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# Table of Contents

<u>Title</u>	<u>Page</u>
<b><i>What Christmas is All About</i></b>	<b>2</b>
<b><i>Journey to Bali</i></b>	<b>4</b>
<b><i>The Christian Worker</i></b>	<b>7</b>
<b><i>A Meaningful Sign of Christmas</i></b>	<b>10</b>
<b><i>Zeal and Sacrifice</i></b>	<b>12</b>
<b><i>Thinking Outside the Box</i></b>	<b>14</b>
蒙恩者	<b>15</b>
<b><i>The Consistency of God's Salvation</i></b>	<b>16</b>
降生節的應許 - 以馬內利	<b>18</b>
咱真正認識上帝嗎?	<b>20</b>
<b><i>Church Health = Church Growth</i></b>	<b>22</b>
<b><i>An Epic Year</i></b>	<b>24</b>
耶路撒冷十個城門	<b>26</b>
勇奔前程, 無悔今生	<b>30</b>
<b><i>PCGS Hongkong Experience</i></b>	<b>33</b>
<b><i>Who Wrote the Books of the Bible</i></b>	<b>38</b>
給愛增添一份的熱	<b>44</b>
<b><i>Extra! Extra!</i></b>	<b>46</b>
<b><i>Other Church Highlights</i></b>	<b>55</b>



# What Christmas is All About

by: Rev. Un Hock Wee

What is Christmas all about? Is it about family reunion when family members come home for a visit and gather together for a big celebration? Is it about exchanging gifts where I buy a gift for you and in return, I will receive a gift from you? Is it about preparing a lot of things in the busiest time of the year?

More important than these, Christmas is all about the love of God....God's unconditional love, His ultimate gift and unlimited blessings.

## 1. GOD'S UNCONDITIONAL LOVE – “For God so loved the world...” (John 3:16a)

It is so natural for us to love a lovable person. The love of God on the other hand is unconditional. The love of God is not based on how we respond to Him but it comes from within Him. We are unlovable in the eyes of God because of our sins and yet, God still loves us. The Bible says in Romans 5:8, “But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”

God loves you simply because He *wants* to love you, He *chose* to love you, and He *decided* to

love you. “The LORD did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any other people, for you were the least of all peoples; but because the LORD loves you, and because He would keep the oath which He swore to your fathers, the LORD has brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you from the house of bondage, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.” (Deuteronomy 7:7-8) This is because God Himself is love. (1 John 4:8).

No one can really fathom why God loves us so much. Yes, we know that God is love, and that we are His creation, His children; but it is a mystery that as we continue to sin and fail Him, as we continue to be disobedient and break the promises that we've made to Him, He still loves us as much as He ever did. God never says, "That's it, no more love! I've had it with you!" Nothing we do can make God stop loving you. God's unconditional love is far beyond our understanding.

God hates the sin but even as we are sinning, He still loves us with that perfect love. It is a love simply beyond the comprehension of the human mind. Man's inability to understand God's great love is probably best described by Paul in Ephesians 3:19, where he described God's love with the phrase, “a love which surpasses all knowledge”.

So what is Christmas all about? It is about the unconditional love of God for to everyone, whether rich or poor, unknown or famous, learned or unlearned...that despite our sinfulness, God allowed His only Son Jesus Christ to come down to earth and die for us on the cross so that our sins could be forgiven.

## 2. GOD'S ULTIMATE GIFT “...that he gave his only begotten Son.....” (John 3:16b)

Christmas time is a time of giving and sharing. We prepare gifts to give to people who are dear and important to us. Those whom we love most usually will receive the best or the most expensive gift. But not in the eyes of God. The gift of God is beyond





compare. We don't deserve any gift from God yet God gave us the best gift through his Son, Jesus Christ. As Ephesians 2:8-9 (ESV) states, "For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast."

*Why did Jesus come and what is our greatest need?*  
 If our greatest need had been information, God would have sent us an educator;  
 If our greatest need had been technology, God would have sent us a scientist;  
 If our greatest need had been money, God would have sent us an economist;  
 If our greatest need had been pleasure, God would have sent us an entertainer;  
 But our greatest need is forgiveness, so God sent us a Savior!!

The only gift we ever truly need is salvation from our sinfulness which only God can provide through Jesus Christ our Saviour. Jesus Christ died for mankind so that we might have abundant life in God the Almighty.

**3. GOD'S UNLIMITED BLESSINGS** - "*....that whoever believes in him should not perish but have everlasting life.*" (John 3:16c)

Life on earth is sometimes full of despair and sadness; we can shed a lot of tears and undergo a lot

of hardships in life. When we think about them, we will only get depressed and easily lose hope. But this should not be the end of the story. God is the one holding the key...the key to everlasting life to those who believe in Jesus and put their trust in Him. In return, God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away. (Rev. 21:4). God is saying, "If you want to have eternal life, accept Christ! If you want to live forever, accept my Christ. If you want someone to take care of all your worries, accept Christ." This is what John 3:16 means when it says, "*For God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.*"

God's invitation is opened to us! Whoever believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life! God's love is unconditional. God's gift is the ultimate for mankind. But if you want to experience it in your life, you have to believe in Jesus Christ for yourself! You have to have your own relationship with God! You have to personally accept God's invitation. Then you will experience the real meaning of CHRISTMAS.

A BLESSED CHRISTMAS AND A CHRIST-CENTERED NEWYEAR TO ALL !!!



# The Journey to Bali

by: Pastor Eric Chan

Sometime last year, the Church Council received an invitation from CCOWE Philippines asking us to join the recently concluded 8<sup>th</sup> CCOWE Congress in Bali, Indonesia from September 11-16, 2011. Through the kindness of our leaders, I was asked to join; yet, I had no passport at that time. They told me it would be easy to secure a passport. Since, it was already December, 2010; I decided to work on my passport application in January, 2011.

The deadline for submission of passport was on June 30, 2011. After two trips to Manila, my passport was finally released on June 22, 2011 – 8 days before the deadline. I knew in my heart this was made possible only by God's guiding hands. The LORD God truly should be praised above all. Dr. Joseph Shao made this comment, “God made what was impossible to be possible”.

Finally in September 11, 2011 after three connecting flights, I set foot on a foreign soil for the first time. Truly, the experience was exhilarating. At the CCOWE Congress, I got glimpses on how Chinese Christian missions are doing worldwide. It is comforting, yet sad.

Like us here in the Philippines, Chinese Churches worldwide are struggling with generation gap amongst believers. To compound the problem, the language barrier is widening from generation to generation. In Indonesia, Chinese curriculum was prohibited in schools for a long time due to racial discrimination against Chinese people. So, most of those who are now in their 40s can't speak a single word of Mandarin – the Chinese national language. On the other hand, after a period of persecution and hardship, the younger generation are finally allowed to have Chinese curriculum, so most of the younger generation are good – if not fluent – in Mandarin. In countries like Australia, American and even Singapore, perhaps due to the strong influence of western culture, many Chinese people can't speak a single Mandarin word but are fluent in English. Here in the Philippines, generation after generation, a good number of Chinese people resolved to forego Mandarin language in favor of English; at least, until recently. In fact, many of our younger generation can't even speak straight Chinese-Fukien dialect. Personally, I believe several factors led to recent circumstances.

Five decades ago after World War II, America emerged as the world's superpower. For some time, Soviet Union tried to match toe-to-toe with the US but socialism was no match to the attraction of democracy (At least, many believed America truly symbolized democracy). So, the English language became acceptable worldwide. This might have unconsciously caused us to neglect our own native tongue. Thereby, Chinese-Fukien dialect was not being used regularly at home.

Another major hindrance could be the prevailing circumstantial condition of our society. At that time, speaking Chinese





who are in their mid-50s have a good command of the Chinese dialect – perhaps both Chinese-Fukien and Mandarin. Those in the middle age can speak Chinese languages but they don't know how to write. The younger generation are mostly English speaking people. So, how do we define a Chinese person today? Is it by the language they speak? Or, is it by their ancestry? Given the situation, how are we to address Chinese Christian mission work today? That is a common problem Chinese Christians are

facing worldwide. Chinese churches are at the crossroad.

Now, let us discuss the generation gap. With the invention of iPad, many of our children have moved a step further away from our culture and tradition. I am now in my late 40s, my children find it strange to see a typewriter. Today, desktop computers are starting to fade away from the offices. Perhaps, soon it will be a thing of the past. So, how are we to point out the beauty and usefulness of the typewriter or desktop computers if we ourselves have relegated it to relics? The same can be said of the values, cultures, and traditions that we grew up with, but are now strangers to them. Add to that, the vastness of information that internet provides – it challenges our beliefs and teachings at home. This is another problem that is common, not only to the Chinese churches, but to everyone worldwide. So, how are we to do effective mission work amidst diversity?

Once, someone spoke about having foresight in doing ministry. So, it was said, China is getting stronger so

dialect could be detrimental to oneself. As a child, I remember how people would make fun of us whenever we speak Chinese. Somehow, it conditioned my mind not to speak Chinese, lest be mocked by others. Moreover, during my student days, the Philippine government reduced Chinese curriculum to two or three subjects per school year. Most Chinese schools seemed not to encourage Chinese education. On the other hand, much premium was given to English – perhaps this was due to the effect of the communist revolution so China was not as strong as it is today. Presently, we have a paradigm shift – economically speaking, China is becoming stronger compared to the US. So, many are encouraged to study Mandarin today.

Therefore, like Indonesia, the younger generation have a great language barrier compared to the older generation. Here in the Philippines, most of those



let us be focused and use the Chinese dialect. But which Chinese dialect? Here in the Philippines, most Chinese people use the Chinese-Fukien dialect, not Mandarin. On the other hand, to be effective in China, you need to speak Mandarin. To complicate the situation further, most of the younger generation, who truly is our future, are no longer comfortable with either Chinese-Fukien or Mandarin.



When we speak of foresight, we should focus on them. Truly, we are in a dilemma!

The coming of the Mainland China people to our country is another great challenge. Yes, they are Chinese like us; but without a doubt, we are worlds apart culturally, not to mention the language barrier. How then can we reach out to them? We need people who can understand their culture; better yet, those who are Mainlanders themselves. Or, at the very least, people who have done mission work in China for some time. In turn, we can support such ministry from the background through prayers and financial support – the same can be said vice-versa.

Locally, we need to reinvent the local Chinese mission work. We must purposely reach out and disciple our youth. Complacency in ministry is no longer acceptable. People will not go to church automatically. The challenge of TV evangelism coupled with the attraction of English speaking pose a challenge to us. We need to MAKE DISCIPLES THAT WILL MAKE DISCIPLES. Mentorship should be the first agenda of the church.

My journey to Bali affirms my understanding of our

recent crisis. We are not alone. Every Chinese church is undergoing the same struggle. CHURCHES ARE GROWING IN NUMBERS, BUT IT DOES NOT REPRESENT GROWTH IN THE NUMBER OF BELIEVERS. The concept of a local church is slowly becoming a thing of the past. People go to church like they are going to the malls. Each Sunday, they moved from one mall unto another. We have failed the Lord Jesus Christ. We are not making DISCIPLES for Christ, but believers.

I thank God for International CCOWE conferences. It provides us Chinese Christians a window to mingle with one another. Also, it's a great opportunity to listen to each other's heartaches and struggles. Let us pray for REVIVAL. May God grant us the passion to reach out to our neighboring fellow Chinese before those who are beyond our immediate reach. Stop bickering against each other. If we are not faithful in small things, how can we do the same for greater things? The trip to Bali was truly worthwhile. God truly has a good purpose for everything.



# The Christian Worker

by: Pastor Angelo Gutierrez

William Wilberforce is one of the great men of Christianity. He became a member of the British Parliament in 1780 and was converted to Christianity five years later. He was not only convicted to change his lifestyle, he also saw the great need for social reform on slavery. Thus, for twenty-six years he struggled to pass the Slave Trade Act in 1807. Later on, he was able to witness the enactment of Slavery Abolition Act in 1833. This led to the abolishment of slavery in most of the British Empire.

But the fight for proper treatment for slaves began even before the time of William Wilberforce.

During the time of Apostle Paul, a big part of the population consisted of slaves because the Roman and Greek empires enforced slavery. Onesimus, the well-known slave in the Bible, was with Paul when he wrote his letter to the Colossians. Paul might have met Onesimus in one of his journeys and had convinced him not only to receive Christ but also to go back to his former master, Philemon.

Perhaps it was through this encounter with Onesimus that prompted Paul to give specific instructions to slaves and masters in Colossians 3:22-4:1. In the past, I have heard sermons that often apply this passage to an employer-employee relationship. But allow me to extend this to a broader picture that

would be relevant to each and every one of us. Through these five verses, we can grasp three principles in order to have a better perspective on our work or responsibilities.

## **I. THE RIGHT ATTITUDE: WORK CHEERFULLY (v.22)**

First, we need to have the right attitude. Paul said, *“Slaves, obey your earthly masters in everything; and do it, not only when their eye is on you and to win their favor, but with sincerity of heart and reverence for the Lord.”*

Paul encouraged the Christian slaves to willingly submit to their masters and to do it cheerfully. He did not tell them to fight for their freedom because through Christ, they were already free from the bondage of sin. He was telling them to accept their situation and do their best with what the Lord had given them. Thus, they needed to submit to their masters, to literally avoid “eye-pleasing” their masters, and do it with sincerity of heart and reverence for the Lord.

Some car owners like to stick quotes at the rear window of their cars. One particular quote says, “I owe, I owe, so off to work I go.” For a majority of the workforce, that's the best reason they can think of for going to work each day.

Whenever people meet and ask the question, “How's work?” the common reply was a complaint: complaint about the boss, complaint about their salary, complaint about co-workers or complaint about the work load. We can only count the number of people who are actually satisfied with their jobs. But just as Paul encouraged the Christian slaves back then, he wanted us *“to make the teaching about God our Savior attractive [in every way],”* showing the beauty of our faith in Christ by how we work.

This, of course, does not only apply to those in the workforce. All of us have our own responsibilities. Students are responsible for their studies and overall performance in school. At the same time, they also have some responsibilities at home. Similarly, parents' work is not only limited to their career. Their work is also to take care of their household. Whatever our role

is in life, we need to make God's teaching attractive by how we work.

There was a story of an Egyptian architect who was commissioned by one of the Pharaohs to build a lighthouse at the Nile River. The architect eventually built a fine structure. Engraved upon the cement outside of the lighthouse was the name of the Pharaoh. In a few years, the effect of wind and rain had damaged the cement and Pharaoh's name had vanished. Then it was discovered that the crafty architect had engraved his own name at the base of the structure. It may seem that we are faithfully working for someone, but when the truth is laid bare, we may be serving our own pride. Even Christian work may be done outwardly for the glory of God; but, when the underlying motive is revealed, our real goal often turns out to be for our own glory.

Let us strive not to become like the architect. Let us be careful to have the right motive and attitude in everything that we do and to do them with sincerity of heart and reverence for the Lord.

## **II. THE RIGHT PRACTICE: WORK CONSCIOUSLY (vv.23-24)**

The second principle is we need to have the right practice. *“Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving.”*

A significant and often overlooked way that we serve God is in our everyday tasks. It may appear that the works of hymn-writer Fanny Crosby and the work of a household help are far different in all aspects. But both become equally spiritual when they are offered to God, when they are done humbly “as to the Lord.” Of course, this does not mean that one can just mindlessly choose any work to do. We are given gifts and skills and we are placed in situations that may determine what God wants us to do. Ants must dig to the glory of God and a rooster must crow for the same purpose.

Martin Luther understood this when he wrote, “The maid who sweeps her kitchen is doing the

*Whatever you do, work at it with  
all your heart, as working for the Lord,  
not for men, since you know that you will  
receive an inheritance from the Lord  
as a reward.*

*Colossians 3:23-24*

will of God – not because she may sing a Christian hymn as she sweeps but because God loves clean floors. The Christian shoemaker does his Christian duty not by putting little crosses on the shoes, but by making good shoes, because God is interested in good craftsmanship.”

Another aspect of the passage is also worth mentioning. Paul said in verse 24, *“you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward.”* In Moscow, back in their communist days, many Christian factory workers impressed the political leaders because they started work on time and achieved more than their work quotas. Therefore, factory managers were eager to employ Christians. These workers were motivated to work with integrity and accountability. Their immediate reward was a guaranteed and a stable employment. But one of the long-term results was that it led to the breaking of communism in Russia. Work as though working for the Lord, *“because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.”*

## **III. THE RIGHT TREATMENT: WORK JUSTLY (v.25-4:1)**

The third principle is we need to give the right treatment. *“Anyone who does wrong will be repaid for his wrong, and there is no favoritism. Masters, provide your slaves with what is right and fair, because you know that you also have a Master in heaven.”*

Do you ever feel overworked, over-regulated, under-leisured, under-benefited? Don't lose heart. Just imagine yourself working in this 1852 London office. Researchers found a memo in the ruins of this



office building. The memo says:

(1) This firm has reduced the hours of work, and the clerical staff will now only have to be present between the hours of 7 a.m. and 6 p.m. weekdays. (2) Clothing must be of a sober nature. The clerical staff will not clothe themselves in bright colored fabric. (3) No member of the clerical staff may leave the room without permission from the supervisor. (4) No talking is allowed during business hours. (5) The craving for tobacco, wine or spirits is a human weakness, and as such is forbidden to all members of the clerical staff. (6) Members of the clerical staff will provide their own pens. A new sharpener is available on application to the supervisor. (7) Now that the hours of business have been drastically reduced, the partaking of food is allowed between 11:30 and noon, but work will not on any account [stop].

We have indeed come a long way from those harsh labor codes. But according to God's codes, the right treatment is to work justly. *"Anyone who does wrong will be repaid for his wrong, and there is no favoritism."* God willed that the gospel would be made available to all, that is why Paul mentioned that, *"Here there is no Greek or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all."* The same principle applies to all our everyday activities – for God, there is no favoritism. Masters and slaves, those of distinguished positions and those of blue-collar jobs are all equal in the eyes of God. Therefore, as employees of whatever field, students, and even those who stay at home – let us diligently perform our responsibilities, bearing in mind that God's justice will come when we take our work for granted.

On the other hand, we may not have slaves at present, but we have several people working under us – or better still, there are people who serve us whom we do not directly pay. We are served by janitors, drivers, repairman, bank tellers, operators, cashiers,

waiters, and salesladies several times and yet we may have thanked them less. Perhaps, we were even quick to complain about their minor mistakes. And sadly, we appreciate their roles only when they have served us according to our standards. May we acknowledge their ordinary yet noble service to us and provide them the treatment that would please God. As Jesus said, *"do to others what you would have them do to you."*

Working justly speaks both to masters and slaves. We are instructed to perform our respective tasks justly without cheating or manipulating our way to succeed. Similarly, we are instructed to regard others who serve us with much fairness and respect. In either situation, let us remember this passage from Philippians, *"in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others."*

In the 2010 national elections, candidates have come up with their campaign slogans that highlight key talents for the promise of improvement of the nation. We have *"Sipag at Tiyaga"* or *"Hard work and Perseverance,"* and *"Galing at Talino"* or *"Ability and Intellect."*

Sounds great! But looking at these slogans carefully, I believe these will not give anyone success without one thing: the fear of God. Apart from knowing and glorifying God, work will not be fulfilling, it will not be satisfying, and it will not be edifying. But when we know Whom we are ultimately trying to please, the work of a businessman, employee, full-time mother or even a student will be more meaningful both to us and to others around us.

Have the attitude of cheerfulness at our workplace because the Lord has placed us there for a purpose. Have a system of working consciously, knowing that the Lord is the one whom we are serving. And have the conduct of working justly, handling all the people connected to you accordingly.

May the grace and mercy of God be with us as we *"do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus [and] with sincerity of heart and reverence for the Lord."* Amen.



# A Meaningful Sign of Christmas

by: Pastor Charmaine Gutierrez

There's a certain excitement when we see Christmas decors displayed in the malls, when we hear Christmas songs on the radio, and especially, when we read the colourful words "Christmas Sale" on newspapers or posters. It's interesting how these things can brighten up a person's day and bring back good memories that can make a person smile. Christmas time is indeed one of the, if not *the*, most awaited holiday of the year for most people.

These simple signs of Christmastime somehow stir in us enthusiasm and even hope for good things to come. And for some people here in the Philippines, Christmas brings an odd, yet fascinating, optimism for their future, despite the relatively poor economic standing they may be in. Indeed, even simple Christmas signs around us shower us with hope.

## *The Sign found in Luke 1*

Interestingly, God Himself provided signs to commence the birth of His Son, which is the reason why we celebrate Christmas in the first place. A particular sign is found in Luke 1:5-25, the foretelling of John the Baptist's birth, an account that has often been left out and deemed unimportant to the coming of Jesus Christ. But the writer, Luke, believed and understood that God gave John the Baptist a crucial role in the life of the Savior, Jesus Christ. Just like any

powerful king, Jesus Christ had a messenger or a herald to proclaim His coming. Thus, the foretelling of John's birth, and ultimately his life, were indicators that *the* King, the One who would save God's people, was to come soon.

## *A Couple's Plight*

Luke 1:5-25 tells about the experience of John's parents, Zechariah and Elizabeth, when they were told about their soon-to-be-born child. Both of them belonged to priestly lines. They were faithful in obeying God's commandments, but they were not able to have a child because Elizabeth was barren, and both of them were already old. Their situation was quite an irony in the Jewish culture. Jews believed that not having a child indicated disfavour from God. Not only would the parents end up alone with no descendant to take care of them in their old age, they were also regarded as sinful and were being punished for something they did.<sup>1</sup> Yet, even in light of such miserable reality, Zechariah and his wife still lived righteous lives in the sight of God.

## *Zechariah's Shocking News*

But something extraordinary happened to Zechariah when he, as a priest, was on duty and serving in the temple of the Lord. According to the custom of the priesthood, the most special priestly task in the temple was for a chosen priest to enter the sacred area, the Most Holy Place, keep the incense burning on the altar there, and immediately leave that area. Zechariah, by the cast of lots, was responsible at that time to do just that. But God planned something more to Zechariah's task there. He received a message from God's angel, telling him the good news that his wife, Elizabeth, will soon bear a son.

However, his amazement, perhaps on both the appearance of the angel and the profound message, got the best of him. He questioned the certainty of the message, knowing very well that his and his wife's condition would absolutely render them incapable of conceiving a child. But his disbelief cost him his speech. As his lesson, the angel silenced him until the birth of his son.

Bittersweet as it may appear, if it was a TV show, this scene would get some laughs. Just like Charlie Chaplin, Zechariah made signs and might have repeatedly tried to talk but nothing came out. At long last, the child that he had been praying for all these



years was finally coming, yet, he couldn't even tell anyone about it.

### ***The Divine Purpose***

But God's purpose was more than just providing the couple a child. God's ultimate purpose was to bring a messenger into the world to declare the coming of the Messiah. Luke 1 verses 16 and 17 says, "Many of the people of Israel will he bring back to the Lord their God. And he will go on before the Lord, in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to their children and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous-- to make ready a people prepared for the Lord."

### ***The Silence Was Over***

For over 400 years, there was no declaration of God's message through prophecies. God did not directly speak to the Israelites. What the message of the angel to Zechariah implied was that the long wait was over; the Israelites would once again hear God's word through Zechariah's son, John. Just like the Old Testament prophets, God would use John to turn many people back to Him through the proclamation of His message. John would "incline their hearts to receive the Messiah, and bid him welcome, by awakening them to a sense of sin and a desire of



righteousness.”<sup>2</sup> As a forerunner of the Lord, John's role would be a herald announcing the coming of the promised king. He would prepare the hearts of the people, pointing them not to himself, but to Jesus Christ who would save God's people. As the messenger of Christ, John's ultimate role was to lead the people to act and think in such a way that is appropriate for God's coming Messiah.

### ***Something Good Was About to Happen***

Through this event in the life of Zechariah and Elizabeth, God had shown us His faithfulness in saving mankind. Through the angel, God had declared that he would bring about a man who would proclaim that the Christ would come soon. He had already promised salvation even in the book of Genesis. Now He was fulfilling that long, long-awaited promise. The announcement of the birth of John was the signal of that fulfilment. It served as a wake-up call to the people that the promise of a Savior would soon come alive. And that fulfilment was climaxed in the life and death of Jesus Christ.

The story of the coming of John the Baptist became a crucial sign because he had a specific role that concerned Jesus Christ. He was the messenger of our Savior. The announcement of John's birth served as a sure sign that something good was about to happen, that is, God's people would be saved. We often fail to remember or appreciate the story of John as we celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ. But John's life still serves as a hopeful sign for us now, showing us God's faithfulness in fulfilling His plan of salvation for us. More than any Christmas decors or songs, the account of Jesus' messenger ought to stir in us that excitement towards God's promise and awe towards God Himself. Our salvation, indeed, rests in the hands of the wise, all-knowing and loving God, who planned and fulfilled His promise through His Son, Jesus Christ.

I pray that our December would be meaningful as we understand more and more the reason for Christmas, Jesus, the King, coming on earth to save us sinners from our sins.

<sup>1</sup> *Word Biblical Commentary*, Vol.35a, Luke 1:1-9:20, Libronix Digital Library

<sup>2</sup> *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the New Testament*, Luke 1:5-25, Quickverse 2007



# Zeal and Sacrifice

by: Rev. Andy Smith

Zeal and sacrifice are inseparable. On the one hand, zeal for the wrong thing can cause people to make a foolish sacrifice. On the other hand, zeal for the Lord can cause us to make sacrifices that bear eternal fruit.

Several years ago, a rally celebrated the 100th anniversary of missionary work in certain part of Zaire. Towards the end, an old man insisted that he be allowed to speak. He explained that when the missionaries first came, they thought the foreigners were strange and their message unusual. The leaders decided to test them by slowly poisoning them to death. Over a period of months, missionary children died one by one. The old man testified, "It was as we watched how they died that we decided we wanted to live as Christians."

Zeal and sacrifice are indeed inseparable. Jesus served with zeal, and it cost Him His very life. The same has been true for many of His followers. Most of the easy missions work in the Philippines and around the world had been done. The work that remains will require zeal and sacrifice.

So, in order to do it, we must first tame the fear. We must tame the fear which threatens to absorb our

energy. The plots of the Jews severely tested Paul (Acts 20:19-21). They tested his willingness to make personal sacrifices. He passed the test, making huge sacrifices for Christ's sake.

As a result, he boldly proclaimed to all that they must repent and turn to God. He was able to finish his task. From Jerusalem all the way around to Illyricum, he fully proclaimed the gospel of Christ (Romans 15:19b).

In addition, we must tame the fear which could abort our plans. In every city, the Holy Spirit warned Paul that he would face prison and hardships (Acts 20:22-23). Did he reply, "If that's the case, maybe I won't go to Jerusalem"? Did he argue, "That cannot be God's will for me; He has promised me only good things"? Did he remind God that he had already made his share of sacrifices?

No, no, and no. Since he had tamed his fear of future hardships, he didn't abort his plans. Instead, he went ahead to Jerusalem ready to endure further hardships.

Most of the easy missions work in the Philippines and around the world has been done. The work that remains will require zeal and sacrifice. To get it done, we must first tame the fear.

Furthermore, like Paul, we must taste the prize. God will honor those who finish well. To be motivated to endure hardships, we must taste the prize which awaits the faithful.

Paul wanted to finish the task God gave him to do (Acts 20:24). He valued that more than his life. In his last letter, he testified: "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness" (2 Timothy 4:7-8a).

Back then, winners of athletic events received a crown made of vines and flowers. It honored the winner for a while but eventually dried up and turned to dust. The crown that awaits the faithful, however, will last forever. Keeping that truth in mind can help us endure hardships.

Most of the easy missions work in the Philippines and around the world has been done. The work that remains will require zeal and sacrifice. To get it done, we must taste the prize.

Having tamed the fear and tasted the prize, we must take the risk. We must begin ministries that may require sacrifices. Among other things, doing so affirms our motive.

Paul made tents while spreading the Gospel. He supported himself while planting churches (Acts 20:34). It also gave him contacts for evangelism. He talked with various traders during the process of purchasing materials. He looked for buyers of his finished products.

Paul deserved to be supported by those he served. But he chose to make this sacrifice to clarify his motive for ministry. He wasn't in the ministry for the money. Instead, he was in it for the joy of obeying God.

In addition, we must take the risk which assists the needy. To help the weak, Paul obeyed Jesus by giving and giving and giving (Acts 20:35). He was happy to make sacrifices in order to assist the needy.

A gifted and highly educated person, he could have settled down, developed his business, and lived well. He could have built a nice house. He could have put up a factory or established a quality school. But instead, he chose to take the risk and give much.

Most of the easy missions work in the Philippines and around the world has been done. The work that remains will require zeal and sacrifice. To get it done, we must take the risk. We must take the risk which affirms our motive and which assists the needy.

How about us? Are we among the zealous? The missions work that remains in the Philippines and around the world will require zeal and sacrifice. To do it, we must tame the fear. We must taste the prize. And we must take the risk.

The sacrifice which we need to make personally depends on the task that God is asking us to complete. Is He calling you to go? Then you will probably need to give up your career and your comfort.

Is He calling you to send missionaries? Then you will need to give up some of your current activities to have time to pray for them. And you may need to revise your budget so that you can support them financially.

Is God asking you to prepare your members to go? Then you will likely need to give up some of your current programs and commit your church's resources to activities that will better equip them for missions.

Most of the easy missions work in the Philippines and around the world has been done. The work that remains will require zeal and sacrifice.

Let's make our lives, our time, our intelligence, our wealth, our hearts totally available to God. May our zeal for Him cause us to make sacrifices that will bear eternal fruit.

*Most of the easy missions work in the Philippines and around the world has been done. The work that remains will require zeal and sacrifice.*



# “Thinking Outside the Box”

by: Wanda Po Liam Giok

This school year, Philippine Christian Gospel School has adopted “I’m MAD for Jesus” as our theme. MAD stands for “making a difference.” We live in world where conventional thinking is preferred; tradition is cherished; conformity is laudable. To make a difference in such a world takes a lot of guts, courage, and determination. The Apostle Paul wrote, “Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is – his good, pleasing and perfect will” (Romans 12:2). Making a difference for Jesus starts with an examination, a scrutiny and probing of our thinking patterns; this progresses to a new mind, a changed attitude, and a transformed person. The result of which is an enriched understanding of God’s will. Yes, making a difference at times challenges our thinking mode; it requires us to think outside the box. As a Christian, I need to review and re-examine some of the world’s thinking patterns in the light of scriptures. As I searched the scriptures for examples of “thinking outside the box,” these are some of what I discovered ...

- Denying is Gaining –  
Jesus said, “If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me” (Matthew 16:24). To deny oneself is to negate whatever rights is due a

person; it is giving up all. It involves a total surrender of one’s rights, possessions, position, status, titles, etc. to the point that there is none of the “self.” This is a voluntary act of the will; not imposed upon by others. When Jesus decided to leave heaven’s glory in order to save you and me and all other human beings on this planet earth, he gave up all claims to himself; he denied himself the worship due a king; he surrendered his will to the Father; he laid down his life. In giving up his life, Jesus gained all – the Father’s approval and exaltation, and the worship of all creation. If I would come after Christ, I must deny myself; when I do this, I gain all – sonship in Christ, forgiveness of sins, heirs and joint heirs of the promises in Jesus, life eternal and so much more!

- Weakness is Strength –  
Who is perfect among us? Who is without any weakness? The great apostle Paul had a weakness, a thorn in his flesh; he pleaded with God to remove it. It was a weakness he openly confessed but not given a specific name. How like many of us? We will admit that we have a certain weakness but we are embarrassed to disclose it. Three times Paul prayed about it - asking God to take it away; each time around God said, “Paul, my grace is sufficient for you... for my power is made perfect in weakness” (2 Corinthians 12:9).

Be not conformed to this world;  
but be transformed by  
the renewing of your mind,  
that you may prove what is that  
GOOD, ACCEPTABLE & PERFECT,  
will of God.  
Romans 12:2



We can therefore delight in things that are considered “weakness” (physical infirmities, mental and learning disability, insufficiency, insults, helplessness, difficulties, etc.) – for “when I am weak, then I am strong” (2 Corinthians 12:10).



- Lack is Surplus

Jesus and his disciples were not exactly planning to go on a picnic but the crowd has been following them all day. It was getting dark; they were in the middle of nowhere – no sari-sari store, no “turo-turo carenderia” nearby; no push cart selling fish ball or tempura in sight; no “piso-piso” water station. Then Jesus instructed the disciples to give the people something to eat. Is Jesus out of his mind? There must be at least 5000 men in the crowd. A year's wages would not even be enough to buy bread for all the people to have a bite! What can a boy's five loaves of bread and two pieces of fish do? Impossible! Unthinkable! Madness! After giving thanks, Jesus broke the bread and told the disciples to give them to the people. Not only did everyone have something to eat, but everyone also had their stomachs filled to satisfaction ... and there were still twelve basketfuls of left-overs. Amazing! Little becomes much in the Master's hands. What was considered a lack has turned out to be surplus!

If I really wanted to make a difference, I would reject all trappings of the self, boast in my weakness and exercise my faith in God because He is still the Jehovah Jireh. Think outside the box and make a difference for Jesus!

# 蒙恩者

萌苗

從前,我不知道上帝是誰,因為我們家庭的信仰是佛教.結婚之後,丈夫的家庭是信天主教.所以我是在佛教和天主教中間的信徒.

上帝沒有在我心裡之前,我是一個消沉和遇見困難不知所措的人.我遇到各樣不同的艱難,我心裡很傷痛.有苦不知跟誰說.我的腦子常常想出不應該想的路,尋找短路,想一了百了.但是我沒有成功.

我受的苦沒人知道,孩子們還小,丈夫不明白,常對我發脾氣.我不敢跟父母說.所以我的苦難是一波未平,一波再起,一連好幾年.有一天,我遇見一個朋友的表姊.她是一個敬拜主的基督信徒.她傳福音給我.她跟我說:「只要我們有信心信靠主,倚靠主,主會跟你同在.主常在你心靈,救你的靈魂.你給主敲門,主會為你開門。」之後,我會用祈禱跟上帝談心裡的話.我漸漸地明白上帝是誰.

一年之後,我接受主耶穌為我個人的救主.我信主洗禮完以後,換了一個新人.我已經不是從前的我.神給我力量,增強我的信心,我覺得我堅強多了,我不再怕了,而且是快樂的.因為主耶穌是我們的避難所,是我們的力量,是我們患難中隨時的幫助(詩篇四十六1-2).

我信主已經十年了.這十年中間,我也遇到了很多艱難的事,有時候我也會軟弱,也會絆跌,也會流淚.但這不代表主不要我,是在試煉我.教我怎樣用信心和忍耐,所以我常用祈禱跟主講話.主在祂的時間來回答我的問題和需要.我記得有一次政府要我們納稅(雖然我們已經停做生意很久了).政府限我們用一年的時間來還清,不然他們要強迫我們賣土地.這數目實在太大,我們沒有力量去還,只好賣我們一半的土地來還.一半的土地可以保存.我就天天地祈禱,就在差三天的限期,主回答我的祈禱.就這樣,我們納稅的問題也解決了.現在我們的居住處不是我們的,但主行神蹟,使我們能繼續的住下.主是愛我的,主給我恩賜,是享受不盡的.我要分分秒秒的感謝主.無論是苦,是甜,一切都是主的旨意,我要靠主做一個快樂的基督徒.

# The Consistency of God's Salvation

by: Pastor Wayne Chua

*He regarded disgrace for the sake of Christ as of greater value than the treasures of Egypt, because he was looking ahead to his reward.” (Hebrews 11:26) (NIV)*

When it comes to understanding the salvation in the New Testament times up to our present time, it is very clear that we are saved by grace through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, as what Paul the apostle had explained in Ephesians 2. But when it comes to understanding the salvation of the Old Testament's, there are several different views. The focus of this article is to give us an understanding of how the Old Testament people are saved and to provide us a better perspective of the God we are worshipping. It is important to know the Old Testament because as believers, the Old Testament is our spiritual history. The promises and calling of God to Israel is our historical promises and calling.<sup>1</sup> If we want to go further living as Christians, then we need to check our history. We have a saying that goes like this: He who does not know how to look back to where he came from will never reach his destiny. A rough translation will be: He who does not appreciate his roots will never succeed.<sup>2</sup> The three most common questions

that people ask are: Are the Old Testament people saved by works? Or are they saved by offering sacrifices to God? Or by obeying the Law? I will be explaining each one of them and see if it is right or wrong then I will give an answer according to my study in Hebrews 11 specifically 11:26.

## **Salvation of the Old Testament People by Works**

I believe we all would agree that salvation by works won't save anyone, not even in the time of the Abraham. I believe it is also true in the teachings of the Old Testament. No one can be saved by doing something good. All are sinners including the people from the Old Testament; they were also depraved just like everyone else. Paul clearly told us in Romans 3 that all of us are sinners and there is no one who does good, not even one. He was not just referring to the people of his time but he was referring to all the human beings in the past, in his time and in the future which includes all of us. Some people will argue that the characters of the Bible did some good works that was why they were saved. Some of those examples are Abraham, Jacob, Isaac, David, etc. They did a lot of great things but how about the sins that they committed? Can their good works cover their sins? I don't think so. So the problem here is really sin. And if we are going to look at the life of Samson the Judge, we could nowhere see anything good that Samson did. Even though his action was according to God's will, it was not according to what Samson wanted. All his decisions were only for his selfish ambition. Samson was the worst judge but when we go to the book of Hebrews 11:32, he was considered a man of faith. Why? Because clearly his faith did not come from him, it came from God, the giver of faith (Eph. 2:8-9). So salvation through works cannot save anyone.

## **Salvation of the Old Testament People by Sacrifice**

Another false belief that we have is that people in the Old Testament times can be saved by sacrificing



a certain animal. The book of Hebrews however explains that sacrifices can never take away sins. They were just annual reminders of how sinful they were in the eyes of the Lord (Hebrews 10:3-4, 11). No one can be saved by sacrificing animals because it is impossible to take away the sins of men using the blood of the animals. But these sacrifices that the people in the Old Testament were doing had a meaning. These were reminders that one day, there will be a once for all sacrifice and there will be no need to sacrifice animals anymore. Because one day, someone will come and that Someone will be the ultimate Sacrifice so that the sins of those who believe in Him will be forgiven and they will be saved.

### **Salvation of the Old Testament people by Obeying the Law**

Salvation by observing the law is yet another wrong understanding of salvation. God never gave the law for us to follow and be saved. It was never the intent of the law. Rather, through the law, we became conscious of our sins (Romans 3:20). A good example that God saved people first before giving them the law was found in the story of Moses when he was assigned to save the Israelites from the hand of Pharaoh. God saved them first through Moses; then after saving them, gave them the Ten Commandments. We are all sinners and no one can follow the law and be perfect. Even the Pharisees at the time of Jesus thought they could follow the law perfectly but they could not. No one can. Jesus made the law even more impossible to fulfill in His Sermon on the Mount found in Matthew 5-7. The purpose of the law is to help us realize that we are sinners in need of a Savior.

### **The answer: Salvation by Faith through Jesus Christ**

When I was a new believer, I thought that one of the answers above will give me a good understanding of the salvation of the people of the Old Testament. But as time goes by, I realized that their salvation and our salvation is the same. It is only

through faith in Jesus Christ that we can be saved. Now the question is, how could they be saved if they had not seen Christ? The answer can be found in the book of Hebrews 11 specifically in 11:26. Hebrews 11 is not just about the faith of the Old Testament characters. Let us not forget that when we read a verse in the Bible, we need to look at the context of the whole book that we are reading. The book of Hebrews is all about the superiority of Jesus Christ not just to humans but also to angels. Meaning Jesus is God Himself in human form. Hebrews 11 is about their faith, their faith in whom? In Jesus Christ as clearly seen in 11:26. How could Moses know Jesus Christ? Basically, he had faith in the promise of God that one day, He will send someone to save them from their sins. Moses did not see Jesus Christ, but because he believed that one day a Savior will come, he was saved. That is faith. The same thing for us, none of us here in this generation ever saw Jesus Christ, but we believe in him. That is faith, and it is enough for us to be saved.

### **Conclusion**

Understanding the Old Testament will help us understand the New Testament because it is where it all started. The God that we worship has a plan, a wonderful plan to save us from the bondage of sin. And God's plan can be seen from the beginning, in our time and into the future. Such a wonderful plan of God that even we sinners are given an opportunity to turn back from our ways and turn towards him! May His name be praised forever!

<sup>1</sup>Fee and Stuart. "How to read the Bible for all its worth". Page 89.

<sup>2</sup>[http://tl.answers.com/Q/Ano\\_ang\\_english\\_ng\\_Ang\\_hindi\\_marunong\\_lumingon\\_sa\\_pinanggalingan\\_ay\\_hindi\\_makakarating\\_sa\\_paroroonan](http://tl.answers.com/Q/Ano_ang_english_ng_Ang_hindi_marunong_lumingon_sa_pinanggalingan_ay_hindi_makakarating_sa_paroroonan)



# 降生節 的應許 - 以馬內利

白鴿

平安夜，聖善夜！這是聖誕的歌聲飄揚傾向著整片大地。是在警醒人們，是神的獨生子——耶穌基督誕生的節令，是在警戒人們該從世俗夢鄉中覺醒過來！因為聖經告訴我們說：「必有童女懷孕生子，人要稱祂的名為以馬內利。（以馬內利翻譯出來就是神與我們同在。）」（太1:21-23）。同時施洗約翰也曾宣告說：「道成肉身，住在我們中間，充充滿滿地有恩典，有真理。我們也見過祂的榮光，正是父獨生子的榮光。」（約1:14）。這些信息，帶給我們多麼大的欣慰！神與我們同在的應許，帶給我們無限的盼望與祝禱！當我們猶如客居在塵俗裡，是免不了會遭遇悲歡離散，生離死別之感傷；貧乏困頓，身心疲憊的感嘆！但感謝讚美我們的神！我們特有「以馬內利」，神與我們同在的鐵證；我們可以把一切傷感，憂慮置之腦後，專心致志仰望「以馬內利」的神。便能發現「雲開見日」的景象。

故事 四面楚歌，坦然無懼的軼聞

開荒佈道家李達斯敦行抵Sambesi河岸畔，該地其極兇猛的生番把他圍圍住，並恐嚇要把他殺死。他們手持長矛，隨時隨地都有可能從前後左右把他殺死。他們也可能在黑夜乘他睡覺的時候把他暗殺。但是，他卻不慌不忙地打開他的錫箱，拿出他的聖經，讀完詩篇第二篇，然後跪下禱告說：「天父啊，外邦人為什麼起來反對我，像當日反對禰的兒子一般。無論如何，我把我的道路完全交託禰的手中。我是軟弱，有罪而且是無用的蟲類，求禰的聖手扶持我。主耶穌阿，不要離開我，不要放棄我，阿們。」

當黑夜來臨，四面楚歌驟起，他的生命，隨時

有會被四圍生番陷害的可能性，但他堅信主耶穌的諾言，罔顧危機，竟能坦然無懼的睡覺，因為主耶穌曾經說：「天上地下所有的權柄都賜給我了。所以，你們要去，使萬民作我的門徒，奉父、子、聖靈的名給他們施洗。凡我所吩咐你們的，都教訓他們遵守。我就常與你們同在，直到世界的末了。」（太28:18-20）

以上這一段聖經，牢記在他的心上，所以無論在任何處境中，他都能夠履險如夷，視死如歸，安然無恙地渡過難關。當他感觸到孤立無援的時候，便拿出日記，寫說：沙得拉、米煞、亞伯尼歌在烈火的窯中，並不孤單（因有主耶穌同行）；但以理在獅穴並不孤單（因有天使保護他）。李達斯敦處在兇惡暴戾的生番包圍中也是決不孤單，因為主曾經應許說：「我必和你同在，直到世界末了。」這使我們多麼的感動而發奮啊，在約伯記裡說：「人算甚麼，你竟看他為大，將他放在心上。」（伯7:17）。是的，在宇宙中是多麼卑微，但至高的神竟然看我們為大，並且把我們猶如心上人一般放在祂的心上，感謝讚美神！

讓我們來思索，「以馬內利」帶給我們有那些福分。

- 一. 祂是我們的牧養者——神說：「我要立一牧人照管他們，牧養他們。」（結34:23）。神把以色列人被擄的責任歸咎在那些貪婪兇殘的君王與祭司的身上。因為君王不但沒有盡他的本分，牧養他所管轄的百姓，也不關心民生的疾苦。甚至剝削人民血汗資財。那些祭司們，沒有負荷他們的職分，教化民衆有關對神的信仰，崇拜，以及守節日的細則。他們只有空守語論，卻沒有實際的作為。導致部份選民被敵國擄去，部份選民因生活困頓，流離失所。由於以色列的君王昏庸且暴虐。神不忍目睹祂子民受煎熬。故而唯有親自作祂子民的真牧者。於是神宣告說：「祂必親自尋找流亡的羊；引領被擄的選民歸回故土；安撫靈命遭受創傷的選民；醫治那些靈命有病的選民。」（結34:11）。感謝神，祂親自應許凡屬祂的子民，要作祂子民的真牧者。
- 二. 祂是我們的盾牌——「以色列阿，你是有福的，誰像你這蒙耶和華所拯救的百姓呢，祂是你的盾牌……」（申33:29）。由於我們寄居彎曲悖戾的人世間，有時會遭遇一般惡勢的恫嚇，有時會碰上市面上的搶劫或殺害，難免會引發我們恐懼、憂慮。這是魔鬼慣用的技倆，使我們無形中陷入牠的詭戾之中。但神深為體



恤我們的軟弱，祂賜給我們非常肯定的應許；祂是我們及時的拯救與幫助，祂的恩惠四面圍繞我們，所以我們倚靠護衛的盾牌，必能凌駕仇敵的高處。

三. 祂是我們奇妙的策士-「因有一嬰孩為我而生，有一子賜給我們……祂名稱為奇妙、策士……」(賽9:6). 奇妙、策士，按字義的結構應該合為「奇妙的策士」。因為神是無所不知、無所不能、無所不在的神。祂有超卓的智慧，和無與倫比的愛。當我們處於暗無天日的世態裡，我們的有限智慧與能力，實在很難擺脫人生一切的疑難。我們謙卑地投靠這位全智、全能的主耶穌作我們奇妙的策士，為我們排脫一切的疑難與迷津。

四. 祂是我們的居所-「我的居所必在他們中間，我要作他們的神，他們要作我的子民。」(結37:27). 神親自應許要作我們的居所。

當時，神藉著僕人一以賽亞所受的痛苦，要將錫安復興，升無限的高處，得到無窮的榮耀！同樣地，他也曾向上世界各地的基督徒呼召，要他們進入神的居所，要將神的救恩白白地賜給祂的子民。因為神的居所，是「平安的居所」，是「寧靜的居所」，是「公義的居所」，更是「成聖的居所」。

所以，神的居所讓我們蒙恩得救的信徒，可以無條地住在裡面。神還將祂的居所放在我們中間，祂將要與我們面對面地住在一起。難怪主耶穌說：「我在父裡，你們在我裡面，我也在你們裡面。」(約14:26). 這就是神賜給我們合而為一的屬靈生命。

五. 祂是我們唯一的根基-「因為那已經立好的根基就是耶穌基督，此外沒有人能立別的根基。」(林前3:11). 所謂主耶穌立好根基的意旨，是要提供信徒有準確信仰的根基。讓信徒們不依靠自己的才智，並分別假師傅的謬論，防範異端邪說的論理。主耶穌降世，雖然是為罪人作救贖的事工，但祂也是「以身作則」給世人作一個好榜樣。

首先我們應該查究主耶穌道成肉身以前的存在：

1. 主耶穌說：「我與父原為一。」(約10:30). 這是主耶穌聲明，祂與父神原有同一意旨和能力。
2. 「祂本有神形像，不以自己與神同等為強

奪的。」(腓2:6). 主耶穌在成了肉身以前，祂的地位，尊榮是與父神同等，且有純一的神性。

3. 「因為萬有都是靠祂造的……祂在萬有之先，萬有靠祂而立。」(西1:16-17). 這表徵主耶穌的神格。祂是一切被造之先，是宇宙的維護者。

在路加福音裡述主耶穌到人世間，以人子的身分，來完成神的旨意。作為世人的表率。祂出生滿了八天，便依例領受割禮，且按照律法，滿了潔淨的日子，要獻於神。當祂十二歲時，按規矩上聖殿守節。在教師中間，一面聽，一面問。祂父母看見，覺得很希奇，便追問祂，祂卻回答說：「我當以父的事為念。」但祂卻跟隨父母回拿撒勒，以人子的本分順從父母。

當時施洗約翰來到約旦河，宣講悔改的洗禮。那時眾百姓都領受悔改的洗，主耶穌是站在人子的地位，盡諸般的義，遵行神的旨意，也領受了洗。祂的浸、是將自己擺在死者的地位上，祂的受浸，且向父神禱告，是活在與神交通中。

接著，主耶穌被聖靈充滿後，聖靈引祂到曠野。祂禁食四十晝夜，餓了。那敵擋者-魔鬼，在暗中觀察，知道時機已到，想要阻擋主耶穌的使命，唆使祂把持神子的身分，棄置神的旨意。祂以三個策略試探主耶穌。首先祂引誘主耶穌吩咐石頭變為食物。這是傲慢感的試探，但主耶穌卻回答說：「經上記著說，人活著，不是單靠食物，乃是靠神口裡所出的一切話。」(路4:4). 魔鬼進一步領主耶穌上了高山，把天下萬國指給祂看，要將「萬國、權柄、榮華」給祂。祇要主耶穌在祂面下拜。這是權力感的誘惑。但主耶穌回答說：「經上記著說，當拜主你的神，單要事奉祂。」(路4:8). 最後魔鬼又領祂到耶路撒冷去，叫祂站在殿頂上，引誘祂「從殿頂跳下」，但主耶穌回答說：「經上說不可試探主你的神。」(路4:12). 這是驕矜超越感的誘惑。主耶穌對魔鬼的回答，均引自申命記八3, 六13、16.

追溯當初人類始祖亞當夏娃被魔鬼以詭戾話語誘惑下失敗了，昔日以色列人在曠野也多次疑惑神跌倒了，但這末後的亞當-主耶穌(林前15:45)卻坦蕩用聖經的話語勝過了魔鬼詭激的挑唆。祂至始至終不犯罪，祂堅貞不渝地遵守神的旨意。當祂在傳道的歷程，堅定遵循神的旨意。為教會立下了堅固的根基。所以我們應該追蹤主耶穌的後塵，凡事都要藉禱告，尋求神的旨意。要堅定不渝地信靠神。正如聖經說：「不是倚靠勢力，不是倚靠才能，乃是倚靠我的靈(即神的靈)，才能成事。」(亞4:6)



# 咱真正認識上帝嗎？

雯華

有許多人認為如果把他們的兒女送入有宗教信仰的學校去讀書，或是給他們參加主日學，或是到教會參加崇拜，聽牧師講道，他們就會認識上帝。這都是不一定的。知道有關於上帝與認識上帝是兩回事。

摩西。舊約聖經時代的偉人，他是一位很有學問很聰明又很能幹的人，他母親從小就教導他關於上帝的事，但是摩西到80歲還不認識上帝。直到有一日他去何烈山上的時，自己親身過著上帝。那時他才認識上帝(出3:1-14)(特別注意v13)。

腓力。耶穌的門徒，日夜都與耶穌做伴，他不但聽過耶穌講解很多篇的道理，也見證主耶穌治癒很多病人，甚至他親眼看見耶穌叫拉撒路從死裡復活。但是腓力不認識主耶穌，不認識上帝(約14:8-10)。

咱要認識上帝，必須與上帝建立密切的關係。現在咱來觀察摩西怎樣認識上帝。

1. (出3:4-5) 當摩西走近那焚燒的荊棘時，上帝從荊棘裡叫摩西，叫他不要近前來，要把他腳上的鞋脫下來，因為他所站的是聖地。

鞋是用在走路的東西，是不清潔的，而摩西所站的地方是聖地。

同樣的，咱要親近上帝，必須先省察自己，懇求聖靈光照咱的心思意念。給咱有屬靈的眼睛能夠看見自己的軟弱，看見咱的罪惡。咱必須要認罪悔改，求上帝赦免咱的罪過，洗清咱一切的不義，使咱真正有清潔的心來親近祂，因為上帝是聖潔的神，祂要求咱每一個要親近祂的人必須要聖潔(彼前1:13-16)

咱要認識上帝，必須在每早晨清早的時候用充份的時間來親近祂。吟詩讚美祂，小心來讀祂的話語，祈禱，等候。讓祂自己對咱說話。注意聽祂微小的聲音，把祂寶貝的話記錄下來，並且遵行。

2. 當摩西順服神的話，就是脫去他腳上的鞋以後，神才願意與他說話(v6-v9)。同樣的，當咱順服神的話，真正遠離罪惡，過著一個聖潔的生活時，神會與咱說話，並且把祂的旨意指示。

3. 神不但歡喜和摩西說話，神也要使用他帶領以色列百姓出埃及，離開困苦去到流奶與蜜的地方(v10)。同樣的，當咱真正順服神，神也要使用咱去傳福音，關心人的靈魂，引導他們信主得永生。

4. 神既然差派摩西回埃及去見法老王，祂一定不讓摩西自己一個人去。神應允摩西說：「我必與你同在」(v12)。有神與咱同在，咱還怕誰呢？(羅8:3)

同樣的，神如果感動咱去向某某一個人傳福音或是作見證，咱不用怕，祂既然感動



咱去,祂一定與咱同在,也要做咱的幫助(賽41:10)

對一個真正認識神的人,咱能夠從他身上學習甚麼屬靈的功課呢?

1. 他的生活有次序. 上帝是有次序的神. (創1:1-31). 他固定每早晨用充份的時間來親近神.

2. 他順服聖靈的引導, 因此他會結出聖靈的果子. (加5:22-23)

a. 仁愛: 有愛人的心 (彼前1:22)

b. 喜樂: 人在世間免不了會遇著苦難, 但他會靠主常常喜樂.

c. 和平: (peace loving person) 大事化小事, 小事化無事. 不愛與人爭辯.

d. 忍耐: 是神特別的恩典賜給信徒, 使他們能夠忍耐力苦難.

e. 恩慈: 他愛人不分階級.

f. 良善: 心底良善, 歡喜幫助人. 幫助人是一個機會, 咱要抓住機會幫助人.

g. 信實: 有信用又誠實.

h. 溫柔: 說話輕聲細語.

i. 節制: 讓聖靈控制咱的情緒.

3. 他有不停祈禱的生活. (帖前5:17), 他不允許魔鬼污穢的思想進入他的頭腦裡引誘他犯罪.

4. 他事奉主越久越甘甜. (詩100:2)

5. 他遵行主所教導的兩條大誡命(可12:28-31). 第一條, 你要盡心, 盡性, 盡意, 盡力愛主你的神. 第二條, 要愛人如己.

6. 他常常有上帝感, 無論他在甚麼地方, 有人看見或是沒人看見, 他總存心做正直的人, 討主的喜悅(創39:6-9). 當約瑟被他的主母引誘的時候, 他說:「我怎樣能夠作這大惡得罪神呢?」

7. 他承認他一切所有的, 就是他的生意, 他所有的財產, 連他的生命都是上帝的. 他不過是一個暫時管家的人. 因此他要好好地使用神所交代他的金錢, 時間與才幹來榮耀神. 因為有一日神要與他算帳.

路加16:8-9耶穌接著又說: 所以我告訴你們, 要利用現今的金錢結交朋友, 出力向人傳道理, 用各種的方法邀請人來信耶穌, 到有一日, 當咱離開世界的時, 咱的金錢無用的時候, 在天堂的地方有許多人要來歡迎咱. 他們都要說他們能夠進入天堂是因為咱有向他們傳福音.

8. 他會多多看見別人的長處, 欣賞別人的優點. 別人的短處呢? 他會在私下用愛心來勸勉他們, 為他們代禱.

9. 他一生的目標就是要榮耀神的聖名(林前10:31)所以你們或吃或喝, 無論作甚麼都要為榮耀神而行.





# Church Health = Church Growth

by: Pastor Jebo Banzuelo

*What's the difference between growing old and growing up?* This is a very significant question to ask specially when talking about church growth. In most cases, churches only grow old and very few actually grow up. Growing old is effortless, growing up takes a lot of effort, time, and determination. Sometimes, the age of the church is not proportionate to its growth. If we want church growth, then we must focus on church health. If a church is healthy, then the church will grow. Consider what Apostle Paul said in Ephesians 4:16:

**Ephesians 4:16** *“He makes the whole body fit together perfectly. As each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole body is healthy and growing and full of love.” (NLT)*

Let's analyse it by using “cause and effect”. The

first part of the underlined portion of the verse is the cause; the second part is the effect. “*As each part does its own special work*”(cause); “*it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole body is healthy and growing and full of love.*” (effect). Notice that church health here refers to the proper functioning of each part (or members). This means that if every member of the church is properly equipped, faithfully serving and joyfully cooperating, the church will grow.

In a research done in American churches, statistics showed that only 20% of the total membership of a local church is doing 80% of the work. I believe that this figure is also similar to the situation in Philippine churches. Why is this so? One of the reasons for lack of involvement among church members is lack of emphasis on the purpose/s of a church.

## WHY THE CHURCH EXISTS

**The purpose of our church is summarized in a single sentence based on two key scriptures:**

1. **Matt. 22:36-40**  
**“Love the Lord your God with all your heart . . . soul . . . and mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself. All the Law and Prophets hang on these two commandments.”**

2. **Matt. 28:19-20**

**“Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.”**

**The Church Exists:**

1. **To celebrate God's presence.**  
**(Worship)**

**John 15:8** “When you produce much fruit, you are my true disciples. This brings great glory to my Father.”

2. **To demonstrate God's Love.**  
**(Ministry)**

**1 John 4:20-21** “[20] If someone says, “I love God,” but hates a Christian brother or sister, that person is a liar; for if we don't love people we can see, how can we love God, whom we cannot see? [21] And he has given us this command: Those who love God must also love their Christian brothers and sisters.”

3. **To communicate God's Word.**  
**(Evangelism)**

4. **To incorporate God's people into God's Family. (Fellowship)**

5. **To educate God's people.**  
**(Discipleship)**

**Ephesians 4:11-13** “[11] Now these are the gifts Christ gave to the church: the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, and the pastors and teachers. [12] Their responsibility is to equip God's people to do his work and build up the church, the body of Christ.”

**Don't Major on the Minor**

It's a sad reality that we face in most of the churches today. We go to church several times a week but we contribute very little to the fulfillment of these purposes. The amount of time spent by most members in church is already minimal, and most of it is not contributing significantly to the over-all purpose of the church.

Here are some important truths that we need to remember:

1. We are called to be *contributors*, not *consumers*.
2. We are called to become *blessings* and not *burdens*.
3. We are called to be *worshippers* and not just *workers*.

**Ephesians 4:16** “He makes the whole body fit together perfectly. As each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole body is healthy and growing and full of love.” (NLT)



# An Epic Year

by: Mona Li



**Canadian Friends Invasion**

As Year 2011 comes to a beautiful end, I thank our Almighty God for the loving care and tender mercies He has so richly showered upon me throughout an epic year, highlighted by two anniversaries and three weddings. The year started with a bang as Cebu Gospel Church's council created a working committee to brainstorm on a grand 95<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration on March 12-13, 2011. With less than two months of preparation, the celebrations were a resounding success. All glory and honor to our gracious God.

Shortly thereafter, I left for Canada and the saga of the Jao-Li matrimony began. In this age of iPhones and iPads, when two individuals, my daughter Pamela and Jeremiah, who were InaRelationship took 10 long years to say I Do, everybody had only one word to say: FINALLY !!! The celebrations spanned five long months beginning with a civil marriage on April 2, 2011 in Canada, which was coincidentally Lala's birthday. Three months later, Canadians invaded Cebu, where the church wedding and reception were held on July 23, 2011. The saga culminated with a post-wedding reception in Canada on August 20, 2011. Given the luxury of time to prepare these events carefully, by God's grace, everything came out beautifully and as many commented that it was the best wedding they had attended in years!

Shortly thereafter, I hurriedly flew back to Cebu in time to help with the preparation of yet another

milestone, Emergency Rescue Unit Foundation's (ERUF) 25<sup>th</sup> year anniversary on September 11, 2011. ERUF is a non-government organization that provides emergency medical services in the cities of Cebu and Lapu-Lapu. With continued spirit of volunteerism, ERUF has served and will continue 'to serve so that others may live'. The whole day fun fare started with a 161 ERUF run at dawn, followed by exercises and field demonstrations showcasing our capabilities and a wonderful fellowship dinner with members, volunteers and benefactors in attendance. May God's grace continue to sustain us in the future as it has done through all the years.

A month after, my siblings and I left for Europe. Not only was I excited to see Ireland, Paris and the Netherlands for the first time but more so because it was bonding time again with the Chang clan and being a 'foodie' family, gastronomic adventures were definitely in the itinerary. The wedding of my nephew Alexander Wright and Rowena Cahill in Ireland on October 15, 2011 was exquisitely unforgettable. We stayed in the 13<sup>th</sup> century Cloghan Castle where the reception was held and we truly felt like royals, with the additional excitement of being spooked at times. Moreover, staying in homes of friends in Paris and Holland gave us glimpses of the way people lived in Europe and not through the rose-colored glasses of tourists. I could write endless anecdotes of our adventures but I don't have the luxury of space; instead, let me share the



insights that I have gleaned from these experiences.

First, knowing that my TMQ (technical and mechanical quotient) was close to nil did not bother me too much until recently. Perhaps it was because Boss and my gremlins were always there to help me that I did not feel the inadequacy. It was during our European tour that I fully realized the convenience of being 'tech savvy'. With so much new technology and gadgets in the market, it is a folly not to make good use of them. Hence, one of my New Year's resolutions is to increase my TMQ to a much higher level and Lord willing, perhaps by the time the Chang clan makes another trip to Europe in Year 2013 for yet another nephew's wedding, I will be as 'tech savvy' as my siblings.

Second, we should nurture strong family ties especially with our spouses and siblings. Why? When we reach that stage of life at which the generations before and after us leave our sides, these loved ones are the people with whom we will spend most of our remaining time. By God's grace, I am very blessed to belong to a close-knit family, perhaps due to the circumstances we had in our earlier lives. However, great relationships don't just happen. It is a product of hard work. Sadly, today's technology hinders rather than enhances human relationships. Take communication for example. The paradox of it is: the newer and faster are the tools for communications, the wider and deeper are the communication gaps. People, young and old alike, spend so much time with gadgets and machines that our human

senses are deadened. While acknowledging the importance of modern science and technology, we need to remember that these are things without souls, and it should always be 'mankind over machine' and not the other way around. My second New Year's resolution therefore is to impress upon the minds of our children and grandchildren the importance of human values and the need to nurture strong family bonding.

Lastly, with all the excitements and busyness that had me running around like a headless chicken the past months, I'm enjoying the mundane pace of my 'beige-colored' life, an euphemism my beloved sister Anna uses to mean boring. With glee, I look forward to the quiet times with God early in the morning and watching favourite television series and movies with Boss at night. Moreover, on days when my youngest gremlin Kitty is not on duty at ERUF, we are beginning to spend more quality time together, thus hitting two resolutions with one action. Kitty teaches me to be 'tech savvy' and I impress upon her yet again the importance of human values and strong family ties. This epic year is about to end and once again, the working committee of our beloved church has been asked to prepare a simple yet meaningful Christmas Sunday festivity. As one big Christian family, let us celebrate together the most important birth date in human history, the birth of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Have a blessed Christmas season and a wonderful New Year!!! To God be all glory. Amen and amen.



Ireland Wedding



Chang Clan in Ireland



# 耶路撒冷 十個城門

許郭錦繡

尼希米是在書珊城亞達薛西王的宮中當酒政。他非常關心他的故土及那些被擄歸回剩下逃脫的猶太人。當有一位弟兄哈拿尼同着幾個人從猶大來時、他就詢問其光景、所得的回報是：「那些被擄歸回剩下的人、在猶大遭大難、受凌辱、並且耶路撒冷的城牆拆毀、城門被火焚燒」。他聽見這些話、就坐下哭泣、悲哀幾日、在神面前禁食祈禱、為眾以色列民認罪代求【尼1：1—4】、並甘願委身犧牲歸返耶路撒冷、主領重建城垣的工作。上帝也感動亞達薛西王的心、使他願意允許尼希米請假、並賜下詔書給大河西的省長、准他經過、直到猶大、又賜詔書通知管理園林的亞薩、給尼希米木料、作屬殿營樓之門的橫梁和城牆及他房屋之用【尼2：4—8】。

尼希米到了耶路撒冷、在那裡住了三日。夜間、他親自往外察看城牆及城門、計劃要如何來進行這重大的事工。同時也挑戰猶大平民、祭司、貴胄、官長和其餘的工作人員、協力進行重建城牆的使命、並分派每人工作的範圍、斷定他們的任務、於是他們就共同奮勇作這善工【尼2：11-18】。

所要修建的、共有十個城門如下：

## 【一】羊門—Sheep Gate【尼3：1、32】

羊門是位於城牆的東北部、它靠近畢士大池【Pool of Bethesda】《約5：2》、也是動物進入之處。因它靠近聖殿、所以祭司們大部份都住在這裡。聖經記載這門是「分別為聖」、特別要獻給神的。羊是預表主耶穌、祂是羊羔、為我們捨命“看哪！上帝的羔羊除去世人的罪孽”

【約1：29】。這門是永遠開放、而且也沒有門鎖的。這就預表凡願意到神面前接受救恩的人、可以隨時來到主前。尼希米是從羊門開始、也於羊門結束。這就證明上帝是首、也是末、祂是始、也是終。

## 【二】魚門—Fish Gate【尼3：3】

位於羊門的西部、有兩個樓：哈米亞樓【Tower of Hundred】和合楠業樓【Tower of Hananeel】、它是夾在羊門和魚門之中。這兩樓也成為城市的防衛機關。魚門是耶路撒冷城的主要入口門。當商人從推羅或加利利海買魚後、就從這門進入、因為靠近這門就是賣魚的市場。

耶穌揀選漁夫為祂的門徒、因為祂要他們得人如得魚一樣。

## 【三】古門—Old Gate【尼3：6】

這門又稱為角門【Corner Gate】《王下14：13、耶31：38》、是位於城市的西北部、從這門進去、裡面有新城【New Quarter】《番1：10》。

古門預表古道。耶和華說：「你們當站在路上察看、訪問古道、那是善道、便



行在其間。這樣、你們心裡必得安息。」【耶6：16】

#### 【四】谷門— Valley Gate 【尼3：13】

位於城的西南部、它和糞廠門距離有五百碼。當尼希米要計劃怎樣修建城牆時、他是從谷門開始察看、然後進入糞廠門、再前往泉門、最後就歸回谷門。每一位信徒需要經過「谷門」。谷是山最低之處、就是代表謙卑、順服上帝。關照別人、以基督的心為心、【腓2：3-5】。

#### 【五】糞廠門—Dung Gate 【尼3：14】

位於南部靠近西羅亞池【Pool of Siloam】。它是欣嫩子谷【Valley of Hinnon】的出口點、也是城市放垃圾的地方。欣嫩子谷是從Gehenna這字取出來的。主耶穌將這地方形容為地獄之處。就是有蟲不死、有火不熄的地方【可9：44】。瑪拿西也就是在「欣嫩子谷」使他的兒女經火、又觀兆、用法術、行邪術、立交鬼和行巫術的【歷下33：6】。後來、約西亞王也在欣嫩子谷褻瀆這裡的假神陀斐特【Topheth】、不允許人在這裡使兒女經火獻給摩洛【列下23：10】。

垃圾是極污穢不潔的東西、需要以適當衛生的方法來處理、否則就會引起了許多傳染的疾病。

同樣的、罪惡是心靈的污穢、如果沒有好好的處理、就會影響我們整個的人生。“親愛弟兄啊。我們既有這等應

許、就當潔淨自己、除去身體靈魂一切污穢、敬畏神、得以成聖”【林後7：1】。上帝應許「我們若承認自己的罪。祂是信實的、是公義的、必要赦免我們的罪、洗淨我們一切的不義」【約翰壹書1：9】

#### 【六】泉門— Fountain Gate 【尼3：15】

位於城牆的東部、也是在糞廠門的北部。它是靠近西羅亞池【Pool of Siloam】、大衛的舊城、及希西家王所挖的水溝【列下20：20】。這裡的基訓泉【Gihon】是本城所需用水的源頭。

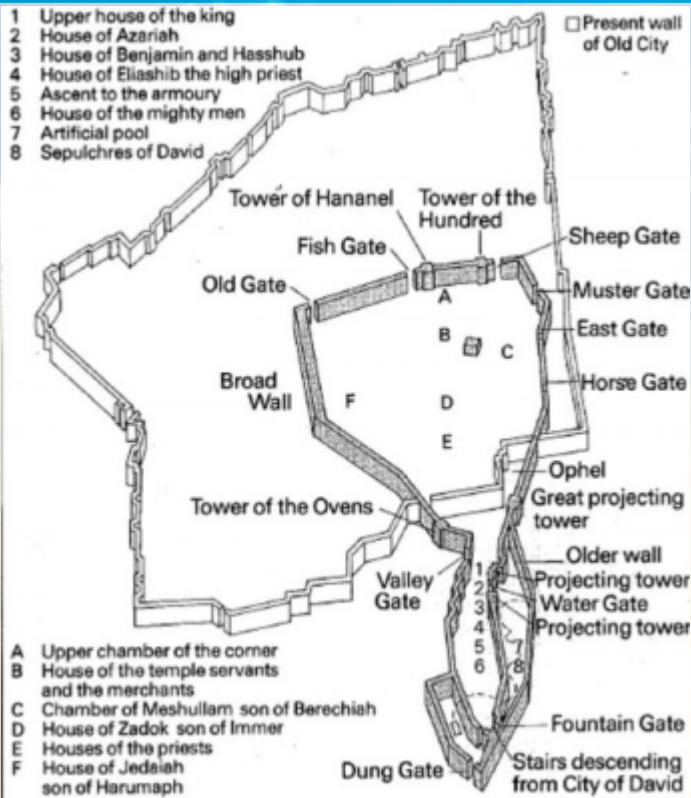
聖經中描寫了兩種的水：飲食的水是預表聖靈【約7：37-39】、洗用的水是預表神的道【弗5：26、約15：3】。以屬靈的角度而言、我們必須進入谷門【謙卑的門】、再次經過糞廠門【被潔淨】、最後才歸入泉門【接受聖靈】。

#### 【七】水門—Water Gate 【尼3：26】

耶路撒冷城市沒有靠近海洋或河流、所以只倚靠泉水和貯水池【Reservoir】來供用所需要的水。以斯拉就是在這水門前的寬闊處、從清早到響午將上帝藉着摩西傳給以色列人的律法書讀給眾百姓聽、【尼8：1-6】。他們聽了以後、就聚集禁食、身穿麻衣、頭蒙灰塵、與一切外邦人離絕、承認自己和列祖的罪孽、專心歸向耶和華【尼9：1-2】。

聖經沒有記載曾經修理水門、而只是修理鄰近的城牆。可見、神的話是永遠長存、永不改變的、所以絕不可以更改。





#### 【八】馬門—Horse Gate【尼3：28】

是位於水門的北部,它與聖殿相近、所羅門王從埃及購買馬匹、作為國家打戰之用、也是從這門輸入的。

馬匹是古時戰爭不可缺少極重要的武器、因為兵丁需要騎着馬與敵人作戰。馬代表精兵,我們要作基督的精兵、【提後 2：3-5】“穿上神所賜的全副軍裝、用真理作帶束腰、用公義作護心鏡遮胸、穿上平安福音的鞋、以信德作籐牌、戴上救恩的頭盔、拿着聖靈的寶劍、就是上帝的道、靠着聖靈、隨時多方禱告禱求、來抵擋那惡者的火箭及魔鬼的詭計”【弗 6：11、14-18】。

#### 【九】東門—East Gate【尼3：29】

從這門進入就可直接到了聖殿。根據傳說的記載、耶穌在棕樹節是由東門

進入耶路撒冷城、眾人把衣服鋪在路上、還有人砍了樹枝鋪在路上喊著說：「和撒那歸給大衛的子孫、奉主名來的是應當稱頌的、高高在上和撒那。」耶穌也就在那時候進入了上帝的殿、趕出殿裡一切作買賣的人、推倒兌換銀之人的桌子和賣鴿子之人的凳子【太21：6-12】。

以西結從東門看見耶和華的榮耀離開聖殿【結10：19】。當主再來時、祂的榮光也要從東門進入殿中、充滿了殿。

【結43：1—5】。東門預表神的再來、提醒我們要做醒禱告、在真道上站立得穩、各盡其職、謹慎自守、來迎接主的顯現。

#### 【十】甲門—Muster Gate【尼3：31】

NIV及NASB將它翻譯為檢查門

【Inspection Gate】。這門是位於城的東北部、在希臘文有「軍隊」的含意、因為耶路撒冷的北部是最容易受敵人的侵略、所以軍營就設備在這裡、所有的軍兵都聚集在這裡註冊及檢閱。

同樣的、當主再來時、祂要召集所有的人、檢查察看他們所做的工、分發獎賞給忠心為祂工作的僕人、【林前3：13-14】、也要審判每一個人在世所做或善或惡之事。【林後5：10】

尼希米於羊門開始、也以羊門為終結、在這整個調整、建造及修理的過程中、並非一帆風順的進行、他經過了鄰國的嘲笑、威脅、惱恨、辱罵、敵人的陰謀、妒嫉、陷



害、歧視、百姓的灰心、懼怕、埋怨、但他終於以信心、禱告和交託、堅心決意、吞聲忍氣、沒有動搖地推動這事工、克服了一切的困難、直到終於在五十二天內、將這工作完滿的結束。

尼希米是一位值得效法的領導者。當他任務在身、就坐上思想計劃、跪下迫切禱告、站立開始工作。他有極大的信心、等候時機、挑戰百姓、實行公義、用智慧面對敵人、推動眾百姓同心合意奮勇來作這善工。

如今教會也需要像尼希米這種精神的領導者、有關心教會復興的負擔、有搶救失喪靈魂的使命、有忠心事奉的榜樣、有聖潔生活的流露。有信心愛心的表現、再加上眾會友齊心努力的配合、方能完成上帝要我們在世為祂完成的使命。

願我們從這十個城門中得到屬靈的功課。

- 【一】 羊門—耶穌是羔羊、為我們捨命贖罪。我們應該相信祂、接受祂的救恩、方能蒙得永生。
- 【二】 魚門—主要叫我們得人如魚一樣。應該將福音傳開、有美好的見證,感動人信主、歸入祂名下。
- 【三】 古門—要遵行古道、也就是善道、使我們在人生的路途中永不差錯。
- 【四】 谷門—「要存心謙卑、各人看別人比自己強」【腓2：3】、「要以謙卑束腰、彼此順服、因為上帝阻擋驕傲的人、賜恩給謙卑的人、要自卑、服在上帝大能的手下。到了時候祂必叫我們升高」【彼前5：5-6】。

【五】 糞廠門—要承認自己的罪。求主洗潔我們心中一切的污穢。要分別為聖、作聖潔的子民【彼前1：15-16】。

【六】 泉門—凡信主的人要從他腹中流出活水的江河來、就是指信祂的人要接受聖靈【約7：38-39】。父要賜我們一位保惠師、就是真理的聖靈、祂要永遠與我們同在【約14：16-17】。

【七】 水門—生命需要「水」來養生。靈命也需要「神的話」求長進。靈修【閱讀聖經及禱告】是每一位信徒基本的任務。

【八】 馬門—要作基督的兵丁。「倚賴祂的大能大力、作剛強的人、要穿戴上帝所賜的全副軍裝、就能抵擋魔鬼的詭計」【弗6：11】

【九】 東門—「當忍耐堅固你們的心、因為主來的日子近了」【雅5：8】。「要時時儆醒、使我們坦然無懼。當祂來的時候在祂面前也不至於慚愧」【約翰壹書2：28】。

【十】 甲門—「要立好的根基、因為各人的工程必然顯露。那日子、有火要試驗各人的工程怎樣、若存得住、他就要得賞賜」【林前3：10-14】。「每人也要按著本身所行的、或善或惡受報」【林後5：10】。

願我們藉着這十個城門、激勵我們更加愛主、甘心奉獻、竭力事奉、堅固信心、做好見證、蒙神喜悅。



# 勇奔前程、 無悔今生

來12:1-2

曾永光牧師講於宿務基督教會主日崇拜

很高興回到大家中間，五年前接受大家邀請參加九十週年慶典，不覺已經五年。現在我已經作了外公，回來看到宿務這城市許多新建設，而教會方面亦有新同工，王美美姊妹女兒Rosalind也成為女傳道，前晚在兄弟團契分享，看到在新加入的團友，昨晚在葉謀泉執事夫婦府上與萬那威青年詩班的青年人分享，看到神使教會有新氣象，實在為大家滿心感恩。這幾天得到許多兄弟姊妹熱誠的招待，使我們深深感動。我們在外面常說：宿務教會兄弟姊妹非常有愛心，特別在接待傳道人方面，真是眾教會的好榜樣。

今早和大家分享希伯來書12章的一段經文。希伯來書作者吩咐他的讀者：「奔那擺在我們前頭的路程」。這話含意是什麼？人生是一條路！「奔」是個行動的字眼！為何要「奔」？原因是「我們既有這許多的見證人、如同雲彩圍着我們。」這裡的場景是運動場。看台上坐滿跑完賽程的屬靈運動員。這裡的見證人就是前面第11章所講的信心偉人。他們不憑眼見、跑完賽程、毫無怨悔，如今興奮地鼓舞場上的運動員。

回想我們宿務基督教會有一大群弟兄

姊妹，已經完成他們的賽程。我想到當日的梁世羔牧師、梁慎微牧師、吳碧英傳道、李能愛傳道、丁明遠長老夫婦、吳鴻秋長老夫婦、林開春長老夫婦、郭毓賢長老夫婦、葉六藝執事夫婦、黃根德執事、年祥伯、年祥姆、年碧嫂、還有許多兄弟姊妹(恕未全述)，都是神忠心的僕人，完成神的託負，安息主懷，加入了希伯來書第11章以及歷世歷代信心偉人，如同雲彩圍着我們，鼓舞我們向前直奔。神要我們奔那擺在我們前頭路程，若你不走，能否對得住他們？如何勇奔前程，無悔今生？

一. 放下各樣重擔：運動員在跑步時，首先要把所有負累放下。今次我們坐飛機往澳洲時，先把華福會後許多書本及一些衣物留在香港，只帶兩件行李，一大一小。本來預備自己拖著小的行李，因怕打壞裡面物品。但終於接受機場服務員的提議，兩件行李都寄運，因此行動十分輕鬆。我們在奔跑屬靈賽程時，也必須把重擔放下。有時候我們好像老太婆，在鄉下路上背著很重擔子，別人用車來幫她，她卻仍背著擔子。我們人生有許多重擔：為了生活、房子、花園、衣服、工作、經濟、兒女、孫兒、時常煩惱憂心。我們也會為過去的失敗灰心、自卑，也會為成功驕傲、自滿。我們要把這些重擔放下，才能奔跑靈程。

我們初來宿務，許多事都不懂，閩南話也全不會，感謝大家對我們的接納和忍耐。這些年來我們在事奉中，雖然靠賴主的恩典有成功之處，也有不少失敗，我們也不斷學習把重擔放下。

有時教會會為自己的傳統，認為不必改變，便影響我們向前。好的傳統應保留，宿務教會注重神的話、主日學、詩



班、宣教，都是好的傳統，我們應為這些感恩。但我們務要力求改進，不斷更新。

二. 脫去纏累的罪：原文是脫去「容易圍困之罪」。我們在芝加哥事奉時，神為我們在唐人街附近預備一間很好的房子，有美麗的花園。一日師母發現玫瑰花都枯謝了，近前一看原來因被藤枝緊纏，玫瑰花垂危。我們每個人都會有容易纏累的罪，羅得被世界物質纏累，故明知所多瑪不好，卻住在裡面。參孫被情慾的罪纏累，故多次因美色跌倒。掃羅被嫉妒的罪纏累，故多次要殺死大衛。

今天許多基督徒不能在屬靈賽程中奔跑，因被罪惡纏累。有人時常被世界誘惑，日思夜想，拚命賺取錢財。賺錢沒有錯，但要有正確目的：為神的國、按神的原則賺錢，而非用不當手法。有人被貪心纏累，有人被電子遊戲纏累，有人被脾氣纏累，有人被情慾纏累，這樣他的靈命必定枯乾。

曾有一位牧師十分有恩賜，講道領導都很好，和師母一同事奉，看是才子佳人，眾人稱羨。但一天發現原來他有婚外情，多年的遮掩終被揭露，因此不能再牧會。

今天你有沒有被某些罪纏累著嗎？我們要時常求聖靈光照，靠著聖靈治死身體的惡行，脫去這些容易纏累我們的罪，才能勇奔前程。

三. 存心忍耐到底：不管多困難，賽跑員必須跑畢全程！屬靈賽程是長跑，要一生努力。我們說「忍」字頭上一把刀，故忍耐必須經歷痛楚，要持續不斷。就如

運動場上的賽跑員，必須忍受流汗、腿痛、疲憊、口渴等，我們在屬靈賽程中也必須忍受一切打擊及困難，堅持到底。

最早來華的宣教士馬禮遜博士，因清庭不允在廣州傳道，故要退到澳門工作。七年後才能帶領第一位中國信徒歸主。他工作的困難實在太多，但他卻能忍耐到底。

我的三弟曾永輝牧師，在美國牧會十年之後，在歐洲宣教並建立了四個教會。在2004年他剛就任美國羅德島華人教會 (Chinese Christian Church of Rhode Island) 主任牧師時，仍不斷找機會向人傳福音。最後一次當我去探望他，看到他臥病在床，頭部非常腫漲，雙眼不能掙開，但當我問候他時，他立刻舉起雙手，用兩隻指頭作出勝利的記號！我實在為永輝牧師感恩，因他留下極美好的見證。

今天在你的屬靈追求及事奉中，有什麼困難或痛楚，你必須忍耐到底，才能勇奔前程。

四. 定睛仰望耶穌：為何要仰望主耶穌？因祂是我們的榜樣，祂時刻對準神交給祂的使命。祂因那擺在前面的喜樂，便甘願被釘十字架，忍受一切苦難，完成祂的路程，救贖我們脫離罪惡，便坐在神寶座的右邊。今天我們要勇奔前程，也必須定睛仰望寶座上的主。大衛說：「祂是我的主，我的好處不在禰以外。」今天你若把盼望放在世界，不論是股市、或樓市、或金市，都要叫你失望。箴言3:4-5說：「你要專心仰賴耶和華，不可倚靠自己的聰明，在你一切所



行的事上，都要認定祂，祂必指引你的路。」只有主能給你清楚的人生方向，給你異象。

當日神呼召我，叫我全時間傳道。當我順服主，祂便繼續引領我進入海外神學院 (Overseas Bible Seminary)，後到中華福音神學院 (China Evangelical Seminary) 深造。新婚三個月後，便來到宿務事主，之後到美國德州、芝加哥，十年前到多倫多事奉主，都有神奇妙引導。

當我們在美國事奉時，有朋友說：「在美國讀大學費用很貴，最好為兒女買金條作準備。」我們也有點擔心，怕三個兒女同時入大學，無法負擔。但我們亦只能為他們每人儲蓄一千美元，其餘一切仰望主。感謝神的恩典，兒女都用功讀書，亦考到獎學金，而大女兒三年已能畢業，所以並沒有三個兒女一同入大學。神的恩典實在奇妙。

我們在過去工場事奉時，都經歷神的賜福，教會有所增長，都需要擴建。如今所牧養的北約華人浸信會 (North York Chinese Baptist Church)，很有差傳負擔，這教會曾支持以前的主任牧師陳喜謙牧師 (Rev. Hay Him Chan) 為世界華福中心總幹事，過去41年有七十四位弟兄姊妹全時間奉獻。如今支持26位宣教士，其中一半以上出自我們教會。感謝神也讓我和教會短宣隊五次下到巴拿馬，幫助我們派出的宣教士建立巴拿馬華人浸信會 (Panama Chinese Baptist Church)。五年前和大家分享我們的建堂異象，去年十一月已破土，現時快完成掘地工程，下月可開始建造地基及地底車庫，2013年春天應完工。我們的異

象是透過社區服務，成為福音橋樑，牧養圈外的羊，使許多家庭，老人、青少年、不同族裔的人，得著主的救恩。這個計劃的挑戰很大，財力、人力、物力的需要很多。但我們仰望耶穌，因祂是為我們信心創始成終的主。請大家代禱及記念我們的需要。

親愛的弟兄姊妹，宿務基督教會的先賢已盡了他們的責任，跑完他們的路程。盼望你也能盡你所能，靠賴主恩，跑完你的屬靈賽程。

威廉波頓 William Borden 出生於美國 Borden 家族，這家族最著名是出產牛奶。波頓生下來便是百萬富翁，他卻願意一生事奉神。1909年他在耶魯大學 Yale University 讀書時，成立許多的查經班，帶領許多同學信主。神感動他到中國向回教徒傳福音，因此他先到埃及學習亞拉伯話，但在25歲時卻患腦膜炎 meningitis 去世。死後人在他的聖經中發現他所寫的三句話：No Reserve「毫無保留」，No Retreat「毫無退縮」及 No Regret「毫無怨悔」。他的傳記「忠心的管家」激勵了千萬的信徒，許多人因他的見證把生命奉獻給主！

威廉波頓奔跑了他的路程！宿務的先賢也完成他們的程！你肯不肯在這時代中奔走神擺在你面前的路程？你的生命能否毫無保留，毫無退縮，毫無怨悔地為主擺上？

(曾永光牧師新地址：10 Bloorview Place, #1503, Toronto, ON M2J 0B1, Canada  
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# PCGS Hong Kong Experience

For the high school teachers, words are not enough to describe our emotions and experiences during the HK trip. So, here are some of our expressions of thanks to the Lord and the PCGS Board of Trustees:

## **Truly Grateful** - Mrs. Raquel Barril

“It is a delight to know that God uses people to give earthly rewards to those who honor Him through their work. The Hong Kong trip was both educational and fun. I had never dreamt nor imagined myself taking “out of this world” rides in Ocean Park. It's great to be a child once again; feel and experience things without inhibitions. I am truly grateful to God and to the PCGS board members.”

## **Great Privilege** - Mrs. Jugie Ponce

“To be part of the PCGS family is a BIG blessing. To be given a chance and an opportunity to travel to Hong Kong was one of the greatest privileges. It was one of the most memorable and exciting trip I ever had in my life. To the Board of Trustees, thank you so much for making our dreams come true.”

## **More Than All that I Asked For** - Ms. Lovely Desiree Sunog

“I only prayed for Enchanted Kingdom but God granted me more than what I wished for. Thank you Board of Trustees for allowing God to use you as an instrument in making other people's dreams turn into reality.”

## **Took My Breath Away** - Mr. Michael Matt Guitguiten



“There are just too many unforgettable experiences during our HK trip, among which are the Disneyland shows, breath-taking rides in the Abyss, the Dragon, and the Mine Train in Ocean Park. Another experience was the visit to the History Museum which was so huge. The museum boasted an elaborate set-up and meticulous arrangement of historical facts. For all the fun, I want to thank God and the Board of Trustees for giving us an opportunity to experience Hong Kong.”

## **Blessing in Disguise**

It was supposedly a summer getaway, but it was postponed. Some of us heaved a deep sigh! Would we have to wait many more months before we get to tread on foreign land as a group? But the rescheduled trip was a blessing in disguise because the mass passport filing and releasing took longer than expected and promised. God's time is just perfect.





**A Terrific Surprise** - Mrs. Loreben Abaquita

“Praise the Lord for the Hong Kong trip! Thank you Lord for a dream come true, thank you PCGS! Thank you Dr. Po and the Board of Trustees! The experience was really amazing; I stood in awe of God's wonderful love. For me, it was a terrific surprise from God. Until now I am still asking if it did really happen. What a great blessing to belong to the Kiankee Family ... all glory to God!”

**A Childhood Dream Come True** - Mrs. Lelamae Cabalse

“For me, the trip to Hong Kong was a childhood dream come true. The Disneyland experience was no longer a childhood fantasy but real. I had so much fun and everything I saw was breath-taking. To the Board of Trustees, thank you for allowing me to make my dream a piece of reality to remember.”



**An Honor and Privilege** - Mrs. Jocelyn Lazaro

“The Hong Kong trip made me realize that belonging to the Kian Kee family was definitely an honor and a privilege. When some of my co-trainers in MTG heard that the faculty and staff of PCGS were going to Hong Kong, they were astounded. They said that never in their schools and seldom in other schools are teachers given this kind of privilege. They expressed that the Board of Trustees of Kian Kee knows how to appreciate and give importance to hard work and dedication of their teachers. I was so proud when I heard that and even prouder that I belong to PCGS. God bless Kian Kee!”

**Was I Dreaming?** - Mrs. Jocen Vargas

“When the announcement regarding the trip became official, I couldn't believe it. Was I dreaming? I am happy and proud that I belong to the PCGS family. Words are not enough to say thanks to the people who gave me this opportunity. Thank you! To God be the glory!”



**God is My Healer** - Mr. El-cid Sayson

“I was sick the night before the schedule to leave for Hong Kong. I thought that I would not be able to make it but God indeed was so good and faithful. He sustained me and gave me strength. Despite my condition during the trip, I was able to enjoy the beauty of God's creation. Indeed the trip was so awesome and I praised God for allowing me to experience the wonderful and joyful trip to Hong Kong.”

**Hong Kong: Live it, Love it!** - Mr. Eduardo Pua

“The 4D3N stay in Hong Kong was indeed an experience worth remembering and retelling. Some of the places in Kowloon are reminiscent of the place where I initially grew up: Chinatown, Manila. As the Hong Kong tourism advertisement serenades with its familiar slogan “Live it, Love it!”, my colleagues and I joyfully responded to its warm invitation by experiencing Hong Kong by foot, on platter, through public transport and the breath-taking rides at Disneyland, and Ocean Park, and through sightseeing. It was an honor to be part of this 1,600-kilometer journey across the South China Sea with the PCGS family. Thank you God and the Board of Trustees for the grace and opportunity to live and love Hong Kong!”

Indeed, the Hong Kong trip was a gift from the Lord. Even though there were some inconveniences during the preparation of the trip, still it brought an indelible fragment in our memories. God really knows how to reward hard work and commitment of His children. God is never blind and He is forever faithful and true!



### **God Grants the Desires of Our Hearts** - Mrs. Stephanie Wong

God hears even our childish dreams and prayers; no, it is not wrong to dream BIG dreams. And God can also place the same dream in the hearts of the Board of Trustees and Dr. Po.....to send the teachers out of the country.....and....yes, to Hong Kong, not for a seminar but for a VACATION! True enough, as we delight in the Lord and serve the Him faithfully, He will grant us our hearts' desires in ways and timing we do not expect. The HK experience strengthened relationships, caused us to see beyond our imperfections and accept each other's differences. I cannot stopped thanking God for the GRACE, GENEROSITY and GENUINE CONCERN that He has placed in the hearts of the Board of Trustees to give us this HK trip.



### **The Blessing Trip** - Teacher YongYong

“Up until now, I still can hardly believe that I was one of the chosen recipients of the said “Blessing Trip.” Memories of the trip will be with me for a lifetime . . . Heartfelt thanks to the Board of Trustees!

To the PCGS Board, my  
Heartfelt gratitude for  
An experience that  
No one will ever forget, and for your  
Kindness . . .

You provided for  
Our most exciting, wonderful and  
Unforgettable HK trip!

### **Lost in Hong Kong** - Teacher Joy Roa

“EXCITED!” That's the exact word to describe what I felt when I heard that we were going to Hong Kong . . . . Never have I imagined that I will be able to travel out of the country; it's truly a blessing from our Lord God Almighty. God is soooooooooooooooooooooo good! The excitement never stopped from the time we stepped inside the Mactan International Airport until we reached Hong Kong and back. But the excitement was soon coupled with fright when I got lost – not once, but on three occasions! I will never forget that experience.



### **Laughing All the Way** - Teacher Keren Tagulob

I will never forget my experiences in Hong Kong with my co-teachers and coordinator. This trip strengthened our relationship with each other. We were LOST, TIRED and SCARED; but most of the time we were just laughing. God is always at work and I can feel it each day during our trip. I learned

more how to TRUST people, to CARE, and to UNDERSTAND our differences.





**Dream Come True**—Teacher Raquel A. Canata

The Hong Kong trip was unforgettable because it was my first travel outside of the Philippines. Hong Kong Disneyland made me feel like a child again. We stayed to watch the fireworks; from start to the final blast, I hear myself saying “Wow! Wow! WOW! At Ocean Park, I conquered my fears by taking some of the extreme rides. Wuhhh... Praise God I did not die in the FLASH. Visiting the giant aquarium, I can only declare, “Truly how great and mighty are HIS works.” Thank you again PCGS for a memory worth treasuring. I am forever grateful.

**A Rare Gift** -Teacher Sally Sapalo



“There is a time for everything and a season for every activity under heaven” (Ecclesiastes 3:1). When I had my head and neck surgery last March, I thought I would never be able to join the “Hong Kong Trip” because I was still recuperating. But God worked in ways I didn't see. The trip was postponed to November; thus, giving me sufficient time to recover! What once was a dream for most of us is now history – a story that we will tell and retell. It was indeed a very rare gift from God. Thank you Lord for the provision! Thank you Lord for PCGS!

**So Blessed ....** - Christine Nova R. Bejemino

Getting lost in Hong Kong *twice* with my group was unforgettable; it is no joke to be lost in a foreign country. All I did was to pray and trust the Lord. I thank God for His protection; we did manage to find our way back to the hotel, still with a smile. God is truly a “Blesser” and Rewarder of good things. I'm so blessed to be part of the PCGS family and I couldn't stop but testify of God's goodness and faithfulness. I thank God for everything and to all who gave us this trip.

**Undeserved Favor** - Ms. Andrea Lou Canonigo

Aside from the cool places, nice views and the adrenaline raising rides, what I treasured most was the fun and bonding I had with my officemates/colleagues. Indeed, God is the giver of all good gifts even ones that we don't deserve. Thank you, Board of Trustees and Dr. Po for allowing God to use you to bless us.







Unspeakable joy and excitement were written all over our faces from the moment we stepped inside Mactan International Airport en route for Hong Kong last November 2. The next day (Nov. 3) inside Bus #1, Mrs. Munoz shared that in times of trouble, we can call “911” referring to Psalm 91:1. The day after this (Nov. 4) inside

Bus #1 again while heading towards Ocean Park, Mrs. Magat reminded us - “in everything give thanks.” God readily placed us to test.... To whom do we turn to in times of urgent need? Can we still give thanks when one of us misplaced and lost her passport? When Teacher San San realized that her passport was not with her, we became worried because we were scheduled to fly home the next day (Nov. 6). We dialed “911” and yes, God heard us *but* His reply was negative. We did not find the passport *but* God sent His “angels” to minister to us so that what normally would take three (3) days to get a temporary travel permit was facilitated in half a day thus allowing Teacher San San to return on Nov. 7. For this trip, we were working around a very limited budget; so initially, we planned to arrange everything on our own through online booking. But God foreknew that T. San San would lose her passport. So when we were finalizing plans for HK, God impressed upon my heart to seek the assistance of Grand Hope Travel Agency for all our travel plans. Amazingly, God also impressed upon the heart of Mrs. Dy of Grand Hope to travel with us to and from HK. She was one of “God’s angels” who ministered to us. It was very kind of her to volunteer to stay behind with T. San San and facilitate her travel documents. God knew that it would take a travel agency proprietor to get a flight booking at such short notice. Truly, God is a God of all wonders; He is all knowing, all powerful, too marvelous for words, and too wonderful for comprehension.





# Who wrote the Books of the Bible?

## An Irreverent View:

### Part 1: The Documentary Hypothesis

**W**ho wrote the Bible, really? Serious question! Holy book it may be, the Bible certainly didn't write itself, did it?

Duh, you might say. This is a *church* publication – of course you have to say that the Bible has divine authorship! Yet even then, that explanation raises some other questions. Was the Bible dictated word for word by God? Or did He merely inspire whoever wrote the Books of the Bible?

Okay then. Let's say it doesn't matter. Suppose God had a hand in writing the Bible, be it doing actual dictation or merely providing the spark of inspiration. Final buck stops with Him. Then another question comes to mind – was the text properly preserved?

We don't have the originals now. What we have are copies of copies of copies of... well, copied copies. How do we know that the text was copied perfectly all along? Remember, before Gutenberg invented the printing press, everything was copied by hand.

Actually, problems cropped up even *after* the printing press was invented. It became much easier to make huge mistakes. Ever heard of the *Wicked Bible*? It was a reprint of the King James Version in 1631, but the printers made a tiny mistake. A single word was accidentally left out. Not a big problem right? Well, not if that word was *not* and the verse in question was Exodus 20:14. Not so tiny anymore, huh?

Okay, since that raises too many questions, let's extend our "divine" explanation to cover any and all possible transcription errors. Now, we're gonna say God preserved everything that was written perfectly, hence no transmission errors here. Satisfied?

Unfortunately, there are still holes left in this explanation. The ancient Israelites spoke ancient Hebrew. And Aramaic after Assyria/Babylon conquered them. Then Greek after Alexander the Great. Then Latin. Unless you're a Biblical scholar, you are relying on translations.

Which translation should we use? There are so many: the most popular are the King James (KJV), New International (NIV), and American Standard (ASV) versions. Philippine Bibles are based on the ASV, while the most popular Chinese translation today (Chinese Union Version) drew from the 1885 KJV.

Suppose we assume all translations are the same, so it doesn't matter. That's not a good assumption. You can't translate every single nuance of one language to another perfectly. You will lose something in translation. Furthermore, different translations draw from different sources. Even if you assume *all* translations are good, you still have to pick sources.

The oldest source we have is the *Septuagint*, a Greek translation created in Alexandria, Egypt dating back hundreds of years before Christ. Jews (and almost all Protestant churches) today use the *Masoretic Text*, written after the fall of Jerusalem in 70 CE. Which source is more reliable?

When people of the New Testament, Jesus included, quote from the Old Testament, they almost always use the Septuagint because it was familiar to them. On the other hand, the Old Testament basically came from the Jewish Tanakh, so why not the Masoretic Text also used by the Jews?

Or what about the Vulgate Bible, written in Latin by Jerome in the Fourth Century? He translated from Hebrew, but also used Greek sources. This version is supported by the Roman Catholic Church. Why not use this translation instead? Protestantism did come from Roman Catholicism, after all.





**"Warning for the tourists"**

1. Do not give the eating for monkeys in the museum area.
2. Do not bring any eating and any plastic bags in the museum, is tha' the monkeys will attack to you and make you danger.
3. Do not provoke the monkeys, is that it will bite you.
4. Please to intensive care your children, do not carry any food And toys, and do not away from the children.
5. The monkeys are not afraid anyone please do not interact With them it so very danger !!

**Notice:** - If have accident from monkeys, Cadle car can not invoke to you.

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As you can see, there lies a very long chain – texts are copied and recopied, and translations are made. These translations are then copied and recopied, and form the basis for yet other translations. As an English (or Chinese) Bible reader, *who* actually wrote the books of the Bible shouldn't really matter *too* much, right? As long as you believe it is, after all this time, still the word of God, all is copacetic.

Be warned. We intend to irreverently answer the question raised. If you feel that textual criticism is not your cup of tea – that it will somehow shake your belief, it is best for you to **skip** the rest of this article. Thank you for reading this far, and I hope you enjoy the rest of Gospel Light.



Still here? Then welcome! Please keep an open mind, as we delve deeper into the provenance of the Old Testament, focusing on the first five books of the Bible. We will be specifically looking at the **Documentary Hypothesis** in this article.

According to tradition, Moses wrote the entirety of Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. There are a few exceptions, of course. All passages that describe events happening after Moses' death would be written by other people (like his successor Joshua). This tradition is what we call the Mosaic Authorship of the Pentateuch. But when you examine it closely, a number of factors cast doubt on Mosaic authorship.

First, there are plenty of anachronisms in the text. Anachronisms are things which appear in the wrong time period (imagine Adam and Eve driving a car, or David killing Goliath with a rocket launcher). For example, Genesis 36 contains a list of Edomite kings that lived long after Moses died. Logically, someone who is *not* Moses put that in.

Second, there are certain events that are repeated (these are called *doublets*):

- The Creation story is repeated twice, in Genesis chapters 1 and 2.



- There are two versions of the Ten Commandments (Exo. 20 and Deut. 5).
- Two stories tell of Moses striking a rock to get water (Exo. 17:1-7 and Num. 20:1-13).
- Three stories (*triplets!*) tell of a patriarch pretending that his wife was his sister (Gen. 12:10-20, 20:1-18, and 26:1-11).

Third, there are inconsistencies in the text. How many animals did Noah take to the ark – *two* pairs (Gen. 6:19-20), or *two* and *seven* pairs (7:2-3)? Was Joseph sold to the *Ishmaelites* (37:28) or the *Midianites* (37:36)? Was the name of Moses' father-in-law *Reuel* (Ex. 2:18) or *Jethro* (3:1)?

These doublets and internal inconsistencies suggest that the Pentateuch had multiple authors. Someone edited the work together, combining the sources into a single narrative. In fact, the story of the Flood (Gen. 6-8) best illustrates this combination. It is possible to separate it into two narratives, both similar but slightly different, that can stand on their own. Try the diagram below for yourself!

Are there two Noah stories in Genesis? Read the yellow verses as a whole, and then the green verses.

Ch. 6	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22		
Ch. 7	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
Ch. 8	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22		
Ch. 9	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20				
	21	22	23	24	25	26	27																	

The final factor that questions the Mosaic authorship is not something you can see if you're reading a translation. God is referred to in two different ways in Genesis. The first name, אֱלֹהִים (Elohim), is usually translated as *God*. The second, יהוה (Yahweh), is usually seen as *Lord*, *Jehovah*, or *Yahweh*. *Yahweh* is God's personal name, and was only revealed to Moses at the burning bush. Despite this, some passages prior to Exodus 3 also use the term *Yahweh* when referring to God. If Moses wrote the Pentateuch, would he have made such a mistake?

If not Moses, then who? Julius Wellhausen thought he had the answer. In his 1877 book *Die Komposition des Hexateuch* (he was a German), he theorized that the Pentateuch had four sources. Each source has a

different writing style and emphasis, and was written in different time periods. Eventually, the sources were merged into one. Today, the thesis Wellhausen formulated is called the Documentary Hypothesis, which splits the authorship of the Pentateuch to four sources:

- The **J** (Jahwist; J is German for Y) source uses the term *Yahweh* exclusively when referring to God. **J** has a rich narrative style, and probably came from the Southern Kingdom of Judah because he favored the South. He used the name *Sinai* (which is a mountain in the South) when referring to the important mountain. In his narrative in Gen. 37:26, Judah was the one who saved Joseph from death by selling him as a slave.
- The **E** source referred to God as Elohim prior to Exodus 3. He's not as poetic as **J**, and probably lived in the Northern Kingdom of Israel because he favored the North. The important mountain in his narrative is *Mt. Horeb* (located in the north); he emphasized the role of Reuben (head

of the Northern tribes – Gen. 37:21) in protecting Joseph.

- The **P** (priestly) source has a dry and legalistic style, and loves laws, rules of sacrifice, and genealogies. **P** wrote the entirety of Leviticus and large chunks of Numbers. God is portrayed as unapproachable, except through priests. He was probably an Aaronite priest, as his narrative elevated Aaron to the same level as Moses.
- The **D** (deuteronomist) source wrote the entirety of Deuteronomy. Based on style and language, he probably wrote the other history books, namely: Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings. **D** rivals **J** in style – Deuteronomy essentially recaps the first four books of Genesis



through Numbers, and was written as a farewell address by Moses to the Israelites.

Richard Friedman's book *Who Wrote the Bible?* presents a compelling interpretation of the Documentary Hypothesis. This is his proposed timeline of events:



Once upon a time, all the early history of Israel is passed down as folklore, orally transmitted from generation to generation. When King David united the tribes into the country of Israel, the **J** source wrote a compilation of these stories.

When Israel broke up into two, the narrative evolved to match the political reality. Thus, the **E** source created a version of the folklore which gave a more favorable view of the North. Because the Levites (priests) stayed in the Southern Kingdom, **E** de-emphasized the role of Aaron, who was the first high priest of Israel.

After Israel fell to the Assyrians, many refugees fled across the border to Judah, bringing the **E** narrative with them. Both **J** and **E** were viewed as sacred documents with slight variations, so the first Redactor (a redactor is basically an editor) combined them into **JE**. Since the editing was done in the south, **J** was given more emphasis than **E** whenever there were inconsistencies.

The **JE** source contained some material which were not favorable to the priesthood. To counteract the bad publicity, someone, most probably a priest, wrote down all the priestly oral traditions into the **P** source as a counterbalance to **JE**.

Years passed, and the Judeans slide back into idolatry. Out of the blue, High priest Hilkiah "discovers" a lost scroll of Moses that talks about the law. Believed to be the book of Deuteronomy, the scroll formed the basis of King Josiah's religious reforms in 622 BCE. Did **D** write the scroll to encourage the reforms (described in 2 Kings 23:8-13), or did Josiah order it written to support his reforms? We may never know.

So now, we have three versions floating around: **JE**, **P**, and **D**. As we well know from the *Irreverent History of Christianity* series, King Nebuchadnezzar attacked Jerusalem, and exiled its most educated citizens to Babylon. The exile didn't last long, because the Persians allowed them to return home fifty years later.

While Judaism was kept largely intact, its leaders struggled to find a way to preserve their religious identity. This is where the second Redactor enters the picture at around 450 BCE. He took **JE**, **P**, and **D**, and merged them into a single narrative. This was not a simple copy and paste job – he organized everything in a logical manner, sprinkling bits and pieces of each source where it makes the most sense.

All those boring lists of descendants listed by **P**? The Redactor spliced them between narratives as dividers and story bridges. He was respectful of the texts, and chose not to remove anything. If there were inconsistencies, he left them in. If there were duplicates, he either combined them (the Flood) or presented them side-by-side (Creation).

Who was the Redactor? He would have to be very familiar with the Pentateuch. He would need to be well-educated (few people at the time can read or write). He also needs to have strong religious and political backing, so his work would be accepted. For these reasons, many people believe *Ezra* to be the perfect candidate to be the redactor.

Why Ezra? He was a scribe – it was his job to copy scrolls by hand – meaning he could definitely read and write. Many also believe him to be the author of the books of Chronicles – so he knows his history quite well. He had political backing – King Artaxerxes of Persia ordered him to teach the Law of Moses to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. He came from a family of priests, and was appointed as chief religious enforcer, so the religious side is covered.

In any case, the content of the Hebrew Bible was fixed by 450 BCE. No more changes were made after that. The oldest existing manuscripts we know



of today are the Dead Sea Scrolls, which date back to 100 BCE. Except for very minor transcription errors, these are essentially identical to the Hebrew version we have today, the Masoretic Text.



This explanation ties in very neatly with the political history of Israel, doesn't it? Well, perhaps it's a little *too* neat. The documentary hypothesis makes bold assumptions that many have objected to. We would be remiss if we don't at least present these objections to you, dear reader! After all, this is an irreverent essay.

### Attacking the Documentary Hypothesis

The documentary hypothesis relies solely on textual analysis to distinguish the four sources. While style and choice of words can be useful clues in determining authorship, they are not conclusive. Just because part of a work is “dry” and “legalistic” while the other parts are readable and lively doesn't mean someone else wrote the boring parts.

The same logic applies with the different names of God. So what if you use *Elohim* and not *Yahweh*? It doesn't really matter in the long run. In fact, as a matter of style, the text is internally consistent in using **E** when God emphasized justice, and **J** when He emphasized mercy.

Furthermore, we don't have the original **J**, **E**, **P**, and **D** sources today, so it is impossible to prove that they even existed as separate documents in the first

place. Although the absence of evidence is not quite evidence of absence, the documentary hypothesis remains just that – mere conjecture.

Even the doublets have an explanation. We are dealing with a population whose majority are illiterate. They only understood spoken language. So how do you teach these people? Rote repetition. If you repeat the story over and over again, perhaps in a minor altered form, you will eventually drill the lessons into the thickest of skulls.

All right then, Mr. D.H. Doubter, how about the most famous doublet of them all – the story of the Flood? If someone didn't do any redacting, why are there overlapping stories of this account? Why not just separate these stories and present them as separate versions, just as in Genesis 1 and 2?

The answer? A Chiasmus. It's a figure of speech that balances the second half of the work with the first half – in reverse order. You use a chiasmus when you want to strongly illustrate a point, by creating a symmetrical sentence structure.

Matthew 20:16 (NIV) has a simple chiasmus by Jesus:

- A **So the last**
- B **Will be first**
- B' **And the first**
- A' **Will be last.**

The story of Noah's ark can be divided into a 15-part chiasmus, I kid you not. *Fifteen* parallels!

### Who's Who in the Documentary Hypothesis?

Jahwist	Elohist	Priestly	Deuteronomist
stress on Judah, supports it over Israel	stress on northern Israel	stress on Judah; favors Aaron	stress on central shrine
stresses leaders	stresses the prophetic	stresses the cultic	stresses fidelity to Jerusalem
anthropomorphic speech about God	refined speech about God	majestic speech about God	speech recalling God's work
God walks and talks with us	God speaks in dreams	cultic approach to God	moralistic approach
God is always presented as Yahweh	Until Exodus 3, God is Elohim	Until Exodus 3, God is Elohim and El Shaddai	God is Yahweh
uses Mt. Sinai	Mt. Sinai is Horeb	has genealogies and lists	has long sermons



# How's this for a chiasmus?

Digital painting by Della Lindsey on deviantART

A	Noah (Gen. 6:10a)	
B	Shem, Ham and Japheth (v10b)	
C	Ark to be built (v14-16)	
D	Flood announced (v17)	
E	Covenant with Noah (v18-20)	
F	Food in the Ark (v21)	
G	Command to enter the Ark (7:1-3)	
H	7 days waiting for flood (v4-5)	
I	7 days waiting for flood (v7-10)	
J	Entry to Ark (v11-15)	
K	God shuts Noah inside (v16)	
L	40-day flood (v17a)	
M	Waters increase (v17b-18)	
N	Mountains covered (v19-20)	
O	150 days prevail (v21-24)	
P	God remembers Noah (8:1)	
O'	150-day water abate (v3)	
N'	Mountain tops visible (v4-5)	
M'	Waters abate (v5)	
L'	End of 40 days (v6a)	
K'	Noah opens Ark window (v6b)	
J'	Raven and dove leave Ark (v7-9)	
I'	7 days wait – waters subside (v10-11)	
H'	7 days wait – waters subside (v12-13)	
G'	Command to leave Ark (v15-17)	
F'	Food outside Ark (9:1-4)	
E'	Covenant (v8-10)	
D'	No flood in the future (v11-17)	
C'	Ark (v18a)	
B'	Shem, Ham and Japheth (v18b)	
A'	Noah (v19)	

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Complaints? E-mail me!

We have now gone through the basic features of, and arguments for and against the documentary hypothesis. What should this mean to you?

Very little, actually. What God is telling us from the Bible will not change whether it was actually written by 1 person in 40 years, 4 people over 800 years, or 400 people over 8 years.

Ultimately, it is our duty to read the Bible and decide for ourselves what God is telling us from it.

The documentary hypothesis is a well-reasoned theory that applies scientific analysis into the best-selling book in the world. It tries to reconcile the evolution of the Pentateuch with real events in Israel's history. I present it here so we can gain some insight into our religion's development. But ultimately it is only a hypothesis, not proven fact.

In the next installment of "Who Wrote the Bible, Really?", we will examine the authorship of the History books. Coming soon, in Gospel Light!



# 給愛增添一份的熱

小星光

人類多少認為禽獸自小是認母不認父的。雖然動物有感情，一旦有了小崽或生了小雛兒，多少雄的都不會負起做爸爸的責任。試看家中的雞狗貓鴨兔，絕不會有海誓山盟，反會遠走高飛，另找新歡。

反觀人類，青年時多麼喜樂甜蜜，和睦相敬如賓，心情如湖水平靜，但有時也不期然起漪漣，像本文故事起了風暴。一對結了十幾年的青年夫妻經不起時光的考驗，即使有個十多歲的男孩，也經不起外間的引誘，也反目要離婚。就在夫妻要折散的前夕，女人問男人分離以後，孩子離開父母，會不會影響讀書的心情，男人平和的回答。孩子要選擇誰就任他做。他們兩個似乎相信自己會被抽選，大家都很放心。次晨到了法庭聽離婚的審判，女人一直伸長她的頸，瞻望這十幾年一直撫養在身邊的男孩，跟她有深厚的感情。男人一直在外面賺錢，跟男孩沒有一點感情。離婚那天，法官問男孩子願意跟爸爸還是

願意跟媽媽？想不到男孩毫不猶想地回答說：「我跟爸爸，我跟爸爸！」男孩的回答者讓所有的人大吃一驚。法官問男孩：「你為什麼願意跟爸爸？」男孩笑著說：「因為爸爸有錢，可以買喜歡的零食給我，可以買喜歡的玩具給我。」男孩如跟著媽媽一定過著困苦的生活。媽媽不給他零花錢買喜歡吃的物品，甚至想吃一個水果也不輕易給他。有時因調皮，媽媽罵過他，也打過他。無疑在男孩的心裡，媽媽是可恨的，選擇爸爸，理所當然！

可是，媽媽卻不放棄，她盯著男孩說：「孩子，你為什麼不選擇我呢？從今往後，你可以買零食，也可以給你買……。」男孩搖搖頭說：「我不喜歡你！」男人聽了，得意地笑著。前兩天他給男孩買吃的，買玩的，是做對了。前兩天，男人一直跟男孩歡聚，是因為他想得到孩子。因他現在的新妻不想生孩子，而他卻是想有孩子。

那天，女人在眾人面前捂著面地哭泣，肝腸寸斷，她怎樣都沒有想到她一直在乎的男孩居然會說不喜歡她，在最關鍵的時候，居然拋棄她。那一刻，她連死的心都有。可是，她轉念自己得好好活著，說不定那一天男孩受不住後母的虐待，會重新回到她的身邊。男孩走的時候，她給他買



了零食,還買了許多喜歡的東西.沒有想到的是男孩居然從車上將它們都扔了下來,還叫爸爸趕緊開車,說他不想看到她.女人看著遠去的小車,放聲大哭.此後的女人,一個人孤零零地生活,依舊早出晚歸地排水果攤.只是她水果攤的生意比以前更差.因為她總是心不在焉.她心裡一直想念兒子.她不知道他過得好不好.好多次,她突然將水果攤推回家,準備到省城去找男孩.可是,走到車站,她又轉了身.因為偌大的一個省城,她不知道怎能找到男孩,或者男孩已不在省城.即使她去了,也是徒勞無益.

有一天,女人收到一張五百元的匯款單,是那省城寄來的匯款,匯款人是「我愛你」.女人莫名其妙,她不知道這是誰寄給她的,不敢去取錢.沒有想到一個月後,女人再次收到了張一模一樣的匯款單.這麼說來,是有人幫助她,她只好取出了錢,心想等日後知道了那個人,再將錢還給他吧!此後,每隔一個月,女人都會收到一張五百元的匯單,而且每次的匯款人都是:「我愛你」女人很想知道這個匯款人是誰,可是對方的地址只有街道沒有門牌.讓她束手無策.

時間飄逝得很快,冬去春來,沒有想到一個月後,女人再收到一封信,信內說:

媽媽:

妳好?我知道你很愛我,我雖離開了妳,但其實,我很愛很愛妳,離開了妳很不習慣,也很想很想妳.媽媽,我知道妳心裡很難受.當初選擇了爸爸,是想減輕妳的負擔,同時我留在他的身邊,就可向他要錢,然後將錢都寄給妳.這樣妳就不用早出晚歸地賣水果了.媽媽,妳好好地生活,不要擔心我,以後會回來看妳.媽媽,妳永遠都是我的好媽媽.我永遠都不會放棄妳,等我長大了,我會領妳來過幸福的生活.

人生的離別,有時是殘酷,有時是不可思議的.但是有時卻隱藏美好的旨意.有時不是為了別離,而是為了走得更近來暗中發揮偉大的愛.客觀這個男孩年紀輕輕能有這麼的作為,孝愛雙全.的確是神的感動!為了解決母親經濟上的困苦,他解拌不孝子而痛傷母親與自己,相信有一天真相明白會獲得他爸爸的諒解.

世界上有很多的事端和問題,表面上是混亂與復雜,但如果我們將主的道拿來做標準作解決,就可迎刃而解.上帝的愛是萬能,只要我們信靠祂,將問題交託神,一切的事端都可解決的.



# Extra! Extra!

by: Pastor Rosaline Lim

## Resurrection Sunday!

One of the most celebrated seasons of the year especially to Christians is the Easter Sunday or Resurrection Sunday.

This is the day commemorating Jesus Christ's resurrection and victory over death. It also reminds us how Christ took our place to face the wrath of His Father. As a result of His suffering and death, the sins of all those who believe in Him are all forgiven.

Last April 24, 2011, we had three baptismal candidates who

proclaimed to the congregation that they are part of the body of Christ. They were: Bro. Ryan Janseen Uy, Bro. Ralph Adrian Uy and Sis. Erica Caitlin Uy. May we uphold them in our prayers and encourage them to grow in His Word and by His grace, live a Christ-centered life for His glory.

*"Jesus said to her, I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me*



*will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?" (John 11:25-26)*

## "Church Members: The Body of Christ - Built From the Ministry of the Saints"

by: Ptr. Jebo Banzuelo



Ptr. Jebo Banzuelo was the speaker of our 2nd theme this

year. He shared about the role of a church member on May 29, 2011.

As church members, you and I have different roles to play. Either you are the hands that help and serve, or the feet that brings the Word of God to different places, the eyes that see the needs of others, the

mouth that intercedes and

encourages rather than gossips and etc ...

Ptr. Jebo said that the role of pastors is to train, to teach and to oversee; and let church members take up their responsibilities to do God's works through serving and leading others to the kingdom of God for the glory of our Father in heaven.



## “One Thing” (Philippians 3:12-14)

Last May 22-26, 2011, the FCCF held its 34th Nationwide Youth Conference here at BE Resort in Mactan, Cebu. Around 400 delegates from different cities and provinces came and joined the youth conference. In Phil 3:13, Paul said that the two words, “One Thing” denote pursuing Christlikeness. He wanted us to focus on what lies ahead rather than to dwell or be distracted by our past achievements and good deeds or the past mistakes and sins. If we cling on to these things, they will hinder us from moving forward or exerting effort on what is ahead of us.

Paul encouraged us, fellow

believers, to do the “one thing”, i.e., “to press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus” (Phil 3:14).

We are like athletes running the race but in order to finish the race, we should be strong and healthy athletes. If we Christians are not spiritually healthy and strong and at the same time lingering on our past (be it achievements or failures), what can we accomplish for the Lord and how can we finish the race that is set before us?

While we are still living in this world of so many trials and challenges, may we not allow such things to stop us from serving and living for Jesus Christ.

## Child Dedication

“It’s not enough to love the children, it is necessary that they are aware that they are loved”

-St. John Bosco



named Samuel, meaning “I asked the Lord for him”. God blessed his parents by granting them their prayer request for a child and in return, they promised to dedicate the child to be used by God. After

he was weaned, Samuel was remembered Hannah because of her prayers and gave her a son

he was weaned, Samuel was presented before the Lord and given back to Him. May those who have been blessed with children give thanks to God for the precious treasures He has bestowed upon them. May you train them up in the way God wants you to so that your children’s lives are pleasing in His sight. And if God calls them to serve Him, may you wholeheartedly give him/her back to Him for His glory.

Calvin and Jade Gothong dedicated their son, David Chace, to the Lord on the 3rd of July, 2011. May God grant them wisdom as they rear their child in the ways of our Lord.





## Operation JLY Medical Mission

Healing was one of the ministries Christ did while He was on earth. Physical healing was one of them. However, the most important healing Jesus did was the spiritual healing or saving of the lost from the wrath of His Father. The Operation JLY (Jesus Loves You) conducted a medical mission at Talisay last August 13, 2011. Around 500 people from the barangay came. Free medical check up and benefits were given after they went through counselors of the gospel. People came to know the Lord and accepted Him as their Lord and Savior. May we continue to do and support the work of God through medical missions. May the people who came received not just the physical healings, but most important of all, spiritual healings.





# Mission Week



The lives of missionaries doing God's work from one place to another are full of challenges and trials. Some were stoned to death. Others were crucified upside down, speared to death, burned alive, beheaded, imprisoned and etc... Some famous missionaries we know who "literally" offered their lives to the Lord were Jim Elliot, William Carey, Adorinam Judson, David Livingstone, Eric Lidell, Hudson

Taylor, Jonathan Edwards, and Robert Morrison, to name a few. Some people are called to be missionaries. May we support and encourage them to finish the race they are running and focus on what is ahead rather than look back to what they have done, whether good or bad, which could distract them from their ministry. Last September 1-4, 2011 was our

church's mission emphasis week with the theme, "Mission and I". Rev. Andy Smith, the director of OMF, was the guest speaker. Our church is currently supporting nine missionaries who are serving in different provinces and cities of our country. A team called "China for Christ" also came and shared their mission experiences.

## **"Unity in Faith, Stable in Doctrine & Built Up In Love"**

by: **Ptr. Jay Banzuelo**



Our last theme seminar was held on October 30, 2011. Ptr. Jay Banzuelo pointed out that for the church to grow, it should be in UNITY, meaning, in oneness or harmony. Unity is the soul, essence & the core of the church.

When it is destroyed, one rips out the heart of the body of Christ. Trinity was being used as the supreme model of unity. When it comes to DOCTRINE, the right doctrine should expose our motives, point our faults, rebuke our sins and expect us to change. We have a huge responsibility before God in keeping our church united. We should focus on what we have in common rather than

on our differences, be realistic in our expectations, choose to encourage rather than criticize, refuse to listen to gossip, practice God's method of conflict resolution, and support pastors and leaders. LOVE is a big word and with it requires big action as what Christ did. If we want to be like Him, we should have the LOVE like His that we may BUILD UP each other IN LOVE.



## ***Becoming a Marriage Healer of Your Church***

***by: Dr. William Kirwan***

Team Timothy from BSOP spearheaded by Dr. Rosa Shao together with Dr. William Kirwan and three BSOP students came to have a short “mission” trip ministry last November 4-5, 2011.

Dr. Kirwan spoke on how to help married people with marital problems, how the brain of

women works, and how the brain of men works.

He also shared that when a person gets married, he or she usually ends up with a partner who has the same characteristic and personality of one of his/her parents who has a big impact or influence on him/her.

God should play a big role in one’s married life because He is the only one who can make the marriage work, make it strong and have harmony. It should be a God-centered marriage. If it is built in self-centeredness, selfishness would creep in and affect the marriage.



## ***Sunday School Sunday***

Last September 25, 2011, the Sunday School Department celebrated Sunday School Sunday. This ministry is very important to all churches because it is where children will get to know the amazing and wonderful stories of

Jesus and the reason why He came into this world.

Our Sunday School kids gave a special number giving praise to God through memorizing verses and singing

praise to Him. May we encourage our children and grandchildren to come and join Sunday School that they might come to know Christ in faith and grow up to be a godly person.



# A Night of Thanks

## Thanksgiving Prayer

Heavenly Father,  
on Thanksgiving Day  
We bow our hearts to You  
and pray.  
We give You thanks  
for all You've done  
Especially for the gift of Jesus,  
Your Son  
For beauty in nature,  
Your glory we see  
For joy and health,  
friends and family,  
For daily provision,  
Your mercy and care  
These are the blessings  
You graciously share.  
So today we offer  
this response of praise  
With a promise to follow You  
all of our days.

--Mary Fairchild

One thing I observed from the Thanksgiving service on November 24, 2011 is that most of the fellowships joined hand to give special numbers.

Indeed, great thanksgiving was offered to our Lord that

night. May our loving Lord be pleased with the talents and praises that were offered to Him.

May we also continue to show our gratitude to our heavenly Father who has always been with us, guiding us, providing for us, loving us; and of course, a Father who doesn't show any partiality which makes Him great.

Let's be thankful also to the people who shared their lives with us, making us a part of their lives, too. May we always be grateful for everything no matter how small it is.

To culminate the thanksgiving celebration, twelve candidates were baptized on Thanksgiving Sunday, November 27, 2011. They are: September Jewel Ang, Winona Ella Chan, Lynette Chu, Krishia Kaye Go, Jarryd Jon Ong, Nathan Josh Ong, Caitlin Gayle Po, Charlene Grace Tan, Gillian Jade To Chip, Jeff Gordon To Chip, Carlven Uy and Diorela Uy. May they continue to grow in the knowledge of God.



**President:  
Deacon Gilbert Yap**



**Pianist:  
Aaron Lemuel Ong**



**The congregation singing "To God Be the Glory"**





**CGC Choir singing "Worthy is the Lamb"**



**"Praise Befits God" by Pastor Eric Chan  
Interpreted by Pastor Alice Huang**



**詩篇100篇 by Diana Alexandra C. Gothong,  
Jonathan Bryan S. Tio, Tashana Joelle T. Ong**



**Psalm 100 and "Shout to the Lord" by  
the Monday and Saturday Bible Study Groups**



**"Mansion Over the Hilltop"  
by Elder Valentin Uy**



**"Come Into His Presence" and "Count Your  
Blessings" by MGC Teens Choir**





耶穌叫咱人 *by Sisters' Fellowship*



**Thanksgiving Remark  
by Elder Celestino Siao**



**"It is Good to Give Thanks to the Lord"  
& "Honor the Lord" by MGC Adult Choir**



**"How Can I Keep from Singing"  
by Joybells, Soul Searchers,  
Young Pro and Praise Band**



**"Amazing Grace" Line Dance  
by Sisters' Fellowship**





**"Sinner Saved by Grace" Quartet**



**"Our Great Savior" by Jovelyn Yu and Christine Marie Uy**



**Testimony by Catherine Young of Carmel Fellowship**



**"Father's Love" skit by CYF**



**Welcome to God's Family: September Jewel Ang, Winona Ella Chan, Lynette Chu, Krishia Kaye Go, Jarryd Jon Ong, Nathan Josh Ong, Caitlin Gayle Po, Charlene Grace Tan, Gillian Jade To Chip, Jeff Gordon To Chip, Carlven Uy and Diorela Uy.**



# Other Church Highlights



**MAY 15 - 媽媽的愛" song rendition by Sunday School Children**



**AUGUST 21 - Induction of Pastor Wayne Chua**



**JULY 17 - Sacred Music Sunday**



**SEPTEMBER 11 - Senior Citizen Mid-Autumn Festival**





**FCCF 60th ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION  
34TH FCCF NATIONWIDE YOUTH CONFERENCE  
“ONE THING” ♦ BE RESORT, MACTAN CEBU ♦ MAY 22-26, 2011**









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CEBU GOSPEL CHURCH

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