

Saltshaker

A Trinity Methodist Church Publication



TRINITY
Methodist Church

JUNE 2017

MCI (P) 002/10/2016

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OPPOSITE

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CHRISTIANITY & CHINESE CULTURE

POLAR OPPOSITES?



Michael Lim

I grew up in a confused family with regards to religion.

I thought I was Buddhist, but really, we practised more of the Taoist way instead.

We did not meditate for enlightenment. Rather, we prayed to the Goddess of Mercy and our ancestors during the 1st and 15th days of the lunar calendar.

There was always delicious food for offerings. Relatives would gather together too. There was plenty of noise and catching up with one another. Those were the Chinese-related traditions that I grew up with. I never spared a thought about why we did it.

A typical Chinese family, 敬老尊贤 (respect your elders) and 孝道 (filial piety) made up the family pillars. We tried our best to remember all the relatives' positions in the family tree so as to address them by their respective ranks. Before dinner, we had to address all the elders at the table before we could begin to eat. We learnt never to talk back to elders, regardless of whether we were right. During Chinese New Year, family visitations had to be in hierarchical order too.

During 清明节 (Qing Ming Festival), there would be lots of paper money, the folding of joss paper 元宝 (ingots), the drawing of circles on the ground, incense-burning etc. I believe iPhone 7 with dual lens has already been launched in a paper version!



This was as Chinese as I could be.

It did not help that I grew up with the image of Christ as a long-haired dude with blue eyes. If I were to meet this fair skinned “*gwei-lo*” (Cantonese, referring to a white-skinned person), I was sure he would speak with an American / British accent. He looked nowhere near the small-eyed, yellow-skinned Guan Yin (Goddess of Mercy) nor the bearded guy with the imperial robe who is known as the ‘Tua Pek Gong’ (literally “grand uncle”, a pantheon of folk religion). The latter two sure looked more Chinese to me than Christ.

Surely Christianity and Chinese culture are opposite poles of a magnet, I thought. I never imagined that I would accept Christ as my Saviour. Thank God I did. However, once in a while, I just cannot help but wonder if Christianity really is a western religion.

When I learnt that there would be a talk - “Christian Faith and Chinese Culture” - organised by TMC, it stirred my curiosity. What do Christianity and the Chinese culture have in common?

Two anecdotes from Lawrence Ko’s talk are memorable.

We learned that hanging a red cloth over the main door (挂红) during Chinese New Year may have drawn inspiration from the Passover. Exodus

12 recounts that the blood of a one-year-old male lamb / goat was to be put on the sides and tops of the door frames. This served as a sign that would protect the Israelites' firstborns from the angel of death. Furthermore, could 年兽* be related to the death angel?

Should we shun attending a non-believer's wake? Absolutely not! The purpose of a wake is to allow us to pay our last respects to the deceased, as well as to comfort the living. In my opinion, it does not matter if we are not holding the joss sticks. A respectful bow is usually greatly appreciated. I usually say a simple prayer for the deceased and family.

In the grand scheme of things, some of our rich Chinese heritage can be correlated to Christian values. As we spend more time in learning and understanding, we will discover that Chinese culture is more than just rituals. We might be able to appreciate the Chinese culture from a different – even Christian - perspective.

It is our responsibility as Chinese Christians to show that we can be Chinese and Christian at the same time.

**According to Chinese legend, Nian was a monster which terrorised the villagers annually. It was driven away by the colour red and the noise of firecrackers. This is how the Chinese came to celebrate Chinese New Year with red decorations and firecrackers.*



Michael Lim, with wife Pamela and daughters Valerie and Gabrielle.

愛

Rotated 90° clockwise

神

Take the above stylised Chinese character for love and rotate it clockwise by 90° to get the character for God.

BEHOLD, LOVE IS GOD!

CHRISTIAN FAITH & CHINESE CULTURE

A MISSIONARY HEART



Lim Sue Yien

Can I, as a Christian, still observe Chinese cultural traditions? Is there a conflict in doing so?

Many Chinese traditions are steeped in Taoist beliefs, such as Qing Ming, or Tomb Sweeping Day, which is a time for relatives of the deceased to pay respects to the soul of the dead. This usually includes cleaning graves, preparing food offerings, and conducting rites. The rites typically involve the burning of joss sticks and bowing in front of one's ancestor's grave.

Can Christians participate in these activities yet stay true to their faith?

On 18 Mar, Mr Lawrence Ko from the Singapore Centre for Global Missions helped a group of TMC members and friends to understand the background and philosophies behind some of these Chinese practices.

Many came looking for answers to real-life dilemmas, such as holding joss sticks during funerals and, if they refused, being told that they had abandoned filial piety for a western religion. There was certainly heavy "emotional baggage" carried by some of the attendees.

The Chinese people have been clothed with a strong cultural identity. They have a long historical tradition, and some exude fierce pride in their Chinese-ness. Moreover, they generally have a strong Confucian concept of Family, rooted in a concern for right relationships.

This is not necessarily at odds with our Christian values.

The bible is clear about filial piety. It commands us, for example, to honour our parents. God is very interested in promoting right relationships among men, and between man and God.

Lawrence dispelled many myths concerning Chinese cultural practices, and gave practical examples of how one does not need to abandon all Chinese values in order to be a Christian.

One example was this: although bowing to ancestral graves could mean ancestral worship, consider that when a Japanese bows to you, he is not worshipping you – he is merely showing respect.

A young man at the talk disclosed that he wrestled with family obligations to be buried in an ancestral (non-Christian) cemetery. Lawrence gave some assurance on this by sharing his experience of having visited Taoist cemeteries, only to find graves with crosses amongst the Taoist graves. One can even view this as a testimony of how Christ is present even in unexpected places.

"I have become all things to all people so that by all possible means I might save some." (1 Cor 9:22) Insofar as Jesus became man in order to save us, and Paul became all things to all people to save them, there should be a missionary cause in our Christian thinking as we interact with our pre-believing friends and relatives.

Lim Gek Ee attends our Mandarin Service. She agreed with the speaker that it is important to understand a pre-believer's background in order to reach out to him. She concluded that it is very much a matter of the heart. The answer is not just in dealing with the practical dos and don'ts. If we love our family and community, then we should pray for a missionary heart, and devote our lives to love the ones we want to reach out to. This means winning their trust first, for how can we share the gospel effectively with someone who does not even trust us. Actions speak louder than words. Show that we care about them and respect their customs, even though we will not perform them as a religious rite. For example, we cannot hold joss sticks, but we can bow respectfully and say a prayer.

Seah Pong Hin, who attends the 8.45am service, summed it up: "We should be in a position to express our Chinese culture as Chinese Christians". Nevertheless, the attendees were reminded of 1 Cor 10:23-30, that we are free to eat of anything, but in order not to stumble a pre-believer, we should decline if we have knowledge that it has been offered to idols.

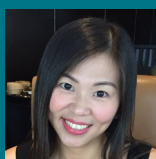
The Christian Faith and Chinese Culture talk was organized by the Witness and Evangelism Committee. Do look out for more of such talks, the aim of which is to give a Christian perspective to challenging issues faced by modern Christians today.



SAHMs Stay At Home Moms

I CAN ... BECAUSE I AM A SAHM

SAHMs is an acronym for "Stay-At-Home-Mums", and a homonym for "Psalms" (which in Hebrew means praises or hymns). One author says it may well be called the "Hebrew Prayer and Praise Book". As much as we often speak of Christians as witnesses for Christ in the marketplace, we thought we would highlight what some SAHMs are doing for the Lord. Contrary to popular thought, SAHMs do not "just stay at home and take care of the children".



Carine Lim

I was a qualified MOE teacher and taught in primary schools from 2001 to 2010.

It was a joy to teach as I love kids and loved my job. I also found the recognition by my pupils' parents and school leaders extremely rewarding.

I would report to school at 6.45am and leave the school at 7.00pm. Yet my energy never ran out. It never occurred to me then that one day I would stop teaching. But that day came sooner than I expected.

After my older child, Gracelyn, was born in Nov 2010, it became clear that I should take no-pay leave and stay home to look after her as I had no helper at that time. Her grandparents were still working and there was no one to keep an eye on a helper (if I employed one) and the baby. Being a clingy new mommy, I was reluctant to send my baby to an infant care centre. That marked the beginning of my SAHM journey. Fast forward and



Carine with her husband, Daryl, and their two children, Gracelyn (6 years old) and Gabriel (4 years old).

I am now a mother of 2 children, and have been a SAHM for almost 7 years.

I would be lying if I say that I have never had doubts or regrets being a SAHM. The loss of personal income, the frequent thoughts of having little or no self-worth, the lack of intelligent conversation with adults in the day, the daily mundane chores of marketing, planning lunch and dinner menus, showering and feeding my kids, the lack of opportunity to dress up, the 'unproductive' time spent waiting for the kids outside their enrichment centres etc. There were many times when I questioned myself why I chose this path. All these negative thoughts consumed me at times, especially when I saw how successful many of my full-time-working-mom friends were in their careers. Many doubts and much regret crept in over my SAHM years. Until last year in August.

God must have heard so much of my inner voice complaining and lamenting to Him that He decided to give me some assurance and encouragement... and of course, some challenges.

My beloved mother passed away last August. It was a wake-up call for me. I am thankful that my mom, my children and I spent so much time together in my 6 years of being a SAHM. Mom and I shopped and had lunch together every single week, and she spent a lot of time playing games with my children. I was also the main person who accompanied her to all her medical appointments as my other 2 siblings had to work. Thus I was the privileged one who got to frequently hold her hands, kiss her cheeks and tell her 'I love you'. This

was only possible because I am a SAHM!

I had always planned to return to teach one day and thus, I had taken no-pay leave. However, after my mom's passing, I tendered my resignation to MOE the following month and I have not looked back since.

In the past one year, I have begun to see more of the privileges of being a SAHM, and the role that God has carved out for me.

God appears to have called me to perform a care ministry – to be a witness for Jesus through caring for others - and I can do this ... because I am a SAHM.

I have been able to bless my children and friends with my time and presence. I have had the privilege to journey through some tough and challenging times with my close friends. Those whom I can help in the day, I try to meet them for lunch. Those whom I cannot meet, I send them text messages late at night after my children are in bed. I do not think I would have the energy to carry on long text conversations at night if I were still teaching.

It has been a fulfilling time of ministry this past year. My diary of things to do has included:

- spending time with my beloved elder sister weekly as she is diagnosed with post trauma stress disorder due to our mother's passing;
- accompanying a dear sister-in-Christ for her oncologist and chemotherapy appointments at the National Cancer Centre;
- helping a good friend by bringing her food and taking care of her newborn when she was sick;
- letting another dear pre-believing friend take refuge in my home whenever her depression strikes. She needs to pretend to go to work so as not to make her parents



Carine with Beautrice at the National Cancer Centre during one of Beautrice's chemotherapy sessions in March.

Anger will happen,
Frustrations will come.
But how we handle
ourselves,
Is really up to us.
What is best for your
child?
A mother who controls
herself.
What is even better for
your child?
A mother who turns to
God for help.
- Tricia Goyer

- worry;
- meeting up with another pre-believing friend who has lung cancer and giving support to her mother who is living in fear of losing her daughter;
- regularly checking on the mother of a pre-believing friend who passed away last year and chatting with her on the phone;
- meeting up with a pre-believing friend regularly as she had fallen out of love and lost her job at the same time and is very depressed;
- helping to babysit a pre-believing friend's toddler at her house occasionally while she attends classes for her part-time studies; and
- helping a good friend with the interior design for her new home, and shopping for appliances with her.

“Whoever brings blessings will be enriched, and one who waters will himself be watered.” (Prv 11:25). This verse speaks to the core of my heart.

I did not expect myself to be enriched in any way by giving my friends my time. In fact, I did not even think that the above were worth mentioning (until I was asked to contribute this article). But time and time again, I have received greater love, favour and assistance from people around me after I started ministering to others and this refreshing water that keeps me going can only be from God.

Being human, there are still times when I feel discouraged being a SAHM. There are still occasions when I let my frustrations with my children get the better of me. My prayer is that I will turn to God in every situation and be a prayerful mom.

I do not know how long God intends for me to be a SAHM. But as long as I am one, I will try my best to bring blessings to my family and friends. For now, this is my marketplace. This is my calling.



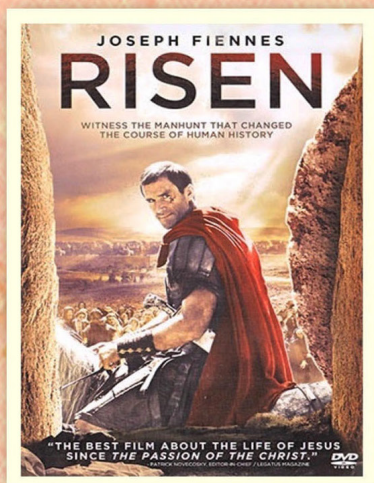
Photos (from top):

1: Carine with her late mother.

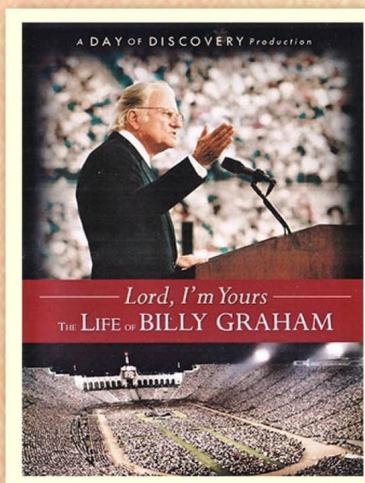
2: Carine's late mother with Gracelyn.

3: Carine with her late mother and elder sister.

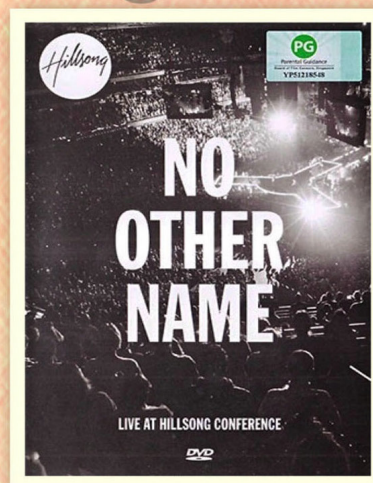
Bibliothèque



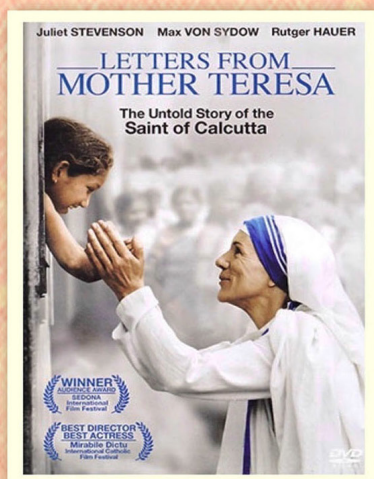
DVD567
Risen - Witness the manhunt that changed the course of human history



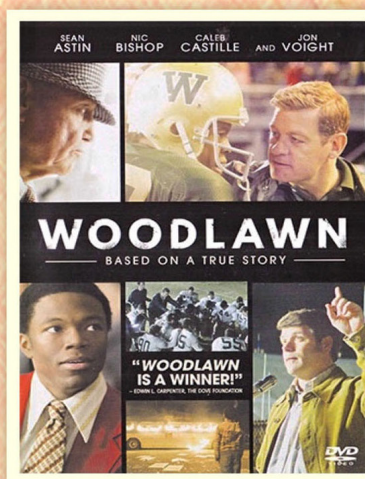
DVD568
Lord, I'm Yours
The Life of Billy Graham



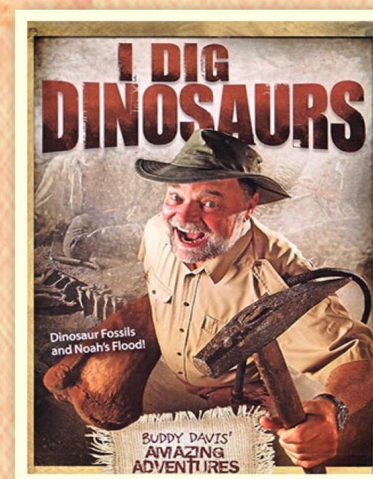
DVD569
Hillsong - No Other Name
Live at Hillsong Conference



DVD570
Letters From Mother Teresa



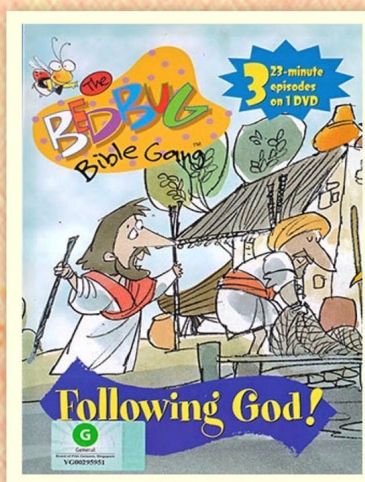
DVD571
Woodlawn



DVD572
I Dig Dinosaurs



DVD573
Shout Praises Kids
Nothing Is Impossible



DVD574
The Bedbug Bible Gang
Following God!



DVD575
The Bedbug Bible Gang
Dandy Dreams!

These recently released DVDs and many other resources are available for borrowing from the TMC Resource Centre, situated at Benjamin Room on Level 2.

REACHING OUT TO THE BROKEN WITH THE FATHER'S LOVE

William Chua



William Chua is a member of TMC, and a recent graduate from Tung Ling Bible College (TLBS). He has retired from the marketplace and is now serving in the social service sector. He has a wealth of experience in reaching out to the broken in society and bringing them to Christ. William is involved in a few voluntary welfare organisations, working with those who need help from many different parts of society - children from dysfunctional families, hospice patients, single mothers, prisoners and even gambling addicts. In this interview, we sought to glean insights from his wisdom and experience in serving the Lord that we hope will inspire you to serve with the love of the Father.

Q: WHAT MOTIVATED YOU TO ENTER FULL-TIME MINISTRY?

I initially aspired to become a pastor but I gave it up to pursue more lucrative opportunities in the international arena. Through my frequent travels to many Eastern Central Asian and Asian countries as far as Mongolia, my eyes were opened to the various forms of injustice, exploitation and suffering. My heart ached for these people, and it awakened a desire in me to take action. Therefore, after being in the marketplace for almost 30 years, I left my job to work in the social service sector. On hindsight, I realised that throughout the years, God had opened doors for me to serve and impact the lives of various demographics.

Q: WHAT DO YOU DO IN YOUR MINISTRY?

What I do can be summed up in an acronym - DRD: Defend, Rescue and Deliver, which is from Psalm 82:3-4. It is my mission to defend the weak and the fatherless, providing a voice for those who

cannot stand up for themselves. God has also made it clear to me that I cannot stop at simply defending them, but must also rescue those who are suffering. Rescue is a very intentional action to help others. While I may not be able to solve all their problems, it is important to try. The last 'D' is to deliver the needy from the wicked. It is a very specific task that is the hardest to accomplish, but the most important. Intentional steps need to be taken to provide a way out for the oppressed. Whenever I am faced with a case, I always ask if it involves DRD. If it does, I know that God has called me to take up the case.

Q: ARE THERE TESTIMONIES THAT YOU COULD SHARE?

I have worked with children who have had to take on a parental role in the household. These children have to juggle schoolwork, household chores and take care of their siblings at a very young age. Consequently, they lose their childhood, becoming jaded and bitter. In such cases, we have to act



quickly and take them out of that situation. I am also on call 24/7 to my cases, and have received calls at all hours seeking help.

Q: HOW HAS YOUR TIME IN TLBS HELPED YOU?

TLBS taught me the importance of the Father's heart. I can do a lot of good things without the Father's heart, but without bringing the Father's love to those I help, it will come to naught. Whatever I do must start and end with God. He must be involved in the entire process. I have also learnt about submitting to authority. I work with churches and Christian communities for specific needs as well as special needs. I have learnt that I have to find a solution that allows these people to go to church, also taking into consideration the timing and feelings of the church.

Q: DO YOU HAVE ANY ADVICE TO CHRISTIANS WHO WANT TO SERVE IN SUCH A FIELD OR SIMPLY WANT TO HELP THEIR FRIENDS?

First, in whatever you do, go with a heart and a passion to love the ones you will be serving. Second, God is very clear that He will judge how we have helped those that crossed paths with us. You could be a model Christian, but if we are not able to answer when God asks to give Him a name of

someone we have helped, what does that say about us? Additionally, don't forget to protect yourself - never meet someone at his or her house. Rather, meet at a neutral, public place. Do not be driven by performance indicators. Quality, not quantity, matters. Through the years, I have also learnt not to expect gratitude. I do what I do not for the thanks or recognition, but out of love and obedience.

Q: THROUGH YOUR WORK, HOW HAS YOUR FAITH IN GOD GROWN?

On a mission trip to Thailand, I fellowshiped, worshipped and ate with local believers. Days later, I found out that almost half of them were HIV-positive! I used to be very cautious when interacting with people who are HIV-positive, but through that experience, I realised that we should love each other regardless. God liberated me from this fear of HIV-positive people that I had and showed me how great and unconditional His love for us is.

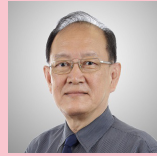
This interview was conducted by Tung Ling Bible School. It first appeared as part of a longer article in TLBS's publication "Polished Shaft, School of Ministry, Term 1, 2017" and has been adapted and printed with TLBS's permission.

The Saltshaker congratulates William on his graduation from TLBS.

**"IN WHATEVER YOU DO, GO WITH A HEART AND
A PASSION TO LOVE THE ONES YOU WILL BE SERVING."**

PASTORAL MINISTRY

WHAT I DID NOT LEARN IN SEMINARY



Rev Dr Daniel Koh

Mary* was the church caretaker when I was appointed to Trinity Methodist Church as a pastor in 1981.

I was sent as a pastor to take charge of TMC after graduating from Trinity Theological College.

It is rare now for fresh graduates from a seminary to be appointed as the pastor-in-charge. But back in the 1980s, when we did not have enough experienced pastors to fill the vacancies, a few of us freshly minted seminary graduates (like Rev Paul Nga and Rev Donald Chia) were thrown into the deep waters as solo pastors.

The TMC church office was located at a semi-basement below the church sanctuary. In the afternoon, the place could be oppressively hot. Although by that time most other churches had had their offices fully air-conditioned, TMC still depended on fans. What I had in my office was an industrial fan which I tried not to switch on unless I wanted the papers to fly all over the place.

There were three full-time workers at TMC then. Besides myself as the pastor, I had a church secretary (no one used the term “Personal Assistant” in those days) who had to provide administrative support, including taking phone calls, cyclostyling - yes, the kind of in-house printing job which required stencils to be cut and getting one’s hands black in the process - our weekly Order of Worship and the

church newsletters.

Then there was Mary, the church caretaker - the one who opened the church premises early in the morning and locked it up as the last person to leave the church. She also kept the church clean, cleared the rubbish, wiped the pews and tried to protect the mangoes growing from a tree just outside the church office. She did a good job with her responsibilities except protecting the mangoes which invariably would be stolen by outsiders before they were ripe.



Mary, the caretaker



Credit to her, Mary did what was expected of her as a church caretaker, although occasionally I received complaints that she missed out certain spots in the corner on the pews which had gathered dirt. Yet more than doing what one would expect of a church caretaker, this widow who lost her husband to a tragic death and had to single-handedly bring up a son, did something else beyond what was expected of a caretaker.

“Pastor, Pastor,” she spoke to me one day.

“Sam - you know him? He good boy. When small he regular in Sunday School. Mother and father also members,” she said.

Perhaps sensing I was a little lost, she explained, “Father - Uncle Fred. Mother - Auntie Rosie.” She continued with her broken English, “Sam not coming to church long time. I not see him. Don’t know why he now not here Sunday.” With an anguished look on her face, she wondered, “Maybe Pastor want to see him? Pastor can ask him to church? Don’t know how he is. He good boy, Pastor.”

How does one respond to a caretaker who is also a pastor at heart?

In Mary, we have an excellent example of a caretaker who takes care of the flock. That was not part of the job description for a caretaker. In Mary’s case, what she did went clearly beyond her call of duty.

I can still see Mary’s face as she taught me a priceless lesson about pastoral care - a lesson which no seminary can teach; a lesson which one cannot pick up in the classroom of a theologian with a PhD.

If we keep our eyes open, there are great lessons from “ordinary people” who offer “free” teachings for life and ministry.

Mary has since left this world. The last I heard, her son had migrated. But for me, Mary will remain a great teacher who taught me lessons in Pastoral Ministry in the most unlikely of places.

**Mary is the real name of a real person. All other names have been changed.*

(Rev Dr Daniel Koh was pastor at TMC from Aug 1981–July 1986. This article first appeared on Ps Daniel’s Facebook on 10 Feb 17 and is printed with his permission.)



In Memoriam *Yip Fook Yoon* *1946 - 2017*



Tricia Tong



Mr Yip Fook Yoon was one of TMC's church elders, and a familiar jovial face in the Plaza every Sunday. He passed away on 21 April 17 from lung cancer.

I last recall seeing Uncle Yip (as he was fondly addressed by many) in church on Good Friday 2016. He looked sombre and I am sorry I didn't have a chance to say even 'hello' that day, knowing what I knew later on.

Uncle Yip was always friendly and hospitable. He could often be seen chatting with newcomers, and connecting them to other worshippers. I was always grateful for the times that he tried to make my Easter-and-Christmas-visitor dad welcome at TMC.

That was not my first experience of Uncle Yip's hospitality. My earliest memory is of his generosity to us London students (and later, those of us who worked in London but were taxed at 40+%, so really, we worked only for the experience and the ability to pay rent!) I'll never forget his treats to us at Royal China on Queensway where his winsome personality and his fluency of the Cantonese dialect endeared him to the Royal China staff, such that we got to the head of the *dimsum* queue despite being not the first to arrive.



Uncle Yip with Auntie Yip (on his right) and undergraduates from TMC, outside All Souls Langham Place in London (1994 circa)

I am happy to have been able to cook Uncle Yip, Aunty Yip and their son, Colin, a meal once upon a time. The banana-wrapped fish that night was full of bones (because I had bought the wrong fish) but Uncle cheerfully ate it up.

He himself was a great culinary expert, which is why he often made me shy when he complimented my banana-wrapped fish in conversation with others. That was, by the way, the last time I cooked that dish.

I have always looked up to Uncle as a mentor. In a time where formal mentor or discipler relationships are championed, Uncle and I had none. Yet I certainly consider myself having been disciplined by him through the many Plaza conversations we shared. One trait that stood out for me and which I took away many learning points from, was his way of dealing with complaints from people in the church.

Whether in his capacity as lay leader (2006 – 2011) or otherwise, he was one of the few people who would not feel obliged to bring every little complaint to the LCEC (Local Church Executive Committee). If he disagreed with a complaint or saw no or little merit in it, he would try to counsel the complainant on the spot and/or try to explain the reason behind whatever was bothering the complainant. I appreciated this 'prophetic' voice very much. Uncle was firm, but kind.

Uncle was also a most diligent chorister, one of the few who would practise with my crude home-made CDs. He told me that he would lie in bed with his scores and the CD playing in the background.

Those were the days when Whatsapp had not been invented, and singing parts had to be recorded and burned onto a CD for about 20 choristers, some of whom had never heard of "mp3"; it was time-consuming. Before the advent of the CDs, I am told by Aunty Yip that she or Colin would play Uncle's bass part on the piano for him to sing to. Despite not being able to read music, he had a good ear and his dutiful practice paid off, such that I despaired when he had to be absent (which was not often at all) because we would then lose a competent booming voice which led the other bass singers. He never complained about the boring bass melodies, except once - the repetitive one in He is Born (UMH 228)!

It seemed to me that Uncle experienced a significant milestone in his life when his grandchildren were born. He always spoke enthusiastically about them and their antics – how he would get his granddaughter, Collette, to nap, but often he would fall asleep before she slipped away to play. He enjoyed traipsing through the Elizabeth Hotel (close to where he lived) with his grandson, Timothy. Uncle had a soft spot for children; he gave my daughter, Vicky, a toy one Christmas.

I will miss this church uncle very much for his kindness and his wisdom. May he now rest in peace.

Giving to The Church



Lim Sue Yien
Chairperson, Finance
Committee

Trinity Methodist Church is a registered charity.

It is governed by codes of practice which are legally binding, such as the need to produce audited accounts annually. These accounts inform the reader how much we spend on items like outreach activities, upkeep of the church building, staff pay, the children's ministry and so on. The regulations governing charities have become stricter over the recent years. Now, we are also required to report details of funds spent on overseas donations, projects such as constructing Glory Trinity Methodist Church, and overseas mission trips. Donations have to be made to registered charities in that country.

In addition, TMC is also part of the Methodist Church in Singapore. Our activities and finances are closely watched by the "mother ship" (my affectionate term for the Trinity Annual Conference (TRAC)), including unannounced visits by our TRAC President and even the Bishop! We are kept on our toes all the time, and the price, needless to say worth paying, is some administrative burden.

So where do your tithes go?

A large proportion goes toward the upkeep of the church building and staff.

As I mentioned last year, the church building is more than 10 years old. Although we've been blessed that expensive items (such as the air conditioning in the Sanctuary) do not yet need replacement, at some point in the future, they will. The Property Committee has arranged to have our air conditioning systems serviced once every 2 months. This frequency has helped to ensure not only good air quality, but also a well-maintained system which can hopefully last longer.

TMC's outreach activities are funded by your tithes. Witness and Evangelism talks, dinners, and concerts are run at no cost to the participants. The Youth Avenue organises activities such as futsal games for the kids in the Serangoon North neighbourhood. Sports is a good way to cultivate intentional friendships, and some of these kids are now attending Youth Ministry on Sundays.

Volunteers in the Outreach & Social Concerns ministries have befriended poor families struggling to make ends meet. The volunteers work to link these people with government-assisted programmes, but oftentimes, the church will help to supplement their monthly income for a period of time until the government subsidies come through. Our philosophy is that Christian friendship should come first, with money supporting the cause holistically.

Every month, the Mandarin Service runs an event for poor people living alone in one-bedroom rented flats in Toa Payoh, with general grooming, food and drinks provided to the community there.



"If among you, one of your brothers should become poor, in any of your towns within your land that the LORD your God is giving you, you shall not harden your heart or shut your hand against your poor brother..." (Deut 15:7, English Standard Version)

TMC has been blessed every year with surpluses, primarily due to under-spending and prudent spending by her many ministries. We have enough to “keep grain in our storehouse”, and have been doing so diligently for several years since we paid off the redevelopment debt.

We are now in a season where several of our sister Methodist churches sitting on short-term leasehold land need to renew their leases or face eviction. TRAC has set up a fund to which churches may donate to alleviate the financial burden faced by affected sister churches. TMC is blessed to have a 999-year leasehold land, and we will be rendering assistance to our sister churches.

As we approach Pledge Sunday (2 Jul 17), it is good to remind ourselves what the bible says concerning the topic of giving specifically to the church.

“Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I directed the churches of Galatia, so do you also. On the first day of every week each one of you is to put aside and save, as he may prosper, so that no collections be made when I come.”
(1 Cor 16:1-2, NIV)

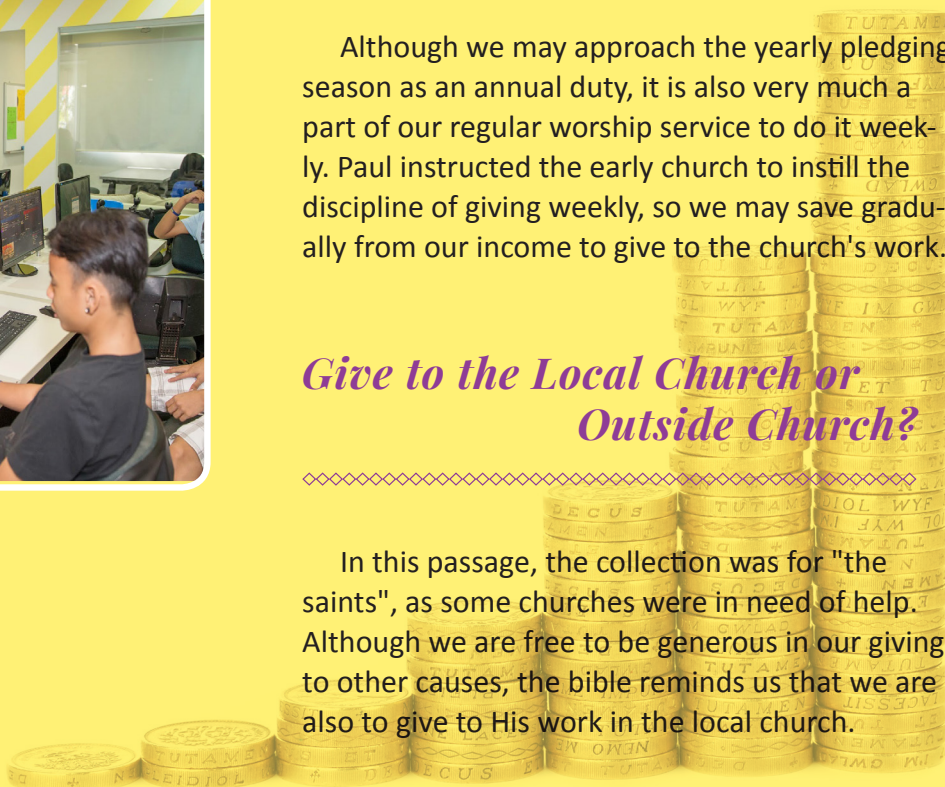


Do you give your tithe out of Worship or Duty?

Although we may approach the yearly pledging season as an annual duty, it is also very much a part of our regular worship service to do it weekly. Paul instructed the early church to instill the discipline of giving weekly, so we may save gradually from our income to give to the church's work.

Give to the Local Church or Outside Church?

In this passage, the collection was for "the saints", as some churches were in need of help. Although we are free to be generous in our giving to other causes, the bible reminds us that we are also to give to His work in the local church.



Have you given too little or too much?

After you have pledged your tithes, do you ever wonder if you've given too little? Or if you've given too much?

Most of us are familiar with the biblical exhortation to give a tenth of our income.

Every year, we observe Pledge Sunday. The pledges received from members and friends enable the church leadership to plan better for ministry work, upkeep of premises and human resourcing in the year ahead. Assuming that each of TMC's 511 members (between the ages of 26-60) is in the workforce, and pledges 10% of their average income, we should expect to receive more than \$2.4 million* in pledges each year. The truth is... we don't.

Nevertheless, God is concerned more about how we give rather than the quantum we give.

Remember the poor widow in Mk 12:41-44? Jesus said: "this poor widow has put more into the treasury than all the others. They all gave out of their wealth; but she, out of her poverty, put in everything—all she had to live on."

The lesson here is that what she gave pleased God. So when you pledge your tithe this year, do consider if God is pleased with the offering.

Do you give Cheerfully or Grudgingly?

"Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver". (1 Cor 9:7, NIV).

If I were to be practical, even if you gave your tithe grudgingly, the church would be able to benefit from the monetary gift. But God takes delight in us when we give cheerfully.

Giving cheerfully - whether of our time or money - also builds our faith, as many of you may have experienced in your journey as Christ's disciple.

This Pledge Sunday:

Give **worshipfully**.

Give towards **His work through TMC**.

Please God with the amount that you give.

Give **cheerfully**.

Pledge Sunday is on 2 July.

Pursuant to the Personal Data Protection Act, pledge cards will only be mailed to TMC members and friends on the mailing list. If you require a pledge card, please approach the iSunday Counter.

* Using the median gross monthly income from work (including employer CPF contributions) of full-time employed Singapore residents of \$4,056 or \$48,000 (rounding down to the nearest 1,000) as published by the Mid-Year 2016 Gross Monthly Income From Work - Comprehensive Labour Force Survey, Manpower Research & Statistics Department, MOM

奉献予教会



林素燕
财政委员会主席

卫理公会三一堂是一个经注册的慈善机构。

它依循着合法的实务守则，包括每年提交经审计的账目。这些账目向读者说明教会的财务用度，包括使用在外展事工、维修教堂建筑、职员薪金、幼儿事工等的费用。近年来，有关慈善机构的规定愈发严厉。目前，教会也需呈交关于对外捐献、建筑工程（如柬埔寨荣耀三一堂的建设）、海外宣教之旅等的详细报告。对外捐献的金额必须支付予该国经注册的慈善机构。

与此同时，卫理公会三一堂也附属于新加坡卫理公会。我们的活动、财政等时时处在“母舰”（此乃我对三一年议会之昵称）的监督底下。换言之，三一年议会的主席，以至会督，随时都可能造访教会。这激励我们常常保持谨慎，却也无形中加添了一定的行政压力。

你的十一奉献归何处？

绝大部分的奉献都使用在教堂建筑的维修与职员的应聘上。

在去年的报告中，我指出教会的建筑已年逾10载。迄今为止，我们感谢 神教会中较为贵重的仪器（包括圣殿中的空调）尚不需要维修，然而这也仅是暂时的。我们的产业委员会已拟定每两个月为教会的空调系统进行维修。这样的维修频率不仅能确保我们享有较清新的空气，希望也能让系统保养更久。

三一堂的外展事工也需要你的十一奉献。宣教与布道会等活动一般都是免收费的。例如，青年社交会经常为居住在实龙岗北的青年、孩子举办足球等游戏活动。

这类体育活动有助于让我们与当地的居民建立友谊；出席这些活动的青年、孩子，有不少位也开始参与星期天的青年部崇拜。

参与外展与社区关怀事工的义工们也到访较贫穷的家庭，帮助他们解决生活上的难题。这些义工们协助贫困家庭申请政府的援助计划。然而，由于申请时间较长，教会往往需要在政府津贴下达之前，帮助这些家庭补贴家用。对此，我们的宗旨始终是以建立基督化的友谊为主，并以经济补贴作为辅助的手段。

每个月，华语崇拜也在大巴窰的一房式租赁组屋区举办活动，为该地的贫困居民提供基本的美容、餐饮服务。

“但是在耶和华你的 神赐给你的地上，无论哪一座城里，在你中间如果有一个穷人，又是你的兄弟，你对这穷苦的兄弟不可硬着心肠，也不可袖手不理。”（申命记15: 7）

每一年， 神丰盛地供应三一堂，让我们在财政上得享盈余。当然，这也有赖于各个事工在花度上的慎重。自几年前还清翻新费用后，我们也得以“在仓库中储粮”。

目前，不少卫理公会的姐妹教会都面临着更新租约或被令搬迁的窘境。对此，三一年议会成立了一项基金，让各教会通过捐款来减缓这些受影响教会的经济负担。三一堂有幸坐拥999年的永久地契，因此我们将援助我们的姐妹教会。

在认献主日（2017年7月2日）来临之际，我们有必要提醒自己圣经中关于捐献予教会的教导：

“关于捐献给圣徒的事，从前我怎样吩咐加拉太的众教会，你们也要照着去行。2 每逢七日的第一日，你们各人要按着自己的收入抽一些出来留着，免得我来的时候才现凑。”（哥林多前书16:1-2）

你的认献出于敬拜或义务？

尽管我们可能将每年的认献视为是一种职责与义务，但我们更该把每周的奉献当作敬拜的一部分。使徒保罗嘱咐初代教会必须要培养每周奉献的习惯，如此一来我们便能学习将收入的一部分献与教会的事工。

给予教会或教会以外？

在以上的经文中，弟兄姐妹的奉献主要是给予“圣徒”，因为当时不少教会都需要援助。尽管我们可以慷慨解囊，捐献予不同事业，但圣经明确指示我们要捐献与教会的事工。

你认献得过多或太少？

在你认献后，是否曾怀疑自己给予得太少，或是太多？

我们大多熟悉圣经中的教导，即献上我们所拥有的十分之一。

每一年，教会都会遵守认献主日。会友们的认献允许教会领袖们拟定接下来一年的预算案；这些捐献的款项大多用于教会建筑的维修，以及人力资源的调度。假设教会中511名介于26-60岁的会友都能认献收入的百分之十，教会每年收悉的款项预计会增加\$240万*。然而，事实却并非如此。

然而，比起我们所收到的数额，上帝更看重的是我们捐献的态度。

还记得马可福音12：41-44中所记载的那位穷寡妇吗？论到这妇人，耶稣说：“我实在告诉你们，这穷寡妇投入库里的，比众人投的更多。因为他们都是把自己剩余的投入，这寡妇是自己不足，却把她一切所有的，就是全部养生的，都投进去了。”

妇人所给予的蒙上帝的悦纳。所以，今年当我们准备认献时，让我们反省上帝是否会喜悦我们的奉献。

你是甘心乐意或是心里作难地认献？

“各人要照着心里所决定的捐输，不要为难，不必勉强，因为捐得乐意的人，是神所喜爱的。”（哥林多后书9：7）

从现实的角度来看，即便是勉强的奉献，教会依然收益。然而，神却喜悦我们甘心乐意的给予。

甘心乐意地捐献——不论是我们的时间或金钱——都将建立我们的信心。相信你们在各自的属灵历程中都有过这样的经历。

这个认献主日，让我们：
带着一颗敬拜的心来奉献
参与神在三一堂的事工
力求在奉献中讨神喜悦
甘心乐意地奉献我们所有

认献主日将拟在7月2日。根据新加坡个人资料保护法令，认献卡将仅寄予三一堂会友以及在邮件列表中的朋友。倘若您需要认献卡，请到教会的主日询问柜台领取认献卡。

* 根据新加坡人力部人力研究统计处基于2016年年中工作人士平均月收入所做的劳动力调查，新加坡人的平均收入为每月\$4,056（包括公积金），抑或每年\$48,000。

Learning to Depend on Daddy God



Clara Fu

I came to know God through my parents when I was younger.

I am a second-generation Christian but I back-slided during my teenage years. Perhaps because I didn't have a close relationship with God. I merely followed my parents to church.

However, when I was 25, things changed and I felt God's prompting to seek Him.

My husband quit his local job and decided to explore opportunities overseas. I was left alone with the kids in Singapore. My uncle invited my parents to join them in church and my dad wanted me to go along. During this time of being alone, God comforted my heart with his love.

My husband did not do well in his foray overseas. I prayed and prayed asking: "God, what should I do?" I came across a verse in the bible where Jesus said: "Let not your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me." (John 14:1)

The turning point of my life came when I accepted Christ as my Saviour. Though my husband was not doing well, we managed to still have our basic needs such as food on the table and a shelter over my head. Moreover, God blessed me with a job and since then, I have been a top achiever in my company despite not having had any previous experience in the industry.

When your spouse is overseas and you are alone with two kids, it can be very tiring and lonely. However, I am constantly reminded that God loves me and this draws me closer to him. I rely on him for strength and courage. I want to be a role model for my kids. I take them to Sunday school, and I read to them stories from the bible every night before they turn in. They will even remind me: "Mummy, it's devotion time." I am also planning to send them to Royal Rangers so that they can soak in the Word of God and they will also be like me: learn to depend on him because without daddy God, I wouldn't be who I am now.

I can't say how thankful I am to God, now that I have accepted Christ into my life.



Clara and her family



Clara on the occasion of her baptism on Easter Sunday 17

The Tailor-Made Sermon



Skyna Low
刘淑玲

I was church-hopping until a friend invited me to TMC's Mandarin Service.

As my visits became more frequent, every time I worshipped God, tears would just well up in my eyes uncontrollably and without reason.

I started participating in the ministry of the church by selling coupons at a Christmas event held at Serangoon North (The Star of Christmas, 2013).

At that time, I was under considerable stress as I had started work in a new industry. Challenges also presented themselves on the family front. To top it off, my two beloved dogs had passed away in the same year, six months apart from each other. At one stage, I was crying so much. Thinking that I might be suffering from depression, I spoke to friends and sought God to calm my mind.

That same Christmas, I was introduced to Alice Ng, who guided me and, often times, lent a listening ear to the stress and challenges I faced. I obtained a lot of comfort through her prayers.

In 2015, Alice invited me to an evangelistic event during which the preacher spoke about "Anger". I felt that that sermon was tailor-made for me – it was a clear message that God sent me. I knew that my quick-tempered self had to change. I was touched by the Lord, and I accepted Jesus that day.

Everything happens for a reason – God's reason – and by His arrangement.

It is now time for me to be baptised – to learn more about the Christian faith, and to follow the path that God has set before me.



Alice and Skyna

那量身订制的讲章

有一段时间，我不断地从一个教会“跳槽”到另一个教会。直到有一位友人邀请我参加卫理公会三一堂的华语崇拜。

随着我到访教会的次数愈来愈频密，我发现每一次敬拜神时，泪水总会情不自禁地盈满眼眶。

2013年，我帮忙售卖实龙岗北圣诞嘉年华的固本；这是我首次参加这个教会的事工。

当时，恰逢我刚转行，全新的工作环境令我面临着巨大的压力。家中的大小事也毫不叫人省心。更糟糕的是，我心爱的两条狗在半年内相继逝世。我一度因为悲恸流体，开始怀疑自己是否患上了抑郁症。于是，我开始寻求朋友，乃至神的慰藉与帮助。

同年圣诞节，我结识了Alice Ng姐妹。她总是默默地在一旁聆听我痛苦的倾诉，并耐心地引导我。借着她的祷告，我在重重的压力与困难中得享安慰。

2015年，Alice姐妹邀请我出席一个布道会。会上，牧者谈及“愤怒”的课题。我当下觉得那是一篇为我量身订制的讲章。我清楚地知道神要我改掉我那暴躁的性格。我深深地被神触动，并在那一天接受了救主耶稣。



Skyna on the occasion of her baptism on Easter Sunday 17

复活节的洗礼仪式

任何事情的发生都有一个特定的理由——神的理由——并是按照祂的旨意与安排。

现在，是时候我应该接受洗礼——在基督教的信仰上不断长进，遵循神定意要我行走的道路。

IN AND A B

GB & BB ENROLMENT SERVICE



ABOUT TMC

EASTER SERVICE & BAPTISM



GOOD FRIDAY



RECEPTION OF NEW MEMBERS



THE TEN COMMANDMENTS:

Who God is, is Who We Are (Part II)



Kwa Kiem Kiok

Previously, I wrote that when we worship Yahweh God, we must want to become more like him (Saltshaker, Mar 17 edition).

His holiness is one main characteristic which we want to emulate; and that holiness is seen especially in the Ten Commandments (Ex 20:1-17). God is holy and wants his people to be holy; and that holiness is seen in worshipping no other gods, not profaning the name of the Lord and by observing the Sabbath.


The Ten Commandments are often seen negatively as a list of “thou shalt nots” for indeed that is their format. When viewed merely as a list of prohibitions, we get the impression that God is a spoilsport who puts restrictions in our lives. Unfortunately such a view can also blind us to the quality and character of God who is behind these commands, and why he has instituted them in the first place. The last 6 commands can sound like God has randomly chosen some matters that he would make an issue of. Not so. These Commandments show us something of God’s character, and therefore what we, his followers, should be and do as well.

God is the one who creates human life, so all human life is sacred. As the Psalmist says, he is the one who “knit us in our mother’s womb” and so we are “fearfully and wonderfully made” (Ps 139:13-14). Human life is sacred; it is God who gives life, and so murder, that is taking someone’s life, is wrong. **All** human life is sacred – the elderly and infirm who may not give economic value, the child with special needs, and the foreign worker who comes to build our homes.

Christians value the institution of marriage. The Christian view of marriage is a man and woman who leave their parents and cleave to each other and so form a new family unit. We uphold this institution by being truthful and faithful in our marriages. God also describes his relationship with his people as a marriage: “I will betroth you to me forever; I will betroth you in righteousness and justice, in love and compassion. I will betroth you in faithfulness, and you will acknowledge the Lord” (Hosea 2:19). So God shows faithfulness in his relationship with his people, and expects us his people to do likewise.

God commands his people to keep the Sabbath. At creation in Gen 2:2 God already set that pattern for us when he enjoyed his work and blessed the seventh day and made it holy. God continued to honour the Sabbath by providing a double portion of manna for the Israelites before the Sabbath so that they did not have to go out to collect it on the Sabbath day (Ex 16:22-23). And so when we rest on the Sabbath we reflect God’s character as well as show our trust in his grace and provision for all of life.

Christians are not individuals living in splendid isolation but people who live in community. And in community we must respect our neighbours – their lives (you shall not murder), their property (you shall not steal) and their names (you shall not bear false testimony). All these are recognised as fundamental in our relations with each other.



The tenth Commandment – you shall not covet your neighbour’s house, wife, servant or animal or anything that belongs to your neighbour – extends this responsibility that we have with regard to our neighbours. While the other commandments command us not to do something – murder or steal or give false testimony – this tenth commandment deals with our internal attitude. We also need to deal with these motivations such as envy which can lead to theft and murder. This answer is given clearly by Jesus Christ in the New Testament.

When Jesus was asked which was the greatest commandment, his reply was simple and unequivocal, to love God and to love your neighbour as yourself (see Mk 10.28ff.). He does **not** mean that we first love God and **then** love our neighbour; but rather when we love God, we love our neighbour; and when we love our neighbour, we love God.


This God has revealed something of himself to us in these Ten Commandments and we worship and honour and love him by loving our neighbours.

EX OD US

The sermon series on Exodus started on 5 Feb, and will continue until 30 Jul.

Kiem is one of TMC’s local preachers and a lecturer in Inter-Cultural Studies at the East Asia School of Theology.

Details – including the sermon schedule, discussion questions and additional resources –available at www.tmc.org.sg/pulpit.html and the TMC app.



Musings for Mullings

Monday Musings is a column on the TMC phone app. It carries reflections from various contributors on the previous Sunday's sermon. We bring you a selection of these Monday Musings, not for your amusement, but for your own mulling.

If you wish to contribute a Monday Musing,
please contact Ang Hern Shung
/ hernshung@tmc.org.sg

The God Who Keeps His Promises (Ex 2:23-25)

5 feb 2017



Timothy Yong

Pastor Alvin delivered a poignant message on how worry and anxiety fade away in our understanding of a God that fulfills his promises.

The book of Exodus describes how God, in the fulfillment of his promises, delivers his people out of:

1. Physical Bondage - the deliverance of God's chosen people from physical oppression in Egypt into the promised land.

2. Spiritual Darkness - as God displays His sovereignty, this leads His people to trust in Him and place their faith in Him.

3. Alienation from God - through the nurturing of a relationship between

God and His people as they commune with him and live in accordance to His will.

God's desire for His people has not changed from the time of the Israelites to the present day.

He desires that His people nurture a relationship with him so as to receive His guidance and wisdom, and so that they might walk in His light in the obedience of faith.

God desires His people to understand that they have been freed from eternal bondage to sin and death through the loving sacrifice of His Son, Jesus Christ. His people can receive an outpouring of joy from this realisation, and love others through gospel and ministry so that the latter too might be free of their physical bondage.

I am challenged to seek God above all things and

desire him, His wisdom and His ways first and foremost. I can commit time each day to reading and studying His Word more so that I might know more of His nature, and dedicate more time to prayer, allowing Him to speak to me.

As I read His Word and pray, I hope to grow in my joy of communing with Him and that I will learn to love others in the exact same way that He has loved me, by pointing others to Him.

WALK OUT THE WORD

What are some promises of God we can lean on during seasons of struggle?

How is God speaking to us through the circumstances we are going through?

How can we learn to find purpose in our pain, and joy in our suffering?

The God Who Calls (Exodus 3:1-9)

12 feb 2017



Ang Hern Shung

Pastor Timothy spoke about the biblical concept of "calling" that goes deeper than any one aspect of life, such as work or vocation.

Even before God calls anyone to a particular task or to fulfill a specific role, God first calls us to become united with Him in all aspects of life. The calling to follow Christ lies at the root of every other calling. It is from this fundamental call that God calls us to participate in

His redemptive work in the world through the jobs that we do.

There is no fixed way that God chooses to call us. God will call each of us in ways that are unique to who we are.

The burning bush is a

The God Who Calls (Exodus 3:1-9)

Continued...

parable about the flesh and the Spirit. Rather than to allow our own strength to be the fuel for the fire, we are challenged to let the oil of the Holy Spirit be the fuel.

Two things spoke to me in this message: Firstly, before “CALLING” has anything to do with “DOING”, it has everything to do with BEING with Jesus and KNOWING Him.

Our response to God in walking out our calling has to be birthed out of our relationship with, and our revelation of, Jesus Christ.

Secondly, Moses was tending sheep, and going about the daily business of his life when he encountered the burning bush and

heard God’s call. Exodus 3:3 says: “And Moses said, “I will turn aside to see this great sight, why the bush is not burned.”

The words “turn aside” jump out at me. Had Moses chosen to continue his routine of tending sheep, instead of turning aside, he would not have encountered the bush nor would he have experienced this extraordinary moment and heard God’s call.

“Perhaps we don’t hear God’s call, because we aren’t turning aside to see what the Lord is doing,” preached Pastor Tim.

It got me thinking that in the same way God used an ordinary object such as a bush to speak to Moses, perhaps God also uses the ordinary objects in our daily lives to speak to us. A most ordinary object could lead us to an extraordinary encounter with God when He puts His divine hand on it.

But we need to learn to stop, “turn aside” and seek what God is doing and saying.

Ruth Haley Barton said: “Many of us are choosing to live lives that do not set us up to pay attention, to notice those places where God is at work and to ask ourselves what these things mean.”

God may be trying to speak through ordinary objects and experiences. Let us tune our heart and spiritual eyes and ears to see as well as hear what He may be trying to say to us.

May we learn to live our lives in such a way that we can begin to see the “burning bushes” in the hustle and bustle of our daily lives; and to learn to “turn aside”, take off our shoes and pay attention to what God may be trying to say and what He may be calling us to do.

WALK OUT THE WORD

What practical steps will you take to condition your “ears” and heart to turn aside and hear God’s call for you?

The God Who is 'I Am' (Exodus 3:10-24)

19 feb 2017

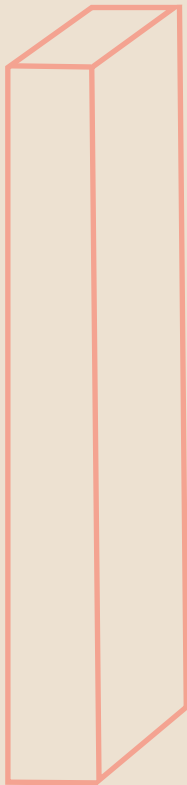


Tan Kim Lam

WALK OUT THE WORD

When faced with a difficult situation at work/home/school, what can you draw from God's response - "I will be with you"?

When God is silent, how can you draw strength from God's response - "I am who I am"?



Moses asked God:

"Who am I to ask Pharaoh to let the Israelites leave Egypt?"

"Who should I say when asked about your name?"

A common but difficult question posed to Christians is: "What happens when God is silent?"

In Pastor Alvin's sermon, he encouraged us to trust in God completely even though we may not fully understand his ways.

The sermon reminded me of my recent visit to a homebound TMC member, Auntie L, who was bedridden due to a stroke and had also experienced many challenges on the family front. She was active in church and loved to sing when she was well.

During our visit, we sang her favourite song "Jesus Loves Me". She could still remember most of the lyrics, although she struggled to follow along.

Auntie L was very emotional while singing. Tears welled up in her eyes. I asked myself: Why do such bad things happen to such a good person? Are those tears due to the pain of the battle between the mind and the body? Or are those tears of joy that God has brought into her heart?

I was moved to believe that it was the latter.

This is because our God is one that neither leaves us nor forsakes us. And God especially will not leave us in times of illness (Deut 31:6). We are not able to explain fully why bad things happen but we can draw strength that God is always with us, and that He is God and we are not.



The God Who is Able (Exodus 4:1-17)

26 feb 2017



Ang Hern Shung

From Exodus 4, I learnt that:

1. GOD CHOOSES TO USE IMPERFECT PEOPLE TO DEMONSTRATE HIS POWER

I take comfort in the knowledge that my weaknesses, failures and even my past doesn't faze God or disqualify me from being used by Him. As Pastor Tim pointed out two weeks ago, perhaps our weaknesses are just as important an ingredient in God's call to us.

I'm reminded of God's promise in 2 Cor 12:9: "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness."

The Message paraphrases the verse this way: "My strength comes into its own in your weakness. I quit focusing on the handicap and begin appreciating the gift. It is a case of Christ's strength moving in on my weakness."

It's a human tendency to want to focus on our handicaps, our weaknesses and our problems. I myself have been guilty of that many times. But I like how God reminds us in Exodus 4 of who He is and what He is able to do - start focusing and fixing our eyes on Him. I'm reminded to shift my perspective from my problems, and towards His promise of provision and protection.

In the words of the well-known and beautiful hymn:

"Turn your eyes upon Jesus
Look full in His wonderful face
And the things of earth will grow strangely dim
In the light of His glory and grace."

2. "WHAT'S IN YOUR HAND?"

The significance of the staff was the other thing that stood out from Exodus 4.

The staff was an ordinary thing in Moses' life - a symbol of his occupation as a shepherd. But mixed with God's power and Moses' obedience, God used this ordinary item for His extraordinary purpose.

But the key to this is our obedience.

All across the Bible, I'm reminded of how God moves in our obedience. Great acts of God are preceded by our simple acts of obedience. I see it in Elijah on Mt Carmel, in Joshua at Jericho, in Gideon at Midian. I'm reminded that perhaps our next step of obedience could be the thing that is standing between us and our next level of spiritual maturity.

At the same time, I remember author and pastor, Francis Chan, once saying: "Be careful, because once we hear God and His Word and do nothing in response, then the next time we hear it, it'll get easier and easier and easier to not do anything. And pretty soon, we'll develop the habit where God and His word no longer demand a practical response from us."

I'm reminded to start considering what God has placed in my hands and in my life right now that He desires to use - my "staff" that I can lay down to Him.

And how even today, I can learn to walk in obedience in submitting to Him my "staff" to use for His glory.

God is indeed able to take the menial and the mundane and use it for the miraculous!

In the March 17 issue of the Saltshaker, we read about how some members of our congregation used what was in their

hands to fulfill what was in God's heart and displayed God's power to save.

For one of them, her "staff" was a love for Zumba and an instructor's licence to teach Zumba; for another, his "staff" was his passion for cycling.

Other members came up to me after Pastor Tim's sermon to tell me: "My mobile phone is my 'staff'" or "my cooking is my 'staff'" or "my workplace is my 'staff'".

I love that God has given us all different and unique "staffs".

And that He can take those ordinary "staffs" and use them to perhaps play a role in someone's salvation story.

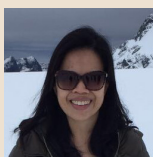
I think my "staff" could be my love for cooking and hosting gatherings. I'm challenged to consider how I could use this to perhaps help increase the warmth and welcome of TMC, by maybe inviting some new members and friends over for a meal and to experience Christian community.

WALK OUT THE WORD

What do you think your "staff" could be, and how do you think God can use it for His glory and purposes?

The God Who is Sovereign (Exodus 4:18-31)

5 mar 2017



Amanda Yong

What does it mean to be sovereign over someone or something?

The common understanding of the term is that of having complete control and influence. According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, a sovereign is an "acknowledged leader", while the Oxford Living Dictionary states that to be sovereign is "to have supreme authority".

From Pastor Alvin's sermon, God reminded me that He is all-powerful and in supreme control of our lives, our situations and everything in the entire universe.

And He assured me that because He is all-knowing and all-powerful, He knows what He is doing.

But God also revealed to me, through the sermon, that His sovereignty is not defined solely by power or dominion.

Instead, His sovereignty is far deeper and more multi-dimensional than our earthly understanding of what it means to be sovereign.

I learned that our sovereign God expects us to be holy just as He is holy.

Moses was dearly loved by God, and had been chosen and empowered by God to perform miracles, and to lead the Israelites out of Egypt. But he angered God deeply when he failed to circumcise his sons.

Like Moses, we can be serving God sincerely, doing His work with great purpose and power, and yet disobeying Him knowingly.

I also learned that God exercises his control and power not simply because He can, but also because He loves us.

The God Who is Sovereign (Exodus 4:18-31)

Continued...

WALK OUT THE WORD

As Pastor Alvin said: "God's love determines how He uses His power." God seeks first of all to be in a loving Father-child relationship with us.

God's love for us drives His use of power. He does what He knows is best for us, out of His love for us.

How has God demonstrated His love in my life recently? How have I experienced God's love?

Am I obeying the Lord in all areas of my life? What have I refused to let go of?

The God Who Delivers (Exodus 5-6)

12 mar 2017



Ronnie Tan

These thoughts ran through my mind after the sermon on God's promise to the Israelites to deliver them from their Egyptian oppressors.

When we have accepted or committed to God's direction or task, should we expect that everything that follows be running smoothly, without any challenges or issues?

The experiences of Abraham (Gen 15:2-8), Joseph (Gen 37:27), and the Apostle Paul (2 Cor 11:26-27) were difficult. The Apostle Peter (1 Pet 4:12) said that we should not be surprised when we experience ordeals in our life.

God wants us to have a close relationship with Him (Ex 6:2), and the challenges that we encounter provide opportunities for us to learn to trust God and to provide a way out.

God will deliver us and provide a way out of our life challenges

"The way out...
The way out of bondage;
The way out of spiritual darkness;
The way out of alienation from God"
(John Oswalt)

The sermon touched on one of my constant challenges - the need to have control over things in general.

A prayer I frequently pray before I face each new day or attend meetings is that God will grace me with a smooth day or session, that all things will turn out right.

I pray:
"His steadfast love never ceases;
His mercies never come to an end;
They are new every morning;
Great is your faithfulness."
(Lamentations 3:22-23)

The reality is that some days are actually more challenging than others and I often wonder why.

Taking pointers from the sermon, it struck me that the good news is that with every challenge and trial, God wants me to "be still and know that He is God" (Ps 46:10), to get to know Him and trust in Him.

Looking back over the years (don't ask how many...) of experiencing the hard knocks of life in general, I must confess that God HAS delivered me from every single tough situation that I have encountered (and even in many other situations that I may not have realised or noticed).

In some situations, deliverance came more quickly and less painfully especially when I trusted in Him (that is, when I didn't struggle with Him for control ... and

I confess it is very hard to not want control).

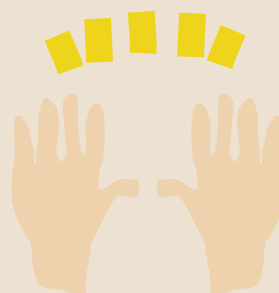
Each time I give control to Him and trust His plans for me and accept that He is the great I AM, things appear to be not as bad as they seem and often turn out better than I can ever hope for. I am still working on it – "let it go...let it go".

WALK OUT THE WORD

Do I totally trust in God and the plans that He has for me ?

Am I willing, to surrender all my daily worries and my cares to God?

Will I give complete control to God in all things that I do?



The God Who is Powerful (Exodus 7-10:29)

19 mar 2017

Written by Anon

Our beloved brother in Christ, Jacob, has come back from his ministry and mission in Cambodia and has blessed us not only with teaching of the written word of God's sovereignty, but also through his own personal testimony - his own Christian walk in his youth and his ministry in Cambodia where the spiritual battle between good and evil is an ongoing struggle.

The sermon was an amazing reminder of God's sovereign power in this world:

1. God is sovereign and He is greater and more powerful than all things in this world.

2. The forces of spiritual darkness do exist and are present in the world and

afflict many in places where the Lord does not reside.

3. Understanding God's sovereignty, we must learn to trust in Him instead of our own abilities.

In one of Jacob's testimonies, he spoke of his days of youth, when he and his friend sought talismans for their power. However these talismans never made him or his friend change for the better.

Reliance on anything else other than God is a form of idolatry, and idolatry is transactional but not transformational. When we lean on God's goodness and his sufficiency, we not only gain the strength to bear or even overcome the world, we also transform more into the one we love - Christ.

The God Who is Powerful *(Exodus 7-10:29)* Continued...

Another testimony was of how people in Cambodia have been freed from spiritual bondage through the power of God. Jacob recounted the story of one woman who was afflicted by an evil spirit that harassed her in her sleep and how God freed her from spiritual bondage.

Jacob highlighted the importance of not only good works in ministry (education, feeding the poor, alleviating the physical troubles of people), but also the need for God's deliverance through prayer and the Word.

We can feed the poor, counsel the troubled and heal the sick, but without the gospel and without God, darkness remains.

WALK OUT THE WORD

Are there things in my life
that are my idols?

If my God is powerful,
why am I not transformed?

Have I truly let myself be open to
experience the power of God?

Do I trust in his ability to provide for me
and to guide me or have I relied too often
on my own ability and devices?



The God Who Saves (Exodus 11-13:6)

26 mar 2017

Written by Anon

The Old Testament God and the New Testament God are one and the same - consistent in righteousness, abounding in grace and mercy and a keeper of all His promises.

When I was a younger Christian I would look at the New Testament Christ and see His compassion, His great love and His gentleness, and it would amaze me.

Then I would flip to the Old Testament and be a little upset that there seemed to be this massive difference between what seemed to be the God of grace and love, and the Hebrew God of judgment and wrath.

It seemed to me then that the God of righteousness whose judgment brings death, seemed so vastly different from the God of love who comes with grace and salvation.

To be able to say, at that point of time, that the Old and New Testament Gods were one and the same seemed to me a complex set of intellectual gymnastics. Moreover, it did not help that many whom I approached had no answer for this, or even if they did have an answer, they themselves seemed to have great doubts about it.

No doubt this is a difficult topic to tackle. But as I muse, I pray that the Spirit leads me to write clearly.

The God Who Saves (Exodus 11-13:6)

Continued...

How wonderful for us to know that this God of ours, in his love and mercy to us, provided grace in the form of Christ who has freed us from the heavy burden of the law.

We are unable to stand by our own righteousness for it only shows us clearly how much distance lies between us and God because of the crushing weight of our unrighteousness.

But Christ has paid the price for us and made us righteous, that we who believe in Him may draw close.

So what use is the Old Testament since grace has been fully received by us through Christ?

We need the Old Testament to understand fully what Christ has done for us:

1. God's righteousness is so great that any sin leads to death. He is so pure that any small speck of unrighteousness is utterly destroyed. No man with the exception of Jesus can stand before God blameless.

Without the death of Christ, we are reduced to fleeing from the presence of God in fear for our lives.

Without the price paid for us, we are unable to draw

close to God in fear of His judgment.

2. The law through which God conveys his desire for His people to know his righteousness is a heavy burden that no man can fulfill on his own.

Without Christ, we are no better than the rest of the world. The law condemns us for our sinfulness. Without Christ, the yoke of the law still weighs heavy on our shoulders.

3. God's righteousness is not without His compassion, for compassion is as much a part of righteousness as judgment. God provides the avenues to address both the burden of the law and the consequence of death, so that God and His chosen people might co-exist.

But His plan was always to not only allow his people (all of his creation stemming from Adam) and Him to coexist, but that we might all have a personal relationship with him.

Without Christ we would only know of God from a distance. Our understanding of God would only be of His word and of His law.

But through Christ, we have Him, and we have Him abundantly. Instead of

knowledge, we have a relationship. Instead of distance, we have intimacy.

The Old Testament shows us clearly and painfully the wrath and judgment Christ bore for us in a manner befitting of God's holy ways.

How much sweeter to know of the grace and compassion offered to us, knowing the judgment and wrath we rightfully deserve! How much sadder we are to know that our Christ bore the entirety of this terrible judgment and wrath for us because He loved us.

Our salvation is a bittersweet thing, undeserved and offered to us on pierced hands and a broken heart.

WALK OUT THE WORD

How does this revelation of God's saving grace change the way we live each day?

The God Who Consecrates (Exodus 13:1-22)

2 Apr 17

Written by Anon

Pastor Tim's refreshing and comforting teaching touched on the importance of dedicating our lives to Christ especially as we approach Lent.

His three main points were:

1. As a consecrated people, the Israelites were set apart by God through their deliverance from slavery and oppression in Egypt. In the same way, we have been set apart for God through the blood of Christ. Everything we have belongs to Christ.
2. The world and our own inner desires will constantly try to pull us away from this knowledge of consecration. The world constantly tells us that the things we own, the titles we have and the people in our lives are the result of our efforts and are ours to keep - that we are our own masters.
3. God helps us in our spiritual journey with him by bringing about feasts, fasts and festivals to remind us of this consecration. The motions of communion, Lent observance, celebrating Good Friday and adopting a posture of repentance and self-denial are spiritual rhythms that remind us and make real to us again our deliverance from sin and death through Christ. In addition, our God is a wonderfully personal God and in our spiritual journeys with him, he brings about events in our lives to shake us up, to build us and to refine us. And ultimately, to draw us closer into his presence and his will.

God has spoken wonderfully to me and journeyed gently with me over the past year.

My walk with him is not without its ups

or downs. Many a time, where I find myself lacking the strength to bear my struggles, His grace provides. Many a time, where my comfort and His great blessings drive me to foolishly think of self-sufficiency and self-determination, quick is His discipline and refining fire.

I thank God that not one moment goes by where I do not see His will for me in my life and His great and immense love for me that I am able to say:

There is no place greater, more amazing, and more loving than to be in the presence of God.

But there is also no place more awe-inspiring, terrifying, and humbling, than to stand in that same presence.

My wish for you and myself is this: that although spiritual rhythms are vitally important in our walks, we should seek spiritual rhythms not as an end but as a means to bringing us closer to our true beloved God that we were made to know intimately.

WALK OUT THE WORD

The world pulls me away from my God. It wants me to deny my Christ and it tells me: "You can bring about your own salvation and purpose through your works, your titles, status and possessions." Do I know what it means to be consecrated to God? Have I consecrated my life, my possessions, my future, even my hopes and dreams to God?

Do I desire his guidance on engaging in spiritual rhythms in my life so that I might draw closer to him? Is there anything in my life preventing me from engaging in such spiritual rhythms?

EVENTS

Sat 3 Jun and every Sat (not 17 Jun, 12 Aug)

3.00pm Youth Ave Sport Activity
www.facebook.com/YouthAvenue123

Sat 3, 17 Jun, 1, 15 Jul, 5, 1 Aug

10.00am Youth Ave Leaders Captains' Development

Tues 6 Jun

11.00am Youth Ave Cooking Class

Fri 9, 16, 23 Jun

3.00pm Youth Ave Nerf Game

Tues 13 Jun

1.00pm Youth Ave Prawning

Fri 16 Jun – Mon 19 Jun

Church Camp
 Hotel Novotel Melaka

Tues 20 Jun – Wed 21 Jun

Youth Ave Leaders' Camp

Sat 24 Jun

3.00pm Youth Ave Parents' & Teachers' Meeting

Sun 2 Jul

WSCS Food Sale

Sun 2 Jul – 3 Sept

1.00pm-3.30pm Alpha
www.tmc.org.sg/alpha.html

Sun 9, 16, 23, 30 Jul

1.00pm-4.30pm Emotionally Healthy Spirituality Workshop

Fri 21 Jul – Sat 22 Jul

Children's Ministry retreat
www.tmc.org.sg/cm.html

Sun 23 Jul

Girls' Brigade Food Sales and Annual Fund Raising

Sat 29 Jul

1.00pm Youth Ave YLCD Pizza Party

Sat 12 Aug

7.00pm Youth Ave Dinner at Serangoon CC

Sun 20 Aug

WSCS Food Sale

Every Sun

9.30am Mandarin Service Prayer Meeting

Every 2nd Sun

After the 11.15 am service Young Adults' Lunch Fellowship

Last Sun of the month

9.00am 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 Wed

8.00pm Church Prayer Meeting
www.tmc.org.sg/prayer.html

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

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

8.00 – 10.00pm Healing Ministry at the Prayer Chapel

Every Sat

9.00 – 11.30am Fellowship of Ukulelians
www.tmc.org.sg/regular.html#ukulele

Every 1st Sat

4.30pm Youth Ministry - Worship, Word and Community
www.facebook.com/TMCYouthMin/

Monthly

WSCS Visitation to Homebound. Those interested to bring the church into the homes of the homebound, please contact Lucy Chan at 9678 4046. Group leaves TMC at 10am.

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