

Saltshaker

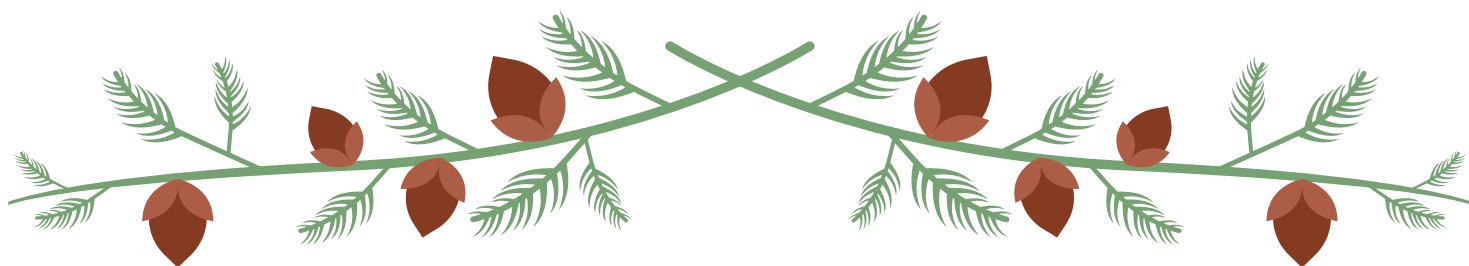
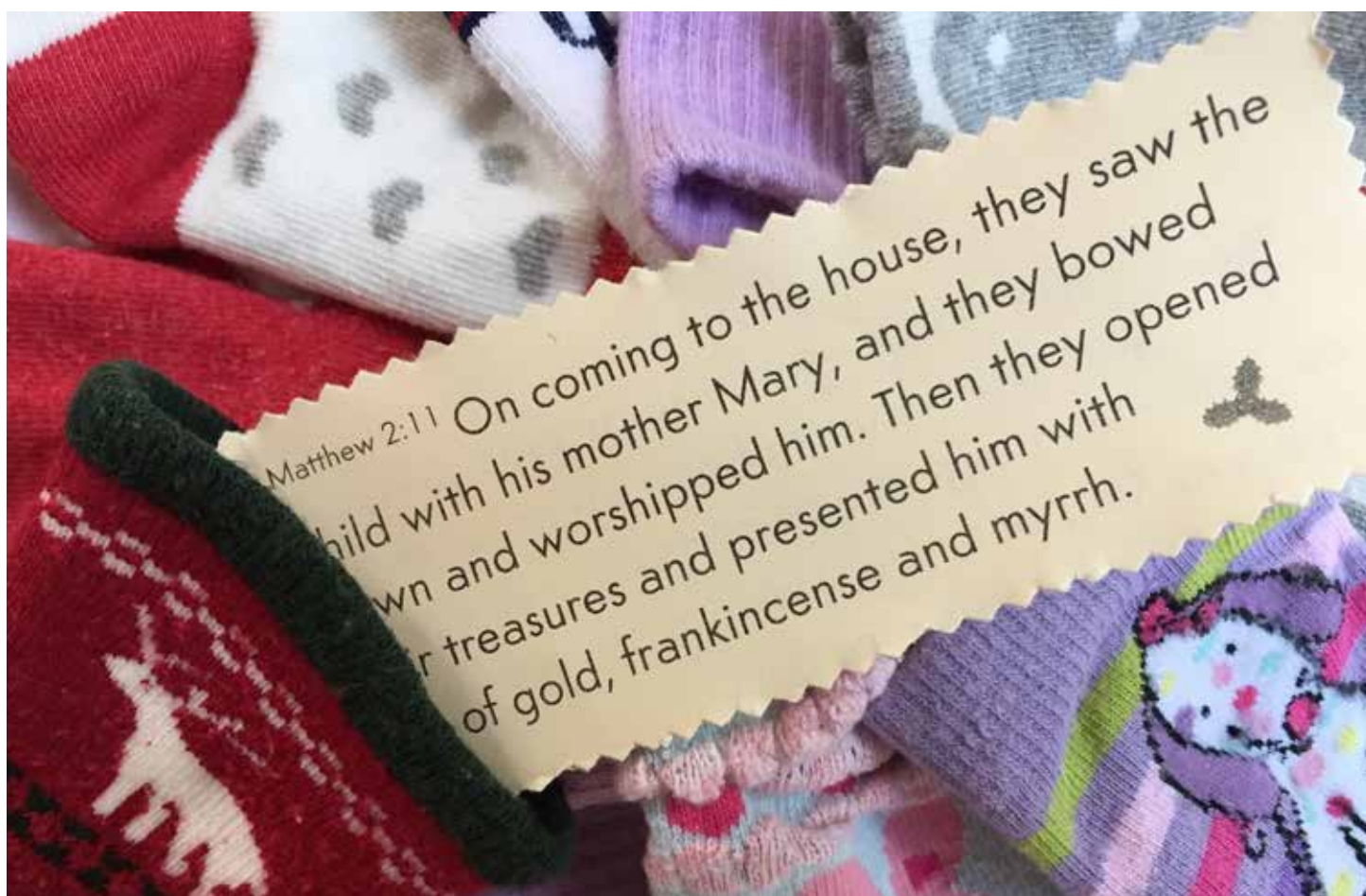
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TRINITY
Methodist Church

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"WORKING"
WITH THE
ELDERLY
PG 14

THE GOD
WHO NEVER
SHORTCHANGES
PG 16

A VISIT TO
AN OLD FRIEND
OF TMC
PG 28

CHRISTMAS LUXURY GIFTS

Tricia Tong



Through a Whatsapp group chat, a friend asked me for 24 child socks so that she could make an advent calendar for my daughter, Victoria.

Cherubim: Tricia, I need 24 socks for the sock project.*

Seraphim: What is this sock project?*

Cherubim: One sock for each day in Advent.

Seraphim: Then put a little gift in each one?

Cherubim: Yup!

Seraphim: You do realise that Vicky will want one every year. And it gives the wrong impression about Advent, which is about preparing to receive the Christ child? I know I'm being a spoilsport but I'm just concerned about it.

What is Advent?

It means "coming" or "approach of". What or who is coming?

The Lord Jesus, of course.

An advent calendar is used to count the days of Advent in anticipation of Christmas. The season of Advent consists of the four Sundays before Christmas. But the modern advent calendar is designed to start on 1 December.

The physical calendar itself consists of a paper calendar with flaps or windows for each day of December leading to Christmas Eve. One window is opened each day to reveal an image, a poem, a portion of the Christmas story.

Traditional Advent calendars feature the manger scene, and other Christian themes and motifs. Alas, you rarely find such calendars in the shops.

When I lived in England, all the confectionary shops seized on the occasion to sell beautiful advent calendars with windows that opened to reveal chocolates or candy.

In Singapore, beauty advent calendars have wended their way into shoppers' lives. You open the window or in this case a drawer or box each day to reveal a beauty product, like a lipstick, or a case of eye shadow etc.

This year, there is a Scotch whiskey advent calendar featuring 24 different rare whiskeys from around the world. The price tag? £10,000 (about S\$17,850). There was a diamond advent calendar priced at €2.5m (about S\$3.96m) in 2014 which included exclusive jewellery designed by Biegel Schmuckdesign from Frankfurt. It's in the Guinness Book of World Records as the most expensive advent calendar in the world.

It's amazing, isn't it, how man manages to turn an innocent, meaningful Christian observation into a money-churning enterprise? No wonder Seraphim felt alarmed.

Let's repeat the question: Who is coming? The Lord Jesus.

I don't think I lack imagination but I cannot fathom how 24 days of chocolates or candies, drams or gems, can help to prepare us for Christ's second coming, or assist us in recalling Old Testament prophecies about Jesus' birth, or provoke us to repentance, or just simply to anticipate the greatest

event of the church year – Christmas – the birth of the Christ child, the birth of the Messiah, the birth of our Saviour and Lord.

But are Christmas luxury gifts not featured at all in the Bible? Of course they are!

The wise men brought to the infant Jesus gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh.

We don't know how much of each gift was brought. Nevertheless, the givers were kings who were unlikely to have travelled from afar with just minute amounts of the items for a baby whom they thought was the Son of God.

Here's the standard of measure: in Christ's time, gold would have been the cheapest of the three gifts. There is an article which suggests that the gifts would have made the Holy Family millionaires.

Luxury gifts for a Messiah King at Christmas.

Luxury gifts which symbolised Jesus' deity, His priesthood and His eventual death.

Luxury gifts used to worship the Son of God.

We aren't meant to be the recipient of luxury gifts at Christmas. We are to give our riches to Jesus in this season.

But what kind of riches can we give Jesus? Here's a suggestion from one of my favourite Christmas songs:

WHAT CAN I GIVE HIM, POOR AS I AM?

IF I WERE A SHEPHERD, I WOULD BRING A LAMB;

**IF I WERE A WISE MAN, I WOULD DO MY PART;
YET WHAT I CAN I GIVE HIM: GIVE MY HEART.**

- In the Bleak Midwinter, by Christina Rossetti

I think giving our heart in our Singapore context could mean this: giving God more time than our electronic devices. Not doing cursory "Quiet Time" by hurriedly glancing at the headline bible verse on our daily devotional (mea culpa). Purposefully preparing to prepare for Advent even!

Time and attention.

Some of the most valuable things we can give to the Lord. Our version of luxury gifts this Christmas.



So what is going into Victoria's advent calendar?

Cherubim: Strictly no candy. I found some simple advent verses for kids on the web which I intend to insert into each sock. Along with a little gift la. It teaches a kid a lot - numbers, verses, patience and endurance.

That's Victoria's Advent preparation cut out for her.

**Names have been changed.*

B.L.E.S.S. SOMEONE

INVITE YOUR PRE-BELIEVING
FAMILY/FRIENDS TO OUR CHRISTMAS
ALFRESCO DINNER

FRI, 15 DEC 7.00-9.30PM

TRINITY METHODIST CHURCH

WWW.TMC.ORG.SG/XMAS2017.HTML

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Trinity Methodist Church

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A wonderful opportunity for adult
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Register your attendance at
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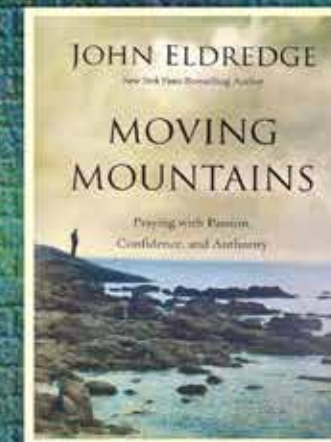
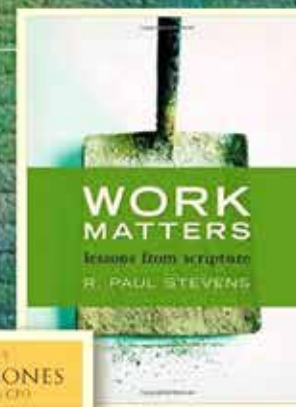
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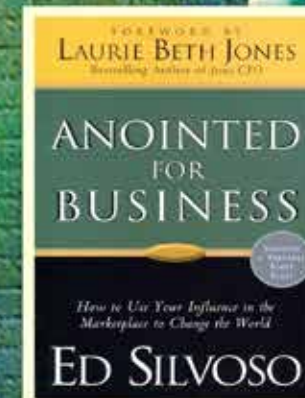
These recently released books and many
other resources are available for borrowing
from the TMC Resource Centre, situated
at Benjamin Room on Level 2.

248.8 STE
Work matters:
Lessons from Scripture
~ R. Paul Stevens

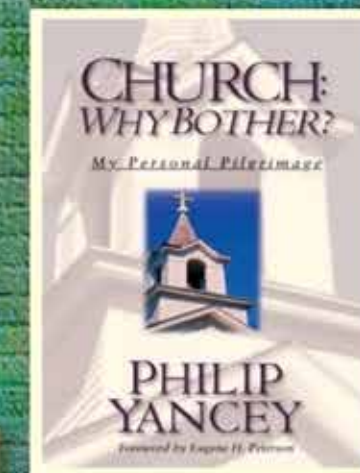


248.1 ELD
Moving mountains: Praying
with passion, confidence
and authority
~ John Eldredge

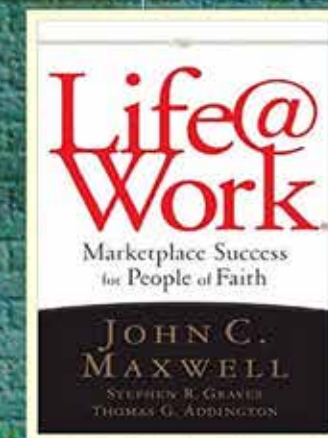
248.8 MAX
Life@work: Marketplace
success for people of faith
~ John C. Maxwell



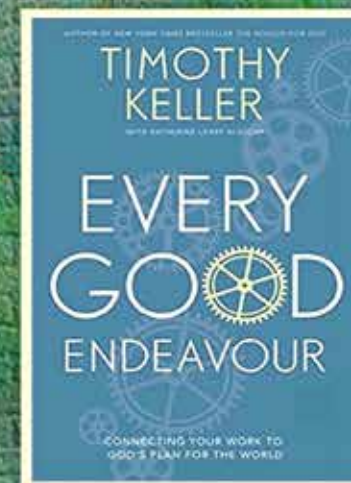
248.8 SIL
Anointed for business
~ Ed Silvoso



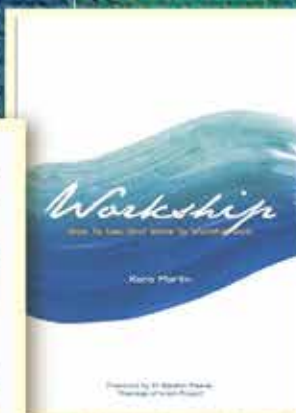
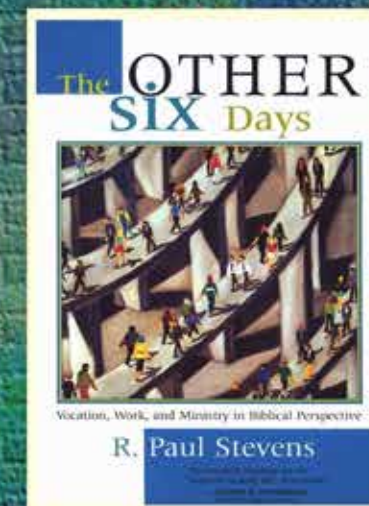
262 YAN
Church: Why bother?
~ Philip Yancey



248.8 MAR
Workshop: How to use your
work to worship God
~ Kara Martin



248.8 KEL
Every good endeavour:
Connecting your work to
God's plan for the world
~ Timothy Keller



262.15 STE
The other six days: Vocation,
work and ministry in biblical
perspective
~ R. Paul Stevens



Tricia Tong

CHONG HONG BIN PARTICIPATED IN THE EDUCATION CHAT GROUP DURING THE "THE OTHER SIX DAYS" SERMON SERIES.

"Hello, Mr Chong? Are you in the office? We've got a boy here ..."

That's how a telephone call to Chong Hong Bin invariably starts at his workplace.

Hong Bin became a teacher in 1962 after completing his GCE 'O' Levels. He first started teaching in a primary school. He would teach in the morning and attend the Teachers' Training College in the afternoon.

A few years later, he sat for his GCE 'A' Levels as a private candidate and won a bursary to university.

Hong Bin has taught in many Singapore schools. He has been a head of department, a discipline master and a vice-principal.

It was difficult to reconcile the role of a discipline master wielding a cane, with the gentle demeanour of the man being interviewed.

Hong Bin said candidly that there were many times when a cane could do much which hours of detention or reasoning could not. *"Whoever spares the rod hates their children, but the one who loves their children is careful to discipline them."* (Proverbs 13:24) is a wise biblical proverb that Hong Bin subscribes to.

Hong Bin has now hung up the cane. Instead, he has to do plenty of listening.

When he retired, Hong Bin took up counselling classes, jointly run by the Ministry of Education and Fei Yue Family Counselling Services. He graduated with a diploma in School-based Counselling.

Since 2004, Hong Bin has been a counsellor at many schools.

When he was posted to a mission school, he would draw from the school's morning devotion to guide his wayward charges.

Now that he is counselling in a non-mission school, Hong Bin cannot openly refer to the Bible in his counselling sessions. That has not stopped him from exhibiting and sharing the fruit of the Spirit.

"...love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control..." (Gal 5:22-23) need to be called upon when handling his young charges.

Some of the participants in the Education sphere. Chong Hong Bin is standing on the extreme right.



One Thursday in August, he shared with the Education sphere's Whatsapp chat group: "I just received a call while texting that a student has just stormed out of class. I know I have to be there to calm him down. I need to seek the joy of the Lord in these moments to work with them."

Hong Bin said that as a life-long educator and now a counsellor, he sees the need to go beyond the call of teaching. The counselling cases which he is assigned mostly consist of problems prevalent among the student population today such as parents involved in acrimonious divorce, single-parent families, boy-girl relationship (BGR) breakdowns, smoking, drugs, stress, and disruptive behaviour.

"I have to seek the Lord's wisdom everyday to help me in my counselling," says Hong Bin. With the air of experience, Hong Bin explained that much of the disruptive behaviour demonstrated in the classroom is "learnt behaviour". Many of the problematic students come from broken homes. Fighting, spewing vulgarities and turning over tables are, to these students, "normal" behaviour.

The large age gap between Hong Bin, who is in his 70s, and his young clients does not affect him or hinder his work. He refers to himself as "Uncle" and not "Mr Chong" when he talks to them.

After Hong Bin receives a telephone call, the student would be led to Hong Bin's office often in a rage. With a twinkle in his eye, Hong Bin said that he pretends to do some work as vulgarities and threats of violence to do someone in are shouted into thin air continuously. When the boy's vocal cords finally give way, Hong Bin would turn to the boy and ask if he was hungry. They would make their way to the school canteen where Uncle Hong Bin would treat the boy to a meal. During the meal, the boy would open up to Uncle, and more calmly give vent to his frustrations.

Hong Bin stresses the importance of listening without judging. It is something he repeats a few

times during our short interview. "To be a part of God's labour force is no easy task. It needs profound reflection and self-examination," he says.

With the number of difficult cases each day which do not get resolved within the day, Hong Bin says: "If the day's work did not turn out as good as we hoped for, can we still say that it has been a 'good' day? When we trust our Lord and work with faith, trusting and believing that we have done our job to the best of our ability, there is nothing to prevent us from celebrating our joy in the Lord."

What gives him great comfort is seeing many of his charges turn over a new leaf before they graduate.

Hong Bin recounts one particular case where a troublesome boy was sent to him. The boy's father ran a shop. He wanted his son to take over the business one day. Alas, the boy was not interested in his father's business. He wanted to be a chef. Hong Bin telephoned one of his former students who had opened a restaurant. He requested for the boy to spend some time in the restaurant kitchen. The boy later enrolled in the Singapore Hotel and Tourism Education Centre (Shatec) and is now doing well as a cook. Whenever their paths cross, the boy would invite Hong Bin for a meal.

Hong Bin says that our perception of work differs depending on the attitude we adopt from the start. For instance, a blind man can enjoy life, and it is possible for him to imagine the different colours of flora and fauna, the blue sky and bright sunshine. He says that this is known as the "theatres of the mind".

"Similarly, if we take a positive attitude towards work, work can be meaningful instead of being routine and mundane. We need not be bound by shackles and be enslaved to our work," he says.

"If we integrate our 'work' into God's work, we can achieve a sense of joy and edification."

"... love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control..."
(Gal 5:22-23)

God in Business, Science and Technology



Koh Shuwen, 40, has a doctorate in Biomedical Engineering. After 5 years in public service and a brief stint at a biotech, Shuwen took the plunge and is now a self-employed biomedical consultant.

Harrison Cheng, 32, is a research analyst with a political risk consultancy. He has been in this industry for three years now, following an initial foray into the civil service where he was able to develop his analytical skills and rigour.

They were two out of fifty-six in the Business, Science, Technology sphere chat group during the “The Other Six Days” sermon series.

How do you think your colleagues would describe you at work?

Shuwen: Extroverted, passionate about activating people and connecting the dots. I love that my work is project-based and hence there is always something new to learn and work on.

Harrison: Introverted, calm and good at following instructions. I am generally serious about my work, and it helps that I am privileged to be able to do what I enjoy doing.

How has Timothy Keller’s book, “Every Good Endeavour” changed how you think of your work?

Harrison: I used to look at small tasks that I had to do that were not part of my so-called job scope with quite a bit of disdain. I felt it wasn’t “my job”, particularly if I was called to cover it because nobody else was dealing with it. Then when I read Keller’s book, I realised all these little tasks do in the end have some significance - God-given significance - which is to serve the wider community. While it may not be in my official job scope, as Christians we are expected not to conform to the world but to Christ and the life he modelled for us. So I now try to approach these tasks with a renewed mind, though at times I find myself begrudging the task at hand.

Shuwen: The paragraph that stood out to me was about the dignity of work. He writes: “We were built for work and the dignity it gives us as human beings, regardless of its status or pay... And every Christian should be able to identify, with conviction and satisfaction, the ways in which his or her work participates with God in his creativity and cultivation...”

It’s both aspirational and practical in advising us to seek work that enables us to exercise our gifting but there’s also the pragmatic approach of taking up what jobs there are when job options are limited.

Aristotle said that unemployment – the ability to live without having to work – is a genuinely worthwhile life, because work is mundane and tiresome. He also said that not all work is equal; some people are born to be slaves and others, a life of honour and culture. Do you agree? How do you deal with mundane work?

Shuwen: I think mundane work does not equate to meaningless work. There are elements of the mundane in even the most meaningful work. The converse is also true, of course.

One culprit, I suspect, is how we seek or obtain affirmation for our work. After I started working for

myself, I realised that the performance appraisal system that most corporations use is a very blunt tool for incentivising and motivating. It’s a matter of looking to, and being confident in, Christ who redeems our work.

Harrison: Aristotle’s view of work has some merit, but not because some are born to work and others for leisure. All work is meant to be good. However, Aristotle’s conception of leisure was for the pursuit of cultivating ‘virtue’ through music, philosophy, not purely hedonism. If we see philosophy as contemplating what is the truth, then one possible takeaway from Aristotle is that we shouldn’t spend so much time consumed with work that we forget to reflect on what the truth is, why we are working, and what our lives are ultimately for. I guess Aristotle’s mistake was that he seemed to think virtue could only be cultivated outside of work.

Keller says that the idea of “work as cultivation” involves “subduing” the raw material of God’s creation in such a way that its potential is drawn out so that the resultant product helps the world and people thrive and flourish. In what ways do you see your work as cultivation?

Harrison: In my line of work as an analyst, I produce risk assessments for businesses. Adopting Keller’s framework in the book, the raw material would be the mass of data out there. My task is to organise the data in a way that is meaningful for people so that they can see the direct implications on their business activities. Data on its own cannot always tell a compelling “story”, so that’s where I see myself adding value or “cultivating” knowledge for wider use.

I found it encouraging that Keller pointed out that God delights in our exercise of creative talents. (Prov 8:27-31) It applies in my case to tasks that are more routine, mundane even. I may take the tried and tested method and save time, or I may spend some time thinking a bit more about how to make the product better for the end user. The first fits my definition of productivity, the second fits God’s definition of productivity.

How do you feel when your work does not bear the fruit you expect?

Harrison: There was one weekend when I had to work on an urgent proposal for a client, corresponding internally with various stakeholders. I got a bit stressed in the process. The pay-off was potentially significant, based on the suggested client fees. However, when Monday morning came, I got an email saying that the client was baulking at the fees and was unwilling to consider the proposal. We were told to hold off “until further discussion”.

So the amount of stress and effort put in from Friday night until Saturday and Sunday did not result in any tangible outcome. An example of accomplishing less than we envisioned. The natural response may be to hold a grudge against the client, or to complain about how my time was wasted. But EGE reminded me that the Lord looks at work as a whole. He is not just fixated on the outcomes. The process and our entire attitude from start to finish is more important. He would be more pleased with me if I continued to take a positive attitude regardless of the outcome, than if I had clinched the sale.

Shuwen: Actually, most of my growth, both in and outside of work has been through failures and setbacks.

I’ve been in the same industry for almost eight years and have seen good policies get stalled, bad ones get hyped up or even reversed with changes in leadership. So there’s been a fair amount of eye-rolling on my part.

After the dust has settled and collateral damage assessed, there is still much good that I can derive from my seemingly futile efforts. What I remember from long days and nights of slogging are the camaraderie with colleagues, inspiration from my bosses and the satisfaction of having done my best. These become the “war stories” I share to spur my team and juniors on.

Then I go home to my friends and family and put on my other hats.



Business, Science, Technology sphere meet-up at Three Cups Coffee

How do you instill God-pleasing work attitudes in those who work for you?

Shuwen: As a consultant managing a team, I believe it is my duty to protect my team from exercises in futility because there is a lot of work to be done. It's also about setting their expectations and attitudes right. As my team is frequently breaking new ground, we are sometimes set work which doesn't result in tangible outcomes. But not all is lost because we learn new hard and soft skills that help our work get better.

I keep an open door and foster a "safe" environment for my team to ask questions because they will in turn become managers.

Harrison: Unlike Shuwen, I'm not in a management position, but in my role vis-à-vis other analysts I try to maintain a disciplined work ethic and a professional attitude towards disagreements or misunderstandings. I try to complain less than before about workloads. A manager's actions and words are closely scrutinised, but people learn from their co-workers too – an attitude of complaining and cynicism can be infectious and self-reinforcing at the workplace.

How do you deal with difficult bosses?

Shuwen: I try to manage my bosses and their reputations carefully. I show them respect and I don't discredit them in front of my team. What I'd do in a situation when efforts would be hamstrung by policies is to do my due diligence so I can argue for or against certain actions or approaches. Saying "no" to my bosses is often a multi-step process.

I'm also an eternal optimist and believe in making changes, which take time. I try to map out a combination of pragmatic approaches as well as try to make incremental changes until the time is ripe for disruption.

That said, I have left organisations when I find I don't have a fundamental respect for my bosses, the leaders or believe in the work I do.

I have had good bosses to learn from. Many of them are Christians who modelled servant leadership. The fear of backlash for doing what's right is real but the patience and faith to believe that God works in His good timing keeps me going.

Harrison: I wish I was acquainted with Niggle* in my previous job when I was similarly being overworked and under-appreciated by very intelligent and competent bosses. I also wish my bosses would have protected me the way Shuwen described. What kept me going in spite of difficult bosses was the tireless effort of those peers around me, some of whom were pre-believers, who kept on plugging away and doing their best despite the harsh demands.

I learnt the importance of working hard as a team and providing mutual support even when the amount of work makes you want to turn inward and mind your own business.

What are some of your enemies at work?

Shuwen: Scepticism, self-interest and the sense of jadedness. Similar to what is written in Ecclesiastes. There's nothing new under the sun and the futile chasing after the wind. We are like grass that withers away.

But each person and each generation is new and a good creation of God. It doesn't have to be insanity, or the doing of the same things while expecting a different outcome. And we don't have to resign ourselves to what has been done before. Our time on this side of heaven can make an impact, however brief. Many of you will remember the sight of beautiful fields, rolling hills and carpets of flowers and grass. Those too have passed but they have made a mark on our consciousness without worrying about their impermanence.

I am motivated by faith, hope and love.

Harrison: Hard-heartedness and cynicism. Hard-heartedness emerges when I allow someone's past negative behaviour – as opposed to God's creation of that person in His image – to define his or her value in the workplace. Cynicism accompanies heart-heartedness, and prompts me to dismiss someone's contributions based on assumptions that that person "will never change" or "isn't good enough".

Both are contrary to what Paul calls us to cultivate in Galatians 5:22 – the fruit of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, longsuffering, faithfulness, goodness, kindness, gentleness and self-control. So I (try to) remind myself to expend my mental and emotional energies towards cultivating such fruit, keeping my heart soft and my mind open even though everything else (the world) is egging me to do otherwise.

*The story "Leaf by Niggle" (JRR Tolkien) is a depiction of hope. Niggle imagined a beautiful tree that he never was able to produce in paint during his life, so he died weeping that his picture, the great work of his life, was not completed. Not one would ever see it. And yet, when he got to the heavenly country - there was the tree!

"If we measure our Christ by the KPI (key performance indicators) of our standards today, we would see at the moment after his crucifixion, a movement completely halted. All his followers gave up and some headed home, sitting around and lamenting. By all standards of the world it would seem like Jesus had failed. Yet, here we are today. We see each moment separate from one another. Like the disciples a day after the death of Jesus, "failure" is all there was. But God sees all and plans all. Work dedicated to him will be good. And we can have faith it will be good because of the resurrection of our Christ."

Aaron Fang

"The performance ranking systems at work can be demoralising. In a work environment, we must maintain our dignity and know our self-worth regardless of what some might say. Keep your head high."

Patricia Thong



“To Be” More Than “To Do”



Carol Ling

Carol is a legal officer in the Legal Service Commission of Singapore. She was one of the 29 persons participating in the Government and Law sphere chat group.

Years back, I had a sensible, right-minded colleague who asked a few good questions about a proposed project. The next day, he received a call from a superior in charge of the project, who began the telephone conversation with: “What are you trying to find trouble with?” The proposed project went ahead.

Over the years, I have come to realise that no institution is perfect. No system is perfect. Simply because they are run by man, and man is imperfect.

Only God is perfect, infallible.

It is amazing to be able to have faith in a perfect God while working in an imperfect system.

Where a push for change for the better is not well-received because it is not something which can be showcased to the public.

Where colleagues get ahead of others simply because they are adept at making conversation with the bosses or when others are recognised more for their emcee or singing skills rather than their core competence.

Or where work is not distributed equitably, just to name a few basic examples.

Psalm 118:8 (KJV) says: “It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in man”.

It may be disillusioning to work in imperfect organisations.

After being in the market place for so long, one thing I have learnt to do - and am still growing in - is to have my complete confidence in God, not man.

The above is a powerful verse as it releases me to continue to strive for excellence in my work, to be bold to suggest change, no matter how unpopular it may be, and to make a difference in whichever corner of the office I am placed in, assured that God is fully aware and will bring the work of my hands to fruition even when I do not know it or see it or even feel it.

That is the confidence we can have in God, even when man may fail us. It certainly helps to remember that promotion comes from the Lord (Ps 75:6-7) and we can go forth boldly in faith to “do the right thing”.

I still seek perfection and pursue my ideals in the workplace I am in, and only ask God to please “grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change. The courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference”.

Honestly, I find it hard to relate the work I do to establishing God’s kingdom here on earth. It is not

After being in the market place for so long, one thing I have learnt to do - and am still growing in - is to have my complete confidence in God, not man.

like being in full-time ministry where almost everything you do has a direct and immediate connection to building God’s people or showing God’s love and good to the community through tangible acts.

Notwithstanding this, each of us is placed in our respective marketplaces and communities. More than what we are called “to do”, God has called us “to be” - to be salt of the earth and light of this world, a fragrance of Christ.

Oswald Chambers said: “The destined end of man is not happiness, nor health but holiness.”

The essence of our discipleship journey captured in Matthew 16:24-26 is a call to surrender our rights, ourselves, and the right to be ourselves, wherever we are. That should nicely draw all men unto Him in the various marketplaces we find ourselves in.

In the meantime, I have this stuck on my work top:

Micah 6:8: “He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God”.



“Working” with the Elderly



Emily Wilfred

“Whatever you do, work heartily as for the Lord and not for men, knowing that from the Lord, you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ.” (Col 3:23-24)

The book “Every Good Endeavour” by Timothy Keller and the sermon series “The Other Six Days” revealed a new perspective of “work” to me.

God meant us to “work” as shown in the story of creation. Adam and Eve were not entitled beneficiaries of God’s creation. They were empowered to play an active part of the Lord’s ongoing creative activity.

When I retired in 2014, I joined the Pastoral CareNet Ministry (PCM). My “work” in PCM includes caring for the elderly.

I am comfortable in the company of the elderly as I am a part-time caregiver to a widowed, childless aunt aged 90 and my mother-in-law aged 93. Thank God, William, my husband partners me in my “work”.

I underwent training, attending the course “Caring God’s Way”, to acquire skills like being a good listener, patience and empathy, skills that only the Holy Spirit can bestow upon me.

It was difficult initially as I came from a place of “work” where I was constantly telling people to be brief, asking questions like “how is this relevant?” and instructing them to “please get to the point as we don’t have the whole day”.

Now I had to listen even if it meant that a question like “how are you” could result in a person taking me back to childhood days first before even answering my question.

Generally, the elderly are gracious, warm and friendly. They need a listening ear for their aches, pains and complaints.

The “work” becomes difficult when I walk alongside elderly who have dementia. They are often depressed, tearful, lonely and experience a sense of abandonment. They panic when they can’t remember. This kind of “work” requires much prayer. Before I set out to visit the elderly, I pray for strength, energy and an abundance of patience.

For example, my aunt is hard of hearing and suffers dementia, yet she insists on living alone with her helper. Despite her failing memory, she insists that there is nothing wrong with her. On one occasion, at Tan Tock Seng Hospital, she threw a tantrum and burst into tears, insisting that she had worn a shawl. When the helper and I disagreed, she ordered us to leave the hospital without her. Fortunately, she was pacified by an attending nurse. While they were in a room, I prayed, feeling helpless as I was not in control of the situation. That day, I went home feeling completely drained and inadequate, only to be reassured in prayer that God was in partnership with me in my “work”.



The “work” becomes difficult when I walk alongside elderly who have dementia. They are often depressed, tearful, lonely and experience a sense of abandonment. They panic when they can’t remember. This kind of “work” requires much prayer. Before I set out to visit the elderly, I pray for strength, energy and an abundance of patience.

I love my aunt and want to help but she makes it difficult, fiercely clinging to her independence. I certainly could not have managed my aunt without God’s intervention.

My mother-in-law has an advanced form of dementia which has robbed her of her memory. Her frustration now is trying to make conversation, otherwise she is always happy and smiling. While she struggles having a conversation, I hold her hand, gently stroking it and pray silently for her. It is not easy “work” because I love her very much and it hurts me to see her in this state.

“Whatever you do, work heartily as for the Lord and not for men, knowing that from the Lord, you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ.” (Col 3:23-24)

Emily co-led the Family sphere chat group of 19 persons.



Family sphere meet-up

Banner photo credit: Gettyimages

A GOD WHO NEVER SHORTCHANGES

Eugenia Koh (Middle)



Communications sphere meet-up over steamboat

EUGENIA CO-LED THE COMMUNICATIONS SPHERE CHAT GROUP OF 19 PERSONS, SOME OF WHOM WERE FROM OTHER CHURCHES OR RESIDING OVERSEAS.

I remember how in 2004, just before I embarked on my journey into the workforce, I told God I did not want to compromise on serving Him in this new season even as I desired to have a vibrant career ahead.

I had enjoyed an amazing time of walking alongside God and serving Him in youth ministry when I was in school and did not want to lose that in my adult years.

God is a God who honours our commitments, and one who never shortchanges us. Since I started work, I have seen His blessings of abundance in my work place. He has granted me extraordinary favour and blessed the work of my hands.

I have moved up the corporate ladder with relative ease and great joy, not having to jostle or engage in office politics for the next promotion but just putting in my best and allowing God to do the rest.

He truly has my back - just as He does for each and everyone of us.

I have never had to apply for a job. Doors have opened through either headhunters calling in or through ex-colleagues I have worked with presenting opportunities in their organisations.

One instance of God's amazing providence and timing can be seen in my move from public relations and corporate social responsibility (CSR) into banking.

I was working in CSR when I was offered a role in a British bank. I felt then that it was not the right time for me to move as I had just joined the team for six months to help establish the CSR programme for Singapore.

However, as I was used to working on multi-market accounts, I also realised that I enjoyed the breadth of regional work more than just the depth of a local scope. Nonetheless, I was convicted that it was not the right thing to do to leave six months into the role, and told them that we could revisit the conversation if they still did not hire anyone in the next six months.

“God’s work done in God’s way will never lack God’s supply!”

HUDSON TAYLOR

In the next six months, although the role had many applicants, none of them made it through all the interview rounds. God amazingly kept the role open for me until I was ready to move. I truly believe that no one can shut the doors that God opens.

Since joining banking, my scope has moved beyond communication to now include impact investing, an area of investing that looks at generating both financial and social returns. This marries my interest in both the world of finance with being able to leverage capital to solve some of the world's most pressing issues in poverty, education and healthcare. I am just awed by how God continues to lead and plan my career.

He has also honoured my prayer not to have to compromise on serving him. I have never had to compromise on ministry. He has allowed me to always be able to take leave when I needed to or to leave early or at least on time in a punishing and highly intense consulting environment. I had even been able to work a four-day week (this took place on a Monday so I was free of Monday blues for a couple of years!) while pursuing other passions.

Even during my time in banking, my non-Christian bosses have also been supportive of ensuring that I leave on time for key activities in church, which is simply because of His favour.

Of course I would be lying if I were to say that there has never been a day of drudgery or that I am constantly brimming with purpose and enthusiasm 365 days a year. But it does make a great difference when you know that God has placed you in a particular place, and that His hand guides your day, and gives you strength through all your long hours and times of searching.

I was in my first job at Weber Shandwick, one of the largest PR firms globally, for six years. When I first started there, I was convicted that God had placed me in Weber, and that He had placed me there among other things to be a blessing.

There were times when I had considered leaving and pursuing the other opportunities that came my way. But each time I sensed God challenging me with the question: "If you leave now, will you be honouring your commitment to be a blessing?"

This kept me at Weber for six years, and enriched me immensely. I grew tremendously in my technical skills, learnt the art of positioning and skillful communication from great mentors and developed many solid friendships.

None of this would have been fully brought to form had I prematurely left. Now that I have gone in-house, I look back and thank God for my formative years in PR consulting.

As I look back on my years of work, I am filled with such thankfulness and gratitude. God has been so faithful and He has walked with me through each day, through each intense period, through the highs and the lows, the periods of intense satisfaction and the seasons of faithful ceaseless churn, giving me great joy and purpose as I work.

He knows our desires and has fashioned us uniquely to work for and alongside Him in the marketplace. I am glad I invited Him to walk alongside me right from the start of my career and it is my prayer that I will continue to journey with Him through the many more seasons at work.

ECCLESIASTES 3:13

“THAT EACH OF THEM MAY EAT AND DRINK, AND FIND SATISFACTION IN
ALL THEIR TOIL – THIS IS THE GIFT OF GOD.”

Extract of exchange on Communications sphere chat group:



Xiaorong:



We've been brought up to think that if we don't study hard, we will become toilet cleaners, road sweepers and garbage collectors – and these are thought of as “undesirable” occupations. But even in the corporate world, there is a hierarchy – the doctors and lawyers are thought of as “better” than secretaries, PAs, and those involved in communications. But all work is God-blessed. Nothing is beneath Him. The challenge then is for us to be excellent in our work because everything is God-given, even when work does not go well.

Not sure about you guys, but I find that the corporate world views comms people as “second class citizens”. Sometimes, it feels lousy when I tell people I do financial communications because they then give me this “face” which tells me that they don't know how to react.



Jillian:

Agree on this. Especially when work involves humans who might not always make things easy.

Eugenia:



Thanks for sharing, Xiaorong. I can understand how you feel. I felt the same ways when I first went over to the corporate side in banking. But God has helped me to see that the gift of writing and being able to communicate well is a gift, and this was helped by having a good CEO who saw the strategic value of communications.

Sometimes when doing comms in-house, your role can be reduced to just a producer of text, but actually, it has a far more strategic business value, and also meaning in helping colleagues find meaning in their roles or investors find perspective and invest well. We can choose to contribute at a higher level, and demonstrate that value beyond the tactical. When we do that, you'll find that people look at the role of comms differently, and you get a seat at the table of many key meetings where you can shape the way big decisions are being implemented. God has used this gift to really expand my tent and influence so may you be encouraged to know that your work matters.



Samantha Yong

I'm an Account Supervisor at Weber Shandwick, a global public relations firm. I've been with the company for close to six years and mainly service one key client where we help to manage and drive their communications efforts across Asia-Pacific markets.

A question I commonly get asked when people learn that I've stayed on at my first job for six years is how I've managed to stick around for that long.

Aren't the hours very long and the pay not very high in this industry?

Yes, that's true. I work in an extremely fast-paced environment with clients who are very demanding and I've had days and months when I struggle to get out of bed to go to work.

However, it's a place where I've had the opportunity to thrive and grow in many ways, and have gained mentors and built friendships that will last a lifetime.

When I first entered the industry as a fresh graduate, I often asked myself: “Why has God placed me in an industry which seems to be more suited for extroverts when I'm an introvert?”

I'm not as outspoken as others, which I used to think was a huge disadvantage.

Why is God challenging me to step out of my comfort zone?

Over time, I came to realise that He had placed me where I'm at, with the unique abilities and

personality He has given to me, to do His work in this world and be a blessing to my colleagues and clients.

I recall a colleague once telling me: “You have to fight for what you want out of your career”, whether it's to get recognition from your bosses or to get a promotion.

That's a common secular worldview and definitely makes good sense to most people.

But by God's grace I've been given opportunities I sometimes did not deserve or have to earn.

It's easy to attribute this to sheer hard work on my part.

However, I see it as a reminder that God alone stands in authority over my career and my life.

Reflecting on the “The Other Six Days” sermon series, I recall one particular devotion which said that “most of us are workaholics where we envision our work to deliver the control, security and satisfaction in our lives”. This struck a chord in me as my life has largely been centered around work.

It was a simple yet extremely meaningful and timely reminder that God is in control of our lives and that only God can give us the security and satisfaction that we seek.

I take comfort knowing that we need not constantly seek to prove our worth at work because our worth is in Christ.

When I grow up, I want to be...

To liven things up, we asked Rev Alvin Chan and Rev Paul Nga what they would have chosen for an occupation had they decided not to be a pastor.

You won't believe this.

I have always wanted to be a pastor.

This was ever since I started thinking about what I wanted to do with my life. I think God put that desire in my heart.

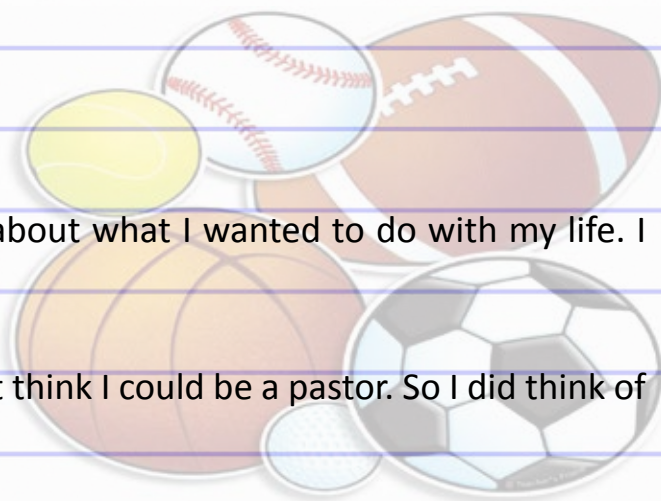
There were times, though, when I didn't think I could be a pastor. So I did think of what I wanted to do in the alternative.

I wanted to be a social worker for people with special needs. Stop laughing. It's true. I probably was naïve enough to think I could do it. I just wanted them to understand and know that God loves them. That's all that matters in life, isn't it? I cannot imagine myself doing it now though. It would be way too difficult for me, I reckon.

If suddenly I could not be a pastor today, I think I would be a sports coach. Probably a team sport like football. I like working with people. I enjoy developing people and bringing out the best in them. I like to help people overcome their challenges and succeed in what they are doing. I like working with teams, bringing out the potential in a team, bringing a team together.

I also wouldn't mind being a golf caddy. I would get to travel, I would be involved in sports, get to go to nice courses, probably get to play on them too.

Having said all that, I still think I'm in my dream job. Living the life!



I don't know how to respond. I wanted to be a pastor since Primary 3! I'll have to answer in another way.

I started my ministry as a pastor in mid-July 1981, and I am into my 37th year of service. I have four more years to serve before I reach the official retirement age of 65.

Lately, I have been considering how to continue to fulfil our Lord's command to Peter ("Feed my sheep" ... "Feed my lambs") during my retirement.

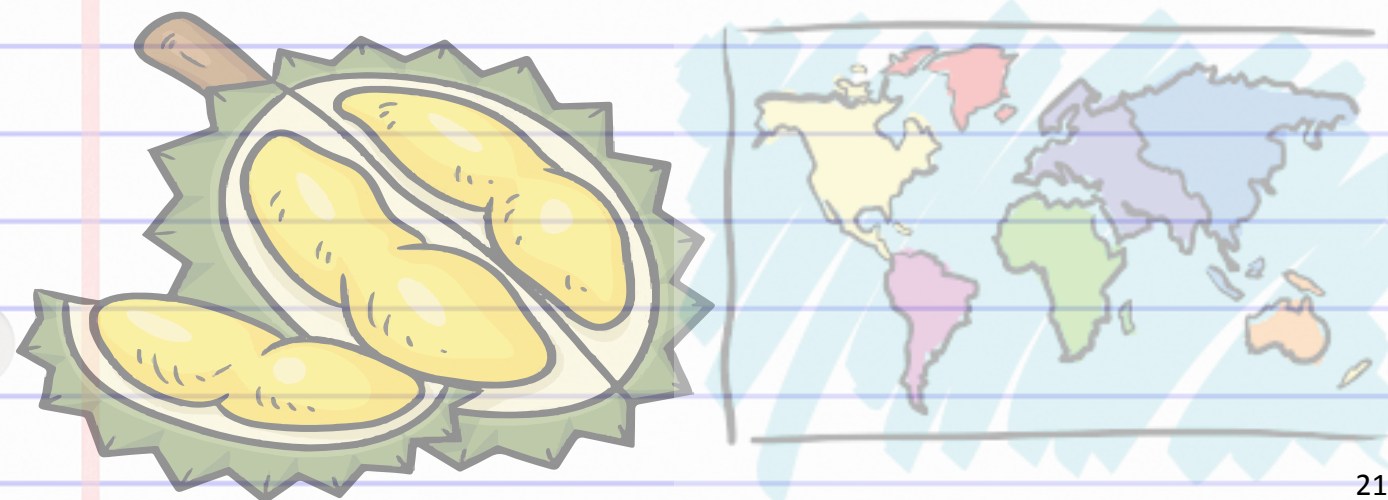
Then a brilliant idea struck me. I could be a food-guide. I could organise food-trails and durian trips, in particular to Yong Peng.

Yong Peng, the hometown of my dearest and beloved Mee Hee, has endeared itself to me.

Yong Peng provides excellent belly-filling and tummy-stretching experiences, blessings which I would love to share with anyone who chooses to engage me as their food-guide.

Just think - the food trails and the durian trips could serve as excellent B.L.E.S.S. opportunities. You could invite or sponsor pre-believing family members and relatives, friends and foes for a time of fellowship and feasting on the Lord's goodness.

One final point to note. In order to avoid any possible confusion with regard to my identity, role and my responsibility, my name would be changed to Epaphroditus. According to Wikipedia, Epaphroditus was an envoy of the Philippian and Colossian church who assisted the Apostle Paul (Phil 2:25-30). Epaphroditus Paul Nga – food envoy extraordinaire at your service.



MATURING IN JESUS



Lim Yew Song

I had been working in China for five years when I was blessed to meet Frances in Shanghai.

Frances became my wife.

I believe that God sent her to me. This was a turning point in my life.

We attended church in Shanghai, and I started to get to know Jesus.

When we returned to Singapore, we first attended Sengkang Methodist Church (SMC). I accepted Jesus as my Lord and Saviour in 2012.

Rev Lek Yong Teck solemnised our marriage in 2012. Since then, the Lord has blessed me further with two beautiful daughters, Meredith and Mikaela.

I started attending Trinity Methodist Church in March this year. Many church members welcomed me warmly. Among them were Francis and Brenda who invited me to join the church choir. I started singing with the choir from July this year. I am thankful for the opportunity to serve God through song. I experience much joy as I worship the Lord in the choir.

I desire that my family become firm believers in Christ, and that my children grow up with strong godly values to anchor their lives. As head of the household, I have a responsibility to provide spiritual leadership, and I want to live my life as

a disciple of Jesus to set a good example for my daughters.

I have personally experienced Jesus's love and faithfulness. He has become a part of my life. My walk with Jesus has matured. The next milestone of my Christian walk is to be baptised. This is an outward testimony of my faith.

Yew Song will be baptised on Christmas Day 2017.



PRECEPT UPON PRECEPT

- 2018 -

Thursdays, 2.00-5.00pm
Instructor: Mrs Liza Leong

Acts Part 1	4 Jan – 29 Mar (excl 8-22 Feb, 15-22 Mar)
Acts Part 2	5 Apr – 24 May

Thursdays, 7.30-10.00pm
Instructor: Mrs Loh Sook Mee

Genesis Part 1	18 Jan – 1 Feb
Genesis Part 2	22 Feb – 22 Mar
Genesis Part 3	5 Apr – 10 May
Genesis Part 4	17 May – 31 May
Genesis Part 5	5 Jul – 26 Jul



Register with Park Ming /
parkming@tmc.org.sg or www.tmc.org.sg/d&n.html#pup

Credit: <http://www.freeimages.com/photo/bible-1244407>

IN & ABOUT TMC

Celebrating TMC'S 61ST ANNIVERSARY



MID-AUTUMN CELEBRATION



CHILDREN'S DAY SERVICE



Your Local Conference 2017-8



The Local Conference includes the pastors, Local Church Executive Committee (LCEC), local preachers, honorary stewards and the chairperson of the Pastor-Parish Relations and Staff Committee (PPRSC).

The PPRSC is not part of the LCEC. It looks after all matters with regard to the appointment of pastors and staff employed by TMC.

Front row (L-R) 1. Samuel Hum · Young Adults' Ministry 2. Andy Chew · Lay Leader / PPRSC member / Second Lay Delegate to Annual Conference 3. Pastor Timothy Yong · Asst Pastor 4. Caroline Lim · PPRSC member 5. Rev Alvin Chan · Pastor-in-charge 6. Kelvin Tan · LCEC Vice Chairperson / Missions / Second Reserve Lay Delegate to Annual Conference 7. Rev Paul Nga · Pastor

Second row (L-R) 8. Tan Seng Hee · Small Groups 9. Lionel Loke · Steward 10. Christabel David · Communications 11. Nerine Seng · Glowing Years Ministry 12. Mary Foo · Women's Society of Christian Service (WSCS) 13. Debbie Tng · PPRSC member 14. Toh Soo Yee · Asst Secretary 15. Katherine Loh · Witness & Evangelism 16. Carol Lie · Mandarin Service

Third row (L-R) 17. Tan Kim Lam · Lay Ministry Staff (Discipleship) / Local Preacher / Third Reserve Lay Delegate to Annual Conference 18. Christina Choo · Governance 19. Lee Park Ming · Lay Executive Staff (Discipleship & Nurture) 20. Lee Hui Ling · Girls' Brigade 21. P Sathiasingam · Honorary Steward 22. Lim Sue Yien · Finance / First Reserve Lay Delegate to Annual Conference 23. Eugenia Koh · Outreach & Social Concerns / Associate Lay Leader 24. Ronnie Tan · PPRSC member 25. Wee Eng Hock · Pastoral CareNet Ministry 26. Judy Yip · Honorary Steward

Fourth row (L-R) 27. Hum Sin Hoon · LCEC Chairperson / PPRSC member / First Lay Delegate to Annual Conference 28. Robert Yeo · PPRSC Chairperson / Associate Lay Leader / First Lay Delegate to Annual Conference 29. Philip Khoo · Local Preacher 30. Tan Sue-Ann · Associate Lay Leader 31. Khor Tong Hong · Honorary Steward

Fifth row (L-R) 32. Choy Wai Cheng · Administrator 33. Tan Sin Guek · Archivist 34. Claire Lowe · Lay Executive Staff (Missions and Evangelism)

Back row (L-R) 35. Koh Eu Beng · Boys' Brigade 36. Wong Ting Ling · Property Management 37. Dexter Chia · Secretary / PPRSC member 38. Pamela Lim · Prayer & Intercession 39. Richard Seng · Associate Lay Leader 40. Jacob Cheng · Discipleship & Nurture



Missing from photo: Ang Poh Kit · Associate Lay Leader; Eugene Koh · Treasurer; George Sathiasingam · Children's Ministry; Daryl Ong · Worship & Music; Nicole Gan · Youth Ministry; Ang Hern Shung · Lay Ministry Staff (Youth and Prayer) / Local Preacher; Eddie Goh · Lay Ministry Staff (Mandarin Service) / Local Preacher; Violet Khor · Local Preacher; Kwa Kiem Kiok · Local Preacher; Kevin Lowe · Local Preacher; Alice Lim · Lay Ministry Staff (Children's Ministry)

A VISIT TO AN OLD FRIEND OF TMC

The late Rev Christopher Smith was a pastor at TMC from December 1959 to December 1962.

My wife, Mui Keng, and I visited Eileen, Rev Smith's widow, at the rehabilitation hospital at Hemel Hempstead in the United Kingdom in September this year.

Eileen was recovering from a fall, which resulted in fractures of her pelvis and left wrist. She was able to walk with the help of a walking frame.

She was otherwise "as bright as two buttons" in her own words, and sends her love to all who knew her at TMC. She thinks of us all often and with great fondness.

Her three grown-up children, David, Richard and Cathy live in the same area and visit her often.

Cathy recently told me that Eileen is now back home after many months in the hospital. Eileen is adjusting well. Although she is tired, she is delighted to be home.



*From the album of Eileen's 90th birthday in April this year.
With her are her three children.*



Dr & Mrs Khor with Eileen Smith (seated)

Fearless Youth Lounge now open



The new Fearless Youth Lounge is now open.

Since its opening, groups of youths have been spending time at the lounge every day.

The room was set up by TMC youths, who did everything from designing the room, to purchasing and assembling the furniture.

Our hope is that this room will become a place where we can build and create community among the youths, and also to help the youths take ownership and see TMC as their home.

TELEVISION

TABLE TENNIS (PLAZA)

XBOX

BOARD GAMES

ARCADE CONSOLE

SNACKS & DRINKS

open everyday

Shout out to all youths! Do come to hang out at the Fearless Youth Lounge!

EMOTIONALLY HEALTHY SPIRITUALITY



Pamela Khoo

Is it possible to be spiritually mature while remaining emotionally immature? Why are relationships difficult to maintain?

Can Christians exhibit anger, sadness and fear? Must we always give in to avoid conflicts?

Should we feel bad for our brokenness, weakness and failure?

These questions and more were addressed at a workshop organised by the Pastoral CareNet Ministry in July 2017, based on the book, "Emotionally Healthy Spirituality" by Peter Scazzero.

It was a mind-transforming four-session workshop conducted by the insightful Rev Peter Goh.

I learnt that having better emotional health helps to strengthen my relationship with Jesus, which then results in improvements in my relationships with others.

We cannot improve our spiritual lives while remaining trapped in our emotions of anger, sadness and fear.

We cannot minimise or deny what we feel. We should and have to express our emotions. By doing so, we improve our ability to love God, others, and ourselves better.

Life is never perfect. We should not pretend things are always rosy.

Nobody likes conflict. Yet, conflict is everywhere.

It is a myth that following Jesus means always giving in to maintain peace or "sweeping issues under the rug". We would be lying to ourselves if we did so.

In fact, we read in the Bible that Jesus was in regular conflict with the religious leaders, the crowds, the disciples and even his own family. Jesus disrupted the false peace all around him to bring true peace.

We cannot succumb to the pressure to present an image of ourselves as strong and spiritually mature. This would merely be an attempt to cover our brokenness, weaknesses and failures.

King David did not yield to such pressure. He wrote a song about his failure. David wrote: "My sacrifice, O God is a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart you, God, will not despise" (Ps 51:17).

We will go through seasons in our life. In some seasons, we will experience challenges such as relationship crises, job losses, health issues, betrayal, grief, shattered dreams, having a wayward child, feeling dry in our walk with God. We cannot control these seasons as they occur.

We can, however, make choices to trust God, to wait on God, to obey God, to stick with God, to remain faithful when everything in us wants to quit and run.

We have to surrender power and control - He will do the work.

Ultimately, God is the One who will move us past our challenges.

God has a different path for each of us which we need to recognise. It is crucial to know our true selves and strengthen our spiritual lives.

We never walk alone in this journey.

God loves us.

God is always with us and He is always in control.

"I am not easily affected emotionally by events happening around me.

Like many of my generation, I grew up in a family where the father was the head of the household, and the children just kept quiet. We did not question. We did not express our opinions. In fact, we hid our emotions and "put on a mask". This course helped me to understand a bit more about myself and how I have come to be who I am.

Having God in my life and understanding my emotional self makes it easier for me to tackle "issues and tissues" that are part and parcel of our human relationships on this side of life."

- Daniel Ho -



"For many years, my spiritual journey was like a yo-yo, sometimes happy and delightful, sometimes frustrating and sad.

This course helped me to discover who I am. Living within my abilities and also in God's ways (e.g. consistent morning devotions and praying for family members and friends, helping people) allows me to know that God is good and real.

My hope is to develop my emotional spiritual strength one step at a time. Rome is not built in a day. Spiritual maturity does not just happen. It requires intention, time and effort in order to realise its benefits."

- Stella Ang -



"I learnt that it is alright to feel upset or angry, and to deal with my emotions. To be authentic is to be our true self and not to pretend and hide our feelings. There will always be 'walls' in our lives but we can learn to deal with them and carry on with our walk with God."

- Lilian Chew -



EVENTS

Sat 2, 9 Dec, 6 Jan, 3 Feb

10.00am Youth Ave Leaders Captains' Development
www.facebook.com/YouthAvenue123

Sat 2, 9 Dec

3.00pm Youth Ave Sport Activity

Sat 2 Dec

10.00am WSCS Christmas celebration with Gospel Mission to the Blind
Contact Mary Foo to participate

Sat 5 Dec

1.00pm Youth Avenue Indoor Event

Wed 6 Dec – Sun 10 Dec

WSCS Mission Trip to Cambodia

Sat 9 Dec

3.00pm GYM Thanksgiving and Christmas Celebration

Tues 12 Dec – 14 Dec

Youth Avenue Camp

Fri 15 Dec

7.00pm Christmas Alfresco Dinner
www.tmc.org.sg/xmas2017.html

Sat 16 Dec

6.00pm GYM Christmas Outreach at Serangoon North CC
7.00pm Youth Avenue Christmas party

Wed 20 Dec – 23 Dec

Youth Camp – Oasis
www.facebook.com/YouthAvenue123

Wed 20 Dec

1.00pm Youth Avenue Outing

Mon 25 Dec

9.00am Christmas Day English Service with Baptism of Infants & Adults
11.00am Christmas Day Mandarin Service

Sun 31 Dec

8.45am / 11.15am Reception of New Members
10.00am WSCS Christmas party for Domestic Helpers
Contact Mary Foo to participate
10.30pm Wesleyan Covenant Renewal & Holy Communion Service

Thurs 1 Jan – 29 Mar (excl 8-22 Feb, 15-22 Mar)

2.00pm Precept Upon Precept – Acts Part I
www.tmc.org.sg/d&n.html#pup

Sat 6, 20, 27 Jan

9.30am Prophetic Art Workshop organised by WSCS
www.tmc.org.sg/highlights.html#propheticart

Thurs 18 Jan – 1 Feb

7.30pm Precept Upon Precept – Genesis Part I
www.tmc.org.sg/d&n.html#pup

Sat 20 Jan

8.00am First Local Conference

Saturdays from 27 Jan to 31 Mar

Marriage Preparation Course
www.tmc.org.sg/highlights.html

Fri 2 Feb

GYM Chinese New Year shopping

Wed 14 Feb

8.00pm Ash Wednesday Service

Thurs 22 Feb – 22 Mar

7.30pm Precept Upon Precept – Genesis Part II
www.tmc.org.sg/d&n.html#pup

Sun 25 Feb

Enrolment of Boys' and Girls' Brigades
10.15am GYM Chinese New Year celebration

Fridays 9 Mar – 30 Nov

DISCIPLE III - Remember Who You Are
www.tmc.org.sg/d&n.html#disciple

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