In our world today we encounter unbearable brokenness everywhere. If we follow God’s call to work for redemptive change, we will find ourselves in dark places, confronting obstacles that seem impossible to overcome. And yet, even in the most painful and difficult situations, hope abides. The reason for our hope comes from Christ, who we know can do “immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine” (Eph 3:20). This is the hope that inspires the theme of the 2017 Faith and International Development Conference. The conference will explore both how hope changes the lives of people around the world and how hope helps each of us become a part of God’s plan for global renewal. The 2017 FIDC will open a space where together we can explore and discover how our hope in Christ motivates us to act and shapes our work in development around the world. We will hear stories of healing in the presence of pain, joy in the midst of anguish, and peace arising out of chaos. When we place our hope in Christ, our lives and our world will be transformed.

Sometimes working in development can feel like we’re trying to do the impossible. We’re confronting the brokenness of our world, recognizing the blaring inequalities around us, and seeing how so many in this world are brushed aside. It can feel overwhelming and unsolvable.

When we are working in development, though, we are really participating in God’s redemptive work for all of creation. God is making all things new, and we get to take part in that. Without the help of God, our work in development would be futile (fruitless, unsuccessful). What we’re able to do in our own strength cannot compare to the work that God is able to do. God has the ability to defy what is possible, what is normal, and what is expected. He is able to do beyond what we can ask or imagine.

Like Jesus says to his disciples in Matthew 19:26, “With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.”

For FIDC 2017, we hope to share stories of healing and restoration, when some of the challenges surrounding development have been overcome. But we also want to share some of the current challenges in development, the issues where we still need people to step in.

Pray for God’s miracles, blessings, and guidance. What you ask for you will receive, seek and you will find, knock and the door will be open to you. (Matthew 7:7) We must be prayer warriors, praying for our brothers and sisters in Christ around the world who are suffering, struggling, and striving to be witnesses for God’s work in their own communities. If we cannot join them in physical international development work, how can we join them in spiritual international development? How can we join together in faith when we aren’t of the same faith? How can we
join them individually, as those seeking to dive into the international development field? How did others start? How have others seen God's work around the world to do what seems to be impossible to man? How can we pray to see God's power in this way? **How can we prepare our hearts to have the faith to anticipate God's work in this way?** What challenges face us as we enter into this work? **What can we do now as students to study, prepare, and pray for God to use us to do the impossible in his world?**

**Joshua 1:9**

Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go."

God is not limited in what he can do. He works miracles in the lives of his children around the world, everyday. Working in international development, it is easy to see the bad, the difficult, and the impossible. But God is a God of the impossible. God calls us to do the impossible. He raised the dead, gave sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, and direction to the lost. He offers more than just physical life, he offers eternal life. (Matthew 11:5)

We are invited to join him in his work; work that sometimes starts out looking impossible and then not only is completed, but with more than we ever thought to ask or imagine. It is hard. God gives us hope- hope in Him as a God that can do all things, and hope in the fact that we can do all things through Christ who strengthens us. (Philippians 4:13) This takes faith- faith in a God who is here and present, listening to every cry of the pain. (1 Peter 3:12)

Faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see. (Hebrews 11:1) I am sure in the God that I hope in- I am sure that he is able to do more to heal his world than I could ever ask or imagine. He has called us each to be strong and courageous, but this takes being certain in his grace, strength, and love.

Having faith in international development requires that we believe in a God who can do the impossible, we walk by faith in the work that he is calling us to join Him in, and that we have hope that He is all we need to trust in.

**The vision for the Faith and International Development Conference of 2017 is that every student would walk away realizing the power of our God of the impossible; learning from and being challenged by those from a variety of disciplines who have also encountered this great God that we seek to glorify as we serve His world, however He leads us to do so.**

**The mission of the Faith and International Development Conference of 2017 is to make the God of the impossible real to those we interact with by showing how faith, hope, and prayer can enable God’s people around the world to do the impossible; more than they could ask or imagine, to restore the brokenness (in ourselves and in the physical and spiritual suffering of others) around the world.**