

Candidate Document – Joshua Wong, Worship

Spiritual Life

- a) *What is the gospel to you? Briefly share your personal testimony.*
- b) *Describe your relationship and current walk with Christ.*

The Gospel and The Word are my faith, my source of truth and my hope.

Born in a Christian family, I was always taught that Jesus loves us, and that He gave himself for our sins so that we may have eternal life, and hence naturally I believed that we are sinful and that Jesus is my Savior. Eventually I got baptized in a church in Hong Kong, confirming in front of the congregation that “Jesus Christ is my Lord and Savior”. However, it was not until end of first year in university when I was challenged with whether or not Jesus Christ was truly my Lord.

Until that point in life, with the influence of secular world views, my life was full of selfish ambitions and I had a twisted view of what love should be. As a first year student coming to a new city, there were many fresh and exciting experiences, but also new disappointments in life. I realized that satisfaction was not as easy to find as I was promised by secular world views.

Eventually, God challenged me to rethink what my life purpose is and showed me what humbleness and unconditional love truly mean. People in my university fellowship (UTCCF) reached out to me, listened to me and comforted me when I truly needed it, even though I never made an effort to get to know them before. For me, that was a huge turning point. After a very slow but meaningful healing process with God and support from my new brothers, I now understand that the only thing that can truly satisfy me and all I will ever need is God and God alone.

Despite this initial transformation, I am still far from perfect. I recognise there are still so many areas of hidden sins in my life, and that my selfishness and pride don’t just go away overnight. I am currently still a person striving for holiness, striving to be a man of God. Gospel transformation to me is an ongoing and never-ending goal of having more of God in my life, as my friend, my father, and my God. Only through this continuous renewal can my characteristic sins and idols be gradually defeated. But I am very encouraged by God putting many brothers and sisters around me in church, that we are able to practice consistent repentance and faith, loving rebuke, and spiritual disciplines together as a unified body of Christ.

Your Candidacy

What do you believe is the purpose of UTCCF and the UTCCF Committee?

The purpose of UTCCF is to provide a space to **worship** our Lord, which includes:

- Exploring who God is (Proverbs 8:17)
- Communal Worship and Praise: eg. Musical Worship (Acts 2)
- Serving (Romans 12:1-2)
 - Equip for good works (2 Timothy 3:16-17)
- Fellowship ie. walk with each other in accountability (1 Thessalonians 5:11, Ecclesiastes 4:9-12)
- Discipleship & Evangelism (Matthew 28:19-20)

Joshua Wong
Worship Coordinator

- As a campus group we are called to use our unique position to partner with other fellowships (showing unity), to show God's love to our neighbours (especially peers) and to journey with those who are younger in faith.

As leaders of the fellowship next year, I believe our purpose is to provide encouragement and a safe space for our fellowship to accomplish the purpose of UTCCF (as above).

How has God led you to run for committee, as well as the specific position you are running for?

Since I was young, I always had a special place for musical worship because I really liked listening to good music. After starting to take my faith seriously at the end of 1st year, I was challenged to take a first glance into what humility means. Taking on leading worship teams in 3rd year, almost without any experience, really showed me what obedience and reliance on God really mean. The worship coordinator at the time and my team members, though much more knowledgeable than me, guided me with love and showed me how important it is to be aware of the pitfalls of musical worship. However, because of my stubbornness, I planted this thought in my mind that I would serve only in the way of musical worship, thinking that that's where God had called me to be. Little did I realize at that time that it was my comfort idol, my own desire that I put in front of God. It was not until this past Christmas that God started getting through to me through my church's theme of "Listening to God", and loving rebukes telling me that I had put myself first. In January this year, I decided to go back to worship ministry after my schedule clashed with it in first semester. After practicing acts of humility and time spent listening to God, I decided to start leading worship ministry beginning of February. Although this was a huge step for me since I never led any ministry before, God made me realize how much I love sharing about how we can worship, the attitudes we should have while we worship and what worship means to me. After further discussions with God, and what God has put on my mind, I believe the best way I can further this vision God has put in my heart next year is by being on committee as a worship coordinator.

If you are not elected to your chosen role, how will you still serve and carry out your vision at CCF next year?

I will continue to advocate for my vision through worship ministry, being on the worship team, large group worship nights and continual discussions with committee about my vision.

Vision

Living a Life of Worship

A lot of times when we think about worship, it's mostly about musical worship. However in reality, we are worshipping our Lord throughout all the activities we do on a regular CCF night: mingling before CCF, communal worship, gospel sharing, bible study, small group dinner. When bible study is cut short and our small group leaders suggest that we continue the talk over dinner, how often do we actually do that? How often do we as a fellowship care about each other's spiritual growth in meetups outside CCF time and engage in loving rebuke? By not only having the idea of worship within musical worship, or CCF, or church, God has placed this year's vision in my heart: to foster a culture of worship as a lifestyle, and to share the attitudes and ways of worship holy and acceptable to God.

Worship Encapsulates our Whole Life

I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

*Romans 12:1-2**

When I first encountered this verse, I found myself asking: What does it mean to do something that is acceptable to God? Can we even do something that's acceptable and perfect? It seems so far away and so impossible to do. But as God continued to speak to me, I realized that the answers are actually in the verse itself: "by the mercies of God...". By the mercies of God, through God's unconditional love for us, he has already sent his one and only son Jesus Christ to die for our sins. For those who believe and have faith, Jesus Christ will intercede for us, that we may be blameless and we are now presented as holy and acceptable.

Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ.

*Colossians 3:23-24**

The part "present your bodies as a living sacrifice..." in Romans 12:1 also showed me how we should be conducting ourselves in our daily lives. To present our entire bodies to God, we not only need to worship him in CCF and in church, but in everything that we are called to do. Whether it's studying, working or resting, we are commanded to present something acceptable to God. To seek holiness, to seek gospel transformation, to build a relationship with Him and to invest in a church are all things that we are called to do, and should come naturally as we live a life of worship. God even showed us that we can listen and discern better through this lifestyle of worship.

Attitudes of Worship

“This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me; in vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.”

*Matthew 15:8-9**

If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. If I give away all I have, and if I deliver up my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing.

*1 Corinthians 13:1-3**

To worship our Lord in our everyday lives, we must understand the attitudes of how we worship. God desires us to worship Him with our hearts. If we don't worship from the depths of our hearts or out of love but just from the surface level, our worship will be in vain. I was reminded of this as I am sometimes guilty of singing and listening to worship songs without actually processing the meaning of the songs. It is better for me not to sing than to sing something I don't mean, and to be more cautious as we are called to worship our Lord in both Spirit and in Truth.

But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.”

*John 4:23-24**

Worship in Spirit and Truth

To worship in both Spirit and in Truth, we must understand what Spirit and Truth means. To worship in Truth is fairly self-explanatory, as the one truth we are to seek from is the Word (John 1:1). Deuteronomy 6:5-6 helps us to understand better what worshipping in Spirit may mean - our mindset and our attitude.

You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart.

*Deuteronomy 6:5-6**

Potential Practical Steps of Implementation

- Change/Add wording to slides to relay the message that we are worshipping our Lord throughout entire large group meetings
 - Eg. the “(Musical) Worship” slide becomes “Communal Worship”
 - Eg. the “Bible Study” slide adds (Worship in The Truth)
- Practice fellowshiping (caring about each other's spiritual growth) in large group
 - Devotional sharing
 - Struggles (eg. Very busy in school)
 - Reminder we are doing it for God
 - Confession
 - Preach the gospel to encourage people after confession
- Practice listening and acts of humility in large group
- Encourage these practices in our daily lives

* all passages are ESV and taken from <https://www.biblegateway.com/>

Personal Evaluation

What God-given gifts do you see in your life? How do you see God using these gifts to further His kingdom at UTCCF?

God has blessed me with knowledge of worship, which includes musical worship, but more importantly is something that should encapsulate our lives. With my more easy-going personality, I can see God using this to expand the fellowship's perception of worship; in teams, in ministries, in large groups, and outside of large groups.

I am also blessed by God in terms of passion and time management. In the past, I have observed myself being very generous in terms of dedicating my time towards my passions. I love to go above and beyond for people and things that I care about, and I can definitely see how God could use that to further along His kingdom and the larger vision in CCF.

What are some areas of weakness in your life? How are you taking grace-driven steps to overcome them and become more like Christ?

However that being said, I am also a very judgemental person in nature. I have a tendency to pre-judge people and ideas through my observations and assumptions before fully understanding them. This is something that I am challenged to be working on, and through my weekly accountability meetings, I am reminded and renewed by my brothers.

I am also a person who sometimes lacks self-control and awareness of my surroundings. With comfort being my characteristic idol, it was always really hard for me to get out of my comfort zone, and to restrain myself from feeding my own desires. Even through my discernment process about if I should be running for committee, I find myself wanting the easy way out. However, through, and only through reminders from God to practice acts of humility, was I able to put down my own desires, listen to God, seek his will and respond to what God has been calling me to do.