



11.23

SHARE YOUR STORY

BAPTISM

2025

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FOR GOD
SO LOVED
THE WORLD THAT
HE GAVE
HIS ONE AND
ONLY SON,
THAT WHOEVER
BELIEVES IN HIM
SHALL NOT PERISH
BUT HAVE
ETERNAL LIFE.
JOHN 3:16

—

Just like our birthdays, graduations, weddings, and the joy of welcoming new life, baptism is a significant milestone for us as believers. Today, in the presence of the church body and other witnesses, we celebrate this moment with those who publicly proclaim their acceptance of Jesus Christ as their personal Lord and Saviour (Acts 2:38-39).

The stories in this booklet, written by the baptism candidates, reveal how different people from diverse backgrounds experience God in unique ways. They all, however, point to the fact that Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life. They confirm that Jesus is the answer to our quest for meaning in life. I hope some of these stories resonate with you.

If you are not a Christian, I encourage you to read these testimonies. I pray they spark your curiosity and move you forward in your search for God. The Bible promises that we can find Him when we seek with all our hearts (Jeremiah 29:13).

We are grateful for all the baptism candidates today and for their willingness to share testimonies of God's loving pursuit and transformative grace in their lives. May this day mark the beginning of a wonderful, magnificent, adventurous and enduring faith journey with our Heavenly Father, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit.

And Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptised every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to Himself." Acts 2:38-39



Alan Leung
Director of Connections
Island ECC

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ANIRUDDH MADHUSUDAN

Looking back across the span of my life so far, I now see that my path to Jesus was inevitable. I have been blind to the power of the Lord and have discounted His blessings over the years, living a life of hubris where I have recognised greatness only in myself, while overlooking the improbability of events that have led to my good life.

Last year, with my company undergoing corporate restructuring, I began to worry about my future and the possibility of being out of work. I started looking for work in earnest when a recruiter offered to meet up. Although she didn't have any jobs available to offer, we ended up speaking for a long time. Towards the end, when she found out I was married to a Christian, she asked me if it was okay for her to say a prayer for me. She also gave me a set of prayers for work, which she asked me to pray alongside every night. Even then, I was mildly amused but quite touched by her kindness, so I agreed.

Things started changing for the better that very afternoon at work. I began reflecting on the number of times seeming "coincidences" had helped lift me out of trouble. I decided to set aside my disbelief and surrender. It has been a struggle, and when the restructure was complete this year, I did end up being made redundant. It was devastating, but my wife, as usual, was staunchly by my side; and my faith, though being tested often, also helped see me through. I did find a job, even though my role is so specific that the chance of finding another within a year is nothing short of miraculous.

I thank God every day for giving me the most blessed family, with a blessed wife and loving children who make my life complete. Jesus has shown me the way within my ability. When difficulties are too great to surmount, He has intervened and broken all obstacles. This is my key learning: there is nothing that God cannot do.

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CHLOE CHEUNG

“I want certainty without faith.” This was what I wrote after reading *Fear and Trembling* by Søren Kierkegaard in my second year of university.

Born and raised in Hong Kong, I didn’t grow up religious, though I attended an Anglican primary school. Frankly, I don’t recall anything from that time, except for a few lines from a hymn we sang, and the fact that we used the *Sunrise Good News Bible*. Then, in 2018, I discovered worship music, and I started believing in something higher, something greater than myself. I don’t remember how I first came across it, but during my lowest moments in 2018 and 2019, when I was struggling with depression and anorexia on top of my anxiety and chronic insomnia, it was a slight solace to me. Still, things got so bad that, partly because my stubborn self wanted to avoid hospitalisation, I ended up moving to Canada in the middle of the academic year. High school was easy, so I had a lot of free time on my hands. This was especially true the following year, when COVID-19 hit, and my first year of university was online. I spent those two years reading a ridiculous amount of self-help books, going on walks, meditating, and doing yoga. I stopped taking medication, but I still struggled a lot with my relationship with food.

Then came my second year of university. A year earlier, a girl from my primary school (let’s call her K) reached out because she heard through a mutual friend that we were going to the same university. We started texting, a few things happened, and we ended up being flatmates. She’s Christian, and since I didn’t go home for winter break, I went to church with her for the first time that Christmas. The worship touched my heart, but I still felt an aversion to sermons.

University was when I started thinking a lot more about God and religion, partly because my degree was in English literature, philosophy, and history. Reading the Bible alongside works like *Fear and Trembling*, *The Brothers Karamazov*, and *The Master and Margarita*, as well as various philosophical proofs about God’s existence, really got me thinking about things like purpose, meaning, and faith.



NOW, I CAN SAY THAT “I HAVE CERTAINTY – OF HIS EXISTENCE, HIS LOVE, HIS GOODNESS, HIS MERCY AND HIS GRACE – THROUGH FAITH.”

It was only in my third year, when a friend I met through K invited me to join her Korean fellowship group, that I began thinking about these things in a non-academic context. I was neither Korean nor Christian, but the community was so welcoming. At the time, they were studying Ecclesiastes, which I had just finished for a class. Despite that, I still found it difficult to be vulnerable like the others to share personal things. I also felt a slight sense of imposter syndrome – while having read Genesis, The Book of Job, and Revelation for class, I believed in a God but I didn’t think that it was the God in the Bible.

Then I went on an exchange although I didn’t know much about faith. After graduating and returning to Hong Kong, a conversation with K led me to attend Island ECC’s Christmas service on my birthday. It was a lovely experience, but I was still apprehensive about going to church alone. As work got busier, I naturally didn’t give it much thought after that.

A few months ago, in June, when I visited Toronto, K invited me to church service with her. After attending that service, my desire to deepen my faith reignited. The next day, K mentioned that her sister attends Island ECC, so I reached out to her after returning to Hong Kong, and I’ve been attending church ever since. From the first Sunday service I attended, and the following week at Shift:Vessel young adults fellowship, I’ve met so many wonderful people. This summer has been truly transformative – I started sharing my testimony, doing daily devotionals, praying multiple times a day, and serving others. For the first time, I finally understood the importance of community and His Word.

I want to thank God for blessing me with so many incredible relationships, amongst countless other things, many of which I’m not even aware of. I have come to realise that there are no coincidences. Now, I can say that “I have certainty – of His existence, His love, His goodness, His mercy and His grace – through faith.”

ELINA TAM

Growing up in a traditional Chinese family, I struggled to feel loved and valued. My parents never expressed openly that they loved me; instead, they often focused on what I did wrong. This made it difficult for me to believe that God loved me and valued me.

Despite this, I believed in God from a young age. I grew up believing in a Heavenly Father, God, who watched over me.

In middle school, my younger brother's teacher introduced me to the church, and I started attending and believing in Jesus. One of the reasons I came to believe in Jesus was because I wanted to be as confident and joyful as the other members of my fellowship.

Things seemed easy, but then I realised I wasn't easy to get along with. I wasn't very popular in church. For community life at church to thrive, it really starts with good relationships. Unfortunately, I didn't have those, hence I gradually drifted away.

Later, I went to study in Australia and met a few Christian classmates. I might have been involved in their churches, but my faith didn't take root. It was like Jesus' parable of the seed sown on the rocky places – without roots, it quickly died.

I remember a low point in my life when I was in college, I prayed to God, "Please never leave me, forever." And it felt like I was back in God's presence.

Then, one year, my mother was diagnosed with cancer. I had already settled in Australia, so I returned to Hong Kong. Two years later, she passed away. My heart was broken. The person who loved me most in this world was gone. During that heartbreaking time, I became a mother. It took me a long time to come to terms with my mother's passing. I also lost faith in God. Although I attended

worship services almost every week and listened to God's words, I didn't truly put them into practice. God was like an idol to me, someone I prayed to only when I needed Him.

Ten years ago, I attended the Alpha Course, where I repented of my sins, clung to God more firmly, and gained a new understanding of Him. Yet still, my faith journey has been a rollercoaster, neither consistently hot nor consistently cold. I simply went through the motions of doing what I think a Christian should do. There was no love nor acts of love.

Last year, I joined the Village. Having never been part of a small group, it was truly eye-opening. There are many sisters walking alongside me. The Bible says that two are better than one, emphasising how having companions in faith is crucial.

When I faced another low point in my life this year, I saw that God's hand of grace has never left me. Many miracles happened to us. Although problems still exist, we rely on God every step of the way.

One day this year, I had a dream about Ephesians 4:5: "One Lord, one faith, one baptism." I then realised that I hadn't been baptised yet. The last time I thought about baptism was when I was a new believer. I decided to be baptised to deepen my faith in God.

Faith is a journey, an experience, and knowledge that confirms God's presence. It's a process, not something that happens suddenly. Although my process has been longer than others, it doesn't mean that God doesn't love me. God is Love.

THANKFULLY, GOD GAVE ME MANY OPPORTUNITIES
AND TIME. ALTHOUGH IT SEEMS LIKE I TOOK LONGER
TO GROW THAN OTHERS, BUT GOD STILL LOVES ME.



ERIC CHAN

I was raised in an ordinary family living on a marginal means. My parents loved us, and they worshipped whatever idols they came across to seek the best “fortune” for their children. As a kid, I followed their practices, bowing to idols and burning incense. At the same time, I studied in Catholic schools. My first connection with Christianity was back in 1988 when my summer job colleague invited me to her church. However, my connection with Christianity was non-existent, and I simply saw those Saturday afternoons as social gatherings with friends.

Only after a couple of years, I prayed seriously to God for the first time after losing my beloved dog, Collie. I was desperate and felt helpless. Miraculously, God answered right after I prayed – Collie was found at a place where it would require someone to walk three hours from where he was lost. Since then, I would pray, but only when I needed something, taking God for granted and treating Him as my troubleshooter. In life, my focus was to move up the career ladder, believing that my advancement was solely due to my own capability.

In 2009, I was introduced by Rebecca, a cousin of my girlfriend Janice, to Island ECC. At the time, my relationship with Janice hit a low point. But through Island ECC, I felt a deep connection with God for the first time. I sought help from God to restore the relationship between Janice and I. In 2011, God answered my prayer again – Janice and I got married, with Pastor Brett as our officiating pastor at our wedding. We have now been a couple under God’s love for 14 years.

After the wedding, I remained in a “pray-on-demand” mode. I prayed for my father, who was very sick with cancer. In 2012, my father passed away in Hong Kong while I was in Shanghai. I felt so guilty that I was not there with him at his last moment, and I realised that I could not take relationships for granted anymore – not with my family and not with God. I began learning about praising and honouring God, beyond just asking Him for help.

However, I soon found myself focused on moving up the ladder again, engaging in back-to-back meetings and business trips without prioritising my relationship with God. I also seldom attended Island ECC, as we were living in Shanghai. About a year and a half ago, we founded a Bible study group with friends in Shanghai. This prompted me to start reading and studying the Bible daily. I was stunned to discover how many Bible messages are directly connected to my daily work and personal life. God has been trying to speak to me for years, but I ignored Him. He was so gracious with an ordinary and sinful man like me. God loved me so much that He answered my prayers numerous times, and I did not even demonstrate my faith wholeheartedly to Him. In 2024, I faced the worst time in my career. I felt abandoned by the company and taken for granted despite my years of significant contributions, solely due to the fact that I was aging. This painful experience helped me reflect and realise that I abandoned God and the church in the same way in the past. Yet, God never gave up on me. Who am I, a sinful person, to deserve such privilege of His grace and love?

In July this year, I stepped down from the spotlight and decided to put my faith fully towards God – the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – through Island ECC. Being baptised is not a formality to me or a way to showcase myself, but rather, a rebirth with wisdom, guided by Father God and Lord Jesus as my Shepherd. It is for me to follow Him, no longer relying solely on myself. I always remember what my wife Janice shared with me: “When a door is closed, God opens a window for you”.

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The LORD redeems the life of His servants; none of those who take refuge in Him will be condemned. Psalm 34:22



HO FAI WONG

Hi, I'm Ho Fai. I wasn't born into a Christian family, and I first encountered Christianity as an adolescent. I hadn't thought about faith seriously until recently. I was born into a family of four, with my mom working full-time, my dad, and my brother, who is six years older than me.

Like most 14-year-olds, I became quite rebellious and defiant at that age. My father had no idea how to deal with me, and our relationship began to drift apart. This may have been largely due to his own upbringing – his father, my grandfather, passed away when my father was only six years old. He later told me how he felt he didn't know how to be a proper father. At the same time, my brother, whom I was very close to, left for university. And also around this time, I also began to struggle greatly with my mental health.

As my mental health declined, I stopped attending school, and I was devastated. I no longer saw many of my classmates, whom I had known since I was six. But most importantly to me, I felt I had squandered all the potential I had and that I had failed my family. It was right about then that COVID-19 started spreading, and I found it more and more challenging to go back to school as online lessons brought me great anxiety and paranoia at the time.

At one of my lowest point, I even thought about suicide. Around that time, I met a girl whom I fell head over heels for. We would go on to date for roughly a year. During that time, I felt happy, even hopeful for the things to come. I started studying again and worked on myself to be a better partner, but it all came crashing down one day.

It was our anniversary, and I had prepared flowers, but a storm that day forced me to cancel the flowers and head to her house early instead. That was when I found her with someone else – my best friend at the time. I was devastated by this betrayal and fell deeper into withdrawal from friends and family. In my isolation, I studied the gnostic gospel and other esoteric works of Christianity. I practiced meditation and other spiritual practices in an attempt to rationalise what had happened.



I HAVE LEARNED TO APPRECIATE BOTH THE SMALL AND BIG THINGS IN LIFE AND HAVE LET GO OF A LOT OF THE ENTITLEMENT I FELT IN MY YOUTH.

I first encountered Island ECC when a dear friend of mine brought me to the young adult fellowship, Shift:Vessel. It was my first time at church and in a fellowship, and I really liked it. From then on, I began attending every week. My friend gave me a Bible, and in my zeal to learn more about the nature of God and the world, I read it in about a week.

Although I'm still early in my faith journey, having joined Vessel only half a year ago, I've noticed significant changes in myself as my faith has grown. I have started to see things with a "glass-half-full" mentality instead of a "glass-half-empty" one, which has greatly improved my mental health. I have learned to appreciate both the small and big things in life and have let go of a lot of the entitlement I felt in my youth.

Looking ahead, I aim to deepen my understanding of God's character and expand my knowledge of spirituality, ultimately becoming wise enough to apply scriptural lessons in my daily life. I also want to share the gospel and the good news of Jesus' sacrifice for us on the cross. I aspire to stand valiant in my faith, maintaining an unwavering stance in the face of obstacles and calamities that lie ahead, knowing that there will be times when people may attempt to lead me astray. I also hope to continue serving and guiding the younger generation to become good, God-fearing Christians.

JANELLE FUNG

I grew up attending a Christian school where we often memorised Bible verses, but they never truly resonated with me. As I went to university and began my career, I drifted away from church, caught up in the temptations of the flashy world. I sought validation through relationships, all of which were broken, and romantic affection became my focus. Church was the last thing on my mind.

In 2022, when my family faced a seemingly impossible legal issue, I felt utterly hopeless. That's when I remembered God and prayed for Him to save my family. After returning to church, I came across a card for Alpha. It simply read, "Questions about life? Go to Alpha." Before Alpha even began, something miraculous happened: the lawsuit was dropped, resolved as if it had never existed. I knew only God could have done this, and it was then that I decided to devote myself entirely to Him.

Through Alpha, I realised how self-centred I had been, trusting in my own plans instead of surrendering to God's far greater plan. My spiritual journey began to take shape, and I started reading the Bible and praying regularly. I learned that prayer isn't about a transactional relationship with God, but about deepening my connection with Him. In 2024, I joined a Bible study group with a group of lovely mothers. I understood that we are fearfully and wonderfully made, loved unconditionally by God, who sent His only Son, Jesus Christ, to die on the cross for us. After a year of study, I felt ready to take the step of baptism.

Just when I thought I had reached a spiritual high, a relationship crisis hit me hard. Someone I could never imagine hurt me deeply. I cried day and night, feeling utterly broken. It reminded me of the story of Job in the Bible, which I had studied only recently. As a mother, I was shocked to read about Job losing his children because of Satan. I couldn't understand how something so undeserved could happen. When Job's three friends accused him of wrongdoing, the Holy Spirit reminded me – I must not think like Job's naive friends. My sins have already been washed away by Jesus' blood on the cross. What I did wrong

in the past has no connection to the suffering I face now. From the moment I prayed the sinner's prayer, Jesus accepted me as I am and chose to forgive me.

God knows I love scrolling through Instagram. One reel popped up with a message reminding me how Job cried out in anger and desperation, but he cried in PRAYER. He didn't walk away from God, even when he couldn't understand Him. That's when I realised: Job stayed faithful, even when he got nothing out of it. Satan was defeated. Job taught me that it's okay to question, grieve, and cry out to God. What matters is staying close to Him, even in the darkest times.

Job's story became my anchor. When I felt like I couldn't go on, I held on to the lesson that God's wisdom and plan are far greater than mine. I continued to pray, attend church, and worship. The Bible has shaped me into a person of endurance, stability, strength, and faith. I've learned that God's grace and mercy are often found in the valleys of life, not just on the mountaintops.

With the help of my spiritual director, I've been learning to surrender everything to God. My strength is finite, but His wisdom is infinite. Through prayer, I've opened my heart to the Holy Spirit. During one prayer session, I closed my eyes and a childhood memory came to mind. It was an ordinary day when I was about five years old, crying because I didn't want to say goodbye to my parents, who were leaving for work in China. I had almost forgotten this moment, but the tears streamed down my face. I prayed for God to send the Holy Spirit to comfort me. I then saw a vision of God holding hands with a cheerful, younger version of myself, as I jumped and danced across a rainbow bridge in the sky towards a bright entrance filled with light. Now, I no longer feel alone. I am ready to live the rest of my life faithfully.

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JESS MAN

Hello, my name is Jess. I was born and raised in Hong Kong before moving abroad for university. During that time, I met my husband, and our life together began quickly – marriage, then children, all while trying to build a career and a family. For a long time, I thought I had to manage everything on my own. My story is about how God found me in my exhaustion and showed me that I was never meant to carry my burdens alone.

Before I knew God, my life was defined by striving. I was trying to be a good business partner to my sister, aiming to be a successful entrepreneur, and, most of all, striving to be a perfect wife and mother. After my sister and I started our business, things were good. But when my children came, I couldn't keep up the same pace. The guilt I felt towards my sister was immense, and our relationship became strained with arguments until she eventually left to work elsewhere. I felt like I had failed.

At home, the pressure was even greater. My husband, who loves our family deeply, had a different point of view on how to raise our children, especially when it was time to choose kindergartens. I felt constantly disappointed, like my best was never good enough. He was coming from a place of love, but I only felt the weight of his expectations. We were caught in a cycle of frustration and misunderstanding. I was drowning in responsibilities, trying to please everyone, and I felt utterly alone under the pressure. I was trying to control everything, but everything felt out of control.



In my lowest season, God sent people into my life to gently guide me to Him. My sister-in-law began talking to me about God. She told me something that stuck with me: “You don’t have to carry all that pressure on your own. You can give it to God.” At the time, it sounded like a nice idea, but I didn’t know how to do it.

Then, another door opened. My youngest son’s school had a mothers’ prayer group. I decided to go, not knowing what to expect. In that group, I found a safe space. I heard other women sharing their

struggles and their faith. For the first time, I began to pray not just as words, but as a real conversation. I started to open up about my fears of failure and my feelings of never being enough.

Slowly, I began to understand what my sister-in-law meant. I was learning to let go. I was learning to trust. This was how I met Jesus – not in a dramatic event, but through a gradual, loving invitation to lay down my burdens and find rest in Him.

Knowing Jesus hasn’t made all my challenges disappear, but it has completely changed how I walk through them. The constant anxiety I used to feel has been replaced by a profound sense of peace. I now know that I am not in control, and that is a relief. God is.

My husband and I still have discussions about our children’s future, but we always approach them with love, trust, and faith. I can now see his heart for our family more clearly, and we are learning to partner together instead of pulling against each other. I often think of the verse from Proverbs that I now hold dear: “Start children off on the way they should go, and even when they are old, they will not turn from it” (Proverbs 22:6). This verse reminds me that my job is not to be a perfect mother, but to be a faithful one – to guide my children toward God and trust Him with the results.

I still run my business, but I no longer see it as my sole identity. It is a part of the life God has given me to steward. The overwhelming pressure is gone because I know He is my provider and my guide.

I am here, preparing for baptism, because I want to publicly declare that my old life of striving is over. My new life is in Christ. He has replaced my burden with His peace, my loneliness with His presence, and my striving with His grace. I am still learning, still growing, and I am so excited to see where God leads our family next. Thank you.

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KAI YIN CHAN

When I was six, I asked my mom (a staunch Buddhist) if I could attend a Christian club with my friends, and she vehemently said no. Subsequently, for over 20 years, I turned down many invitations to church, including one from a mentor whom I greatly respected.

Despite how hardened my heart was, God still found His way to me. Years ago, while I was in a very dark place, a friend invited me to church. I would do anything to get out of the abject misery, including attending church. I went there for a year but eventually stopped. Later, out of curiosity, I started attending the church of another friend whom I never expected would become a Christian. That was where I met Sarah, who was instrumental in my coming to faith a year later, on 16 Aug 2019.

That day remains vivid in my memory. It was my first encounter with the Holy Spirit, who revealed what was holding me back from accepting Christ: the fear that if I took the leap of faith and accepted Him as my Saviour, I might one day find out He wasn't real.

For six years, I lived as a ritualistic "Christian". I attended service, joined small groups, and read scripture out of discipline, but I didn't truly know Jesus. I continued striving for the things that mattered in the secular world. God's kingdom could wait because eternity felt distant compared to the worldly things which demand our immediate attention every day. Over time, the "things that mattered" started losing their lustre. Cycles of momentary satisfaction soon gave way to valleys that left me chasing the next "high". I found myself asking, "Is this all there is to life?" Ecclesiastes 1:3-11 encapsulated the meaningless monotony of life for me. I might have hit rock bottom.

Purch, my pastor in Singapore, advised me to get rooted in a community in Hong Kong because I was backsliding, even though I kept up my Christian "rituals". I started attending the Village and Shift in Island ECC whenever I could make time after work. But it was not until God called me to a mission trip in Tai Tung this August that I experienced the turning point in my faith journey.



GOD HAS BROUGHT LIGHT INTO MY WORLD OF DARKNESS THROUGH HIS KINGDOM FAMILY AND HAS GIVEN ME A NEWFOUND PURPOSE IN LIFE.

During the trip, I felt God's Holy presence and received many divine revelations, including my lack of faith and my unwillingness to surrender my life to Him all these years. I was overwhelmed, humbled, moved, in awe, and experienced a peace that transcends understanding, all at once. I could no longer doubt His existence because His presence during the week-long mission trip was irrefutably real. I was awakened from my "spiritual slumber". And it was no coincidence that I crossed paths again with Alan, the mission trip leader, who prompted me to reflect more deeply about what it means to be a Christian, encouraging me to get baptised.

I recently came to truly understand the magnitude of God's love, grace, and mercy when Jesus died for our sins to grant us the gift of salvation through the study of "Behold Your God". It gave me a newfound purpose to pursue Jesus and to know Him, liberating me from the "performance orientation" mindset ingrained in me, which had justified my existence in this world.

I now have faith that no matter what happens, God is with me – Immanuel – even when I may not always feel it. He is a God of redemption, restoration, and even miracles. Thanks be to God – my mother, an even more unlikely Christian, accepted Christ on Easter Sunday this year, which coincidentally falls on my birthday. She also gave me her blessings to be baptised. There is no coincidence when it comes to God, and His existence is very real.

Today, I am still a work in progress, and I seek the courage to surrender my life to His hands daily. "Believe and see" is the way I choose to live going forward. God has brought light into my world of darkness through His Kingdom family and has given me a newfound purpose in life. By God's grace, I hope that through me, more people will come to know Him and His goodness.

Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.
Hebrews 11:1

KA MING KO

As a kid, my parents would take me to church, but I was never really interested. Every Sunday, I would sit there and fall asleep. Still, my parents would always tell me stories about Jesus and the Bible, despite my lack of interest. Slowly but surely, I grew more curious about life and its meaning. That curiosity grew into research, and slowly, my Instagram reels started becoming reels about Jesus. It taught me quite a bit about Jesus' character. But that fire quickly burnt out, and I started trying to fit in with my friends, following their social norms. My life went downhill, and I started feeling emptier.

Still, the emptier I felt, the more I tried to hold onto temporary fulfillments. One night, after hanging out with a friend, I suddenly went home and felt my heart racing rapidly. My sight started to tunnel, and I couldn't catch my breath. After checking with the doctors, I found out it was an anxiety attack. During that attack, I thought my life was ending; I thought I was going to drop and never stand again. It became severe, and I started to question my health and feared death. In my eyes, life became finite. Every time I walked into a room, the first thing that popped into my head would be how I would die on the spot, the excruciating pain I would feel as my body starts to feel lifeless. Through all this, I started understanding that life on earth really was finite, realising that tomorrow isn't promised. As my anxiety grew worse, my dad took me back to church. The first sermon I heard was by the pastor who founded the church; by this time, he had already retired,

and he was speaking merely as a guest speaker. Coincidentally, his entire sermon was about a straightforward message – “Do not fear”. As worship music started playing, I couldn't hold my tears back. I felt for the first time in my life that God was speaking to me. Since that day I started going back to church, I wasn't magically healed, but I was beginning to understand my circumstances.

About a month after that day, my mom took me on a run. She had been encouraging me to go on runs for the sake of both my physical and mental health. On our third run, we took a new path down the coast. The sun was setting beautifully, and during that moment, as we stepped out onto the

coastline, I closed my eyes and prayed to God, telling Him I was tired. Tired of fearing death, tired of living life like it was going to end the next moment. I told God, “My life is in Your hands”, and I started running down the coastline with my eyes closed. I crossed the finish line unscathed, having narrowly missed a 30-foot drop to the coast on one side and speeding traffic on the other, perfectly safe in between the two.

Instead of any of that happening, I felt supernatural peace, peace that made me realise God was always by my side, He had never left nor forsaken me, no matter the circumstances. Feeling the peace of His presence, the assurance of His love and character made me not want to ever let go. I started praying to God more and more, studying His Word, and got to know my Father in Heaven. After all this, I prayed to God for more godly friends. The night after, a friend recommended that I come to Island ECC, where I joined the Shift:Vessel fellowship and met many brothers and sisters in Christ.

After this crazy journey, I understood something significant; in John 13:7, Jesus says, “What I am doing you do not understand now, but afterward you will understand”. I have to trust God with whatever happens in my life; He has the bigger and better picture. Wherever I am in life is exactly where God needs me to be, just as God says in Jeremiah 29:11 “For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”

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KAMMY KWAN

When I was young, my parents and grandparents took my brother and me to Sunday school because my grandparents were Christians. My brother and I just took it as an almost-weekly activity we had to do and never really took it seriously – we would even hide in the playhouse on the playground to skip the classes. When my grandparents emigrated, we no longer attended church as a weekly activity. Although my primary and secondary schools were Christian, faith wasn't really present in my life.

After experiencing some tough times in school in Hong Kong – being bullied and not feeling like I belonged anywhere – I went to high school in the UK. While the experience helped me develop in many ways, it was also during those years that the value I placed on “freedom” took a firm hold. Freedom from parental rules; freedom from boarding school constraints; freedom from the limits of the weekly petty cash I was allowed to spend, etc. I believed I should do whatever it takes to do whatever I want, whenever I want, because, “You Only Live Once”, right?

I brought that mentality with me when I returned to Hong Kong for university – that I could (and should) do whatever made me happy. Who cares if I didn't attend class? Who cares if I didn't get the grades? Who cares if I wasted my days away not doing anything? This carried on past my graduation, and I was living without a care in the world. Who cares if I didn't have a stable job and a career? Who cares if I didn't save up money? Who cares if I didn't have healthy, stable relationships? I was living life my way, and I believed that was what life should be all about.

This lifestyle caught up to me in 2017, and I was hit with a reality check after a nasty breakup and some financial problems. I asked myself: “What have I been doing?” “What am I doing?” “What am I going to do with my life?” I felt lost. All that “freedom” I held dear and took pride in suddenly showed its other side – directionlessness. I realised I've been floating around aimlessly without anything to hold myself steady or redirect my path.

My best friend at the time, whom I met during an internship before starting university, was a Christian who had seen me go through all of this. While he did point out all the flaws and issues in my lifestyle, I never listened. It was in 2017 when he invited me to attend the Island ECC Christmas Eve service. The sermon from Pastor Brett that evening was the moment everything changed for me. It was about how God is with you and for you. God always has a plan for everyone, and all we need to do is listen, and He will guide us because He loves us. Tears streamed down my face uncontrollably. “Please, please tell me what the plan is for me, God. I don't want to be lost anymore...” I prayed to Him silently during the service.

From then on, I attended church every week, and also signed up for Alpha in 2018. I accepted Jesus Christ as my Lord and Saviour on May 19, 2018 during the Alpha retreat. Since then, I have personally experienced God's love, healing, and abundance. I would not be where I am today without Him, and I see now that even all those years when I was floating aimlessly, He was there with me, preparing me for our reunion and relationship. Even my best friend, whom I thought I had crossed paths with only by chance all those years ago, was intentionally placed by God to lead me to faith, and has now become my husband this year.

As I get baptised today, this is me proclaiming the good news of God, and declaring my desire to follow Him for the rest of my days. I will do my best to live in a way that would glorify Him through my professional and personal life.

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KATIE WU

Faith has always been present in my life. I grew up attending a Christian school, and my family went to church every Sunday. I still remember going to the kids' ministry at my family's church and sometimes sneaking out, pretending I was going to the bathroom, only to wander off and window shop at the nearby mall. Looking back now, it's funny to see how far I've come and how God has brought me full circle, especially on my baptism day.

For a long time, Christianity felt more like a label than a personal choice. I was a Christian by association, not yet by complete surrender. But even in those early years, God was faithful. He blessed me with a loving and supportive family, parents who exemplify His love, and an older sister who has guided and protected me. I had a fortunate upbringing with many resources at my disposal. Still, even in seasons of hardship, I now recognise that He was always watching over me.

Just like many others, my life completely changed during COVID. After graduating from college, I moved back home, ended a long-term relationship, and had to start my social life from scratch again. In 2022, I was given the opportunity to move to Singapore for work, which I saw as a chance to take a very daunting leap. I left behind my dog, which broke my heart, and the comfort of home, for a country where I only knew a few people. I still

live in Singapore today, and this experience has continued to throw curveballs my way left, right, and centre. I've faced challenges and heartbreak from those closest to me – things I never thought could happen. The feelings of loneliness were, and sometimes still are, strong as I live physically away from my family. But what once felt like brokenness in the darkness, I now see that as God gently drawing me back to Him and shining a light on my path.

One of the greatest blessings from my time in Singapore so far has been the people God placed in my life to draw me closer to Him. Growing up, I had always prayed for a close-



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knit group of friends I could truly lean on, a group that would share the funny quirks of life. Before this, I never felt that I had a core circle where we consistently supported and showed up for one another. God answered that prayer by bringing a group of girls into my life who are loving, uplifting, and deeply supportive. We all happen to be Christians, but our initial bonds were never based on faith. I think that makes it even more special, because God made it happen so naturally.

God has made me a whole new person, a refined and better version of myself under His love and guidance. When life doesn't give me lemonade on the surface, He meets me in the darkness. He extends His unconditional love, grace, and empathy. My heart is filled with gratitude because He saved my life.

I want to live by His teachings, to be kind to one another, to spread His unconditional love and grace, and to carry a heart of forgiveness and humility. As I take this next step in baptism, I pray that I may reflect the grace and love He has shown me and live my life according to His Word.

I'll leave you with my favourite verse, and one that guides me deeply:

Love is patient and kind. Love is not jealous or boastful or proud or rude. It does not demand its own way. It is not irritable and keeps no record of being wronged. It does not rejoice about injustice but rejoices whenever the truth wins out. Love never gives up, never loses faith, is always hopeful, and endures through every circumstance.

1 Corinthians 13:4-7

KIM CHUI

Hi, my name is Kim. I came to Christ two years ago while I was at university, when a cousin of mine shared with me the gospel of salvation through CRU (formerly known as Campus Crusade for Christ). When I first heard that Jesus was willing to die for me – a sinner who did not yet know Him – I was deeply moved. How could someone love me so much that He would give His own life before I had even recognised Him? It struck me as a gift both free and yet priceless.

This truth touched me even more because I grew up in a non-religious family. Like many typical Hong Kong households, my parents would bring me to visit Buddhist temples on occasion, and I would follow along. But deep inside, I was always left wondering about the meaning of worship. Was worship only a transactional take-and-go relationship with God, or was there something more to it?

Throughout my teenage years, I kept searching for a sense of belonging and something to anchor myself to. I explored different spiritual paths – dabbling in Buddhist teachings of dukkha, seeking wisdom through Daoist practices, and even reading into New Age philosophies. Yet none of them gave me the truth or satisfaction my soul longed for. It always felt like something was missing.



Fast forward to my university years – when I finally received the gospel – I felt an awakening like never before. This new faith in Christ set a fire in me to go above and beyond for God. The Great Commandments spoke to me powerfully, and I wanted to obey and live them out, actively serving and growing in CRU.

At that point, I assumed the Christian life would mean steady growth and a “happily ever after.” But what makes a real testimony is not a smooth road – it is the story of obstacles, struggles, and perseverance through God’s grace.

Following Christ did not make life easier. In fact, the deeper I walked with Him, the more I began to stumble in areas I once felt confident. I discovered

just how weak and broken I was on my own. During a spiritually dry season, even serving God felt empty – more like clinging to a duty than enjoying a living relationship. I reached burnout, and my walk with God felt heavy.

But the Lord never abandoned me. In January this year, I attended a Christian Youth Revival Camp with my community. Through prayer, worship, and fellowship, I began to see the truth about my “old self”. God opened my eyes to how much I had been living in pride, people-pleasing, and insecurity. He showed me that my fragile identity had always been rooted in the wrong places.

Yet those very trials revealed His greater truth: the gospel is not a one-time fix or a quick solution. Instead, it is a lifelong, intimate, and life-giving relationship with our Creator. He loves us not only enough to save us once, but to walk with us daily and transform our hearts over time.

On the last day of that camp, I decided to surrender my burdens and my heart to the Lord fully. With tears flowing down my face, God reminded me that He had never left me – and that He never will. In that encounter, I felt with my whole being just how merciful and loving our Creator is. I realised He had been shaping me all along, even in hardship, preparing me for a greater purpose to carry the gospel to East Asia and beyond.

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Today, I continue to walk and serve in a gospel-centred community. Over the past months, I’ve witnessed many brothers and sisters being baptised, and their testimonies encouraged me to pray and prepare my heart for this next step. Now the time has come for me to express outwardly what Christ has already done inwardly.

All glory belongs to God, who has been faithful, patient, and merciful every step of the way. I look forward to walking with Him, grounded in His Word and His promises, as I continue to grow and serve.

Stay blessed in our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen.

RODNEY ANDRADE

My name is Rodney Andrade, and I was born and raised in Brooklyn, New York. Although I grew up Catholic and attended Catholic school, I never had a connection with God.

Since I was little, my entire life has been about survival. My parents divorced when I was young, and my mother took her anger out on me. Seeing how my mother maltreated me, my perspective became unhealthy. I lived in darkness, and my life seemed impossible.

Growing up in Brooklyn, I was a sheep amongst wolves, so I decided to become a wolf to survive. There are things I have done in my life that I am not proud of. I possess extraordinary talents and abilities, but I was not a steward of them for God's purpose. I became a father at 19 and married at 21. At 22, I joined the Air Force. This was my escape and my transition to becoming a "good person". While in the Air Force, I attended a non-denominational church.

My inner drive, discipline, and motivation enabled me to achieve whatever goals I set for myself. However, my ambitions, travelling, and the mission got in the way of my marriage. I was divorced after 20 years of marriage. I learned to turn pain into power, sat in loneliness for so long that I did not need validation, and I was not scared of being rejected. I turned my wounds into what I thought was wisdom.

I told myself I would not get married again. However, I met a beautiful person whom I took for granted. This person brought out things in me that I thought were dead. Being in her arms was a safe place. I questioned myself every day whether this was real or just another disappointment.



My journey as a Christian began when I was introduced to Island ECC in 2016-2017. In the summer of 2018, my job required me to travel to Manila. Anxiety, separation, thoughts of being abandoned, being unloved, and disconnected haunted me. If a relationship is not rooted in God, it is destined to be deceived by the devil. Our 8-year relationship was far from perfect; our arguments mainly stemmed from our differing views and approaches to life. I never related to others when they complained about life. People often make excuses and blame others for their failures. I did not understand that we are created differently and have our own purpose in life.

I AM GRATEFUL FOR EVERY CHALLENGE I HAVE FACED
IN MY LIFE. GRATITUDE IS NOT ABOUT BEING BLIND TO
PAIN; IT IS ABOUT BEING AWAKE TO GRACE.

In 2022, my father passed away, and I retired from the Air Force. Transition after working for the government for 27 years was not easy. I didn't know how to manage my emotions and thoughts, so my escape was singing and dancing. Dancing is a "sour" subject for my wife. Instead of being open and communicating what I was going through, I lied about my whereabouts. I held onto this lie for almost a year. All I did was lose her trust and allow her resentment towards me grow. In April of 2024, we argued over hanging the laundry. The argument got out of hand, and she kicked me out of the house. Looking back, this was the best thing she did for us.

Being in a room alone, crying, disappointed, and ashamed made me realise that I was living in sin. I would cry, not sleep, and think "How did I get here?" I know God saw my pain, and heard my cries as I tried to hide the hurt. All I heard was, "Rod, it hurts me to see you in pain. But why do you keep doing this to yourself?" It was then that I decided to apply my God-given talent of discipline to follow the Lord. The word "impossible" now reads, "I'm possible."

"Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me." Luke 9:23

I now participate in Men's Fraternity, which enables me to deepen my faith and spiritual growth. Faith has allowed me to release the pain I have carried since childhood. I realised that God doesn't just want me to be understood, He wants me to be obedient. There was a purpose in how He designed my journey, and all I can say is, "I am sorry". I was sorry that I used God as an emergency exit.

I am grateful for every challenge I have faced in my life. Gratitude is not about being blind to pain; it is about being awake to grace. As broken as I am, with open arms, God still says, "Come". So here I am – not blaming anyone, not hiding, not defending – fully transparent, telling the world that I am a sinner. It is time to stop doing it Rod's way and start following God's way.

TIFFANY SHEK

Hi, I am Tiffany. I was christened at birth and grew up reciting The Lord's Prayer, saying grace, and singing hymns daily. Saturday nights were for fellowship, and Sundays were for Sunday school. However, I felt like being a "Christian" was not by choice; it felt imposed on me. Biblical teachings felt like a long list of "shoulds". As a child with low self-worth, worship songs about being "a wretch like me" felt defeating. My shame grew, as did my resentments toward the religion. Prayer was the immediate solution offered whenever I encountered problems, leaving me feeling unheld and dismissed. I had no personal relationship with God; technically, I was talking to myself. This abstract "God", supposedly omnibenevolent / present / potent, felt intangible, neither solid nor profound. I didn't see the fruits of following the "Christian way" – I found it uncool and irrelevant, so I rebelled. Skiving church became routine, and I fled away from anything related to faith.

In my attempt to create my own life, I started playing God, defying the real thing, resulting in chaos and destruction. With deep-seated fear, loneliness, attachment issues, and abuse, I self-medicated and sought false refuge through unhealthy ways to escape and numb my emotions. I white-knuckled through life, ran in circles like a headless chicken, and attempted to end it all as there was no hope. During those years of unmanageability, I was put on medications and institutionalised, bringing me and those around me to our knees. Yet, looking back, I see moments only God could have achieved, a faint light in the valleys of death, momentary peace. This allowed me to share my testimony today.

As I embarked on the road to recovery, an experience that God meticulously orchestrated and placed angels around me, I had to define a higher power. Initially skeptical and stubborn, I considered relating it to nature, like the sea, as it felt romantic and poetic. However, deep down, it felt inauthentic, like I was pushing my gut feelings away. When I surrendered and became rigorously honest with my true self, I finally came to realise that, deep down in my heart, Jesus lives there, always has, and that my God is the only God, the truth, the way, the life. I came to believe that only He could restore me. I have never truly understood God's heart and

wholeheartedly embraced the Christian life. How prideful was I to say that it doesn't work when I never gave it 100%? This time, I am all in.

I returned to Island ECC and chose to stay. Sunday service became my weekly soul reset, a place of growth and collective gratitude to our good God. To surround myself with healthy relationships, I joined Care Group Connect and am lucky to have found a place to call home in "Eat & Pray". Elijah House provided a safe place for me to uncover my wounds and clean them for proper healing, whilst Pure Desire offered me opportunities for God to speak to me directly and demonstrate how His mercy trumps all trauma.

Through the years, I have driven myself crazy trying to navigate the labels placed on me medically and psychologically, when the only label I need is that I am a Child of God. In times of disconnect and loneliness, I feel like no one truly understands me, and why would they? God comforts me, reminding me He is there – He feels everything with me. The more I understood God's character, the more I learned that He weeps with me. Looking back on past experiences, I may not know why they occurred, but I've come to realise that I am meant for more. Through these experiences, I've emerged stronger and can now serve as a wounded healer for others. I'm not meant to be tending the graves, especially my own.

I let go of my tight grip and continuously turn my will and life over to Him. I keep looking up because of His promises and faithfulness. God speaks to me through music, providing me guidance within lyrics. He is my true refuge, and in His embrace I can finally rest. With Him by my side, I can ride waves and dance through the highs and lows of life. I can't think of a better role model – Jesus is not only king, but also a rebel, kind, gentle, and a badass. He is love.

The song "I Follow Rivers" by Lykke Li pops into my head as I envision my baptism and my forever path with Jesus: "I, I follow, I follow you, deep sea baby, I follow you."

THROUGH THE YEARS, I HAVE DRIVEN MYSELF CRAZY TRYING TO NAVIGATE THE LABELS PLACED ON ME MEDICALLY AND PSYCHOLOGICALLY, WHEN THE ONLY LABEL I NEED IS THAT I AM A CHILD OF GOD.



WARREN SETO

I grew up in a Christian family with a father who regularly preached at a local church. My parents brought me to church every Sunday, where I would attend Sunday school with the other kids. Although I was blessed to know Christ from a young age, being a Christian was not presented to me as a choice, and it felt like I did not have a say in the matter. From the way the other churchgoers and Sunday school teachers interacted with me, it seemed like I was expected to behave in a certain way, or have the biblical knowledge and spiritual maturity that befits the preacher's son. This placed a lot of pressure on me and slowly made me reluctant to go to church.

Keenly aware of my rebellious nature, my parents made the brilliant decision to allow me to attend a different church than theirs. I was only around 10 years old at the time, so the problem was where they could send me without parental supervision. As God would have it, in the Tsim Sha Tsui YMCA building where my parents' local church was situated, there was another church conveniently located just down the hallway on the same floor – ECC Church (back before Island ECC was founded). At ECC, I was able to experience a personal relationship with God, unfettered by the pressures and expectations that I felt were placed upon me. I started to also have a community of Christian friends around my age. I was no longer afraid to ask questions about my faith, fearing judgment. This culminated in my decision to follow Christ on 20 July 2000, during a summer retreat camp organised by ECC. Since then, I have continued on my journey of faith and joined the ECC youth group, called "Harvesters", with my group of Christian friends.

Fast forward to when I graduated from high school, all my Christian friends left Hong Kong to study overseas and eventually started their careers there. Without my usual group to hold me accountable, I started to get complacent and often focused my time on my

studies and career instead. Although I did start attending Island ECC, I did not immerse myself in any ministry, care group, or community. I took God for granted because I knew He would still be waiting for me after I had achieved good grades or a successful career. I did not give God the priority in my life that He deserved, and I let earthly matters occupy my heart and mind. God could wait, and life came first.

In around 2015, life hit me hard. Rather than looking inward and realising that I had stumbled in my faith, I instead placed the blame on God. I grew even more distant from my faith and stopped going to church for a few years. During this time, the absence of God made life feel hollow, and I yearned for Him to be back in my life and in my relationships. After yet another bad breakup, I decided that I wanted to go back to church again, but I did not want to do so alone. Without any close Christian friends in Hong Kong, I asked one of my best friends (a non-Christian) to accompany me to the Sunday sermon on a whim. She agreed, even though she didn't seem like someone who would be open to the faith. This led me down a path towards rekindling my faith, and I eventually joined a fantastic care group a few months later.

While I thought God was working on me, He was also working on my friend through me. Without realising it, my simple invitation also led my friend to Christ. My friend and I continued our journey in faith together and eventually started dating. We got married earlier this year and are now getting baptised together.

Through this experience, there is no doubt in my mind that God has a plan for each of us.

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YAU YAU TSANG

I was born into a second-generation Christian family and have attended church my entire life. I joined Island Youth in high school, where my small group leaders Debbie, Fi, and Valerie guided me through my early days of faith (they did a fantastic job!). Surrounded by a loving family and a happy childhood, I rarely faced challenges that made me feel I needed to rely on God. I thanked Him for blessing me with such a smooth-sailing life. It wasn't until I went to a Christian conference in the UK that I had an epiphany about my faith. God moved me through tears and revelations when I saw the hardest hearts being thawed around me. The Holy Spirit is real. I vividly remember singing the song "All Hail King Jesus," where the worship leader invited the 3,000-person crowd to kneel and praise Jesus. There, I understood the difference between believing in God and living for Him – that everything belongs to Him and He gave me everything I had. God is not just someone I thank; He is sovereign, the One to whom we bow. That was a scary thought at the time. Still, it was the moment I decided to devote myself to knowing God more intentionally.

Since then, I realised that the "intention to devote" was the easy part, but the act of trusting and obeying was much harder. I recall taking a crucial entrance exam for UK universities and scoring miserably. While receiving rejections, I convinced myself it was God's plan for me to stay in Hong Kong for university, but it felt like my dreams were shattered. I realised that my plans had been driven by my own ambition and pride, rather than by God. When university started, I enjoyed partying and drinking a lot. I felt bound by the "stiff and rigid" rules of Christianity, as if they were keeping me from enjoying my youth. Galatians 5:19 warns that acts of the flesh – including drunkenness – "will not inherit the kingdom of God." That scared me, yet I chose to ignore His warnings. It wasn't until I made some regrettable decisions that I understood some mistakes are permanent, and have consequences that can haunt you for a long time. Only then did I realise God's words were meant to protect me. I was naïve and reckless; God was all-knowing and merciful all along.



I LEARNED THAT EXPERIENCES CAN ENRICH ME, ACHIEVEMENTS CAN EXCITE ME, FRIENDS AND FAMILY CAN COMFORT ME, BUT NOTHING FULFILLS ME LIKE GOD DOES.

Fast forward to my recent year abroad, it was God that kept me company in the first days when I was utterly alone, with no friends or relatives near me. In a season of changes, God was the only constant in my life. Eventually, I met many new friends and went on many trips. I was thrilled, but it was hard coming back to the mundane life after each one. Like many other things of the flesh, the excitement comes fast but fades even quicker. Only through prayers and practicing gratitude with God's words did I find unwavering joy from within. I learned that experiences can enrich me, achievements can excite me, friends and family can comfort me, but nothing fulfills me like God does. Looking back, I'm grateful that God led me to stay in Hong Kong for my university studies. I received countless opportunities for exchanges and overseas conferences that I wouldn't have had in the UK. God always had my back; I didn't trust Him enough to see it.

Years ago, when I saw many friends get baptised after high school, I prayed for a dramatic encounter with God. Now I see there was no single dramatic moment because He had been with me all along. I'm blessed to have known Him from the start and I'm grateful for all those who have nurtured my faith along the way. One of my favorite verses is Matthew 5:16: "Let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven." I could not have had such blessed and fruitful experiences by my own strength – only through God. I want to give glory to the Father by openly acknowledging my faith through baptism. I am confident that God completes me when nothing else can, and I commit to living a God-centred life.



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