



宿務基督教會

CEBU GOSPEL CHURCH

*Gospel  
Light*

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# TOGETHER WE THRIVE IN CHRIST IN OUR NEEDS

## 2 Kings 6:1-7 (ESV)

6:1,2 The sons of the prophets said to Elisha, "See, the place where we dwell under your charge is too small for us. Let us go to the Jordan and each of us get there a log, and let us make a place for us to dwell there". And he answered, "Go".

6:3 Then one of them said, "Be pleased to go with your servants". And he answered, "I will go".

6:4 So he went with them. And when they came to the Jordan, they cut down trees.

6:5-7 But as one was felling a log, his axe head fell into the water, he cried out, "Alas, my master! It was borrowed". Then the man of God said, "Where did it fall?" When he showed him the place, he cut off a stick and threw it in there and made the iron float. And he said, "Take it up". So he reached out his hand and took it.

REV. VICENTE AND MRS. HELEN SIA | CONTRIBUTOR

**INSIGHT:** The sons of the prophets refer to members of spiritual learners who are being mentored by Elisha. The students see the need for a bigger place to house them and Elisha agreed to their plan.

In the same way in our church, we see needs arising as we serve together. It is a blessing to witness people in our faith community planning, coordinating and striving together to meet a specific need.

In acknowledgement of Elisha's availability, the students asked their teacher to accompany them. And because Elisha cared for his earnest students, he went with them. His presence encourages them. There are times when it is our presence and not words that make a great difference in a situation.

In cutting trees, the borrowed axe's head fell into the water. The students had borrowed the axe as it was too expensive for them to purchase one. They would have to pay off the value as a bondservant should they lose or break the borrowed axe.

Telling Elisha about the problem is like us telling God our concerns and problems. God performed a miracle through Elisha when his students came to him. In the same way, when we look to God in faith and humility, He is faithful to give us His answers in His time and in His way.

HOW  
WONDERFUL  
GOD IS IN  
ALLOWING  
US TO BOND  
& THRIVE  
TOGETHER  
THROUGH  
OUR NEEDS!

# 在主裡同心共進

謝國智牧師 許玉英師母

引用：（列王紀下6章1-7節）

1 先知門徒對以利沙說：看哪，我們同你所住的地方過於窄小。

2 求你容我們往約但河去，各人從那裡取一根木料，建造房住。

他說：你們去罷！

3 有一人說：求你與僕人同去。回答說：我可以去。

4 於是以利沙與他們同去。到了約但河，就砍伐樹木。

5 有一人砍樹的時候，斧頭掉在水裡，他就呼叫說：哀哉！

我主啊，這斧子是借的。

6 神人問說：掉在哪裡了？他將那地方指給以利沙看。以利沙砍了一根木頭，拋在水裡，斧頭就漂上來了。

7 以利沙說：拿起來罷！那人就伸手拿起來了。

靈訓：

\*先知門徒和以利沙先知同住的地方狹小，門徒知道他們急需建造一個更大的地方居住，便主動想出了解決問題的方法。先知以利沙得知此事，就鼓勵他們去做。

● 同樣，我們在教會事奉，若發現有些需要解決的問題，同工們就要在主裡彼此聯繫，一起商量，盡心盡力把問題解決。

\*門徒要求以利沙先知與他們同去，他毫不猶豫、立即答應。

● 以利沙與門徒們一道幹活，這種親力親為的行動比話語更有親和力、鼓舞力。

\*其中有一人砍樹時，不慎斧頭掉進水裡，非常驚慌，因那把斧頭是借的。門徒告訴以利沙，神便藉著以利沙行神跡。

● 同樣，當我們遇到問題，我們要憑信心，謙卑地向神求助。祂是信實的，必照著祂的時間、方法回應我們的禱告。讓我們在主裡同心協力，一起為拓展神的國度邁進。

# 2022 SERMON SERIES

DR. BOYET LISBE | CONTRIBUTOR

It is my privilege to be part of the preaching ministry at Cebu Gospel Church for a number of years already, together with other Bible expositors and faithful preachers (veteran and young preachers alike). The ministry of the Word is indeed foundational for and indispensable to the growth and edification of the body of Christ. We put premium on this because we firmly believe in the reformation doctrine of Sola Scriptura, which means that the inspired and inerrant Scripture alone is the final authority for faith and practice.

The series of sermons preached every Sunday since the beginning of this year 2022 is connected with and reflecting the various aspects of the theme "Together We Thrive in Christ." This theme highlights God's expectation of his people to grow, to improve, to thrive (not just survive) in ALL aspects of life. But this thriving is to be done in the context of the faith community/church. In other words, it is a communal journey/thriving, not just an individual journey/thriving. Thus, the emphasis on togetherness. And all these thriving are grounded in a dynamic relationship with our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ ("in Christ"). As Jesus himself declared, "... apart from me you can do nothing" (John 15:5). Paul also testified, "I can do all things through him [Christ] who strengthens me" (Phil. 3:13 ESV)

We started the year with sermons exhorting us to thrive in loving God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength (Deut. 6:1-9 & Mark 12:28-30). Since God is the most important person in our life, and because loving God with all our being is the greatest commandment, then every believer should thrive in this area. Additionally, we were also challenged to thrive in loving our neighbor as we love ourselves (Matt. 22:36-40).

As believers, we strive to be what God wants us to be (Col. 3:12-14), especially in loving God and in loving others.

For four Sundays we were also reminded and challenged to thrive in the area of giving. We learned about having a heavenly perspective on wealth, the five ways to please God in our giving, the various lifestyle characteristics that God rewards, and the wonderful blessings that God imparts to the faithful stewards. It is evident that CGC excels in the grace of giving and is thriving in this area. We hope and pray that as we continue to respond to God's grace and persevere in the faith that this attitude towards and practice in giving will also continue for the furtherance of God's work within CGC and beyond the four walls of this church.

We recognize that on our own strength we cannot live the Christian life victoriously (Gal. 5:19-21) and cannot manufacture the fruit of the Spirit within us (Gal. 5:22-23). So, for two months or so we meditated on why we need to be totally dependent on the Holy Spirit to fill us and empower us. When a church thrives in living a Spirit-filled life, the fruit of the Spirit (love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control) will become evident in our lives and significantly and positively affect the relationships within the body of Christ.

And those who are thriving in living a Spirit-filled life will also be thriving in loving the church. Because of that we spent at least seven Sundays of exhortations on how we can tangibly express our love for the church. As John commands, "Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth" (1 John 3:18 ESV).

So, CGC was exhorted to thrive in loving the church by washing one another's feet, serving one another, being humble toward each, being devoted to one another, not grumbling among one another, being at peace with one another, and regarding one another as more important than one's self.

As we thrive in loving the church (a bigger community), we must also thrive in our domestic affairs or household relationships. This will ensure that our public expression of faith is consistent with how we live out our faith at home. In this regard we were challenged and encouraged to seek ways and do positive things that will improve husband-wife relationship, parent-child relationship, as well as the overall household dynamics (Col. 3:18-4:1). It is our prayer and desire that each family at CGC is strengthened and consistently growing in the Lord.

One of the factors why some Christians are not thriving in Christ is because they do not know how to wrestle against the spiritual enemies and withstand in the evil day. That is why it is important for CGC members to be reminded about the role of the spiritual warfare in the believer's life so that each one will thrive (not just survive) in the fight against the evil forces of Satan (1 Peter 5:8-9). So, we were exhorted to guard our heart from temptations (lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, pride of life) and to guard our stand by knowing and wearing the full armor of God (Eph. 6:10-20). When believers do these as well as continue to abide in Christ (John 15), we can be strong in the Lord and stand firm in the midst of the enemy's attacks.

One potent way the enemies attack the church is by tempting us to be self-focused and not care about the edification of the body of Christ. This happens when believers do not use their God-given spiritual gifts to serve one another. We do not want this to happen at CGC. That is why we spent at least three Sundays to unwrap/unpack the various serving, leading, and speaking gifts (Rom. 12:3-8; 1 Cor. 12:7-11) so that we would be encouraged and challenged to discover our individual gifts and use them to glorify God and to build up our faith community. We hope and pray that we too are thriving in this area.

The month of October is the Missions month at CGC, and we were reminded and challenged to thrive in reaching the world. We heard sermons about how to become a magnetic church and to continue to proclaim and demonstrate the gospel wherever we are. CGC is indeed thriving in the area of gospel partnerships as you continue to pray and financially invest for the missionaries you have adopted and other gospel ministries in the Philippines and outside the country. May you continue to obey our Great Savior who has given us the Great Commission (Matt. 28:16-20) for his global glory.

November is known as the thanksgiving month. And so, the sermon series is about thriving in THANKSGIVING, exhorting believers about grateful living both in good times and in bad times. As we anticipate the Christmas season in December, we can expect the sermons to reflect the deeper reason and purpose of Christ's incarnation so we can continue to live in the light of that truth.

As you may have noticed, we have gone through a more systematic kind of spiritual feeding as the messages are connected with the main theme for this year. It is God's will that each one of us will put into practice the things that we have heard from the exposition of God's word (James 1:22). And I continue to encourage each one to yield to the Spirit's control and power daily for He is the one who will give us both the desire and the ability to obey.

By God's sustaining grace, let us continue to be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord our labor is not in vain (1 Cor. 15:58 ESV). Amen!

Soli Deo Gloria!





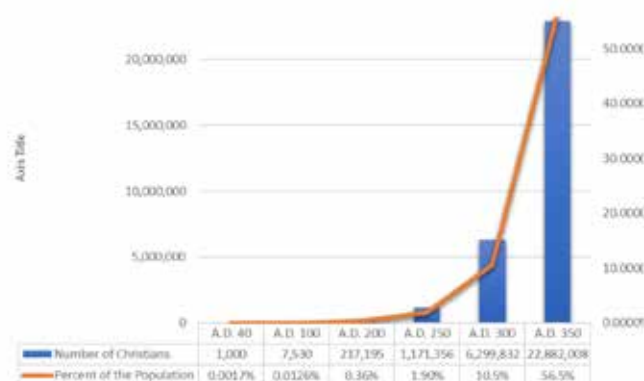
# Thriving Community

DR. WANDA PO LIAM GOK | CONTRIBUTOR

In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, many of us were forced to stay home, sheltering ourselves from crowd, including in-person worship services. This decision was forced upon us by the government's lock down policies not only on our borders but also upon business and social establishments including churches. It became evident that any gathering apart from people living in the same household, is not allowed. For some families, it was a positive thing to be together; but for some, it was "forced" upon them to be together. Many families did not only survive but thrive during the pandemic. Family members huddled together for comfort, for encouragement amid uncertainties. The lock down period gave some families more occasions to share stories, took meals together, played and socialized together. Family camaraderie was fostered.

Centuries earlier, around AD 33, after the apostles received the Holy Spirit during the day of Pentecost, Peter began to preach boldly to the crowd gathered for the feast. That day, many believed Peter's message of salvation in Jesus Christ. Thus, the church was born. The church composed of all believers in Jesus Christ, began to gather for prayer, Bible study, fellowship, breaking of bread, etc. This community became a "force" to reckon with because people took notice of them - their faith was translated into action of generous giving and sharing, such that no one was found to be in need. The Christ-followers' life witness and lifestyle were so attractive that people flocked to the community wanting to know more about this way of Jesus Christ.

According to secular historian Rodney Stark, Christianity grew exponentially from its inception, at the astonishing growth rate of 40 percent per decade. The figure below gives a clear illustration of the rapid growth (Smith, p. 30). What can account for such a growth rate, especially the danger involved in being a Christ-follower during this era? According to Smith (p. 30), he heard many explanations but one that he found most appealing was that the lives Christians were living were so winsome that others simply wanted to have what they had.



Fast forward 2022, do our churches (not the buildings) attract people? Do people outside want to flock to our community - CGC or MGC? Are we a community that is attractive to the outside world? What will it take us to become winsome that others simply will want to have what we have? Smith (2010) offers eight (8) ways of how a community of believers can be both good and beautiful - or simply said, blessings to the world around us. I believe that these also are the characteristics of what a thriving community of believers is. Here in this article, I am sharing only the tip of the iceberg from his book, and I have chosen only the first four (4) of the eight (8), hoping that after reading this article, it will whet your appetite to get a copy and read. If interested, I can lend you my copy, just let me know.



FOLLOWING THE SPIRIT, EXTENDING GRACE,  
DEMONSTRATING LOVE

# The Good and Beautiful COMMUNITY

A book written by James Bryan Smith

## 1. PECULIAR COMMUNITY

When somebody says that you are “peculiar,” take it as a compliment because that’s how scriptures described Jesus’ followers. Dictionaries define peculiar as “distinctive,” “odd,” “strange” and weird.” In short, peculiar means different. Christians are different from the ordinary, from the common, from what is the norm. Jesus’ teachings were peculiar because it was not the norm. Ex. “You have heard that it was said, you shall not murder... but I say to you... (Matthew 5:21-22). Further on, Jesus said “you have heard that it was said, you shall love your neighbor, and hate your enemy, But I say to you, love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you; bless those who curse you,” (Matthew 5:43-44). Jesus also said, “For whoever wishes to save his life shall lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake, he is the one who will save it.” (Luke 9:24). There are many more hard sayings that are so different from what the world considers as the normal and acceptable. Yet, because our God is a peculiar God, it follows that the church must also be peculiar. How different are our ways from those of the world? Or are we so blended into the world that the world hardly notices the difference? Paul challenged believers to not conform to the patterns of this world but to be transformed. What must the church do to be different from the rest of the world? Do we dare to be different and be branded as “peculiar”?

## 2. HOPEFUL COMMUNITY

During the COVID-19 pandemic, where was the church? How did the church respond to the pandemic? Was the church also as fearful as many of the people were? Was the church desperate and hopeless? Our God is a God of hope. Smith (pp. 49-51) unpacked four parts of the story of hope which is also the story of the church - all centered in Jesus. The story of hope starts with Jesus’ death that every believer partook upon receiving Him as Savior and Lord of our lives. Jesus’ death gives us hope of sins forgiven and the dying of our old self on the cross. Secondly, the story of hope brings us to Jesus’ resurrection which is the foundation of our faith. The power that raised Jesus from the dead is the same power that now resides in us which allow all Christ-followers to live a new life (2 Corinthians 5:17). The third part is Christ’s ascension. We do not think much about the significance of Jesus’ ascension. But this part is important because it gives us the “present” perspective of Christ - where he is and what he is doing. Colossians 3:1 “If you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God.” Today, Jesus is enthroned as the supreme Lord of all. Jesus reigns - He is Lord! The posture we see is that of Jesus seated, which implies that his work is complete. By setting our hearts on things above, we are to focus on the finished work of Christ which is our source of hope and strength. Finally, the fourth part of the story is Christ’s return which has not occurred; yet His return is our ultimate hope for all things to be made right and our joy will be complete. This hope binds all Christ-followers together as we await the final consummation of God’s plan for the ages.



*For who is the greater, one who reclines at table or one who serves? Is it not the one who reclines at table? But I am among you as the one who serves.*

**Luke 22:27**

### 3. SERVING COMMUNITY

Jesus came to serve and not to be served. If the story of hope is centered on Jesus Christ, the story of a serving community is focused on others. The serving community is the "others-centered" community. As Jesus is, so are his followers. Jesus was a servant. He lived for the good of others. Greatness in our world is defined by power, position, and possessions. Jesus reversed this notion of greatness. "Who is the greater, the one who is at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one at the table? But I am among you as one who serves" (Luke 22:27). The King of all things, the Creator of the universe, comes to serve. He lives to serve. How can CGC and MGC do this? We become others-centered when we understand that our faith community is an "outpost of the kingdom of God" (Smith, p. 72). It is never about us, but it is about God's kingdom. "The value of a church is not in its longevity but in its love. The success of a church is not in its size but in its service to the people and the community. We are a people founded by a person who never established a church, built a building, or led a finance campaign to build impressive buildings. Our leader just came and served and then died for the good of others" (Smith, pp. 72-73).

### 4. CHRIST-CENTERED COMMUNITY

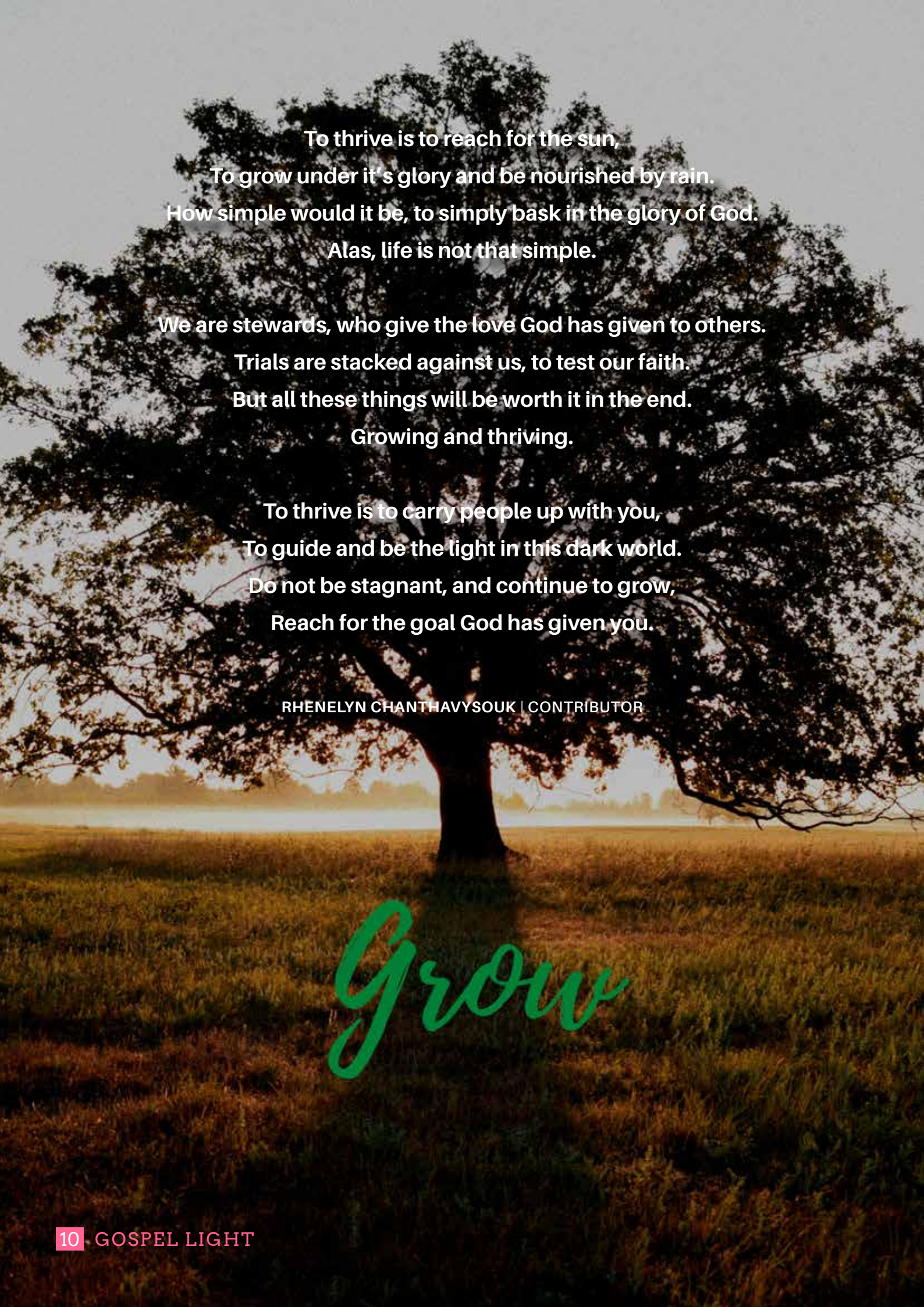
Jesus prayed that all believers may be one. But the awful truth is that the church of Jesus Christ has been split into many different factions who refused to have fellowship with one another. For a people who claim to be one body and one Spirit, one Lord, one faith and one baptism, one God and Father of all, we are not one church but exist in isolation, judgment, suspicion, and condemnation. This is sad and undoubtedly this grieves God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit (Smith, p. 90). Our division instead of unity are founded on three areas: race, gender, and class, as implied in Galatians 3:28 which states, "There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus." But this verse also clearly gives us the basis for our unity - we are ONE IN CHRIST Christ is in every believer, changing our fundamental identity without eradicating our differences - men are still men, women are still women; by ethnicity, Chinese will remain Chinese, Filipinos will remain Filipinos; slaves are still slaves when they step outside of this "Christ-follower community." The solution to gender, race and social divisions is not to eradicate our differences but to see them in light of Christ. The true source of our "unity in diversity" is the Trinity - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; distinct from one another yet, mutually indwelling and mutually interdependent (Smith, pp. 98-99)..

**Amidst the COVID-19 threat, will CGC and MGC rise to the challenge and thrive? Will Cebu Gospel Church and Mandaue Gospel Church be known by the outside world as a church that stands out because of our "un-worldly" thinking and behaving? Can we be hope bearers because of our faith in Christ's death, resurrection, ascension, and return? Will our church be known for how promptly we respond to disasters because we are always willing to lay down our needs to take care of another? Are we so Christ-centered that we welcome anyone in Christ, who breaks down all barriers that tend to separate people? To the surprise of many, as John saw in a vision, we too shall behold this glorious scene in heaven - "a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb... Crying out with a loud voice "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!" (Revelation 6:10).**

**DISCLAIMER :** Many of the ideas shared in the article are based on the writings of James Bryan Smith from his book "The Good and Beautiful Community" originally published by IVP, Illinois, USA, 2010 and locally published by OMF Literature Inc., Manila, 2011.







To thrive is to reach for the sun,  
To grow under it's glory and be nourished by rain.  
How simple would it be, to simply bask in the glory of God.  
Alas, life is not that simple.

We are stewards, who give the love God has given to others.  
Trials are stacked against us, to test our faith.  
But all these things will be worth it in the end.  
Growing and thriving.

To thrive is to carry people up with you,  
To guide and be the light in this dark world.  
Do not be stagnant, and continue to grow,  
Reach for the goal God has given you.

RHENEALYN CHANTHAVYSOUK | CONTRIBUTOR

Grow



THRIVE is the fellowship group of senior high school (SHS) and college students of our church where the older youth are at a unique season in life-- having stepped out of the common high school teenage drama into a more serious career-focused life in university before being deployed to the actual work field. We gather together every Saturday from 6pm to 9pm.



We do all things together from eating simple meals, playing games, and watching movies to studying God's Word, sharing how our week went, and praying for one another. Through this fellowship, we have made friends with young adults from other schools and churches and have gathered in different places like cafes, homes, and even the beach! We follow Jesus, walk with Him in our daily lives, love one another, and THRIVE!

# TRUST THE PROCESS, TRUST GOD

MAEGAN LAUREN YAP | CONTRIBUTOR

'Wake up - eat - study - sleep' was my routine every single day during distance learning. Quite boring but it was reality. My days were filled to the brim with countless lessons, study sessions, and stress. The days were filled with worry and anxiety that made me doubt myself, question my decisions in taking this curriculum and even those that question my trust in God.

This worry and anxiety were at an all-time high during November 2021. It was our finals for our first semester and my teachers had mentioned to us that our grades for the finals will determine whether or not we received our diploma as it will be sent as a basis for our predicted grades. Though this pushed me to study hard, it also made me question,

'What if I don't get my diploma?'

'Am I even supposed to be in this curriculum?'

'If God didn't intend me to get my diploma, I'll end up failing, then I won't be able to go to college, what am I supposed to do?'

These questions loomed at the back of my head for a couple of days. It was difficult to concentrate and it also influenced the way I interacted with my family to the point where they knew it was best to leave me alone so as not to disturb me. I was practically locked up in my room with my own thoughts. I hated it. I wanted this uncertainty to pass and I just want to skip to the end to see if I really received my diploma or not. I constantly prayed for wisdom and understanding but I felt powerless because I didn't hear anything from Him nor did I see any tangible sign of the answers to my prayers.



As a means to calm myself, I decided to memorize one bible verse a day, just to get something new into my routine. I would pick one bible verse from either the Bible app on my phone or my Daily Bread, sometimes, I would just flip to a page in the Bible and randomly pick a verse to memorize. This went on for a couple of weeks, even after my finals had passed.

During the last week of our finals, for some unknown reason, I decided to look back at the verses I had memorized. Then something caught my eye. Clustered all on the page of the week of my finals were the verses:

**James 5:11** - 'As we know, we count as blessed those who have persevered. You have heard of Job's perseverance and have seen what the Lord finally brought about. The Lord is full of compassion and mercy.'

**John 5:15** - 'And if we know that he hears us - whatever we ask - we know that we have what we asked of him'

**Proverbs 14:29** - 'Whoever is patient has great understanding, but one who is quick-tempered displays folly.'

**Proverbs 3:1-2** - 'My son, do not forget my teaching, but keep my commands in your heart, for they will prolong your life many years and bring you peace and prosperity.'

My eyes widened. I didn't realize that God was speaking to me all along. Through these verses, God was telling me to open up to Him and tell Him of what I really desired, which during that time was my receipt of my diploma. He was willing to grant it as long as it is in accordance to His Will. God also reminded me to be patient and trust in His timing because only He has the perfect timing. I should rid my desire to want to fast forward to the very end because God might have other plans for me along the way. All I had to do was trust in Him and be patient. He was telling me not to worry too much and just to do my best. I mustn't forget that I cannot overcome this challenge on my own. Through this, I was reminded to always acknowledge my need for God's help and deliverance whenever I encounter challenges in life because everything is for Him and because of Him. He was also reminding me that even if these challenges seem to overwhelm me, I shouldn't use it as an excuse to treat others differently, like how I did to my family. I must continue to keep His commands to show love to others, especially my family.

Sure enough, when I got my scores back, I was very pleased. I even got a perfect score in English, my weakest subject. Through this, it made me realize how amazing God is and how it is really His plan for me to be in this curriculum.

Fast forward to May of 2022, I was holding my diploma in my hand with the plan of going to Manila for University, the last place I thought I'd go. It was really His Plan to put me through that stress and hardship to test and strengthen my trust and faith in Him. Though fear, doubt and anxiety were involved, I would say it was worth it to get to where I am today. Even if my will doesn't prevail, I don't feel so bad about it anymore because I know that God's Will is way better and beneficial for me to build a stronger relationship and faith in and with Him. Now, especially in an environment where not everyone is Christian, I can firmly and confidently say that I am a Child of God as I know that God is always going to be right beside me to help me achieve His Will, just like He did to me in Senior Highschool.





# I AM NOT ALONE

JUSTIN ADRIAN U. CHING | CONTRIBUTOR

My life was not, is not, and will not be a perfect story to read.

I faced, I am facing, and I will continue to face a lot of trials.

Trials too heavy, that I alone cannot bear nor succeed.

Trials too heavy, that I may need more than a good night's sleep.

I fold my hands, as I prepare myself for a heartfelt prayer;

I bow my head, surrendering to Him and asking for His assistance;

I close my eyes; Knowing He is always there and He will always care;

I say a prayer, Knowing He will hear my words no matter the distance.

I know He will answer my prayers according to His plans,

Whether His plans align with mine is not important.

Because I am aware that His plans are far greater,

For He is the one true Creator.

He has done more for me than I could ever ask for.

Though I may question the plans He laid out for me,

I am more than eager to explore what He has in store;

Because He is the one who freed me.

He is the reason I must strive against Sin,

The reason I thrive and feel better than I have ever been.

He was there for me then. He's here for me now.

I'll trust him again and again until I take my final bow.

My life was not, is not, and will not be a perfect story to read.

I faced, I am facing, and I will continue to face a lot of trials.

But the main reason why I am able to bear with it and succeed,

Is because I am not alone. God is always here with me.

# WAY MAKER, MIRACLE WORKER, PROMISE KEEPER

BY THE LOST SHEEP | CONTRIBUTOR

**A FEW NIGHTS AGO**, I heard that my former business acquaintance had been regularly attending online Bible studies. Upon learning that he accepted the Lord Jesus Christ, tears welled up in my unbelieving eyes. Our God is indeed a Way Maker.

Rewinding a few years back - we met over lunch with other business associates and he, an unbeliever, shared that he was diagnosed with a condition even medical professionals have difficulty understanding. He tried Western medicine, Chinese medicine and even resorted to Alternative medicine; but, to no avail. Given the symptoms such as difficulty in chewing and swallowing as well as muscle weakness, his doctors associated it with ALS, otherwise known as amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, which is a disease that affects nerve cells that control locomotion and motor functions of the body. Treatments seemed unsuccessful and finding a cure was even more difficult. Choosing to be optimistic, I simply said that I would be praying for him. And that was the last time we met.

Over the years and into the pandemic, whenever I hear about ALS, my thoughts drift back to the lunch meeting and I wonder how he's been doing lately. I've prayed for him a couple of times but the thought of how grave his case is, made me doubt myself. I have been asking our mutual friends his medical condition, but they, too, have no updates on him.

Oftentimes, praying for me, is like a task waiting to be crossed out in my to-do list or a mindless endeavor to be fulfilled, thinking that God might only listen to those who love Him more or those who are more actively involved with church ministries. It was hard to believe that one day I'd come across the good news that he had found Jesus Christ! He has found solace in his Savior not only for himself but with his family. Although his condition isn't getting any better, it makes me happy knowing that he finally knows the Almighty God who is our Miracle Worker.

This experience is a wake-up call for me. In the many times we pray to God, we tend to think He has more problems in His hands to consider our pleas. This time God reminds me that He listens to my every prayer. No prayer is too small and insignificant for Him. The Apostle Paul reminds us in 1 Thessalonians 5:16-17 to "pray without ceasing" because in fact, Jesus told us to keep on asking, keep on seeking, and keep on knocking in Matthew 7:7.

As I share this story to my family, I realize that some things might seem impossible, but everything happens according to God's ultimate plan. It was hard for me to believe that one day my acquaintance would know the Lord in the midst of suffering from an 'incurable disease', but God works in mysterious ways and He always keeps His promises. He is indeed a Promise Keeper.





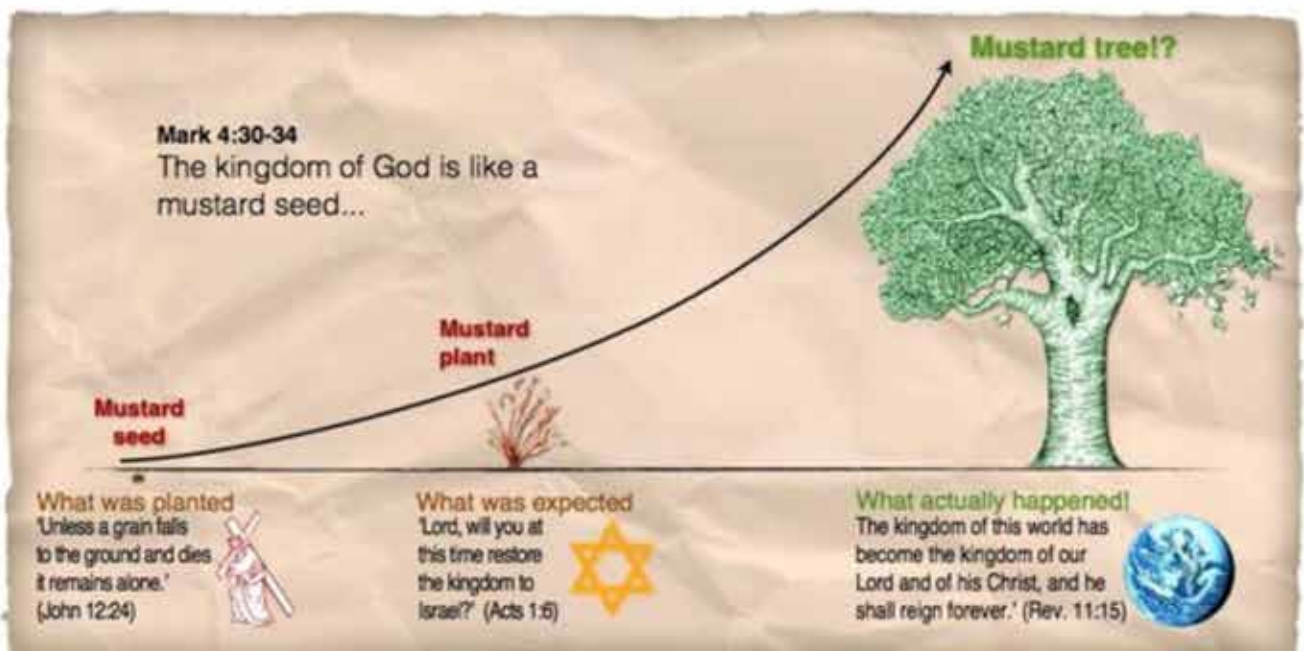
# DO NOT DESPISE SMALL BEGINNINGS: **KEEP ON!**

DR. WANDA PO LIAM GIOK | CONTRIBUTOR

Jesus said, "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed planted in a field" (Matthew 13:31). The mustard seed (not the mustard herb we grow in our vegetable garden) is the smallest of all seeds in Palestine during the biblical time. But when grown, it is the biggest of all plants, growing up to 12 feet high and birds build their nest on it. Small but when planted, the size of the plant is astoundingly huge. "Small" very often ends up "big." A paradox but this is how God usually operates.

God's work often starts very small. From one man, Noah, came the nations. From one couple beyond child-bearing age, Abraham and Sarah, came God's chosen nation. From one man, Jacob, came the twelve tribes of Israel. From one shepherd, came the greatest king of God's chosen nation, and from whom also came the King of kings and Lord of lords, the promised Messiah of the Jews, and the Savior of the world - Jesus.

Christianity was started from the humble arrival of this one baby in a manger. Raised as a carpenter's son in Nazareth, his life, sacrificial death, and miraculous resurrection, made a remarkable impact on the twelve ordinary men he chose. The twelve turned the world upside down and made Christianity the largest and fastest growing movement in the world today. Small and insignificant beginnings yet it leads to enormous impact. God's kingdom has never stopped growing and increasing.



The parable of the mustard seed gives us at least three important kingdom principles that will encourage us whether as individual Christians or as a body of Christ - the church.

### **1. The mustard seed needs to be planted in the ground.**

To be planted in the ground implies obscurity and death. The seed needs to be hidden in the ground for a time before you see it grow. In the ground implies dying. Unless the Christian dies to self, dies to the world, and to the flesh, the Christian will not grow. For it is in dying that the Christian lives. Jesus said it succinctly, "Very truly I tell you, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds" (John 12:24).

Hidden and dying also imply humility. The body of Christ or the church must put to death all works of the flesh - divisiveness, partiality, pride, envy, covetousness, evil desire, malice, slander, etc. Instead, put on love, kindness, gentleness, forgiving spirit, patience, etc. It is by these Christ-like qualities that the world will know that we are Christ-followers "This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples" (John 15:8).

### **2. The mustard seed's growth is exponential.**

When the mustard seed is grown, its growth is remarkably huge. Such is the kingdom of God. Small beginning yet in the end, many nations will be gathered within it. The Apostle John in Revelation 7:9 wrote, "Behold, a great multitude, which no one could count, from every nation and all tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, and palm branches were in their hands."

In the last 100 years, the number of Christians in the world has quadrupled from about 600 million in 1910 to well past 2 billion presently. Today, Christianity remains the world's largest religious group. According to the Pew Research Center, in 2015, there were 2.3 billion Christians of all ages living in the world. The Center for the Study of Global Christianity (CSGC) at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, reported that the number of Christians in the world edged past 2.5 billion in 2019 (learnreligions.com). Globally, Christianity is growing at a 1.27% rate while the world's population, 7.7 billion, is growing at a 1.20% rate (www.barna.com).

### **3. The mustard seed needs time to grow.**

Lifted from the pages of Chris Tiegreen's One Year Heaven on Earth Devotional (2016, July 18), is the following write up - "High in the Andes Mountains, a plant known as the puya raimondii or the Queen of the Andes - grows to more than 30 feet and can live well over 100 years. But the plant flowers only once - at the end of its life, which is sometime between 80 to 150 years of age in the wild. In other words, it takes a really long time for anyone to see its stunning beauty."

In God's Kingdom, our investment in time, treasures, talent do not always bear visible fruit after a while. In fact, many times we need to be extremely patient and persistent in gospel efforts, discipleship, and mission's agenda. Our prayers may not see any answers; the works of our hands may not be producing results; our random acts of kindness and compassion may not be making any difference; yet all these spiritual exercises will eventually yield its fruit.

Paul in 1 Corinthians 15:58 resonates this kingdom principle - (paraphrasing) stay strong, stick with whatever you are doing in the Body of Christ. Don't get discouraged, don't give up but keep serving, keep loving, keep giving, keep teaching, keep reaching out, all for Jesus - because you know that after a while and sometimes, after a long while, your work will be rewarded. You will see prayers answered, lives transformed, hearts fired up for Jesus. The church of Jesus Christ will thrive because this is already prophesied and affirmed by Jesus when he said, "I will build my church, and the gates of Hades shall not overpower it" (Matthew 16:18b).





# Mandaue Gospel Church

LEONARD PSALM YAP | CONTRIBUTOR

## A Look into Mandaue Gospel Church - from the time of the pandemic to the present

*“Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? As it is written: ‘For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.’ No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.” (Romans 8:35-37)*

In March 2020, the pandemic struck and left the world in a standstill. Like everywhere else, Mandaue Gospel Church reeled from the effects of the deadly corona virus. Face-to-face activities and worship service had to be suspended for a week, which turned to a month, and then a year.

Despite the unfortunate circumstance that befell us, the Lord remained in control.

Just before the lockdown, the church was blessed with a new internet line that provided it with a better and more stable connection. This turned out to be the greatest blessing, as it allowed the church to adapt to the conditions and stay connected with its brethren throughout the pandemic.

The virtual shift was initially difficult due to the lack of tools and equipment. Nevertheless, the Lord provided the church with people and resources to adapt to the change. With the cooperation of the members, the church was gradually able to provide better worship videos and conduct its activities more systematically.

Church activities were carried out through various social media apps. Zoom was utilized for meetings and Bible studies, while YouTube was utilized for the Sunday worship program. The internet allowed the members to continue attending Sunday worship and to have fellowship with each other, albeit virtually. Moreover, it also brought the Word of God to different people, believers and unbelievers, in various parts of the world.

The church strived to stay in touch with its members by regularly checking up on their well-being and visiting their homes during the Christmas season. For the departed members, the church managed to conduct face-to-face internment programs.

Towards the end of 2021, the church faced another trial as Typhoon Odette lashed the city.

By the Grace of God, the church withstood the typhoon with minimal damage. Through the efforts of its members, the damages were addressed and regular virtual activities quickly resumed as soon as the power was restored.

The past two years have indeed been a challenge for our small church. But amidst the difficulties, the Lord has continued to provide overflowing resources and dedicated people to do His work. Through the cooperation of its members, the church withstood the trials brought about by a pandemic and a super typhoon. His blessings and protection reminded us of His promise in Philippians 4:19,

“You can be sure that God will take care of everything you need, His generosity exceedingly even yours in the Glory that pours from Jesus.”



# Activities during the Covid-19 Pandemic



Sunday Bible Study  
(before Sunday Worship)



Regular Sunday Worship Service  
Every Sunday 9:30-10:30 am



Sunday Bible Study  
(before Sunday Worship)



Youth & Young Professional Fellowship  
Every Friday 7:00-8:00pm



Church Visitation to Members  
Christmas Season 2020 and 2021



Chada Fellowship



# MISSION

## CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

YEAR 2022

GILBERT YAP

It is without a doubt that the Covid-19 Pandemic has changed our lives, confining and immobilizing us to our homes, hindering us from going about our daily activities like we used to. The new normal was indeed a challenge, especially for the missions committee. It hindered our main line of work, missions.

Despite this hurdle, Cebu Gospel Church's Mission committee still pressed on to complete and accomplish what we are called to do. With 57 years of service, even during the pandemic, Cebu Gospel Church still continues to support these missionaries, both active and potential ones. Currently supporting 10 active missionaries and 30 students studying to be either pastors or missionaries, the missions committee supports them financially to encourage and sustain them in their calling to be vessels in spreading the Good News.

Cebu Gospel Church's Missions committee is also an active partner with the care caravan of CCOWEF (Chinese Congress on World Evangelization Fellowship Philippines) an organization that aims to share the Gospel to unreached places. Our partnership with them is most active, especially during the occurrence of natural calamities. Just last September of 2022, during Typhoon Karding, we provided them with financial support for their relief operations in Luzon. Likewise, when Cebu was hit with the devastating Typhoon Odette in December of last year, we personally experienced God's grace, love and deliverance through the care caravan's relief goods which included water and other basic necessities that were, at that time, scarce.

However, our work does not stop there. Since September 2022, we, together with CAMACOP (Christian and Missionary Alliance Churches of the Philippines), are conducting children feeding programs in 13 sites around Cebu. With an estimate of more than 1300 children every week and a food budget of P12.50 for each child, we plan to continue sharing the Word of God with them in the hopes that they will take inspiration from these Bible stories and dedicate their lives to serving the Lord.

As an active member in the Missions committee for more than 15 years, I can personally see God's faithfulness and goodness in the work that we do. He constantly provides us with the material, financial, and human resources, as well as spiritual guidance to support and successfully accomplish not only our work as the Missions committee but also the field work of other missionaries. The execution of the Missions committee's projects is fully grounded in the goal of sharing the Gospel and bringing more souls to Christ. Through this, we hope to continue expanding our support to more missionaries as well as reach out to more places that need to hear the Good News.

# COMMITTEE

**Those who live in the shelter of the Most High will find rest  
in the shadow of the Almighty. This I declare about the  
Lord: He alone is my refuge, my place of safety;  
he is my God, and I trust him.”**

**Psalm 91: 1 - 2**

When the pandemic hit two years ago, this became our current source of hope. Our hearts and minds were filled with fears, worries, anxious thoughts, depression, desperation, and uncertainty about the days ahead. However, the psalmist reminds us that if we would only rest in the shadows of our God Almighty, we would be safe. The Psalmist exhorts us to place all of our reliance in Christ alone because He is our fortress and a constant source of support. We also urge our members to uphold this commitment throughout the pandemic.



Ministries were temporarily suspended at that time. It forces churches to consider alternatives to face-to-face ministry in order to continue to uplift and support its people. Because the majority of our members don't have internet connection, it presents a number of difficulties for us. By the grace of God, we are able to assist them by purchasing loads just for their Bible study via Messenger, and it is effective. We were able to minister to them weekly and have witnessed their dedication and thirst for God's Word.



Then God provided us some people who are eager to assist the families who were severely affected by the pandemic, and we were able to give them some groceries. In doing so, we also fulfilled our mission as a church, which was to lead and disciple the church members holistically as well as spiritually.

Another ministry opportunity presented itself when a fraternity approached us and requested assistance for their community pantry. They gave us the permission to take part by leading them in prayer and distributing 160 Bibles to those who received food from the pantry.



Then Typhoon Odette struck, wreaking havoc on our area. Some of our members lost their homes, while others had nothing left, not even clothes or food. The Christian and Missionary Alliance Churches of the Philippines, Inc. (CAMACOP) sent assistance to the typhoon's hardest-hit areas, and we were one of the recipients. The families received assistance from the church in the form of cooking supplies and food that would allow them to survive. And we give thanks to God because, despite the fact that we were in the midst of these calamities, God provided a way for the church to act and contribute to the community. And as a result of those opportunities, many people accepted Christ as their Lord and Savior, others were encouraged, and the gospel was spread. And thus, following the pandemic and the typhoon, 31 people have made the decision to follow Jesus through water baptism.



## **God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble**

### **Psalm 46:1**

It's been two years since the pandemic began, and nearly a year since Typhoon Odette struck. The people to whom we have ministered requested that we begin our Sunday services in the neighborhood. And as of today, we thank the Lord for allowing us to be a part of His ministry here in Cordova. Our church now has around 100 members, ranging in age from children to adults, and we regularly gather in the Barangay gymnasium to worship.



It is true that God is true to His word that He will never abandon us. Because we find comfort in the presence of the Almighty, we have experienced God's goodness and protection. He is our refuge, our safe haven. We trust Him because He is our God.





**“So do not fear, for I am with you, do not be dismayed,  
for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you;  
I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.”**

**Isaiah 41:10**



Worries, problems, doubts, challenges, crisis is natural even in the Christian world. Covid-19 turned the world upside down. Restrictions, financial crisis, food problems, and spiritual challenges to name a few. All of these happened beyond our expectation. But for us, it is an opportunity to share the word of God and to build our relationship with our neighbors. It is also our time to share whatever we may have to the glorify His name.

Our worship service may have been affected but through technology, we find new ways of gathering simply to continue to worship the Lord. It may feel strange, but nothing can stop us from our commitment to love God, to worship God and from being the church.

As it is written in the Bible, God assures us and promises us that He is always with us. No matter what we are going through, He has assured us that our end point will be with Him in a place where there is no more mourning, crying or pain. We will gain a new body that can never be destroyed. This pandemic has given us the opportunity to grow spiritually as well as to build stronger bonds with our families leading toward commitment and dedication in serving the Lord.





# The Beginning of Center Point Church (CPC) in the Middle of Pandemic

BY PASTOR HERMELO B. SENO JR. | CONTRIBUTOR

As a Missionary/Church planter of CGC (Cebu Gospel Church) allows me to use my God-given abilities for Kingdom-Work that God has prepared in advance for me to do and accomplish together with my family.

After studying at BTC (Baptist Theological College), my wife and I desired to do mission works — to reach out to the lost and lead them to have a personal relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ. This desire has stayed within our hearts and minds. Then Pandemic hit the entire world that both of us can never understand why now and why the desire to start a new movement (plant church) is very strong in me that I even told her this is not about having the comfort of steady income at all, it's about following God's leading for me to plant church. I'm very happy that in the end my wife is very supportive to me and in following God's plan. The bottomline is that, this is a dream come true for us. I believe God is leading me to start a new movement (to plant church) by making disciples of Jesus Christ and with the ability to build relationships that allows people to feel a sense of belonging and creates a culture and desire for involvement. Using creativity to communicate the word of God effectively is a passion that I desire to use for the Kingdom.

Since 2021, the Lord is faithful and gracious. He has been doing great things far from what we can expect and imagine. He has provided us with great people who become our mentors and coaches for church planting, partners who become our prayer warriors and supporters, and church leaders who are available and committed to be trained and equipped to reach out the community. On February 2022, CPC has celebrated the 1st church anniversary of God's faithfulness. We praise and thank the Lord for everything He has done. Throughout the years in the ministry, the Lord has let us experience different things for us to stand firm and be faithful to what He has called us to do. He blesses us with lots of good things, answered prayers, and more opportunities to serve Him and the people in the community. Along the way, we also experience struggles, trials, and challenges in life and in the ministry. However, these things have grown our faith in Him and learned more of His ways. In spite of the circumstances, we focus our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, and we are always thrilled and excited of what He has in store for us. To God be the Glory!!!

*Our 1st Year Anniversary*  
February 2022





# Our Ministries

## Youth Ministry



Youth Group  
Everybody's birthday 🎉🎂

12-15 young people attend our youth ministry group every Saturday afternoon. There's a Bible class for them to learn more about God. We also have skills training for them like playing instruments (guitar, piano and beatbox), and some cooking skills.

## Men & Women Ministry



These are the men and women of Lamac, we have fellowship and some special gatherings for them like celebration for Father's Day and Mother's Day. We also provide them some help with their health, livelihood and values transformation.

## Kid's Ministry

40-50 kids in Lamac attend our Saturday's Bible class and feeding program





WELCOME TO

# GOSPEL MOVEMENT

*Translating God's Word Into Action*

## Our Vision

SEEING CHURCHES

*planted  
in every community*

## MISSION STATEMENT

We exist to (BLESS)

- Bring Christ to the community
- Live to edify the church
- Equipping the believer
- Serving one another and
- Seeking Christ-centered worship



Pastor Randorg and Cory Jan Bayo  
Medellin, Cebu



# OUR Ministries

## Spiritual Enrichment

Share the gospel among the uniformed personnel and government officials using the Moral Recovery Programs or Values Formation



## Socio-Biblical Entrepreneur

Training communities on livelihood making them dignified & responsible citizens. A venue for gospel propagation.



## Social Evangelizing

Giving opportunities for church members to volunteer in church ministry such as outreach, feeding programs and tutorials





## Saint Equipping

Theological Education by Extension (TEEXT) credited at Baptist Theological College and T-Net for Disciplemaking churches help equip believers become effective and fruitful Christians



## Squire Empowering

Lifestyle Mentoring helps the growing disciple to better understand & experience ministry. No classes required, just a daily walk, coffee time and sharing of thoughts



## Sodality Establishment

Partnering & Networking while ministering to the military, local government unit and civil service organizations helped us accomplish more. We provided events to showcase gospel presentation



## Support Emergencies

We minister to communities using Bible disaster stories and responses. We provide training on disaster preparedness, mitigation & emergency response



**As a result, we have a Christ-centered Worship**



**Please pray  
for God's  
provision**





# Strive to Survive



## How Backyard Gardening Sustained Us



Pastor Bryan Jones M. Ocampo  
Bogo City, Cebu

One of human life's instinct is the ability to survive. We strive to breathe; we strive to smile and be resilient even in the most terrible situations.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, it was indeed a great challenge for us, church planters. With all the restrictions, compliance to health protocols and worst the "lockdown". For some of us, it could be torture or chastisement from God. We may empathize with our community, but Apostle Paul reminds us in 1 Thessalonians 5:18 that says, **"In everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus."** Instead of complaining, we gave thanks and praised God. His word also reminds us in Matthew 6:26 to, "Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? This gave me the idea on backyard gardening, an activity that we did which allowed us to discover new things during the tough times.



When we plant, we reap a good harvest. During the pandemic, we focused on what can yield the best result. Seeing the greenery of the garden is indeed rewarding. It gives us hope. As a result, we encourage everyone not to stop during this pandemic but to continue to push forward knowing that behind these challenges are the greater blessing from God. As the saying goes, there is still sunshine after a great storm. If plants can grow and survive, so much more for us who are more valuable than them. We know that He will make great things out of the circumstance we are in and prepare greater opportunities after the storm. We are called to do His will to build His kingdom. It is for the glory of God that we strive and only by His grace we survive.



**Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters,[a]  
whenever you face trials of many kinds  
James 1:2**

### Prayer Request:

- More souls to come to know the Lord Jesus Christ
- Ministry Provisions
- Quality Printer and Portable Mini Projector
- Family Provision
- Church Building
- More ministry partners



# Sogod Community Fellowship

**W**hat an awesome God we have! We started our ministry last July 2019 at Sogod, Southern Leyte and started to build a relationship with the community when unexpectedly, the COVID 19 pandemic hit us last March 2020. Protocols for quarantine at the height of the pandemic were strictly observed. We were worried for both our ministry as well as our family's health and daily needs. My wife lost her job and panic buying was happening in our place. We used up our little savings to store up food for a week's worth and planted vegetables in our backyard to sustain our needs. The Lord is our great provider for we lack nothing.

To continue with our worship, we held Sunday worship at home and send videos of encouragements to the new believers in our church planting area. This too is a blessing for we have been given time to spend with our children and to bring our family closer to Him. May 2020, we visited the field despite of the quarantine imposed by the government. We complied with the protocols and continued to minister, strengthening and encouraging them using God's word to live by faith in Him. We distributed seeds to our community that they may plant some crops and enjoy the harvest later. What little blessings we have, we shared with them as well. We have harvested from this activity as the Lord enabled us to build a church and gathered the community to join us in worship. Finally, in July 17, 2021 we held our first Sunday worship in our newly built church.

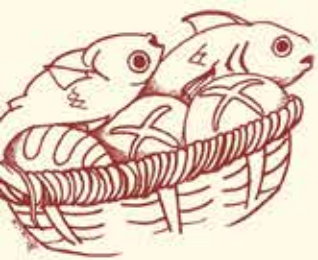
Months passed and Super Typhoon Odette hit Southern Leyte washing away our newly built church structure as well as some of the houses of our members. We were taken aback not knowing how we can start all over again and how we can help the community. Everyone around us was asking for help. This time of crisis, we rely on the Lord and put our trust in Him. We asked for strength and for provision to travel as the roads were covered due to landslides along the way. The Lord is our Provider. He enabled us to stand up again and we were able to reach out and help our community. As such, they slowly opened up their hearts for us and for the ministry. Now, they encouraged us to start the Sunday worship again even without a proper shelter. The Lord has moved kind hearted people to help us build the church again, slowly but surely.

The pandemic and Super Typhoon Odette never hindered God's work in Sogod, Southern Leyte.

TO GOD BE THE GLORY!!!!







# Thank you for praying with us and for keeping us under your care



## OUR COVID-19 EXPERIENCE

June 13, 2021

**Q**uarantine was a very challenging time for us when I, my wife and foster daughter tested Covid-19 positive.

Considering the distance of our location, food, supplies and medicines had to be taken via 'gutom express/toktok' and other local delivery services. Thanks to individuals who also shared some of their food supplies. Despite the sickness and limitations, God is gracious and we all were able to recover after three weeks of isolation.

We were granted with health certification on the 1st week of July 2021 and we immediately got back to our regular work and ministry routines. Glory to God for sustaining us physically, materially, emotionally and above all spiritually.

## OUR SUPERTYPHOON EXPERIENCE

December 16, 2021

Everyone was affected; but, not totally damaged. The route going in and out was no longer passable as the ground has eroded. Our church building served as a temporary shelter while some of our families were renovating their homes.



**"I remain confident of this: I will see the goodness of the Lord  
in the land of the living."**

**Psalm 27:13 (NIV)**

## THANKSGIVING CELEBRATION

December 24, 2021 (one week after Odette)

There is indeed joy and blessing in the presence of the Lord amidst inconveniences - no water supply nor electricity. Thanksgiving celebration with the theme "PANALANGIN TALIWALA SA KALISOD" was held in the afternoon of December 24, 2021





## REGULAR WEEKLY ACTIVITIES

**SUNDAY WORSHIP SERVICE**  
9:00 AM



**Youth Fellowship**  
Fridays and Saturdays



**Saturday Morning Watch**  
at assigned household  
5:30AM





# God's Faithfulness amid a storm

**"I lift up my eyes to the hills.  
From where does my help come?  
My help comes from the LORD,  
who made heaven and earth."  
Psalm 121:1-2**



Despite the troubles it brought, who could have imagined that God would use this crisis and open new opportunities. We have people starting to gather in the church and attending Bible Studies. Our numbers started to grow as we grew spiritually as well. In 2020, we celebrated Thanksgiving and Christmas with an overwhelming attendance.

The pandemic is a horrible experience. Strategic plans made for 2020 did not materialize as lock downs were implemented by the government. We were all restricted from going outside of our residences which affected our daily routine. Moreso, we were terrified upon hearing neighbors confirmed as positive for Covid-19.



By the grace and mercy of the Lord, what was destroyed by the super typhoon is now in the process of rebuilding. This has taught us to turn crisis into opportunities, pain into joy and storms into blessings. The God we are serving works beyond our imagination. His faithfulness knows no bound.

A test of faith came as a surprise when Super Typhoon Odette struck us. Half of our Church and parsonage was destroyed; no clean water to drink; no signal; no Sunday gatherings and no electricity and no roof over our heads. Moreover, roads were blocked making transportation almost impossible.



# Blessings Beyond Pandemic

## Church Planting : Getafe

We could not deny the fact that the pandemic brought about changes. Business establishments were temporary closed, and some declared bankruptcy. At the same time, the churches closed. But praise be to God, for every ministry that thrived beyond a midst of such unexpected events. This pandemic showered us with blessings; therefore, we declare **"BLESSING BEYOND PANDEMIC"**.

Our ministry started in October 2018 and one of our challenges was to connect with people. The COVID-19 pandemic gave us this opportunity to connect with families. We were blessed with groceries and with these blessings, we shared with other families. Through this, we were able to encourage them with the Word of God. We thank God with the one family who responded to the call of the Lord. Last June 12, 2021, they were baptized, and dedicated their children to the Lord as well. What a blessing.

During the pandemic, we established a Bible Study group composed of men at RDex Farm. A few months later, we were having Sunday worship service already. We were moved to include the family members of these men; and so, we scheduled Sunday Worship for parents and Junior Worship for their children every Thursday.

Unfortunately, the Super Typhoon Odette hit us last December 16, 2021, and wiped out our fellowship center. We had to put all our activities on hold and felt discouraged and anxious. How can we start over and where can we get financial assistance?

In times like these, we see and feel God's amazing grace. He has provided what we needed for the rebuilding our fellowship center. We believe that "God gives, God takes away and God replaces" As the scripture says,

**"And my God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus" - Philippians 4:19**

We continually thank the Lord for He has sustained us. We have now restarted our activities (both Sunday worship and Junior worship) even with all the challenges that we faced. We may have our struggles in gathering the people to worship now but we are certain that one day, they will follow Christ and return to gather with fellow Christians.

The ministry continues even during pandemics or any super typhoons that may come across us.

To God be all the glory.



Pastor Velly and Shella May Joaquin baby Eshra Vell and Esher Vell Getafe, Bohol



Water Baptism and Child dedication June 12, 2021



Sunday Worship and Junior Worship



Fellowship Center after Super Typhoon Odette (December 16, 2021)



# Serving with God's Favor



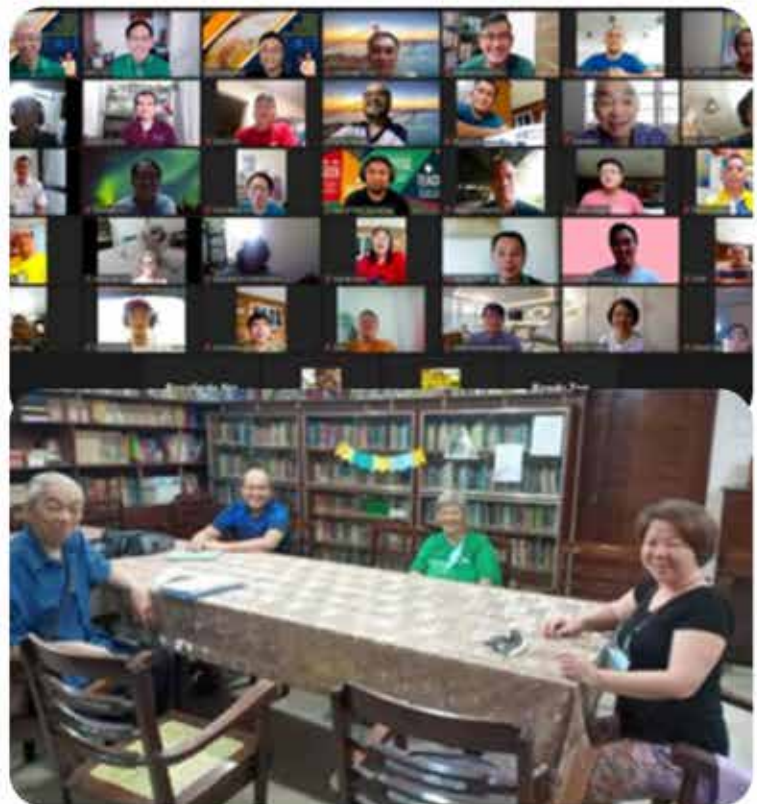
BY ANN MARIE SU | CONTRIBUTOR

Grace and Peace to all in the blessed name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!

With this simple report, I would like to thank you for the support that you have been giving me as I continue to serve our great God in OM (Operation Mobilisation). Indeed, He has been so faithful that even if I have to live by faith for my needs, He never fails to provide for me - using loving people like you to channel His blessings. I am so thankful to the Lord for your trust and for coming alongside me as I serve our Lord in Missions.

I used to think that Missions is just for the missionaries (those who are sent). But now, I have learned that all of us believers are actually missionaries where God has placed us, and every unbeliever is our mission field. We may take up different roles as we partner with God in His mission. Some may be PRAYers, GIVERs, SENDers, MOBILIZERs and GOers. It is my desire that more people could understand this and eventually take a more active role in Missions. May we, as a church, become more aware of the crucial role we play in working towards zero unreached people.

As I have shared, I shifted from pursuing my Masters in Christian Leadership in CGST to join the TNet Course Sia BokSu has recommended for me. We are done with Course 2 and are waiting to resume this September. We had our virtual classes 8:00am- 12:00nn every Mondays and Tuesdays. We are hoping to do it face to face soon. There are only five females in the class among more than thirty pastors, including our missionaries. Every Monday at 8:00pm, we have our DBS (Discovery Bible Study) with some Young Professionals to train them for discipleship. On Wednesday mornings, Sia BokSu, Ptr. Andy, Merly and I meet for our discussion and prayer time for TNet.



I praise and thank God for sustaining me as I continue my role in being the Children Ministry Coordinator of OM Cebu, taking care of our six outreach areas in the lowlands and even in the highlands.

We have resumed our weekly activities with the children and teens. In fact, the numbers have increased. Thank God that Christ the Living Water Harvest Church has partnered with us and welcomed our teens from the Umapad community into their church. They pick them up and bring them home. Having gone through their discipleship program, seven of the teens were baptized just recently.

And now, they are on fire to serve the Lord. Sensing the need to equip and train these teens who have grown spiritually from the outreaches, we organized an OUTREACH TEENS LEADERSHIP TRAINING for all the teens in our six outreaches. We also invited some volunteers from our partner churches. Thank God that Bradford Church opened its door for our use last June 30 and July 1 - two full days of learning, sharing, fun and prayer. We even had someone share the gospel to them after which they were also taught how to share the gospel to others. Thank God for those who did accept Jesus into their lives during the training.





During the Holy Week this year, we were able to invite our outreach teens to Bradford's WALKTHRU held in Ayala Central Bloc. Here, they had a personal encounter with Jesus as they went through the stations reflecting on the events that led to Jesus' death and resurrection. I also volunteered to help in this event as a watcher and counselor.



Last month, when the team of ten from Singapore Bible College came to visit, we went to the mountains of Bonbon to bring the love and hope of Jesus to fifty children. We taught them songs, Bible stories, played with them and shared the gospel to them using the five-color bead bracelet. Many received Jesus. We also had painting activity wherein they portrayed "What is LOVE" for them.



We did not have much material things to give away but only some items from Colgate-Palmolive which I was tasked to dispose. We were able to distribute almost one thousand boxes of wipes and handwash to ten outreaches and at least fifteen partner churches and para church organizations.

Finally, at the end of June, we conducted a VBS Training for our outreach volunteers at TLCC. We also had volunteers from our partner churches. Our theme for this year was WALK IN THE LIGHT.

## God is good ,.... All the time,....

He has given us many opportunities to share His blessings to His people. May the Lord use us mightily to be channels of His love and hope to the lost. Let us not be weary in doing good. . . . God knows and He will reward our every good deed. Let us continue to partner together for the expansion of His kingdom. Again, THANK YOU VERY MUCH for your loving support in prayers and in financial resources.

May God bless you more.

# MEMBERSHIP

## CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

YEAR 2022

Sis. Christina Tou Chia

*The Lord Jesus said, "A new command I give you:  
Love one another. As I have loved you,  
so you must love one another."  
- John 13:34*

The pandemic has posed numerous challenges to all of us. Some of us are in a better position to handle the transitions, while others are struck with sicknesses, departure of family members, loss of jobs, unable to continue their businesses, and finding it hard to support their families and making ends meet.

In the past year, Membership Committee (Mem-Com) met regularly to survey the needs of the church membership and to find ways to serve those needs. With the use of Welfare Fund, MemCom continues to offer assistance to some members who need financial aid with their regular medical maintenance. Some members are provided with assistance for their hospitalizations and surgeries, and some members or their children are granted tuition subsidies to continue their education at PCGS.

Realizing some members faced the greatest challenges during this trying time, God moved MemCom to take proactive action. MemCom offers help to those members and their families

who are most affected and in need by distributing basic food baskets that include rice, noodles, crackers, groceries, condiments, etc. on a quarterly basis.

Each year during Christmas, MemCom honors our elderly church members who are 80 years old and above with Christmas baskets. This is a token from the church to celebrate the lives of the elderly among us.



# COMMITTEE



Recently, an elderly church member was admitted to the hospital two times due to different medical reasons. She is a 24-year cancer survivor, had been very disciplined in her diet, and had not been hospitalized all these years until October and November this year. As a result, she became unable to take care of herself in her own home. God burdened the hearts of MemCom members and empowered us with courage, patience, wisdom and strength to care for her, making sure that she has what she needs, constantly checking for diagnosis and medical advice from the doctors, caringly communicating with her caregivers for any instructions and update of her conditions, and most importantly of all, committing her to the Lord in prayers.

Praise God for His divine guidance and providence. She is now in the care of a nursing home. She is assisted by caregivers and attended by doctors and therapists. Her meals are all prepared for her. She can make friends with other residents of the nursing home and there are gardens where she can walk around and do daily exercise.

We are all in awe how this arrangement has come to be. We did not have the experience to care for an elderly church member. We did not know what to do when we started. As God burdened our hearts and entrusted her into our care, He grew our love for her and led us to put our love into action. We witnessed how God leads our hearts and transforms our lives, causing our hearts to beat as one and our lips to be filled with praises and thanksgiving to Him.

I thank God for the experience of love, joy, peace, and growth through helping, caring and loving others. In Christ, we are all branches of the same tree. Jesus is the vine, the true source of life for us believers. We are branches connected to Him, drawing our life from Him as branches of a tree draw nutrients to grow and flourish. God intends for us to grow together in order to bear fruits for Him. We must maintain our personal relationship with God, as well as a good fellowship with our brothers and sisters in Christ. In order to bear fruits, we must love one another as Jesus has commanded us. We are one body in Christ. We share the same heartbeat and the same life, and this life is the Lord Jesus Himself.

Brothers and sisters in Christ, let us shine our light for Jesus, and thrive to be good disciples of God's Kingdom. Some of us will pray earnestly; some of us will give cheerfully, and some of us will be called to serve in action. No matter which part we play in God's plan, when we obey God's command, God's love is manifested in all we do. We may encounter adversities at different point of our lives. We can be there for each other. We can help and support and journey with one another.

This is not just the task entrusted to the Membership Committee, this is the command from our Lord Jesus Christ, that,

***“A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”***

**- John 13:34-35**





# IN MEMORY OF

BY JANE JANE ONG | CONTRIBUTOR

## Elder Adon Ong

There are so many ways to describe Papa but allow me to enumerate here how other people saw him. When he passed away at the height of the pandemic lockdown, many who knew him couldn't go to his burial and instead sent me messages and words of encouragement. This is how they described him: man of God, loved the Lord and lived a meaningful life before God and men, lived an exemplified life, man of integrity, serious in serving the Lord, a model Christian to many, always helpful, generous, humble and meek in spirit, good and kind person, a man of great faith, forgiving heart, peaceful man (walay libog), sense of humor, joyful and happy disposition. Indeed, he was well loved by many.

As with most traditional Chinese families, we are not demonstrative with our feelings. But there was never any doubt in our minds that Papa loved us. All our lives, he had always been a good father & a good provider.

Papa was a very simple person with simple basic needs. He also led a very simple life and loved routines. His life revolved around our family, his work

and church. Although he was very frugal with himself, he had a big and generous heart. Always on top of his priority is to give back to God and to God's servants. Not only that, he was very generous with the less fortunate too. Papa is one of the kindest persons I know. I've known him all my life and he never had any ill-intentions towards anyone. He has been very quick to forgive those who had wronged him, never holding a grudge.

Papa had been a man of few words but he spoke it loud and clear through his actions and the life he lived. From him, we learned to be generous, to be always grounded, to be humble and to have a servant's heart. He had dedicated the most productive part of his life to loving God and serving Him. And we have seen how God has loved him in return and took good care of him especially during the latter years of his life. Everyone who knows him says he was a blessed man!

He had left us a wonderful legacy which we will surely continue on. We are indeed very blessed to be called his children.



# Elder Valentin Uy

BY ERLYN UY HO AND RODGE UY | CONTRIBUTOR

When I was a 15-year-old high school student, I was our school's master of mischief. The school had to call my parents for a serious talk; but mom refused to attend dreading what the teachers had to say. I resorted to plan B and asked Angkong to meet my teachers for some "minor offenses." Without any hesitation and without asking any questions, Angkong agreed.

The teachers discussed with Angkong my misconduct, and that no amount of reprimand stopped me from my misdemeanors. Without any hint of judgment in his voice, Angkong called me and talked to me. He was always very tolerant of me. Always diplomatic in words and action, never raising his voice. He advised me to stop the pranks as it does not benefit me. "You reap what you sow," he reminded. His gentle words went a long way and had a bigger and more lasting effect than harsh words spoken in anger. His acceptance of me, regardless of faults, helped boost my confidence. Angkong believed that I had more to offer than just my pranks.

The times spent with my grandfather are the most treasured memories. Angkong's favorite movie was the Sound of Music. Climb Every Mountain was particularly his favorite song in the movie as it reminded him to continue climbing in spite of all the obstacles he faced.

Through all his life's challenges, he abhorred the use of the word "problem" because for him, problems do not exist. If things had solutions, they were not problems. If things did not have a solution, then he let them be.

During Typhoon Odette, he slept through the storm. He would not allow the typhoon to rob him of his sleep. All his life he would not allow himself to be possessed by fears, doubt, or bitterness. He filled his heart with feelings of love, peace, and joy. He entrusted the things he could not control to the Lord. He is truly the most optimistic person I know. His mindset is a game changer.

The most valuable lesson I learned from him is that our thoughts become our reality. Think of only the good, to create the best results.

Thank you Angkong for teaching this priceless lesson that reality can be changed by the power of our thoughts.

## How do you measure a lifetime?

Christmas of 2021 was a mostly-somber affair, hosted in now-familiar isolation with global restrictions on travel still very much in effect. What should have been the hustle and bustle of the season visiting friends was instead spent online, with calls on Zoom to distant family half a world away. One of these sessions would see my heavily-pregnant wife and I reach out to someone I had not seen in person since 2019, my grandfather Valentin Uy. As the conversation about his good health wrapped up, I casually asked my grandfather to wait for my son to be born. I didn't realize it at the time, but those parting words would be incredibly important to all of us.

Long after all the Christmas decor had come down and several difficult days of labor, my son Xavier Benjamin Uy was born. I would excitedly rush to call my Angkong; even over the grainy connection we could tell how proud he looked to see his great-grandson for the first time. But little did we know that it would be the only time. By the time my son was discharged from the maternity ward, my Angkong Valentin would be admitted into an ICU. Three tear-filled days later, under the watchful eyes of my cousins Erlyn and Ryan, I would sing 'How Great Thou Art' to him only minutes before he passed away.

I can say with confidence that my grandfather lived a good life; my Angkong's years were full and rich beyond compare. From his own personal stories, it has become apparent that close to a century of experiences left their mark upon him and those around him. I also have my own memories to call upon; I remember fondly those days he spent walking me to school in Canada, or singing to me at the dining room table in the Philippines.

My grandfather Valentin was blessed with a lifetime on this Earth. No more, no less. And for a brief moment, his long stay on Earth intersected with that of my son, because he waited, just like I'd asked. And I will treasure that moment, however short and fleeting, until the day I see him again.

My Angkong leaves behind a legacy of a Godly lifetime to his children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren. I remain thankful for the testimony he impressed upon me, and remain prayerful for the day of our reunion. Until that day comes, I will tell my son the precious stories of my grandfather Valentin and sing the songs about the God he loved.

# IN MEMORY OF OUR BELOVED MOTHER TAN SIAO MUY TIE

July 29, 1926 – February 19, 2022

BY THE 7 CHILDREN OF SIAO MUY TIE | CONTRIBUTOR

*“To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven: A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted....A time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance;”*

Ecclesiastes 3:1-4

Our mother Siao Muy Tie 蕭梅治 was born on July 29, 1926 in Cebu City. She studied at Cebu Chinese School 宿務華僑中學。 There my father and my mother were classmates. After World War II, she studied at Yiok Tek School 毓德學校 in Kulangyu (Piano Island), Xiamen, Fujian Province in China. Father and Mother married in 1950 and had 7 children. There are too many stories we can tell you about our dear Mother. Our Mother continues to inspire us in two ways to this day.

First, our Mother was made of steel. But she also had a heart of gold. She instilled in us discipline, internal self-worth and the true meaning of hard work. In our toughest times, Mother’s words to us were simple and unforgettable: “we are materially poor, but we can never be spiritually poor”. As we look back, we are always grateful for what Mother inculcated in all of us. Mother’s message was always: never give up and it guided us to endure and overcome life’s hardships.

Second, our Mother possesses an unyielding spirit as she faced life’s challenges. Some years ago, we read these lines by Alfred Tennyson to a group of sisters in the Sisters Fellowship of Cebu Gospel Church during mother’s 92nd birthday. They characterize our Mother’s unyielding spirit and our family through the years. They remind us of how far we’ve travelled through life, and who we are as a family:

“Though much is taken, much abides;  
And though we are not now that strength  
which in old days  
Moved earth and heaven, that which we are,  
we are;  
One equal temper of heroic hearts,  
Made weak by time and fate, but strong in  
will.  
To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield.”

God has blessed our family with Mother’s teachings, both in words and acts, for over 70 years. We remember our mother, by the grace of God, strong as steel and whose unyielding spirit to life is an invaluable legacy to us. As we look back, God has also blessed our Mother and our family with priceless encouragers and friends who journeyed with her and our family the past 72 years. They are more precious than diamonds that money can’t buy. We are deeply thankful to our Lord for them.

We are saddened by Mother’s departure from this life, but we also rejoice in the knowledge that her journey through life has come to a peaceful, meaningful and fulfilling end like what is described in Chronicles 29: 28 says:” King David died at a good old age, full of days, riches and honor.” We thank God for mother’s life as full of days, full of God’s blessings and now enjoying love, joy and peace with the Lord forever and forever.

The past three weeks (Jan 25- Feb 19, 2022) were filled with God’s presence, grace and mercy, like what our family has experienced the past 72 years.

Mother has been sick with anemia. On January 25, she was infected with Covid Omicron. She took Molnupiravir immediately before the onset of symptoms such as fever or coughs. However, mother’s anemic condition is exacerbated by the effects of Covid Omicron. She had pain all over her body and was admitted to the hospital on Feb 13, 2022. Her body deteriorated and suffered cardiac arrest on Feb. 18 Friday evening but was revived in less than 1 minute. Finally, she had organ failure and succumbed on February 19, 2022 at 9:10 pm.

As we remember our Mother, we ask you to see Mother’s departure as a celebration of life, rather than as an agony of death. Mother’s life was filled with God’s blessings. 1 Thessalonians 4:14 “ For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep.” Yes, mother is sleeping now. We all shall see her again.



# Cresencio Ang

BY DESIREE GAY ANG LOPEZ | CONTRIBUTOR

**P**apa is what me and my siblings call him and his close friends refer to him as Guan-Guan. Papa was stern and a disciplinarian towards us, but he always had that soft spot in his heart.

As I try to recall now who papa was, I just don't know where to start...

Papa was a man of principle, he was disciplined especially in business, so organized and focused. As a young man, Papa worked hard and took care of his siblings and also us his family. He always made sure that we were all well, felt secured and did his best that we lived a good life. He was a Father who inspired us to do our best and aim high in life. Papa guided us in making the right decisions in life, and stood by us when things went wrong.

As a christian, Papa was a late bloomer. He came to know the Lord through his bestfriend. At first, he was just a 'sunday-goer', but the Lord had other plans for him and through all of life's ups and downs, Papa got to know the Lord in more deeply. He found good christian brothers in

our CGC brotherhood fellowship that helped him learn and grow in the Lord. Soon enough from a 'sunday-goer' Christian, he became a changed man for the Lord. He read the word and prayed every day and learned more about God's word and started sharing the gospel to friends, his employees and to people that he treasured in life.

Sadly, Papa got severe dementia during the first year of the Covid-19 pandemic. But even with this disease, his brain still remembered the Lord. And when Covid-19 claimed him at the peak of the Delta variant, it was really hard for us, his family, that we could not be with him during his last days and even up to his last breath. But through it all, we are thankful and deep in our hearts we know that Papa is in a happier place. A place that he can live eternally and in the presence and arms of our Lord.

Papa a good father, a great inspiration to us, and yet flawed in so many ways was loved by God and saved by His grace. Glory to God for his life and we will forever remember his love for us his family and to the Lord Jesus Christ.

# Gaudencio & Naty Uy

BY CHRISTIE OH UY | CONTRIBUTOR

**M**ost of the happiest memories of my childhood are graced by my grandparents' presence. I still think of the times spent in my grandparents' house after school, snacking on scrambled eggs made by my Ama Natty while watching the afternoon news with my Angkong Dencio; the pictures we took together after Christmas cantatas in Cebu Gospel; the homemade lunches enjoyed after Sunday service; the choir anthems I was privileged to sing next to my Ama.

In longing to go back to those days, I reflect on what my grandparents were like and how their selfless actions resonate with me today. My Angkong thrived in routine. As a young father, he would pick up my mom from school and help with homework. I can only imagine that he did the same for my aunt and uncles. As part of his routine as a retiree, he would walk around downtown Cebu, chat with his pals, and watch movies. Not only did he spend his day

like clockwork; he was also methodical about how he got the house in order.

My Ama liked to serve and help, both at home and in church. She would not miss any church commitments for anything. She sang in the choir unswervingly and played the piano beautifully. Her life was faith in action. Dependable and devoted, she was always ready to step in and save the day.

Together, my Angkong and Ama tirelessly made their house a home, where family was prioritized, music was enjoyed, and strong familial bonds were deeply rooted. Even though they have gone to be with the Lord sooner than I wanted, I am beyond blessed to be able to hold such lasting memories of our time together and use their memory to spread the love they had instilled upon me.

# Pursued by JOY

*“as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, yet possessing everything.”*

**2 Corinthian 6:10**

Human life has always been in search for a joyful life. Some efforts used to describe what a joyful life is. It is fascinating to understand the unique nature of joy. It is a word that cannot be negated by simple prefixes to make it a negative word. You cannot say unjoy, disjoy, or maljoy. It can be negatively combined with another word to kill it (killjoy) or lose it (joyless). It can be positively intensified by joyful, enjoy and rejoice. True joy is something complete, regardless of human situation, something that is not rooted in the happenings of human life and is not affected by time -something outside of time and human achievements. Therefore, it is possible to be grieving and sorrowful yet rejoicing.

Even if it is God who gives joy (Ecc. 2:26), through the Messiah (Isa.61:3), and the Spirit's fruit (Gal. 5:22), borne by Gospel (Lk 2:10) and results of His Words (Neh. 8:12; Jer. 15:16), humans spent a lifetime to find it his own accomplishments and wealth and find it illusive, vanity - chasing after the wind (Ecc. 2:10,11). Human happiness does not last. To generate joy in oneself and hold on to it becomes a trap of an endless loop of struggles. They melt, expire, exhausted and come short, unless God have brought, given and man received and lived joy.

Human finds fleeting happiness in four things. There is a cone of ice-

cream. A lick of material sweetness is happiness, yet so quick to melt and disappear. The feeling is gone, and you buy another toy, endlessly. Too much of it makes one sick. Then there is the trophy - a sense of accomplishment of hard work, launching one to the top, being more than all others. It too is a fleeting moment of joy that ends up a dusty corroded monument on the shelf, none will dare ask about. Furthermore, its tiring to prove oneself every time. Then comes the giving and blessing others by doing good to them. A spark of joy that is so addictive because it feels so good and so right. Selfless giving feels heroic until one realizes that he/she cannot be everything to anyone. Then the ministry of doing good becomes exhausting and frustrating when one becomes the messiah to another. Finally human found that true joy is something not in this world, a reaching out to grab it, is needed. They raise their hands towards the skies and attempt to reach the infinite, by meditations, prayers, religious chants, rituals, and worship hoping, manipulating bribing the true giver of joy to release a dose of it to them only to hear that the praise and worship singers didn't hit the pitch and drummers was off beat or the cellphone rings and the emotional religious feeling has stopped flowing from heaven upon them.

All were so human centered works and struggles that ultimately fail and joy becomes illusive a striving after

the wind. And with this experience, a man and woman can quit pressing on in life. Yet there is something that the apostle Paul have that enables him to rejoice in "Joy" even when afflicted and imprisoned. He wrote a letter of gushing joy and shared it to the believers in Philippi and to the rest of the churches. He found the secret to pressing on in life with joy even if grief and afflictions surround. He encouraged believers to press on in life on the same motivation. He said, "I press on... because Jesus had made me his own..." (Phil. 3:12) - Here lies the secret to finding joy. It is realizing and intimately knowing that Jesus has been pursuing us to make us his own. This is the initial step to make the sweetness of the ice-cream lasts; the joy of winning and accomplishing inspires; the ministry of blessing others is beatitude and worship lasts and make sense. And when all these are gone, joy remains because it was brought by Jesus who pursued us first. You are pursued and loved by Christ and therefore you can find true joy in Him. Living joyfully and sharing it to others will make sense. "Though the fig tree should not blossom, nor fruit be on the vines, the produce of the olive fails, and the fields yield no food, the flock be cut off from the fold and there be no herd in the stalls, yet I will rejoice in the Lord; I will take joy in the God of my salvation." (Hab 3:17, 18) Let us rejoice because the Joy of the Lord, even Jesus, has come, Amen.



# PERSONALITIES INVOLVED IN THE NATIVITY STORY

BY : JOSEPHINE QUE YU | CONTRIBUTOR



**W**ith the advent of the yuletide season, we often associate it with Christmas gifts, parties, decorations, Cantatas, reunions, vacations, caroling, Santa Claus and other related activities. Very few of us understand the real significance of Christmas, nor do we know who were instrumental in its creation. Therefore, allow me to introduce the personalities involved in this nativity story for our learning and warning.



## Angel Gabriel

- His name means “God is my strength”
- He explained the dream of Daniel’s vision (Daniel 8:15-26; 9:21-27)
- He appeared to Zacharias and foretold the advent of John the Baptist. (Luke 1:11-20)
- He appeared to Joseph and told him to take Mary as his wife. (Matt 1:20-25)

*His role in Christmas:*      *the Anunciator of Christ’s birth*

*Angel Gabriel announced to Mary that she would conceive a son of God by the Holy Spirit to be named Jesus. (Luke 1:26-32)*

*Lessons to learn:*

**When God sends us to do any work for Him, we should serve Him faithfully.**

## Joseph

- He was Jesus’ earthly father and Mary’s husband
- He was called a descendant of David - a God-fearing, honorable, gentle, honest, righteous, and faithful man
- He married Mary in obedience to God’s command (Matt 1:20-24)
- He was a hard-working carpenter
- He was last mentioned when he and Mary lost track of Jesus, and ultimately found him in the temple listening to the teachers. (Luke 2:41-52)

*His role in Christmas:*

*the Obedient One of Christ’s birth*

*Joseph took Mary to be his wife in obedience to the Lord’s command through Angel Gabriel. (Mat. 1:18-24)*

*Lesson to learn:*

**The Word of God is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path. We must follow His righteous laws and submit to God’s will. (Ps. 119:105)**

and

## Mary



- She was a Jewish woman from Galilee in Nazareth
- She was the wife of Joseph, the earthly mother of Jesus, and the cousin of Rebekah, the wife of Zechariah, the priest.
- She was obedient to God’s will and willing to be conceived by the Holy Spirit and to give birth to the Holy Son, Jesus
- Her reputation and life were at risk if she was conceived before marriage. Joseph may abandon her and people will stone her to death
- She was mentioned twice in the Bible - first, at the wedding feast in Cana and second, when Jesus was crucified on the cross on Calvary.

*the Offeror One of Christ’s birth*

*Mary offered her body to fulfill God’s plan of salvation. The Holy Spirit will come upon her and the Most High will overshadow her. And she will give birth to the Holy Son of God. (Luke 1:26-35)*

*Lesson to learn:*

**We must offer our bodies as a living sacrifice to God for His use. (Romans 12:1)**



## Angels

- When Jezebel was about to kill Elijah, Elijah fled for his life to the wilderness. There, an angel touched him, saying, "Get up and eat!". (1 Kings 19:5-8).
- When Daniel was in the lion's den, God sent messengers to seal the lion's mouth. (Dan. 6:22)
- After Jesus was tempted by the devil, the devil left Jesus and an angel came to serve him. (Mat 4:11)
- When Jesus prayed in Gethsemane, an angel appeared from heaven and strengthened Him. (Luke 22:43)
- The angels announced the birth of Jesus to the shepherds. (Luke 2:8-12)
- When Peter was imprisoned, the angel of the Lord opened the prison door during the night and led him out of prison. (Acts 5:19)
- The angel of God stood by Paul by night and said to him, "Do not be afraid, for you will surely stand before Caesar;" (Acts 27:23-24)
- And a messenger came to Cornelius, and told him to send someone to Joppa, and to ask Simon, who was called Peter, to come to his house. (Acts 10:3-6)



*His role in Christmas:*      *The Messenger of Christ's birth*

*The angels gave the glad tidings to the shepherds. (Luke 2:8-12)*

*Lesson to learn:*

**There are many people who do not know the true God. We need to spread the gospel to show our love and care.**



*His role in Christmas:*

## Shepherds

- They were considered unclean, uneducated, lowly, and despised by society. But the sheep represents Jesus as the Lamb of the world.
- The angels gave them a direct sign of the birth of Christ.

*His role in Christmas:*      *The Witnesses of Christ's birth*

*The angels gave the glad tidings to the shepherds. (Luke 2:8-12)*

*Lesson to learn:*

**There are many people who do not know the true God. We need to spread the gospel to show our love and care.**

## The Magi

- They came from the East to worship the King of Judah.
- They brought gold, frankincense, and myrrh to Jesus.

*His role in Christmas:*      *The Worshipers of Christ's birth*

*The Magi fell down and worshipped Jesus. They presented Him with gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. (Mat. 2:9-12)*

*Lesson to learn:*

**All what we have is given by God. Therefore, we should give our money, time, and talents to Him. We must worship and praise Him wholeheartedly.**







## King Herod

- He was called Herod the Great.
- He had 3 sons: Archelaus, Herod Antipas and Philip.
- He ordered all the boys which is 2 years old and under in Bethlehem to be killed.

### *His role in Christmas: The Destroyer of Christ's birth*

*King Herod was disturbed, and told the Magi to find the child and report to him. But the Magi were warned in a dream not to go back to Herod. When King Herod realized he was outwitted by the Magi, he was furious and gave orders to kill all the boys, which were two years old and under in Bethlehem and within its vicinity. (Mat. 2:3-16)*

### *Lesson to learn:*

Three bible stories showed us the results of jealousy. Cain murdered His brother Abel. Joseph's brother sold him as a slave to Potiphar, one of Pharaoh's official, the captain of the guard. King Herod the Great killed all babies two years and under. Jealousy leads to anger, anger to hatred and hatred to death. Therefore, we must not harbor jealousy in our hearts.

## Simeon

- He was a righteous and godly man in Jerusalem, and he was able to meet Joseph, Mary, and Jesus in the temple.
- He hoped that he would meet Jesus before he died.
- After he met Jesus, he asked God to let him rest in peace.
- He considered Jesus to be the light of the Gentiles and the glory of the Jews.

### *His role in Christmas: The High Hope of Christ's birth*

*When Simeon's hope of seeing the child was fulfilled, he asked the Lord to dismiss him in peace. (Luke 2:25-32)*



### *Lesson to learn:*

The signs of Christ's second coming are: earthquakes, diseases, famines, wars, lightnings, thunders, hailstorms. All these events are happening now. Therefore, we must watch and pray, and prepare our hearts to meet the Lord anytime.



## Anna the Prophetess

- She was an elderly woman of the tribe of Asher.
- She was widowed after seven years of marriage until she was eighty-four years old.
- She worshipped, fasted and prayed day and night without ever leaving the temple.

### *His role in Christmas: The Minister of Christ's birth*

*She thanked God and spoke about the child to all who were looking forward to the redemption of Jerusalem. (Luke 2:38)*

### *Lesson to learn:*

Every believer should attend church worship service regularly. He must have a daily devotion by studying the Bible and fellowship with God to live a holy and victorious life.



## John the Baptist

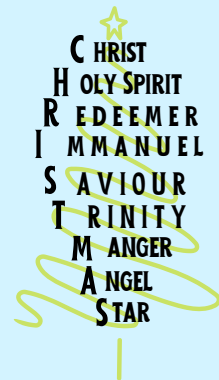
- He prepared the way for Jesus.
- He preached the message of repentance, confession, and baptism.
- He was a humble man who said, "I baptize you with water, but there is one coming who is more powerful than I. I am not worthy to untie his sandals, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire." (Luke 3:16)

*John the Baptist preached repentance in the wilderness, prepared the way for the Lord, straightened His path, and baptized Jesus. (Matt 3:1-17)*

**John the Baptist served the Lord faithfully. He humbled himself and confessed that Jesus is more powerful than him. He preached the message of repentance boldly. Let us follow his virtues of faithfulness, humility and courage. Let us be Christians with good testimonies that are pleasing to God.**

These are the major characters responsible for making nativity the greatest and most wonderful story ever told. To all of us who believe that nativity is an occasion and time for service, obedience, offering, love, care, witness, worship, hope, devotion, faithfulness, humility, and courage, we can become part of the story! Let us do our role in expanding the kingdom of God.

In conclusion, since "Jesus is the reason for the season", CHRISTMAS stands for:



## The Sufficient Grace of God

**Church Updates** by Pastor Rosaline Lim

It's been more than two years since the Covid-19 pandemic happened; but, His never ending grace never ceases. As God continues to show his providence and protection to His people, He opened the doors for us to meet again. Here is the update on our fellowships currently doing face to face meetings this 2022:

March 5, 2022 :	Thrive Fellowship
April 3, 2022 :	Sunday Worship Service
	8:00 AM
June 3, 2022 :	CYF - Highschool
	Fridays
August 2, 2022 :	Sister's Fellowship
	Tuesdays
October 13-16, 2022 :	Mission Week
October 15, 2022 :	CYF - Elementary



# 2023 REFOCUS CHURCH RECHARGE THEME REACH OUT

BY REV VICENTE AND MRS HELEN SIA | CONTRIBUTOR



## REFOCUS 調整焦點

We believers in Christ respond to the call of Christ to follow Him. We believers run the race set before us. But there are times when we are distracted by temptations and drawn to the things of the world. We pursue the praise and approval of man rather than that of our Lord. We settle for self-gratification and entitlement over God's will. To finish well, it is imperative that we focus on Jesus, the Christ. Refocusing on the author and perfecter of our faith is the key to not miss the higher calling to run the race well.

Hebrews 12:1,2,3 NIV) exhorts us, "Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down the right hand of the throne of God consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart".

## RECHARGE 重新得力

The author of Hebrews also warns us about getting weary as we run this race. But Acts 1:8 states, "you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes..." The believers are given power to be witnesses, to run the race. When we are tired and weary, the Holy Spirit empowers, enables us to overcome the sin that entangles. The Holy Spirit enables us to persevere and endure when life is hard and dreary.

Only in times of soul searching quietness and introspection, in stillness, in confession and repentance that the Holy Spirit will lead us to recognize the things that hinder us in finishing well. Invite the Holy Spirit to search our hearts, our minds and to fill us that we may refocus and thus be recharged.

Our life is not just looking unto Jesus, our life need to be reaching out to unbelievers with God's Truth and love and with encouragement for believers. We are commanded to preach the gospel to all nations. Matthews 28:19, "Go and make disciples of all nations, reaching out to the lost, fulfilling the Great Commission. We are commanded to love each other, encourage one another and to build each other up in the household of faith.

基督徒要回應耶穌基督的呼召一輩子跟從祂，奔跑神為我們安排的路程。在奔跑前頭的路程中，會遇到一些攔阻。如魔鬼的試探，世界的引誘，只追求人的稱讚勝過追求神的喜悅，不在乎神的旨意。這些攔阻都容易纏絆基督徒前進的步伐。我們必須調整焦點，專一仰望耶穌。耶穌是信心創始成終的主。不要忽略祂的呼召，要義無反顧地奔赴前面的路程。希伯來書的作者說：我們既有這許多的見證人.....就當放下各樣的重擔，脫去容易纏累我們的罪，奔那擺在我們前頭的路程，仰望為我們信心創始成終的耶穌.....我們要思想，免得疲倦灰心。

希伯來書作者警告我們奔跑中容易疲倦灰心。路加在使徒行傳1:8記着「但聖靈降臨在你們身上，你們就必得着能力.....」基督徒得能力作見證人，奔前程。疲倦灰心時，聖靈賜能力勝過試探，免受罪纏累。聖靈會幫助人忍受、自省、安靜、認罪，重新得力。

## 伸手援助 REACH OUT

基督徒不僅要向上仰望耶穌，我們還必須關心周圍的人。馬太福音28:19「你們要去，使萬民作我的門徒.....」所以我們要去拯救失喪的人，完成大使命。耶穌也賜下一條大命令：「要彼此相愛」、彼此勸慰、彼此建立.....

# Gospel Light

Vision  
異象

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

菲華教會 確信聖經 培養門徒 榮耀基督

Mission  
使命

To prepare God's People for works of service through  
equipping, encouraging, and discipling.

To promote a Christ-like Church that loves and cares for  
one another.

To proclaim the Gospel to our Community and beyond.

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



宿務基督教會  
CEBU GOSPEL CHURCH

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