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# *One Christ, One Church*

Mona Li

Our church theme for year 2009 is One Christ, One Church taken from the book of Ephesians 4: 4-6. Actually, there are seven uniting "ones" in these three verses: one body, one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father. In recent years, the word 'ONE' is often used in slogans and mottos. Remember Beijing's 'One World, One Dream' 2008 summer Olympics? Early this year, Cebu hosted the 1st "One Visayas, One People, One Destiny" forum at the CICC. People wore "One Love" t-shirts during the wake and funeral of the late master rapper Francis Magalona. These are but a few examples of our fondness for the word "ONE". The big question is 'Why?' A quick check with Mr. Webster shows ONE as the same as united and undivided. When people come together for a goal, for a cause, or for a mission, success comes only when there is oneness and unity. For 'united we stand, divided we fail and fall.'

In the midst of global crisis, people need to be united and act as ONE in order to stop the crisis from turning bad to worse. Earth hour on March 28, 2009 was observed by countries around the world and boy,

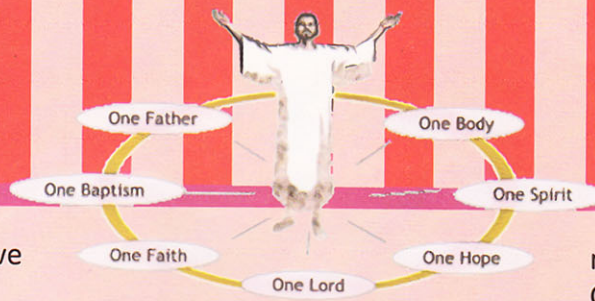
knowing that it was an act of unity in purpose warmed my heart. When I explained to our caretaker Rosie why we need to turn the power off for an hour that evening and how much power was saved during earth hour in the previous year, she brought smiles on my face when she said: 'Maayo unta kung kada buwan ni buhaton inday Mona!' Swine flu alert has been raised to level #5 and people are united in trying to stop it from becoming pandemic in proportion. Countries may have different ways and protocols in handling this situation, but the bottom line is to contain and to stop it from spreading. With oneness in purpose and unity in spirit, 'YES WE CAN!'

On a smaller scale, harmony and bond of unity are essential in the growth of an institution or a church. I was blessed and privileged to have attended the seminar sponsored by the ACSI (Association of Christian Schools International) last April 20, 2009 in Manila with Dr. Wanda Po and Ms. Stephanie Wong as representatives of PCGS (Philippine Christian Gospel School). Dr. Derek J. Keenan was our resource speaker on board governance. Again, the principle

of "One Voice" was emphasized as a critical ingredient to peaceful progress. Ever heard of the phrase: different folks, different strokes? While there is diversity amongst people, we need to put on love as a bond of unity. This unity begins at the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. When Christ called His disciples to unity, He did not necessarily mean uniformity. Take a choir, for example. When the choral group sings in unison, it produces one powerful voice. However, when the sopranos, altos, tenors, and basses sing their different parts in harmony, the sound it produces is amazing and makes unison-singing pale in comparison.

In the same manner, Christ builds His church with people of different shapes, gifts and temperament. In the midst of these diversities, He creates unity. The beautiful harmony of services and the effective working by which each member does his or her share causes growth to our church. Knowing the fact that there is no unimportant member in the body of Christ, we are called to be dependent on one another to become a mighty force in fulfilling His purposes for the church. We should not allow feelings of grandeur nor desire





for others to conform to what we believe as great moves and brilliant ideas to overcome the need to clothe ourselves with humility and grace in working towards the fulfilment of this great commission. When Christians share in the unity of one Christ and one church, coupled with gentleness and humility, debatable issues will be resolved and not escalate into intransigent battles.

Amid the trying times of global economic meltdown, it has been reported that attendance in Catholic churches rose by 20% while church offerings fell by even a larger percentage. What about our own beloved church? While we rejoice over the fact that people continue to give

generously to our church, are we having a surge of attendance in fellowships and Sunday services? Or are we perennially 300+ as somebody once pragmatically remarked? Lord willing, we will celebrate our church's centennial in seven years. How glorious it would be if every pew inside our century old church would be filled with members and worshippers! Is it wishful thinking and a 'mission impossible'?

We have to remember that nothing is impossible with God and for Christ. Church growth can only be attained by the concerted efforts of the pastoral team, church council and more importantly, church

members. I've been a member of Cebu Gospel Church for almost 40 years now. Time and again I ask myself how much have I done for Christ through our church? What about you, dear brothers and sisters in Christ? Are we indeed members of this church and yet one Body (1 Corinthians 12:20)? Or are we like spectators in an athletic meet, cheering on the sidelines when our rightful places are on the frontlines? God has set members of our church, each one of them, in the body just as He pleased (1 Corinthians 12:18). Let us work together with the different gifts that He has so richly bestowed upon all of us. One Body, one Christ, one Church. To God be the glory.

## *How Many Can You Find???*

*There are names of 16 books in the bible mentioned in the paragraph below. See how many you can find. A minister found 15 books in 20 minutes but it took him weeks to find the 16<sup>th</sup> book. Let's see how much time it takes you....*

I ONCE MADE A REMARK ABOUT A HIDDEN BOOK OF THE BIBLE. IT WAS A LULU; KEPT PEOPLE LOOKING SO HARD FOR FACTS AND FOR OTHERS IT WAS A REVELATION. SOME WERE IN A JAM, ESPECIALLY SINCE THE NAMES OF THE BOOKS WERE NOT CAPITALIZED. BUT THE TRUTH FINALLY STRUCK HOME TO

NUMBERS OF OUR READERS. TO OTHERS IT WAS A REAL JOB. WE WANT IT TO BE A MOST FASCINATING MOMENT FOR YOU. YES THERE WILL BE SOME EASY ONES TO SPOT OTHERS MAY REQUIRE JUDGES TO HELP THEM. I WILL QUICKLY ADMIT, IT USUALLY TAKES A MINISTER TO FIND ONE OF

THEM, AND THERE WILL BE LOUD LAMENTATIONS WHEN IT IS FOUND. A LITTLE LADY SAY SHE BREWS A CUP OF TEA SO SHE COULD CONCENTRATE BETTER. SEE HOW WELL YOU CAN COMPETE. RELAX NOW FOR THERE ARE REALLY SIXTEEN NAMES OF BOOKS IN THE BIBLE IN THIS PARAGRAPH.



# 唯一基督，合一教會

許郭錦續

中國「合」這個字含有很深奧的意義。「合」是由三個中國字綜合而形成的。第一字是「人」，第二字是「一」，第三字是「口」。換一句話來說，要實現「合」，必須「人」只有「一」個「口」。如果人的心思，意念，見識，立場各不同，那麼就有許多的「口」，因此，「合一」的目標就難以達到。家庭的破碎，學校的鬧亂，教會的分裂，社會的糾紛，國家的爭戰，均都是因為不能夠「合一」的原因。

保羅說：「聖徒受了蒙召後，行事為人就應當與蒙召的恩相稱，凡事謙虛，溫柔，忍耐，用愛心互相寬容，用和平彼此聯絡，竭力保守聖靈所賜合而為一的心」（弗4:1-3）。所以保羅在以弗所書4:25-32就教導聖徒「合而為一」生活的原則，以供我們來思考，學習及實行。

## (一) 真實的生活 - Life of Truth (v.25)

### • 棄絕謊言 - Put Off Falsehood

甚麼是謊言？誇大之言 (Exaggeration)，捏造謊言 (Fabrication)，欺騙之言 (Lying)，是非之言 (Gossip)，背棄諾言 (Unfulfilled Promise)，洩露信約 (Betrayal of Confidence) 等等都是謊言。初期教會所犯的第一項罪，就是欺哄之罪。亞拿尼亞及其妻撒非喇，只因欺騙而致死亡。啟示錄22:15形容一切喜好說謊言，編造虛謊的，是屬於城外的犬類。

謊言能破壞「合一」，製造爭鬧，毀壞信任，傷害關係，並使教會成了公開的戰場。因為「沒有虛謊是從真理出來的」（約壹2:21）。

### • 說誠實話 - Speak Truthfully

每一位信徒應該「在真理上，互相建立，用愛心說誠實話，連於元首基督」（弗4:15）。在撒8:16教示我們：「你們所當行的是這樣，各人與鄰舍說話誠實，在城門口按至理判斷，使人和睦」。

### • 互為肢體 - Be Members of One Body

教會是一個肢體，「全身都靠他聯絡得合式，百節各按各職，照著各體的功用，彼此相助，叫身體漸漸增長，在愛中建立自己」（弗4:16）。

## (二) 節制的生活 - Life of Control (vs.26-27)

### • 生氣不犯罪 - In Your Anger Do Not Sin

耶穌在世時，他也曾經生氣過。但是他所發出的生氣是對罪的生氣。因為他禱告的殿成為了賊窩，所以他將殿裡一切作買賣的人趕出，並推倒兌換銀錢之人的桌和賣鴿子之人的凳。

生氣是人的常情，它並非是罪，但是沒有控制的生

氣，往往就會如火燃起來，燒毀了神的子民，影響了神的教會，甚至會致到殺人的地步。

中國成語說：「忍得一時氣，省得百日憂」這句話真可信！Aristotle 曾經說：「要使生氣針對著準確的人，並於適當的程度，絕對的時間，正確的目的和合宜的方式，實在是不容易的」。聖經中形容不輕易發怒的人是有見識（箴19:11），而且他是勝過勇士（箴16:32）。

### • 不含怒到日落 - Do Not Let the Sun Go Down While You Are Still Angry

保羅教我們生氣不要過於日落。因為生氣若一直延長下去，就無形中長大生根，使我們產生了報復的念頭，但是羅馬12:19很清楚的記載：「主說伸冤在我，我必報應。」

### • 不給魔鬼留地步 - Do Not Give the Devil a Foothold

生氣的存在，就是魔鬼留地之處。魔鬼藉這機會來破壞及傷害神的家，利用「生氣」引誘信徒犯更多的罪，而帶來了更大的邪惡——就是教會的分裂。

## (三) 誠實的生活 - Life of Honesty (v.28)

### • 不要再偷竊 - Steal No Longer

保羅勸告那些從前習慣



偷竊的，而現在已接受主的信徒，要有生活的改變。偷竊是利用非法詭詐的手段來獲得財物。聖經十誡中第八條是不要偷竊。亞當、夏娃都因為偷吃那分別善惡樹的果子而犯了罪，被上帝趕出伊甸園。

• 要努力作正經事 - Work and Do Something Useful

上帝創造亞當後，就分派他管理看守伊甸園。保羅本身雖然是個宣教士，但是他也辛苦勞碌，晝夜作「天幕」的工作，不吃閒飯，以身作則，供我們效法。摩西、大衛是牧人；彼得、雅各、約翰都是漁夫；基甸在酒酣那裡打麥(士6:11)；耶穌也是一個木匠。所以，每個人須要有一份正當的工作，努力去作，使神得到榮耀，使人得著益處。

• 分給缺乏的人 - Share Something to the Needy

施比受更有福。保羅鼓勵那些富足的信徒，應該幫助缺乏窮苦的兄弟姊妹，使他們感受著在基督裡的愛和溫暖。

(四) 溫柔的生活 - Life of Graciousness (vs. 29-31)

• 不出污穢之言 - No Unwholesome Talk

污穢之言乃是指惡臭、腐朽、損傷、劣味、敗壞、無用的言語。一個重生得救的信徒，應該脫去從前的舊人，穿上新人，有新的生命，充滿了神的形像 - 就是真

理、仁義和聖潔(弗4:22-24)。所發出的言語並非污穢之言，乃是會「帶著和氣，好像鹽調和，知道怎樣回答各人」(西4:6)。

• 說造就人的話 - Speak to Build Up & Benefit Others

雅各書第三章記載舌頭是百體裡最小的，但也是最難制伏的。它如同船的舵，會轉動了整個的船隻。也如同最小的火，能點著最大的樹林。我們用舌頭頌讚主，也用同一個舌頭咒詛人。保羅要我們使用舌頭做有價值的功用，就是說鼓勵人，安慰人，勸勉人，教導人，使人得著造就的話語。

• 不叫聖靈擔憂 - Do Not Grieve the Holy Spirit

耶穌升天前，他應許差保惠師聖靈降臨在門徒的身上，使他們得著能力。這位保惠師，就是真理的聖靈，要引導我們明白真理(約16:13)，並指教我們明白神的話語(約14:26)，而且也常與我們同在(約14:16)。他既來了，要叫世人為罪，為義，為審判，自己責備自己(約16:7-8)。

當我們接受主後，神就用印印了我們，並賜聖靈在我們心裡作憑據，所以我們不可銷滅聖靈的感動(帖前5:19)，抗拒聖靈(徒7:51)，褻瀆聖靈(太12:31)，更不要給聖靈擔憂(弗4:30)。苦毒、惱恨、忿怒、嚷鬧、毀謗和一切的惡毒都會使聖靈擔憂。

(五) 得勝的生活 - Life of Victory (v.32)

• 以恩慈相待 - Be Kind

恩慈就是恩惠和慈愛。恩惠是領受不配得的祝福。慈愛是免承受應得的懲罰。因神的恩惠，他將救恩白白的賜給我們，因神的慈愛，他替我們在十字架上擔當死的刑罰。同樣的，我們既然接受了主的恩慈，也應該以恩慈互相寬待。

• 存憐憫的心 - Be Compassionate

古人認為人的情緒，是位於體裡心腸肺腑五臟。所以「憐憫」這名詞是一種情感從心腸五臟裡所發出來的。憐是「可憐」，憫是「同情」。一個真正能夠憐憫人的人，他必定親身經歷過同樣的遭遇。

一位無名的作者如此說：「憐憫是你的傷痛在我的心裡」。耶穌是憐憫人最好的榜樣。他在世時，看見人遭受了疾病的痛苦，就發出憐憫的心，到處醫治人。在登山寶訓耶穌說：「憐憫人的人有福了，因為他必蒙憐恤」(太5:7)。

• 彼此饒恕 - Forgiving Each Other

饒恕的英文 - forgive 是由「for」和「give」聯合起來的。For - 「為了」，Give - 「給了」，需要有謙卑的心與犧牲的精神才可以實踐出來的。

...continued on page 27



# The Two Greatest Commandments

Rev. Wee Un Hock

God's Word shows us the way to eternal life. His character and attributes are stated as well. It also enlightens us on how to please the Most Gracious and Loving God. How can we really please Him? What can we do to repay His kindness and to show our deepest gratitude to Him? Here are some ways we can show Him:

## I. LOVE GOD MORE

The best gift we can give God is to love Him M-O-R-E. Love God deeper. God has shown His love to us by sacrificing His only Son, Jesus Christ. God demonstrates His love to us first so that we can understand love and love Him in return. How do we love God?

### 1. LOVE GOD WITH ALL OUR HEART

– This means loving God wholeheartedly. We should love God 100%. *Heart* represents our whole being and loving Him wholeheartedly means asking Him to completely take charge of our lives. God requires us to love Him completely. He is a jealous God!

Revelation 2:12-17 shows us that the church in Pergamum was being praised for not worshipping idols and emperor but was being rebuked for welcoming the teachings of Balaam and the Nicolaitans. This clearly shows us that God wants us to love Him without leaving any part, not even one area of our heart to love other gods or things above Him.

### 2. LOVE GOD WITH ALL OUR SOUL -

Our *soul* refers to our emotion We

<sup>37</sup> Jesus replied: 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.'

<sup>38</sup> This is the first and greatest commandment.

<sup>39</sup> And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'

<sup>40</sup> All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.

(Matthew 22:37-40)

should use our whole EMOTION in expressing our love to HIM. We should express it out and let God see how much we love him. If we meet a long time friend in our reunion, what will our reaction be? Probably we will say, "Hi, how are you?" But if we meet a very close friend, we will not only say, "Hi" or shake hands as it will not be enough. We will hug each other and spend more time together.

King David is one who expressed his love to God in his Psalm. The intimate feeling of David towards God is found in Psalm 18: "I love you, O Lord, my strength. The Lord is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer; my God is my rock, in whom I take refuge...." How many times in a day do we praise and thank God? Loving is not merely shown by words, it should be accompanied by action. Every time we sing in fellowship or worship, do we mean what we sing and is it

coming out from the bottom of our heart?

### 3. LOVE GOD WITH ALL OUR MIND -

What does *mind* mean? It is our intellect, our understanding of God. Our mind is our thoughts. Hence, the way we think and perceive things must be pure and clean. We must have pure thoughts and set our mind on good and clean things. We need to meditate on the Word of God and read good books to have healthy thoughts. Not only must our action be pure, we must also feed our minds with what is good and healthy.

Psalm 119:9 states, "How can a young man keep his way pure? By living according to your word." How can we live according to His Word without reading the Holy Scripture? Reading His Word will not only purify our mind, it is also the best way we can have a good relationship with Him. There is no way for us to grow deeper in relationship with Him without having quiet time. That's why Jesus praised Mary for spending time with Him as compared to Martha who was busy preparing for their meal.

### 4. LOVE GOD WITH ALL OUR STRENGTH -

This refers to our physical being. We have been bought with a price; hence, our body belongs to God. We must be willing to offer our gifts or talents and let God use them for His kingdom. It is written in Romans 12:1, "Therefore I urge you,



brothers, in view of God's mercy to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God – this is your spiritual act of worship.” Let's serve Him with a joyful heart even if it means sacrificing our own pleasure, time or other things.

A young lady didn't attend her prom night for it was on the same day she normally serves God through visitation. Eric Liddell didn't compete in the 100-meter dash for it was on the same day he worships God. Instead, he competed for the 400-meter dash. He received lots of criticism from other people but he stood firm. God rewarded him. He won gold medal for the 400-meter dash and even broke the world record. Later in his life, he gave up his life as an athlete and chose to serve God as a missionary.

## II. LOVE OTHERS MORE

A person who really loves God will surely learn to love other people as well; but a person who loves other people does not necessarily mean he loves God. A person who puts God first will also care for others; but a person who cares for others does not necessarily mean he loves the Lord.

**O – Outsiders** – When we say *outsiders*, who are they? They are the unbelievers. Do we have unbeliever friends? Pray for them and care for them and invite them to know the Lord. Our role is to spend time with them and bring them to know the Lord. As Romans 10:14-15 says, “How can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom

they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? .... How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!”

**T – True Believers** – Why the *true believers*? They are already Christians. It is because we are members of one family in the Lord. Some time ago when I had trouble with my foot and can't walk, many showed their concerns by visiting and comforting me. WHAT A GREAT COMFORT! There was even one person who told me, “Pastor, I want to visit you but I can't climb the stairs up to 3<sup>rd</sup> floor.” Galatians 6:9-10 says, “Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time, we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.” Therefore, whenever we have the opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.

**H – Helpers** – *Helpers* are those who work with us in the house and at the office. Some employers are even kind enough to give free dinner and lechon to encourage helpers to be more efficient in their work.

**E – Enemies** – How can I love my *enemies*? The best way for us to love them is to pray for them. There is no better way. Pray for them that they may someday come to know the Lord.

**R – Relatives** – The last letter is R and it means our *relatives*. Aside from our family, the next in line are our relatives. We need to spend more time with them and take the opportunity to know, to build relationship and to bring them to know the Lord. They may not read the Bible but they will surely read

the way we live our lives as we are with them most of the day. Our testimony is very crucial to our family members and relatives as it will make them want to draw near or ran away from God.

## CONCLUSION:

How then do we love GOD more?

1. If we're not praying, start praying.
2. If we're not reading the Bible, start reading.
3. If we're not coming to church regularly, start coming regularly.
4. If we're not serving, start serving the Lord.
5. Change our attitude in loving God more.

What is the symbol of Christianity? It's none other than the cross. This shows how much God loves us by sacrificing Himself for us, are we willing to sacrifice ourselves for Him?

Every year we give gifts to our family members. We think and we plan as to what is most suitable for that person. We try to give the best and that person will appreciate it. This year,

1. Let us bring our family closer to God by having a family devotion once a week or even once a month. Let us not only come to God alone but let's bring the whole family closer to God and let the family love God more.
2. Let us choose two persons whom we can pray for and help them grow in the Lord. They may be the weakest among our family members, a friend or a person we admire. If these people are encountering problems, may God use us to remind them that the Almighty God is waiting upon them to call on Him.



# *Sufficiency of the Gospel for Christian Living*

Ptr. Keren Tan

It is a tragic fact that many Evangelicals today are convinced that the Gospel is only for unbelievers. It is commonly believed that once we have uttered the "sinner's prayer" and have "asked Jesus into our hearts", we can now graduate from the Gospel and move on to something else. Believers then progress to learn what it means to live the Christian life and are challenged to "try harder" or "be better" disciples of Jesus Christ.

More often than not, we believe that acceptance by God is gauged whether or not we have committed to spiritual disciplines like reading the Bible or prayer. However, when we fail to live up to these regulations, we might think that God is generally unhappy with us. And so we "try harder" and "be better" the next time around. For a little while, we keep up with the performance. But sooner or later, we find ourselves in the same miserable situation.

Why do we fall back to this frustrating spiritual dilemma? In his work, *Cur Deus Homo* ("Why God Became Man"), English theologian and philosopher Anselm addressed his created character Boso who deliberated the reason for the Incarnation of God the Son. Anselm responded with these famous words, "You have not yet considered the gravity of sin." Hence, if we fail to understand the reality of sin, we might also misconstrue the necessity of the Atonement of Christ Jesus. In effect, we might also get the wrong idea regarding the process of Sanctification, which is the "the work of God's free grace, whereby we are renewed in the whole man after the image of God, and are enabled more and more to die unto sin, and live unto righteousness." (WSC35)

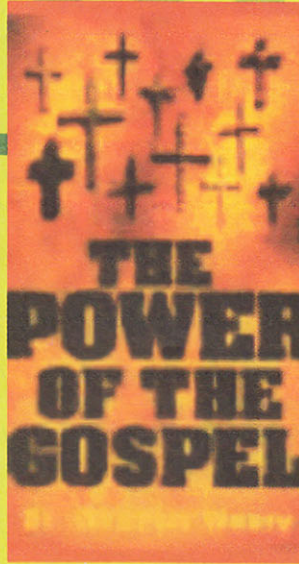
The question now is this: Why can we not trust our own performances in gaining acceptance with God? In as much

as believers have been made righteous by grace alone, through faith alone and in Christ alone, we *still* are sinners while we are on this side of heaven.

If that is the case, how then shall we live? Because of the reality of the power of sin even in the life of the believer, the necessity for our Savior has been established which points us to the remedy found in the wonderful Gospel of grace of our Lord Jesus Christ!

The Word of God tells us that we never get pass the Gospel. We don't just leave it once we get saved. The apostle Paul never describes the Gospel as simply the knowledge for us to escape from the torments of hell or a ticket to eternal bliss in heaven, but as an infinitely beautiful, infinitely glorious, all-satisfying, all-compassing grace that continually grows. We find this in Colossians 1:3-6 (ESV) where he likens the Gospel to organic plant growth:





<sup>3</sup>We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, <sup>4</sup>since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love that you have for all the saints, <sup>5</sup>because of the hope laid up for you in heaven. Of this you have heard before in the word of the truth, the gospel, <sup>6</sup>which has come to you, as indeed in the whole world it is bearing fruit and growing—as it also does among you, since the day you heard it and understood the grace of God in truth,

We must discover and rediscover what Jesus has done, that is “Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures,” (1Cor. 15:3) to influence and shape every aspect of our living. The glorious drama of redemption centered on the saving work of Christ connects and continually speaks to the reality of our every day lives.

We find multiple examples of this scattered throughout

Scripture. For instance, after elaborating on the richness of the Gospel of grace in the first 11 chapters of Romans, Paul begins his series of exhortations with the motivation rooted in the Gospel, “I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the **mercies of God**, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice...” (Rom. 12:1, emphasis mine)

In another place, the apostle does not appeal to the Corinthians who struggle with sexual immorality by suggesting that they be better people. Instead, he points them to the Gospel, “You are not your own, **for you were bought with a price**. So glorify God in your body.” (1Cor. 6:19b-20, emphasis mine)

Furthermore, when believers find it difficult to love one another, the Word of God again connects

this exhortation to the Gospel, “Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, **as God in Christ forgave you**.” (Eph. 4:32, emphasis mine)

In the same way the great reformer Martin Luther wrote, “The truth of the Gospel is the principle article of all Christian doctrine... Most necessary is it that we know this article well, teach it to others, and beat it into their heads continually.”

All Christian behavior should spring from the Gospel because apart from the Gospel of grace, exhortations only breed legalism. Moral exhortations will not persist, but when it is connected to the Gospel, it will carry out something that is glorifying to God.

From conception to conversion, the single greatest need of man is the Gospel. This is why believers should *never* outgrow their need for the Gospel.



# Christ – The Greatness of His Gospel

Ptr. Eric Chan

Who is Christ? *Christ* literally means – the anointed one. It is the Greek translation of the Hebrew word “Messiah”. Moses, author of the first five books of the Old Testament Scripture – Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy – clearly wrote of a coming Messiah, the One who will crush the head of the Serpent (Gen. 3:15; or Satan, see Rev. 12:9).

Immediately after the fall of Man into sin, God promised mankind a Savior, “the seed of the woman” (Gen. 3:15). This promise was eventually fulfilled in Jesus, the Child who came from the lineage of David (Luke 2). True enough, Jesus Christ is the central figure in which the Old Testament foreshadowed and the New Testament proclaimed as prophecy became a fact. A key passage that summarizes Jesus' own interpretation of His completed messiahship is the Emmaus saying of Luke 24:25-27: *“How foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Did not the Christ have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?” And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, He explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning Himself.* Jesus claimed the Old Testament as prelude to His role as the Christ/Messiah, highlighting His redemptive suffering and triumphal glorification. He attested the continuity of the old and the new and invited His followers to see *“in all the Scriptures the things concerning*

*Himself”*.

Jesus, the Christ has many other titles attached to His person. He is “the seed of Abraham ” (Gen. 22:18), the man whom God chose to be the father of Israel, His holy nation. He is also “the Prophet like unto Moses” (Deut. 18:15). This was attested when Jesus miraculously fed about five thousand people (John 6), an account narrated by all four Gospel writers. Jesus was also “the priest after the order of Melchizedek ” (Ps. 110:4), because Jesus resurrected to life after He had offered Himself as a living sacrifice. And now, He lives eternally to make intercession for *all who believe and would believe* in His name (Heb. 7-8). These are some of the titles attributed to Jesus Christ, and certainly there are more. But at this point, I would like to focus on another important aspect of Jesus' Christship, *“He was chosen before the creation of the world to be bearer of our sins, but was revealed in these last times for our sake”* (1Peter 1:18-20).

In eternity, God provided us salvation through the precious and sinless blood of Jesus Christ. God purposed salvation for us even if we were not worthy of it. The promise God made after the Fall of Man into sin is after all, a plan put into action (Gen. 3:15). Isn't that enough reason for us to see CHRIST as the cornerstone of God's gift of salvation?

THE GREATNESS OF CHRIST'S

GOSPEL resides on all these truths, yet, many people continue to blindly reject His Gospel. Worst of all, some who professed to be Christians made salvation appear cheap with their wanton ways of living. God's gift of salvation came with a price. *“For God so loved the world, that He gave His one and only Son, Jesus Christ, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life”* (John 3:16). Jesus is Himself God, yet He willingly lowered Himself to become man. Like us, Jesus was tempted, yet was without sin. He suffered, was crucified and died for our sins. Make no mistake. It cost God much just to provide us salvation.

To believe that “Jesus is Christ” is to believe that He is the Anointed One, the Messiah of the prophets, the Savior sent by God; that He was what He claimed to be. This is to believe the gospel, that by faith alone men can be brought unto God. That Jesus, the Christ is the testimony of God, and the faith of which constitutes a Christian (1Cor. 12:3; 1John 5:1).





# Manhood and Womanhood: God's Perspective

Ptr. Charmaine Gutierrez

How do we look at man and woman today? What do we expect each to do as their gender roles? Nowadays, the world has been teaching us not only about the equality of the two, but even the *similarity or reversal* of each of their roles.

Dr. John Piper, a theologian, author and a pastor, has written a refreshing book about manhood and womanhood in light of what God has said in His Word. The Bible does not necessarily teach the ideas that the world have been filling in our heads. But what it teaches is much more beautiful, because it is the design of our Perfect Maker. Here are some of the things that Dr. Piper teaches us about Biblical manhood and womanhood:

"At the heart of mature masculinity is a sense of benevolent responsibility to lead, provide for and protect women in ways appropriate to a man's differing relationships."

This may not be an exhaustive description, yet this definition provides us the core of what true manhood really is as revealed by God in the Scriptures. It is a sense of responsibility to grow out of its sinful distortions and to find its true nature out of love and not self-assertion, whether in the presence or absence of women in his life. This responsibility is done for the good of women. It is actually a trust, rather than a right, given by God, that is, man is held accountable. It is mature masculine leadership that does not demand to be served, instead serves and sacrifices for the good of woman. Mature masculinity also advocates the authority of Christ over woman, and not assuming or taking over that position. It neither presumes

superiority nor the need to be the initiator of every action, but it mobilizes others' strengths and takes on the responsibility of setting a general pattern of initiative. It is a leadership that guides the family in decision-making and disciplining. It is a leadership that expresses a strong and tender pursuit in romantic sexual relations. It is a leadership that adapts cultural expressions of masculinity (where no sin is involved) to communicate to women that he relates with maturity and dignity as man. Above all, it is a leadership role that is a call to repentance, humility and risk-taking. Man carries the special primary responsibility of sustaining the family through breadwinning labor. And just like the sense of provision, mature masculinity instinctively senses his role of protecting or guarding woman. All these are expressed and exercised in proper and appropriate ways to the different relationships that a man is involved in.

"At the heart of mature femininity is a freeing disposition to affirm, receive and nurture strength and leadership from worthy men in ways appropriate to a woman's differing relationships."

As mature masculinity establishes pattern of initiative as discussed above, an important factor of femininity is a way of responding to that pattern. Though not exhaustive, this description takes us to the heart or core of what true womanhood means as revealed by God through the Scriptures, and not by the distortions caused by sin nor the stereotypes that the world has embraced. It is a disposition or an inclination to yield to a man's leadership and authority by being

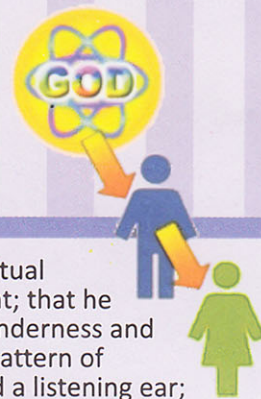
transformed in the renewal of her mind to fit in with God's perfect will. With this comes her three roles: to affirm, receive and nurture worthy men's strength and leadership. "Affirming" is advocating this masculine-feminine complementing relationship that is according to God's Word, even if she herself have little or no interaction with men. "Receiving" is naturally and gladly accepting the strength and leadership of worthy men. And "nurturing" is partnering and assisting the male in strengthening his resources of masculinity in order to make men stronger and wiser and to make the relationship richer. Mature femininity exemplifies this disposition in proper ways to her different relationship even to those where some men are put in roles subordinate to her.

At the end of this book, Dr. Piper gave a challenge to men and women as an application. I have listed below the fifteen practical and helpful ways which aim to challenge men and women individually to live out their complementary roles which God has designed.

The challenge for both man and woman is:

1. That all of his/her life—in whatever calling—be devoted to the glory of God.
2. That the promises of Christ be trusted so fully that peace and joy and strength fill his/her soul to overflowing.
3. That this fullness of God overflows in daily acts of love so that people might see his/her good deeds and give glory to his/her Father in Heaven.





4. That he/she be a man/woman of the Book, who loves and studies and obeys the Bible in every area of its teaching. That mediation on Biblical truth be the source of hope and faith. That he/she continues to grow in understanding through all the chapters of his/her life, never thinking that study and growth are only for others.
5. That he/she be a man/woman of prayer, so that the Word of God will be opened to him/her, and so the power of faith and holiness will descend upon him/her, that his/her spiritual influence may increase at home and at church and in the world.
6. That he/she be a man/woman who has a deep grasp of the sovereign grace of God which undergirds all these spiritual processes; and that he/she becomes a deep thinker about the doctrines of grace, and even a deeper lover of these things.
7. That he/she be totally committed to ministry, whatever his/her specific calling; that he/she does not fritter his/her time away on soaps or women's magazines or shopping, on excessive sports and recreation or aimless diddling in the garage, or on unimportant hobbies; that he/she redeems the time for Christ and His kingdom.
8. That, if he/she is single, he/she exploits his/her singleness to the full in devotion to God and not be paralyzed by the desire to be married.

9. That he/she steps back and (with his wife/her husband, if he/she is married) plans the various forms of his/her life's ministry in chapters. Chapters are divided by various things—age, strength, singleness, marriage, employment, children at home, children in college, grandchildren, retirement, etc. No chapter has all the joys. Finite life is a series of trade-offs. Finding God's will, and living for the glory of Christ to the full in every chapter is what makes it a success, not whether it reads like somebody else's chapter or whether it has in it what only another chapter will bring.
10. That he/she develops a wartime mentality and life-style; that he/she never forgets that life is short, that billions of people hang in the balance of Heaven and Hell every day, that the love of money is spiritual suicide, that the goals of upward mobility (nicer clothes, cars, houses, vacations, etc.) are a poor and dangerous substitute for the goals of living for Christ with all his/her might and maximizing her joy in ministry to people's needs.

The challenge for man is:

1. That, if he is married, he loves his wife the way Christ loved the church and gave Himself for her; that he be humble, self-denying, upbuilding, happy spiritual leader; that he consistently grows in grace and knowledge so as never to quench the aspirations of his

wife for spiritual advancement; that he cultivates tenderness and strength, a pattern of initiative and a listening ear; and that he accepts the responsibility of provision and protection in the family, however he and his wife share the labor.

2. That, if he has children, he accepts primary responsibility, in partnership with his wife (or as a single parent), to raise up children in the discipline and instruction of the Lord—children who hope in the triumph of God; that he establishes a pattern of teaching and discipline that is not solely dependent on the church or school to impart Bible knowledge and spiritual values to the children; and that he gives his children the time and attention and affection that communicates the true nature of our Father in Heaven.
3. That he does not assume advancement and peer approval in his gainful employment are the highest values in life; but that he ponders the eternal significance of faithful fatherhood and time spent with his wife; that he repeatedly consider the new possibilities at each stage of his life for maximizing his energies for the glory of God in ministry; that he poses the question often: Is our family molded by the culture, or do we embody the values of the Kingdom of God? That he leads the family in making choices not on the basis of secular



trends or upward lifestyle expectations, but on the basis of what will strengthen the faith of the family and advance the cause of Christ.

4. That in all his relationships with women (not just in marriage) he seeks the guidance of the Holy Spirit in applying the Biblical vision of manhood and womanhood, that he develops a style and demeanor that expresses his God-given responsibility for humble strength and leadership, and for self-sacrificing provision and protection; that he thinks creatively with cultural sensitivity (just as she must do) in shaping the tone of his interaction with women.
5. That he sees the Biblical guidelines for what is appropriate and inappropriate for men and women not as license for domination or bossy passivity, but as a call to servant-leadership that thinks in terms of responsibilities not rights; that he sees these principles as wise and gracious prescriptions for how to discover the true freedom of God's ideal of complementarity; that he encourages the fruitful engagement of women in the countless ministry roles that are Biblically appropriate and deeply needed.

The challenge for woman is:

1. That, if she is married, she creatively and intelligently and sincerely supports the leadership of her husband as deeply as obedience to Christ will allow; that she

encourages him in his God-appointed role as head; that she influences him spiritually primarily through her fearless tranquility and holiness and prayer.

2. That, if she has children, she accepts responsibility with her husband (or alone if necessary) to raise up children in the discipline and instruction of the Lord—children who hope in the triumph of God—sharing with her husband the teaching and discipline they need, and giving them the special attachment they crave from her, as well as that special nurturing touch and care that she alone are fitted to give.
3. That she does not assume that secular employment is a greater challenge or a better use of her life than the countless opportunities of service and witness in the home, the neighborhood, the community, the church, and the world; that she does not only pose the question: career or full-time homemaker?, but that she asks just as seriously: full-time career or freedom for ministry? That she asks: Which would be greater for the Kingdom—to work for someone who tells you what to do to make his or her business prosper, or to be God's free agent dreaming her own dream about how her time and her home and her creativity could make God's business prosper? And that in all this she makes her choices not on the basis of secular trends or upward lifestyle expectations, but on the

basis of what will strengthen the faith of the family and advance the cause of Christ.

4. That in all her relationships with men (not just in marriage) she seeks the guidance of the Holy Spirit in applying the Biblical vision of manhood and womanhood; that she develops a style and demeanor that does justice to the unique role God has given to man to feel responsible for gracious leadership in relation to women—a leadership which involves elements of protection and provision and a pattern of initiative. That she thinks creatively and with cultural sensitivity (just as he must do) in shaping the style and setting the tone of her interaction with men.
5. That she sees the Biblical guidelines for what is appropriate and inappropriate for men and women not as arbitrary constraints on freedom, but as wise and gracious prescriptions for how to discover the true freedom of God's ideal of complementarity. That she does not measure her potential by the few roles withheld, but by the countless roles offered. That she looks to the loving God of Scripture and dreams about the possibilities of her service to Him, with the ones available to her in her church.

-- Taken from the book, *"What's the Difference : Manhood and Womanhood Defined According to the Bible"*



# *Yes, We Can!*

Ptr. Angelo Gutierrez

When U.S. President Barack Obama accepted his nomination as a presidential candidate last year, he focused his campaign on persuading the public to cry for change. He anchors his vision on the idea that change can happen in America if people will work together to fulfill that desire. Their history dictates that when the whole nation joins hands to overcome something, it is certain that they will succeed.

Whether or not his plan will succeed is yet to be seen. But one thing I'm certain of, these changes won't last. I believe that to make lasting changes, a person must not only set free his habits from worldly influences; he must also deal with his sinful soul. And blessed are those who truthfully accepted the Lord Jesus Christ, for theirs is the promise of a true, lasting, and effective change. Change we can, for the Lord Jesus Christ is Lord of all Creation and of our Redemption! There would be many hindrances, disappointments and hopelessness but as Christians, there is hope because we can change and make the right choices through the Lord Jesus Christ.

***We can change because Christ is the Lord of Creation (Colossians 1:15-17)***

As the Lord of all Creation, Christ is the Firstborn of Creation. What does "the firstborn over all creation" mean and why does it refer to Jesus? Does Christ belong to the created beings like us? Some cults believe this. Some cults claim that Jesus is the first person born in creation. But this is a complete lie. Christ was not created. Being God Himself, He is eternal, no beginning and no end. To be the "firstborn over all creation" has something to do with the honor given to Jesus for the custom in ancient times gives the most honor to the firstborn son.

In line with this, Christ is also the Agent of Creation. When we say "agent" we don't mean that Christ is like James Bond or the FBI agents. Christ is the agent of creation because all creation was created through Him and by Him. This is a confirmation of what John said in his Gospel. John 1:1-3 says, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made." We have to understand the fact that the plants, animals, clouds, the universe and even human beings like us will not be here if there is no Jesus Christ.

Thirdly, Christ is the Intention of Creation. Since Christ is the Firstborn and Agent of creation, it is but right and logical that all created things must point to Him and give Him all the honor that is due Him. The reason why all the things in this world, including ourselves, were created is to give glory to Christ.

Nature has its way of pointing us to see the glory of God. We wonder how a small seed of an apple grows to an enormous tree that bears delicious apples. We find it interesting why the universe is at its current state and thus we send probes and satellites to study it. As for me, what fascinate me are the many different insects out there. As a kid, I enjoyed collecting and preserving insects mainly because I was greatly intrigued by their complex features. All these fascinating creation point to Jesus. Therefore, He must be honored and revered.

As Christians we are called to give glory to no one but Christ. We can do this by living as salt and light in this world. We are called to follow the righteous life of Christ. Therefore, we are to change our sinful ways. Instead of godless chatter, let us bless and be thankful to others with our words. Instead of



cheating our way in earning a living like the people around us, let us be honest and obey the law. Instead of wanting people to serve us, let us serve with a humble attitude. This change can make us God's salt and light. If we do these things for God, we would be pointing people to God and not to us. Is this difficult to do? Yes. But is it impossible? No, not when Christ is the Lord of creation. We can change and dare to be different, not following the ways of this world, because Christ is the Lord of creation.

***We can change because Christ is the Lord of Redemption (Colossians 1:18-20)***

We can also be confident to change because Christ is the Lord of redemption. When Christ was born, an angel appeared to a group of shepherds. The angel gave the announcement concerning the birth of the Messiah. As the Savior of God's people, God has bestowed upon Christ the headship of the church. We may not physically see or feel Him today, but the Lord is reigning in our hearts.....in every Christian's hearts. Christ sits as the head of the church because we are dependent on Him and Him alone. Paul described the church as forming one body. Some may be its hand, some may be its eyes; but

there is only one head that directs its body and teaches everything that the body needs to learn and do.

As the Lord of redemption, Christ also is the beginning and the firstborn among the dead. Christ is the beginning of the new creation. Paul explained what this means through 2 Corinthians 5:17, "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!" Christ is the firstborn among the dead for He was the first one who was resurrected from the dead and never died again. Forty days after His resurrection, Christ was lifted up to heaven to be seated at the right hand of God. Christ overcame death forever. And because of this, He opens the way for us to be resurrected from the dead too in the end.

And finally, we can change because Christ is the Savior of the church. Upon the introduction of sin in this world, we are all bound to face eternal punishment. Because of sin, man is also called as enemies of the Holy and Righteous God. However because of the Father's grace and mercy, He has sent His one and only begotten Son to walk on the earth and to suffer on the cross for the sins of His people. That is why the gospel is God's grace because we truly and utterly do not deserve it. What we deserve is to face punishment forever. But what

God gave His people is the way to be with Him forever, no matter how filthy we are here in this world. Through Christ's death and resurrection, salvation was not only made possible, but it was made certain for God's people. And this salvation is sure to set us free from the strong grasp of sin, making it very possible for us to change and do good for God's pleasure.

With the ransom of Christ, we've been set free from the bondage of sin. Once we were dead in our sins, but God made us alive through Christ ensuring that we can change. As what Paul said of the effect of Christ's sacrifice, "the old has gone, the new has come."

Many years ago there was a magnificent tapestry in a home for recovering alcoholics in Germany. It was a picture of a stream with a school of fish heading one way. But in the midst of these fishes was a solitary fish swimming in the opposite direction. And underneath were the words: "Any dead fish can float downstream – it takes a live one to swim against it." We are not dead to sin anymore. Because of Christ, we are alive to please Him. So can we change? Yes, we can. All praises to Jesus Christ because He is the Lord of all creation and of our redemption!

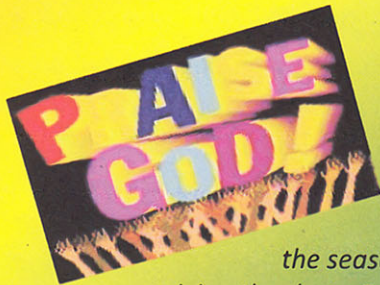


# NEWS BREAK!

## Church Highlights

November 2008 ~ April 2009

compiled by Ptr. Rosaline Lim



Ah...  
'tis

the season of  
giving thanks to God, our  
Father above.

The church celebrated Thanksgiving Day on November 27, 2008. Different fellowships expressed their thanksgiving to God through singing, dancing, skits and testimonies....thankful of how God had been watching over them, guiding them in times of troubles & difficulties and giving them comfort.

**HAPPY BIRTHDAY**

This  
fellowship  
started 1948 of November.

The fellowship is composed of elementary, high school and college students who come from different schools. Many of our grandparents, parents, teachers, counselors grew up in this fellowship. Some of them came to know Christ, gave their lives for fulltime service, and served in various ministries in our church.

By God's grace, at present, we have an average of 20

### I Just Want To Thank You, LORD!

Hoping that Thanksgiving Day is not the only day to give thanks to God but each and everyday of our lives. Let us continue to show our gratitude to God by living our lives as we ought to and bring glory to His name.



CGC choir showing their thanksgiving to God through singing praises

Sunday School Teachers with their midget number.

### CYF CELEBRATES IT'S 60TH BIRTHDAY (senior citizen na ta ...) November 29, 2008

elementary kids, 70 high school students, and 20 college students regularly attending CYF. Through this fellowship, children and youths discover their gifts & talents and use them to minister others. They also

get the chance to meet new friends and built good relationship with each other. Hoping that they will continue to grow in their Christian lives.

We thank GOD for His faithfulness to this fellowship, for providing never ending blessings and supporters through prayers, finances and others. We give glory and honor to our Heavenly Father for watching and guiding this fellowship every step of the way. Nothing is impossible with God. Let us all give glory to our Father above.



LUNCH FELLOWSHIP ...  
YUMmm OI LECHON





## 'Tis The Season To Be Jolly

Yes! a time of good cheer for it is the season when our

Savior, Lord Jesus Christ, was born in the manger. Joybells Gospel Team led the congregation to some Christmas carols. CGC Choir rendered a short Christmas musicale of praise.

*Christ is always the reason for this season. May the joy of the birth of Christ be found in us each and everyday."*

Rev. Chuck Guill was the guest speaker for the Sunday Worship. The title of his message "A Reason for the Season" reminded us why we celebrate this special day and why God sent His One and Only Son to this world.....that we may be reconciled to His Father again.  
Happy Birthday, Jesus!!!

## Sunday School Annual Offering and Induction of Newly Elected Deacons & Deaconesses



3 year old Sunday School representative, Kurt Dominic Yu, gave a short speech to the church congregation as an annual

tradition to give its entire 2008 offering to the church.

Last November 16, 2008, our church conducted an election for deacons and deaconesses serving 2009-2011.

Newly elected deacons and deaconesses (in alphabetical order) are: David Tan, George Tan, James Young, Lorenzo Ong, Jr.; Julie Tio, Lili Gothong, Merry Lourdes Lee Yu.

May we include them in



our prayers that God will continue to guide and use each one to accomplish His work.

## Jesus Loves the Little Children ...Child Dedication

Children are God's precious gifts to the parents. In return, Christian parents dedicate their children back to God as a "symbol" of promise and accountability in raising their children in a godly way and allow God to use them when the time comes.

Baby Johana Cassidy Y. To Chip and baby Dior Justine T. Gothong were dedicated to our Lord last February 1, 2009 by

their parents, Mr. & Mrs. Lester To Chip and Mr. & Mrs. Calvin Gothong.

May our Almighty God

continue to guide and touch the hearts of their parents that they raise their children in His way.



Baby Dior Justine T. Gothong



Baby Johana Cassidy Y. To Chip



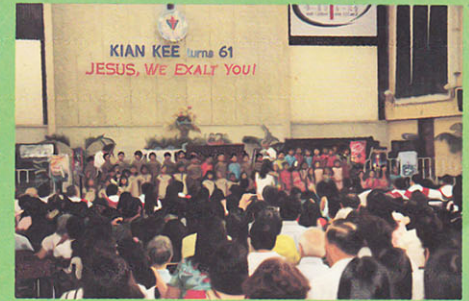
# PCGS Sunday

Last February 8 was PCGS Sunday. The Kinder 2 students and their teacher led the Praise & Worship time during the Worship Service. The faculty, parents and relatives of students filled the

church to its capacity.

Invited guest speaker, Dr. Stewart Young, delivered a very inspiring message.

Indeed, God is greatly exalted during this special day!



Cebu Gospel Church started its ministry to the Filipino-Chinese community in Cebu 93 years ago ( March, 1916). The church's vision and mission were founded by an American missionary, Rev. John Dunlop and by some of our ancestors.



## CGC @ 93 "ONE CHRIST — ONE CHURCH"

Through God's guidance, providence, protection and love, the church still stands today and is celebrating its 93rd birthday.

Last March 14, 2009, the church held its Evangelistic anniversary dinner at the PCGS gym. Joybells Gospel Team and Soul Searchers gave some special numbers. 400 people were in attendance that night.

Rev. Danny Reyes, senior pastor or "boksu" of UEC

Malabon was the special speaker for that night. His message was "The HOPE in Life". The main points of his message were: 1) hope gives us strength to face the future; 2) hope gives us directions; and 3) hope gives meaning. Hope will always be alive as long as we allow God to take control over our lives and allow Him to change us inside and out. May our hearts be full of hope until Christ comes.

### How GREAT is Our GOD ...





## Congratulations, Graduates!

Last March 22, 2009, there were 35 senior students and 60 grade 6 students from PCGS who attended baccalaureate worship service with us. Parents of the students, teachers & staff also came. The PCGS band led the praise and worship.

Let us keep them in our prayers especially the senior students as they start a new chapter of their lives as college students. May they continue to seek God's

**"Try not to become a man of success  
but rather, a man of value"**  
By: Albert Einstein



guidance and rely on our Father's way and be responsible for their actions.

For the grade 6 students, as they embark to a higher level of high school lives, may they grow responsibly and beautifully for the Lord. May these students continue to have a good relationship with their families, friends and other people they will meet as they cross their paths. More importantly, may Christ be manifested in their lives.

## 5th Youth Camp (LOST in the World ... Found by CHRIST)

Last March 30 to April 4 of 2009, the CGC youth spent their first week of summer at C.R.E.M.D.E.C Taptap. A place where you can call "little paradise". It sits on top of a mountain where you can breath fresh air, feel the cool breeze, bathe in cold water, have a panoramic view of the city, eat sumptuous meal....literally a place where you can feel close to God.

There were around 60 campers ably assisted by 16 counselors and staff. The purpose of the camp was to reach out to the youths that have not accepted Christ into their lives, to open their eyes

that sin is lurking around us today, that Christ's second coming is near, and that Christ can use them as His instruments or vessels to accomplish His plans in this world.

Pastor Jebo Banzuelo from FEBIAS was the theme message speaker with Rev. Chuck Guill from ETCP as the revival message speaker.

We praise and thank God for there were 3 campers who gave their lives for fulltime ministry, 1 accepted Christ and the rest rededicated their lives to God. Not only did God protect the comings and goings of everybody, He kept them healthy albeit cold weather & icy water. We

would like to thank the church council for their support and for those who prayed for us.

Soli Deo Gloria  
"To God Be The Glory"



Group picture at the mountain top.



## God's Big Backyard! (where kids have a blast serving Jesus!)

The CGC Sunday School Department headed by Dea. Lili Gothong organized a vacation bible school (VBS) last April 13-17, 2009. The theme was "God's Big Backyard".

It teaches kids how to serve

Jesus, their families, friends and communities. Each topic is based and taken from the Bible.

90 kids joined the vacation bible school and 9 teachers, 20 teacher aids & 6 runners had their hands full. We hope and pray that through this VBS, many kids are being reached out, heard the gospel

and that they would learn how to help others. Thank God for all that He had done.



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# *Creating Positive Change, Expect Extraordinary Results*

Dr. Wanda Po

As the school year 2008-2009 comes to a close, we look back to recall the opportunities that God had given us – opportunities to grow in knowledge and character; to shine and make an impact in others. I remember that we started this year with a call to create positive changes and expect extraordinary results. We challenged ourselves to try out new things and we certainly did. Some of which were the following:

1. The Supreme Student Government (SSG) led in the celebration of TEACHERS DAY for ONE week. Everyday from September 22-26, teachers were given a simple token. It was like giving APPRECIATION without end. On the final day, the whole high school student body was mobilized to turn the gym into a completely “DARK” room for their special program. We thought this was impossible – but we were proved wrong. For, “where there is a will, there's a way!” The gymnasium turned out to be so beautiful and we were fascinated with the dancing that greeted us when we went inside; and mesmerized by the candles that lighted our paths as we walked into our seats.



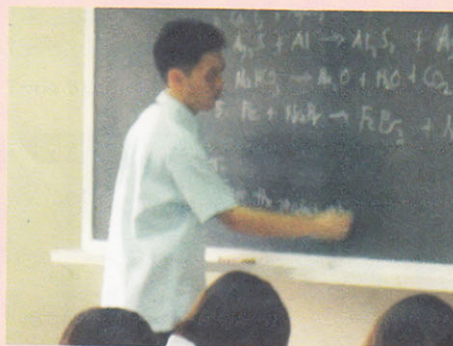
2. The mini MILO Olympics was a good exposure to our young and inexperienced players. This event challenged our students to get more training and to be more prepared for next year's Olympics.



3. Our teachers felt very much appreciated and encouraged when the school hosted the ACSI (Association of Christian Schools International) Teachers National Convention last October. We were not sure how this was going to turn out because the last time we hosted an ACSI convention was like 10 years ago (many of us were not with PCGS then). The special numbers we prepared for the delegates were received with much commendation.







4. "Know the School" week was something positive both for the teachers and the seniors who assumed roles as classroom teachers or non-teaching staff. The real teachers were amazed at the degree of dedication and preparation that each student-teacher did.

5. With our world getting smaller and smaller everyday because of the innovations in technology, we accepted the invitation from Swiss Cottage Secondary School (SCSS), Singapore, to have some of their students come and visit us last November. The visit was a sort of "cultural exchange" program. For two days, students from SCSS and our own students shared experiences and practices at home, in school and among friends.



6. "December to Remember", a project of the SSG was definitely a success. This event was a "change" from our usual way of celebrating Christmas with our adopted barangays. Traditionally, we would prepare packed meals and distribute these to the barangays. This year, we invited the families to come to our gym where a buffet lunch was prepared for them. No words can express the joys and satisfaction we saw in the faces of our invited guests. And no words can express my admiration for the people behind the project.





7. Our scoutmasters designed the first Father-Son camping in January. We were excited but also quite apprehensive if this was going to be positively received. There were blunders in the final execution of the plan but we were still happy because the positive results prevail over the negative. There were 45 pairs of father and son.



8. Who can forget Founder's Day 2009? For the first time, we invited our Kindergarten 2 pupils to lead the congregation of Cebu Gospel Church in exalting Jesus through songs and dances. "Jesus, we exalt you" was expressed not only during the Praise Cheer competition but also during the games. Last one minute into the ball game was dramatically extended into five minutes – but that's not the point. Suddenly a hush – both teams (Juniors and Seniors) were PRAYING!



9. SSG voting has taken a new turn with electronic voting used last February 27 for the voting of the new set of SSG officers.







10. Vacation Bible School (or Bible Week, as we called it this year) was given a new twist. With “Ocean Odyssey” as the theme, classrooms were redesigned and redecorated to have the appearance of activity underwater or adventure in water. Children trooped to the outdoor playground to splash on the inflatable pools set up for the occasion. High School students listened to stories shared by missionaries.

11. The Seniors Retreat was extraordinary because a new thing was started. We had a “Purity Covenant” and “Appreciation” Night on the last evening. Every senior invited their parents to this special night. Everyone was caught by surprise by what transpired that evening. The son or daughter pledged to remain pure to their parents. Finally, each senior presented a mug to their parents as a token of appreciation.



12. The kindergarten 2 pupils during graduation always have a special presentation – usually a skit or a simple play; but never a major production like what we attempted to do this year. Our kindergarten 2 kids gave their daddies and mommies a wonderful graduation surprise. “Joseph” was a major project of the preschool department. If we can do this one, by God's grace, we can do another one next year.

Create positive change, expect extraordinary results .... By God's grace, we did try many new things or modify some of our old practices – and YES! we experienced extraordinary results. To God, we give back all the glory!



# 基督徒的義務和恩寵

白鴿

聖經：「惟有你們是被揀選的族類，是有君尊的祭司，是聖潔的國度，是屬神的子民，要叫你們宣揚那召你們出黑暗入奇妙光明的美德。」（彼前二：9）

基督徒是屬於聖潔國度裡的國民，是神所揀選的子民。所以，是理所當然地承受其應盡的義務，及其應得的恩寵。讓我們來思考基督徒要怎樣實踐其應盡的義務和應得的恩寵。

一、基督徒應盡的義務 - 就是要聽從神的話，要恪守主的命令。當我們揣摩摩西、亞倫承奉帶領以色列百姓出埃及的任務上。經上說：「摩西、亞倫這樣行，耶和華怎樣吩咐他們，他們就照樣行了。」（出六：7）。「照樣行」三個字，是值得我們深省的。難怪聖經為摩西見證說：「他在神的全家誠然盡忠」（來三：5）。因他在執行任務上，沒有自己的成見，沒有自己的策略。完全以順從神為準則，絕對恪守神的命令！

所以，主耶穌說：「跟從我的，就不在黑暗裡走。」這是主耶穌親自教訓我們的，我們若領會祂的話，便能得到真理的亮光。因為主耶穌的教訓，是超越古訓，先賢們一切的教訓。我們若虛心仰賴聖靈的指引，必能找到隱藏的嗎哪，且能融會貫通於基督的真理。便能屏除暗□的行為，呈現出優雅的品格，吸引更多的人在主的大家庭裡得到造就，使神因我們的行為得到榮耀！

神所喜愛的兒女，是順命的兒女。若要討主喜悅，必須「信靠順服」。俗語說：「能聽從和領教的，比教訓人較為妥善」。所以，凡是讀過或聽見神的道的人，能夠做戒遵行的人有福了。神將以超卓的智慧安排萬事，教蒙恩的人能夠「互相效力」，冀使祂所喜悅的兒女得益處。

感謝神！因主耶穌是末後的亞當，祂道成肉身，一生存心順服，以至於死，且死在十字架上。祂說：「神阿，我來了為要照禱的旨意行。」（來十：7）。照樣，祂在客西馬尼園的禱告，更表現祂的順服。祂說：「我父阿，倘若可行，求禱叫這杯離開我，然而不要照我的意思，只要照禱的意思。」（太二：39）。感謝讚美主！因主耶穌的順服，眾人也成為義了。

「聖經都是神所默示的，於教訓、督責、使人歸正、教導學義、都是有益的。叫屬神的人得以完全，預備行各樣的善事。」（提後三：16-17）

由於聖經既是神的話，是主對我們的訓誡。對我們日常生活有密切的關聯。因為人類要消滅，主的真理卻永遠長存。神用種種的方法對我們說話，祂決不偏待人。凡誠心領教於真理的人，必從許多歧異的思想中被救出來。因而我們讀聖經；要有謙虛的心、安靜的心、專一的心、信服的心、智慧的心、正直的心、和渴慕的心，才能領悟更多、更奧妙的事，但切不可懷著

爭取博學的念頭，免被那惡者一撇但留地步。

因此，主耶穌說：「文士和法利賽人，坐在摩西的位上，凡他們所吩咐你們的，你們都要謹守、遵行，但不要效法他們的行為，因為他們能說□不能行。」（太廿三：23）。是因為讀得多，宣揚也多，滿腹經綸，且洶洶不純地炫耀他的歪曲事實；竟形成了混水摸魚，模稜兩可的怪現象。使徒約翰勸勉我們，相愛不要只在言語和舌頭上，總要在行為誠實上，就是這個道理。因為人的本性只知看重人的外貌，神的意思卻反過來注意內心的事。看重外貌，常常令人失望，注意內心，信靠神，就不至于受欺騙。但是神要我們完全降服于祂，因祂的愛的激勵，我們就能解脫人性的迷惘。

故事二則

（一）站在神那邊

當美國為解放黑奴的制度，引發了南北的戰爭。一位虛誠的信徒對大總統說：「林肯先生！神是與我們同在，在這慘烈的鬥爭中，神確實站在我們這邊。」林肯卻回答說：「朋友阿！我並非擔心神是否站在我們這邊！我乃是十分關心我們是否站在神那邊。」所以，基督徒應該降服在神的旨意裡，站在神那邊；不應該勉強。神照著我們的意向，站在我們這邊。

（二）求神使到我肯順服

威伯門先生起初作聖工時，聽他講道的人一日比一日增加。禮拜堂也蓋得頂大。慕迪先





生聽說他的聲譽，特地乘搭火車，到他的禮拜堂聽道。慕迪進了禮拜堂，私下坐在那裡聽。當聚會結束時，因威伯門認識慕迪，下

了講台，便直接走到慕迪那裡，請他有甚麼意見直說。慕迪就說：「弟兄！我發覺你有錯誤的地方，你屬靈生命出了問題，你所作聖職是失敗的，不是成功的。」威伯門聽後，在他肉體的生命中，感到很抱屈，埋怨慕迪不該無端的批判他。然而在他屬靈的生命裡，內心掀起不平安的波浪，他感悟到他的缺點；就是他太溺愛他的妻子和兒女；為了這點，心中一直在掙扎，極其難受。於是他便向神祈禱：「神阿！在我敗壞肉體中，無法擺脫對妻子、兒女的溺愛，求禱聖靈運行作工，直到我肯順服為止。」於是，他腦中便浮現經句：「你要將一切的憂慮卸給神，因為祂顧念你們。」（彼前五：7）。從那天起，神使威伯門開通醒悟他，要怎樣去愛護他的妻子和兒女。後來，關於他所事奉的聖工大有能力，有人請他作見證。他說：「我在所事奉的工作中會傳授福音，會傳揚神的真理，這些能力豈不是那一次在神面前順服才得到的！所以，凡是在我們所服事上，應該謙虛地向神說：『神阿！我無法擺脫貪愛世界，我的愛心有欠缺，求禱賜我能力，使我能降伏禱的旨意；使我棄絕貪愛世界，不懷恨人，不猜忌人，完全遵守禱的

誠命』。祇要你有信心禱求，將要在你的靈命上有很大的改觀。」

二、基督徒應得的恩寵——就是禱告。當我們能聽從神的話，順服主的命令後，我們將會發現神將會照我們的呼求為我們行事。祂不會推卻我們的呼求，因為這是祂賦與的恩寵。

經上說：「耶和華以色列的聖者，就是造以色列的如此說，將來的事你們可以問我。至於我的眾子，並我手的工作，你們可以求我命定。」（賽四五：11）。可惜我們經常忽略了這個恩寵，且讓我們追溯先賢們，在禱告上所發生的奇蹟：

（一）摩西、亞倫承受帶領百姓出埃及。他們要過紅海時，因後有埃及的追兵，前有紅海。摩西舉杖呼求耶和華，耶和華用一陣「大東風」使海成了乾地，海水「直立如壘」，以色列百姓渡紅海如走乾地。同時海水的回流又是適合其時間，以致拯救了以色列的百姓，而毀滅了埃及的追兵。這是神施展奇妙的神蹟！當以色列百姓在沙漠的行程上，耶和華聽摩西的呼求，便賜下嗎哪，鵝鶉作為他們的食物；使瑪拉的水變甜；使磐石流出水來等等的奇蹟！

（二）當以色列人與亞摩利人爭戰的時候，約書亞禱告耶和華：「日頭阿，你要停在基遍，月亮阿，你要止在亞雅倫谷。」於是日頭停留，月亮止住，直到國民向仇敵報仇的任務完成。所以禱告也是勝敵的訣竅。

（三）以利亞秉著信心，呼求神不要下雨，雨就三年零六個月不下在地上。他又禱告，天

就降下雨來，地也生出土產。

（四）但以理緬懷往日以色列的君王、首領、列祖列宗以及百姓等；偏離神的誠命，不肯聽從神僕和眾先知的儆戒，惹神忿怒，致被懲罰，流離四方。但以理為這緣故，禁食、披麻蒙灰，定意向主神祈禱懇求。於是天使便向他啟示將來要發生的特別異象。

（五）美國總統——林肯，為解放黑奴的制度，（發生於一八六二—一八六三年間）而引起南北相戰。當時其戰爭狀態，北方政府外有強敵，內有內奸，以致屢敗。際此情勢，南方軍隊更加驕矜，決定加緊北伐。處於極端危急的關頭，林肯總統頒發一道命令，勸告全國人民，一心一德，共同禁食禱告，同樣地他關在房間裡，向神迫切禱告，並許願說神若賜他大勝，他必終身向神盡忠。然後他憑信心向軍士們宣告說：「這次戰爭是為正義、是為神而戰。所以這次是依靠神的大能扶助我們的將士，必定能戰勝他們。」次日，在賓伯的戰役中，果然獲得大勝，且是屢戰屢勝。從此奠定了美國政局的平定。這證實神聽了國家元首和全國人民敵愾同仇的禱告！

基督徒是天之驕子，神賜予恩寵，運用信心憑恃神的大能為我們行事。但使徒保羅說：「你要……同那清心禱告主的人追求公義、信德、仁愛、和平。」（提後二：22）。所以，我們必須禁制一切敗壞的情慾，不受任何事物的牽累，坦然無懼地來施恩寶座前，求憐恤，求恩惠作隨時的幫助。阿們！



# How To Be A Good Model

Francis L. Young

In 1490, two young friends, Albrecht Durer and Franz Knigstein, were both poor and tried to work and study art at the same time. As their advancement was slow, they agreed to draw lots to determine who would work full time while supporting the other one to study art. Albrecht won and went off to the cities of Europe to study. He not only had talent but was a genius. When he was successful, he went home to keep his promise with Franz.

It was only then that Albrecht found out the sacrifices of his friend. Franz worked so hard that his fingers became stiff and twisted. He could no longer execute the delicate brush stroke necessary to do fine painting. Though his artistic dream could never be realized now, he was not embittered but rather rejoiced in his friend's success.

One day Albrecht came upon his friend unexpectedly and found him kneeling with his gnarled hands intertwined in prayer.... praying for the success of his friend. Albrecht, the great genius, hurriedly sketched the folded hands of his friend and later completed a true masterpiece known as "The Praying Hands."

The above story illustrates love and prayer of a faithful friend. Franz not only rejoiced in the success of his friend but also earnestly prayed for his friend's success.

In Greek, the word "love" is expressed with four different words:

1. *Eros* – love between husband and wife
2. *Storge* – love between family members
3. *Philia* – heart love, "brotherly love" – Philadelphia, City of Brotherly Love
4. *Agape* – noblest kind of love.... sacrificial love. It has something to do with the mind, not just emotion. It's a principle by which Christians live. It's the kind of love that Christians must have for all men, even our enemies.

1Corinthians 13:4-8 says, "Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. <sup>5</sup> It is not rude, it is not self seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. <sup>6</sup> Love does not delight in evil, but rejoices with the truth. <sup>7</sup> It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always

perseveres. <sup>8</sup> Love never fails....." These are what we Christians should do.

As Sunday School teachers, we must be good models. To be a good model, we can learn from our Lord Jesus Christ, the One and only eternal, ever faithful and perfect Model.

## A. Jesus, the greatest teacher

When Jesus began His ministry, He taught His disciples with parables. In teaching Sunday School, we can learn to put up good illustrations using visual aid, short skit, film showing, etc.

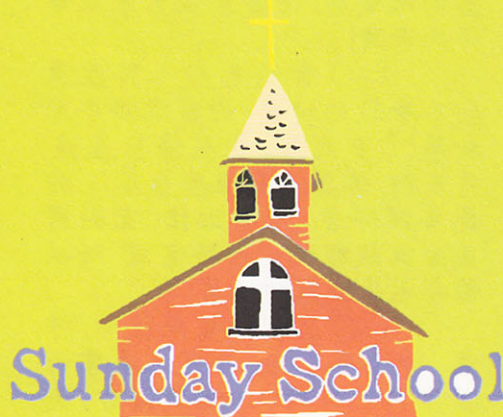
He taught them to serve one another (Jn. 13:13-15). We must serve one another.

He taught them to love one another (Jn. 13:36). We must love one another.

He taught them how to pray (Mt. 6:9-13; Lk. 11:1-4). We must learn how to pray. Pray for your students, co-workers and their families.

## B. Jesus loves His disciples

"Now before the Feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that His hour had come, that He should depart from this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the





world, He loved them to the end" (Jn. 13:1). We must learn to love others to the end.

He loved His enemies. Jesus said, "Father, forgive them for they do not know what they are doing" (Lk. 23:34). We must learn to love our enemies.

### C. Jesus prays for His disciples

Some of the salient points of His prayer are: "I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name – so that they may be one as we are one." "My prayer is not that You take them out of the world but that You protect them from the evil one." "Sanctify them by the truth; Your word is truth." We must develop closer relation with our Heavenly Father through our Saviour Jesus Christ.

There is a Hebrew legend about two brothers that who lived side by side on adjoining lands. One night, after harvest time, one brother stayed awake and thought, "My brother lives alone; he does not have the companionship of a wife and children to cheer his heart as I have. While he sleeps, I will carry some of my sheaves into his field."

At the same hour, the other brother reasoned, "My brother has a larger family and his necessities are greater than mine. As he sleeps, I will put some of my sheaves on his side of

the field." Thus, the two brothers carried out their plans and laden with sheaves, met at the dividing line. There, they embraced.

Years later, at this very place stood the Jerusalem Temple; and on

the very spot of their meeting stood the Temple Altar.

As Sunday School teachers, we must be good models in love, in prayer, in thoughtfulness and in caring for others.

*continued from page 5*

## 唯一基督，合一教會

耶穌在世怎樣教導「饒恕」呢？

(一)太6:12-「免我們的債，如同我們免了人的債」

(二)路11:4-「赦免我們的罪，因為我們也赦免凡虧欠我們的人」

(三)可11:25-26-「你們站著禱告的時候，若想起有人得罪你們，就當饒恕他，好叫你們在天上的父，也饒恕你們的過犯。你們若不饒恕人，你們在天上的父，也不饒恕你們的過犯。」

(四)太18:21-22-「那時彼得進前來對耶穌說：主啊！我弟兄得罪我，我當饒恕他幾次呢？到七次可以麼？耶穌說：我對你說，不是七次，乃是到七十個七次。」

「饒恕」是一切信徒應當遵守的誠命。一位無名氏的作者這樣的寫：「能饒恕是如同解放了一個囚犯，而那囚犯原來就是你。」G. Weatherly說：「能赦免得罪我們的人是一個人平安的鎖匙。」不能彼此饒恕，就會使教會成為魔鬼的樂園，而成為信徒的戰場。

今年教會的主題是「唯一基督，合一教會」。如果我們要教會復興，人數增加，福音傳遍，主名高舉，我們應該在主內有「合一」的心。實踐保羅「合一生活的原則」，過著真實的生活，節制的生活，誠實的生活，溫柔的生活，及得勝的生活，「並要以恩慈相待，存憐憫的心，彼此饒恕。正如上帝在基督裡饒恕了你們一樣」（弗4:32）。



# Masterpiece

Clarence Aaron Sy

There is a side of Jesus Christ that is not often mentioned: He was an artist by profession.

Long ago, before the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, spirituality was governed by a body of leaders called the Pharisees. These men wrote over six hundred laws that were nearly impossible to follow. An individual had to comply with these spiritual tenets in order to attain a "holy" life. Back then, the concept of change would have been very much welcomed.

Jesus brought the change. He renewed the concept of spirituality. From too many laws, Jesus came forth and presented just two laws that we need to adhere to. First, we must love the Lord with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength. Second, we must love our neighbor the same way we love ourselves.

Jesus came into the world to transform it. And transform it He did. He removed all our sorrow and nailed it to His cross. His ultimate sacrifice inspired people back then and still continues to inspire others to believe in Him today. Ironically, we live a joyous life today as a result of the painful death that Jesus suffered at Calvary.

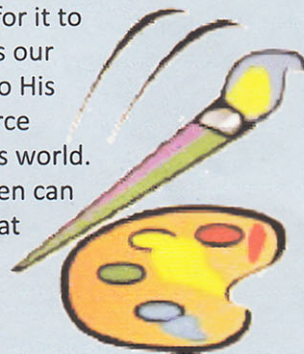
If we give the story of Jesus a little bit of artistic flair, Jesus may well be the greatest painter that ever lived. So unique and beautiful were His paintings that no human can possibly achieve such artistry. He did not paint on canvass, but on lives. He did not use oils, but He used His precious blood.

Painstakingly paying the price for our sins, He painted a masterpiece – us. And He wants to share it with the world.

The whole world can be perceived as an artist's workshop, where the seas would be the ink, the skies the canvass. And the Great Painter would use our lives as the brush. Through us, God can spread a message of love to the world.

Unlike all the great artists, Jesus Christ did not leave His signature for everyone to see. This is because He knows that within each masterpiece lies His mark – love. And all it takes for it to manifest itself is our willingness to do His will and be a force of change in this world.

Only then can we, like any great masterpiece, shine.



continued from page 19

## 教會消息



- 11/16/08 - 選出七位新任男女執事(恕不稱呼): 李永仁, 陳大關, 許致國, 楊永興, 吳李欣然, 李蔡容容, 趙丁慈誼
- 11/27/08 - 舉行感恩聚會, 同頌主恩

- 11/29/08 - 青年團契六十週年慶典, 願主繼續保守
- 12/21/08 - 教會各歌詠團吟詩讚美, 一同慶祝教主誕生
- 2/01/09 - 舉行嬰孩奉獻, 將吳冠芳, Dior Justine Gothong 奉獻主前
- 3/14/09 - 教會慶祝九十三週年, 請林永健牧師主持佈道會, 感謝

神的帶領, 求祂的名得榮耀

- 3/22/09 - 建基中學畢業禮拜, 但願學生在基督裡得生命
- 3/30/09-4/04/09 - 舉行青年夏令營, 主題為「失落於世, 基督尋見」
- 4/13/09-4/17/09 - 九十多位小孩參加兒童聖經班, 蒙主悅納!

◎ 務光 · GOSPEL LIGHT ◎



# An Irreverent Look at the History of CHRISTIANITY

## A SPECIAL SERIES BY THE IRREVERENT HISTORIAN

BACKGROUND: ABRAHAM'S FAMOUS 'SACRIFICE' OF ISAAC

Welcome to the first of our irreverent history series on the history of Christianity. We will eventually cover the origins, development, and current state of the Christian religion. We try to provide a general understanding of the topic - so, what you read here will be quite general. We cannot assure comprehensive coverage of historical nuances. Brickbats (and much more preferably bouquets) can be directed to our e-mail address at [history@cebugospelchurch.com](mailto:history@cebugospelchurch.com).

With that in mind, we will now plunge into the time before Christ, and explore a major world religion that is the predecessor of Christianity. The first part of our series will cover the early era of the nation of Israel, the originators of Judaism.

## Part 1: Sacred Origins

### The Genesis of a People

**A**ncient Israel traces its origins to **Abraham**, who is considered as its Patriarch<sup>1</sup> and the founder of monotheism.<sup>2</sup> Called upon by **Yahweh**, he left his hometown of **Ur** (in modern-day Iraq) and settled in the land of **Canaan**.

He adopted a covenant with God, who promised him countless descendants to live in the land of Canaan. As a sign of the covenant, all the male members of Abraham's household, servants included, were circumcised. This practice remains an important part of Jewish identity to this day.

Abraham begat **Isaac** and Isaac begat **Jacob**. Jacob (renamed **Israel** after a wrestling bout with a divine being) begat twelve children. He favored his second-youngest son **Joseph**, who was a bit of a dreamer.

Jacob's favoritism and the beautiful clothes he gifted to Joseph made the older brothers very jealous. At their first chance, they sold him off as a slave to work in Egypt. They told their father that Joseph was probably killed by wild animals.

In a way, this is divine justice. In his day, Jacob pulled a similar stunt on his own father, and stole his twin brother's inheritance.

Fortunately for everyone involved, God was with 17-year old Joseph. But it wasn't easy for him - he had a misadventure with the wife of his master, and was jailed after she accused him of attempted rape.

Thanks to his ability to interpret dreams, Joseph went from a jailbird into the right-hand man of Pharaoh, the ruler of Egypt. His prophecies allowed his adopted home to prepare for seven years of famine.

Back in Canaan, the famine caught Israel and family flat-footed. They were forced to buy food from Egypt, forcing the brothers into an encounter with the brother they betrayed.

The family reunion was awkward, to say the least. But ultimately, Israel and family chose to immigrate to Egypt, and were settled in the Egyptian province of Goshen.

### Exodus from Egypt

Many years passed, and the Israelites thrived and multiplied in Egypt. The new Pharaoh, who never heard of Joseph, feared that they would soon outnumber the Egyptians in their own land.

He implemented a forced labor program and ordered the death of all the Hebrew baby boys. One boy escaped death through the actions of

his family. By a quirk of fate, he was found and adopted by the Pharaoh's daughter. His name was **Moses**.

Moses became a liberator, peacefully leading the Israelites out of slavery from Egypt. It took Pharaoh a lot of convincing - ten supernatural Plagues that devastated the country, but left the Israelites unharmed.

The Israelites' exodus from Egypt climaxed in a race of man against chariots across the Red Sea. The results were dramatic, and disastrous for the pursuing Egyptians who were drowned.

Modern scholars are skeptical of the accounts in the book of *Exodus*. No mention of this incident was ever recorded by Egyptian historians, who otherwise kept thorough records. So, perhaps it didn't really happen!

As an aside, the reason for this omission is pretty obvious, no? (After all, that was a whopper of a defeat best swept under the rug...)

<sup>1</sup> Patriarch means "Founding Father". Abraham had many children, and was the patriarch of Islam (through his eldest son Ishmael), the Midianites (through his son Midian), and the Edomites (through his grandson Esau).

<sup>2</sup> This is the belief in one god. It was quite unusual at a time when other contemporary religions had many gods. For example, the Egyptians and Hindus had so many gods in



Moses is the most important prophet in Judaism. According to tradition, Moses wrote the *Torah* – *Genesis* through *Deuteronomy*.<sup>3</sup> The “Mosaic Law” written in the *Torah* (or *Pentateuch*) are the most holy scriptures in Judaism, and are still observed to his day.

Two festivals that feature Moses are celebrated today in Israel. *Passover* recalls the deliverance of the Israelites from the Tenth Plague of Egypt, and *Shavuot* commemorates the day when God gave the stone tablets bearing the Ten Commandments<sup>4</sup> to Moses.

Because of their doubt and disobedience, all the Israelites who left Egypt, including Moses, did not step foot on the promised land. What took Jacob and family a few weeks took the Israelites forty years.

### Retaking Canaan

After Jacob left Canaan, new settlers grabbed the vacant real estate. These Canaanites built cities protected by big strong walls, and assumed that nobody in their right minds would dare attack them.

Led by **Joshua**, the new nation was forged in the heat of battle. The Israelites crossed the Jordan River and destroyed the fortified city of Jericho in a week’s time.

The land promised to Abraham many years ago was taken by force, city by city. By the time he was through, Joshua and his people captured 31 Canaanite cities.

The conquered land was divided by Joshua among the twelve tribes<sup>5</sup> of Israel. After many years wandering in the desert, the

Israelites finally had a land to call their very own.

After this period, Israel fell into a repeated pattern. Its people turned away from God and start worshiping other gods. Enemies would come and attack them.

God would eventually listen to their cries, and give them leaders (known as **Judges**) to save them. Once saved from bondage, they returned to Yahweh – at least until the Judge kicks the bucket. Then, the cycle continues.

The actions of well-known Judges such as Deborah (the only woman), Gideon (with his 300), and super-strong Samson were not quite enough to break the vicious cycle.

There was no “Israelite nation”, so to speak. No one had any central authority, and power was scattered across Judges and tribal leaders.

As the book of *Judges* said, everyone pretty did what they pleased. And people started to grow sick and tired of being bullied by other people.

### Israel’s First King

There are three different accounts of how King **Saul** was chosen, all with the same result. Samuel, the last Judge of Israel, with God’s blessings, anointed Saul as the first king of Israel.

Most of King Saul’s battles were fought against the Philistines, a seafaring people who lived in the present-day Gaza Strip. The Philistines had a technological advantage: they were the only ones in the area who knew how to forge iron into weapons and armor.

Early on, Saul lost divine favor after he disobeyed and showed mercy to the Amalekites. This favor later went to young David, a shepherd boy who had a good singing voice and was quite gutsy as well.

In a famous battle, David killed the Philistine champion **Goliath** (who, depending on the source text, was between 6½ and 9¾ feet tall). Saul initially liked David, but became envious when David became more popular than him.

David had a close, and (I dare say) possibly kinky relationship (depending on how you interpret *1 Sam. 20*) with Jonathan, Saul’s eldest son. David was also married to Michal, one of Saul’s daughters.

This royal link was not enough to save David from Saul’s paranoia – Saul was convinced David would take over his throne. He chased after David, trying to kill him. David was forced to run, and lived the exciting life of a rebel.

<sup>3</sup> With that said, the account of Deut. 34:5-12 which tells about the death of Moses, could not possibly be written by him. Many modern secular scholars attribute authorship to multiple scribes during the period of Persian exile (539-334 BC), a theory termed as the documentary hypothesis. We will cover this in detail during our next installment.

<sup>4</sup> Certain passages (Ex. 20 and Deut. 5) contain more than ten “commandments” although the content is similar to Ex. 34. The way the commandments are subdivided varies according to tradition. For example, Roman Catholicism omits the prohibition about graven images and has split “covet your neighbor’s wife” and “covet your neighbor’s property” into two separate commandments.

<sup>5</sup> Actually thirteen. Poor Joseph doesn’t get a tribe named after him today, but his first two sons did – Jacob later “adopted” them as his own sons. The Levites (descendants of Levi) didn’t share in the land, since they were assigned as priests. So, Joseph’s 11 brothers, minus Levi, plus Manasseh and Ephraim, equals twelve.



Other than his obsession with killing David, Saul was not an evil king. He protected his people from Philistine incursions, after all. But Saul's pursuit scared David so much that he left Israel and stayed in the land of the Philistine. He would remain a guest for many years.

In the meantime, Saul and his sons died heroically in battle, fighting to protect the country from the Philistines. With the death of Israel's first king, hope of liberation from Philistine domination seem to die out.

Still, the kingdom needed ruling, even if it had to kowtow to the uncircumcised seafarers. So, Ishbosheth, the last surviving son of Saul, was crowned king of Israel.

With Saul dead, David felt safe enough to return. He entered the southern city of Hebron, and was crowned king of the tribe of Judah. The tribe seceded from the country of Israel, and the country plunged into civil war.

The war ended when Ishbosheth was assassinated in his sleep. With all of Saul's sons dead, David became the king of United Israel at the age of 30.

### *United Israel*

David is full of contradictions. He was a talented musician and songwriter, and is said to have composed much of the book of *Psalms*. Yet, David was a warrior king, and forcefully expanded Israel's influence far across its borders. One of his lasting legacies was to move the capital to Jerusalem after taking it from the Jebusites.

David was said to be a man's after God's own heart, but was hardly innocent and blameless. He seduced the wife of a loyal soldier, and plotted to have the husband killed to cover up his adultery. In direct contravention to two of the ten commandments.

Because of his many failings, David did not have a trouble-free reign. In addition to fighting enemies outside Israel, his son **Absalom** staged a coup d'état and briefly took over David's throne. The upstart son later died in the process of trying to kill David, after his head got stuck to a tree branch.

Due to David's sins and the blood he shed, he was not allowed to build a Temple, which was intended to serve as the permanent home for the Ark of the Covenant. The Ark is a sacred relic that contained the second set<sup>6</sup> of stone tablets Moses received from God.

So, David started to gather up materials which are used for the Temple. But the actual construction was left to future kings.

King David reigned for forty years and was succeeded by his youngest son **Solomon**, who beat back a challenge from his eldest brother Adonijah. Solomon was a shrewd politician, and brought peace to Israel mainly through the use of diplomacy. He arranged a number of marriages between himself and the daughters of neighboring kings. Lots and lots of them.<sup>7</sup>

Solomon was personally wealthy, and received some 40 tons of gold every year in tributes and taxes. He spent these on buildings,

sculpture, and horses and chariots. Solomon completed the first Temple of Jerusalem, which his father was not allowed to build.

Solomon was an excellent administrator, and projected Israel's economic influence far and wide. His reign ushered in a golden age of prosperity for the country. Solomon's economic control was said to reach as far north as the banks of the Euphrates River (modern-day Iraq), in Hittite territory.

Solomon was well-known for his wisdom, and made lasting contributions to the Scriptures. Tradition considers Solomon as author of three books: a listing of adages in the book of *Proverbs*, the rather cynical *Ecclesiastes*, and the erotic *Song of Songs* (or *Songs of Solomon*).

Unhappily for him, neither his country nor the grand structures he built would stand the test of time. Barely 100 years after Solomon's death, the Israelites were a divided people, militarily weak and surrounded by enemies.

Why did this happen, and how did God's chosen people survive in a time of upheaval? Stay tuned for the next irreverent installment of the history of Christianity: *Kings and Prophets; Vassals and Exiles*.

<sup>6</sup> An angry Moses smashed the first set into itty-bitty little pieces, enraged by a gold idol. He ground up the idol to dust, mixed gold dust with water, and made everyone drink 'eau de or.'

<sup>7</sup> The Bible stated that Solomon had 700 wives who were connected to royalty, as well as 300 concubines (basically an officially-recognized mistress). This strategy backfired later on – in order to keep his wives happy, Solomon adopted their religions and built temples to their gods. This greatly displeased the self-professed "jealous" Yahweh.



# Triumph in Tribulation

Ann Marie Su

Who says you can't be happy when you have problems? Who says you can't smile when you are sick? Who says crisis is bad?

Life was good. Life was fast. For thirty-seven years, I was so blessed. I was very healthy. I was always on the go. I was enjoying all that life had to offer me. Then one day, everything just came to a big halt.

Last June, 2007, my colleagues in school noticed I had red rashes on my face. At first, I thought it was an ordinary condition. I visited five dermatologists who each gave me a set of medicines to take and apply. All of a sudden, I felt like my body became a pharmacy. The rashes persisted. Then I had mouth ulcers which never seem to heal. By October, I noticed I could not reach the top of the stairs without heavy panting when I used to just run up and down with ease. I was strong and healthy, remember? I was actually having shortness of breath. My hair started falling too much every day. I also noticed that my chest was getting tight and my arms could not reach as far on my back.

Many noticed my circumstance but no one said a word, except for one special friend. She felt uncomfortable and concerned just by looking at me, until she finally urged me to go see a rheumatologist. Wasting no time, I went and had a checkup. I was advised to have several lab tests and x-ray. On January 28, 2008, when my doctor saw the

results, she was alarmed and said I should not go home anymore and should have myself admitted to the hospital ASAP. So I did.

I asked my family and friends to pray for me. I was afraid and yet, I had to trust the Lord. This came as a big blow, yet I reminded myself by asking the question as Job did in Job 2:10, **"Should we accept only good things from the hand of God, and never anything bad?"** Somehow, I realized this was a trial He was sending my way to test me – my faith, my testimony – to radiate what I declare I believe. Even though I wished He would tell me why I was going through all these, He really didn't have to. How will I know what I really got inside me if I do not allow Him to try me? I knew I just have to trust Him in this. I had His promise in His Word.

I was diagnosed with Interstitial Lung Disease, something idiopathic which means there is no known cause or cure for it. However, it can be treated with the maintenance of medication. This has been linked to SLE, commonly known as Lupus. While I had several of its symptoms, my case was not full-blown.

For more than a week, I was stuck in the hospital. I had one more grading period to go with my school kids but I was forced to take a leave from Bethany Christian School. I didn't even know whether I could still go back and teach again. Life became so uncertain. Questions like "Where

will I get all the money to pay for my bills and medication? Can I live a normal life again? What if I can't? What next?" raced through my mind.

All these drifted away as loving people visited. I was greatly ministered. Daily text messages came encouraging me. The Holy Spirit prompted me to move on each day, assuring me that God sees and He cares. Somehow, I knew He was trying to develop something in me. Just like a butterfly struggling to come out of the cocoon, there was something beautiful waiting ahead.

Actually, there wasn't much I could do because it was God who chose what I would go through. It's up to me how I would choose to go through it. The way I would respond was very important. I must bear in mind that this was part of His will. And as long as I believed, all things would work out for the good and ultimately for His glory.

I started off with eight medicines daily. Also, I had to use oxygen at night to aid in my breathing as I slept. I had monthly laboratory tests and consultation with two doctors. All these expenses became quite a burden.

I stayed home most of the time. I was not allowed to go out yet since my condition made me ten times more at risk for infection than a normal person. I had to put on a mask whenever I need to go to public areas. Furthermore, I had to avoid people with cough and colds.





Last June, I was admitted again for an infection. I went through a drain surgery and had a 'heplock' on my hand for two weeks to inject IV antibiotic into my body twice a day.

As I hang in there, God expected me to be strong. I just had to keep on because one day, it's going to be over. I found assurance in Psalm 91:1-2 which says, **"He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge, and my fortress, my God in whom I trust."**

Now, after fifteen months, I may not have fully recovered yet and I do not even know if I will ever be, but I have so much to thank the Lord for:

1. Friends who willingly stayed and even slept over to take care of me.
2. God has provided an instant substitute teacher for my class.
3. He sent generous people to help me with my financial needs.
4. Though my oxygen input level was low (only 50%), it could be aided with oxygen tank. Praise God, now I do not need it anymore.
5. My SGPT went as high as 600 perhaps due to the medicines I took; it is now down within normal range.
6. Come to think about it – how many Lupus patients with lung problem can reside in Beverly Hills where there is fresh air all around? – Just exactly what I needed.
7. I had more time to spend with God. I discovered a lot of Bible

jewels. More so, it gave me the opportunity to intercede for others.

8. I am able to minister to other people through my joyful disposition. I try to encourage others as I have been encouraged, too.
9. I was able to organize a Thanksgiving Outreach last September in three CEF (Child Evangelism Fellowship) areas of ministry.
10. My medicine intake has tapered off. I do not have to take four of my medicines anymore. My steroid dosage is reduced to 5mg every other day from the original 60mg/day.
11. For a time, I lost my voice. But now, I can sing again and can talk for a longer time.
12. My scalp was brightening as the hair kept falling. Now, they're growing back again.
13. Every morning before 8am, I see to it that I am able to walk for an hour around Beverly Hills. They used to be small baby steps only, now I could do brisk walking. This exercise strengthens my bones which are weakened by my medication.
14. The tightness on my chest is gone and I can swing my arms and reach front and back with ease.
15. Though I was sick, I was not in

pain. In fact, I have learned to overcome my fear of needles. I have to because I have to go through it every month.

16. Though for several months, I wasn't free to move about and couldn't even climb up the stairs, yet I was not totally immobile.
17. Though my lungs could not function fully, there was still breath in me.
18. I had a group of prayers warriors. A pastor friend urged me to confess my healing, which I did. Indeed "You are what you think".
19. I am now back to serving the Lord in the youth ministry.
20. Now, I am sharing this testimony to thank our God for healing me and to thank all who have lovingly supported me all the way.

As the Psalmist says in Ps. 103:1-2, **"Praise the Lord, o my soul....and forget not all His benefits"** and in Ps. 150:6, **"Let everything that has breath praise the Lord."** This is exactly what I am trying to do with this testimony. I hope you will be blessed with it.

I may not know what you are going through right now and you may not fully understand my situation, but be encouraged because even though trials may disturb us, they do not have to defeat us. Though they may disrupt us, they do not have to destroy us. And though they may disarm us, they do not have to demoralize us because GOD IS NOWHERE. Yes, **GOD IS NOW**

...continued on page 35



# 與上帝同行

小山

經文：彌迦書6:8

從前在加拿大有一位愛爾蘭的聖徒名叫Holy Ann。她活到一百歲。她少年的時候在一對很殘酷的主人和主母的家庭做工；薪俸很少。他們差她將水搬運上一個約有一英里高很斜的山嶺。在山嶺上本來有人挖了一口井，但已乾了，多年沒有水。有一天晚上她很疲倦，就跪下呼求上帝。那時候她讀到這些字句：「在深谷我要開泉源，要使這乾地成為江河。」耶和華說：「你們要呈上你們的案件；雅各的君說，你們要聲明你們確實的理由。」這些話打動Holy Ann的心，她就在主的面前說出她的理由；她告訴主她主人的家庭很需要水，她很難將水搬上這很斜的山嶺；然後她就躺下睡了。次日清早她拿著水桶走向那井去。有人問她要到那裡去呢？她回答道：「我要到那井打水。」「為什麼呢？它已乾了。」但這話沒有停止Holy Ann，因為她知道她所信的是誰，她繼續地向前走；看阿！在井中有八十三英尺深的純潔冷水。而那水井永不再乾了！Holy Ann是一位與上帝同行的聖徒。

在舊約聖經記載了三

位和上帝同行的聖徒：

## 1. 以諾

從創世記5:21-24我們看到以諾活到六十五歲，生瑪土撒拉之後與上帝同行三百年。以諾活到三百六十五歲，他與上帝同行，上帝將他取去，他就不在世了。可見以諾沒有經過死亡，就被上帝提到天堂。

## 2. 挪亞

創世記6:9說：「挪亞是個義人在當時的世代是個完全人；挪亞與上帝同行。」

## 3. 以利亞

從列王記上第十七章到第十八章看到先知以利亞的生平知道他是與上帝同行的人。他沒有經過死亡，因為耶和華用旋風接以利亞升天去了。（參王下2:11-12）

每個基督徒都必須與上帝同行。但我們應該注意，不要在上帝的面前因而迷失方向，或偏行自己的路；也不要走在上帝的後面，離開祂愈來愈遠而失去上帝的教訓，忘記祂的法則。基督徒要怎樣與上帝同行呢？彌迦書6:8告訴我們應怎樣做才能與上帝同行。

先知彌迦大概在主前

750-686B.C.作先知。他是摩利沙人，摩利沙人是猶大南部的一個小鎮。當猶大王約坦、亞哈斯和希西加在位的時候，耶和華的默示臨到先知彌迦；論撒瑪利亞和耶路撒冷的將來。他的預言證明他對當時社會的不公弊病的敏感。在彌1:6他預言到以色列國首都撒瑪利亞的淪陷（主後722-721B.C.）；又在彌3:12預言到猶大國首都耶路撒冷的淪陷（主後586B.C.）。

先知彌迦綜合了同時代以色列的先知-阿摩司、何西阿和以賽亞眾先知的信息；寫出彌6:8是在舊約為人最紀念的名言；也是歷代聖徒與上帝同行的指南。彌6:8說：「世人哪！耶和華已指示你們何為義。祂向你們所要的是甚麼呢？只要你行公義，好憐憫，存謙卑的心與你的上帝同行。」

## (一)行公義

義者宜也，就是作事要合理。簡單的說行公義就是對待人要公平正直，不貪不取。在彌2:6-16我們看到當時以色列社會的人不公。1. 他們得非義之財，就是用小升斗；不公的天秤；用詭詐的法碼。2. 富戶靠財力行強暴；就是靠錢財來欺壓人。3. 居民說謊，舌頭詭詐，



顛倒是非。

記得我在岷市讀書的時候，我們的鄰居是大理院法官，Justice Pastor Endencia。每晚我開夜車趕功課的時候，常看到他在辦公直到深夜。家父問他：「法官先生，你為何要辦公直到深夜呢？」他說他每次判決的時，特別是死刑都要反覆思想謹慎明辨。他不但坐堂聽原告和被告的供詞和證據；回家後還要在安靜的時間仔細地看這些供詞和證據；以免枉害無辜。他實在是一位公義正直的法官。

## (二)好憐憫

憐憫是對他人有同情心。也就是對他人的需要有真正的關心，樂意幫助人解決困難；不袖手旁觀，是一種忠心的愛；對主對人都是這樣。

何西阿書6:6說：「我喜愛憐憫，不喜愛祭祀。喜愛認識上帝勝於燔祭。」彌6:6-7：「上帝責備以色列人以為獻祭可蒙上帝悅納。因為他們沒有行公義好憐憫；因此他們就是將長子獻上為祭也不會蒙主悅納。」

紐約市的前市長 La Guardia 在 1934-1945 年連任市長三次；退休後在紐約市做市法官。有一夜坐堂的時候，警察抓了一個年長市民來，被控偷取一間麵包店的麵包。La Guardia 就問：「你為什麼偷麵包店的麵包呢？」那老年人回答道：「因為我身無分文可以

買麵包；家人都饑餓了；不得已要偷麵包來充饑。」法官判決道：「你犯了市法律應罰款美金十元。」說後就從自己的皮包拿出十元美金還罰款；然後用自己的帽子叫在座的聽眾說：「你們自由放一些錢幫助這老人。」共得到五十餘塊的美金。La Guardia 實在是一位行公義好憐憫的好法官。

## (三)存謙卑的心與上帝同行

有一位基督徒的學院院長，因為學院的經濟短缺沒有校丁。有一天他的辦公室需要油漆整理。他就穿上工人的衣服親自漆辦公室。附近的一個富商來到辦公室找院長，看到一個工人在漆辦公室就問

他院長在那裡？那人回答道：「午餐後他會來辦公。」下午富商來到辦公室看到坐院長位的人與剛才油漆同是一個人。他們交談後才知道學院的經費短缺；又看到院長本身殷勤做工就寫了一張美金五萬元的支票獻捐給學院作經費。

最後我要以詩 139:23-24 和弟兄姊妹互相勉勵：「上帝阿！求禱鑒察，知道我的心思，試煉我，知道我的意念；看在我裡面有甚麼惡行沒有。引導我走永生的道路。」要求上帝引導我們行永生的道路，就要行公義，好憐憫，存謙卑的心與我們的上帝同行！

## *continued from page 33* *Triumph in Tribulation*

**HERE.** and it will never be **GOD IS NOWHERE** because even if you read Hebrew 13:5b backwards, it will always say the same thing, "Never will I leave you, never will I forsake you."

By the way, do not worry. God already had "this" trial in mind when He created you. You were built for it. Do not fear – He will provide what you need as you need. It will always come just in time,

Life was good. Life had been good. And life will always be good because **GOD IS GOOD!**

Nobody knows what lies ahead. I do not have any idea what will become of me in the coming months, yet I put my complete trust in Him, knowing He is still working in me – to make me what I ought to be. In the meantime, may this chapter of my life attain the ultimate purpose He has for me. Above all, I say with the psalmist, "**Not to us, O Lord, but to Your name be the glory because of Your love and faithfulness.**" (Ps. 115:1)



林瑞玉

愛來迎明人。人子聽令苦世起。愛來拜害憫人排。來令生架大活魂。淪人何歡會。造給帝該命。痛出此憐下。敬災憐罪安。下令降字勞。復靈沉人從不就。創吹上應神。受來從極。賜不受兼。愛早降順來十功主救免。壽福苦經土氣本令背國罪苦帝氣心神義惡人子。穌人死罪日死赦。萬此痛聖用生人命達樂帶勞上福硬鬼公罪愛聖耶為釘贖三替罪。樂知傷讀帝將以帝祖出人傷神樣人拜父恨父衲子願人人了。穌信福不憂請上又所上始趕人憂真萬世去天怨天差聖甘替為死耶肯。

「世信若才世趕不機人耶肯躲人永認懊，，，，帝免改。穌死生。條，誤。安面安逆神刻再信你得災有眼可不，安平內平背求立不要替可大只擺不來平得的樂罪改遲去罪你人來路死擇錯無穌主喜犯悔延過有愛的將道永還選間耶在有人快可會人穌信避生生真悔世信若才世趕不機人耶肯躲人永認懊

挑卻愛信受  
有，親心時  
常弱。堅暫。  
常軟我也怕城。  
生會助你要黃金  
人，心幫望不見  
徒信常盼，得  
基督時常，穌久  
基，有主者耶不

戰，救讀主，  
蒙的靠苦

送時母教後在養時糕。被歲祖，過時因歲賣活亂就五與我。歲。八習生迷大養嶼疼識六書、學持惶一個月收浪很知。點七家維驚一人鼓母的住一我家庭些給到祖貝下念，人家有才好。我自。實學校家跟助裡何我。門帶住些來學顧來幫心如家母起一回會不出，時知出養一我又教父就餅有不

一學學得不裡我時大個蒙自，們切做的帝祂祂上快罪得音求覺時間要個而一樣認的我一穌生上受，為，沒歲福在裡平房，這責惡這若實免離耶人為接人成也，沒六在。心和到邊。受罪就我們信赦脫主成凡的，福足，十，久我形我床。罪的我我是定們讀我做樣為名利有事主。心給到祖貝下念，人家有才好。我自。實學校家跟助裡何我。門帶住些來學顧來幫心如家母起一回會不出，時知出養一我又教父就餅有不

位校期很同去好候哭一主已是的不我主兒的就帝樂滿









宿務基督教會

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