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2019 CHURCH THEME



VISION

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

異象

菲華教會 確信聖經
培養門徒 榮耀基督

MISSION

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

使命

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



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A BETTER GIFT THIS CHRISTMAS?

Rev. Anna Wright



nce again, the Christmas season is upon us, and I'm taking this 'calm before the storm' period to reflect on some memories.



The enduring images of my childhood Christmas hinge on a few but emotive rituals. First, there was the cleaning out of a little alcove for the 'Belen' or nativity scene in the living room of our house on Ramos Street. Here, figures of the infant Jesus, his devoted parents, animals, shepherds and kings were taken out of their storage bags and carefully placed in their traditional spots, the whole scene being surrounded by twinkling Christmas lights.

There was the making of the Christmas tree that, for a time, varied from year to year. The most memorable was a precarious pyramidal pile of cut soap pieces, stuck together with toothpicks! We had fun building it and mama was pretty tense until the tall pile assumed a recognisable shape of a tree! The best thing about it was the soap pieces were recyclable and used for laundry!

When it came to feasting, the most delicious dish for me was the braised whole 'older chicken' that we bought from the old Majestic Restaurant on Colon St, and came in a gallon-sized ice cream container.

The flesh was the remainder of a chicken used in a special dish called 'Crispy skin with prawn crackers!' The Cantonese chef was a genius in using five-spice powder to draw the best out of a tough fowl. Again, the virtue of 'recycling' is invoked here!

Finally, there was the giving of gifts, usually one gift per child. Once, money was tight and I had to share one doll with my two sisters, Mona and Lydia! The parsimony of that single gift did not strike me as a sign of 'poverty'. Maybe it was because we let our imagination transcend our material limitations.

After playing with our doll, we took out our old toy claypots, gathered bougainvillea leaves and stones (for siopaos) and pretended to be chefs in a restaurant with the doll as our customer.

We also played with 'Jackstone' (a ball accompanied with metallic pieces), suwapao (small home-sewn cushions filled with sand or dried beans), and 'playing cards' by which we honed our math skills with blackjack and 'burut-burut'.

Of course, there was mahjong that we played using two sets of alphabet blocks (modifying rules along the way) because we did not have a proper mahjong set! (Here in English Blyth Valley, we have a group of retirees who play proper mahjong to keep their brain cells ticking!)

Why recall these memories? It is the appreciation of the pure simplicity of life. Our hope and joy did not reside in possessing more and more objects. It was the rituals, the traditions of retelling the story of Jesus' birth, having Christmas meal together, sharing of gifts, and playing together that evoked our imagination and consolidated our memories. The best Christmas experiences were those made within the context of human gathering and togetherness, particularly within our human family.

Why did Jesus come to the world not as a 'full-grown saviour on a cloud' but as a vulnerable baby? I believe that, to save the world, Jesus had to know what it was to be human by growing up within a real family. Thus he was born to the poor couple Joseph and Mary on their journey to Jerusalem and later, fled with them to Egypt with very few resources.

He grew up, knowing fear, insecurity, helplessness, hunger, frustration and even despair. But he also grew up under the care and loving concern of his reflective mother and, equally important, good guidance from his father who taught him the art of working with wood.

It is a tragic and scary prospect to grow up without being part of a family. Worse still is the reality of being in family with a semblance of unity but where the members are not truly relating with one another.

In the present age, one danger is the ubiquity of mobile devices. In restaurants where people are meant to celebrate and spend time together, I see fathers, mothers, sons and daughters isolated from one another by locking their gazes onto their devices' screens.

The relentless march of mobile technology is hollowing out our awareness of each other, our acute sense of belongingness. Isn't it a wonder that many youths feel closer to their friends on the net or feel more alive when playing games as avatars?

When was the last time we looked carefully at the countenances of our loved ones? When was the last time we listened attentively to their voices and unspoken needs? If Jesus himself needed to belong to and be rooted in a human family, then we ordinary beings have even greater need of familial belongingness and rootedness.

We are all 'beings in time' and are sustained by the Lord of Time himself. It is noteworthy that Jesus did not only spend time with his human family and friends but also purposely sought the high mountains to embrace his Father's presence.

Long before he took on mortality, he was already part of a divine family, the holy Trinity imbued with a circling, perpetual love for One Another. Separated from his divine origin, Jesus got up on earthly peaks to relish - time and again - the joy and exuberance of his Father's mirth, breathed through by the Holy Spirit.

Do not imagine that Jesus went up Mount Tabor to be sad and perpetually pleading with his Father! He probably shared many divine smiles and jokes about his amazing discoveries and experiences of being human! With his thirst for the rootedness in and belongingness with the Trinity, Jesus showed himself to be most divine and, paradoxically, most human.

So this Christmas, try to give your mobile phones, tablets and computers a good break as you yourself take your holiday. (A corollary given by sleep experts is: do not charge your phones in your bedroom and your children's phones in their bedrooms! Install a 'charger park' downstairs).

Remember that you are creating new 'memories' with your spouse, children, grandchildren, clan members, friends, etc. In twenty, thirty, forty years' time, your loved ones will thank you for their precious, irreplaceable memories of the Christmas rituals and traditions they shared with you. The best gift this Christmas, in short, is your time with your family, your attentiveness to them, your being 'here-and-now' with them.

This Christmas, let your laughter-filled family time mirror the perichoretic, ever-renewing joy, love and life of the Divine Family of Creator God, Saviour Christ and Sustainer Holy Spirit. A Blessed and Merry Christmas to one and all! Amen and amen. 🙏

CHRISTMAS MORNING

Celia Margot Amaya

The passage has been long and difficult.
It was a wrench to leave your side.
But we had planned this all along.
Love does not let go simply because
the world is indifferent or
disdainful.

I miss you already –
our cleaved Being and
Loving.

She is young, gentle, confused.
But not as bewildered as I am –
thrown into the midst of
animal groanings,
bits of straw tickling my nose.

My hands are wrapped up snugly.
They are freed once in a while
in the air, to clench her breast.

Strange, this habitation,
my thirst for human milk
and human caress.

These same hands will someday
work on wood, give sight,
repair limbs, bless the wretched.
Then they will be helpless again –
stretched out, pierced through,
bloodied, emptied of life.

Last night, at the first hour,
there were no angelic voices,
nor visions of heavenly apparitions.
It was a quiet, innocuous arrival.

But oh, these eyes,
these eyes you have bestowed,
and the deep night
with its pirouetting stars.

四種無聲的見證

許玉英師母

『逾

越節前六日，耶穌來到伯大尼…有人在那裡給耶穌預備筵席，馬大伺候，拉撒路也在那同耶穌坐席的人中。馬利亞就拿著一斤極貴的真哪噠香膏，抹耶穌的腳，又用自己頭髮去擦，屋裡就滿了膏的香氣。』

（約翰12:1-3）

在這短短的經文裡記載四位人物，他們用無聲的動作，見證我們的主耶穌。

第一：「有人在那裡給耶穌預備筵席…」聖經沒有清楚記載這人是誰，他隱藏不顯露自己。只要人看見主，他就滿足了。可見他預備筵席的目的是為主，不是為己，寧可自己衰微，只要主耶穌興旺。

第二：馬大的伺候。伺候的工作也是無聲但卻是明顯的。伺候的工作是最忙碌最卑微的。伺候人者要先顧念客人的需要，再顧到自己，先叫人得益自己在後也甘願。我們事奉主當以耶穌作主人，把自己放在僕人的地位，以謙卑束腰，甘心放下自己的享受關心別人的需要。

第三：拉撒路的見證。「拉撒路也在那同耶穌坐席的人中」。當耶穌受猶太人反對逼迫的情形之下，作主的門徒，與祂在一起真不容易，因為隨時隨地都有受逼迫的可能。拉撒路卻付上代價與主坐席。他坐著，沒有講話，只是安靜地見證主是他的朋友及救主。他屬主，主也屬他，他坐席表明他是耶穌的人。在日常生活中，我們曾否做過這樣的見證，叫人知道我們是屬主的人？或我們以被看是主的人為恥呢？

第四：馬利亞的見證。聖經記載馬利亞三種動作- 拿、抹、擦。這三種動作表達馬利亞對主的愛心。這三種動作都是無聲的，卻叫多人知道。她拿極貴的真哪噠香膏摸抹主的腳時，屋裡就滿了膏的香氣，叫主心滿意足。她的行動表明主是尊貴可愛，配得人為祂犧牲的。

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我們為主放下多少？見證我們的主值得多少？祂是配得我們盡心盡意盡力事奉的主。✝



GOOD GOOD FATHER

The Lost Sheep

One significant attribute that I've recently learned about sheep is that they are very dependent on their shepherds. Some animals can go wild with almost no human contact, but it is different with a sheep or a flock of them. Their shepherd is their closest companion.

Like a shepherd, my father was my constant companion. I used to think that no one could ever love me more than he did. So, when my father was struck ill and became very sick, I didn't know what to do.

Amidst the confusion, the only thing I could think of was to haggle and plead with God to extend my father's life to a few more years. Yet, God had other plans for me.

I tried to cope up with my dad's passing and it was very difficult because he was my best friend, always had my best interest in mind and the one who understood me the most. My dad was someone I could rely on and the one I could run to anytime.

When God chose to take my father away from me, it was only then that I truly encountered Him. It made me realize that the God whom I worship on Sundays is actually very real and a 24/7 God

who loves me very much. That painful experience pushed me to my limits .

It was when I could no longer get answers to many of my questions that I decided to let go and let God. When I surrendered it all into my Shepherd's hands, I experienced firsthand that He can indeed be trusted.

What good does the tragedy of losing a father bring forth? My God found me, the lost sheep, whom He rescued and loved. In finding me, I found God. He was there all the time. When God was all I had, I discovered that He was all I ever needed.

My Shepherd had ninety-nine other sheep to take care of but He went out of His way to search and look for me. God carried me and became my Heavenly Father. I'm blessed that He gave me a loving earthly father so I can grasp a bit of what it feels like to experience the love of a Heavenly Father. 👑

EPHPHATHA— BE OPENED

Judge Jocelyn Uy Po

*A*nd looking up to heaven, he sighed and said to him, "Ephphatha," that is, "Be opened." (Mark 7:34)

And his ears were opened, his tongue was released, and he spoke plainly. (Mark 7:35)

And they were astonished beyond measure, saying, "He has done all things well. He even makes the deaf hear and the mute speak." (Mark 7:37)

About same time last year, November 2018, I was reading these verses. And after reading and meditating, I thought of how the people had so much faith in Jesus who was performing these miracles. I was amazed at how the deaf and dumb, after being healed by Jesus, could immediately speak a language he had not ever heard before. How the Lord simply said "Ephphatha" and that his ears were opened.

Seeing my sleeping husband beside me, I suddenly realized that he got some hearing issues especially on his right ear. He went to different doctors and hearing centers just to be told that his frequencies are too wide apart and therefore, difficult to fix.

Then I said to myself, if Jesus could heal this deaf and dumb person in the Bible, surely I could try to pray for my husband's hearing issues. So I laid my hand over his sleeping head particularly his right ear and prayed, "Lord, please Ephphatha my husband's ears."

When he woke up, I was hopeful that my husband's hearing would have gotten better. But still, he could not hear me clearly, specially when I asked him to do the dishes. Or maybe he just pretended to be deaf, hehehe. But his hearing did not improve a bit.

However, I kept on praying, praying and praying that God would Ephphatha his ears. Have you tried to pray for something, expected some great miracles and it just did not happen? Well, same here.

But I remembered the Syrophoenician woman who persisted, so I just kept on praying, "Please Ephphatha his ears." With the same word Jesus spoke, I prayed.

Days later, while visiting SM Seaside, he came across this place called Active Hearing Center. He was given a free trial on some of their hearing aids. So he came home with his new "ears". He was happy, very happy that at last he could hear.

I said, "Wow Lord, You are great!" He can hear!! I was happy that we decided to buy, but it was so expensive. I tried to haggle and requested if we could just buy one for his bad ear and later nalang the other. Anyway, he can hear already.

Then he told me that the lady said nga, "Sir, kon mopalit ka ug eyeglasses, duha baya ka mata naay glass dili baya usa ra even if maayo ang usa ka mata. Better gyud both ears to prevent degeneration what what blah blah blah..." while I was counting chiching chiching chiching...

Anyway, by God's grace we were able to get a pair at a very discounted price, too. So when the lady was fitting the hearing aid on his ears, I was sitting outside looking at the certificates that were hung on the wall. Then I saw these words Ephphatha, Inc.

I opened my eBible to check if it was really the Ephphatha that Jesus spoke and one that I had been praying for. And surely it was exactly the same spelling. So when it was time to pay, my husband was ready to write the name of Active Hearing Center on the check when the lady, whose name happens to be FAITH, said that the registered company name is EPHPHATHA, Inc.

Later I found out that Faith is the daughter of my very good friend from church in Siquijor. What a small world! Amazing how the Lord provided Faith and Ephphatha, Inc. to bless us.


Do you believe that miracles still happen today? Of course, although at times they are not how we expect them to be. God in His omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent character knows how to do it better than what we could think or conceive of.

Some may consider it a coincidence, but in my little understanding of God, I consider it an answered prayer to a very simple prayer. It was not even original, I just copied what He said thousands of years ago.... I just dared to pray, I dared to ask, I dared to knock on heaven's door. And who would even thought that God would open heaven's door and give me exactly my EPHPHATHA. To God be the glory, it's all His doing.

Well, I got my Ephphatha!!! And my husband, yeah right, he takes off his hearing aid at home, maybe to avoid the dishes again. Hay, men... 🙌

靈性的細菌

許玉英師母



有些特別的細菌，一進入人體以後，就不容易除盡。患病的人一生有懷病菌的可能，除非有抵抗力，否則對病人有隨時發作的大損害。

同樣我們基督徒，靈命有一種似小的罪，若不注意靠聖靈的能力抵抗它，它會做破壞的工作，使基督徒生命中產生出不能榮神益人的作為。

嫉妒真是可怕的罪，這種罪無論年紀大或小，無論地位高低，無論是男是女，常常患了這種靈命的疾病，不但自己有，不小心時，也會傳染別人。

普通經驗中，嫉妒至少引起兩種令人驚恐的事情：

⊖ 引起紛爭。夫婦之間，婆婆和媳婦之間，兒女之間，同學之間，同工之間，什麼時候有嫉妒，紛爭結黨也存在；

⊖ 相咬相吞。有人因嫉妒而相殺。

從聖經記載和觀點來看，嫉妒會進入人的心，使那人作出一些不合身份的作為。馬可福音15章第1-15節記載，當時耶穌站在彼拉多面前受審。

『彼拉多原曉得祭司長是因為嫉妒才把耶穌解了來。』（可15:10）從這節經文我們可知道祭司長也嫉妒耶穌，他是猶太人宗教的領袖，卻會如此。

我們事奉主的人也不例外，一不小心，這罪很快入人的心。因為嫉妒，祭司長行事詭詐，在表面上如同要公正，叫人見證耶穌的不是。其實，原來和審判官是同一個人，罪已經定了。因為嫉妒，祭司長眼睛看不清楚，是非分不清。

我們什麼時候，對事情，對人的看法會主觀偏見，不會客觀公正。因嫉妒使無辜的耶穌被釘十字架，受苦。舊約聖經的約瑟，因弟兄們的嫉妒也曾受過多種的苦楚。掃羅王因為嫉妒大衛也作出不合王身份的作為，做出很多糊塗的事情，浪費很多時間。

我們難免有嫉妒在心，我們如何克服呢？我想提出幾點方法：這些方法可用在我們看見他人比我們有成就、比我們好、比我們強、比我們著名有才幹、比我們給人注意、比我們更給主用，在這種情形下，我們要：

⊖ 為那人的好處感謝主，因為他們是我們的肢體，屬於同一位救主耶穌，他的優點，使教會建立。他人的好處是我們的好處，想到主整個工作，我們會感謝主呢。

⊖ 不要自卑，他人的好處，我們也許沒有，但我們的好處，他們也沒有。『全身都靠祂聯絡的合式，百節各按各職。照著各體的功用，彼此互助，使叫身體漸斬增長，在愛中建立自己。』（弗4:16）

⊖ 我們承認有這種罪，主的寶血會洗淨。當我們被人嫉妒時，我們要為那人禱告，那麼事情會有大改變了。 🙏

BIRTH OF TRANSFORMED BIBLE STUDY GROUP

Joshua Ty



The reason why I joined Transformed Bible Study is because I have always strived to learn more about Jesus and His teachings. I may know His teachings but that doesn't mean I fully understand them and know how I can apply them in my life. I believe joining this bible study can help me grow spiritually and thus achieve my goal. This is also a great way for me to spend time with my ahias, atchis, and friends.

Attending Transformed Bible Study has become an important part of my routine on Sundays and I enjoyed the company and topics discussed.

Transformed Bible Study first started last September 6, 2018. It is held in the second floor Boardroom every Sunday from 9:30AM to 10:30AM and led by Pastor Arfaith Miranda and sometimes in his absence, Pastor Andy Pecson and Brother Derek Po.

From a handful of eight people, it grew to an average of twenty as of July, 2019. PTL!

Certainly, we who are drenched by the Word of God should have our lives changed by it...



Sanctify them by Your truth. Your Word is truth." (John 17:17)

God is the Potter and we are His clay – God uses His words to get this sanctification process moving for our lives to be TRANSFORMED!



FROM LIGHT TO DARKNESS TO LIGHT

Judge Jocelyn Uy Po

*L*ights after lights lining in hallowed lines, perfect bright lights in perfect lines. I felt myself wheeled through these tunnels of lights. Looking at the sides, I see white spotless walls, then names, then numbers, and the occasional fire alarm buttons that broke the monotony of the white colored walls.

I also felt the occasional bumps of my bed as I was wheeled through ramps, elevators, and jagged pathways up and down hallways. The orderlies were very kind to assure me that we are almost there. Our destination... the operating room.

My head was spinning, my heart was very hopeful that this would be just one of those ordinary medical procedures that most doctors want their patient to go through. A "just to be sure" procedure.

I signed the waiver because I do not want anybody to be guilty and be responsible in case something goes wrong. My husband was asked to wait outside the operating room. I did not tell him the details to spare him any unnecessary stress, because as I said, I was hopeful.

Then sets of faces looked down on me. Three belonged to my doctors and the rest I presumed to be nurses. I was told to relax, but all I care was for this to be over with. "Count 1—2—3—" and zappppppzzzzzzzz.

Rewind: Two weeks ago, my doctor called late one night and ordered me to immediately get another ultrasound first thing in the morning and that she will be waiting for me in the hospital. With such urgency, something must not be right.

Why? I just took my mammogram a month ago and did not even bother to get the result until I accidentally met my doctor about a month later. She asked me about the result and I replied, "It's still there in the hospital laboratory." She said she will get it for me. Then this late night call. When I went to sleep, it was already dark.

I got up early the next day just when the sun was up. It was a beautiful bright morning. I drove to the hospital and true enough, my doctor was at the hospital door beckoning me to come. She told me that they were waiting.

Huh, why the urgency? It was inside the laboratory that Dr. Grace told me to look for a surgeon. Suddenly I felt all alone. Everything seemed to slow down and quiet. Remember... her name is Grace.

I went to the comfort room to break the quietness and stare at the mirror. The sad face that looked back at me asked if this is how my life will end. Hmmm... Cancer... Social. The room seemed darker than usual.

It was December of 2014. Without telling my family, I went to see a few doctors to seek for alternative opinions, alone as I often do. There were well-meaning friends who advised me to just go organic, go to China, go to Singapore, but I opted for the knife just here in Cebu.

It was a very hasty decision because it was December and I want to get this over with. I wanted to enjoy my Christmas. The parties, music, gifts, and those bright colored lights.

Hours passed, though they seemed like minutes, and I was at the recovery room. I can hear the nurse talking to me. Then I touched my chest just to be greeted with the grim reality that my life is now numbered. I felt my tears trickled down my face and the nurse gently wiped them and told me to get some rest. Let Thy will be done. Then I felt vomiting and darkness began...

Few hours later, I was wheeled back to my room. This time, there was no more bright lights. It was just darkness upon darkness upon darkness and greater darkness still. When I reached my room, my husband tried put up a smile which I felt was tainted with much sadness. He tried to blurt some comforting words which I could hardly remember.

All I can hear was his deafening sigh. Thank God for the drugs that kept me sleepy outside but awake inside. A new chapter of our life, "in sickness and in health". I wonder when the "till death do us part" comes. I slept. It was evening. It was getting dark.

Three days and I was back home with this little ball still hanging by my chest. On the fifth day I already was doing laundry. I just wanted to keep my mind occupied hoping that at the end of each wash, it would also drain away some of the pains deep in my heart.

The warmth of the sun assured me that my clothes would quickly dry. However, no matter how brightly the sun shone, it did little to take away the dark cloud of sorrow hovering all over my being. It seemed to follow me around. Sadness and fear were brewing in my heart. "Lord, is this for real. Me? Why?....." It reminds me of Jacob wrestling with the Lord. I kept crying. Finally tired, I said..... "Why not?"

Two weeks after my operation, I went to church at the PCGS school chapel. It was held there since the church was under renovation in preparation for her Centennial celebration—a nice face lift for our church as she neared a hundred year. How I wish I just also have a nice body lift, but God is doing a more serious spiritual lift inside me. Breaking me piece by piece.

My husband and I walked through the well-decorated gym then up to the chapel. It was supposed to be a happy moment for me to continue to fellowship with brethren, but the cold temperature inside the chapel made it unbearable and uncomfortably close to inconsideration to people like me. I was very cold and was just happy the service was over. The sermon, I forgot what it was. I just remembered it was soooo cold. I started coughing.

And so it was, Sunday after Sunday. The same was and is true in our mother church. I sometimes think that maybe the temperature of our church bespeaks the coldness of our hearts. Maybe it was our coldness, both temperature and attitude, that hinders other to continue to have Sunday worship and fellowship with us.

Seemed pathetic. I just surmise because that was and is how I feel. The cold makes my heart sadder and the Sundays, ugh! Gloomy and dark.

I had my specimen checked and rechecked, hoping against hope for a miracle that those cells will turn out good. The more tests, the more the confirmation and the uglier it got because it made the facts more certain.

I was advised to send them to the US for another test that would cost more than a hundred thousand pesos. I decided, it was enough. No mas, no mas... no more no more, I got it! I have cancer and I will have to live with it.

Slowly, I sunk into more darkness... depression. I wallowed most of the time in bed, alone. I tried to find refuge in sleep. I refused to open the lights. I felt God was sooooo far away. But I know deep inside that He IS somewhere there... there... there... but not here.

He IS listening to prayers but maybe not mine. I was surrounded with darkness inside and out. It was like a "darkness that can be felt." (Exodus 10:21)

Darkness. ...How quickly life could change.

In my mind, I knew I need this darkness to disappear. I should not only live with cancer but I have to learn to accept it. Maybe I need to realize that I cannot bring my old self to this new body that I have. Like new wine in an old wineskin. (Mark 2:22)

My body has changed, I have to change. My mind has to learn to embrace the new me. The faithful old mirror reminds me of that every day. Kind of like taunting me sometimes, and I cannot prevent myself from crying.

Now it's time to move on. My husband and I went to see some oncologist. I was not too concerned about the procedures they will perform on me. It was basic: chemo, radiation, Herceptin vaccine and others. They said the same things. It was just the number of chemo cycles that differed. Some said four cycles, others six, whatever.

My basic question as a newbie with this cancer thing was... "How long will I survive without going through all that?"... knowing I am HER2+++. The answer also differed. Some said 2½ years; four years was the most.

Then one doctor told me that we just try oral medication and talk again if things turn out differently. Praise the Lord, an answered prayer. A new approach of treating cancer. The ember of hope began.

One day my son, in his effort to comfort me, told me, "Ma, don't worry, you are now half-man. We are now four and a half men in our family. When you run, you will have your own special aerodynamics." And he showed me how I have to run with my right side tilted to take advantage of the lighter side.

Well, a flicker of light. Learning to laugh my way through these tough times and to especially laugh about myself without getting hurt.

Then our family left for the United States to celebrate our first American Christmas and New Year. It was the first time that I did not have a lechon for Christmas, but the big honeyed ham took its place. I missed our New Year fireworks but the grand fireworks of Disneyland replaced it.

It was grand, it was cold and the lights were just beautiful. I felt sooooo blessed. Yes, things are going to be all right in His own sweet time. Happy New Year, Los Angeles! Then Boom! Crack! Boom...! It seemed like some angels just threw beautiful sparkles in the skies...

Days after, I celebrated my birthday by visiting the U.S. Supreme Court and Congress. Because it was my birthday, the guard opened the Supreme Court for me to get in and take a peek, nah, Filipinos never just take a peek.

Took photos inside, yes! My sons made fun with the huge silver bear statue outside the governor's office while the guards were smiling at us. They said it was Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger's stainless bear.

The place was just full of history. It was there that I got the idea of putting up a bulletin board for our Church Centennial Heritage exhibits from the exhibits each state had put up. I was so grateful to God for that idea. It was a very memorable birthday and I had my classmate Liza and her husband Jessie to thank. How God had used their kind hearts so that I could be ready for our centennial exhibits.

Coming home, I began to keep myself busy with our Church Centennial celebration. Then suddenly it struck. I had difficulty breathing, my head was so heavy, I could hardly walk eight steps without so much effort.

I could hardly focus. My eyes and my head seemed like moving up and down. My back hurts. My doctor told me to immediately get an MRI and other brain scans because he was afraid that my cancer might have spread to the brain. Then I reasoned, if it's in my brain, what could you possibly do? Open my head? No way! I still got a Centennial to celebrate. I would not miss a day enjoying God's greatness and goodness, especially in this lifetime.

Looking back, I was able to celebrate the church's 50th anniversary where I was 5 years old, the youngest choir member. And I will still sing in the choir this time, 50 years after, even if I will have to slip to the back of the stage halfway through the cantata if my body cannot take it anymore.

Dr. Helen Yap, Dolores and Un Bee were so kind. They were angels unaware. Maybe they did not realize that the small acts of kindness they did was sooooo comforting to me. They would say, "Sige lang, Judge. Lingkod lang dinha sa likod." And they would cover me. Random acts of kindness goes a long way.

True enough, I was able to sing in the cantata, the same place where I was 50 years ago, right-most at the front. A week after the Centennial Celebration, I was hospitalized.

However, I remembered that I have to announce the bulletin board winners next day, Sunday. So I told my doctor to just place me in the emergency room and in case my lab work shows nothing serious, that I have to be released so I can go to church. Sure enough, I was in church that Sunday. I made some mistakes but nothing serious. I was grateful that God gave me this chance to celebrate a great day with the church, His people.

Finally, I was able to slowly and excruciatingly finish writing the church history; put up a very simple but wonderful church heritage exhibits, the church bulletin board competition and sing with the 100 Voice Choir for the Church Centennial Cantata. Surely there will not be another Centennial Cantata for me. Bright lights ... another century begins.

Jesus, my brightest of Lights.

"This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all." (1 John 1:5)

"Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change." (James 1:17)

They said it is in the darkest of night that we see the beauty of the stars. Jesus is my bright and morning star. Soon the sun will break out heralding a new day....morning will come.

God the source of my light...

God is good. Few months from now and I will have survived this cancer for almost five years without chemotherapy radiation or vaccination. My husband is enjoying his newfound interests: gardening, photography, tea time. We have more time together.

He is my Chinese driver whom I cannot hire and cannot fire. He goes to court with me sometimes where he is most welcome because he makes *bangka* with lunch. My staff loves and respects him.

He is slowly talking like a lawyer with me. He analyses the cases and wonders why it took so long for the lawyer to present their evidence when a single document would suffice. And I would jokingly answer, maybe he got a son that needs to go to law school.

We have more coffee time together. We enjoyed our discounts and trying to enjoy a stress-free living. All my sons had passed their licensure examinations. The youngest made it with self-review while also in medical school. He even won the Mr. Medicine Competition 2019 for Region 7. I think he is quite smart and handsome. Thank You, Lord.

The second is now in Bible school. People are very kind to support his ministry such that he is self sufficient, paying his way to Bible school and taking care of the needs of his disciples. He works part time and is always on the go for the Lord. Thank You, Lord.

Our house is like a *cheng dian tong sim*... Youth Center on Sundays and on some weekdays. The teens love to "make *tambay*" (slang for standby) in the house. Their best part is eating and playing. Our home is open anytime to them. Even if we are not around, they sit in the terrace to pass their time away or doing their homework.

I pray that one day we can build a small chapel for more young people to fellowship formally. Maybe called CGC Youth and Recreation Center.

The eldest is now in Law school after his stint as manager of SGV. He is doing part time work as school administrator helping our school in PCGS as well as his *Koko Wanda*. He was supposed

to represent their school in an international competition but he opted to help the school. Thank You, Lord!

This year the Supreme Court increased my salary to two grades higher... Thank You, Lord.

We do not have much but we have so much love to give. My husband who got the biggest heart is quiet happy with his small business as he calls it. Quiet, I mean literally quiet. And his silent sigh is just as deafening.

I am slowly decluttering, hoping to do a death cleaning, organizing my documents in case the plane leaves with me. Not much buying but more of letting go and more Netflix time and prayer time. Netflix time is when I doze off. Watching usually the beginning and waking up at the ending.

Since I love my things, it's difficult to let go. Maybe because I do not have much while growing up. One afternoon after taking my things out, folding, sorting, trying the Konmari method, I discovered that I only let go of two underwear. After listening to Marie Kondo's audio book, *Spark Joy and the Art of Decluttering* and watching all those YouTube videos... yes, two small underwear...

Everything seems to spark joy. I hope a bright idea will spark and enlighten me on how to really declutter. However. "Lord... if You are not taking me away yet, then my cabinet can surely wait another 20 years." Why not... maybe more pin lights to see through the clutter.... but things have to definitely go.

I could just imagine the day when my time will come. I will finally meet the Lord. There will be bright lights, all kinds of lights, wonderful lights. And then I would see that great gate opening, my master telling me, "well done, good and faithful servant"... then my name would be called. And when I look up... wow destination ... Heaven....Body complete.

In the meantime, clutter and all, while waiting for that call, I will watch more YouTube ideas on decluttering... watch only.....

Till next episode, *bella ciao*. 🙏

EXPLORE! EXPAND! EXPLODE!

Aileen Yap
2019 Camp Coordinator

Young people are bombarded with questions about their origin (Where did I come from?), identity (Who am I?), purpose (Why am I here?), ethics (What is true?), and destiny (Where am I going?). These are issues addressed by the main speaker, Dr. Gerardo Lisbe Jr., at the youth camp "Explore! Expand! Explode!" held in Maayo Stay Argao, last May 27-31, 2019.

With 1 Peter 3:15a, "but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you" in mind, eighty-two delegates had joined to be equipped and be edified in their faith and conviction.



In today's society, the youths are being confronted with objections about God, Jesus and the Bible more than ever. These topics were answered by Bro. Lorenzo Castro, Bro. Dereik Micah Po and

Pastor Andy Pecson in their sessions.

The campers had the chance to ask about the issues surrounding them and their faith in a panel discussion with Dr. Lisbe and Sis. Stephanie Uy. Evangelism was reiterated by Pastor Alvin John Rival and Bro. Dominic Daniel Ong. Equally important, commitment and accountability partnership was facilitated by Sis. Rose Marie Castro and the group counselors.

Heeding the Lord's commandment to His followers to go and make disciples, many counselors involved in the youth ministry took time to invest in the lives of the campers. The counselors were

all aware of the gravity of the task at hand, so commitment to prayer was given the utmost importance.

We truly desire to see Spirit-led young people, loving God and walking closely with Jesus as their Lord and Savior. So it was with great joy to see youth leaders contribute much prayers, time, and effort to the preparation and activities at camp.

They were actively involved in the praise and worship, presiding, video presentation, shirt design and handbook preparation. Many of them are regulars in the youth fellowship and are already involved in His ministry. A week later, most of them were also given the opportunity to be with much younger kids in the Daily Vacation Bible School's "Shield Squad."

Prayer done in faith is truly affirmed by the Lord. This can never be taught, only experienced. As many of us have experienced how our loving God works His way amongst His people, now our desire extends to all—to Explore the word, Expand in faith and Explode for His glory! 🙌





生命更新的生活

謝國智牧師

耶

穌說：「我來了，是要叫人得生命，並且得的更豐盛。」（約10:10b）但是基督徒屬靈的生命要增長豐盛，不是一兩年就可以得著的，而是要腳踏實地、埋頭苦幹，持久地與主建立親密的關係才能得著的。

保羅在羅馬書第十二章第一至二節提到生命更新三部曲：⊖身體獻上當作活祭；⊖不要效法這個世界；⊖要心意更新而變化。我們把自己的生命獻給主為活祭是把我們的主權交給主。

從此以後，讓主掌權我們的生命，絕不讓屬世的習俗來控制我們，而是要心、靈一致地更新變化，活出更像耶穌的樣式來。

生命更新需要一生的追求，一生與主耶穌基督一同走天路歷程，不拘是『個人』，也是『全體』的追求。

我們生命更新的生活，需要遵從『更新的追求方式』。使徒彼得就是我們生命更新的最佳楷模。

⊖生命更新的根基

使徒彼得在彼得後書第一章四節有提到神賜給我們的應許：「因此，祂已將又寶貴又極大的應許賜給我們，叫我們既脫離世上從情慾來的敗壞，就得與神的性情有分。」（彼後1:4）

祂寶貴又極大的應許是：(A)我們會脫離世上從情慾來的敗壞（1:4a）；(B)我們會得與神的性情有分（1:4b）。

我們相信和接受了祂的應許，已經是與神的性情有分，又脫離了世上從情慾來的敗壞。如此，我們的生命便開始更新了

⊖生命更新的模範

我們有了神的性情，應該心意更新不斷的改變，必須有可效法的人做模範以及有亙古不變的經文，讓我們有確鑿的依據學習怎樣像耶穌的樣式。

彼得後書第一章第三節有提到這事情「神的大能已將一切關乎生命和虔敬的事賜給我們，皆因我們認識那用自己榮耀和美德召我們的主。」

神藉著祂的大能賜給我們祂的兒子耶穌以及聖經。提摩太後書三章十六節說：「聖經都是神所默示的（或作：凡神所默示的聖經），於教訓、督責、使人歸正、教導人學義都是有益的。」神藉著祂所默示的六十六卷真實的、寶貴的書賜給我們一切關乎生命和虔敬的事。這是世上獨一無二屬靈生命的造就與操練的書 - 聖經，從中讓我們知道要怎樣更像耶穌的樣式。

我們也要深入的認識那位『用自己榮耀和美德召我們的主。』要更深的認識主需要長時間的屬靈追求。這就是我們應該要經過的『生命更新的過程。』

⊖生命更新的過程

彼得在彼得後書第一章五節至七節有提到生命更新的過程：「正因這緣故，你們要分外地殷勤；有了信心，又要加上德行；有了德行，又要加上知識；有了知識，又要加上節制；有了節制，又要加上忍耐；有了忍耐，又要加上虔敬；有了虔敬，又要加上愛弟兄的心；有了愛弟兄的心，又要加上愛眾人的心。」

彼得提到生命更新的過程曾說過：『正因這緣故』，意思是既然神已經賜給我們生命更新的根基及模範，我們要做的兩件事：就是『分外地殷勤』以及『加上』，才可以達到生命的更新。

我們要『分外地殷勤』 - 其意思是『執行』，『祂在旁邊帶領輔助我們』。一個基督徒能靠著聖靈賜下的力量，使他能『脫離世上從情慾來的敗壞』，他就能『加上』信心應有的七種美德。因此，我們要勤於培養自己七種靈命的特質。

我們要『加上』或補足 - 『加上』希臘文是【epichoregesate】，英文是『合唱』，『演唱指導員』以及『演唱』的意思。

在古希臘國家組成合唱團，它的指揮員【chorigys】須付出合唱團豐足的費用。後來便演變，引用到那位豐富供應別人需要的人。

因此，我們『生命更新』的過程需要每一種屬靈美德，並要『加上』在我們的『信心』。

『信心』是倚靠主耶穌作我們的救主，使我們成為神屬靈家庭的成員。它也是七種屬靈美德的根基。

七件屬靈美德有：

⊖ 德行或良善：其意思是『高尚的道德』。

⊖ 知識：不是從理智得著的，而是藉著聖靈集中於上帝的話而得著的屬靈知識。

⊖ 節制：其意思是一個人能控制自己的情慾。

Ⓢ 忍耐：指一個人在逆境時不搖動，能恆久忍耐，不妥協或投降。

Ⓢ 虔敬：指虔誠，尊敬。人對神要敬虔度日。

Ⓢ 愛弟兄的心：一種誠懇實際關心他人的心。

Ⓢ 愛眾人的心：是渴慕別人會得著最好的。這是種愛神愛人甚至向罪人表達出來的愛心。

④生命更新的結果

使徒彼得論說『生命更新』的根基，模範以及過程以後，他就列出生命更新的後果：假如我們有『分外殷勤』以及有『信心』後，逐日不斷地『加上』七種屬靈美德，我們就「充充足足的有這幾樣」（1:8）就有下列四樣的結果：

⊖ 多結果子：「就必使你們在認識我們的主耶穌基督上不至於間懶不結果子了。」（v.8）

⊖ 記得主恩：「人若沒有這幾樣，就是眼瞎，只看見近處的，忘了他舊日的罪已經得了潔淨。」（v.9）

⊖ 靠主站穩：「使你們所蒙的恩召和揀選堅定不移。你們若行這幾樣，就永不失腳。」（v.10）

Ⓢ 豐富入天國：「這樣，必叫你們豐豐富富的得以進入我們主 - 救主耶穌基督永遠的國。」（v.11）

生命更新的生活應在日常生活中體現出來。我們必須要有真正的根基 - 神的應許以及賞賜，祂賜給聖經以及主耶穌為模範。因此，我們要樂意地，矢志不渝地經歷生命更新的過程。

我們的信心要分外地殷勤並加上德行、知識、忍耐、虔敬，愛弟兄的心，愛眾人的心。我們應充充足足地擁有七種屬靈的美德。如此，我們將成為多結果子，記得主恩、靠主站穩、靈命豐富，滿有基督樣式神的兒女。✎

DVBS 2019

Ann Marie Su



SHIELD SQUAD

SECURE IN GOD'S PROTECTION

God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. Psalm 46:1



It's always been a joy, actually a thrill to plan and organize for a Vacation Bible School. So many things to prepare and yet you couldn't really tell how many will be joining. For the past years, planning was done as early as January especially the appointment of the VBS Director. But this year was quite different, rather unique, because instead of having one, there were four people in charge. So, early this year, BSN Helen, Elma, Doren and I met up for the initial meeting wherein we divided all the possible work to be done in the preparation for this year's VBS. The theme chosen was SHIELD SQUAD – Secure in God's Protection. Our theme verse was in Psalm 46:1—The Lord is my refuge and strength, an ever present help in times of need. It was set to be held in the CGC compound on June 17-22, 2019.

And so the work began. Doren took charge of all the printing work. Elma contacted those who would be helping including

the ERUF. BSN Helen took charge of the materials, requested for the budget, daily devotion and logistics. I took care of the registration and other secretarial work, including the t-shirts and give-aways. With this new set-up, I felt more relaxed because I know people who are able and competent are doing the other things. I do not have to be so tight and stressed to get everything done. Somehow, the Lord taught me lessons like work delegation, trust, teamwork, accountability, patience and so on. Finally, we were just a month away. The teaching staff and assistants were complete. We invited the



Po Brothers to do the special topic sharing, too. The Sisters' Fellowship, as usual, sponsored the snacks for the whole week. Just when we did not know how to decorate the stage, Cheryl came in with her brilliant idea and so that was it. On the first day, we had Flee From The Fire based on the story of Sodom and Gomorrah. Children were taught that obedience to God's instructions guarantee His protection. On the second day, it was Rise Above the Flood based on the Story of Noah. Here, we let the children see that God's warnings are always meant to keep us safe.



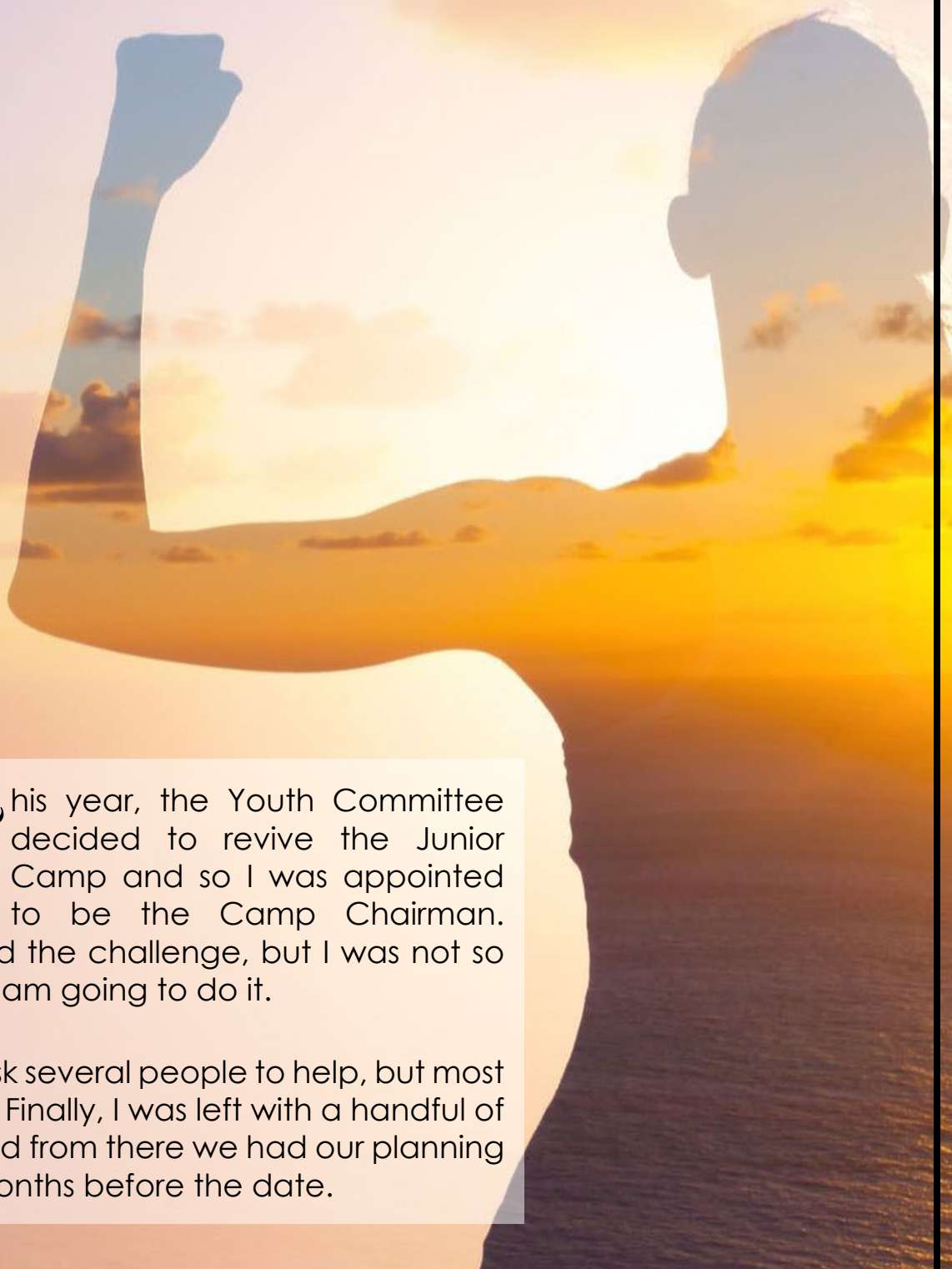
On the third day, we had Stand Strong Amidst the Storm based on the Wise and Foolish Builders. Students realized that when our lives are founded in the Word of God, we can withstand anything. On the fourth day, it was Survive the Earthquake based on the Story of Paul and Silas in Prison. Children were reminded that God is always with us and will protect us even in bad times. On the fifth day, we had Face the Final Disaster based on the story of the Dying Thief on the Cross. Here, the Gospel was emphasized. Children also learned that only Jesus can defeat death and give us eternal life.

On the sixth and final day, we had our practice for the Sunday presentation. We also had fifteen ERUF volunteers who came to have a mini seminar workshop for all the children according to their age levels. They enjoyed and learned a lot as they learned firsthand fire, flood and earthquake drills, including some first aid tips. To top it all, we gave each kid a simple emergency kit loot bag. It was a whole week of fun and learning with all the bible lessons, songs, memory verses, arts and crafts. Teachers, assistants and students alike all had a great fill of God's Word – assuring us again and again that all is safe in God's hands. 🙏



OVERCOMER

Ann Marie Su



*T*his year, the Youth Committee decided to revive the Junior Camp and so I was appointed to be the Camp Chairman. I accepted the challenge, but I was not so sure how I am going to do it.

I tried to ask several people to help, but most could not. Finally, I was left with a handful of people and from there we had our planning just two months before the date.

Indeed God has prepared the material for this year's theme. Last year, when we had our VBS, I saw a set of bible correspondence materials for kids and I thought it would be good for camp lessons. And this year, when we had set it on May 15-18, 2019, I did not look elsewhere anymore but chose the theme I AM AN OVERCOMER - based on the material I found a year earlier.

The problem now is who will be the speaker. But then, no worries! I was sure the Lord will also provide. True enough, when I approached Gina chi, she kind of declined because she was then busy with her Comprehensive Report as she was finishing her Masteral studies. Oh ok, I thought I will leave that up to the Lord. One day, she approached me and said maybe she could make it after all. Whew! I knew it! He sure did prepare the speaker for the kids. That is why all along I was not worried a bit.

I asked Andy Hia to make the 3-day devotionals and without hesitation he said YES! It was rather easy cause all he needed to do was to coordinate with his wife regarding the topics. He finished it and gave it to me right before he left for Manila.

Songs were chosen and the handbook was being prepared. Jefh helped in laying it out and oh by the way, I did learn something new while watching him do it.

For the counselors, God has touched the hearts of two young people who accepted the invitation with willingness. Two mommies also committed to help. But I had to fill in when they are not around. And two

young professionals also sacrificed their time to be with their groups all the way. Since we had twenty-nine campers, they easily found their groupings among the six counselors.

We just had a few staff but they really worked hard even doing multi-tasking at times. They were all so dedicated and at the same time really took time to share themselves with the kids—playing, sleeping and eating with them. Some had to help the small ones take a bath. Sometimes, it was so tiring but then again, there is that inner sense of joy and fulfilment when you have served others.

On Day 1, the children arrived at 8:30 AM. We brought them to their rooms—all the girls stayed in the Assembly Hall while the boys were divided according to their counseling groups and roomed in at the 3rd floor rooms. Then, Ahia Jefh and Achi Danica led the Acquaintance and the Teambuilding games to help break the ice among the children as they were from Grades 1 to 6. The message was about JESUS IS MY GREAT CREATOR AND MY GREAT SAVIOR so I can be an Overcomer.





In the midst of those heavy lessons, we had light workshop in the afternoons. On the first day we had Siansi Doren teaching us how to dance. We mastered the dance steps for the song "Shackles" and presented it on Sunday. Then Ahia Jethro also came to teach us some theatre or acting tips. And on the third day, Achi Darynne and Achi Jamie taught us how to make desserts like Mango Float and NO-cook munchkins. Yum yum yum!

On Day 2, we talked about I AM FORGIVEN AND I AM LOVED. Siansi Gina explained very clearly about sin and God's forgiveness. The story of the Prodigal Son made a great illustration for this lesson. And because we have been forgiven by God, we can be an Overcomer. The children were asked to write down their sins on yellow balloons which were later released to God. Another message was about THE NEW LIFE IN CHRIST. Just like the stages of a Butterfly, we go through changes to become more beautiful for the Lord. If we are in Christ, we become a new person – we should be an Overcomer.

On Day 3, the message was MY GIFT TO GOD. Actually, our gift to God is our very self. What we do with our life is our gift to Him. We must do the things that pleases Him. Just like young King Josiah who started well in serving God and ended well loving God, so we too can be an Overcomer. That night, we had our campfire in the church parking area and each of the campers shared their testimony. It was so heartwarming. Then they had barbequed hotdogs and marshmallows.

Lunch was always served at 12:00 PM, dinner at 6:00 PM, and breakfast at 7:00 AM. Each meal included rice, soup, veggies and meat entrées, and dessert. Also, snacks were served in between. Thank God for Achi Darynne and Ache Jamie who volunteered to be in charge of the food. They sure did a great job!

There was a time to nap till 2:30 PM. For those who did not want to sleep, they could play in the game room. After the workshops, they had free time and counseling time for others.

It was really a wonderful time to spend with the children, times when we could just be as natural and open to them. It was a great bonding time. Most especially, the direct and firsthand teaching moments as we had to learn to live together the whole four days and three nights.

I am just so thankful to the Lord for providing everything.

Again, it's affirmed that GOD'S WORK DONE IN GOD'S WAY WILL NEVER LACK GOD'S SUPPLY!

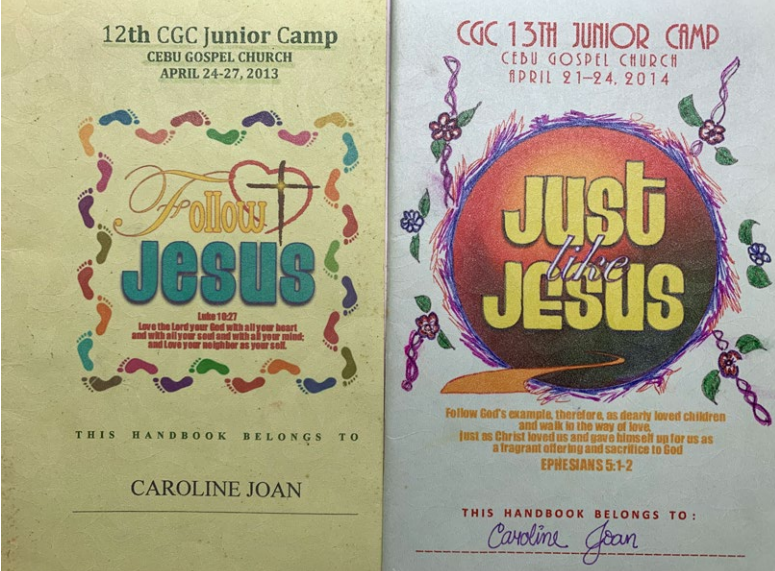
Amen and to God be all the Glory!! 🙌



SACRIFICE AND BLESSING

Caroline Joan P. Tan

*T*he title shows the two words that describe my experience in this year's four-day, three-night Junior Camp. Being brought to Cebu Gospel Church before even turning a year old, I have been nurtured in our church for eighteen years now. Along this journey, I have joined numerous activities and fellowships such as Christian Youth Fellowship (CYF) and THRIVE. And till now, Junior Cap remains to be one of the most memorable ones. I was blessed to be able to participate in two consecutive summer camps in 2013 and 2014. This was where I got to sleep in the Assembly Hall on the second floor, walked across the scary hall to reach the female bathroom, took a shower with a basin filled with cold water, ate the colorful vegetables our atchies prepared, and pondered hard on my relationship with Jesus Christ.



This was five to six years ago and truth be told, nothing except the people involved have changed. I now served as a siansi (teacher) and had five first and second graders under my umbrella: Shaiya, Chloe, Arelli, Franchesca, and Keanna. I also led the Singspiration team who also served as ahias and atchis during the camp.

Playing these two roles before, during, and even after the camp was not as simple as some may deem it to be. Why? Because it required a part of, if not my whole self, to be offered to these children.

We, the staff, warmed up our bodies by going and sleeping in church a day before the camp actually started. We used this time to do last-minute preparations, finalize our songs for the next day's Singspiration, and adjust to our "home" for the next few days.

On the morning of May 15, we welcomed twenty-eight campers with varied ages from seven to twelve to Junior Camp 2019: "I am an Overcomer" filled with fun team-building games, dance, theatre and baking workshops, morning devotions, and much more.

As a counselor, it took sacrifice to put the campers' needs and even wants before my own. I remember yearning for a few minutes of sleep during Nap Time, but these children wanted to play and cuddle. I also remember how they loved to use my set of colorful scented pens that ended up with missing covers or with empty ink tubes.

I recall having to make sure that all of them got to take their baths, change into new clothes, and dry their dripping wet hair before patiently staying in the dining area to encourage a few campers to eat their lumpia and vegetables and drink their delicious corn soup when everyone else had finished.





I likewise remember having to consciously give each of my counselees attention and replying to all their funny statements and questions while squeezing in practice time with

the band. We, the staff, woke up the earliest and slept the latest.

There was a time during the camp when my patience and pride were tested. I was tasked to calm everybody down to pray for the lunch. However, no matter how I tried to get their attention, many did not listen and instead, kept talking.

In addition, one camper ran towards the dining table without noticing the projector wires around him and as he moved, his foot entangled with my relatively new laptop. Down it fell, hard on the floor.



My heart slowly broke as I silently distanced myself from the crowd to cry out to God. It was painful, but at the end of the day, I learned that sacrifice is indeed part of our service to the Lord.

Looking back, I can now say that the time I spent with the campers was actually a blessing. Having had the opportunity to teach and help these younger ones grow made me focus on Who I was doing all these for and when obstacles made itself known, my faith was tested and then strengthened. The Lord was shaping my heart for Him alone.

Due to this camp, I was also able to establish relationships not only with my fellow youth but also with the children as well. I hope to see them grow in the Lord, lead the next generation's Junior Camp, and one day, realize that whatever we sacrifice for Jesus will always turn out to be a blessing. 🙏



The background of the page is a photograph of several green bamboo stalks standing in water. The water is calm, reflecting the green of the bamboo. The background is a soft, out-of-focus green with circular bokeh light effects. The word 'THRIVE' is written in a dark blue, serif font. The letter 'V' is stylized, with a brown stem and two green leaves growing from it.

THRIVE

THRIVE

COUNTERING THE EVER-PRESENT DANGER

Dereik Po

If one were to look at our church today, one would see numerous people of different age groups. However, the most prevalent age group is not the teenagers or young adults, but the elderly.

The youth of CGC had long been gone over the years. Brimming with life during its early days, CGC is now a husk of its former glory. Our national hero, Jose Rizal had once said that the youth is the future of the nation. If those words were true in a church setting, then CGC has very little to look forward to.

There is this great chasm between the young and elderly. Hardly can you see any active youth in our church nowadays unlike those of yesteryears. This was not the fault of a single person but probably the accumulation of complacency and lack of love for the youth. There were some who probably had the right idea to ensure the future of CGC but there were some who were quick to judge and mishandled it.

And so we still have Sunday school for the young kids, but by the time they reach their teenage years to college level, their population will drastically dwindle until only a handful will remain.

In a survey within the churches of America, they found that most youth leave the church when they reach 25 years old. Some would say because they grew up and had careers of their own, or even perhaps got married, but could these really be valid reasons to leave God behind?

One survey had asked these youths why they would ever consider leaving their faith and most would answer because they were taught the "truth" in their universities. What truth? As we know, college is a spiritually-hostile environment for Christians. Even those who come from Christian schools like PCGS in their primary and secondary levels are not immune to this negative atmosphere.

They can just as easily be shot down by the lures of the world, the dazzling promises of fame and success, lust for wealth, call of power, subtle and direct persecutions of the peers and the like. There are people who seek their downfall, teachers who do not respect their faith and temptations that can shake their spiritual foundation.

Most of our young people are not taught the dangers they will face, much less are they given the support to overcome these barrage of adversities. So much so, they eventually prefer living for a lie a.k.a. "truth" in the university than living for God.

As such, THRIVE was established to counter this ever-present danger. THRIVE is a community of Christian college believers who not only share the burden of facing university life, but who are taught to become ministers, missionaries and leaders in their respective career choices. From the lives of the counsellors known as "Guides", they are taught the dangers of temptation, the beauty of the Word of God and the happiness of living a righteous life for the Lord.

THRIVE ensures that when they leave high school, they have a place they can have fellowship with the right people who in turn can offer them Godly advice. THRIVE gives these youth a place to call home, a place they can find rest and laughter, which it is never short of.

THRIVE is a place where college students find out that God is not only for the super young or super old. To serve and love God is the reason why they live, the reason why they achieve excellence and the reason why they should stay in church.



THRIVE — a college-level CYF meets every Saturday from 5:30 PM - 8:30 PM at CGC 2nd Floor Assembly Hall



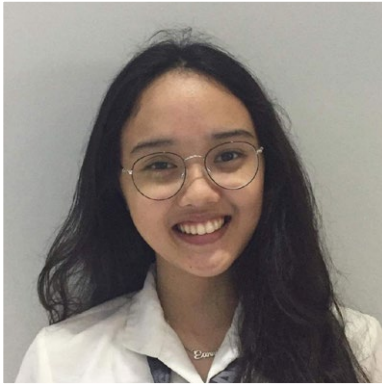
THRIVE started its first meeting last March 16, 2019

Despite the difficulties of the lives they go through, they don't just survive but thrive and prosper in God's level of standard.

Psalms 1:1-3, "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way

of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper." 🙏

TESTIMONIES



Eanna Cañada

They say the best years of being a student is during high school because after high school, true challenges come. More difficult projects, laborious assignments, different people and pop-up quizzes are what we regularly face now. This is also the crucial part of being a Christian because we meet different people with different values which is why we need to truly establish our foundation in God's Word.

THRIVE, a collegiate level fellowship, is an avenue where we learn God's Word and meet up with fellow Christians in the Senior High and University level. We talk about our own current experiences while mature Christians who are our counsellors, called the "Guides," share to us their own battles, victories and lessons they themselves experienced.

We grow deeper in the Lord together and develop our spiritual understanding through enhanced study on Bible verses, seeing deeper meanings and getting through complex topics together. If ever one of us has a question, we just ask the Guides what the correct viewpoint about this is. It is also one way to relieve stress from our studies and for the Guides from their work. We play games, watch a movie, listen to some advices from the Guides and have topics that we, senior high and college students can relate to. What a great fellowship! 🙌



I always enjoy attending THRIVE. Every Saturday, we gather together to have fellowship with one another, to worship the Lord, and most of all, to have many activities ranging from Bible study and trivia, to fun and educational career talks with different speakers and even board games and group dynamics. In short, it is fun and interactive, nourishing our minds and hearts every session that makes us anticipate the upcoming meetings.



Wayne Dayata, 18
PCGS Senior High Student

The best and unique feature in this Thrive group is that I get to learn deeper facts and analyses of God's word as well as the proper ways in reading the Bible. These will altogether effectively remind and guide me as I prepare for my college life, something that will be totally different from high school. Also, as I build intimate relationships with other people, I easily manage to open myself up and share as well as listen to a lot of insights in tackling various issues that most college students face. Moreover, listening to the different testimonies, experiences and ultimate realizations of the Ahas and Atchis motivates me by giving me a clearer picture of what the Lord desires in my life when the college and work days come.

As a member of this growing family, I strongly recommend you students to join us as we spread the love of God and celebrate His goodness together. At the same time, we help sharpen one another's minds to stay Godly and share some practical ways in living a fruitful college life. Come join us as we assure you that this will be a truly life-changing experience and definitely worth coming for! 🙌

生命發光



LET YOUR LIFE SHINE
IN MISSIONS

THE STORY OF NAGA: TURNING TRAGEDY INTO OPPORTUNITY

Christina Chia



L

ast September 20, 2018, a landslide caused by heavy rainfall and quarrying operations in Naga, Cebu buried the homes of 2,087 families. Thousands of people were devastated and displaced by the disaster. They became homeless, helpless, hopeless and living in darkness.



In the light of Jesus' love, the Mission Committee called for immediate action to organize a relief operation to reach out to the families in need. Volunteers were gathered to pack relief goods on September 30 and mission trips were planned together with Youth With A Mission (YWAM) and Gideons International on 2nd and 4th of October 2018.

God moved me to go out of my comfort zone. I incidentally found myself helping with the packing of relief goods and I subsequently committed myself

to the mission trips to Naga. We prepared one water jug per family containing laundry soap, shampoo, toothbrush and toothpaste, canned goods and gospel tracts.

About thirty of us went on each day, divided into three vans in a convoy with three cargo trucks for the relief goods. We visited six evacuation centers and distributed these goods to 1,300 families.

We went from shelter to shelter to meet the landslide victims. While we distributed relief goods, YWAM was there to sing and dance and share the good news of Jesus to the people. We talked to some of them and distributed Bibles from the Gideons to each hand that reached out to us.

That was my first time to visit landslide victims. When we arrived at each shelter, I saw poor and grieving people. When we spent time to talk with them and tell them about Jesus, whether it was from singing, acting short plays or short sermons, the people were very responsive. They started to cheer up.





Jesus' stories and God's words were like medicine to their conditions, just as what it says in Proverbs 4:22, "For they (God's words) are life to those who find them, and health to all their flesh." And in Proverbs 17:22, "A cheerful heart is a good medicine, but a crushed spirit dries up the bones."

When the pastor asked, "Do you want to accept Jesus as your Savior and Lord?" Many raised their hands and replied, "Yes!" I could not contain my tears at that moment. I could feel how much these people needed the Lord. God's presence filled the shelter. They needed food and water for their

bodies, but they needed God to fill the emptiness in their hearts and save their souls from their sins.

I thought I was there to help. Instead, I received so much joy in helping others. I was touched by the response of the people to the Gospel. I witnessed pure hearts turning to God and smiling faces of adults and children as they held the Bible in their hands and started reading it.

I know the lives of these people will never be the same again. I have kept them in my prayers that




they will continue to seek God as they rebuild their lives. When they embrace God, they will have the assurance that no matter what they face in the future, they are being loved. They can have hope; they have light for their path, and they have a safe home in God's Kingdom.

What was a horrendous tragedy became a gateway of opportunity for us to share the gospel and more importantly, for those victims to get to know the grace and love of our Lord Jesus. 🙏



A LITTLE SET OF SLIPPERS

Manuel Chan



On Saturday, the 12th of October, 2019, I travelled with James Tan, Darwin Ong and Pastor Zyda to the municipality of Tabogon, which is about 90 kms from Cebu City, to participate in the children's feeding program supported by our church.

We began our trip early at 5:30 in the morning & arrived there at 9 AM. It was a long yet pleasant drive with jokes & conversation. It is always nice to see new places, visit the less fortunate churches that we are supporting, and experience their simple life and hospitality.

When we arrived there, we were amazed to see the children ready for their Bible stories. Most of them are from poor families yet they came to the church well prepared. They were clean, wore proper clothes, and waited quietly for their activity to start. Of course, they were also quite shy. However, their attitude changed once we started.

First, we were introduced to them. They received us warmly with resounding clapping of hands. About eighty children came to church. They were respectful & very attentive to what their pastor and teachers had to say. They participated eagerly in their activities.

What amazed us more was the story telling done by the young teachers in different age groups. These new teachers are the product of the missionaries' work. They themselves are still very young, merely 14-15 years old and yet, they were very good at it.

They know how to manage the younger children ages 4-12, attract their attention to their stories and

get them to participate. When offered a simple treat such as candies for the question & answer portion, the children became very enthusiastic.

We also noticed that many of the children had worn out slippers. A few even came barefooted. But we never heard them complain or being made fun of. I think this is not uncommon to the children in the poor communities.

Their faces lit up when we told them that we brought some gifts for them. We asked their leaders to group them according to their age. They readily complied. We even heard the older ones asking the young children their age and showed them which group to join. Wow! So young & they have already learned to care for each other!

What better gift to give to them, than the brand-new slippers we brought with us. Again, they lined up & waited patiently for their turn to receive their slippers.



Manuel Chan fitting the children, ensuring that each child gets the right size of slippers

We also witnessed the children's orderliness during feeding time. They lined up according to their age group for their portion of chocolate champurrado, boiled egg, biscuits & some treats.

In short, it was a heartwarming experience for everyone. The joy & gratitude manifested on their faces were very infectious. It brought much joy to us, too. Indeed, there is joy in sharing.



**With the pastoral staff and lay youth workers
in front of their small church**

We were saddened, however, when the time had come for us to leave in the afternoon. We needed to drive several hours back to the city. It was a tiring day, but nevertheless a very memorable and rewarding one. Our church had successfully reached out to eighty young but very promising children that day.

This was just the beginning. We saw with our eyes how well our supported missionaries and church workers are doing in bringing these young people to know our God.



**Children so happy showing
their new sets of slippers**

They are effective & enthusiastic in spreading Christianity to them. Their church is growing. The children are bringing not only other new kids to their church, but also their parents. With the little support from us, they have grown in number and in the knowledge and grace of our Lord Jesus.

May the small set of slippers be useful for their feet inasmuch as the word of God shared be useful in their walk with the Lord. As the psalmist wrote in Psalm 119:105, "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light to my path." 🕯️



**Young teachers are very adept at sharing the Bible
stories to their younger brothers and sisters,
letting them memorize one Bible verse for the day**



**Pastor Lester enthusiastically led the
young kids to a Praise and Worship session**

MY INSPIRING JOURNEY

Perkin Yap

*A*s one of the messengers of our beloved Cebu Gospel Church's White Gift Drive 2018, I was blessed with a fulfilling experience both emotionally and spiritually. Last December 2018, I volunteered to deliver the packages to one of our church supported missionaries, Pastor Jimmy Timogtimog of New Lourdes, Cortes, Bohol.





On the way to his location coming from Tagbilaran Port, I felt this God-given peace as well as excitement knowing that we will be able to share the Lord's blessings to the less fortunate. Indeed, as the Lord's Word says in 2Corinthians 9:7, "Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver."

I was also blessed with the time to talk with Pastor Jimmy on his growing church ministry in his location. He also shared his experience with one of his neighbors, a Roman Catholic nun who happens to be in the same area with a bigger church building. There used to be a tense atmosphere between the two churches, but the barrier was broken when Pastor Timogtimog was able to fix the broken motorcycle of the nun. Because of the love and kindness extended, they are now friends.

With the thrust of the Mission Committee, we are now more involved in our Lord's Mission. We do not just send out financial support but we go out of our comfort zones and do personal visitations to the mission sites. We get the feel of what it is on the field. We will know firsthand how the lives of the missionaries are and likewise, the lives of the people we are reaching out to. This way, we can better assess how we can help them more effectively.

I have come to realize that my service to the Lord has become stagnant nowadays by only serving within the church. I missed this feeling of abundant joy and fulfillment. Our service should never be limited within the four walls of our church but we also



have to contribute to our community, just as what we did in CYF years back.

After our conversation with Pastor Timogtimog, I left a prayer of blessing and thanksgiving and went back my way. Fast forward to this year's Mission month, I got to talk to Pastor Jimmy again and clearly, the Lord's faithfulness and providence continued to shine down on him.

From what I saw last December, his church building was merely a skeletal structure, i.e., a roof with four pillars and a mini-stage. But now, the walls have been built up and the place installed with air conditioning. The Lord's work has continued to prove, time and time again, that He is our One True Living God and His Kingdom continues to expand in Him and through Him.

As we continue to form this bond of brotherhood and family with our missionaries, I share this verse for all to ponder: 1Peter 4:10, "Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms." Praise the Lord. 🙌



WARMING UP FOR THE LORD!

Carl Te

5 AM!! The alarm in my cellphone rang. Yes, it's 5 AM and it's time to exercise. I had a wonderful privilege this year as I was tasked to lead the early morning exercises for the missionaries during our church's mission week entitled, "LET YOUR LIFE SHINE". This is a five-day affair where we invited nine of our missionaries from all around the Visayas.

It was supposed to be held at Abellana National High School oval. But due to the haze warning from the raging Indonesian fire, the air was very unhealthy to jog outdoor with all those minute particles hovering over us in the cool morning. So we decided to warm up indoors, and what better and more convenient place to do it than in our church's auditorium?



I pray that God will always give them strength, patience and wisdom so that they may overcome whatever challenges that are placed in front of them.

By putting emphasis on spiritual nourishment as well as on the training of the physical body, we can have the necessary balance in our lives, we can strengthen our health and do more to live for the Lord.

Let me encourage you with the verse found in 1 Cor. 9:24-27 where the apostle Paul encouraged us to be focused in our lives,

“Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one receives the prize? So run that you may obtain it.

Every athlete exercises self-control in all things. They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we are imperishable. So I do not run aimlessly; I do not box as one beating the air. But I discipline my body and keep it under control, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified.” 🏆

My experiences with the missionaries were quite fun. Even as early as 5 AM, they were all ready and so enthusiastic. I was glad to see that each one of them was so eager to participate in the activity. I was able to teach them a thing or two on what they could do at home with no equipment needed.

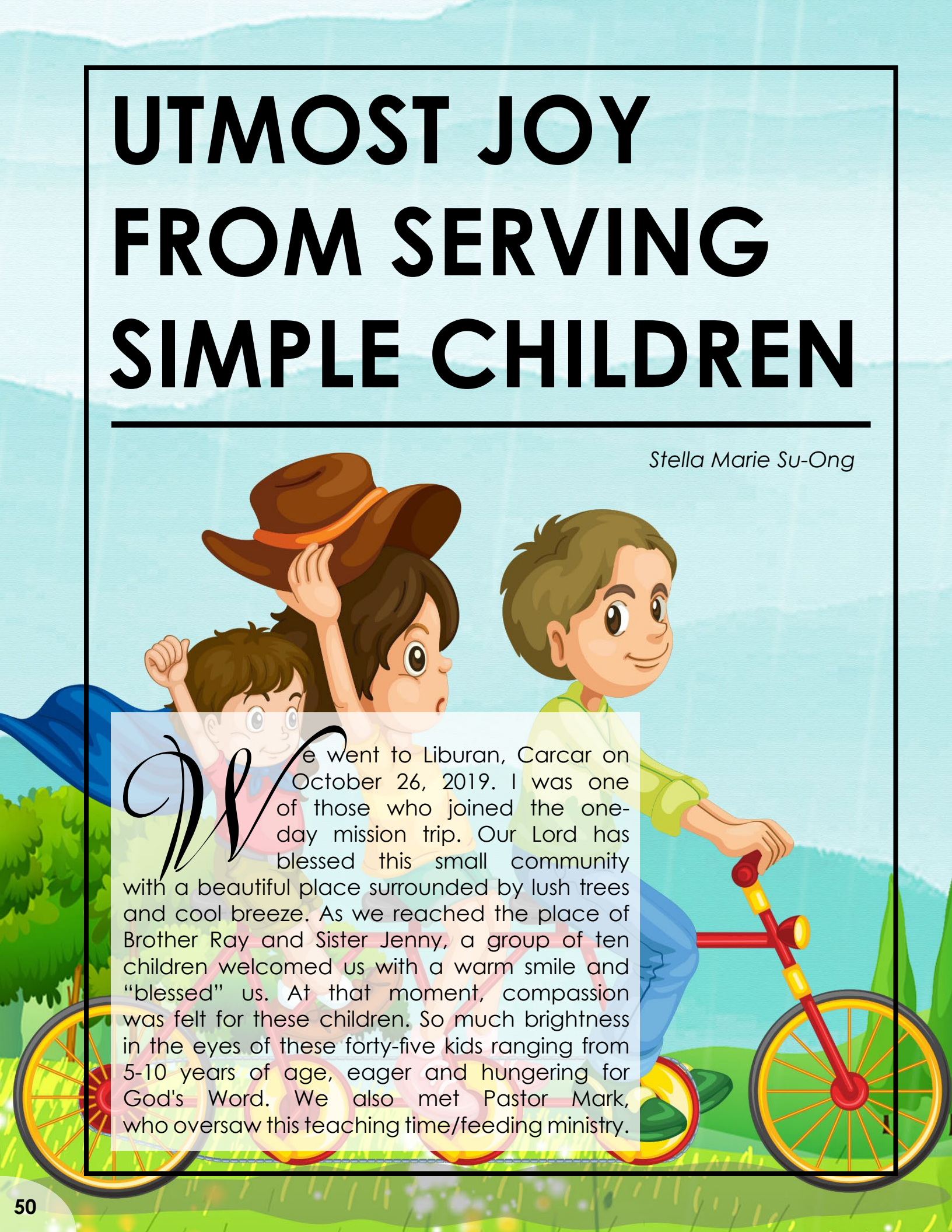
We did lunges, jumping jacks, high knees, mountain climbing and even push-ups!! Given their busy schedules and various responsibilities, they still do need to exercise to keep themselves healthy to serve the Lord's ministry.

Overall, I felt so blessed to be more involved in this year's mission week. Listening to their stories and experiences out in the field has opened my eyes to the difficulties they face each day in their line of work and the victories they won by the grace of God.



UTMOST JOY FROM SERVING SIMPLE CHILDREN

Stella Marie Su-Ong



We went to Liburan, Carcar on October 26, 2019. I was one of those who joined the one-day mission trip. Our Lord has blessed this small community with a beautiful place surrounded by lush trees and cool breeze. As we reached the place of Brother Ray and Sister Jenny, a group of ten children welcomed us with a warm smile and “blessed” us. At that moment, compassion was felt for these children. So much brightness in the eyes of these forty-five kids ranging from 5-10 years of age, eager and hungering for God's Word. We also met Pastor Mark, who oversaw this teaching time/feeding ministry.

The program started with the children singing praise songs led by our youth, Eanna Cañada, Emma Cañada and Danika Yankee with child-like enthusiasm. After singing, they were divided into groups, one under Brother Ray and the other under Sister Jenny.

The lesson of the day was taken from the story of Zacchaeus under their main theme, "GOD CAN CHANGE ME". I seldom hear this topic in children's teaching which I believe is a powerful statement that all children should know, that indeed, God can change each one of us.

After their lesson, they had hand crafts. We, the team, composed of my sister Ann Marie, Pastor Zyda Betillones, Elma Uy, my husband Darwin Ong, Manuel Chan and James Cho encouraged each other to participate with the children, helping them with their craft activities, cutting, folding and pasting.



Beautiful crafts made by the children on the ground

One thing I learned from these activities was in our immersion with the children. When we spend time with them, the kids will feel they are valued and loved. And that indeed we, including the little ones, are all precious in God's eyes.

We can in a way practice the compas-sion of Jesus,

wherein He admonished His disciples who initially shooed the children away in one of the most well-known accounts of Jesus loving the little children found in Mark 10:13–14, 16:

"People were bringing little children to Jesus for him to place his hands on them, but the disciples rebuked them. When Jesus saw this, he was indignant. He said to them, 'Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these.' ... And he took the children in his arms, placed his hands on them and blessed them."



We trekked up the hill until we reached the feeding site



This feeding site is regularly served every Saturday at 2 PM

I was sure some of the children were already hungry because some of them went so early to the place, very excited for the afternoon's program. So after the lessons, it's feeding time! Hot binignit was prepared for them. The children immediately lined up.

I see a need for a table where they can put the big pot used to cook the food. The big pot was just placed on the floor as they scooped out from it to give to the children. As they received their meals, all the children merely sat on the ground as well and ate. Thus, I see the need for our church to supply tables and chairs.

Being one of those who went, my heart was warmed with pity and moved to pray for the children that they too will one day come to personally know and accept Jesus Christ as

their Lord and Savior. And it is my hope that as they continue in this ministry, they can reach out to their parents as well and show them, through the changed lives of the children, that God can change their parents' lives as well.

Thus, we saw ordinary people doing great things for the Lord. We saw a simple place being turned into a place of wonderful praise and worship, learning, and sharing the grace of God. What a marvelous joy doing humble yet noble work with these simple children! Hallelujah!

May we be reminded in 1 Peter 3:8, *"Finally, all of you, be of one mind, having compassion for one another; love as brothers, be tender-hearted, be courteous."* 🙏



They had fun doing all these things with only trees as their shade

ALL ABOARD TO THE CEBU SAFARI

Engineer Anthony Poh T. Lim

*I*t's been quite some time, so I wanted to go to Cebu Safari. One day, a friend visited me in the office, telling me it's a world class park where Cebuanos can be proud of, so my desire to go there increased exponentially. More so since I'm an animal lover. Now here comes our Mission Week, where missionaries were given a free pass to visit Cebu Safari. I'm not a church supported missionary, but I was blessed to be part of the Mission Committee. So I didn't hesitate to say yes. I will definitely go with them.

We rode in three vehicles together with our mission week resource speaker, Rev. Reuel and his lovely wife Christine Tica and the rest of the missionaries namely: Pastor Joseph and Nancy Demafilis of Palawan, Pastor Joven Sajulga of Macrohon Leyte, Pastor Rosalinda Ng of Surigao, Pastor Edison and Shia Villagracia of Medellin, Pastor Jimmy and Yandy Timogtimog of Bohol, Pastor Mariano Yamas III of Tomas Oppus Leyte, Pastor Vicente and Nielito Olayvar of Sogod Leyte, Pastor Jesson and Early Joy Misso of Carcar, Pastor Randolph and Lory Bayo of Medellin, Merly Lee Yu, Ann Marie Su, James Tan, and his mom Conchita Dillon.

As we arrived early in the morning, one of the animals we encountered was similar to a donkey. The missionaries were taking pictures and petting it. It reminded me of the story of Balaam & his donkey which God allowed to speak, to warn his master Balaam that an angel with a drawn sword would strike him down if he pushed thru with his plan. The donkey we saw in the park was not talking this time though. Good for us.

We went to a deep pool type enclosure with shallow waters at the center, full of crocs. Not the rubber slipper nor the famous Lacoste shirt. But it was full of saltwater crocodiles. We got to throw raw

chicken legs to the crocs to feed them. Some crocs were really greedy, some got angry because other crocs got to the chicken legs first. A pastor cracked a joke in Bisaya, "Nga, dili ta mag binu-aya." (Let's not behave like crocs.) Everybody laughed.

We saw a big yellow "big-as-thighs" python just coiled around, sleeping but not tempting us. We mostly rode the park trams that took us from one animal attraction to another.

There were lots of animals in the park like kangaroos, zebras, tigers, lions, antelopes set nicely and freely in their replicated natural habitat. Would you know how zebras are colored by the Lord? Are they black with white stripes, or white with black stripes??

The highlight of the tour was the bird show. There were birds of prey that flew over us and back to the arms of the trainer and they were fed with meat as rewards. Mmm, steak every day!!

There were two talking yellow nape parrots with yellow color feathers on top of their heads and green color feathers on the body. They came from South America's Amazon rainforest. I'm a bird lover and am blessed to have four talking birds at home. So seeing those wonderful birds made me wish that they would one day migrate to my house.



Riding the park tram that leads you to the African savannah where animals roamed freely



Riding the park tram that leads you to the African savannah where animals roamed freely



**Pastor Reuel and Christine Tica
hike up the park trail**



**Pastor Jo of Palawan
feeds a parrot**



**Taking pictures after we
got lost for a while**

There were lots of doves flying as a flock. The dove is known to be a symbol of peace. But in the Bible, the Holy Spirit was described to be like a dove descending from heaven coming down on our Lord Jesus.

Pigeons have been used to deliver written letters with great distances. Ravens, very clever birds, were used by God to deliver food to Elijah during his escape from the evil King Ahab and Queen Jezebel.

The animals I saw in the park are more than alive to me. They brought life to the pages of the Bible. The creation of the Lord is just so marvelous from little turtles to the towering giraffes.

As the tour was ending and the sun setting, we closed the activity with a prayer by Sis. Ann Marie Su, who gave thanks to God for our safety, enjoyable fellowship together and for His wonderful and beautiful creation. Amen. 🙏



**Merly Lee Yu just a few inches away
from a live hungry tiger**



**Everybody posing for a photo op
before we left**



REACHING OUT THROUGH MEDICAL MISSIONS

James Tan

Last February 23, 2019, a group from our church went to Northview Christian Fellowship and conducted a medical and dental mission. We served 436 patients coming from the outskirts of the Talamban area. There were 200 volunteers who helped in the mission, from doctors to dentists, nurses, counsellors, ushers, crowd control and anybody who has the heart and the strength to carry chairs, water containers and boxes of medicines.

We praise God for the great harvest, as there was a multitude of souls, 229 to be exact, who accepted our Lord Jesus Christ. 🙌



Rev. Roel Tabasa

Senior Pastor
Northview Christian Fellowship

Medical missions are really evangelistic events where the poorest of the poor in the communities, those who cannot afford medical services, are invited to come to a place like a church where they can be given medical aid, dental services and be shared with the gospel.

This is not only providing them with their physical needs but more importantly, their spiritual needs. So after that medical mission, we continued our ministry by going to the homes of those who had accepted the Lord and those who had wanted to have Bible studies.

Because of this medical mission, we were able to hold several Bible studies in three communities every Saturday with a fellowship of about 50 to 60 parents.

Once a month, we have a fellowship in this church. They even wanted that we have fellowship every week, but since we still don't have the facilities and personnel to take care of that, we are just having it once a month. 🏰

A lot of people don't really know anything about healthcare. Once they have problems, they usually just shrug it off and then they only seek professional help when it's already severe or serious. So medical mission is like the first step for them to know what their problems are. 🏰



Kristyl Belaniso

Volunteer Nurse
CGC Young Pro



Sharing the Gospel

We helped in preparing the needs of the medical and counselling crew, as well as ushering the people to their respective rooms. It was a very fulfilling experience and a great opportunity for us to be a part of this activity, not only to meet the physical needs of the people but their spiritual needs as well. 🏰



Aileen May Laurente, 18

Volunteer
University of Southern Philippines



Oral Prophylaxis



Check-up

I am very grateful to know that there will be sharing of the word of God in this mission. I am thankful because with the study of the Bible, my life has changed.

Sometimes, hardships in life made me doubt and question God. Is He really there? I just try to turn a blind eye to my doubts and difficulties. Gratefully, as I share my problems to my pastor during Bible study every Saturday, the burden in my heart eases little by little. 🙏



Nida Batoon, 48

Housewife

*W*hen I heard that there will be medical mission here at NCF, I immediately attended. My husband's blood pressure was 194. He was even made to rest for 30 minutes to see if his BP would go down. Both of us also have high sugar problem. Tooth extraction or even just dental cleaning are very expensive. But here, it's just for free. All of us including my four grandchildren were able to avail of their medical and dental services. 🙏



Maxima Seno, 58

Housewife

I am truly grateful for this medical mission as it helped me a lot. It was a good coincidence that my two children were also sick at that time. One child was having asthma while the younger one was having fever.

I was able to avail of medicines and mind you, medicines are very expensive but I got them for free. So I'm just thankful to those doctors who were here with the pastor. 🙏



Hazel Morga, 32

Housewife

I f there will be another chance for me to join medical mission like this, I will definitely do it. It's a great feeling that we can help people who cannot afford to get health care. With this medical mission, they can receive the same services but without paying anything, not even one peso. 🙏



Marites Legaspi, 19

Senior High Student
Cebu Institute of Technology



Checking of Vital Signs

cebu gospel church missions

MEDICAL MISSION

february 2019



Jotting Down the Prescribed Dosages



Team from CGC



Distribution of Vitamins and Prescribed Medicines



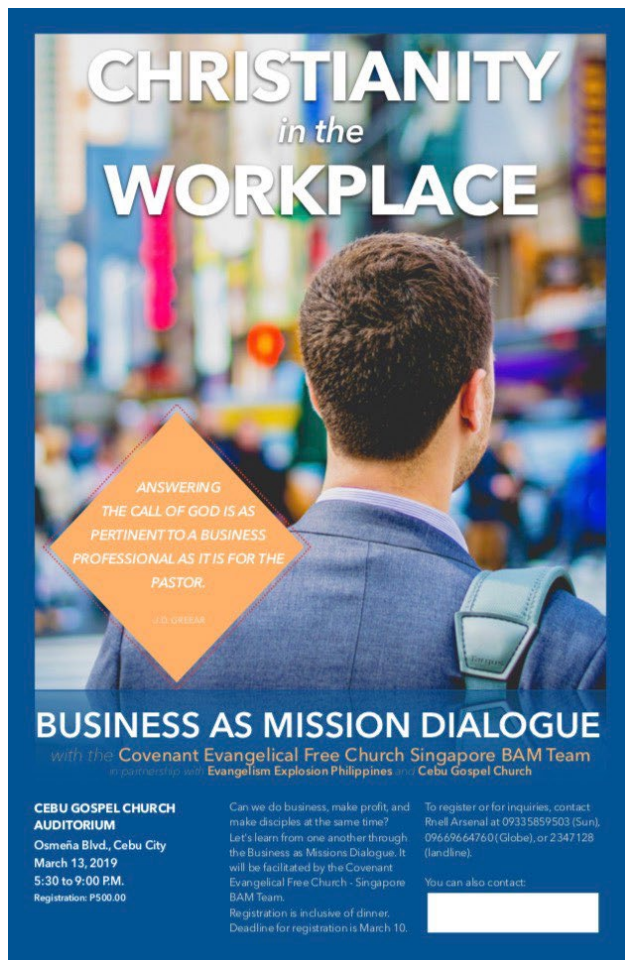
Boxes of Medication Ready to Be Distributed



Evangelism



MISSION SEMINARS



Last March 2019, we invited 120 Christian businessmen from all over Cebu's churches to attend a "Business as Missions" dialogue facilitated by the Covenant Evangelical Free Church of Singapore, who pushed for Christian businessmen to be at the forefront of world evangelization by using their individual business enterprise's resources for missional impact.



It was a marvelous sight to see Christian businessmen from different churches praying for one another.



BUSINESS AS MISSIONS or **BAM**: Although the target number of participants was only 100, praise God, it reached 120 Christian businessmen from different churches such as Bethany Christian Church, Living Word, Living Christian, Destiny Church, Second Wind Ministry, Bradford, CCF and Citichurch, to name a few.



We held a sumptuous dinner buffet, and at the same time, celebrated the soft opening of our newly-renovated auditorium.



Matthew Kok, a renowned Christian financial analyst from Singapore CEFC, spoke and rallied the businessman to use their business endeavors for the Lord's work.



About forty-five people joined the seminar "Be a Post-Disaster Responder: How Can A Christian Help His Community In Times Of Disaster" held last October 6, 2018.



These sisters enjoyed the seminar that taught them how to approach the problems of people who experienced trauma right after a disaster.



The graduates, with their hard hats, are ready to be deployed.



On October 10, 2018, a Mission Awareness Seminar was conducted which enlightened more than thirty attendees on what God has been doing in the world today in the field of world evangelism.



On October 27, 2018, it has reached its climax as the Evangelism Explosion Ministry led by Pastor Rnell Arcenal conducted the first installment of the two parts series of SHARE YOUR FAITH. Thirty-five brothers and sisters were equipped on how to share the gospel in a simple and conversational form using the five fingers of the hand.



The second part of the SHARE YOUR FAITH series involved an EE facilitator helping our members in testing practical evangelism through the practice of conversational skills.

MISSION WEEK

SEPTEMBER 18-19, 2019

THEME: LET YOUR LIFE SHINE

MISSION WEEK SPEAKER: REV. REUL TICA

Ptr. Rosaline Lim

Praise God for giving our Church another privilege to help and support missionaries from different areas in Cebu and other parts of the country. This year, we are blessed to have three new missionaries: Ptr. Randolph Bayo in Medellin, Ptr. Vicente Olayvar in Sogod Southern Leyte and Ptr. Jesson Misso in Carcar, Cebu.

Our speaker was Rev. Reul Tica. He shared on how to let your life shine in the ministry. Our partnership with the Holy Spirit:

You	Communicate the Gospel	Humility	Usefulness	Rooted in the Word of God	Commit to Christ	Help a Need
Holy Spirit	Change Lives	Healed Relationship	Unity in Diversity	Ready to Answer	Communion	Holy Living

- **Communicating the Gospel** – Change Lives: through our simple gestures like waving, smiling or saying hello. It gives impact to those we meet. It helps build relationships, and shows others that we care.
 - **Humility** – Healed Relationship: this is one of the most difficult thing to do. When Jesus died for us on the cross, it was the beginning of our healing relationship with God. How can our relationship be mended when neither one of us is humble enough? Saying sorry is the most important and difficult thing to do when it comes to relationships with family, friends, colleagues, etc...
 - **Usefulness** – Unity in Diversity: which part of God's body are you? Each of us has a part and is a part of God's body. We may be the feet who can go and help others, the hands to reach out to those who need comfort, the eyes to see those who are in need, ears to listen to those who are not heard or the mouth to talk about His love, grace, mercy and justice. All of us have different roles in the body of Christ but the question is, "Will you allow God to use you? And at the same time work as one with others?"
 - **Rooted in the Word of God** – Ready to Answer: read-think-do. We may read the Bible from Genesis to Revelation, but are we meditating and applying what we have read? Sometimes we are like the Pharisees. We read and memorize a lot from the Bible but have a hard time living it. We are good in quoting Bible passages when it benefits us but can't apply it when it rebukes us.
 - **Commit to Christ** – Community: commune-communion-communication. Seeing people through the eyes of God would make it easier to forgive others, do things for Christ and commit to Christ and not to the people they serve. It would be easier to deal with others when you commit to Christ even when they don't like you – just love them back.
 - **Help a Need** – Holy Life: sacrifice doing something out of your comfort zone: There are instances or situations in our lives that we need to sacrifice in order to help others. But our motive is very important. God sees into our hearts and it pleases Him when we do it for Him.
- May God continue to guide, protect and give wisdom to our missionaries and their family. Let us continue to pray and support them in every way we can for God's glory. Soli Deo Gloria! 🙏

平安和喜樂

許郭錦繡

人

生二項最重要的祝福就是平安和喜樂。什麼是平安？平安是人與人中間的和諧，沒有糾紛，強暴或戰爭。它也是思想的自由—沒有阻礙，沒有毀壞，沒有煩慮。它是身體的健康—沒有疾病，沒有痛苦。換句話說，它是平靜及安寧。什麼是喜樂？喜樂是內心有滿足與快活的感覺，喜樂是不會因外界任何環境而受影响的。人活在世上，如果有平安和喜樂，就可領受完滿，美好又有意義的人生。但是要如何獲得平安和喜樂呢？只有在活在基督裏面，才能得到真正的平安和的恆久喜樂。

什麼是平安和喜樂的秘訣？

- ① 接受神旨意：約瑟的樂觀／
大衛的忍耐
- ② 以父事為念：耶穌的敬虔／
但以理的忠心
- ③ 完全交託主：亞伯拉罕的信靠／
保羅的順服
- ④ 順從神的話：挪亞的聽從／
馬利亞的獻身

約瑟的樂觀：

約瑟的哥哥恨惡他，他被賣到埃及為奴，受衛長波提乏之妻子的冤枉，無罪被下在監裏，並被酒政忘記了，他實在不知道他將來是如何，但是他仍然以樂觀的眼光來接受神所為他定的計劃。後來神高舉他，他被法老王委派治理埃及地，當饑荒來到時，他才明白了一切。

當他哥哥們奉父命來到埃及地取糧時，遇見了約瑟，就大大的害怕，約瑟不但不報仇，而且又安慰他們說：「現在不要因為把我賣到這裏，自憂自恨，這是神差我在你們以先來，為要保全生命。」（創45:5）

所以，如果你經歷苦難或逆境時，應該接受神的旨意，要有快樂的觀念，知道上帝有美好的計劃，因祂的意念非同我們的意念，祂的道路高過我們的道路（賽55:8-9），上帝會將平安和喜樂安慰我們。

大衛的忍耐

掃羅王在曠野追趕大衛要將他打死，但是當亞比篩有機會殺害掃羅王時，大衛說：「不可害死他，有誰伸手害耶和華的受膏者而無罪呢？…我在耶和華面前，萬不敢伸手害耶和華的受膏者，現在你們可以將他頭旁的槍和水瓶拿來，我們就走。」（撒下26:9-11）當大衛被宣佈為以色列王時，他心中是多麼的喜樂呀！

同樣的，當你遇到迫害或受欺侮時，要學習大衛的忍耐，等候神的時間，至終你必明白神的時間是最美善的，你也必以喜樂的靈來讚美神。

耶穌的敬虔

「次日早晨，天未亮的時候，耶穌起來，到曠野地方去，在那裏禱告。」（可1:35）由此可見，耶穌在清早第一件所做的事就是到父面前禱告。



你也應該學習耶穌的榜樣－以主為先，在你一切所要做的事，讓神居首位，每日清早有靈修時間與主交談。這樣，你就會經歷到神的平安與喜樂。

但以理的忠心

巴比倫王大利烏立一條堅定的禁令，三十日內不拘何人，若在王以外或向神或向人求什麼，就必扔在獅子坑中。大利烏王立這禁令，加蓋玉璽。（但6:6-8）

但以理知道這禁令蓋了玉璽，就到自己家裏，（他樓上的窗戶，開向耶路撒冷），一日三次，雙膝跪在他神面前，禱告感謝，與素常一樣。」（但6:10）

雖然但以理面對着危險，他仍舊繼續禱告。結果，當他被扔在獅子坑中時，神差遣使者，封住獅子的口（但6:22），上帝不但保全但以理的生命，同時祂的名因此得了榮耀。

當你面對需要選擇遵照人意或順服神旨時，你絕對要遵照神的旨意才可得真正的平安和喜樂。

亞伯拉罕的信靠

「耶和華對亞伯蘭說：『你要離開本地，本族，父家，往我要指示你的地去。』」（創12:1）「亞伯蘭就照耶和華的吩咐去了，羅得也和他同去，亞伯蘭出哈蘭的時候，年七十五歲。」

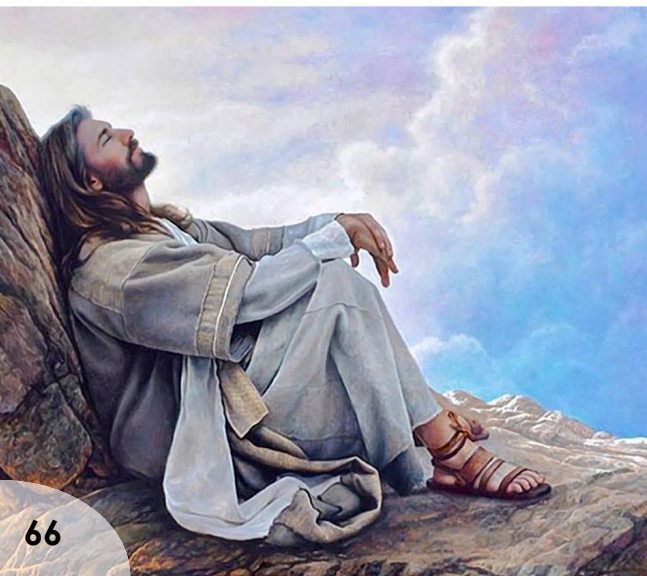
（創12:4）亞伯蘭是以完全的信靠離開他的故鄉，沒有究問任何的問題，他的將來是以完全的信心交託耶和華。

希望我們效法亞伯拉罕，以信心倚靠祂，神的平安才會長存在我們的心裏。

保羅的順服

「因為我活着就是基督，我死了就有益處。」（腓1:21）「我也將萬事當作有損的，因我以認識我主基督為至寶。」（腓3:8）保羅已將他的生命交託主，無論或活或死，對他都無關，他已忘記背後，努力面前，向着標竿直跑，為要得神在基督耶穌裏的獎賞。（腓3:13-14）

當你若完全交託主，讓祂掌管你的人生，平安和喜樂必跟隨着你。



挪亞的聽從

當耶和華見人罪惡很大，心中憂傷，就決定將祂一切所造的人類，走獸，昆蟲以及空中的飛鳥從地上除滅。（創6:5-7）「神對挪亞說：『你要用歌斐木造一隻方舟。』」（創6:14）「挪亞就這樣行，凡神所吩咐的，他都照這樣行了。」（創6:22）「挪亞就遵着耶和華所吩咐行了。」（創7:5）

當神命令你做任何之事，你應該聽從遵守，照祂的吩咐去行，就必可得到平安和喜樂。

願我們接受神旨意：我們所面臨的一切，無論是好或壞，都是神所許可的，不可自作聰明，偏行己路，以致一失足成千古恨，唯要知道全能之神必定替我們處理一切的問題，祂也是賜平安和喜樂的父。

願我們以父事為念：耶穌教導我們要先求祂的國和祂的義（太6:33），保羅鼓勵我們要思念上面的事，不要思念地上的事（歌3:2）因為世上之事帶給我們愁悶，而上面之事帶給我們平安和喜樂。

願我們完全交託主：在你人生的過程中，要相信上帝，倚靠祂，不要疑惑，

馬利亞的獻身

天使加百列對馬利亞說：「不要怕，你在神面前已經蒙恩了，你要懷孕生子，可以給祂名叫耶穌。」（路1:30-31）「馬利亞說：我是主的使女，情願照你的話成就在我身上，天使就離開他去了。」（路1:38）

馬利亞願意將他的身體獻給主用，你有願意將你的身體當作活祭獻給神嗎？（羅12:1）你若這樣做，就可嘗試主的平安和喜樂。

結論

因為上帝是慈愛，信實可靠的神，在苦難中祂會與你同在，賜給你力量平安和喜樂來勝過人生的阻礙。

願我們順從神的話：「神的話是我們腳前的燈，是我們路上的光」（詩119:105），「它有教訓督責，使人歸正，教導人學義的功能」（提後3:16），「神的道是活潑的，是有功效的，比一切兩刃的劍更快，甚至魂與靈，骨節與骨髓，都能刺入剖開，連心中的思念和主意，都能辨明」（希4:12）可見，順服神言會帶給你行在正路中，幫助你得到出人意外的平安及無限量的喜樂。✝



PEACE AND JOY

Josephine Q. Yu

Two of the most important blessings in life are PEACE and JOY. Peace is absence of conflict, violence, or war. It means mutual harmony between people; is freedom of mind from annoyance, destruction or anxiety. In other words, peace is tranquility and serenity. Joy is an internal feeling of great pleasure and contentment regardless of what the outside circumstances are.

If we have peace and joy, we can truly enjoy our lives to the fullest. However, only God can give us real peace and absolute joy.

What are the secrets to Peace and Joy?

1. **Accept God's Will:** Be Optimistic like **Joseph** /
Be Patient like **David**
2. **Primacy to God:** Be Devoted like **Jesus** /
Be Faithful like **Daniel**
3. **Complete Trust in God:** Be Trusting like **Abraham**
/ Be Submissive like **Paul**
4. **Obey God's Word:** Be Obedient like **Noah** /
Be Dedicated like **Mary**

Be Optimistic like Joseph

Joseph was hated by his brothers, who sold him to Egypt as a slave. There, Joseph was falsely accused of sexual assault by the wife of his master Potiphar, and though innocent was sent to prison. Even though the cup bearer promised to remember him upon regaining his freedom, he completely forgot about Joseph.

He did not know what his future held, but he remained optimistic and accepted what God had planned for him. Only when he was appointed Prime Minister did Joseph finally understand everything.

During the famine, his brothers went to Egypt to buy grain. When his brothers recognized him, they were terribly frightened. But instead of vengeance, Joseph comforted them by saying:

"Do not be distressed and do not be angry with yourselves for selling me here, because it was to save lives that God sent me ahead of you." (Gen. 45:5)

When you are experiencing trials, accept God's will and be optimistic, knowing that God has a better plan for you. His thoughts are better than our thoughts; His ways are better than our ways. (Isaiah 55:8-9) Trials are meant to strengthen your faith and make you closer to God. He will protect you and comfort you with His peace and joy.

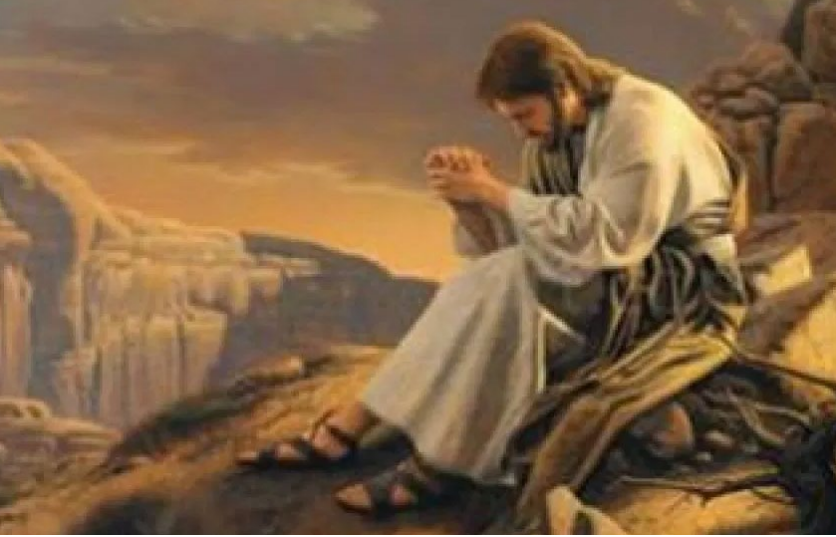
Be Patient like David

In his zeal to kill David, King Saul pursued him into the desert. Saul grew careless and gave Abishai, David's nephew and military leader, the perfect opportunity to kill Saul. But David said: "Don't destroy him! Who can lay a hand on the Lord's anointed and be guiltless? But the Lord forbid that I should lay a hand on the Lord's anointed." (1 Sam. 26:9,11)

David patiently waited for God's time to deal with Saul. When David was finally proclaimed king of Israel, he was full of joy.

Similarly, when you are being oppressed or persecuted, be patient like David and wait for the Lord. At the end, you will realize that God's time is the best time. Then, you shall praise God with joy.





Be Devoted like Jesus

"Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed" (Mark 1:35). The first thing Jesus did early in the morning was to come to His presence and pray.

You should also put God first in everything that you do. Have a daily devotional time with God, and you will experience peace and joy in Him.

Be Faithful like Daniel

Darius, the king of Babylon issued an edict decreeing that anyone who prayed to any god or man other than Darius himself during the next 30 days shall be thrown into the lion's den.

"Now when Daniel learned that the decree had been published, he went home to his upstairs room where the windows opened toward Jerusalem. Three times a day he got down on his knees and prayed, giving thanks to his God just as he had done before." (Daniel 6:10)



Despite knowing the danger that he will be facing, Daniel remained faithful and continued to pray. When he was thrown into the lion's den, the Lord sent His angels to shut the mouth of the lion. (Daniel 6:20). God protected Daniel's life and the Lord's name was glorified.

When there is a choice between obeying man's command and the Lord's command, always choose the latter. And surely peace will be with you.

Be Trusting like Abra(ha)m

"The Lord had said to Abram, 'Leave your country, your people and your father's household and go to the land I will show you.'" (Gen. 12:1) "So Abram left, as the Lord had told him." (Gen. 12:4)

Abram left his country without any question, but with complete faith in God. You must follow his example to trust God in all your undertakings so that peace will always remain in you.



Be Submissive like Paul

"For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain" (Phil. 1:21) "I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ." (Phil. 3:8)

Paul had submitted his life completely to the Lord. Whether he lives or dies, he is fine with either outcome. He wrote: "I will forget what is behind. I will strain toward what is ahead and I will press on toward to goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus." (Phil. 3:13-14).

Paul had learned to rejoice and be content. (Phil. 4:4,11) If you submit yourself to the Lord and let Him take control of your life, peace and joy will follow.

Be Obedient like Noah

When the Lord saw how great man's wickedness on the Earth had become, His heart was filled with pain and decided to wipe mankind from the earth. He commanded Noah, saying: "So make yourself an ark of cypress wood." (Gen. 6:14) "Noah did everything just as God commanded him." (Gen. 6:22, 7:5)



When God tells you to do something, listen and obey. By following His command, you will surely have peace and joy.

Be Dedicated like Mary

An angel spoke to Mary: "Do not be afraid Mary, you have found favor with God. You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus." (Luke 1:30-31)



Mary answered: "I am the Lord's servant, may it be to me as you have said." (Luke 1:38) She was willing to dedicate herself to the Lord.

How about you? Are you willing to offer your body as a living sacrifice to serve the Lord? By doing so, you can enjoy His peace and joy.

In Conclusion

Let Us Seek God's Will—whatever befalls us, whether is it good or bad, is permitted by God. We should seek God's will and not our will, for a misstep may result in eternal regret. Know that our powerful God can solve our problems and give us peace and joy.

Let Us Put God First—Jesus teaches us to seek first His kingdom and His righteousness. (Mat. 6:33) Paul encouraged us to set our hearts and minds on things above, not on earthly things (Col. 3:2). For things on Earth may give us worries and sorrows, but things above will give us peace and joy.

Let Us Trust in Him—As we are traveling on our life's journey, believe in God, trust Him, and never doubt Him. For Our Lord is a merciful, righteous and faithful God. He will be with us in times of trouble. He will surely give us strength, peace and joy to withstand the obstacles of life.

Let Us Obey His Word—"Your Word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path." (Ps. 119:105). "All scripture is God breathed and is useful for teaching rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness." (2 Tim. 3:16). "The Word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart." (Heb. 4:12). Therefore, if we obey His Word, He will lead us in the right path and help us to enjoy the Peace that transcends all understanding and the Joy that is beyond measure.

Glory be to God in the Highest! 🕌



CHURCH EVENTS

*Compiled by
Jessamine Cristy Kate Go*

MOTHER'S DAY

We celebrated Mother's Day last May 12, 2019. Our speaker, Dr. Juliet Uytanlet, spoke about mothers who made lasting impact on their children. The scripture reading was taken from 2 Timothy 1:5. The Sunday School department prepared travel kits as tokens of appreciation for all the beloved mothers. 🙏



FATHERS DAY

Last June 16, 2019, we celebrated Father's Day. Our English service speaker, Dr. Gerardo Lisbe Jr., gave a sermon entitled "Living as Resolute Fathers" with the scripture coming from 1 Corinthians 16:13-14. In our bilingual service, Rev. Danny Reyes gave a sermon entitled "Live Revived" from Elijah's encounter in 1 Kings 19:1-8. The Monday and Saturday Bible Study groups presented a set of stainless utensils to all the dear fathers in attendance. 🙏



DAILY VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

DVBS was held on June 17 to 22, 2019, with more than 120 children and staff joining the event. The theme was "Shield Squad: Secure in God's Protection" where the kids learned about different disasters such as fire, floods, storms, and earthquakes, and what to do when faced with them. These disasters were related to stories in the Bible, where the kids learned that obedience to God's instructions guarantees His protection.

God's warnings are meant to keep us safe. When our lives are founded on God's Word, we can withstand anything. God is with us and can protect us even in bad times, and only Jesus can defeat death and give us eternal life. 🙏





CHILD DEDICATION

Last July 7, 2019, parents Leonardo and Kheneth Ramin dedicated their children Sophia Isabelle and Pia Cassandra to the Lord. Let us continue to pray for these children, so that they may grow in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man. 🙏



SACRED MUSIC SUNDAY

In August 11, 2019, we celebrated Sacred Music Sunday, with the Church Choir leading the Praise and Worship and the Cebu Christian String Chamber from Hanaro Church as accompanists. Our speaker was Dr. Gerardo Lisbe Jr., with his sermon entitled, "Pondering on Yahweh's Wonderful Works." The scripture came from Psalm 77:1-12. 🙏





On September 22, 2019, we culminated Mission Week with Mission Sunday Service. Our speaker, Rev. Reuel Tica, gave a sermon entitled "Let Your Life Shine," taken from Matthew 5:14-16.

Rev. Tica talked about how we, as God's children, should let the light that Jesus has given us to shine everywhere we go, whether in our homes, schools, or work places. By letting our light shine, we can then bring glory to our Lord Jesus Christ. 🙏



SUNDAY SCHOOL SUNDAY

September 29, 2019 was celebrated as our Sunday School Sunday, with Rev. Bob Long as our speaker. His sermon was entitled "John: From Son of Thunder to Apostle of Love" with scripture coming from Luke 9:1-5 and Mark 3:1-17.

Rev. Long talked about how John's life was transformed because he spent a lot of time with Jesus. He explained how we can experience change in our lives when we spend time with our Lord and Savior.

Loyalty awards were given to Ema Cañada, Jennica Mae Tan, and Eliana Ong, who have been attending Sunday School from Grade 1 to Grade 10. All three are now helping and serving the church.

Our Sunday School Choir, Cherubim, also rendered some songs during the Sunday worship service. 🙏



RESPECT THE AGED SUNDAY



On October 27, 2019, we celebrate Respect the Aged Sunday. Our speaker was Rev. James Uy, who exhorted us with his message entitled "Symbol or Idol" based on John 3:12-16. The Youth distributed 'cow bells' to all the senior citizens, a tool to help them call for assistance. 🙏



TEN MINUTES WITH GOD

EXECUTIVE SUMMARIES

Exclusive Digital Edition Content

A Better Gift This Christmas?

Our hope and joy do not lie in possessing more and more objects; the emotive rituals that form the best experiences are made within the context of family gathering and togetherness.

Jesus, after all, came to earth as a vulnerable baby. It is the intertwining of time with human family and friends, and communion with His Father, that Jesus showed himself to be most divine, and paradoxically, human.

This Christmas, put away your mobile phones, tablets, and computers, and create new precious and irreplaceable memories with your loved ones.

Good Good Father

My dad was someone I could rely on and the one I could run to anytime. When God chose to take my father away from me, it was only then that I truly encountered Him.

When God was all I had, I discovered that He was all I ever needed. I'm blessed that He

gave me a loving earthly father so I can grasp a bit of what it feels like to experience the love of a heavenly father.

Ephphatha—Be Opened

With one word, "Ephphatha!" Jesus made a deaf-mute hear and speak. So I said to myself, surely I could try to pray for my husband's hearing issues.

I laid my hand over his sleeping head, and prayed on his right ear, "Lord, please Ephphatha my husband's ears."

Sadly, there was no immediate miracle cure. But like the persistent Syrophenician woman, I kept praying, "Lord, please Ephphatha his ears!"

Days later, he came across a place selling hearing aids. Trying one on, he was very happy with its effectiveness. When time came to pay, lo and behold, the name of the company is EPHPHATHA!

Coincidence? I consider it an answered prayer. I dared to ask, and God gave me exactly what I had asked for!

Birth of Transformed Bible Study Group

Transformed Bible Study first started last September 6, 2018 and as of July 2019, grew to an average of twenty people.

Attending Transformed Bible Study has become an important part of my routine on Sundays, and I enjoyed the company and topics discussed.

From Light to Darkness To Light

When I was diagnosed with cancer in December 2014, all the light in the world suddenly turned into darkness upon darkness and greater darkness still. Darkness... how quickly life could change.

Time to move on. Most doctors prescribed the same thing: chemo, radiation, Herceptine vaccine... all except one who prescribed oral medication. Praise the Lord, an answered prayer. A new treatment approach; an ember of hope.

A vacation to Los Angeles, U.S., brought a measure of light. The fireworks were beautiful. It seemed like angels threw beautiful sparkles into the sky.

Returning home, I busied myself with our Church Centennial Celebration. Then it struck. The doctor suspected that the cancer might have spread to my brain.

I delayed treatment until the celebration was over. I was able to celebrate the 50th anniversary as the youngest choir member; there was no way I'm going to not sing in the Centennial Choir!

They say it is in the darkest of night that we see the beauty of the stars. Jesus is my bright and morning star. A few months from now, I will have survived this cancer for almost five years without chemotherapy, radiation, or vaccination.

My family is doing well. Thank You Lord! We do not have much, but we have so much love to give. Everything seems to spark joy.

I could just imagine the day when my time will come. I will finally meet the Lord. There will be bright lights, all kinds of lights, all wonderful. Then I would see the great gate opening, my master telling me, "well done, good and faithful servant!"

Explore! Expand! Explode!

It is with great joy to see youth leaders contribute time, effort, and prayers to the Explore! Expand! Explode! Camp held in Argao last May 2019.

All eighty-two delegates joined to be equipped and edified in their faith and conviction, as they are exhorted to Explore the Word, Expand in Faith, and Explode for His Glory.

Shield Squad: Secure in God's Protection

It's always been a joy to plan and organize for VBS. This year's theme was SHIELD SQUAD—Secure in God's Protection, based on the theme verse in Psalm 46:1

Centering upon the natural disasters in the Bible, the kids were taught to obey God, listen to His warnings, and know that God is always with us and will protect us.

It was a whole week of fun and learning. Teachers, assistants, and students alike all had a great fill of God's Word.

Overcomer

I am an Overcomer. This was the theme chosen for this year's newly-revived Junior Camp.

We were fortunate to have dedicated volunteers who, though few in number, worked hard, even multitasking at times.

It really was a wonderful time to spend with the children, a great bonding time when we could just be natural and open to the kids.

Sacrifice and Blessing

I have joined numerous activities and fellowships such as CYF and THRIVE, and now serve as a camp counselor to twenty-eight campers in the 2019 Junior Camp.

It took sacrifice to put the campers' needs and even wants before my own. There was a time when my patience and pride were tested.

Looking back, I can now say that the time I spent with the campers was actually a blessing. I was able to establish not only relationships with my fellow youth but also with the children as well.

THRIVE: Countering the Ever-Present Danger

College is a spiritually-hostile environment for Christians. Even those who came from Christian schools like PCGS are not immune to this negative atmosphere.

Most of our young people are not taught the dangers they will face. As such, THRIVE, a community of Christian college believers, was established to counter this ever-present danger.

The Story of Naga: Turning Tragedy into Opportunity

Last September 20, 2018, a landslide in Naga, Cebu buried the homes of 2,087 families. Thousands of people were devastated and displaced.

I found myself helping with the mission trip planned by the Mission Committee together with the Youth With a Mission and Gideons International.

I thought I was there to help. Instead, I received so much joy in helping others. I witnessed pure hearts turning to God, and saw the smiling faces of adults and children as they held the Bible in their hands and started reading it.

What was a horrendous tragedy became a gateway of opportunity for us to share the gospel, and more importantly, for those victims to get to know the grace and love of our Lord Jesus.

A Little Set of Slippers

A feeding program in the municipality of Tabogon was quite enlightening. We witnessed how respectful and attentive the children were, and participated early in the activities.

We also witnessed the children's orderliness during feeding time. It was a heartwarming experience for everyone. Indeed, there is joy in sharing.

My Inspiring Journey

While working as a messenger in our church's 2018 White Gift Drive, I felt this God-given peace as well as excitement knowing we will be able to share the Lord's blessings to the less fortunate.

I have come to realize that my service to the Lord has become stagnant nowadays by only serving within the church.

Our service should never be limited within the four walls of our church, but we also have to contribute to our community.

Warming Up For the Lord!

I feel so blessed to be more involved in this year's Mission Week. Listening to our missionaries' stories and experiences out in the field has opened my eyes to the difficulties they face every day.

By putting emphasis on spiritual nourishment as well as on the training of the physical body, we can have the necessary balance in our lives, we can strengthen our health and do more to live for the Lord.

Utmost Joy From Serving Simple Children

I was one of those who joined the one-day mission trip to Liburan, Carcar for a teaching/feeding program, with a group of forty-five kids in attendance.

One thing I learned from our immersion with the children was that when we spend time with them, the kids will feel that they are valued and loved.

We can in a way practice the compassion of Jesus when He admonished His disciples to "let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these..."

All Aboard to the Cebu Safari

I accompanied our church-supported missionaries to a trip to the Cebu Safari.

One of the animals we encountered was similar to a donkey, reminding me of the story of Balaam and his donkey.

The highlight of the tour was the bird show. There were lots of doves that flew in a flock. In the Bible, the Holy Spirit was described as like a dove descending from heaven.

The animals I saw in the park brought life to the pages of the Bible. The creation of the Lord is just so marvelous—from the little turtles to the towering giraffes.

Mission Week

How do you let your life shine in your ministry?

1. Use simple gestures such as waving, smiling, or saying hello to communicate the Gospel to others.
2. Be humble enough to admit you are wrong and say sorry.
3. Be a useful instrument as a part of God's body.
4. Live what you read in the Bible—be rooted in the Word of God.
5. Be committed to emulating Christ in all that you do. Follow His commandments and love those who hate you.
6. Sacrifice yourself to help fulfill the needs of others.

Peace and Joy

Peace and Joy can help us enjoy our lives to the fullest, but how can we get real peace and absolute joy from the Lord?

1. Accept God's will. Even when you don't understand why you suffer (like Joseph) or why you have to wait (like David).
2. Give God primacy. Jesus always prioritized praying to God, and Daniel continued to pray even in the face of death.
3. Trust God completely. Abram left his home on God's orders without question, and Paul placed his life wholly in the hands of the Lord.
4. Obey God's word. Noah built the ark, and Mary willingly dedicated herself to be the instrument of Jesus' birth on Earth.



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