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SALTSHAKER



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by Kwa Kiem Kiok

SALT, LIGHT AND THE BEATITUDES



We are familiar with the metaphors of “salt” and “light” (Matt 5:13-16) and how Christians are to influence their environments.

As “salt”, Christians add flavour to their contexts and surroundings so that others will always appreciate the Christian presence – that which encourages, builds up and not tears down, and speaks the truth in love.

As “light”, Christians are a contrast to the sin that is around them by doing the right thing even when it costs or hurts us.

Also as light, Christians are to be put on a stand so that there is light for everyone in the house (Matt 5:15), and salt must come out of the saltshaker to season the food.

However, these metaphors of salt and light also have deeper and richer meanings when we read them in the context of the Beatitudes. After all, these words of Jesus follow directly after Jesus’ teaching on the Beatitudes so the two portions must be connected.

The Beatitudes, the start of the Sermon on the Mount, tell us the characteristics expected of those who follow Christ. Looking at the list – poor in spirit, those who mourn, the meek – tells us that these qualities are very contrary to the values of the world. Could Jesus thus be challenging us that by living out the Beatitudes we are also being salt and light?

The Beatitudes are difficult to live out because at various levels they are counter-cultural. Our society respects those who are rich because they are deemed to be successful and worthy. In the same vein, society says that the politically powerful, those who are high flyers in commerce and industry, are those whom we should listen to because they have knowledge to rise to their positions and so get ahead in this world.

So it is hard to believe that the meek will really inherit the earth because our experience and the media tell us otherwise. Media portrayals of brutal murders of innocent victims (not new human activities but brought startlingly close today with social media) reinforce the message that those with power and weapons are

the ones who will get their way in the world. This was so in Jesus’ day as well because Christians were neither highly-placed nor well-regarded in society, and were ruthlessly and casually persecuted.

But Jesus blesses those who are poor in spirit, who have nothing and who therefore totally depend on God for their meaning and identity, because they are the citizens of the Kingdom of God. He applauds peacemakers because they reflect God’s character of reconciliation and so shall be called sons and daughters of God.

If anything challenges my faith and seems contrary to everything that I see around me today, it is the Beatitudes. That’s why these are considered counter-cultural qualities. I read about the faith and responses of those who live out the Beatitudes and pay for it with their lives, and I wonder whether I could ever be like them. I would like to think that I can and I will, whether it is to face death or to forgive those who have persecuted others. Perhaps that is a question that you are also asking, and wondering whether your faith can stand up to such severe persecution. We shall not know until we go through such a time of testing. We pray that we will be able to stand up, and yet we also pray that we will not have to undergo such suffering in this life. That is what faith is about, isn’t it? To be sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see (Heb 11:1). We also need the faith to believe that what we see in the media shall not and does not determine how we live nor what is valuable in life.

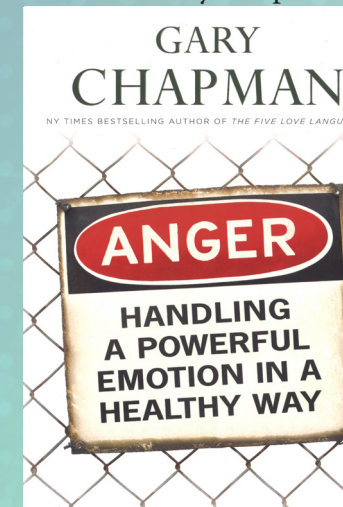
Let us encourage one another to live out the Christian life in the everyday situations we face, whether it is to stand for justice for the foreigners in our midst, to help out a colleague who is facing challenging circumstances or to reconcile people we know who do not get along. For it is when we live out our faith each step in our everyday lives that our faith is strengthened for we can believe that these are values which matter to God. Secondly let us encourage one another to live this way, because as I have said before, the Christian life is too difficult to be lived alone - we need each other.

This is the second in a series of articles for the Saltshaker 2015, following the pulpit calendar on the Sermon on the Mount.

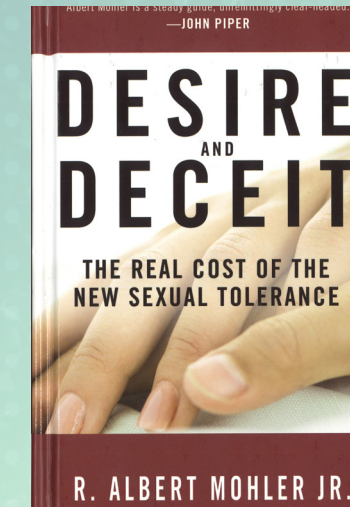
BIBLIOTHEQUE

Here are more books to deepen your understanding of Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount.

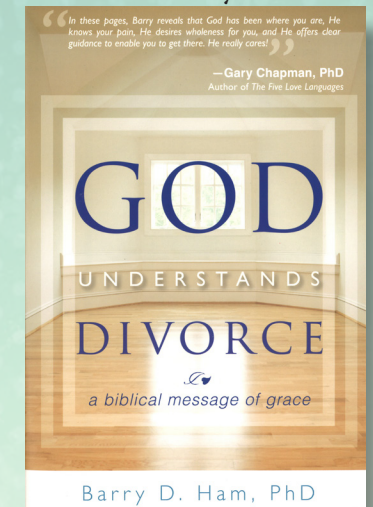
ANGER – HANDLING A POWERFUL EMOTION IN A HEALTHY WAY
Author: Gary Chapman



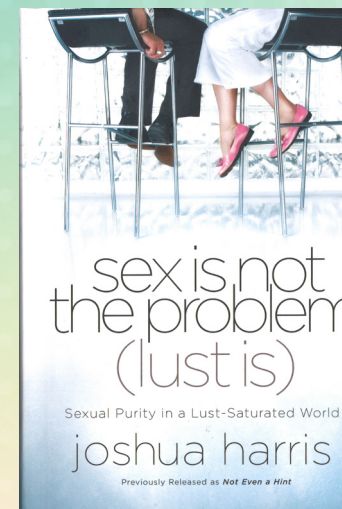
DESIRE AND DECEIT - THE REAL COST OF NEW SEXUAL TOLERANCE
Author: R. Albert Mohler Jr



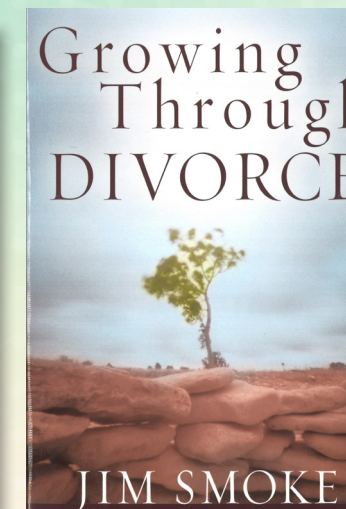
GOD UNDERSTANDS DIVORCE
Author: Barry D. Ham



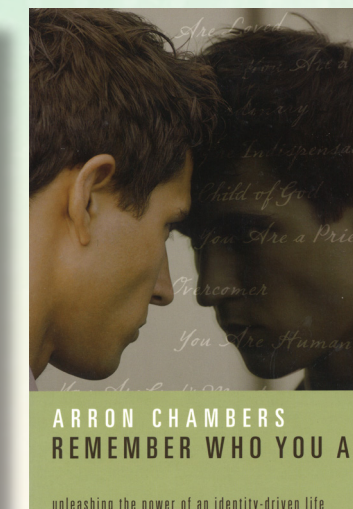
SEX IS NOT THE PROBLEM (LUST IS)
Author: Joshua Harris



GROWING THROUGH DIVORCE
Author: Jim Smoke



REMEMBER WHO YOU ARE
Author: Arron Chambers



CHANGE AGENT
Author: Os Hillman



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TMC RESOURCE CENTRE

You can also borrow books related to the topic of anger, one of the upcoming sermon themes, from the TMC Resource Centre on Level 2. Some available titles are:

When Anger Hits Home by Oliver Gary Jackson (249 OLI)
Anger is a Choice by Lahaye Tim (152.4 LAH)
Overcoming Hurts & Anger by Carlson Dwight L (152.4 CAR)

Voices From the Laity

This year, the Saltshaker will feature the work of the Lay Leadership, a group of seven passionate individuals who lead different clusters of ministries and committees, and represent the laity across the English congregation, Mandarin service and Youth Ministry.

We featured Andy Chew (Lay Leader) and Chew Kim Ling (Associate Lay Leader, Evangelistic Cluster) in our February issue. In this issue, we hear from Richard Seng and Keegan Ong.

Associate Lay Leader, Richard Seng, leads the Prophetic Cluster. He also serves as a worship leader at the 11.15am English service.

Jesus said to those who responded to His “Follow me” invitation:

“All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.” (Matt 28:18-20).

“How can people have faith in the Lord and ask him to save them, if they have never heard about him? And how can they hear, unless someone tells them?” (Rom 10:14, CEV)

IS EVERYBODY LEARNING KUNGFU?



by Richard Seng

My first understanding of the word “disciple” came from watching Chinese kungfu television serials when I was a child. The message was simple yet clear - there was no such thing as “10 Steps to becoming a Disciple of the ‘Eighteen Dragon-Subduing Palms’ Skill” (降龙十八掌 for the kungfu movie aficionado). To become a disciple of the master of that particular skill, one had to relocate to live with that master. The apprentice had to follow him in order to be trained, mentored, corrected and disciplined over an extended period of time.

In modern times, to acquire a skill (be it in art and craft, gastronomy, hip-hop dance, how to trade in stocks, etc), we tend to subscribe to a plethora of self-improvement initiatives conducted by renowned masters of respective trades. If we were serious about accomplishing the skill, what we would not do is just read the advertising literature.

Those of us who consider ourselves to be believers in Jesus Christ KNOW that we are called “Christians”. It is a term we use when filling up forms in the section headed “Religion”.

How many of us are followers of Jesus Christ, though?

Most of us know Jn 3:16. When we read “...that whosoever believes in Him may not perish but have everlasting life...”, do we merely understand the phrase to mean that we receive a promise of eternal life, that we pass on at the end of our earthly journey into a new spirit state of timeless, sorrow-less and tear-less being? Is that all there is to that verse?

That would not be a complete picture of what Abba Father has in mind for us as His beloved children. A Christian does not merely believe in Jesus and what He has done for us. We read in Jam 2:19: “You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that—and shudder!”

No, a Christian is a true disciple if he follows after Jesus (including His command in Matt 28), and spends time sharing, teaching, supporting, and exercising faith in Abba Father in and through a commonly shared life within the Christian community. This takes place over an extended period of time, as part of appropriating the eternal, abundant life that Jesus came to give, to you and me, and to others (Rom 10:14).

Are you a believer in Jesus Christ? Let me rephrase – Are you a mere believer of Jesus Christ? Or are you a follower of Jesus Christ? Is there a difference? Yes. Is there a quick guide to becoming a disciple (follower) that you can download from the internet or buy? Clearly not. I believe the hardest part, after receiving Jesus’ gift (Jn 3:16b), is to follow Him and to follow through with a life of discipleship so that more may receive the same gift.

“Them with ears, hear ye the invitation – “Come, follow me, and I will make you into fishers for men!” (Mk 1:17, CJB)

The leadership in TMC firmly believes that the abundant fruitfulness of the Christian life is grounded in discipleship. The mandate of the Prophetic Cluster in TMC (made up of the Pulpit Ministry, Worship & Music, Prayer and Communications Committees) is “Revealing God and leading the church towards God”.

Let us ask ourselves some questions: In all that we think, say or do, no matter whether this is during weekdays (at home, work, or school) or weekends (at leisure, or at worship services), how is God revealed in our lives (to the watching world)? How is my life constantly (albeit not perfectly) moving towards God? How is there a clear focus on God?

Understanding Discipleship

Keegan Ong, Associate Lay Leader (ALL) (co-leading with Kim Ling*) in the Evangelistic Cluster helps us to understand 4 key things about Discipleship. Keegan is also the chairperson for the Mandarin Service.



by Vinitha Jayaram

Life Changing

In secular terms, the word “disciple” refers to one who is learning from a senior, typically in trade or skill and who then passes the skill on to another junior. From God’s perspective and the way our Lord Jesus lived his life on Earth, **discipleship can be life-changing as we walk with our Lord Jesus.**

A Multi-Way Partnership

As an ALL, I see my role as a partnership with the Lord and other ministries and its committee members. With a macro view of the church, I am able to bring together various ministries to participate in and support the church’s discipleship vision. That involves praying together for one another’s ministries, upholding one another whenever there is need to.

Sharing the Gospel while Building Relationships

Discipleship comes hand in hand with sharing the gospel, and the Evangelistic cluster hopes to help the church in their discipleship journey by providing opportunities to share through evangelistic outreach. We intend to do that by creating an environment that builds up the disciple-discipler relationship. Let’s not forget that **“Discipleship is a process where two or more individuals intentionally choose a lifestyle of accountability and together, journey with one another towards Christ likeness”.** (quote from lay leader, Andy Chew)

Involves Every Part of the Body of Christ

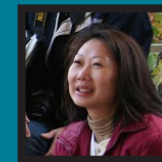
First and foremost, the church is the whole body of Christ, and we make up the many parts of this body.

Romans 12:4-5 says,

“For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all others”.

In the same way, **at the core of discipleship is the need for the entire body of Christ to build up and support each other** “until we all reach unity in faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ” (Ephesians 4:12-16).

Therefore, whatever the Evangelistic cluster needs or wants to do requires every part of the body of Christ to be involved.



SG CONNECT FEEDING GOD’S SHEEP

by Lim Sue Yien

A new small group has started up in TMC, so new it doesn’t even have a name yet. Comprising a mix of old and young believers, it is led by married couple, Hsien Hui and Caroline. Shortly after getting married in 2013, the couple felt God prompting them to begin a small group. At that time, Hsien Hui had been serving in his ministry for more than 20 years, and he had been praying for a new way to serve God. Finally in 2014, they were asked if they would like to lead a small group made up of newly baptised members from the membership and ALPHA classes. Together with Shuwen from their existing small group, they formed this new small group.

“FOR A CHRISTIAN, YOU’RE NOT BAD”.

These words had been said to Hsien Hui in the past. It saddens him because it shows that non-Christians have seen negative examples among those who profess to be Christian but do not practise the faith. Hence, Hsien Hui wants to build a solid Christian foundation in these new believers, just as mentors and mature believers have helped him to build strong foundations in the past. Difficult times will come, and a solid foundation helps to weather the storm.



Each meeting starts with worship and prayer.

“WE ARE A SMALL GROUP ON A DISCIPLESHIP JOURNEY”

The group is working through the Navigator Bible Study series “Growing In Christ – a 13-week follow-up course for new and growing Christians”. While these sessions tend to be a sharing of experiences by older Christians to those younger in the faith, the older believers have learnt a lot from the child-like faith of the newer Christians. The most important thing to know is that the struggles are the same. They don’t disappear once you become a Christian. It is how you respond to them that makes the difference between the new Christian way and the old secular way. In a sense, the older Christians are mentoring, or discipling the newer believers. There are unofficial discipler-disciple relationships which are developing within the group. The Christian journey, after all, is not to be taken alone but together with fellow believers.

“The purpose of a small group is to take care of its members”

For Caroline, who has had experience leading a small group, small groups exist to take care of each other. Tapping on God’s love to love others, and not relying on one’s own strength, is crucial for long-term relationships in a small group to work. Things get easier if you seek God along the way. Taking care also involves integrating these church members into the wider body of the church so that they feel like a member within God’s larger community.

“EQUIPPING LEADERS IS VERY IMPORTANT”

Hsien Hui, Caroline and Shuwen would consider themselves to be new at this. This is a learning experience for them as well. Currently they learn from one another. After each meeting, they sound each other out to seek feedback in order to improve themselves. In the end, they realise that God is teaching them through these new believers. Seeing them trust God in simple things is an amazing encouragement to these “old hands”.



Discussion time

“THE RAIN CAME DOWN, THE STREAMS ROSE, AND THE WINDS BLEW AND BEAT AGAINST THAT HOUSE; YET IT DID NOT FALL, BECAUSE IT HAD ITS FOUNDATION ON THE ROCK.” MATTHEW 27:25

More about small groups at TMC can be found at www.tmc.org.sg/smallgroup.html. Or contact Park Ming at parkming@tmc.org.sg, or through the church office

MAKING DISCIPLES WHO MAKE DISCIPLES



by Lim Sue Yien

One of the key needs identified by new small group leaders (SGLs) is the importance of equipping leaders. Mature SGLs, on the other hand, desire to have a forum to share experiences as well as learn from one another in mutual encouragement.

Although the Small Group Committee organises regular SGL meetings as a platform for these leaders to be updated, share their experiences and work through small group training modules, the Committee wanted a platform specifically to spiritually build up these leaders to be Disciples. Thus, the Discipleship Group was developed.

Discipleship Groups can happen in any context in the church. It is a safe environment where we develop together a shared understanding of the process and experience of discipleship, encouraging and supporting one another in being and making disciples.

A collection of 15 SGLs have decided to embark on this discipleship journey together. It is not, however, another bible study merely to gain knowledge. The purpose is to intentionally transform the thinking of these SGLs so they can become Disciples of Christ who go out to make disciples.

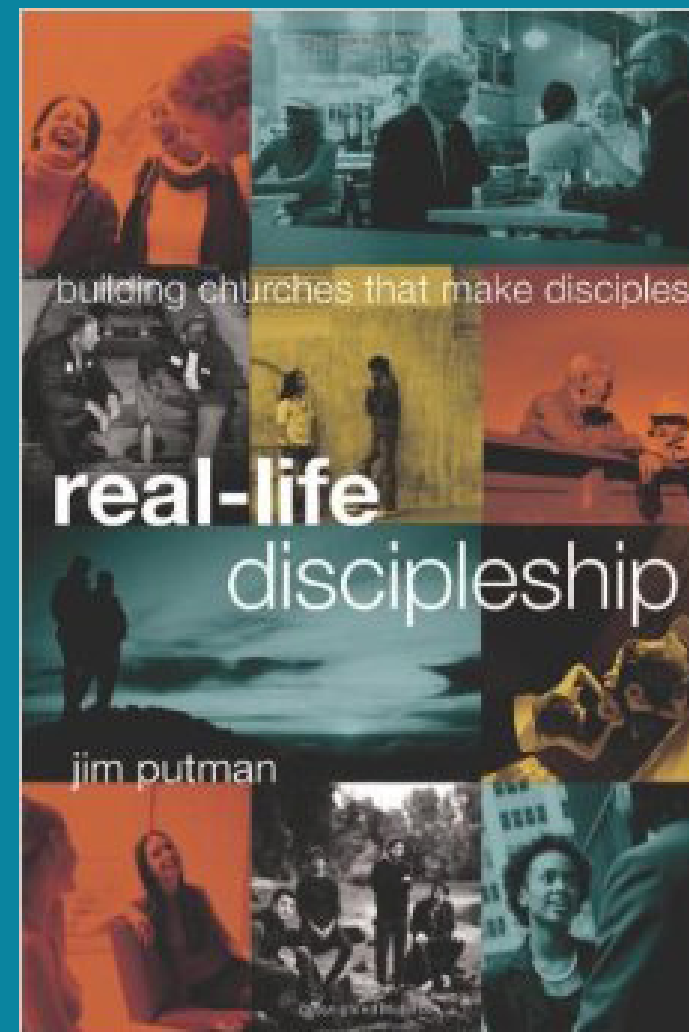
The group is walking through Real Life Discipleship Training Manual, a 12-session resource developed by Navpress, and recommended by the TMC Discipleship Roadmap (www.tmc.org.sg/dn/roadmap.pdf).

There are five sub-sections of materials per session, which each participant covers in his or her own time. Meetings take place once a month to review the last session, and set the direction for a time of group discussion and prayer. As everyone is expected to have worked through the materials, the group discussion time focuses on application topics and the current challenges faced by each member.

Real-life struggles and past experiences provide a rich learning ground for participants, each on their own journey of making a difference the lives of those around them, those under their care in their small group, and those in their homes and workplaces.

In many ways, discipling relationships are already ready and waiting to happen in TMC. Even within a small group, there could be smaller clusters of twos or threes who form a prayer accountability group that meet in their workplace. Or simply smaller groups of people who form a natural bond due to similarities in their life stages (for example, young mothers, cycling enthusiasts). Or a newly-baptised Christian who is linked up with a mentor who is an older Christian.

If indeed you find yourself in one of these circumstances, ready to take a deeper dive into obeying God's call to make disciples, do feel free to visit this Discipleship Group. Alternatively, training can be given to your group to help you to get yourself on this track to become fishers of men.



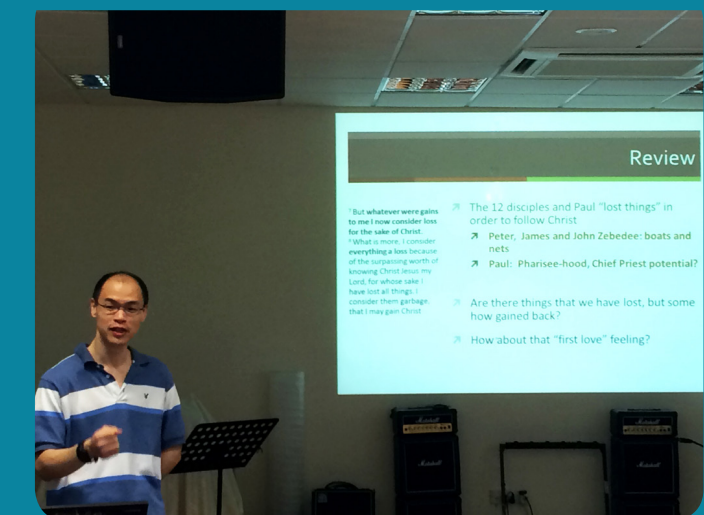
Materials used for the Discipleship Group

**This Discipleship Group meets on
the first Saturday of each month.**

**If you would like to pay a visit, or
find out how to set up one,
please contact Colin Yip at
colinyip@gmail.com.**



Groups break out for discussion and prayer



Reviewing the previous session material



Disciple Group members meet once a month



by Koh Shuwen

In my last article, I mentioned that the original Greek word for hospitality is *philoxenia*, which means love of strangers.

Loving strangers, or for that matter, being loved by strangers was probably the furthest thing from my mind when my beloved 88-year-old grandmother suffered a massive stroke on 4 Feb 15 and was warded at Tan Tock Seng Hospital (TTSH) and later, Ren Ci Community Hospital (RCCH).

My grandmother's ward at TTSH could have been a poster child for the promotion of Singapore's efforts in fostering racial harmony. Her three other ward mates were Malay, Indian and Eurasian ladies. The more alert among them always smiled and greeted me when I visited my grandmother. When none of my family members were around, the caregivers of the weaker patients would check in on my grandmother and happily provide us with her "progress reports". If not for the (literally) sterile surroundings, beeping medical equipment and nurses bustling around, one might have mistaken TTSH Ward 12B for a little "kampong" visited regularly by its inhabitants' extended families and friends.

After my grandmother's condition had stabilised, the doctors decided

that she could be transferred to step-down care at RCCH to complete her course of intravenous antibiotics for a pre-existing infection. The medical and health conditions of the patients at RCCH were more bleak. Most of them were there because they had "stable" health issues that required medical attention. Some were semi-conscious, others were conscious but had limited cognitive functions.

At RCCH, I met wonderful people whose loved ones were in the same ward as my grandmother. One lady in particular, stood out. She is a veteran caregiver for her mother who had suffered three incapacitating strokes. In between faithfully visiting and caring for her mother daily, she would chat with some of the patients who were in the TV room. We got talking one day and I found out that she attended Cornerstone Church. We never exchanged names or personal information but whenever our hospital "shifts" overlapped, she never failed to encourage and affirm me as well as provide practical advice about longer term care for my grandmother. She shared how she would speak to, hold the hand of, and pray for her mother every day and reminded me about the importance of human touch in conveying love. She was never intrusive but listened patiently to my questions and gave me brochures and information about caring for stroke patients.

I was surprised, and very humbled by the acts of hospitality demonstrated by so many strangers during my grandmother's hospital sojourn.

It brought to mind the Parable of the Sheep and the Goats.

³⁷ "Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink?'"

³⁸ "When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? ³⁹ When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?"

⁴⁰ "The King will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.' (Matt 25:37-40)

Hospitality is infectious both ways. I in turn learnt to extend hospitality to others.

During that same period, I'd heard about as well as met our own TMC members who visited Aunties M and L who were respectively in the same ward and hospital as my grandmother. I visited Auntie M and her faithful husband and companion, Uncle J whenever I got the chance, and in turn received Uncle J's encouragement. I also exchanged many useful pieces of care-giving information with Uncle J.

Hospitals are not the most uplifting of places but boy, were my spirits lifted during my grandmother's stay there!



WHEN DIALECT FAILS THERE IS STILL THE HOLY SPIRIT



by Koh Shuwen

On 4 Feb 15, my grandmother suffered a stroke in the left hemisphere of her brain.

It seemed like a cruel sentence, perhaps one worse than death. The stroke was severe enough to cause the loss of function to the right side of her body as well as rob her of most of her speech and the ability to swallow. Her cognitive function was difficult to assess and seemed patchy at best. The events that unfolded after her debilitating stroke however helped me understand why God preserved her life and was a testament to God's patient and unfailing love.

Prior to my grandmother's stroke, my aunt (by marriage) and I had been sharing the Good News with her. This had not been easy. For a start, my grandmother only speaks and understands Teochew, and sharing with her about God's love for her tested the limits of my Teochew. "Love", "hope" and "faith"

were simple enough to convey in Teochew but I ran out of words pretty quickly and I ended up saying that I hoped to eventually be reunited with her in Heaven. Each time we broached the topic of putting her faith in God though, my grandmother would cite reasons such as her old age and worry about "abandoning" my late grandfather should she throw her lot with a different religious camp.

After my grandmother's stroke, my hope for her salvation was at an all-time low and I was very anxious. My aunt however, persevered and I tried to contribute what little faith I had left to bolster her efforts. On 12 Feb 15, in the presence of my uncle and myself, my aunt asked my grandmother if she wanted to accept Jesus as her Saviour. Her answer was a clear "yes"!

To be honest, I had doubts about my grandmother's cognitive state but prayed that the Holy Spirit would

CONVERSATIONS ABOUT DYING AND DEATH

My grandmother's stroke left my family facing the bewildering prospect of long-term hospitalisation. Navigating the hospital procedures as well as healthcare and financial considerations was incredibly taxing to say the least, and emotionally stressful.

My grandmother's stroke was severe enough to compromise her quality of life, but yet not fatal enough to grant her the blessed relief of a quick death. This might sound callous and cold-hearted but my family was able to say with certainty that my grandmother was ready to die. We were guided by the conversations we have had with her after my grandfather's sudden death from a heart attack two years ago. She had clearly and repeatedly expressed her readiness to die as well as her wish to die at home so we opted for early discharge prior to the completion of her course of intravenous antibiotics and signed an AOR (At Own Risk) form to indemnify the hospital. We decided that she would have a better shot at quality of life at home after reviewing her medical condition and discussing Advance Care Planning (ACP¹) with her doctor and ACP counsellors. Given my grandmother's age as well as underlying health issues in addition to her stroke, we also made other tough decisions such as not attempting resuscitation in the event of another stroke/heart attack and limiting medical interventions to comfort measures such as painkillers and oxygen.

At the time of writing, my grandmother is in a stable condition. There is still anxiety when she has a health "episode" such as fever or breathlessness. We manage her fevers by spongeing her and giving her panadol. We have an oxygen tank on standby should her oxygen levels drop as well as the contact of a network of house call physicians for more serious health issues. These are not "pretty" situations but the precious opportunities we had to discuss her wishes (dying at home) and fears (being hooked up to machines) were important. These conversations have relieved my family of having to second-guess my grandmother's dying wishes (pun intended) and hopefully ultimately serve to ensure that she will have as good a death as she can when my grandmother returns to God whom she now calls her Lord.

¹Advance Care Planning (ACP) is the process of planning for your future health and personal care. Having ACP conversations with your loved ones allows you to:

- Share your personal values and beliefs
- Explore how your values and beliefs affect your healthcare preferences in difficult medical situations
- Think about who among your loved ones can be your voice if you become very ill one day

Resources and references:

- Agency for Integrated Care (www.aic.sg)
- Living Matters (www.livingmatters.sg)

continue to speak to her and work in her heart. I tried to calm my anxious heart by claiming on the promise in Rom 10:13 that "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved". I was also supported by the prayers of my small group and other TMC friends. The next day, Friday 13 Feb, my aunt said that she would ask her pastor whom she had brought to meet my grandmother over the last two years to attend to grandmother. Again, my TMC prayer warriors were activated. We all prayed for her to be alert and receptive during Pastor Angeline's visit.

My grandmother was particularly active before Pastor Angeline's visit and had motioned that she wanted to sit up in the wheelchair. She was clearly able to recognise, and happy to see, Pastor Angeline. This time, I was certain that she was lucid when she was able to repeat after Pastor Angeline that she wanted to accept Jesus as her Saviour and to walk with Him.

The feeling was indescribable when my grandmother said she wanted to be baptised there and then at Ren Ci Community Hospital.

Amen and praise the Lord! Our Lord is truly a gracious God and He "wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim 2:4)!

I felt like Jesus' disciples in Lk 17:5-6. The apostles said to the Lord, "Increase our faith!" He replied, "If you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mulberry tree, 'Be uprooted and planted in the sea,' and it will obey you". I shared this with a friend and he pointed out that it wasn't so much the *size* of my faith, but *whom* I had placed my faith in that mattered. Indeed, our Almighty Father is great and worthy of all praise!



CHEONGSAM EVANGELISM



by Tricia Tong

She – let's call her A – shared the good news.

She told S where to find this good news. A even showed S what the good news had done for her.

S went in search of this good news and found it exactly where A had said it would be. S appropriated the good news for herself.

It took all of just over 60 minutes (arguably much less) for this conversion to happen.

I should be writing about sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Alas, I'm not.

I am talking about how an exchange of WhatsApp¹ messages between my good friends, A, S and myself which resulted in A telling S and me where to find inexpensive cheongsams for this past Lunar New Year. A even sent a photo via WhatsApp to show us that the cheongsams were beautiful. "Lovely" designed in "polka dots" and "checks" was how A described them. This sent S in search of the shop the very next day and – this is the conversion – S **bought** a cheongsam too. She sent me a picture of herself in this new garment.

The three of us good friends wondered why our sharing of the Good News is not as effective.

It is not my intention to whittle down the serious matter of salvation to the comparatively frivolous and superficial subject of shopping for new year clothes. Nor am I ignoring the work of the Holy Spirit in the soul conversion process. But just why is it that we find it easy to initiate a conversation about almost anything that isn't related to Jesus, and keep on talking about the subject (our Whatsapp thread about cheongsams continued way after S had bought her new clothes), but our lips remain tightly zipped about the most momentous, life-changing moment of our lives?

There are probably many reasons for this. In the interests of space, I offer only two reasons for our consideration ... and conscious attention.

Firstly, we may not be mindful about introducing Jesus into our conversations. But the Bible says: "These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts ... Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up." (Deut 6:6-7).

In short, talk about them all the time. Seize every opportunity to introduce the Gospel.

S: Oh dear, I have nothing to wear for the new year!

A: I can recommend a shop to you but why do you

*worry about clothes? The Bible tells us that the flowers of the field do not labour but God takes care of them. Don't worry so much about clothing. I'm sure you'll find something nice. We are not like flowers which are here today and gone tomorrow. God will take even better care of us.*²

S: I am so busy and tired! I have to cook for the entire family of 30 on Chinese New Year's Eve.

A: I'll pray for you to get some rest. But don't worry about the food. Jesus says: "Life is more than food and the body more than clothes".³ What's important is the family coming together.

It is not possible to predict the infinite number of directions which the above conversations could take. But our role is not to convert – that's the role of the Holy Spirit. Our work is to sow the Word of God any time and every time.

Secondly, we may not have forsaken our first love (Rev 2:4), but we may have got used to having our first love around. Like the furniture around the house. It's there. We use it. But we have forgotten the initial excitement when we first turned on that 42-inch television set in our home.

There used to be a time for every Christian, I'm sure, when we read our Bibles voraciously, and when we eagerly looked forward to talking about Jesus at every opportunity. This enthusiasm might even have worried some of our parents who might have thought that we had got involved with cults (I know mine did).

Perhaps we got bored. Perhaps we started to treat Jesus like the clothes that hang in our wardrobe which we don't wear anymore (and then complain that we have nothing to wear). He's there. Just ... dusty.

In this Easter season, we need once more to recall Jesus' sacrifice for us on the Cross and the excitement that His resurrection brings. We cannot just sing "Were You There" without also appreciating that the hymn writer wants us to imagine that we **were** there when He was nailed to the tree and when He rose from the grave.

At this year's main Easter service, we will also be celebrating Holy Communion. Yes, it might be appropriate to sound morose when we say: "Christ has died". But let us sound, feel and **be** robust – not just in church but out there in the streets, in our schools, work places, and homes – when we say: "Christ is risen!" and "Christ will come again!"

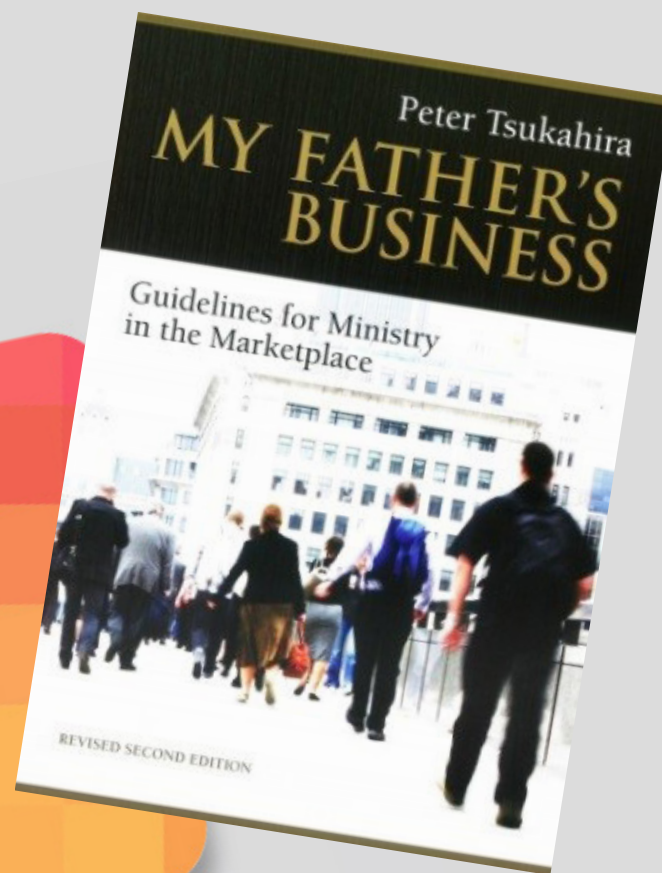
¹WhatsApp is a mobile phone application where more than two people can chat with one another.

²Matthew 6:28-30

³Matthew 6:25

MY FATHER'S BUSINESS

Guidelines for Ministry in the Marketplace
written by Peter Tsukahira



by Claire Lowe

What was Jesus' central message while He lived on earth?

A gospel of personal salvation?

For you to pray to receive Jesus into your heart?

Peter Tsukahira says NO! The core of Jesus' teaching went beyond the redemption of the individual (a concept probably popularised by Western theology). Jesus' teaching on earth revolved around the restoration of God's Kingdom in society.

Agree or disagree?

Peter Tsukahira, a missionary pastor and businessman challenges our understanding of our Christian mission and the way we define and express ministry. He speaks of a need for a paradigm shift in the way we view business and employment, and invites us to think

of ourselves as "kingdom professionals" and "full-time Christian lay ministers" in the workplaces, witnessing Christ from Mondays to Fridays, in and through the professional work that God has called us to.

"We think of the church as being the place we go to or the people we are with in this one day a week, rather than the *ekklesia*, (New Testament Greek word for "the called-out ones") - a holy people chosen for God's sovereign purposes." God is not only The Lord of the Sabbath, interested in the religious activities we do on Sundays, He is also Lord of the other six days of the week, in which we are called to live out His Kingdom in society, transforming the socio-cultural norms of our working worlds.

Peter Tsukahira, in his book, My Father's Business, beckons us to a life of radical discipleship. He shares, intimately from his own journey, of the tensions and struggles he faced as an employed staff and later a



we will never change the world by
going to church. we will only change
the world by being the church

business owner wanting to practise Kingdom values. He also spells out very practical principles on how we can integrate our work and ministry and in so doing, accomplishing "The Father's Business" at the work place. He expounds on how we can truly worship God at work and the importance of exercising integrity, having singleness of mind, diligence, having a winning attitude, resisting intimidation, building relationships and prioritising prayer.

"My Father's Business" is substantive in content but very readable. It's a highly recommended book endorsed by eminent Christian and business leaders.

Let us return to God His rightful place and kingship in our jobs!

"Whatever you do....
do it unto the Lord"
(Colossians 3:23)

"My Father's Business" can be borrowed from
TMC's Resource Centre on Level 2 (248.4 TSU)

introducing **E-Track** within TMC's Discipleship Roadmap

Evangelism is not simply about organising an Alpha Course or putting up a concert

Witnessing is not simply a presentation of the Gospel story to a friend or stranger. Evangelism is not an event or a programme. It is a way of life. It is about intentionally engaging in a purposeful relationship with a pre-believer, bearing witness – in deed and word – to the reality of God, His Love, and His Kingdom. This is the journey we pray the whole church will embark on together in the coming years under our Discipleship Roadmap.

Will you be part of this journey and come on board the Evangelism Track (E-Track)?

Let's **CHANGE!**

Change our understanding and mindset of Evangelism.

Let's **LEARN!**

Learn to share the Gospel through relationships.

Let's **WORK TOGETHER!**

We are not alone and shall spur one another on to good works.

Let's **DO IT!**

Take one step to bring someone one step closer to Christ.
Find out how you can be part of this transformational journey and make a difference this year for Jesus Christ by

Relational Evangelism @ the Marketplace

Sat 25 April, 9am to 4pm

www.tmc.org.sg/alpha.html

CHRIST has risen! CHRIST lives in and through us!

Alpha

Let's **BE** His witnesses!

Sun 26 April

ALPHA Experience

Find out more about ALPHA
in this trial session (for the believer)

Sat 16 May

**ALPHA Training &
Apologetics Workshop**

Answering Tough Questions
about the Faith

Sun 5 July

ALPHA Introductory Lunch

For pre-believers seeking to know
what ALPHA is about

Sun 12 Jul-6 Sept

ALPHA

www.tmc.org.sg/alpha.html

**Begin to pray for a pre-believing friend and reach out
to him/her. Invite your friend to the next ALPHA.**

TMC Mandarin Service proudly presents

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5月24日
晚上6.30

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Keegan Ong / keeganml@singnet.com.sg

Holy Week & Easter Services

Date 日期 *Time* 时间 *Preacher* 传道

Holy Week Prayer Services

Mon 30 Mar	8pm	Rev Alvin Chan
Tue 31 Mar	8pm	Rev Peter Goh
Wed 1 Apr	8pm	Rev Paul Nga

Maundy Thursday (with Holy Communion) 2 Apr	8pm	Rev Alvin Chan
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Good Friday, 3 Apr 受难日, 4月3日

Mandarin Service 华文崇拜	11.00am	伍显芬传道
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Good Friday Combined Service and Prayer Vigil (English)	3pm	Rev Peter Goh
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Easter Sunday, 5 Apr 复活节, 4月5日

Sunrise Service (English)	6.30am	Rev Paul Nga
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Combined Service (English), with Holy Communion and Reception of New Members	9am	Rev Alvin Chan
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Mandarin Service 华文崇拜	11.30am	伍显芬传道
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TMC Fellowship of Ukulelians (FOU)



by Samuel Wong

The humble ukulele has worked its way into the hearts of many TMC Seniors and will even be the star in the upcoming Festival of Praise come August 2015.

The Fellowship of the Ukulelians (FOU), under the auspices of the Glowing Years Ministry (GYM), was formed in March 2012 when Rev Peter Goh initiated a new programme to bring the seniors together to grow their spiritual life in their worship of the Lord.

Striving to find something new that would involve an element of creativity, Pastor Peter found that the ukulele was a natural fit since it did not require prior musical skills, knowledge or experience. Compared to other instruments of choice, the ukulele is inexpensive to purchase and extremely portable.

Pastor Peter helms the weekly class and is the principal teacher. Beginner classes run consecutively for four weeks and participants are taught the basics of how to handle the instrument. In its structured format, the learning process is easily managed and everyone is promised that, by the first lesson, they would be able to play at least one simple tune.

In fact it is an encouraging process and the ukulele is probably one of the easiest musical string instruments to learn. It simply requires practice and confidence to get over the initial hurdles.

Even though the beginner classes are held once a year (2014 being the exception), many of the original group from 2012 are still around and enjoying each Saturday session.



Enthuses Linda Wee: "We delight in our weekly jamming sessions because we just let the music flow through us. It is simply beautiful and uplifting as we sing and strum along, quite different from just being a spectator and listening to someone perform."

Alice Chong agrees that the whole experience is transformational. Played beautifully, the ukulele can produce sounds as mellifluous as the harp. Both hymns and gospel favourites are played and sung in the Saturday morning sessions from 9.30 to 11.30am.

Having only played and "jammed" together privately, the bold move to perform came when the group joined a Seniors' Cruise in 2013. As the only church group on board the Legend of the Seas, Pastor Peter sought and received permission to organise and lead a Sunday worship service on board the ship. Using this platform, the FOU seized the opportunity to boost their own confidence and, with God's grace, put on a well-received performance for the other cruise passengers.

Other performances followed when Wesley Methodist Church in Johor Baru and Wesley Methodist Church in Malacca separately invited the group to perform at their services. These outings and performances have given the FOU a new purpose and, for many of the passive and shy performers, a sense of belonging and the drive to initiate new projects.



Performance at Malacca Wesley Methodist Church

The spirited group that make up the FOU committee include Alice Chong (Coordinator), Irene Eng (Ensemble Director), Linda Wee, Stephen Loh, Jessie Loh, Tan Poh Ling, Chong Hong Bin, Goh Soo Kwan, and Pastor Peter Goh as Advisor. With God's guiding hand, they have taken the initiative to organise the first Ukulele Festival of Praise in Singapore.

They have written to and invited over 20 TRAC churches to send their respective ukulele groups to perform as ensemble groups on one non-competitive platform in mid-August this year, to coincide with the nation's SG50 celebrations.

Including TMC's 50-strong ukulele ensemble, over a dozen groups are expected to meet and worship the Lord together. To be held on TMC's premises, it will undoubtedly be a lively and joyous occasion. Even before formal replies are received, there is already much excitement through word of mouth.

Pastor Peter has also recently devised the Trinity Knot for use in the FOU. "I wanted to create something useful yet at the same time identify it with TMC. Three knots constructed as one to represent the concept of Trinity," said Pastor Peter.

Primarily used to hold up the instrument, the Trinity Knot can be hung on the wall both to display and to remind the ukulelians to play their ukulele during their daily quiet time with the Lord.

The Trinity Knot is made with a series of knots including the common noose or Hangman's knot. It allows the tuning pegs of the ukulele to slip in and out of the knots with ease.

The construction of the Trinity Knot was premiered and taught at the FOU 3rd anniversary celebration of thanksgiving on 14 Mar 15.

HOW TO GET STARTED WITH THE UKULELE

From a small group of a dozen plus in 2012, there are currently over 50 FOU members. Most are TMC members even though a handful are from other churches.

To join the Ukulele Beginner's class, there is a token sum of \$20 to cover miscellaneous costs. Similarly, there is also an outlay of about \$100 to cover the cost of buying the instrument, the stand and the tuner. A file, student notes, song sheets and cord chart are provided. A certificate of completion along with a badge are given at the end of the month-long course.

Classes are limited to no more than 20 in a group to ensure enhanced learning. As the lessons are effectively free, a commitment is expected that all participants have to occasionally perform in special events that are related to TMC (e.g. TMC anniversary, GYM Sunday etc.) or public sessions that the FOU organises.



Left photo: Trinity Knot



2015 CHURCH CAMP UNION

COMMUNION WITH GOD, REUNION WITH ONE ANOTHER

WHERE?

PULAI
SPRINGS
RESORT

WHEN?

5TH - 8TH
JUNE 2015



facebook.com/UNIONCamp2015

That Fateful Church Camp



By Koh Shuwen

The 1996 church camp held in Penang was literally, a life-changing one for me. It was my first church event and I decided to go at the last minute despite not knowing anyone else. Some of you may think this was a brave move on my part. To be honest, I surprised even myself!

At that time, the Prayer and Praise contemporary service was held in the old sanctuary and I always sat at the Upper Gallery because I would frequently only turn up in time for the last worship song and sermon. I would smile and shake the hands of those seated around me when prompted but never felt the need to be plugged in to church life beyond my personal cocoon with God. After almost 3 years of faithfully doing this, **I couldn't shake the feeling that something was lacking in my spiritual life.**

I had considered changing churches but I knew that would repeat the same pattern of church attendance and participation (or lack thereof). That was when I decided to take the plunge and sign up for church camp. **I knew that if I didn't make the effort to do something beyond attending Sunday service, my connection to God would remain lukewarm at best.**

It was scary. Silly as it sounds, I felt vulnerable and exposed. However, there has been no looking back since. The inter-generational aspect of church camp helped me understand what it felt to be part of a "church family". **Despite spending almost 10 years away from Singapore between 1998 and 2010, I remained close to, and continued to build bonds with many of the people I got to know at the Penang church camp.** I returned to my TMC "roots" every time I was home during my nomad years. God truly used TMC to shake and shape my walk with him, starting with that fateful church camp.

What a life-changing experience! We thank God for Shuwen, who is now serving in the Publicity Committee for Union Camp 2015.

*With the successful completion of
Bible App - Hebrews,
TMC's Discipleship & Nurture Committee
is pleased to be in partnership with
Precept Ministries (Singapore)
in conducting the bible series*

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COMPULSORY INDUCTIVE BIBLE STUDY session on
Thurs 9 Apr | 7.30-8.30pm

Thereafter, PUP Bible Studies will be conducted on

THE BOOK OF RUTH
Thurs, 16, 23, 30 Apr | 7.30-10.00pm

THE BOOK OF NEHEMIAH
Thurs, 7, 14 May, 4, 11, 18 Jun | 7.30-10.00pm

The Bible Studies will be facilitated by Ms Loh Sook Mee

Pick up a detailed brochure from the magazine racks at the iSunday Counter / outside
Emmanuel Hall, or visit www.tmc.org.sg/d&n.html

Registration must be by 29 Mar 2015

Enquiries to Lee Park Ming / 6282 4443 / parkming@tmc.org.sg



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4	\$4,000	\$7,250	\$13,250
3	\$3,375	\$6,125	\$8,750
2	\$2,750	\$4,875	\$8,750
1	\$2,250	\$4,000	\$8,750

* subject to terms and conditions

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- Other Methodist Church members: 10% less

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Website: www.tmc.org.sg

EVENTS

Sat, 4 Apr

Youth Avenue Easter Celebration
www.facebook.com/YouthAvenue123

Thurs, 9 Apr

7.30pm Introduction to Inductive Bible Study
www.tmc.org.sg/d&n.html#pup

Sat, 11 Apr, 9 May

9.00am Small Group Leaders' Discipleship Group meeting
www.tmc.org.sg/smallgroup.html

Sat, 11, 18, 25 Apr, 2, 16 May

3.00pm Youth Avenue Youth Captains' Leadership Development
www.facebook.com/YouthAvenue123

Thurs, 16, 23, 30 Apr

7.30pm Precept upon Precept Bible Study on the Book of Ruth
www.tmc.org.sg/d&n.html#pup

Sat, 18 Apr

12.30pm Fellowship Lunch for New Members

Sat, 25 Apr

9.00am Relational Evangelism @ the Marketplace
www.tmc.org.sg/alpha.html

Sun, 26 Apr

ALPHA Experience
www.tmc.org.sg/alpha.html

Sat, 2 May

10.00am Small Group Leaders' Meeting
www.tmc.org.sg/smallgroup.html

Thurs 7, 14 May, 4, 11, 18 Jun

7.30pm Precept upon Precept Bible Study on the Book of Nehemiah
www.tmc.org.sg/d&n.html#pup

Sat, 16 May

9.00am ALPHA Training & Apologetics
www.tmc.org.sg/alpha.html

Sat, 23 May

Youth Avenue Pizza Party
www.facebook.com/YouthAvenue123

Sun, 24 May

6.30pm Parents' Night Dinner organised by Mandarin Service
www.tmc.org.sg/highlights.html#parents

Sun, 31 May

Youth Ministry Day Out
www.facebook.com/TMCYouthMin

Every Sun (Except 1st Sundays)

10.15am Design for Discipleship
www.tmc.org.sg/d&n.html

Every 2nd and 4th Sun

7.45am Church Prayer Meeting
www.tmc.org.sg/prayer.html

Every 3rd Sun

10.00am WSCS Visitation to Homebound. Those interested to bring the church into the homes of the homebound, please contact Lucy Chan at 9748 2733.

Last Sun of the month

Visit to Institute of Mental Health by Outreach & Social Concerns. Contact Yvonne Tan at 9091 8589 / yvnn_tan@yahoo.com
www.tmc.org.sg/osc.html#imh

Every 1st Wed

10.00am-12.00pm Yum Cha@10 is an opportunity for people to come together for fellowship, and serves as a platform for TMCers to meet one another as well as non-Christians in the community mid-week. Contact the church office / churchoffice@tmc.org.sg
www.tmc.org.sg/ministries.html#gym

Every 3rd Wed (not in May)

10.00am-12.00pm God's Masterworks: A Concerto in 39 Movements. A bible study of the Old Testament. Currently on the Book of Numbers.
www.tmc.org.sg/regular.html#masterworks

Last Thurs of the month

10.00am-12.00pm St Luke's Eldercare Centre Devotions at Blk 217 Serangoon Ave 4. TMC's ministry to SLEC brings hope, help and the love of Christ to many needy elderly. If you wish to join in, contact Eddie from the church office / eddie@tmc.org.sg
www.tmc.org.sg/osc.html#slec

Every Fri (not 3 Apr and 1 May)

8.00-10.00pm Healing Ministry at the Prayer Chapel

Every 1st and 3rd Fri (not 3 Apr and 1 May)

9.15-11.15am Bible Study on Exodus
www.tmc.org.sg/regular.html#exodus

Every Sat

9.30-11.30am Fellowship of Ukulelians
www.tmc.org.sg/regular.html#ukulele

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