

voiceofhope

the newsletter | July- Sept 2015

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Little Lighthouse Picnic Day

Dear Reader,

Indeed, being a Christian gets you no popular votes. Having to pick up that cross and follow Christ daily is no easy task when He is such a tough act to follow – always the highest standards of grace and holiness! Here at home, we are faced with news on the current political situation in our nation. Our freedom to worship is being challenged, the Ringgit is falling to a record low, racial tensions are high, people have called for change via the Bersih 4 rally.

It is then truly apt that the 40 day prayer and fasting falls within this time – we need revival! There is no better time for us to stand in the gap and unitedly pray for our beloved Malaysia. As Ps Ann Low said during her visit to HGC: The clock is ticking for Malaysian Christians to get down on their knees and PRAY!

In spite of the uncertain happenings around us, be challenged to hold fast to Christ and be the Voice of Hope within your family, workplace and community!

Unite In Prayer,
VOH Team

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Be His Voice of Blessing Over Our Land

By Khor Hoe Chai, Pastor

It is easy to talk, especially about the humongous problems that are besetting our beloved nation, Malaysia. Indeed, our nation is facing great challenges. The question we need to ask ourselves is, does our talk help or does it make things worse? Can we do more than talk?

Well, the Word of God has some instructions for us, Christians, in 1 Pet 3:9-11. It's a list of conduct Christians ought to demonstrate in times of difficulties and sufferings.

1. Pay back evil with blessing – Don't repay evil for evil. When insulted, don't retaliate with insults.
2. Speak what is good – If we want to enjoy life and like to see many good and happy days (certainly we like to see that in Malaysia,) we need to keep our tongue from speaking evil and our lips from telling lies.
3. Avoid evil and cultivate what is good – We are to turn away from evil and do good.
4. Pursue peace – seek peace and work to maintain it.

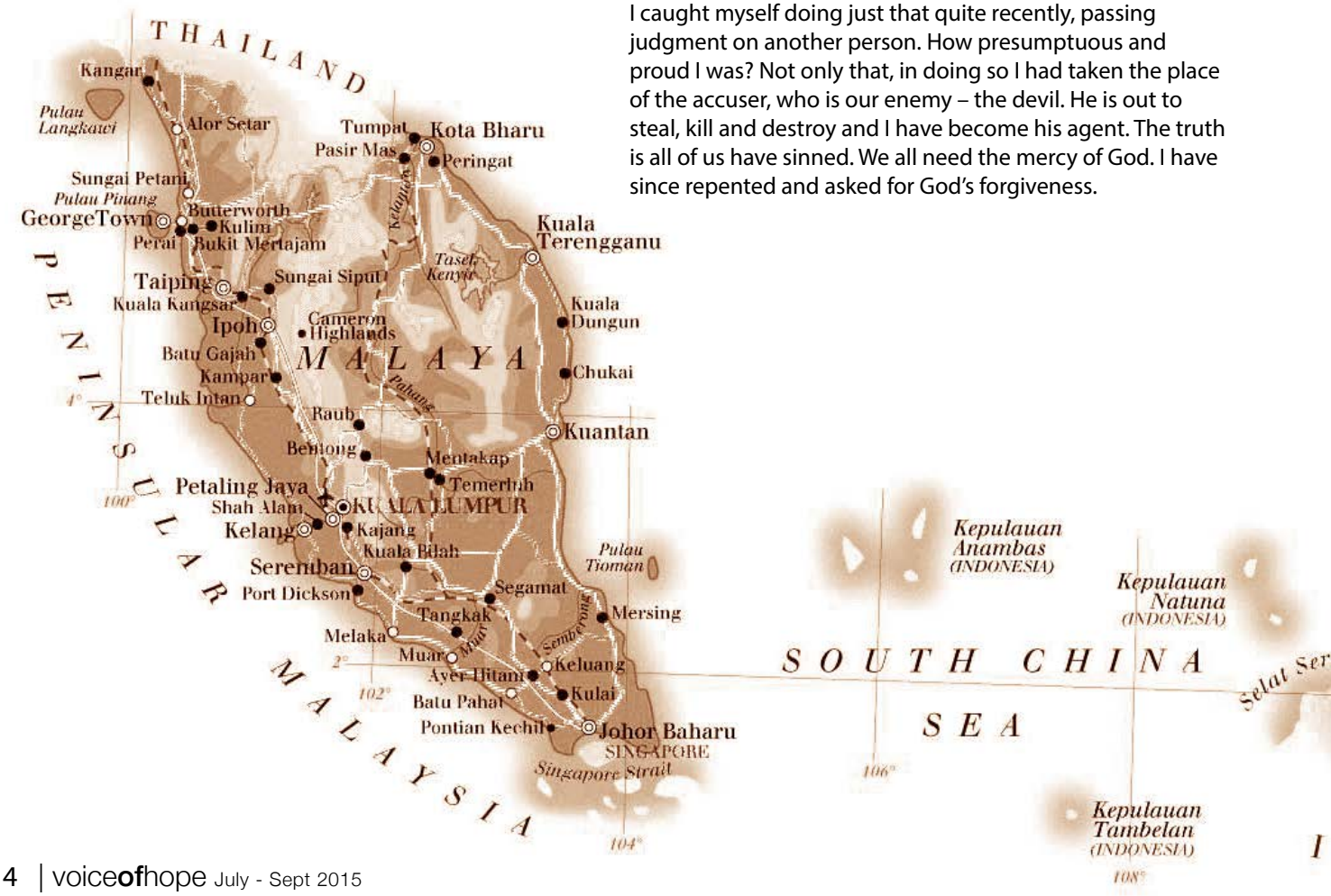
This is what God has called us to – bless! That's our job! And when we bless, God will bless us in return. He will take notice of us. His eyes will be on us, and His ears will be open to our prayers. (1Pet 3:12) This does not mean Christians will be exempted from difficulties or troubles, but rather God will provide what is needed to overcome, stay faithful and be strong. But to those who do evil, the face of the Lord will be against them.

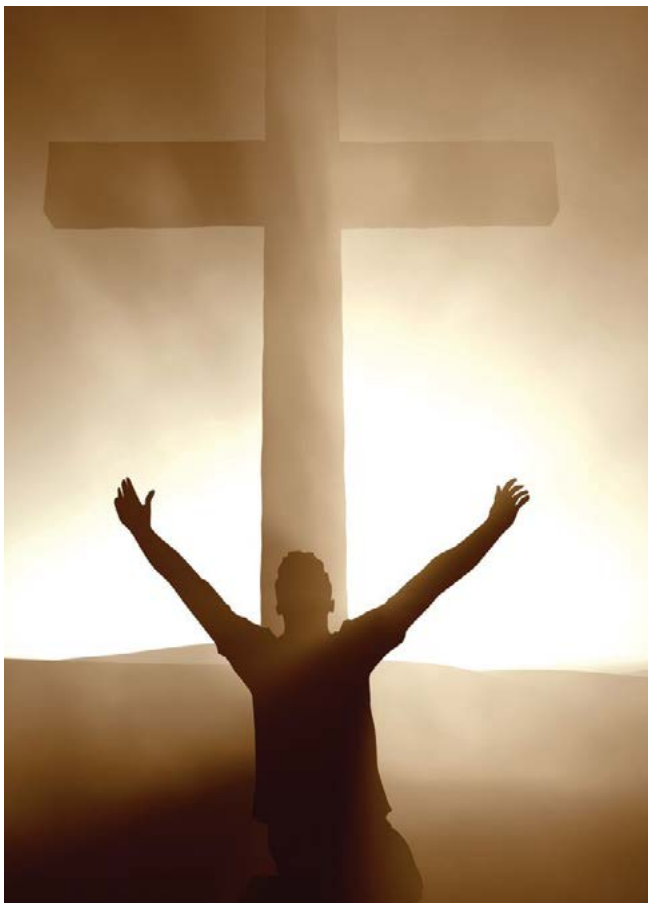
Pro 18:21 tells us, "Death and life are in the power of the tongue, And those who love it will eat its fruit."(NKJV)The New Living Translation puts it this way, "The tongue can bring death or life; those who love to talk will reap the consequences." While the Message, a more contemporary version, says, "Words kill, words give life; they're either poison or fruit – you choose."

What we say is absolutely vital. We cannot take our words lightly. What we say will make a difference. Despite all the negative things taking place, let us choose to speak life not death. Let us consciously and intentionally speak hope not doom; faith not fear; love not hate; peace not animosity; unity not division.

Often we are caught being judgmental. We sit as judges and pronounce judgment. Jam 4: 12 says, "There is one Lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy. Who are you to judge another?" God is the only judge.

I caught myself doing just that quite recently, passing judgment on another person. How presumptuous and proud I was? Not only that, in doing so I had taken the place of the accuser, who is our enemy – the devil. He is out to steal, kill and destroy and I have become his agent. The truth is all of us have sinned. We all need the mercy of God. I have since repented and asked for God's forgiveness.





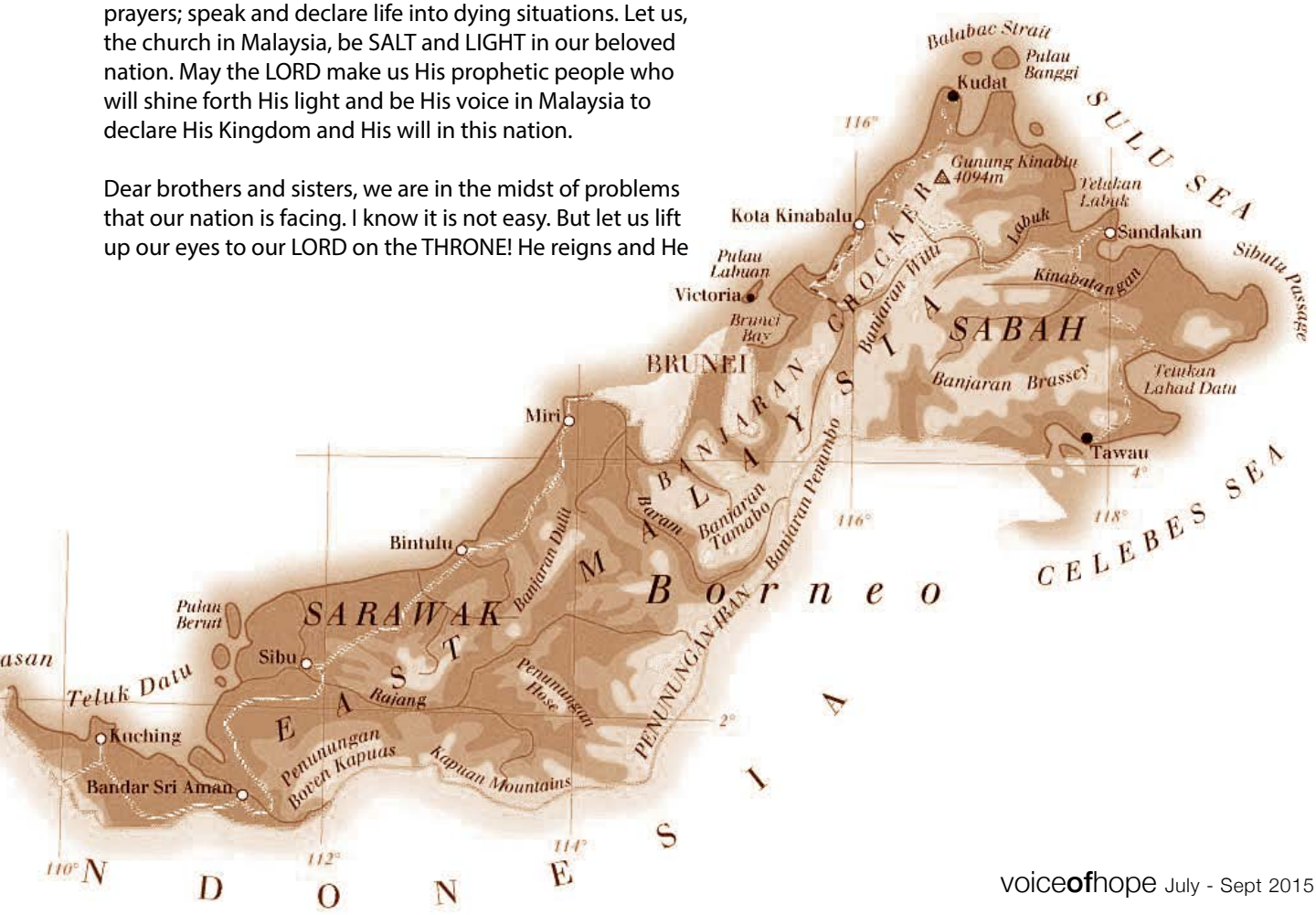
May I exhort us all to choose to take heed to God's Word and refrain our tongue from speaking evil. Instead, let us speak truth with love and compassion; turn problems we see into prayers; speak and declare life into dying situations. Let us, the church in Malaysia, be SALT and LIGHT in our beloved nation. May the LORD make us His prophetic people who will shine forth His light and be His voice in Malaysia to declare His Kingdom and His will in this nation.

Dear brothers and sisters, we are in the midst of problems that our nation is facing. I know it is not easy. But let us lift up our eyes to our LORD on the THRONE! He reigns and He is in control. And His promises are faithful and true for all eternity and will be our solid, unshakable foundation. Let us put our total trust in Him and His promises. May we see that the challenges and shaking He has allowed in our nation is for good - to move our nation forward towards her destiny, and to awaken and purify His church for His return.

One of my favourite promises is Matt 6:33. It has proven to be true over and over again, so let us with all our heart, soul, mind and strength SEEK FIRST HIS KINGDOM AND HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS knowing that ALL THESE THINGS (that we need in life) WILL BE ADDED UNTO US. Let us hold fast the confession of our hope for transformation for Malaysia. Let us walk by faith in Him and serve Him faithfully till the very end without holding back ourselves, our time, energy, talents and resources.

Lastly, let us take heed to the word our Lord Himself has given us in Luke 6:35-38 as they are so relevant to us at such a time as this.

> LOVE your enemies.
>
> DO GOOD, and lend, hoping for nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High. For He is kind to the unthankful and evil.
>
> BE MERCIFUL, just as your Father also is merciful.
>
> JUDGE NOT, and you shall not be judged.
>
> CONDEMN NOT, and you shall not be condemned.
>
> FORGIVE, and you will be forgiven.



Church Without Walls, Mission Lesson From Chinese House Churches

By Chan Tham Seng



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THE Communist government that reigned over China since 1949 has tried to destroy Christianity by forcing the churches to operate within the four walls. What is enclosed within the four walls is called the Three-Self church. Had the churches followed the order and stayed within the enclosure, they would have either been wiped out from Chinese history or evolved into a very different kind of churches today.

But the Chinese churches, or house churches to be exact, remain a defiant force today. They have not only broken out of the walls, their missionary zeal has also influenced some Three-Self churches today. This is the story told by renowned missionary Dennis Balcombe in his second book, China's Opening Door (Florida: Charisma House, 2014).





We can learn a great deal from the history of Chinese house churches on how to grow our church in the context of God's Kingdom. Our mission theme this and next year is "Missions: Church without Walls." The theme indicates that we realize the importance of reaching out to communities outside the church.

Pastor Dennis, who has preached in our church on a few occasions, attributes the vibrancy of Chinese house churches to the baptism of the Holy Spirit. In his book, he gives due credit to the strong spiritual foundations laid down by early-day Catholic Jesuits including Matteo Ricci and protestant mission-scholars James Legge and Robert Morrison. However, his emphasis is on the work of Spirit-filled missionaries including Jonathan Goforth and Norwegian sisters Marie Monsen and Serene Loland.

In his book, Pastor Dennis gives extensive coverage to two spiritual manifestations that took place in China in early 1900s. The first was the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon Adullam Home, an orphanage in Yunnan in 1924. For three weeks, some 40 orphans at Adullam witnessed incredible visions of heaven, angels, Satan, hell and end of the age. Apart from that, the children also prophesied and preached on the street.

The second manifestation is related to the Shandong Revival, which took place in northeastern Shandong in 1929. During the revival, it was documented that 24 missionaries and many Chinese church leaders experienced the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Numbers of Christians and churches were being revived; restitution of money was being made, tithes of the Lord held back were being brought forward; sins confessed to God and to those who had been wronged; sick were being healed; devils cast out; men and women, boys and girls were preaching with a power hitherto not known; hundreds were crying for mercy and were being saved.

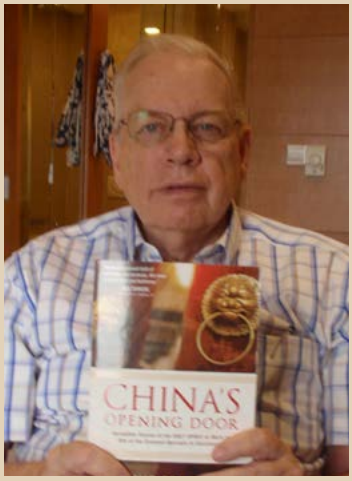
To Dennis Balcombe, all these happenings came under God's mercy plan for China. In the early 1900s, God raised Spirt-filled missionaries from among the mainly evangelical colleagues to usher China into periods of spiritual revival. Later, God caused many Chinese believers to be baptized



Captions:

1. *Fujian's Nanping Gospel Church is a spirit-filled official church*
2. *Most of Henan rural house churches are Spirit-filled*
3. *Balcombe's teaching is well-received in Nanping church*
4 *Fervent Henan believers are truly a church without walls*
5. *Sister Ding (right) is Henan's top-ranking house church leader*

in the Holy Spirit to prepare them for the communist rule under which persecution reached its peak during the Cultural Revolution 1966-1976.



Dennis Balcombe and his latest book "China's Opening Door"

In April 1969 Dennis Balcombe arrived in Hong Kong where the commotion of Cultural Revolution could be heard at its border with Mainland China. In Hong Kong, he founded a Cantonese-speaking church but waited till early 1978 before he journeyed to Guangzhou under China's open-door policy. In Guangzhou, he launched his Bible delivery ministry (also known as Donkeys for Jesus) and waited for another 10 years before he could sneak into Henan in August 1988.

Henan is the ultimate destination of Dennis Balcombe's China calling. He is there to continue God's plan to transform the house churches into China's spirit-filled powerhouses. Henan is the birth place of China's two largest networks of house churches, namely Fangcheng network and the Tanghe network.

Sister Ding Hei, a top leader of the Fangcheng network, has co-labored with Pastor Dennis in Bible delivery ministry in early days in Guangzhou. Sister Ding, who has also visited our church, remembers those days in Henan:

"Pastor Balcombe's teaching on this new wave of the Holy spirit was initially rejected by most at the meetings for fear of coming under the wrong spirit. The few who accepted it were those who had earlier acquainted with him in Guangzhou. After Dennis Balcombe left Henan, the leaders quickly organized Bible study sessions to help believers understand and accept this new wave of the Holy Spirit. After two to three years, all our Fangcheng house churches, except for a few, accepted the Spirit-filled teaching." (p110)

The result of churches being filled with the Holy Spirit opened the way for more manifestations of signs and wonders. Signs and wonders are widely regarded as the primary reason for rapid growth of Christian population in China. Spirit-filled house churches went about evangelizing in total defiance of laws that forbid missionary activities outside designated locations. Observes Dennis Balcombe:

"Mission work among Chinese house church expanded greatly beginning in 1991. In 1993, the Henan churches reported that 15,000 people from Fangcheng came to the Lord; in 1994 another 20,000 people were saved. From Henan province alone more than 100 missionaries were sent out to Northeastern China, Shanxi, Shaanxi, Hunan, Sichuan, Gansu and Xinjiang provinces." (p147)

One estimate of Christian population in China today puts it at 105 million as compared with 4 million in 1949, indicating a 26 fold increase in 60 plus years. However, Dennis Balcombe sees the needs for house churches to rise up to new challenges today.

The first challenge is the need for house churches to regard their official counterparts in a different light. Pastor Balcombe noted that China is now under a more enlightened government which no longer views the churches as the country's major threat. Meanwhile, the leadership of official churches are today in the hand of younger pastors some of whom are revival-hungry and exposed to the worldwide charismatic-Pentecostal revivals. Pastor Balcombe himself has been invited to preach and teach in official churches on the Holy Spirit and revival in Chongqing, Fujian, Guangdong, Guangxi and Zhejiang provinces.

The second challenge is the need for churches to realize a fast-changing China: that the Bible will soon be available everywhere and the gospel preached on radio, television, internet, schools, stadium. With China opening her door wider and wider, he sees the need for churches to use outreach methods which are different from those used in traditional missions field. He explains:

"... All kinds of ministries are springing up throughout China; the vast majority of them are run by Chinese businessmen, church laymen and even some pastors. The scope of these ministries is vast: literature ministries, educational ministries, disaster-relief ministries; ministries to the poor people,





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orphans, students, drug and alcohol addict, unwed mothers; prayer ministries and media ministries."
Since the founding of HGC, the church has been steadily developing mission works in the local and distant communities. Currently we are moving deeper into our immediate community in Ampang. Last December we set up Charis Hope Elderly Centre to provide caring ministry for the older folks. D' Bridge, a community centre catering to the needs of local youths has also started operation in July this year. An old folks home with stay-in facilities is also being planned.

For distant communities, we continue to focus on Kuala Kubu Baru (peninsular orang asli), China (ethnic minorities), India (rural villagers) Indonesia (rural students) and Sarawak (long house dwellers).

Captions:

6. *"The Shandong Revival" brought great blessing to China in early 1930s.*

7 & 8. Charis Hope Centre serves the elderly folks.

9. *Our newly launched D'Bridge Community Centre*



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Christ Our Cornerstone and All Sufficient One

By Dr Nitta Arul



Recently as I was counselling my daughter on the issues and challenges that we face in life, the issue of marriage surfaced. It was then that I shared with her that although finding a soul mate and getting married are important milestones in life, it should not be the "be all and end all of one's life. "

There is no doubt that relationships are important be they relationships with friends or family. However, the most important relationship we can ever have is our relationship with Christ and nothing can surpass or over shadow that. This relationship ought to be the core relationship in one's life and all other relationships that we have with others must have Christ as the cornerstone (Eph 2:20) or the central figure. Indeed, all other relationships must flow from the relationship that we have with Christ. One interesting point to note concerning Christianity is that it is not merely a religion but rather it is a relationship with a living God.

Christ is our All Sufficient One (2 Cor 3:5) and because Christ is the centre of our life, we can look to Him to meet our needs. God is our Jehovah Jireh, our Provider (Genesis 22:14), He is Jehovah Rapha, our Healer (Exodus 15:26) and He is Jehovah Shammah who is present with us all the time (Ezekiel 48:35). Once a person builds intimacy and closeness with the Lord, life becomes colourful and fulfilling. This closeness with the Lord then becomes the bedrock from which all other relationships grow.

I explained to my daughter that in a marriage relationship, the husband should not expect the wife to meet all his needs including emotional needs because no wife can meet all her husband's needs. Likewise, no husband can meet all his wife's needs. Therefore husbands and wives ought to draw from the Lord Jesus Christ to meet the deepest longings of their souls. A Christian marriage union is therefore like a threefold cord with Christ being the centre. Such a cord is difficult to be undone (Eccl 4:12). A Christian couple can be happy and fulfilled when they look to the Lord instead of each other to fulfil their needs.

Shaunti Feldhahn a Harvard-trained social researcher, popular speaker, and best-selling author writes, "Highly happy couples tend to put God at the centre of their marriage and focus on Him, rather than on their marriage or spouse, for fulfilment and happiness" (pg. 178, Highly Happy Marriages).

In my own marriage I was attracted to my husband Arul due to his love for God. I remember that during our dating days he kept on talking about God without ceasing. I could see that he had a vibrant and close relationship with Jesus and I found this to be very alluring, probably because I too was a born again Christian. Our mutual love for Christ and His kingdom was a very solid foundation upon which we pursued our friendship which later bloomed into romance. As we grew to more deeply love and understand one another, our relationship became a source of mutual spiritual edification. He spurred me on to pray more and we attended Christian gatherings and seminars together. He also encouraged me greatly to study God's Word. The children too were greatly blessed whenever we had our family altar times in which contemporary Christian and life issues were discussed and even debated.

In our marriage we have witnessed how Christ has equipped us to be potently effective for His kingdom. Most importantly it was only under the covenant of marriage, that we were able to discover and celebrate our love for one another within the context of physical intimacy, something that we highly price as a couple.

Relationships can be a great blessing, or a great curse, depending on where we place the Cross. ***J.C. Ryle***

To conclude I would like to quote J.C. Ryle who stated that "relationships can be a great blessing, or a great curse, depending on where we place the Cross."

My prayer is that each one of us will discover the all-sufficiency of Christ within us in every relationship that we are a part of especially in our relationship with our own spouse. For those who are single, take time to develop closeness with Christ and you will find Him to be a source of rich blessings and encouragement not only when you are lonely but in all circumstances of your life. Should you get married later on, this strong relationship with Christ will carry you through the difficulties you will face later in life. Take it from me that life will pose to be challenging and Christ is a reliable anchor in the midst of the storm. May you therefore find your sufficiency and fulfilment in the All Sufficient One. Truly He is sweeter than honey in the rock (Psalm 81:16).

"Cukup Geram" (Furious Enough)

By Ruth Lee



The once-a-month overnight prayer organized by the KL and Klang Valley Pastors' Fellowship in different churches on a Friday night has seen tremendous response since it started. About 40 churches make up the Fellowship. Pastors from various churches take turns to host the overnight prayer. Worship teams will lead throughout the night from 11.00 pm to 6.00 am and usually a full band will be in attendance.

The glory of God fell upon us in a powerful and tangible way on 10 July 2015 at SIBKL as we stepped into the sanctuary. We sang, we worshipped and we raised our hands to God. Prayer was fervent and serious. Many voices praying fervently in the Spirit felt like a mighty rushing wind sweeping from one end of the hall to the other. The place was packed with many believers from various churches and the strong presence of God fell upon us as though to bless the gathering of His saints in unity.

Sometime during the night, different churches were called out to be prayed for. When it came to our turn I felt so blessed to represent Ampang and HGC. The pastors from various churches took turns to pray for us. We were blessed by an encouraging word from Ps Lee Choo (SIBKL) who prophesied HGC as a "faithful church".

Somehow the moment I heard her releasing the word of prophecy and encouragement, my thoughts immediately flew to the morning watches! It felt as though God was saying to us "keep it up…keep it going…I will be with you, my faithful church."

There were also some wonderful messages worth repeating here:

1. Why was Sabah shaken with the recent earthquake? The epic centre of the Sabah revival in the 1980s was where the earthquake struck. God wants the churches in Sabah who had once experienced revival to WAKE UP! The revival coming to Sabah will be much bigger and more powerful than the Ba Kelalan revival. At a recent prayer meeting in Sabah, signs of heaven splitting and flames of fire falling from the sky were seen by the prayer warriors interceding near the mountainous areas.

2. The secret of revival is reconciliation and confession of sins. During the Bario revival, people openly confessed their sins to one another. Repentance was outward.

3. Adopt the attitude of David in fighting the enemy. God does not want us to stay in our present spiritual state. He wants us to be "cukup geram" (Bahasa Malaysia word for "furious enough")! We must pray and pray until we are "cukup geram" and "fed-up" with the enemy. Then we must hit back furiously and hard.

   Ps Lee Choo shared with us 1 Samuel 17:34 - 35 the story of the posture David took in caring for his sheep.

"But David said to Saul, "Your servant used to keep his father's sheep, and when a lion or a bear came and took a lamb out of the flock. I went out after it and struck it and delivered the lamb from its mouth; and when it arose against me, I caught it by its beard, and struck and killed it"

Our prayer posture should be "cukup geram" so furious that we will continue to strike back even though all hope seems to be lost. We should continue to pursue after the demonic forces that hold the souls of our loved ones in their grip.

David was "cukup geram" with the lion and bear that stole his sheep. He was "furious enough" to go after the ferocious animal that held the helpless lamb in its mouth. David did not flee from the lion. David did not run away from saving his flock. He was so "angry" and "furious" that he practically ran after an animal that in the natural was capable of tearing him into pieces. Yet David did not give up…he ran after the lion, struck it and pulled the lamb from its mouth!

Just like David, this should be our posture in prayer. We should never give up praying for our family members who are in the "mouth of the enemy". Some of them may even be half-way trapped in the tight grip of sin. Our prayer posture should be "cukup geram" so furious that we will continue to strike back even though all hope seems to be lost. We should continue to pursue after the demonic forces that hold the souls of our loved ones in their grip. Our prayers combined with seasons of fasting will then be "cukup geram"!

Be "violent", be persistent in prayer! Be "cukup geram" towards the work of the enemy determined to break his intimidation, oppression and control! Let our spirit man declare enough is enough!

Let us adopt this posture this coming 40-day prayer and fasting!

Obedience

By Chan Yi Hern



Yi Hern with her mum, Voon Ching.

As a teenager, the spirit of rebellion has tempted me in every area of my life including refusing to listen to my parents! But the awesome words of my loving Lord Jesus have flowed smoothly into my life to erase my disobedience bit by bit. He has touched me by opening my heart to receive Him and planted seeds to nurture my growth.

Eph 6:1 teaches me, "Children, obey yours parents because you are a child of God, for this is the right thing to do."

Being obedient is love shown by us children to our parents. When we listen to our parents' teaching and guidance, we will grow up to be righteous people.

My heart ultimately wants to be good but the growing up process is full of worldly temptations which hinder, distract and shake me up. Ignoring the problem is not the solution. Therefore, with the Lord's guidance and wisdom, I am learning to deal with the situation by meditating on God's Word sown into my heart and staying obedient to His Word.

On many occasions, my obedience was tested by God. He tested and I passed with His given wisdom! Hallelujah! But occasionally, I disobey - the sign of a growing teenager who has thoughts of his or her own. Besides, growing up is a heavy responsibility to shoulder in life.

In obedience, I am to keep and use His gift given to me and shine for His glory. He will therefore continuously pour endless gifts and goodies to me.

Pro 16:9 tells me, "In his heart a man plans his course but the Lord determines his steps."

I make plans for my future but I need to obey and patiently wait for the Lord to determine my next step in His time. I believe God watches over all who love Him as in Psalms 145:20. In His love for me, He will perform miracles and wonders to enable me to shine for Him.

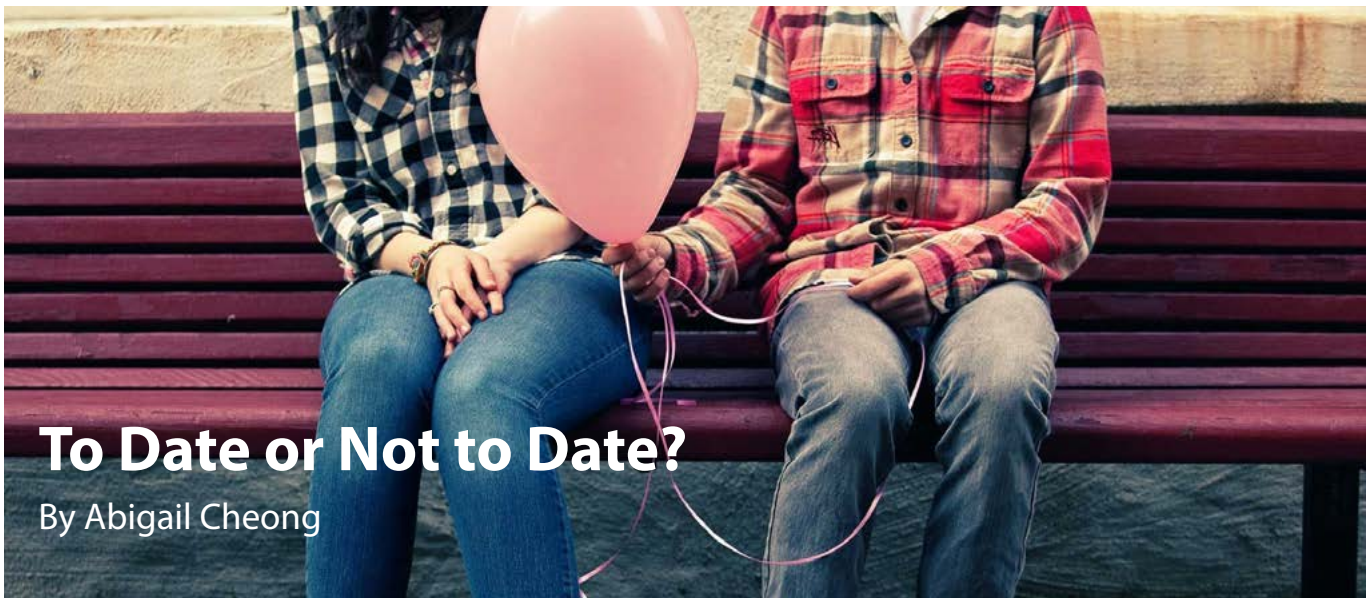
Being obedient is love shown by us children to our parents.

Dear God,

You wish me to be an obedient child. I am willing to submit myself, my daily life and future to You. I am a strong willed girl who has endured trials and testings to obediently follow You, my Lord. You're my Saviour, my life. Before knowing You, I was an empty tin but You filled me with Your glorious gifts. Whatever dust that has gathered along the way, Lord, please remove them and fill me with Your goodies. At times, I may wonder whether I am able to complete the task assigned to me. However, I recognize, my accomplishment is a great gift from You. For instance, my inspiration to write always comes from You either through Your Scriptures, songs or music. It just flows like a stream of river to me, smoothly without interruptions. My vision in life is always to spread Your awesome gift to me - to write and to continue writing.

And Lord, You patiently deal with my obedience to You. As a teenager, I am uncertain of what is needed in life but gradually, You garnished me with your love and tamed me to grow. May Your Word be continuously poured into me that I may be an obedient child with Your grace and wisdom. Thank You and always love you Lord.

Ed's Note: Chan Yi Hern is autistic. She is blessed with the gift of writing.



To Date or Not to Date?

By Abigail Cheong

Okay, let's be real, teenagers date. They may or may not be going out with someone exclusively, but dating is certainly something that happens (even for teens as young as 13!). The question is: Should teens be dating?

Some people argue that teens should not date, because they are still struggling to find themselves. How would they know who their ideal partner should be if they don't even understand themselves enough?

But then again, there are stories of people who grew up, married their high school sweethearts and live happily ever after. So it can't mean that all teenagers who date are destined to fail right?

Dating is the process of **getting to know someone in order to find out if you are compatible to be partners for life** (marriage). This means that in the early stages of a relationship, you try to find out each other's personalities, likes and dislikes, strengths and weaknesses.

For teenagers, I think casual dating is a good idea. This means that you are not exclusively attached to someone and there is no one person you call a boyfriend / girlfriend. With casual dating, you are able to meet different types of people, find out what are the values you seek in a future life partner AND **have the freedom to grow into the person or identity God intended for you to be.**

When you are exclusively dating someone (officially boyfriend / girlfriend), you spend a lot of attention, time and effort on that person. You become emotionally attached to your partner. This has its benefits - it feels nice to receive someone's affection, to have a special person you can rely on and hang out with. Steady dating is a great feeling.

But it is also important to be realistic and know that statistically, teenage relationships tend to fail. If you are too invested in that relationship, the after-math of the breakup can be very painful.

So instead of telling you that you should or should not date exclusively, I think you really need to consider these questions if you want to start dating seriously:

1. Do you have the maturity and steadfastness to ensure that your partner MUST love God and share your faith?
2. Are you realistic enough to know that breaking up is a very high possibility – can you deal with the pain and disappointment after?
3. Do you have the self-control to abstain from sex before marriage and remain physically pure?
4. Are you able to make sure that your boyfriend / girlfriend does not take priority over God, your family, your studies and your personal growth?
5. Do you have the sense of responsibility to focus on your full-time job as a teen; that is to study hard and equip yourself for adulthood?

If you answered YES to all the questions and decide that you DO want to have a boyfriend / girlfriend, then these are things that you should do:

1. **Set physical boundaries**
   Physical boundaries bring about freedom: freedom to know each other as friends and freedom to pursue your life goals. Make a conscious decision to respect each other's physical boundaries at all costs. Your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit. Don't spend time with each other alone in private places where temptation can creep in.

2. **Hanging out in groups**
   Being in a group setting is where you can really see their true character – how they treat their friends, your friends, elders and their family when he/she is not trying to impress you.

3. **Be accountable to someone**
   Being young, it is extremely important for you to get advice from someone who not only has experience, but genuinely wants the best for YOU. Speak to your parents or if that's too awkward, get in touch with your youth leader. Talk to them about your relationship, seek their advice, get them to pray for you and be accountable to them. Having a support system and a prayer partner will really be a good anchoring point for your relationship, regardless of whether it does or doesn't work out.

Finally, I just want to say is it is really alright to not date until you are older, you don't have to date now just because all your friends are dating. Never let a fool kiss you and a kiss fool you. When you finally meet THE ONE, it will be worth the wait.

Dating - As God Intended

By Chris Cheong



Chris with his lovely wife, Sumi

Dating had always been foreign to me. Maybe it was because of the inhibitive nature within me, which made approaching the opposite sex not a natural thing! Moreover coming from a traditional Asian family, sharing such experiences down from one generation to another was unheard of and therefore offered no help at all. Most of what I picked up was from friends and television. Adding to that, cable or paid TV was not in the picture then. Those were the days, when RTM1, RTM2 AND TV3 reigned supreme and imposed total dominance.

Attending an all-boys school for 12 years, from Standard One till Form 5 (17 years old), did not help too. The only close encounters of the female kind were mainly teachers, mothers and relatives. They were all twice or three times my age!

I have two sisters, but the eldest left to further her studies overseas when I was still in my early secondary school. Two years apart from my second sister, we grew up together. We played together with kids from our neighbourhood but as we grew older, we started to have our own friends and seldom mixed, except during family gatherings and outings. However, those outings were usually far and wide apart, so they were of not much help too.

So it was in this setting, when I accepted Christ in my twenties, that I brought along a totally twisted worldly understanding of what dating and marriage was supposed to be – completely construed by the living room idiot box, physical needs and peer influence. A complete difference to what Christ intended it to be, of which I began to unravel after I accepted Christ.

Let me say now that God was there throughout my journey of ignorance, graciously waiting and working in me. On some occasions, in His grace, allowing repercussions to bypass me, so that I can testify of His grace and mercy! God was gracious as He brought my future chosen wife, into my life only a few years after being a Christian. Thank God, as I had a few years to learn and unlearn! Most importantly, allowing Him to change me "inside out" and "right-side up".

It was not easy going out on a date with my first, then girlfriend (now wife!). I was so conscious of how to act as a renewed Christian Boyfriend! Whether by placing my hand over her shoulders or holding hands might be stepping over my boundaries! Let alone a kiss on the cheek or lips!! The Bible, I knew, is crystal clear on the prohibition of premarital sex.

Pray, and ask God, trust in Him knowing that His will is the best for you.

In Jewish customs (extracted from www.chabad.org "Dating the Jewish Way"), dating is viewed as a serious matter and is not intended for entertainment purposes! Dating is reserved for mature men and women who have reached marriageable age and are actively seeking their life mate. Further down the article, it mentioned that "dating is not a game"! To think that the world today is completely running the opposite direction, teenagers, even secondary school children are pressured to have partners, partners that are shallow and casual, easily dropped, like changing clothes! And some even contemplate on pre-marital sex!

The Bible also indicates that "dating" is for the ultimate goal of finding your life partner! God is gracious as He narrows down the search to only "Christians"; unbelievers are not included in this category, period! Just remember, that God knows your heart's desire! And He also knows what you don't even know, yet! Just as God knew who my life partner would be! So do not be pressured to find a partner just because your friends are all attached! Stay strong and know that somewhere out there is a person that is just the right fit for you. Matthew 6:33 says "Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and He will give you everything you need." (NLT).



Healthy Dating

By Jane Oo

When the VOH team approached me to write on healthy dating, I couldn't help but chuckle at how many times I evaluated on my own values and principle of dating. When I was a teen, I was greatly influenced by the book 'Kissing dating goodbye' by Joshua Harris. The title of the book was obviously about saying no to casual dates. At that point of time, being young and fresh, dating wasn't the main stream culture; therefore saying no to casual dates was easy. I have many friends who share the same view and I remember clearly about our discussions and how passionate we became about it. We believe that a healthy relationship should start with friendship. I had many guy friends that were really close yet we kept at 'friendship' zone. As I look back, I would say that it is wise not to date when you are not ready for it.

As I grew older, the principle of no dating started to change as well. My friends started to date and some led to a beautiful relationship that I would envy. The question was no longer about whether dating is ok or not, but who you date. 'Can I date a non-Christian?' was the next big question. The Bible did clearly say, "Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness?" (2 Cor 6:14) Being single for the past years, I can really say that a godly Christian guy doesn't come by easily. Should I blame God for it? After hearing and seeing many extraordinary relationship stories in YWAM, I am ashamed to say that my view or my trust in God for relationship was so limited. We always see relationship through our limited eyes, surveying for potential partners within our circles or expect him or her to drop on our lap.

All we have to know is that God does care for us. I got the opportunity to witness a relationship that was formed because God calls her, an American serving in Romania, and him, a British serving in Australia, to India for a separate mission trip. Both met in a small city in Kolkata, partnering together in mission and now they are getting married in October! Beautiful!

Know our own dating or relationship principle. Or else, we will end up with any 'Ah Chai' or 'Ah Lui' that comes along our way

We must also know our own dating or relationship principle. That's a must! Or else, we will end up with any 'Ah Chai' or 'Ah Lui' that comes along our way. Start praying for your future partner and yourself. I am sure we want to be the best partner our partner can have. Let's start working at it. There will be new 'dos' and 'don'ts' regarding dating in each season of life and it's a long list. The rule of thumb is in 1 Cor 10:23, "All things are lawful for me, but not all things are helpful; all things are lawful for me, but not all things edify. Let no one seek his own, but each one the other's well-being." I truly believe that as we draw closer to God, our relationship with one another whether exclusive or not will also be amazing.

Last but not least, here's my favourite verse and I believe and testify with all my heart. "But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you." Matt 6:33

Family Picnic Day 2015: Parent-Child Event

By Melody Wan


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04 07 2015 was a day where some kindergarten families created new experiences and enjoyed well-spent quality-time together. We were glad to see such a big crowd gathered even though it had rained early that morning. The day turned out beautifully with perfect weather, at a wonderful venue. Each family's effort in preparing food for the picnic, bringing their own mats and brainstorming for the Banana Food Art Competition was worth it all, for it put "a smile on their child's face." We began the event with some warm up exercises with the motto – Your children need to feel your LOVE to have a smile on their faces.

With the Banana Food Art Competition, families were encouraged to have a good time discussing, communicating and laughing together as they complete the worksheet. It was a whole new level of experience for the parent and child as they worked together in decorating their Banana Food Art.

We want to thank the Children's Church team for hosting the exciting games, the young adults for setting up fascinating face painting and photo booths, Charis Hope Centre for selling finger food snacks, the Chinese Youth for preparing bubbles-blowing booth, Keng Youth for selling ice cream, as well as KKB team and Bukit Indah Life Group for selling drinks. All these helped to create a warm atmosphere during the family day.

I always believed that a school is an open door to connect to the community. A school is not only meant for children's education, but every stable school should help parents grow together. By looking at our society today, there are a lot of young parents who are not aware of the ways to train their children. Many are lacking knowledge in understanding their children's utmost needs and do not know the meaning of "quality time spent." Quality time spend is not simply watching movies and eating good food but it includes sharing and exchanging values.

To this end, the Lord has put His vision, His passion; and He breaks whatever things that are holding us back from seeing this vision. For one, we are not just working, but serving people. Education is the key to unlock wrong thinking, eradicate poverty, and change wrong mindsets. We want to transform mindsets with good values. Why do we do events for parenting? It is not for project's sake, but it is for the transformation of lives. So far we have done two events in line with this. The first was the talk organized for parents on "learning disabilities" in our new community hall in April. The second was the picnic day in July. With these events we helped create moments for parents and children to have greater bonding, to have quality time and better communications with each other. We also use these events as a platform for the church to connect to the community in line with our theme for the year – Discipling the Community. Let us be together in this. Let us not just be living "among" the community but living with the community. Let us give our time "to be with this community" because our community needs us, our community needs the Lord!

To create moments for parents and children to have greater bonding, to have quality time and better communications with each other


7







Caption

1. A family at work together
2. Children leading the way
3. Family creation
4. There is love!
5. A photo for family album
6. Mummy, Daddy and I made this!
7. Quality time
8. Face painting
9. A fun picnic day



Closer Deeper Further

By Luke Tien

How shall I describe HGC 2015 Church Camp? A wonderful retreat! A proper resting and renewal period; a time for thoughts and to grow closer and deeper with God! It took us out of our busy schedules. We were taken away from the bustle of life to a hiding place, just an hour's journey from Ampang, to the Felda Residence, Trolak from 4-6 June. We had lunch at the only Chinese restaurant in sight at Sungkai. Ten great dishes were served on each table. We could hardly believe the amount of food on our table. We tried our hardest to finish them all, only to realize that it was an impossible effort.

Upon entering the gates of Residence Inn, we followed the directions shown and made a stop at the main hall. I got out and stretched my legs. The blazing sun was burning down my back but the serenity of that place stilled my heart. We were placed into our groups with whacky names – Cavemen, Hawaiian, P Ramlee, and Bollywood. The games were quite intense especially the one in which each group had to compete in creating the worst tasting food. Mark Charis and Chris Cheong, our Camp Leader, were tasked with tasting the final creations. It was all fun and games until it was time for the first session.

After a Spirit filled worship, our guest speaker, Ps Clement Wong from Ipoh captured the attention of the whole hall. He was a great joker but jokes aside, he laid down the foundation of getting closer to God and being hungry for Him. We were convicted of the guilt of our iniquities. Many were moved by the Holy Spirit and stepped up for the altar call. He released us from our 'guilt and shame' and comforted us with His presence. From that moment I knew why I had come to the camp. That night, everyone went back to their rooms tired but renewed.

On the second day, during the second session, the presence of the Lord was so strong. The worship team could not stop worshipping! When it finally ended, the speaker encouraged us to reach out to God's presence more. I felt a deep conviction to reread the whole Bible again. I became hungry – hungry for the Word and Spirit of God. It was a good start to the day, to be filled with the Spirit in the morning.

After lunch, practices for team cheer, advertisement and 'cat walk' got underway for the evening's Talent Night. In the late afternoon, some went for a good dip at a nearby hot spring while the youth had a go at the rope challenge. When dinner came, we were all exchanging stories. That evening, the Talent night really took us by surprise. The hall was filled with laughter as the five teams presented their own rehearsed cheers, advertisement about teamwork and cat walk. The winning group was the cavemen. They were so creatively barbaric. My group, P Ramlee, ended up second. Although I didn't want the lead role as P Ramlee, I got selected. There was great teamwork and it was really fun goofing around. I must say that it was the great effort of Justin Yong (my team leader) in getting the props which allowed for such a good performance.

On the final morning, after a hasty breakfast, we were thrown into another powerful worship session. Ps Clement spoke about getting personal – personal prayer life, personal relationship with God and personal faith. This is the fuel to sustain our Christian lives, so that we can go further with God in His ministry. I went out during the altar call to be prayed for. I realized I needed the Lord to be my vision and provision for my journey ahead.

The camp came to a close as we packed our luggage and got ready to go. But another journey started as we are refueled and fired up for God. The camp was an indescribable experience. All glory to God.

















Caption

1. The barbaric duo
2. P Ramlee Team - "Getaran Jiwa"
3. Cowboy team - "Hee Ha!"
4. A Great Camp!
5. Going deeper
6. Going further
7. Having fun .... soon
8. Bollywood Team - "Vah! Vah!"
9.Foot therapy at the hotspring

A Child Has Changed

By Jeanette Chan

Just as Jesus instructed his disciple, Peter, three times to take care of His lambs and sheep entrusted into his care; the same trust is given to His disciples today. Little lambs of diverse backgrounds, culture and life circumstances come to our Children Church (CC); and under the love, care and guidance of our CC teachers and helpers, the "Peters" of today, the little lambs grow and change!. Below are some of the transforming work of God in partnership with the CC teachers and helpers:

Big Boy Already

By Helen Dan

I remember Jayden when he first came to Children Church nine months old ago in Nov 2014. He kept crying and wanting his father. He didn't want to join the CC. My son, Daniel, and I tried to comfort him. I carried him in my arms, telling him that it's fine and assuring him that his father would come later. After a while, he answered with tears in his eyes that his father no longer loved him and had put him in a children's home, the Sunbeams Home. At that moment, my heart went out to this four year old boy, who knew and needed parental love.

Every week he would sit on the staircase, crying emotionally and repeatedly say that he didn't want to attend CC. I would carry him from the 2nd floor to 3rd floor, telling him, "Bro Daniel and I love you." In time, he became happier and enjoyed coming to CC, and I need not carry him anymore. He would always offer to help me. Every Sunday, he would wait for me on the 3rd floor, run to me to carry my bag and say, "I big boy already, I can help you to carry the heavy items, like Kor Kor Daniel (Brother Daniel)." He would come close to me and ask me to open his packet of food. Each time, he would take out a piece of biscuit saying, "Sis Helen, this is for you".

He was a cheerful child who responded quite well to questions asked. He would even come to my registration table and offer his help. However, Jayden could not stand or sit in one place for more than 15 minutes. He loves to run around. Sometimes I will hear someone shout, "Sis Helen, look at your Jayden!" when Jayden did not follow instructions and ran around during services. I had to be firm with him too and not simply agree to his every request. He has learnt to take no for an answer and not get emotional when he doesn't get what he wants. I learned from this experience as to how to handle his emotions.

Thinking of Jayden's changes, from an unstable child to a more knowledgeable, cheerful person, shining for God, makes me feel wonderful. All the glory to the Lord!

What Trust Can Do To A Child

By Mark Charis

Trust! Responsibility! It is amazing what trust can do to a child. There was once a child who was very playful, attention seeking and a disruption to the CC. I decided to start giving him responsibilities – an avenue to use his energy in a more productive manner. And it turned out fantastic! He started to be helpful and less of a nuisance. At a certain point, he even learnt to be responsible and began to take care of others his age. Isn't it great? To trust a child and expect something more of him, really brings out the best possible in him. Even if he failed in the given task, he passed by having tried to do his best. Trying to impress even when he could not! I say that is very good indeed.





A Special Helper Programme

By Janelle Lim

This year, I was given the "honour" of being a house leader. And honestly, it was TOUGH. There was one child in particular that captured my attention. He was naughty, and would do almost anything to annoy me right to my limit. I would try to think of multiple ways to help him and discipline him. At one point, Mark had a 'Special Helper' programme and he was selected. Suddenly, he became more serious and responsible towards things. Noticing this, I started giving him more and more responsibilities so that he would be at his best behaviour as he knew he was being watched by other children by being one of the "Special Helpers". It started small, like asking him to help collect pencils after class and it snowballed into much bigger responsibilities. He has improved a lot since then, though occasionally he would still be naughty, but hey, nobody's perfect. I hope to see him as a great person growing in Christ and serving the Lord in the future, one step at a time.


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To trust a child and expect something more of him, really brings out the best possible in him.

No One Realised

By Perez Sien

A child has changed, but no one realised…
A trouble maker to a leader's helper, but no one realised…
A noisy kid to a disciplined child, but no one realised…
An irrational to a self-controlled boy, but no one realised…
Time has changed him, but no one realised~
Your child has changed, have you realised?


4

Caption
1. Helen with Jayden
2. Teachers, helpers and children
3. Mark leading the CC team
4. Children's positive response
5. Teacher Helen loves the children


3



DG Testimonies

By Ruth Lee

The Adult Discipleship Group (DG) started in April and ended in July this year. There were two groups, one group met after church on Sunday while the other group met on a week day. The DG was facilitated by leaders in the church and those who participated were adults and new leaders.

Read some of their testimonies here and you will be blessed:



"I have truly enjoyed all the sessions. My doubts have been clarified when questions lingering in my mind were answered through the 12 sessions of Roots & Wings. The discussion on where and how I can fit into the church and its vision really benefitted me. Through these studies and very interesting discussions with fellow students, I was able to appreciate who God is in my life; who I am; what my spiritual inheritance in Christ is; and what my priority and life purpose should be. My faith has been firmly grounded through this wonderful study of the Word of God. My eyes of understanding have been opened through the empowering of the Holy Spirit. I can humbly look to higher ground in ministry and leadership with a servant heart. I would highly recommend this study to all aspiring to be in positions of leadership or be involved in any ministry to register for future sessions. You will be richly blessed" - ***Sekar***



"I find the DG Bible study very deep. I had to prepare myself each Sunday by doing research and reading up the Scriptures. Not only have I learned a lot from my own study of the Word of God but I have also learnt a lot from the sharing of my brothers and sisters in Christ. I particularly like the part on Biblical Foundation. Indeed, we need to build our foundation on the Rock (Jesus Christ) by going deep into the Word of God. I was always strengthened and uplifted after each session of Bible study using the Roots & Wings. Thank you to all the facilitators for making time for us. God bless you all." ***– Suarno***



"I wish to thank the leadership for organizing the DG. Those 12 weeks had awakened me to reflect on the topics we discussed on and shared together. This is a systematic and profound way of growing in discipleship and studying the Word of God. Thanks to Ps Khor and all the facilitators. I am looking forward to joining another group study soon. Be Blessed. Shalom" ***– Jesse***



The No-Blame Hamburger Theory

By Ruth Lee

Do you have a staff member who is often late for work or who is frequently on medical leave? Every year the leave allocation is maxed out whether annual leave, medical leave or compassionate leave (although this type of leave is only for the death of immediate family members).

You wring your hands at the failure of all your efforts to counsel and speak to your staff. Your multiple WhatsApp messages, email and constant reminders to them have come to nothing. You bring this up in their presence at office meetings hoping to 'name and shame' them but all your 'threats' have fallen on deaf ears.

For one week your staff will behave like an angel but the following week the whole process will be repeated again! Yet, as a Christian boss you want to be compassionate, as you understand the family situation. She has children to support and cannot afford to lose her job. You do not want to report her to HR to give her a show-cause letter.

Here is a 'secret' to giving effective criticism. One businesswoman in Thailand has applied what is known as the 'no-blame hamburger theory" and it has worked for her due to the culture of the Thai people.

The success of Vinder who runs Mrs Balbir group of restaurants in Bangkok (a chain of North Indian restaurants) is, according to her, "learning to deal with Thais according to their culture" when handling issues concerning difficult staff.

A true food enthusiast, Vinder calls this her "no-blame hamburger" theory".

She starts with:

1. Bun on the top
First you have to praise them, fluff them up a little bit, something along the lines of, "I really like this about you, you are doing really well in this area and I appreciate your hard work.'

2. Meat in the middle
Then you come to the meat, which is the real issue. But the trick is to approach it without putting the blame on the person.

Say something like, "You are very good in your work. However, I am unable to make use of your talents as you are often on medical or emergency leave. I wonder if you are experiencing some personal problems. Would you like to share with me as I like your work very much?" or "I think this particular task could have been done differently. Are you having some sort of difficulty, hence you are unable to perform this task well?"

Make reference to the problem but with understanding and compassion. The staff can sense the kindness in your words.

3. Bun at the bottom
Finally end with the last bun.

"How do you think you and I can work together so that it does not happen again?'

Not pointing fingers, according to Vinder, is a way of showing respect, which to the Thais is most important. This last bun is to assure the staff that you are concerned about welfare and sincerely want to see her do well.

I tried applying this recently to one of my staff with the perennial problem of being missing from work for one reason or another. She broke down and cried and shared with me the reason why she had to be on medical leave or emergency leave. Although her real problem had yet to be resolved but I have started applying the 'bun at the bottom' theory, I have been daily encouraging her by praising her for being at her table when I see her. I also remind her before the weekend (emergency leave and medical leave after a weekend is common phenomena) to make every effort to be at work on Monday.

So far so good…..

Equipping Today's Generation with the Gospel

By Helen How





Wai Shin



Zera Sian



Josiah Chin



Perez Sian



Melissa Foong



Bibianna Lee



Janelle Lim

This year, XEE Semester 5 started on 25 Jan and ended on 31 May 2015. We had a total of 12 trainers and 12 trainees, the largest XEE semester team to date, for God's glory. We would like to thank God for our wonderful team that worked together to make this semester a success. We also would like to appreciate all our prayer partners and our church for partnering with us in prayer.

Below are some exciting testimonies of our team.

Trainees' Testimonies

Wai Shin

I learned the skills of sharing the Gospel with people around me, how to stay focused and win souls for Christ especially through the connect activities. Now that I am equipped, I am committed to share the gospel to at least one person a month. Completing the XEE semester is just the beginning of making evangelism my life style.

Zera Sian

XEE has definitely impacted my life. I was very timid, and always needed my brother to help me out. Now, I am bolder and able to share the gospel during our connect activities. Even if I am alone, I am able to share with confidence. I would like to encourage other brothers and sisters to enrol in the next XEE semester.

Josiah Chin

XEE changed me a lot. I know how to share the Gospel in a more proper way and have grown in boldness. At first I was scared but slowly, through the training, it became easier for me. I am now very happy that I have learnt the tool to bring other people into God's family. I joined this program because I wanted to share with my friends and relatives that they may know the one true God.

Perez Sian

Last year, during my major exam (PT3), I felt very down because one of my friends who had worked as a part-time waiter with me had passed away in a car accident. I was sad because he was young and had just finished his SPM a year ago and he did not know Jesus. That night, I made a commitment to God that I will share the gospel to the world. Through Xee Semester 5, I have learnt how to share the gospel and my confidence in sharing the gospel has increased.

Melissa Foong

All my family members except for me, have joined and graduated from XEE; so I thought why not join in too? When we were told to write about our own story, I reflected on my life as a Christian. I realised that I didn't really tell people about what Jesus did for me. What if one day a friend were to stand before me and asked, "Why didn't you tell me about such a great God?" I know I would not know how to answer. I did not want to live my life in regret forever. But at the same time, I did not know how to share the gospel.

A few weeks after joining XEE, a few of my friends in school actually asked me why Jesus died on the cross for us and was He forced to die. I began to share with them a few simple illustrations I learned from XEE. Previously, I would be shy and not know how to answer my friend's questions. But this time, I was able to share with them about Jesus. This shows that XEE has really helped me and impacted me in a big way.

Bibianna Lee

When I chose to join XEE, I was actually worried that I would not have time for it and would not be able to catch up with my studies. But after joining, I have no regrets. Through the XEE connect activities, practices and classes, I have learnt a lot from my

wonderful trainers about different kinds of people with different perspectives. I was afraid to speak at the beginning but ended up finishing my XEE well. I know that JESUS will always be with me and I have confidence to speak now. Praise the Lord.

Janelle Lim
Joining XEE was one of the best decisions that I have ever made. It is so much easier to share about God to my friends and family. Now with my XEE skills, I cannot wait to go out to the world and share the good news of God.

Luke Tien
My mother's transformation after she attended the School of Acts and the XEE Discipleship Training has encouraged me to join XEE. I always wanted to tell others why I chose to be a Christian but my words would fail me because I do not know where to start, especially when it came to my own testimony. Do I start with Genesis, with the fall of man, or with Jesus? XEE helped me organize the gospel into wonderful parts which fit perfectly together - Life, Us, God, Jesus, Faith and Response.

I am always self-conscious and afraid of offending people with my belief. During the street evangelism connect activity, we went out to connect with strangers, I was very relieved to find that people were not that hard to talk to. XEE is a really good tool to help us to be a witness for Jesus Christ. I encourage other church members to join XEE and see how your life will grow even more when you testify for Him.

Trainer/Associate trainer testimonies

Wai Pooi
XEE semester 5 has been a blessing for me as a trainer. As an act of obedience in discipling others in sharing the gospel, I am more convicted than ever to reach out to others with the gospel of Christ. The faithfulness and diligence of the trainees have encouraged me greatly. May this be a lifestyle and a way of life for all Christians!

Soon Hoe
I started XEE a few years ago with the understanding that it was an evangelism tool. Now, I know that XEE is more than that. It is also a discipling tool.

I was very encouraged to see that all the trainees of 2014 Xee semester were from the younger generation, in line with the church theme of Discipling the Next Gen. This semester, I am even more encouraged to see some of last semester's trainees becoming trainers, training even younger ones.

Yes, it had been challenging because I had to fit my time into the trainees' schooling time but it had been worth it when I saw the multiplication effect of XEE, in addition to the opportunities to share the gospel with people.

Ann Teh
Praise the Lord. This is my second year committed to this ministry and I am still very fired up about XEE. Last year I was one of the trainees. This year I am an associate trainer. All glory to God. I am happy that I am discipling others and also doing God's work. God has blessed me tremendously as I do His work. Thank you Lord.

Christian Foong
This year is the first year for me as an associate trainer. I find it very good as it provides me a platform to continue using this XEE tool to share the gospel. Not that I cannot share XEE at other times, but joining this semester definitely provides more opportunities for me to share. Furthermore, it helps me to be more fluent in applying the XEE method of sharing. Lastly, I would definitely encourage other church members to enrol in next year's XEE semester and for the new graduates to enrol as trainers. Praise the Lord.

Ow Wen Han
This is my second year in XEE. I was a trainee in my first year and am an associate trainer this year. After 2 years in XEE, now I can now share the gospel confidently. Overall it has helped me to grow closer to God as a Christian. Praise the Lord.

Rebekah Foong
I have been blessed in many ways ever since joining XEE last year. So I've decided to join the Evangelism Ministry this year and hence it is compulsory to join XEE and I have not regretted making that decision.

It was another good experience as I see things differently. Each semester has its own experiences. It was definitely tougher this year as I am still in training as an associate trainer. However, God has been really merciful and gracious in providing me with His wisdom and strength to finish this semester. XEE has really made me grow spiritually in the Lord.

I have learnt that joining XEE for one semester as a trainee is definitely not enough for me to be able to share the gospel smoothly and boldly. This year gave me much more opportunities to share. God has indeed answered our prayer by inspiring so many young people like me to join XEE this semester. Thank God for such a wonderful time. Praise the Lord for everything that He has done!


Luke Tien


Wai Pooi


Soon Hoe


Ann Teh


Christian Foong


Ow Wen Han


Rebekah Foong

Article

The 3 Un-Christian Responses Towards Homosexuality By Joann Lim



Christians shouting "Jesus" while drumming, during the LGBT counter-protest in Seoul. (Source: Buzzfeed)

On June 26, the US Supreme Court ruled that same sex couples can marry nationwide. LGBT communities around the world rejoiced in an explosion of rainbow coloured gay-pride parades around the world.

In Seoul, Korea, tens of thousands held a 3 week long LGBT Queer Festival to celebrate. In response, Korea's largest Christian church associations formed an Anti-LGBT Response Committee and held a counter protest surrounding the queer festival.

The group held a worship service across the street from the Queer Festival, blasting hymns, prayers, and sermons so loudly that at times it overwhelmed the festival's sound system. They performed ballet and flag dances and shouted "Jesus!" during drum performances towards the Queer Festival.

Head of the anti-LGBT coalition, Ps. Lee Young-Hoon gave a speech saying, "Our prayers will open the sky and the homosexuals will fall, we will be blessed with victory."

From a Christian's perspective, I feel that much has been said about the right or wrong of homosexuality, but not enough of what our response toward the issue should be.

In light of the new ruling, I noticed several un-Christlike responses that some Christians had:

1. **The "Radical" Christian**
   "REPENT FROM YOUR SINS, TURN FROM YOUR EVIL HOMOSEXUAL DESIRES AND COME TO JESUS, FOR THE PUNISHMENT IS HELL AND ETERNAL DAMNATION!"
   These are the types of statements you will hear from the 'radical' or rather, extremist Christian. Think Westboro Baptist Church. The radical Christian is all about threatening and coercing people to 'stop being homosexual'. Much like how terrorists try to force their beliefs on other people. Not only is this method ineffective, it will blow up in your face and create a negative impression on Christianity.

   Telling a non-Christian to stop sinning is like a healthy person saying to a sick person, "Please stop vomiting and looking so pale. It's very unbecoming." Sounds ridiculous right? If a person is ill, they can't help display its symptoms. And stopping the symptoms will not treat the underlying problem.
   Sin is merely a symptom of a bigger underlying disease – absence of God.

2. **The Bible-Basher**
   Lev 20:13, "If there is a man who lies with a male as those who lie with a woman, both of them have committed a detestable act; they shall surely be put to death. Their bloodguiltness is upon them."
   Similar to the radical Christian, Bible bashers retaliate

by quoting scripture – basically bashing others using the Bible. Because the Bible always has strong words about the consequences of sin, the message non-Christians get becomes offensively similar to the Radical Christian's message; except written in more flowery, scriptural prose.

As Christians, we agree that the Word of God is truth, but non-Christians don't believe in the Bible and they don't share the same conviction in the Word that we do. Quoting Scripture to get them to stop sinning comes across as us imposing our standards on them. Of course, one day when we stand before God, those same standards will apply to everyone regardless of whether they believe in the Bible or not. But the main point is not about pointing out the sinner. It is about reconciling the sinner to God BEFORE that day arrives.

When I see the responses from these two types of Christians, I find myself thinking: On some level, in our "Christian-ness", have we forgotten how to be relatable to non-Christians? Are we really concerned about salvation for the non-believer, or have we become more concerned about self-righteousness? Instead of displaying love and grace - trademark characteristics of Jesus, these insensitive responses take on a tone of judgment and rejection.

What Would Jesus Do?
In His ministry, Jesus often (if not always!) mingled with sinners. He made conversation with them, broke bread with them, got to know them on a personal level instead of judging them; and no one was a more qualified judge than He! Can you imagine how poorly-received Jesus would be if He went around behaving like a Radical Christian or a Bible Basher?

"Zacchaeus, get down from that tree you cheating, dishonest thief! The commandments clearly states THOU SHALT NOT STEAL. Fire and brimstone be upon you for the tax money you have stolen! The wages of your sin is death!"

Did Jesus say that? No.

Instead, He said, **"Zacchaeus, come down. I am going to your house today."**

Jesus didn't judge or threaten. He invited. And the result? Zacchaeus repented.

Luke 19:5-10: So Zacchaeus came down at once and welcomed him gladly. All the people saw this and began to mutter, "He has gone to be the guest of a sinner." But Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, "Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount."

Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost."

Judgment VS Correction
So if we are not to judge sinners, does that mean we have to keep quiet about it in order not to offend anyone? Not at all. We are called to be the salt of the earth, a light in the darkness. But where do we draw the fine line between judging someone and exposing sin?

Recall the story when the Pharisees brought a woman caught in adultery before Jesus.

John 8:7, 9-11: When the Pharisees kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, **"Let any one of you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her."**… At this, those who heard began to go away…until only Jesus was left, with the woman still standing there.

Jesus straightened up and asked her, "Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?"

"No one, sir," she said.

"Then neither do I condemn you," Jesus declared. "Go now and leave your life of sin."

This is the perfect example of rebuke without condemnation; truth spoken in love. Jesus did not condemn her weakness, but He recognized that what she did WAS sinful. His rebuke to her stemmed from the love and compassion he had for this woman. That is the fine line between judgment and correction.

"But wait a minute," you say, "There were times when Jesus behaved like a radical Christian AND a Bible basher!!" Yes indeed, that is correct. Remember the time when Jesus "cleansed" the temple? He made a whip out of cords, overturned tables and stalls, and drove the moneychangers out, shouting, "Get these out of here! Stop turning my Father's house into a market!" Jesus also did not mince His words whenever He rebuked;

- His disciples – the people who followed him daily and were meant to continue His work
- The Pharisees and Sadducees – political and religious leaders of the time who practiced the Old Testament traditions and gave it equal authority to the written Word of God.

If you noticed, Jesus was A LOT stricter in correcting those who were supposed to be of the faith, not the unbelievers! In fact Paul writes in 1 Cor 5:9-13:

I wrote to you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people - not at all meaning the people of this world who are immoral, or the greedy and swindlers, or idolaters. In that case you would have to leave this world. But now I am writing to you that you must not associate with anyone who claims to be a brother or sister but is sexually immoral or greedy, an idolater or slanderer, a drunkard or swindler. Do not even eat with such people. What business is it of mine to judge those outside the church? Are you not to judge those inside? God will judge those outside. "Expel the wicked person from among you."
Which brings me to the next type of Christian response within the flurry of arguments on the gay marriage ruling.

3. The Pro-LGBT Marriage Christian

"Christianity is all about unconditional love, so gender should not matter as long as there is love."

Needless to say, I can imagine that Jesus will display some tough love in correcting Christians who twist the Bible to suit their whims and fancies. God's Word clearly states that marriage is a sacred institution designed exclusively between a man and a woman. Saying otherwise is an attempt to justify sin.

2 Tim 4: 1-5 says:
In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I give you this charge: Preach the word; be prepared in season and out of season; **correct, rebuke and encourage – with great patience and careful instruction. For the time will come when people will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear.** They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths. But you, keep your head in all situations, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, and discharge all the duties of your ministry.

Sin is merely a symptom of a bigger underlying disease – absence of God.

So perhaps before we respond (whether online or in real life), ask yourself this:

- How can I respond in such a way that will help bring this person closer to knowing God?
- Does the response I am about to make stem from love and compassion, or self-righteousness?

Finally, pray for clarity and ask the Holy Spirit to empower you in bridging the gap between God and those who need Him.

NB: LGBT - Lesbain, Gay, Bisexual & Transsexual



Participants of a gay pride march wave a rainbow flag as they stand before a police cordon set up to keep out anti-gay Christian activists. (ED JONES/AFP/Getty Images)

Homosexuality & The So Called "Same-Sex Marriage"

By Justin Yong

The recent declaration by the Supreme Court of the United States (SCOTUS) on the fundamental right to marry for same-sex couples across all states in America; has been unprecedented. This decision by the court, decrees that all states in America are now ordered to license and recognised same-sex marriage within their states. While homosexuality itself is nothing new in society – with the Bible mentioning it repeatedly – however, the institutionalising of it is. John Piper in describing this calls it the "new calamity."



US Supreme Court legalise same sex marriage on 26 Jun 2015

The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines homosexual as:

1) of, relating to, or characterized by a tendency to direct sexual desire toward another of the same sex
2) of, relating to, or involving sexual intercourse between persons of the same sex

While the majority of people consider these acts as completely unnatural, many who claim to be homosexuals have actually made this their lifestyle choice sometime in their lives. Advocates have worked at lobbying their agenda to the government numerous times in the past. The 1972 gay rights platform and the 1987 march on Washington are two known public gatherings of pro-gay groups. The demands spelled out were very clear:

- Repeal of all state laws prohibiting private sexual acts involving consenting persons; equalization for homosexuals and heterosexuals for the enforcement of all laws. (1972 State-2)
- Repeal of all legislative provisions that restrict the sex or number of persons entering into a marriage unit; and the extension of legal benefits to all persons who cohabit regardless of sex or numbers. (1972 State-8)

The announcement by SCOTUS on same-sex marriage ruling has been their finest victory to date for pro-gay groups. It would be unwise to think that these developments in the US would have no implication for the rest of the world. It certainly would in time.

This event has culminated in part because people are split as to who owns the definition of marriage. Governments have long regulated marriage into laws which focuses solely on legal implications such as divorce settlements, custody of children, extra-marital infidelity and so on. This relationship between government and marriage is further enforced when couples are made to declare their unions through the registration of marriages (ROM). However, the extending of definition to include same-sex couples is contentious, **as marriage was not conceptualised by our governments in the first place.** The idea of marriage was adopted by governments from our cultural traditions, and as such traces its roots from there. It is very much a cultural institution rooted in a person's religious belief. If anything, the term "marriage" should be consulted with conservative society since, marriage ceremonies are almost always conducted by religious leaders. For Christians, the definition of marriage as between a man and a woman has been uncontested since the genesis of creation.

"Long before our government came into existence, marriage was created by the One who created man and woman – Almighty God – and His decisions are not subject to review or revision by any manmade court." Franklin Graham

Hence fundamentally, the government does not hold an exclusive right either to the definition or institution of marriage as a whole. They only help regulate it in a country. Franklin Graham stated this swiftly in response to the SCOTUS decision:

"Long before our government came into existence, marriage was created by the One who created man and woman – Almighty God – and His decisions are not subject to review or revision by any manmade court. God is clear about the definition of marriage in His Holy Word: "Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh" (Gen 2:24).



Marriage was created by the One who created man and woman

Use What I Have

By Elsa Foong

It was a busy Saturday morning, the Saturday right after our church 21st Anniversary. My son had extra tuition class in preparation for his examination. I needed to fetch him to and fro his teacher's house. It was a rush. After that I had to do the laundry and cook lunch for my children.



Oil and luncheon meat spilt all over the floor.

I decided to make a simple and easy meal. On one stove I was boiling chicken porridge and on the other stove I was frying luncheon meat. I was using a small non-stick pan with a big, heavy stainless steel spatula turner. I should have used a small silicon turner. While the luncheon meat was frying, I wanted to wash some dirty dishes in the sink. I rested the turner on the pan, something which I normally wouldn't do as the stainless steel turner was way too heavy for the pan. But that day I was in a rush and couldn't think straight. The heavy turner caused the pan to topple, spilling the luncheon meat and the hot oil onto the floor and splashing the oil onto my feet and legs. My legs were full of hot oil. I could feel the heat and the pain; and I could imagine my feet badly scalded and blistered. I was in a shock and totally alarmed.

At that time, I thought it was too late to put any soothing cream or toothpaste on my legs. All I did was cry out to the LORD, "LORD, help me! Help me!" In such a situation where I didn't know what to do, I knew He was the only One who could help me. I walked slowly from my wet kitchen to my dry kitchen, leaving a trial of oily footprints. I prayed in tongues asking the LORD to take away the heat. I told Him that I needed His help and healing power. As I was praying, the LORD reminded me of my experience during the church 21st anniversary and to use what He had given me.
It was during the miracle offering time. I told the Lord I didn't have anything much to give Him. I just offered myself to Him. I asked the LORD to use me and requested Him to help and empower me, "I need Your power so that I can tell others about you." As I lifted up my hands while the worship and collection was going on, I felt a big, bright, purple ball in my hands. It was turning and turning. I felt God was raising me up with the ball. God told me that He wanted me to be His light and gave me the Holy Spirit to do His will. Although I had experienced God's miraculous healing of Hepatitis C1 (as shared in VOH Oct-Dec Issue, pg 32-34), I needed more of His power to testify to others so that they can believe what I share.

My legs were full of hot oil. I could feel the heat and the pain; and I could imagine my feet would be badly scalded and blistered.

Remembering that experience, I used what I have – the Holy Spirit and His power. I laid hands on my feet and kept praying. I could feel the heat and pain subsiding. My feet and leg did not turn red and neither did any blisters develop. Even when I was showering later, I kept looking at my feet in amazement and wonder of what God had done. No redness, no blisters. My feet were normal. It was a miracle, a work of the Holy Spirit. Using my hand phone, I sent a photo of my messy kitchen to my Mom and friends and told them what had happened. My Mom and friends texted me immediately advising me to apply toothpaste, put some salt, soak in flour. I would need a whole sack of flour to do that. I comforted and assured them that my feet were alright. I told them, "I used what I have, the power of the Holy Spirit."



No redness or blisters on Elsa's feet after hot oil spilt on her feet.

Charity Begins From Young

By Gwen Teoh (on behalf of Hadley Chua)



Hadley happily giving away the money she had earned.

When I heard about the Kindergarten picnic and that there were booths for members to sell things, I was excited and told my 7-year-old daughter, Hadley, about it. She expressed keenness to book a booth to sell handlooms to earn some pocket money.

Hadley was actually inspired by a video I had shown her about a poor girl selling pineapple ice-cream in the market.

Hadley loves making multi-coloured looms and is quite creative in coming up with original designs especially finger looms. Finger looms are brightly coloured rubber bands woven into delicate designs which can be worn on the wrists and also on fingers – like a bracelet and a ring in one.

When I explained to her about the purpose of the sale, she was happy to know that she would be able to help the elderly with the proceeds. By setting up a little table, sandwiched between the ice-cream stall and the drinks stall, her little 'business' attracted a lot of young girls. Not only did they admire the beautiful hand and finger looms, they waited patiently with their mothers (some with their fathers) to have their nails painted with pretty colours.

Surprisingly the little booth attracted a lot of attention and drew a lot of 'customers' to the stall.

At the end of the event, a total of RM60 was collected from the nail-painting (RM1 per customer) and the sale of the hand-looms (averaging RM4 per piece). When Hadley walked over to place the collection in the Charis Hope free-will offering box there were smiles all around!

Praise God that my daughter had the opportunity to learn about giving to charity at such a young age!

He Calls Me Friend!

By Jeremy Chew



One night I went out to get some groceries, dinner and a Digi (mobile phone credit) top up coupon. Usually, I would come home and absent-mindedly, throw the coupon away together with the receipts. Later when I realize it, I would search my trash and retrieve it.

That particular night, I didn't throw anything, yet the coupon couldn't be found. I looked in my pockets among my ringgit notes. I searched everywhere, retracing my steps from the doorway to the kitchen, microwave, drawers of plastic bags, under the sofa, below the TV, I even swept the floor and looked in all the trash baskets a few times.

I went to bed, certain that I must have dropped it in the streets outside and even God wouldn't be able to help me find it. I prayed, as usual giving thanks to God for everything. Then I asked Him to help me find the coupon I had lost, wondering how God would answer my prayer! Smiling to myself, I said to God, "Got You, didn't I?"

The following day while typing on my computer, a gust of wind slammed my front door. I opened the door and there was the coupon - right in the doorway!!!!!!!!!! I could almost hear God laughing, saying, "You thought you got Me? No, you didn't!"

"I am the LORD, the God of all mankind. Is anything too hard for me?"
(Jeremiah 32: 27, NIV)

Angel's Help

By Ginna Tay



The lost and found headphone extension plug

On Wednesday, 19 August, Kelvin, my son, lost his small headphone extension plug while he was practising his guitar at home in his bedroom. He searched all over his bed – flipping his blanket, tossing his pillow; and rummaged through the room, the floor but he still could not find it. He kept saying to himself, "It couldn't be!" It couldn't be that he had lost it for he had remained in the same position while playing the guitar. He had not moved from his position.

Not knowing what to do, Kelvin called out to me, asking me to help him. I told him to ask the angels of God to help him find the plug. In less than a minute, he found the plug lying on the bed right in front of him; and it was not even covered by anything. It was so incredible and miraculous. Both Kelvin and I stood there looking at the plug on the bed amazed by the Lord's speedy help.



My Defender & Protector

By Michelle Liew

On a Tuesday, 16 June 2015, I was on my way to fetch my niece and nephews back from school. I was driving along Jalan Merdeka and nearing the school junction when a taxi in front of me braked suddenly. To avoid knocking into the taxi, I slammed on my brakes immediately. However, the car behind me failed to stop in time and rammed into the back of my car. I came down to inspect the damage done to my car. The driver of the car, a big size man, accused me of stopping my car abruptly. I told him I had no choice because the taxi in front of me had suddenly stopped. By then the taxi had already left, oblivious of what he had caused. The big guy told me to chase after the taxi and to ask for compensation from him. It was totally illogical as the taxi driver wasn't the one who had knocked into my car. He obviously didn't want to take responsibility for the accident and tried to throw me off by shifting the blame onto the taxi driver. He jumped into his car, mumbling that he would give chase to the taxi, and sped off, leaving me standing there.

I knew I would probably not see that man who had so cleverly made his escape again. Nonetheless, after dropping the children back home, I returned to the place of the accident twice hoping to find witnesses of the accident and to see if the driver did return. Of course, he did not. My husband and I brought the car to the workshop. The mechanic advised me to make a police report for my own protection and for the purpose of insurance claim. I was told that it would be very difficult to make claim of the other party's insurance as I had not taken any photo and the driver who sped away could not be located. How could I find the driver who knocked into my car? In such a situation, although disheartened, I decided to commit the whole matter to God, believing He would help me!

I went to the police station to lodge a report. Thank God I remembered the car number plate and informed the police. They said that if the driver came forward to make a report within 24 hours, they would notify me. I waited for more than a week but there was no news. I just kept praying. My Life Group sisters also prayed for me. Impossible as it seemed then, I prayed that the driver would show up at the police station.

After a week, it happened. My husband received a call from the police asking me to go to the police station immediately. The moment I stepped into the police station, there was that big size man who dented my car. The police told me that he had accused me of reversing my car into his and that I was using my hand phone while driving. That was totally ridiculous. The Lord gave me the wisdom and calmness to reason with the police that I couldn't possibly have reversed my car along the busy Jalan Merdeka as there were many cars travelling in the same direction. And that I didn't have my hand phone with me that day, for if I had, I would have taken many photos as evidences. That big size man got real angry and became so bold as to threaten me right in front of the police. He warned that the next time he saw me on the road, he would knock my car.

That big size man got real angry and became so bold as to threaten me right in front of the police.

Thank God the police were smart enough to see through his lies. They recognized that it was not possible for me to have reversed my car on that busy road. They also suspected that it was the man rather than me who was using the hand phone. The police came to the conclusion that it wasn't my fault and gave that man two summons instead of one - for knocking into my car and not reporting within 24 hours. I realized later that although that man hadn't gone to make a police report, the police had with the license plate I provided, summoned him to the police station. God helped me and vindicated me!

With that, I could claim that man's insurance for the repair of my car. God is good. Even though some situations may look impossible and difficult, there is still hope for God can make it possible.

What Does The Bible Say About Angels? Can Believers Still Encounter Angels Today?

Answered by Loke Wai Keng



The word "angel" actually comes from the Greek word aggelos, which means "messenger." The matching Hebrew word mal'ak has the same meaning. Angels are mentioned at least 108 times in the Old Testament and 165 times in the New Testament.

The Scripture speaks about the creation of angels, therefore, it is clear that they have not existed from all eternity (Neh 9:6; Psa 148:2-5). Col 1:16-17 explains: "For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities – all things have been created by Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together."

The time of their creation is never definitely specified, but it is most probable that it occurred in connection with the creation of the heavens in Genesis 1:1. It may be that God created the angels immediately after He had created the heavens and before He created the earth – for according to Job 38:4-7, "the sons of God shouted for joy" when He laid the foundations of the earth.

Since they are created beings, their knowledge is limited. This means they do not know all things as God does (Matt 24:36). While the Scriptures give no definite number of angels created, we are told that the number of angels is very great (Dan 7:10; Matt 26:53; Heb 12:22). It appears that all angels were created at one time. No new angels are being added to the number. Angels are not subject to death or any form of extinction; therefore they do not decrease in number. All angels were originally holy, enjoying the presence of God (Matt 18:10) and the environment of heaven (Mark 13:32).

Angels who opposed God under the leadership of Satan are fallen angels. They were thrown out of heaven and are not given the chance to repent hence they do not experience salvation like human being (Matt 25:41; 2 Pet2:4; Jude 6; Rev 12:9).

Angels are essentially "ministering spirits," (Heb 1:14) and do not have physical bodies like humans (Luke 24:37-39). Angels can take on the appearance of men when the occasion demands. How else could some "entertain angels unaware" (Heb 13:2)? On the other hand, their appearances are sometimes in dazzling white and blazing glory (Matt 28:2-4).

Since angels are spirits rather than physical beings, they don't have to be visible at all (Col 1:16). Elisha once prayed that his servant would see the armies of angels surrounding the city, and the young man discovered that he had overlooked a lot of invisible beings (2 Kgs 6:17)!

When angels do appear, they generally appear in the form of men. In Gen 18, Abraham welcomed three angelic guests who appeared at first to be nothing more than some travellers. In Gen 19, two angels went to Sodom where they were assumed to be simply a couple of human visitors.

Sometimes an angel appears with unusual features. The book of Ezekiel and Revelation describe some highly unusual beings who may be a variety of angels. (Ezek1:4-8; Rev 4:6-8). Angels in the Bible never appear as cute, chubby infants! They are always full-grown adults. When people in the Bible saw an angel, their typical response was to fall on their faces in fear and awe.

We don't know whether every angel carries out the same tasks, or whether some of them specialize in certain areas. The Bible does speak about classes of angelic beings like cherubim (Ezek 1) and seraphim (Isa 6). We also know the names of two notable angels: Michael (Dan 10:13; Jude 9) and Gabriel (Dan 9:21; Luke 1:19,26).

The unnamed angels who appear most often in Scripture carry out a variety of tasks – all designed to serve God as listed below:

- Worship and Praise – This is the main activity portrayed in heaven (Isa 6:1-3; Rev4-5).
- Messengers – They serve as messengers to communicate God's will to men. They helped reveal the law to Moses (Acts 7:52-53), and served as the carriers of much of the material in Daniel, and Revelation.
- Guiding – Angels gave instructions to Joseph about the birth of Jesus (Matt 1-2), to the women at the tomb, to Philip (Acts 8:26), and to Cornelius (Acts 10:1-8).
- Providing – God has used angels to provide physical needs such as food for Hagar (Gen 21:17-20), Elijah (1 Kgs 19:6).
- Protecting – Keeping God's people out of physical danger, as in the cases of Daniel and the lions, and his three friends in the fiery furnace (Dan 3 and 6).
- Delivering – Getting God's people out of danger. Angels released the apostles from prison in Acts 5, and repeated the process for Peter in Acts 12.
- Strengthening and encouraging – Angels strengthened Jesus after His temptation (Matt 4:11), encouraged the apostles to keep preaching after releasing them from prison (Acts 5:19-20), and told Paul that everyone on his ship would survive the impending shipwreck (Acts 27:23-25).
- Answering prayer – God often uses angels as His means of answering the prayers of His people (Dan 9:20-24; 10:10-12; Acts 12:1-17).
- Caring for believers at the moment of death – In the story of Lazarus and the rich man, we read that angels carried the spirit of Lazarus to "Abraham's bosom" when he died (Luke 16:22).
- Executioners – Angels are sometimes used by God to punish sin. An angel of the Lord went forth and smote an Assyrian camp (2 Kgs 19:20-35) – "behold, they were all dead corpses." The Assyrian army was annihilated. A destroying angel was sent, but later withheld, to punish David for his vanity in taking a census of the great number of his people (2 Sam 24:17).

As to whether believers can still encounter angels today, there are testimonies of believers in difficult or challenging situations who called upon the Lord, and unexpected help came to them instantly. People with such experience testified encountering angels. The writer in the book of Hebrews 13:2 reminded the readers, "Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some people have entertained angels without knowing it." So there are possibilities believers can still encounter angels today.



Chicken Kurma

By Rosemary Santiago



Ingredients:

- 1 chicken (wash & cut into bite sizes)
- 2 potatoes (quartered)
- 1 carrot (cut into small pieces)
- I tomato (quartered)
- 1 red chilli (halved & seeds removed)
- 2 tbsp oil
- 1 stick cinnamon
- 1 star anise
- 5 cardamoms
- A sprig of curry leaves
- Salt to taste
- Coriander leaves

- 4 onions cut up
- 4 cloves of garlic
- 1 inch ginger

} pound

- 3 tbsp kurma powder
- ½ tsp saffron powder
- 5 almonds blended
- 2 cups water

} mix

Method:

1. *Heat oil in kuali. Saute cinnamon, star anise and cardamom in oil till fragrant.*
2. *Add onions and pounded ingredients. Fry till fragrant and ¾ cooked.*
3. *Add in potatoes and curry leaves. Fry evenly.*
4. *Add chicken. Sauté till colour and texture change. Add salt to taste.*
5. *Pour in mixture B and allow to simmer.*
6. *Add in red chilli, tomato, and carrot.*
7. *When chicken is cooked, add in coriander leaves and switch off fire.*
8. *Serve with briyani rice.*

HAPPENINGS IN HGC

CHURCH EVENTS | July to Sept 2015



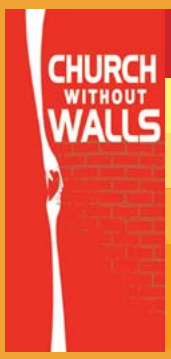
D'bridge Community Centre Dedication
2 Aug



40-Day Fast & Pray "Abide in Me"
7 Aug – 15 Sept



24 hours Worship & Prayer Meeting
14-15 Aug



MISSIONS "CHURCH WITHOUT WALLS"

Charis Hope Centre Healthcare Day	**16 Sept**
Chinese Seminar with Ps Tryphena	**19 Sept**
KKB Fundraising	**20 Sept**
Missions Convention with Ps Tony & Christine Phang	**26 Sept**

COMMUNITY EVENTS | July 2015



Kindy Picnic Day
4 July



NEW BORN

Bradley Wong 15 July

Michelle Teh & Eugene Wong's 1st born

COMING EVENTS | Oct to Dec 2015



Little Lighthouse Kindy Graduation Concert
10 Oct



Leaders Retreat
8-10 Oct



Christmas "Peace on earth"

Saturday Service Celebration	19 Dec
Sunday School Celebration (Chinese)	20 Dec
Children Church Celebration	20 Dec
Chinese Keng Youth Celebration	23 Dec
English Keng Youth Celebration	24 Dec
English Christmas Evangelistic Meeting	25 Dec
Chinese Christmas Evangelistic Meeting	25 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.

The Hope of Glory Centre

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