

# THE COURIER

ST ANDREW'S CATHEDRAL



JANUARY 2019

MICA (P) 060/02/2018

## The Living Legacy of Bells

Read the ongoing story on pages 2-9

# THE VISION OF THE CATHEDRAL

The historic and strategic location of the Cathedral - along with her calling as a Church - has always invested her with a sense of vision and mission. Each generation seeks to refresh and continue these. The vision can be laid out in this way:

## 1. A HOME IN THE CITY

The Cathedral is an oasis and home in the midst of a bustling modern city. We seek to be a quiet place where one can find solace in and peace with God. We welcome all to meet, pray, attend services, meet as Bible Study or prayer groups, enjoy a drink etc. Being at the heart of a cosmopolitan city, we will endeavour to provide worship avenues and create social spaces for people of different races, languages and backgrounds.

We are mindful that many in our city will need help and support. We want to create spaces for healing, restoration and spiritual formation. *Matthew 11:18-20*

## 2. A MONUMENT IN THE CITY

The Cathedral's history is intertwined with our city nation. Ours is a city which was built by many foreigners. Our rich heritage bears testimony to the contributions of many peoples: Scottish, English, Australians, Chinese, Malays, Indians, Arabs and so on. Devout Christians have served as inspiring examples of love and sacrifice and helped to instil good values. These are some of the seeds on which this city is built. *Hebrews 13:7*

As a monument and heritage centre we seek to be good stewards of our rich heritage and "remember and tell" the story well, to current and future

generations. We will preserve and build on our rich music, arts and historical aspects of our monument. As our nation progresses, this story is still unfolding. We need to keep good records of developing stories so that future generations will remember and tell. May we be a monument to His glory. *Psalm 105:1-3*

## 3. A VOICE IN THE CITY

The city is not just about people and space. It is an intersection where the latest ideas collide with those from antiquity. We seek to offer a Christian voice and make contributions to the ongoing debates. *Acts 17:22-34*

We seek to help Christians to reflect deeper on their faith and strengthen our prophetic voice. We will work at building a strong Christian Education programme and use various platforms – old or new – to engage with Christians and other citizens. *Ephesians 4:14-15*

## 4. A MOTHER CHURCH FOR THE DIOCESE

This is our inherited ecclesial role. We are called to be a diffusing light to those around us, including neighbouring nations. We will seek to set an inspiring example in all that we do, to encourage our Anglican parishes here and in the deaneries. Areas will include worship, prayer, biblical teaching, community-building, outreach to the poor and needy, evangelism, missions, church-planting etc. We pray that other Anglicans or Christians who visit the Cathedral will find her to be an encouraging and inspiring church. *1 Thessalonians 1:7-8*

*Note: Earlier iterations of these statements were first released in 2016.*



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# Getting to Know St Andrew's BELL

by June Gwee





# HERITAGE

It was eight o'clock and night had claimed the island. Immediately after the gun sounded the curfew, the Revere bell at Singapore's St Andrew's Church rang steadily for a full five minutes. In 1843, this was the signal for sailors to return to their ships and for residents to be on their guard. The Revere bell was the church's first bell. Mrs Maria Revere Balestier, the wife of Joseph Balestier, Singapore's first American Consul, gave the bell to St Andrew's Church on condition that it was used to keep Singapore residents safe. That was the beginning of St Andrew's bell heritage and a testament of the role of the church in the city.

In 1889, in replacement of the Revere bell, St Andrew's Cathedral received a peal of eight bells from the family of Captain J. S. H. Fraser, H.E.I.C.S. These bronze bells were cast at the John Taylor & Co. Foundry in Loughborough, England, the same bell foundry that cast the bells of St Paul's Cathedral in London, England. These eight bells have been rung every Sunday for services, and for weddings, funerals, Easter and Christmas. They are the city's call to worship and part of Singapore's heritage in the civic district.



## THE ANATOMY OF THE BELL

These eight bell apostles were made around the same period as the bells for St Paul's Cathedral in London. St Andrew's bells were made with roughly 80% copper and 20% tin, and cast with flat tops. The largest bell was 1,420kg and had a diameter of 1,337mm while the smallest bell was 227kg and 702mm in diameter. Each bell had a number and was named after an apostle – Andrew (the largest bell), Peter, Thomas, Bartholomew, Paul, John, James and Matthew (the smallest bell). Andrew, the largest bell, is about 500kg heavier than Peter, the next largest bell; but there is only a tone difference between them.

The narrowest part of the bell is called the head. This is the part where suspension loops would have been situated if the bell had one. When St Andrew's bells were cast in 1888, the Taylor Bell Foundry had already stopped casting bells with canons or suspension loops on the top. So, St Andrew's bells were cast with flat tops and bolted to the bell frame.

The curved portion just below the head is called the bell shoulder which connects the bell to the waist which broadens out to the sound bow. The clapper strikes on the sound bow from the inside to produce the tone of

## Overview of the Finished Eight Bells in 1888

	Bell Name	Diameter (mm)	Tone	Weight (kg)
1	Matthew (treble)	702	IX / E <sup>b</sup>	227
2	James	727	X / D	239
3	John	797	XII / C	321
4	Paul	896	XIV / B <sup>b</sup>	423
5	Bartholomew	996	XVI / A <sup>b</sup>	606
6	Thomas	1056	XVII / G	688
7	Peter	1182	XIX / F	947
8	Andrew (tenor)	1337	XXI / E <sup>b</sup>	1420

Source: The Job book, 1888 (archive reference JT 6/1/4/67 pp.281-2)

a tuned bell. The edge of the bell is called the lip which essentially forms the mouth of the bell.

The year that the bell was cast is inscribed in Roman numerals (MDCCCLXXXVIII) and found just below the shoulder of the bell. Within this same band, the name of the bell is also inscribed. Just below the inscription band is the logo or trademark of Taylor Bell and Company, to reflect the founder's work.

The diameter of a bell affects the amount of application at a specific frequency of sound which means that a bell with a larger diameter will amplify the lower notes more. Each of the eight bells were cast with different weights, diameters and tones. The Andrew bell was a tenor and the Matthew bell was a treble, both pitched to E $\flat$ . Over time, as the bronze of the bell corroded due to moisture in the atmosphere, the heritage of the bells' original tone was also altered.

Bells can last 500 years if they are regularly maintained. Although the bells look strong, they are brittle and can be easily damaged if handled incorrectly. Bells crack if they are poorly made, for example when impurities or air bubbles remain in the bronze when the molten metal is poured. Structural fatigue due to wear and tear also weakens the bell. Hence, bells should be turned to avoid having the clapper strike on the same point in the bell. Bells can also damage if they are rung in an incorrect manner, such as not hitting the bell with the correct force to allow the clapper to retract fast enough and causing the reverberation and impact of the clapper to crack the bell.

**I heard rounds, queens and hymns played on them, using the chiming apparatus, and realized what a splendid eight they would make if hung for full circle ringing.**

*Walter Perry, Sudbury, Suffolk, during his visit to St Andrew's Cathedral in 1953*

## CHANGE RINGING

Although bells can be rung by striking or swinging them, to get the full sound of the bells, they must be rung by swinging rather than striking. This is because Anglican church bells are typically rung by swinging them through an arc of 360 degrees or more.

Bells designed for swinging are positioned mouth up when resting so that less physical effort is needed for bell ringers to swing them in a full circle. When the bells are converted for change ringing, instead of being hung dead, the bells will rest on a bell frame with wheels where the bell mouths face upwards. A rope will be attached to each of the wheels of the bells and the ropes are controlled by bell ringers in a chamber below the bells. When swung fully for change ringing, the bells may well be heard as far as Marina Bay Sands on a quiet day.

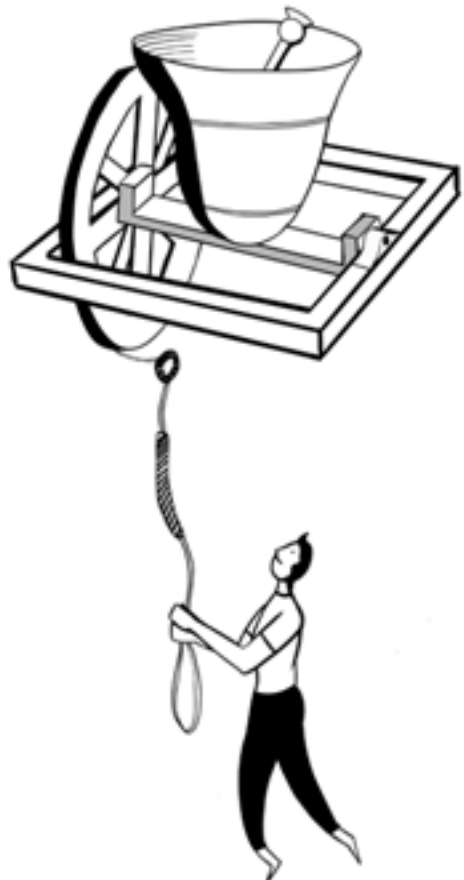


Illustration by Daniel Ng



Change ringing refers to a method of ringing tuned bells by controlling the speed in which the bells are rung to produce variations in their striking sequences. Hence, the name ‘change ringing’ because bell ringing is performed by changing the pattern of ringing so that the sound produced is a constant cascade of notes. There are no tunes in change ringing. The bells in each ring are numbered, from the smallest bell which is the treble, to the largest bell, or the tenor. Change ringing is about making a series of swops. The number of changes that are possible depends on the number of bells.

To create a constant cascade of sound, bells are swung in sequence by making a series of changes in the order. In mathematics these are known as combinations, with the number of possible combinations being the factorial of the number of bells being rung. Hence, the more bells are used in change ringing, the more complex, and majestic, the sound of the ring, and the longer it would take to ring all the possible combinations (see Table on Number of Sequences). It takes roughly 2 seconds to ring one change because that is how long it will take a large bell to complete a natural swing. Of course, we do not need to ring all the possible combinations! The longest normal period of continuous ringing is a “peal,” lasting just over 3 hours.

There is no score sheet for change ringing.

### 4-BELL CHANGE SEQUENCE

1 2 3 4	2 3 1 4	3 1 2 4
1 2 4 3	2 3 4 1	3 1 4 2
1 4 2 3	2 4 3 1	3 4 1 2
4 1 2 3	4 2 3 1	4 3 1 2
4 2 1 3	4 3 2 1	4 1 3 2
2 4 1 3	3 4 2 1	1 4 3 2
2 1 4 3	3 2 4 1	1 3 4 2
2 1 3 4	3 2 1 4	1 3 2 4

(1 2 3 4)

Bell ringers are each assigned a bell and they learn the path that their bell makes through the sequence and memorise it. In change ringing, these swops follow a set of basic rules. For example, the rules of change ringing a 4-bell peal are that the sequence must start and end with 1234. Except for 1234 at the beginning and end, you are not allowed to repeat any sequence, and you must keep doing this until you run out for sequence. Also, the sequence must involve every bell and that bell’s striking position may only move one place at a time. With more bells, the sequences become more complicated and take longer to complete the sequence. This 4-bell sequence is also known as Plain Bob.

### NUMBER OF SEQUENCES

Number of bells	Factorials (n!)	Number of sequences	Approximate time taken to ring the sequence
4 bells	4 x 3 x 2 x 1	24	1 min
5 bells	5 x 4 x 3 x 2 x 1	120	4 mins
6 bells	6 x 5 x 4 x 3 x 2 x 1	720	25 mins
7 bells	7 x 6 x 5 x 4 x 3 x 2 x 1	5,040	3 years
8 bells	8 x 7 x 6 x 5 x 4 x 3 x 2 x 1	40,320	24 hours
9 bells	9 x 8 x 7 x 6 x 5 x 4 x 3 x 2 x 1	362,880	9 days
10 bells	10 x 9 x 8 x 7 x 6 x 5 x 4 x 3 x 2 x 1	3,628,800	90 days
11 bells	11 x 10 x 9 x 8 x 7 x 6 x 5 x 4 x 3 x 2 x 1	39,916,800	2.75 years
12 bells	12 x 11 x 10 x 9 x 8 x 7 x 6 x 5 x 4 x 3 x 2 x 1	479,001,600	27 years

Source: PowerPoint Slides titled ‘The Science of English Bell Ringing’, and ‘An Introduction to English Bell Ringing’, 21 March 2017.





*Lowering the bells down to the organ loft where they are lined up for a crane to take them out through a loft window.*

When St Andrew's bells are restored and converted for change ringing, they will rest mouth up in the bell tower. In the ringing chamber, bell ringers will stand in a circle and ring the bells. In change ringing, bell ringers stand in a circle facing one another (since change ringing is based on patterns) and pull bell ropes to ring the bells.

Currently, there are a handful of experienced bell ringers in Singapore. There are certified bell ringing teachers that are willing to train our new bell ringers. Also, expert bell ringers do stop by Singapore and can ring with our own bell ringers to help us gain the required experience quickly.

### **DISMANTLING THE BELLS AND EXTRACTING THEM FROM THE BELL TOWER**

On 13 Nov 2018, bell engineer Mike Semken and bell hanger Andrew Mills visited St Andrew's Cathedral to discuss how to dismantle and lower the bells to the ground. It was time for the bells to be taken down for a long overdue maintenance. Dismantling the bells was a historical milestone because this was the first time these eight bells would be taken down since they were installed 129 years ago. These bell experts explained their plan of action with the Preservation of Sites and Monuments Board which accepted their explanations and in turn gave suggestions on how to better access the bells in the future if they are needed to be moved again.

The eight bells rung for the last time on Sunday, 2 Dec 2018. Servers from the Cathedral Servers' Guild rang out hymns

between 1.30 to 2.00pm to bid a temporary farewell to the bells.

On 3 Dec, work began to make a space in a window in the north wall of the tower, through which the bells could be taken out. Then four strops of 2 tonne capacity were placed over the existing large section roof beams. The strops passed through the spaces between the floor joists that bear down on the main beams. Existing steel bell frames and beams in the bell loft were used as structural support to create the necessary mechanism to dismantle the bells. This way, there was no damage to the walls of the bell loft. The floor of the bell loft was cut to create an opening to move the bells from the bell loft down to the organ loft.

The clapper was first taken out from each bell. Then, each bell was lifted up out of the bell frame, and slowly maneuvered to the opening in the floor. Each bell was individually lowered down to the floor of the organ loft. The first bells that were dismantled and lowered were Bells 6 and 5 – Thomas and Bartholomew. Andrew came down last.



*The eight clappers, rusty and dented in some places*



crane lifting out a bell



Members of the team from John Taylor & Co.  
TAC Contracts and SAC

There was a respectful hush in the tower when Andrew, at almost 1.5 tonne was very, very slowly lowered down. It took a day to lower all the bells, but two more days were spent dismantling the frame from which the bells hung.

On 10 Dec, a crane mounted on a lorry, lifted each bell out of the eastern-most window in the north wall of the tower, directly on to the lorry. The bells, clappers, and some parts of the frame were to be put into a container and loaded on to a ship bound for Felixstowe and thereafter by rail to Loughborough. The cost of the whole project is \$600,000, which includes restoring the present 8 bells, casting 4 new bells, adding a chiming apparatus, that will allow the bells to continue to be chimed electronically, shipping and logistics costs and the preparation of a bell ringing chamber.

## RINGING IN HEARTS

We will next see the bells again in third quarter 2019. As they begin their restoration process in Loughborough, St Andrew's Cathedral prepares for a year of harvest in 2019. St Andrew's bell apostles are one of the many channels to capture the attention of those who visit and reside in Singapore. Will their sounds ring in hearts? Will they awaken imagination and spirituality to connect more people to God? The restored bells may only be the first step in God's process of revival. After 175 years, the purpose of St Andrew's church bells is certain and multifaceted - from guarding lives to beckoning the weary and breathing life into the city.

## BELL FACTS IN NUMBERS

**40,320**

Sequences can be produced by an 8-bell peal

**1843**

Year which St Andrew's Church received its first bell - the Revere Bell

**1889**

Year which St Andrew's Church received the peal of 8 bells

**120**

Decibels of chime is produced by the Andrew bell

**500**

Year lifespan if bells are regularly maintained

**40,000**

Bell ringers in the World

**41**

Steps to organ loft to ring the bells

**34**

Steps to organ loft to bell loft to see the bells

**4,871**

Kilogrammes is the weight of 8 bells



## Hymns Chimed by Servers on 2 Dec 2018

- To God be the Glory
- Lo He Comes with Cloud Descending
- Come Down Long Expected Jesus
- Wake Oh Wake, with Tidings Thrilling
- People Look East
- Joy to the World
- O Come, O Come Emmanuel
- Amazing Grace

## A Brief History of Bells at the St Andrew's Cathedral

- 1835-1855** The First St Andrew's Church
- 1842** Bishop Wilson of Calcutta suggested adding a tower and spire to St Andrew's Church to 'distinguish the sacred edifice from secular buildings in a manner usual in all parts of India as well as at home.' Then, he thought that the Church might be mistaken for a Town Hall, a College or an Assembly room.'
- 1843** Mrs Maria Revere Balestier, wife of Joseph Balestier, first American Consul to Singapore, presented the Revere Bell to St Andrew's Church. Mrs Balestier was the daughter of Paul Revere, one of America's renown bell-casters. The Revere Bell is the only bell cast by the Revere Copper Company that is outside the United States.  
The bell was given on condition that it be rung for five minutes every night at eight o'clock, after the gun was fired, to sound the curfew. The curfew was imposed because early Singapore was unsafe after dark. The bell reminded sailors to return to their ships and residents to stay vigilant after dark.
- 1855** The Revere Bell ceased being rung at eight o'clock in the evening when the Church was demolished.
- 1861-present** Current St Andrew's Cathedral
- 1861** The Revere Bell was relocated to the new church building and continued to ring for minutes every night at eight o'clock to signal curfew.
- 1874** The Revere Bell ceased to be used as a curfew bell but continued to be used in the church. In the later years, the bell was said to have a mournful tone. Subsequently, the Revere Bell was placed in storage in a Public Works Department facility at Kandang Kerbau.
- 1889** The family of J. S. H. Fraser presented a peal of 8 bells to the Cathedral to commemorate the 70th Anniversary of the Founding of Singapore in 1819.
- 1911** The Revere Bell was loaned to St George's Garrison Church in Tanglin Barracks. Later, while in transit to the Royal Engineers, store-yard, the bell was damaged beyond repair. A piece of metal at the lip of the bell was dislodged.
- 1936** For the first time in 50 years since they were installed, the peal of 8 bells at St Andrew's Cathedral were silent for 2 days as 6 coolies from the Public Works Department turned them so that the clappers would strike new spots. It took the coolies one and a half days to jack up the Andrew bell, turn it slowly one-half, and re-bolt it to its place on the girder. The other seven bells were turned within half a day.
- 1937** Archdeacon Graham White donated the Revere Bell to the Raffles Museum, now known as the National Museum of Singapore.
- 2017** St Andrew's Cathedral started discussions to consider restoring the bells for Singapore's Bicentennial Anniversary.
- 2018** The 8 bells rang for the last time on Sunday 2 Dec. They were taken out of the tower on the 10th Dec and shipped to the United Kingdom that same week.
- 2019** Singapore's Bicentennial Anniversary and 130th anniversary of the Bells at St Andrew's Cathedral.



*But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility ... And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near. ... So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God...*

(excerpts from Ephesians 2:13-19)

**A**lienation is a popular word in our society today.

It describes a social condition where someone, for various reasons, feels cut off from the social unit which he or she is a part of. For example, some of our own citizens may feel alienated because of social inequality. Those who are older may also feel alienated because of the rapid changes in the way society communicates. They are being left out of WhatsApp, Telegram and other popular social media chat groups.

A citizen should not feel like a foreigner. A family member should not feel like a guest in his own house. Yet, this sense of alienation is common and real in modern societies.

In recent history, it was Karl Marx who popularised this word. Every worker puts into his craftsmanship a part of himself. When his employer then sells his product, the worker is in part alienated from himself. This, according to Marx, was the basis of the class struggle. As we look back, we can see the huge impact which basic ideas like these can make.

But long before the word 'alienation' was used this way, the Bible has used it to describe man's alienation from God, and man from his fellow man. St Paul described the spiritual condition of the Gentiles very vividly in Ephesians chapter two. He talked about this double-alienation, and how the solution to these dividing walls is the cross.

Firstly, Jesus has made possible our reconciliation with God. As a commentator summarised, the Gentiles were "Christless, stateless, friendless, hopeless and Godless." But in Christ, we have been reconciled with God. We have found "peace with God."

And at the same time, He has created in Himself one new man instead of two. He did that by abolishing the requirements of the law. It used to be that one can only come near by embracing a certain race, culture, and language. Now, through Christ, anyone can come near.

Peace with God. Peace with men. In a nutshell, this is the message of the Gospel.

# PREACHING PEACE IN A YEAR OF HOPE

by Canon Terry Wong

## PEACE WITH GOD

"Peace with God" was the title of the famous book which Billy Graham wrote. I remember reading it as a teenager. He must have based the title of his book on this passage.

If you were amongst the thirty thousand and above who gathered at the Pray Singapore event at the Sports Hub in October this year, you would agree that the screening of the short clip of Billy Graham's rally in 1978 was a notable moment. We were transfixed by his message. We were moved by how the crowds responded to the salvation altar call, while his signature hymn, *Just As I Am*, rang out.

I felt transported back in time as I reflected on how the Gospel was shared in those days. Sin has caused the divide between man and God. God so loved the world that He sent His only Son, Jesus Christ to die on the cross for our sins. He became our way or bridge back to God. To be a Christian, one only has to turn from his sins (repent) and "receive Christ." One does that through praying the "sinner's prayer."

Undoubtedly, Billy Graham was one major reason why so many churches worked together and gathered at the National Stadium. Beyond the magnetic personality of this US evangelist, however, was our shared conviction in the Gospel's message. Christians invited many friends because of this conviction.

I know of one lady who walked down the stadium steps. She was 35 years old then. She was baptised as an infant, but in her own words, was a "complete non-Christian" up till that point. She gave her life to Jesus. She moved on to become a very influential lay leader and prolific personal evangelist in one of our parishes. On that night, this lady also brought along her two daughters. The oldest daughter was 11 years old then, who also gave her life to Christ. This step changed and shaped the rest of her life. Her daughter became very active in her faith as a secondary student, junior college student and later in her student's life at varsity. She became a general practitioner and active in witnessing

to the Gospel. Eventually, she became married to a clergy. I know this for a fact because this clergy was me.

Those who were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

Just as I am, without one plea,

But that Thy blood was shed for me,

And that Thou bid'st me come to Thee,

O Lamb of God, I come! I come!

We may not be singing this hymn in next year's Celebration of Hope (COH) rallies. But the Gospel truth is the same. We may have many reasons to participate in COH. But this conviction needs to be at the heart of it all.

## PEACE WITH MAN

This may be lost to us today but the idea that a Jew and Gentile can be the same was unthinkable to a traditional Jew, no less to St Paul himself. That the cross can make us *One Man* has always been one of the glorious messages and impacts of the Gospel.

One of the greatest phenomena of our time is the presence of foreign workers. More people than ever, it seems, are displaced from their own homes and families in search of a better life.





What foreigners want above all is to be accepted. Some bring their families along and stay more permanently. The ultimate sign of that acceptance is to receive citizenship in the country they have adopted as their own. Their new passport is often their proudest possession. At last, they can hold their heads up and build a new sense of identity. Now they can say the pledge, proudly with their hand to their chest. They have arrived. They belong. That was my experience 10 years ago.

But long before I received my pink ID card, it was the church which was home and family to me. For resident foreigners in Singapore today - whether they are temporary residents, permanent residents or new citizens - the church can offer this "One Man" experience. To be loved and accepted as a fellow human being. Even if some legal rights are different, we can share similar spiritual, social and moral rights.

There are hundreds of foreigners, mostly Myanmar workers, who gather on Cathedral grounds every Sunday. I can recall my first few weeks here as the new Vicar. I went to the Franciscan Center to make a new cassock for myself. When Sister Theresa found out that I was the new Vicar of the Cathedral, she sat me down. She wanted to tell me something which was very important. "Vicar, it is about the hundreds of foreigners on your ground." And she proceeded to tell me what some churches are doing for foreign workers every Sunday: language classes, sewing classes,

cooking classes, concerts and so on. I must admit that I felt my blood pressure rising. How will we find the energy to do all these in the Cathedral?

I can testify, that today, three years later, some of these are happening now on a regular basis on our grounds. We are thankful to the dedicated staff and member volunteers in our Befriending Myanmar Workers (BMW) ministry - from the English and Mandarin congregation and our brothers and sisters from the Myanmar Worship Service (MWS). We have moved from seeing them as a problem to manage to people whom we can minister to. When the opportunity arises, the Gospel will be shared. Some have started to attend the MWS.

2019 is very different from 1978 in this aspect as the variety and number of foreigners have increased manifold. There will be rallies for the Chinese speaking as one obvious group to be reached will be those from mainland China. There will also be one in the Indian languages and one for the Filipinos. Many of the other foreigners will understand some basic English and with some help with translation, can be invited to the stadium. As they come here to find a better life, may they be given the opportunity to hear the Gospel.

As our nation celebrates her 200th year of existence as a modern nation, we are reminded that Singapore is unique amongst the major cities in Asia. Beijing, Calcutta, and Tokyo have centuries of civilisations behind them. When you visit these cities, you experience a city culture deeply rooted in her civilisation and racial identity.

Singapore is a nation made up largely of foreigners without a single discernible racial or local culture which could claim affinity to the land. Many peoples and cultures have cobbled together to create a new city. In such a context, the two-fold Gospel message of reconciliation has an even more meaningful relevance.

Peace with God. Peace with Man.

In a Year of Hope, let us be a loving witness of this Gospel message.



# GRAHAM WHITE

## A Legacy of Faith

by Sharon Lim and Titus Zheng

In the hustle and bustle of Sunday mornings, hundreds of church faithfuls flock to the Nave to make it in time for services at St. Andrew's Cathedral. As many would quickly pass by the North Transept Hall located next to the Nave, it is easy to overlook the historical significance of the space which houses the Graham White Library that was completed in 1952. In this article, we delve deeper into the person that the library was named after and explore why the Cathedral chose to honour Graham White in such a manner, along with the legacy that he left behind for the Anglican Church in Singapore.

### ROAD TO MALAYA

Educated at University College, Oxford, Graham White first came to the region in 1925, when he was instituted as Chaplain of South Perak. Before his posting to British Malaya, White was Vicar at the Church of St. Hilda and St. Helen from 1920 to 1925, where he served the coal mining community in the township of Dawdon, northeast England. After 6 years in Perak, White was installed as Archdeacon of Singapore on 21 June 1931, at an Evensong service at St Andrew's Cathedral.

During White's tenure as Archdeacon, Singapore faced a period of economic uncertainty as the effects of the worldwide Great Depression were also felt in this part of the world. The fall in demand for commodities such as tin and rubber affected trade and had a negative impact on businesses, wages and employment. As Archdeacon, White felt that more could be done for the welfare of the local people and understood the importance



of reaching out beyond the four walls of the Cathedral.

He played an instrumental role in setting up two churches on the outskirts of the city, so that the Church could remain accessible to those who may not have had the financial capacity to travel from rural outlying communities to the city where the Cathedral is located. With this vision in mind, White played an instrumental role in establishing two churches in the 1930s: St. Paul's Church in Upper Serangoon and St. Hilda's Church in Katong. White was extensively involved in the foundation of St Hilda's Church and School. In

a strong act of faith, he dipped into his own personal savings to purchase the plot of land at 41 Ceylon Road so as to secure a long-term future for the church and school.

### THE FALL OF SINGAPORE

The peaceful years did not last long, as World War II dawned upon Singapore with the December 1941 Japanese attacks on Pearl Harbour and Southeast Asia. While most locals assumed the Japanese would not attack due to the strong British military presence, the Japanese launched their first daytime raids in Singapore in January 1942, thus marking the beginning of the Japanese invasion of Malaya.

The Japanese raids affected Archdeacon White personally, with the death of his own secretary Joseph who was killed instantaneously when the bombs fell as he was standing on the verandah of White's garden. Despite this tragic event at the Cathedral House, White continued to press on and minister to the people. Together with his wife

Georgina, they went to places where help was needed the most such as the General Hospital which faced an increasing number of casualties from the heavy bombing raids. In addition to arranging for Sunday Services at the Cathedral, White went around hospital wards to meet with wounded soldiers and civilians while his wife continued her work with the Red Cross.

The "Gibraltar of the East," as Singapore was known then, finally fell on 15 February 1942, and the Whites soon found themselves interned as Prisoners of War (POW) with other British and European civilians. By God's grace, the incoming Japanese Officer in charge of Religious Affairs was a member of the Nippon Sei Ko Kai, the Anglican Church of Japan.

Lieutenant Andrew Tokuji Ogawa was sympathetic towards the plight of the Church during the war years and maintained cordial relations with the Anglican clergy. Ogawa helped to secure the release of three clergymen from internment. On 22 February, Bishop Wilson, the Bishop of Singapore

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Australian War Memorial



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received passes for himself and two others to move at will around Singapore and have use of two cars. Holding a senior position in the Diocese, Archdeacon White was also offered the same pass to roam free in occupied Singapore. However, he was aware that he was not in the best of health and chose to sacrifice his freedom so that younger clergy could best attend to the needs of the Church during the war years.

### **PRISONER OF WAR**

Archdeacon White would have known that his decision would result in his confinement as a Prisoner of War in the Changi Prison. In spite of these tribulations, White and his wife played an important role in raising morale and ministering to the spiritual needs of the interned. In addition to preaching at services, White sought to maintain some form of church routine in camp by holding classes for Confirmation candidates, prospective ordinands and New Testament Bible study groups. Perhaps taking comfort and inspiration, he also conducted a special study of St. Paul the Apostle who was imprisoned for preaching Christ's gospel.

In May 1944, both husband and wife were moved from Changi to another prison camp at Sime Road intended for civilians. However, they struggled with frail health during their internment—food was scarce while the overcrowded camps had poor standards of hygiene with little medical treatment available for the multiple cases of diarrhoea and dysentery.

Georgina White passed away in January 1945. Her loss was felt keenly at the Women's

Camp as she was a pillar of support for those around her. A few months after his wife's passing, Graham White underwent an operation and died less than a week later on 8 May 1945, at the age of 61, from bronchial troubles and a sudden attack of diarrhoea which took away his strength. Bishop Wilson was by the Archdeacon's side at his passing and a memorial service was held in Camp which remembered his generous nature and services to education.

### **A MAN OF FAITH**

However, not all was lost with this man of faith. In his last days at Sime Road Camp, Archdeacon White executed the declaration of trust in the presence of two English solicitors. This 17-page legal document included a title deed for 41 Ceylon Road, which Graham White dedicated for the purpose of an Anglican church or school for children of all races and creeds whether Christian or non-Christian. Even in a weakened physical state, the welfare and future of the church that he founded prior to the war weighed heavily on his mind.

Although the Archdeacon and his wife passed away at Sime Road internment camp in the last months prior to the Japanese surrender, their behaviour and conduct during the War reflected the couple's devotion in serving others for the extension of the Lord regardless of one's circumstances. While there may be a physical memorial at the Cathedral for Graham White in the form of a library, we can also learn about what it means to fight the good fight and to finish the race well (2 Timothy 4:7) from his service and sacrifices.

# MADE READY for the MANY PRESSURES of ORDAINED MINISTRY

by Edmond Chua



**THE CATHEDRAL WELCOMES** the Revd Joshua Raj, a married father of three who will be serving in various areas of ministry, notably in pioneering our planned Tamil service. In this interview, we catch up with him during the workweek (November 27, 2018) in the midst of his busyness – he was between meetings and in his BB polo tee – to find out more about his roles at the Cathedral – and the warm-hearted Reverend happily obliged!

**THE COURIER (TC):** Hi Revd Joshua! Welcome to the Cathedral family! Could you begin by telling me a bit about yourself? How did you become a Christian?

**The Revd Joshua Raj (JR):** I come from a non-Christian background and I was very involved in the faith of my parents. And then at the end of 1985, two very shocking incidences happened to my family one after another, and that really made me question about where the god that I was worshipping was. It was at that time [that] a cousin, brother, of mine came and called me and my brother aside, and he shared the gospel to us. I was a bit surprised because this person was affected by what happened to my family. I approached a school friend of mine who I knew was attending church, and I said, "Can I attend your church?" It was a Saturday evening service, and when the altar call was given, I went forward, and gave my life to Christ. I was so burdened about what was happening at home, I was only 18 at that time. But after surrendering my life to Christ that night, when I went home, I just went to bed. And that was when I had this strong feeling of a huge burden, a boulder, taken off my shoulder and then I just felt this indescribable peace coming upon my heart and my mind. That was when I realised, "This must be the true God."

**TC:** What was the primary and main impetus for your going into fulltime ministry?

**JR:** I felt that I had a calling to fulltime ministry maybe a year or so after I came to know the

# I HAVE A DESIRE THAT WE MUST GROW AND REACH OUT – TO THE LOST, BROKEN, NEEDY, LONELY.

Lord. I was involved in key leadership in the church over the years, and then after some time I was working fulltime with the Boys' Brigade. But I still did not feel that satisfaction and I knew there was something even more. It was interestingly only after I gave up the idea of going into fulltime ministry [that] the door opened for me to go into Bible school. My pastor encouraged me to enroll into Trinity Theological College. I graduated in 2013.

**TC:** Do you mind sharing about your involvement in pioneering a new Tamil service at the Cathedral? How did those talks begin?

**JR:** I finished Bible school in 2013. It was then that Bishop suggested that in 2014 January I would be posted to St Andrew's Cathedral to start a Tamil-speaking work. But it didn't materialise. And after my three years at Chapel of Christ the Redeemer, it was then that Bishop assured [me] that when the new vicar was posted in he would send me to Cathedral to start the Tamil work. Bishop felt I would be the right person to pioneer this work because I was involved in a pioneering work in my previous church where I served for 28 years. I wasn't [the] pioneer, but I was there in the early stages.





**TC:** Was that previous experience also in pioneering a Tamil service?

**JR:** Yes. We were a small Tamil fellowship. The congregation grew steadily until we became a parish in 1992.

**TC:** May I ask which parish?

**JR:** My Saviour's Church. It was the Tamil fellowship of Church of Our Saviour.

**TC:** What will this service look like in terms of its vision for its community of God's people who will gather there?

**JR:** My desire is of course to see growth. Cathedral being Cathedral, many people would like to join or visit because it's the Cathedral. But whatever their intentions might be, of course I'll welcome them. Anybody is welcome to attend. But my vision and desire will not be for someone just to come and sit, just make up the numbers, or just fill up the space. I have a desire that we must grow and reach out – to the lost, broken, needy, lonely.

**TC:** You are also the newly appointed Christian Education priest-in-charge. Can you talk about your hopes for CE?

**JR:** Basically, now I'm just in charge of the Baptism and Confirmation course. It should not be just something for them to go through but something for them to experience and to start on the right foot, to start with the right foundation. I'd rather it be a memorable experience for them, a time also where the candidates can encounter God through the lessons, through the group discussions and even through the teaching sessions.

**TC:** Apart from all that, you are also attached to the Saturday 4.30pm Service as a fulltime staff member. What kind of function will you serve there?

**JR:** We're still in the process of working things out with Revd Freddy. For now I see my role

as assisting him in all he needs to do. We have not defined an actual role [for me].

**TC:** Do you have any particular hopes for the Saturday Service, personally speaking?

**JR:** Personally of course we want it to grow, and of course a stronger bond, fellowship, among the people.

**TC:** Have I missed any area of ministry?

**JR:** I was just appointed as the chaplain of BB.

**TC:** It seems that you have a part in so many things! What might your past ministry experience have taught you about coping with pressure?

**JR:** It was at my 'home' church, My Saviour's Church. It was the year 1994.

I was planning my wedding which was to take place in April, I acted as Jesus Christ for our Good Friday Evangelistic Drama in March, I was the Chairman of the Healing Rally Organising Committee which was to take place in June, and I was also planning for a Mission trip in July to India and Sri Lanka.

By God's grace, I got it all done within the space of 6 months. It was a hectic period but O thank God for the learning experience.

And then in the year 2015, I was suddenly posted to Chapel of Christ the Redeemer, when they had no Vicar. They only had an acting vicar, he was not resident. [For] three years I served there as the lead pastor. I had to see to the day to day running of the church. It was quite intense for me to get to know the church and bring it together, get to understand the ministries, on top of my own personal challenges, taking care of my family. But by God's grace, things worked out well. I've learned to realise that it's the Lord who builds the ministry and we're merely instruments, committed, available instruments. The Lord will take care of the rest. So just trust in Him, no matter how much pressure you may feel. Just trust in Him and He will take care of all things.



# THERE'S **NO** **RUNNING** **AWAY** FROM GOD

A conversation with  
Revd Hambali Leonardi

by Phillip Towndrow

Revd Hambali Leornardi was ordained in May 2018,  
and is currently pastoring the 11:30AM contemporary Service.  
We met in the Cathedral Café to chat about his work and faith journey.

**PT:** When did you first come to St. Andrew's?

**HL:** My father brought me thinking it was a Roman Catholic church! It was during my National Service. At that time the pastor was Rev'd Alex Paatan and he had a very thick Tagalog accent that I didn't understand.

One day, I had an incident that caused me to feel very disgusted with myself. My father was overseas. So, I came to the 11:00AM service on my own and asked God to forgive and cleanse me.

I had a sense of renewal, a sense of receiving that grace and mercy from God. I then signed up for a baptism course. After I became a Christian, everything Rev'd Paatan shared made sense. So, you literally need to be born again to understand.

**PT:** How did you move into full-time service?

**HL:** After I was baptised and confirmed, I was involved in CityKids and was their mascot. I had to wear shorts like Paddington Bear with a blue cap and make a fool out of myself just to get the children excited.

Then, I attended a Lenten Devotion. Dr. Joseph Ozawa did an altar call for anyone

who wanted to do full-time ministry. I thought God was calling me and I went up and gave my life to Him.

But the door sort of closed and there were very few opportunities at that time. So, I finished my National Service and later graduated with a degree in Business from the University of San Francisco.

After National Service, I applied to MOE to be a teacher but they didn't recognize my overseas degree. I was willing to take up the offer of a non-graduate teaching position, but I received a call telling me there was an opening at St. Andrew's for a children's worker. I accepted it as this was what I wanted to do.

**PT:** Is that when you started your theological training?

**HL:** No, the Dean (Rev'd Dr. John Tay) at that time didn't think I was ready. I'd only been a Christian for about three or four years and I didn't think I was prepared either. After some time and encouragement, I enrolled at Trinity Theological College as a part-time student. I graduated with a Master's of Divinity in 2005, and then became a parish worker.

*Baptism, 1997*



*Cambodia Mission, 2005*





**PT:** Then there was a long gap.

**HL:** Ah, the tenuous waiting and running away!

**PT:** So, what was happening during that period?

**HL:** The new Dean (Bishop Kuan Kim Seng) asked if I would like to go for ordination but I declined. Once again, I felt I wasn't ready and was quite happy to continue in the children's and youth ministries.

**PT:** So, what eventually changed?

**HL:** Good question! Canon Terry (Wong) wanted to start a new ministry—the 11:30AM Service—to engage young people and he asked me to helm it as the pastor. At first, I didn't see myself as a minister to adults and young adults and so it sort of awakened me.

Canon Terry suggested I go for a vocational retreat for candidates to discern whether ordination is a path they want to follow. I decided to go but had a lot of fear. But God guided and encouraged me. For example, we stayed at the Montfort Retreat Centre and one of the famous quotes of the founder, St. Louis Marie de Montfort, is 'If we do not risk anything for God we will never do anything

great for Him.' It was everywhere and it spoke to me.

**PT:** What was it like during the preparation for ordination?

**HL:** I had to go for three more retreats over a period of about a year. Each one built up my confidence and courage. Ordination is a bit like a marriage and I had like three thousand in-laws!

**PT:** How is the 11:30AM service progressing?

**HL:** I think there are more ups than downs. It's sometimes a challenge for me, personally, to craft good sermons that connect with young people. How to make God's Word relevant and exciting for this generation? Something that's not too simplistic but intellectually and spiritually stimulating.

**PT:** You've also been working on Alpha and recently took over as the coordinator for the adult's course. Can you tell us about that?

**HL:** We have an excellent food ministry and that's a major draw. But in the end, I think Alpha is a tool. It's attractive, very engaging and it gives space for people to just ask and explore about life. People feel safe and don't feel judged.





**PT:** You've been on quite a journey from those early days. Did you ever think you'd ever get to this point?

**HL:** When I was in kindergarten they would bring us for a chapel service. One memory that stuck with me was that the Pastor would celebrate something—I'm not quite sure what happened—but when I went home I would put on a towel with a clip and pretend to be a Pastor taking the offertory. And I would play with my sisters' friends; I would pretend to preach and collect ... my favourite part was collecting money. Imagine that! When I was wrestling about whether I should go for ordination, God reminded me of this memory. And I said, 'Okay, alright, no running away.'

**PT:** Do you feel you're now taking risks in order to do great things for God?

**HL:** Yes, I'm certainly taking a risk but I think I need to take more. Once you're ordained and in a certain kind of position you can

lose your cutting edge. I don't want to be too comfortable. They always like to say, "God comfort the disturbed and disturb the comfortable."

**PT:** Can you share one thing about yourself that we might find surprising?

**HL:** Although I look like a person who doesn't exercise, I enjoy doing Crossfit at a nearby gym. I took up sports early last year and I have been hooked ever since. I love the workout challenges and community.

**PT:** Is there anything else you'd like to add?

**HL:** I'm very thankful for the Cathedral community for trusting and supporting me in prayer. Showing love and care. Discipling and rebuking me. Again, it really takes a village to raise a Deacon! You know, I joined the Cathedral when I was a young adult—an old teenager in that sense—and its given me chances and made me feel welcome. I'm very thankful for that. I'm a product of St. Andrew's Cathedral. And I pray that there'll be many more young people out there in our community who will be used by God in other ways.

**PT:** Well, thank you for being a pastor. We need people like you.

**HL:** Thank you.



# A SPARK IN THE WORKPLACE

## MY ALPHA EXPERIENCE

by Laurence Lim

Alpha

Every follower of Christ can be a spark in the workplace, no matter what our position or status is a company. By "spark," I mean being a witness and testimony to our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Let me share my experience of running the Alpha course at my workplace, and how God has been my guide, my rock and my fortress throughout my journey with Alpha.

If you've not heard of Alpha, it is an interactive course that explores the basics of the Christian faith. At Alpha, everyone can share his or her views freely and ask any question about Christianity. It has been used for outreach in churches, prisons, homes, and workplaces. A typical Alpha course has 11 sessions with an optional weekend getaway. It revolves around three main elements: food, a talk, and a group discussion in a relaxed and friendly environment.

What prompted me to serve in this ministry? Over the years as a Christian, I have come to realise that there are two privileges God has blessed me with.

The first is my salvation, which is the privilege to enter into an intimate and eternal relationship with God. The second is the opportunity to serve Him with good works, which He performs through us. Both these privileges are a result of God's grace through His Son Jesus Christ.

With these entitlements in mind, I was challenged to share the Gospel in the workplace 30 years ago. However, nothing actually happened during the first ten years. I could not find any Christians or was not aware of any—maybe, they were just like me: "Undercover Christians" who were focused on their jobs. However, I kept praying for God's direction, prompting and guidance.

In the 1990s, I was introduced to Alpha at St. Andrew's Cathedral. I was invited to attend the course and during the Holy Spirit evening near the end of the course, I witnessed an



amazing anointing of the Holy Spirit on many guests and church members. That experience ignited my passion and desire to reach out to the lost through Alpha. I participated in several more Alpha courses at the Cathedral, and subsequently, after training, I was asked to lead discussion groups.

My experience with Alpha at the workplace came in 2000, when my company merged with another. As the two parts were still in different locations, we communicated with our new colleagues through phone and email. One morning, as I was going through my email, something caught my eye: An email not addressed to me. The sender was from the other company. Its contents surprised me as it was about inviting someone to come together to pray and participate in the Alpha course. I could not believe it! I told the sender the message was sent to the wrong person, but added that I was familiar with Alpha. The sender immediately replied saying help was needed, and invited me to be part of the core team. We spoke over the phone, and later met in person. It was truly God's divine arrangement that we met through this misdirected email.

Praise God! We formed a core team and started to publicise the course. To our surprise, many Christians in the office volunteered to help, and at the first run, close to 120 invited guests came. The response was overwhelming. Many were seekers and we were very encouraged by what God was doing.

We continued to run Alpha twice a year and even started inviting people from other companies around our office complex. The results were beyond our imagination. Thank God for the many brothers- and sisters-in-Christ in our company who answered the call to serve with joy, unity, and dedication in spite of their busy travel schedules. Today, Alpha is still going strong in the company.

I retired in 2006, after serving 34 years in the company. The year before my retirement, as I was driving to work one morning along the CTE, I prayed to God asking for clear direction if I should continue to be involved in Alpha after my retirement. As I prayed, a vision

came to my mind: It was Christ on the cross. I wept, remembering that Christ Jesus died so that many would be saved and reconciled to God. It was a clear reminder about His great commission for Christians to reach out to the lost. I knew then what I had to do.

After retiring, I began serving at Alpha Singapore as the Alpha Workplace Coordinator and later as the God-at-Work Coordinator, providing course facilitation and training to those who wanted to run Alpha at their workplace.

The Alpha experience has been tremendous, as it has given me the opportunity to meet and share with many Christians and seekers in various workplaces across Singapore, from MNCs and government to private companies.

Over the years of involvement in the training and facilitating of Alpha courses in church and the workplace, and partnering brothers- and sisters-in-Christ from different companies, I have been very encouraged by their commitment, unity, zeal, and passion for the lost. Without a committed and dedicated team, it would be impossible to run the course.



I know that it is truly God's amazing grace—and not my own capability—that enabled this to happen. When God wants us to do something, He will give us the ability to do it; we just have to trust and obey. When we put Him at the centre of our lives, He will provide all the resources and manpower.

I've seen Alpha transform many lives in the workplace where God is at work. Therefore, we need to be ready at all times to partner Him.

How can you start an Alpha outreach initiative in your workplace? Allow me to share what I have learnt through my experience with Alpha at the workplace:

1. If there is already a Christian fellowship group in your workplace whose passion is for the lost, running Alpha would be easier. The important factor is to always commit the initiative to the Lord in prayer.
2. The team must have a passion and desire to reach out to the lost, and be fully committed.
3. If there is no Christian fellowship group in your workplace, pray for God to mobilise Christians with you as the initiator.
4. You can run an Alpha course at the workplace in an hour, for example, during lunchtime. The talks, which can be done by speakers or through videos, don't last more than 25 minutes.

The Bible encourages us with these words:

"Behold, I am the LORD, the God of all flesh. Is anything too difficult for Me?"  
Jeremiah 32:27

"For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, 'The righteous shall live by faith.' " Romans 1:16-17

Brothers- and sisters-in-Christ, this is the season of harvest and opportunity to reach

out to your colleagues, friends and loved ones. Bring hope to the lost.

Let me encourage you to rise up to the call, and consider either running the Alpha course at your workplace or serving as a volunteer at the Cathedral's Alpha course for the Workplace. Let's win one more soul for our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

# ALPHA EVERYWHERE


**IMAGINE THIS:** the opportunity to invite your colleagues and friends to a warm community where they can be introduced to Jesus Christ. Anytime. Anywhere.

In conjunction with the Celebration of Hope, we're looking at two seasons of Alpha—one before, and one after. We're excited about the incoming harvest, and we want to provide a community where anyone, everyone, can find their footing on the Truth of the Gospel. We are encouraging Cathedral members to bring Alpha right to your workplace. Whether you work or live in the North, South, East, West, or Central areas, we've got you covered.

These runs will be synchronised—that means your friends don't have to worry about missing a session. They just have to attend another run within the same week.

We're inviting you to partner with us in making this dream a reality. The Year of Proclamation is here. Let's be His witnesses. Together with our Lord, let's extend His Kingdom here in Singapore!

If you are a Cathedral member and would like to run Alpha at your workplace, please contact Andrew Ho at [andrewho@cathedral.org.sg](mailto:andrewho@cathedral.org.sg)



**Life  
Faith  
Meaning**

# **ALPHA**

**20 Feb - 15 May 2019**

**7pm**

**ST ANDREW'S  
CATHEDRAL**

**INTRO DINNER  
20 FEB 2019, 7PM**

Registration: [www.cathedral.org.sg/alpha](http://www.cathedral.org.sg/alpha)



# On the Importance of Online Communities and Chat Groups

by Dr Irene Chua



We all know of the perils and temptations of checking our mobile 'phones throughout the day, but I recently discovered the uplifting and comforting benefits of WhatsApp Christian chat groups during a recent family medical situation.

## **PRAYERS FOR HEALING**

My son, Darren, was gravely ill. In the first few critical days, I felt it imperative to inform my Christian friends. I alerted several chat groups of family and friends, including the Petals Ministry prayer group at St. Andrews Cathedral to pray for him. The outpouring of concern and prayer for God's healing buoyed up our family's faith. It became their concern as much as ours. For three weeks, as I daily updated the doctor's reports on the chat group, I experienced an overwhelming sense of being supported. My son was their son, my anxiety was their anxiety.

Teary-eyed, I also asked Bishop Rennis Ponniah to pray for Darren and he cried out to God on my behalf. From that moment my faith strengthened. I dared to claim God's protection over His children and had a deep assurance that my son would be healed. God truly stopped the bacteria in its tracks and in His mercy, Darren was discharged from hospital after three weeks. He has since made a full recovery.

## **A PRAYING CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY**

When something devastating happens to you, like a child who falls and bruises his knee looks up to his parent, we look around for sympathetic people to inform.

When you know other people care, you feel supported and your distress is validated. You receive strength to carry on, become optimistic and thankful instead of fearing the worst. Your faith increases and you dare to pray boldly.

In my situation, having informed others of my son's illness, I felt it was my responsibility to update the chat groups regarding the unfolding situation and I was preoccupied with sending updates, instead of worrying. I had a praying community behind me and I felt comforted and strong.

Acts 2, describes the early Christian community, how after Pentecost, presumably by word of mouth, they informed each other to meet in each others' houses, where they shared their food and had things in common. They also witnessed signs and wonders in

their midst. Many non-believers who found faith were added to the community. The Holy Spirit was connecting people together with one heart.

## **ONLINE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITIES**

If the oneness of the early Christian community described in Acts happened when communication was mainly by word of mouth and the writing of letters, what more can happen in our day? The Holy Spirit can do a mighty work in our midst too when we can connect with each other so much more speedily and inform through social media—Facebook and WhatsApp chats.

It takes initiative and courage to go out of your way to befriend someone even in Church. Really connecting begins with listening, being genuinely interested, taking note, and intentionally remembering to follow up. It may not be enough to say, "I will pray for you." People may need tangible help and it takes time and effort to find ways and means to lend a helping hand.

Communicating on WhatsApp and chat groups is an easy and convenient way to extend and deepen these friendships. They can even evolve into new support groups.

A retiree, like me, can stay in touch with friends and make new friends, ask for advice, get help, learn new things, and realize there are different perspectives on the problems we experience. Older folk who know they are connected with the world and their friends need not feel isolated. They have an almost instant way of connecting with others and someone to 'talk' to.

This can be a great source of comfort, companionship and meeting of their needs. People must trust enough to be unafraid to share their needs and have the courage to share and ask for help. In chat groups, members who encourage others also encourage them to care.

## **NEGATIVE ASPECTS**

While there many positive things about online chat groups, there are also some negative aspects to be keenly aware of. These have the

potential to destroy relationships and hurt members.

For example, some might feel misunderstood or uncomfortable that their personal story is exposed to others. They might sense that they are being gossiped about or threatened.

Problems may also arise such as the breaching of confidentiality, use of abusive language, and a lack of understanding which may deteriorate a chat group into a gossip site.



### SENSITIVITY

As with other forms of interpersonal communication, comments and responses to each other in online chat groups need to be expressed with sensitivity and deliberation. It is also worth knowing that not responding to another is also a response.

Additionally, we need to be mindful that when we offer to help, there can be a strain on our own resources and personal boundaries. For example, someone in need might contact you at all hours or demand funding beyond what you can manage. In such cases you might want to refer them to the church or social services.



### ADMINISTRATION

Therefore caring online chat groups must be well administered and members carefully selected. Importantly, chat members need to exercise self-censorship. A good guide is to abide by Scripture, "whatsoever is true, whatever is honourable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever

is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things." Philippians 4:8



### MOVING AHEAD

The online chat groups I currently participate in share uplifting videos, health tips, good food, warnings of dangers that lurk and world affairs. They also reminisce about the good old days and circulate light hearted trivia. Overall, they are entertaining, encouraging and lift the spirit.

There is a limit, though, in the number of videos one can watch before it affects the use of your time for other things and distracts you from other important things.

What an older person needs is an online connected mobile device. I learnt my computer skills from my children, my community at home. We can recruit younger people, part of the wider church, to teach older folk how to use social media and WhatsApp.

Thinking about caring communities, brings to mind some lyrics from a song by Barbara Streisand, from the play 'Funny Girl' (1964):

*People,  
People who need people,  
Are the luckiest people in the world  
We're children, needing other children  
And yet letting a grown-up pride  
Hide all the need inside  
Acting more like children than children  
... First be a person who needs people.*

Older folk who know they are connected with the world and their friends need not feel isolated. They have an almost instant way of connecting with others and someone to 'talk' to.





# God's Assurance

by Margaret Tay

**M**rs. Margaret Tay attends the 9:30AM Thursday Holy Communion Service and has conducted weekly ukulele sharing sessions with the Silver Strings since 2015. In this testimony Margaret tells of how she drew on God's assurance following a roadside mishap.

I would like to share what happened to me in mid-September 2018, as a testimony of God's greatness, presence and blessings in my life.

It was a sunny afternoon. I was walking along a shady pavement on my way home. I noticed a car had parked across the pavement about 10 metres ahead. As it was blocking my way, I had no choice but to step off the pavement and walk along the road for a short distance. Suddenly, I felt like I was being slammed by a wall that was crushing down on me. I was thrown down and my body literally bounced on the road until I came to a standstill.

"Get up! Get up!" I told myself. Praise the Lord. I struggled to my feet and managed to stand up quite straight. Then I bent a little to touch my knees. I even managed to take a few small steps. I was so happy. I exclaimed, "Thank You God, no bones broken!"

I noticed a large bump on my head. There wasn't any bleeding but my torso was numb. Meanwhile, there was a woman standing by watching me and I asked her what had happened.

She looked at me and said sheepishly, "Sorry aunty. I was reversing my car and knocked you down." She then offered to take me to see a doctor.

At that point in time, I was just very confident I was well. For what ever reason, I wasn't sure. I think it was God's assurance. I thanked the woman driver for her kind offer and we parted.

I continued to walk another 30 metres to my house.

When I was home, my family members checked me over. Besides the bump on my head and the soreness of my torso, they couldn't find a single scratch or a bruise. Even a glass bottle of jam I was carrying survived the ordeal. Again, I praised the Lord. Once again, they wanted to take me to the hospital but I refused once more. I knew I was well because of God's assurance.

After the accident, my friends gave me a good scolding. They said, "Margaret, you are too kind. You should have made a police report to safeguard yourself in case of injuries which require mega treatment, the medical fees could be very high." I wasn't dismayed.

Three days after the accident, I joined the Silver Strings to visit St. Hilda's Service Centre in the morning and the Anglican Care Centre at IMH in the afternoon to cheer up the residents. I shared my story with the residents of St. Hilda's and they told me they believed Jesus was carrying me.

A week after the accident I came upon a verse in the Bible I thought was talking to me. scripture—Joshua 1:9.

Be strong, and of good courage; do not be afraid nor be dismayed for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go. (Joshua 1:9).

The bump on my head has long disappeared and the body pain that caused me many sleepless nights has receded tremendously. I believe I will fully recover in time to come.



# GOD'S VISION FOR

**"You better study hard, or you'll be a cleaner!"**

**"Huh? You want to be an artist?  
How to earn money?"**

**"Applying for a new job? How much is the pay?"**

by Jillian Lee



# EDUCATION

Many of us would be familiar with these statements uttered by our well-meaning parents and teachers. The need to study hard to get a certificate in order to get a good job and secure your future is ingrained into our national psyche. It's a competitive, individualistic system that is based on a survival of the fittest mentality. We see it in kids starting enrichment classes from the time they're two years old, parents doing all they can to get their kids into the best kindergartens and primary schools, University students trying to outbid each other for spots in the most popular classes and internships placements, and so on. The goal? To pursue the "good life" as found in financial stability and material comforts for self and family.

This system has produced students who have done well on the international stage, as reflected by our stellar PISA and IB scores. But it has also come at a high cost, evidenced by the growing numbers of youth who suffer from depression and anxiety (The Straits Times, 18 May 2018), the rising numbers of suicides (The New Paper, 30 May 2018), and young people who find little meaning in life (The Straits Times, 17 May 2018).

Clearly, something is wrong. We hate this pressure-cooker system and lament that our kids have been robbed of their childhood. We may be able to afford our condos and

family holidays, but often at the expense of personal health and precious time with our families. Yet too often our default reaction is, "no choice – what to do? If they don't score, they can't find a good job." Or we blame the government for not changing their criteria for hiring. But do we really have no choice in shaping the educational journey of our next generation? And is this really the "good life" that God intended for us to live?

Fortunately for Christians, there is good news. We have a better reason for all our schooling years and beyond, and it has everything to do with the God and His Kingdom: education is about learning to love God and His people, and being equipped to serve in His kingdom.

## LOVING GOD WITH OUR MINDS

Our minds have been given to us by God. Just like our bodies, they are a gift that we are to steward well. To ensure our minds do not grow flabby, we need to exercise them by memorizing, sorting, connecting, wrestling, problem-solving, creating, analyzing, exploring and questioning – the very same things that we do in school!

But does it mean that thinking about anything and everything is a way of loving the Lord with our minds? Scripture tells us to take every thought captive to Christ (2 Cor. 10:5)



Jillian Lee is the Principal of Sterling Campus, a ministry that works with churches and schools to offer training in the area of faith-Life integration. Look out for their various Re-Source: Gap and Marketplace courses coming up in 2019!



**OUR MINDS HAVE  
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and not to be conformed to this world, but to be transformed by the renewing of our minds (Romans 12:1-2). That means we need to strengthen our minds to think God's thoughts after Him and to understand how His truths speak into our materialistic, secular, post-modern, post-truth world. In other words, our next generation must be trained not just to think critically, but also Christianly, about all things.

Indeed, loving the Lord with our minds is not confined to memorizing and meditating on God's Word, as important as those are. It also means deeply contemplating all of God's World – because He created every corner of it. Christ, the Logos, preeminent in all things (Col. 1:15-19) and in whom all treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden (Col 2:3), invites us to discover aspects of his infinite wisdom through every subject we study.

Math then is no longer just about numbers and equations; it reveals the order and beauty of God the Greatest Mathematician who graciously gave us a language that would help us understand and explain His world. History is not about memorizing boring facts, but a study of God's providence and grace over generations. The sciences reveal His

precision, ingenious creativity and tender care towards all creation, and languages become a way of exploring God's love for His people and His desire to communicate with them! Every subject gives us an opportunity to love and worship the Lord anew.

### **LOVING NEIGHBOR AS SELF**

Education is also intrinsically tied to the second part of the greatest commandment – to love neighbor as self. Rather than collecting certificates for our own vain-glory and better promotional prospects, this commandment reminds us that the obtaining of knowledge and skills must be for the benefit of others.

In school, students learn about teamwork, how to deal with stress and leadership skills, all of which hone godly character and teach us how to love our neighbor better. But through education, students specifically learn the knowledge and skills they need to love and serve others with competence. God, the Master Designer and Craftsman, cares about good work. Over the six days of creation, God looked at all that He had made and said that it was *tov*, meaning good, beautiful, fitted to its design and purpose. As image-bearers and stewards, our work

should be good too. The process of education helps us hone our craft in writing, calculating, designing, and building. We are learning to love our neighbor by making life a bit more beautiful, comfortable, just, kind, orderly, and good for our communities and society.

### **GOD'S VISION FOR EDUCATION**

What would it look like if Christians caught God's vision for education?

Perhaps the church would once again be a place of great learning, just as it was during the Middle Ages when monks studied not only theology, but also philosophy, astronomy, music, law and botany; or in the 17th century when Christian scientists paved the way for the flourishing of modern science.

Perhaps Christian students truly discover the joy of learning because every subject is a way of deepening their worship of God.

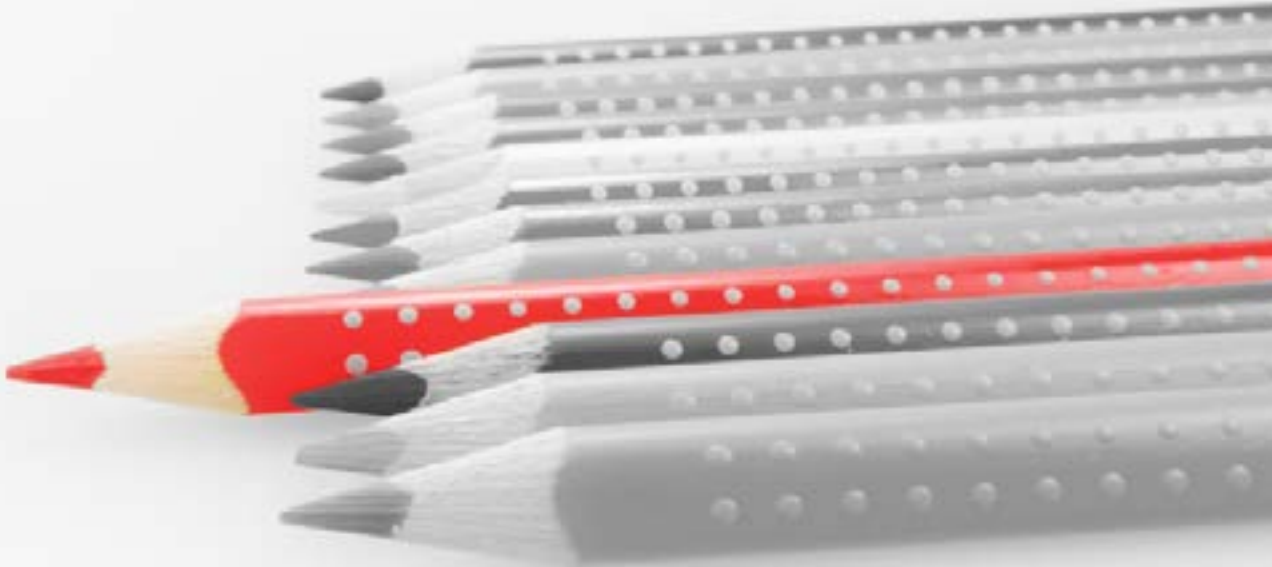
Perhaps Christian parents would be

willing to release their children to explore their God-given talents in all spheres of life (even in the arts!). And they do so because they know that helping their children discover God's call for their lives is much more important than a fat paycheck and comfortable retirement.

And perhaps all of us would find greater meaning in our jobs – whether we are administrators, engineers, teachers, IT managers, mothers, accountants or designers – because we know that all the knowledge and skills we've acquired are God's gifts to us; gifts that enable us to partner with God to bring His *shalom* into every corner of human existence.

Dare we make the choice to subscribe to God's vision for education? To measure our standards of success to His KPIs? We are more than conquerors in Christ who loved us (Romans 8:39).

**DARE WE MAKE THE CHOICE TO SUBSCRIBE  
TO GOD'S VISION FOR EDUCATION?  
TO MEASURE OUR STANDARDS OF SUCCESS  
TO HIS KPIS?**





# HOW IS JESUS ONE PERSON WITH TWO NATURES?

## Heresies and the Mainstream “Chalcedonian” Position

by Edmond Chua

*“Anything that undermines Christology is heresy.”*

Those were the words of a senior churchman, spoken to me some ten years ago, which come to mind as I write this piece, signalling as they do the continued importance of the mainstream formulation of the doctrine of Christology, or what Christians believe the Bible teaches about the person and work of Jesus Christ.

### **The Chalcedonian Definition and its Contemporary Relevance**

The mainstream doctrine of the nature and

personhood of Jesus affirms that he is one person; that is, a single centre of consciousness and decision-making; in which two natures, a divine and a human one, are united. Such a conception is enshrined in a conciliar doctrinal decision known as the Chalcedonian Definition (451). This doctrinal statement was issued in response to ideas, finally deemed heretical, pertaining to how the two natures of Jesus could be reconciled in his one person, especially that of Eutyches, and runs thus:

*Therefore, following the holy fathers, we all with one accord teach men to acknowledge one and the same Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, at once complete in Godhead and complete in manhood, truly God and truly man, consisting also of a reasonable soul and body; of one substance with the Father as regards his Godhead, and at the same time of one substance with us as regards his manhood; like us in all respects, apart from sin; as regards his Godhead, begotten of the Father before the ages, but yet as regards his manhood begotten, for us men and for our salvation, of Mary the Virgin, the Godbearer; one and the same Christ, Son, Lord, Only-begotten, recognized in two natures, without confusion, without change, without division, without separation; the distinction of natures being in no way annulled by the union, but rather the characteristics of each nature being preserved and coming together to form one person and subsistence, not as parted or separated into two persons, but one and the same Son and Only-begotten God the Word, Lord Jesus Christ; even as the prophets from earliest times spoke of him, and our Lord Jesus Christ himself taught us, and the creed of the fathers has handed down to us.*

We will shortly look at the main errors against which the Chalcedonian Definition safeguards Christian theology. For now, let it suffice to say that despite the passing of many centuries, the doctrine of the nature and personhood of Jesus remains important. The evangelical theologian Millard Erickson links the continued significance of the study of the person and work of Jesus to the fact that the person of Jesus lies at the very heart of the faith of Christian believers.

### Christological Heresies

Some took issue with the scriptural affirmations to the effect that Jesus is fully divine and fully human. The Ebionites, a Jewish-Christian sect, taught that Jesus was merely an ordinary man who was adopted by God at his baptism. Another group, the Docetists could not ultimately make sense of the dual nature of Jesus and chose to jettison his humanity because they thought that matter and change, essential qualities of humanity, were repugnant to the nature of God and absolutely irreconcilable with divinity.

The Arians held a compromise position on the nature of Jesus in contending that he is the greatest of all the beings God created, through whom he created all other things. In so teaching, they placed Jesus below God himself but above humanity and even angels. The Arians did this in order to avoid what to them was the logical implication of affirming both the Father and Son as fully God – that there are really two Gods and not one.

Eutyches (378-456), an elderly monk from Constantinople, had no issues with accepting that Jesus has both a divine and human nature. Nonetheless he could not fathom how such a being, constituted as it is of two distinct natures, could be thought of as a single person. Hence, he proposed that at the incarnation the divine and human natures in Jesus were mixed and became either a third and new hybrid nature or the divine nature swallowed up the human one.

Nestorius (386-451), a Bishop of Constantinople, took issue with the mainstream position on the nature and

personhood of Jesus because it implied that God was actually born of a woman and also left open the possibility of an overcoming by Jesus' divine nature of his humanity. Thus, he emphasised the distinctness of the divine and human natures of Jesus in a manner that seemed to some orthodox writers to separate them and split the single person of Jesus into two personalities existing in one body.

Earlier, Apollinaris (310-390), a Bishop of Laodicea, commended a theory to reconcile the two natures of Jesus in his single personhood by speculating that Jesus possesses a mind that is governed by his divine desires and not also human ones. In so doing he sought to avoid the idea that Jesus was comprised of more than one personality. During the seventh century, the monothelite controversy began as a bid to unite a beleaguered Byzantine Empire and developed into a proposition that Jesus only has one will or set of desires rather than two.

### Patristic Christology

Patristic theologians – church fathers – eventually worked out the conception of the two natures of Jesus and how they cohere in him as a single person by seeing the natures as sources of at times conflicting desires managed by the person that is Jesus Christ.

According to Gregory of Nazianzus (329-390), Leo I (400-461), and John of Damascus (676-749), the person of Jesus made room for both his divine and human natures to exercise themselves according to their desire through a well-coordinated process of mutual submission. In this perfectly harmonious interplay of opposites, sometimes Jesus subordinates his divine desires to his human ones, allowing himself to feel, desire, and act as normal humans do, and on other occasions allows his divine nature to lift up his human nature and enable the latter to perform what is humanly impossible.

On the one hand, there is the personally willed submission of the divine nature to the human nature. As a case in point, as a result of the human nature, Jesus experiences thirst when he goes without water for too long. Here, the human nature produces the desire

## The evangelical theologian Millard Erickson

links the continued significance of the study of the person and work of  
Jesus to the fact that the person of Jesus lies at the very heart  
of the faith of Christian believers.

for water, and drives an attempt to satiate thirst. As for the divine nature, it permits the human body to experience thirst and attempt to satiate it; the divine nature resists the natural urge to rid the body of any bodily desire by divinising it.

Thus, Jesus is able, *pace* Apollinaris, to think, suffer pain, and even die bodily; as well as to experience human emotions like fear, grief, and anguish. As such, Jesus was capable of becoming momentarily overcome with fear at the prospect of his imminent death as he prayed in the garden of Gethsemane, and was helped by the Father who provided timely relief to him.

On the other hand, there is also the personally willed submission of the human nature to the divine one. The divine nature empowers the human nature to do what the divine nature desires and the human nature ordinarily cannot do. In the performance of miracles, Jesus uses his human body to place his hands on the afflicted person, for example, and his divine nature produces the power to heal. In a manner of speaking, therefore, the human nature allows itself to be used by the divine nature as a physical conduit to perform miracles.

### Conclusion and Significance

The Chalcedonian conception of the nature and personhood of Jesus does justice to the fact that he has two natures in one person, not by downplaying any pertinent scriptural affirmation, but by permitting all the messiness of life as a being both fully divine and fully human, and placing this under the sovereignty of a single director that is the person of Jesus himself.

Such a doctrine has many benefits for the Christian believer, such as, *inter alia*, the reassurance it gives to the believer that Jesus being authentically human is able to understand the struggles we face, having faced those very struggles himself without falling into sin; and also serves as a role model for an obedient servant of God, empowered by the same Holy Spirit on whose divine assistance every believer, indwelt as we are by the Spirit, can count amid the spiritual warfare in which we are continually engaged.

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# Compassion Starts Young

## Sunday School Visit to SAC Home for the Aged

by Gail Chua

*"Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God." (Hebrews 13:16)*

On 18 November 2018, the quiet enclave of Block 341, Clementi Avenue 5 was filled with the sound of children's chatter and song. Two dozen children and teachers from the 11.15 am English Sunday School had arrived for a visit to St Andrew's Cathedral Home for the Aged. This clean and peaceful residential home houses a close-knit community of 25 elderly ladies above the age of 60 – the oldest resident is in her mid-90s.

Established in 1980, its inception was spearheaded by the then chairman of the Welfare committee of SAC, Mr. A.D. John, together with generous assistance from Cathedral members and the Ministry of Social Welfare. Upon entering the home, visitors step into a well-lit living and dining area, its walls decorated with photos of the residents. Off to the sides are three dormitories and a kitchen at the rear, while further down in the same block is a recreational hall.

The morning started with an icebreaker game, where children and residents were paired up via slips of paper with matching numbers. It was a good opportunity for the kids to practice speaking Mandarin, a more familiar language for many of the residents, and after an initial period of hesitation, the conversations began to flow.

The children sang two songs – 'Jesus Loves Me' in English and Mandarin, as well as '我要向高山举目', complete with actions! The next activity struck a chord with me, a 30-year



old working adult: the teachers passed around photographs of Singapore from the mid-to-late twentieth century. The ladies' faces lit up as they recognized images of yesteryear – the old Queenstown cinema, the Majestic Theatre, Haw Par Villa, Hotel New World, as well as objects like old TransitLink fare cards, which I myself used in my childhood. These were a springboard for conversation as the ladies opened up to the children about places they had visited in decades past. The children then gave out goodie bags to the residents, as well as handwritten cards which they had made in previous weeks. The visit ended with a KFC lunch being served by the children to the residents.

For my four-year-old daughter, this was the first visit to a home for the elderly. Before the visit, she had enthusiastically picked out items to donate to the Home, including fresh fruit and Nescafé coffee powder. Though she and some of the other kindergarten-aged children were not completely fluent in Mandarin, I was heartened that even these young children behaved with confidence and compassion.

The smiles on the residents' faces said it all. By God's grace, the children will continue to learn through such visits that "it is more blessed to give than to receive", and that though they may be small, they can contribute their time and gifts, and show genuine love to the less fortunate.





# INSIDE OUT

by Keith Leong

What would it be like to wear your heart on your sleeve? The prospect of displaying, confronting and processing our feelings rather than keeping them hidden may bring fear to some. It may also bring measures of excitement, invigoration and growth to others.

From a scriptural perspective, the 'heart' denotes more than feelings and emotions. It encompasses the whole inner life of a person. The 'heart' in Biblical Hebrew, i.e., *lev*, or *levav*, denotes such a constellation of traits. It includes one's moral character, willpower, and conscience.

Thus, the above question, seen through a faith lens, may be rephrased thus: what would it be like to put your moral character on display and at the front and centre of your life? The anointing of King David, the man after the Lord's heart, and its surrounding narrative offers us an occasion to reflect on this question.

## THE ROAD SO FAR

As Israel transitioned from judgeship to kingship, the last judge of Israel, Samuel, was tasked with anointing a king for Israel. When we first meet the king-to-be, Saul, he seems to the reader, to Samuel, and to Israel to be an ideal king. He is described as most handsome, something attributed to other individuals whom the LORD had chosen to do

His work, like Moses and Joseph. And in his first meeting with Samuel, he demonstrates humility when told that he would fulfill the desires of Israel.

After Samuel appoints him as king, Saul demonstrates his ability to rule almost immediately. Saul is moved to action by the Spirit of the LORD to act on behalf of the Israelites. When the Ammonites threatened the Israelites living in the city of Jabesh, Saul used shrewd military tactics to defeat them.

During his reign, the Philistines established garrisons at many places in Canaan to control and tax large areas. But Saul managed to conquer the Philistine fortress at Geba and brought an end to Philistine domination in the territory of Benjamin. He also achieved victories against Moab, Ammon, Edom, Zobah, and Amalek. After his death, we read in David's lament that Saul brought economic prosperity to Israel.

So, we can see Saul started out as a good king. But he didn't stay that way. He would soon establish a pattern of bad behavior, spewing forth from his heart, that would make God regret that he had made him king.

## THREE EXAMPLES OF SAUL'S BAD BEHAVIOUR

(1) When the Philistines were beginning to see Israel as a big threat, they assembled to fight them. Saul's men were afraid. At this

point, Saul had been told to wait days for Samuel to arrive and intervene. But he did not show up, and many of his men began to scatter. So, Saul decided to flout instructions and administer the burnt and fellowship offerings to seek God's guidance.

(2) Saul made a foolish oath: He cursed any soldier who ate food before the evening. This act of piety may have been designed to attract God's aid in battle, but it just made the soldiers hungry and exhausted. Furthermore, his son, Jonathan, who did not know about the curse, ate some honey. After Saul found out about this, in order to save face, he commanded that his son, one of his finest soldiers who achieved victory for him, be killed.

(3) Saul was instructed to completely destroy the Amalekites, the people who attacked Israel during their Exodus from Egypt. The Lord was using Israel as his instrument of judgment on them. However, instead of completely destroying them, Saul spared the king Agag and took the spoils of war. When confronted he replied insincerely: "I have sinned. But please honor me before the elders of my people and before Israel...". His comments revealed that he was only concerned with saving his face among the people.

Saul's outward confession may have taken the right form, but his inward state was not sincerely apologetic; it was not accompanied by a corresponding inner alignment towards God. And because of his insincerity, God would not reverse his decision concerning Saul and initiated the process of choosing a new king for Israel.

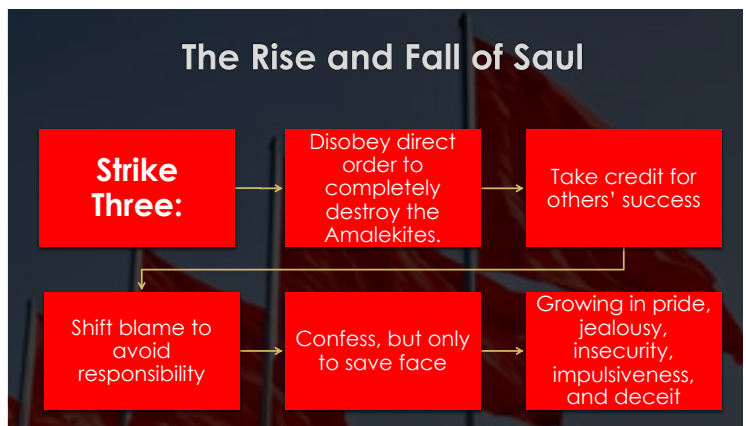
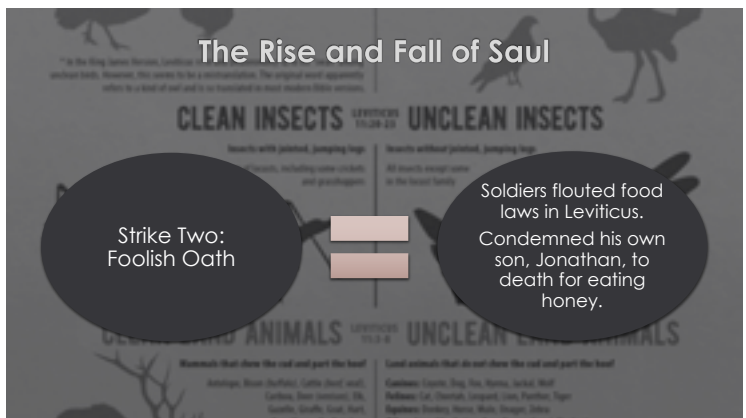


## The Rise and Fall of Saul

### Strike One: Burnt Offering

Saul rejected the higher role of the prophet, in this case, Samuel, who was both prophet and judge, as divine messenger, and who told him to wait.

Disobedience and lack of trust in God.



## The Choice of David



The Heart:

- a. Moral character
- b. Willpower
- c. Conscience



### DAVID'S HEART

So now, the Lord sent Samuel to anoint someone as the new king. This one would be from one of the sons of Jesse from Bethlehem.

With Jesse's first son, Eliab, we get someone who probably looks like Saul: big regal stature and handsome features. He looked so impressive that even Samuel thought this must be the one. However, God told Samuel not to "consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The Lord does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart" (1 Samuel 16:7).

In the Hebrew Bible, this part of the narrative has a parallel structure. Literally, it reads:

We are often impressed and deceived by what our eyes tell us. Not so with God. And so, each son passed by with the same negative assessment from God.

Then, when they got to David, the smallest among them, whom Jesse did not even bother to call at first, the Lord said, "Rise and anoint him; for this is the one." Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the presence of his brothers, and the spirit of the Lord came mightily upon David from that day forward. Unlike the judges and Saul, the Lord's spirit would find a permanent dwelling

place in David, and because of that, David would find success in all his undertakings (1 Samuel 18:14).

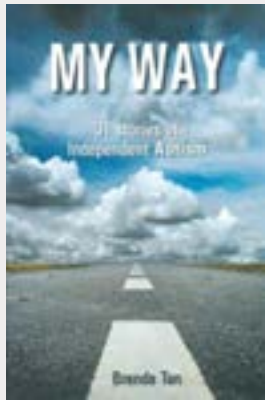
Like other great men of God, Noah, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Ephraim, and Moses, the choice of David over his more powerful older brothers flips social norms. This is because God tends to use marginalized members of society to fulfill his will. This is a common theme in the scriptures (Mark 10:31; 1 Cor. 1:27-28).

In this case, an insignificant shepherd boy became the Lord's anointed, and would develop into a brave man and a warrior, prudent in speech, and a King who would transform Israel from an anemic confederation of tribes at Saul's death to a powerful kingdom in possession of a land where the temple for worship would be built.

So, what can we learn from this? God is chiefly concerned with the condition of our hearts, as defined scripturally, as He was in His choice of David. Therefore, our motives matter to God. Furthermore, our outward displays of faith mean nothing without a corresponding inward alignment towards God. Finally, God uses nobodies in the eyes of the world to fulfill His will. Be heartened therefore, that, whatever your station, we can serve God effectively when we submit our character to God and bear the fruit of the spirit.

Adapted from a sermon preached at the 11:30AM service by Mr Keith Leong

**MAN JUDGES  
BY EYES  
LORD JUDGES  
BY HEART**



## MY WAY

### 31 stories of independent autism

By Brenda Tan

Reviewed by Sengalrayan Bernadine W

*My Way: 31 Stories of Independent Autism* is a collection of experiences of 31 autistic adults. The author, Brenda Tan, who has a son who is autistic, talks to and interviews autistic adults from 15 different countries and tries to uncover the ways they have managed to integrate themselves into society.

Autism or autism spectrum disorder (ASD) refers to a neurodevelopmental disorder, characterized by challenges with social skills, repetitive behaviors, speech and nonverbal communication. The stories attest to the fact that autistic behaviours present very differently from person to person. Many living the majority of their lives without knowing they were on the spectrum.

Each story is recounted by first setting out the circumstances in which Brenda came into contact with each individual and their interactions. The introductions set the stage for each of the stories detailing their childhood, diagnosis, current living situation and their hope for an inclusive future. Brenda makes it clear that the stories were compiled from a mix of face-to-face interviews, emails or texts. Her preferential use of verbatim responses makes each story a reflection of each person's speaking or writing ability.

The first-person perspective lends an authentic voice to each story. For example, Rhi Williams, 36, is from Wales, United Kingdom. She is a mother of five and blogs about her experiences of being autistic. She

was diagnosed with autism in her mid-thirties. She explains that it is because of her autism, rather than in spite of it, and the ability to see the world with the honesty of a child and ignorance of 'proper' social nuances, that allows her to connect with her children more deeply.

Then there is the story of Alexy Voskov, currently a senior research fellow in Lomonosov Moscow State University. Alexy was diagnosed as a high-functioning autistic when he was six and re-diagnosed with Asperger's syndrome in his late-twenties. He relates the encouragement he received from his mother in making models of trains and his father teaching him computer programming.

Brenda was inspired to write this book partly for her son and to understand the challenges he might face as an autistic adult. She also wrote it as a way for neurotypicals (persons without autism) to look at the world with the eyes of an autistic person.

In my opinion, *My Way* lends an authentic voice to these autistic adults. However, the uneven writing styles between each of the stories makes the reading laborious. The book is recommended for persons who work with or around adults with autism, as well as anyone who cares to see the world from a different perspective.

To learn more about autism and St. Andrew's Autism Centre, please visit their website at <https://www.saac.org.sg>.



Testimony of Judith Dawn Francis-Wertenbroch, Survivor of

# 9|11|2001



*Judith Dawn Francis-Wertenbroch, is a survivor of the tragedy at the World Trade Center Building in New York on 11th September 2001. She is married to Klaus. They worship regularly at the 11.15 am Service at the Cathedral.*

On the morning of Tuesday, September 11, 2001, I was dressed as usual, except that I decided to wear a pair of grey, orange and white sneakers I had bought only two days before. I thought, "What if I wore these to work? Would anyone really take offence to me wearing these sneakers to the office?"

On my way to the bus stop I kept remarking how exceedingly beautiful it was outside. I arrived at the World Trade Centre around 8:30am, and took the elevators up to my office.

As I walked in on the 102<sup>nd</sup> floor, I saw something headed towards my building but I couldn't see it properly so I disregarded it. I went to my boss' office next door and tried to look out of his blinds, but they were closed. After a few minutes of small talk, I went back to my office which had a view of Tower 1 and upper Manhattan.

I was looking uptown with a smile in my heart for it was an exquisitely beautiful day.

While opening my desk drawer to take out my work shoes, Tower 1 exploded right before my eyes. I panicked and shouted, "Oh my God, oh my God, what are we going to do?" while looking down at the fireball that was forming in front of me. I continued in shock.

In that moment my mom's question, of just two weekends prior, resounded in my mind. We were sitting at the fountain of the World Trade Center plaza. She began looking up at the towers and asked, "Judi, what would you do if something happened up there?" I told her, "I'd cross that bridge when I got there." My mom's question was just one of the things that prompted me to run that morning.

I ran to my boss' office, grabbed his arm and asked, "Did you see what just happened?" He stood there in a trancelike state. I asked again, "Gary, did you see what

just happened? We have to get out of here."

I left him standing there and checked the hallway to see who were in their offices. The President's secretary of our company was running out of his office into hers. I gestured for her to come to me. She hesitated for a bit and I told her we needed to get out of the building. She grabbed me around the waist and cried, "My Bible, my children. Everything is in my office." "We need to leave, NOW!" I said firmly.

Many of us ran down a stairwell. Each floor was bottle-necked with people. I repeated Psalms 91 and 23, and the Lord's Prayer to myself from memory. Some of my colleagues continued going down while others remained on their floors because there was a repeated overhead message that said, "Please return to your office, we have everything under control". I learned after that it was an automated response in case of an emergency. Unfortunately, many people remained in their work space as a result or went to the roof hoping for a rooftop evacuation.

As we made that left turn around the bend from the 86th to 85th floor, the second plane was making its entrance into Tower II. Sheetrock from the walls exploded in our faces through the open doorway.

Can you imagine the

sound of steel cutting steel? I'm sure you've heard something like it. Imagine thousands of elephants crying out all at once and the thunderous feeling of them running through a building—that was the sound and the feeling of the tower as the plane entered and exited. Heat and smoke filled the space.

Finally, we reached the ground floor. We stopped for a brief moment and looked up at the huge cauliflower fireballs and clouds of smoke while shouting, "Get out of the area. The building is going to drop." We then took off, prayed briefly at the nearby cemetery and ran up Broadway. I stopped a school bus and asked the driver to give us a ride out of the area. After what seemed like an eternity, fleeing that horrific scene and trying to find

a phone that worked, I was finally able to speak to my brother. He came to pick me up from my co-worker's, Luisa, house on Long Island. During the drive home, I finally felt safe and began crying uncontrollably.

After 9/11 my life was filled with appointments. I saw a psychologist twice a week and was diagnosed with PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder). I went to the gym daily. I received acupuncture treatment daily for panic and anxiety attacks, pain in my legs, feet and internal bleeding that left me having surgery



**Can you imagine the sound of steel cutting steel? I'm sure you've heard something like it. Imagine thousands of elephants crying out all at once and the thunderous feeling of them running through a building—that was the sound and the feeling of the tower as the plane entered and exited. Heat and smoke filled the space.**

a few months later. I was also treated for headaches, dizziness, abdominal problems and a shift of my reality. I had to change my eating habits, what and how I ate. I experienced panic and anxiety attacks several times, every day. They were triggered by nightmares, certain sounds, touch, the familiar or unfamiliar and the telephone ringing.

In March, 2003, I moved to California after my father's death. I wanted to be in a place where I didn't know anyone. My purpose was to hide for the rest of my life.

However, this was not God's purpose for me. His word says, "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you a HOPE and a FUTURE" (Jeremiah 29:11). Verse 13 goes on to say that "you will seek me and find me when you seek me with your whole heart." I felt that if I did that, He would reveal to me what I needed to do going forward.

On May 23, 2003, I began the process of purchasing a car. That evening my mom's friend, Hulette, whom I later learned was a family member, called to ask if I wanted to go to church with her. I simply asked, "Where is it?"

During the altar call, my whole body literally shook. I felt I had come home to a place I had never known and the tears began to pour out of my eyes. I knew I needed to get involved immediately. I wanted to serve the LORD. I began attending a Cell group and was baptized on July 6, 2003.

I went to church six days a week and immersed myself in Bible studies for new believers. I went to every Leadership class for Women and other leadership training. I signed up to do Decision Counselling for those who made a decision to accept the gift of salvation. I volunteered for every church event when I was available.

Not everyone has to do what I did, but I needed to be renewed and rebuilt. I had been shattered from the inside out, and it was devastating. Connecting with God on such a deeper level took me out of the insanity and has brought into a place of continuous healing and growth. I moved to Singapore in March, 2017.



Top: Recovered steel column fragment from Tower 2. Image taken at the 9/11 Memorial & Museum, New York City.

Above: Recovered steel column fragment from Tower 2. Image taken at the 9/11 Memorial & Museum, New York City.



# 11 YEARS OF LOVING & STRENGTHENING YOUTHS

**CITY Community Services** commemorated its 11th year of service dedicated to developing "Character in the Young" with an inaugural Family Day Carnival and a special dinner: CITY LIFE.

The Family Day Carnival held on 7 July 2018, was graced by Ms. Denise Phua, Mayor of the Central Singapore District and MP for Jalan Besar GRC (Kampong Glam) as the Guest-of-Honour. About 600 participants took part in various games and sports. The objective was to bring together CITY beneficiaries, their families, and CITY staff for a day of fun and bonding.

On 30 October 2018, 250 guests including school leaders, donors and supporters, volunteers, community partners, management and staff of the Singapore Anglican Community Services and CITY Community Services, beneficiaries, their families, and CITY's Befrienders Alumni (BFA), attended the CITY LIFE Dinner. At the dinner, CITY showcased how they Love, Inspire, Fuel, and Empower (L.I.F.E.) children under their care so that they may grow up to be responsible adults.

The Guest-of-Honour, Mr. Desmond Lee, Minister for Social and Family Development, and Second Minister for National



From left to right: Mr. Dennis Ang, CEO of St. Andrew's Autism Centre; Ms. Vivien Chen, CITY Chairperson; Dr. (Mrs.) Jennifer Wong; Canon Terry Wong, Vicar of St. Andrew's Cathedral; Mr. Desmond Lee, Minister for Social and Family Development, and Second Minister for National Development; Ms. Wong Kok Yee, Honorary Treasurer of SACS; Bishop Rennis Ponniah, President of St. Andrew's Mission Hospital (SAMH) and Singapore Anglican Community Services (SACS); Dr. Arthur Chern, Group CEO of SAMH and SACS; Ms. Sharon Chua; Mr. Keith Chua, Vice President of SACS.

Development, shared passionately about how social service organisations are committed to helping the disadvantaged in society. He affirmed the government's support to jointly uplift those who are underprivileged. Commending their work, Mr. Lee invited CITY to collaborate with the Ministry of Social and Family Development to make a difference in the lives of children.

The Befrienders Club, a core CITY programme, is active in 11 schools. Helmed by graduates of the Befrienders Club, the Befrienders Alumni (BFA) organised carnival games that encouraged the beneficiaries and their families to interact and bond. This initiative enables BFA youths to hone their leadership skills. It also serves as a useful platform for CITY staff members to engage and build rapport with parents of their beneficiaries; partnering them for more effective mentoring of their children.

It has been an eventful year for CITY Community Services.

Children from Kids' Loft Student Care graced the stage with impressive performances, bringing much joy to all who were present.







# THOSE WHO CALL UPON THE LORD WILL BE SAVED

A remarkable testimony of  
God's healing by William Tan

I was born into a Buddhist family in 1962. When I was just a few months old, I swallowed an opened safety pin. The doctors tried digging it out through my anus but to no avail. Surgery was carried out. A day later, the stitching gave way and they had to perform another operation to redo it. From then on, I kept going in and out of hospital due to severe bleeding when passing motion. Many scopes were done but the doctors could not figure out what was causing it.

I was hospitalised again during my Primary school days and a nurse told me about Jesus Christ as our Saviour and gave me a children's Bible to read. That was how I came to know God. But I still followed my mother in Buddhism initially.

I finally accepted Christ after I met my wife at the age of 18. I was baptised in 1988 and confirmed in 1989, at St. Andrew's Cathedral. Our only son was born in 1995. I left my job in 1999, to look after my wife and son. Since then, I have been taxi driver working flexible hours.

Throughout the years, I continued bleeding when passing motion and my haemoglobin count was always very low (my haemoglobin levels were around 6g/dl, normal levels are at 13g/dl). I always avoided seeking treatment for minor illnesses because most doctors would refer me to hospital due to my low haemoglobin count. They told me I could collapse at any moment. Miraculously, I still worked and lived as per normal.

In 2004, on a Sunday after service, I had severe abdominal pain and my stomach was very bloated. I could not eat or walk and vomited. Thankfully, we were in church and Revd Hali took me to Tan Tock Seng Hospital. He stayed there to take care of my family and accompanied them home so I did not need to worry. I had to have a major abdominal operation due to intestinal entanglement. Thank God for saving me and I was able to work again after two months rest.

In 2015, I had more severe abdominal pain. This time, I was diagnosed with a gallbladder infection. The doctors could not remove the gallbladder as there was a risk of the infection

“I also needed to have two decayed molars extracted before chemotherapy and it took three dentists and several hours to remove them!”

spreading to other parts of my body. I had to carry a 24 hours antibiotic drip with a tube inserted near to my heart and another for the dirty discharge from the gallbladder. This lasted for a month and I went to work with the tubes inside my body until I was discharged from hospital. I was healed. I thanked God again for saving me.

In the beginning of 2017, during a company's medical check-up, I was diagnosed with high blood pressure. I ignored the advice to seek medical treatment even though my systolic blood pressure was in the very high range (190 mmHg). I continued working with high blood pressure and low haemoglobin levels.

In September 2017, I felt some pain in my chest, back and shoulders which caused difficulties when driving and sleeping. During a follow-up for my high blood pressure, I consulted the doctor about my back ache and pain and he told me that it could be just because of lifting objects and not to worry about it. I bared the pain for a month and was still reluctant to go for a check-up. As I was worried about supporting my family, I believed I needed to work.

One night, my son asked me to go for check-up the next day and that was also the day I could not lift my left arm and had difficulties turning the steering wheel. He later realised that the sudden urge to rush me for check-up was a prompting from God.

I was admitted to hospital and diagnosed with Multiple Myeloma, an incurable bone marrow cancer. The doctor told me that without treatment, I would only have three to six months to live. There were multiple fractures in my rib-cage, shoulders and thighbones due to the cancer. My kidneys were also affected due to hypercalcemia resulting from myeloma. I was in intense pain during the second night and my stomach was very bloated. I couldn't sleep the whole

night and had difficulty breathing. I kept praying to God and I felt better once I had vomited a lot of brownish-black liquid. Test results of my stomach and colon showed everything was normal.

One night in the ward, I heard a voice saying “save us” but no one was near me. I prayed and had this message from God, “Those who call upon me will be saved.”

I then had major surgery on both my femurs to insert metallic rods to strengthen the bones. After the operation, Revd Hali came to visit me and gave me Holy Communion, I am very grateful for that. I could not walk after the operation for around a month and the doctors said it depended on my willpower to walk again.

I also needed to have two decayed molars extracted before chemotherapy and it took three dentists and several hours to remove them!

But I had no fears because I knew God was watching over me.

I was discharged after a month and was grateful I could attend church again. After three months of chemotherapy, I had a bone marrow transplant done at the National University Hospital on 4 June 2018, and was discharged after 3 weeks. The doctors said I would be able to return to work after 180 days of rest at home.

Five months have passed since the transplant and the cancer is under control. Miraculously, the bleeding whilst passing motion has stopped, my haemoglobin levels have returned to normal and my blood pressure has normalized. God not only healed me from cancer, but also from the other medical conditions I was suffering.

I wish to take this opportunity to thank God again. Thank you for the support and prayers from church leaders, staff and members of St. Andrew's Cathedral.

God hears when you pray! Hallelujah!

# SPIRITUAL LESSONS LEARNT IN MY CAREER TRIAL

by Andrew Lee Cheow Hon

The first half of 2018 was one of the toughest periods in my career as a portfolio manager in the investment industry. My job security was increasingly threatened, as I saw some of my colleagues being forced to leave the company where I worked one after another. The situation was made even more difficult for me and my wife, as I had become the sole breadwinner when my wife obeyed God's call to stay at home to be with our children a year before that. Nevertheless, God proved He is faithful and taught me precious spiritual lessons. Here are some of them.

## GOD IS WITH US

I had been a portfolio manager for more than 5 years and I mostly enjoyed it. However, in the final few months, the situation took a drastic turn, as I realised I may be the next one to be affected. During that period, I was prompted to memorise Psalm 46. The verses that I committed to memory became so useful. For instance, during some difficult meetings that I had to go through, the Holy Spirit reminded me of Psalm 46:7, "The Lord Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress." Despite the negative atmosphere of confrontation and ridicule in those meetings brought on by my colleague, I experienced tremendous peace. God reminded me that He was with me and I should not retaliate. God is indeed with me, and I simply have to trust and obey Him!

## GOD IS ALL-POWERFUL

It was not easy looking for a suitable job in my 40s but I saw how God created one for me. There was a job advertisement for a junior investment analyst with about 3 years of working experience. I thought I wouldn't stand a chance, as I have over 20 years investment experience. Nevertheless, I decided to approach the headhunter so that she could keep me informed of other suitable roles. Instead, she suggested showing my profile to the recruiting company. After looking at my profile, they decided to change the role to a more senior position so that it would match



my experience better. Truly, God is sovereign and all-powerful. He can create a job for me out of nowhere!

### **GOD GUIDES US IN OUR DECISIONS**

Two days before my final interview, there was a Bible verse that spoke to me. It was James 1:17, "Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows." I was not aware of how it would impact me, but I sensed something different. I was given a job offer, but I was uncertain if I should accept it because the salary was not what I had in mind initially. Immediately after the interview, my wife Lina sent me a text message with the same Bible verse. I realised it was not a coincidence and that God was confirming to us to accept the offer. Thank God for guiding us in our decision and providing the affirmation to accept the job offer.

### **IT IS NOT GOOD FOR A MAN TO BE ALONE**

I have experienced how God put people in my life to help me through the difficult times in my previous firm that forced me to leave. There were several people who were praying faithfully for me, including my family, my cell leaders, and group members. My cell member Renyi went to great lengths to help me to find out useful information when he knew that I was considering teaching as another career option. God also sent an Anglican priest, whom I have a deep respect for, to guide me in my spiritual direction. In the previous office, there was also a fellow colleague, a mature believer, who provided me with much encouragement and spiritual support.

At home, the innocent smile of my daughter En-Xin that I saw each day helped to take away some of my work pressure. My son Kai-An also showed constant concern by asking me about the progress of my job interviews. Last but not least, once again, besides praying for me faithfully, I saw how Lina, also complements me yet again in areas where I lack, such as salary negotiation and

understanding other people. It is indeed not good for a man to be alone. God desires his people to be united so that we can encourage one another in our spiritual journey.

Thank God that I am in this new company now. I have passed my probation period, and the job has turned out to be the most fulfilling I have ever had. I am not sure what I will go through in future, but I am assured that our all-powerful God is with me, and he will guide and teach me in the way I should go. He will never forsake me or you. Thank God for my family and the community of believers. Praise be to God!

James 1:17

EVERY GOOD  
AND PERFECT  
GIFT IS FROM  
ABOVE,  
COMING DOWN  
FROM THE  
FATHER OF  
THE HEAVENLY  
LIGHTS, WHO  
DOES NOT  
CHANGE LIKE  
SHIFTING  
SHADOWS.





# CAUGHT

## IN THE NET OF GRACE

*Dave Thio is an undergraduate student at the National University of Singapore, studying psychology. He enjoys playing sports, especially soccer and badminton. In addition, he also enjoys reading books, especially books relating to history. Dave currently worships at the eleven30 service.*

I have been pretty much a believer my whole life. I grew up in a Christian home to Christian parents and was baptised at St Andrew's Cathedral at the age of 7. Back then, I did not fully understand the significance of baptism. To my 7-year-old brain, baptism simply meant that I knew that I had a heavenly Father who was looking out for me.

However, this did not mean that I lived free from sin. In my teenage years, obedience to my parents did not come easily to me. I was also very lazy with my studies and had issues with empathising and being nice to people. Although I was a Christian, my actions did not display the traits that befitted an adherent to the faith.

In secondary three, I stopped going to church for several reasons. For one, I felt that there was nothing more to learn from church. At that point, it just did not make sense for me to go to church every Sunday and listen to a sermon – one that I had probably already heard before. Furthermore, if I wanted to learn from the Bible, I could just read it myself at home.

One saving point about my three years away from church was that I would periodically read the Bible. Although I had drifted away from church, I still believed in Christianity and all that it represented.

In my first year at junior college, I had a lot of difficulties at school. Studying was difficult, and I also experienced many difficult situations with my friends. Thankfully, I had a close friend, Shaun, who helped me throughout my first year, even though he had an equally hard time adapting to the demands of school. At the end of my first year, I was at my lowest point. I barely scraped through in my grades to avoid retaining and redoing the first year again, and I was extremely anxious about my ability to cope with the second year and the upcoming A-Levels. I had also just broken up with my then girlfriend, and that broken relationship convinced me of how far I had fallen from what my faith represented.

Shaun (also a Christian) challenged me to rediscover what Christianity meant again, and that reignited my search for God.

At the start of my second year, Shaun convinced me to join the Christian CCA in my school. Through that CCA, I found myself surrounded by other Christians who taught me what it meant to love God and to live for him. While all of us had doubts and challenges, they taught me how to constantly depend on Jesus. Many of them remain close friends and we continue to challenge one another to love Jesus more.

I was also convinced of the need to find

a church for my family once again, and that mission continued through my time in National Service.

My time in National Service was the period where I most strongly felt the presence of the Holy Spirit in my life. I guess it's really a cliché to say this, but for most Christians, we will always come to depend on Jesus when we undergo difficult periods in our life. National Service was especially hard for me because I was unfit (an irony since I love to play sports). However, I know that the Holy Spirit was constantly present because despite the difficult times I went through, I was constantly challenged to love even the most difficult people that I had to work with there.

With the help of the Spirit, my family also eventually returned to St Andrew's Cathedral – after a long four-year hiatus. Eventually, I found the eleven30 service, which has been a home to me and my brother for the past two years. Through the service Connect Group, which meets fortnightly, and through serving at the eleven30 service, I have found friends who, like those in junior college, taught me new ways to love Jesus and live life with guidance from the Holy Spirit.

In my first year in university, while I was reading Psalm 23, I was challenged by the Holy Spirit to reaffirm my faith.

...Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me...

That night, I prayed that the Spirit guide me to not only walk through the valley of the shadow of death but to also guide me in being fearless and strong in my faith with God. Through that experience, I began to understand the need to constantly pray in difficult periods of my life. Although I was already praying to God whenever I experienced difficulties, I did not fully trust that I could just leave everything to God.

I now understand that God is not only there listening to our prayers, but He also works in us (or around us) to resolve the troubles that we face. Although the 'solutions' might not be the ones we expect, we can trust in God forever, because He is an everlasting rock

(Isaiah 26:4).

I was challenged recently with a question: When was the moment that I knew God was real for me? In evangelising to people, this is a question that we must be prepared to answer. If we do not know when was the moment God was real for us, how then can we reach out to others? When others ask of why we are so sure of our faith, can we give some personal stories instead of the rhetoric textbook answers? I was initially unable to really pinpoint the moment that I knew God was real for me. It was difficult because I had been sure for so many years of His presence in my life. But was I 100% certain of God's presence when I was 7? I do not know.

But now, if you were to ask me this question, I would say that for me, knowing God's realness was more a process than a moment. The process began when Shaun challenged me to seek out Jesus at the beginning of my second year in junior college, and somewhere along the way, I grew more and more certain of His realness. That process confirmed His realness in my life, but that process has not ended. Every day, I continue to be reminded of His presence in my life. Constantly experiencing the Spirit's presence in my life helped affirm that He was working in me.

I know that the Holy Spirit guides me and works in me for His pleasure (Philippians 2:13). I also hold on to the promise that since the Spirit has begun working in me, He will ensure its completion (Philippians 1:6).

Faith is a journey. Every day, you will be challenged by everything and anything on whether it is worth holding on to your faith. Many people question Christianity: how can we believe in something so abstract and uncertain? How can we rely so much on faith when society runs on evidence? But I will say this of God – the relationship is not far away and is personal. To believe in God, you have to first seek Him out. I know for sure that He is real, for He has begun the process described in Psalm 116:8-9.

For you have delivered my soul from death, my eyes from tears, my feet from stumbling; I will walk before the LORD in the land of the living.



## BEING A BLESSING TO OUR SPECIAL VISITORS The Befriending Migrant Workers Ministry

by Edmond Chua

**M**igrant visitors have become a colourful and lively fixture of the Cathedral compound on Sundays.

These guests, some of whom are Christians, hail from the distant lands of Mizoram and Manipur in India, and closer to home, Myanmar and Indonesia. They come to SAC primarily to take a well-earned break from their work and also to meet up with friends. They find the Cathedral grounds provide a welcoming environment and ample space to accommodate their large numbers—typically around 600.

In a bid to bless these visitors and maintain order, the Cathedral has set up a Befriending Migrant Workers (BMW) ministry. The main purposes are to demonstrate hospitality, share the Gospel as well as organise useful classes in cooking local dishes and the English language.

From the beginning of June this year, ministry volunteer teams made up of church members—the current strength is twelve—have used their free time on Sunday afternoons to get to know our migrant guests

and give out Burmese flyers and tracts. These publicity materials contain advice on using the Cathedral premises and updates on upcoming events. There are also invitations to attend English classes, the Myanmar worship service, and to seek prayer and counselling by calling a helpline.

The reception to the BMW ministry has been “generally friendly,” according to Lee Yew Seng, who serves as coordinator for the work. “We talk about the events and English language classes available to break the ice and then go with the flow. [We will] also pray for them if there are requests. The Christians from Mizoram India have prayer requests weekly.”

A class conducted in September 2018, was geared at teaching domestic helpers to expand their cooking skills. This was extremely “well received” with more than 40 people in attendance diligently writing notes on a menu in the Burmese language that was distributed that day.

To teach and help strengthen the English language proficiency of our guests, the BMW

ministry now holds two English classes from 11am to 1pm at the white tent. These cater to both beginners and intermediate learners with basic skills and grammar lessons. The ministry plans to combine the two classes at a later date next year, and also set up an English corner for those who are unable to reach the Cathedral by 11am.

Our migrant visitors feel they have benefited from the classes offered by the BMW ministry. Ei Nandar says she is committed to mastering the English language, and is appreciative of the kind manner of her two teachers.

Monica expresses that the English lessons have boosted her confidence in using the language with her employer. In addition, she is able to worship the Lord in another language. She also learned from the cooking class not just to prepare new dishes but how "simple ingredients can make the best dishes."

Like Monica, Nant May Phyu Phyu Iwin has



seen improvement in her grasp of English and this has also facilitated communication with her employer. More importantly, the language classes have furnished a safe place for her to learn and grow.

Despite the headway made in the BMW ministry, it remains a challenge to build relationships with some migrant visitors because they have to work most Sundays in a month.

## Senior Members' Fellowship Outing to Bekok, Malaysia

by Chutima Chutatape Sarah

A group of senior members from St. Andrew's Cathedral took a day trip to Bekok, Malaysia on 11 October 2018. The journey took two-and-a-half hours from Johor Bahru to this well-known rural village located at the western entrance of the Endau Rompin National Park.

The Hakka Museum is a tourist attract with much rustic appeal. The displays feature many items and collectables from the past. For example, the kitchen area contains old kitchen cabinets with their characteristic screen doors and utensils. The living room contains several paintings of former celebrities. I was thrilled to see a painting of Zhou Xuan, a famous singer from the 1950s. She was my late mother's favourite artiste. The painting brought back some



happy memories for me as my mother used to sing Zhou Xuan's songs to me.

The variety of clocks reminded me of times in the past. Indeed, time flies as they say and in God's time He makes all things beautiful. I'm also reminded how the prophet Isaiah exhorted us to look to the future and know that He is always with us. "... Behold, the former things have come to pass, and new things

I now declare; before they spring forth I tell you of them." (Isaiah 42:9) And, Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel. (Isaiah 7:14)

The trip was quite an experience for us all and it was good to fellowship over a meal together.





## New Couple Team Brings Wealth of Missionary Experience to the Cathedral Staff

**T**rusting the Lord takes on a whole new dimension of meaning in the mission field, far from family and friends, voluntarily deprived of material comforts and modern healthcare, and the blessings that the fellowship of the body of Christ in one's own church brings, not to mention the vital need to adapt to another culture and understand it.

To deal with those and other challenges, Lawrence and Lyn Wee found themselves having to turn to the source of all comfort and hope.

"There is only one way for me to overcome challenges and difficulties – trusting the LORD – fully. Period," says Lawrence, citing scriptures from Proverbs 3, Philippians 4, and Romans 12 and the truth about God to which they attest as a means to overcome the host of difficulties he faced while on the mission field, "scriptures," he adds, "which I hold on to day by day, even to this day."

Lyn, who is Lawrence's wife, shares her own experience of depending on God for spiritual sustenance and support during the couple's missionary days, which began in 2002: "You have no one to trust but the Lord. There were many times we were thrown into the unknown or the deep end and you just

had to rely fully on Him. It's like sweet victory in the wilderness."

Lawrence and Lyn's call to take the leap of faith to plunge into a missionary lifestyle started, for Lawrence, since his youth ministry days, right after he committed his life to become a Christian. Even as a new believer, he had asked God how he could serve Him and where to begin. And God was faithful to answer his heartfelt prayer, leading and guiding him through almost three decades of training working in the local church.

Lyn, too, says she was keen on personal involvement in missions from the very beginning of her walk with God. Like her husband, she had also heard from God about becoming a missionary, receiving a vision concerning missions. She also attributes her desire to surrender her life to be physically and directly on the mission field to a spiritual mentor who was active in short-time missions.

Headhunted to continue the missions work in SAC after having served on staff with the Project Khmer HOPE (PKH) ministry, the couple serve together in the Cathedral in the areas of a Befriending Migrant Workers ministry with Lawrence filling the role of staff representative for the ministry and Lyn assisting with the coordination of outreach

through the English and Mandarin language classes offered by the ministry. Both also serve on the staff team of the Sunday 9am service, where Lawrence serves as the staff representative for the ushering ministry and in security, and Lyn in the congregation's welcome team. Lawrence also plays the role of cluster leader for a number of connect groups, while Lyn prepares the visual slides for the service.

Apart from the service, Lawrence serves in the 289 Fellowship of the Manger ministry and Lyn in the Cathedral's new ministry to the homeless and as a coordinator for missions work at Cornerstone in Lat Krabang in Thailand.

The couple agree that their current job scopes are in line with their previous missionary work. In taking up their respective roles, Lawrence and Lyn bade farewell to people in their previous church, another Anglican parish, and became members of the Cathedral. Adjusting to the new church family has not presented much of a challenge to both. "Attending the 9am service camp certainly helped us get to know members prior to becoming members of SAC," they note.

Asked to enumerate the benefits and constraints of working together as a couple team as part of the Cathedral staff, Lawrence highlights the blessing of being able to see his spouse even when he is at work, and Lyn said it was nice that she could conveniently eat with her husband during the lunch hour. The fact that Lawrence and Lyn are married enables them to more effectively counsel

young couples. "We have our strengths and weaknesses, and most of the time, they work to complement what we do," observes Lyn.

Lawrence enjoys creating art and teaching English as a tool to help his students both develop their linguistic proficiency as well as grow spiritually in the Lord. Lyn is excited about all the opportunities that the Lord might send her way. "Whatever tasks the Lord gives me, I see them as opportunities to learn and grow. The whole ministry is an adventure. There is always something new to experience and discover, both in the work and in the people that you are involved with," she says.

Like her husband, Lyn has drawn spiritual strength from Proverbs 3, particularly when she became a follower of Christ in relatively dramatic circumstances. She shares her story of coming to faith: "I was one who was very much against Christianity. One of the things that I struggled with was nightmares. I used to get very bad ones, and had to deal with frightening, sleepless nights. One night, on the eve of Easter Sunday, it was so bad that I felt so messed up inside, so I prayed: 'God, if you are real, help me to understand what is happening.' A voice spoke and said, 'Read the Bible.' I told Him that I didn't have one, so he showed me, in a vision, to find one in a drawer in my brother's room.

"True enough, I found it where He said it would be. He led me to read Proverbs 3 and answered my prayer, to trust Him and not to lean on my own understanding (vv. 5-6), and gave the promise of sweet sleep (v. 24). I gave my life to Jesus right there."



*At Project Khmer H.O.P.E. Aoral Center, Kg Speu  
with Industrial Skills 2016 students.*



# Serving as a Youth SAYING NO TO SAY YES



by Curie Roe

SAC's youth ministry, Linking Youths 'n Christ (LYnC) has been a significant part of my life as a youth. It was in this fellowship that I found friendships that lasted through all the changes I experienced as a teenager; a weekly weekend constant that grounded me firmly in the body of Christ amidst the chaos, distractions, and stress of adolescent life.

Admittedly, LYnC has never been a perfect ministry, and it never will be. After spending 12 full years in this fellowship as a member and later as a youth leader, I am convinced that trying to make a group of teenagers from vastly different backgrounds become a God-fearing community together is the furthest thing from an easy task. Having slightly older teenagers facing different types of struggles become youth leaders adds further complication. It does not come as a surprise then, that many of my friends left for other youth ministries (possibly to find themselves facing a whole other set of challenges), yet somehow God led a few others and myself to stay in LYnC through all its seasons. Today, this smaller group of friends are the faces of familiarity, stability, and home to me.

Slowly, we are all transitioning out of LYnC to serve in the bigger body of SAC in sung worship, dance, welcome and ushering, prayer and admin, etc. But our roots originated in LYnC; all of us started serving at LYnC, a safe space for us to try new ministries, make mistakes and ultimately find out where our gifts lie. After my first LYnC camp as a 13-year-old, I was so convicted with a passion to serve that I immediately joined the LYnC worship ministry. Subsequently, through the years, LYnC presented me with countless opportunities to serve in other areas: in camp committees, in cell group, and in other youth events.

I noticed that youth ministries, in particular, were always zealous to give avenues for their youths to serve. Youth pastors and leaders were the first to encourage youths to "take up the challenge" to serve, from simple tasks such as playing the guitar for a small cell group session to larger scale settings such as

helping out as an usher for a special service. And understandably so, since inculcating values of serving in church in believers from a young age is seen as a good thing. As a result, we were taught explicitly to be enthusiastic about serving, and we learned implicitly that “things had to be done in church” and “someone had to do it”.

What mistaken thinking it was - as if God needed us to do help him carry out His work. We keep saying yes regardless, forgetting that Jesus himself taught us that a simple “no” is also a legitimate answer that honours Him (Matthew 5:37). This was a simple principle that I found easier to apply in my life outside of church rather than within because I felt that there was an unspoken ideal of the “sacrificial” type of service in church. I had an internal self-check system that revolved around the question: is my service really worth something to God if it does not cost me anything?

Witnessing many of my own friends suffer from burn out in church (not just in SAC) convinces me that this is a common struggle, especially when church activities are planned with KPIs in mind rather than the wellbeing of the volunteers serving in ministries. The phenomenon of “burning out” is made worse when the same few people frequently get asked to serve because other leaders know they are experienced, competent and will get the job done fast. Recently, I found myself



**The phenomenon of “burning out” is made worse when the same few people frequently get asked to serve because other leaders know they are experienced, competent and will get the job done fast.**

harbouring a lot of resentment and bitterness towards serving, and the people I was serving with because I felt so overworked. I had just unofficially graduated by ending a week of submitting my entire final semester’s worth of assignments, projects, and essays, and yet the following week of doing church activities felt even more stressful than having had to meet my academic deadlines. I asked God to give me a change of heart as I felt terrible

about serving with a negative attitude, and ironically, I finally achieved it when I fell sick that weekend, forcing me to drop every single church duty I had for a few days. On hindsight now, I obviously see how the truth of genuine sacrificial worship became twisted into a lie in my mind. My bitter service was truly worse than not serving at all.

While recovering from the gastric flu, I was reminded of an incident I encountered in my first year in university as a fresher. I was waiting for the shuttle bus on campus when a pair of girls approached me to evangelise. We ended up talking about what it meant to serve as Christians, and they gave me an analogy of a lighthouse: if you were manning a lighthouse and had just enough fuel to burn the lamp for the night, would you give some of that fuel to a ship that ran out of fuel? The idea was that it is more beneficial for even the wider body of the church if you first take care of your own spiritual, emotional and physical



Curie is a recent graduate who has been in SAC for her entire life. University has made her into an unexpected coffee convert, so she is now very thankful for the cathedral cafe. In her free time she plays indie video games and befriends stray cats.



wellbeing before serving someone else, instead of serving out of lack. If you ran out of fuel for your lighthouse before dawn, many other ships would be lost. Although there are moments when serving becomes demanding and sacrifices inevitably have to be made, the original heart and core of our service should come from a place of joy, not obligation. In any case, I have come to learn that God desires our heart way more than He needs our service.

Hence, I have resolved to say no to serving the moment bitterness creeps into my heart. This means a number of things. Firstly, God does not suffer the least bit because I said no, and He is all-powerful to carry out His will whether I am a part of it or not. This is a humbling thought, and it also makes the things I have said yes to more precious as I am acutely aware that I am privileged to partner with God in very specific ways in His work. Second, when I say no to certain opportunities to serve, I am prioritising my existing commitments in church. Third, maybe my refusal has opened up an opportunity for somebody else to grow in that area of service, who knows?

So yes, I feel that youths should still be encouraged, even nudged beyond their comfort zones to be enthusiastic about serving in church. In SAC, LYnC is the best place for a youth to start. We have a lot of physical energy and mental capacity to try new things and be very active in church, but we are also not very good at managing our resources. Perhaps then, we should be taught and reminded about the heart of service before we are even encouraged to serve. After all, the state of our souls is more important than "getting things done".



**Although there are moments when serving becomes demanding and sacrifices inevitably have to be made, the original heart and core of our service should come from a place of joy, not obligation. In any case, I have come to learn that God desires our heart way more than He needs our service.**

# Reflections on Children with a Mission Trip to Cambodia 17-21 November 2018



by Gaye Chan

After months of practice, we were finally on our way to Cambodia with 19 SAC Sunday School children. I was apprehensive and my mind full of doubt. Would our gospel message in the form of a song, skit and dance be well received? The children were so reluctant to perform and their practice was always half-hearted at best. Would it be a total flop? Would these playful, wilful children really learn something? Were they capable of being touched by the experience of others? Could they really change?

These were my thoughts as we made our way to Cambodia. Not long after our arrival in Project Khmer HOPE (PKH) though, I began to notice a change in our children.

That very first evening, I saw our children begin to take ownership of their performance. They wanted to practice, they suggested ways to improve the flow of their performance. They wanted to do well.

The second day was full of excitement. We left for the PKH English School in Trang in 3 vans but one lost the way for a whole hour.



The rest of the team jumped into action, engaging the children at Trang PKH English School until it arrived.

A boy was too sick from the long, bumpy journey to perform. A team mate stepped up to memorise the lines to take his place. Even though he did not play the role in the end because his team mate felt well enough to perform, there was no grumbling. Everyone pitched in to ensure that the gospel message would be given out. Teamwork... wow!

*“During this mission trip, my relationship with God grew. I really saw God’s love through the people in Cambodia. How they welcomed us and gave us the best. When the children saw us, many of them came up and hugged us. It was as though they were sent by God to show us how He loves everyone no matter what our circumstances are.”* ROWENA



Last mission day. The team spent the whole day at PKH English School in Chbarmorn. By this time, the children had begun to realise that the point of the mission was not just about sharing the gospel message but also getting to know the local Cambodian children. What I saw that day blew my mind! The children poured their hearts into the performance. Not only that, they spontaneously and enthusiastically threw themselves into additional songs and activities. I watched them happily eat lunch, braid hair and skip stones with the local children.

That same night, we had carolling with the youth at PKH. It had been a long and tiring day for the team, but they did not protest. The children obliged their enthusiastic hosts with a long night of worship and dancing to the Lord. They did not do this grudgingly anymore. They were actually enjoying themselves! My heart soared with joy and was also filled with repentance.

*“Overall, I found the Cambodian people and children were kinder and more helpful than us in Singapore. For example, when our van got stuck in mud, I saw bystanders helping us to get the van out and safely to land. This mission trip taught me to be grateful for what we have.”* JIAWEI

The children learned, they were touched and they changed. So did I! I learned, again, not to limit God with my own prejudices. Anything is possible with Him. Though many times we sinned in our attitudes and our actions on this trip, and things did not always turn out as planned, God is perfectly able to work through us just because we obeyed.

It was my privilege to have learned alongside the children and fellow teachers on this journey!

*“The phrase, ‘It is not happy people who are thankful but thankful people who are happy,’ really speaks for itself. When the Cambodian children received the school bags we gave them, they were so touched to the extent that they teared up. A bag may not mean much to us, but it might be the first and only one they would ever have. People will forget what you say and do, but they will never forget how you made them feel. For one day, you will look back and realise that the greatest joy is giving joy to others.”* JENELL LEE





“I learnt the Cambodian children are less fortunate. However, they are much happier and content than everyone else and this touched my heart deeply. I also learnt that I should appreciate what we are given and never take things for granted.” GRACE

“I learnt that together with my friends, we can help the Cambodian community by raising funds for the PKH centres. It is good to know that some of the funds we raised are going to provide our Cambodian friends with improved access to food and water. More importantly, we got to share the love of God as we practiced hard and performed a skit for our Cambodian friends to watch.” KIERAN

“I should pray to God and read the Bible more often so that I can understand what God wants me to do. I want to have a closer relationship with Him. I am happy that our church, through PKH, could give the Cambodian children hope in life and an opportunity to learn. I realise after this trip that I really don't need my mobile phone that much. I should not spend so much time on my phone, but spend more time with my family and friends.” JOSHUA

“After this trip, I find Joshua is more sensitive to the feelings of others and willing to share with his sisters and look after them more. He also listens more and spends more time with us. I am reminded that the Lord works in all of us and He is in control of all things. He has a plan for all of us, just like he has a plan for all the children in PKH.” FELICIA TANG (Joshua's Mum)

“Day 3 was a highlight for me. We blew up 5 large balloons for the little children to play with. However, one of the black balloons burst and we did not have an extra. We didn't want to dampen the children's mood and by God's grace we found a spare green balloon that we could use. This delighted the children. Going on this Cambodia mission trip was a precious experience for me. I was able to spend more time doing work that pleases God.” ETHAN





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# HOPE IS



## **WHAT DOES HOPE MEAN TO YOU?**

*As believers, we know the hope we celebrate: The love of the Father. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. And our fellowship with the Holy Spirit. But what about those around us who haven't discovered the joy of knowing Jesus yet? Wouldn't it be amazing to be able to help them find hope?*

## **THAT'S WHAT THE CELEBRATION OF HOPE IS ABOUT.**

*From 17 to 19 May 2019, the church across Singapore, across every denomination, will unite in the spirit of personal evangelism on a mass scale, inviting our loved ones – no matter their age, nationality or language spoken – to the National Stadium to hear the Good News of Jesus.*

## **HOW CAN YOU BE A PART OF THE CELEBRATION OF HOPE?**

*Think of at least 5 people who could really use the love of Jesus.*

**PRAY** for them. **ENGAGE** them in blessings and conversation.

**GATHER** them by inviting them to the Sports Hub in May 2019.

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