

voiceofhope

the newsletter | Jul - Sep 2014

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contents

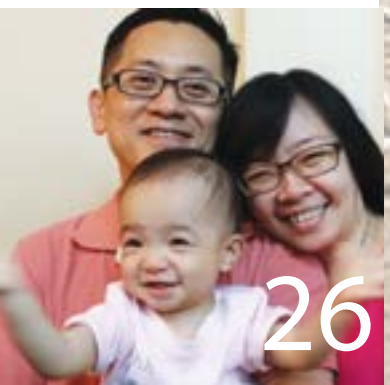
voiceofhope **the newsletter** | Jul - Sep 2014

Contents	02	
Pastor's column	04 - 05	Cultivating Your Love for God
Missions talk	06 - 08	The Hong Kong Connection
Missions Testimony	09	Donkeys For Jesus
Prayer wave	10 - 11	If We Don't Know What To Pray, It Doesn't Matter
Ministry News	12 - 15	Equipping Today's Generation With The Gospel
Baptism Testimony	16 -17	Desiring To Be Baptised At A Tender Age God Never Abandoned Me Despite My Disobedience God Is Real & Loving Jesus Has Never Left Me
Youth Wave	18 - 19	Our Purpose In Life
Life Game Camp	20 - 21	Life Game
Missions - Philippines	22 - 23	Cuenca, Batangas, Manila A Mighty Move Of The Spirit
Reflection	24	Jesus, My Firm Foundation….. Growing In The Word
Life Management	25	How To Deal With Stress?
Testimony	26	Expired Visa Giving Thanks For A Timely Custody
	27	A Light For Christ
	28	ICIC – An Eye Opening Experience
	29	Our Prayer Answering God Unscathed . . . By The Grace Of God
	30	Saved By His Still Small Voice
	31	In The Presence Of Angels
	32	A Different Kind Of Fast An Unexpected Visitor
	33	Marriages Are Made In Heaven, Worked At By The Couple!
Word of life	34	The Grain of Wheat
Children's Corner	35	Jesus The Centre Of My Family - A Hope of Glory Art Competition
Q & A	36	Why do we call Jesus the Son of God? Can God have a Son?
	37	What is the Biblical view of committing suicide and can a believer go to Heaven if he commits suicide?
Article	38	Lessons From MH 370
Recipe	39	Yoghurt-Nara
Back cover	40	HAPPENINGS IN HGC



















Dear Readers,



Cover :
Our Hong Kong connection began here in 1997

What were the 298 passengers and crew of MH17 doing at the very second the plane was shot out of the sky by a surface missile? Savouring a piece of cake? Drinking a cup of coffee? Chatting with a fellow passenger? Sleeping? Enjoying an inflight movie? Winning a game? Serving a passenger with a smile? Walking the aisle? Cradling their baby? Reading a novel?

They were so unsuspecting, so unprepared when life was snuffed out of them. The likelihood is they didn't even know what hit them. How tragic! We find it hard to accept, how much more the families and friends of all on board.

Were they prepared to die or meet God? Where is their soul?

Nowadays we really don't quite know what to expect but one thing for sure, we see the fulfilment of Bible prophecies. We can see the first 5 seals of Revelation 6 opened, revealing the riders of the white, red, black and pale horses which are galloping fiercely through the earth bringing much sorrow through deception, war, famine and death. We read with trepidation of the rising tide coming in the name of religion against believers of Christ. Everything seems to be hastening.

Jesus says that His coming is like the days of Noah before the flood where the people were eating, drinking, marrying and giving in marriage until the day Noah entered the ark. They were unaware until the flood came and swept them all away.

Let us be aware, prepared and faithful till the end. Our youth and children need to be prepared. Our loved ones need to be prepared. The Lord is coming!

VOH aims to herald the truth of God, whether taught or experienced in the lives of our members to prepare the church. Be blessed by the many good articles and encouraging testimonies in this issue.

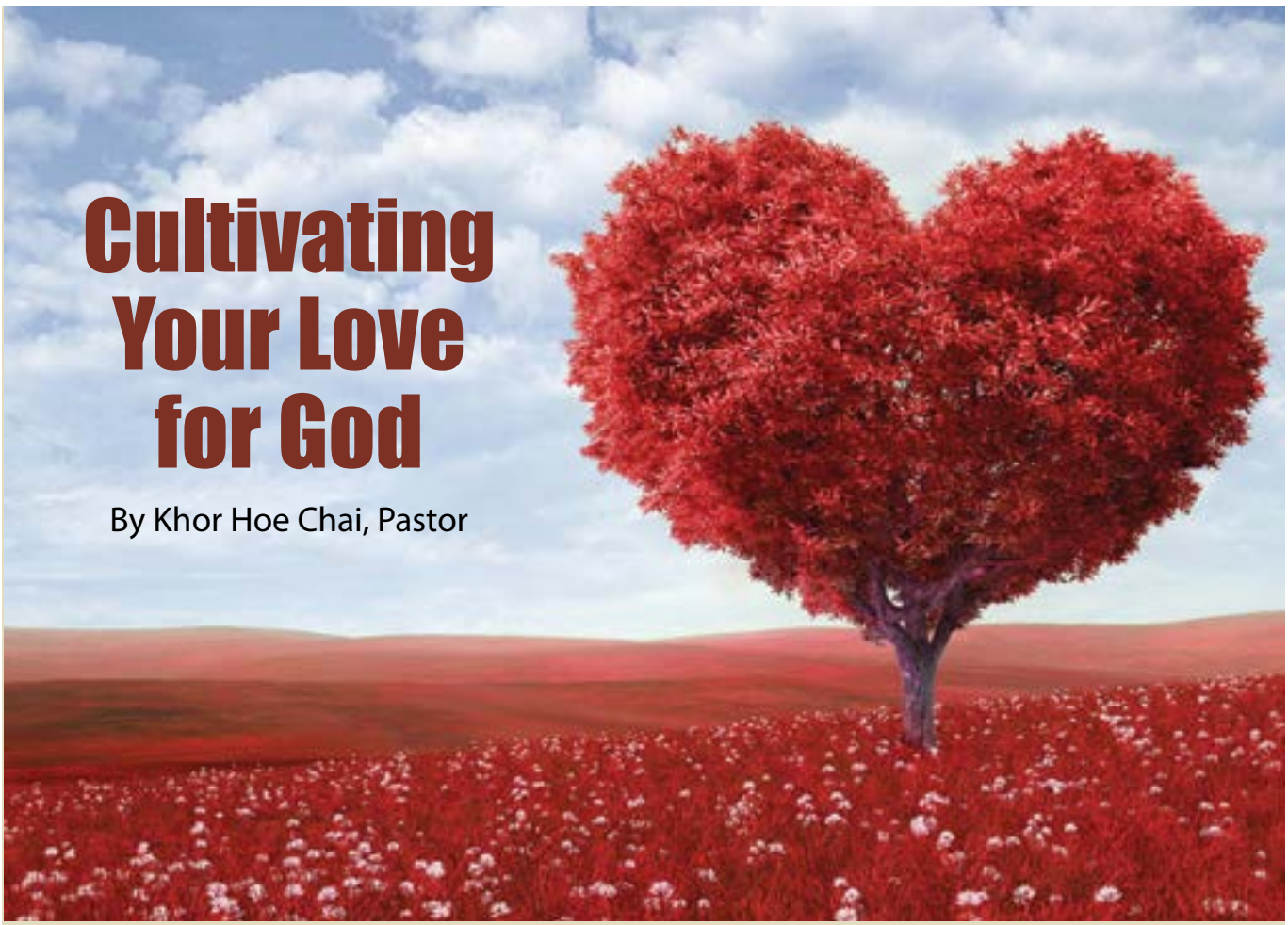
Towards Preparedness,
The VOH Team

The Hope of Glory Centre

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Cultivating Your Love for God

By Khor Hoe Chai, Pastor

A scribe listened intently as Jesus answered question after question that was thrown at Him by those who were out to trap Him. He was captivated because Jesus' every answer was just so sharp. So intrigued was he, that he broke his silence to put forth his own question to Jesus, "Which is the first commandment of all?" That is an intelligent question. After all being a scribe, he knew well that there were 613 commandments in the Mosaic Law.

Jesus answered the scribe, "The first of all the commandments is: 'Hear, O Israel, the LORD our God, the LORD is one. And you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.' This is the first commandment. And the second, like it, is this: 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these."

"Well answered! Well answered!" The excited scribe couldn't agree more to Jesus' answer. He knew that it was absolute truth. Loving God wholeheartedly is the first of all commandments…and it is more than all the offerings and sacrifices put together. (Mark 12:28-33)

One Sunday, while talking to a 10 year old girl in church, I asked her if she was fasting and praying as we were in the 40 days of fasting and prayer. Immediately, she pulled out her prayer booklet and told me that she had prayed daily using the guide book and fasted as well. That was very encouraging indeed. Later in the day, I talked to another 10 year old. I asked him the same question about fasting and praying. He however didn't seem to be aware and did not have the prayer booklet. Then I felt the Lord directed me to share something from His heart to him.

Looking at the boy, I asked, "Do you know how much Jesus loves you?"
The boy replied without hesitation,
"A lot. Very, very much."
Then I asked him, "How much do you love Jesus?"
And his reply was, "Ah…..."

There was no definite answer.

That was when the topic of this article **'Cultivating Your Love for God'** surfaced. God's love for us is rich, full, unconditional, unfailing and unceasing

and is constant and forever. But our love for Him seems like a yo-yo always vacillating. Sometimes we love Him a lot. Sometimes we seem to love Him so little. Sometimes we don't bother. Sometimes we are even mad at Him.

For any relationship to grow, it requires both parties to relate.

A simple illustration came to my mind and I asked the boy, "If you were to plant something, what do you do to make sure the plant grows well?"
He answered, "You water it."
"Ya, that's right. What else?" I asked
"You soften the soil and put fertilisers," he replied.
"That's good. And…' prompting him to go on.
Thinking just a moment he said, "Must make sure the plant gets sunshine."
Affirming him I said, "That's right. That means you have to cultivate it right? "

The same principle applies to our relationship with God. God loves us and has given us His life sacrificially; His heart and His best. He gave us the great commandment. Why? Because He knows that when we do so we will be most blessed, whole, fulfilled and satisfied. Even though that's the case He does not force us to love Him. He desires us to love Him willingly from our hearts.

How much we love Him depends on us. We can grow our love for Him by cultivating it.
If we don't, all kinds of weeds will grow in our hearts. Often plants that have the potential to be beautiful and fruitful become scrawny, ugly, wild and fruitless because the soil was not cultivated.

God provides all that is necessary for us; the water, the seeds, the fertilisers and etc. But He requires us to work on it.

I learn some practical things about gardening from the little garden I have. One obvious thing is that I need to water the plants REGULARLY. If I want my plants to do well, I cannot water it whenever I feel like it or free to do it. When it rains it helps. But I have to inspect the soil to see if it is moist enough. I have to watch. I cannot be lazy. I have to be diligent. The same goes with putting fertilizers. I have to do it consistently. Not on and off. One other very important factor is the soil. After a while the soil would harden. And I must dig the soil to soften it. I have to break up the top hardened soil and throw some of it away and add more enriched soil to it. Sunshine is also absolutely necessary. Certain parts of my garden don't get the sun and the grass just cannot survive.

Beloved brothers and sisters, if you want to have a heart that loves God you must cultivate it. It is not automatic. If you want your children to have a heart that loves God you must cultivate their hearts. You must water it with God's Word. Expose them to the sunshine of His presence through times of worship and prayer. Break up their hardened hearts with the discipline of truth with love. Intentionally soften their hearts with humility and train them to serve others. Beware of weeds of worldliness that try to choke their hearts with lustful, godless and harmful things. There is also the need to "fertilise" their hearts consistently with encouragement, affirmation and affection.

Young people, let me ask you a question. What do you want to be like in 10 years' time? Do you want to be wise, knowledgeable, mature, successful, friendly and loving? Do you know how you can become a person like that? You will become such a person if you cultivate your heart to love God.
I guarantee you. God's greatest commandment when obeyed brings His greatest blessing! Loving the Wisest, Most Loving and Most Knowledgeable Person in the Universe will transform you to be more like Him. What a privilege it is to love Jesus!

There are many ways to cultivate a heart of love for God. Since each heart is different it may be different for different ones. I believe that if you are determined to do it, the Lord will certainly help you. As you move along be inspired to follow the footsteps of those who manifest a great love for God. Indeed let us seek to love the LORD our God with all our hearts, with all our souls, with all our minds, and with all our strength!





1

The Hong Kong Connection

By Chan Tham Seng

"THREE of us held at customs", a text message reached me at noontime, August 26. Which meant our people ran into a snag at Lo Wu checkpoint with their "forbidden" items. Immediately I alerted the church to intensify their prayer and called Hong Kong for details. Fifteen minutes later, the Revival Chinese Ministries International (RCMI) office replied that the problem had been settled: All the brothers have been released and are now heading for downtown Shenzhen. Later another message confirmed that the Chinese customs detained most of their books but allowed them to collect all the items on their exit back to Hong Kong. Thanks to God for protection and RCMI for the experience!

The Hong Kong connection traces back 17 years. On 30 June 1997, I was in Hong Kong covering the colony's reversion to China. While there, I popped over to Dennis Balcombe's Revival Christian Church (RCC) in Kowloon. Many locals were reported to have migrated leaving behind people who were either jittery or resigned over their future. RCC, however, was celebrating with overnight worship and prayer in a sanctuary converted from an old cinema hall newly purchased from the Shaw Brothers (HK) Ltd.

Since November 2000, I have been involved with RCMI, the outfit of Ps Dennis and RCC which carries out ministries in Mainland China. The involvement, mainly in writing, has enabled me to follow the development of Chinese house churches more than a decade. The connection has blessed HGC in its China ministry in some ways, a chance to participate in RCMI's Donkeys for Jesus ministry being one.

Donkeys for Jesus require individuals to personally deliver spiritual materials in small quantities from Hong Kong to Shenzhen. To our 4-member team, led by Sam Liew, the 23-28 August trip was a heart-throbbing challenge. The team made two border-crossing trips and, despite the abortive second trip, had delivered 173 copies of The Shepherd's Staff to Shenzhen. (Read report by team member Yap Chin Yau)

The Donkeys for Jesus ministry was developed by Ps Dennis shortly after his first mainland trip to Guangzhou in 1978. At Guangzhou he worked with one Aunty Liu who redistributed the Bibles to the interior. Christians were few in China after the turbulent decade of Cultural Revolution (1966-76), let alone courageous ones like Aunty Liu.

From Bibles, RCMI expanded its spiritual materials to include teaching materials, Bible tools and other popular Christian books. The most sought-after titles by the mainland churches today are The Shepherd's Staff and The Abundant Life Study Bible.

RCMI records show that 250,000 to 300,000 bibles had been delivered per year into Mainland China from 1997 to 2006. From 2007 to 2012, the yearly average dropped to 100,000 - 150,000 copies. The decline was probably due to a weakening in overseas financial support toward this ministry and difficulty for "donkeys" to obtain longer China visas. Another factor cited is misinformation that Bibles are now easily and openly available in China, hence less need to bring them from outside.

Whenever feasible, RCMI will replenish its storehouses by buying Bibles from official outlets in China. However, the Bibles obtainable are far from sufficient and most of the other popular items are not available anyway. Hence, RCMI continues to invite believers to participate in this exciting ministry.


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5

Traditionally, the biggest supporters of Donkeys for Jesus in terms of finances or delivery are the Westerners. When it comes to Bible smuggling with RCMI, no one matches with New Zealander Papa Bill. Bill started travelling to Hong Kong since 1992 at age 50, usually with his wife and later taking teams with them. By May 2014, Papa Bill has landed in Hong Kong 19 times and from there making 228 Bible-delivery journeys to Shenzhen and other parts of Mainland China. This averages 12 deliveries per Hong Kong trip.

The 22 years as a donkey for Jesus have enabled Papa Bill to gain a smattering of 'putonghua' but not quite making him an Indiana Jones. He said recently,

"Each time my wife and I crossed the border we were nervous but the Lord has always been our rock. All these years we have been queried by the customs for just a few times and only once did a member have his Bibles confiscated." These days the couple is finding their baggage heavier due to age; Bill is 72 and his wife 74.

Another way RCMI has blessed our China ministry is its study aid set up for ethnic students. Among the aid recipients in 2012 were our two Lugu Lake believers Yang Chunxian and cousin sister Yang Chunqin.

Ps Dennis' major contribution in China ministry has been his role in transforming the Henan house churches, comprising mainly Han believers, into spirit-filled powerhouses. Only about 15 years ago that RCMI started a ministry with the ethnic minorities in China. And it was only in 2010 that it launched the study aid to help needy ethnic students in high school and university education. Pumi believers Chunxian and Chunqin have today completed their tertiary education and returned


6


7

home to Langfang village and working in Lugu Lake. On September18-28, HGC sponsored 10 Langfang believers for a 3-day special meeting at Lijiang. At the gathering, my wife and I conducted topical teachings for the believers and advised them regarding their future: Should or shouldn't the Langfang fellowship register with the local authorities as a religious group.

HGC started a gospel ministry in Lugu Lake in 1999 and has since led to Jesus about 90 ethnic people including the Pumi, Naxi, Mongolians, Tibetans, Mosuo and Yi. In our last Langfang trip in May 2013, we baptized two believers including 28-year-old Yang Chunxiu, older sister to Chunxian. Chunxiu, our 1999 convert, is today a mother of two kids and a long-standing leader of Langfang fellowship.

Lugu Lake is a religiously sensitive area due to the presence of Tibetan culture and Christian cults. In our last 15 years of ministry, we have come under occasional harassment by the police and local residents. Our Langfang believers too have been meeting underground with little peace. Due to local circumstances, the Langfang fellowship has come under increasing pressure of the local authorities for registration. However, rising above ground is unacceptable to some given the repressive Chinese policy toward churches in the past. In recent years, the atheist government seems to be relaxing its control over churches and is more concerned with Bible-based cults and separatist movements within the country.

In this regard, our Hong Kong connection has given us a better understanding of the religious policy of the Chinese government. In Lijiang, we also introduced our Langfang believers to a house church which is now registered with the government. The Lijiang church leaders had a 2-hour session with our believers on the pros and cons of registering a house fellowship with the authorities (Full report on the Lijiang trip in the next issue of VOH).


8

Photos:
1 *A Hong Kong street scene, August 2014*
2 *Tim and Esther with full team of Lugu Lake believers*
3 *At teaching session given to Lugu Lake believers*
4 *At teaching session given to Lugu Lake believers Tim in Lijiang*
5 *RCMI study aid recipients: (L) Chunqin, Chunxian*
6 *RCC worshipping and praying on night of reversion*
7 *Chunxiu's rebuilt house, where Langfang fellowship was born in 1999*
8 *The team meets with Ps Balcombe at RCMI office*

Donkeys For Jesus

By Yap Chin Yau



That's how "donkeys" haul their goods

It was our first attempt to take spiritual materials into Mainland China. On 25 August, 2014 after loading our suitcases and backpacks full with the Shepherd's Staff at the Hong Kong Revival Chinese Ministries International's (RCMI) warehouse, we had a short time of prayer asking God to give us a successful trip. Before we started our first border crossing, the Hong Kong RCMI staff, Christy Cheung, briefed us well on how to carry the books over the border at the RCMI office. There we also had the chance to meet with Ps Dennis Balcombe who shared with us his testimony and briefed us on some recent situations and challenges Christians in the mainland encountered. Ps Dennis Balcombe also presented a few books written by him to each of us and to our church.

Then we departed for the Luohu Port to get the books over the border from Hong Kong to Shenzhen. Sam Liew, Raymond Wong and I made it through without being checked by the customs. However, Steven Lee's suitcase and backpack were scanned by the X-ray machine as instructed by one of the customs officials. God is mighty! No action was taken against Steven, his suitcase or backpack. All 124 copies of the Shepherd's Staff were successfully delivered to Shenzhen RCMI co-worker.

On the second day, we started our journey earlier. Encouraged by the successful first border crossing, we intended to bring even more books. I had chosen a suitcase with wheels to lighten the load my arms needed to carry. We took the same route and arrived at the Luohu Port before noon. Soon we realized that only one passageway was opened for travelers. Almost all travelers had their luggage scanned by the X-ray machine.

All of us were stopped by the customs official and ordered to open up our suitcases for checking. Being the first to be checked, Raymond made the effort to argue with the official and made it through with all the books he carried.
However, the books in the suitcases of the rest of us were detained. Only the few books in our backpacks were allowed to be carried over the border. We managed to take altogether 49 books into Shenzhen on that day.

Overall, our days were successful and we shared the joy with the RCMI contacts at Shenzhen who treated us warmly. All the 173 spiritual books will be delivered locally to bless those needed. We thank God for this exciting experience, His peace upon us and His protection upon us during our detention at the customs.



Posted outside Lo Wu border checkpoint

If We Don't Know What To Pray, It Doesn't Matter

By Ruth Lew

Oftentimes during corporate prayer, when we are taken into the depths of worship, beautiful tongues in unknown languages will flow out from us in songs and in verbal utterances.

This is praying in the spirit. It is yielding ourselves to the Holy Spirit to allow Him to pray or sing through us in an unknown language. To pray or sing in tongues is to pray or sing in the spirit.

1 Cor 14:2 GNV "Those who speak in strange tongues do not speak to others but to God because no one understands them. They are speaking secret truths by the power of the Spirit."

It is a "prayer language" capable of leading us into extended hours of prayer.

Romans 8:26-28 The Message "Meanwhile the moment we get tired waiting, God's Spirit is right alongside us all along. **If we don't know what to pray, it doesn't matter. He (the Holy Spirit) does our praying in and for us, making prayers out of our wordless sighs, our aching groans**. He knows us far better than we know ourselves, knows our pregnant condition and keeps us present before God. That's why every detail in our lives of love for God is worked into something good"

Praying in the spirit makes prayer a joy, not a task. Praying in the spirit is easy because it flows from our relationship with the Holy Spirit. Praying in the spirit plunges us into the depths of God's love and keeps us under the shelter of His wings.

4 reasons to keep on praying in the spirit:

1. **Keeps us in the love of God**
   Jude 20-21 "But you, beloved, building yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life."

2. **Keeps us from false teachers/deception**
   Jude 19-20 "These are sensual persons, who cause divisions, not having the Spirit. But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit…."



3. **Keeps us on the victor's side**
   Eph 6:18 "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints"

4. **Keeps us edified in the Lord**
   1 Cor 14:4a "He who speaks in tongues edifies himself" How do we stay focus as "the mind is unfruitful"? Picture the face of the person being prayed for or picture the global map of the nation or the name of the city or simply "speak" the name of JESUS, JESUS, JESUS over and over again in your mind. Sooner or later, the Lord will reveal the face of the person or picture of the nation being prayed for.

However to be balanced in our prayer life, we need to know that although praying in tongues is needful, praying in understanding is equally important. Both are interdependent, not independent. Both are complementary, not competing. Both are integrated, not separated. Both enrich and enhance our prayer life.

It would do us well to pray both in the Spirit as well as in understanding.

1 Cor 14:15 "I will pray with the spirit and I will also pray with understanding. I will sing with the spirit, I will also sing in understanding"

Here Are Some Other Testimonies....

"Praying in the Spirit helps me to pray according to the will of God, tap into the wisdom of God and to speak directly to God" – Carrie Chow

"Praying in the Spirit helps me to overcome the natural, grow my spiritual muscle, have breakthroughs, energizes my spirit man, pray more effectively and brings me into the presence of God" – Selina Chern

"Praying in the Spirit helps me to stay connected to God" – Nitta

"Praying in the Spirit helps me in spiritual warfare" – Rachel

"Praying in the Spirit builds up my faith" – Vincent Foong

"Praying in the Spirit is my daily source of strength. Not only do I hear His voice, I also have His peace. I am able to experience Psalm 27:4 – one thing I ask of the Lord, that I will seek after, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord and to enquire in His temple" – Amy Lim

"Praying in the Spirit helps me hear His voice better" – Sumi Cheong

A Personal Testimony

The Power of Tongues
by Ruth Lew

I pray in the Spirit often in my office before work starts. I will visualize the work I have to do for the day and begin praying in the Spirit for wisdom.

There was one piece of work that had been a disaster from day one. Every time I produce the 30-page monthly report, the boss would scold me non-stop for producing an incoherent piece of work with numbers/calculations that did not jive. I was so stressed out that I would break out in cold sweat just thinking of the task. My heart would start pounding (panic attack) even before I could take up the pen to start drafting. She said that she felt so ashamed to present such a report that was full of so many mathematical and grammatical mistakes to the board. 100% of the assignment would have to be thrown out each time until the third or fourth drafts.

I was so fed up with being scolded that I determined to spend many hours just praying in the Spirit visualizing the report in my mind asking the Lord for help! I asked the Lord to show me to the detail how to format and write the report. Yes, I (who am not good in Maths) had to ask the Lord to help me churn out numbers that make sense!

Praise the Lord that the ideas came to me over a one-month period! It was so clear (like a high resolution computer image) even to the pie-charts, the calculations and the diagrams! I quickly sought the help of my IT-savvy officer to put what I saw during my prayer time on paper. It was so well done that for the first time (after 2 years of incessant scolding with regard to this assignment) my boss actually signed off the paper at first glance and even wrote a remark on the paper "Good". Thank you Lord for downloading wisdom to me while praying in the Spirit. God is excellent in counsel and wonderful in His working!

Xee Semester 4

Equipping Today's Generation With The Gospel

By Helen How

Xee is an exciting product of the Evangelism Explosion discipling and equipping ministry. It was primarily designed to reach those of Generation X (age group 30 to late 40's) and younger. However, other generations have also been found to prefer Xee as well. In our church, through Xee, we can be equipped to step out of our comfort zone, find common ground with our peers, and share the gospel clearly and effectively.

This year our church Xee Semester 4 started on 23 Feb 2014 and ended on 22 June 2014. There were 5 teams. The trainees were young adults and youths: Rebekah Foong, Ann Teh, Germaine Khoo, Ow Wen Han, Christian Foong, Zachary Yong. Our team of trainers were Helen How, Chin Loo Yee, Foong Wai Pooi, Jimmy Yong, Margaret Lee, Karen Sim, Alice Tan, Tham Soon Hoe, Lee Soon Nyen

Here are some incredible and exciting testimonies from the trainers and trainees.



Ann Teh - Trainee

Joining Xee has been one of the best decisions in my life. I knew that the Holy Spirit was stirring my heart while I was praying about joining the Xee training. To me being a Christian is not just about reading His Word daily or going to church and worshipping Him on Sunday. I believe it has to be more than that. This step of faith that I had taken has helped me to grow so much more spiritually and in His Word. I used to be afraid of sharing my faith because I did not know how to start, what to start with or how to answer when questioned. It terrified me. However, this program has helped me to learn that we shouldn't be afraid about sharing our faith to others as God has the power to save. It is not us but Him.

I also recognized that as a Christian, not sharing the gospel and the things that He had done for us is being selfish and sinful, as Christ has commanded us to go and share as His disciples. Therefore, I really thank God for speaking to me and encouraging me to boldly take the step to commit myself in joining Xee. Now that I have finished the semester, I feel so much more confident in sharing my faith with others. It has brought me so much joy knowing that I am doing God's work. To see many people professed Him to be their Saviour makes me feel even more fulfilled and happy with my life. Thank God for Xee!

Rebekah Foong - Trainee

Xee has really made a great impact in my life. I personally did not have a very clear understanding on the Gospel. Joining Xee has really helped me understand the Gospel in an easier and detailed way. I am more confident of sharing my story and the Gospel to others now.

The training has helped me to assure professing Christians around me who do not actually understand what it means to be truly a Christian. I have really learnt a lot from the trainers through the lessons and the Connect Activities. This Xee semester was an eye-opener for me to many things. Reaching out by sharing the gospel and seeing souls saved have greatly encouraged me. I am grateful to be doing God's work to glorify His name.





Ow Wen Han - Trainee

After joining Xee, I fully understood how to present the gospel in a non-threatening way to those who have not heard the gospel. Through Xee, I have been equipped to reach out and share the gospel to other people. Every time I share the gospel with a prospect, it actually renewed my faith and drew me closer to God.

Xee is a tool for me to share the gospel with my siblings, friends and even strangers. Before I joined Xee, I was often scared to share my faith with my friends as I feared rejection. After the Xee semester, my understanding of who God is has deepened, and it has helped me to overcome my fear. Now, I am bold enough to take the initiative to share the gospel with whomever I meet at any place and time. In this Xee semester, we were also required to have two prayer partners. We prayed together on a weekly basis. I found this helpful and powerful because whenever there were Connecting Activities with people, I really felt God touching their hearts for Him.

Christian Foong - Trainee

At the beginning of the semester, it was a bit difficult adjusting to unit sessions and the Connect Activities. On the Sundays I was serving in the worship team, I found myself dozing off in the middle of the lessons because of the long hours. As I continued on into the semester, I realized what I learnt in Xee was very useful to me in sharing the gospel. And that made me want to know more and learn more. I became very attentive.

The thing I found most interesting and impactful was the illustration story for each section of the Gospel presentation. The stories helped me personally to understand clearly the importance of salvation through Jesus Christ alone. I believe these stories will also help to illustrate the Gospel clearly to the prospects too. I will definitely continue to use this Xee tool to share the Gospel to the people around me as God gives me the opportunities.





Germaine Khoo - Trainee

Xee wasn't what I expected. The classes were not boring, but they were surprisingly fun and interactive. Xee has an interesting way of sharing Jesus and the gospel to people. I enjoyed being in this year's Xee semester.

Being in this training makes me realise that people whether friends or strangers are willing to share their lives with us when we are willing to talk and connect with them. We just need to make the first move to approach them. This Xee training has definitely equipped me to share the good news better. Now I am confident to make the first move to share about Jesus.



Foong Wai Pooi - Trainer

This Xee semester was special to me in many ways. One of the highlights was that all the trainees were made up of youth and young adults. These young trainees brought with them enthusiasm and energy befitting their youth. Each class and Connect Activity was vibrant and full of fun, and this made the teaching very enjoyable. Even though the atmosphere was light, each trainee got down to business and committed to the Xee learning process. They "took the bull by its horns" as they say, and completed their reading assignments and Connect Activity on time. Personally, I marvelled at their ability to remember the gospel story and the composed demeanour in sharing to the prospects. I certainly did not fare as well in my first EE outing.

Another highlight was to see my two children – Christian and Rebekah, participating in Xee. Knowing that we cannot force them to take part, it was an answered prayer for me and Soon Hoe to see them sign up voluntarily. This Xee semester has been a family affair for us. My prayer is that Xee will continue to be a lifestyle for me, the trainers and trainees long after the semester ends. I am already looking forward to the next Xee semester, believing for more young people to sign up for Xee.

Karen Sim -Trainer

Thank God for Xee Semester 4. I have joined Xee 4 times. The first time was as a trainee and subsequently, as a trainer. To be a trainer! Wow! What a responsibility! But in fact I didn't really train. I just practised what I had learnt and presented the Gospel while the trainee observed and learnt from it. All in all, we learnt together. Xee is what I would call "Practice makes perfect" and "Making evangelism a lifestyle". If we knocked against any walls, There was no need to worry as during our reporting and brainstorming time together, we would find the best solution. I thank God that He has lifted me to a higher level in my spiritual life. As a trainer, The Lord has, through Xee, given me boldness to start a conversation, call up my long lost friends who have never heard from me for years and asking them to meet with me. Even though I didn't really share the whole Gospel with them, nevertheless, I have started connecting with them. Some of them did not accept my invitation to meet but at least I have made contact with them. Perhaps I can connect with them in my next semester. Xee is interesting and it is all about connecting, meeting and sharing the Gospel to others.





Helen How - Trainer

This semester was especially meaningful because my co-trainer and trainee were teenagers. It was interesting learning from each other even though we are of different generations.

One exciting Connect Activity was when our team did street evangelism. It was the first time for my co-trainer and trainee. After gaining courage and speaking to a few strangers, they were roaring to go and looking forward to another time. I encouraged them to share where ever they are and at any time. We have to purpose in our heart to intentionally share the gospel, to be His witness as a way of life. The Holy Spirit is our Partner in evangelism all the time.

I was really amazed at all our young trainees. They were fast learners, very committed, enthusiastic, full of energy and eager to learn. It had been a joy to impart our experiences and knowledge to them as they grasped concepts easily and applied them well. I was very delighted to see our team catching the vision - 'pray and go'. That really touched my heart as I saw them on fire for souls and desiring to be trainers in the coming semester. What a joy it is to our Father God to see His children labour in His harvest field and equipping others along the way too. Xee program is indeed discipling the next generation in HGC for our Lord's glory.

We would like to thank our church, all our prayer partners for praying with us and for us. We appreciate all the trainers and trainees for their commitment and faithfulness to the training. We are in this together to build the kingdom of God.

We pray that those who would like to be equipped to share the gospel do seek the Lord whether it is your time to be in the Xee semester 5 in 2015.



Chin Loo Yee - Trainer

This is my second year as an associate trainer. This time round, I shared the whole presentation of the gospel many times and I am more confident because practice makes perfect. In the beginning I was still nervous but slowly, I gained boldness and managed to share more naturally with the prospects.

Again and again, I am reminded that the end time is near. Jesus is coming back. I am very concerned about the salvation of souls especially my family members. Now that I am equipped, I will pray and go share the good news. I believe when I do my best, God will do the rest.

Xee is really a good evangelistic discipleship tool where we have classroom teachings and going out to share the gospel. It's super exciting! The joy and satisfaction is indescribable. Listening to and sharing each other's experiences and testimonies encourage me to go on and makes my day! Don't believe me? Come and experience for yourself then in the next semester.

Lee Soon Nyen - Trainer



This semester I was given the opportunity to be a co-trainer with Soon Hoe. Zachary was our trainee. We had a great start with our facilitators or trainers teaching well in the classroom lessons. I observed that all of us were having a lot of fun. Trainees were very eager to learn and participated actively in the discussions.

In the semester we were required to do 10 Connect Activities. It was challenging for our team because we were staying far from each other, but we managed to work out our time and completed our connect activities. I wish to thank our prayer partners who regularly prayed with us for prospects and opportunities to share.

This semester we were also challenged to do street evangelism. It was my first time and it was exciting as we managed to engage with 3 prospects that day. They happened to be my customers from my former working place, CIMB bank, whom I have not met for many years. Hallelujah, praise the Lord!

It was a blessing for me to be involved in Xee semester 4. Indeed I felt the satisfaction of being a trainer especially seeing Zachary sharing with ease. All the trainees finished well. I pray the Lord will open doors for us to share the Gospel wherever we may be. I am looking forward to the next semester. I pray that more young adults and youths will step forward to join us.



Soon Hoe - Trainer

Yey! Yey! …. Yey! Yey! Yey! X……e…e…! Hallelujah! We have come to the end of another semester of Xee. Praise the Lord and all Glory to His Name that we have trained and discipled another 6 trainees. I am thankful that He has enabled and empowered me to go through this Xee Semester. This Xee semester is special, significant and impactful to me (I believe to my family) for many reasons.

1. All the trainees were from the next generation with two of them being my own children. For this I am very thankful to God. My prayer is that my children be so grounded in the Gospel that it would guard their hearts.
2. In this semester, I found myself more fluent and comfortable in using Xee to connect and share the Gospel.
3. Through laying down myself and putting Xee training and trainees above my own needs, God has shown Himself faithful. I obtained good results for my Early Childhood Education course despite having missed my tutorials on 3 Sundays. (definitely not advocating truancy, I had to work harder at studying myself and be dependent on Him),
4. The trainee I had helped trained last semester was my co-trainer for this semester. I can see that Xee is a good discipling tool.

I pray more young people would want to be trained and discipled in the coming semester.



WATER BAPTISM
Testimony

Desiring To Be Baptised At A Tender Age
By Bryan Rau



My name is Bryan Rau and I am 6 years old. Early this year (2014) I invited Jesus into my heart because I wanted Him to become Lord and Saviour of my life. When Jesus came into my heart, I was filled with the Holy Spirit and wanted to be baptised. I wanted to overcome my fears and get rid of my old self and be a new person living in faith for God. I love Him very much.

God Never Abandoned Me Despite My Disobedience
By Kelly Han Yuet Ngor



My name is Kelly Han. I am 38 years old, married with one son. I was born into a Buddhist family. My dad is a staunch Buddhist and we used to go to Chinese temples to give our donations.

I studied in BBGS and was required to join one co-curriculum activity. I chose Christian Union for convenience because it was held on Fridays. As I attended the services, I found hope in life, and felt God's love and peace. My heart was touched sometime in 1992 and I accepted the Lord Jesus as my Saviour. I joined some church camps and felt God was so real.

God was good and granted me a place in USM, Penang, after form 5. It was challenging being away from my family at such an age but God was with me. I joined the Christian fellowship and was taken care of by a team of seniors and attended church every Sunday.

After graduation, I returned to KL to work and decided to pursue MBA. Since I studied on weekends, I neglected God and became too engaged with my career life. I then met my husband who is a non-believer until now. My husband and his family respect me as a Christian and do not interfere.

Both my husband and I are Alpha Thalassemia carriers so when I conceived there was a 25% chance that my baby would not survive. I prayed hard and with God's blessing, I have a normal child even at the first attempt. I was thankful to the Lord but had never ending excuses not to attend church due to my hectic career. I also had no time for my family members and my health condition worsened. God was good and gave me a new job that operates from home. I knew this is God's perfect arrangement for me to bring me back to Him. God did not abandon me despite my disobedience. God cares for me and my family. This is a very good opportunity for me to obey His Word and declare my faith and love publicly.

God Is Real & Loving

By Irene Yee



My name is Irene Yee. When I was a little girl, my mother used to bring me along to church to listen to the Word of God. At that time because I was still young, I didn't quite understand God's Word.

When my mother moved away to Singapore to work, my aunt who is a Buddhist raised me up. Despite that, I never had a desire to practise or follow any of the Buddhist teachings. Instead, I felt closer to Jesus Christ.

In 2013, after my mother passed away, I became very down and depressed. In my depression, I decided to go to church to pray towards the end of 2013. That was the first time I came to HGC. After attending the Sunday Service, I was much better and felt relieved. I knew God had heard my prayer. On that day, I gave my heart to Jesus and accepted Him as my God and Saviour.

Since then, I have attended FOD 1 (Foundation in Discipleship). Through the teaching of God's Word by Sis Wai Keng and others, I have learnt and come to understand more about the Gospel and the life of a disciple in Christ. Now, I always pray to God when I need help, ask Him for forgiveness for my wrongdoings and to guide me daily. I have also attended the Water Baptism Class.

My beloved mother was never baptised but I wanted to be baptised and be a part of His family, now that I have come to fully understand that Jesus Christ is truly LORD.

Thus on Sunday, 29 June 2014, I declared to the world that I believe in the LORD God and acknowledged that only through believing in Jesus Christ that I am saved and loved.

Jesus Has Never Left Me

By Chan Hon Ming



I came to know the Lord Jesus Christ when I was a young man in my teens. It was my Aunty Janet who first introduced me to God's love. I attended her Bible Study classes in her house and slowly, I found myself drawn towards the greatness and love of God. Aunty Janet presented me with my first Bible which I still have until now.

In 1972, I had to leave the country to look for a job. I continued visiting churches whenever I could, to find peace and to pray to Jesus my Saviour. When I returned to Kuala Lumpur after about a year, Aunty Janet had by that time emigrated to Australia. However, I continued to reach out to Jesus and attended prayer meetings in a Baptist Church whenever possible.

As the years rolled by, I was consumed with starting a family and building up my career in the hospitality industry that I spent lesser time visiting God's house. However, I continued to buy Christian books occasionally and read about Jesus' life and how He brought God's love to mankind.

Furthermore, I was my parents' eldest son. Having the responsibilities of and expectation on an eldest son made it a struggle for me to follow the Lord totally.

After my parents passed away two years ago in 2012, I finally decided to follow God wholeheartedly, to know Him more and to seek His plans for my life. I acknowledge that it is only through Jesus Christ that I have redemption and a renewed life. On 29 June 2014, my wife and I were baptised.

Our Purpose In Life

By Justin Yong



During the recent combined youth LG on 5 July, 2014, HGC's "Keng" Youth warmly welcomed Ps Jit Pang to share a message entitled "Our purpose in life." This message was targeted specifically at Christian youths and their priorities as disciples of Jesus. As a follow up to his sharing, the VOH invited some youths to attend a discussion session and to share their thoughts on the message.

This discussion was facilitated by 4 reflective questions prepared by Ps Jit Pang and based on the passages, 2 Kings 7 and Mark 12:29. The following is the summary of the discussion session shared by the youths.

Question 1 – What is the mission and purpose of the church (individually or corporately)?

Joshua Sian: Well, individually we are called to be like Christ. We need to grow in His kingdom and to share the gospel. As a church, corporately, we need to unite with one another, organise missions and to spread the gospel to further places.
Loo Yee: Our purpose as disciples of Christ is to show God's love to people around us and not to be judgemental. All in all, we need to live our lives to glorify God. Corporately, we need to love each other and to build unity in the body of Christ.

Grace Lee: Personally, we have to live the Christ-like life in all areas and not just on a Sunday. We also need to love our enemies and show God's grace in life. Collectively, we need to be dependent on the church together. Engaging in social work and evangelism must be a priority for our lives. This is because God would open opportunities to share the gospel through social work.

Festus Chen: We are called to be different and to show good works and love for our enemies. As a church, we need to work together in helping people in and out of the church.

Josiah Chin: Our mission is to share the gospel to others and to unite corporately as a body of Christ to help each other. We must also be active in sharing our life testimony to others.

Jonathan Leong: Individually our mission is to share the gospel and save souls. As a church we need to connect with other churches in fellowship, fast and in working together.

Question 2 – What and how does it mean to love our neighbours who do not know Jesus? Is there any sort of boundaries to who our neighbours are?

The youths all agreed that there are no boundaries to who our neighbours are. As long as they are people, we are called to love them. However, Joshua did mention that we ought to exercise caution when sharing our testimony to Muslims. As a whole, the youths said that to love our neighbour, we ought to be sincere and truthful in our relationship with them. We are not to consider ourselves higher than people who are lost, but instead to put ourselves at their level and love them. There must be trust in the relationship, genuine concern, to have fun and only at a later time engage the gospel. The youths also think it important to make time

to relate face to face to love our neighbours instead of only building friendship through social media.



Question 3 – If we say we love God and love our neighbour (world), then do we make a priority in our lives to share our lives with them? Why or why not?

Most of the youths responded that it is a priority in their lives to spend time and share their lives with their pre-believer friends. Joshua mentioned an example during national service where he befriended an atheist and a Buddhist. He made the connection and subsequently shared his testimony with them. He believes that by sharing his live, people can see Christ. This will stir a desire in them to know Him more especially when they are down. Loo Yee shared that it is already part of her lifestyle to share her life with her friends. Jonathan gave the example of how he used to invite his non-Christian classmates to the Christian Fellowship and spend time at meals after school.

Question 4 – Are you engaging with the world or people right where they are at or only when they are in church?

Some youths mentioned that they are making an effort to engage their communities particularly by finding opportunities to chat and spend time with their friends out of church settings. They realise the importance of being natural in their conduct and building bridges outside. As an example, Josiah mentioned how he would cycle with his neighbours who are of different races, and in return, his Malay friends would invite him for their "kenduri". Some mentioned how they befriended lonely classmates in class and helped them out, while others mentioned inviting friends for Saturday Youth after their Saturday classes. There were some youths who also highlighted a difficulty in engaging with their college group compared to when they were still in secondary schools.



Life Game

By Racheal Lee



What is Life Game? A game that simulates the real world? But how does it run? Those were the questions a lot of people asked during the registration and the truth was revealed when the camp took place from 19 – 21 Sept 2014. As much as I would like to share about the details of the camp here, I (and also all the participants) am restricted because we made a promise not to reveal too much information about it. I will summarise what we did there.

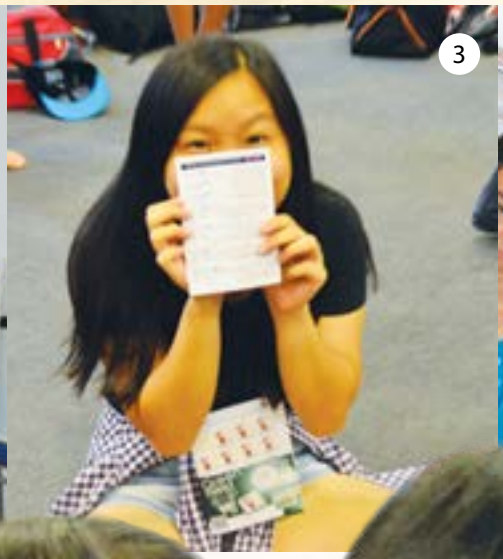
A total of 95 people took part in the camp that was held in the Malaysia Bible Seminary. Every participant was to start at the age of 15 and they could live out their whole lives however they wished. Just like in the real life, they could get an education, a good-paying job, purchase a house, get married, raise a family and so on. They also had to take care of their personal needs like food, clothing and health. Of course, they would also face life's downside and consequences such as robbery, accidents and sicknesses – and deal with them.

Some "died" at young age before they managed to do the things they wanted to. Some were given a second chance to live again. Some retired at an old age with a big fat bank account. No one knew how long they would live, before they meet their Creator face to face.

As we reflect on the entire game at the end of the camp, some of us realised that the priority we placed in Life Game is similar to (if not exactly the same as) our real lives. The game allows


1


2


3


4











us to see our lives from a different perspective; and helps us reflect on whether any adjustment is needed. It also helps us to think about our lives, not only on the "what" and "how" but also the "why". It also challenged the participants to commit to Christ for salvation; to commit to following Him(with heart and with action); commit to sharing Christ as well as serving Him full time in ministry.

Photos:

1 *Joel Liew trying to pepare for exam*
2 *Sharing testimony on the last day*
3 *Facing exams*
4 *Arrival to Free City*
5 *A group photo for remembrance*
6 *Jonathan Liew interpreting for the Sunday Sermon*
7 *Arrival to the camp site*
8 *Distributing camp T-shirt*
9 *Some participants from HGC & AMC*













Cuenca, Batangas, Manila

By Ruth Lew

My maiden mission trip to Philippines, May 30 to June 7, 2014, can be said to be a record-breaker. This is because of the many firsts that I had experienced during this trip. In fact of the seven of us who came along, at least five of us were first-timers.

It was my first time leading a mission team of this size. I was not sure what to do but I thank God for the prayers of HGCians and the 'obedience' of team members. I was particularly concerned when Festus came down with fever on Monday, 2 Jun. As Allison and I sponged him to bring the temperature down, I wanted so much to text Ps Khor to ask him to pray for Festus's healing. Somehow the Holy Spirit reminded me that Ps Khor had been praying for us during morning prayers and that God would heal Festus so that he could enjoy the rest of the mission trip. Praise God the fever came down the following day after a night of rest, water and Panadol! We took turns to lead the morning devotions, prayed and worshipped in the Spirit and also had fun and laughter teasing one another during our first mission trip together as a team.

It was my first time preaching a message on the Baptism of the Holy Spirit. This was at the request of Ps Willy Rufinowho who was conducting a 2-month discipleship training session for church leaders and members of the Cuenca Bible Christian Church. Both he and his wife, Vicky, had been faithfully conducting a discipleship series every Saturday. They wanted to cap it with a final series of teaching on the Holy Spirit.

We had a truly awesome time. All our messages flowed with each other. The final session with Allison was to put into practice all that we had taught them for the past two days. I heard the sound of mighty rushing wind while Dorothy saw rain falling on the people. Many young people were in tears. Psalm, Ps Willy's daughter, saw a vision of halo around people's heads. The message was that we had been cleansed and had received the Holy Spirit. We are to continue to walk in the Spirit and to keep the halo around our heads burning brightly!

It was my first time praying for people to receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit; and so many of them spoke in tongues. Many broke down and cried when Tim and I led them to pray the prayer of repentance, some crying uncontrollably. Other team members prayed for the sick and people were falling all over the place, touched by the power of the Holy Spirit!

It was also my first time receiving a certificate nicely framed up thanking me for being part of the discipleship training. For all of us who had received the certificate, we were deeply touched. When I held the certificate with my name on it, signed by the senior pastors, I felt that I had graduated from Bible School. I had learnt so much from the Christians of the Cuenca Bible Christian Church – their humility, hospitality and their eagerness to serve us with their excellent meals, transportation for the seven of us and blessing us with a free holiday to Tagaytay (a volcano island with stunning scenery)! It was something unparalleled to other mission trips I had

gone on. Like one of my team members said, we truly felt appreciated!

To my shock and surprise, we were even given a big offering on our last day! It was the first time I received a love offering after ministering. Having ministered in different mission trips in the past, I have more often than not ended up giving things away to the locals. Joy filled our hearts when we decided with one heart to sow the money back to the church!

For the first time I had the opportunity to pray for the municipal council of Cuenca, a district of Batangas (province of the Philippines). I was asked to share my testimony during the flag-raising ceremony with the workers of the municipal office and to pray for the city of Cuenca. That morning as we took turns to pray during our morning devotion, one of our sisters prayed for the gates of Cuenca to be opened to welcome the King of Glory. I decided to share from Psalm 24 and to lead the council staff gathered on the open space of the municipal council grounds to pray for clean hands, pure hearts asking God to forgive them for turning their souls to an idol. Then I asked them to invite Jesus into their hearts and into the city. At least 40 council employees including the Mayor of Cuenca opened their hearts and the gates of the city to the King of Glory!

It was also my first time witnessing to so many people. Armed only with the tract 'Steps to peace with God', I went through the 4-steps with more than 10 people, leading them to pray the sinner's prayer, at the mall, at a 7/11 outlet, at a tourist spot, in a home, at Payatas (a slum area in Manila) and at a Dunking Donuts outlet. I also managed to distribute a number of tracts to several people that I met during this trip.

It was also the first time I met a humble Korean missionary, Rev Lee, who had started a school in Batangas and a church in the area to reach out to the young people there. In fact Ps Willy shared with us that he grew up in BPC (Batangas Presbyterian Church) and that his life had been much impacted by Rev Lee's 25 years of ministry in Batangas. This trip is an eye-opener for me as I could see how Ps Willy and Vicky treasured their time with us in HGC. They shared with their church that we made their family felt so at home with our love and hospitality during their short time in Malaysia.

They also implemented many of the things that they saw in HGC in the Cuenca Church for e.g. the discipleship training sessions leading to the possibility of starting discipleship groups in the different Barangays (similar to our life groups) with the possibility of turning the discipleship groups into daughter churches. They brought back the DISC profile which they had learnt from Ps Nicholas Choo and let their senior pastors do it (in so doing they discovered the personalities of their senior pastor and wife). They even adopted the format of our membership profile, the pre-service prayers, the prayers during services, the 'harp & bowl' prayer and worship sessions during their prayer meetings!

I have been so blessed. I have been so enriched. My heart is bursting with joy!

Salamat po Jesus! Paalam Cuenca, Batangas and Manila! We will be back!

Photos :
1 *Team with the Mayor of Cuenca*
2 *Praying for the Baptism of the Holy Spirit and healing*
3 *Ministry to the workers of municipal council of Cuenca*
4 *Photo with Cuenca Church members*

A Mighty Move Of The Spirit

By Allison Chen



Praise the Lord! God is good. Initially I was so fearful of this trip to Cuenca, Philippines. I had to prepare a message and there were so many other things to handle by myself besides having to take care of my son Festus who joined the team. It was quite taxing but God gave me the assurance and peace that He would go with me and be with me during the whole trip. I had His peace and I kept on trusting Him.

True enough when we reached Cuenca, the Holy Spirit was with us, as always. We had surplus food to eat and when we prayed for people, they were touched by the Holy Spirit. A lady, who said that she received the Holy Spirit fire, shook uncontrollably. When we stayed at her place, she wanted to be prayed for again.

When the final session came, I prayed for the Holy Spirit to move mightily. The Holy Spirit came like rushing wind and rain. Many were touched and cried. People were drawn to the place like in the book of Acts. When we sang in the Spirit, I felt angels singing with us too. It was so angelic that a lady, who heard the singing while she was at home, was drawn to the church. Even a man carrying his baby was also drawn to the church by the singing in the Spirit.

PTL! It was so awesome. All glory to God!

Jesus, My Firm Foundation..... Growing In The Word

By Loke Wai Keng

Jesus, You are my firm foundation, I know I can stand secure….I put my trust in Your Holy Word….I have a living hope, I have a future….God has a plan for me, of this I am sure. Your Word is faithful, mighty in power…. God will deliver me, of this I am sure.

Jesus at the end of His teaching on the Sermon on the Mount said, "Therefore, whoever hears these saying of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock; and when the rain descended and the winds blew and beat on the house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock. Matt 7:24-25

There is no other foundation that is worth building on other than Jesus (1 Cor 3:11). If what we have trusted in has moved, or our faith has been shaken or has faded, it could be because our beliefs are not really anchored on Jesus Christ. He is our foundation stone. He is the basis for everything we are and everything we do. And most importantly, He has the most wonderful and glorious future for us. When we give ourselves to Him, fully entrusting ourselves to Him, we will really begin to be what He has made us to be.

The laying of the foundation of the Word of God began at a very early stage of my Christian life. As a young believer, the Lord blessed me with a friend who helped me understand the importance of establishing a daily devotional life. She was the one who led me to Christ. She brought me to a church that placed great emphasis on studying the Bible. I grew up in a church culture where every member young and old would have a Bible study support group to attend. It was there that I discovered my gift in teaching the Word as I grew spiritually.

A very gifted church elder taught me the Word thoroughly. I benefitted very much under him for over 11 years. However, when he was transferred out of KL, my world of Bible Study began to dwindle. Perhaps, in God's wisdom, He took him away so that I would begin to look for my own spiritual food instead of depending on someone for so long. It was not until I joined YWAM that my horizon and scope of studying the Bible began to expand. God brought many different mentors and teachers both locally and internationally to equip me in studying and teaching the Bible to different age groups and cultures. I was given the responsibility to lead the Biblical Core Course for several years and through it the Lord opened doors for me to teach in different bases.

The strength and depth of this foundation is very much related to the understanding of the Word of God and allowing it to transform our lives. A shallow reading of the Word is insufficient. Ps 105:19 clearly states, "Until the time that His Word came to pass, the Word of the Lord tested him." Whenever God gives us any Word, He will bring us into situations where we need to take hold of the truth of this Word and apply it into our lives.

Each time when I prepare to teach a book or a certain topic, the Lord would take me on to learn the practical aspects before I can really teach it. The Word of God has to be tested in my life before I can teach it effectively. James 3:1 issues a very stern warning, "My brethren, let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment." Teaching the Word is like a built-in warning alarm system. It helps to check, first of all, if what I am teaching is in line with my life and character. It is always a life of grace, trusting in the Lord's enabling, so that at the end when someone is helped, God gets all the glory. I am still in process of being pruned.

In recent months, I went through a very severe testing of my faith where my foundation was shaken to the core. During that season, I experienced a whole array of emotions from despair to fear, uncertainty to anger. I felt the whole demonic host wanting to squash me of the confidence I have in the Lord and His Word - suggesting to me that life was not worth living and it was pointless teaching the Word. "Where is your God?" "Does He care?" These were snickering questions the enemy posted to rob me of my peace and joy in the Lord.

Yet with a glimmer of hope in His Word and a weakened faith, I hung on to God and His promises that He is faithful, that He will not fail or leave me but sustain me in this agonizing season. It was also the persistent prayers and faithful counsels of friends in and out of church that helped me through the dark patches of my life. In all these, I am learning to practice what I believe God has said in His Word, so that the Word can transform my life.

The prophet in Amos 8:11 wrote, "Behold, the days are coming," says the Lord GOD, "That I will send a famine on the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord." Is this prophecy meant for the people in the time of prophet Amos? Will there be a time that there will be a famine of the Word of God in our land? We cannot tell but events that are happening in the world today are pointing to us the nearness of the coming of the Lord. Will we keep strengthening our foundation on Jesus through His Word so that when any winds of adversity come along our way, we can be like the wise man who built his house upon the Rock and remain immoveable?

How To Deal With Stress?

By Ruth Lew



Stress is caused by a few factors such as family problems, job problems, financial lack, poor health or even the death of someone close to you. There are some physical symptoms associated with stress such as a loss of energy, sleeplessness, loss of appetite, difficulty in breathing and in some cases an outbreak of rashes. For me, I know I am stressed when I get easily agitated with people. I have a tendency to snap at people in my office when I am under stress at work. I also know when I am under stress when I talk constantly or talk bad about the situation and the person who is the source of my stress.

How do we deal with stress?

Experts will tell you to 'attack' stress in 3 ways:

1. Lifestyle changes
2. Mental activities
3. Standing up for yourself

Some of the lifestyle changes recommended are adequate sleep, exercise, going for relaxing activities or simply to do the things you love. Sometimes even a change of diet will help, such as giving up oily food and meat for a more vegetable diet.

As for mental activities, psychologists will advice on avoiding negative thinking and to stop worrying about things which are not within our power to change or just to simply laugh at ourselves and not to take things seriously!

As for standing up for ourselves, experts recommend that it would be good to have a heart to heart talk with the person causing us all the stress to lay it off for a while or simply to get someone to share our stressful emotions with.

Do you know that Paul was a man under stress? He described his emotional condition vividly in 2 Cor 4:7 to 10, "But we have this treasure in earthen vessels that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us. We are hard-pressed on every side, yet not crushed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed— always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body."

In serving the Lord, Paul said that he was "hard-pressed". How many times have we been "hard-pressed" in meeting the deadlines of our bosses? Very often when an assignment is given, the expectation is delivery within the same hour!

How many times have we been "perplexed"? Things happen to us which we cannot understand. Loved ones die all of a sudden, leaving us with massive debts.

What about "persecution"? Maybe we do not face this yet but when we see the Bible Society being "invaded" or the way the "Allah" is tried in the courts, does it not give us a sense of frustration or just simply stressed out that we are unable to do anything about it?

What about being "struck down"? My good friend was "struck down" with breast cancer. She had to have her breasts removed to prevent the cancer from recurring. The stress of explaining her condition to her young children or simply trying to raise funds for treatment is very real.

The spiritual solution recommended by Paul is to "look within us" for help. Paul says there is a "treasure in earthen vessels that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us."

Paul was very realistic in dealing with stress. In fact he said that it made him feel like he was dying! He admitted that there was no way for us to resolve the stress in our lives except to call upon God for help. Truly the only way for us to be filled with the "excellence of the power" is to tap into the source of the power who is the Holy Spirit!

I find the following way is still the best way to resolve my stress-level in the office. Yes, it is good to try all the remedies proposed by experts but the real deal is this – praying in the Spirit daily to re-charge me daily is totally indispensable. I have tried it before, when I fail to pray for an hour daily, my colleagues label me "moody" but when I have spent an hour re-charging my spiritual battery I have a much happier and calmer disposition. I am also able to be more productive as wisdom and guidance will flow when the assignments are placed on my desk.

However if you are unable to do this due to the overwhelming pressure you are facing, then I suggest you start with sharing your problems with someone close to you and get them to pray with you until the storm blows over. Remember that tough times don't last but tough people do!



Expired Visa

By Daniel Lim

After several hours of travelling from Gui Yang, my wife and I had arrived at the reception of a hotel in Kunming. Our thoughts were to check into the hotel quickly, have a warm shower and then to enjoy a bowl of hot local noodles to satisfy our hungry stomachs. Suddenly, the hotel lobby manager exclaimed, "Mr Lim your visa has expired! You can't stay in the hotel. We have to report you to the police for overstaying." Quickly, I checked my passport. It was not a joke. It was true. I had actually overstayed in China for 15 days and for every day that I overstayed, I must pay a fine of RMB 500.

At that moment I even considered going to the airport the following day and forcing my way through at the Immigration to return home to Malaysia. But my better sense prevailed. I called the Chinese Immigration Office to tell them about my situation. They told me that I would definitely be fined. I would have to reapply for a new visa and wait four days for the new visa. At that moment, I could see my air ticket going to waste but the most troubling part was I would not be able to return home with my wife. We had a lot of luggage. It was not possible for my wife to bring the entire luggage home by herself.

Since it was already 4pm in the afternoon, I didn't have the time to consider too much. I jumped on a taxi and headed for the Immigration Office immediately. While in the taxi, I contacted a sister asking her to intercede for us. The wonderful thing was she had just come out of a prayer meeting. She sent us prayer asking us to pray accordingly. The content of the prayer was that God's joy would be with us.

At the Immigration Office, the officer told me in no uncertain terms that I must pay a fine of RMB 7500; that I could not leave China the following day but must wait for 4 days. I appealed to him to lower the fine and requested to be given a new visa immediately so that I could return to Malaysia as scheduled. The officer told me that it was impossible. After appealing to him repeatedly, he called for another immigration officer to handle the situation.

Fifteen minutes later at 4.30pm, a very friendly middle aged male police officer came over. After understanding my situation, he immediately took me on his motorcycle to my hotel to register, took me to a bank to withdraw money and sent me to the Police Station to settle the fine. The police officer was actually off duty but he worked overtime to help me process the report of the fine. I was only fined 3 days which was RMB 1,500. By 6.30pm, the whole process was completed. Olive and I still had time for a dinner appointment.

On the following morning, I handed the fine report to the Immigration Office; and very quickly I received my new visa. Straightaway we rushed to the airport for departure clearance and I successfully flew home together with my wife.

I have worked in China for nearly 8 years, so I know the way the Chinese work. Honestly, I did not think that China Police could complete a fine report within two hours or that a new visa could be issued within a day. It is really unimaginable! But with God's presence there is favour and there are miracles. It should take 4 days to issue a new visa but within two hours I received mine. All the glory to our God Most High!



Giving Thanks For A Timely Custody

By Daniel Lim

As I remember my late mother who went home to the Lord in 2011 because of cancer, my heart is filled with deep regret. I was not able to be with her in her dying moments as I was overseas. I couldn't return in time to see her for the last time. How I wish I had spent more time with my mother when she was still alive.

Without my mum around, my younger sister Pek Kim, who was a cancer survivor, was left to take care of her own self and her daughter Hannah. During that time, both of them experienced the care, love and support of church brothers and sisters. They took care of my sister and her daughter in their times of need. Anyone observing the care and love shown would certainly be touched.

At the beginning of 2014, signs of breast cancer recurred in my sister's life. It was diagnosed later that the cancer had spread to her lungs. Realising that, she made plans to have her will done, made arrangements for her own funeral but most of all, to

legally transfer the custody of her daughter Hannah to Olive and I. We sought the advice of several lawyers as to how to go about doing it. Every lawyer told us that the process would take several months and the legal fees would come up to RM 10,000. Upon hearing that, we felt a little discouraged and helpless. But, the end of man is the beginning of God. We could only place our trust in the guidance of God. We called on Him to help us to complete the whole legal procedure of transferring the custody of Hannah within one month and at the lowest possible cost.

In our helplessness, God miraculously sent help to us. It was through a friend of my mother-in-law. This person specialised in handling custody cases in local magistrate courts. She understood the urgency of our situation and the last desire of my sister to witness the formal handing over of custody of her daughter over to us before she left this world. The court accelerated the whole procedure. Within one month, without having to pay any fees, we obtained the transfer file. It was done before my sister when home to the Lord. I remembered that day was my wife's birthday. She said that her birthday gift was having an additional daughter to love and respect her. As for my sister, her biggest wish was fulfilled that day. We were really grateful. In all things, we had the guidance and arrangement of God.

In the coming days and months, we will face many challenges. We need more wisdom and knowledge as to how to teach Hannah. There is now an additional member in our family. There will be readjustment of lives for all of us but we believe that as we continue to build God's altar in our home, we can surely raise up our three children whom God has entrusted to us to be vessels for His use and to glorify His name.



A Light For Christ

By Patrick Chong

20 March 2014 was a day I looked forward to with great eagerness, yet with slight apprehension. It was the day my SPM results would be released. I was uneasy, fearing the worst. In the days leading up to that day, I kept committing my results to God, praying that I would obtain excellent results. When I received my SPM result slip, I couldn't believe my eyes. It was beyond what I had asked for. 11A+! Praise the Lord, all glory to God!

I believe one of the reasons that I was able to perform well academically was because my parents cultivated in me the passion to learn since young. Before starting any formal education, my mother would read bedtime stories to me every night, which developed my interest in reading. When I was in kindergarten, my mother would revise with me before each exam. During my primary school years, my parents set the rule that I had to revise for an hour each day a week before the exams. Ever since then, I got used to doing my revision one or two weeks before my exams, and would spontaneously take up my books to study.

I have a few motivations to do well in my studies. The first and foremost is being a good Christian example, so that through it I could bring others to Christ. Studying hard and being a good example in school was extremely important to me because Jesus gave the instruction that I am to be the light and salt of the world and there were many non-Christians in school. As a follower of Christ, I tried my best to have good results because this would reflect on my learning attitude. I would pass up homework on time; treat my teachers with respect and when I can, offer to help teachers or friends who were in need. I paid attention to my own speech and avoided using rough or obscene language. When friends noticed all these and asked about it, it provided a very good opportunity to share with them about what I believe in.

The second is to honour my parents. If I am able to do well academically, I hope it will give them peace of mind and happiness. Besides, good results would increase my chances of securing a scholarship, which would in turn reduce the financial burden of my parents. Of course, I was also motivated to achieve good results so that I can further my studies in a good university or college and eventually to find a good job after I graduate.

I am currently studying International Baccalaureate (a pre-university course) at Taylor's College Sri Hartamas under the Maybank Foundation Scholarship. All my expenses are fully covered. I am so thankful to God for the way He has provided for me. After completing two years in Malaysia, I hope to pursue a degree in Chemical Engineering in the United States.

In closing, I would like to quote Jesus' words to His disciples, "But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you." (Matt 6:33)



ICIC – An Eye Opening Experience

By Lee Seol Mei

Praise the Lord that five of us from Yayasan Sunbeams Home could go to Chennai, India to attend the International Children Intercessors Conference (24 - 27 Jul 2014) under Royal Kids, Children House of Prayer (CHOP). God provided all our needs for the entire trip in a very short period of time. We can only marvel how God works so miraculously, leading us faithfully step by step. Even though we encountered some little obstacles along the way, God was always there to help us in our time of need.

In 1987, Father Anton Cruz, a Catholic Priest then, was led by some street children to an abandoned baby. They told him, "This baby has no father, no mother and is crying for milk. It's going to die. You are a Father. Take this baby to your church and give milk." Father Anton rushed the baby to a hospital but the baby died in his arms. This stirring event provoked Father Anton to rethink about his role as a Father. It inspired the birth of the ministry - "FATHER TO THE FATHERLESS" where he introduced God as the Father and treated every child as his own. Rescuing the "Trashes" of society and restoring them as "Treasures" in His sight. Providing these children with a future and raising them up as leaders.



Truly, it was an eye opening experience for me to see how the Royal Kids children prayed and interceded with such desperation. They cried, sang and danced earnestly to the Lord. They were mere children yet they were models for us, adults, who came from all over the world to learn. Participants were from Malaysia, Taiwan, China, Hong Kong, Myanmar, Singapore, Philippines and South Africa. Surprisingly, majority of the participants were Chinese who came as a church group. I hope next year our church can come as a group as well to

have this special encounter in India. I have no regrets coming; rather I have come back grateful for everything that we had experienced.

On the second day of the conference, all the participants were divided into 8 different groups to go for a whole day of prayer walk. We chose to go to the slum areas to reach out to the poor. A team of Indian children from Royal Kids joined us. We went from one slum area to another, the sight was truly sorry to see. Everywhere was just full of garbage, so dirty and smelly. Each slum was worse than the earlier one. The dwellers live in despair and had no way to change their situation. They are so poor and helpless.

In conclusion, make plans to join ICIC once in your life time, it will be worth it. You will never be the same again. Our God who worked a wonder in these Indian children, He can surely work a wonder in your life, to transform how you pray and worship Him… with fervency.







Our Prayer Answering God

By Renee Lim

As I am writing this article thanking God for my daughter Siobhan's life, I am also grieving for a friend of mine who just lost her daughter due to unknown cause. One can never anticipate what is going to happen next. Hence, we must really learn to give thanks for His grace in our life at all times.

God's grace, the meaning of "Siobhan", this is our story… Both Ian and I had been trying to have a child after we entered into marriage. However, despite our many efforts of getting ourselves ready mentally, physically and emotionally with the countless prayers, there was no news.

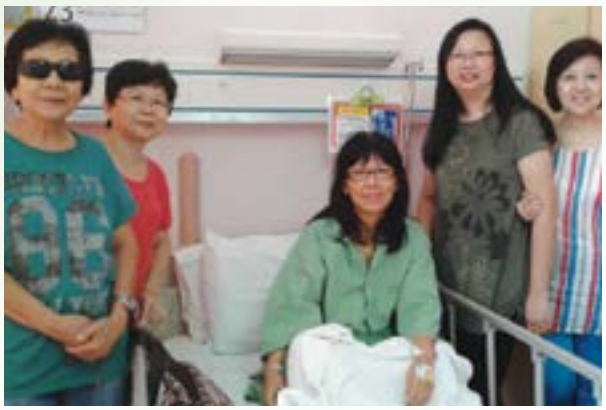
In our hearts we knew that our prayers would not fall into deaf ears. God is faithful and would bless us with a child. It's only the timing. Waiting was really excruciating. Thank God for prayer warriors like Auntie Teh who always reassured us time and time again that God will bless us with a child. We waited.

During a seminar in November 2012, Ps Peter Truang, an overseas speaker, prayed for us, asking God to bless us with a child. Our dream came true when I conceived in February 2013.

During my pregnancy, I experienced God's protection over myself and the baby. I had two serious falls and an admission to the hospital due to severe gastric but yet unharmed. I really thank God for watching over me and my baby.

I gave birth to Siobhan on 25 October 2013 and she is truly a beautiful and wonderful gift of God to us.

When God promises to bless us, He will definitely follow through. This is the God that we worship. All glory to God.



Unscathed . . . By The Grace Of God

By Kweh Gim Gaik

On a fine Saturday morning, 28 June 2014, after my usual morning exercise at the park, I was on my way home. While crossing the road, I stopped and stood in the middle of the road at the traffic junction. As I was about to cross to the other side of the road, a white Toyota Vellfire came towards me and knocked me down. Upon impact, I fell and bounced like a rubber ball about five feet forward. I was groaning in pain but was still very conscious and alert. I saw the driver rushing out from his MPV and heard a passer-by pedestrian telling the driver that he had driven out without looking out for other road users' safety.

The driver carried me immediately into his MPV and rushed me to the Ampang Hospital. After all the checking and x-rays done by the medical team, I was so relieved to be told that there was no fracture at all except for two five cent size scratches, a big bump on my skull due to the impact of the fall and severe giddiness. Much thanks to the Lord for extending His hand of protection and saving me from the worst.

I was put under observation at the hospital for the next three days.

The driver was not a hit and run type. This responsible driver visited me the following day and gave me a small token as compensation for the mishap and even prayed for me. Not only that, he insisted that I call him should any further complications arise due to the mishap and that he would take care of everything. He is a real good Samaritan and a true Christian. I truly believe that the Lord's divine protection was upon me all these while. Thank You, Lord!



Saved By His Still Small Voice

By Chris Cheong

My mother, at the age of 81, decided to make the 37 hours long journey over a distance of exactly 9,497 miles via Hong Kong, New York to the final destination at Baltimore on 18 April 2014.

The idea was mooted a few months earlier with my sister and I deliberating on whether she could endure the journey. A bit apprehensive initially, we decided to pop the question and she agreed whole heartedly to take up the offer. Her strong dåesire to see her first great grandson Elijah Wong, to spend time with her daughters and church friends and also to witness the graduation of her grandson, Michael Wong, made the long journey worth the while!

Preparation was intense and extensive, to say the least! The family went through many evenings of serious haggling, on which item to unload or keep as the luggage was too heavy. Luggage requirement for travel to US is not the normal 22 or 30 kg accumulated weight allowance. It is calculated per luggage with a maximum of one piece only, the second piece is chargeable. So being on a restricted budget, we resorted to work within the allocated weight without incurring any additional charges. With so many persons to buy gifts for, it was extremely difficult! We actually sat down to plan on the gifts in detailed, but overlooked the most important aspect of it, weight issue! The 3 in 1 coffee sachets were the first to be voted out of the bag! The second to leave were the coffee powder single sachets. My mum's health supplements were the next to go. She was defiant but we managed to come to a compromise on a much reduced selection. We even went through my mum's clothes and weigh each one to ascertain which one should get the boot! But, praise God we finally managed to seal the bag just a day before departure.

There were so many aspects of the journey that required attention, and truly it was only by the grace of God that we managed to complete it. However, not quite, as we would find out later, much later!

Ensuring a wheelchair with assistance at all exit and entry points, and giving correct instructions to clearly indicate my mum's condition were of utmost importance. That's when I learnt new terms such as "Restricted Mobility" and "Reduced Mobility". We were extremely relentless to ensure that wheelchair assistance must be available in New York. That was because my Mum was expected to claim her luggage upon arrival at New York and go through customs and immigration there. Then, immediately after that, to check in her luggage again for an onward flight to Baltimore! There was no way she could single handedly lift a 50lbs or 22kg bag from the carousel, to a push cart all the way through immigration and customs. Armed with a handful of USD1.00 notes and a disarming smile, we prayed for angels with strong biceps all the way. God was gracious and sent help at every place in need.

On the day of the flight, we left home early at 6.30am to arrive KLIA 7.30am for the 10.30am flight. We waited in line at Cathay Pacific counter for the check in. The entire sector was ticketed by United Airlines but this sector KUL/HKG was code shared with Cathay Pacific. That was also the reason why the process of securing seats all the way to Baltimore took much longer than necessary, but we were patient and waited.

But the most devastating moment came when the lady at counter casually asked, "Where is your Mum's US Visa?" At that very moment, my heart stopped, knowing for a fact that this was one issue that we had overlooked. Mum's visa was valid but attached to the old passport and we completely forgot to remind her to bring along. My eyes moved to look at my mum, praying and hoping that somehow by fluke chance, she remembered to bring. But it was not to be. Turning to the lady at counter, I heaved a huge sigh, gathered the remaining breath within me and mentioned that the Visa, attached with the old passport, was at home. It was not possible to retrieve the Visa from home and return in time to board the plane, as it was already 90 minutes before departure.

The Manager on duty, who was immediately informed about the situation, went through the flight details and advised us to hop on a later flight since there were 4 flights to Hong Kong on that day, My Mum would still be on time for the connecting flights on the following day. At that moment, I knew why I insisted in her staying a night in Hong Kong. God knew and was gracious to allow that opening. So with a glimpse of hope, I took the car and sped off home for the Visa. Sumi and Mum stayed behind at airport to pray! What else can we do! Sumi also informed Ps Anita in Hong Kong who was supposed to chaperon my mum's overnight in Hong Kong.

Thirty minutes later, the manager contacted me to inform that since the ticket was purchased online via United Airlines, only United can make the changes. I parked my car along the side of the road and immediately started calling the rep office in Kuala Lumpur. Being a rep office, they were not able to assist and referred me to the United office in Singapore. Only then, did I realize that that day was Good Friday and it was a public holiday in Singapore. It was at that moment that a realization emerged, a feeling of total powerlessness and inability to salvage the situation. We were faced with a cruel reality of just sending my mum back home in Kuala Lumpur, foregoing the entire ticket. I just sat in the car, completely still for a moment when a still small voice clearly appeared in my heart to "call sister in US." My sister was still awake, thank God! She was aware of the situation. I explained the whole scenario to her and she quickly called United toll free 24 hours in US and managed to secure a seat for the subsequent flight to Hong Kong. There was a hefty cost involved for the amendment, but at that moment I was just simply overjoyed, my mum was able to continue with her journey!

My mum arrived safely in Baltimore on 19 April at 6.09pm and my sister was there to meet her. She travelled exactly 9,497 miles, totalling 37 hours including 12 hours overnight in Hong Kong alone, halfway across the globe. A month later, my sister in US decided to submit an appeal letter to United Airlines requesting to waive the amendment cost. It was incredibly far fetch to even believe that United will even entertain such requests, but my sister having much more faith than me, went ahead and submitted the letter. Yes, United replied a few weeks later, thanking my sister for the business, apologized for the inconvenience caused and more than glad to offer the refund in FULL!

Praise God for His faithfulness!



In The Presence Of Angels

by Chan Yi Hern

My, Oh my! I needed to extract two wisdom teeth! I was not comfortable to let the dentist check my teeth. Well, they told mommy they had to put me on anaesthetic to extract my teeth. I was really scared this time. 8 July 2014 was the day. On no! As they pushed me into the operation theatre, I began to panic. Mommy was with me. She assured me, "Angels are with you." My heart received an instant relief and was peaceful immediately. Wow! God granted me peace. So efficient and quick too!

The theatre was very cold and bright. I saw medical machines everywhere. Doctors and nurses were wearing caps and medical shirts and hand gloves. They called my name and gave me oxygen. I fell asleep immediately. During my sleep, I was greeted by angels. Yes, beautiful, graceful, loving, caring angels surrounded me with their cheerful and welcoming smiles. They were very loving and gentle. They sang soothing worshipful songs and danced gracefully. Besides that, they also laughed happily as they danced to the rhythm of the music. It was really peaceful watching them. They held my hands, guiding me to move with them. I had entered heaven! It was so peaceful and relaxing watching the angels singing and dancing to cheer me. It was such an unimaginable experience that I couldn't believe. My biggest surprise was they knew my name. I felt so loved as I could sense their love from within their hearts, Well, they brought me around heaven and surprisingly, I didn't need to walk to move around. It was a wonderful pleasing relaxing time with them. The angels were all smiling sweetly and friendly towards each other.

Suddenly, someone slapped my face and it was the nurse waking me after the dentist had extracted three of my teeth. Oh gosh! The pain was still there but it was bearable. Mommy came to me very quickly to comfort me. I could see her worried-look but she hid her fear so as not to frighten me. She quickly played my favourite song; You Raise Me Up. Yes! God raised me to heaven to be with the angels to give me peace in my heart so that I would be strong and brave to face every challenge in life as a special needs child.

Dear God, You are my source of strength, my Comforter, my Protector, my guidance, my Counsellor, my one and only loving God.

Thank You, Lord, for keeping me by Your side. Thank You, Lord, for accepting me for who I am. Thank You, Lord, for Your awesome and abundant blessing towards me and all my loved ones.

Thank You, Lord, for taking my fear and granting me peace. I have grown deeply in love with You Lord, day by day!



A Different Kind Of Fast

Anonymous

I was very tired as I hadn't slept the night before. After ferrying my daughter back from school and my son to his tuition class, I slumped onto the sofa to catch some much needed sleep. I was fast asleep when the telephone woke me. Still drowsy, I picked up the phone. It was my dear husband on the other side of the line and he didn't sound happy. He was questioning where I had been, who I had fetched, as there was smoke smell in the car. Furthermore, he said, there was a 30cm scratch on our car.

I was upset. How could he think that of me? Where could I go? Who could I be fetching? Without a maid to help at home, I was always busy with housework, fetching my children around, looking into their schoolwork and getting meals ready. I didn't want to hear more and put down the phone.

But as I thought about it more, I got stressed and angry. It was not my fault. Why should I take the blame? I called my husband back and told him that I couldn't stand his accusations.

After placing the phone down, the Holy Spirit prompted me and said, "Patience." It was then that I remembered telling the Lord that I didn't know how to fast as I couldn't fast food for medical reasons. Interestingly, the Holy Spirit told me that fasting need not just be "menahan lapar", abstinence from food, but "menahan marah", which is not to give in to temper or irritations, to exercise more patience and self-control. In response to the Lord's prompting, I had agreed to fast from my temper.

That day was indeed a test for me. When I realized that I prayed and prayed, asking God for forgiveness and felt the release. He reminded me how Jesus bore our sins, our faults and mistakes. He had to die for our sins. Was it His fault? No, it was not. Yet He took the accusation, the blame and suffered for us without any complain. He surrendered His life to God. He died and in three days, God raised Him up.

Three hours later, the Lord also raised me up. I was no longer angry.

When my dear husband returned home, he took me to see the 30cm long scratch. I told him that I didn't know who scratched his car but I would polish for him. My husband tried polishing but he couldn't get rid of the scratch. He insisted it was too deep and could not be done. But I told him that with the Lord's help it could be done. As I polished the car, I was rejoicing. I sang happily, praising Him and asking Him to help me. I prayed that the Lord would show my husband that He could do it.

The Lord did it! The scratch came off totally. It was clean! That day I was happy because I had the victory. The devil tried to disturb me but the Lord helped me to win the battle.

And my husband realized later that the smoke smell in the car was because of the haze that was widespread then.



An Unexpected Visitor

By Lim Chin Nee

On the night of 2 May 2014, I was dozing off to sleep, when I heard the door bell ringing incessantly. I wanted to ignore it initially as it was late and pastor was away attending an LG meeting. But the bell kept ringing. Whoever could it be? I was a little wary for no one I knew would ring the doorbell in such a manner. I ran downstairs quickly and without putting on the living room lights, I took a peep out of my living room window through the partially closed blinds. I didn't want whoever was outside to know I was at home. I saw a man at the gate. He was still pressing frantically at the door bell. Since there was no answer, I saw him move away to the side perimeter fence of my house. Being on guard, I ran towards my kitchen where I could get a better view of my side garden. I wanted to see what that guy was up to. Before I could reach my kitchen, the garden sensor light had come on. I was alarmed as I knew he must have jumped over the fence into my garden. Carefully, without wanting to be noticed, I peeked through my kitchen window. Urgh! I saw that man standing right in my garden. I could see his face. That's the closest encounter I have ever had with a burglar. My heart was racing. I knew I must trigger the alarm to frighten the thief away and to alert my neighbours. But as I stood in front of the alarm, I was dumfounded as I had forgotten the code

to trigger the alarm. Desperate, I banged at the front door, hoping that the vibration would set the alarm off. Ahh! It didn't work. Moving quickly, I took the draw strings of the blinds and kept on flipping the blinds. The alarm went off loud and clear. What blessed noise to my ears! Relieved, I hurried back to the kitchen; the thief was nowhere to be seen. I stayed alert in case he was still hiding somewhere. Praise God, pastor came back shortly after he called me to check when his hand phone alerted him of the alarm. Praise God, I was at home that night and though sleepy, was still awake and alert. Praise God my house was not broken into.

That night, my intention was to have an early night's rest. Little did I expect it to turn out to be so eventful; little did I know an intruder would come a visiting (although since staying in a landed property, I have become more alert and careful…and now, I have to be doubly watchful and prayerful) Yes, it is unexpected, sudden, startling… for no thief would ever announce his coming.

The Lord Jesus Christ said that His coming again is much like that, in an hour we do not expect. He used the illustration of the thief in Matt 24:42-43, to tell us that just as we do not know when the thief will come, He warns that no one knows the hour He will return. It is an unexpected hour!

Since we, believers, do not know the hour or day of Jesus' return, we need to be always watchful or alert. We need to stay awake, be prepared, be ready and be expecting ... whenever THE HOUR maybe.



Marriages Are Made In Heaven, Worked At By The Couple!

By Abigail and Thierry Niederhauser

After five years of courtship, we decided to start a new chapter in our life, to become one soul and body by putting God first in our relationship!

To be honest, our relationship was not always easy. We had our ups and downs like most relationships, but we never gave up on each other. Rather, we always tried our best to work things out, because we believe that a relationship that functions is one that works by putting God first.

Both of us grew up in different countries with different cultures and lifestyles. These differences brought about conflicts between us many a times. We couldn't quite understand the way each other acted at times and got upset but we did not want our differences to hinder our love for each other. We took time to discuss things through and arrive at some compromises and arrangements. We hope to grow and complement each other.

In hard times, instead of simply breaking off the relationship, we found help from pastors or church leaders. Listening to their counsels helped us a lot. I remembered a pastor advising us to stop talking and stop arguing with each other when the conflict gets a little too heated up or when we are angry at each other, because we might say things that we would regret. We should just simply STOP and walk away and seek a more suitable time for a tete-a-tete (heart to heart talk) over what went wrong and find a solution, so as not to repeat the same mistakes. In other words, we need to learn to be more objective and not be too personal about things which had happened.

We have come to realise more and more that communication is the key to a successful relationship. Throughout these years we have always attended couples' seminars organized by the church. We found them helpful when we took a serious note of them and apply them in our relationship.

On 28th June 2014, we had a wonderful wedding with our friends and family in Switzerland, with a mix of Swiss and Chinese cultures. We took our vows before the Lord in La Tanne church and both our fathers, Ps Marcel and Ps Daniel Yap, officiated our wedding! It was one of the best days of our lives! A few weeks later, on 19 July, we had our wedding reception in Malaysia. We would like to thank everyone for your presence and blessings, it was a wonderful dinner!

Note:
Abigail is the second daughter of Ps Daniel & Ruth Yap who are serving in Switzerland.



The Grain of Wheat

By Dr Nitta Arul

"Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit" (John 12:24).

In this scripture Jesus speaks of a timeless truth that unless a person dies to self, he or she will not be able to bear much fruit. Whenever we speak of dying to self, most people feel uncomfortable with this thought because the idea of death is not a pleasant thought. In this verse, Jesus is speaking of His own death because only by His death, the death of the Son of God, would the salvation of a multitude of souls become possible.

Likewise as followers of Christ, we too cannot bear much fruit until and unless we die to our own self-centred wants and needs, our own selfish desires and our own secret ambitions which are contrary to God's will. In contemplating this, the Holy Spirit brought to my remembrance one of my favourite scripture which is "He must increase, but I must decrease" (John 3:30) which was spoken by John the Baptist in reference to Christ. Whenever I stand up to preach and teach God's Word, I always tell myself that I am merely God's vessel and there is really nothing much that I can impart to the people from my own self and my own mind. Therefore, I always empty myself of self so that God can speak and move through me fully. In this way, the Holy Spirit who dwells within me can speak through my thoughts because only divinely inspired messages can touch the hearts of the people and bring healing and deliverance.

As I dwelt upon this thought, the Holy Spirit impressed upon me that I should not only die to self when I am behind the pulpit but to practise dying to self all the time, when I am talking to friends, dealing with customers and colleagues, serving my family members and basically in all my interactional relationships with people. This was such a powerful thought that required a paradigm shift in how I approach life. To make a meaningful impact in the lives of others, we need to be fully conscious of the Holy Spirit's presence at all times and tap into His indwelling power that resides within us to touch, talk and live with others. The Holy Spirit is the **VVIP** dwelling within us and His ways, thoughts and feelings must become more important than our own self-centred ways which are less important in the light of eternity. One of the weaknesses of Christians is to silence the voice of the Holy Spirit or ignore Him when He asks us to do something that goes against our flesh or our own thoughts and feelings.

Dying to self is an incredibly humbling thought and Jesus has called us to be servants. In Mark 10:42-45 Jesus spoke of servant leadership:

"Jesus called them together and said, "You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be servant of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

And if Jesus, the Son of God came to serve, should we not also, being his disciples, follow in his footsteps to serve others? As Jesus said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, the servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him (John 13:16).

In conclusion, it can be said that unless we make an intentional and conscious effort to discipline ourselves on a daily basis to **decrease** so that Christ may increase, our witness will be shallow and tasteless. Dying to self will not be easy but it will be significant. Jesus said that His yoke is easy and His burden is light. Dying to self is tough but when we submit to the Lordship of Christ, He makes it easy for us. Let us therefore trust the Lord to make it easy for us as we submit to Him, and in doing so bear much fruit.

Jesus The Centre Of My Family

A Hope of Glory Art Competition



Yap Ern Yi
Age: 9



Mandy Yuen
Age: 12



Charisse
Age: 11



VOH organized a Colouring Competition for CC children. They can use any media and they have to complete the drawing. Out of the entries, the above 3 winners were selected. Prizes will be awarded to them.



Why do we call Jesus the Son of God? Can God have a Son?

Answered by Danny Pang

Firstly, we need to have a biblical understanding of the concept of Sonship. Many misunderstood the phrase "Son of God" to imply that Jesus was the offspring of a physical relationship.

There are many verses in the Bible that mentions "son of God" but nowhere does it mean an offspring of a sexual relationship. Since, the term "son of God" can only be understood in its context where it is used, we need to look at some examples from the Bible.

Examples from the Bible:

1. The Israelites were called "**My son**, My firstborn" because they were chosen to be God's holy nation. It speaks of a unique relationship.
   Ex 4:22-23 *'Thus says the LORD: "Israel is **My son**, My firstborn. So I say to you, let **My son** go that he may serve Me.*
   Hos 11:1 *When Israel was a child, I loved him, And out of Egypt I called **My son.***

2. The kings of Israel were called God's son because God has set them apart under the Davidic Covenant.
   2 Sam 7: 12-14 *"When your days are fulfilled and you rest with your fathers, I will set up your seed after you, who will come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be his Father, and he shall be **My son**.*

3. Adam was called "son of God". He had no earthly parents and was created by God
   Lk 3:38 *…the son of Enosh, the son of Seth, the son of Adam, the **son of God.***

4. Believers are also called sons of God because of faith in Jesus. There is a relationship between God and His believers.
   John 1:12 *But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become **children of God**, to those who believe in His name*
   Rom 8:14 *For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are **sons of God.***

To be sons of God signify a redeemed relationship and a privilege that now believers in Christ can enjoy. As redeemed children, we become heirs of God, heirs of an

Gal 4:6,7 *And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, "Abba, Father!" Therefore you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.*

From the above examples, we see that the meaning of the word "son" does not refer to biological relationship but refers to

a. Origin
b. Unique relationship
c. Functional relationship

Thus, the biblical understanding of the term "son of God" has no reference to physical or biological terms but has reference to a unique relationship.

Jesus is not God's Son in the human sense of a father and a son. God did not get married and have a son. Rather, the term "Son of God" means that Jesus is divine and shares the exact same divine nature as God. He is God made manifest in human form.

John 1:1,14 *tells us that the Word who is God, became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen His glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.*

Hebs 1:3 *says Jesus, the Son Of God, is the brightness of His glory, the express image of God or the exact same nature as God.*

In Luke 1:35, *the angel announced to Mary, 'The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the **Son of God**.'*

The Jewish religious leaders understood exactly what that term "Son of God' meant in reference to Jesus. It meant that Jesus is equal to God, that He is divine. This was blasphemy to the Jewish leaders and for this they plotted to have Jesus sentenced to death.

Jesus is indeed divine and there are 4 unique features that establish His divinity.

1. His resurrection from the dead (now seated at the right hand of God)
2. His fulfilment of prophecies
3. His deeds and attributes
4. His sinless life.

Let us recognise Who Jesus is and worship Him!



What is the Biblical view of committing suicide and can a believer go to Heaven if he commits suicide?

Answered by Loke Wai Keng

The Bible does not address the issue of committing suicide. However, the 6th commandments of God - "you shall not murder" seems to say God prohibits the taking of one's life. The Bible in Basic English translates the phrase, "Do not put anyone to death without cause." The Hebrew word used here is ratsach, which nearly always refers to intentional killing without cause.

God is the giver of life. It is He who fearfully and wonderfully formed each one of us in our mother's womb (Psalms 139:14-16). Life is precious to Him. He is the only one who is to decide when and how a person should die. Suicide, is taking of one's own life – self murder. It is rejection of God's gift of life. No man or woman should presume to take God's authority upon them to end his or her own life.

There are some examples of people in Scripture who fell into deep despair in life and expressed the desire to die. Solomon, in his pursuit of pleasure, reached the point where he "hated life" (Eccl 2:17). Elijah was fearful and depressed and yearned for death (1 Kgs 19:4). Jonah was so angry at God that he wished to die (Jonah 4:8). Even the apostle Paul and his missionary companions at one point "were under great pressure, far beyond our ability to endure, so that we despaired of life itself." (2 Cor 1:8)

However, none of these men committed suicide. Solomon learned to "fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the duty of all mankind" (Eccl 12:13). Elijah was comforted by an angel, allowed to rest, and given a new commission. Jonah received admonition and rebuke from God. Paul learned that, although the pressure he faced was beyond his ability to endure, the Lord can bear all things: "This happened that we might not rely on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead" (2 Cor 1:9).

There were records of six people in the Bible as having committed suicide namely Judas Iscariot (Matt 27:5), Abimelech (Judg 9:54), Saul (1 Sam 31:4), Saul's armor-bearer (1 Sam31:4-6), Ahithophel (2 Sam 17:23) and Zimri (1 Kgs 16:18). We know for a fact that five of them were ungodly, wicked men, and there isn't enough information about the sixth - Saul's armor-bearer - to make a determination about his character. Samson is also death could be considered a true suicide. Suicide is essentially "self-murder" and murder is a sin, outlawed in the Ten Commandments (Ex 20:13)

What is clear from all these examples is that suicide in the Bible was usually the result of evil men realizing what was in stored for them as a result of their evil. Often suicide will not take place apart from demonic influences, driving one to take their own life.

Can a believer go to Heaven if he commits suicide?

Again the Bible is silent regarding this issue. Some people believe that all who commit suicide go immediately to hell. What are the conditions for banishing people into hell? Revelation states very clearly that those whose names are not found in the Book of Life will be thrown into the lake of eternal fire – hell.

Suicide is not the most ideal solution for those who could not find answers to their problems, for example, those under deep depression, or those who have incurable sicknesses or under hallucinations or any other unknown reasons. However, it is so important to remember that God judges each of us individually, weighing all the factors of our lives, our beliefs and our motives. Each of us is so intricate and complex, only God could really judge us in total truth, wisdom and without favouritism. The important truth to follow is that each of us will stand before His throne and give an account of our lives. If we live intimately with this sobering truth, people would be more mindful with how they live their lives. Perhaps people would then value their lives and even when under intense pressure of ending their own lives will consider seeking help.

Footnote: I have two friends who were believers and faithfully serving the Lord, but because of some personal reasons decided to end their own lives. This came as a shock to so many. Another friend who had been to mission and serving the Lord faithfully came to the end of her rope and decided to commit suicide by jumping out of a 17th floor building. God in His mercy stopped her. Today, she remains faithful to the Lord. I asked her how she felt at the time on the verge of jumping. She said that she was so desperate that all she knew was ending her life would be the end of her miseries. Just two months ago when I was going through a difficult season, a voice within me suggested I end my own life but thank God I recognized this as the voice of the enemy. Please be on the watch out for people who have suicidal tendencies. They need our help because more often than not, they are so desperate that they do not know where to turn to.



Lessons From MH 370

By Ruth Lew

Yesterday, I received my bonus.

For the first time in 8 years working with the bank, my bonus dropped about 10 % points. Although generally all my colleagues suffered the same fate, I was still stunned at the reduction as I thought that I had worked really hard and saved the bank a lot of money.

I was grumbling and complaining about that until I spoke to a non-Christian colleague who said this to me, "At least we can still enjoy our bonus...what about those on board MH 370? Even if they had their bonus, they would not be able to enjoy it."

Suddenly, I woke up and the truth hit me like a ton of bricks. God had to use a non-Christian to rebuke me about this. Yes, I should be thankful for my bonus. Yes, I am thankful that I am still earning a good pay to support my family of four and my mother. Yes, the money that God has blessed me with is being put to good use. Yes, the money is within my power to bless others with it!

Some lessons from MH370:

1. Money cannot fill our heart with comfort or love

Ps 62:10 is clear on this, "If riches increase, do not set your heart on them." The heart is always seeking a home, a refuge. Money is neither its home nor its refuge, only God can give our heart the comfort and love it needs.

2. Money cannot save in the day of distress

Job 36:19 "Will your riches, or all the mighty forces, keep you from distress?"

All the ships, all the planes, all the people deployed and all the nations of the world sending help to look for MH370 are 'mighty' forces yet the loved ones of those on board continue to have distress on their faces as the plane is still missing.

3. Money cannot deliver us from judgment

Proverbs 11:4 "Riches do not profit in the day of wrath but righteousness delivers from death"

I took the time to tell my colleague about JESUS being the way, the truth and the life. I took the time to ask him if he knew where he was going to go before he died. I took the time to share with him of a guaranteed place in heaven if he will put his trust in JESUS.

Then I sent him a tract with a prayer for him to read.

God is not saying that money is evil as can be seen from this verse in 1 Tim 6:17 "Command those who are rich in this present age not to be haughty, nor to trust in uncertain riches but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy"

To be able to enjoy this precious life that God has given us, to be alive today and to know JESUS, to walk with Him and to talk with Him, to be able to enjoy the love of our family members, to be able to bless others and be blessed in return, to be able to work with our hands and to serve the Lord, to be able to raise up others to follow in our steps as we follow the Lord – this is true riches!

Yoghurt-Nara

by Calvin Lim

A new and healtier twist to Carbonara



STEP #1 - Bring a large pot of water to a boil; add salt and spaghetti, and cook until al dente, according to package instructions.

STEP #2 - Heat oil in large pan over medium-high heat. Add bacon and cook until golden. transfer cooked bacon aside.

STEP #3 - Reduce heat to medium-low. Add onion and garlic, and cook until golden. Throw in seafood and mushroom. Mix well.

STEP #4 - Beat egg yolk, yoghurt, milk and Cheddar cheese (parmesan is better) in a bowl until combined. Add drained hot pasta and bacon to pan and pour the egg mixture over. If pasta seems dry, add some milk. Stir in the baby spinach (any vegetable). Season with black pepper and salt.

STEP #5 - Serve garnished with lemon zest, a dash of smoked paprika, and additional cheese, if desired.

HAPPENINGS IN HGC

CHURCH EVENTS Jul to Sep 2014



Harp & Bowl Sunday
27 Jul



40-Day Fast & Prayer
7 Aug -15 Sep



KKB Fundraising for Church Building
7 Sep



Life Game Camp by Keng Youth
19 - 21 Sep



BABY DEDICATION

13 Jul

Magnus Goey Herng
son of Michael & May Goey

Ezra Ebenezer Phillips
son of Jeffrey and Adelin



NEW BIRTH

20 Jul

Esther Debbie Bose
Daughter of Debbie & Jonathan Bose

18 Aug

Kylie Goh Tzi Xuan
daughter of Goh & Siew Chyi



MISSION

23-28 Sep

Donkeys For Jesus

18-28 Sep

Lijiang, China

COMING EVENTS Oct to Dec 2014



Little Lighthouse Concert
4 Oct



Church Leaders Retreat
22 - 24 Oct



Baptism Sunday
23 Nov



Christmas Celebrations
Dec

INVITATION

Do you know that Jesus loves you very much? He loves you so much He was willing to die on the cross and shed His blood for your sins. His blood can wash and cleanse away our every sin. He was willing to suffer so that everyone who believes in Him will not die and go to hell but will have eternal life. Not only did He die for our sins, but He also took our sufferings and carried our sorrows. He also bore our sicknesses. He was wounded so that we can receive our healing. He also came to give us abundant life (life in fullness and abundance). He is a good God who cares for us and is able to meet our every need. Would you like to believe in Jesus? Would you like your sins forgiven and have an abundant and eternal life? Would you like to have peace with God? All you need to do is open your heart to Him and say the prayer below. He will immediately come into your life and be your Saviour and Lord.

"Lord Jesus, thank you for dying on the cross for me. I believe in You and confess that You are Lord. I open the door of my heart to You. Please come into my heart and be my Lord and Saviour. I ask that You forgive me of my sins and cleanse me with Your Precious blood. Please take control of my life and help me to love You and be the person You want me to be. In Jesus Name, Amen."

If you have said this prayer, praise the Lord. Your sins are forgiven and you are now a child of God.

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