



Girls' Brigade International NEWSLETTER

Tales from the International Conference of the Girls' Brigade

From our International President

Dear friends,

Greetings in the worthy name of our Saviour Jesus.

What a pleasure it was for me to meet all of you including so many of our national and emerging leaders at ICGB, Kuching. To see and interact with many dedicated leaders in a single place is always a highlight for us in Girls' Brigade. The Kuching ICGB afforded us the opportunity to share our ministry experiences and move on to inspire one another for greater ministry once back in our particular countries.

Indeed, between 24th and 31st July, Kuching was the place to be. To organize a conference the size of ICGB calls for a lot of commitment and hard work, and you will agree with me that certainly GB Malaysia deserve whole hearted commendation and a pat on the back. We say a big thank you to all our friends in GB Malaysia for organizing such a great conference. The worship, workshops, recreation and tours exhibited a great commitment and dedication to excellence. Well done GB Malaysia.

As this edition of the newsletter

is dedicated to ICGB, I would like to thank the national councils and everyone who attended ICGB. It is important to note that everyone in the GB family contributes to the success of every ICGB. More significantly at this ICGB was the presence from our national councils, emerging leaders. It was very good and 'cool' to have the young people in our midst and listen to their contributions. As for those who attended the ICGB for the first time, I am sure it was worth every moment spent.

The prayer times and worship every day brought us together in one accord—raising our voices in praise to our God! Under the theme of Cross Over, Move On, our challenge was and is to ensure that we are not standing still after we Cross Over, that we move on and be a blessing to others, that we are inspired to bring God's Kingdom among girls. I believe that we have continued to reflect on the theme since Kuching and trust that we are already incorporating in our programme how we can best express the theme in our ministry among girls.

Business sessions were seri-

ous, enlightening and interactive giving us an opportunity to discuss and agree on matters pertaining to the future of GBI. As serious as the business was, I believe we all found time to experience the rich culture of Malaysia and its warm and hospitable people.

As you read the stories from the different parts of our Brigade world, my prayer is that our ministry among girls is forever experiencing daily transformation into a relevant Christian youth ministry and a growing in our outreach to many young people, seeking a safe place. May GB be the safe place that they come to and eventually find a meaningful relationship with God, thus making our new vision come true: *Girls' lives transformed, God's world enriched.*

May the blessing of God follow you as you seek, serve and follow Christ.

Ruth M. Chikasa

ICGB 2010

- ◆ Held in Eastern Malaysia, in the city of Kuching
- ◆ From July 24th to 31st July 2010
- ◆ Including worship, workshops, recreation and tours.
- ◆ Attended by Girls' Brigades from all over the world.



Members enjoying the celebrations

STOP PRESS PRAYER SPOT

Please remember our International Secretary, Ann Webster at this time. Having been diagnosed with cancer Ann is currently undergoing further tests and treatments. Please keep her and her family in your prayers.

ICGB Worship Times

Cross Over—Move On ... that was the theme for our International Council meetings in Kuching. That, too, was the theme for all our worship times together in which we were privileged to be led by Rev Dr Ong Hwai Teik, The President of the Methodist Church in Malaysia and Chaplain for GB Malaysia. As we worshipped together, we shared the rhythm of our African sisters, listened to the testimony of young people from around the world, engaged with prayer partners from other fellowships, harmonized as we sang familiar songs in different languages and explored God's word. What a privilege it was!

At the beginning of the conference, Rev. Dr Ong challenged us to realize that we could not look at our organization without first looking at ourselves. We, as individuals, needed to CROSS OVER and MOVE ON in our own journey with God before he could effectively use us within the organization ... a challenge to all members of our GB family wherever they are. Throughout the week, as we shared together, he helped us

**"Be ready to
CROSS OVER
whatever
barriers may
be in our path
and MOVE ON**

to explore what we needed to do in order to CROSS OVER AND MOVE ON in our personal and spiritual lives.

- ◇ First we looked at those things that may BLOCK the Spirit of God from moving through us. Those times of difficulty when we don't understand God, when His ways seem far from comfortable, when we try to fathom God and can't manage it, when we need simply to trust Him.
- ◇ Next we were reminded of the FOUNDATION of our faith—the un-surrendering love of God which will uphold us no matter what.
- ◇ Then we were directed to hold fast to the FOCUS of our faith, our obedience to Christ's leading, and we were urged to keep our eyes fixed on that.
- ◇ We were challenged, too, to accept that there would be a personal COST in following, but reminded that it would lead ultimately to our Lord's 'Well Done!'
- ◇ On the final morning we were all left with a CHALLENGE—to launch out into the deep and recommit ourselves to the service to which we were called, ready to CROSS OVER whatever barriers may be in our path and MOVE ON to the place where God wanted us to be.

CROSS OVER, MOVE ON! That means changing! It means moving from one place to another! We can't stay static in our faith as individuals, or as an organization. As an organization, we must constantly change in



order to be culturally relevant. We are not, of course, to change our principles or our foundation, but the methods we use and the way that we communicate must change. Rev. Dr Ong said 'have faith in Christ and with confidence in yourself, move on to change!'

Challenging?

Yes! In fact the whole conference theme was challenging—but that is what being a Christian and a Christian organization is all about! No-one said it would be easy!

Difficult?

Yes, but we can do it in Christ's strength because as we were reminded:

We are accepted in Christ

We are secure in Christ

We are valuable in Christ

We are the servants of Christ

.....and if we work in unity with him He WILL mandate blessing.

So, together, let's CROSS OVER and MOVE ON and await his blessing.

'Put out into deep water and let down the nets for a catch!'

Luke Ch. 5:4

Vivienne Aitchison

Girls' Brigade Europe

ICGB Touring Party Experiences - GB England & Wales

The news that ICGB 2010 was to be held in Malaysia sounded very exciting. I had never travelled so far from home and probably wouldn't have considered Sarawak as a destination, but I wanted to share that feeling of being connected all around the world I had experienced at ICGB in Northern Ireland.

I took the plunge and booked on the Touring Party. Information of what this would involve was rather limited, but because it was a GB event I had faith that all would

be well. Several months and injections later I was off, first to Kuala Lumpur, then onto Kuching.

The schedule was packed, but we were able to join in the Morning Worship sessions on most days and the Evening Activities and Vespers. There was also the option of joining the Delegates Workshops.

The trips were well organized. Rose, our guide, brought the country to life for us and we learned a lot. The canoe trip through the

Rain Forest to visit a Long House was particularly memorable as was seeing Orangutans at quite close quarters and on their terms!

I was delighted to re-establish contacts made in Northern Ireland and make new ones. It was fascinating to hear how God is using GB around the world and I thank Him for the opportunity to share in ICGB once again.

Kathy Hubbard GBEW

ICGB - Touring Party Experiences - GB Australia

When I was advised that I would be in the Touring Party during ICGB, I decided that this was the perfect opportunity to share my travels with the girls in my Cadet Group at 2nd Maryborough GB Company, in Queensland, Australia. We commenced the year by starting their International Award "Operation Reachout" and using the material in the kit, they learnt much about the lifestyle in Malaysia. I was thrilled to find that I was going to visit so many interesting places and attractions in Sarawak that my Cadets had learnt about during their work for the award. Now I would be able to bring back photos to bring the project to life.

I had been part of the Touring Party at two previous ICGB's, having led the Touring Party in Australia in 1998, and also being a TP member in Northern Ireland in 2006, so I knew what to expect and I looked forward to discovering as much as I could about Sarawak during the five days of ICGB.

What a great time we had. The bus company that was selected to take us touring had very careful drivers and two very knowledgeable female guides who were able to give us a great understanding of life in Malaysia. Added to this were the wonderful Malaysian Girls' Brigade Leaders who came with us to the attractions and were so caring of everyone's needs and abilities.

ICGB Report 2010 - GB New Zealand

I was very grateful for the opportunity to attend ICGB in Kuching as a delegate for New Zealand.

It was a wonderful experience to attend this International Conference and mix with Christian women from all over the world. I was able to renew old friendships and make many new ones. So often I was reminded of how lucky we are here in New Zealand with our standard of living and the opportunities we have.

I felt the conference was very well organized and congratulations should go to Malaysia for this.

When the conference discussed changes to the Vision/Mission Statement we were divided into small groups to discuss what we felt should be included. In my group the differences between GB cultures in different countries were very obvious. We had to make a list that included the thing that GB needed to retain. It was obvious

These wonderful ladies had taken leave from their employment and busy home duties to see that we were well looked after and did not get lost. To them we were so grateful and they really made our time in Sarawak so special and fulfilling.

The adventure of my visit was the visit to the Iban Longhouse on the Lemanak River, which was very close to the Indonesian border. The trip included a 5 hour drive, plus stops in two villages along the way, before arriving at the Lemanak River to commence the boat trip to the longhouses further down the river. I think we were all quite wary of the canoe boats and the fact that the river was flowing very fast. We mustered up our courage and boarded the canoes, trying hard not to fall over and toss the other 4 occupants into the river. It took about 16 canoes to get us all ferried to the longhouses and getting out of the canoe was even harder than getting in. It was all well worth it, and the welcome by the occupants of the longhouse made the adventure worthwhile. I realized it was a privilege to be invited to see how these people lived and the talents they had. To my astonishment I was amazed to see that I had mobile phone coverage and the Iban people in this longhouse had electricity, electric fans, Sky TV and computers.

We were showered with so many love gifts and souvenirs during our time at ICGB, and these also have been great to share with my GB members back in Queensland. Everything we did and the places we visited were all very interesting, and it was wonderful to share with my GB members back in Queensland. Everything we did and the places we visited were all very interesting, and it was wonderful to share with leaders from so many parts of our worldwide GB family. I have many special memories of the Opening and Closing Services, the Malaysian Evening with the beautifully costumed dancers and entertainers, the Sarawak Night beside the river, the day outing to the Sarawak Cultural Village and relaxing at the Damai Beach Resort and our final night together at the President's Dinner.

I spent many hours catching up with friends from past ICGB's and making new friends. I was thrilled to see the number of 'young' leaders taking an active part in leadership roles in their countries. I believe that the future of Girls' Brigade is in good hands, and with following the vision of "Girls' lives transformed, God's world enriched", we will see Girls' Brigade grow and spread in new ways as we follow our Motto to Seek, Serve and Follow Christ.

Nalda Brett
Australia

that different countries value different things which made it impossible to make a list that pleased everyone. I really enjoyed the talk our International President Ruth Chikasa gave on "Branding". For many people the things she talked about would have been new insights. Part of the reason why I really enjoyed it was because I had recently gone through the process of branding as a member of the New Zealand Missions team for our new IFG initiative. It was great that Ruth was elected to a second term as it was obvious that she is a woman with vision for the future of Girls' Brigade.

There were many highlights - the Welcome and Closing Ceremonies and Dinners, catching up with old friends and making new ones, the visit to the Cultural Village and for me one of the biggest highlights was our encounter with the wild Orangutan at Semenggoh Reserve.

We were very lucky to see around 15 Orangutans, many only metres from where we were standing.

Kuching is a relatively clean city. We were lucky that for most of the time the weather was not too hot. The Riverside Majestic Hotel where we stayed and the Conference was held was very comfortable, right in the centre of town and by the river side. After the Conference ended I made good use of the pool. The best place to be when the temperature rose.

I would recommend attending ICGB to everyone as it gives you the bigger picture as to what GB is all about.

God Bless
Charmayne Johnstone
New Zealand

Report on Business Sessions

Monday 26th July, 10.20 to 13.00:

After the welcome, apologies, etc. it was straight into business, the first item to be discussed was the Memorandum of Articles and Constitutional changes. There was quite a bit of discussion on some of these, but it was a majority vote that agreed to:

- ◇ The change of the term of office for the International President. An IP now has the option of standing for a second four-year term.
- ◇ The introduction of a vote for the President's Committee as trustee's of GBI.
- ◇ The change of the term of office for the International Treasurer - she can serve two, four year terms.
- ◇ Plus some legal changes that were required because of legislation.

These changes came into effect immediately.

International President's Report:

This business section concluded with the presentation of a very full report from International President Ruth Chikasa, outlining her journey through the last four years as IP which has taken her from Belfast, Ireland in 2006, to Kuching, Malaysia in 2010.

Note: Each Fellowship had a day allocated to them, when they were on duty, and the Fellowship Reports were presented by them on these days.

Tuesday 10.20 to 13.00 and 20.00 to 21.30:

Fellowship meetings were held on Tuesday with two time slots allocated for these. This was a time for some Fellowships to elect their IVP's and for all to discuss matters relating to their Fellowships and GB International.

Wednesday 10.20 to 13.00:

At the beginning of this business section, a **tribute was paid to Masiofo Fetaui Mata'afa** from Samoa who dies in 2007. During her term of office as the University of South Pacific's Pro Chancellor a position she held from 1970 to 1976, Masiofo was Chairman of the Pacific Fellowship of Girls' Brigade.

A tribute was also paid to Elizabeth Nicoll who had served as a National President of GB Scotland and as an International President from 1983-1988. She died on 5 July 2008.

International President Nominations:

There were two candidates standing for International president, the incumbent Ruth Chikasa

from Zambia, and IVP from Asia Sally Chew. Ruth was re-elected and thanked everyone for the confidence they have placed in her as together we serve God through GB.

Finance:

Four years of accounts were presented by Joyce Evans, International Treasurer. In presenting her report, Joyce noted that our income was lower in 2009 and this was because of the global financial situation and the fact that we did not receive as much interest from our investments during that year. Scotland moved and Jamaica seconded the adoption of the accounts, agreed unanimously.

Re-Appointment of International Treasurer:

It was unanimously agreed that Joyce Evans was re-appointed as our International Treasurer for the next four years. A vote of thanks was passed thanking Joyce for her work..

One Chance project launched in 2006:

Asia IVP Sally Chew gave a presentation on the One Chance project in Cambodia and thanked the international family of GB for their financial support.

International Project 2010

GB Europe presented a proposal for the next International Project focusing on Kosovo in Eastern Europe where GB Europe has commenced work in partnership with Smile International. It was agreed that this should be the next International Project which will be called FIZZ. Watch for further details regarding this.

Patron for Girls' Brigade:

This subject was discussed at length - we currently have Vice Patrons but not a Patron. After much deliberation it was agreed that GBI should have two classifications of Vice Patrons:

- ◇ Ambassadorial Patrons who would serve for just four years, actively supporting the work of GBI. The number of such Patrons would be limited to five at any time.
- ◇ Life Patrons who would be appointed for life, in honour of outstanding service to GBI. There would be no limit to the number of Patrons in this category.

It was also agreed that Ambassadorial Patrons could become life patrons after their term of office.

Details of the above will be worked out and sent



to countries.

Friday 10.20 to 1.00

Branding Session:

Ruth did a presentation on branding in relation to Girls' Brigade. This session came about following a workshop held at the President's Meeting in July 2009 using the "Drucker Self-Assessment" model which identifies the need to modernize our mission statement. A paper circularized to all member countries for discussion prior to ICGB, but not all Fellowships had an opportunity to do that. Clarification was given regarding the difference between a mission and a vision statement and following further discussion within the Fellowship meetings, it was decided by the President's Committee that for this ICGB we would focus on a new vision statement, as mission statements may well be expressed differently, in different parts of the world. After collating the recommendations from the Fellowship meetings, the President's Committee put the following wording forward. It was agreed that the new International Girls' Brigade vision statement will be:

"Girl's lives transformed - God's world enriched."

Venue for ICGB 2014:

It was agreed that the venue for ICGB 2014 will be Australia - details regarding this will be sent out in due course.

Girls' Camp in Cape Town, South Africa 2013:

Information was presented regarding the planned girls' camp in Cape Town in 2013 which is being held to celebrate 120 years of GB internationally. The age group for girls attending is 14 to 25 years of age. As further details are known, they will be distributed to all member countries.

Jennifer Box - IVP Pacific Fellowship

ICGB 2010 MALAYSIA CROSS OVER AND MOVE ON FELLOWSHIP INTER-ACTION

The Welcome

- Delegates descended into Kuching (The Cat City), Sarawak from all around the world as early as three days before the arrival date of 24th July, 2010 for ICGB 2010.
- The arrival for the President's committee marked the highlight of the arrivals. The President's committee arrived in Kuching on 23rd July 2010 from Singapore where they had spent the preceding week in serious business planning and mapping out the future for GB International.
- The 'PC' was welcomed by beautiful girls wearing colourful traditional beaded outfits. The IP, Mrs Ruth Chikasa, and her team were garlanded with beautiful beads by the girls as they arrived at Kuching airport.
- Walking out of the Airport the PC were entertained by a beautiful "Cat Dance."
- The weather outside was not so welcoming as it was cold and rainy. But this did not dampen the moral on the delegates and the Host in the bus carrying the President promised "they would call off the rain the following day!" And promised a warm and sunny weather!

'There was so much laughter in the Sarawak Chamber as each country played different games.'

Arrival at the Riverside Majestic

- The Riverside Majestic Hotel foyer was full of screams and shouting as delegates arrived for the conference and old friends met and hugged.
- Country displays were put up showing off various art and craft from all countries in attendance.
- The International Competition Items were also displayed and showed such a high degree of creativity and initiative on the part of our girls. A lot of hard work had been put into every piece of artwork displayed.
- In the evening, the Sarawak Chamber was live with delegates in their traditional outfits. It was a time of sharing among old friends and making new friends.
- It was a true "Malay night" as delegates enjoyed the various Malay Traditional dances and sampled various traditional dishes.

Official Opening

- Sunday 25th July was a day of worship in the morning and the National Chaplain for GB Malaysia, Rev. Dr. Ong Hwai Teik shared with the delegates from John 5:1-8. Jesus asked the crippled by Bethesda if he wanted to get well having been by the poolside for 38 years? We have talked of wanting to change and be relevant for a long time, are we really committed to change.
- The afternoon marked the official opening of the conference with a service held at the Trinity Methodist Church. The International President, Mrs Ruth Chikasa, made an impact when she officially opened the Conference by using Explorers to Hit the Gong! Showing all exactly why we are there as leaders - It's for the Girls!

Inter-Action and Fun at ICGB

- Monday 25th July, the conference went into Business full swing and the touring party went off "touring".
- More fun and sharing in the evening with the Games night in the evening after a full day of business and workshops.
- There was so much laughter in the Sarawak Chamber as each country played different games. The delegates went around the hall having a go at the various games and you would think the room was full of 'Explorers'! It was relaxing and refreshing and this gave the delegates more time to share and get to know each other.

Highlights

- Touring party had a full packed programme of sight seeing and visits to interesting places in Malaysia including the "Traditional Longhouses".
- An outing to Semenggoh Orangutan was interesting and delegates had the opportunity to see the Utan. Of course the faint hearted lost the opportunity once they learnt he could be dangerous when upset and they remained at the gate.
- The Pottery Factory was interesting as we watched how the beautiful flower pots, etc. were made.
- A visit to the Cultural Village, sampling more traditional dances and experiencing real life situations of the various Malay ethnic groups.
- Every delegate was issued with a "passport" as a souvenir to show that they had visited the village. This was a good time to mingle and get to know each other as delegates strolled around the village at leisure.
- The "Rooms" made available for delegates after lunch were just what was needed after walking around the village all morning. Resting by the poolside and by the beach was sweet.
- No matter where or who you are, music and dance brings people together. It cuts across cultural boundaries. Everybody joined in the Song and Dance night.
- Fellowships came together and it was a memorable night for the delegates.

Workshops

- The workshops put in place gave delegates more time to share, outside GB Business.
- Delegates enjoyed the crafts, Lead Like Jesus, Leading and Managing Change, Seek, Serve, Follow and HABITUDES! What relevant topics and excellent presenters. It was good to be able to share as all of us lead the same generation.



Members from Girls' Brigade Hong Kong enjoying the conference

Conclusion

- The highlights of the conference finally was the President's Dinner on 30th July 2010. The food was excellent, served in a stylish manner (Systematically)!! It seemed like the waiters were on "drill".
- ICGB 2010 was well planned and well done to GB Malaysia and Asia Fellowship for putting up such a wonderful conference. There was lots of time and opportunity to share experiences and ideas. It was so easy to go with the flow of the moment during entertainment, workshops and even business!
- ICGB 2010 will be hard to follow. Good luck to those hosting 2014! But being GB we know every ICGB is always special and outstanding. Well done ladies and hoping we have definitely Moved On and Crossed Over. If God is on our side, who can be against us!!

Compiled by: Priscilla P. Penny
International Vice President (Africa)



Youth View

From the Emerging Leaders at ICGB
 Ever growing—and Folding into Shape
“Like the Beauty of a Napkin”

Reflections

By Isabel Ross, one of New Zealand’ emerging leaders. She has also served as a youth representative on the country’s national leadership team. Isabel shares some thoughts on ICGB Isabel took the beautiful cover photo of napkins at ICGB. Her message to us

They were so beautifully folded that I needed to have some record of how they looked before I unfolded them, covered them with food that fell from my fork (or chopsticks!), and tossed them next to my plate as I left the table, leaving an unappealing scene behind. Of course, they were then washed, folded, and ready to be admired again at the next meal. Isn’t that kind of like what God does for us? We can go to Him, messed up and unable to fix ourselves, and ask for forgiveness. He will restore us to righteousness, and we can stand before Him blameless.

As beautiful in His eyes as an exquisitely folded napkin.

Bits & Pieces—Pictures Speak Volumes



This ... sums up some of my favourite things about ICGB. The first thing you notice about this picture is that we are all different. There were 26 countries represented at ICGB, each one having its own culture and language. Yet despite all the difference, two things united us: we all love Jesus Christ and we are all passionate about transforming girls’ lives. The second

thing ... Is that we are all women. It doesn’t matter what culture you are from, if you put 200+ women together for a week, you are bound to have lots of laughs, share lots of stories and have a great time! ... The final thing about this picture is that we are all emerging leaders.

Stephanie McWilliams,
Australia

GB Malaysia Reinvents “This Little Light of Mine” & Rocks the House—Way to Go!



Crossing Over: GB Emerging Leaders proudly carrying ‘the colours’ during the ICGB’s closing service.

Youth View, continued

Emerging Voice of GB Europe - Claire Rush



Claire Rush hails from GB Europe as a true pioneer and testament of how GB can inspire and impact young women worldwide - On a personal level Claire is amicable and easy going in nature - but as they always, still waters run deep because despite her unassuming demeanor, Claire has a wealth of talent and passion for Girls' Brigade which far exceeds her years.

I first met Claire at the 2006 ICGB in Northern Ireland, where I, like many I am sure, were struck by what appears to be an endless enthusiasm from her to engage her fellow young leaders in Brigade.

At that time Claire was vying for the GB International Queen's Award and doing her Masters simultaneously, not sure how she was doing it all, but from her growth over the past 4 years all can see that her sacrifices were indeed worth it. In 2006 she began as a Youth Delegate for Northern Ireland and quickly became an Executive Member of GB Northern Ireland, acting as their Youth Coordinator until her departure for greater paths in June this last year. Fortunately for GB, Claire is now England & Wales Esther Project Coordinator and Youth Coordinator for GB Europe and already serving mightily. As GB Youth coordinator, she is responsible for developing youth project and communication strategies. That she has done, over the past months Claire has joined the team of youths in the FIZZ outreach project in Kosovo and a dele-

gation of volunteers in Cambodia. In between all of that, she still found capacity to develop the "CONNECT" blog, which served as a great source of information and inspiration to young women and readers from all over Europe and the world on the feelings and happening within GB especially for those attending ICGB 2010 and the GB Europe outreach missions.

As I said, Claire is truly easy going, loves movies, animals (cute dogs especially), eating garlic mayonnaise and dreaming about the future of GB, especially the Kosovo mission. She reminds us through her own testimony that she, like many of us (yours truly included), received Christ through Girls' Brigade and with that she holds Girls' Brigade very close to her heart. What is Claire's message to us? To us she says: "As GB reaches its 120th anniversary in 2013, I'm excited about the potential that it has to impact more girls for Christ. But to stay relevant, dynamic and exciting the voice of more of our younger members needs to be heard and acted on."

GB Asia's Emerging & on the Job Leader - Lau Mee Ting

Perhaps it is apt that we see a picture of Mee Ting right in the fray of things. That's her in true essence. Lau Mee Ting is a vibrant emerging leader from host of ICGB 2010, Girls' Brigade Malaysia. Here she is preparing the excellently tuned team of Malaysia volunteers for ICGB 2010 who dined, entertained and accommodated us all to such a level that 'beauty' is the only apt description of their level of service.

As an International delegate, I must take this opportunity to express our sincere thanks, appreciation and congratulations to GB Malaysia for the stellar performance at ICGB. They made their hard work and dedication look effortless and that takes great skill, preparation and poise. Well done to you all and to organizing committee.

That is where Mee Ting comes in, as Vice Orga-

nizing Chairman for ICGB 2010 the world host was synonymous with the word "Mee Ting." She was there for virtually every event, gave endless briefings to her organizing team, delegates and to members of the Presidential Committee. She kept us informed, up to date and on schedule. If there were questions on protocol Mee Ting had the answers, on the press, she was there, on Conference events and scheduling, she was there. She was even there assisting in the leading of one of the Conference Services, at a local Malaysian church and as you see from this picture, she was in the midst of preparations long before delegates arrived. Mee Ting, along with the then GB Malaysia conference director Tinay Yong Hua and Organizing chairperson Evelyn Chew, were key players in preparing our stellar hosts in their flawless gift of hospitality to us all. So when we congratulate GB Malaysia we must



also congratulate one of its brightest and emerging young leaders in the unassuming but always energetic Lau Mee Ting. Well done, you did us proud. Her message to us virtually every day, was "come all folks, we're rearing to go." Who could say no to an enthusiast like that?

Tracy Rankine of GB Caribbean & Americas – A Leader of Quiet Resolve



Like so many dedicated emerging leaders, Tracy joined Brigade in her home country the Cayman Islands, from very young and never left (at the age of 6 actually). I see a pattern there, Explorer teachers of the past and today “way to go – keep doing what you are doing.” Tracy shared her story in depth and honestly. She shared something rather simple, but yet very profound – her struggle even in the best of environment and ultimately her triumphs.

Many ministers’ kids, children of missionaries and spiritual leaders like us are often bewildered when children, who are seemingly in the perfect homes do not automatically follow the same paths. However, if we are ever honest for ourselves, many of today’s spiritual leaders have rather similar stories to Tracy’s. If we, like her, could stand up and share candidly it could work wonders in letting youth and emerging leaders know that they are not alone, we have also walked

where they have. She shared, that because of her childhood struggle with a Spiritual connection to God, she explored a lot. Throughout her childhood and teen years she moved between the Girls’ Brigade and Girl Guides, but for some reason her loyalty to the Girls’ Brigade never waned. She shared that she lost a close elderly relative at the age of 12, who was never a church person, but received Christ in his last weeks of life and was baptized in the hospital that same night. On the heels of this, she had to cope with being uprooted from her home, due to the severe effects of the devastating hurricane Ivan and a strong earthquake. However, despite those tragedies, she was able to see how through them she was **CROSSING OVER & MOVING ON**: first, she was blessed to find a thriving Brigade company in her new neighbourhood, with many girls her age. Secondly, by that time she had gained a strong sense of self (‘I could make my own choices’ as she put it) so that when other teens started dropping out, Brigade had taught her ‘sometimes you are the only one – and that’s alright.’ So she stayed and in her words: ‘I was right, because the support I got from my Church and Brigade’ helped me just decide to become a confirmed member of the Church. Within weeks of her confirmation, she was further

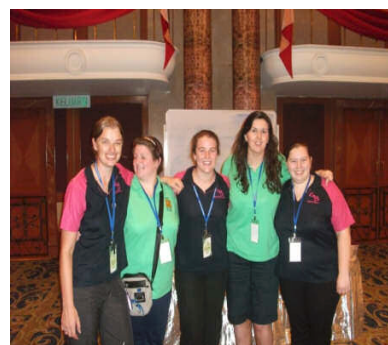
strengthened in attending the 2007 Caribbean & Americas Fellowship Camp in Antigua, because in sharing with others she saw that she was not alone in her struggles, and issues that hindered her were not issues at all. Even when Tracey started College she had so many options before her, but she nonetheless decided to remain faithful to Girls’ Brigade, even if it meant skipping 2 years of steel pan musical practices to attend Girls’ Brigade. She even found that her drifting between Brigade and Guides had some benefit, because it was through the Guides/ Scouts she was able to gain a higher level drilling exposure and in later years the Scouts actually tried to recruit her as an officer. That offer made her realise that it was time to commit to Girls’ Brigade, as she put it ‘I declined, because if I am to lead I am supposed to be commissioned as a Girls’ Brigade officer. ‘This year she leaves her home college and travels to university abroad. She observes that many emerging leaders have been lost after their departure, but ‘I’m not letting that happen, I made connections on the first day –Thanks Zoe’ she says. ‘I have stayed in Brigade not because someone wants me to, or because I should do it since I’ve done it so long...It is because I want to help girls develop in spirit, character and give back to their community.’

The ICGB Medal of Courage (if there was one) – goes to – Australian Emerging Leader Alison Margetts

I recall meeting Alison in the Singapore Airport, as she had apparently arrived from a trip to Cambodia as a part of her quest for cultural exchange. She spoke fondly of her journeys abroad and how fascinating it all was, what struck me most was her enthusiasm for reaching out to the people she met along the way and sharing Christ with them. In listening to her you would never imagine that Alison had suffered a serious fracture to her left leg shortly before her flight. Even in her picture her broad smile does not betray the

cast on her left leg, suffered whilst on her way to ICGB. However, did she turn back and go home, in view of her injury? No, she championed on, came to ICGB on one leg (if you will) and enjoyed every moment of it. Half way through ICGB she suffered yet another challenge, as she received a mysterious insect bite giving her feverish symptoms and a swollen left eye – she was experiencing this by the time of her picture above, but you would not know that. It was only after Alison shared her story early in ICGB that it all

clicked. She was introduced to Girls’ Brigade as an explorer (around 7) and simply never left, even when her family asked



her as a young woman, why can't you forget about Brigade, settle down and have a family like "normal people." You see what many misunderstand is that someone who truly experiences the joy of Girls' Brigade Fellowship, no longer has a "family" confined to ones' home base, but it extends to a sisterhood of believers worldwide. She shared that she met Christ in GB and ultimately gave her life to him at one of our ICGB Youth Conferences. Like Claire, Alison shared that with her personal experiences in the Brigade she has come to love and treasure Girls' Brigade and what it stands for. She serves in her home town as not only a Registered

Nurse, but also as a Brigade Officer. Seasoned officers, continue to stand in the gap and support the Alison's in your own countries and companies - every country has them - be the "Wind Beneath Their Wings" and they will soar like Eagles.

GB Africa - Is keeping it Teal with Emerging Leaders

In preparing the Africa feature, by divine providence I now can see that this is the perfect story which shows how Girls' Brigade can be the "Wind Beneath the Wings" of our future leaders. The Zambia Post reported in 2009 that the All Africa "More than Rubies" conference was held at the Queenshill Hotel in 2009 with participants from Nigeria, Tanzania, Zimbabwe, Malawi, South Africa and Zambia.

The conference began in July 2009 with a passionate call from the Zambia First Lady, Thandiwe Banda: she commended Girls' Brigade for working tirelessly in the empowerment of young women from girl to girl and explained that the focus of the Conference was 'a call for a vigorous fight against women trafficking and gender-based violence.' She warned that those who prey on young women are on the rise and 'it will not do for us to keep quiet and pretend all is well. We must, as women, be courageous enough to stand up and strongly speak against such vices as the trafficking of women and poverty. As women, we hold the key to our own problems.'

That call came in July 2009, in following the entire story, I now appreciate that her call gave such a profound message for things to come. Helen Hopkins, Deputy Chairperson of the African Fellowship summed it up well, the story that she shared on the GBConnect blog of an emerging leader named Sarah, demonstrates how GB can have a positive impact on the lives of girls in even the most difficult of situations The conference was a part of a series girls' camps under the same theme. Among those who attended the camps was a young teen named Sarah. Her life

has not been sort of its share of difficulties, because 5 years ago she had plastic reconstructive surgery on her cheek and jaw and was scheduled to undergo further surgery in 2010 as she turned 16 this year. This is to correct her jaw, which is still locked. After the 2009 camp, she went back to her village excited about her experiences there, with new confidence and stronger in her faith as one who is indeed 'more precious than rubies' as the theme of our camp reminded us all. This is her last year of school, so it was good timing for her surgery on completion of her exams. It was devastating, however, to go out to her village in November 2009 and discover that she was pregnant. According to the law of Tanzania, the young boy involved could be jailed for 30 years, but he was a visitor in the village and is now nowhere to be seen. Now her life has taken an unplanned direction and Sara felt ashamed and distressed. She has been very courageous and completed her Standard 7 exams (last year of school). She gave birth to a beautiful baby, Juliana, in July 2010. Helen Hopkins visited her in February 2010 and she cried, but Helen and Brigade officers were able to encourage her that she is still 'more precious than rubies'. She had to postpone her surgery to correct her jaw and any further studies until Juliana is a bit older. They encouraged her to go back to church and Girls' Brigade where she can learn more of Jesus' love for her and how he can help her even in such a difficult time. Her life has taken a different turn, but Jesus is still in control. You see, the message coming out of GB Africa is that there is no point in burying our face in the sand, as First Lady Thandiwe Banda urged, we are



Sarah and baby Juliana,
February 2010

the key to the empowerment of young women around us. We have many budding emerging leaders world-wide who face very real and rather difficult situations, but as leaders if we are able to reach deeper and reach them wherever they are and let them know, as Helen did with Sarah, that Brigade continues to welcome them as God has a divine purpose for their lives. That is why God says in Proverbs 31:15, young women and emerging leaders: "you are more precious than rubies..."

Remember, rubies like diamonds, pearls and most precious gems are created out of the harshest of conditions. Experienced jewelers will tell you that the best gems are those which have been burned, crushed and put through the roughest process. Our future lies with real young women, some of whom might not take the expected paths. However, our role is to let them know that they are precious to us and that to God they are 'more precious than rubies' diamonds or gold.

Keep the Faith Girls!
May God Richly Bless You
By Hazelann Hannaway Boreland
IVP, Caribbean & Americas

Reflections from ICGB—Emerging Leaders from New Zealand

My name is Janine and I am from Invercargill, a small town at the bottom of New Zealand. I am 29 years old and the second oldest of four sisters. I am a secondary school teacher as well as a Girls' Brigade and Sunday School Leader.

When I was 6 years old I began Girls' Brigade and have continued through Girls' Brigade as a girl and now a leader, with various roles along the way. As a small enthusiastic girl I wore my uniform with pride and learnt our motto 'Seek, Serve and Follow Christ' off by heart. I grew up going to church and Girls' Brigade learning about Jesus Christ—bit I didn't really understand what our motto meant and it has not been till much later in my life that I have realized the real meaning of it, and understood how to really follow it. I think as a young person going through life it can be hard at times. There is so much of life to experience that doesn't fully fit with Christian beliefs or values. When I was younger life got in the way a bit of my walk with God, but it was Girls' Brigade that put me on track and my relationship with God has strengthened and I am now seeking guidance from God and my life.

Over the past few years I have begun to understand that prayer is an essential part of seeking Christ and obeying him is the only way I will get to His kingdom. I am not sure what the plans are that God has for my life, but I am seeking, and serving Him the best I can and at times the journey is pretty amazing.

I have two stories of God's greatness that has built my faith that I want to share.

In 2008 a good friend of mine (who is not a Christian) was struggling to fall pregnant after many painful years of trying. As a Christian I began to quietly pray for her and her husband. One day I sensed God saying that 2008 will be her year to fall pregnant. So I continued to pray with excitement. But as the year went on there was still no news of a baby. At the end of 2008, still no baby on the way, I was disappointed that I had got it wrong and all the praying was for nothing.

In March of 2009 I got baptized. I invited my friend to the service but she couldn't make it so we caught up the day before. On this day she told me that she was 3 months pregnant and that she found out she was pregnant a few days before 2008 came to an end. This was amazing, it showed that God doesn't let you down when he promises something. You have to be patient even though that can be hard and you have to keep seeking, serving and following Him even in a situation that seems like there is no hope left.

My second story is about being obedient. As I said I am a school teacher and I work in a Catholic School, but as a Christian I fellowship at a very lively new life church. Last year we had a preacher come to our church to do a series of healing services. We were asked in advance to think of people to invite. But I didn't really know anyone and I wasn't really brave enough to ask anyone to come along. So off I went to the first service alone. During the worship—God spoke to me and said the name 'Shontae'.

Let me tell you about Shontae. She is a student at my school. Four years ago, as an 11 year old, she got a disease that ate away at her muscles in her legs confining her to a wheelchair, being unable to walk. The future did not look bright. But she comes from a strong catholic family with a strong faith and they never gave up hope. Shontae never lost her smile or her positive attitude. At the beginning of 2009 she regained some strength in her legs, just enough to allow her to stand. She wore leg braces and used her crutches to swing each leg along in attempts to walk.

Anyway, God told me I had to invite Shontae to a healing service. My dilemma was how do you invite one of your students from school who is a traditional catholic to a full on healing service in a lively new life church? Best approach I thought was to write a letter, then I don't have to talk to them and it won't be awkward. It took me four days to write the letter inviting them.

When I got home from work that day I had a

phone call to say that yes, they wanted to come. I was so excited that they said yes and even more excited that miracles and healings were taking place and I really wanted a miracle to happen for Shontae. The opening line of the preacher was 'that sometimes miracles don't happen instantly'. At that exact moment I knew that it wasn't going to be the night that Shontae walked freely. It was a reminder from God, it's all in His time and not my time.

We prayed for Shontae and God was definitely present and they left that evening the same as they came but blessed by God's love. The following week I had a call to say that Shontae had felt something different in her legs and was walking unaided around her house—free from crutches and the leg braces. And from that moment on she has continued going from strength to strength. Now you would never know that she was confined to a wheelchair and crutches for three years.

I wanted to share this story with you all as you never know when it is your turn for God to use you for something amazing, even if it doesn't happen instantly. If I hadn't obeyed God and invited her that day, would she be walking today—who knows, but the point is I did obey Him and along with many other prayers she was healed.

So you have to obey Him in all you do. Our motto 'Seek, Serve and Follow Christ' can be hard to do at times, we all know that but I urge all of you to really live out this motto in your lives, and let others see it shine from you.

So seek him with all you have, Serve him with all you have, and Follow him with all you have, and you might just be surprised by the journey God will take you on.

God Bless.

Allie's Story - GB Australia

As a young child I grew up knowing that when Sunday came round Mum would take me and my siblings off to church, so I grew up learning about God and stories from the bible but I didn't know God, it didn't mean anything personal to me.

My mum learnt about GB when I was 11 so every Wednesday night my sister and I were sent along. Over the years I learnt more about God and I thought of myself as a Christian because I went to church and GB, and tried to do what was right.

It wasn't until I attended the Australian National Fonomaræ in 1998 that things between me and God changed for the better. There I was encouraged and challenged to have a personal relationship with our Lord and for the first time I knew what it felt like to have the Lord as my saviour. A verse from Fono that stuck with me and is my favourite verse is: Isaiah 40:31. "But those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles, they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint."

What an awesome promise. When I hope in the Lord, trusting in His promise and timing I will soar above difficulties and reduce the turbulence and manage my energy so I can run and not grow weary, walk and not feel faint through the life God leads me.

My passion for GB stems from what it has done in my life. Not only did I grow to know Christ as a personal friend but I also grew in confidence and am no longer the shy quiet girl I once was. Through knowing and trusting in Christ I am able

to do things that this crazy world throws at me.

We as Christians are called to be in the world but not of the world. It's like a boat, when a boat is in water it doesn't sink, but when water is in the boat this is what causes it to sink. This is like life; at times it is hard not to compromise our Christianity to the world. Take my life last year for instance, I was struggling with time. I was working; studying at uni; I had GB commitments; Church commitments and family needs. I was struggling to fit everything into my life. My faith was being compromised, I had let the busyness of the world effect my relationship with God. My quiet time with God was something I would get to later, once this assignment was done, after this shift at work, after GB, it was all later, yet later didn't happen like it should. I was spiritually in a hole with a world that kept demanding more and more of me. I felt that God was miles away, but yet, he hadn't moved, I had. God reminded me of Martha in Luke 10:38-42. I was like Martha, I was so caught up in living and working that I found it hard to stop and be quiet. It's so easy to put other things first in this world and to be so busy running around doing things that I tend to forget that all God wants is my heart and time. It's something I struggle with setting priorities so that God comes first no matter what.

Also, our interactions with our friends and families can make it hard not to compromise

our beliefs and God's laws. Personally, I find my workmates and family don't understand what I do or why I do them. For instance, my father doesn't understand and thinks I waste my time going to bible study and has also told me I'll never find a guy in GB. My grandmother believes I should quit GB, get married and have children.

Yet here I am. I'm still not married nor do I have any children but I'm where God wants me to be and that's what matters. I'm not perfect, just an ordinary girl who's soaring with God attempting to grow in grace and godliness.

Alison Margetts
Tasmania, Australia

**"But those
who hope
in the Lord
will renew
their
strength."**

***Isaiah
40:31***

To live with Understanding and Compassion - GB Singapore

"Living with Understanding and Compassion" is GB Singapore's theme for 2011-2012. The theme requires us to define our focus in the face of all that is calling for our attention, our involvement, our time and our finances. Mark 12: 30-31 being our theme verse.

Over the 2 years, GBS will intentionally design activities and programmes around the theme with the purpose of helping officers and girls relate firstly to themselves, then their family, neighbours and the communities at large.

The bigger purpose of this is to "Bring GB back to

the Heartlands". The Heartland is a place that matters to us, a place that has impacted our lives and where we grew up, a community and neighbourhood that brings back sweet childhood memories. Why the Heartland? We believe that as we go back to the roots, "water, fertilize and prune", GB presence in Singapore will grow stronger, wider and deeper.

It is our prayer that GB ministry in Singapore will penetrate more schools, churches and communities. Currently, we are also exploring ministry in the prison, among the elderly, for-

eign students, etc. It is GB Singapore's hope that every girl and officer in the Brigade will be seen as useful individuals and leaders in their respective neighbourhoods - serving the needs of the communities and being the light and hope where we have been planted.

Evelyn Yip Sook Lai

Brigade Commissioner,
The Girls' Brigade Singapore

Raising up an Esther Generation - GB England & Wales

GB England & Wales has been intentionally developing an initiative for mentoring and encouraging 18 to 30s.

The Establish project was formed to help empower, equip, resource and connect this age group within GB with the vision of raising up a generation of Esthers - young women who are bold and confident in Christ and not afraid to be countercultural.

Claire Rush, Esther Generation Project Facilitator, says 'A recent report from the Evangelical Alliance stated that the 18-30s are a missing generation in our churches today. Currently, only a very small percentage of churchgoers (7%) in the UK are in their 20s. This is quite a

worrying statistic. But isn't it amazing that there are currently just over one thousand 18-30s serving as leaders in GBEW? A quick statistical tally of our database shows that this age group composes over 30% of our leaders. This is definitely one trend that we're very happy to contradict!'

The initiative includes:

- A group of young women meeting together at every GBEW Council meeting (three times a year) to help finalise a vision, goal and a strategy for the future of the project. They also meet via phone conferencing to pray together every other month. This vibrant and enthusiastic group of young women are

known as the Establish First Steps team.

- GBEW also organizes a number of Establish days out which are social get-togethers for the 18-30s. Previously the groups have visited London and the Christmas markets in Birmingham and there are trips in the pipeline for a pampering spa session in Sheffield and some fashion retail therapy at the Clothes Show Live.
- A fortnightly e-news sent to the 18-30's containing news of upcoming events and a little dose of inspiration.

We're on the Web!
www.gbic.org

Our Foundations

Our aim:

To help girls to become followers of the Lord Jesus Christ and through self control, reverence and a sense of responsibility to find true enrichment of life.

Our principles:

The Brigade acknowledges Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord according to the Scriptures and seeks to fulfill its aim to the Glory of One God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

The Brigade Witnesses to the standard set by Jesus Christ and gives positive teaching on the Christian attitude to life.

The Brigade promotes a just society where all people are equally valued.

Our motto:

Seek, serve and follow Christ.

Our crest:

All over the world, Girls' Brigade members wear the same badge. The badge has 4 main elements, each with a special meaning to those who wear it.

Our vision:

**Girls' Lives Transformed
God's World Enriched**

**The Girls' Brigade
International**

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