Hallelujah! Greetings in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ

We praise and thank God for leading us through the Winter Student Spiritual Convocation at Dallas Church from December 21 to December 26, 2008. This time, a total of 43 participants from 8 cities and across 5 states came to attend the WSSC. It was truly a blessing to see so many parents from so many different locations allow their children to spend this precious vacation time to study God’s word and pursue holiness. May God remember their dedication and love.

The theme of this WSSC was “A Life of Servitude.” Through the study of God’s servants such as Nehemiah, Samuel, and the Apostles, we learned the true meaning of a servant of our Lord and what that means for us today.

In the short four and a half days, we also learned how to pray; for ourselves, for others, and for the church. We prayed with sweat and tears. We prayed for God’s Holy Spirit, we prayed for God’s guidance in life, and we prayed for God to remove the sin within us so that we may serve Him. By the end of the four and a half days, we witnessed how our heavenly father had heard our cries. Three students received the Holy Spirit and a great number of students have been renewed by the Holy Spirit.

Praise and thank God! In the course of this WSSC, we were able to see all these younger brothers and sisters earnestly seek God. Although the prayers were long and the course load was not easy, but all the students tried their best and encouraged one another to do the same. When we see all of these students, our younger brothers and sisters in Christ, we see the future of the church. Often times, it is easy for us to feel like there is no one else serving God and that we are serving alone. We might even say “I alone am left” as Elijah did. But when we look at these SSC students, we see how God always provides. Just as God told Elijah, “I have reserved seven thousand in Israel,” we see today that God has reserved so many young workers for Himself.

I am thankful to God for allowing me to help in this WSSC. Even though I am unworthy, He still gave me the opportunity to be part of His work. In doing this work, I saw His love, His power, and His plan. In the end, I can say nothing but this: How great is the God we serve! Hallelujah! Praise His name!

May God continue to bless and guide our every step.

-Daniel Jeng, J2 Group Habakkuk
Foot Washing Reflections

During SSC, the students learned about the sacrament of foot washing. They also had a special topic session on the Biblical teaching of mutual foot washing and had the opportunity to practice this teaching. Below are some reflections students wrote on their foot washing experiences.

Before foot washing, I felt very honored but they wipe your foot dry. During foot washing, I felt ticklish because I’m over extremely ticklish on my feet, but spiritually I enjoyed it, and I felt like my counselor really cared for me and I noticed she looked very humble. When I washed Emily Lin’s feet, I felt like I was doing something special for a friend, and I felt sorry for some reason. I would wash someone else’s feet. In the future, I would wash someone else’s feet in the future.

-Emily Lin, E2

Before receiving foot washing, I thought it would be a cool feeling and a different spiritual feeling. When my counselor washed my feet, physically I felt ticklish because I’m over extremely ticklish on my feet, but spiritually I enjoyed it, and I felt like my counselor really cared for me and I noticed she looked very humble. When I washed Emily Lin’s feet, I felt like I was doing something special for a friend, and I felt sorry for some reason. I would wash someone else’s feet. In the future, I would wash someone else’s feet.

-Eileen Lee, E2

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-Emily Liu, E2

Before foot washing, I thought foot washing would be like really cool. I would have wanted to wash someone’s foot, but too bad I’m shy. I would wash my feet. After getting foot washing from my counselor, I felt less scared than before. Because at first, I was really shy, and just hesitated and stared. When other people did it, I felt that I can do it too. After watching my teachers wash feet, I might wash someone else’s feet. When Lashayla washed my feet, I did not feel different because I didn’t really feel anything.

-Annie Wang, E2

I thought it was going to be scary because I rarely show my feet a lot. And, I didn’t want my feet to show. When my counselor washed my feet, I felt embarrassed for people to look at my feet and to touch them. I would wash someone else’s feet to say sorry to the other person and if I felt really bad for doing what I did to them.

-Lashayla Daniels, E2

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-Heather Lo, E2

Before foot washing, I thought it would feel different once it happened. When my counselor washed my feet, I felt a little weird in a good way. When Eileen washed my feet, it felt a little bit different, because she did this mostly to be so you could forgive that person for what they did to you. Or if they just thought they wanted to be nice or kind to you. In the future, I might wash someone else’s feet.

-Emily Lin, E2

Before foot washing, I thought it would feel weird and cold. I thought I wouldn’t like it. When my counselor washed my feet, I felt funny, weird, and my feet felt cold. I did kind of like it. In the future, I would probably wash someone else’s feet if I knew that person. I don’t know if it were a stranger, though.

-Annie Wang, E2

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-Andy Xu, E2

The sacrament of foot washing, instituted by Lord Jesus, teaches and reminds us four main important teachings: to remember God’s love, to remind ourselves to be holy, to be humble, and to forgive one another.

My reflection on the foot washing is that it isn’t such a hard task. I can see how it reminds us to be humble because the foot washer has to kneel down in front of the receiver of the foot washing. Also the washer has to bend over in order to scoop the water and pour it on the other person.

I think that humbleness also then lead to forgiveness. To forgive someone, you have to be humble. The task of washing someone’s feet is a very humbling task and I would imagine that if the washer was angry at the receiver, they would not be able to focus on the task. In this way I realize that forgiving one another is a lesson from foot washing.

I washed Aaron’s feet, which were not dirty at all. But if the receiver of the foot washing had dirty feet, I can see how foot washing teaches us to be holy. As mentioned, our feet represent our actions, that then means if one had dirty feet, it would represent unclean actions, which would be unholy. Thus, foot washing teaches us to be holy. All this then adds to God’s love—in how He
performed foot washing if the washer only gently touches the feet. A solemn ceremony can quickly turn to a joke. Thus the sincerity of the person performing foot washing is really important, and the level of sincerity is really obvious for everyone to see. It reminds me that in a real foot washing we should really take it seriously and keep in mind the teachings of Christ.

I am really touched by Elder Jung’s testimony about the two church brothers who had seriously issues with each other. They made peace and washed each others’ feet. In foot washing they cried, because they could experience the love of Jesus on His disciples. I think the understanding of how much each of us has owed to Christ is the solid foundation to the forgiveness toward each other.

-Kyle Sung, Senior

This is my first time to really think seriously about the meaning of foot washing. In the past, I knew foot washing was important when people receive baptism. The church ministers have to wash the new members’ feet and they will be clean. But I didn’t know that we can always practice foot washing with each other at any time.

Today, I learned that foot washing can be separated into two parts; one is the sacrament of foot washing, the other is mutual foot washing. When Elder Jung talked about the history of foot washing and other nations’ perspective on foot washing, I started thinking if I had the complete understanding of foot washing these past years. While foot washing is important because we need it to have part with Lord Jesus, the teachings behind foot washing are also important to know.

I was baptized in 2005 in Taiwan. I was a college student and have been in church since birth. At the time when I received foot washing, I had a special experience. I was sitting inside the chapel in the front row, and there was a sound that came into my ear saying, “The gates of heaven are opened for you, from now until eternity.” I was joyful and happy at that time because I knew from now on I am God’s child. I felt God’s love fill my heart and give me strength to stand stronger. Also, after foot washing when I knelt down and prayed; tears fell down directly from my eyes and I couldn’t let it stop. That was the first time I truly felt the Holy Spirit fill my heart and body.

When Lord Jesus established foot washing He commanded His disciples to wash one another’s feet. Why did Lord Jesus say that? I think Lord Jesus is teaching us to be humble and have a willingness to serve God. If we want to wash someone’s feet, we have to lower down ourselves instead of standing up. This will give us the opportunity to learn to be humble and willing to serve one another in church. Through foot washing, I also learned to forgive others even when they are doing bad things to me, because Jesus teaches us to love each other and to help each other.

-Julia Wu, Senior

Being humble and forgiving goes hand-in-hand. I can show humbleness by being humble and forgiving people even when they infuriate me.

-Ricky Ariton, J2

The teachings of foot washing are rather complicated in class, but I think that the basic idea is pretty simple once I had a chance to demo. When I am performing mutual foot washing, I cannot put my mind away from how awkward foot washing is and in the back of my mind I always have a hygiene concern. However, I could understand from the demo that foot washing can really transmit the sincerity of Christian fellowship and learn about how to apply the love of Christ to our brothers.

I actually do not like the demo that much because I don’t feel the need to. I was laughing out of awkwardness and the fact how dirty the water is after I washed my feet. I felt bad for treating the demo so lightly, but I had a better understanding of the teaching after I realized how much it takes to wash each others’ feet.

It is really ticklish on the person being E2 students paint plaster molds of their feet after mutual foot washing.
African Ministry Reflections

When I saw the pictures of Pr. Yeh’s missionary trip I felt very thankful that my life isn’t so hard. When I saw that they were sharing a small bowl of rice and only one dish, I was touched. Little children were very well-behaved and sat on the pews in church chapel. I think we should learn from them. I thought the sisters and brothers of the church were very loving, and that they had good faith in God. Even though inside their chapel there was nothing, they all looked joyful and happy to be at church. I learned to be thankful for what God has given me.

-Esther Bae, J1

“Our missions in life are to receive salvation and to also help others receive salvation”

The pictures that were shown to me astounded me. I never would have imagined that Africa could be so interesting. I never knew that they just walked around selling items from their head. The churches there may look run-downed and ugly but the believers inside are truly faithful. Some, as Pastor Yeh mentioned, walked for two hours just to come to Sabbath service. The people sung many hymns to praise God even with the lack of musical instrument. The meals that they ate were very simple and they are still content with what they have. I think that we need to learn from them. They are content with what God gives them, and yet we, as humans who live in a very civilized country, never have enough and always want more. If we ever want to do this type of ministry, we will need to learn how to survive without any secular items. The people that were there treated the pastors like V.I.P’s. They showed their love and are to those who were preaching the gospel to them. From this, we can also learn a valuable lesson. We need to appreciate the people that preach the gospel to us, and we should thank them and follow their teachings. Another thing which I have learned is that the youth there are every responsible. They care for the young ones in place of their very busy mothers and they also bring their siblings to church. As a youth myself, I have learned that I need to be more responsible and should help my parents with daily things. Who knew that you could learn so much from a desolate place?

-Thomas Hsu, J1

SSC Student Reflections

Through the beginning of SSC, I did not experience God in my prayers. It wasn’t until Wednesday night that I really enjoyed prayer. During that prayer, I remembered the teaching that we cannot take anything out of this world. However, in that prayer God reminded me of the few things that we should take. These are our friends, family, and even strangers. Our missions in life are to receive salvation and to also help others receive salvation. Lord Jesus set a good example when He died for us to give us salvation. In the same way, we must never forget about the salvation of others. This prayer was the first prayer in this SSC that I felt close to God. This was also the turning point of SSC for me. I also really felt God’s abundance in Thursday’s dinner prayer. I felt the power of the Holy Spirit in the prayer room as everyone was praying earnestly. In that prayer, I was reminded of the night when we shared how our families found Christ. In my mind I asked the question, “Have I found Christ myself?” Every SSC I feel that I find Christ, but after SSC I feel that I lose Christ. I hope that after this SSC I will keep Christ in my heart as a first priority for the rest of my life.

-Andrew Lo, J2

The prayer of intercession is a powerful one. When you and your spiritual friends pray for one another, God will hear what is being prayed for even better. It isn’t always easy to pray for another person though, as I found in my prayers. When you pray for yourself, you have to have heart and motivation. Likewise, when you pray for your buddy, you have to pray and really care about them. We should not only think about ourselves, but the people around us.

-Alvin Hsieh, J2

“The prayer of intercession is a powerful one. When you and your spiritual friends pray for one another, God will hear what is being prayed for even better”
E2 students act out their own 21st century versions of David and Samuel stories.

Like most people, my favorite SSC of all SSCs is winter 2004. That SSC marked the spiritual peak of my life—I have never felt more spiritual or happy before. Since then, I’ve had a spiritual downfall. The four years between then and now were filled with ups and downs—mostly downs. Although this SSC doesn’t match the winter 2004 SSC, I think it gets second place. From this SSC, I have pulled myself back together and my spiritual life is back on track. I hope with all my heart that, with the help of brothers and sisters, I can continue to pursue a life of servitude and holiness. I hope to keep prayer, the church, and God as the number one priority in my life. From now on, I hope that all future SSCs, NYTS, or any spiritual gathering will serve as higher points in my spiritual life, rather than falling back to my old life every time.

- Liz Gunther, J2

Counselor Reflections

Since I started for the Kingdom, Since my life He controls, Since I gave my heart to Jesus, The longer I serve Him, the sweeter He grows.

The longer I serve Him the sweeter He grows, The more that I love Him, more love He bestows,
Each day is like heaven, My heart overflows,
The longer I serve Him the sweeter He grows...

-Hymn 414, The Longer I Serve Him

Prior to SSC, as I was reading through 1 Samuel to gain better understanding of servitude and to prepare for the morning Bible studies, I was greatly moved by the passages in 1 Samuel 2, when Hannah thanked God for her blessing and when the boy Samuel was first called by the Lord. Throughout the chapter, I drew inspiration from the complete willingness of Hannah and Samuel to serve God and the trust and love that Hannah praised God with. Reflecting on my own servitude and attitude, I realized that I had somehow lost the peace and joy that came with serving our Lord. Later on, during SSC, in a particularly heartrending prayer, I realized that it is only the Lord God who chooses us to be His servants, gives us the skills and preparation needed to take on the tasks He assigns us, and continues to forgive and unconditionally love us even when we fail. I needed to discover how to truly cherish God’s abundant mercy—in servitude, in prayer, and in life—and that meant that I needed to accept both the beauty and suffering that comes along with following God’s will.

1 Samuel 2 gave me great encouragement as well as reminded me to truly pour my heart, soul, mind, and strength into serving God so that He will not strip me of His grace. Even though we sin sometimes even in the midst of our services and tasks, He remains ever true and devoted, sympathizing with us and forgiving us, strengthening and supporting us in our times of distress. Not everyone is allowed to or is bestowed upon the talents to be “faithful priests” for God, and I know that I need to be more dedicated to my most important position and career as the Lord’s ambassador for a world that grows more and more distant from its Father.

I praise and thank God that this past SSC I was finally able to once again taste the sweetness of serving the Lord. May the Lord continue to bless all those who serve Him faithfully.

- Abby Chu, E2 Group Amos

Thank God for guiding this SSC and for making it fruitful for those who attended! This SSC I experienced that “the longer I serve Him, the sweeter He grows.” I realized that I could no longer serve God on my own accord, but I must serve Him His way and with
His heart and His mind (as we read in our 1 Samuel morning Bible studies). It is only through prayer and Bible reading that we can know God and know His will (so that we can serve Him the way He wants us to serve Him). By cultivating ourselves daily, we will be able to trust in God, to lay aside our pride and personal wants, to submit to His will, and to make our servitude pleasing in His eyes.

During this SSC, I was also reminded of the sweetness of the little prayer room in the back of the chapel. It really reminded me of the Winter SSC of 2004 when I received the Holy Spirit. In that little prayer room, it seems that the more people there are, the stronger the prayer. Together we reach God, and together we support each other on this heavenly journey. I hope God continues to guide all of us in our post SSC endeavors, and let us never forget to “watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the body is weak” (Matthew 26:41).

Let us not let Satan catch us sleeping! And let us continue to pray for one another and to help each other up when we see that one has fallen (Ecclesiastes 4:10). Praise and thank God! 😊
-Priscilla Lo, E2 Group Amos

"Who are you Lord?" and "What shall I do Lord?" are the two questions Paul asked in the book of Acts. The God we worship, He is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in love (Psalms 103:8). He hears the prayer of the poor and needy and those who come to Him with a contrite heart. God wanted us to act justly, to love mercy and to walk humbly with Him (Micah 6:8). The rewarding part of counseling is being able to impress our children with the word of God so they will grow up to be God fearing. The edifying part of counseling is to be reminded by our children through their action of love and humility. We live in a society that competition is highly demanded and humbleness will draw us back from all sources of opportunities. But in the mutual foot washing class, I saw a beautiful heart which I have not seen for a very long time. Some of the E2 students volunteer willingly to wash each other’s feet. They were humble, they were sincere but most important, they were true to each other. Let our worship be true, let our prayers be true, and let our service to God be true for He has always been true to us. Lastly, I thank God for the opportunity to come to know my coworkers and being able to work together for the house of God.
-Johnny Lee, E2 Group Micah

Thank the Lord our heavenly father, after SSC 2008 has successfully ended, I continue to experience edifying moments and witness God’s abidance in every aspect of my daily living. This particular SSC has taught me how to pray in order to stay connected with God. Several key prayers changed my outlook in life.

In the past, drastic contrasts in highs and lows of my spirituality confused me and sometimes frustrated me. I struggled to maintain the inner peace and a spiritual level where I could feel close to God constantly. When life was a smooth sail, I easily took it for granted and relied too much on myself. God often took the backseat in many of my decisions. So during this SSC, I prayed for a change of heart to live a consistent life of prayer.

Challenges came immediately after I returned to Austin, yet troubleshooting with prayers has made God’s existence ever so clear to me. God was greatly attainable because I could reach Him right there, right then. My daily prayers tune me in to God’s messages. Each challenge becomes a learning opportunity, and with that closeness to God, enlightenments are revealed to me everyday and I no longer feel afraid. Now it seems as if God has clearly emerged from a gazillion things while the blob of chaos quietly fades into the background. I regained my inner peace and I am firmly holding on to it.

Before Nehemiah took action to rebuild the wall, he prepared himself by four months of prayer. It showed He was patient and humble. Living a life of prayer is the basis of all things. I pray to God all of us will keep praying in the SSC spirit and let ourselves become equipped to serve the Lord. May all the glory belong to His name.
-Amber Chang, J1 Group Obadiah

Thank God for His blessing that I have this wonderful chance to be a counselor during this SSC. The theme of this SSC was “A life of servitude”, therefore, we are not only taught how to serve, but also we also had the chance to put what have learned into this SSC work immediately. As Nehemiah rebuilt the wall of Jerusalem, we were building the spiritual wall inside of our heart. The SSC gave us the good foundation of building this wall; however, we need continue to keep up this spirit together even after SSC to finish the wall strongly and firmly to resist all the temptations and iniquities in our lives. May God strengthen and help each of us in this New Year!!

"Unless the LORD builds the house, its builders labor in vain. Unless the LORD watches over the city, the watchmen stand guard in vain” (Ps 127:1)
-Daniel Wu, J1 Group Hosea

One of the lessons I learned from this SSC was that a life of servitude means we must continually battle against ourselves and Satan in order to grow spiritually. In our daily lives, sometimes it seems like a daunting task to try to overcome our weaknesses and avoid temptations. But, during this SSC I felt the power of God working among us and I was reminded that we are not alone in our spiritual battles. God wants to fight for us through the power of the Holy Spirit! He wants us to be victorious! Our church friends, counselors, teachers, parents, and pastors are also praying for us to help fight these battles! With God fighting for us, we have nothing to fear. All we need to do is be strong and courageous and work diligently to do our part in the battle. May God grant us the strength and courage to be victorious and be called worthy servants of His.
-Jo Huang, J2 Group Zephaniah