up this year's program.

The initial stage of planning laid many different puzzle pieces in front of us, each one revealing a different part of the whole picture. We didn't know what it would look like pieced together, but we knew that every part of this process was an opportunity to speak God's love and truth to all those He brought to us.

I wish I could share all the special moments of VBS with you, from the testimonies of our youths for our campers, to their beautiful servant leadership as they came together as a team to serve God by serving campers, and how they served with open hands and hearts. The support



and encouragement of parents, the precious friendships the campers developed – even a few miracles that I would say are testimonies of God’s great love and His wondrous work.



Up to that Gospel Thursday, which was when we shared the Gospel, I wasn’t sure if anyone would put their hand up. We prayed for God to stir the hearts of the 99 children who attended. As believers, we have been given new life, hope, and peace that transcends all human understanding. God doesn’t want us to live in defeat or be held in bondage. He wants to set us free so we can live the abundant life He has given to us. God’s hand was at work that day, and He showed all of us that He is faithful and His love is for His children. That morning, 27 children raised their hands to accept Jesus and follow Him! God is so good!

As mentioned earlier, there were many different pieces that came together to give us this beautiful and whole puzzle. I praise God for all the people He led from the different congregations and campuses to serve in this year’s VBS. It truly is teamwork, the body of Christ coming together for one purpose: to share Christ’s love! Many thanks to Coach Jen, Coach Nick, Coach Kenzi at UW Sports Ministry, and Anh for their wonderful partnership in putting together this year’s VBS.

I sense God is working a revival. I pray for this generation of believers to grow in their faith and for their knowledge to have hands and feet, to carry God’s love and light wherever they go. I hope one day more and more of God’s children will sing this song together: God is Bigger than Big!


Here’s what the youth shared:

I thought it was eye opening to see kids being so excited about Bible verses and stories, especially because most of us high schoolers are constantly stressed and tired, which makes us not as eager to learn more in church. But helping out the enthusiastic kids at VBS rejuvenated my hunger to devote more of myself to God. ~ **Adrienne Ng**

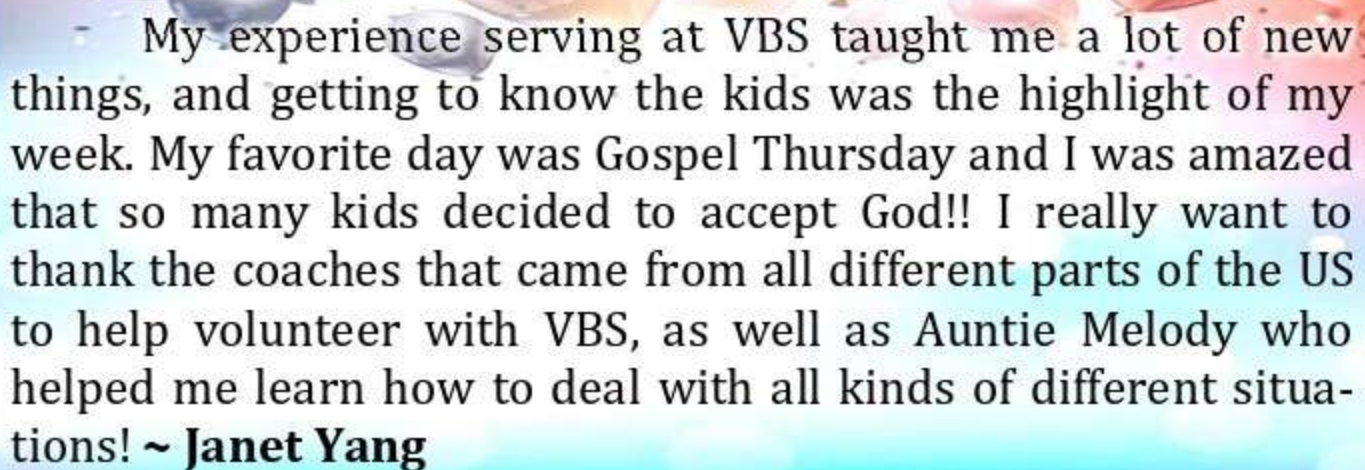
This year was my first year leading VBS, but I've participated all throughout elementary school. This experience as a leader was really special and eye opening. I was pretty nervous coming in because I've never led before, and I didn't know any of the kids. However, as the week progressed, my love for the kids really did grow, and I became super excited to hang out with them and share God's love with them. I loved how engaged the kids were when we played tag, and I got to see friendships blossom right in front of my eyes. Kids who were new to church soon became friends with our CBC kids, and it was really heartwarming to see them all happy, kind, and inclusive. I learned how to better interact with kids this week, and I love that it reinforced my desire to continue working with kids in the future, even as my career. God gave me a lot of patience, a good memory for names, and a group of amazing assistants this week. I grew closer to my youth volunteers and got to meet people from other campuses as well, with us all here to serve God and the children. I had a firsthand experience of God working with me and through me to stay calm, comfort crying kids, and have fun! Seeing all the older kids who raised their hands to accept Jesus as their one and only Savior was awesome, and I can't wait to see them come back to church or next year's VBS!! ~ **Joyce Meng**

I absolutely loved working with the kids this year; it was an amazing experience! I really enjoyed seeing the kids grow in their faith and learn new things, along with myself. It was also a blessing to be able to work with people that were very loving and hardworking. ~ **Emily Tai**

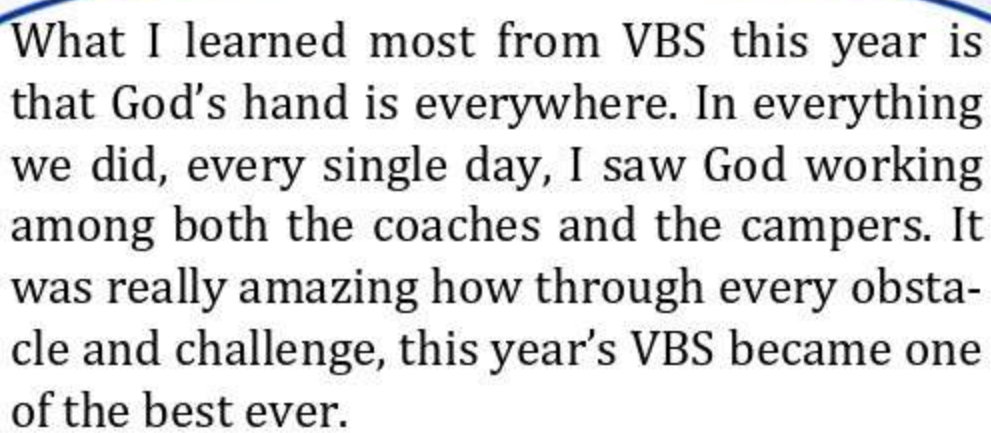
Being an assistant coach in VBS has been an interesting experience for me because last year I was still one of the campers. One of the best parts of VBS was seeing the kids learn dances, cheers and chants. The Coaches Huddle was another highlight of the week because there were kids in my group who had been to church their whole lives and kids who just learned that God, Jesus, heaven, and hell existed. On Gospel Day (Thursday), almost all the kids in my group raised their hands to accept Jesus as their Savior. The coaches were all very nice and friendly, the worship songs were amazing, and I'm looking forward to helping out again next year. ~ **Abigail Cheng**



It was really lovely working with the children, and seeing them grow was truly magical. I really enjoyed dancing and singing with the kids and I learned to be patient. ~ **Jason Leung**

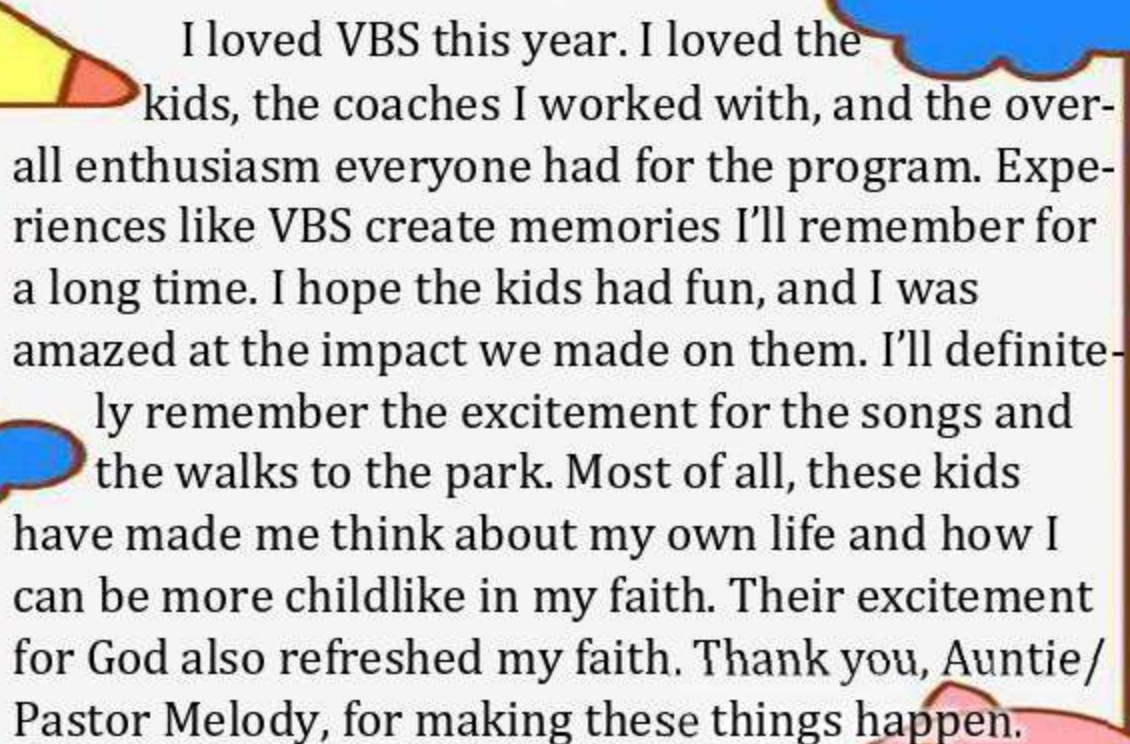


My experience serving at VBS taught me a lot of new things, and getting to know the kids was the highlight of my week. My favorite day was Gospel Thursday and I was amazed that so many kids decided to accept God!! I really want to thank the coaches that came from all different parts of the US to help volunteer with VBS, as well as Auntie Melody who helped me learn how to deal with all kinds of different situations! ~ **Janet Yang**



What I learned most from VBS this year is that God's hand is everywhere. In everything we did, every single day, I saw God working among both the coaches and the campers. It was really amazing how through every obstacle and challenge, this year's VBS became one of the best ever.

~ **Jonathan Tai**



I loved VBS this year. I loved the kids, the coaches I worked with, and the overall enthusiasm everyone had for the program. Experiences like VBS create memories I'll remember for a long time. I hope the kids had fun, and I was amazed at the impact we made on them. I'll definitely remember the excitement for the songs and the walks to the park. Most of all, these kids have made me think about my own life and how I can be more childlike in my faith. Their excitement for God also refreshed my faith. Thank you, Auntie/Pastor Melody, for making these things happen.

~ **Bennett Chiu** ♦

You Raise Me Up to More Than I Can Be

By Ning Ke, Central Campus



When I first learned about giving a sermon at Central Campus, I had mixed feelings. During my walk with the Lord, it became evident that I should serve Him by sharing the Scriptures with others, yet I knew deep down that I'm not actually that good of a communicator. I would prefer to not speak in public, if avoidable. Could I really pull this off? I wasn't quite sure.

As the "big day" got closer, my anxiety grew. "The messages delivered by the other speakers were all so well received. How will mine stack up? How can I deliver my message in a way that the audience can actually benefit from it? What if I mess up? What if I ...? What if I ...?" My mind was filled with thoughts of what would become of me, and the pressure I felt became all the more burdensome and suffocating. I asked some brothers and sisters to pray for me. A sister reassured me that God is ultimately responsible for His own doing. That nailed it for me! Yes, it was God who gave me the opportunity to share His words far and wide. He would surely help me achieve that, too. That was my paradigm shift! I began to turn my eyes upwards to focus more on God instead of downwards on my meager self. What I was about to share was good news from God, not good news from me. As my thoughts pivoted, the pressure on my heart was released and no longer burdensome. "For Christ's love compels us, not for the sake of ourselves, but for the glory of God and for the benefit of others." God used 2 Corinthians 5:13-14 to shed light and guide me. I resonated with Paul's mindset more than ever and my heart was purged time and time again until it became more like that of Jesus'. I also started to appreciate

Mark 8:35



For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the Gospel's will save it.

Mark 8:35

bibleinspirations.org

more: “For whoever wants to save their (self-centered) life will lose it, but whoever loses their (self-centered) life for me (in order to glorify me) and for the gospel (in order to benefit others) will save it (a new life that’s centered on Christ).”

As I was preparing for my sermon the night before the “big day,” I was suddenly struck by a panic attack, as if there was a battle being waged within me. “Are these messages enough? Will the audience benefit from them?” I felt like running away and giving up. “Lord, please let my heart be filled with your Holy Spirit again!” I prayed and prayed until I was enveloped by God’s peace and slept like a baby. I prayed again before getting to the podium, “Dear Lord, please be with me. I know you love me unconditionally. Your love for me will not increase even an iota if I succeed in delivering the message or decrease an iota if I somehow mess up.” With God’s presence, I had another “extraordinary” experience of smooth and peaceful sailing that only He can bring about.

After this sermon, I felt like a butterfly breaking through its cocoon, learning to fly for the first time. In God’s perfect timing and with the wings He created, He raised me up to more than I can be. “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” As 2 Corinthians 12:9 puts it, God is Emanuel; He is omnipresent and omnipotent; He is the Prince of Peace and full of love and mercy. Let our God compel us on in our life’s journey to follow and glorify Him! ♦



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