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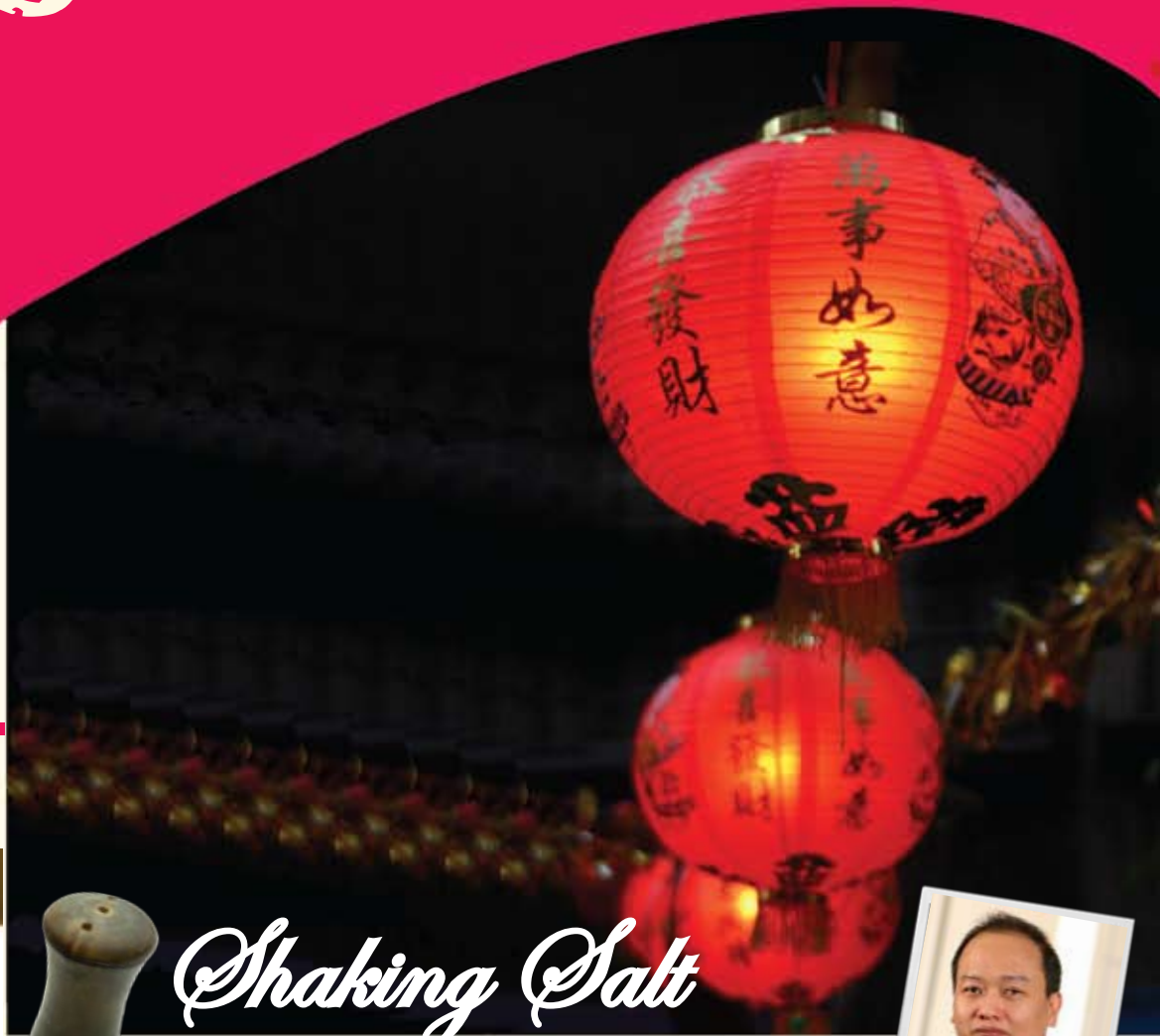
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SALTSHAKER

TRINITY
Methodist Church

MICA (P) 158/09/2010

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WITH OTHERS*Shaking Salt*Celebrate the Passover
this Lunar New Year

by Benjamin Goh



In Exodus, we read about how God inflicted ten plagues upon the Egyptians before Pharaoh would release his Israelite slaves. In the final plague, only the newborns of the slaves were spared when the Spirit of the Lord passed over their homes which were marked with the blood of a spring lamb. Hence the term "Passover".

In comparison, "guo nian" (过年) in Mandarin marks the celebration of the Lunar New Year. "Guo" means "pass over" and "Nian" or "Year" refers to a mythical beast which brings bad luck. In this legend, the villagers of Taohua (Peach Blossom) Village prepare to flee from this beast every year. One Lunar New Year's Eve, an old beggar claimed he could get rid of Nian, but the villagers did not believe him and they fled.

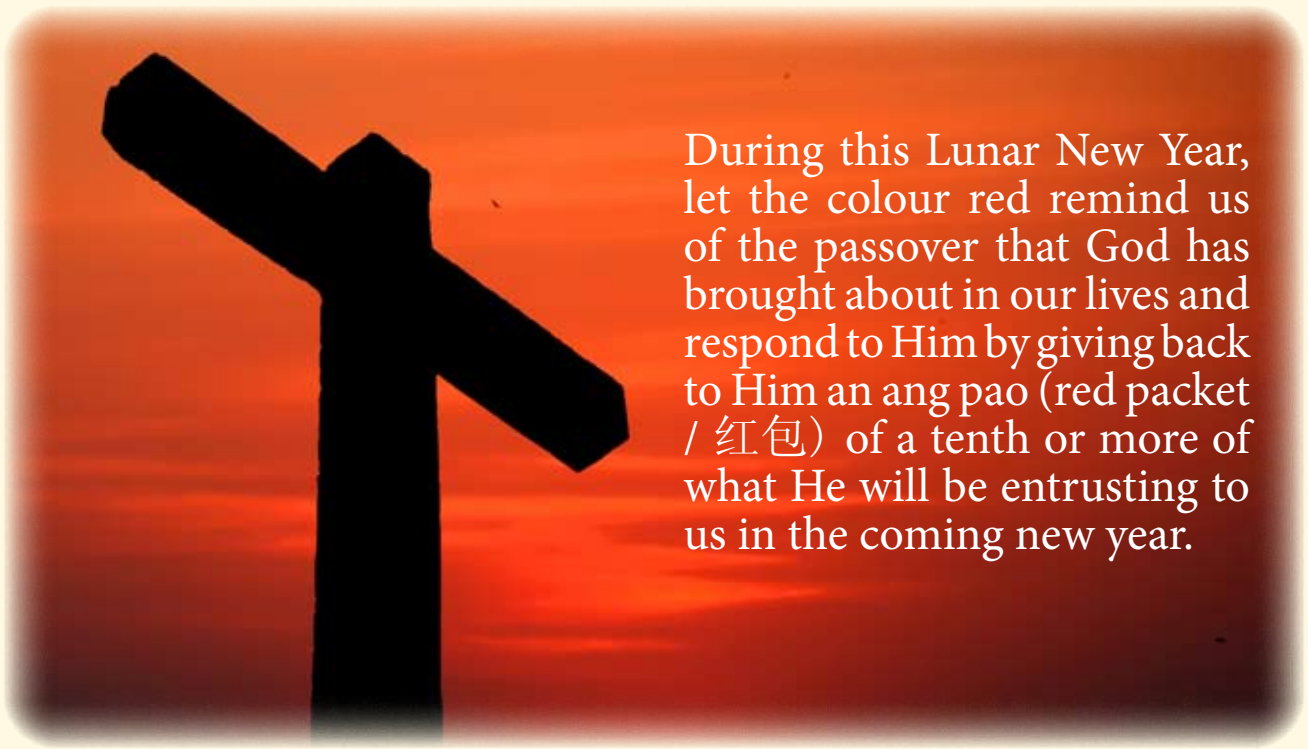
At the stroke of midnight, the monster Nian rushed into the village. It quivered on seeing the red paper glued on the door of a brightly lit house. Nian scowled and howled fiercely, ready to throw itself at the house. As it approached, fireworks were set off, the

door flung open and the old beggar dressed in red came out laughing loudly. Nian was startled and took flight in great haste.

Word spread quickly and from then on, during Lunar New Year's Eve, every family would hang red paper with couplets written on them, light lanterns, let off fireworks to stay up late or all night (shousui / 守岁) to wait for the New Year's coming.

The similarities in the two passovers seem to be the colour red.

But what does "Guo Nian" mean to us as children of God? To me, "Guo Nian" is a time of thanksgiving to God who has faithfully helped us pass over yet another year. Even if the year had not been ideal in our mind, we must always remember that God loves and cares for us. We are reminded in Romans 8:28, "And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose (NASB)".



During this Lunar New Year, let the colour red remind us of the passover that God has brought about in our lives and respond to Him by giving back to Him an ang pao (red packet / 红包) of a tenth or more of what He will be entrusting to us in the coming new year.

In Acts 16:6-40, God's purpose was revealed to Paul to go to Macedonia to preach the good news. Led by the Spirit, Paul and Silas travelled to Macedonia and managed to convert three persons, Lydia, a dealer in purple cloth, a slave girl fortune teller and a jailer. But Paul and Silas also suffered immensely when they were there. They were stripped, flogged and thrown into prison. Still, they continued to pray and sing hymns to God while behind bars.

A natural reaction for most of us during this period of trial would be to question God's faithfulness and ask why He has allowed such injustice. But Paul and Silas rejoiced to suffer for God. Our Heavenly Father was pleased and He caused a violent earthquake that shook the foundation of the prison to free all the prisoners.

From this day on, in Philippi where Paul and Silas were imprisoned, the church at Philippi was founded by an extraordinary display of God's power. Paul and Silas gave thanks to God and wrote in Philippians 4:6-7, "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God (NASB)". Is it not wonderful that our Father in heaven listens to our prayers?

Paul responded with contentment to God's generosity in Philippians 4:11-13, "Not that I was ever in need, for I have learned how to be content with whatever I have. I know how to live on almost nothing or with everything. I have learned the secret of living in every situation, whether it is with a full stomach or empty, with plenty or little. For I can do everything through Christ, who gives me strength (NLT)". When we place our trust and faith in the Living God, He will give us strength to overcome all things.

The problem with most of us is that when we have successfully "passed over" our problems, we forget how He has delivered us. One solution is to start a prayer journal to record all the blessings He has given us. In moments when we face challenges in life, we can reflect upon them and remind ourselves that He will never forsake us. Faith is trusting in Him to continue delivering us now and in the future.

If God touches us to give ourselves, our time and our money to Him, would we hesitate to give our best? In Genesis 18:3-5, we read that Abraham attended to God personally although he had a multitude of servants. And even though Abraham was already old and well advanced in years, it did not stop him from responding to God immediately. Are you ready to respond immediately when God calls?

During this Lunar New Year, let the colour red remind us of the passover that God has brought about in our lives and respond to Him by giving back to Him an ang pao (red packet / 红包) of a tenth or more of what He will be entrusting to us in the coming new year.

In the same light, as we give to those in need, we are also giving to our Father in heaven. May I suggest the following as ways on how we can do that.

- Donations to TMC's Missions Fund and Outreach & Social Concerns' Community Fund;
- Donations to Methodist Welfare Services, Methodist Missions Society, St Luke's Elder Care, Chen Su Lan Methodist Children's Home and the Prison Fellowship of Singapore;
- Sponsoring a breakfast or an outing for the Institute of Mental Health patients
- Sponsoring an underprivileged Cambodian child's education through The Methodist School or The Learning Lab in Cambodia; or
- Sponsoring a Cambodian orphan's basic living expenses, food and education through an orphanage.

Bring a smile to someone's life this Lunar New Year with a generous ang pow offering!

A Prayer For The Season Of Epiphany



by Gerard David

Dear God,

As we celebrate this season, may we find the hope, joy and peace that only You can give.

May the WORD that was made flesh and the LIGHT that came down on that first Christmas be our only source.

May Your Word sustain us and Your Light guide us in our journey through this season. Grant us hope as we trust in your word and peace as we learn to forgive.

May the families that gathered at Christmas to celebrate the birth of Our Lord continue to live in your love.

Grant Your wisdom and strength to the heads of households as they lead their loved ones. Protect our children under Your banner and watch over them as they grow in Your care.

Cleanse us with Your righteousness that we may know, and illumine our hearts that we may grow. Fill our homes with Your joy and our tables with Your abundance.

Be our Light in our hour of darkness, our Hope in our despair, our Peace in our trials and our Joy for the world to see.

In Jesus' name,
Amen.

letters to God *revealed*

This new column gives us a glimpse into TMC worshippers' quiet times with God.

Terri Koh's Journal 10 September 2010



The 1st day of the Young Methodist Leaders' Conference (YMLC) 2010. I went for YMLC feeling spiritually drained, and nervous about taking on the mantle of Youth Ministry (YM) Chairperson. I was scared of the work ahead, and not sure what to do!

"Dear Lord,

I think that the Reverends (Rev. Malcolm Tan & Rev. Wee Boon Hup) spoke on a lot of things today that frightened me, challenged me and made me think quite a bit about the system and how we do things in YM. Thank you for not letting me live a wasted life, that whatever I have gone through is a way of Your working in my life.

Lord, I just want to pray for the ministry and for my work in YM. What do you want me to do Lord, now that you have called me to this role? There isn't a job description that can teach me what to do. It's like I need to figure it out on my own.

Lord, I'm praying for a ministry that is open to you and those around us. I pray for reverence in our hearts and that we will be men and women of integrity and prayer... give me a vision that is close to your heart for my life and for your ministry... I don't know what the plan is, but I know that You have a plan and I really want (the YM leaders) to be able to catch that plan, so that when we do something Lord, it is Yours.

I know that we cannot get a revival simply for the sake of showing off or to show that something is "being done" or that we are "moving". Because it doesn't mean that just

because there is no "revival", that you are not there. No, it only means that you are working, but in your own time. Lord, I pray for patience in waiting for your bigger plan. I pray for wisdom and discernment to see when your plan is there and for the urgency to catch the vision.

I am scared Lord, of the task ahead. It's even more frightful than being a lawyer. Remind me to keep praying faithfully. Help me and Tim and all the leaders be real to each other and encourage them to chase after You and your vision for YM.

Let us arise with you. It is in your hands Lord, we are your workers. Amen."

God spoke to me clearly during this Quiet Time. He revealed to me that:

- (1) I needed to catch His vision,
- (2) YM leaders had to work together as a team, so that we could
- (3) Arise with God. And that this would
- (4) Be my season of leadership.

I'm still finding my way as the YM Chairperson, but God has been my help as has the verse, Hebrews 12:1-2:

"Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God."



QT - a compass of my spiritual life by Dr Fu Dunyi

Over the years, I have come to treasure the inestimable value of QT as I rely on the wisdom of God's Word as the compass of my spiritual life. Nothing is more powerful than a surrendered life in the hands of God.

Personally, Philippians 4:6-7 provides an all-embracing setting for my QT contemplation: "Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."

The Bible contains numerous other exhortations for us to maintain this state of rest and rootedness in the Word of God, even amidst the busyness of life:

"Be still before the Lord, and wait patiently for Him." (Psalm 37:7)

"If you remain in Me and My words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you." (John 15:7)

"Everyone who hears these words of Mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock" (Matthew 7:24).

"Come with Me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest" (Mark 6:31).

God's Word has tremendous power. It has changed the direction of my life. It has the power to reach the heart of that person you love and have prayed for many times.

One of my most endearing and enduring experiences was to participate in the QT retreat, "Rest in the Lord: A Guided Silent Retreat" held in Kingsmead Hall, Victoria Park Road from 6-7 March 2009.

The tranquil and beautiful setting of the site with lush green vegetation left me with the imagery of the Garden of Eden God had created for Adam and Eve to live a peaceful, happy, wholesome and righteous life. Man's original nature was good (人之初性本善) until he disobeyed God's law.

The silent retreat impacted me in a profound way in revealing the symbiotic relationship between solitude and community. The retreat paper titled "Life Together, 1938: Solitude and Silence" extracted from Dietrich Bonhoeffer's book is a profound discourse on this relationship. Those who cannot be alone will do harm not only to themselves, but also to the community. Alone we stand before God when He calls us. We cannot escape from ourselves. If we refuse to be alone, we are rejecting Christ's call to us. In the same way, if we cannot be in the community, we reject the call of Jesus, and our solitude can only be harmful to us. Therefore, only in fellowship do we learn to be alone and only in solitude do we learn to live in fellowship.

"There is a time to be silent and a time to speak" (Ecclesiastes 3:7). Indeed, there is a time for everything in life. God has made it so. Man may understand time, but he cannot comprehend the whole of God's work. So he must learn to stand in awe of God.

So enriching was the QT retreat that I introduced QT as a necessary feature of our small group Bible study. The 10-minute-or-so QT follows immediately after our Bible study to enhance our quiet moments with God when we emerge from our individual reflections to share with one another.

QT is an integral part of God's creation of the earth. God could have accomplished creation with one word. But He chose to employ six days to demonstrate to us the Sabbath-rest which is one of the ten commandments of God. "By the seventh day God had finished the work He had been doing; so on the seventh day He rested from all His work. And God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it He rested from all the work of creating that He had done" (Genesis 2:2-3). Sabbath-rest, blessed and sanctified by God, brings us closer to God. It gives us the time and space to repent and take advantage of His patient love. In the process, we learn to enjoy our families, our friends, our health and everything in our life.

QT is not an option. It is all part and parcel of our spiritual life.

Will you consider telling us how God has been speaking to you? If so, drop a message to the Saltshaker team at tmccomms@gmail.com with the excerpt from your quiet time journal.

If you haven't been spending quiet time with God recently, or are wondering if you should begin journaling what you've learnt, why not start today? Journaling can be as simple as writing down the insights you've gained into God's Word, and how you can obey what His Word says.

You might even find the following acronym useful in helping you in your journaling process:

S Scripture: reading God's word
O Observe: study and learn from the text
A Application: what is God's word to me?
R Response: what is my word to God?

(taken from http://www.edgechurch.com/filestore/pdf/SOAR_journaling.pdf)

Let's Hear It Again!

The following is an extract of Bishop Dr Robert Solomon's sermon on the occasion of TMC's 54th Anniversary and Dedication Service. The scripture text for the day was Deut 12:5-14.



We know the history of this passage and how God rescued Israel from slavery and brought them into the promised land. One of the important things that God did was to instruct them on how to worship. It was important for God that the Israelites worshipped the true God and worshipped Him in the right way. If we have the wrong notions of God, then we will be led astray, and it will have no effect on our transformation. The danger that Israel faced was the surrounding Canaanites. Israel was going into a very pagan environment and it was easy for them to be tempted to worship the idols that were very popular around them. God wanted to preserve the heart of Israel so that Israel might give undivided attention and worship to the living God. So here we find Moses instructing Israel in verse 4, "you must not worship the Lord your God in their way."

Worship is a very hot topic in church these days, and it seems to me that we often fight over style rather than substance. The styles that we choose also convey certain things about what we think about God. But far more than style is the substance of worship and here, God is very jealous to guard the way the people of God worship Him. To prevent unauthorised and syncretistic worship, in the beginning, God said there could only be one central place of worship. Shiloh (during the period of the tabernacle), and then after that, in the temple in Jerusalem. No other place.

One place so that Israel's faith could remain strong, clean and pure in order for God's purposes to be fulfilled. This was not an eternal plan, but for a time, God wanted Israel to worship in one place so that they would not fall into apostasy. God chooses this place of worship; we human beings do not. Our role is to seek the place of God's choice as we read in verse 5.

And what is this place all about? It's interesting the way that the Old Testament puts it whenever it describes the tabernacle or the temple. "This is a dwelling place for my name. The place that you worship shall be the dwelling place for my name."

That phrase - "A dwelling place for my name." - is repeated again and again in the whole of the Old Testament.

His Name is important for various reasons. The most important reason is that **His Name represents His character.**

In biblical times, a person's name represented his character. God is saying that a dwelling place for His Name is a place where His character is celebrated, accepted, received and exhibited. And so the places where we worship are to reflect the very character of God. **The very holiness, love, and truth of God have to be tangible and evident in our places of worship.**

The name of God portrays the character of God and, therefore, it represents the glory of God. The sanctuary which we set apart to worship God, is a place for the glory of God. So every time we come in here, I think we should feel something. There should be a difference. There should be a presence of God here, the glory of God, so that everyone who comes here is touched in some way by the glory of the living God. This character of God and the glory of God should be thickly felt in the church.

The name of God, which brings us the character and glory of God has to do with worship. We read from Matthew 18:20 Christ promising, "where 2 or 3 come together in my name there am I with them."

The church is God's people and God's people are called to worship Him. Many churches today have mission and vision statements. This is a good exercise but I think that a lot of time spent coming to the same things at the end of the day. Very simply, church is about worship, nurture and witness. We may try to put it in different ways but it's all there. It's in the Bible. Worship is one important aspect of who we are as a church. Sometimes we forget Who is at the heart of worship, Who the most important person is in worship.

When God says, "the place where you worship will be a dwelling place for my name", God's Name continues on in the life of God's people. I don't know how long buildings will last. I don't know how long congregations will last. But I know that the Name Whom we worship belongs to the One Who lasts forever. He is the one we worship, and in His presence we gather. I pray that in this place, God will be worshipped in truth and in Spirit, and that hearts will be touched, that truly God's presence will be thickly felt here, that this church does not just go through the motions of worship, not just empty ritualism or just cultural habits but there will be an encounter between the living God and His people.



The Name of Jesus is also connected with prayer.

In John 16:23-24, Jesus said, "I tell you the truth, the Father will give you whatever you ask in my name... My Father will give you whatever you ask in my name. Until now you have not asked anything in my name. Ask and you will receive and your joy will be complete."

God's Name is connected with the prayer of God's people and the power of God in answering those prayers. What a wonderful place this place is! God has given a sanctuary, a church building so that His people may come and pray in His Name, and so that God can fulfil His purposes through them, that their joy will be complete. If every church is a praying church, there will be amazing results.

Why is it that our prayer meetings are not so well attended?

This is a universal problem, not just a Methodist problem – the Presbyterians, Anglicans, everyone has the same problem. Someone once said that the attendance on a Sunday morning has to do with the popularity of the church; the attendance at the mid-week service where the pastor preaches has to do with the popularity of the pastor; the attendance at the prayer meeting has to do with the popularity of God. If that is true, God is not as popular as human preachers and human institutions. **The poor attendance at our prayer meetings demonstrates where our attention actually is, or where our faith is.**

But the Bible promises that when God's people gather to worship, and ask in His Name, God is able to do amazing things beyond our imagination. What a wonderful place it is, a place that God has given so that people can pray in His Name.

Worship, salvation and prayer. These things are connected with the Name of God, which dwells in His holy place, in His sanctuary.

I end with this little children's verse that many of us know, and which I've shared in many other places:

*Pussy cat pussy cat where have you been?
I've been to London to see the queen.
Pussy cat pussy cat what did you there?
I chased the little mouse from under the chair.*

The pussy cat had very noble intentions. It was travelling to London to see the queen, to see majesty. But when it arrived in London, instinct took over noble vision. It ended up doing what came naturally - it chased the little mouse under the chair. Obviously, it didn't see the queen.

*Methodist Methodist where have you been?
I've been to church to worship the King.
Methodist Methodist what did you there?
I counted all the mistakes in the bulletin.*

But if it is otherwise,

*Methodist Methodist where have you been?
I've been to church to see the King.
Methodist Methodist what did you there?
I fell at His feet and worshipped Him.*

imagine what God can do through this church?

He has given us much and all He asks for is a heart of worship, that we recognise Him for Who He is and what He has done for us.

Secondly, **we connect the Name of God with salvation.** Romans 10:13 – "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." I pray that, in this place, many, many, many more will come to find the salvation that is in Jesus Christ, that they will call upon the name of the Lord, that they will be cherished and celebrated and kept holy in this place, that many more will come to have that salvation that Christ had come to give us on His cross. The church isn't just for members. The church is for everybody else outside our walls. They have to hear the gospel and they have to come. They have to come into this place. And for this to happen, every church member must get into action.

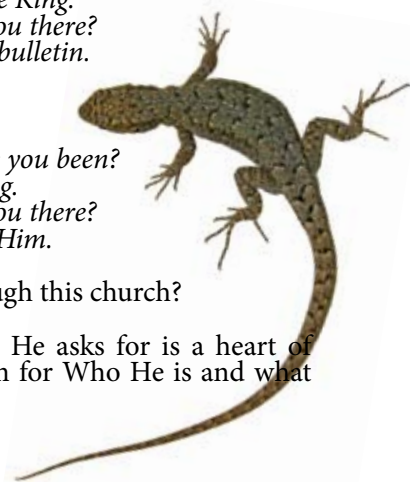
Methodism is not a spectator sport. Perish the thought of any clericalism. Perish the thought of paying a small group of people, calling them pastors, giving them this yoke of obedience and then telling them what to do – "you do our work for us."

In 1989, Lee Yih, a Hong Kong businessman was speaking at the Lausanne II Conference, said, pastors are like frogs. Frogs sit on the rock. The insect comes from a distance, and when it comes near enough, at the right time, the tongue of the frog goes out and pulls in the insect. That's the pastor. There is nothing wrong with that because pastors are basically trained and called to equip God's people. They minister in the church. They train God's people to go out and do the ministry.

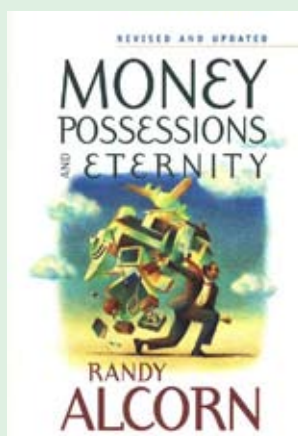
And so Lee said that lay people are like lizards. Lizards don't sit on rocks and wait for insects. Lizards crawl all over the walls and everywhere actively. They are very mobile. They go and find the insects. Lee is essentially saying that lay people have been placed by God in places that pastors cannot go to - in your own family, in your own office, in your own classroom, in your own block of flats, among your own relatives. God has placed lay people in strategic places. He wants to touch people's lives through the ministry, the prayer and the witness of His people.

Frogs train lizards. Lizards go out and do the ministry.

People have to come to call on the Name of the Lord so that they can be saved. And this is the ministry of partnership that we are all involved in. There are no spectators in the Methodist church – and there should not be any as everyone who is baptised and believes in Jesus is a servant of the Lord. God sends everyone to do His ministry, so that those who do not know Jesus may come to know Him, and call on His Name and be saved.



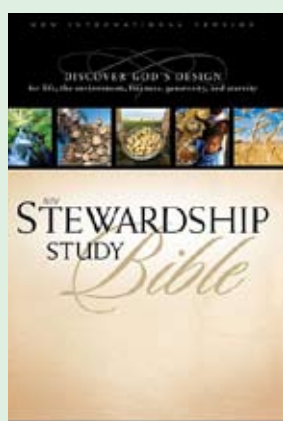
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Money Possessions and Eternity by Randy Alcorn

This book is written for individuals who seek to find out what the Scriptures has to say on the issue of money and material possessions. Be prepared to have your attitude towards materialism, debts challenged, through thought-provoking arguments raised by Randy Alcorn.

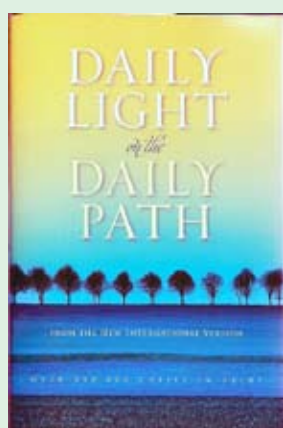
Overall, this book is an excellent read for individuals and groups who are looking for a deeper look at how they can use the resources given by God to make an eternal impact on those around them.



NIV Stewardship Study Bible from Zondervan Publishing

This study Bible is for those seeking to understand what it really means to be a manager who is entrusted with the resources of God.

More than just focusing on the topic of money issues alone, this Bible emphasizes on stewardly responsibility in all areas of our lives such as relationships and caring for the poor among many other areas. It also reminds us that stewardship is not supposed to be draining or guilt-inducing but is meant to be motivating and empowering.



Daily Light on the Daily Path from Zondervan Publishing

This daily devotion by Samuel Bagster is a classic which features unique day and night meditation for each day of the year that is composed entirely of passages in the Bible.

Each morning and evening devotion is designed around a Biblical theme and will give you new insights into powerful spiritual truths. This devotion will help you uncover the deep truths of the Bible while finding fresh insights and strength from the promises of God to face every circumstance through daily reminders of God's love.



Your One-stop Christian Resource Centre

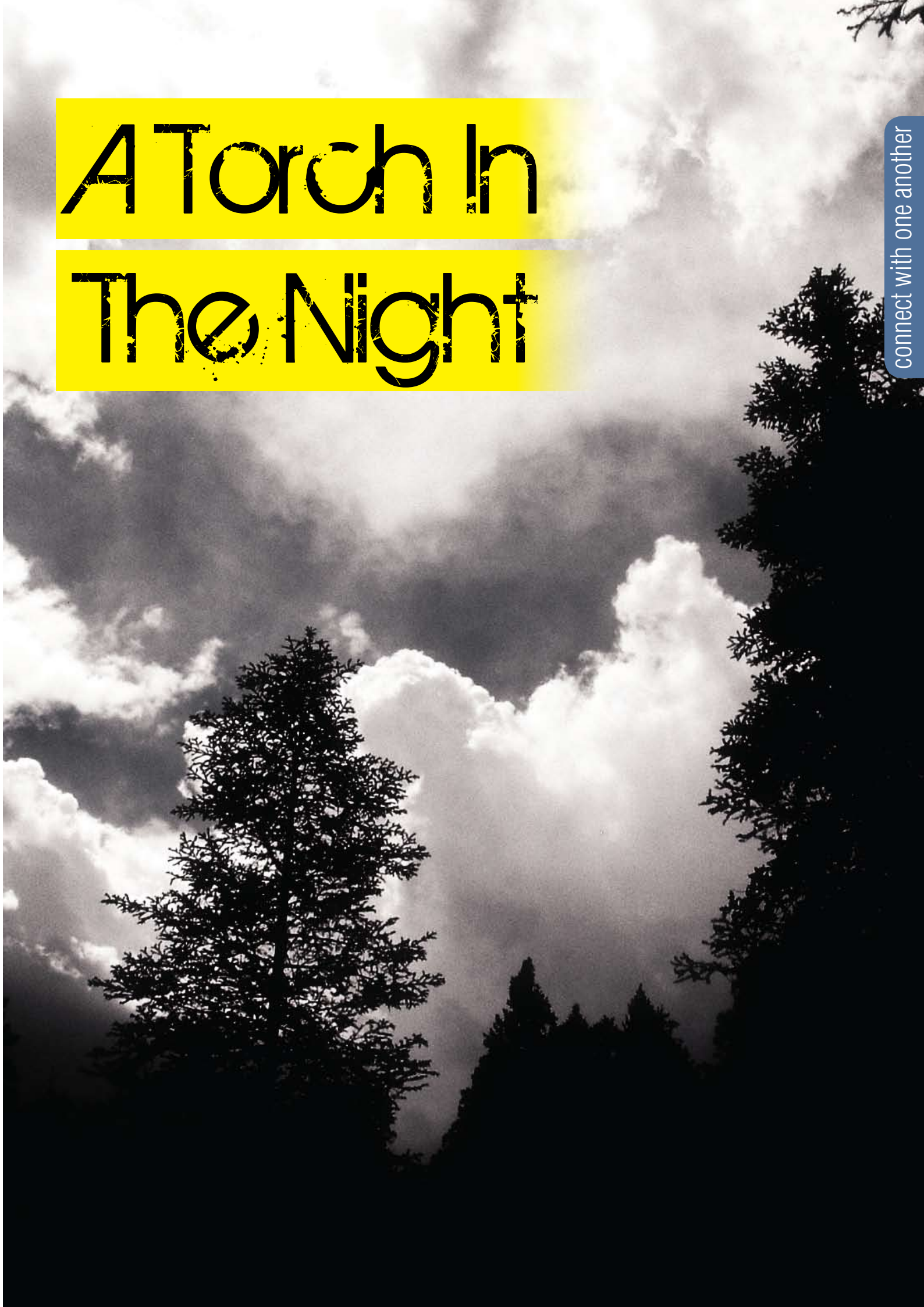
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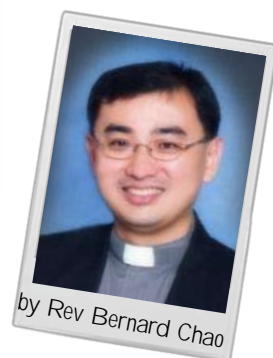
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A Torch In The Night

connect with one another



A Torch In The Night



It was dark. Very dark.

Still, but not quite quiet. Mysterious but gentle flutterings, faint rustles, and all kinds of insect calls punctuated the still forest air from time to time. Aside from that, nothing seemed to be moving except for the cool night wind that wafted between the giant trees around us.

We were in the deepest bowels of the Bruneian jungle. My buddy, Suhaimi, and I, were on a three-day navigation exercise as part of our training in Officer Cadet School, in the middle of Brunei's deep jungles.

We moved only in the daylight, and stopped when light faded. Because when the light faded there, the thick canopy imposed an absolute black-out on the jungle floor. You could not even see your hand in front of you.

On our first night there, we had hung up hammocks between the trees and had fallen asleep. In the middle of the night, I woke up feeling thirsty. Gingerly sticking my leg out, I tried to feel in the dark for my boots down on the ground below.

"Ow!" I bellowed. Instead of finding my boots, I felt a stinging pain on my feet and toes. I instantly pulled my feet off the ground. Clawing frantically for my torch, I switched it on. By now, Suhaimi had also awoken.

The torch splashed light all over the jungle floor and our jaws dropped in surprise.

All over the ground, it seemed like the entire insect world of that jungle was awake and on the move. The still, calm, and serene night I had been swaying in, was not quite. All kinds of ants, bugs and insects were crawling in different directions. I was swinging and hovering over what seemed to be the downtown traffic jams of an insect city!

Without the torch, and without the light, I would never have been aware, and seen what was really going on in the dark.

The same is true of life. Of life now. And of life eternally. Without the light of Christ, no man, no woman, no child, will become aware, know and understand the dark state we

are in. Without the Light of the world, we cannot appreciate our need for God.

Only when Jesus enters into our life, can we see clearly, be convicted convincingly, and be converted truly.

In the account of the Acts of the Apostles, Luke records for us how this was also true for the Apostle Paul. On the road to Damascus, "Saul" as he then was, encountered Jesus in a "light from heaven" that had "suddenly shone down around him" (Acts 9:3, NLT). As a result of that encounter with Jesus, Saul came to recognise his sinfulness, and his need for the Savior, Jesus.

Our church theme for 2011 concerns light. Jesus tells us in Matthew 5 that the disciples of Jesus are the "light of the world". Jesus commands us to "*let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.*"

For those of us who have been Christians for a while, we have been living in the light of Christ. For many of us, we've forgotten the obvious. We are in the light. Like the oft-quoted story of the fish in water asking where the water is, time and the lack of accountability lulls us into a forgetfulness.

We are living in the light of Christ. We are to be the light of the world.

It is too easy and tempting to forget that most Singaporeans, most of our friends, most of our relatives, most of our colleagues, and most of our neighbours have not seen the light of Christ. Like my buddy and I who were ignorant of what was going on in the middle of the dark Bruneian jungle, they still do not know that they are in spiritual darkness - not knowing God in Jesus, the Christ.

What are we to do?

Shine!

黑漆中的灯光

赵伟君牧师

connect with one another

四处都是黑漆漆一片

一切仿佛是静止的但又不完全安静。神秘又轻柔的嘀嗒声，隐约的沙沙声，还有时不时刺穿空气的各种昆虫的鸣叫声。然后，除了偶尔绕着大树轻轻吹来的夜风，就没有其他动静了。

我们当时正处在深密的文莱森林里。我的同伴苏海米和我正在进行一个我们在新加坡见习军官学校必须完成的为期三天的军事导航训练。

我们只在白天活动，太阳下山后就暂停。因为在这里，夜幕一低垂就是伸手不见五指的黑暗，没有月光也没有星光。高高的大树加上厚厚的树顶会把所有的亮光都挡住，使得整个森林象被黑暗吞噬了一样。

我们已把当晚要睡的吊床挂起来，接着睡着了。半夜，我因口渴醒过来。轻轻伸出脚在地上摸索，试图在黑暗中寻找我的靴子。

“啊！”我大喊了一声。靴子没找着，反而感觉到脚丫子和脚趾头传来一阵刺痛。我立即把脚收回来。慌乱中找到手电筒将它打开。这个时候，苏海米也惊醒了。

手电筒的灯光照着周围的地上，眼前的一幕完全让我们错愕。

遍布这个地上，好像是整个森林的所有昆虫都来这里报到了！原本我躺在吊床里轻晃的那个静寂安详的黑夜原来并不是如此。各种各样的昆虫正四处地爬着。直接在我下面的那一部分就好像是城市闹区的交通阻塞一样密集！

没有手电筒，没有灯光，我绝对不会察觉到和看到在黑暗中的真实情形。

生命即是如此——无论是在这个世界上的有限生命或是以后的永生的生命。没有基督的光，任何人都无法知道和了解我们处在的黑暗中的真实情形。没有世界的光，我们也不会了解和珍惜上帝对我们的重要。

只有当耶稣进入我们的生命，我们才可以清楚地看到，并从由衷的信服而达到真实的改变。

使徒行传里，路加的记录让我们知道使徒保罗也有相同的经历。在前往大马士革的路上，当时名字仍是“扫罗”的他经历耶稣的情形就是看到“忽然有光从天上向他四面照射”（使徒行传9:3）。因为这个与耶稣的经历，扫罗看到自己的罪恶，知道他须要救主耶稣。

我们教会2011年的主题是关于光。耶稣在马太福音第5章告诉我们耶稣的门徒是“世上的光”。耶稣这样指示我们“你们的光也应当照在人前，让他们看见你们的好行为，又颂赞你们在天上的父。”

我们当中已经信主一段时间的弟兄姐妹，我们一直都活在光里。对我们很多人来说，我们已经忽略了最明显的事。我们就在光里面。就像那个在水里的鱼问水在哪里的故事一样，时间和无需负责的态度已渐渐让我们对一些事遗忘了。

我们就生活在耶稣的光里。我们要做这个世界的光。

我们有时很容易也很想忘记多数的新加坡人、我们多数的朋友、多数的亲戚、多数的同事和多数的邻居还没有看到耶稣的光，如同我和我在文莱森林里的同伴，不知道没有认识上帝而身处在灵命的黑暗里一样。

那我们应该怎么做？

发光吧！

You - A Lighted City



by Lim Khia Teck
LCEC Chairperson

What are our new year resolutions and plans?

Better exam results for those in school? Promotion and advancement at work? Better fitness? More appreciation of the finer things in life? More fun, more security, more time to do the things we like?

It may be natural to long for these things, but we are warned against letting these things become the sole passion in our lives. The hymn "Seek Ye First the Kingdom of God" reminds us where our priority should be. As God trains us in righteousness, so all the things we need will be added unto us. With His training, we shall be wise in our daily conduct and speech. In this way, we let our light shine before others, that they may see our good deeds and give glory to our Father in Heaven.

We can be like that lighted city on a hill, where weary travellers can seek refuge from the dangers and torments of worldly society. Or that light on a narrow path leading to salvation, where seekers can find true peace in a dark and confused world where truth is so often hard to discern.

If we pause to look around us, in the midst of outward prosperity and abundance, it is not difficult to notice people who are lost and lonely, people in need of hope, shelter, justice, compassion and peace. It could very well be someone at your workplace or school. You can be that light for this person.

As a church, we have set up ministries to help needy families who are unable to provide for themselves, children who need good counsel and friendship at Contact 123, the lonely and infirm elderly at St Luke's Eldercare in Serangoon. Our BB, GB and kindergarten provide Christian education and development for young and impressionable kids. Overseas, our missionaries in Cambodia labour to make disciples of the Khmer people, teaching them to follow after Jesus and how to make an honest living.

Each of us can play a part in supporting these and other ministries, through our presence, our prayers, our gifts and our service.

In the new year, will we endeavour to do better in responding to our Father's call to bring Jesus and His light to the ends of the earth?

God of the poor, friend of the weak, give us compassion we pray. Melt our cold hearts, let tears fall like rain. Come, change our love from a spark to a flame.



你是照亮的城市

林嘉德弟兄，
执事委员会主席

我们新的年度的计划和未来十年（甚至更久以后的数十年）的规划是什么？

在学校努力争取更好的成绩吗？就业的力争升职加薪吗？或改善个人健康？更尽力的享受生活？可以更快快乐、更安全、更多时间做我们喜欢的事？

我们也许很自然会去向往这些东西，但必须牢记不可让它们成为我们生命里唯一追求的东西。圣诗《先求神的国》提醒我们什么才应该视为重要。上帝带领我们追求祂的义，我们所需要的也会赐给我们。在上帝的教导下，我们对于每天的言语行为也会有智慧。这样我们就会让我们的光显现在他人面前，让他们看到我们所行并将荣耀归于我们在天上的父。

我们可以象那在山上照亮的城市，成为疲惫的旅人在这充满险恶的世俗社会里可歇息的避难所。或象那通往救恩的窄巷里的那线光，让寻觅的人可在这真假难辨、灰暗混乱的世界里找到真实的平安。

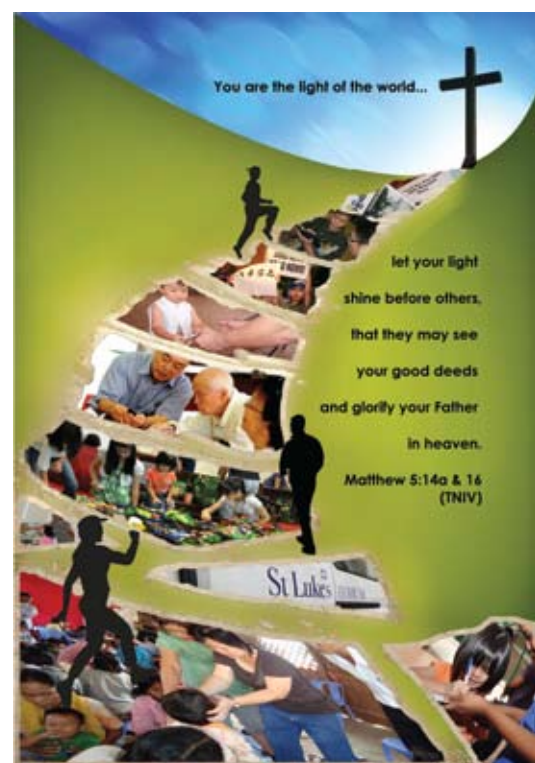
如果我们停下脚步看一下周围，在这富裕的表面下，不难发现迷失和孤独的人，生命需要希望、庇护、正义、同情和平安的人。他可能就是工作的地方或学校里的某个人。你可以成为照亮这个人生命的那线光。

在教会里，我们成立多个事工来帮助：需要援助的家庭，在“联系123”需要正面教导和友谊的小朋友，在实龙岗的圣路加乐龄关怀中心里孤独虚弱的老人。我们的男少年旅，女少年旅和幼儿园为年轻朋友和幼小孩童提供基督教教育和训练。在海外，我们在柬埔寨的宣教士努力带领柬埔寨人信主，教导他们跟随耶稣和如何维持生计。

我们每一个人都能够在这些事工里尽一分力，通过亲身参与，祷告，奉献和服务来侍奉。

在新的一年里，我们会更努力去回应我们的天父叫我们将耶稣和祂的光带到世界的每个角落的呼召吗？

慈悲怜悯的上帝，请赐给我们惻隐之心。让我们冷却的心从新发热，让我们无视的态度从新开始感受，帮助我们将我们的爱从新燃烧起来。



small group connect

connect with one another

More Than A Small Group



by Lim Sue Yien





The Seletar Parish small group has been around for as long as TMC has existed.

Formed in the early days of our church, this was one of three parish groups set up to minister to members who lived in the Seletar area. Very little has changed in this small group over the years. The group still meets faithfully every third Wednesday of the month at 8pm in a member's home in Seletar Hills Estate. Each meeting begins with praise and worship, a time of testimony, teaching of the word, and ends with fellowship over food.

These 12 families have literally grown old together. When the church was smaller, the pastors would come to share the Word at the parish meeting. This fostered a strong bond between the pastors, members and their respective families. Members also participated actively in the community life of the small church. This has continued to this day where every member in Seletar group contributes to some ministry in TMC. Big or small, each member's contribution to the group is valued, no matter if it's opening up their homes, leading worship, providing food, leading prayer, or simply turning up faithfully at each meeting.

Although the group received some younger members over the past year, the majority are in their golden years. Last year, they celebrated the 90th birthday of the oldest member, and what a beautiful memory it was! Another member is now living in a home, and members visit her whenever they can to encourage her.

The attendance of a pastor at the small group meeting is no longer mandatory. Although finding a replacement for a pastor's teaching hasn't always been easy, God has always provided spiritual food. The Seletar Parish small group participated with the rest of the church in the study of Philip Yancey's "What's so Amazing about Grace" and Rick Warren's "Purpose Driven Life", even meeting weekly to go through the materials and watch the videos.

As God provides the spiritual nourishment, the lady of the house will provide the food! You are most welcome to try either, on the third Wednesday of every month at 8pm in Seletar Hills estate.

YM presents...

connect with one another



INSPIRATION FROM ONE CHALKBOARD



Compiled from the testimonies of Children's Ministry workers, Deborah, Mei Chan and Chui Mei after their mission trip to Cambodia in December 2010.

by Chew Kim Ling

1. We were inspired by the boundless energy of Charia and her team from TransWorldRadio ("TWR") Cambodia who organised the Christmas celebration in Village Toul Sala. They were expecting 300 children. Instead, more than 500 children turned up for the celebration! It was wonderful to see so many children singing with actions and really enjoying themselves. The children were told bible stories and recited memory verses in the open fields. When it was time to distribute goodie bags, it was touching to see the joyful expressions on the children's faces. They looked happy with whatever little gift they got. Some even ate the loaf of bread they received on the spot.

2. In Village Kporb - which is one of the 60 Care for Cambodia ("CFC") sponsored village projects - about 50 children come voluntarily after school to have lessons under a wooden stilt house owned by Ruth, the village project owner. There were not enough mini blackboards for each child. Each row of children shared a board. After the children had written on it, the young teacher, who looked no older than 12 years old, checked the writing, and then passed the board on to the next row of children. We felt sad and at the same time hopeful. Sad that we Singaporeans have so much while these poor children have to make do with so little. Hopeful because these little ones were eager to learn and even slightly older children were teaching the younger ones. Witnessing the young teachers at work also taught us that, regardless of our age, as long as we are willing to give our time to serve Him, He will equip us to do His work.

3. Fi has always given us the impression that she is a very soft-spoken and caring but frail old lady. But our impression of her frailty changed totally after seeing her manoeuvre a land cruiser onto a small ferry and taking on the leader role in the village visit. She reminded us of Paul, who trained his disciples and sent them out to be Christian leaders. In this case, Fi sent people out to the village to run programmes to teach the villagers about healthcare, literacy, English, share the gospel and have bible study.

In this mission trip, we have been inspired by our mission partners' strong faith in God. We truly witnessed that nothing is impossible for God, as long as we trust Him, being ready and willing to answer His call towards the Great Commission. He will use anybody, young or old. He will make it possible!

Voices from our Youth Mission Trippers

December 2010



We often train ourselves to look past need and not do anything about it. We know of what is happening in Cambodia from past mission trippers as well as from missionaries, but we sometimes choose to look past it. We think to ourselves that "Yes, it sounds bad. They have my sympathy," and we give a few dollars, but that is as far as it goes for most of us. Albert Einstein said that the world is a dangerous place, not because of those who do evil, but because of those who don't do anything. And as Christians, God has said all that He requires of us is to do justice, to love mercy and to walk humbly with Him. It makes me question myself - how am I living out what He is requiring of me? - *Ang Hern Shung*

I learnt from the Khmers the art of serving. They helped me with the cleaning up, serving of food, and even the youngest little boys helped carry the plates around during lunch. I realised how caring these people were. I also saw love, the simplest acts of care and concern, the older boys taking charge of the younger children and leading them in games, and older girls doing the washing up. These all touched me immensely. - *Clara Chua*

I may groan about having to wake up early and having a lot of homework to do, but the people in Cambodia need to hold part-time jobs just to pay for their education. They stop schooling when they have no more money, and they resume schooling when they have earned enough to continue. Such perseverance is to be admired greatly. Marianne Williamson said, 'Joy is what happens to us when we allow ourselves to recognize how good things really are.' - *Clara Tay*

The team learnt the meaning of empowerment and to expect the unexpected. We had gone to Takhmao with our own plans, but Pastor Chanmap had actually planned the day for us. Plans that the team-in-charge had in place were changed drastically. But we learnt how to adapt to changes and still bonded with the Khmer youths. - *Goh Chui Mei*


Leo F. Buscaglia once said, "Too often we underestimate the power of a touch, a smile, a kind word, a listening ear, an honest compliment, or the smallest act of caring, all of which have the potential to turn a life around." I had my arms around a few children, praying for them, when I started to tear a little. The children saw this and whispered to one another. They started to tickle me. Moments like this set me thinking about how the smallest act can change and touch someone's life. - *Nicole Gan*

In the first place we visited, we saw many carvings, tombs, incense burnings and daily practices that the religious Khmers took in all seriousness. They performed rituals, such as the release of captured pigeons to carry their sins away so that they could be forgiven. This reminded me of how easily salvation has been given to me. All I needed to do was believe in the only true and living way - Jesus Christ. I am not satisfied with being merely on the receiving end of such grace. I believe I can give and accomplish more in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. - *Tan Min Qhee*

At Takhmao, they are so passionate about every aspect of the service, be it singing or the sermon. Their worship is so simple but moves the hearts of everyone including me. They sing with such conviction and passion every Sunday. It has made me realise that sometimes I lose my focus on God and turn my focus to my friends during youth ministry. As Hern Shung said, the twelve of us mission trippers make up almost one-fifth of YM. If each of us behaves as if we were on a mission trip every Sunday, I'm sure YM would be a much more lively and wonderful. - *Timothy Tan*

On the night before we left Cambodia, we had dinner with the Cheng family. Their stories of God's provision were amazing! Once, they had a huge order for their catering services, and they ran out of plates in the middle of the event. Unfortunately, the event was held in a very remote place, and the only nearby shop was a petrol kiosk. Now, petrol kiosks do not sell plates, so the only thing they could do was to pray. After that, Uncle Jacob decided to just try the petrol kiosk anyway, and amazingly, they sold paper plates! - *Vernetta Vivian Chai*

Change is something that many are apprehensive about. But is change always a bad thing? Take our Khmer brother, Chan Thol, for example. When I first met him last year, Chan Thol was a little shy and spoke very little English. When I met him again this year, Chan Thol had opened up more and had taken the effort to learn English. He has been growing and glowing in the name of God. I'm glad to have gotten to know him better. - *Jonathan Lau*



What if *twenty steps*
across a room could
change your friend's life
forever?

connect with others

Just Walk Across the Room

A journey that will refresh your appreciation for the Holy Spirit's mysterious ways, rekindle your passion for people, and revive your belief that the single greatest gift you can give to your friends and family members is an introduction to the God who...

created them
loves them
and has a purpose for their lives

You'll learn how to:
Develop friendships with people who do not yet know God
Discover the stories behind their lives journeys
Discern the "next steps" which will help point them to faith in God

Pointing people to faith is what God calls us all to do.

A church-wide programme beginning in March 2011 at
Trinity Methodist Church

EVENTS

Connect with God

Every Saturday

0700hrs - Men @ Prayer

19 February

Day of Prayer for Missions. Please contact Andy Chew at cybrchew@pacific.net.sg for more information.

Connect with One Another

12 February

Senior's Lunar New Year Gathering, 4-7pm

12, 13, 19 February

Intermediate Photography Course (visit www.tmc.org.sg/highlights.html). Contact Tricia Tong (tmccomms@gmail.com)

17 March

Seniors' Get-Together

Connect with Others

18-21 February

WSCS Mission Trip

24 February/27 March

Visitation & Devotion @ St Luke's Eldercare. Please contact Eric Cheong at eric@tmc.org.sg for more details

2 March

Yum Cha, 10am. Contact Eric Cheong for more details.

31 March

Visitation & Devotion @ St Luke's Eldercare. Please contact Eric Cheong at eric@tmc.org.sg for more details

SERVICES REQUIRED

TREASURE HUNT

Anyone who would like to help preserve the treasured memories of our church, please contact Victor at 9619-6176 / vseah@singnet.com.sg.

PHOTOGRAPHERS

The Communications Committee still requires photographers to serve once a month. Please email tmccomms@gmail.com if you are a shutterbug.

GRAPHIC DESIGNERS

If you have a gift of graphic design and are proficient in InDesign or equivalent software, please email tmccomms@gmail.com to exercise your gifts which are sorely in demand.

TEACH

Contact 123 is in need of tutors to assist primary school children with their school work. Volunteers are also required to manage the counter. If you can offer your time at Block 123, Serangoon Avenue 1, #01-140, please contact Eric Cheong at 62824443 or eric@tmc.org.sg.

WHO IS IN THE COUNTING HOUSE COUNTING THE MONEY?

Not enough people, says the Finance Committee, which needs volunteers.

Responsibility: collate the offering into different denominations and record the amounts accordingly on Sundays and special days like Christmas after the worship services. Volunteers would be placed on a pre-agreed duty roster.

Simple pre-requisite: A devoted Christian with a fear and love for God.

Training: Training will be provided. A counting team leader will be present to guide you.

For more information: Please call Denisa at 62824443 or denisa@tmc.org.sg

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