

THE SALTSHAKER

Trinity Methodist Church • December 2001



Pastor's Message	2
Happenings	3 - 5
Calendar of Coming Events	5
Cambodia Youth Leaders' Training Camp	6 - 8
Claire Lowe	8 - 9
Testimony	9
Behind the Scenes	12

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Pastor's Message

The movie, "Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone," is taking the world by storm. Box office takings have hit new highs in many countries. J K Rowling must be laughing all the way to the bank. But Rowling has also ruffled the feathers of many Christians with the publication of her books on Harry Potter. In fact, a Christian School Principal did not allow his students to read any of the Harry Potter books. Why all these objections? Because of all the wizardry, magic and spiritual happenings that are a part of the Harry Potter books.

Well, back to the movie, "Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone." It is about Harry Potter, a boy who learns on his eleventh birthday that he is the orphaned son of two powerful wizards and possesses unique magical powers of his own. He is summoned from his life as an unwanted child to become a student at Hogwarts, an English boarding school for wizards. The bulk of the film-show is on what goes on in his one year at the boarding school.

As Christians, should we read and watch such books or movies? The choice is always ours to make. God has given us a freewill to make choices. And we are always reminded that we live in the world even though we are not to be of the world. Being Christians, we need to know what is going on in the world as we are not called to live in isolation. Moreover, wizardry and magic were what the early church had to deal with; and the spiritual world is a part of our heritage. So I decided to watch the movie. And there are a few good lessons that can be drawn from it. In one scene, Harry Potter is given his train ticket and told to go to Platform 9 $\frac{3}{4}$ for his train. Of course there isn't such a platform in the station! But when he is told that Platform 9 $\frac{3}{4}$ is in the pillar between 9 and 10, he walks into the pillar and was transported into platform that he is supposed to be. Talk about faith! There will be times in our lives when we will have to do just that - walk into the unknown in faith and trust God to take us to where we are supposed to be.

The end of the movie is a lesson on LOVE. Harry Potter has to face the wicked wizard who killed his parents and who wanted the Sorcerer's Stone. Harry Potter is able to prevent the Stone from falling into the wrong hands and saved himself from the wrath of the wicked wizard because of the love that his mother has given him when she sacrificed herself for him. Isn't that what God has done for us, too? God has sacrificed His Son, Jesus for us and put love into each of our hearts. With God's love, we can overcome all difficulties!

As we come to the close of another year, let us press on with FAITH. Trust God to do the impossible with our lives and let us LOVE God and others and let that love help us to overcome all odds for His Glory. Have a Blessed Christmas and a Spirit-filled New Year.

Philip Lim

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Happenings



Dr Chris Dippenaar

Over the last 2 years, the Disciple Et Nurture Committee (D & N) has been organising Bible expositions twice a year. The purpose is to help members know the Word. Through these talks, we also appreciate the richness of the Bible and how we can apply these teachings to our lives.

In May we had Dr Chris Dippenaar from Trinity Theological College teach us 1 Corinthians. On 23 and 24 October, we were delighted to have Rev Jonathan Fletcher, Rector of Emmanuel Church in Wimbledon (London), preach on the book of Zechariah. Rev Fletcher, who was friendly and personable, taught with clarity and depth of insight. Not only did he show us how Zechariah (and the Old Testament) points towards Jesus and His salvation, he also explained the need for us to have an overview of biblical history so that we can interpret each book of the Bible in its proper context.

The response to these talks has been good, with about 100 members attending each time. This reflects a spiritual hunger amongst our members to know God's Word better.



Rev Jonathan Fletcher



The 47th Company Boys Brigade had their camp in the Serangoon Garden Secondary School field from the 29 Nov to the 2 Dec. It was a good opportunity for the boys to experience the outdoor life - a contrast to their often indoors lifestyle.



Pastor Philip holding court

Family Fiesta

On 10 Nov IMCers got together to relax at East Coast Park. Some cycled, others roller bladed, and many took part in a sandcastle building contest. All ate from picnic baskets prepared by the 55th Company Girls Brigade. The GB girls organised this event for the enjoyment of church members and to raise funds for our Redevelopment Project.



Web game...



...ended in a tangle!

Children's Ministry Games Day

About 40 primary children went to Serangoon Garden Secondary School to play games at the field and basketball court. The youth did a good job of organising these fun games. Everyone then had a good time feasting in church at a barbeque.



TMC Kindergarten 13th
Graduation cum Concert

It was a poignant but spectacular concert put up by the teachers and children of TMC Kindergarten as this was their last graduation before the kindergarten was closed. The kindergarten will resume when the church redevelopment is completed in about 2 years time.



Upcoming Events

24 & 25 Dec '01	Christmas Services
31 Dec '01	New Year's Eve Dinner & Watchnight Service
Mar '02	Methodist Walk
Mar '02	Holy Week & Easter Services
Apr '02	Walkathon to PLMGPS
Jun '02	Church Camp

Cambodian Youth Leaders' Training Camp

"I have received a command to bless;
He has blessed, and I cannot change it." (Numbers 23: 20)



Ong Hon Yuh and translator Santik

Indeed, how true and wonderful this is! Even as we have received a command to bless, we receive His overflowing blessings. This trip to Cambodia to conduct the Cambodian Youth Leaders Training Camp (22 – 24 November) has been such. The team comprised Ong Hon Yuh (team leader), Andy Chew, Eugenia Koh, David Gwee, Khor Teik Heng, Zach Ong, Patsy Mah, Stacey Teo, Shermeen Cheong and Kelvin Ho.

We set off to bless our Cambodian brothers and sisters in Christ by teaching them: how to pray, do bible study, evangelise, the Christian walk, the Church and Sacraments, and other aspects of the Christian life. Yet, even as we went to give, to teach; we came back receiving so much more in return, learning many valuable lessons.

The love and hunger of our dear brothers and sisters in Christ for God and His Word put many of us to shame. The reverent way in which the Cambodians treated what little they received and understood of the Bible, promising to teach others in their various provinces was simply humbling. For many, this opportunity to learn and fellowship was rare. "I'm glad to be here. All year I have no church or Christian fellowship. I've enjoyed this camp a lot," said a camper.

How often have we taken our easy access to and comprehension of God's Word for granted. Like jars that have been filled to the brim with the Living Water, we





Clockwise from top left: David, Zach, Eugenia and Patsy

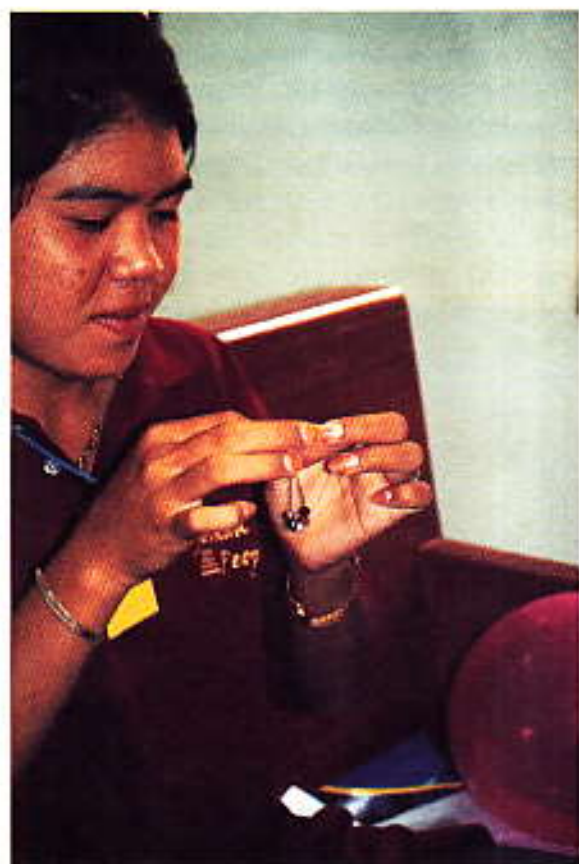
can only receive more if we pour out some for others thirsting for it.

Their sincerity and earnestness has deeply encouraged us. "I came last year. I'm sorry, I didn't understand all of the lessons, so I didn't share enough with my church people," said a brother.

Even though many of the youths had to work as well as attend school, they made the effort to come. They came – some on foot, some on bikes, some after whole-day journeys on lorries, over dry and dusty mud-paths. Some were from the provinces while others the city. They came with only one agenda, to seek God and learn His Word.

With such passion did they embrace what was taught. Breaking them up into groups to discuss the foundations study, we were encouraged by their perseverance in answering the questions and the intensity of their discussions. Though we did not understand Khmer and could not contribute to the discussions, seeing how passionate they were in bible study encouraged us to be likewise.

The camp climaxed with a prayer and praise night, where there was worship and an opportunity for a representative from each province to share their prayer requests. This was truly a ministering time. They paid no attention to the slightly off-key instruments, singing their hearts out to praise and worship the Lord. Indeed, "when the music fades, and all is



Making a band of witnessing beads



Sharing on the streets of Phnom Penh with a gospel message cube

Hon Yuh, Kelvin, Janet
(a Singaporean
missionary), Stacey &
Andy worshipping at
Takmau Trinity
Methodist Church



stripped away. I simply come, longing just to bring, something that's of worth." We could practically see each and every one of them bringing something truly of worth to the Lord.

The sharing of prayer requests was another amazing time. As many of them shared about the difficulty of their members to attend church because they had to earn the day's meal, we were reminded of how blessed we were. Indeed, it struck me that this opportunity to come and teach is simply by God's grace, not our own efforts. Being a Singaporean and enjoying the prosperity we have now is all a blessing from Him.

"Thank you for coming to teach us - God has blessed Singapore very much and you have shared the blessings with us." As the Cambodians thanked us for coming to teach, we must truly thank God for the opportunity. Indeed, God will continue to provide the opportunities. We were challenged when many asked, "When are you coming back next year?"

Thanks, blessings and a challenge from Cambodia. How could we not return? The team has greatly been blessed by our trip. It is our hope and prayer that YOU who are reading this will also pray about taking up that challenge, and in turn be blessed.

Eugenia Koh



Patsy Mah



Two youth leaders enjoying themselves at games we organised

Letter from Claire Lowe

Dear brothers and sisters at TMC,

Greetings from Cambodia in the blessed name of our Lord Jesus Christ. I pray that this letter finds all of you "well in your souls".

Kevin and I have been in Cambodia for 4 years now – and these 4 years have been truly wonderful in many ways. The mission here in Cambodia has grown and prayerfully the fruits will last. We have altogether 10 worshipping congregations: 2 in Phnom Penh, 1 in the Kampong Som city, and 7 in the neighbouring provinces. The Methodist School of Cambodia is in its fifth year of operations, with a student enrolment of 160 students. Twenty-two teenage girls stay with us at The Methodist Centre, where we conduct literacy classes and dress-making courses for them. We also have computer and English classes for youths. Most recently, we started an orphanage in a nearby district. All these would not have been possible without our team of 11 missionaries.

On a personal note...

I remember the last year with fond memories – for it has been very enriching, soul-searching and faith-growing for me. It has been a year of building relationships and also a year where I've experienced a range of emotions from heartaches to deep satisfying joys. I'd like to share with you a testimony of a sister – something wonderful that happened just in the last month.

Sreyha (age 23) and her husband (age 26) were married in 1998, and they have been attending church regularly since their wedding day. However, 5 months ago in July, Na's husband decided to divorce her. She had been having much conflict with her mother-in-law and her husband's uncle. Na does have a quick temper, and compounded by frustration over her husband's constant siding her mother, she had been rude to the elders time and again, all of which she now regrets very much. She had gone to her knees to apologise; however her mother-in-law refused to accept her back. What was most heart-wrenching was that she was left alone to take care of their 22-month old baby girl. She was completely at a loss as to what she should do. She has no job and no skills. She shared that she never thought of finding a job because she depended entirely on her husband. The days after she was kicked out of the house were so difficult for her – her baby kept screaming and crying especially at nights, and fell ill with high fever. After overcoming the initial shock, she tried to do odds and ends to feed herself and her baby. She couldn't work, because she had no one to care for her baby girl. In the second week of October, she received two good news – first, that her cousin's sister was willing to take her in, teach her dress-making and even give her part of her tailoring business. Secondly, a friend was willing to help her pay for the service of a baby sitter while she attends sewing lessons (1 year). Na was so happy – I haven't seen her smile for such a long time! She kept giggling when she spoke to me. She spoke of God's



mercy and goodness to her. She testified to God who has changed her nights of crying to joy – how at last, she sees hope and light after several months of darkness and bleakness. Please pray for Na – that she will always remember and count her blessings and remain faithful to God.

Please pray also for Phally, Kim Huong, Sok Leap, Sokly, Thavi and Sitho, that as they struggle and try to make sense of life, the faith of these women will be strong and deeply rooted so that they will not fall away in bad or good times.

In the last year, because of little Titus, I have not been so mobile. I gave Bible studies from home, and taught music/dance at the Bible School for one semester. I've worked mainly in the office, helping the school teachers with curriculum and doing various administrative duties. One of these was to co-ordinate the Student Sponsorship Scheme which was recently initiated. This sponsorship is for students of our Methodist School who come from very poor families and who cannot afford school education at all. By doing this, we give them a hope for the future.

In the new year, I have been assigned to assist in the Outreach Ministry and the Women's Ministry. In addition to the on-going Computer, English and Music/Dance (Cultural/Christian) classes at The Methodist Centre in Phnom Penh (where we reside), we plan to extend these outreach programmes, where appropriate, to our sister churches. We also plan to start Cambodian literacy classes especially to the woman folk. About 75% of Cambodians are illiterate. Our main objectives are of course to evangelise the women and enable them to read the Bible.

Please pray along with us and may I invite you to visit Cambodia this coming year.

May I once again express my heartfelt gratitude to TMC for your kind support towards me in the last few years.

Kevin sends his warmest regards to all.

Wishing you God's peace and blessings,

Claire

3 November 2001

continued from p.11

Desmond Fu

Before I accepted Christ, I went with my mother to the temple. It was my wife, Irene, who encouraged me to go to church. She told me Jesus will heal our daughter. She taught us how to pray as a family. I thank God that I can worship Him as a family. I was amazed at the pastors, brothers and sisters in church. Though they don't know my daughter, yet they willingly offered to pray for her. Their concern and love for Elthea reflect how wonderful Christians are. As a young Christian, I know very little about the bible. Fortunately, through our small group, IED and the leader Noel, we have learned and grown, and we can pray for one another. I have discovered great joy and comfort from the small group.

I thank God for renewing me. Hallelujah! God has indeed changed my life totally. "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation, the old and gone, the new has come!" (2 Cor 5.17)



Bryan and Elthea

Testimony

Irene Fu

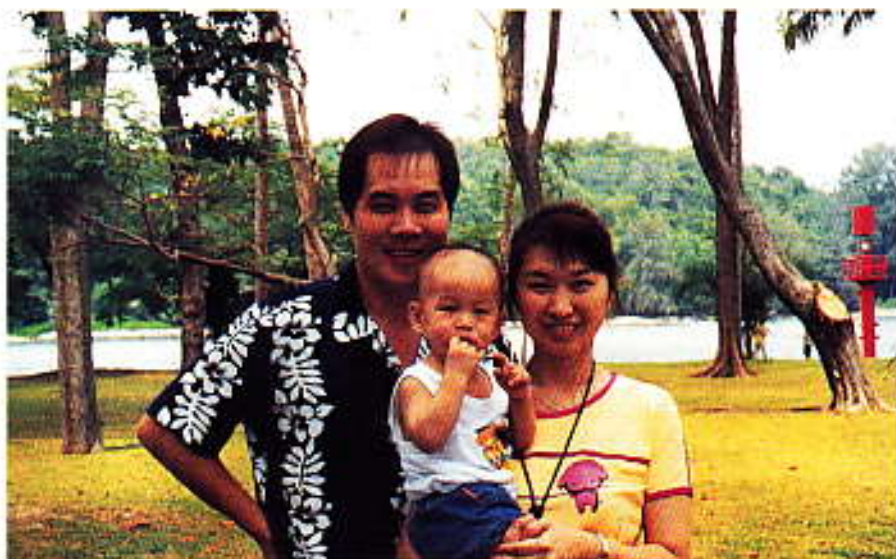
I grew up in a staunch Buddhist and Taoist family, but I also went to church. However, I was not allowed to be baptised. I must confess that I went to church for a selfish reason – I wanted my daughter, Elthea, now 6 years old, to go to Sunday School. She enjoyed it, and sang and performed in the church choir. In 1999 after giving birth to my son Bryan, attending church became a tough chore. My husband, Desmond was not a believer then, so I had to drive the children on my own. I struggled, and eventually stopped going.

Elthea studied in Trinity Methodist Church Kindergarten. She is cheerful and vocal. Everything was fine until November last year, at the end of her K1 year. My husband and I noticed that she had patches of hair loss. We later found out that she is suffering from a severe skin eczema. Slowly she began to drop more hair. Eventually my husband decided to shave her head.

When I looked at her, I felt very sad. It hurt me especially when people stared at her. I cried a lot and became depressed. I didn't know what to do. No one understood those dark moments. I cried out to God and asked Jesus to heal my darling

Elthea. I kept asking, "Why did God do that to her? Why does God allow my daughter to suffer? What sins had I committed?"

One Sunday morning in February this year, I had a strong desire to go to church. I told Elthea that Mummy was going to church, and surprisingly, she said she wanted to come along. She quickly changed. But I didn't know which church to go to. I was afraid that if I went to our previous church, people would stare at Elthea and she would feel unaccepted. I prayed for direction. Finally, I decided to drive to Elthea's kindergarten, a place with which she was familiar.



Desmond, Irene and Bryan

It was here that I found the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ and experienced His love. The pastors approachable, members compassionate and loving. Weekly fellowship with my small group made us feel like part of an extended family. The prayer meetings are good. All these made me realise that God exists. God sent His angels and wonderful things began to happen. I thank God that my husband, Desmond, has also accepted Christ as his Lord and Saviour.

I thank God for hearing my cry and answering my prayers. I suppose God used sorrow and difficult situations to draw me closer to Him. Though we went through tremendous stress and pain, God's mercies endure forever. Today, I still shed tears when I look at my Elthea but there is a peace and joy within me for I know Jesus is always there for me. Her hair has started to grow. Praise the Lord. Now we attend church as a family. God has indeed changed our lives!

continued on p.10

Behind The Scenes

Every Sunday many helpers are involved in making the worship services happen!
Here are just some of them.

