

Jul
2019
vol.
27

Gospel Light

digital
edition

務
光
上網版

RUNNING IN THE RACE

OH, FOR THE
GRACE OF GOD

How I began to
run in the race
of Christianity

10

MOTHERS WHO MAKE
A LASTING IMPACT

What Mothers can do
to fortify their kids
for the race ahead

38

PASSING ON
MY BATONS

When do we let go
as we approach
the finish line?

19

MARVEL-ous? ONLY MY GOD!

What the superheroes in the Marvel Cinematic
Universe taught me about our relationship with God.

30

2019 CHURCH THEME

生命發光



VISION

To be a Bible-believing Filipino-Chinese Church that develops Christ-glorifying Christians

異象

菲華教會 確信聖經
培養門徒 榮耀基督

MISSION

1. To prepare God's People for works of service through equipping, encouraging, and discipling.
2. To promote a Christ-like Church that loves and cares for one another.
3. To proclaim the Gospel to our Community and beyond

使命

裝備鼓勵 培訓門徒
神的子民 盡職事奉
促進推動 效法基督
彼此相愛 互相關懷
宣揚傳講 神的福音
始於市鎮 直到地極



TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 2** 讓我們的生命為主發光
- 5** 風雨有感
- 6** 苦難中持守純正
- 8** A Rice Bowl: A Symbol of Surrendering to God
- 10** Oh, For the Grace of God
- 13** Business Lessons from the Book of Proverbs Pt.2
- 19** Passing on my Batons
- 22** River, Sea, and Mountain
- 26** 河、海與山
- 29** Pursuing God-given Dream for His Glory
- 30** MARVEL-ous? Only My God!
- 34** The SunCell Story
- 38** Mothers who Make a Lasting Impact
- 42** Just Another Ordinary Day
- 44** Historical Background Paper: The Sadducees
- 48** Church Events
- 57** Ten Minutes with God: Executive Summaries

讓我們的生命 為主發光

謝國智牧師

當

主耶穌基督宣告與命令我們是世界的
光之時候，祂是在登山寶訓中挑戰我們
要做世界的光。

祂說：「你們是世上的光。城造在山上是不能隱藏的。人點燈，不放在斗底下，是放在燈臺上，就照亮一家的人。你們的光也當這樣照在人前，叫他們看見你們的好行為，便將榮耀歸給你們在天上的父。」
(馬太福音5:14-16)

我們要做世界的光不可以隱藏，反而要光明正大的照在人前，叫世人看見我們的好行為，便將榮耀歸給我們在天上的父。

那麼，我們的生命要怎樣成為世界的光呢？

第一 我們要有基督復活的生命

聖經說：「因為世人都犯了罪，虧缺了神的榮耀。」（羅馬書3：23）聖經又說：「然而，神既有豐富的憐憫，因祂愛我們的大愛，當我們死在過犯中的時候，便叫我們與基督一同活過來你們得救是本乎恩。」（以弗所書2:4-5）

假如我們不與基督一同復活，就沒有基督復活的生命。聖經詳細的描寫：「你們死在過犯罪惡之中，祂叫你們活過來。那時，你們在其中行事為人隨從今世的風俗，順服空中掌權者的首領，就是現今在悖逆之子心中運行的邪靈。我們從前也都在他們中間，放縱肉體的私慾，隨著肉體和心中所喜好的去行，本為可怒之子，和別人一樣。」（以弗所書2:1-3）

保羅在加拉太書二章廿節也有提到這種經歷：「我已經與基督同釘十字架，現在活著的，不再是我，乃是基督在我裏面活著。並且我如今在肉身活著，是因信上帝的兒子而活，祂是愛我，為我捨己。」

因此，我們有基督復活的生命，就能為主發光！

第二 我們要與基督同行

聖經說：「生命在祂裡頭，這生命就是人的光。光照在黑暗裡，黑暗卻不接受光…那光是真光，照亮一切生在世上的人。祂在世界，世界也是藉著祂造的，世界卻不認識祂。祂到自己的地方來，自己的人倒不接待祂。凡接待祂的，就是信祂名的人，祂就賜他們權柄，作神的兒女。」（約翰福音1:4,5,9-12）

基督復活的生命就是人的光，照亮一切活在世上的人但是只有信祂而接待祂的人有權柄作神的兒女。真正神的兒女才能讓他的生命為主發光。

聖經又說：「耶穌又對眾人說：我是世界的光。跟從我的，就不在黑暗裡走，必要得著生命的光。」（約翰福音8:12）

我們要與基督同行必須在日常生活有屬靈的操練。

耶穌也挑戰我們：「…若有人要跟從我，就當捨己，背起他的十字架來跟從我」（馬太福音16:24）路加福音十四章廿七節也說：「凡不背著自己十字架跟從我的，也不能做我的門徒。」

歌羅西書二章六節與七節也說：「你們既然接受了主基督耶穌，就當遵祂而行，在祂裡面生根建造，信心堅固，正如你們所領的教訓，感謝的心也更增長了。」

因此，我們要與基督同行必須做祂的門徒，天天背起他的十字架來跟從祂，肯每天有屬靈的操練。保羅解釋『當遵祂而行』有三方面的追求方式：

甲·生根建造

靈命要長進必須在祂裏面扎根，然後被建造。耶穌在約翰福音有提到生根建造的方式。祂說：「你們要常在我裡面，我也常在你們裡面。枝子若不常在葡萄樹上，自己就不能結果子；你們若不常在我裡面，也是這樣。我是葡萄樹，你們是枝子。常在我裡面的，我也常在他裡面，這人就多結果子；因為離了我，你們就不能做甚麼。」（約15：4-5）信徒若沒有常在主裡面，他就不能多結果子，他就不能為主發光！

乙·信心堅固

保羅解釋說「正如你們所領的教訓」，我們要追求信心更剛強不搖動，我們必須謙卑有受教的心保持自己靈修（祈禱讀經）所領受的心得亮光，參加崇拜會、小組查經或主日學所領受的講道信息，我們就會靈命長進，信心得堅固。

以弗所書四章十一至十四節也提到真道上合一「祂所賜的有使徒，有先知，有傳福音的，有牧師和教師。為要成全聖徒，各盡其職，建立基督的身體。直等到我們眾人在真道上同歸於一，認識神的兒子，得以長大成人，滿有基督長成的身量。使我們不再作小孩子，中了人的詭計和欺騙的法

術，被一切異教之風搖動，飄來飄去，就隨從各樣的異端。」

丙·凡事謝恩

『感謝的心也更增長了』是遵祂而行的第三個追求方式。凡事謝恩的生活方式必須有幾項應注意的心態：

- (1) 一切都是上帝所賜的。雅各書一章十七節說：「各樣美善的恩賜和各樣全備的賞賜都是從上頭來的，從眾光之父那裡降下來的；在祂並沒有改變，也沒有轉動的影兒。」
- (2) 我們經歷過祂的慈愛。詩篇103:1-6表達了上帝的慈愛。「我的心哪，你要稱頌耶和華。凡在我裡面的，也要稱頌祂的聖名。我的心哪，你要稱頌耶和華，不可忘記祂的一切恩惠。祂赦免你的一切罪孽，醫治你的一切疾病。祂救贖你的命脫離死亡，以仁愛和慈悲為你的冠冕。祂用美物使你所願的得以知足，以致你如鷹返老還童。耶和華施行公義，為一切受屈的人伸冤。」
- (3) 這是上帝的旨意。帖撒羅尼迦前書五章十六至十八節「要常常喜樂，不住的禱告，凡事謝恩。因為這是神在基督耶穌裡向你們所定的旨意。」

第三 我們要為基督受苦

保羅在腓立比書一章廿九節挑戰我們：「因為你們蒙恩，不但得以信服基督，並要為祂受苦。」保羅列出信徒蒙恩得救以後不但得以信服基督，還要與祂受苦。

保羅也提到信徒必須：(1)行事為人與基督的福音相稱。(2)要有一個心志，站立得穩。(3)為所信的福音齊心努力。（腓立比書1:27）

但信徒可能遇到敵人的驚嚇，他就勸勉我們不要怕：「凡事不怕敵人的驚嚇。這是證明他們沉淪，你們得救，都是出於神。」（腓立比書1:28）

保羅在羅馬書第八章十七至廿三節也論到信徒面臨世上苦難的心情與態度：

- ① 若我們和祂一同受苦，也必和祂一同得榮耀。「既是兒女，便是後嗣，就是神的後嗣，和基督同作後嗣。如果我們和祂一同受苦，也必和祂一同得榮耀。」（8:17）
- ② 現在的苦楚比不上將來的榮耀。「我想，現在的苦楚若比起將來要顯於我們的榮耀就不足介意了。」（8:18）
- ③ 信徒等候主再來時要得著兒子的名分，乃是我們的身體得贖。「我們知道一切受造之物一同歎息，勞苦，直到如今。不但如此，就是我們這有聖靈初結果子的，也是自己心裡歎息，等候得著兒子的名分，乃是我們的身體得贖。」

因此，當我們確定要讓自己的生命為主發光，我們就要與祂一同受苦。

彼得的書信也提到我們為祂受苦的一些原則（這些受苦特別是指心理方面的憂慮）：

- (1) 我們要將憂慮卸給神。「因為祂顧念你們。」（彼得前書5:7）
- (2) 我們務要謹守，儆醒。「因為你們的仇敵魔鬼，如同吼叫的獅子，遍地遊行，尋找可吞吃的人。」（彼得前書5:8）
- (3) 我們要用堅固的信心抵擋牠。「因為知道你們在世上的眾弟兄也是經歷這樣的苦難。」（彼得前書5:9）

當我們遵照這些原則面臨心理憂慮的苦楚後，神就會幫助我們。「那賜諸般恩典的神曾在基督裡召你們，得享祂永遠的榮耀，等你們暫受苦難之後，必要親自成全你們，堅固你們，賜力量給你們。」（彼得前書5:10）

我們要努力追求有基督復活的生命；與基督同行的心態；為基督受苦的心志。讓我們的生命為主發光吧！👑

風雨有感

許玉英師母

『出

』日下雨是主所定，兩項都是花木欠用，憂悶歡喜都有利益，養飼靈魂堅固信德，賜福降災都從命令，天父願禱旨意得成。性命我知是祂所賜，不論好歹不嫌境遇，死的蔭影遮我的時，堅固盼望我心無疑，或活或死我全無怕，天父願禱旨意得成。』這是一首閩南詩，曾經安慰幫助了不少的人，也曾經安慰幫助了我。

菲律賓的氣候變幻無常。有時艷陽高照，遍地如洗過那麼清潔新鮮，使人有爽涼的感覺，有時風雲突變，雷聲震耳欲聾，其聲音令人汗毛豎立。雨水也隨之傾盆而下，這種情景令我想到人的心情如天氣易變，有時憂悶，有時快樂。聖經上傳道書第3章4節：『哭有時，笑有時，哀慟有時，跳舞有時。』

基督徒的生命，難免要經受苦難的磨煉。如雨水是花木所需要，基督徒也需要苦難。苦難對世人是悲劇，對基督徒卻不是這樣，苦難對我們是有益。詩篇119篇71節：『我受苦與我有益，為要使我學習禱的律例。』羅馬書8章28節：『萬事都互相效力，叫愛上帝的人得益處，就是按祂旨意被召的人。』萬事包括苦難，也包括快樂。基督徒的生命是得勝的生命，不可被壓在苦難之下，而是要升到苦難之上。

我們總覺得苦難很不容易接受，常有逃避的心。這是很正常的反應，但是在我們心裡有浩大的能力，可以用神的眼光看苦難，並經歷祂的得勝，使苦難化成祝福。

雨水可以滋潤萬物，風雨使樹木堅固，同樣地苦難對我們亦是有益。許多寶貴的功課在苦難中學習，許多的美德在苦難中培養出來，許多的真理亮光在苦難中發現領悟。

人的一生不是事事一帆風順，有挫折苦難，有掙扎。但這並不是徒然，這些反令我們更成熟，對人生慢慢有了新的看法。讓我們感謝那管理風雨的主，因祂不但知道我們生命中所遇到的風雨，而且伸手來扶持我們，在祂所定的時間叫風雨停止。☔



和善的話語

無心的話語可能點燃衝突，
冷酷的話語也許毀滅生命；
適時的話語可以減少壓力，
愛的話語可以治療及祝福。

苦難中持守純正

許玉英師母

聖

經介紹約伯是完全正直敬畏神遠離惡事的人。當時在遠方人中為至大，有一天他的妻子對他挑戰說：『你仍然持守你的純正麼？你棄掉神，死了罷。』（伯2:9）

為什麼他有這挑戰呢？原來神容許撒但毀他所有的，包括他的家產和七子三女。約伯不在這一切事上犯罪，也不以神為愚妄。他在地上下拜說：『我赤身出於母胎，也必赤身歸回。賞賜的是耶和華。收取的也是耶和華。耶和華的名是應當稱頌的。』（伯1:21）撒但認為約伯所有被毀後必當面棄掉神，撒但認為約伯事奉神是因神的祝福，撒但同時認為神用恩典恩賜買人心來敬拜祂。約伯在第一次苦難的反應是可敬佩的，他敬拜，順服並稱頌神，約伯的見證否認撒但的控告，彰顯了神的榮耀。


撒但第二次擊打約伯本身，使他從腳掌到頭頂長瘡，但神要撒但存留約伯的性命。神有時容許撒但試探我們，但神限制它的活動。在這情形下，約伯妻子看見他受不該受的苦就挑戰他說：『你仍然持守你的純正麼？你棄掉神，死了罷。』（伯2:9）約伯卻對她說：『你說話像愚頑的婦人一樣。噯，難道我們從神手裏得福，不也受禍麼？在这一切的事上，約伯並不以口犯罪。』（伯2:10）約伯妻子認為神似乎不看顧不關心約伯，她認為約伯所受的苦是不應該，因為神稱約伯為完全正直敬畏神，遠離惡事的人。（伯1:8,2:3）

約伯受苦時得三友以利法，比勒達，瑣法之拜訪，各人從本處約會同來，為他悲傷，安慰他。他們陪他七天七夜坐在地上，一個人也不向他說一句話，因為他極其痛苦。朋友如何能安慰受苦的人呢？最好是與他在一起，靜默地表同情。

約伯極其痛苦，於約伯記第三章記載他發言求死咒詛自己的生日。為什麼約伯要受苦呢？他自己不明白，三友也不明白。但約伯與三友有三回合辯論受苦之難題，記載於四章至四十一章。在三回合中，三友指出約伯受苦是受神之罰，他們認為受苦是因他過去犯了罪，他們認為無人在神前可以稱為義，遭禍者決非善人，約伯遇禍，證明他不是善人，乃苦難罪孽之結果。在三回合中許多人生哲理及『先祖神學』不為易明；也不容易摸到其辯論的中心思想。在第一回合中，他們以神的性情為主題；在第二回合中，他們的辯論環繞在『惡人之報』；在第三回合中，他們都直斥約伯的不義。約伯在三回中不承認自己有錯，他以天地皆證明自己實是無辜，他要求神為他伸冤。約伯三友認為神在管教，如同準確的審判官，他們辯護神是公義，而忽略神的主權。約伯在三回

合中，以神為專制無情的審判者，他認為神是不公正。為要辯護神的主權，約伯忽略了神的公義。

以利戶在約伯記32至37章提示苦難之目的，不限於神之罰，且也有教益之目的。乃出自神之美意，為教訓成全祂的子女。以利戶對苦難的看法與約伯三友不同，他認為三友指出約伯在過去犯了罪，所以被神刑罰，以利戶則認為約伯受苦有別的目的，是造就信徒。他看見約伯在受苦過程中的態度不討神喜悅，約伯有自以為義的自高態度。以利戶認為苦難是指引人，認識一位憐憫人的神，神以恩典為標準。以利戶講完，神在約伯記38至41章回答約伯，神叫約伯注意看神的創造有說不盡的奇妙，祂固然造偉大動物，也關心微小的鳥蟲。這段指出神之偉大，權能，智慧，仁愛，榮耀。約伯因此覺悟自己的無知，無能，不義，和卑微。他說：『我是卑賤的。我用甚麼回答禱呢？只好用手摀口。』（伯40:3-4）約伯承認過去之愚昧，現經歷真神權能旨意之奇妙（伯42:1-6）。他又見證說：『我從前風聞有禱，現在親眼看見禱。因此我厭惡自己，在塵土和爐灰中懊悔。』（伯42:5-6）他看清楚神，也看清楚自己。他經過苦難後，看見萬事皆有神的美旨，在一切的經歷中安然順受，等祂旨意顯明，約伯至終得神雙倍之祝福。約伯在苦難中持守他的純正，雖然曾經求死，埋怨神，他仍然抓住神，神在他身上得榮耀。

『那賜諸般恩典的神，曾在基督裏召你們，得享祂永遠的榮耀，等你們暫受苦難之後，必要親自成全你們，堅固你們，賜力量給你們。願權能歸給祂，直到永永遠遠。阿們。』（彼前5:10-11）

A RICE BOWL: A SYMBOL OF SURRENDERING TO GOD

Reverend Anna Wright

When two people get married, it is natural for them to create a 'home' together. Within the constraints of their budget, they choose household items that reflect their tastes, preferences and personalities. This is what I call 'nesting.' Like birds that fly around in search of materials such as twigs, moss, leaves to create nests for their eggs, human beings care about how they furnish their homes.

When children come along, the acquisition of children's clothes, toys, furniture and the like keeps the curating of one's home moving forward. It is only when children grow up, move away, and create their own little nests that people start thinking of 'downsizing.'

I am now in the middle of the curve of downsizing. As I get older, I find a diminishing desire to accumulate material things. In fact, in the past few years, I have asked my sons to give me gifts that are 'consumable' and/or 'recyclable.' Delicious food items are consumed and usually leave little trace except for their recyclable packaging. 'Events' or 'experiences' are most welcomed! This year, for my birthday, my son Christopher took me to an art gallery in Cambridge, dinner at a new Chinese restaurant and finally, a movie about Queen. There is nothing more enduring than the joy of his company etched into my memory.

Next year, I shall reach a significant age when I am classified as 'retired' in the English system. My sons will want to mark the occasion with a 'tangible' gift. I have thought that I would ask them for a Chinese rice bowl!

The rice bowl bears two aspects of my roots. It is Chinese, and it is traditionally associated with the female. Rice is the Asian staple food and having one's fill of it means one is satisfied and has no fear of hunger. Hunger often led to revolutions and the toppling of dynasties; by 200 AD, China already had the same population that England has today which is about 60+ million people!

In many other continents, feeding the family has long been associated with the female. The woman is in charge of hospitality and home. In an early 13th century diary by the Japanese Lady Nijo, consort of the emperor Go-Fukakusa, there was an interesting account of the distinction between the births of a royal son and a royal daughter. When a son was born, a sword was presented to him. When a daughter was born, a rice kettle was rolled down the north side of the roof of the palace.

I choose a rice bowl not only for its traditional Chinese connotations but more for its paradoxical symbolism of satisfaction and surrender. The goal of all human desiring is God. Our deepest satisfaction resides in God and God alone. Our relationship with God does not exist alongside our many other relationships. It is rather the very axis on which all our human relationships rest. In loving God, we learn to love our spouses, families, friends, neighbours and even our enemies truly.

A rice bowl must first be empty before it is filled. Similarly, we must empty and surrender ourselves and our interior spaces to the indwelling of God. Someone recently asked me why it was "easier for

a camel to pass through a gate than for a rich man to go to heaven." I replied that it is not because God hates rich people per se. Indeed, in the New Testament, there are three persons described as being 'loved' by Jesus: (1) John who sat next to him in the Last Supper, (2) Lazarus whom he raised from the dead and finally (3) the rich young man who could not give up his riches to follow Jesus. Jesus did not hate the young man. He loved and pitied him because the latter, despite his good and sincere intentions, could not empty his heart, fill it solely with God's Will and follow Jesus.

Jesus warned against the tendency of rich people to depend on their wealth as a solution to everything. He also warned sternly against the Sadducees and Pharisees for their sense of 'self-sufficiency' and 'self-righteousness' in spiritual matters. Beloved by Jesus were the materially poor and poor-in-spirit—the impoverished widow who felt that she did not have enough for the temple offering save for her two small copper coins, and the unknown humble man praying behind a closed door, 'Have mercy on me, O God, a sinner!'

God longs for all people to come to him. He longs to have a real relationship with the poor and the rich, young and old, female and male, healthy and infirmed. God, however, is a most courteous God. He does not force himself upon those he loves. He waits for us patiently and longingly. He waits for us to empty our hearts of our pressing human concerns, goals and desires. All we need is to say "Yes," and in our total surrender, we shall have 'Life, a real abundant Life' as Jesus promised.

God's love is a love that knows no beginning or end, just like the eternal rim of a rice bowl. His love is the wellspring that never runs out of goodness, light and joy. It is the source that satisfies us and inspires us to act kindly and compassionately towards our co-sojourners in life. By feeding, helping and supporting the less fortunate amongst us, we have a foretaste of God's hospitality and unutterable generosity.

I look forward to the consummation of Time and to the Heavenly Feast when the Lamb of God puts a bowl of rice in each of our cupped hands and say, "Have your fill, my beloved brothers and sisters! Eat and drink with me, as you have shared the good news of my Life, my Incarnation, my Cross and my Resurrection on Earth!"

Glory be to God in the Highest! 🙏

OH, FOR THE GRACE OF GOD

Michael Go

G

race. For the past few months, I have pondered on this word. I discovered that this word gives strength to people when there seems to be no more hope in their lives. It helps them smile even when the pain is unbearable. It helps them to keep living, even when it seems like there is no reason left to live.

And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.

Philippians 1:6 (ESV)

Most importantly, grace helps people realize their mortality. They are able to recognize their very humanity and their flaw due to the sinful nature.

Every night before I fall asleep, I would always ponder why would an omnipotent, super-intelligent being display an act of grace to a race which failed Him time and time again for the past 7,000 or so years? Why would He even bother showing Himself to me, a small and insignificant child, that fateful day on July 31, 2010 at 11:21 A.M.?

It just seems so unreal to me. When He could simply destroy this world and start all over in creating a new race and Earth, He chose to keep us all alive and show us His mercy and grace and love in the most unconditional way possible: sending His one and only Son to die for people who never even wanted to be saved in the first place. That is grace. To receive something that you do not even deserve to have, that is grace.

Every time I think about it, I simply cannot comprehend just how much of a debt that we once owed was completely and permanently cancelled for the sake of love. This gift is God's grace. From my point of view, I see God's grace as something very precious and important in my life. God gave me a journey that I can look back with pride and awe. God showed me His grace through instances that were rare.

I came from a non-Christian family and I believed that as long as you were behaving morally, then that was all there was to it in this life and the life after that. I never understood God's grace, and never knew what He wanted in my life. I just simply thought of Him as someone who could judge you when you die. If you behave morally, then you get to stay with Him in Heaven. If you did things that were not good by moral standards, then you deserve to go to hell. Simply put, I had a typical mindset of the afterlife.

But one fateful night, being a Grade 2 student, I never would have expected that people of my age at that time would ask themselves of what they were doing, what the direction they were taking so far in their lives, and whether the things they believed in were the right thing or not.

I struggled long and hard to find the answer to this "right path" I have been constantly looking for. For the first time in my life, I felt so helpless that tears could not come out and all I could do was sit down and stare at the floor.

My mind was drifting in thought: If I were to die now, where would I go? It was one of the most frustrating moments I have felt so far in my life, but that was also the time when I started to learn God's grace, although it was just a glimpse.

I learned that the only way to salvation was through Jesus Christ and if you obey His Word, you would be saved. Upon hearing that, I felt a surge of relief that there was a way to salvation, that there really was a "right path".

At that point, all I understood was that Jesus died for my sins and if you follow every word in the "prayer" the teacher tells you to follow, then you can go to heaven. But something in my heart urged me to go even further. I felt a thirst that I wanted to quench so bad. I wanted to read the Bible.

With no one to teach me and just borrowing my sister's Bible (because I did not have any), I began reading. I started at Genesis and then Exodus and eventually finished the Pentateuch but gave up reading by the time I reached Joshua.

It took me 2 years to finish the first five books of the Bible, and after reading Genesis and Exodus I felt as though I was starting to understand God's plan. But upon reading Leviticus, I started questioning the purpose of God putting all these laws that I barely understood, and how were they able to keep up with all the laws if they couldn't be grateful to God for even a week after being saved by the Egyptians from the Red Sea.

With these kinds of thoughts, I just kept on reading until I gave up on the book of Joshua. Once I gave up reading Joshua, I stopped caring about God and Christianity. I thought that was the end of my spiritual life, that that was all there was to it. But God had other plans; He reminded me that he who began a good work in you will be faithful to complete it at the day of Jesus Christ.

All I have to do was to keep running, because it is not we who run the race. It is the Holy Spirit running the race, making sure that I finish this race...

A year after I gave up reading my Bible, PCGS had its Christ Emphasis Week for the elementary department. I was assigned to a male Values Education teacher named Pastor Alfie Bugtai. By the second day of the week, I saw God's grace as Pastor Alfie shared more on God's Word. At 11:21 AM, on July 31, 2010, I accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior.

It is not because of our moral goodness that we are able to go to heaven; it is because Jesus died for us and gave us a way to heaven. I saw salvation more clearly than I have ever seen in my 11 years of life at that time. For the first time, I saw that life was not all about who was the greatest or who was the smartest, but it was all because of Jesus that we are saved.

Eventually, I started taking my walk with Christ a little more seriously after accepting Christ as my Lord and Savior. But God did not want me to just simply pray and trust in Him; He also wanted me to learn more about Him through His word.

At one point, I lost all my friends due to a rumor that I was gay. In all honesty, I felt terrible. All the people I trusted and once talked to started ridiculing me, telling me that I did not belong with them because I was different from them. With all those thoughts running through my head, I started becoming more and more depressed and I grew lonelier and lonelier as time passed.

Then one day, Pastor Alfie showed me a passage from the Bible in the Gospels talking about

Jesus' crucifixion. Upon reading that passage, a fire within my heart lit up. I had the urge to keep reading, and so I started reading through the Gospels and then the Book of Acts, then the Pauline Epistles and I ended up finishing the New Testament in four months. Never have I felt so contented and filled with the Spirit than those four months. Though my circle of friends was small, I had the Bible that kept me going.

Something that kept telling me that life was not yet over, and all I could trust as I live through life was grace. Simply stopping the race of Christianity and moping about my situation was not an option for God, He had other plans. As God used Pastor Alfie to begin a good work in me, I then began running the race of Christianity, not by relying upon my abilities and resources I have in my hands, but solely trusting in God to help me finish the race that would only happen through His grace.

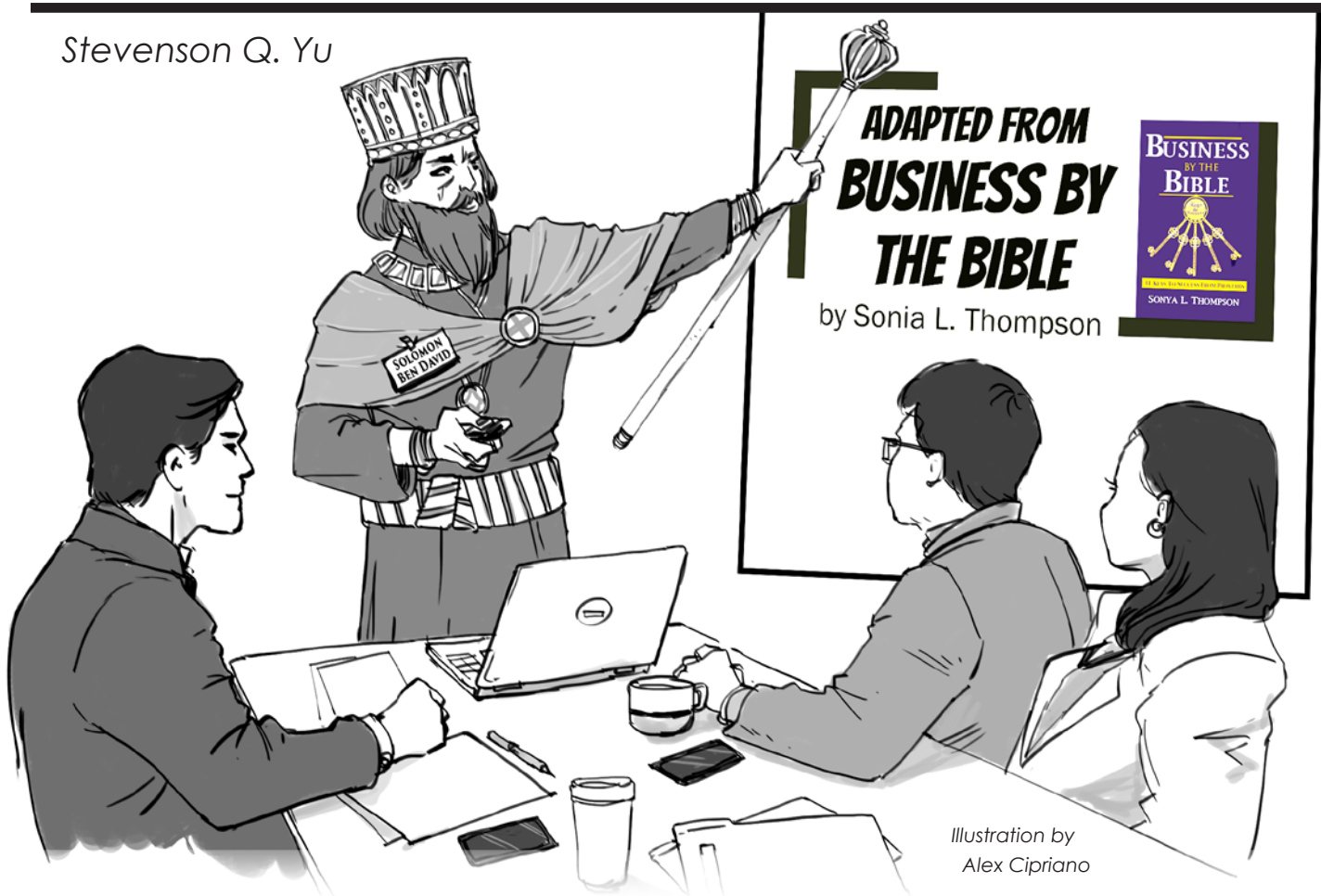
I have stumbled more than I could admit; I lost hope until I reached a point where I thought taking my life was the only answer. At one point in my life, I doubted the very existence of God and nearly abandoned the race that made me who I am today because I was pressed on all sides and was struggling to hold on. Despite all that, the only thing that kept going through my mind in all of these trials was Philippians 1:6.

Every time I would consider stopping and just giving up, I felt a flame that I thought was lost, rekindle itself and start to tell me that what I was thinking was all nonsense. All I have to do is keep running, because it is not we who run the race. It is the Holy Spirit running the race, making sure that I finish this race, knowing full well that it is not because of my own strength, but it is because of God. It is mainly because of God's grace.

For that, I am eternally grateful that a good work was done in me by God and will later be brought to completion at the day of Jesus Christ. 🙏

BUSINESS LESSONS FROM THE BOOK OF PROVERBS PT.2

Stevenson Q. Yu



Dear reader, it may surprise you at how the wisdom from the Bible can be applied in a different day and age. However, businesses today still practice the principles of the past, taking inspiration from Sun Tzu's Art of War written over 2,500 years ago? How much that the word of God, channeled through King Solomon, should still remain relevant today!

Last issue, we examined these four important business lessons we can learn from the Book of Proverbs:

1. Avoid enticement (be ethical)
2. Be vigilant
3. Be teachable, and
4. Do not procrastinate

Join us as we continue learning about the business lessons written long ago in the book of Proverbs!

LESSON 5

Do not Waste Time with Fools

PROVERBS 9:8

Do not reprove a scoffer, or he will hate you; reprove a wise man, and he will love you.



In his book "Necessary Endings," Dr. Henry Cloud writes that there are three types of people: the wise, the foolish, and the evil. You cannot deal with them the same way.

If you try to deal with a foolish person in the same way that you deal with a wise person, he will drive you crazy. You will lose time, resources, and heart. And if you deal with an evil person at all, you might lose your business or your life.¹

A wise person adjusts his behavior when shown the right way. The foolish person, on the other hand, becomes defensive when given honest feedback. They start to think a lot of excuses. It wasn't their fault! Blame the machine! Their co-workers! Even the weather!

Any businessperson will tell you that the most valuable commodity they own is time. Everybody has twenty-four hours a day, and there is no way to get more. Time represents money, and so we must guard it with all diligence.

As such, we should identify what type of person we are talking to, be they an employee, a customer, or a supplier. Are they wise and willing to learn? If so, you can take time to help or enlighten them. Or are they foolish, very defensive, and are not open to new ideas? If so, not only is your effort a waste of your time, it is even resented by the fool! It's better to just avoid them and spend your time on other things.

¹ Cloud, Henry. 2011. *Necessary Endings*. HarperBusiness.

LESSON 6

Be Generous

PROVERBS 11:25

Whoever brings blessing will be enriched, and one who waters will himself be watered.



How to Manage a Difficult Employee

by Amy Gallo

Dig Deeper. Investigate what is causing the employee's behavior, and offer to help with the underlying issue.

Give Direct Feedback. Some people don't realize the impact of their own behavior. Give honest feedback grounded in the work, and not a personal attack.

Explain the Consequences. Find out what the employee cares the most about, and put that at stake if they don't change their behavior.

Accept that some people won't change. There are just some people who won't change, and do this for fun and believe they can get away with it.

Document everything. It is very hard to fire someone without just cause. Gather all the evidence for when the time comes to let them go.

Quarantine them. Toxic attitudes can quickly spread like a disease. Put as much physical distance between them and other employees as possible, and try to minimize their interactions.

Don't get distracted. It is draining to manage a difficult employee, but don't forget they are not the only one you are managing. Keep yourself healthy, and surround yourself with supportive and positive people

Excerpted from "How to Manage a Toxic Employee" by Amy Gallo, from the October 2016 issue of the Harvard Business Review.

Many people think that being generous in business is a waste of money. Why should you treat people better and give them more than what is expected of you? They equate giving with losing. But is having a reputation for being generous and helping others really a bad business strategy? What does being generous in business mean anyway? To quote from a Forbes Magazine article:²

It's about being willing to give a piece of yourself or offering an invaluable gift of your time and expertise or extending your network to someone you care to have a relationship with. It's about caring enough to make someone else successful first ... It's about empowering those around you through a simple word of encouragement and inspiration at a time when it matters the most. All without expecting something back.

In short, it means you must treat others as human beings and be generous to everything you do and everyone you interact with. Not just to your

² Walter, Ekaterina. 2015. "Generosity as a Business Practice." *Forbes Magazine*, February 18, 2015.



Portrait of Zappo's CEO Tony Hsieh courtesy of Zappos.com



The fun and collegial work atmosphere in Zappos Retrieved from Twitter.



Noted Philanthropist Bill Gates learns about polio vaccination efforts in Anganwadi, India ©May 2010 by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation

employees and customers, but also to your business partners and even the community around you. Although you may feel that this is an unnecessary expense, it actually makes very good business sense today, when competition has shifted from price to service quality.

Take for example, the case of online shoe retailer Zappos. Founded in 1999 and later acquired by Amazon.com in 2009, Zappos, under its CEO **Tony Hsieh**, decided on a unique approach to both customer service and working culture – generosity!

The company has a reputation for dedicated employees willing to go above and beyond the call of duty to meet the needs of every customer and make them happy. Its free returns, generous 365-day return policy, and habit of surprising customers with random free upgrades from standard to overnight shipping, puts a smile on the face of customers. As Hsieh said in an interview, “The shoes may wear out, but they will always remember that feeling they got from the experience.”³

While these policies can be quite expensive and are strictly not necessary, Hsieh was maximizing the customer experience and not efficiency. In a Harvard Business Review article, Hsieh attributes Zappos' growth due to investments of time, money, and resources into three key areas: customer service, company culture, and employee training.⁴

Many companies used the power of generosity to increase the power of their brand and the dedication of their stakeholders. **Tom's Shoes**, which donates a pair of shoes to a child in a poor country every time you buy a pair of shoes from them.

Lego, which ranks second on the Reputation Institute's 2019 Most Reputable Companies Worldwide, made public commitments to protect the environment and practice ethical business.

Even **Microsoft**, which was reviled not so long ago as the “Evil Empire,” has a good reputation today because of the philanthropic practices of both the company and its founder Bill Gates, who has dedicated most of his \$90 billion fortune to charity before his death.⁵

- 3 Hughes, Frank. 2018. “Zappos CEO Shows Exactly Why ‘Doing Good Is Good Business.’” *Digitalist Magazine*, June 13, 2018.
- 4 Hsieh, Tony. 2010. “How I Did It: Zappos's CEO on Going to Extremes for Customers.” *Harvard Business Review*, July 1, 2010.
- 5 Schwartz, Ariel. 2018. “Bill Gates Reveals the 2 Reasons He's Giving Away His \$90 Billion Fortune.” *Business Insider*. February 13, 2018.

LESSON 7

Live Within Your Means

PROVERBS 12:9

Better to be lowly and have a servant than to play the great man and lack bread



Unfinished construction in China's "Manhattan of the East," located in Yujiapu (于家堡金融區), Tianjin.



Turkey's Burj Al Babas is an abandoned ghost town full of apartments that look like miniature castles



Abandoned partially-constructed buildings in Kangbashi, Inner Mongolia, China's most-famous ghost city.

Pretending to be bigger than you are is a sure way to run into trouble in business, and a common reason why small businesses fail.⁶ Many business owners confuse initial success with opportunity instead of focusing on slow but steady growth.

You only need to look at one of China's "ghost cities" in order to appreciate the danger of living beyond your means. Real estate developers invest a lot of money into new planned cities, hoping that manufacturers will come in, and bring in the workers and their families. Most of these investments were financed with loans, which left the developers in a very dangerous situation if the occupancy rate turns out to be low.

When the "if you build it, they will come" adage goes terribly wrong, you are left with nothing, except for the shells of empty buildings, most of them half-finished. The problem is so prevalent that China's commerce minister warned that companies should not "expand blindly."⁷

Overexpansion is a problem even for big firms, especially in the food industry. **Subway's**, the biggest fast-food chain in the world, grew rapidly to over 27,000 stores at the end of 2015. But store sales declined due to oversaturation, and many franchise owners are now in open rebellion against the franchisor.⁸

In the Philippines, **Global Restaurant Concepts Inc.**, the local franchise holder of California Pizza Kitchen, International House of Pancakes, and Applebee's, went from zero to 19 food outlets in 3 years. But in 2000, they were forced to closed seven stores.

The 2000 global economic crisis undoubtedly played a major role in the decision. But the main culprit was inventory leakage. Because of their rapid expansion, the company failed to maintain its internal control system. Because of this, the company suffered losses from food wastage and theft.⁹

6 Schaefer, Patricia. 2019. "Why Small Businesses Fail: Top 7 Reasons for Startup Failure." *Business Know-How* (blog). April 22, 2019.

7 Jabri, Parvez. 2014. "China's Commerce Minister Warns against over-Expansion." *Business Recorder* (blog). March 7, 2014

8 Maze, Jonathan. 2018. "Why Subway Is Facing a Crisis." *Restaurant Business* (blog). January 19, 2018.

9 Carlos, Maricris. 2014. "How IHOP, Applebee's Franchisee in PH Recovers from Overexpansion." *Entrepreneur Philippines*, September 2014.

Seven Ways Rapid Growth Can Kill Your Business

by Carla Young

Adapted from the article first published on MOMEo Magazine.Com on January 28, 2013

- 1. Cash Flow.** Many people cannot distinguish between profit and cash flow. A business that's growing needs a lot of free cash flow to invest in fixed assets. However, if a business invests too much, it will start to bleed cash. If this keeps up, and even if a business remains profitable, it will not take long before regular suppliers cannot be paid, and the business and must declare bankruptcy.
- 2. Working Capital Requirements.** Another common source of confusion some people have is the difference between revenues (sales) and profit. Money coming in from customers should not be considered profit, because you need to pay all of your expenses and replace the goods you just sold. Working capital increases when your business grows, and a business that grows too fast will quickly find its situation unsustainable.
- 3. Operational issues.** As a business grows, so does the complexity of its day-to-day operations. It becomes very challenging to manage so many moving parts and can easily overwhelm the novice businessman.
- 4. Customer service issues.** A fast-growing business will often face high demand for its goods and services. This may overwhelm its ability to meet the needs of customers, and the satisfaction rating and brand reputation will suffer.
- 5. Human Resource risks.** Working for a small firm is very different from working for a bigger firm. The culture in a smaller firm can be more caring and personal, while big firms have strictly professional relationships and even office politics. This can turn off some of your best and earliest employees. A business may begin with a set of values, but they can easily be overwhelmed by the values of the new hires due to expansion. In a big firm, there are more opportunities for tension between employees, and this can drain valuable time from a company's managers. Time that they could have spent on other more-productive pursuits.
- 6. Decision-making changes.** As a company grows, the founder must step back from day-to-day operations and delegate responsibility. Therefore, he or she is more disconnected from the customer and the rank and file employee, which will affect the quality of decision-making.
- 7. Leadership risks.** Some people are good at taking risks, while some are better as managers. As a company expands, the management and leadership skills become more important than entrepreneurial ability. Any leadership faults will quickly be exposed and affect the company.

In May 2019, the restaurant group owned by celebrity chef **Jamie Oliver** closed, closing 25 restaurants and leaving over 1,000 without jobs.¹⁰ While some are blaming the Brexit decision and increased competition from other casual dining restaurants for the closure, cash problems from recent expansions were the root cause for the collapse.

Take Solomon's wisdom to heart. Live within your means, and don't try to be someone you're not. You (and the bottom line of your business) will be much happier that way.

¹⁰ Meyer, David. 2019. "What Killed Jamie Oliver's Restaurant Chain?" *Fortune Magazine*. May 21, 2019.

LESSON 8 Watch Your Words

PROVERBS 13:2

From the fruit of his mouth a man eats what is good, but the desire of the treacherous is for violence.





Elon Musk has a severe case of foot-in-mouth disease.



The less Joseph Calata says, the better for him. But he can't resist defiantly playing the victim.

Elon Musk, CEO of electric carmaker Tesla Inc., is a visionary often compared to Thomas Edison, who is perhaps America's greatest inventor. In addition to his vision for environmentally friendly cars and a solar-powered society, he has dreams to offer space tourism, shoot people through underground tunnels in a "Hyperloop", and even colonize Mars.

Unfortunately, he has a habit of behaving erratically, with problems controlling his mouth. In 2018 alone, he insulted stock analysts covering his company, smoked marijuana live in an interview, and made a joke on Twitter that caused the U.S. Securities & Exchange Commission to charge him with misleading investors.¹¹ Tesla was already in poor financial condition in 2018; its CEO's antics made the situation worse.

Elon Musk is not the only offender. **Michael Leary**, CEO of discount airliner Ryanair, called customers who show up at an airport without a boarding pass as "stupid." **Chip Wilson**, the founder of Lululemon (seller of yoga-inspired athletic apparel), suggested that some customers were too heavy for his company's yoga pants. **Mike Jeffries**, the CEO of fashion retailer Abercrombie and Fitch, once said¹² he only wants to sell clothes to "cool, good-looking people."

Joseph Calata was hailed as a genius when he became the Philippines' youngest self-made billionaire.¹³ The fall from grace was swift. In quick succession, the company was investigated by the PSE for stock manipulation, and the SEC ordered the delisting of Calata Corp. from the stock exchange due to several violations of securities laws.

11 Robinson, Matt, and Benjamin Bain. 2018. "Elon Musk Is Sued by SEC Over 'Funding Secured' Tweet - Bloomberg." Bloomberg.Com, September 28, 2018.

12 Scudder, Virgil. 2014. "Careless Word Choice: When the CEO Has Foot-in-Mouth Disease." The Public Relations Strategist, April 9, 2014.

13 Enriquez, Marge. 2014. "Joseph Calata gets so far so fast." Inquirer.net, June 22, 2014.

The unapologetic Calata cried Filipino crab mentality, saying that the violations were all honest mistakes all young entrepreneurs can commit. This defiance caused the SEC to impose a harsh penalty, banning him from leading or sitting on the board of a publicly-listed company for life.

The Chinese saying 「病從口入，禍從口出」 literally translates as: "Disease goes in through the mouth, and trouble comes out through the mouth." This advice exists in many other languages. English has "If you don't have anything nice to say, don't say it at all." Bisaya has "daghang sulti, daghang sayop; way sulti, way sayop" — more talk more mistakes, no talk, no mistakes.

These adages apply equally to business as they do to life. If you say good and sensible things, you will reap its fruits. If you can't control your mouth, and either say something bad about someone else or start blurting out your company secrets, that's when you get in trouble. In the past, what you say might blow up very fast, but just as quickly be forgotten once something more juicy comes out.

Today however, everything that you say and do can be preserved forever on the Internet and circulated again and again on social media for years to come. So, since something said or done decades ago can and will return to haunt you, be very careful what you say! 🙊

Thank You for Listening!

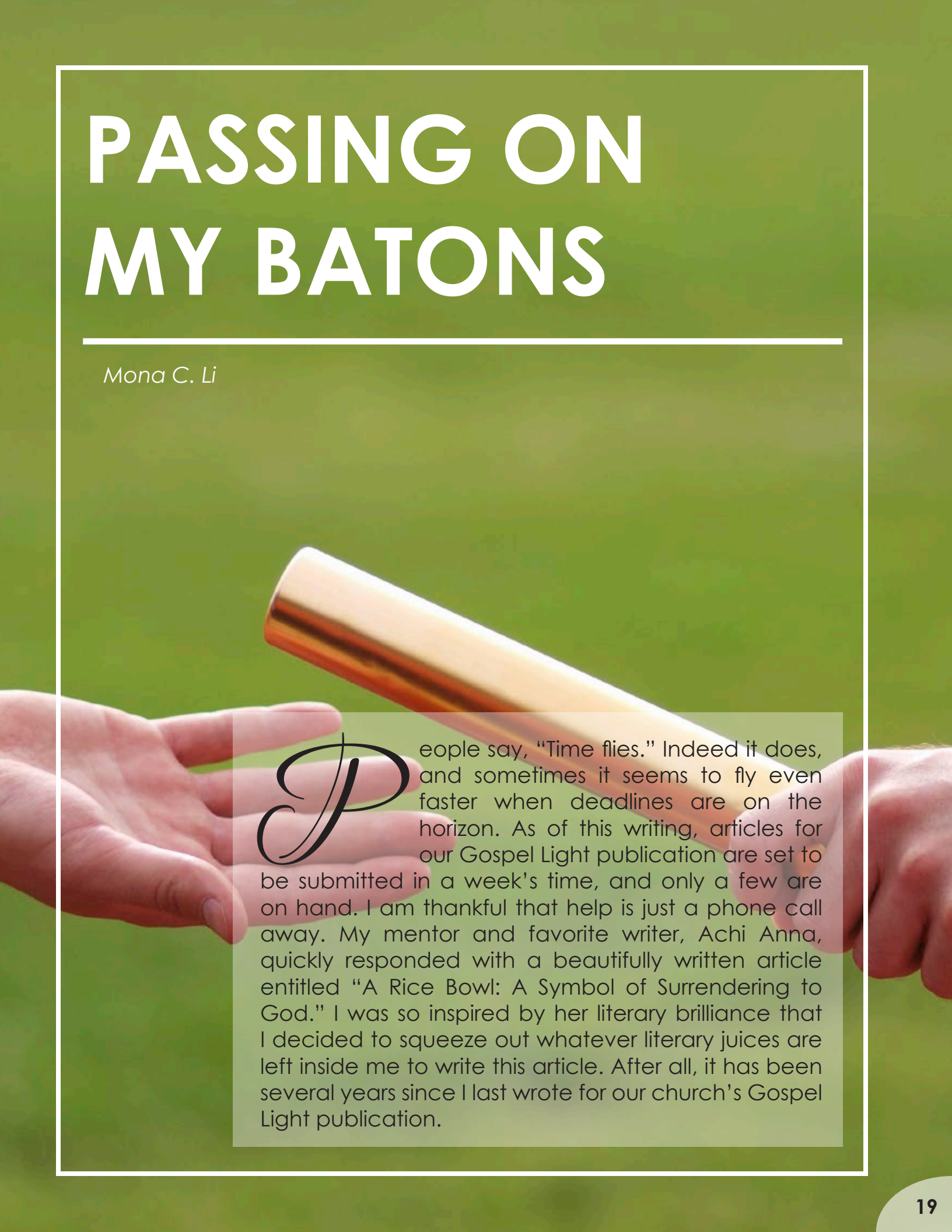
This is all the space we have for now. I hope you have learned something from it. Or were at least entertained!

If you would like to see more business lessons from the book of Proverbs in future issues of Gospel Light, please drop me an e-mail at yu@Stevenson.asia



PASSING ON MY BATONS

Mona C. Li

A hand is shown holding a golden baton against a green background. The baton is a shiny, cylindrical object. The hand is positioned on the left side of the frame, with the fingers wrapped around the baton. The background is a solid, vibrant green color. The text is overlaid on the right side of the image, partially covering the baton and the hand.

People say, “Time flies.” Indeed it does, and sometimes it seems to fly even faster when deadlines are on the horizon. As of this writing, articles for our Gospel Light publication are set to be submitted in a week’s time, and only a few are on hand. I am thankful that help is just a phone call away. My mentor and favorite writer, Achi Anna, quickly responded with a beautifully written article entitled “A Rice Bowl: A Symbol of Surrendering to God.” I was so inspired by her literary brilliance that I decided to squeeze out whatever literary juices are left inside me to write this article. After all, it has been several years since I last wrote for our church’s Gospel Light publication.

Like Achi Anna, Boss and I are in the middle of downsizing, as our children left 'home' and are setting up their own 'nests' in two continents. Lord willing, we hope to split our time between two timezones, and for this to happen, the businesses and services we are involved in should be able to run without our physical presence for prolonged periods of time.

As always, God's timing is perfect. Early last year, a golden opportunity was presented where I could gracefully retire as finance officer of a family-owned business, and it has now merged into something so much bigger, owned by a corporation.

Being a finance officer then took up ¾ of my working hours and now that I have retired, people often ask me, "What do you do on a regular day? How does it feel when you have nothing to do?" The fact is: I still have a lot of things to do, but now I have more time to do the things I love to do instead of things I need to do.

What then were my favorite 'to-do' things? First and foremost, I love 'WORD' games. Even when I was busy at work, I took time out to answer crossword puzzles to relieve stress – incidentally, one of the reasons why I buy newspapers. Crazy, isn't it? Nowadays, I play Letter Soup and Wordscapes on my iPhone to my heart's delight.

Another thing I love to do is going over the old and new things I have kept in my possession. I believe I am a hoarder, as it takes me forever to give away or throw away things that I don't need. As we are downsizing, it poses a challenge to me as I agonize over every single item. The question is: To discard or not discard, to give away or not give away?

I think it is time to seek help by reading the books of Marie Kondo, a Japanese organizing consultant and author. Like Achi Anna, I, too, will request future gifts to be consumable and/or recyclable and better still, events or experiences.

Knowing that I am one of three ERUF officials who have been invited by the VHC, Brandweer, and EMS groups to visit Haarlemmermeer, Netherlands to discuss a 5-year strategic policy plan this July 2019, Achi Anna immediately arranged for a rendezvous in Amsterdam a few days prior to the meeting so we could spend time together.

I am excitedly looking forward to this wonderful 'cultural' experience with her. First, I have to do some reading on the arts of Rembrandt and Van Gogh though, to fully appreciate the experience :-). Achi Anna will always be my mentor/siansi and I will always be that 'ligoy nga istudyante.' I hope I can live up to her expectations.

Another thing that keeps me busy is my involvement with community services. So as not to spread myself too thinly, I am actively working with only 3 volunteer groups: ERUF (a non-governmental organization providing emergency medical services), PCGS (my alma mater), and the Literature Committee of Cebu Gospel Church. Having been part of these groups for over two decades, I feel it is time to look for successors as we don't live forever and we hope to leave legacies that they can continue to work on.



I would often say to people I worked with that nobody is indispensable, whether in business, groups or organizations. The late Mr. Herminio Cortes, one of the founders of ERUF, was very versatile, and his passing after a lingering illness left a big gaping hole in our organization. As nobody can single-handedly do all his works, each of us put on our small shoes to fill up his big shoes. We praise God that ERUF's legacy lives on and to this day, we still serve so that others may live.

Lesson learned: the earlier we prepare for successors, the smoother the transition will be. Now that I am a senior citizen and semi-retired, I am more than ready to pass on the batons. Question is: Are there any takers? There are so many qualified people out there and I am urging them to pick up the batons. After all, everyone to whom much was given, of him much will be required, and from him to whom they entrusted much, they will demand the more. (Luke 12:48)

Passing on the batons mean stepping to the side and letting the successors take the center stage. It can be a very hard thing to do especially when

one is very attached to that particular baton. Is it the fear of losing one's identity or vitality without the baton? Or is it the fear of losing the legacy one has worked so hard to build up? I really don't know the answers. This is what I know, and I quote Desiderata: "for always there will be greater and lesser persons than yourself."

For the batons I am passing on, it is my fervent hope and prayer that with our great God's guidance, the successors will truly be greater persons than myself. We only need to: Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him and He will make your paths straight. (Proverbs 3:5-6)

In the meantime, I will continue to give the best of me in everything I do and hold dear. At the end of Time, what will be music to my ears is the verse found in Matthew 25:21 and I quote, "Well done, my good and faithful servant."

Wait, allow me to end this article with a quote from Achi Anna's article as she eloquently expressed what is in my heart: "I look forward to the consummation of Time and the Heavenly Feast when the Lamb of God puts a bowl of rice in each of our cupped hands and say, 'Have your fill, my beloved brothers and sisters! Eat and drink with me, as you have shared the good news of my Life, my Incarnation, my Cross and my Resurrection on earth!'"

Hallelujah!!! To God be all the glory. 🙌



RIVER, SEA, AND MOUNTAIN

Josephine Q. Yu

When the Israelites departed from the bondage of slavery in the land of Egypt, they had to pass through wilderness, leap over rivers, and climb through high mountains before they could reach the promised land of Canaan.

Similarly, when a Christian is running the race to heaven, he must also experience hardship, climb over mountains, and ford rivers and seas before he can reach the heavenly home.

Let us examine the path taken by the Israelites:

1. NILE RIVER (EXODUS 2:3-10)

When the new king of Egypt saw that the Israelites had become numerous and very progressive, he ordered all Hebrew babies to be killed when they were born.

When Moses was born, his mother kept him for three months. But later, when she could no longer hide him, she placed the child in a papyrus basket coated with tar and pitch and left him at the bank of the Nile.

His sister Miriam stood at a distance to observe. Later, when the daughter of Pharaoh went down to the **Nile** to bathe, she saw the baby crying and pitied him. She adopted him as her child and named him "Moses," which meant "I drew him out of the water".



2. MOUNT HOREB (EXODUS 3:1-10)

The Lord had seen the misery of His people in Egypt and heard their cry of suffering. So He appeared to Moses at **Mount Horeb** via the Burning Bush. He was sending Moses to Pharaoh to bring His people out of Egypt.



3. RED SEA (EXODUS 7-11)

Pharaoh hardened his heart and would not allow Moses to bring the Israelites out of Egypt even after experiencing the Nine Plagues. But after the Lord slaughtered every first-born son of Egypt, he summoned Moses and Aaron and urged them to hurry and leave the country with the Israelites.

But later, when Pharaoh saw that there were no one left to serve them, he changed his heart again and took his best chariots along with his armies to pursue the Israelites. When the Israelites saw the **Red Sea** in front of them and Pharaoh's army behind them, they were frightened.

But God performed a miracle by opening up the **Red Sea** and allowed the Israelites to pass through. Those chariots, horsemen and armies of Pharaoh who followed them were all swept away, lying dead in the shore.



4. MOUNT SINAI (EXODUS 19)

The Lord called Moses to the top of **Mount Sinai**. He spoke to him the 10 Commandments and told His people to obey them.



5. MOUNT NEBO (DEUT. 34:1-8)

Moses climbed to the top of **Mount Nebo** and the Lord showed him the whole land that He had promised to the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

6. JORDAN RIVER

The **Jordan River** played an important role in several Biblical events:

- When the Levite priests carried the Ark of the Covenant and set foot at the **Jordan River**, its water flowing downstream was cut off and stood up in a heap. All the people of Israel passed by until the whole nation had completed the crossing on dry ground. (Joshua 3)
- Naaman's leprosy was healed at the **Jordan River** (2 Kings 5:1-14)
- Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist at the **Jordan River** (Mat. 3:13-17)



7. MOUNT GERIZIM / MOUNT EBAL (JOSHUA 8:30-33)

Joshua built an altar on **Mount Ebal** and offered a Burnt Offering and several Fellowship Offerings. Joshua copied the law of Moses onto stones there.

All the Israelites were standing on both sides in front of the Levite priests carrying the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord. Half of the people stood in front of **Mount Gerizim** and half of them in front of **Mount Ebal**.

Afterwards, Joshua read all the Word of the Law to the whole assembly of Israelites about the Blessings and the Curses – just as it was written in the Book of the Law.



SYMBOLISM

What do the RIVER, SEA AND MOUNTAIN symbolize?

1. Nile River: Salvation

Moses was saved by Pharaoh's daughter, who drew him out of the water and adopted him as her son. Similarly, we are saved from the bondage of sin by Jesus' blood and are called the "children of God."

2. Mount Horeb: Ministry

God called Moses to go and lead the Israelites out of Egypt. God is also calling us to go and preach the gospel and serve Him.

3. Red Sea: Separation

The people of Israel was free from the bondage of slavery. They passed through the **Red Sea** to reach Canaan, the land of milk and honey. God wants to separate us from the bondage of sin and bring us through life's journey to His glorious kingdom in heaven.

4. Mount Sinai: Obedience

God had given the Ten Commandments to the Israelites at **Mount Sinai** for them to observe. Today, God also gives us His Word - the Bible for us to obey.

5. Mount Nebo: Faith

God showed to the Israelites all the land He had promised them at Mount Nebo. Similarly, God will fulfill all His promises to us if we trust in Him.

6. Jordan River:

- **Miracle:** God performed a miracle by stopping the flow of water for the Israelites to pass through the **Jordan River**. Even today, He can also perform wonderful miracles in our midst.
- **Healing:** If God could heal the leprosy of Naaman at the **Jordan River**, surely He can also heal all kinds of sickness anytime and anywhere.
- **Regeneration:** Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist at the **Jordan River**. We must die in sin, and live for Christ.

7. Mount Gerizim: Blessings

If the people of Israel obey God's laws, they will be blessed. If we follow God's will, God will bestow His blessings to us.

Mount Ebal: Curses

If the people of Israel disobey God's laws, they will be cursed. If we disobey God's Word, expect curses to befall us.

LESSONS LEARNED

What lessons can we learn from RIVER, SEA and MOUNTAIN?

1. **Nile River:** Accept salvation and be saved
2. **Mount Horeb:** Listen to God's voice and serve Him faithfully
3. **Red Sea:** Separate from the world and depart from sin
4. **Mount Sinai:** Obey His command and live a holy life
5. **Mount Nebo:** Trust in God and believe in His promises

6. **Jordan River:** Remember God's works and witness His might

7. **Mount Gerizim:** Follow God's will and receive His blessings

Mount Ebal: If you defy His Word, expect to be cursed

As we travel in our life's journey, we will encounter different kinds of environment - be in the River, under the Sea or over the Mountain. If we allow God to control us, we can feel His presence, protection and guidance.

Continue to press on and prepare to meet Him face to face and enjoy the everlasting joy. 🏰

河、海與山

許郭錦繡

當

以色列人離開埃及為奴之地時、必須經過曠野、越過河流、大海及高山、才可到達神所應許給他們之迦南地。同樣的、基督徒奔跑天路、也必經歷多方的艱難、跋山涉水、才能到達天家。

現在讓我們思考以色列人所經過的路途：

一. 尼羅河(出2:3-10)

(二)當時法老王看見以色列人生養眾多、並且繁茂又強盛、就命令將所有以色列男孩臨盆的時候、將他殺了。當摩西出生後、他母親將他藏了三個月、後來不會再藏、就將孩子放在一個薄草箱、放在尼羅河、令姐姐米利暗在遠遠的看守。隨後法老女兒來到河邊洗澡、見了孩子哭了就可憐他、接納為她的兒子、並給孩子起名為摩西、意思說、因我將他從水內拉出來。

二. 何烈山(出3:1-10)

耶和華看見以色列人在埃及所受的困苦、並聽見所發出的哀聲、就向摩西在何烈山於荊棘火中顯現、要差遣他去見法老王、將以色列百姓從埃及地領出來。

三. 紅海(出7-11)

法老王心裏剛硬、不容許摩西帶領以色列民出埃及、後來、經過了九個災難、最後、耶和華擊殺埃及長子、法老王召了摩西和亞倫、就打發他們帶以色列民趕快離開埃及地。後來法老王看見沒有人事奉他們、就變了心、豫備了車輛、帶領軍兵追趕。以色列民舉目看見前面是紅海、後面是埃及追兵、就非常害怕。但上帝行出神蹟、將紅海分開、讓以色列所有百姓經過後、便將一切追趕的法老軍兵和車輛都淹沒在紅海裏。

四. 西乃山(出19)

耶和華降臨在西乃山、召了摩西上山頂、將十誡傳給他、叫以色列百姓好好的遵守。

五. 尼波山(申34:1-8)

摩西登上尼波山、耶和華便將一切所應許給阿伯拉罕、以撒及雅各後裔之地指給摩西看。

六. 約但河

約但河在聖經中有許多重要角色：

- * 祭司抬耶和華的約櫃、把腳站在約但河水裏、從上往下流的水就斷絕、立起成壘、所有百姓就都從乾地過去。(書3)
- * 長大痲瘋的乃縵在約但河得醫治。(王下5:1-14)
- * 耶穌在約但河受施洗約翰的洗。(太3:13-17)

七. 基利心山/以巴路山

(書8:30-33)

約書亞在以巴路山築一座壇向耶和華獻燔祭和平安祭、約書亞在那裏、當着以色列人面前、將摩西所寫的律法抄寫在石頭上、以色列民站在約櫃的兩旁、在抬耶和華的約櫃的祭司利未人面前、一半對着基利心山、一半對着以巴路山。隨後約書亞將律法上祝福及咒詛的話、都宣讀了一遍。

上述之河海與山是預表什麼？

(一) 尼羅河：救恩

摩西從水中被救出來、成為法老女兒之子。我們也是蒙耶穌將我們從罪中拯救出來、使我們被稱為神的兒女。

(二) 何烈山：事奉

上帝呼召摩西帶領以色列百姓出埃及地、以便事奉祂。神也要呼召我們來事奉祂。

(三) 紅海：離罪

以色列民脫離為奴之地、經過紅海到流乳和蜜的迦南地。上帝也要叫我們脫離世界的罪惡、經過世上的路程、而帶領我們到祂榮耀的天家。

(四) 西乃山：順從

上帝寫了十誡要以色列民遵守、如今我們也要聽從神的話語。

(五) 尼波山：信靠

耶和華將所應許之地賜給以色列民、同樣的、上帝必定將祂所應許的、賜給我們。

(六) 約但河：

- a. 奇蹟：神怎樣將水停留、使以色列眾百姓經過約但河、現在祂也能為我們行神蹟奇事。
- b. 醫治：神怎樣治好乃縵的大痲瘋、如今祂也會醫好任何的病痛。

- c. 重生：耶穌在約但河使約翰受洗、我們也要將罪釘死而活出基督的樣式。

(七) 基利心山：祝福

以色列人若遵守摩西所寫律法、神就祝福他們。我們若照主旨而行、也必蒙神的祝福。

以巴路山：咒誼

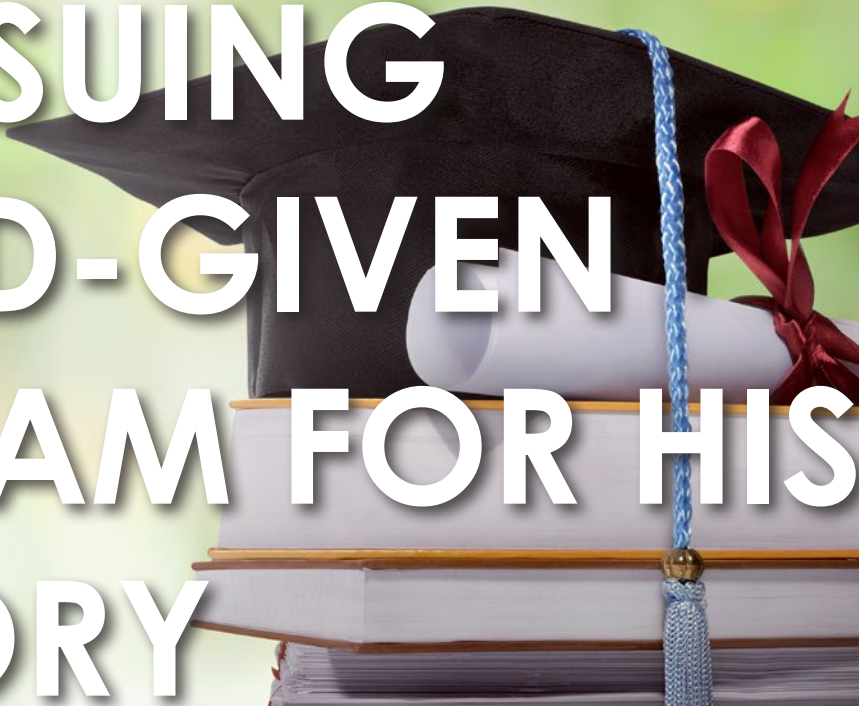
以色列人若違背摩西所寫律法、他們必受咒誼。我們若違背上帝的命令、也必領受咒誼。

從河海與山、我們可得到什麼的功課？

- (一) 尼羅河：接受救恩、得蒙拯救
- (二) 何烈山：聽主呼聲、忠心事主
- (三) 紅海：脫離世界、離開罪惡
- (四) 西乃山：遵守誡命、成聖生活
- (五) 尼波山：倚靠上帝、相信應許
- (六) 約但河：記得神為、見證主能得蒙醫治、感恩讚美埋葬老我、為主而活
- (七) 基利心山：順從主旨、得主祝福
以巴路山：違背神言、領受咒誼

願我們讓神掌管一切、使我們人生的過程、無論在任何的環境中（在河邊、在海裏、或在山頂）、有主的同在、看顧及引導、繼續努力奔跑、安然快樂地渡過、預備將來與主見面、同享永遠的福樂。✝

PURSUING GOD-GIVEN DREAM FOR HIS GLORY



Pastor Gina Pecson

Everything started with a dream, then came along a plan on how to achieve this dream in order to leave a legacy in the field of education. As what Proverbs 16:3 says, "Commit to the LORD whatever you do, and He will establish your plans."

It was not an easy thing to do, and with all the words that start with letter "s" that I can think of, I'll try to demonstrate how I have achieved this far to be a full-fledged M.A. Degree holder (Master of Arts major in Educational Management).

I spent every Saturday for about three years in schooling, studying, skimming, scanning books, sweating, and having sleepless nights. Thus, these sacrifices transformed into sweetness, satisfaction, and success of my thesis, the purpose of which is to help make a difference by promoting a school with a culture of excellent instruction, data usage

and leading teachers to become self-directed individuals.

These can never be achieved without the strong prayer warriors surrounding me and the support of our fellow church members who never stop encouraging me. This includes my ever supportive and loving husband, Andy, and my two beloved sons, Dan and Ben, who always show their love and understanding even in my busiest days. This really means a lot to me! Therefore, "I thank my God every time I remember you." (Philippians 1:3)

Most of all, I acknowledged that I cannot do all these without God's strength to press on, God's wisdom to complete my thesis and God's encouragement to finish the race!

All I can say is TO GOD BE THE GLORY, PRAISES AND HONOR!!! 🙌

A close-up, high-angle shot of the Hulk's gauntlet, showing the intricate details of the armor and the green, cracked texture of the gauntlet. The background is dark and blurry, suggesting a night scene with some green foliage at the bottom.

MARVEL -OUS? ONLY MY GOD!

D'Spare

Nowadays, entertainment holds the spotlight in people's lives. For millennials, movies are a sure hit! Due to the fast pace of the film industry, some resorted to turning animated clips into real-life movies. Others are resurrecting old films to clearer high-definition copies. But the latest craze, I believe, would be comic books turned into a series of connected movies—and a particular one would be the Marvel Cinematic Universe!

A world in danger. Superheroes saving the day. Marvel is not the only one selling these stories. It's the same gist – no matter the storyline, the characters, or even the setting. Why don't people get tired of these repeating stories? It's because, in this imperfect world full of darkness, we grasp for even a tiny bit of hope. At the core of the story of Marvel superheroes, we find the very essence of human beings like you and me – broken and weak – and in desperate need of a hero to fight the battle for us.

Well, what exactly makes Marvel Superheroes, super? Their unequalled power that separates them from ordinary citizens. Despite this fact, we have to believe that Superheroes aren't created overnight. Although some may or may not want what they were given, having the will to accept it, and to persevere in refining their crafts, is not an easy task. Superheroes welcome challenges to help them become better.

Most of all, Superheroes are given the privilege to be different, to be of help to the world. Not every Superhero's life is perfect. They are just as human as we are, and they often are outcasts due to their special abilities.

While every single person in this planet is uniquely created, we must always remember that we are born with a purpose. Sometimes, we don't realize it until God reveals it to us through circumstances that come our way. Like the superheroes, we undergo something we may or may not want to, but in the end, it was ultimately for our good.

I'm a super avid fan of Marvel and allow me to share some marvelously-interesting realizations I discovered from the stories of some Marvel characters and how their life stories, which may not exactly resemble ours completely, but which we are able to relate and learn from.

Captain America

Steve Rogers is a very persevering, persistent and determined soldier despite his small, weak and sickly form. He went from one army base to another to find a position that would accept him and allow him to fight in World War 2.

When his friend Bucky Barnes was drafted, it made Steve even more intent in joining the army. Nothing could keep him down. After being injected with a Super Soldier Serum that made him look and feel stronger, Steve's confidence was boosted and made him into a leader, which he truly deserved.



He believes that all is not lost when he sees Bucky Barnes again after his best friend was brainwashed and trained to fight against him. The army training he got helped him live up to his potential, and he doesn't stop doing his best to help anyone in need.

You'll never know what hope does to a person. It is life-giving. In every aspect of our life, it is important that we keep on being hopeful and determined to go through whatever challenging situation life throws at us. Everything in this world is temporal, even our bodies. I believe that we must be like Captain America, whose strength doesn't lie on his physical body but from a willful heart.

Thor

Thor Odinson is heir to the throne of Asgard. His overconfidence, sense of entitlement and rash decisions made him break a peace treaty with the Frost Giants that had stood for a thousand years. This made his father Odin believe that he has endangered the Asgardians, so he banished Thor to Midgard, also known as Earth, to teach him lessons.

Thor's time in Midgard taught him valuable lessons and empathy with its people. Odin also threw Thor's hammer, Mjolnir, to earth. When Thor arrived at the site where it crashed, he realized that he is no longer worthy enough to lift the mystical hammer, which can only be lifted by someone deemed worthy. Though unsure of what his brother Loki's true intentions are, he still loves his brother and tried to convince him to stop being rebellious.

Like Thor, we are often arrogant and proud, but with the help of the people who surround us and still keep on believing in us, we are able to change into a totally new person with new goals, knowing what is right and what is wrong. It is easy to say but difficult to achieve but with God on our side, nothing is impossible if we believe!



Ant-Man

Scott Lang is an ex-convict who has lapsed back to robbing stuff. When he broke into the house of Hank Pym and stole a suit that can shrink its wearer, Pym recruited Lang to steal a weapon being developed by Darren Cross, his protégé who had forced Pym out of his own company.

Scott is praised for his quick thinking and ability to break into complex places, and he is trained to fight in order to be able to overpower Cross. He is given Pym particles to be able to shrink or grow at will. He is also given an EMP communication device to collaborate with ants.

One important thing I find interesting during his training period is his ability to shrink and interact with the different kinds of ants and feel like them. I can strongly compare this with Jesus' coming down to Earth to become one of us, feeling and understanding the world from our human perspective. Like ants, we might be little insignificant objects but God looks after us all the time.

Doctor Strange

Dr. Stephen Strange is an accomplished surgeon. After a terrible car accident mangled his hands, he falls into despair when he lost his job and after undergoing seven failed surgeries to heal his hands. He then tried to find ways to seek healing. It led him to find a mentor who is willing to teach him different ways to view his lamentable state.

From a highly respected professional, Doctor Strange began to let down his pride as he realized that he is just a tiny particle in the vast universe and that there are a million dimensional realms to be discovered.

Doctor Strange's experience taught me that sometimes when we accomplished something great, we might think that we can do anything and we need nothing else. But we must learn to have a heart of humility and always strive to learn new things.

Okoye

As the Leader of the Dora Milaje, a border tribe that served as the royal guards of Wakanda, Okoye has great authority. Instead of using it to her advantage, she uses it to protect her King T'Challa and ensure his safety. She is ready to stay and protect her King, even from her own husband, and is always on the lookout for danger, thanks to her proficiency with her spear.

We must strive to be like Okoye: dependable, careful and protective. It is important that we display these characteristics not only to ourselves but also to our friends and family. We must learn to love the people whom God allows us to live with in this life, no matter how hard it is. We must show God's love to everyone.

Captain Marvel

It was definitely a confusing accident that made Air Force pilot Carol Danvers absorb all energy from the blown up plane. All memories of her past was erased, and she was brought to Planet Kree, by Yon-Rogg, a Kree soldier. There, she was trained to control her emotions to avoid any unnecessary explosions she can fire at will. During one of their trainings, she suddenly finds herself back to Earth and meets with Nick Fury. She also met her co-pilot, Maria, who helped her regain her memories. She remembers failing many times in her past life, but she also recalls that after every fall, she rose back.

What struck me was the double life she lived. She, like us, thinks at first that she is in the right side with Yon-Rogg. But after an encounter with the Skrulls or shapeshifting creatures, she begins to doubt her mentor. Often times, worldly things such as the internet is helping us achieve more but actually, it captures our attention and drifts us away from God. As good as they may be, they help us lose our focus in becoming the best that we can be, and most significantly, stop us from realizing what we are capable of. Captain Marvel taught me to never give in to the temptations that come our way but instead, rise above the trials that we face.



Rocket Raccoon and Groot

Once a wild animal known as subject 89PI3, Rocket has genetic and cybernetic upgrades to his brains and skeletal structure. These have made his teeth very sharp, and gave him the ability to speak, the skill to maneuver any ship, and super strength. He has escaped prison twenty-three times, much like his pal, Groot.

Groot is a self-aware plant also known as a Flora Colossus from Taluhnia. He is also not a stranger to prison. Initially, Rocket is the only one in the Guardians of the Galaxy who understands Groot's simple vocabulary being only, "I am Groot."

His love for Groot doesn't change. When Groot regenerates after sacrificing himself, their relationship changes from best friends to parent-child. Teenage Groot proved to be not useful because of his constant use of gadgets, but in the end, at the most crucial moment, Groot can also be helpful in a way we should be.

We might be distracted by material things, but in the end, we must always put our attention to those that matter. Rocket is like God in a way that he acts like a father figure to Groot, taking care of him every step of the way, through thick and thin, same as what God would do, even if we disobey him.

Iron Man

Ending with the man that started it all, let me first tell you his background. Tony Stark is a billionaire. Known for his amazing skills with technology, he graduated from M.I.T. at the age of 17 with a B.S. in Engineering. Tony inherited his father's company, Stark Industries, at the age of 21, making him the youngest-ever CEO of a company.

After a horrible experience as hostage in Afghanistan, he became the superhero Iron Man with a new goal in life: to clear up his past mistakes and

eliminate threats around the globe. Busy making improvements with his suits and saving the world, he gave his title as CEO of Stark Industries to his personal assistant turned wife Pepper Potts, whose loyalty to Tony never wavered.

We must be like Iron Man. Although he was already happy with his life, he still helped his friends, especially when he has the solution in mind to their problems. He resembles God in a way that He was the one who created the universe. In the case of Iron Man, he began the Marvel Cinematic Universe.

He is also like God when he knows that he is the only superhero that has a suit that could hold the six Infinity Stones, and did not hesitate to use it in order to save the world. His heroic act parallels Jesus' same sacrificial situation, dying on the cross, for our sins, to cleanse and free us from Satan's grasp. The only difference is that God loves us more than "3,000 times."

You see, if I go on with the narration of each and every superhero, it would take a few more pages. But I will save Gospel Light Publication the pages, the ink, and the money for you guys to discover God in each and every superhero you encounter when you watch the movies yourself. The game has ended.

On a more serious note, the utmost significant take-away from this would be that while these stories are far from reality, there is an important story in this world that is so real, that it scares some people away! Some refuse to believe them and others had other theories which they trusted more.

It's the story of the greatest and most real superhero the world has ever known - God. He is the ruler of the Universe, the Milky Way and the Galaxies. He created you and me, along with the plants, sky, ocean, every living and non-living things on a planet called Earth. We are just a bunch of His creations, but what makes us special is that He handpicked each one of us and loved us as His own child.

He deeply cares for us - to the point of sending His own Son to live with His created beings for Him to save us from our sins. God did more than just saving us; He came to us. He promised to give us Eternal Life, if we believe in Him and accept Him as our personal Lord and Savior.

That's what makes this story different - because our Savior loved us and made us one of His! Despite how broken and weak we may be, we have a Savior to fight the battles with us.

How MARVELOUS is that?! 🏰

THE SUNCELL STORY

Pastor Alice Huang



After having been in the harvest fields for over forty years and being a child of God for sixty-three years, I learn one important lesson about life with Christ:

“Serve the Lord with gladness.
Obedience keeps one on track.
Service and obedience are partners.”

We can take a glimpse of how our Lord Jesus Christ Himself rejoiced in serving the Father before the world began. This is seen in Proverbs 8:30, "Then I was beside Him, like a master workman, and I was daily His delight, rejoicing before him always." (ESV)

For two thousand years, Christians worldwide are looking forward to the imminent return of Jesus Christ to rule the whole world. The world has been warned in the following passage in the first century or even earlier.

As Psalm 2:10-12 says, "Now therefore, O kings, be wise; be warned, O rulers of the earth. Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and you perish in the way, for His wrath is quickly kindled. Blessed are all who take refuge in Him."

The loving God has been warning His people before the judgment comes. This manifests one beautiful character of our God, His being merciful and slow to anger. But be warned, God's word shall not return void. Bearing this truth in mind, we can trust Him for making our life fruitful. This has also led me to my ministry with SunCell.

How then did SunCell start?

Over twenty-five years ago, some eager-faced young students with hungry stomachs would come up to Tenielyn's and Ivy's apartment which was only one block away from the University of San Carlos

in downtown Cebu. Dinner would be served, followed by a Bible Study. This happened every Saturday, hence the name "Saturday Cell Group." A few sessions were also initially held at Cebu Gospel Church.

The Lord had since then laid a burden on my heart. This idea was impressed upon me. Jesus said, "I came to seek and to save those which are lost. Have you tried to look for them? Have you not taught on Sundays? I have not seen them in church."

In response, I prayed to the Lord for coworkers. They responded promptly. They are Sis. Rosa Ngo, Sis. Paz Ngo, and Ptr. Rosalinda Ng. I thank God for this precious networking. Some accepted Jesus as their Lord and Savior. Some were baptized. Truly, there is joy before the angels of God over one sinner who repents! As we continue moving about looking for the lost ones, the burden on my heart was lifted away. What's left there was joy from above.

To give more access to the students, the Bible Study was moved to Sunday. Hence, the name "Sunday Cell Group" or in short "SunCell." For one summer, SunCell used the premises of PCGS. Now, SunCell feels very much at home at Cebu Gospel Church.

Our motto is: "Being a disciple of Christ, disciple others." The door of SunCell is open to everyone. We are equipped to serve our glorious God together. Praise the Lord!!! 🙌

5TH ANNIVERSARY



10TH ANNIVERSARY



25TH ANNIVERSARY





TESTIMONY

by Tenielyn Lim Fernan

A speech delivered during SunCell's 25th anniversary on September 2018

Good afternoon, brothers and sisters in Christ, and friends. HAPPY 25th ANNIVERSARY! WOW! PRAISES TO GOD INDEED. For by His grace we are now celebrating the 25th year of SunCell.

I was with SunCell from 1998 to year 2004. It was during my 3rd year High School in PCGS (Kian-Kee) till my 5th year college in the University of San Carlos. Ptr. Alice Huang, fondly called Yok-Le Chi, Sis. Rosa, Sis. Paz and other leaders in church always reach out to us every Sunday. The SunCell schedule was in the afternoon after the morning church service.

Whenever we would miss it, they would visit us in our house. They labored, though one cannot understand what potential there is or why they worked so hard to lead us closer to God and to prevent us from backsliding in our daily walk with God.

Looking back on those years, I'm very grateful to the Lord for the people who guided me in my spiritual walk. I've been encouraged TO KEEP RUNNING THE RACE and NEVER GIVE UP. Otherwise, I would have lived my life far away from the Lord. I would have been discouraged, empty, and without direction. SunCell had been a training ground for me to develop a deeper relationship with our God.

Now, God has put me in Trinity Christian Fellowship in Bacolod City where I continue to be a disciple as I disciple others also. It is my prayer that all of you:

- will never give up your faith in our God;
- will be strong; and
- will all finish the race 🏆

TESTIMONY

by Hannah Joyce M. Desoloc

For me, SunCell had been instrumental in two ways. First, it allowed me to reach out to people from my own hometown. Second, it reminded me of how faithful God is.

At first, it was all about social connections. At SunCell, some of my old friends and most familiar faces from Surigao City were there. As a newbie at that time, it was hard to make friends. So in a way, it was more like a haven.

Then, as I grew to know and establish relationships with the core people in SunCell, it became something deeper. Attending Bible study, singing familiar hymns and joining visitations afforded me a glimpse of how God reaches out to people by using people like me. 🏆



A close-up photograph of several pink tulips with green leaves, serving as the background for the text.

MOTHERS WHO MAKE A LASTING IMPACT

Juliet Lee Uytanlet

*I am reminded of your sincere faith,
which first lived in your grandmother Lois
and in your mother Eunice,
and I am persuaded, lives in you also*

2 Timothy 1:5

Introduction

William Ross Wallace wrote in 1865 a poem entitled **"The Hand that Rocks the Cradle is the Hand that Rules the World."** What did he mean with that poem? Mothers have a special role and an important responsibility given by God that is to care and nurture their children. They have a privileged opportunity to make an influence and impact their children who will eventually impact our society and our world.

Wallace is a native of Lexington, Kentucky. His father, a Presbyterian pastor, died when he was just an infant. He understood the difficulty and struggles of a single mom, widowed and facing parenthood alone. She needed to be both the provider and nurturer. Although today, many families are operating on a dual-income family, meaning both parents are working. Needless to say, raising a family alone is a huge and difficult task.

Let me share a stanza of this poem that reflects how Wallace honored mothers. First, he acknowledged the divine mission of mothers. Second, he reminded mothers of the opportunity to teach their children to trust in God. Lastly, Wallace believed that the success of a person is attributed to the hardship and sacrifices of a mother.

*Woman, how divine your mission
Here upon our natal sod!
Keep, oh, keep the young heart open
Always to the breath of God!
All true trophies of the ages
Are from mother-love imppearled;
For the hand that rocks the cradle
Is the hand that rules the world.*

(William Ross Wallace)

Dear mothers, and even fathers, grandparents, aunts, and uncles: if the Lord has placed in our hands that opportunity to influence and minister to a child, **DO NOT TAKE THIS LIGHTLY.** This is a very important responsibility. The daily opportunities to see them, talk to them, listen to them, play with them, read to them, advise them, pray with them, and model for them what it means to love the Lord and trust the Lord are oh so precious. The family is the basic unit of a society. It is imperative for us as Christians to build godly families to the praise and glory of God. For a godly family will affect and influence a community, a society, and a country.

So how can a mother best make a lasting impact on her children? It's by discipling them.

Mothers Who Disciple Make a Lasting Impact

We know that discipleship simply means following Jesus. Jesus is our ultimate model on how we should live for God's glory. We are convinced that discipleship is an important ministry that we all must be involved in. However, in the Christian home, the parents are the first disciplers of the children. The nurturing roles of fathers and mothers are crucial in the holistic and spiritual development of a child. But let me focus on the role of mothers, and the impact and influence they have on their children.

Paul discipled Timothy, but Paul acknowledged in this letter to Timothy the impact and influence of two godly women who greatly influenced and impacted the life of Timothy. Paul did not grab all the glory to himself for having a faithful disciple like Timothy. Instead, he encouraged Timothy by reminding him of his godly heritage that he was actually first discipled by his mother Eunice, who in turn was discipled by his grandmother Lois.

Acts 16:1-2 says, "Paul came to Derbe and then to Lystra, where a disciple named Timothy lived, whose mother was Jewish and a believer but whose father was a Greek. The believers at Lystra and Iconium spoke well of him."

In this passage, we see that Timothy was a believer and a disciple (meaning growing and exemplifying faith and devotion to God) and was highly-regarded. He had a good testimony and people liked him. He brought honor to his parents and even grandparents. Lois and Eunice must be very proud of him.

By using the life of Timothy, and the impact of his mother and grandmother in his life, I want to share these three points on how we can disciple our children.

How Do Mothers Disciple Their Children?

1. Mothers must pass on a godly heritage.

What do I mean by a godly heritage? A heritage is the transmitted ancestral or cultural traditions, customs, and practices. As Chinese-Filipinos, we want to impart to our children our ethnic Chinese heritage by passing on the cultural traditions like employing the *Minnanhua* language, attending Chinese school, celebrating Chinese festivities, and at times even encouraging our children to find a Chinese life partner. A godly heritage is to pass on to our children Christian traditions, practices, and beliefs, with the hope that they will adhere to these and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. Proverbs 22:6 (NASB) says, "Train up a child in the way he should go, even when he is old he will not depart from it."

Even though Eunice married a Greek and lived in Lystra (present day Turkey), she maintained her Jewish heritage by being God-fearing. Lystra became a Roman colony in 6 BC. It was possible that Lois and Eunice were part of the Jewish diaspora that went to Asia Minor and settled there.

Why did the Jews leave Jerusalem? We need to remember that in the Old Testament account, going to exile was the ultimate punishment of God for the Jews' idolatry and unfaithfulness. Not all Jews scattered during the Babylonian Empire were able to return to Judea with Ezra and Nehemiah during the Persian Empire.

This could be the case of Lois and Eunice. Living as diaspora Jews, they did not forget or give up their godly heritage. The fact that Eunice gave her son the name Timothy or Timotheos in Greek, which means "honoring God" or "precious to God," showed how she passed on that godly heritage.

Why did Eunice marry a Greek man? It could be because of love. It could be because there's no Jewish male available. At one point in the history of the Chinese in the Philippines, there were more Chinese males than Chinese females. This led to scarcity of Chinese women for marriage. This scarcity led to many Chinese men finding Chinese Mestizas or Filipinas for marriage.

Despite the fact that Eunice married a Gentile, she passed on a godly heritage to her son Timothy. Eunice's marital situation did not discourage her from maintaining her faith and passing her godly heritage to her son. She could have taught him Hebrew, brought him to the synagogues, made him memorize the Scriptures, obey the Jewish Law and etc.

As mothers, we can pass on a godly heritage by setting up a godly environment in the home. Make sure that God is honored, and His word is taught in the home. Practices like praying before eating or sleeping are good ways to honor God. Reading the Scriptures together, or teaching them how to read or establish daily quiet time, is crucial for them to see the relevance of God's Word in their lives.

We pass on a godly heritage when we give testimonies of how God answers our prayers, how awesome are his creations, how he performed miracles and wonderful acts of grace. It is important we audibly tell our children that our God is real and not just a fairy-tale character.

2. Mothers must pass on their faith.

A godly heritage may not necessarily result to faith in God. A godly heritage can simply be practicing Jewish culture and traditions. In the case of Timothy, his mother not only passed on a godly heritage, but also her faith to him. What proof do we have? Timothy was already a disciple—a follower of Jesus—when Paul met him. He was first disciplined by his mother and grandmother (2 Tim. 1:5). We can presume that these godly women taught him the teachings of the Scriptures even before they had heard of the Gospel about Jesus. The teachings of the Scriptures can be said as foundation for faith in God and eventually faith in Jesus.

When Paul and Silas came to Lystra by AD 48 during their first missionary journey, Lois, Eunice, and Timothy could have heard them preach the gospel, saw them perform miracles, and witnessed how they endured persecutions. The missionary journey of Paul and Silas did bear fruit such that by the time Paul journeyed again to Lystra, he encountered Timothy as a disciple who is highly-regarded by the believers.

We need to remember that it is our responsibility to share the Gospel, but we can never force our children to come to faith. Nevertheless, we must continue to pray for them and pray with them.

I remember sharing the Gospel message when Johann was two years old and he prayed with me then. But I know I needed to fan the fire and constantly helped him to understand the Gospel message. When he turned four, he joined his very first VBS. His counselor shared the Gospel message to him, and he also prayed to accept Jesus. When the counselor told me this, I cried. I was filled with joy because I felt assured that he understood the gospel message even in his young age.

When Johann reached eight, he decided to have his baptism. The Kentucky church we attended back then allowed child baptism with parental consent and the Sunday School teacher's recommendation. At first, I was anxious that Johann might not fully understand what baptism was all about. After my husband talked to him about baptism and following Jesus, both of us, as his parents, were assured that he was sincere in his desire to be baptized. On that chilly Easter Sunday of 2012, my son was baptized and made a public declaration that he wanted to follow Jesus. My heart was filled with joy.

How can we pass on this faith?

First, pray. My good friend Teena one time shared with me that she would lay her hand and pray for her daughters before they left for school. She has been doing this practice since they started schooling. She said this helped her children recognize that God cares for them and that they can trust in Him. Further, this practice also helps them realize that God is sovereign, and they should seek to live for God and seek His help always. When my son started going to school, I also started to do this every morning. I pray a simple and short prayer (since we often are in a hurry to catch the school van) but it seeks God's blessing, protection and strength for the day.

Second, share the gospel message in portions or based on the age level.

Third, model your faith. Live in godliness and in fear of God. This brings us to the third point.

3. Mothers must pass on godly character.

Having faith in God and having Christ as Lord and Savior ought to lead to a godly character. But we all know that this is not always the case. As Christians, we are bombarded by various trials and temptations that may cause us to respond the wrong way and sin against men and against God.

No wonder Paul reminded us in Romans 12:2 that we should be careful not to conform to the pattern of this world, and its sinful and dark influences and practices. Rather, we should be transformed by the word of God and live holy lives.

As parents, every day, we exemplify what it means to be Christians. How we respond in trials and temptations will also reveal our faith and devotion to God. It is crucial then that the fruit of the Spirit is evident in our daily life.

Bill Bright was greatly used by God as he established Campus Crusade for Christ. In his biography, he mentioned the impact of the sacrificial love of his mother, Mary Lee. Mary was a Methodist who experienced personal conversion at age 16. She was a devout Christian. She woke up early in the morning for her devotion and attended church regularly. She was a schoolteacher before marriage. With this training, she made sure her children developed intellectually. She read to them nightly.

The year before Bill was born, Mary Lee had a still birth. She became wary for the next child. She prayed to God if this child is born healthy and well, she would dedicate him for the Lord's use. Mary Lee never revealed this to Bill until later in his life when he became involved in the ministry. She remarked that she didn't want to influence him to enter the ministry. She wanted God to work in him and influence him to the ministry. Bill's fond memories of her mother are her sacrifices and her toil. In his own words:

"She (mother) was a very humble, quiet, gracious woman ... At mealtime, she was always the last person to eat because she wanted to be sure that everyone else was served first. Mother would eat what was left over. We lived five miles from the nearest community. Many times I would walk or run home from school, and she would walk a mile or two from our house to meet me, as she did with the rest of the kids. Then we'd stroll back together and talk about what was on our mind."

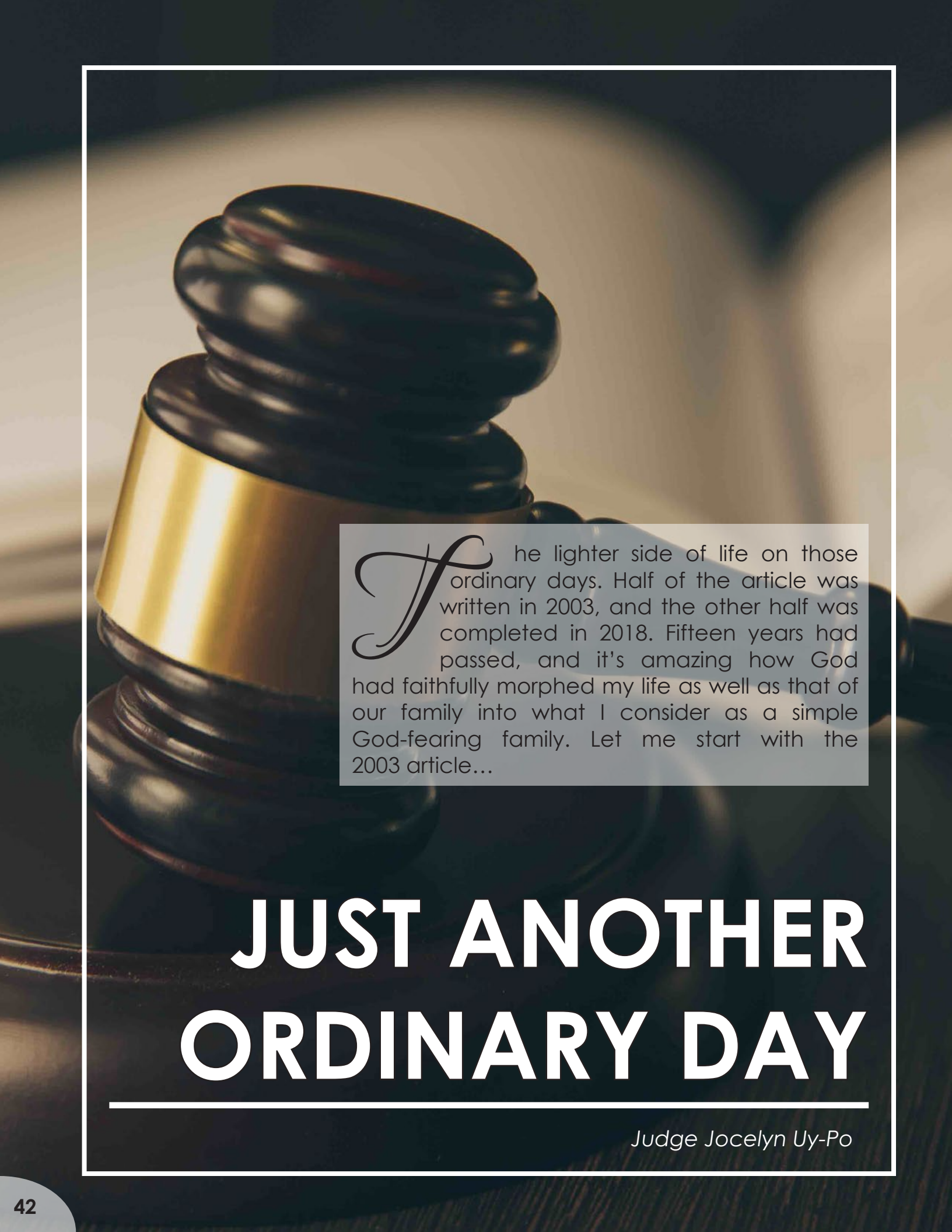
Conclusion and Challenge

Mothers, God gave us children not just for us to have heirs. God gave them to us to influence them to be good citizens and good parents themselves someday. Furthermore, to make a lasting impact, we must seek to impart to them a godly heritage, a godly faith and a godly character. 🙏

Do not conform 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





*T*he lighter side of life on those ordinary days. Half of the article was written in 2003, and the other half was completed in 2018. Fifteen years had passed, and it's amazing how God had faithfully morphed my life as well as that of our family into what I consider as a simple God-fearing family. Let me start with the 2003 article...

JUST ANOTHER ORDINARY DAY

Judge Jocelyn Uy-Po

Circa 2003

Being a judge is no easy task. I shall not discuss anything about my job because it's already obvious how taxing it is to be one. All lawyers are aware of it. I shall then discuss another scope of the job of a judge per my personal experience.

When I was appointed judge of the Consolacion Municipal Trial Court last 2002, my reaction was very consistent with what Justice Sison said when I applied for this position. She said, "You are the only reluctant applicant." Thus, when I got appointed, I cried. Not with excitement that I am now a judge, but because of the great responsibilities ahead plus the giving up of many other things.

I thought that going to my place of work was no big deal since Consolacion was one of the "nearest" stations among the many courts up for grabs. I considered myself very fortunate to be given this station by God. Then, reality hit me on my first few trips to that place.

I thought I would be driving smoothly to that hallowed pedestal that I called my courtroom. But lo and behold, I was driving alongside mammoth trucks. Not the ordinary four-wheel Isuzu etc. trucks, but the big nth wheeled trucks. Those trucks are full of different loads (cargo). Sometimes carrying anapog, tanks of oxygen, rattan poles, metal tubing, lumber, barrels... You name it, you got it! And yeah, hogs too!

When I start to traverse uphill, I always pray for two things. "Lord, do not let those tiny ropes that are holding those loads snap, or else I will not look beautiful in my funeral." If the cargo was rattan poles, the more I double this prayer. Just imagine if that tiny rope snaps and those rattan poles fly to my car, I will look like a human barbecue on a stick. Can't imagine what a great task those funeral artists will have with that. If the cargo was oxygen tanks, they would flatten my face. I am proud of my sharp pointy nose, so I can't take any chances here.

Wooh! Gross!! But that's just the beginning. When I go downhill, I'd pray that my brakes, as well as the brakes of all the trucks behind me, would hold. Otherwise, my face will end up stuck on my windshield. Again, my sharp nose, don't forget that.

This stress started even from the earliest hour of my working day. People asked me why I did not get a driver. Well, if I have to die on the road, I prefer to be able to face it head on with nose held high.

I hope by next writing I can discuss some funny incidents I encountered in court. As of now, let me say, "Ciao."

Circa 2018

Fast forward fifteen years. I am now up by two salary grade levels, and am almost at the last stage of my step increment. Soon I will reach retirement age.

My sons have all become professionals; however, they are all pursuing their second courses. Little did I know that one would go for full time ministry. The other one, who vocally told me that he would never want to be like me, is starting to become my mini-me; that includes his size and height. The other one just thanked me for giving birth to him after assisting a child being delivered.

My husband is as quiet as before.

Looking back fifty years ago, he is still the same little boy that I fell in love with, except with gray hair, bespectacled eyes and aching joints. Our silent whispers had turn to shouts because as the Bible said, "The sound of the mill is low."

One time, he told me that I was so noisy. I understand because words are noise to one who is hard of hearing. I lovingly told him, "Enjoy my voice because you will soon miss it forever." This is the sad part of life, but this is life. Man is created with an end.

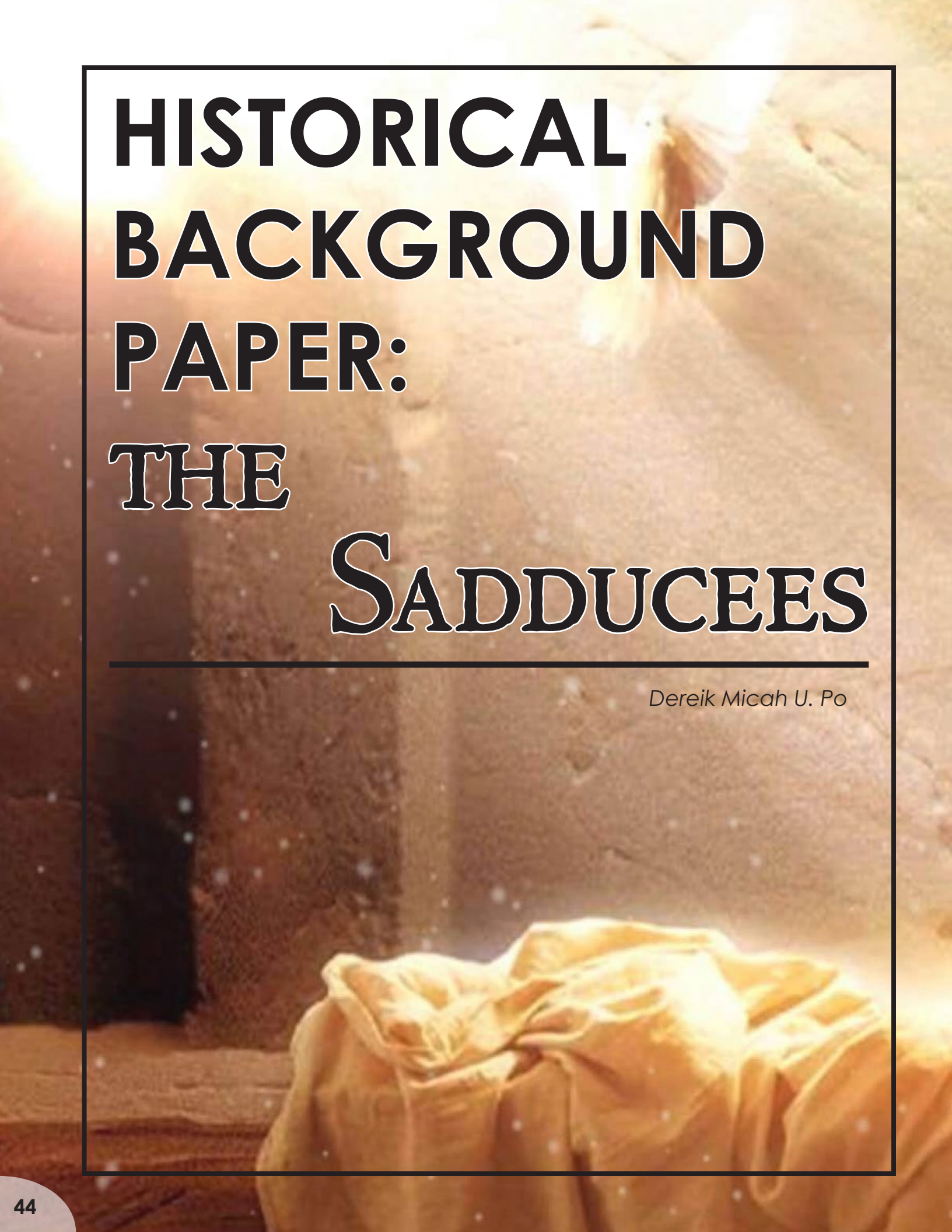
Ahhh, we are both now entering the Ecclesiastes 12 Era as I would often like to think of it. However, before the dawn of youth arrives, Ecclesiastes 11:6 reminds me that, "In the morning sow your seed, and at evening let not your hand be idle, for you know not which of the two will be successful, or whether both alike will turn out well."

Yes, we had sown, God had blessed our seed and I pray that they will turn out to be God-fearing young men, successful in every way, favored by God and men.

As much as possible, my husband and I are preparing for that evening to come. But before it comes, we try to stay grounded, humbled by God's presence and guidance awaiting for that call that would beckon us home one day.

I am always reminded by what Bishop Fulton Sheen had said, "God never puts the crown of victory on a swollen head. As the shadow of the sun are longest when its beam are the lowest, so we are greatest when we make ourselves least."

My deepest prayer is that whether it be the seed we had sown or the work of our hand, may both all turn out well. 🙏



HISTORICAL BACKGROUND PAPER: THE SADDUCEES

Dereik Micah U. Po

Origin and source

As early as the Maccabean period (164 BC – 63 BC), a Jewish sect was founded that would be known as the Sadducees.¹ This Sect was known for arising from the Jewish society's priestly aristocrats and this particular sect was more focused on acquiring political influence within the nation than on the religious aspects.²

This group was directly opposed by another Jewish sect known as the Pharisees, who were known for their mastery of Jewish laws. Whether it was from their differences in what they taught or towards political domination of the nation, these two groups were at odds with each other.³

Throughout the Maccabean period to the Roman occupation of Jerusalem (63 BC – 70 AD), these two groups would lay claim on the support of various high priests or political rulers to acquire political or religious leverage over one another.⁴ However, the origins of the Sadducees remain a mystery, as scholars have not discovered their true origins.

But as speculations go, these are some of the theories that scholars believe to be the origins of the group known as the Sadducees.

1. Because of how closely the word *Sadducee* is to the word *Zadok*, this group is closely associated to a high priest named Zadok, who was the high priest during the reign of King David and his son Solomon.⁵ Most scholars point out that this Jewish sect originated from the priestly line of Zadok.

- 1 W. J. Moulder "Sadducees", in *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia Vol. 4: Q-Z*, 1988; Parton, 2000, 1050; D. A. Hagner, "Sadducees", in *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible Vol. 5: Q-Z*, 1975.
- 2 Elwell and Yarbrough, 1998, 59; D. A. Hagner, "Sadducees", in *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible Vol. 5: Q-Z*, 1975; Parton 2000, 1052.
- 3 Porter, 2000, 1050; D. A. Hagner, "Sadducees", in *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible Vol. 5: Q-Z*, 1975.
- 4 D. A. Hagner, "Sadducees", in *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible Vol. 5: Q-Z*, 1975.
- 5 W. J. Moulder, "Sadducees", in *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia Vol. 4: Q-Z*, 1988; Elwell and Yarbrough, 1998, 58; D. A. Hagner, "Sadducees",

2. They derived their origins and role from the Greek word "*syndikoi*," which means judges or fiscal.⁶ This term would refer to an individual who would have responsibilities and authority in regards to upholding the law or having a mediatorial role, which coincidentally was what the Sadducees were known for.⁷
3. The origin of their name was derived from the Hebrew word "*saddiq*," which would mean the righteous ones.⁸ The problem with this theory is that there is no reason to think that the Sadducees claimed to be known or characterized themselves as the "righteous ones."⁹

As it stands, these are the most probable theories that scholars provide in regards to the origin of the Sadducees. Consequently, theory number one is more widely accepted by scholars to be the most plausible of the three.

Development towards the NT Times

As early as 30 B.C., the Sadducee sect had suffered an abysmal loss of influence and power due to political affiliation that did not bode well for the group.¹⁰ It was only from 4-6 AD during the Roman occupation that the sect was able to acquire limited power due to their relationship with their Roman occupiers.¹¹

in *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible Vol. 5: Q-Z*, 1975.

- 6 Elwell and Yarbrough, 1998, 58; D. A. Hagner, "Sadducees", in *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible Vol. 5: Q-Z*, 1975.
- 7 D.A Hagner, "Sadducees", in *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible Vol. 5: Q-Z*, 1975; Walter A. Elwell, "Sadducees", in *Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible Vol. 2: J-Z*, 1998 ed.
- 8 Elwell and Yarbrough, 1998, 58; D. A. Hagner, "Sadducees", in *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible Vol. 5: Q-Z*, 1975; Walter A. Elwell, "Sadducees", in *Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible Vol. 2: J-Z*, 1998 ed.
- 9 Walter A Elwell, "Sadducees", in *Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible Vol. 2: J-Z*, 1998 ed.; D. A. Hagner, "Sadducees", in *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible Vol. 5: Q-Z*, 1975.
- 10 D. A. Hagner, "Sadducees", in *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible Vol. 5: Q-Z*, 1975.
- 11 D. A. Hagner, "Sadducees", in *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible Vol. 5: Q-Z*, 1975; W. J.



The reason why the Sadducees would try to build a relationship with their conquerors was because they came from aristocratic backgrounds and would prefer to maintain the status quo.¹² Consequently, the Sadducees would lean towards Hellenistic tendencies in order to maintain good relations with Rome. This led to an inevitable hatred from Jewish people as Jews saw the compromise of their culture an act of treason against God.

But on the part of the Sadducees, they were trying to ensure peace with Rome.¹³ Because of their ties with the Roman occupiers and their strict observance to Roman policies, the Sadducees were extremely prejudiced towards popular movements that had political overtones. Their prejudice was seen more vividly when the masses had started proclaiming a certain person to be the Messiah—Jesus.¹⁴

The Sadducees were also very exclusive of their circle of membership, ensuring only those of aristocratic background could join the group, thus assuring their dwindling numbers and immense unpopularity among the masses.¹⁵

Moulder, "Sadducees", in *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* Vol. 4: Q-Z, 1988.

- 12 D. A. Hagner, "Sadducees", in *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible* Vol. 5: Q-Z, 1975; W.J. Moulder, "Sadducees", in *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* Vol. 4: Q-Z, 1988.
- 13 D. A. Hagner, "Sadducees", in *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible* Vol. 5: Q-Z, 1975; W. J. Moulder, "Sadducees", in *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* Vol. 4: Q-Z, 1988.
- 14 W.J. Moulder, "Sadducees", in *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* Vol. 4: Q-Z, 1988.
- 15 D. A. Hagner, "Sadducees", in *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible* Vol. 5: Q-Z, 1975.

Though small in numbers, the Sadducees were the primary members of the main Jewish tribunal leadership, the Sanhedrin.¹⁶ The Pharisees, on the other hand, had the approval of the Jewish people and compared to them, the Sadducees were viewed by the masses as crude, coarse, vulgar, and boorish people.¹⁷

Significance during Jesus' time

Contrary to what the Gospels say with regards to the Pharisees and Sadducees being portrayed as a similar group,¹⁸ they in fact were opponents of each other and one of the main issues they had towards one another was their varying or contrasting doctrinal views.¹⁹

A particular doctrinal issue that created problems against the Pharisees, which apparently was the main problem they had with Jesus Christ, was that the Sadducees did not believe in the resurrection of the dead. Their doctrinal view of the resurrection was directly against Christ's teachings of the resurrection;²⁰ this became a characteristic of the Sadducees as they were depicted in the Gospels.²¹

- 16 D. A. Hagner, "Sadducees", in *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible* Vol. 5: Q-Z, 1975; W. J. Moulder, "Sadducees", in *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* Vol. 4: Q-Z, 1988; Elwell and Yarbrough, 1998, 59.
- 17 D. A. Hagner, "Sadducees", in *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible* Vol. 5: Q-Z, 1975; W. J. Moulder "Sadducees", in *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* Vol. 4: Q-Z, 1988; Porton, 2000, 1050.
- 18 D. A. Hagner, "Sadducees", in *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible* Vol. 5: Q-Z, 1975; Porton, 2000, 1050-51.
- 19 Elwell and Yarbrough, 1998, 59; D. A. Hagner, "Sadducees", in *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible* Vol. 5: Q-Z, 1975; W. J. Moulder, "Sadducees", in *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* Vol. 4: Q-Z, 1988.
- 20 W. J. Moulder "Sadducees", in *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* Vol. 4: Q-Z, 1988; Walter A. Elwell, "Sadducees" in *Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible* Vol. 2: J-Z, 1998 ed.
- 21 Porton, 2000, 1050.

The Sadducees would confront Jesus by asking him questions regarding the mysteries of the resurrection and its absurdity, as was written in the Gospel of Matthew.²²

This particular contrast of ideals was not enough for the Sadducees to be alarmed with Jesus' ministry.²³ They were only concerned of the ministry of Jesus when people had started to recognize him as the Messiah. This ensured that the Sadducees would have to put an end to Jesus' life and the proclamations of him being the new king.

The Sadducees, being the majority members of the Sanhedrin, gave Jesus no chance of a fair trial or any other sentence but death; this was to safeguard the peace they had with Rome. The Sadducees would continue to persecute the Christians as they would perform miracles and testify of the risen Christ.²⁴

However, the fall of the Jerusalem temple in 70 AD proved to be too much of a political upheaval for the Sadducees to maintain their power and influence. This incident would eventually cause their demise and the total disappearance of the Jewish sect known as the Sadducees.²⁵

Other Information

In regards to their opposing doctrinal views with the Pharisees, the Sadducees had one in particular that would cause the most agitation between the two sects. The Sadducees had denied the authority of oral law.²⁶ In short, the Sadducees only viewed

- 22 Walter A. Elwell, "Sadducees" in *Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible Vol. 2: J-Z*, 1998 ed.; D. A. Hagner, "Sadducees", in *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible Vol. 5: Q-Z*, 1975.
- 23 D. A. Hagner, "Sadducees", in *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible Vol. 5: Q-Z*, 1975.
- 24 Moulder, 1988, 280; Walter A. Elwell, "Sadducees" in *Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible Vol. 2: J-Z*, 1998 ed.; D. A. Hagner, "Sadducees", in *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible Vol. 5: Q-Z*, 1975.
- 25 Elwell and Yarbrough, 1998, 59; D. A. Hagner, "Sadducees", in *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible Vol. 5: Q-Z*, 1975.
- 26 D. A. Hagner, "Sadducees", in *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible Vol. 5: Q-Z*, 1975; W.J. Moulder, "Sadducees", in *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia Vol. 4: Q-Z*, 1988.

the Laws of Moses as authoritative and everything else, be it the prophets or other books, as simply just books. Another doctrinal view that the Sadducees had was their rejection of the concept of fate and the acceptance of the idea of free will.²⁷

The group known as the Sadducees was not entirely a bad group of people. Despite having ulterior motives to maintain their political standing, they still managed to procure peace with Rome, be it for a limited time. Although the Gospels would depict this group as being quite similar to the Pharisees, they in fact were at odds with each other.

The Sadducees, being of significantly wealthy backgrounds, secured great political position within the Jewish community. However, they would fall prey to unpopularity as they tried to grovel towards their Roman occupiers to maintain the peace and the power they so enjoyed.

Within the records of the Gospels, it was depicted that the Pharisees and Sadducees would only be united in regards to their opposition to Jesus' ministry and that these two groups would go on to continue opposing the Christians as mentioned in the book of Acts. 🙏

References

- Elwell, Walter A. "Sadducees", in *Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible Vol. 2: J-Z* 1998 ed., Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House.
- Elwell, Walter A. and Robert W. Yarbrough, eds. 1998. *Readings from the First-Century World: Primary Sources for New Testament Study*. Grand Rapids: Baker.
- Hagner, D.A. "Sadducees", in *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible Vol. 5: Q-Z*, 1975 edited by Merrill C. Tenney. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House.
- Moulder, W.J. "Sadducees", in *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia Vol. 4: Q-Z*, 1988. edited by Geoffrey W. Bromiley et.al. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.
- Porton, G.G. 2000. "Sadducees", in *Dictionary of New Testament Background*, edited by Craig A. Evans and Stanley E. Porter, Downer Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press.
- 27 Porton, 2000, 1050; Elwell and Yarbrough, 1998, 59; D. A. Hagner, "Sadducees", in *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible Vol. 5: Q-Z*, 1975.



CHURCH EVENTS

*Compiled by
Jessamine Cristy Kate Go*

MISSION EMPHASIS WEEK

Mission Emphasis Week was held on September 12-16, 2018 with Leadership Workshop and Revival Meeting. Dr. Pio Tica highlighted Mission Sunday with his sermon entitled, "The Harvest That Jesus Saw" based on Matthew 9:35-38. Indeed, the harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest. 🙏



SUNDAY SCHOOL SUNDAY

Sunday School Sunday was celebrated last September 30, 2018 with a special performance from our Sunday School kids, as well as the first-ever performance of our Sunday School choir. 🎵



RESPECT THE AGED SUNDAY

Respect the Aged Sunday was held on October 28, 2018. Rev. Vicente Sia encouraged the elderly and the not-so-elderly to continue to "be fruitful" like the palm tree and the cedar tree from the passage in Psalm 92:12-14. The Christian Youth Fellowship (CYF) distributed tokens of magnifying sheets with a verse to those sixty years old and above to help them read God's word better. 🎵

THANKSGIVING DAY

The Youth Committee hosted the Thanksgiving Service for the first time on November 22, 2018. Testimonies from our brothers and sisters and an astounding dance number from the Sister's Fellowship and the youth were among the highlights of the evening. Dr. Ricky Recodo gave the fitting message entitled, "The Easiest, the Hardest Will of God" taken from 1 Thessalonians 5:18. 🙏



Opening to the sun above,
Melt the clouds of sin and sadness;
Drive the dark of doubt away,
Giver of immortal gladness,
Fill us with the light of day!

Melt the clouds of
Drive the dark
Giver of immo
Fill us with the



WATER BAPTISM

Two sisters in Christ received water baptism on Nov. 25, 2018, namely Catherine Chua and Sister Lucita Qua Say on November 29, 2018. Praise the Lord!!! 🙏



BOOK SALE

The annual Book Sale, organized by the Literature Committee led by Deaconess Mona Li, was held for two consecutive Sundays (November 25 and December 2, 2018). Rebates were given for Bibles, Christian books, and other items bought in the sale. 🙌



WATER BAPTISM

Our brothers in Christ, Jose Tan and Modesto Yu, received water baptism on December 2, 2018. Brother Andres Uy was also baptized on December 5, 2018. Praise the Lord! 🙌

SUNDAY SCHOOL CHRISTMAS PARTY



Sunday School Christmas Party was held on December 9, 2018. An assortment of food and goody bags were prepared for both the kids and the adult Sunday School students.

A skit about "What Christmas Truly Means" was played in which a young girl detective came in and asked what Christmas was all about. This was then followed by what we usually associate Christmas with, like Santa Claus, shopping, gifts, and Christmas trees.

The girl was told that she could not celebrate Christmas without these. She only realized the true meaning of Christmas when she found a Bible and read about the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ. 🙌

CHRISTMAS CANTATA

A

joint service for both English and Bilingual services was arranged on December 23, 2018 to celebrate Christmas together. The CGC Christmas Choir, together with some PCGS students and the Sunday School Children's Choir presented a Cantata entitled "How Should a King Come?" 🎄



INDUCTION OF DEACONS AND DEACONESSSES

During the induction ceremony on January 06, 2019, Brother David Tan was inducted as our new elder; Brothers Derwin Chan and Peterson Yap as our new deacons; and Sisters Doren Chan and Stephanie Uy as our new deaconesses. 🙏



PCGS & BSOP SUNDAY

PCGS Sunday and BSOP Sunday were both held last February 24, 2019. Dr. Joseph Shao expounded on "Jesus is the Door" from John 20:7-10, followed by a video presentation on BSOP. The PCGS kindergarten students gave a wonderful rendition during the tithes and offerings. The school also presented a video on the highlights of the past year and a teaser of their upcoming school play, Madagascar. 🙏

WATER BAPTISM

Sister Merlyn Yap received water baptism on March 17, 2019. Praise the Lord!! 🙏



CGC 103TH ANNIVERSARY & BLESSING OF RENOVATED AUDITORIUM



Last March 31, 2019, we celebrated our church's 103rd anniversary with the theme, "Let Your Life Shine Before Men." Dr. Roy Versoza exhorted the church on "How to Keep Shining" from Matthew 5:16; Philippians 2:14-15; 3:10-14. He reminded us that it's easy to shine when everything in our lives is in order. The true test is whether we can shine amidst hardships and difficulties in life. How? Find our purpose, forget our past and face our predicaments. 👑



PALM SUNDAY / BACCALAUREATE SUNDAY



On April 07, 2019, Palm Sunday, the new graduates and moving-up students of PCGS were gathered together for the Bacculaureate Service. Rev. Vicente Sia shared the message "Transformed Lives" from the scripture passage in Colossians 3:4-11. He reminded us of how our salvation is by faith alone and not by good works. Good works are the fruit of our salvation. Moreover, we must put off the old self (v9) and put on the new self (v10). 🙏



RESURRECTION SUNDAY/ BAPTISMAL SUNDAY



Resurrection Sunday this year falls on April 21, 2019.

Dr. Ricky Recodo gave the message, "The Plot Against Resurrection" from Matthew 28:11-15. Do you believe in the historical resurrection of Jesus? Our hope is anchored on the resurrection of Christ. Do you surrender to the universal authority of Jesus? Surrender your life to Jesus and submit to His authority for He lovingly and supremely reigns over us. On this day, we witnessed the water baptism of eight brothers and five sisters namely:



1. Karl Benedict S. Cabriles
2. Elyza Jade L. Canada
3. Justin Adrian U. Ching
4. Hyun Tae Cho
5. Mark Edgar Luch A. Honoridez
6. Brittany Gail H. Lao
7. Elena P. Ong
8. Franck Ethan S. Ong
9. Tashana Joelle T. Ong
10. John Louie V. Sy
11. Yanni Martin V. Sy
12. Precious Angeli Suarez, and
13. Kyler Josh K. Tee

Praise the Lord! 🙏

TEN MINUTES WITH GOD

EXECUTIVE SUMMARIES

Exclusive Digital Edition Content

A Rice Bowl: A Symbol of Surrendering to God

The humble rice bowl is strongly associated with being Chinese, and has strong connotations with femininity. It also symbolizes both satisfaction and surrender.

Surrender in the sense that a rice bowl must be empty before it can be filled; similarly we must empty and surrender ourselves to God.

Satisfaction in the sense that just as a full rice bowl satiates our hunger, we will be similarly filled with a rich, abundant life that God has promised.

Oh for the Grace of God

I see God's grace as something very precious and important in my life. I saw it in action when Pastor Alfie Bugtai shared God's word with me, filling my heart with the urge to keep reading the Bible.

I began running the race of Christianity, solely trusting in God to help me finish the race. Every time I faltered, a flame that I

thought lost would rekindle in me the desire to keep on running.

It is not we who run the race; the Holy Spirit is running the race, ensuring that I would finish it. All I have to do is finish this race, because I know full well it is not through my own strength, but mainly because of God's grace.

Business Lessons from the Book of Proverbs Pt. 2

- 5 Time is precious. Do not waste your time consulting with or giving advice to fools, who won't even appreciate it.
- 6 You can use generosity as a powerful weapon to magnify your brand and strengthen your reputation.
- 7 Be very careful in expanding too quickly. It is the gateway to financial and operational difficulty and may eventually lead to bankruptcy.
- 8 Choose your words carefully; what you say can and will be used against you in business—not just today, but for eternity.

Passing on My Batons

The earlier we prepare for successors, the smoother the transition will be. Now that I am a senior citizen and semi-retired, I am more than ready to pass on the batons.

Passing on the batons means stepping to the side and letting the successors take the center stage. It can be a very hard thing to do especially when one is very attached to that particular baton.

It is my fervent hope and prayer that with our great God's guidance, my successors will truly be greater persons than myself. In the meantime, I will continue to give the best of me in everything I do and hold dear.

River, Sea, and Mountain

Here are the lessons we can learn from the various rivers, seas, and mountains traversed by the Israelites.

- 1 The Nile River, the site of baby Moses' salvation, teaches us to accept salvation and be saved.

- ② Moses' experience with the burning bush in Mt. Horeb shows that we must listen to God's voice.
- ③ The parting of the Red Sea symbolizes separation from the world and departure from sin.
- ④ Mt. Sinai, the site of the Ten Commandments, exhorts us to obey God's commands.
- ⑤ God showed Moses the promised land Canaan while on Mt. Nebo, symbolizing the need to trust in the Lord.
- ⑥ The Jordan River is the site of many miracles; a place to witness God's might.
- ⑦ Finally, Joshua read the Word of the Law to the Israelites at Mounts Gerezim and Ebal, promising blessings for obedience and curses for defiance.

Pursuing God-Given Dream for His Glory

I spent every Saturday for about three years in schooling, studying, skimming, scanning books, sweating, and having sleepless nights.

I couldn't have done all these without God's strength to press on, God's wisdom to complete my thesis, and God's encouragement to finish the race. To God be the glory, praises, and honor!!!

Marvel-ous? Only My God!

They may be fictional characters, but we can learn many things from the superheroes in the Marvel Cinematic Universe (MCU)!

1. Captain America symbolizes the power of having hope in your heart.
2. Thor Odinson's journey signifies our ability to change for the better.

3. Ant-Man interacts and empathizes with ants—a strong metaphor for God's interactions with us.
4. Doctor Strange receives a heavy dose of humility, which all of us can use.
5. Okoye signifies devotion to her King, which we should strive to emulate.
6. Captain Marvel taught me never to give in to temptation but rise above our trials.
7. Rocket Raccoon has a strong, unshakeable fatherly bond with teen Groot, which God has for us.
8. Tony Stark created the MCU and sacrificed his life to save the world, just as God and Jesus did for us.

As compelling these superheroes are, God is truly the greatest and most real superhero the world has ever known. He deeply cares for us, to the point of sending His own son to live with us. That's what makes this story different—because our Savior loved us and made us one of His!

The SunCell Story

SunCell started as a small Saturday cell group in downtown Cebu, and would grow over the years with the help of several sisters to become a SUNday CELL group with its new home in Cebu Gospel Church.

Our doors are open to everyone, and we are equipped to serve our glorious God together. Praise the Lord!!!

Mothers Who Make a Lasting Impact

Mothers, fathers, grandparents, aunts, and uncles: the Lord has placed in our hands the opportunity to influence and minister to a child. Do not take this charge lightly!

The life of Timothy clearly shows the strong influence of both his mother and grandmother, who disciplined him.

Mothers can pass on a godly heritage (never forgetting your roots), their faith (through prayer, proselytization, and by example), and a godly character (by ensuring the fruit of the Spirit is evident in daily life) to their children.

Just Another Ordinary Day

Fifteen years ago, an ordinary day consists of driving to Consolation while sharing the road with monster trucks carrying heavy loads secured by flimsy rope. A terrifying proposition to someone with a sharp pointy nose and wants to preserve it.

Today, an ordinary day is much more relaxing. Faced with the prospect of mortality, I can now stay grounded, hopeful that the seeds sown by me and my husband, and the works of our hands, would both turn out well.

Historical Background Paper: The Sadducees

The Sadducees was a relatively small religious sect, admitting only those of aristocratic background, that gained political power through its collaboration with the Roman occupiers.

Contrary to the Biblical portrayal, the Sadducees and the Pharisees were at odds with each other, with the resurrection of the dead being a major sticking point.

The Sadducees ensured Jesus' conviction through their majority control over the Sanhedrin, and continued to persecute early Christians in order to placate Rome.

Since their power base was strongly linked to the Temple of Jerusalem, the sect could not survive the Temple's destruction in AD 70, and soon disappeared into obscurity. 🙏



宿務基督教會

CEBU GOSPEL CHURCH

<http://www.cebugospel.church/gospellight>

ISSN 2545-9961



9 772545 996100