

# FORWARD FALL 2014

For from the rising of the sun to its setting  
my name will be great among the nations.

MALACHI 1:11

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# INTRODUCTION

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Hello Bethany,

We are Missions Ministry and our vision is to begin building a long-term ministry that the church can continue to build upon and shape even after all of us graduate. Another way to carry out this vision is to share our brother' and sisters' testimonies from their mission trips. Forward newsletter is a compilation of stories and experiences of our brothers and sisters who have gone to recent mission trips.

This Fall 2014 edition includes the experiences of our sisters who went to Haiti and Mexico this past summer, as well as an update from our brother who is currently serving in Cambodia. We hope that as you read their testimonies, you will be encouraged by what God is doing and that you too would be emboldened to declare His glory everywhere you go. Please continue to keep these nations in your prayers as well as all the other nations in the world.

Thank you,

Missions Ministry

# CAMBODIA

BRYAN CHEAH

Dear Bethany,

Thanks so much for checking in with me! Cambodia is filled with many new experiences and challenges, so it is a great comfort and joy for me to share how I am doing with you all. I have been deployed in the capital city of Phnom Penh for almost 3 months now working with International Justice Mission as their Church Mobilization Intern. IJM fights to protect the poor from violence around the world and at our Cambodia office, we specifically combat the commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC). As the Church Mob Intern, I inform local churches about the work IJM does, teach about God's call in the Bible for His people to practice justice, and invite churches to partner with us in extinguishing CSEC.

God has neatly prepared me for this job using my experiences as a Bible study teacher at Bethany and as the IJM Cornell campus chapter President, but nothing could have fully readied me for what laid in store. I guess I wouldn't need to continue relying on Him then, right? Work has introduced tasks already familiar to me like sending emails and coordinating trainings, but other duties have completely thrown me off course. I discovered how clunky I am with creating media material such as prayer newsletters and prayer cards. Many times I have thought to myself, "this isn't what I signed up for!", but Holy Spirit humbles me and reminds me that the servant does not spell out his working terms. I have been called here to serve and support the Cambodia staff regarding any needs they have, so I will make templates and crop pictures with all my heart! (Colossians 3:23)

While I am considered a professional employee here, I am no less a missionary committed to sharing the Gospel of God and advancing the Great Commission. Outside of the office, I make myself available for God to use me in any way He finds pleasing – whether it's encouraging fellow Christians, preaching the Gospel to non-believers, or defending the faith from doubters. My year here is devoted to serving in both professional justice ministry and traditional church ministry.

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You may think of dusty roads and dangerous crime when you think of Cambodia – and you wouldn't be completely off – but I want to sketch you an accurate picture of how I am doing. I am not living in a straw hut, feeding off of rice meal or reading my Bible by candlelight (although God could have made that totally happen). By His grace, I am situated in the heart of the city where my neighborhood is relatively safe and the new cafes, pizza joints, bubble tea shops and Korean restaurants are never in shortage. And by His mercy, I can focus on doing work without being distracted by hindrances like insect infestations and proper toilet access!

God is ever good and He is faithfully leading me according to His promises beyond Cornell. Thanks for checking in with me Bethany! Please feel free to ask Missions Ministry how to receive regular updates from me! I am rooting for you all. Continue growing in your faith, increasing in love for each other, and serving as shining examples worthy of boasting. (2 Thessalonians 2:3-4)

In Christ's freedom,

Bryan



# HAITI

HEIDI WONG

Thank you for supporting the Summer 2014 Haiti team. This trip would not have been possible without support from the church, through prayer and financially as well.

I was a last minute addition to the Haiti team - for some time I had been on the fence on whether to go or not because I lacked a “clear conviction”. After prayer and talking to brothers and sisters, I realized that I won’t always have neatly defined convictions from God. The fact that Haiti had been on my heart for a while was enough of a nudge for me to decide to go and submit to whatever God had in store. Although so many things happened during that 10 day trip, I wanted to share a few of the things God impressed most on my heart.

## *EV: HOLY SPIRIT*

God very tangibly showed me the power of the Holy Spirit...almost spoon—fed it to me so I wouldn’t forget. I met a man named Tousens during one of our EV afternoons. Esther was sharing the gospel with him, and he kept interrupting her with something (negative) to say about everything she shared. Sporting crooked sunglasses and standing with his arms crossed, Tousens’ heart seemed to be completely closed off. As Esther spoke, I prayed for the Holy Spirit to soften his heart. At one point during this back and forth discussion/debate, Tousens abruptly turned to me and asked me to “say something”. This caught me off guard but I felt like I should share my testimony with him so I did. As I spoke about how God had worked in my life, I felt fully convicted that the words I spoke were true. He didn’t interrupt once while I was sharing. I truly felt like the Holy Spirit gave me the words to speak. After I was done, Tousens’ attitude toward us changed. He said that he could see that I fully believed what I spoke and that he was proud of us for sharing the gospel with him. Although he didn’t commit his life to Christ that day, I was amazed at how quickly God softened his heart.

## **I Miss GOD**

There came a point the third or fourth night where I broke down during de-

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brief and couldn’t get it together. Every day had been an emotional roller-coaster with children’s ministry and EV. Amidst my unstable waves of emotion, Missionary Simon’s actions and words continuously reminded me of God’s love & heart for his people. Our Father loves to listen to his children, desires to embrace them – He wants to hold



our hand & gently but firmly speak truth into our hearts. As I reflected more on God’s heart, I began to realize that I dearly miss Him. I often lead myself to believe that I’m seeking Him, but I settle for the crumbs instead of taking my seat at the feast. I desperately want and need a gentle father who will lead me in the truth, yet I choose to fill myself with other things because my heart isn’t truly convinced that God can be such a father to me. This realization was humbling but also led my heart to be deeply sorrowful.

## *2 CORINTHIANS 12:9-11 (WHEN I AM WEAK, THEN I AM STRONG)*

After my “I miss God” revelation, I felt very emotionally/spiritually unstable. I lacked confidence in my words and actions...especially when it came to the thought of sharing the gospel. My smallness, ineptitude, and weaknesses became all the more apparent to me. I desperately asked God for his strength and for the Holy Spirit to lead and guide me in the days that followed. I now have a glimpse of what Paul means when he says he is strong in his weakness. God is so much more powerful than all my faults, and he still used me despite my sins to share his gospel. By struggling through ministry, God revealed to me more of the extent of his power, as well as what true love looks like in action. During the times when I felt the most inadequate and not confident in myself, I oddly also felt strongest because of God’s strength to me.

Coming back to the States was more shocking than I had anticipated for such a short trip. It was hard to stop myself from merely reminiscing about Haiti, and instead remembering and praying for all the people I had met. All the sweet times I had with God in Haiti quickly felt like a distant and fading memory. The first week I was back, I even had terrible dreams and nightmares that I later on realized were spiritual attacks. However I see that God has reminded me He is the same, no matter where I am. That's hard for me to fully believe sometimes, but I am thankful for all that He showed me during the trip. Going to Haiti opened up my heart to missions in general and also showed more of God's love for people in other countries.

Again, thank you for your support and reading!

Heidi



# MEXICO

JOYCE LEE

I did not plan on embarking on a missions trip this summer, but our Father in heaven foreknew that I would go to Tijuana and Mexico City with my family members to share the good news and make Him known. What an honor it is to have this God whose thoughts are higher than our thoughts, whose ways are better than our ways! He knows what's best for us, and His timing is perfect. Looking back, these two mission trips can be described as a true privilege, special opportunity, and divine gift of learning to become a faithful witness.

Thank God that salvation isn't in our hands. Thank God that He calls us solely to find rest in Him and abide in Him. He (the Holy Spirit) is the one who empowers us to do His work; as we abide in Him, we find joy and peace in knowing that He is in absolute control and that He is sovereign. When the disciples ask Jesus (after His resurrection) whether he would restore the kingdom of Israel now (visibly and immediately), Jesus tells them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth" (Acts 1:6-8) Through the two mission trips, God kept reminding me of His power and sovereignty. He is more than able to carry out His will—He doesn't need me or any of us to help Him, yet He graciously chooses us to partake in His kingdom work and calls us to be faithful witnesses of the glorious work of His hands.

## *JULY 3 (THURSDAY) - 6 (SUNDAY) TIJUANA, MEXICO*

The team consisted of about 32 families (over 80 members in total). We drove down to San Diego, California, walked across the border, and were greeted by Missionary James Lee and the local pastors that he has connected us with.

For three days, we split into two different groups to do Vacation Bible School (VBS) at two different sites. My family and I were at the same VBS site; however, throughout the trip, I almost forgot that they were there with me. At times I wondered what they were doing. But I realized God was sustaining each and every one

of us, knowing every detail of our lives, and He assured me that I should keep focusing my gaze upon Him and Him alone (“seek first His kingdom and righteousness and all things will be given to you as well”). Even when I’m away from home, God is meeting us individually wherever we are and moving powerfully—it was so awesome to ponder upon that thought.

The VBS theme was “the armor of God” just like the past senior banquet theme. I don’t think it was a coincidence. God kept reminding me the importance of standing firm and being grounded on His word and truth as well as asking, seeking, and knocking on the door through prayer. Thank God that He is the divine warrior who guarantees the victory—though there may be casualties in the fights that we have here on earth, He enables us to become more than conquerors by faith. We can be rest assured that God is for us and not against us.



that He even uses non-Christians to fulfill His plan and that I do not need to be concerned about how He will carry out His work—just be a faithful witness, Joyce (He kept reminding me).

Throughout my time there, my legs were all swollen from mosquito bites. I could not unfold my legs when I slept, and it was so painful to move around. However, when I was doing VBS or some kind of ministry, I did not feel the pain (and I think that was by God’s grace—He gives me the strength to do His work).

A vast majority of my team members were toddlers, children, and adolescents. When I saw them running around or heard them making loud noises, I was quick to judge in my sinfulness and question whether it was appropriate for them to be on the missions trip. However, God quickly rebuked me by reminding me

It was truly an intergenerational missions trip (toddlers to seniors), and I had the privilege of witnessing how He ministers to and through us despite age differences; truly, God knows what He’s doing.

*JULY 30 (WEDNESDAY) - AUGUST 3 (SUNDAY) MEXICO CITY, MEXICO*

Missions to Tijuana involved more than 32 families (80+ people); it seemed normal to have families going on missions together, and I didn’t really have much contact with my family as I did in Mexico City. Mexico City Missions team members involved me, Josh (my younger brother), John (my youngest brother), my mother, my father, and four other teammates (1 who is 25, 2 in their 30s, 1 in their 40s). Basically, more than half the team was my family.



My father (who is a pastor for the senior ministry at All Nations Church) had been building upon the relationships he made in Mexico City for the past 5-6 years; he was extremely blessed and encouraged last year that he was hoping for his whole family to go to witness and experience for ourselves God’s work in Mexico City.

I fell in love with God more deeply through the lives of brothers and sisters in Mexico City, as well as my team members. We arrived there around midnight, and Isai greeted us and recognized me and Josh. He had been going back and forth between Mexico City and Oaxaca for the past several years and remembered me and my brother dancing and praising God in the rain. That was when I was in 8th grade. How crazy is that? I wasn’t aware how God used me and my brother to minister to other people’s hearts back then, but through Isai I realized that God had used us as a vessel to further His kingdom (and therefore, I don’t have to know every single detail

of what He's doing but simply trust that as I abide and rest in Him, He will have His will be done.

The locals' hospitality and care for our team members really challenged my faith, and I will never forget how Elizabeth's family insisted my family members and I to stay in their master bedroom and Elizabeth's room. When we stepped into their household, they told us that their place was our place. I recognized Elizabeth's quinceañera photo that my father had brought back several years ago as well as about 5 of my family photos framed throughout their living room. They had been praying for us; even though our hosts' parents were in a very critical condition, they were more than willing to host us. As I looked into Elizabeth's mom's eyes, I felt as if though she was my dear sister in Christ. I think God's timing was perfect, because my grandmother was too in a critical condition; we were able to comfort one another and bear one another's burdens through prayer.

John and I were the only ones doing VBS, as the other team members were doing medical-related things (i.e., eye ministry, acupuncture, pharmacy, counseling). For three days, my team members and I went to three different sites that the main pastor connected us with. No one in our team except our team leader, Edward, knew how to speak Spanish very fluently (though my brothers and I had learned a bit in high school); no one except one 17-year-old boy knew how to speak English (he was slowly learning how to speak). It was crazy and awesome that despite our language barriers, there was no barrier is us worshipping our God together in every aspect of our lives (whether it'd be by sharing meals, having time of praise, doing ministry, etc.) Thank God that Christ is the one who connects and brings His people together as one. He unites us as a body and overcomes all the differences and disparities we may have.

During VBS, I was so encouraged by my brother John, whom God used to remind me of Matthew 19:14 (Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.") Before the missions trip, we didn't prepare much for VBS, because we thought that it would be a minor thing alongside the medical missions; however, as there were 100 children, for instance, on the first day waiting for us, I caught myself getting anxious and wor-

ried about what to do. With the uncertainty of how many children there would be the next day at another unknown site, I found myself telling John that we should stop at a certain point in distributing the limited supplies we had, but my brother kept repeating the phrase "let the children come." I think childlike faith requires a dependence and quiet trust that God will provide and meet all of our needs even though we may not see it visibly or immediately. By the end of the missions trip, we had more than enough leftover despite not having given freely without limits—it was almost like how Jesus fed the crowds. Praise the Lord for His faithfulness even in our faithlessness and showing us that He is worthy of all our trust, submission, and obedience.

All glory be to Christ: my aim, goal, and desire I think God really used the two mission trips to humble me and show me that this Christian life really isn't about me, but about Him who is worthy of all glory, honor, and praise. He is God Immanuel, and He is with us moment by moment. What a sweet and wonderful promise that is!

I can go on and on, but will try to stop myself here. There is so much more I would like to share and am willing to share with you, if you'd like. Please feel free to ask any questions or details. You can reach me by email ([joycejaeyoung@gmail.com](mailto:joycejaeyoung@gmail.com)).

Blessings,

Joyce