

Thinking Biblically about Technology

By Eileen Poh



From newspapers to social media, it seems as if everyone is talking about it. Some say there could be a risk to humanity, and it should be regarded as “a global priority alongside other societal-scale risks such as pandemics and nuclear war.”¹ Others extol its benefits, e.g. in drug discovery. Most, if not all of us, encounter it every day, e.g. when we shop online or ask Siri or Alexa a question. Yes, I am talking about artificial intelligence (AI).

AI is very much a part of our daily life. It gives us online recommendations, language translation, virtual customer support or chatbots, and other useful applications. Each time you order a ride-share trip on Grab, or turn on your air-conditioners ten minutes before you arrive home, you are using AI. The launch of ChatGPT in November 2022 has taken the world by storm. It has been used by millions around the world. ChatGPT is a language learning model developed by OpenAI, which generates texts based on extensive data from the internet. You can prompt it to write essays, news articles, film scripts, poems, and even sermons. But the results churned out by ChatGPT may contain untrue or made-up facts. In a recent legal case, lawyers for the plaintiff submitted a brief using ChatGPT. To their great embarrassment, it was found to contain precedents and legal quotations that do not exist.

The rapid speed by which AI is developing has caused concerns. Nobody knows for certain what will happen with the future of AI. Sam Altman, the chief executive of Open AI, calls for governments to regulate AI: “I think if this technology goes wrong, it can go quite wrong. We want to work with the government to prevent that from happening.”² Politicians are now awakened to the need to regulate the development and use of AI.

Christians must also join in the conversation about AI. I suggest we start with a biblical perspective on technology. I find John Stott’s fourfold biblical framework helpful; it takes into consideration four elements of biblical history: creation, fall, redemption and consummation or new creation.

Firstly, we affirm that God is the Creator of everything (Gen. 1-2). He made man and woman in His own image (Gen. 1:26-28). This implies that God has given human beings characteristics which reflect His own divine nature. As there is perfect love and communion in the Godhead, so men and women are capable of love, of relating with others, and with God. They are creative, and have free will, which is to be used to make just, merciful, loving, inclusive communities in harmony with the whole of God’s creation.³

Part of bearing the image of God is being God’s representative to exercise dominion over God’s creation for the benefit of all creation. Thus men and women are stewards, accountable to God for what they do. They must exercise this dominion with care, love and responsibility.

Secondly, when Adam and Eve asserted their independence and rejected God (Gen. 3), the image of God in humankind was marred, and human thinking was corrupted. But sin has not erased the image of God in man, who is still accountable to God for the stewardship of His creation (Gen. 9:1-5).

- 1 Geneva Andul, “Risk of extinction by AI should be global priority, says experts”, *The Guardian* 30 May 2023.
- 2 C. Skadian, “Enough gushing about AI, we need to pause and think about its dangers”, *CNA* 20 May 2023.
- 3 J. Stott, “*Issues Facing Christians Today*” (4th edn.; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2006) 62-64.

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According to Stott, our view of humankind must take "... equal account of the creation and the fall. It is this that constitutes 'the paradox of our humanness'. We human beings have both a unique dignity as creatures made in God's image and a unique depravity as sinners under His judgement ... We can behave like God in whose image we are made, only to descend to the level of the beasts. We are able to think, choose, create, love and worship, but also to refuse to think, to choose evil, to destroy, to hate and to worship ourselves. We build churches and drop bombs."⁴

We see examples of this "paradox of our humanness" in the accounts after the fall. Cain built a city (Gen. 4:17). His descendants made tents, kept livestock (Gen. 4:20), made musical instruments (Gen. 4:21), forged tools out of bronze and iron (Gen. 4:22). All these were possible because of man's creativity and his use of God-given resources to benefit God's creation. But Lamech used excessive force to kill a man for wounding him, presumably with the tools designed for farming and building (4:23).

Human sinfulness is displayed dramatically in the account of the Tower of Babel (Gen. 11:1-9). All people on earth gathered, and they used God's creative gifts and resources (they made bricks and baked them thoroughly) to build for themselves a city with a tower that reached to the heavens. Their ambition was to make a name for themselves. Graham Houston calls this "a symbol of technology gone wrong, the result of the ingenuity of humankind in culling materials and using them for their own evil purposes."⁵ In his judgement, God scattered the people over the whole earth.

Out of all these nations, God chose Abraham and promised to bless him, and make him into a great nation so that in him all peoples on earth would be blessed (Gen. 12:2-3). This is the third element in the biblical framework: redemption. God's blessing on Abraham's descendants is clearly seen in God

⁴ Stott, "Issues Facing Christians Today", 66-67.

⁵ G. Houston, "Virtual Morality: Christian Ethics in the Computer Age" (Leicester: IVP, 1998) 69.

A Personal Note

This June, we resumed our overseas church camp after three years – in 2020, the main church camp which was to be held in Melaka was cancelled due to the Circuit Breaker in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, though the Chinese Ministry camp was held online. In 2021, we had our first fully-online church camp via Zoom, and in 2022, we had a two-day in-person camp at PSPC itself. Enjoy the photos of the church camp (pages 15 to 17). The Chinese Ministry (page 14) and PLH news (page 24), also feature the church camp. If you missed it, you can scan the QR code to listen to audio recordings or go to: <https://www.pspc.org.sg/ministries/explore-christianity/pspc-church-camp-2023>.



In these pages, we also see the full range of our usual events in the second quarter - the Tenebrae Service and Arts Fellowship Exhibition (pages 12 and 13), the Easter Service (page 10), the annual Men's Ministry Retreat (page 9), and Children's Ministry Day Camp (page 18). The EPJM trips are resuming after a hiatus - Alvin Teo (page 7) shares about the first trip back to Japan since the pandemic. Let's not take these for granted but give thanks to God!

One big item of thanksgiving is the restarting of the Boys' Brigade 1st Company at Yusof Ishak Secondary School, and the first combined Enrolment for the BB 1st Singapore Company, BB 1st Junior Company and GB 7th Company at the school in April.

Two of our PSPC members have completed a phase of their theological degrees. Dorothy Koh (pages 3 and 4) and Rev Kelvin Chen (page 5) share their reflections on their studies in TTC, while Koh Tse Yuen (page 6) looks back on the last six months of his Prinsep Internship Programme in preparation for serving in Thailand.

Generative AI, exemplified by ChatGPT, burst into the world's consciousness late last year, and looks set to affect our lives in many ways. What is a biblical and spiritual perspective and response? Eileen Poh takes a look at it using a biblical lens in our cover article. What's your take on generative AI? By the way, I wrote this editorial all by myself.

Chia Gaik Bee

June 2023

Do you have any feedback on *The Messenger*? Do let us know at pspcmessenger@gmail.com

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dwelling with them in the Tabernacle as they journeyed to the Promised Land (Ex. 25:8, 22). God gave some Israelites the skills for building the Tent of Meeting. But similar skills were used to cast the golden calf, which the Israelites worshipped (Ex. 32:1ff).⁶

Technology at its best can be seen in the building of the temple in Jerusalem during Solomon's reign (1 Kings 5-8). The temple was the place where his people could meet God, where they could worship Him and bring their petitions, and where foreigners could come to pray to the God of Israel (1 Kings 8:28-53). But Jeroboam made two golden calves, set in Bethel and Dan, for Israelites to worship (1 Kings 12:26-33). He also built temples, where sacrifices were offered.

Because of their idolatry, which continued for many generations, God sent them into exile. After their return from exile, they built a temple for the Lord, for Solomon's temple had been destroyed during the Babylonian invasion (Ezra 3:8-10; 6:14-16).

By the end of the Old Testament account, God's promise to Abraham in Genesis 12:2-3 remained unfulfilled: they were no longer a great nation but subject to foreign powers, and they were certainly not a blessing to all peoples on earth.

In the fullness of time, Jesus Christ came to fulfil the Abrahamic promise of blessing all peoples on earth. He "became flesh and dwelt among us" (John 1:14), but He was without sin. He died on the cross to reconcile all peoples to God. The community of God's people, living under God's rule, are still responsible stewards of His gifts and resources, which must be used for the benefit of all of God's creation. Failure to do this "should be the object of prophetic critique and positive alternative proposals."⁷ Prophetic critique, countering technological trends, and offering other ways may be costly, a part of the cross we need to bear when we follow Jesus.

The fourth element in our biblical framework is new creation. We look forward to the fullness of the kingdom of God in the consummation. In John's vision in Rev. 22:1-2, he sees "the river of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb through the middle of the street of the city." It may come as a surprise to find a city in the new heaven and new earth. A city represents the best of what humankind can do with his God-given abilities, what man can do with technology. So to find a city in the new creation suggests that there is a place for technology in the new creation. This is technology redeemed.

Looking at humans and their use of God's gifts and resources in technology from a biblical perspective, it will come as no surprise that all technology, including AI, can be used for good and for harm. Technology is not neutral; the algorithms and the training data used in AI are not neutral. This technology is developed and used by man made in the image of God and sinners at the same time. On the one hand, scientists have used AI to discover a new antibiotic to kill a deadly superbug. On the other hand, AI has been used to spread disinformation, create deepfakes, enable frauds, perpetuate injustice and bias, etc.

Out of curiosity, I prompted ChatGPT to write an article on a biblical perspective of AI. The result is rather telling: it cites one verse, and makes no mention of human sinfulness and the presence of a city in the consummation.

As redeemed people of God, when we use God's gifts and resources to develop and use technology, we must ask: Does it bring glory to God? Does it contribute to human flourishing? Let us build churches and *not* drop bombs!

⁶ See also Is. 40:18-19.

⁷ D.A. Lyon, 'Technology' in D. Atkinson & D. Field (eds.), *New Dictionary of Christian Ethics and Pastoral Theology* (Leicester: IVP, 1995) 834-835.

Adventures with the Good Shepherd: Reflections on my TTC MDiv Journey

By Dorothy Koh



I graduated from Trinity Theological College (TTC)'s Master of Divinity (MDiv) programme, which is a basic degree, on 13 May 2023. I am blessed and extremely grateful to have the church's support and prayers for me as I start the 1.5-year advanced degree, the Master of Theology (MTh) programme in July.

Three years. What a journey it has been. My MDiv journey not only increased head knowledge, but it shaped me in more ways than one. Beware when you ask God to mould you, for God may uncomfortably, and sometimes painfully, shape you, so that you may become a vessel fit for His purposes.

Do I know God more now than I did three years ago? I can say "Yes, I do"; but not primarily from books

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or lectures. Perhaps the best way to learn more about God is to go on an adventure with Him; just like Abraham, when God told him to leave his homeland by faith and journey to a place which God would show him (Gen. 12:1-3). And what an adventure my journey has been.

Imagine going on the adventure blindfolded, trusting your guide to take you to your destination, safe and sound. That was how I felt most of the way. God had called me to feed His sheep, and to take this step of embarking on theological training. However, He left out the details of what to expect on the journey, and what would happen after. This was the case for me due to the circumstances I was in, being from another church. I am thankful that since those days, the Session and Pastor Darryl have provided their support and collective wisdom in co-discerning God's will with me.

From my interactions with other Christian ministry workers, it seems that being led by God without a clear end in sight is a common experience in Christian ministry. Nevertheless, it was extremely disconcerting for me, not knowing whether these three years would be a waste of time and money since I had stopped drawing a salary and was self-funding my studies. What if all the effort came to nothing? What if I messed up my life by taking this path? These anxieties stayed with me for most of the journey, despite constant reminders to fix my eyes on God.

In my first semester, a theology lecturer encouraged us that our experiences at TTC would not go to waste, even if we do not eventually end up in Christian ministry. Biblical and theological grounding will also come in handy, whether in the secular workforce, or even as a homemaker. This perspective encouraged me to be less fixated on the outcome. However, I still struggled with the uncertainties.

Theological education may sometimes shake our worldview and presumptions about the ways of God. I was blessed with guidance from another lecturer, who showed me unconditional love and patience when I frequently went to her with many doubts and questions. Learning what pastoral care looked like did not only take place in the classroom, but through modelling by and receiving it from the lecturers. This gave me a desire to help others the way I had been helped in school.

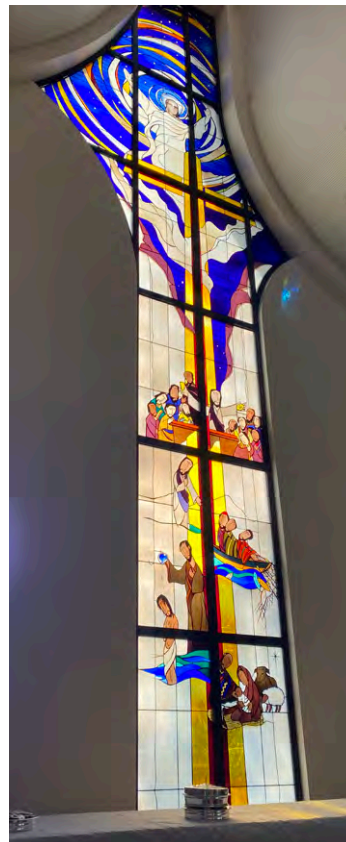
Delving deep into the biblical contexts and languages made me fall in love with the richness of Scripture. My



previous church experiences convinced me of the importance of sound biblical interpretation for the truth of God's Word not to be obscured by human presuppositions. I found joy in working through concepts and explaining them to others. Lessons were never dull for me. Rather, many of them were directly applicable to daily living.

For example, I learnt in Hebrew Exegesis class of the importance of my responsibility as a parent in teaching our children God's ways by applying Deut. 6:4-25, to talk to my children about God in day-to-day conversations. Having thought through faith issues in class and in my assignments, I find myself able to answer their difficult questions and explain the Christian faith to them in simple language. Previously, I would be frustrated when my children wanted my attention, especially when I had work to complete. However, I realised that spending time with my children and helping them grow emotionally and spiritually is part of doing God's work.

Lastly, I am thankful for the many friendships I have gained in this three-year journey. Through class discussions, lunch outings, and prayer times together, my schoolmates and I shared our lives with one another and carried one another's burdens. These precious times of interaction will be what I miss most. Moving forward, we may meet much less frequently, but my hope is that these friendships will prove to be life-long.



At TTC, I would go to the chapel in the morning before classes and just sit quietly in a pew, to look at the stained-glass portrait of Jesus and enjoy the many colours of the stained-glass windows in silence. There was peace and calm, with no strife or struggle. I enjoyed the time so much that I did not feel like leaving for class. Focusing on Jesus really made everything else fade away. When Jesus fills my view, there is stillness amid the external and internal turmoil. Jesus is all that matters.

And this holds true, regardless of circumstances, people's opinions, or my own personal shortcomings. My three-year MDiv journey

may have come to an end, but the adventure of life continues, and I am content as long as the Good Shepherd of my soul remains by my side. In whatever adventures God brings us through, let us fix our eyes on Jesus, our Good Shepherd who has promised to be with us always.

Catching up with Rev Kelvin Chen

Interviewed by Chia Gaik Bee

Messenger: You went back to Trinity Theological College (TTC) for a season of study and being equipped. What were the areas that you focused on? What are some of the key takeaways?

I went to TTC to work on a Master of Theology, and I focused on the area of Christian Spirituality, which is the exploration of the relationship that characterises the human-divine encounter, i.e. how do we live in God's transforming presence.

I learnt that as Christians in the Reformed tradition, we need to be mindful of the bases and criteria of the Reformed spiritual tradition, so that we may be able to discern carefully whether a certain spirituality is not only good, but also compatible with our Reformed tradition, and is therefore suitable for us to learn and thus, to practise.

This clarity for discernment is important, especially in our time when many practices and many claims to spirituality threaten to tug at us from different perspectives.

In summary, Reformed Spirituality:

- is founded on the personal, trinitarian God of the Christian faith, with the goal of glorifying God. It is always a response to what God has done, not of our own doing.
- is founded on the fundamental truths of the Christian faith, rooted in obedience to God's Word, which is the way we hear His voice. All subsequent actions of Reformed Spirituality comprise our responses to the revelation of God's Word – including prayer and worship.
- is communal, not individualistic, nor self-absorbed. We are God's people, grafted into Christ as part of His body; thus there is no place for an individualistic "me-and-my-God" perspective. And Reformed Spirituality expresses itself in the missional impetus to love our neighbour as ourselves, because each of our neighbours is also created in God's image, just as we are ourselves.

Messenger: As you resume your pastoral ministry with PSPC, what are the burdens the Lord has laid upon your heart? What is your hope or vision for PSPC?

The burden which the Lord has laid on my heart has not changed from my first season in PSPC – that is, to be God's under-shepherd, to guard, and to nurture, and to equip God's children that each one may be missional disciples of His, ready to make disciples of all nations, teaching them to obey everything Jesus our Lord has commanded us.

And the path to achieve this is the pastoral role as spelt out in Ephesians 4:12, "to equip His people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature."

So, my hope for PSPC, is that together as a church, together as part of the body of Christ our Lord, each one of us PSPC-ians may grow to maturity in Christ, to obey our Good Shepherd as obedient sheep, neither wandering off to the right or to the left, neither running off in front or lagging behind, but walking in step with Him.

In this journey of obedience, may each of us grow not only in head knowledge of God's Word, but also grow in obedience to His Word, growing to be emotionally healthy, changed from the inside out, transformed by His Spirit to be more and more like Him.

Messenger: You and your family had gone to the mission field and subsequently you also served with SIM East Asia HQ. What are your hopes for PSPC in terms of missions?

I pray that PSPC will grow to be indeed a missional church – not just sending missionaries, not just going on mission trips, not just giving to missions, not just caring for missionaries: but that our whole lives may seek to obey and honour Him, as we incarnate Jesus' presence to those around us, and as we participate in His purposes for the world, beginning with ourselves, in small steps of obedience.

Messenger: In your years at PSPC, what are the changes you have seen? How has the Lord been working in and through PSPC?

PSPC has grown to be a more welcoming church, a church which is intentionally disciple-making, a church which not only has spiritual knowledge, but also spiritual heart; a church where forgiveness is not only preached but practised, and a church which is steadfastly rooted in God's Word.

Are we perfect? Have we made it yet? The simple answer is, of course, "no". But what counts, I believe, is that we continue to grow in Christ-likeness as God's children, even as we are forgiven by God's grace, even as we obey His Word, even as we are empowered by His Spirit, and are encouraged onward by His love.

A Season of Preparation

By Koh Tse Yuen

At the Watchnight Service on the last evening of 2022, I spoke about my plans. As some of you may know, I had been teaching in Ngee Ann Polytechnic for a bit over 25 years. God had blessed me with circumstances where it had seemed good to start exploring new possibilities and my boss graciously approved an extended no-pay leave in April 2022. I used part of that time to get advice and ideas from people from PSPC and Wycliffe Singapore. I also spent almost two months in Chiang Mai, a large part of which was to attend a CELTA course (Certificate in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages). The other part was to visit several schools for missionary kids there and to visit Pastor Wat of Wycliffe Thailand which our church has worked with over the last few years. So by the end of 2022, certain directions had become clearer and I got the support of PSPC, applied to join Wycliffe Singapore as a short-termer and resigned from the polytechnic.

Almost half a year has passed and this is an update of what I have been doing and my plans for the future.

I have been an intern at PSPC since January. During this time, I have had the opportunity to see the workings of PSPC close up. It has been a good time to get to know the pastoral and admin staff better (as well as to find out interesting things e.g. nice places to eat lunch around Prinsep Street). I went with Pr Aldran and Pr Dawn and the seniors to their retreat in Melaka and also joined some home visitations as well as in the bereavement ministry. I was introduced to the Community for Spiritual Formation; I joined other activities which I had not been involved in before like the men's ministry retreat and the spiritual formation group; the Sarah Active Ageing Centre chapel and night walk, newcomers' lunches and events organised by the English Presbytery. I am grateful for this time of learning from different ministries and getting to know fellow members of PSPC from all generations; I now have a deeper appreciation of the hard work of those involved and their ministry to different people.

I am also very grateful that PSPC sent me on a number of courses. I attended the Kairos course which was held in PSPC and which I would recommend to all to develop a global perspective in missions. In March, I was sent to attend a 3-week residential course conducted by the Asian Cross Cultural Training Institute. This covered a wide range of topics

e.g. cultural intelligence, honour and shame cultures, different worldviews and evangelistic tools, basic linguistics, ...to very practical things like security, soulcare and setting boundaries, working in teams. Although many of my interactions abroad are likely to be with Christians, many of these topics will be useful as I face different situations; also I may not be the one talking to the unreached but I will need to understand and support those who are. I really enjoyed the fellowship with all the trainers and my fellow-participants. It was good to realise that God has called different people in different ways and that we were all at different stages in our journey.

As of now, my plans of what I will do with Wycliffe Singapore are still taking shape. I will be helping missionary kids with their secondary science. I was originally hoping to be involved in some form of English language teaching as well. However, this is also subject to the restrictions due to the type of visa which I am eventually given and I would be grateful for your prayers in this. In the meantime, I am preparing myself by looking at science material which is American-based but not that different from Singaporean textbooks. I have also been 'studying' English textbooks for local students to get a sense of what is taught. To practise my English teaching, I have been co-teaching a zoom course for Indonesians through Wycliffe Singapore.

The last five months have been a big change from teaching in the polytechnic. I still appreciate my former Ngee Ann colleagues and my ex-students whom I continue to contact regularly. In return, I have got to know my church family better and I am grateful to God for giving me this time through PSPC to prepare myself before going away. He has taught me so many things – not only practical things through courses but also to slow down to contemplate and pray more. He has also shown me the more unpleasant sides of myself.

My tentative plans are to leave Singapore sometime around 30 July; but there are still many aspects of my life in the next few months which I am not sure of yet and I hope to update in due time. But I trust that God will help me to adapt and learn to enjoy the challenges and keep me close to Him. I trust that He will also keep my mother, my brother and his wife and their family safe here. In all this, I very much appreciate your prayers and support.



EPJM: First Trip, Post-Pandemic

By Alvin and Sylvia Teo

After three years of travel hiatus and restrictions due to the COVID pandemic, the English Presbytery Japan Mission (EPJM) commissioned its first trip to Japan in 2023 from 13 to 24 April. Prior to the pandemic, the EPJM had been sending teams to Japan on a monthly basis since its inception in 2012.

Five members from PSPC, All Saints, and Glory Presbyterian Church came together to embark on this exploratory trip.

The purpose of the trip was 3-fold:

- 1) to re-establish ties and reconnect with the local churches,
- 2) to explore how EPJM can continue supporting the local pastors, church workers and missionaries in Japan by sending teams in again, and
- 3) to encourage the local pastors, church workers and missionaries who have been serving on the ground.

The last pre-pandemic trip was made in January 2020, just before the borders were closed. Usually for these trips, we would prepare some music and crafts for visiting the elderly in the coastal areas, with the local pastors. We would also conduct English Cafés in the local churches as a form of outreach to seekers. During that trip in 2020, many activities were cancelled, and we were advised not to visit the elderly due to the rising cases of the COVID virus.

During the 3-year gap, there were intermittent online ministry sessions via Zoom and monthly prayer meetings to keep EPJM connected and updated with the Japanese partners.

For the first post-pandemic trip, we arrived in Tokyo on 13 April and headed north to Morioka, Iwate to go back to the region where EPJM had toiled for 9 years prior to the pandemic border closure.



Besides Iwate Prefecture, the team also visited Aomori Prefecture and Yamagata Prefecture. The team drove approximately 1670 km over the 10-day trip.

We managed to visit 11 churches and established contacts with some new churches and ministry points. We also visited several Singaporean missionaries who are currently serving in Japan, and connected with others from Hong Kong, the UK and USA.

Japan's churches remain small and struggling. Small churches struggled with slow growth, a drop in attendance over the pandemic, financial burdens and discouragement. Big churches struggled with stagnancy, pastors overworking, inward-looking congregations and also online worshippers' attendance. One local pastor shared that 30 churches shut down in Japan annually. Many churches are without pastors, resulting in sharing of pastoral load among churches.

In the past, EPJM had been a primary partner for outreach. During this trip, we were sensing that future teams could contribute to other needs, to share and witness, to help discipleship within churches. EPJM has many lay people serving in their own churches, who may be tapped on to work alongside pastors who are working towards changing the members' mindset to build a strong serving church. This will mean adjusting our team schedule to enable team members to empower the church on weekends, while outreach activities are done on weekdays.

One of the highlights of this trip was to be able to attend the dedication ceremony of Grace house church in Ofunato. This church plant was started by the Alliance church denomination, and has been a contact point for many EPJM-ers since its inception. It started from a rental building, to having no building, to this current church building purchased in 2022.

On 22 April 2023 the team joined the many representatives from all over Japan and abroad to come together to dedicate this church to the Lord. We were in awe and gave thanks for God's grace that has brought the church thus far.

We spent the trip sharing, listening and praying with the local pastors and missionaries. We continue to covet your prayers for discernment and hearing what God's plan is for future EPJM trips. We feel encouraged that nothing can stop God's love and His work still continues. Praise be to God!

Senior Members Fellowship Retreat 2023

Words by Ruth Lim & photos by William Lam & Pr Dawn Tan

This was my second Seniors' Retreat, which was held at Ames Hotel Ayer Keroh, Melaka. Rev Timothy See, our speaker, gave impassioned talks on what it means to be loving one another in a senior Christian community. He shared many personal testimonies, while encouraging and reminding us of the importance of being in community as we live out our silver years. Our retreat time was leisurely, giving us ample opportunities to interact with one another over meals, getting to know each other better. It was a time when we could slow down to enjoy warm and pleasant fellowship outside of Church, and share laughter and companionship; I am grateful for how God provided richly for us, and kept us safe in our journey there and back.



PSPC Men's Ministry Updates

By Eld Wilson Teng

The purpose of the Men's Ministry is to develop and deepen Christ-centred friendships amongst men, and to encourage the brothers to live a meaningful life that glorifies our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. We aim to build strong relationships amongst brothers by creating opportunities for edification and fellowship together with Bible-centred learning.



Men's Ministry Walk and Makan Fellowship

Saturday, 22 April 2023 (Rifle Range Nature Park)

For the first Men's Ministry event for 2023, we had a family outing to the newly-opened Rifle Range Nature Park. We praise God for the fine weather and even though the turnout was small, we enjoyed God's creation and the encouraging fellowship. The journey began along the Gliders Boardwalk, passing the new Visitor Pavilion towards the former Sin Seng Quarry and upwards to the Colugo Deck where we enjoyed a panoramic view of the Bukit Timah district. The return journey took us through the wooded primary forest and back to the Visitor Pavilion for respite where we learnt about the history and ecology of the park. Finally, we adjourned to Beauty World Food Centre for a well-deserved breakfast fellowship.

Men's Annual Retreat – Disciplines of a Godly Man

Monday, 1 May 2023 (Speaker: Rev Kelvin Chen)

Rev Kelvin reminded the men gathered on this Labour Day public holiday that though we are saved by grace, yet we are instructed to discipline our bodies in order to grow in godliness in a fallen world. Just like a disciplined athlete in training, we are to grow to become like Christ each day (1 Cor 9:24-27).

Three foundational disciplines of Church, Worship and Prayer were unpacked for the 22 men who participated. We had many opportunities to share and encourage one another in our small group discussions. We also got to know one another better during the morning and afternoon tea breaks, and over a sumptuous Peranakan lunch.



Mother's Day

Sunday, 14 May 2023

We celebrated Mother's Day during our Sunday Services on 14 May by presenting mothers with a stalk of carnation as a token of our appreciation. We also prayed for God's wisdom for mothers to nurture and care for their children whom God has entrusted them with.

The flowers were lovingly prepared by our young church member, Timothy Chng, who has just started his own online floral shop. We were happy to encourage and support one of our own to become a successful entrepreneur.

Upcoming Events

We are planning for two **Men's Equipping Workshops** on the *Disciplines of Work and Mind* in the second half of the year. In addition, we will organise another **Men's Walk and Makan Fellowship** along our Rail Corridor sometime in the 3rd Quarter. Do watch out for the announcements and sign up!

DSPC Easter Service

(9 April 2023)

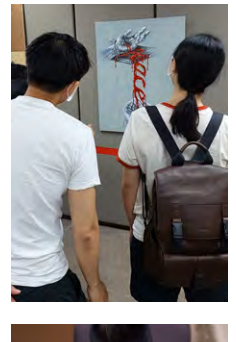
Photos by Joshua Chen, Mark Chen & Michael Goh



The Arts Fellowship: What's Art Got To Do With It?

Talk, exhibition and hands-on experience

Photos by Andy Choy, Joyce Tan, Lily Tan & Mark Chen



Tenebrae Reflections 2023

By Joyce Tan & additional photos by Andy Choy & Mark Chen



After a lapse of four years due mainly to the pandemic, the Music and Arts Fellowships returned to collaborate on Tenebrae Reflections 2023. The theme was “*We Remember Calvary*”.

The presentation of Tenebrae Reflections is unique and memorable, owing very much to the heritage architecture and design of PSPC.

Tenebrae means “*shadows*” in Latin, and the Service is designed to recreate the emotional and spiritual aspects of the Passion Story, culminating on Good Friday. The verandahs on each side of our chapel building hold together the space inside, and this peripheral space is transformed into an art gallery lit only by spotlights on artworks created by Christian artists, mainly from our midst and a few invited from other churches. The space inside is in shadows, with the only lit object being the wooden cross hanging on the wall of the arched sanctuary, and the seven candles on a stand, which are poignantly extinguished one by one during the choral rendition. The choir members sing in near darkness, their

scores lit only by the light behind the wooden cross. This source of light is also turned off after the last candle is extinguished, as was the Light of the World extinguished by the sin of the world on Good Friday.

The atmosphere was of hushed buzz of wonder and curiosity as people filed into the church to view the works of art, and of hushed silence as members with invited friends sat in the shadows in meditative anticipation. The moving backdrop of powerful visual images and key phrases from the choral anthems accompanied by emotive narration, invited everyone into a participative sense of presence. The sacred space swelled with sung prayers when the conductor brought the congregation in to join the choir in familiar hymns like *The Old Rugged Cross*.

The Arts Fellowship is deeply grateful for the opportunity to work with and walk alongside the eight artists who contributed their talents and personal spiritual journey with us. On the following pages, we share the personal stories by two of the artists, Kee Kirk Chin and Joelle Yap. The other contributing artists for 2023 were Clifford Chua, Chow Shan Shan, Geraldine Koh, Marie Toh, Nariko Prasannan and Riki Tan.





Reflections - Resilience and Redemption

Contributing artist Joelle Yap:

More than 30 years ago, my plans to pursue an arts-related career switched to a career in nursing. I had expected to do well in Art at A levels, but didn't. It shattered my confidence in venturing into the arts field. However, nursing turned out to be very fulfilling, meaningful and all-consuming. It was only when I left my full-time job in nursing education that I found time to get in touch with art again.

Preparing for the exhibition was a time for me to reflect on the last few days of Jesus' life on earth. He endured the most extreme pain, shame, suffering, and a gruesome death. Out of this, He offered a message of peace, love and hope. Most of my pieces were done in the wee hours of the morning when I had time to practise reflexivity – looking back on God's faithfulness in my life, how my trials are nothing compared to what Jesus did for me, and the joy of His saving grace. I wanted my pieces to look like broken stained glass. At the centre of the nine pieces is a broken mirror in which one sees the brokenness of oneself; and also a representation of Jesus' body that was broken for us, and His blood, poured out for the forgiveness of our sins. The surrounding eight pieces depict His agony in the Garden of Gethsemane, the tortuous journey He took to the cross, and ultimately, His resurrection.

It was heartening to see people viewing what I put on display and hearing their reviews. I am humbled by the opportunity to participate in the Tenebrae Reflections art exhibition because it has given me hope in exploring art again, in a new and faith-affirming way. To God Be The Glory!



*Sunset or Sunrise?
Shadows stain unblemished snow
Sun soft, and suns rise*

Contributing artist Kee Kirk Chin:

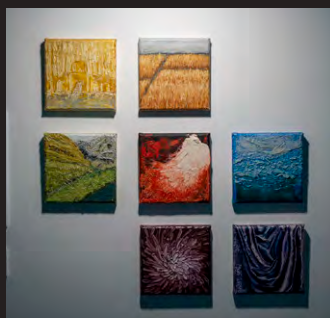
The deadline loomed for submission of my artwork for Tenebrae 2023. Inundated and flustered with work, I was unable to settle my heart and mind to paint a new piece. With encouragement from the Arts Fellowship team to consider a finished work, my mind was drawn immediately to a watercolour painting from 2015 of a serene snowy landscape that always filled me with a deep sense of calm.

As I pondered the theme of 'We Remember Calvary', I saw that the bright sun, the Light of the world, the Son of God must set into the darkness before we can rise with new life as sons of God. In the foreground, the shadows of the setting sun were cast on the pure unblemished snow, reminding us of the price the Son of God paid because of the stain of sin in our lives.

I was moved to write a Haiku, to capture the essence of this reflection with the briefest of words, for the magnitude of the work of the Cross will render us speechless, lost in wonder, love and praise. *O Love Divine, All Loves Excelling.*



The Melody of a Broken Vessel by Marie Toh



Gift of Rainbow by Chow Shan Shan



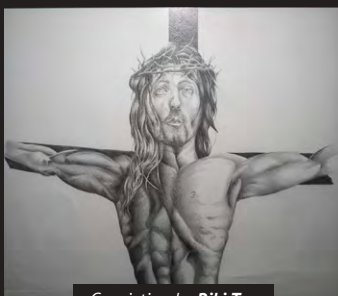
Torn by Nariko Prasannan



Peace by His Blood Geraldine Koh



Slaughtered Lamb by Clifford Chua



Conviction by Riki Tan



2023年教会营

中文聚会简报

主题:爱使生命美好!

Words by Niu Yi Fan & photos by Lin XinYu

今年六月的17至21日，长老会磐石堂在马六甲举办了弟兄姐妹们翘首以盼的教会海外营。按照惯例，教会营会均为一年一度。由于新冠疫情的影响，过去三年的教会营或在线上进行，或在新加坡本地举办。今年是疫情之后首次的海外营会，弟兄姐妹们激动不已，喜悦之情溢于言表。

本次的海外营会以中英双语进行，每日的活动丰富多彩。弟兄姐妹们首先在一起敬拜赞美上帝，然后按语言分堂聆听主题系列信息，并进行小组讨论及问题解答。此外还有祷告会、专题工作坊，以及游戏赞美操等有趣的活动。营会的最后一晚举办了中英文联合的“复古”晚会，弟兄姐妹们通过创意与巧思，呈献了一台精彩纷呈的歌舞盛会，充分体现出教会肢体合一、平安喜乐的美好生活画卷。

感谢上帝的恩典与预备，中文聚会邀请了张小芳牧师和董明汉牧师为主题讲员。在营会的第一天，张小芳牧师首先分享“回归到上帝的大爱”。她透过诗篇139:1-18的经文，使弟兄姐妹们更深认识上帝对我们的爱，那是彻底的爱——无所不知，是上天入地的爱——无所不在，是受造奇妙的爱——无所不能。上帝的爱超越人的理解，超越时空，珍贵深奥又无法测度。愿我们的情感都回归到神的爱里。

在随后几堂的信息中，张小芳牧师分享的主题分别为“治愈心中的羞耻感”、“隐藏着的疫后情绪”和“做你情绪的主”。她让我们认识到什么是羞耻感，如何区别健康与不健康的羞耻感，产生羞愧的原因及结果，也懂得如何帮助自己与他人从羞耻中得痊愈。更重要的是让我们了解到情绪是上帝赋予的，无论是高兴、伤心、生气、害怕，这些都是上帝创造的情绪；但是情绪也有生病的时候，所以我们要及时掌握情绪的变化。弟兄姐妹在这个课题中，不但学习到一些切

实可行的自我诊治情绪的方式方法，也被教导要多聆听和理解别人。愿上帝的灵帮助我们，让我们能在彼此的磨合中成为更美好的人，一同建立健康的情绪，活出讨神喜悦的属灵生命。

董明汉牧师的主题信息则是夫妻关系。他通过旧约圣经中的五对夫妻关系阐明相关的课题，包括“上帝设立婚姻的目的”、“夫妻之间的配搭与信任”、“夫妻之间的沟通对孩子的影响”、“在婚姻中寻求上帝的旨意”、“怎样作一个合神心意的人？”。通过董牧师的讲解，弟兄姐妹对于上帝设立婚姻家庭、个人在家庭中的角色、责任与使命，有了更清楚更具体的体会。这同时也鼓励依旧单身的弟兄姐妹们更多地寻求上帝在婚姻中的带领。

星期一下午的工作坊是“关怀同性恋群体”。张小芳牧师的讲解让我们对同性恋群体得到更多认识，对圣经中谴责同性恋的经文获得更深的理解，了解到同性恋是上帝严厉禁止的性行为，是可憎的事。这可以促使我们在生活中实际地关怀和帮助同性恋者，愿上帝怜悯他们，使他们能够认识自己的罪，并愿意认罪悔改归向上帝。

时间如白驹过隙，这次丰富多彩的教会海外营在弟兄姐妹们的依依不舍中顺利结束，营会中的美好经历、学习与欢笑将对我们产生深远的影响。弟兄姐妹们不但在共享美食、游戏互动交流中增进了友谊，提高了认识，加深了彼此了解，更在所学习的知识和真理方面获得提高，生命得到造就。这次教会营必然会对我们的生活产生极大的触动，更新我们的属灵生命，更激励我们愿意为主而活，活出主的爱。正如约翰一书4:19所说，“我们爱，因为上帝先爱我们。”

在平凡的日子能听见上帝不平凡的话语，且享受生命，这是何等大的恩典啊！



PSPC Church Camp 2023

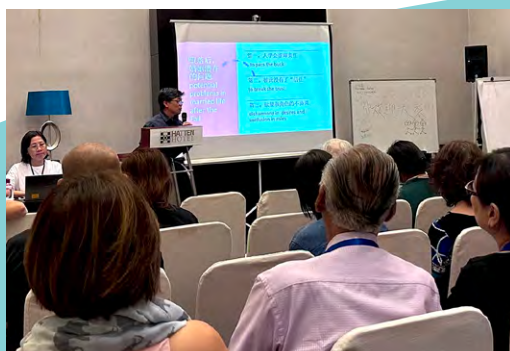
Photos by Audrey Yuen, Jo Lee, Joshua Chen,
Lin XinYu, Mark Chen, Michael Goh & Rev Ron Tan



17-21 JUNE 2023
ISAT - WED!
HATTEN HOTEL
MELAKA



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Children's MINISTRY CORNER

By Pr Carol Ng
Sunday School Superintendent

SCHOOL HOLIDAY PROGRAMME



Our Sunday School children and friends had a school holiday outing at the Children's Biennale at the National Gallery Singapore on 30 May. We are thankful to have had some of our Sunday School parents and grandparents with us as they helped to take our 18 children on the outing. We set off from church in the morning, took the train from Rochor MRT station to City Hall MRT station and walked from the City Hall station to the Gallery.

Our children had fun exploring some of the 11 artworks in the Children's Biennale. This year's theme was "Let's make a better place" and it had immersive and interactive artworks which highlighted four core values of Care, Collaborate, Imagine and Respect.

Our children were engrossed with the immersive and interactive artworks, like the use of yarns to create knots and using leftover materials to create a unique art piece. You could "see" their work in the installations as they left their imprints there. They also explored what it meant to make a better place in the world that we live in through some of the art installations.

We ended the outing with a yummy lunch at McDonald's in Funan. Thank God for the precious time of coming together for an outing where we had fun as God's family. May our Sunday School children continue to build a close relationship with one another in their Sunday School days and beyond.



Girls' Brigade (GB) 7th Company

~ 1st Update



By Jess Goh
Captain
7th Company Girls' Brigade



We had our first Enrolment Service at Yusof Ishak Secondary School in April. Though we have only one recruit in the 7th Company, we are blessed by her commitment and enthusiasm. Two of the girls' fathers also came to witness the Enrolment Service. This parade was the last for the Upper Secondary girls as they stepped down to prepare for the N and O Level examinations. We also had our first birthday celebrations. The girls had lots of fun.



★ ENROLMENT & CELEBRATIONS! ★

As part of our HQ initiative to fulfil 3000 wishes of those in need, we adopted 30 wishes. The girls were very passionate because they knew these gifts were to meet the needs of the elderly whose shoes/hot water flasks/radios etc., were all worn out or broken down. The girls fulfilled all the wishes by

- ★ getting their schoolmates, teachers, the Principal and parents to support this "GB friend in Deed" initiative.



The girls will be at PSPC on 30 July 2023 to raise funds for our programmes next year. Do give your full support to them when they come. We hope to provide the girls with good and exciting programmes so that more girls will join us.



This year, five of our girls will also be taking part in one of the National Day Parade (NDP) segments — the Total Defence segment. Together with other uniformed groups, they will be unfurling the Total Defence Flag. Our officers also have to accompany the girls throughout the training and rehearsals from 10 June 2023 till National Day, every Saturday from 10am to 9pm.

Besides participating in NDP rehearsals, we also had our annual camp from 22 to 24 June at the BBGB campsite. We want to thank God for all the officers who are willing to take on so many responsibilities during this June holidays.

LOOK OUT FOR
OUR GIRLS ON
NATIONAL DAY!

BOYS' BRIGADE (BB) 1ST COMPANY

~ 2nd Quarter Update



THE BOYS' BRIGADE

By Ho Yew Keong
Captain
1st Singapore Company

By God's grace and mercy, we had our Annual Combined Enrolment Ceremony once again. The event was well attended by many parents from the three companies that we have at PSPC. With the help of all the Officers and Helpers, this ceremony was successfully held on 29 April 2023 at Yusof Ishak Secondary School with LG (Ret) Winston Choo as our Guest of Honour.



The Dedication of BB and GB Captains, Officers and Helpers



This Quarter started off with the Basic class, also known as the Target class. The Boys learned about the history of The Boys' Brigade and were given an overview of the organisation. All the Boys passed the test and were awarded their first badge, the Target Badge.

We are currently doing Adventure lessons, which involve the introduction to navigation and hiking, through which the Boys learn skills like knot-tying, basha building, and using maps and compasses.

We tried the diabolo and spinning plate using the same vendor as BB1J. The Boys enjoyed it and were happy to have learned another skill.

We have met our BB Week collection target this year and would like to thank all the members of PSPC for your continuous support.

There will be a change of teacher-in-charge as the new teacher has come in. Pray for a good working relationship with him.

Do continue to pray for wisdom and strength as we bring this group of Boys up during their four years with us.



BB1J 2023

~ 2nd Quarter Update



THE BOYS' BRIGADE

By Carol Ng
Acting Captain
1J Singapore Company

For the very first time, our BB1J Boys saw how the Colour Party marched in procession with BB1J Company Colours, together with BB 1st and GB 7th Company Colours, and how the Company Colours were handed over to Rev Darryl Chan, the Chaplain, at the BB and GB Enrolment Ceremony at Yusof Ishak Secondary School on 29 April 2023.

Our Boys were naturally overwhelmed with the excitement and grandeur of the combined BB and GB ceremony, from the presence of our Guest of Honour, LG (Ret) Winston Choo, to the many guests and the overall carefully planned and dignified ceremony.

We are thankful that our Junior Boys sat through the ceremony and experienced for the first time what an Enrolment and Dedication Service is like for BB and GB Companies. We are thankful they witnessed the Enrolment of Recruits and Dedication of Officers and Helpers. May they be inspired and encouraged to be part of the BB and church family.

WHAT WERE SOME OF THE HIGHLIGHTS AT THE CEREMONY FOR OUR JUNIORS?

Buffet of yummy food!

Bagpipe band performance from 121!

Photo-taking!

The awards!

The huge turnout of people at the ceremony!

"I am overwhelmed!"

"So many things happening!"

"So many people!"

"I don't know what's going on!"



CARE PACKAGES FOR OUR P6'S

Our P6's will be gearing up for their Prelims and PSLE from the second half of the year onwards. They will be excused from CCA from Term 3 to prepare for their coming examinations. We presented all the P6 Boys with care packages as an expression of our Christian love and support.



Appointment of leaders in BB1J

We are thankful that we have selected a new batch of leaders in BB1J.

NG ZHEN YOU
Lead Boy



ZENITH WONG
and RYAN CHEN
Squad Leaders



LIM JUN YU
and LIAU YI JIE
Assistant Squad Leaders



Do pray that the BB Officers and Teachers continue to nurture our Boys to be mature and responsible leaders in the way of the Lord, and the newly elected leaders will, in turn, inspire the other Boys to grow in maturity and character through their leadership.



(Continued on Page 22)

LET'S GO CAMPING

Finally we had our first BB camp for 1J on 1 June! Although it was not a stay-in camp, we praise God that we could have a day camp after so many years. I think six years to be exact. Sure & Stedfast!

We are thankful to God for the pouring rain in the morning. The rain stopped when camp began at 8am in Jurong. What a pleasant way to start the camp! It was cool! We are thankful to God, who saw us through, enabled and protected all of us - the 10 Boys and 12 adults.

We started the camp with games and, thereafter, tent pitching. The Boys were all geared to pitch the tents especially since they were taught the theory and now they were able to have hands-on experience. The four big tents were their go-to "playpens" during their break. We were heartened that our Boys could have pure fun just 'chilling' inside their own tents. We hope that they will be able to lead the way to set up tents for their own family fun.

Our Boys were also treated to a game of Nerf guns. They were divided into two groups and played against one another. The good old fun began when the Officers challenged the Boys with much gusto. They responded with bewilderment and admiration at how the Officers had played against them. "We must learn from you all!", "All of you are so good!", "You could even dodge the 'bullets!'" We could finally see that our Boys learned to play this game with much strategic planning and teamwork. What about the Officers and Teachers? They were all smiling and panting like mad, but they played like children!



Our Boys had their lunch with a difference. Many of them cooked for the first time, handling the cooking session from start to finish. All Officers and Teachers ensured safety was in place and guided the Boys throughout the cook-out. What was the verdict? Our Boys were initially apprehensive about having to cook on their own, handling the open fire, and wondering whether they could cook a decent meal. They were responsible for their own lunch. The outcome? They were all happily digging into their noodles, luncheon meat and eggs. They also found out that they had to wash their own tins and cutlery and clean up the cooking area. It was indeed an eye-opening experience for them. May they continue to have the gung-ho spirit of trying new things and teaching others their newfound skills and knowledge. May their parents be surprised and thankful for what they have learnt.

The Boys were also taught basic navigation skills, where they learned how to locate eight checkpoints around the school to get clues for a special word. They completed the challenge by arranging the eight clue letters to form the word "Stedfast". All in all, it was a good learning experience to put their navigation skills to the test.

We thank God for a great camp. It was tiring but fun and fulfilling, seeing all the smiles and listening to all the chats from the Boys to the Officers and Teachers. Best of all, all the Boys had great fun and learning in the camp, and all the Officers and Teachers had worked very hard together for God's glory. We are thankful for all the Officers and Teachers for their hard work, commitment and love for Christ's work. Praise God!

In & Around PSPC



WEDDINGS

Hi everyone, we are **Nathanael Goh and Emma Kok**. We got married on 17 June 2023, and will be worshipping at Nat's home church, Wesley Methodist Church. Thank you to our PSPC family for journeying with us and seeing us grow as a couple till this moment! We are truly so blessed to be supported by a community of faith on both sides. Your love and guidance has encouraged us so much along the way.



Hello! **Yii Zheng-Wei and Liu Jialin** here. We met at our mutual friend's wedding and were not so covertly set up by them. We got married on 15 April 2023 after 2.5 years of dating. We are in Amanda Leong's CG (Not A Scam =P), and we are thankful for the love and grace of God and of the community in Prinsep. Looking forward to growing deep roots here =)

INSTALLATION OF EDC MEMBERS



NEW BIRTHS



Abigail Kee Yue Xin
2 May 2023

PARENTS:
Benjamin Kee
& **Cheryl Giam**

Anne Yap Duan Min
11 May 2023

PARENTS:
Yap Neng Giin &
Adeline Fam

PARENTS: **Daniel Ong and Ga Li Chin**

We welcomed our firstborn, **Matthias Ong**, into the family on **12 April 2023**. Matthias means "the gift of god" and we are so thankful God blessed us with a wonderful boy! We are thankful for the support of the PSPC family and pray that we can continue to raise Matthias up in a loving and God-centred family, rooted in Christ.



PSPC Church Camp Reflections

DILLON CHUA:

I wasn't exactly keen on going for the church camp at first. It was a totally new environment for me with totally different people. With some convincing and help from my parents, I decided to step out of my comfort zone and join them in Melaka. Throughout the various activities in camp, I definitely got a deeper understanding of God as a Father and Friend, and not just as some invisible entity that we worship every Sunday. Personally, I felt that the buzz group discussions were enriching as they made me question my relationship with God (in a good way). Just want to take this opportunity to thank my buzz group mentor, Beatrice, for leading us in the discussions and to everyone involved in this year's church camp for making it a 10/10 experience!

SAMANTHA HO

Church camp was so fun! Due to COVID-19, we could not have church camp overseas the last few years, so I was really excited to be in Malaysia this year. During buzz group discussion sessions, we were able to go deeper into the talks and have a deeper understanding of the texts. Moreover the activities allowed us to exercise. I am really excited to see what they will plan for next year's camp!



For enquiries, please contact Elder Jack Lum at jacklum21@gmail.com or Rev Ron Tan at rontan@pspc.org.sg