

SINGAPORE MISSION UPDATE

February 2, 2020

A FRESH YEAR, A FULL HOUSE, AND A FAITHFUL GOD

January 2nd marked the beginning of the 2020 school year at Four Seas. The first month of the school year is always filled with many beginning of the year activities for the students. These include getting settled into the dorms, getting assigned daily cleaning tasks, and obtaining student visas for all of the new students. The students attended daily meetings learning about everything involved with being part of the school, ranging from rules about living in the dorm rooms to how to write research papers and more. There is also the nervous excitement as the students meet each other, learn about Singapore, get to know local brethren, and start the new semester of study and work. It is truly an exciting month, and we have a great group of students from all over Asia and the world!

The first half of this term I am teaching English and Galatians - Colossians. Our students at Four Seas are eager to learn the Word of God, apply it to their own lives, and teach it to anyone and everyone. This term will also allow me some time to study one-on-one with the students over topics, sermons, grammar, and texts as they get more comfortable with me.

The elders here have developed an 8-year plan for the adult Bible classes which commenced this January. During the first year, all adults will go through three classes covering the book of Acts, the synoptic gospels, and the gospel of John. I am part of a team who will be teaching the book of Acts during this year. I also had the opportunity to preach in Jurong over the assigned topic of worship where we studied the importance, blessing, and responsibility of coming into the presence of God.

During January Lisa began assisting in preschool Bible class (Annie's class) on Wednesday nights and will begin teaching in the preschool and primary (elementary) classes in the upcoming months. The children's Bible classes include kids from both the English-speaking and Chinese-speaking congregations as well as regular visitors from the neighborhood. Assisting in the preschool class has given Lisa opportunity to get to know the students, see how the children's classes are conducted, as well as learn about unique challenges in the Bible classes here.



If you have been keeping up with the news you may have heard of a new virus called the coronavirus (or Wuhan virus) causing concerns in China as well as in some other countries such as Singapore and the U.S. Singaporeans (including the brethren here) take the virus situation seriously and are exercising great caution such as wearing masks, avoiding public transportation if possible, and practicing careful hygiene. Church activities outside of worship and Bible classes are currently being limited or cancelled. Singapore suffered greatly during the SARS outbreak a few years ago, and the memory of those events have been rekindled here. While these attitudes are serious and the precautions are more than has been deemed necessary, the church here is acting in the best interest of each member, the best interest of other citizens (their neighbors), and in the best interest of their (our) reputation in the community and the city. The current situation for our family and Singaporeans who have not travelled in and around Wuhan, China is very safe. While people here are cautious, there is no pandemic or panic going on in Singapore. Thank you all for your concern and continued prayers in this regard. The school has also limited students' public outings, use of mass transit, and extracurricular events; however, instruction within the school is continuing as usual at this time.

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STUDENT SPOTLIGHT: INTRODUCING FIRST YEAR STUDENTS

With the addition of the new first year students the school is near capacity with a total of 21 students living on campus. We have 22 students total, but one of them is a local Singaporean from the Lim Ah Pin congregation who only attends classes without staying on campus. Among the 22 students, four are wrap-around students who will be finished very soon, six are second year students (two were unable to return for family and personal reasons), and twelve are first year students. Over the course of this year we will continue introducing supporters to our first and second year students in this space each month. As a brief introduction, here is a list of the first year students. Let this list be your prayer list as each of these individuals has left their home or career or more to study the word of God for two years.

1. Kelly - Malaysia (our one female student in the first year class for now)
2. J.M. - Philippines
3. Xay - Laos (pronounced like "Psy")
4. Jilmer - Philippines
5. Jason - Philippines
6. Suresh - India
7. Vinod - India (pronounced Vee-nodd)
8. Ben - Singapore
9. Joshua - Laos
10. Grant - Philippines
11. Albert - Philippines
12. Rance - Texas, USA (Rance is still looking for about \$100 in monthly support if anyone is able to help)

We are also expecting to have 1-2 more students come in over the next few months.



FOUR SEAS STUDENTS (FIRST YEAR STUDENTS ARE BOLD)
SEATED (FROM LEFT TO RIGHT): JANA, CHESSA, **KELLY**, JAMES, **JASON**
2ND ROW (FROM LEFT TO RIGHT): **GRANT**, ROLLY, DAVE, **JM**, **XAY**, **SURESH**, NOVE, **ALBERT**, **JOSHUA**
3RD ROW (FROM LEFT TO RIGHT): **JILMER**, LEVI, **BEN**, EMMANUEL, **RANCE**, RICO, **VINOD**
NOT PICTURED: THYNA

CULTURE SHOCK: TOILETS, RESTROOMS, & BAÑOS

According to one study produced in the UK, the average adult will spend almost 100 days over the course of their life on the toilet. Going to the toilet or the tanka or the restroom or the baño or the wash closet or whatever other name we use is a common thing that most of us do not think about very much. However, the first time I went Jamaica I experienced toilet culture shock: a woman was cleaning the men's room while men were using it. I thought I had gone in the wrong restroom! Over the course of many visits amounting to months spent in Jamaica, I learned that it was a very common thing. When you travel outside of your comfort zone, you should expect some type of restroom realizations. In Singapore (and traveling in Vietnam and Malaysia) we have learned many things about the restrooms over here:

Am I in the wrong restroom? You should not be too surprised to see a woman in the men's room. Like Jamaica, women are often employed to clean both the male and female toilets. Ladies will clean while you are using the facilities, but they do so very discreetly. Over here though I would never expect to find a man – of any sorts – in the ladies' room. However, Lisa tells me you might find a pint-sized urinal in the ladies' room for little boys using the restroom facilities with their moms.

What is an in-ground toilet? In-ground toilets or squatty potties are very common all over Asia. They mimic a hole in the ground like everyone used to use before the advent and common usage of toilets. It is very common to enter a stall and find a hole in the ground – that flushes and has running water and all the works. Because of how common they are, restrooms that do not have in ground toilets will often post instructors on how to use what American might call a "normal" toilet. These instructions always come with an illustrated guide that includes stick people and potties.

Where's the toilet paper? Many of the public restrooms in Singapore do not have toilet paper. Ella and I learned this very quickly when we visited in 2018. We began to carry tissues with us everywhere "just in case." Now, every purse and backpack in our house has some tissues and wipes just in case we are out and about and need to use a public toilet. Sometimes there will be toilet tissue outside the restroom where you have to guesstimate how much toilet paper you need and pay an outside attendant. Also, in many places where there is no toilet paper there is a house to rinse off. Needless to say, this is quite the shock coming from Texas!

What is a boys' room? I was out of the house one day and found a public restroom labeled "Boys." I put my head down and went right in. But, when I went in I found that all the toilets were very small, very short, and made for children. Unfortunately, I did not have Troy or Luke there to make it less awkward. Unknown to me, the "Men's" room was around the corner and I was using the toilet meant only for male children Oops!



CURRENT COURSEWORK AT FOUR SEAS COLLEGE

WWW.FOURSEAS.EDU.SG

1ST HALF OF 1ST TERM (JANUARY 2, 2020-FEBRUARY 19, 2020)

FIRST YEAR STUDENTS

BIBLE GEOGRAPHY
OLD TESTAMENT SURVEY
LIFE OF CHRIST I (MATTHEW/MARK)
ENGLISH GRAMMAR I

SECOND YEAR STUDENTS

GALATIANS, EPHESIANS, PHILIPPIANS, COLOSSIANS
PREACHER & HIS WORK IV (PERSONAL EVANGELISM)
HEBREW HISTORY II
NEW TESTAMENT GREEK

ALL FEMALE STUDENTS

THE CHRISTIAN WOMAN

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