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WHAT IS MAN'S GREATEST NEED?

If our greatest need is **information**,

God would send us an **informer**.

If our greatest need is **technology**,

God would send us a **scientist**.

If our greatest need is **money**,

God would send us an **economist**.

If our greatest need is **pleasure**,

God would send us an **entertainer**.

But our greatest need is **forgiveness**,

that's why God sent us the **Savior**.

AND ONLY THE **SON OF GOD** IS ABLE TO
AND CAN FORGIVE US.

Our church theme for this year is "IN CHRIST ALONE" because we all need Christ. The world needs a **Savior**. This is the reason why Paul the apostle in Colossians 1:28 said, "We proclaim him, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone perfect in Christ." What must every Christian do then for the Lord? Our main and most important task is to fulfill the Great Commission.

A. PROCLAIMING CHRIST

Paul did not proclaim politics, philosophy or man-made theology. He didn't preach his own message, opinions, not with entertaining stories or illustrations. He preached Jesus because Christianity is all about Christ and nothing else.

We too must preach Jesus and it is every Christian's duty to fulfill the Great Commission. We are commanded to go and make disciples.

The word **proclaim** has three meanings:

1. To Declare Publicly

To let all people know Christ, not only to a handful or even many, but to the whole world.

If you have a medicine that can cure more than 500 kinds of skin diseases or at least stop any itchiness, and if it has helped you a lot, don't you want to tell your relatives and friends about its efficacy so that they can also benefit from it? In the same way, we want to tell the world what Christ can do to our lives.

2. To Make Known

How did you come to know the Lord and how has the Lord helped you? What is the best way to make Christ known? Is it through the internet? the radio? newspaper? television? distributing tracts? The most effective way to make Christ known is by showing the world that we have Christ in us. We meet a lot of people everyday and it is our opportunity to reach out to them and make Christ known.

3. Continuously

We proclaim Christ not only at one time but many times from now till when we are able to do so.

A sister had been attending our Sisters Fellowship for nine years but has not been baptized. Every-time the Sister Fellowship would make the invitation to accept Christ, she would just keep quiet. She always says, "Wait till I'm prepared." One day, she got ill and was in critical condition. Many sisters showed their love and care, paid her visits, prayed for her and comforted her. The Lord touched her heart and she was baptized last December 19, 2009. Praise the Lord!

B. ADMONISHING CHRIST

The word **admonish** has two important meanings:

1. To Warn – not to frighten people. If you don't believe in Christ, you will go to hell. Yes, that is true but many can't accept it that straight. For them, it

is not nice to hear so they will most likely reject it immediately. We don't directly tell a sick person, "If you don't take this medicine, you are going to die." The response will surely be negative. Instead, we have to gently give wise counsels or advise, explain to them the do's and don'ts.

2. To Impart Understanding

Admonishing is to be able to explain clearly and make the person understand when we tell them about Christ. What important message should we impart about Jesus? We tell them who Jesus is and what He has done for us in a plain language or simple term.

C. TEACHING CHRIST

One of the most common problems that the early church faced was the person of Jesus Christ, i.e., whether Jesus had two natures when he came to earth.

Problem #1 – During their time, many believed that Christ was 100% human and not 100% divine.

This is not correct because if Jesus did not have divine nature, then He could not have the authority to forgive our sins. Remember the story of four men carrying a paralytic on a mat? They tried to take him into the house where Jesus was, but they couldn't find a way so they removed the tiles on the roof and lowered him into the middle of the crowd, right in front of Jesus. When Jesus saw their faith, He said to the paralytic, "Son, your sins are forgiven." The teachers of the law began thinking to themselves, "Who is this fellow who speaks blasphemy? Who can forgive sins but God alone?"

Problem #2 – Christ had divine nature but did not have human nature. In short, He did not become human, only a shadow and therefore, He cannot understand our human needs. This teaching is again wrong. His human nature was manifested in His life on earth. He got tired and slept, He ate and drank, etc... When Lazarus was sick, Mary and Martha sent word to Jesus informing Him that

Lazarus was sick. When Jesus arrived, He found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days. Mary heard that Jesus was still at the place where Martha met Him. She quickly got up and went out. The Jews who had been comforting her thought that she was going to the tomb to mourn there, they followed her. When Mary reached the place where Jesus was and saw Him, she fell at His feet and said, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died." When Jesus saw her weeping and the Jews who had come along with her also weeping, He was deeply moved in spirit and troubled. Jesus wept.

Problem #3 - The divine nature and the human nature of Christ were separated. This fallacy claimed that Jesus was sometimes God and at other times human. It believed that Jesus cannot be both human and divine at the same time. These provided many doubts as to whether He was God or whether He was just human.

Problem #4 – The divine nature of Christ was greater than His human nature. When Christ was on earth, He was 100% human, became like one of us; and, at the same time, He was 100% God in Him. Christ was 100% divine in which He cannot sin and was 100% human in which He was weak and could sin but He chose not to sin. Do you remember when Jesus was praying in the Garden of Gethsemane? He said in His prayer, "Take this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what You will." Jesus chose to follow His father's will rather than His own comfort. Same way, we should follow His example.

Our Heavenly Father wants everyone to have the saving knowledge through our Lord Jesus Christ. Let us be strong and courageous in sharing the Gospel to the whole world. And may we continue to equip ourselves with the Word of God so that we could stand against the Devil's scheme.

Last March 7, 2010, we celebrated our 94th founding anniversary. Cebu Gospel Church, being the second oldest Chinese church in the Philippines, certainly has a rich heritage behind her. Indeed, we need to praise God. The Church would not be what it is today if God is not with us. For this reason, just as Paul wrote in his letter to the church of Philippi, let us *rejoice in the Lord!* (Phil. 3:1a). In the midst of our joy though, we also need to be reminded of our tasks. Let us not rest on our laurels, focusing only on past glories. Instead, we need to be cautious of the challenges ahead for our protection. This is the message of Paul in Philippians 3:1-11.

In this part of Paul's letter, he issued an urgent warning to the church. Paul said, *"It is no trouble for me to write the same things to you again, and it is a safeguard for you."* Paul had previously warned the church of a persistent problem, and he repeated it again here in vv.2-11. Paul called on the church to watch out for misplaced religiosity (3:1-3), and throw out legalistic privileges (3:4-7), because we only need to seek out God's imputed righteousness (3:8-11).

Paul confronted the problem of Judaism. Unlike other major religions of the world, Judaism is the religion of only one people – the Jews. Judaism focuses in the belief of One God, but not in the doctrine of Trinity. Judaizers derived their teachings from the Old Testament Scripture of Bible. Proponents of this religion focus on the observance of ceremonial Laws and Traditions. In other words, Judaism became a religion that centered on religiosity and legalistic righteousness.

One of the major teachings of Judaism is the practice of circumcision (3:2). Circumcision was instituted as a sign of God's covenant with Abraham and his descendants (Gen. 17:1-14). This is an everlasting covenant between God, Abraham, and all of Abraham's descendants (Gen. 17:7). Any male who has not been circumcised will be cut off from God's people, because he has broken God's covenant (Gen. 17:14).

The Bible clearly dictates, *in Christ we who believes were circumcised, not with a circumcision done by hands of men but with the circumcision done by Christ* (Col. 2:11). Furthermore, in Galatians 3:26-29, Paul said, *"We are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus ... There is neither Jew nor Gentile, slave or free, male or female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."*

This was further affirmed in Romans 9:6-7a,8. The Bible said, *"It is not as though God's word had failed. For not all who are descended from Israel are Israel. Nor because they are his descendants are they Abraham's children. In other words, it is not the natural children who are God's children, but it is the children of promise who are regarded as Abraham's offspring."* Therefore, all who believe in Jesus Christ are now considered to be sons of Abraham, or God's covenant people.

We also face the same problem today. Some embrace religion in the belief that it could provide them a rightful standing in the sight of God. They hope that somehow and in some

way, they will be made righteous by ceremonial practices and traditions. Paul asked us to be cautious of MISPLACED RELIGIOSITY. Some religions openly oppose Christ, but others are more subtle. They use Christian language to give their faith a familiar sound. Then they add to it their own twisted brand of thinking.

An example is the religious group which affirms the authority of the Scripture. They believe that salvation is by grace, not of works; and many other things to which we also adhere. However, the group believes that their founder was a messenger from God gifted with the spirit of prophecy. Thus to them, the Bible is not the final and last word of God to us. This is heresy. Moreover, they believe that on October 22, 1844, Jesus entered the second and last phase of His atoning work. In other words, Christ's atoning work was incomplete when He died on the cross. This again is unacceptable to us. Furthermore, they believe that Jesus is Michael the Archangel which we all know is unfounded in the Scripture.

The Bible in Hebrews 1:1-5 says, "*In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days He has spoken to us by His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, and through whom He made the universe.*" Hence, no further revelation was needed. The following is said of Jesus Christ: "*The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of His being, sustaining all things by His powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven.*" In other words, Christ's saving work was completed at the cross. The Book of Hebrews declares, "*So He became as much superior to the angels as the name He has inherited is superior to theirs. For to which of the angels did God ever say, 'You are my Son; today I have become your Father?'*" Jesus is

God, He never was an angel. Let us not misplace our religiosity. Instead, let us fix our eyes on Jesus. For Christ alone is the author and perfecter of our faith. Be confident not in the flesh, but in Christ alone.

The Bible says, "*We were included in Christ when we heard the Word of truth, the Gospel of salvation. Having believed, we were marked in Him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit.* (Eph. 1:13)." This is the very point of Paul when he said, "*For it is we who are the circumcision, we who worship by the Spirit of God, who glory in Christ Jesus, and who put no confidence in the flesh ...* (v.3)".

Another problem we need to confront is the practice of abstinence. Some people commonly practice abstinence come Lenten Season. They believe this is a form of penance, an act of devotion performed to show repentance for sin. In the province of Pampanga, devotees would go to the extent of whipping themselves. Worse, some would even re-enact Christ's saving work and be nailed on a cross. They believe this would somehow make them right in the sight of God. In reality, all these are merely LEGALISTIC RIGHTEOUSNESS.

Paul cautioned us of the same problem (Phil 3:4-7). Many who professed to be converts mixed Judaism with Christianity. They believe circumcision precedes salvation. Paul was circumcised on the eighth day, a requirement stipulated when God made a covenant with Abraham (Gen. 17:12). Moreover, Paul was a pure-blooded Jew and he knew the tribe from which he came. He could speak Hebrew and understood its customs thoroughly. He was a son of Hebrew parents. With regard to the Law, Paul was a Pharisee, a member of the strictest religious group of his people. With regards to zeal, he

persecuted the church. In other words, in terms of legalistic credential, Paul was a perfect example of a man of God. Surprisingly, he forsook everything for the sake of Christ.

Look and see vv.8-9. Paul said, *"What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus our Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ – the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith."*

The Bible explicitly dictates, *"All our righteous acts are like filthy rags in the sight of God."* (Isa. 64:6) And in Romans 3:10, the Bible says, *"No one is righteous, not even one; there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God. All have turned away; they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one."* How then can anyone claim righteousness for themselves, much less, take credit for their salvation? For this reason, we need to SEEK OUT GOD'S IMPUTED RIGHTEOUSNESS which comes only by faith in Christ alone.

Our journey with the Lord does not end with such acknowledgment. Instead, like Paul, we need to take a step further. In vv.10-11 Paul said, *"I want to know Christ and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in His sufferings, becoming like Him in His death, and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead."*

The Christian walk is a long and challenging journey. Someone said, "Christian life is not a bed of roses". I would venture to say, "Christian life is a bed of roses together with its thorns." We never ran out of challenges. Every step of life is like a

climb in the ladder. It is not always smooth. It is not always safe. But we know Christ provides us the ladder to climb. The purpose of this ladder is, first and foremost, for us to be renewed into fellowship with God. After which, each and every step is an effort to know Christ and the power of His resurrection.

Our Lord Jesus Christ once told Paul, *"My grace is sufficient for you; for my power is made perfect in weakness."* (2 Cor. 12:9) It is during the most trying moments of our lives that Christ's power is made perfect in us. And sometimes, it is after we have experienced Christ's resurrected power that we learn to fellowship with His sufferings and become like Him in death. Therefore, let us not be overwhelmed by surpassing challenges before us. Instead, let us acknowledge our need of Christ's saving work for us. Righteousness comes neither by our religiosity nor legalistic credentials. Instead, righteousness comes only by faith in Christ alone.

As we journey through life, understand the purpose of this journey. For us Christians, our lives are meant to experience the power of Christ's resurrection so that after we have a foretaste of God's power, we may in turn learn OBEDIENCE. That is the essence of Paul's message when he said, *"Sharing in Christ's sufferings, becoming like Him in His death, and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection of the dead."*

Let us love Christ, for in Him alone comes salvation. Let us revere God, for in Him alone comes the power to endure all things for the sake of knowing Christ. Learn obedience, for righteousness comes by faith in Christ alone.

A group of English Protestants of the late 16th and 17th century known as the Puritans were noted for signing their correspondence with the letters "D.V.", which means *Deo Volente* in Latin or "God willing".

John Wesley and other Methodists continued this practice in their letter writing. Not only that, placards about coming events also had D.V. initials on them. It was a simple reminder that all plans were subject to the Lord's sovereign permission. These believers made it a point that their thought-life and attitude were always in submission to the Lord.

In our day and age, few Christians would have the nerve to say, "My life is my own." But most of us live as though we believe those words.

GODLESS PLANNING

The book of James offers a powerful warning to those who think they are in control of their lives: Godless Planning is dishonoring to God. Needless to say, Godless Planning is sin.

With this in mind, James 4:13 begins with a caution: *"Now listen, you who say, 'Today or tomorrow we will go to this or that city, spend a year there, carry on business and make money.'"* At that time, the economy was growing and opportunities were everywhere. And in this passage, James zeroed in on businessmen who made plans for commercial expansion. I am not saying that making business plans are wrong. You must do so in order to survive the demands of industrialization. What is wrong, then, is the fact that these businessmen were planning as if God does not exist. But this does not apply to businessmen alone; the same principle applies to planning for education, career, family, ministry, etc.

We must remember that James was not talking to

pagans or non-believers. Instead, he was addressing Christians. From the time of James until now, believers *still* isolate their Christian lives within a Sunday morning. Believers *still* live the rest of their week outside church as if God does not exist. And this is basically "practical atheism". You say you believe in God, but act as if there is no God. The problem lies, therefore, in the attitude of the heart.

Godless Planning tells us that we must **Be Presumptuous**. It tells us to live and plan as if we know what the future holds; as if we can predict the outcome of what we decide to do. But if truth be told, we do not know what tomorrow will bring. Just as verse 14a clearly tells us, *"Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow."*

Robert Kiyosaki is an investor, businessman and best-selling author of the book *Rich Dad, Poor Dad* series on financial matters. A large part of Kiyosaki's teachings focus on generating passive income by means of investment, such as real estate and businesses, with the ultimate goal of being able to support oneself by such investments alone.

Yet even if you follow Kiyosaki's advice and work to put your money on investments, you will never be sure about the economy. Back in 2008, the top US investment bank Lehman Brothers filed for bankruptcy sending shockwaves through financial markets. In this changing world, there is no such thing as *sure* investment. Therefore, we cannot follow Godless Planning and Be Presumptuous.

Certainly, none of us knows what tomorrow will bring because even our lives are in the hands of God. And so James 4 continues in the latter part of verse 14, *"What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes."*

While Godless Planning tells us that we must **Be Invincible**, the Bible reminds us of the opposite. In truth, we are not invincible because life is brief like mist that is here for a time and goes away quickly just like the mist from a hot kettle or the morning dew. Aside from the mist, Scripture also uses other object lessons in conjunction to the brevity of life (Ps. 103:15-16; Is. 40:7; Ecc. 9:2-3).

Surely, death is not a respecter of persons. It may seem normal when an aged person passes away but when a relatively young person's life ends, it all seems too sudden and unexpected. But this is how the Bible explains our life. Life is delicate. Life is short.

Even the famous Protestant Reformer, Martin Luther, was radically changed when he was confronted with the frailty of life. Luther had recently completed a Master's degree and started his law studies at the University of Erfurt. He was on his way back to Erfurt after having visited his parents when he was caught in a terrible thunderstorm. Lightning struck near Luther and he was thrown to the ground by the air pressure it created. At this moment, Luther asked St. Anne to save his life and made a vow as an Augustinian monk.

As we know, upon faithful study of Scripture, Luther found that Rome is wrong for teaching indulgences and carried on to champion the doctrine of justification—that we are saved by grace *alone* through faith *alone* in the work of Jesus *alone*. Martin Luther certainly served the Sovereign God as if each day were his last!

May we live consciously each day in submission to the Sovereign Lord's will, confessing that we can never be presumptuous and invincible.

GODLY PLANNING

Scripture not only warns us about Godless Planning, it also gives us the alternative in James 4:15, "*Instead, you ought to say, 'If it is the Lord's will, we will live and do this or that.'*" By doing so, the Bible teaches us the first part of Godly

Planning, that is, to **Acknowledge God's Sovereignty and Gracious Favor**.

Deo Volente or "If God wills" is more than a spiritual sounding slogan. It is an attitude of heart that is to dominate our lives as Christians.

Even the Muslims apply this practice using the words, "Insha'Allah". To the Muslims, this saying indicates that you want Allah's blessing for what you are about to do. For example, if you want to do something in particular that you know is very hard to achieve, you invoke Allah's blessing before it occurs or before you set out to do it.

The difference between the Muslims and true Christians is that we acknowledge not only God's sovereignty; but we rely on His gracious favor. We cannot manipulate God to give us what we want; instead, we depend on His grace, that is, God's undeserved favor. Our salvation from sin and our growth in holiness all spring from God's grace. In other words, we cannot earn God's favor and we only receive it by His grace.

When French ruler, Napoleon Bonaparte, mentioned to a friend his plans to invade Russia, the man tried to stop him by warning, "Man proposes, but God disposes." Napoleon then replied, "I dispose as well as propose." The arrogant move of Napoleon was ultimately the turning point of his own downfall. He learned that while man may propose his plans, only the Sovereign God could bring them to fruition.

Deo Volente is a good philosophy by which to live our lives. However, having the right heart attitude is more important than saying the right words. There is a danger of it becoming another Christian cliché. But it is not so much on the fear of becoming cliché that we stop using these words, rather it is the influence of our modern world that rejects the relevance of God in our day-to-day lives.

The absence of it from our lips perhaps suggests we are not as dependent on the Lord as we think

we are. We move ahead with our own plans and expect God to bless them. Worse yet, we live like "practical atheists," making plans and boasting about the future without acknowledging the sovereign hand of God in the daily affairs of life. Instead, there should always be contingency in all our plans.

Not only that, we must also **Avoid Boastful Ambition**. Disregarding God's gifts and favor is to boast in your own accomplishments apart from Him. Just as James 4:16 rebukes us, "*As it is, you boast and brag. All such boasting is evil.*"

Some of the businessmen in the book of James had expanded their ventures—they took risks and made a profit. As always happens, "Success breeds success and along with prosperity comes pride and self-sufficiency."

Such boasting includes bragging about our accomplishments. It is like saying, "Look what I have done on my own. Sure, God gave me life, but it is my brains, my plans, my energy." Just as one famous "philosopher" had said, "I did what I had to do and saw it through without exemption. I planned each charted course, each careful step along the byway. And more, much more than this, I did it my way."

Human boasting is evil because man steals the glory that belongs to God *alone*. King Nebuchadnezzar boasted in his own accomplishments when he said, "*Is not this the great Babylon I have built as the royal residence, by my mighty power and for the glory of my majesty?*" (Daniel 4:30) Because of his pride, Nebuchadnezzar was punished by the Sovereign Lord—he was driven away from his people and he ate grass like cattle. Yet in the end, his sanity was restored and he concluded, "*Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and exalt and glorify the King of heaven, because everything he does is right and all his ways are just. And those who walk in pride he is able to humble.*" (Daniel 4:37)

Furthermore, Godly Planning also means to **Abide by God's Will** as Scriptures instruct and

challenge us to not succumb to the sin of omission. James 4:17 clearly tells us, "*So whoever knows the right thing to do and fails to do it, for him it is sin.*"

In other words, we sin when we ignore God. We sin when we make plans on our own and when it turns out to be a success, we sin when we brag and boast about our achievements. We sin when we steal the glory that rightly belongs to God alone. The right thing to do, therefore, is to acknowledge God's sovereignty and gracious favor, and avoid boastful ambition. This is how we shall abide by God's will.

But if you are not a believer, what is God's will for you? It is that you believe in His Son Jesus whom He sent to be your Redeemer and Lord: "*For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him will have eternal life, and I Myself will raise him up on the last day*" (John 6:40).

If we are left to ourselves, we would choose to run our lives our own way. We are being pulled from every side as we struggle with sin from day to day. But praise be to God who sent His only Son, Jesus, who not only took on the full punishment for the sins that we deserve; but Christ also lived in complete obedience to the Father's every command on our behalf because we cannot ever fully do so.

J. Gresham Machen, founder of *Westminster Theological Seminary*, found solace in this truth shortly before he died when he wrote in a telegram these words: "I'm so thankful for the active obedience of Christ. No hope without it." Dear saints, Christ did not only die an atoning death for our sins, but He also lived a sinless life for our righteousness. Trust, believe and rest in the Gospel of Jesus Christ!

But while we are still in our bodies longing for our eternal rest in heaven, may the cry of hearts in all of life always be, *Deo Volente*, making every plan contingent on "If the Lord wills."

“And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins. Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ are lost. If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are to be pitied more than all men” (1 Corinthians 15:17-19).

The resurrection of Jesus Christ is one of the most important miracles that God has done. If Christ was not raised, Christianity itself would never exist. If Christ was not raised, all of us who believed in Him would become fools. We're wasting our time and energy attending Sunday services, doing ministries, or even evangelizing none believers – all of these would be for nothing. Many of us who have been Christians for almost our whole lives would be so devastated to know that we've been living on a lie.

Thanks be to God! Jesus Christ indeed died and was raised from the dead, and then He appeared to many people before ascending to heaven. The miracle of the resurrection proved that Jesus Christ **is** the Messiah, the promised seed of blessing to Abraham and the promised seed of victory over the Serpent in Genesis 3.

What benefits does this miracle of the resurrection have in store for the believers? Surely it did not only prove Christ as the Messiah! Indeed, the Bible tells us that there are more to the resurrection than just proving the veracity of Jesus as Christ. I have listed below few of the benefits from the resurrection of Christ that I find assuring and encouraging to all of us, reminding us of the goodness of God through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

The first one is from the passage above: **we have forgiveness of and freedom from sin.** The sacrifice

of Christ on the cross is the price that He paid for our sins. Christ's resurrection grants us the freedom from its bondage. Sin no longer has power over us and we receive from God the ability to yield ourselves to Him. The ability to obey His commands that are written in the Scriptures comes from Him. This is why Christ said in Luke 19:10, "For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost," because left on our own, we cannot and will not seek Him. Isaiah 53:6 and Romans 3:10-12 explains, "We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way;" "There is no one righteous, not even one; there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God. All have turned away; they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one."

Second, **we are assured of our justification through the resurrection.** Romans 4:23-25 says, "The words 'it was credited to him' were written not for him alone, but also for us, to whom God will credit righteousness – for us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead. He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification." One of the purposes of the resurrection is for us, who believe in Him who raised Jesus from the dead, to be justified (or declared) righteous in the eyes of God. By raising Christ from the dead, God has approved of what Christ has done for Christ was perfect and righteous, enough to pay the penalty of sin. By virtue of our union with Christ, Christ's righteousness was applied to us.

Assurance of regeneration is the third benefit. 1 Peter 1:3 reads, "Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope

through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." This new birth that the Bible has told us is not a physical birth as what all of us had experienced. This new birth, as Jesus Christ explained to Nicodemus in the Gospel of John, is in essence a spiritual one. We are dead in sin and therefore need to be "spiritually reborn" in order for us to enjoy the salvation from Christ. And the changes in us do not end to our being reborn. In Ephesians 1:19-20, Paul prays that the saints would know "his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is like the working of his mighty strength, which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms." The same power that by which God raised Christ from the dead is the same power at work within us, the goal of which is to transform us to become more and more like Christ. And we are certain that when God works, He "will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus" (Philippians 1:6).

Fourth, and this is a good one for all of us, is that through Christ's resurrection, **salvation is assured**. John 6:39-40 says, "And this is the will of him who sent me, that I shall lose none of all that he has given me, but raise them up at the last day. For my Father's will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day." Part of the "will" of the Father is to not lose any one that He has given to Christ. In trying to explain this doctrine, Paul asked a rhetorical question to the saints in Rome, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword?" (Romans 8:35). We all know and understand that the answer to that question is "no one" or "nothing"! The power of God to save us in Christ is more powerful than any other thing in this world. The same power that raised Christ from the dead is powerful enough to preserve us and our faith in Christ; therefore, once you are

saved, you are always saved and shall receive eternal life from God.

And finally, Christ's resurrection **guarantees resurrection to those who believed in Him**. Paul tells us that "By his power, God raised the Lord from the dead, and he will raise us also" and "that the one who raised the Lord Jesus from the dead will also raise us with Jesus and present us with you in his presence" (1 Cor. 6:14; 2 Cor. 4:14). The "completion" that Paul mentioned in Philippians 1:6 not only means changes on the physical, earthly sense – it also includes the eternal end-product of the work God had begun in us. We shall receive glorified bodies in the resurrection day, the day of Christ! Now, many have asked what kind of resurrection body they would be receiving in the last day. Since Christ retained his wounds from being nailed to the cross, would we retain the scars that we had in our lifetime as well? An author explains that "we probably will not have any scars from the injuries or wounds received in this life, but our bodies will be made perfect, 'incorruptible' and raised 'in glory.' The scars from Jesus' crucifixion are unique because they are an eternal reminder of his sufferings and death for us."

Let us praise God for granting us grace to enjoy these benefits from the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Let us be reminded of the sacrifice of the Lamb not only during "Holy Week" festivities, for we are living testimonies of that sacrifice and are tasked to live it out every single moment of our lives.

"Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever! Amen" (Ephesians 3:20-21).

A pediatrician once said, "Babies do not come with a manual." Observing moms and the problems they face, I somehow know this truth even before I gave birth to my baby. Sleepless nights, dirty diapers, unknown rashes and illnesses and endless crying are not the only things that scared me when I was still pregnant. What frightened me more was the upbringing of my child under my watch. It may sound silly, but the idea of being responsible for the life of someone, the desire and the challenge to let her know God and the huge accountability I have to the One who gave her to me, were quite overwhelming.

The good Lord certainly knew my fears and graciously provided me comfort and help through a book entitled, "Treasuring God in Our Traditions." This short and light-read book is written by Noël Piper who filled the pages not only with her inspiring family traditions but also with her refreshing desire for and joy in God. Looking at traditions in a God-centered light, this book communicates the beauty of celebrating God's goodness and holiness through the regular activities and occasions we consciously establish to store God's words in our hearts.

"Love the LORD your God and keep his requirements, his decrees, his laws and his commands always...Remember today that your children were not the ones who saw and experienced the discipline of the LORD your God: his majesty, his mighty hand, his

outstretched arm...But it was your own eyes that saw all these great things the LORD has done...Fix these words of mine in your hearts and minds; tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads...Teach them to your children, talking about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up" (Deuteronomy 11:1, 2, 7, 18 & 19). This passage has had a clearer meaning to me as I read this book by Piper. It's a tall order, no doubt. Yet, its beauty and practicality enable us to see how obeying this instruction entails declaring God's words and works to others.

Our story with God started way before we accepted Christ in our lives. God's gracious and mighty works in the time of Moses, Joseph, Elijah, the disciples and Paul and throughout history are ours to treasure and remember. Just as God commanded Moses and his contemporaries to remember what God has done for them, God similarly wants us to not forget His works and words as recorded in the Bible. It is God's wise design that our Christian lives are not only permanently connected but also rooted in what was written in the Scriptures. We are no doubt successors of the Biblical fathers.

Amazingly, God's work continues on, even in our individual lives. When we put our faith in Christ and instantaneously become part of God's family, we experience a "personalized" history with our Creator. These, together with

God's Word, are to be treasured and remembered, kept in our hearts. When we do, as Piper puts it, "God's Word (is) as available and as visible as if it were hanging between our eyes... and as if it were tied on our hand so that all our acts are directed and shaped by His Word."

Of similar importance is passing on to others, particularly the next generations, what God has taught and shown us. He has commanded us to teach His Word to our children not just once or twice, but repeatedly. Thus, He spoke of imparting His teachings as we do activities such as sitting, walking and laying down, things that are seemingly mundane yet are the actions we do ever so repeatedly. When we incorporate such significant lessons to those regular activities, we would see and remember our Lord even in the most routine task of our lives.

According to Piper, "Tradition is the handing down of information, beliefs, worldview from one generation to another by word of mouth and by regular repetition of example, of ceremony and of celebration." We remarkably learn and teach about God through the most basic tasks that every Christian should do, reading the Bible and praying. These are traditions that we pass on to others, teaching them how they can relate to God through personal devotions, personal prayers, family mealtime prayers and even through worshipping together on the Lord's day. These "everyday" traditions enable us and our children to understand God more clearly and give Him His most deserving praise.

The Bible has guided Christians even from the Biblical times on how to inform others about our faith. Ceremonies and celebrations are done to remember what God has done to His people. This truth still applies to us as we annually celebrate Christmas, Lent and Easter, Thanksgiving, birthdays, weddings and funerals. Events such as these are unlike our ordinary days in order to make us stop and realize the significance of the occasion. That is why how we observe these events and who we highlight are no trivial matters, simply because these will help others value who God is and how He works.

Noel Piper wrote her desire for her children in a poem, and my heart whispers the same aspiration:

I have always wanted my children
to know as much about God
as they were able to grasp at whatever
age they were.

And I have wanted my life and our family
to be a picture of God to others—
that we be the body of Christ
who presents an image of Christ
to the people around us.

Heavy and daunting desire, I suppose. Thus, I plead for God's grace to empower me and my family to perform the responsibility He has given us; that we will make God our utmost delight, so that we may be able to honor and praise Him. "May the ceremonies of our homes be true ceremony – from Him, because of Him, pointing toward Him, honoring Him, and thanking Him. Amen."

Before coming over to Cebu, I had absolutely no idea of what Cebu Gospel Church was like. Naturally, I was very amazed when I heard that Cebu Gospel Church has a 94-year history. To my knowledge, that is longer than most of the churches that minister to Chinese communities. I thank God because in His grace, He has given this church such a rich heritage. As I reflect upon the long-standing history of the church, I know that no one who has grown to love the church would certainly want the church to end at 95 years. We all want our churches to remain faithful and growing until the day of Christ. For this reason, I would like to encourage all of us to cultivate godly traditions.

As I speak about tradition, I realize that some of us may have negative impressions concerning traditions in a Christian community. We may perhaps fear that our church will end up like other churches that put too much value on tradition and giving it the place of authority that is appropriate only for the Word of God. We do not wish to fall into that kind of error. At the same time, as we observe our ever-changing world, we see that, nowadays, people are doing away with their traditions because they have perceived traditions as a limitation for growth. We would rather follow trend than tradition because everyone wants to be up-to-date and not old-fashioned. Furthermore, we have several references in Scripture where Jesus spoke against the Pharisees and teachers of the law because they have followed traditions set by men instead of the commandment of God.¹ Paul, too, warned believers not to follow tradition over and above Jesus Christ.² It is not surprising then, if we have apprehensions toward cultivating traditions.

However, if we are to have a fair treatment of the matter, we realize that traditions do not have to be against our Christian faith. In fact, on some occasions, Paul would tell believers to keep to the

traditions they received from him and from other apostles.³ Furthermore, when God told the Israelites before that they should teach His words to their children,⁴ God was actually making His words the tradition that the Israelites should keep. Therefore, we do not have to be fearful of keeping traditions. This does not mean though, that we simply accept all kinds of traditions. We have to discern whether a certain tradition leads us closer to or farther from God. Therefore, we need to cultivate only godly traditions.

Before we talk about godly traditions, we must first come to an agreement as to the definition of the word 'tradition'. A book by Noël Piper gives a pretty good and comprehensive definition. She wrote:

"Tradition is the handing down of information, beliefs, worldview from one generation to another by word of mouth and by regular repetition of example, of ceremony, and of celebration."⁵

One example of a tradition is in the teaching of language. I observed that several kids in church still speak in Chinese, perhaps not as many kids as you want, but for someone from Manila, that is already a lot. Now, when we teach the kids to speak in Chinese, we are not merely teaching them the language, we are in fact teaching them that the Chinese language and the Chinese culture is important to us. At the same time, we hope that they too will learn to value what we value. This is how tradition works. Now what makes a tradition godly?

Godly tradition then would simply be the passing on of God's word (godly information), and Christian faith (belief and worldview). This sounds simple enough but there is one area of complication. Although it may be easy for us to pass on God's word, either through a literal giving of a Bible or through reading, preaching and

teaching God's word, it is impossible for us to pass on Christian faith. This is because faith is not a tangible object. It is not like our grandmother's wedding dress or engagement ring that we could entrust to our kids for them to keep. Faith is a gift of God. It is something that God has to create in the hearts of our children and not something that we can give. However, we can at least help them "know and understand God in ways to prepare them to believe in His name."⁶

Since we hope to help our kids know and understand God, the first godly tradition that we must have is the study of God's Word. The Bible is God's gift to us. It is what God has given us to tell us about who He is and what He has done. Young kids may not be able to read yet and so we have to read God's Word to them. However, even adults who know how to read God's word may not necessarily know how to interpret what they have read. This is truly a concern especially for teens or adults who did not grow up in a Christian home, school or church.

There are two ways to address this legitimate concern. The first way is to enroll these people in classes taught by our pastors or teachers concerning the interpretation of God's Word – hermeneutics. However, not many people like the idea of being in a classroom setting. This is why the second method is perhaps more desirable. This method involves a believer, whether parent or friend, who will take time to study God's Word together with each child, teen or adult. Some call this a mentoring or discipleship approach. Ultimately, what we try to do here is to help people understand the Word of God by showing them how to understand it themselves. Within the family, the father can lead the rest of the family in a time of family devotions. Not only do such times teach the kids to understand Scripture, they also show to the kids that God's Word is important for

their lives.

A second excellent tradition that families should adopt is the tradition of prayer. Although we know that prayer is simply talking to God, some people find praying difficult. Having a time of prayer together gives us opportunities to settle a few questions kids and adults may have concerning prayer. Cultivating such a habit helps us to keep on praying even if we are not in the mood to pray. Prayer strengthens the God-centeredness of any marital relationship. Most importantly, prayer recognizes the limitation of our influence on the faith of the child. We pray because we realize that ultimately God brings people to faith not us.

I realize that it is impossible to make an exhaustive list of godly traditions. It is equally true that each of our families will have our own unique sets of godly traditions. God has given us insight, wisdom and discernment as to how we will raise our families and what activities we will have for family time. May we all learn to depend on God to help us cultivate godly traditions. May we all learn to be intentional in passing on our faith. We need to plan these things with the wisdom that God has given us.

Although much of what I have written applies more to parents, grandparents, and even uncles and aunts, 'passing on our faith' is a responsibility we all share, even if we are single. As single people, our 'kids' could be our peers, our classmates, our colleagues, and even brothers and sisters in Christ who have just come to faith. Not everyone has had the privilege of growing up in a Christian home, a Christian school, a Christian church. But when these people become part of God's family, they have as much a right as we do to the traditions that we have in the family of God.

¹ Matthew 15:3, 6; Mark 7:8, 9, 13, ESV.

² Colossians 2:8, ESV.

³ 1 Corinthians 11:2; 2 Thessalonians 2:15; 3:6, ESV.

⁴ Deuteronomy 11:19, ESV.

⁵ Noël Piper, *Treasuring God in Our Traditions*, (Illinois: Crossway, 2003), 26.

⁶ Noël Piper, *Treasuring God in Our Traditions*, (Illinois: Crossway, 2003), 18.

In this world, there are many things that replace God in our lives. For instead of choosing God, we choose other things and place them in the center of our lives. We call them counterfeit gods, as they replace God from His rightful place. A more common term would be idols. These are the things that occupy people's lives instead of God. Sadly, many Christians also fall for this kind of problem. Hopefully after reading this article, we will know what an idol exactly is and how we can overcome it.

First, let us define what an idol is. Usually, some people describe idols as statues or things that people create and worship. Such idols may be in the form of an animal, things, etc. But I want to give you the definition of what an idol really is. Basically, an idol is what takes up most of our time. It is what we spend most of our lives in. An idol may not necessarily be a statue or golem; it could be anything in this world! It could be money, work, family, computer, malls, etc. It could be anything that you could think of. The question is how they can be considered an idol. I believe in order to understand that, we need to go back to the earlier times when the early people practiced idolatry.

In the earlier times, the Israelites spent most of their time worshipping idols because of two reasons. First, they do not trust in God. They wanted something they can see and touch. They made idols of stones, bricks and mud because they wanted to "see" what they are worshipping. Secondly, they made gods from whom they can ask something from whenever they needed anything. If they wanted rain, they will worship this "god" in the hope that this "god" will provide them with what they want.

God commanded us in Deuteronomy 5:7-8, "You shall have no other gods before me. You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is on

the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. You shall not bow down to them or serve them; for I the LORD your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments."

Though the commandment was given around 4,000 years ago, I believe the commandment still applies to us today and the future. This wrong practice was handed down from generation to generation. In our present generation, the idols may have changed its form but people still trust in them rather than putting their trust in God. One of the most common idols is money. A lot of people spend most of their time earning money, even sacrificing their very time with family, friends and the church. Idols control our lives today. It could also be our work as we spend all of our time working and not even worshipping God.

Now that we know what an idol or a counterfeit god is, what can we do about it? I believe there is only one thing we could do and that is, to believe in the true God not in a counterfeit god but in the one and only true God, the God of the Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob. Only He and Him alone can save us from these so called gods of our time. We can be saved only through the blood of Jesus Christ and if we place Jesus in our hearts, He will help us overcome the idols that control our lives.

We must not forget that we are created for one reason, i.e., to glorify God. And if there are things that hinder us from doing that, then we should ask God to help us and bring us back to the right path, that is, to glorify him with all our hearts, all our minds, all our souls and with all our strength. May God continue to bless us as we continue to serve Him.

What do a seventy-seven and nineteen year old guys have in common? PASSION. What passion would bring them together? A GOLF FELLOWSHIP! That was precisely what happened last February 16, 2010 at the Cebu Country Club. The Cebu Kian Kee Alumni Association (CKKAA), in celebration of the 62nd founding anniversary of her alma mater (formerly Cebu Christian School, now Philippine Christian Gospel School), held the FIRST GOLF TOURNAMENT FELLOWSHIP among its alumni. The tournament brought together a total of 48 golf enthusiasts.

It was an extremely hot day when the Kian Keenians started to arrive at the golf course of the Cebu Country Club. All 48 golfers were divided into 11 teams under 4 categories: Class A, Class B, Class C and Class D.

A dinner at the Molave Hall of the Country Club followed the tournament. It was ably hosted by Mr. Gabriel Yap (Class 1989) and Ms. Natasha Cang (Class 1991). Foods prepared by the club and raffle prizes donated by 18 alumni were plentiful. There was more than enough for everyone. But it was the Kian Keenian spirit of

camaraderie and the joyful feeling of satisfaction after a job well done that filled the Molave Hall.

Chairperson of the golf fellowship, Mr. Justin Uy (Class 1975) president of the Profoods International, in his closing remarks said that it is only in a game of golf that the ball waits for you. It is also in a game of golf that both the young and the old can be playmates. On a final note, Mr. Justin Uy presented a gift check of Two Hundred Thousand Pesos (P200K) to Mr. Raymond Ong (Class 1973, President of the CCKAA) and Dr. Wanda Po Liam Giok (School Director), representing the money raised during this event for the association's future projects.

Kudos to all the organizers headed by Mr. Justin Uy (Class 1975) as chairperson; Engr. Emmanuel Ong (Class 1978) as vice-chairperson; Secretaries – Mr. Arnel Go (Class 1972) and Engr. Sidney Po (Class 1977); Treasurers – Mr. Gabriel Yap Jr. (Class 1989) and Engr. Emmanuel Ong (Class 1978).



人生一直在尋找，在嬰孩時，尋找吃奶，尋母親懷抱的溫暖，長大後尋知識，友情，職業，事業，終生伴侶，老年時找兒女回應的愛，但最後往往是失望。人一直尋找，你可能不知道你和我正在尋找一件東西。

首先，你要弄清楚你是誰。你必須認識你是誰，否則你便不知自己要尋找甚麼？蘇格拉底有一天在光天白日，手拿著燈籠到處在尋找東西，有人問他：「你在找甚麼？」他說：「我在尋找我。」究竟我是誰，我是在失落中？

今天這裡有五幅圖畫看看人生是甚麼？

(一) 人生如戲

有人說人生如戲，戲如人生。何必認真。你有沒有觀察到一些人的一舉一動，發現很多人在做戲，戲中真情假做，有時，台上的演員流的假眼淚，卻感動台下的你和我流出真眼淚來，明知道是做戲，但你和我都軟弱地流淚，在現在的生活中，很多人曉得我們的感情脆弱，利用假感情欺騙我們的真感情。是不是嗎？

此有一位弟兄，師母曾問他為什麼一把年紀也不結婚呢？他說十七年前一個女朋友，預備來加拿大時，因英文不好，所以請了一個補習老師教她英文。可惜後來她愛上了這位補習老師。同時也有一位姐妹，她的男朋友到了美國，每星期都有一封情書，書中常盼望有一天可相聚結婚。但有一天她收到男朋友的信告訴她，他們之間只是友情不是愛情，他已另有女朋友。從此這位姐妹再不打算結婚。因為再不信任男人。

人生充滿了很多虛假，口是心非，逢場作戲。人與人之間沒有真心相待的，且生活中常常有很多不必要的應酬。有一天，一個小朋友聽到父親在歎息，便問父親為什麼？他父親說因為每天有很多應酬，小孩子又問：「應酬是甚麼？」他父親告訴他「應酬」是講一些本不想講的話，做一些本不想做的事，去一些本不想去的地方。這小孩立刻說：「我也很多應酬啊！」他指的是他天天上學。戲是常變的，舞台上的背景也是隨意更換，人生也是變幻莫測，正所謂：「好花不常開，好景不常在」戲劇的面具不是我，真我是孤單及痛苦，應酬人生沒有真情。

有一個病人到醫生那裡看病，醫生說此病乃因憂慮而來，叫他去看一齣戲。看後便會很開心。但那病人聽了更傷心。因為演戲的那人正是他。

我們可以在人前歡笑，但我們內心卻孤單痛苦。戲有落幕之日，曲終人散，人生如此落幕悲傷收場。

(二) 賭博人生：

人生如賭博一樣，所以渴望一博可成為財主，可得名利，聲勢不同，人生如賭博般充滿貪婪，更有老千騙人，人與人的交往便是要在別人身上取得利益，在賭場內有三種人：

第一種人帶著一筆錢去，期望以有限的錢來賺更多錢。

第二種人是在那裡以服侍人為職業的。

第三種人是青春美貌的女仕。

這三種人同是在賭場上找機會希望生活會變得更好。但卻帶著失望，空虛，虧本離開賭場，很多人拼命賺錢，認為錢是萬能，可以買婚姻，但錢不能買真正的愛情，錢可以買大屋，但不可以買家。屋是用石所造的，但家是由愛組成的。有人可以有很多錢買大屋，但大屋裡面可能是空巢，或是破碎家庭，或是金屋藏嬌。

(三)人生如夢

人生如夢，夢如人生。夢有美夢，也有惡夢。在夢中做皇帝，醒來做乞丐。有很多人對前途充滿夢想。但是事實與夢彼此相違背。

這是事實的故事。一位數學博士，也是加州特技飛行冠軍，幾年前因為有股票走俏。他即以公司的內部特定價格購買股票，然後離開公司退休，準備好好享受飛翔的日子。當時他以為股票上升，沒有立刻賣掉，那知道股票價從超過一百元降到一元多。他不但面臨破產，而且欠了國稅局一大筆款，他乘上自己心愛飛機，用塑膠袋蒙著頭，打開氧氣桶，就這樣結束了他的生命，死時五十歲，一個沒有永恒價值的人，在絕望中找不到活著的力量，於是美夢破滅，殘酷收場。

(四)煙花人生

仰望夜空，看著綻開一波一波輝煌燦爛煙花的確美麗。但讚賞的呼聲隨著花的煙滅而消失，人生如煙花，要積極的在黑暗中放射光芒，人生要奮鬥，努力，必定會有燦爛的人生，不單自己欣賞，還要身邊的人欣賞。

戴安娜皇妃很多人羨慕她。但她的結果很悲慘。她很孤單寂寞，甚至最後車禍慘死。如果你是她的父親，你必寧願她在鄉村裡做教師。比在皇宮作皇妃更好。

煙花只是短短一瞬間就消失，人生如煙花，有的人生命可以綻放爛漫光輝。但煙花消失，曲終人散，天空呈現漆黑一片，空虛和惆悵立時襲入你的心。

(五)戰場人生

情場，商場，政治都是如戰場，人生要不斷爭戰才有獲得。為著獲取，有人可以不擇手段，十多年前在維多利亞島有一個英俊有為的青年，聽到他的祖母會有一筆遺產留給他母親與他後，他不能等待遺產的時日。竟聯同二位朋友把他的祖母和母親殺了。可憐的是，那祖母聽到孫兒要來探望時，還準備好豐富的晚餐來招待他們呢？許多人為了爭取愛侶而傷害情敵，為了爭取更多的金錢，而加害同行的對手，為了奪取權勢和地位而以「莫順有」的罪名加害於政敵，因為他們覺得人生就是戰場，不是我贏，就是你輸。

在反面，我們要知道人生的意義，價值和真理，就必須遵行信靠「聖經」所教導我們，最重要是救人的靈魂，在世時忠心事奉主，有真正的愛心幫助人，不虛假的有好見證來榮耀主，才有人生的價值，無目標的人生等於夭折，不與神和好的人，可謂虛度此生，人生的價值不在活命的長久，而在於他對神國的貢獻如何？來配合成一幅美麗的圖書「彩虹的人生」。

「彩虹的人生」也是活在神應許中的人生，祂應許我們：「信祂的不至滅亡，反得永生」「彩虹的人生」是新生命的開始。正如主說：「我來了是叫人得生命，並且得的更豐盛」約10:10。

在1912年四月十四日的晚上，一位美國的婦女雖然很疲倦卻睡不著。因為她心中被驚惶煩悶所壓制。最後她被感動要為在Titanic豪華大輪的丈夫Col. Gracie的安全祈禱。她懇切地祈禱了幾小時，但她心中卻仍是惶惶不安。她一直祈禱到清早的五點，她感受著一種很大的平安在心中就睡覺了。

Titanic有1,528名的搭客，因為撞到一個大冰山，船身分裂快要沉了，有數百名的搭客搶著要上救生船。她的丈夫放棄求生的願望，卻盡力幫助小孩和婦女上救生船。不久船沉了，Gracie上校被捲在海洋的大漩渦中沉到海底。這時他本能地在極冰冷的海拼命游泳，直到清早五點才浮到海面，被人救上另一艘輪船。這清早五點正是他的妻子感受到很大的平安的時候。

上面的故事，Gracie上校的妻子心中的不安，一直祈禱到清早五點，心中感到很大的平安都是聖靈的工作。祈禱是屬靈爭戰的動力。當亞瑪力人攻打以色列人的時候；摩西上山頂祈禱，而約書亞在山下帶領軍兵用刀劍爭戰。以色列人打敗亞瑪力人，是因為摩西在山上祈禱和在山谷的約書亞用刀劍爭戰的結果，祈禱是得勝的原動力。

以弗所書6:18說，「靠著聖靈，隨時多方禱告祈求，並要在此做醒不倦，為眾聖徒祈求。」現在我們來思想這節經文的意義。

一. 在靈裡禱告

按照聖經，祈禱的次序是靠著聖靈，奉主耶穌基督的名向天父上帝祈禱。羅馬書8:26-27告訴我們只有靠著聖靈禱告才能照上帝的旨意來祈求。不然，我們的禱告可能是自私的，和在上帝的旨意以外。在舊約的會幕裡有一個香壇，祭司在那裡燒香。

在聖經中，香代表聖徒的祈禱，而壇上的火代表聖靈。香要照上帝指示的原料、分量、方法製作。我們的禱告如果是靠肉體，雖然迫切的懇求，仍不能達到上帝的面前，而靠聖靈禱告能為我們成就大事。

二. 隨時多方的禱告

我們的禱告，按照需要可以隨時隨地祈禱。因為我們的主是無所不在無所不能的上帝；如果合祂的旨意，祂必為我們成全。在腓立比書4:6-7說，「應當一無掛慮，只要凡事藉著禱告祈求和感謝將你們所要的告訴上帝。上帝所賜出人意外的平安，必在基督耶穌裡保守你們的心懷意念。」

信徒如果只為自己事禱告會失去代求和感恩的祝福。因此我們應為主裡的弟兄代求，也應為未信的人代求，使他們認罪悔改信主耶穌得永生之福。此外要為君王祈禱，為在位的官員祈禱。約伯最後為他的朋友祈禱，耶和華就使約伯從苦境回轉，並且賜給他的比從前所有的加倍。

三. 做醒禱告

做醒禱告在聖經中常被提到，當尼希米在修建耶路撒冷的城牆時，敵黨威脅阻擋。尼希米靠著做醒禱告來打敗對敵。當時敵黨同謀攻打耶路撒冷，使城裡擾亂。然而尼希米禱告上帝；又因敵黨的緣故就派人看守，晝夜防備。結果城牆修建成功。

基督徒做醒禱告是得勝世界肉體的情慾和撒但的祕訣。主耶穌到客西馬尼園禱告，帶彼得、雅各、約翰同去；回來看見他們睡了，就對彼得說，「西門，你睡覺麼，不能做醒片時麼？總要做醒禱告，免得入了迷惑。你們心靈固然願意，肉體卻軟弱了。」主的話不但是對當時的門徒說的，也是在勉勵今日的基督徒應該做醒禱告。

四. 禱告要持久不倦

George Muller為他五位未信主的朋友的救恩祈禱。五年後有一位得救，十年後又有二位信主。廿五年後第四位朋友得救。George Muller歸天幾年後第五位朋友才信主。這故事是持久

不倦的禱告的好榜樣。

持久不倦的禱告是不住的祈禱，是上帝向基督徒所定的旨意。不住的祈禱不是說我們要整天念念有詞地禱告，而是說時刻和上帝有密切的交通。

初期教會的信徒都是天天同心恆切禱告。不住的禱告不是說要扭轉上帝的手，使祂照我們的意思來做。因為我們的禱告不是要人的旨意成全在天上，而是得到上帝的旨意行在地上。初期教會時，希律捉拿了彼得收在監裡，教會卻切切為他禱告。上帝差遣天使救彼得出監。

五. 為眾聖徒祈求

主禱文開始說我們在天上的父，不是我在天上的父。原來我們每個人的祈禱是主的大家庭的祈禱的一部分。教會是上帝的家，所有的基督徒都是家中的人。因此，我們一定要為眾聖徒祈禱；也應互相代禱。在弗6:14，使徒保羅請以弗所的信徒為他祈禱，而保羅曾被主提到第三層天，且需要他人的祈禱支持。你和我是誰呢，更需要其他信徒祈禱來支持。

啊們！

俗語說：「一樣的米糧要養餵百樣的人。」也就是說：「人各有志」。不論男女老少對人生都有個別的抱負。有時走過人生的高峰還會興嘆沒有好好抓住機會和錯失某項事物。自從1872年美國影壇推出一齣時光倒流的影片起，引起很多人的幻想和嚮往。要尋他(她)過去時代錯過的東西或事物。

在眾多菲人社會的一個華人大家族，為首的一個老人家，有妻子，兒女，子婿，媳婦，孫兒雖然不是很富裕，但可稱喜氣洋洋。為首的是一個年紀八、九十齡的老翁。有一天他的家人感覺老人有點不對勁，好像患了貪睡病，整天沉睡不醒。延醫看病，都說無病，兩三天會自己醒覺，只有注射五穀水以防缺水而已。家人只有輪番的陪伴著。

事實上老翁實在沒有病，日間一直睡覺，晚間夜深人靜卻和神的使者關智著。他要求使者使他返回過去廿四、五歲時代，他還有很多該做而未做的事，還有錯過的伊人。使者拿一個金色的窗框令他看，他看到一個美少女，他不禁寒喊著，就是她。使者令他，再看下去，看見一個人拿了結婚新衣套在身上，剛要下樓，忽然連續幾發槍中了要跌下去。他喊那是我，求求你，不要使我死吧。天使說是命注定，也是命運和代價。當他要計較時，不留意被推向金窗口，而墜下去，煙霧

圍繞住他的四圍，直到吹散後。看見他是在海濱的椰林，他在池沼照一照，發現他是年輕健全翩翩的少年。正在受寵若驚時，他靚靚茅屋的少女，幼嫩雪白，陽光晒黑不了她皮膚，人活潑善動，有不經塗紅柔唇朱紅，叫人看了不惜多看一眼。那就是幾十年朝夕思念的晚霞。

他又在林中池沼中再照一照，無獨有偶發現他也變為青春少年，不再像八、九十歲的老翁，有氣色有力量滿懷歡喜，他被海濱的工人推拉去見女主人晚霞，經過一番的纏綿和依戀，晚霞想一件更重要的事要去市內晉見父母。紛忙拉雯生驅車到市內去。趕緊將意中人拜見父母親說：「爸、媽，這是雯生，他現來到這裡是要向你們求親」

「這怎麼可以呢？你上星期已和坭市王先生訂婚。現在不能再第二次訂婚。」

「這我不管，王先生和我是陌生，不認識的，我們沒有感情，不能共同生活，而且年紀老得可做我的叔父。爸、媽，你們不是愛你們的女兒，愛她們過的幸福和快樂，怎麼做爾又反爾？」

這時雯生也脆下說：「懇求叔、孀成全霞兒的要求給她成全。」

晚霞的雙親扶起雯生說「孩子起來，看到你與霞兒真心相愛，我就取消坭里拉

的訂親，星期日他來時我再設法把手飾還給他們，與訂婚的開銷和必須的賠償。霞兒你快和雯生去縫套新婚禮服，以便星期四穿，叫他加班，工錢多少不論價。」一夜岳父子婿，母親女兒的歡談，喜氣洋洋，到天將亮才入眠。

早上早餐後，裁縫匠送來了新郎新衣。工夫不錯而且頗稱身，馬上叫女工人拿去洗滌，才掛在陽台風乾。晚霞叫雯生留在家督察打掃新娘房自己到市上採購糖果，於大後天大喜日請客之用。約有一小時後，街上忽然發生騷動而有凜冽的槍聲，驚壞晚霞的父母忙將這位快要結婚的女婿帶到密室隱藏著，頃刻間兩個雄糾糾的賊匪將飾物現款搶劫一光，經過陽台要逃走，看見快要乾的新衣，忙脫起舊衣服換上，剛要從陽台爬下去，不料軍警已趕到，槍聲齊響，身中要害，跌下陽台底層自己的血泊，一命嗚呼。他同伴卻向警察投降。片刻後晚霞也自街中返回，急忙要找雯生。她的父母答說，「雯生很安全在密室中」。她急忙開啟密室，可不見雯生的蹤影。「人呢？」「在內面」。仔細查看，沒有他的影蹤，密室沒有窗口，門戶，沒有人從外面是不能出來。她動員每個人尋找整座房屋，雯生不知怎樣失蹤，於是禁不住嚎啕大哭。哭得很悲傷，哭的非常的悽愴傷心。原來在臨危的時刻，神的使者帶著金窗框叫他跳進去，一下子，他就隨流光回到廿一世紀。他就恢復老年的病態回到他的睡床中，握著一隻幼嫩的手，眼睛慢慢地張，看到他所握的纖手

不是晚霞的，是他孫女的手，不好意思放鬆，滿眶盡是熱淚。他捨不得離開那麼難忘的世紀戀人。

「公公你不歡喜再見我們麼？我們很歡喜你甦醒著。」老翁在回廿一世紀時身再發生改變，老人的病痛再回到他的身上，皮膚又再生皺痕，行動不靈活，只不過內心有一種少年的心態。然而當晚霞找不到蹤形，每日哭喪了臉，愁煩不樂，三餐厭食，容貌憔悴。待到星期日，坻市來迎親時，她祇得聽父母的勸言，聽命嫁給坻市的鞋商王君，雖然內心有說不盡的痛苦，像一隻受擒的黃鶯被帶到坻市去。物質生活雖不錯，但內心的靈魂枯竭。金錢雖像可買世界任何東西，但有時卻買不到愛情和許多事物。聽說，她四十多歲就披上文君新寡的面紗，到遠方的新奇內亞去移民，離開了這麼多愁的菲島。

至於雯生，自回到廿一世紀，也恢復蒼老衰弱，再也沒有可能回歸舊世紀時代。他所能做到只是在夢幻中尋求歡慰的時光。

科學現在可稱是相當進步，但人類不能控制時光，時光的流逝，長短，久暫還是神的主宰。正如俗語所說「為事在人，成事在神。」沒有神的許可與成全，人微弱的力量是不能有所作為。正如傳道書所說的「生有定時，死有定時。」做事成事都有定時。

A SPECIAL THANKSGIVING SERVICE

*Give thanks with a grateful heart,
give thanks to the Holy One ...*

We thank our Heavenly Father for all the things that He had done to us and for us.

Do you know that we have so many things to be thankful of to our God that at times we don't even know where to start?

November 26, 2009 — It has been our church's tradition to celebrate Thanksgiving Day.

A celebration to remind ourselves how God has been watching over us through thick and thin. People come & people go but we still thank God who continues to watch over us and guide us. A reminder of God's FAITHFULNESS to our lives, His GRACE given to us even though we don't deserve it, a LOVE

shown to us even though we are so stubborn and His RIGHTEOUSNESS that we are made right through His Son.

Because of what He has bestowed upon us, the different fellowships rendered their diverse talents. There were singing, dancing, acting, and testimonies offered to God. From the oldest member to the youngest member, all of them offered their thanksgiving and gratefulness to our God the best ways they can through their talents & testimonies.

Sometimes, saying "thank you" is not easy especially when we are going through difficult times and challenges.

How often do you say "thank you" to the people around you? Do you choose whom to say

"thank you" to? Is it that hard to say thank you?

He Knows My Name
By: Tommy Walker

*I have a Maker
He formed my heart
Before even time began
My life was in his hands*

*I have a Father
He calls me His own
He'll never leave me
No matter where I go*

*He knows my name
He knows my every thought
He sees each tear that falls
And He hears me when I call*

Are we thankful and grateful enough to have a God and Father like Him? May we never stop thanking Him for all He has done for us.

BAPTISMAL



Ong, Sharleen Dianne Ong and Denzel Matthews Po. They faithfully committed their lives to God as new citizens of His kingdom.

Also last December 1, 2009, Sister Au Chay Hong accepted Jesus Christ into her heart and was baptized.

November 29, 2009 — the church celebrated Thanksgiving Sunday with five candidates for baptism namely: Queenilyn Jane Ang, Arthur Louie Ong, Dominic Daniel

What a great joy seeing people coming to our Lord Jesus Christ! Let us include them in our prayers



CHURCH CHOIR CANTATA

"Go, tell it on the mountain, over the hills and everywhere ..."

The title of the album from where the choir sang was "Pure Light". Indeed, the reason for this celebration is Jesus, who is the pure light. As John 8:12 quotes, "I am the light of the world, whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life."

People today celebrate Christmas for many reasons and

sadly, most of them are for the wrong reasons. The reason for this season will always be Jesus Christ period, not santa claus, gifts, feasts, Christmas tree and etc ... but the birth of our Savior Jesus Christ.

People may argue about the exact time when Jesus was born but this is not really important. What matters most is knowing why we are celebrating Christmas. The birth of Jesus Christ is the first important part of the

gospel.

As we celebrate Christmas, may we be reminded of the true reason why we rejoice and honor this season.

"He rules the world with truth and grace, And makes the nations prove; The glories of His righteousness, And wonders of His love, And wonders of His love, And wonders, wonders of His love."

INDUCTION OF NEW DEACONS AND DEACONESSES

As we start our lives with Christ, we know it means serving Him wholeheartedly. It's a package deal.

Serving God faithfully and willingly are Christian responsibilities and commitments that many of us are avoiding. It's quite heartbreaking to see many Christians not serving God knowing that it is what they should do.

Some Christians today can take some time out from their busy schedule and enjoy breaks but when it comes to God, all they can say is, "I have no time, I'm

busy, I can't go because of this and that." Some may use the "Hey, I'm still a sinner." excuse to get out from it. Sadly, this excuse is often used to avoid serving the Lord.

Serving Christ can be one of the most fulfilling experiences. Though there might be ups and downs, it is always His sufficient grace that makes us strong and contented.

To God be the Glory! Three first time elected deacon/ deaconesses were inducted into the church council: Deacon Anthony Lim, Deaconesses Helen

Go and Nancy Ong.



CHILD DEDICATION

"Jesus loves the little children, all the children of the world; red, brown, yellow, black and white, they are precious in His sight, Jesus loves the little children of the world."

Last February 7, 2010, seven little angels were dedicated to our Lord. They were Chris Ryan Chua, Robin Alec Ho, Elizabeth Joanne Guanzon King, Kenzie Rhys Li, Karl Richard Lim, Nathaniel Poh Tiu

and Emmanuel Edralin. May the parents of these children continue to nurture them and guide them in the path that God wants them to be. May they grow in the knowledge and wisdom of God's words and serve in His kingdom.

Mark 10:13-16, " And they were bringing children to him that he might touch them, and the

disciples rebuked them. But when Jesus saw it, he was indignant and said to them, "Let the children come to me; do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God. Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it." And he took them in his arms and blessed them, laying his hands on them."

CHURCH 94TH ANNIVERSARY

94 years has passed and God continues to watch over Cebu Gospel Church all through the years. Praise God for all the blessings He had given to us for the past years.

The church celebrated its 94th year in PCGS gymnasium by inviting the Chancel Repertoire for an evangelistic play entitled, "No Greater Love" last March 6, 2010. Praise God for the success of the play. Dr. Joseph Shao



closed the play with an evangelistic message. No church is perfect and as members of Cebu Gospel Church, our role is to help the church become more loving, warm, building each other up and most of all, be a refuge for those who are in need. May we be the cures and not the cause of our church's problems.

It is always easy to judge others but hard to rebuke ourselves. As the Bible says in Matt. 7:3-5, "Why do you see the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? Or how can you say to your



brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when there is the log in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye."

May our good Lord continue to show mercy, love and sufficient grace to our church as we are approaching our centennial year. And may we be reminded to give back to God all the glory that is due Him. Soli Deo Gloria!

BACCALAUREATE SERVICE

Many high school students who graduated from Christian schools will soon forget the values that were taught to them in school.

Nearly 90 students from PCGS graduated high school and around 60 students graduated from Grade 6 last March 21, 2010.

To all the high school students: As

you go into the new stage of your lives, may you cling to whatever good values you've learned and been taught and try to preserve your dignity for as long as you can.

There will be so many temptations and challenges ahead. Choose your friends wisely for we can not undermine

their influences. Whenever possible, show them why you are different being the child of God.

As for the graders who are going to high school: I hope that as you step in to the next level, may you become more responsible and that your action will bring glory to God.

RESURRECTION SUNDAY



One of the greatest and unsurpassed events in Christianity was the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ who fathomed death.

He is the Savior who obeyed His Father's will in spite of the pain He went through to fulfill God's plan — redemption.

No other "god" had done this for

his people, i.e., died on the cross because of our sins so that we might be saved from eternal damnation.

He is the High Priest who understands our hearts whether in times of happiness or sorrow. A loving, merciful and just God who is always and will be there for us.

Praise God for the 6 candidates who gave their lives to the Lord and were baptized last April 4, 2010. They are: November Shine Ang, Nicole Dy, Victoria Belle Ong, Mary Diane Po, Jade Michael U.

Presbitero and Melody Hope L. Yu.

May their parents continue to guide them in a godly path and may we as a church be a model in their lives that they may follow our footsteps. Let us include them in our prayers that God will use them for His purpose in His kingdom.



DVBS (THE ARMOR OF GOD)

Are you God's soldier? A warrior? Or maybe a defender? The Sunday school held its Daily Vacation Bible School last April 12-16, 2010 with sixty children who attended.

It's was a great time for the children to know and learn more about the armor of God because of what our world is today. This doesn't apply to the children



need God's armor to fight temptations, face challenges and stand firm for God.

The armor of God helps us stand against the plot of Satan. If we are well versed with the Bible and have immersed ourselves to the Word of God, we can guard and preserve our minds and hearts from Satan's schemes.

only but May our Loving Father touch the hearts of the children and lead them to Him. May these children



continue to grow and be thirsty for the God's word.



SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST

- The CYF highschool & college gave an "Appreciation Night for the Janitors & Guard" last November 13, 2009
- Sunday School Department celebrated their Christmas Party at Wetland Resort together with their family.
- Congregational Sunday January 31, 2010
- PCGS Sunday February 14, 2010

CBDTI (YOUTH CAMP) "CHRIST-LESS CHRISTIANITY"

Last April 5-9, 2010 forty-eight delegates from our church attended the CBDTI youth camp held in Bacolod. The theme of the camp was "Christ-less Christianity".

The youth got the chance to watch the video of Paul Washer, "a shocking message to the youth". Paul Washer talked about how Christians today walk their lives as if they don't know Christ at all. He also called the attention that preachers today don't give much importance in their preaching. All they do is just talk about prosperity and feel-good messages for the sake of being liked by his congregation.

Sad but true as many of us today live our lives with many compromises so that the world may applaud us, may love us, gain favor from them and etc... We sometimes despise the Christian values that were being

taught to us because we know the world can hate us for it. Some Christians become very choosy, they want to listen to fun, entertaining, feel good, prosperity messages which we know may be deceiving.

The Bible clearly stated, "For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions."

A number of pastors today allow their congregation to compromise to other teachings and doctrines for the sake of getting their approval or for other reasons.

Pastors should remember that doing God's works might result to the world hating us for the Bible says we are not of this world.

The accountability and responsibility God gave us are very important. As Paul wrote to the Galatian church and warned them that whoever preaches different from the gospel shall be accursed and so are those who listens and accepts it. Meaning, in preaching the wrong gospel, we are putting the soul of that person at stake and ours as well.

Praise God for the four delegates who are willing to be used by God for fulltime ministry.

Are you ready to be hated by the world because of the TRUTH? May we live our lives with Christ in it and not Christ-less.



Though days went by so fast in this camp, I learned a lot - especially on being a good Christian and a good example to others. I've learned that being a Christian is a big role to take on in this world. The Lord blessed me with new friends from other places as well. Now that I am a teenager, I've learned to be proud of being a Christian, even if some of my friends don't. I just thank God for sending me here... it really was a great opportunity to be a part of this camp! Now I'm going home armed with the values and lessons learned on how to be a good child of God!

by Joelia Marie C. Lee Yu



When classes ended last March, 2010, I was so excited for summer to start.

Summer means more time on the computer and going out with my friends. But somehow, I paused and thought for a while. I knew something was missing and that my summer wouldn't be complete without it. That thought led me to join CBDTI, so I and my brother did not hesitate to sign up for the camp. Even though we were quite late, it was a good thing that we were still allowed to join. Joining this camp was really new to me because it would be my first time to be in a camp but somehow spending five days here really changed me a lot. I've learned that my life was nothing without God and that living a life by obeying God's will needs a lot of sacrifice and pain. For me, a great sacrifice comes with a great reward. I have surely met a lot of good friends and learned how to be confident at all times; but as we all know, with every beginning there's an end.

Now that CBDTI has ended, I really thank God for sending me to the camp to hear His Word so that when I get back to Cebu, I may share it with other people. I also thank God for letting me meet all the wonderful people from different churches. Though we've spent only a short time together, they have become a part of my life in such simple ways. I hope I have become a part of their lives as well. We have to remember to put God first and everything else will turn out right. Just have faith in Him. Let us not live a Christian life only by words, but let us live it through actions as well.

by Jesphine Villa



所謂「生命有限，學習卻可以無盡」。處處留心皆學問，一個人只要有心，就能在學習之路上獲得許多意想不到的收穫與驚喜。

我們的教會在許多兄姊及熱心家長的推動下，又在楊世寧弟兄的轉介中，順利地在今年的暑假展開為期一個月的華語夏令營。張瑞文老師和江鎮宇老師是兩位來自台灣的年輕老師，他們將自己的專長和精心設計的華語課程，淋瀝盡致地表現在營友們面前。

頓時間，教會內各個角落都可以聽到兒童時代耳熟能詳的「潑水歌」，「三輪車」和「小毛驢」。幼兒班的歌聲不盡令人洋溢在他們天真無邪的幸福中。

走廊上，不時可以看三五成群的小男孩玩著扯鈴，輕巧敏捷的動作和變化多端的技巧。令人看了目瞪口呆。當中學班教室內傳來朗朗上口和充滿悠長的緬懷之情的「但願人長久，千里共嬋娟」時，古人婉約柔長之情，似乎又深深地觸動人心。

成人班上的時事討論，有「世界日論環保」，「菲律賓總統選舉首次用電腦數票」等各式各種的主題，從短短的文章和影片的播放中學如何用中文表達自己的想法和意見。令人驚喜的是在上完濃厚的中國氣息的某一堂課後，成人們竟然也能完成短短的祈禱文，讓心中的祈願，飄上天際。

學會一口流利的中文，學習好中國悠久淵博的文化，並非一件容易的事。在萬那威基督教會華語夏令營結業式的那天，許多人的祈許便是以「活到老，學到老」，「天下無難事，只要有心人」的精神，在學習中文的道路相伴相隨，互相鼓勵。感謝主讓我們有機會學習華語。

A Chinese saying goes like this, "There is no boundary to learning". Taking into the mind of things going on around us is knowledge. As long as a person has an open heart to learning, he/she can achieve a lot of unexpected knowledge and amazing ideas!

The "Mandarin Summer Camp" of our church came out successful with the support of many brothers and sisters, motivation of interested parents, also with the help of Brother Ching See Ling, who pointed to us the path to invite two young Teacher Chang and Teacher Chiang from Taiwan. With their vivid expertise and carefully designed learning programs that were candidly presented, they were able to attract the interest of our younger learners. Nursery rhymes and songs in Mandarin like "The Splashing Fun", "Three-wheels' Ride" and "The Little Donkey" were soon spread all over the campus. Our hearts leap with joy as these songs are so pure and refreshing and we were hooked.

By the classroom alleys were groups of young boys and girls playing their Chinese Yo-yo. See how they tossed and caught them back smartly and how they changed their techniques every now and then. You would simply be amazed! Likewise, our hearts travelled far and our emotions touched when the high school students recited loudly the ancient work of famous poets. "Let's look at the beauty of the moon and remember each other from faraway places".

Current issues were taken up in the adult classes, like "Earth Day", "Automated Elections of the Philippines" and others. Short write-ups accompanied by multimedia presentations initiated us to speak and express our own ideas and thoughts in Mandarin. Would you believe that during one session, they were encouraged to write their own prayers and wishes in Chinese on lanterns sent to heaven?

Learning to speak Mandarin and knowing ancient Chinese culture well is not an easy job. During the culminating activities of the Mandaue Gospel Church's Mandarin Summer Camp, campers prayed earnestly that they will continue to *learn regardless of age* and that since *there is nothing difficult for a persevering person*, may we walk side by side along the path of learning and continue to hold each other up. We thank our Lord for giving us this opportunity to learn Mandarin.

I will sing of the Lord's great love forever, with my mouth I will make your faithfulness known through all generations.....Ps 89:1

Indeed, it is **amazing** how God works in wonderful and mysterious ways just to show how much He loves me.

This summer, I had the privilege to visit a little town in Negros Occidental – Cabacungan. The name may not sound so nice but **amazingly**, it has one of the best sites – the beautiful Canlaon Volcano.

1st, I never expected a couple planning to get married would ask me to be one of their sponsors. **Amazingly**, my name was there along with the thirtysome pairs of principal sponsors for the Indian-Filipina wedding set on April 24, 2010.

2nd, I haven't met the groom but I had a feeling he must be a good man for he was marrying a godly woman from a family of pastors. To my **amazement**, he sure is. Born in a Christian Indian home, his passion for the Lord Jesus was so evident. We also enjoyed our conversations

especially about food, as he is a chef from Dubai.

3rd, I never thought I could make it to Negros, having to take the 6-hour trip of open air bus and ferry rides. **Amazingly**, our good God did sustain me. The bus was not so full that it provided me space to move about when the sun became too hot on my side. He prepared the same circumstance on our way back here to Cebu.

4th, as we were approaching Cabacungan, I noticed a beautiful site – the Canlaon Volcano. As I couldn't seem to get a good angle of it, my friend said, "Just wait and see". Finally, we stopped and came down from the bus. Wow, it was so **amazing** looking at the full view of the volcano and the pretty house across the street. It was picturesque.

5th, there was such a warm welcome and the aura of Christ's love filled the air. As I got more acquainted with the owner couple, it never stopped to **amaze** me how much they really loved the Lord – they built Beulah Land to encourage pastors, missionaries and Christian



workers by providing them a quiet place for physical rest and spiritual refreshment.

6th, it's **amazing** how God provided a free van for us to go to Bacolod. Otherwise, we could not -- for my sake -- because it was too dusty due to road construction and the public transportations were all open-air.

7th, though I brought with me a tab of vitamins, I couldn't find it, so I had to buy again. However, I found it just before I talked to a pastor's wife who really needed them. I was glad I had something to help her with. Guess it was really meant for her. Isn't God **amazing**?

8th during the wedding, it was quite hot and my face was really so flushed. I wished I could sit in front of a fan. **Amazingly**, God arranged the principal sponsors in such a way that my seat was on the "no-sun" side and was right under an electric fan.

9th, I was supposed to come home on the 26th. Even if I wanted to stay, I couldn't since the place was fully booked. The night before, there was a phone call informing us that three people could not make it including the one who was going to stay in my room. So I was able to stay four more

days -- and when I checked my pillbox, it had enough medicines for four more days. Isn't it **amazing** how God fulfills our desire?

10th, on the day I stayed behind, it rained. It was also the first day of the kids' camp -- something I wanted to witness also. I was able to go visit the camp back and forth. Someone even exclaimed "The Lord made it rain so it wouldn't be hot for you when you come to visit us." **Amazing**, isn't it?

All these may seem trivial but when you look closely, so much of God's love, mercy, grace, faithfulness, sovereignty, providence were displayed. It just **amazes** me how a God so great and mighty could be so mindful of a mere human being such as me.

My friends, if He could do all that, how much should we give back to Him? But what could we give that He has not given us or what do we have that is not already His? Blessed as we all are, let us give Him the glory and praise that is due Him. Be mindful to offer your whole being to Him -- He deserves our best and our all.

...I will praise your name for Your love and Your faithfulness...Ps 138:2



I have recently been the recipient of the adventure of a lifetime. It was so improbable that had someone described to me six months ago the experience that I would end up being a part of, I would have laughed and thought that I would have a better chance of winning the lottery than that happening.

But it did.

I have been given the opportunity to travel, and visit almost ninety percent of our country, campaigning by the side of a great man, who would ultimately become the 15th President of our country, Benigno "Noynoy" Aquino III.

I would have never thought that would be possible especially given the fact that I did not even know him or any of his family, nor was I a member of his political party or involved in politics.

The adventure has given me rich experiences from riding different kinds of helicopters to all sorts of planes as well as to experience the different ways of life of many of our countrymen. It has also allowed me the chance firsthand to see how fortunate and blessed many of us are, and of how much we can actually do to help if we choose to.

I was surprised when I found out I was quoted in Time Magazine and the Philippine Daily Inquirer. I have had the pleasure of meeting hundreds of interesting people as well as some very famous as well as controversial ones. It really has been a journey beyond description for me.

I have always said to myself, "God gives us opportunities that may be suited for our talents but the circumstances that allow these to occur can only be explained by God." And I have constantly experienced this, and along the way, I have always relied on one thing, "Trust in God". "Everything is possible for him who believes." Mark 9:23

I have often been asked, as to how I ended up doing what I was doing. I really have no clear answer. I was asked to volunteer in Cebu, to which I tried to do my best and with a passion. As things got tougher in the campaign, I was asked if I was willing to also volunteer in Manila. I said Yes, and began shuttling back and forth. From there it just happened very quickly, and the next thing I knew, I was assigned to be a member of the close in campaign team of the Senator.

I realized that I had committed with a passion and belief that the Senator would be the best man to lead our Country. I relied on my Faith that this was part of God's plan. Even when it was not very clear to many people, I and many others had already believed the Senator was part of this plan.

One of the things that struck me about Noynoy was his deep humility, integrity, as well as strong faith in the will of God. The decision to take up the challenge and run only came about from constant prayer as well as a religious retreat. I have seen for myself many occasions wherein he would pray and commit many of his actions and decisions in the campaign. "Commit to the Lord

whatever you do, and your plans will succeed."
(Proverbs 16:3)"

God really has unique plans for each and everyone of us. We have to open our minds to it. Nothing is impossible with him. A man who was devoid of ambition to become leader of our Country is now awaiting proclamation to do so. A Year before, had he been told that he was to be the next President, it would have been as improbable as winning the lottery. Similarly, had I been told that what I had experienced was to happen, I too would have ended up with the same conclusion.

I have a favorite verse that has always stuck in my mind and heart, "I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."
(Jeremiah 29:11)

His verse has always comforted me in everything that I do. It has given me the confidence in making decisions as well as the strength to pursue certain actions. It has allowed me to accept the situations and deal with it as it comes along.

I have had a wonderful journey, one that is now causing me to think about what lies in store for me. I have been blessed with rich experience and been given a unique responsibility to share and inspire others, into once again, believing and working together to help our country become better.

God is all knowing and all loving. He has unique plans for each and everyone of us. I have added one more verse to my favorite. "Trust in the Lord with all your heart; and don't lean on your own understanding. In all things acknowledge him, and he shall direct your way. [Proverbs 3:5, 6]"

十一月廿六日 - 舉行「感恩節聚會」，由各團契供獻特別節目，共讚主恩！

十一月廿九日，十二月一日 - 舉行聖洗，為洪真真，王良耀，王良賜，王妙恩，傅雷恩，盧彩鳳施洗，歸入主名。

十二月廿日 - 舉行聖誕崇拜會，由聖歌團以詩歌讚美，歡頌主哉。

正月三日 - 今年主題為「唯在基督」，並為恩賜兄，安祥兄，善籌兄，俊傑兄，素美姊，維仁姊，如玉姊舉行2010-2012年度執事就職禮，事奉主神。

二月七日 - 舉行嬰孩奉獻，將Chris Ryan

Chua, Robin Alec Ho, Elizabeth Joanne King, Kenzie Rhys Li, Karl Richard Lim, Nathaniel Poh Tiu, Emmanuel Edralin 獻於主前。

三月七日 - 舉行教會94周年慶祝，特請菲華聖劇社主演「天下父母心」，彰顯主愛。

三月十三日 - 舉行建基中學畢業禮拜，願學生們追求智識，熱心主工。

四月四日 - 舉行聖洗，為洪瑩瑩，李麗慈，王明慧，傅仰美，黃俊德，李玉嬌施洗，蒙得主悅。

四月廿四 - 舉行「聖經透視之養育」講座，由謝偉光博士主持，同領主道。

教會消息



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