

TAIWAN MISSION TRIP 2016





Trip Schedule (2nd – 9th July)

DAY 1

Depart HKG and arrive TPE
Meet & greet other team members at Taipei
Evangelism & curriculum training



DAY 2

5-hour train ride to Jinlun, Taitung
Prayer walk in village



DAY 3

Morning – Fellowship & Community VBS kick off
Day 1-4: ‘Love One Another’
Afternoon – Team workshops and Life group
Evening – Home visitations



DAY 4

Morning – Fellowship & Community VBS
Day 2-4: ‘Serve One Another’
Afternoon – Team day to beef noodle restaurant
Evening – Home visitations



DAY 5

Morning – Fellowship & Community VBS
Day 3-4: ‘Fellowship with One Another I’
Afternoon – Amazing Race
Evening – Home visitations



DAY 6

Morning – Fellowship & Community VBS wrap up
Day 4-4: ‘Fellowship with One Another II’
Afternoon – Finale
Evening – Evacuation to Taimali village



DAY 7

Team sharing at Taimali village
5-hour bus ride back to Taipei



DAY 8

Island ECC Team Debrief
Depart TPE and arrive HKG



Special thanks: 美南浸信會, 台東歷坵浸信會, 台東豐里浸信會, 台北頌主堂, 台北世界之光教會, 嘉蘭浸信會, Albuquerque Chinese Baptist Church, Hyde Park Chinese Baptist Church, Sugar Land Chinese Baptist Church

Foreword

This is the fourth summer that Island ECC has embarked on a mission trip to the village of Jinlun in Taiwan. Our 22-strong mission team poured in countless hours of planning leading up to the trip – but while things seldom went according to our plans, everything went according to His.

This year, we encountered much more logistical complications, spiritual attacks and of course, weathered super typhoon Nepartak. These adversities, however, allowed us to experience God in remarkable ways as He worked through each of us as one body of Christ in Jinlun.

A lot of what we experienced cannot be penned down in words, and the reflections contained in this booklet will not do justice to His glory. But it is our hope that from these reflections, you will catch a glimpse of, and be encouraged by, the amazing love and grace that He has shown us in Taiwan.



– TAIWAN MISSION TEAM '16

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Alda Leung //

As I was preparing my heart and mind to compose this sharing, I went back to the memory booklet written to me by other team members at the end of the trip, and I was being strongly reminded of ...

The Body of Christ

Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body — whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free — and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. Even so the body is not made up of one part but of many.

1 Corinthians 12:12-14

I earnestly appreciated the team God put together, and how well everyone was acting as a body of Christ according to the Bible. On one level, leaders were certainly leading well and members were being good, cooperative followers. On another level, everyone did her/his part to care for each other and all needs (whether emotional or physical) were met one way or another. On still another level, all members were always so willing to contribute their talents and skills as the opportunities arose.

My Mandarin was very limited, but in all occasions there was Mandarin help (especially during my class). Besides the language help, my fellow class teachers Kristy and Yafang were also very good at splitting up class responsibilities so things would run smoothly and kids were cared for properly. I received much encouragement from team members during different moments. Everyone was giving their best, whether it was teaching, leading games, relating to kids, performing, praying, and many more.

The Home Visits

They replied, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved — you and your household." Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all the others in his house. At that hour of the night the jailer took them and washed their wounds; then immediately he and all his household were baptized. The jailer brought them into his house and set a meal before them; he was filled with joy because he had come to believe in God — he and his whole household.

Acts 16:31-34

Our Taitung ministry strategy was to reach the kids through camp, and then reach their families through home visits. It was precious to have built relationships that were deeper than I could imagine with the students within four short days, and then able to connect with a grandfather and a father during an over-an-hour home visit. We had to believe that as God promised,

the blessing would spill over from the believer to the entire household, and even the entire JinLun community. In a heartening way, I felt that God had assured me again of the same promise in the trip. When we were experiencing the storm, my family in Hong Kong were praying for me — with my non-believing mom, and somehow my mom had a lot of peace (rather than worry) even when we were in evacuation. **God remembers and cares about the non-believing household of His daughters and sons.** God also convicted me of that in serving and building relationships, I must also put emphasis on the Gospel message itself, and not be shy to articulate the Gospel clearly, being fully convinced how impactful and crucial the Gospel message is.

The Finale

Now to Him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to His power that is at work within us, to Him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.

Ephesians 3:20-21

The finale was scheduled on the day when the unexpected super typhoon hit. I was deeply moved when I saw how focused the whole team was on the mission despite the storm, how God gave wisdom to the leaders in making important decisions, and how God watched over us as we put bold faith into action (as we kept the finale going). I think God rewarded and honoured us the same way with His Finale: the huge rainbow, the safe shelter in the eye of the storm, and the timely evacuation all the way to Taipei. It was God's great love and power on display.

God has evidently taught me in a very personal and unique way about the theme of our camp: **One Another** — how to serve, love, and fellowship with one another. I'm truly thankful to our heavenly Father and victorious Saviour.



Alexandra Low //

Ilha Formosa. The Beautiful Isle.
Taiwan.

It is not difficult to understand how she managed to capture the heart of George Leslie Mackay (one of the first missionaries, and the most prominent one, to Taiwan), and many others after him. Neither is it difficult to comprehend how Taiwan often drifts between its two stark images of idyllic haven and political warfare between nations.

Religious freedom presently enjoyed here is a direct result of her unique history; the outcome of centuries of sociopolitical and economic evolution. The abundance of churches is the fruit of hard work, sowed with tears and even blood, by those who have gone before us.



Throughout the entire outreach, I could not help but marvel at how far we have come, and also burdened by how much work there is still to be done.

I kept comparing how it was like a century ago and present. There was a time the locals did not have the Holy Bible in their tongue. A time when children, especially girls were not schooled. A time when people travelled on foot for hours (some up to five hours) just to attend a Sunday gathering, by the roadside. For us today, we have God's Word in English and Chinese, as well as Taiwanese indigenous languages. Schooling is made mandatory and children can now read Bible stories on their own. Church facilities are erected where people gather.

I marvelled.

I kept comparing how it was like half a decade ago and present. There was a time when things were slightly different. A time when there was only Jinlun. A time when there was only one single mission team every summer. A time when there was no church facility for the new converts to gather. Today, in

2016, two teams were commissioned; one to Jinlun, another to Jialan. A church is running, and shepherded by a local pastor. The local community benefited immensely through the local missionaries' hard work, to bring the Word of God to the area, but also the grace of God in their socioeconomic aspect. In all the toiling, sowing, watering and harvesting work done here, our team plays a supporting role.

I marvelled.

May the community in Jinlun be not too different from the early churches. A place where children come to Jesus. An institution where women's efforts are given their deserved recognition. A platform where ethnic differences can be set aside, while the new identity in Christ regards everyone as equals.

And, a sanctuary where adults set stellar examples for the next generation. I wondered often how it would look like ten years from now ... a hundred years from now.

There is still work to be done.

I can almost hear the last message from George Leslie Mackay to the church ring in my ear,

"Will Formosa be won for Christ? **No matter what may come in the way, the final victory is as sure as the existence of God.** With that thought firmly fixed there will be but one shout 'Blessed be His glorious name for ever, and let the whole earth be filled with His glory. Amen and Amen.'"



Alistair Chiu //

Answered Prayer: Round 1

Our team headed down from Taipei to Taitung on two different trains, an earlier one and a later one. We who were on the earlier train were supposed to wait for the second group at the station in order to take the connecting train together on to our destination.

However, we discovered that the second train coming was delayed, which might cause us to miss our connecting train. We were waiting there on the platform in the heat, and the team starting praying. Some of us were talking to the guard, who indicated that the train was delayed



by 15 minutes, which would cause us to miss the connection. I felt that God would not cause the train to make up 15 minutes of lost time! So I wondered if there was a point to praying for it. But the team prayed that the second group would make it and we would be able to get on the connecting train together. In the end the guards agreed to hold the connecting train until the second train arrived from Taipei, so we could all get on together! God answered our prayers in a way I totally did not expect.

Answered Prayer: Round 2

On the final day, our finale was supposed to be held in the evening in order to farewell the kids. But the super typhoon was barreling towards Taitung, and scheduled to make landfall on that day. We started praying for God's protection and for God to stop or slow the typhoon to allow us to hold the finale. There was some debate whether to hold the finale at all. It seemed like God was slowing the typhoon's arrival, so we made a very late call on the final morning to hold the finale, but in the afternoon instead of the evening. The rain still had not come by then and we were able to hold the finale. Many of the kids showed up to perform and we were able to have a

proper farewell for them, which they loved. In the end the rain came down as we finished the finale, and we jumped into vans to leave the area straight afterwards.

God then protected us that night as we were able to evacuate the area, sheltered from the typhoon and then the next day opened the road and the rail for us to return to Taipei, just 9 hours behind schedule (but still able to arrive on the same day!) **These two instances of answered prayer encouraged me to pray bolder to God, as we knew that we could ask for His help when we are doing His will and He will listen to us.**



Connecting with the team and the kids on mission

I really enjoyed our time spent with the kids. Despite my limited Mandarin, I was able to connect with the kids in our classroom (thanks to the other teachers who would sometimes translate for me!). I also enjoyed very much the time spent getting to know the members of our team. It is hard in Hong Kong to get to know people well, but somehow when you are away and on mission, despite it being very busy you get the chance to bond with people. I now look forward to seeing people at church and at our reunion and thank God for the friendships made on mission. I also wanted to thank our leaders for looking after us and making wise decisions to look after the team.

Ami Tsoi //

That's what faith can do

This year is my second year to join the Taiwan mission trip, and my first year to co-lead the trip. Last year, the Taiwan mission trip was so awesome that I made up my mind to join again this year without a second thought. I was excited to see how God was going to make the trip amazing, but never expected God would do immeasurably more than I could have imagined.

Preparation for the mission trip started months ago to make sure everything would go right. However, NOTHING went as planned!

Our departing flight to Taiwan got delayed; we almost missed the connecting train from Taitung to Jinlun; some of the classrooms at where the summer camp was held were locked on day 1; almost every day we had team members getting injured or falling ill; a super typhoon came, almost causing the finale to be cancelled; we evacuated from Jinlun which is in the mountains; a car accident blocked the only road to the city, and we were stuck on the road faced with the risks of landslide and mudslide.

Honestly, we had no plan B for any of those situations. **The only thing we could do was pray.** We prayed together to fight against all those spiritual attacks every day. We prayed hand-in-hand together asking God to let the finale happen. We prayed together to ask God for protection on our way back to the city from the mountain. We also asked family and friends to pray for the team by sending prayer requests to different message groups. None of us was afraid of the super typhoon Nepartak (though it was the strongest typhoon Taiwan has seen in 60 years) as we were hopeful that God would provide in all circumstances.



God did answer all our prayers! **And He turned all those chaotic situations around into blessings!** Could you believe them? Because of the delay of our departing flight, we bumped into Pastor Brett who prayed for us at the gate; the connecting train to Jinlun was willing to wait for 20 minutes in order for us to all get on; the classroom assignments we had to re-mix was even better than what was originally planned; we had no doctors or nurses in the team, but we had a vet who took great care of our injured team members! (God planned before we even asked!) The finale was pushed a few hours earlier with short notice, and it turned out 90% of the kids and parents showed up (more than we originally expected) The super typhoon slowed down a bit in the Pacific Ocean, and we earned some time to finish the finale and evacuated from the village; the car accident was cleared within an hour, and we were able to leave before they closed down the only road out of the Jinlun.



When we reached the safe shelter from the mountain, rain stopped and there was a double rainbow all the way across the sky! That's God's promise! After the whole team made it under safe shelter, rain poured again the entire night, and the super typhoon made a direct hit on where we stayed in the middle of the night.

Praise God for His amazing grace and all-knowing power! I am in awe of how with the power of prayer He provided in ways that are immeasurably more than I could ever expect throughout our Taiwan mission trip.

And whatever you ask in prayer, you will receive, if you have faith.

Matthew 21:22

That's what faith can do!

Calton Chu //

Tears of Joy, Tears of Hope

This is my third year attending the Taiwan mission trip with Island ECC. Prior to this year's trip, I wondered whether it would be more or less the same as the previous years'. After all, we were heading back to the same village (Jinlun), to teach the same group of children, and to visit the same families. I had doubts as to whether God would reveal anything new to me this year. I even wondered whether this "lack of novelty" meant that I would not be able to experience God the way I did in the past. God proved me wrong on so many levels.



Seeing my old students this time around felt very different. When I first went to Jinlun in the summer of 2013, the children I taught did not have a relationship with God and many were first introduced to Jesus through our Joyful Hope Summer Camp. Fast forward to 2016, I was surprised at how much they have matured spiritually. Some of my ex-students still do not have much knowledge of the Bible, but they know who Jesus is and are learning to trust and rely on Him. I have often questioned how effective these one week VBS camps really are in helping the children of Jinlun build their

faith. I still do not have an answer to that question – but what I've learned from this year's trip is that **while we are only there for a week every year, God's presence in Jinlun is constant**; and we, the Island ECC mission team, are but a small part of God's beautiful plan for the village.

I was reassured of this on our second day when I spoke to a boy who had severe mobility and speech impairments. As part of this year's curriculum, the teachers washed their students' feet to bring the story of Jesus washing the disciples' feet to life. I asked the boy how he felt after he got his feet washed. With his impairments, every word that comes out of his mouth takes

immense effort, but he managed to respond with the words, “像耶穌:像耶穌” (like Jesus, like Jesus). He had the brightest smile on his face and I saw so much joy in him. At that moment, I wondered how someone in such physical condition could possibly experience so much joy. In fact, more joy than people I know who are in much more privileged positions (both physically and financially). **The answer has to be God.** I do not know his backstory, or how he was exposed to Christianity. But I know that just as God has been working in the village, He has also been working in that boy's heart.

Our trip was mired with an unprecedented amount of complications and spiritual attacks - flight and train delays, multiple injuries and super typhoon Nepartak just to name a few. Despite these circumstances, all of which were outside our control, our team pushed forward in knowing that we stand on the side of victory with God and that “in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose” (Romans 8:28). After we evacuated from Jinlun (the evacuation experience itself warrants a reflection of its own!), we were shown a magnificent rainbow as a reminder of God's covenant. This year, God opened my eyes and gave me a glimpse of His intricate plans. And for the first time on a mission trip, **I cried tears of joy when I experienced His love for the children, and tears of hope when I witnessed how He is at work in Jinlun.**

I went on this trip partly doubting whether God would reveal anything new to me, or whether I would be able to experience Him the way I did the first two times I went. But as always, God responded by



revealing to me and letting me experience much more than I could have asked or imagined.

Casper Chan //

This is my first mission trip ever. I would like to share how God answered our prayers, how we increased our faith in God, and how we experienced God's love and His protection during the trip.

Taiwan has always given me the impression of being cosmopolitan and modern. Yet, Jinlun village is very different from that. It is neither modern nor wealthy, but besides lacking in resources, it is also lacking in love and care. In a place like Jinlun, monetary donation without love is useless.



When I was there, I could feel the strong love from God for Jinlun. Because of that, I could gather the strength to finish this mission trip and show God's love to one another. Now I understand God's love on a new definite level. His love is unconditional. No matter who you are, where you are from, what you have done, His death redeems all of our sins. He loves and cares for us so much and protects us in His hands.

I once thought that mission trips are chances to serve with other brothers and sisters, while escaping from work and stress. But after the trip, I have a new perspective on mission and service. It reminds us that we can serve God anytime and anywhere, not only during specific times and locations, and not only when we're on spiritual highs. All we need in order to serve is just a pure heart, which is totally free. Also, we should never underestimate how the tiny things we do could make a mega change in someone's life.

Probably we wouldn't reap what we sowed instantly, but God promises that big harvest will definitely come.

From this trip, **I learnt how to surrender everything to God. We surrender not only when we have no other way out, but every single day, every single minute.** Humans are greedy. We want things to be done in our own way and time. Unfortunately, we only see the world from a tiny window. We depend on our finite knowledge and experience to make decisions to achieve whatever we want, without seeking His will. As He is the Creator of the world, everything is under His control. The super typhoon that we faced, base on our finite understanding and scientific whether data we gathered, should be the strongest typhoon in Taiwan in over 20 years, and should hit us directly right during our graduation ceremony. Nothing from the weather reports suggested that it would be weaken and slowed down.

Yet, miracle happened. Two hours before the typhoon was expected to hit, it slowed down. It was only after we finished the graduation that the thunderstorms arrived. We then evacuated the village, but if we had done so a few minutes earlier, we might have come across a serious car crash. The timing was perfect and everything was under His control. This demonstrated how God protected us. He answered our prayers and was with us all the time. **I know He is the only one who could have made this happen.**



Charlotte Lui //

Thank you for journeying with us in different ways for without you, this trip would be a different one.

It was definitely a trip full of God's presence in the midst of challenges! I had no

specific expectation for the trip except desiring to see God. And indeed, God answered this prayer by showing me how real and present He is in our lives always according to His ways. There are so many stories to share but let me share a few in particular.

It was a valuable experience and lesson that broke my pride and increased my faith in Him. I already knew that I am not good in Mandarin but subconsciously I thought that I was ok, until the kids laughed at my broken Mandarin. God broke my pride by helping me admit as a teacher before them that I was not good at it and asked help from my co-teachers so that His message of love would be understood by the students. He also increased my faith by helping me decide to stay and send the students home before leaving the village despite hearing the fearful news that one of the bridges has already been broken before the super typhoon arrived. That was the first time in the trip that I felt fearful, yet I had to quickly decide on how to respond to the student who asked, "Teacher, how will I go home?" I struggled and almost left her but thank God for His grace and reminder, I changed my mind and decided to go with another volunteer who had a car to drive them home before leaving the village. Experienced God's faithfulness and protection!

It was beautiful to see how the "naughty and rebellious" kids became understanding, obedient and cooperative with us. God helped us interact and gel healthily and wonderfully despite the challenges and the short four days' time together. The students actually listened and remembered what was being shared with them. God also blended and united the teams from



US, Taipei and Hong Kong nicely despite our limited time for interaction and our different point of views. Decisions made by the leaders were followed especially during critical moments. We witnessed how Hebrews 10:24-25 was put into action:

And let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near.

It was special and a blessing to have so many God-fearing people pray with us as we faced the super typhoon — the strongest one in Taiwan in 50 or 100 years. I experienced God's peace throughout, even after being awakened by the loud noises when the typhoon hit.

The opportunity to hear from Pastor Tony on God's will was also timely, for I had to make a decision towards the end of the trip on whether to leave early due to my commitment in Hong Kong. I was confused and under stress, but after conversing with God and doing my part, He answered my prayer and blessed me with a win-win solution. God honoured His Words, that **he who has His commandments and keeps them is the one who loves Him; and he who loves Him will be loved by His Father, and He will love him and will disclose Himself to him** (John 14:21).

Thank You, Father God, for the Valuable, Beautiful and Special Taiwan 2016 Mission Trip. Thank You for Esther who suggested this VBS acronym that is appropriate for this experience. Father, keep blessing the people in Taitung and the people reading this. Amaze them of who YOU are! Thank You.



CK Wong //

Before this trip, my prayer was for God to give me confirmation on whether I should serve more on missions. I have asked God to prepare my heart, my soul, my mind, and my strength to be His servant on this mission trip. God answered my prayer and revealed His grace thoroughly in all aspects on this first mission trip of my life.

These are the kids in our class (pictured). They are all first graders. I was very surprised by their friendliness. They treasured us as their teachers — some of them even gave me hugs on the first day.

There are three stories in which I saw God's footprints.

1. One of the students in our class, she was an introvert, was not attached to the group, and rarely talked. She liked to observe from outside the classroom. She was really into art and crafts. At the beginning, we did not know how to help her participate in class. I prayed to God for wisdom and asked Him to open up her heart to Him.



After a couple of days, in one of the activities before class, we played the "Eagle catches chicks" game. She sat out as usual and observed. Halfway through the game I become the eagle. She suddenly stepped in and held onto me and said, "You can not!" (不可以!). I was shocked that she would step up to protect her fellow classmates given that she was usually so withdrawn. God showed me the qualities in children who were made in His image. God also put another teacher in our class who has similar personality as her who stayed with her the whole time. I thank God for His immeasurable love and mysterious arrangement for us to experience His awesomeness. I pray that God continues to build her up to protect those around her.

2. There was another student in our class, she came on the first day with anger clearly shown on her face. She was easily irritated by her classmates and was easily upset. During the class, I witnessed her change, from being

withdrawn to being involved. On the third day during lunch after class, she shared how she was angry with his drunk father. One of our teachers shared her experience with her drunk father and how God comforted her with His grace. Although the student said she was still angry with her father, I could see in her eyes that she started believing that the situation could be changed. I thank God for planting a seed of hope in her heart. And I pray to God that she would continue seeking hope from the grace of God.

3. At the fourth day, there were typhoon warnings and the typhoon was fast approaching us (It was the strongest typhoon in many years). The leadership team was forced to cancel the finale in the afternoon, and the mission team had to evacuate from the area. We had a group prayer the night before, where we prayed as a group to seek God's face and His will on this matter. We cried out to God, and we asked for the power and faith to overcome our fears of the uncertainties.

We sent the children home after class that fourth day. We said our farewells to them because we were expecting that the finale scheduled at 7pm would not be possible since that's the time the typhoon was supposed to hit. At around 1pm, after getting the advice from Pastor Do the local pastor, and considering that the children had prepared so hard for their finale performances, the leaders announced that we would move the finale to 3pm. We expected that many of the children and parents would not be able to come as some of them live at a certain distance and would need to prepare for the storm. Praise to the Lord, 90% of the student came with their parents at 3pm and they participated enthusiastically. I could tell from their faces how much this finale meant to them. Although we had to quickly say our farewells again, with tears and drama as the team rushed to evacuate, it was God answering the prayers we prayed. We put our requests out without fear and He filled us with joyful spirit. Hallelujah!

God showed His promise with a double rainbow during our evacuation. This mission trip was filled with His love that is immeasurably more and His faithfulness towards us. Although Taitung is still suffering from calamities done by the storm, God has shown that He loves and cares for the people by revealing Himself to them. I pray that God continues fill the fields with workers to reap the harvest, and continues to bless and reveal His mightiness to the ones who pray to Him. AMEN.



Emily Wong //

Not fully knowing what to expect but simply wanting to see a little more of what God sees, I went onto my first mission trip. I was open, but God still took me by surprise with how much He was able to make me see within one short week, how hard He cared to break me, just so He could build me up again in His powerful ways. "A little" was too little for Him.



I came face to face with the realisation of the measure (or rather the incomprehensible-ness of the measure) of our Creator's love for each and every one of us, despite, and because, of our differences. I was assigned a very diverse group of students, some had very difficult family situations, some were abused, some were physically handicapped, some were plain difficult to handle. However, despite their physical immobility, despite the past hurt they've experienced, they all have extremely pure, joyful, and God-seeking hearts that I could tell did not come from anywhere but God who was and is taking care of them and loving on them from heaven as they grow. They each in their unique ways convinced me that **God is still God even in the darkest and most abandoned places.**

I like having everything under my control. I like to know that there's a plan I could follow. I do not like surprises and the unknown. And of course it had to be a trip full of surprises: I did not meet the lead teacher of my class at the pre-mission training, did not get to properly plan the lessons with her, did not have a proper chance to get to know her before we had to teach together; We got the senior kids class (which I dreaded), all-boys (needs no further explanations), and later on the first day of camp we found out was a very, very difficult class (to say the least); The weather was unexpectedly unforgiving; I did not realise my Mandarin was so ineffective. My heart feared. My mind stressed. My strength weakened. I was totally not in my comfort zone.

But it was in those times of uncertainties that my fearful heart remembered to look to God and trust Him when He said,

"For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways," declares the Lord. "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My

ways higher than your ways and My thoughts than your thoughts. [My word that goes out from My mouth] will not return to Me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it."

Isaiah 55:8-9,11

God, on the very first day of the trip, when I was still on the plane from Hong Kong to our destination, already started reminding me that this was His mission. The mission was His. The village is His. The children are His. I am His.

On the plane when I was finishing off the translation of the song for our drama performance, reflecting on my own story as I was trying to pen those words, thinking of the villagers of Jinlun and what messages God must be wanting them to hear, I felt so strongly that God was with me as I wrote. He was the mastermind behind the song. He was the author that wrote my life story so I could churn out those words that tell of the hope He gave that grounded me. He is the one that loves the village, He is the one that has the message of reconciliation for them, and I was privileged enough to be His vessel. He reminded me there and then, that **it is Him, not me, who does all the planning and doing and worrying. I only have to do all the trusting and following.**

As the camp went on, I would begin to see and marvel at that — yes the class was chaotic, yes some of them they have heartbreaking stories, yes our teaching, finale, and travelling plans were all disturbed, and yes Mandarin was not a strength of many of us — none of these were outside of God's plan. We could not see it initially, but He had placed each of us perfectly. The personal stories we each carried with us He used to bring hope to the kids He placed in our immediate reach. Our unique gifts and experiences He strung together to enable and encourage the team in fulfilling His mission. The changes of plans ultimately brought nothing but glory to our God and testified His sovereignty.

What we saw as chaos, He looked upon them and said "very good".



Fred Tan //

I've been to three mission trips in Cambodia within these past 5 years learning about different areas our local partners are working on: anti human trafficking, university students and children at risk. This trip to Taiwan nudged me to change environment and also to focus on building relationship with children / youth which is not an easy task for me!

I'm grateful for the team: high school students, teachers, sales, pastor, moms ... Everyone was giving different views on how God was in action.

His Light Is Powerful

We had a prayer walk on the night we arrived at the village.

While walking and praying with Kevin, Winnie, Mei Woon and Veronica, we reached a very dark place and my eyes were caught by that very strong light in the middle of nowhere. **God reminded me of His presence and that His light has great power.** This place was in fact where our team would organize the closing ceremony with the children with some performance and gathering parents to see their talented kids.

It wasn't after a few days that we all realized how important it was to pray for protection over our team (minor injuries), over the kids (e.g. some with very strange nightmare), and the super typhoon which I'm certain you will have more details with the other members' sharing. The leaders shared with us that it was a bumpier road to run the camp this year. **The picture of God's light I saw kept me alert and on guard to pray even more, and be certain about the victory the team was bringing into the village.**

Teaching With Love

I didn't have any experience with kids at all and at first when I was assigned with my fiancé Veronica to a class with very young kids, I couldn't imagine how I could help as I didn't know how to speak Mandarin. Plan changed and we got the older ones, yay! Youth around 14-ish. We had great



interaction with them because they joked, tried to test our boundaries but also wanted to learn from us. The camp theme was on love. One thing that made it easier to teach was our own experience with God. I think it's not an effective way to teach if only head knowledge was shared. So with Veronica, we decided to share the five love languages, challenging the youths to say "I love you dad and mom"; then we shared more personally on relationship boys/girls topic. The six youths we had were part of the local pastor's youth ministries. Even though they seem on the outside as being strong, knowing how to sing Christian songs, and knowing how to dance and perform well, we got to know them better and we functioned like a care group. What I could testify was that they have great parents and the Lord is with them.

More To Come

To me, habit builds over the years and experience shapes how I run my life. My takeaways from this mission trip: Be watchful of not being trapped by the world. Remember the Gospel at work. Pray. Pray. And pray not for selfish desire, but for God to reveal to me His teaching.



Jonathan Cho //

During this week in Taiwan, I have realized the power of love, prayer and community through different experiences.

God has really shown me His power through prayer throughout this experience. I dislocated my shoulder a little more than a month before the trip. I believe **God used this injury to prepare a patient heart within me.** When I first got injured, I was very frustrated with the inability to do day-to-day activities, but eventually grew more and more patient with the healing process. As the mission trip edged closer, I prayed for even more patience, as I know I would be easily frustrated, especially with younger children. This prayer was answered and I felt a sense of peace even during times when I would normally be frustrated. Another time when God showed His power through our prayers was when our team prayed about the super typhoon. I remember being in a huge huddle praying that God's will be done and that we would be delivered safely. It was a truly remarkable experience that we were able to evacuate the area given the small window of opportunity.

Before going on this mission trip, I watched a sermon by Hank Fortener about love. Fortener mentions that "God is Love" and "everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God". These words could not have been more relevant during this trip. During the trip, we were encouraged to share testimonies and use evangelism cards. However, I did not really have the confidence to use either tool because of my sub-par Mandarin. Despite this, **I felt like serving God could also come by simply loving the children.** There

was this one child 張仲璽 who I grew quite attached to. Though at first he was quite disobedient, we were able to build a loving friendship through things as simple as playing basketball. This friendship was especially special to me because 張仲璽's parents are not really emotionally or physically



available for him or his brother, so I felt the need to show more love towards him. If the parents are not always there to love on them, **I could definitely show God is a God of love just by loving on him.**

Lastly, I am really thankful for the entire team. I am especially thankful for Victoria and Emily because they were able to carry the load of teaching, and Victoria even translated my testimony into Mandarin for the children to understand. Furthermore, I could see the impact of unhealthy family environments on the children of 金崙 as some of these children are emotionally scarred by what happens around the community. Despite this, some of these children are able to be loving and mature at such a young age, which is very remarkable to me given the little that they have.



This mission trip has really transformed my perspective and made me understand how lucky I am. I can't help but feel the need to help those in need more often, and I hope this mission trip is the first of many to come.

Joshua Chong //

I've always really struggled with writing testimonies.

Going into this trip I didn't have much expectation, not because I didn't think God would use this trip in unimaginable ways, but precisely because I knew He would do just that (and c'mon, He does have a pretty solid track record of being awesomely unpredictable). I knew He'd surpass any expectation we could hold, probably in the most unexpected ways, so with that in mind, I decided to just be open and let God blow my mind.

This trip was a lot different to last years, our team was much smaller, and we (the youth) were quite discouraged when we heard that our friends (youth from the Taiwan/US teams) from last year were headed to serve in another village.



Our Hong Kong team consisted of a wide variety of people coming from different background and places in life, and I will admit (probably not the best thing to say knowing this is going to be printed and read by thousands of people...including everyone on the HK team, but we're sharing everything right?) that me being the stubborn, prideful person I am, I had my doubts about them and found myself not wanting to really bond and get to know them. As the trip progressed, the walls I put up came down and down and down and I learned to appreciate and love each and every one of them, and I'm so, so grateful I got to experience God with them. God really humbled my heart throughout the trip and I couldn't have been more wrong and I'm so embarrassed to have been so prideful...but hey, that's why we go to church right? Pride has always been something I struggle with and I think on a personal level, that's where God worked on me.

There is one thing every single person on our team experienced and struggled with this year; spiritual warfare. This year's trip was riddled with spiritual attacks; from injuries to super typhoons, it just seemed like nothing was going as planned, everybody was affected. We were warned about the enemy's attacks, but nobody was ready for them. Everything just seemed to be going wrong.

Participant turn-up from the village was way lower than expected, not nearly as many children came as last year, which wasn't very encouraging. We had multiple injuries on our team throughout the week, some being quite serious. From little things to large things, our whole team was affected.

The biggest test, however, was the impending super typhoon. The night we learned about the magnitude of the super typhoon about to hit the village, our whole team got together and prayed. God lifted all the fear and doubt out of our hearts. We knew we were being attacked but none of us feared. We knew that we were united and we knew that we were going to be okay. We knew that the enemy was trying hard to bring us down and we laughed to their faces. We knew that all these things, all these attacks, weren't up to us to fight. We knew that we were not alone. We knew that the battle has already been won and that there is nothing to fear, that our God is almighty and nothing can ever come against us. We knew that despite this typhoon being the strongest typhoon in years, that despite it being headed straight for our village, despite all the devastation we knew it would bring, that the waves and wind know His name. We knew that where feet may fail our God doesn't budge. We knew we were told to fear not, we knew that in Him there is nothing to fear, and none of us did. Peace and joy were brought to our hearts. **The enemy failed, what was supposed to be their biggest hold on us, became our most powerful testimony.**

The next day, while teaching our classes, we were notified that we might be leaving the village on that same day, as opposed to the next day as planned. We had organised a finale night for the villagers and all the teachers were looking forward to it, not to mention the children. It was decided that the finale would be pushed earlier from 7pm to 3pm. Everything was rushed and chaotic, and a sense of uncertainty planted itself in the atmosphere. We were all frantically trying to pack our luggage all while attempting to contact our children (and their families) to inform them of the change of finale time. We were unsure how things would work out, whether the families would still turn up to the finale, when the typhoon would hit us, when we would be leaving, etc. We were unsure and we were doubtful again.

The finale still happened and went along swimmingly, all the kids showed up, many families came along, and we managed to get through all the performances. However, right after the finale ended, while everybody was still talking and interacting with our kids, we were told we needed to leave immediately. Everybody was with their class of kids, we all wanted to pray and take photos and properly talk to them before we left. We were all heartbroken as we could tell all the kids were disappointed and down, as they were originally hoping we'd be staying a bit longer due to the typhoon, but instead we were leaving earlier than expected. I remember, in the midst

of all the chaos, TunHow (our local partner) coming up to us and telling us that we had to leave NOW, that a road had just collapsed. We were rushed into minivans and hastily rushed off. I remember praying and singing worship with my van-mates. We then hit massive traffic. There was only one road left in and out of the village, and the road was set to close down at 8pm (a few hours later). Many people were trying to escape the village before the typhoon hit, which resulted in a pile-up of cars. We then learned, that a coach carrying student athletes had crashed with a large truck, and that that was why none of the cars were moving. Ambulances and police cars whizzed by, carrying the athletes to the hospital. Everybody was uncomfortable (we had turned the fuel off to conserve energy, which meant no air-con), it would rain periodically, skies were gloomy, we could see waves crashing in the distance, the atmosphere really wasn't the most positive. At one point our driver asked some strangers walking past about the situation ahead of us, and they told us that the people were still trying to rescue the truck driver and that it'd be at least another 2 hours before our cars would be able to get through. In total, we ended up being stuck in traffic for 1.5 hours. The typhoon was set to hit us at 4pm, but somehow it slowed down (by "somehow" I mean God). I remember wondering whether we'd make it out in time, as it was already after 5pm, the traffic wasn't budging, and the road was going to close down at 8pm. At some point, we were told that the blockage was cleared and we'd be able to leave soon, and we started moving shortly after.

Then, everything changed. I remember being on the highway, under a clear sky, with wind blowing past us. The rain and clouds were replaced by a clear, peaceful yellow sky. We saw that a rainbow had appeared behind us, which was met with much excitement. Then, to our amazement, ANOTHER rainbow appeared in front of us. Shortly after, we



arrived at our new hotel. Everything was absolutely crazy, I could not describe it to you if I tried, however, I shall attempt to do so anyway. We got off and were met with the most amazing sight. The WHOLE frickin rainbow, start to end, decided to plant itself right outside our hotel. It was the most beautiful sunset I had ever seen; the sky was painted a palette of crazy colours from purple to blue to orange to yellow. HAHAHA sorry for the excitement I got excited writing about it. **Seeing the rainbow reminded us of just how great our Lord is. It was a reminder of His covenant with us, the**

promise He made. I remember thinking that this rainbow was for us (I mean, when was the last time you saw a rainbow? When was the last time you saw a rainbow DURING A SUPER TYPHOON), **it was God reminding us that He is here and He is greater.** It was God reminding us that there was and is and never will be anything to fear. It brought peace to our hearts and an assurance that everything was going to be okay. It just served as a testament to how BIG God really is, how that tiny little super-typhoon had NOTHING against our Super God.

We all got to meet and settle in, and the typhoon only hit us in the early hours of the morning. We woke up to a mess; fallen trees, damaged building structures, broken ACs, no shower water, non-flushing toilets, no phone reception — everything was a mess, but we were okay, we were at peace. We knew that we had a long journey home, that we might not even make it home that day, but we were at peace. We ended up taking a coach for 4 hours to a train station. We were supposed to transfer from one train to another but a train opened last minute that took us directly to the city, by that point I wasn't even surprised anymore (was still amazed).

This trip has just been a huge affirmation of just how great and how powerful our God is, how He provides for us always. The theme of our summer camp was “在一起”, which means “togetherness”. **I see now that the message wasn't just for the children, it was also for us, it was to remind us that as brothers and sisters united in His love that nothing can ever stop us. This whole trip, nothing went according to our plans, but everything went according to His plan.** God not only worked in the village, He also worked in our hearts. Through all this I can see just how deep His love for His people is, that these are His people, and how despite the enemy giving all they had, nothing can stop God's love, and **in a place so desperately in need of Him, He truly is working. In a place so filled with hurt and abandonment, and so lacking in love, He is there.** He wants them to know that nothing can take

His love away, when the world fails and abandons them, He is there. God is working there and nothing can stop that.



Karmen Tam //



This was my first mission trip and what I experienced way exceeded my expectations. Apart from spreading the Gospel and God's love, we also spent time praying, worshipping God and fellowshiping with other Christians.

I experienced how we each play a role in the body of Christ. Apart from serving the children, we also served each other in the team. **Each of us had a role to play, and every role was important. There is no small service to God; it all matters.** God made me understand what it means to submit to Him and to serve other people. It is so beautiful when a group of dedicated Christians travel to a place to spread God's love and to serve as the body of Christ with one heart.

I love the kids in Jinlun so much. I love their smile and they are so genuine. I was a teacher for the first time. I still remember after the first day of class I thought it did not go too well. I was worried that the kids would find us boring. Thankfully they did come back for the classes later. They looked much more comfortable around us as time went by. We bonded very well in the end and I could tell that they were really glad that we were there to spend time with them.

There were different kinds of spiritual attacks throughout the trip, from injuries to weather. The enemies were trying to stop us from doing what was right and from having the finale. Thank God we managed to do it and we won! We already know the answer when we battled — God wins!

I want to thank God for the safety and protection during the whole trip. I am really thankful that we were able to finish the last day of school and finale

despite the coming of the storm! I was so worried that we were not able to say a proper goodbye to the kids and perform at the finale. Praise the Lord for slowing the typhoon! God is so powerful. He created the heavens and the earth and He can also slow the storm. The finale was marvelous. I hope the parents and people in the village experienced God's love by watching our performance at the finale.

I am so thankful that there are no coincidences in my life but only God-incidences. God is at work all the time. God's fingerprints are over all the moments in our trip. **His timing is always perfect, not one minute late or one minute early.** I learned that we do not need to worry about tomorrow as God is in control.

I want to thank God for this trip where we can learn about His love, to witness His power, to serve and to have fellowship with one another.

All of you together are Christ's body, and each one of you is a separate and necessary part of it.

1 Corinthians 12:27



Kevin lu //

The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; His mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is Your faithfulness. "The Lord is my portion," says my soul, "therefore I will hope in Him."

Lamentations 3:22-24

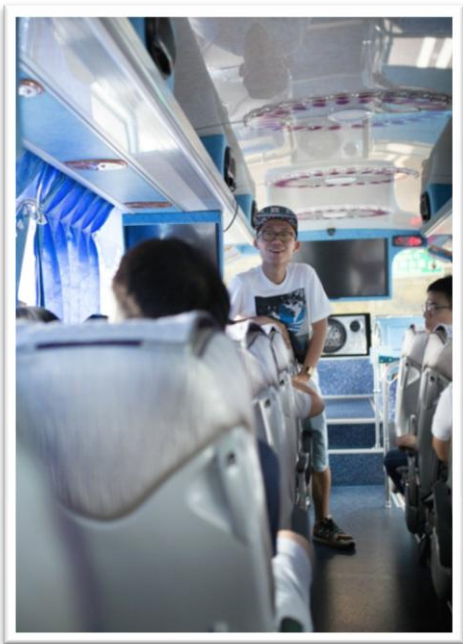
Remember three years ago on our first time to Jinlun, we were in the wave of Linsanity. We used this opportunity to learn more about the students through basketball training and spread God's love through sharing Jeremy Lin's testimony. After



that trip, our prayer request was to have a church to serve the community.

On our second year, though our Hong Kong team was small in size with only nine adults, we tried adopting Alpha into our lesson planning by strategically delivering the Gospel each day. Our prayer was to have a local leader in discipling the children who learnt about Christ through the camp.

The year after that, a lot of families from Hong Kong has joined this mission. Including children and youth, we have a team of 25 members. God handpicked each and every one of the team members as the local church requested for the topic of the camp to be about relationships and boundaries. God used different members, especially the youth and parents in our team to open up some of the deepest hurts that the local children would not have shared in their families. Our prayer last year was to restore relationships in the families as it is one of the biggest problems in the village.



This year, our team of 22 returned to Jinlun. We picked the theme '在一起', meaning fellowship and community, hoping that the villagers, especially the Christian families can support one another and create a sense of community. But by looking back in these three years, it is very obvious that the prayers are answered each year. Right now, we have a church / community centre run by an aboriginal pastor who decided to return to his village not too long ago. And more amazingly, more parents / grandparents have shown interest in their children's participation in our camp, and that was shown in our camp finale.

On the last couple days in our camp, we were challenged by a super typhoon, one of the strongest in 60 years, that was forecast to land exactly where we were on the day of our finale. So on the night before, our team held hands to pray as one family. Instead of praying that the typhoon will be gone, we asked for the Lord's will to be done. Though the spiritual attack was to call us to lose faith, by prayers, fear was cast away in our team.

The next day, we moved our finale an hour earlier hoping to still catch it before typhoon arrived. But the observatory forecasted that heavy rain will approach at 5pm. There was a moment that we decided to cancel the finale for safety measures, but as the leaders gathered again to make the call, we were compelled by the Spirit to change the finale time to 3pm instead. Even though all the students were dismissed back home already, and we did worry that either they wouldn't know the change of time, or that the parents wouldn't allow their kids to return or the parents themselves would not come due to weather. But that meeting was an image I would never forget – when our four leaders shed tears together, were fighting between logic and emotions, battling between safety and worry of

abandonment to the children. We were stripped of any clear decision laid in front of us, there was no plan B. It was by faith in God's goodness that the call to go on was made.

After that, it was like a tape on fast forward mode. Within a couple of hours, all our team members had to pack up their stuff and moved everything to the finale venue, prepared to evacuate right after. The local pastor and village head had to keep broadcasting the news to the village. Villagers made their typhoon precautions and made their way to the finale.

God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea, though its waters roar and foam and the mountains quake with their surging.

Psalm 46:1-3

Because of the typhoon warning, families were dismissed from work earlier. By God's grace, they trusted that the finale was worth going to. At 3pm, over 90% of the students returned, where a lot of them were brought by their families. One by one, they delivered their final class performances that they had been preparing for as a team for the past week. The parents were in awe of their children's unity and talents. Then the rain arrived at the end, both from the sky and our faces.

It was clear to us that our goal was to allow the kids to witness God's love. Our hope was that they could depend on Him in their times of desperation. Our team, because we have tasted God's love, we could pray to Him with confidence in the midst of storm and super typhoon and cast out any fear to trust in Him. Similarly, our goal and heart were that the children could learn about this freedom as well. **The freedom to be free of fear, free of guilt, free of shame, all because of what Jesus has done for all of us.**

Our prayer this year is to await future leaders in the village to step up.

We were not there to alleviate poverty or to eliminate alcohol problem, because these are simply reflections of the loss of something bigger. God's fingerprints have been all over Jinlun these past years, His steadfast love never ceased and we will continue to hope in Him. Our primary focus is to

break down our own pride and obey God's command in loving our neighbors, and that is rooted in our understanding of God's grace in us and spreading this love to others through our words and deeds. And year after year, local leader would disciple new leaders to carry on this mission and our Hong Kong team would be blessed to be part of this walk. And ultimately, **the problems will have no stand against God's presence in the villagers' hearts.**



Kristy Lam //

Returning for my second year to this mission trip, I was excited to see what God would be teaching us through this experience. My two biggest takeaways are: firstly, that God's timing is better than anything we can plan for, and secondly, that God is always sufficient.

God demonstrated His control over everything as I saw His hand over our team every day, through giving us energy to teach the kids and to the bigger situations, like how He protected us in the midst of the typhoon and gave us so much peace. It was incredible to see how

God gave our team such unity and peace throughout the whole trip. During class each day I felt that every member of the team was working towards one common goal and that we all had the same heart to love the kids in the village. I especially felt God's provision every morning at our devotionals, albeit everyone's fatigue, **it was clear that He gave us not only energy to power through the day but He also gave us joy to serve the kids.**



One of my biggest concerns on this trip was the language barrier, as this year our team size was only a third of last year's team. This meant that there was only 2/3 of the number of teachers in a class compared to last year, and I was worried that I would not be able to execute / teach the curriculum as

well as a fluent speaker. On top of that, I was nervous and unsure as to how I should handle an all boys class. Nonetheless, **I really saw God's grace through the way He gave me opportunities to love on the kids** and through the words and actions so that we could interact with the kids. By the end of the week, our classes went smoothly and **I felt such an overflowing love for the kids in the class and I think I truly got a glimpse of His love for them too.**

This experience has reminded me of God's provision and most importantly that He gives us peace in any and every situation.



Mei Woon Chan //

One word that stood out in my memory of our Taiwan mission trip is 'team'.

Before the trip, I knew none of the other 21 team members from HK. Even after four pre-trip meetings, I still could not put the name to the all of their faces while waiting to board the plane to Taipei. Yet in one week's time we bonded and experienced the joy of serving side by side as the body of Christ. A few episodes below might explain why.

1. **We experienced answered prayers together.** More than 60 of us (from HK, US and Taipei) travelled from Taipei to Taitung on two separate trains. The second train was delayed due to rail work and we waited on the platform for them for 90 minutes. The only connecting train to our final destinations was due to leave soon. Those of us waiting gathered and prayed for their prompt arrival. God answered our prayers! The connecting train waited and they arrived soon, so all could make it to our destinations!



On the second last day of the camp, we were alerted of the coming of a super typhoon and the possibility of leaving the next day due to impending dangers. None of us wanted this to happen as the students would be definitely disappointed (to say the least) and so would we!

The whole team joined hands and prayed together and God answered us! We were able to go home-visiting that night and finish the last day class with an amazing finale!!

2. Everyone in the team really paid attention to the team code of ethics in order to achieve our goals. **Our group of 22 from HK and 10 from Taipei worked hand in hand with flexibility, enthusiasm and great devotion to finish the work entrusted to us.** I was particularly impressed by the teenagers in our

midst. The young gentlemen were always ready to lend a helping hand, picking up luggage and watching out for others.

One incident that touched my heart that team spirit was evident went like this: A teenager sharing

the same room with us needed to change to a clean pair of shorts after running around in the heat for a few hours. After she changed, she made for the door. Then she stopped and turned around and asked us if her shorts were long enough. We just told her they were not the knee-length (they were not too short though) ones. She then went to change to another pair. I was impressed by her willingness to abide to the dress code in order to accomplish the mission.



3. Team spirit was evident in the team leaders first before it would spread to the whole group. I had great admiration and appreciation for our team leaders. They worked tirelessly and diligently with a humble heart. On the first night of our summer camp, we were in for a surprise after dinner. Our team leaders washed our feet in the outdoor veranda outside the canteen under a star lit sky. The next day, we were teaching our students the verse: The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve (Matthew 20:28). We would wash the students' feet as well. This was not just an exercise or activity that went with the verse. It was an act that would impact them: how it felt to be served (especially in this way) and what they would do to serve others.

In my class, after we washed nearly everyone, one student volunteered to wash another student's feet. We were very touched by her spontaneous response! **May we be like little children all the time, responsive to the Holy Spirit's prompting and guiding in our lives!**

Ruth Chi //

July 2nd was a big day for me because that's the day **I realized how inadequate and small I am, yet my Almighty God still uses me for His mission work.**

It was such an eye-opening experience for me when I saw so many young adults willingly served the Lord on such hot summer days and flew to Taitung to get trained just to serve the aboriginal children. We had an intensive training and through it I learned how important it was to work as a team. I had to put my professional knowledge aside and be able to work with others. I thank God for giving me such a privileged chance to learn how to be humble.



On July 3rd, I fell and hurt my ankle. I realized God wanted me to be humble again. I still had pride inside me. But when I fell, I knew right on the spot I couldn't do anything without God. I thank God for such a wise and effective way of teaching me.

I did not have any expectations before I went on the mission trip. Teaching kids is not a difficult or new task for me, but **the more I worked with the team and prayed with them, the more I knew that loving the children with God's love means loving God first.** Through this mission trip, I reflected on how much I love God and the answer is not much. It is a shame before God. The children loved us through their actions and caring words more than I did to them. This is another lesson I learned. Love your neighbours.



We experienced the most powerful typhoon in Taiwan in many years. I learned how to trust God. It was not an everyday experience but a truly personal encounter with God, and it tested the level of trust I have in God. I thank God that I am protected and anchored in His promises.

Grand finale was another blessing God gave me. Even in the midst of the super typhoon, all the children came out to the finale and praised God together with us. Through their performances, I learned that **God loves His children in His own way**. They have different difficulties in their own lives, but they know who they believe in and they trust in it with pure heart.

I had some wrong ideas about mission trips. But now I know because God has opened my eyes to see how His work could only be carried out by humble and willing people, and I could such examples in all my teammates. Praise the Lord for His wonderful and clever way to show me how to serve and what it means to do mission work.



Teresa Ding //

This was my first mission trip and it changed me in profound ways.

Although I accepted Christ as my Savior back in 2011, church or its related activities were never a priority to me. I was perfectly content to put off "my first mission trip"



for as long as I needed to. Career, dating, traveling to exotic destinations and being together with family all trumped the time to serve God. If you asked me this time last year whether I would consider going to Taiwan for a mission trip, I would have probably laughed at your face and said "why waste my precious annual leave on places I have already been? It doesn't make sense."

But it is not about checking things off my bucket travel list. **Through this trip, God gave me a greater gift - to learn to give and receive.**

As strange as it may sound, neither giving nor receiving is natural to me. I am used to doing everything by myself, seldom relying on others. If something was out of my expertise (i.e. electronics), I would call for professional help and pay for the service, rather than asking a friend for a favor. I also believed that people ought to be responsible for themselves, while public or private support would be nice to have, they shouldn't be counting on it.

My self-sufficient philosophy not only caused me to lack sympathy for the most vulnerable people (i.e., the old, the young, the sick or the poor), but also prevented me from becoming closer to God. I rarely prayed and structured my days on the basis of meritocracy. Grace was still just a theological concept, I didn't want to "risk" anything by slowing down my worldly pursuits and living as if I had already received grace in its fullness.

I was not that different from a non-Christian. In fact, you probably couldn't tell that I was Christian.

That is why I say this trip to Taitung changed me in profound ways. In just one week, God softened my heart on countless occasions: He used the group members, the Jinlun village children and their families, and even the typhoon to speak or reveal Himself to me. Instead of holding back my emotions, I allowed myself to open up and be touched by so many people's stories. I felt more vulnerable and cried more times than I had done in years.

If I didn't go on this mission trip, what would my life be like right now? Would I just be continuing the status quo, prioritizing things based on visible gains and only seeking God in times of emergency? What a dreadful situation!

I would not trade this mission trip for an expedition to the Poles or a trek in the Himalayas.



Veronica Wang //



Dear Heavenly Father,

A week in Jinlun is far from enough to see the problems hidden in the community, but **You know them the best**. I feel hopeless thinking of the struggles and darkness, but **I put my faith in You**. We spread the little mustard seeds and **trust in the Holy Spirit to perform miracles**.

I pray for Pastor Du and his family. Father, please continue to bless them and strengthen them to do Your work. Shower them with joy and patience. Protect them from evil in every



way. Let the angel armies stand before them in every battle.

I pray all in Jinlun will one day understand Your amazing grace, Your unconditional love. They will come to know You personally. I pray that the kids we served will always remember to run towards Your open arms. Father, please guide their steps, bring them closer to You.

Father, let us proudly proclaim **Jinlun is Yours!** In the name of Jesus, Amen!



Vivien Ko //

This mission trip was way more intense than what I expected.

Waking up at 05:00; trying to get ready in 15 minute (with 6 people sharing the room); daily devotion at 06:30; walking for 15 minutes under strong sunshine and up and down



a steep slope to the primary school; socialising with students for half an hour (most of the time my kindergarten students would just crawl onto me, lay on me, play with my hair, and talk to me non-stop); worshipping with singing and dancing; game session for half an hour which surely involved students crying... after an hour of sweating, the class officially started at 9:00.

The nightmare then began with all 6 kids running around in the classroom, exploring every single cupboard, yelling at the top of their voices, eating their breakfast. It usually took Teresa (my co-teacher) and me more than 10 minutes to settle them down. Even after the class had started, we still had to stay alert and make sure the students were focused and engaged using all means (stickers, giving commands, praising, yelling, ignoring, and making promises). 12:30 was when the students finally finished school.

In the evening, we had life group and sharing session, followed by home visit and prayer walk. By the time we got onto our bed, it was already 22:30.

The missionary trip was intense both physically and mentally. Every day I just dragged my exhausted body to the canteen to start off the day as this was an assignment from God. I thought I had to serve Him wholeheartedly. I did not have time to think about what I learned each day. I just told myself to give my very best.

In class, I tried to make every kid feel loved by talking to every single one of them and saying “Jesus loves you and I love you too” every single day I saw them. Despite how dirty their hands were (even right after they picked their noses), I held their hands and hugged them to show them they were being cared for. I tried to listen to every single word they said even though what they said most of the time were not related to the class. I praised them as much as possible whenever they expressed love and care to other people. I tried to patiently talk to a 5-year-old kid for half an hour on why he should not take revenge even if other kids try to bully him.

There are many “I tried...” but God loves every one of us including His servants. And in fact, I feel that **blessed are those who have the privilege to serve**. It is impossible to make you – readers – feel how much God has done for each one of us. But I just want to express that despite how physically and mentally challenging the trip was, it was totally worth it. The only way you can know how I felt is to experience it yourself. **This missionary trip has surely secured my faith in Christ by seeing how God has made all that was seemingly impossible possible.**



Winnie Chong //

We can make our plans, but the Lord determines our steps.

Proverbs 16:9

This Bible verse rang so true in my experience in the Taiwan mission trip this year. Going onto this mission trip, I had expectations for God. I have been struggling with some personal emotional wounds this past year, and I thought this mission trip would be the



perfect time for the Lord to finally heal me. Also, as we were planning for teaching teams for the summer camp, I found out I would be placed in my “dream” team — with a Taipei teacher whom I have deeply admired along with other loving and energetic teachers, and also teaching the younger group of kids. Everything seemed to be in my “perfect” plan.

By the end of the camp, my “perfect” plan executed, but without the outcome I anticipated. Firstly, God did not speak to me about my emotional wounds in this trip. Secondly, because I was in the “dream team”, I felt I did not have a job to do because the teachers in my team were so capable and were doing so well with the kids already. Furthermore, teaching the younger kids was fun, however, I was not able to connect with their stories and their families, compared to the past years when I was teaching the older kids. **None of these came through according to my plan, but I knew the Lord was teaching me a lesson.**

“For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways,” declares the Lord. “As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways and My thoughts than your thoughts.”

Isaiah 55:8-9

When I held my fist so tightly and took control of my plans, I thought I could take control also of the enjoyment that comes from the Lord’s blessing. In

the past few years, I let go of all my expectations of what God had prepared for me and just let Him place me according to His plans. **Even if I was placed outside of my comfort zones, that was when I would find His true joy and His blessing, because He knew what I needed better than I do.** The Lord is good, because He knows this is what I need to learn and be reminded of this year in order for me to let go and let God, and let my healing process begin according to His timing.

A lot of times in the busyness of Hong Kong, it is all too easy to take control of everything in my life and to think of myself first over others. This is often out of fear of being taken advantage of, fear of stepping out of my comfort zones, fear of having more work that I can do and losing time to “enjoy life”. But God’s plans are different.

Whoever finds their life will lose it, and whoever loses their life for My sake will find it.

Matthew 10:39

When I let go of my fist and open my hands, that is when I will find “real” life — a life of looking to the Lord and others and not myself — a life of true joy, peace, love, hope, and true blessings from our great Father.



Yinting Chiu //

Similar to last year, I had no particular expectations for this mission trip — what had drawn me back were the village kids and people I had met in the previous year in Jinlun. I wanted to continue serving God without expecting much back from it, but ultimately **I saw that God had done so much for the whole team, much more than anyone could've imagined.**

This year, I was assigned to a 7-year-old class, which initially terrified me because I wasn't sure if they would listen to me or not and I was used to teaching older kids. However, I was so grateful that the children in my class were good listeners and followed whatever the teachers told them to do (apart from like one girl but that's good enough). This was the first situation where I felt God providing for me.



Over the next four days, it was clear that spiritual warfare was occurring — this was shown through the multiple injuries our team faced and also the hot weather which created a physical strain on us. As the four days flew by, a super typhoon was also approaching us, which ultimately forced us to

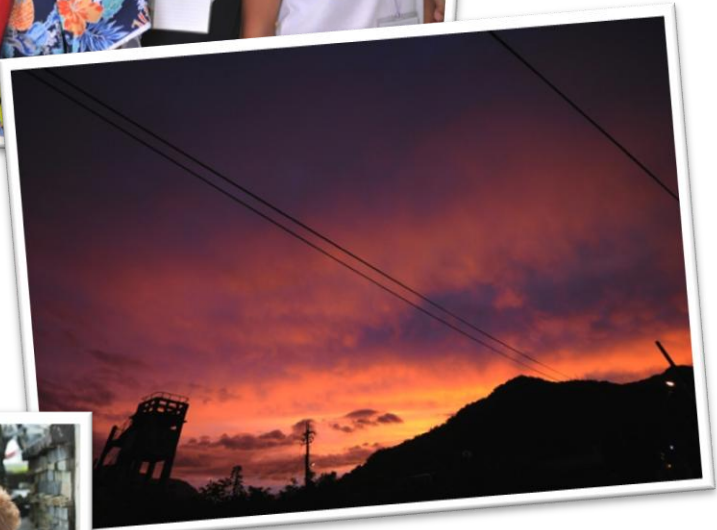


evacuate the village on the day of the finale. However, God's timing was good and the storm only started to escalate right when we were saying our goodbyes. On our way to the next village, Jialan, we had encountered a bus and truck collision on the road, which delayed our journey

by an hour. This was another example of how God had this all planned out for us — if we had left a few minutes earlier, one of our vehicles may have been hit. As we approached Jialan, two full rainbows appeared, which made it even more evident that God was with us this whole time.

To sum it up, through this trip I have learned one very important thing: **although it may seem like there are so many obstacles pushing you back from what you want or are meant to do, as long as you have God on your side, He will have everything set out for you perfectly, even if it may not be in the way you hoped for it to be like.**





If you feel convicted to support Taitung financially in the super typhoon Nephartak disaster relief, please email us at iecc.taiwan@gmail.com.

We are currently targeting to raise US\$7,000 for families and churches in the village of Jinlun, Lichou and Jialan to provide necessary emergency relief (such as the purchasing of food and other essentials). Any amount raised in excess of US\$7,000 will go towards rehabilitating homes and churches in those areas and providing long term support to the Community Center in Jinlun that our partner church in Taitung established in 2015. This Community Center provides after school activities, education support and housing for underprivileged children in Jinlun.

We trust that your contribution will go a long way in rebuilding the community.

In addition to that, we would like to ask for your support for Taitung and this fundraising effort spiritually in the form of prayers. Please pray that the Lord will provide strength and comfort to those affected by the typhoon, and wisdom to discern how we can best assist the Taitung community in their rebuilding project.

Thank you for partnering with us.



NOW TO HIM WHO IS ABLE TO DO IMMEASURABLY MORE THAN ALL WE ASK OR IMAGINE, ACCORDING TO HIS POWER THAT IS AT WORK WITHIN US, TO HIM BE GLORY IN THE CHURCH AND IN CHRIST JESUS THROUGHOUT ALL GENERATIONS, FOR EVER AND EVER! AMEN.

EPHESIANS 3:20-21



TAIWAN MISSION TRIP 2016
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