

May 2023



**Canning Garden Methodist Church**

# **FAMILY FOCUS**

**GROWING DEEPER IN CHRIST,  
IMPACTING &  
TRANSFORMING LIVES !**

He is not here; for He is risen, as He said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay. And go quickly and tell His disciples that He is risen from the dead, and indeed He is going before you into Galilee; there you will see Him. Behold, I have told you."

Matthew 28:6-7

A colorful cartoon illustration of an underwater scene. A large wooden treasure chest is open, spilling gold coins and pearls onto the sandy ocean floor. A large anchor is also on the floor. In the background, there are green seaweed-like plants and a blue fish. The title 'DIVE DEEP' is written in large, bold, red letters with a white outline. Below it, the text 'Join us for an exciting adventure under the sea!' is written in a smaller, red, cursive font.

**DIVE DEEP**  
Join us for an exciting adventure under the sea!

**CGMC KIDS VBS \* 31 Aug - 2 Sept \* 7.30am - 12.45pm**  
Kids ages: 6 -12 \* Early Bird Registration Fee: RM60 After 18 JUNE: M70  
Online Registration: <https://.gle/dhJkXa9uaqzTNT4y7>  
Contact Mimi 0135219850 / Mui Yew 0124362248 / Priscilla 0125230176

A dark, moody photograph of a crowd of people with their hands raised in the air, suggesting a worship service. The background is a deep blue with some light bokeh effects.

**Together Again!**

**WORSHIP IN-PERSON | LIVESTREAM**  
SATURDAYS 8:00 pm | SUNDAYS 8:45 am  
BULLETIN HAS THE LINK TO REGISTER ATTENDANCE

# MESSAGE from the Editor...

Shalom brothers and sisters in Christ,

I'm particularly drawn to highlight this year's Mother's day celebration. Unlike our usual CG celebration with flowers and cake cutting, this year was rather unique. We had a special "ladies night out" in a nice cozy restaurant with delicious food. Oh, how wonderful it is to be able to talk, laugh and mingle around without interference! And what about the kids and all??? Well, let the men handle it! Truly Mother's Day!

It was all well planned and prepared by our beloved CG leader's wife Samantha, only to be informed about her predicament on the day itself, that she tested positive. After 2 years of experience, Covid ain't going to stop us celebrating together. She prepared herself a nice meal at home and joined us during dinner virtually. Talk about living out Hebrews 10:25, she certainly did not give up meeting together. I am encouraged, and I hope you are too.



# CANNING GARDEN

## Methodist Church

### Worship Celebrations

#### SATURDAY

08:00pm English

#### SUNDAY

08:45am English

09:00am Chinese

10:30am Bahasa Malaysia

Sunday School (*English*)

Sunday School (*Chinese*)

03:00pm Youth Fellowship (*English*)

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## About Family Focus...

Family Focus is published 3 times a year (in January, May & September) under the Membership & Evangelism (M&E) Committee of CGMC, Ipoh.

It seeks to fulfill the church's theme of "Growing deeper in Christ, Impacting and transforming lives" by sharing Christ with each other and strengthening the community of Christ through writings and testimonies.

### THE EDITORIAL TEAM

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We welcome you to submit your articles & testimonies to us for the coming issues.

Each article should preferably be less than 1500 words and can be submitted to any of the editorial team members above, to the church office or emailed to [cgmcpoh@gmail.com](mailto:cgmcpoh@gmail.com).

All articles should be accompanied by the author's full name, contact number and cell group where applicable.

We reserve the right to edit the articles, keep the articles for subsequent issues, or withhold the articles from publication.

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# MESSAGE from Rev. Dr. Andrew Tan

## WHO IS JESUS?

The question “Who is Jesus?” sounds disarmingly simple, and those who have been in church donkey years may think they have the answer. Jesus is of course the Christ, the Son of God, and the Lord, and that is correct. But still, do we really know who Jesus is? If we really know who Jesus is, we ought to get out of our boat and walk on water and get excited about what He wants to do in His Church! Conversely, if we don’t find ourselves getting out of the boat walking on water or getting excited about serving the Lord in and through his Church, we need to ask ourselves, “Do I really know who Jesus is?”



**REV. DR. ANDREW TAN**

Pastor-in-charge  
Canning Garden Methodist Church

## THE GOSPELS PRESENT JESUS AS THE MESSIAH

All the four Gospels affirm that Jesus is the Messiah (Christ). In the Synoptic Gospels. Matthew, Mark and Luke all highlight Simon Peter’s declaration: “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” (Matt. 16:16; Mark 8:29; Luke 9:20 ). Not only does Peter’s affirmation that Jesus is the Messiah mark an important turning point in the Gospels of Matthew and Mark, but the opening words of both Gospels introduce Jesus as the Christ (Matt. 1:1; Mark 1:1). In his conclusion, John summarizes his reason for writing his account of Jesus’ life, he says: “... these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name” (John 20:30-31).

Michael F. Bird in 'Jesus Is the Christ: The Messianic Testimony of the Gospels' (IVP Academic, 2013). writes that the throughout the four Gospels, the writers constantly present Jesus as the Messiah:

True, Jesus did not go around flying a banner saying, “Look, I’m the Messiah.” But if you proclaim the kingdom of God, declare that the day of national restoration is dawning, compare yourself to David and Solomon, perform what various people considered to be signs of messianic deliverance, enter Jerusalem on a donkey with people shouting “Hosanna to the Son of David,” and end up on trial on a messianic charge and mocked in death as a Jewish king, well, you don’t need a PhD in rabbinic literature to see what was going on here. (pp9–10)

## JESUS IS THE MESSIAH AND THE SON OF GOD

But the Gospels declare that Jesus is more than just the Messiah; He is the divine, Son of God. Matthew 1:23 identifies Jesus as “Emmanuel ... God with us.” Mark 2:1–12 demonstrate Jesus forgiving sins, and Matt. 14:22-32 Jesus calming the storm. These are two examples where Jesus’s actions demonstrate how he did what God alone could do. More directly, Luke 1:35 identifies Jesus as “Son of God” because he was conceived by the Holy Spirit instead of by a human father. Then, at the end of Matthew’s Gospel, the Son is identified with the Father and the Holy Spirit in the baptismal formula of Matthew 28:19.

But the passage that connects Jesus as the Messiah (Son of David) and the Son of God is best found in his debate with the Pharisees in Matthew 22:41-45. Jesus went on the offensive and threw the Pharisees a question: “What do you think about the Christ? Whose son is he?” (v42a). Jesus’ intention is to make the point that the Messiah is both David’s son and God’s Son who is the LORD.

It seemed like a simple question to the Pharisees, who answered the question promptly, “The son of David.” There was nothing unexpected or unorthodox about their answer. The messianic expectation was that the Christ would come from the line of David.

But Jesus pressed them further to test the depth of their understanding of the true identity of the Messiah from the OT prophecies: “How is it then that David, speaking by the Spirit, calls him 'Lord'? For he says, <sup>44</sup> 'The Lord said to my Lord: "Sit at my right hand until I put your enemies under your feet.'" <sup>45</sup> If then David calls him 'Lord,' how can he be his son?” (vv43-45).

The question Jesus was pursuing is this: “Is the Messiah merely a man? Is He merely the son of David?” He pursued this point by quoting Ps. 110:1 which reads: “The LORD says to my Lord: ‘Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet.’” In this Psalm, there appears to be two contradictions. First, how is it that David calls his son “Lord”? What father and king would call his son “Lord”? Second, how can David’s descendant be put in a special relationship with the LORD (Yahweh)? He is seated at the highest position of privilege and authority at the LORD’s right hand. And the LORD will subject all his enemies to him.

The point Jesus made is that the Messiah is more than what the Pharisees had understood the “*son of David*” to be. He is more than a human descendant of David. Since the Pharisees did not adequately understand the OT prophecies regarding the Messiah, they could not possibly understand Jesus’ identity. They did not understand the depth of the personal identity of the Messiah in relationship to the LORD, so they could not understand the relationship of Jesus to the LORD.

The Jews generally did not believe that the Messiah would be divine, but here Jesus challenged that thinking. He showed them that as David called Messiah “son” and “Lord,” so Messiah is indeed his human descendant, but Messiah also has a divine relationship to the LORD. The answer was that Jesus is David’s son as well as David’s Lord! David’s son as man, David’s Lord as God – that was the only answer to the question.

## **BELIEVING JESUS AS THE MESSIAH AND THE SON OF GOD**

For many Christians today, believing Jesus to be the Messiah and the Son of God is just all up in the head. It is just academic and does not seem to make a difference to our lives. But while I was preparing to preach on the passages of Matthew 14:22-33 and 16:13-20, I felt challenged by these two passages in practical ways.

The first passage, Matthew 14:22-33, is about Jesus walking on water. When the disciples saw Jesus walking on water they were terrified thinking that they were seeing a ghost. But Jesus assured them, “Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid” (v27). The expression “It is I,” is literally “I, I Am.” It is translated from the Greek “ego eimi.” This expression alludes to the voice of Yahweh, the LORD, from the burning bush who declared Himself as the I Am. Jesus claimed to be the Lord God of Israel!

When Peter heard the voice of Jesus, he shouted back, “Lord, if it's you tell me to come to you on the water” (v28). Peter calling Jesus “Lord” meant a lot more than other occasions when the disciples used it as a title of respect. Here Jesus was walking on water in the middle of a furious storm. Surely, Jesus was someone more than Peter had ever known. And if Jesus was “the Lord” and not a “ghost,” Peter didn’t need to fear. With his focused faith on Jesus’ true identity, he realized that Jesus could enable him to come to Him on the water. So, he called on Jesus to make him walk on water! In reply, Jesus commanded him, “Come.” Peter obeyed by getting out of the boat and miraculously walked toward Jesus on the water.

The point I am making is that when Peter saw Jesus as the divine Lord, (and in a short moment all the disciples would confess him to be “the Son of God”), he was enabled to get out of the boat and walked on the water. Similarly, our confession of Jesus as the Son of God and the divine Lord should enable us to do the same. Is Jesus’ divinity so real to us that we will get out of our comfort zone and walk on the water to risk doing something new? Does Jesus amaze us so much that we fall down at His feet and worship Him? Conversely, if we don’t see ourselves doing all these, do we really know who Jesus is?

The second passage, Matthew 16:13-20, is about Peter’s confession that Jesus is the Christ. Against the backdrop of the influential religious leaders who had denounced Jesus as the Messiah and swayed many common people towards them, Jesus took his disciples to Caesarea Philippi and asked them who they thought him to be. Peter stepped forward as the spokesperson for the others: “You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God” (v16). This was the first time the title “Christ” was addressed to Jesus directly. But most importantly, here the disciples were publicly and directly and personally confessing Jesus. “I say, you are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”

What is interesting to note is that upon the disciples’ confession that Jesus was the Christ, Jesus immediately response was to tie this confession to the building of his Church. Jesus would build his Church upon their confession that He was the Messiah, the King who had come to set up his kingdom. The point I am making here is that if we confess Jesus to be the Messiah, the King who has come to set up his kingdom, should we not be excited about expanding his kingdom by doing kingdom work in and through his Church? On the contrary, if we give our last priority or our left-over energy to serve in his Church, does our confession that Jesus is the Messiah count for much? We see quite a number of Christians who don’t even want to belong to or care anything much about his Church!! Do we really know who Jesus is?

So who is Jesus according to you?

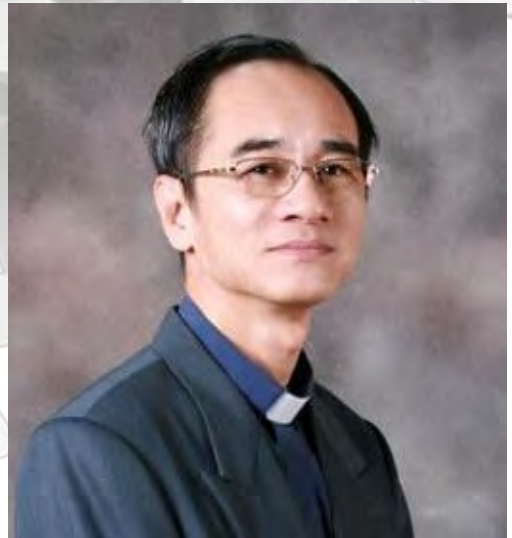




# MESSAGE from Rev. Yu Chiew Song

你们要休息，要知道我是神！我必在外邦中被尊崇，在遍地上也被尊崇。

【诗46:10】



REV. YU CHIEW SONG  
Associate Pastor  
Canning Garden Methodist

2023春天 转眼已过  
鸡啼鸟鸣 阳光照耀  
如常早起 享受早餐  
再来一杯 香浓苦涩的咖啡  
倍感生机 准备展开充满活力的服侍

突然之间 眼前天旋地转，眼睛无法争开  
闭上眼睛 陷入天昏地暗，仿佛日月无光

这已是在怡保第三次的晕眩，幸好不是第三次不认主  
可怕晕眩 晕头转向 难以站稳 什么都不能做  
深感无助 担忧恐慌 不知所措 身边无人扶持  
只好躺下 赶紧拨电 通知一声 期待有人救援  
最后教会弟兄夫妇  
从屋主手中拿钥匙  
前来协助终于获救

其实近来 心力交瘁 精疲力竭 疲惫不堪  
忙惯了却不觉得累,然而身体提醒自己的年龄  
忙惯使人变得盲目,就好像晕眩一样迷失方向  
忙惯会使人心亡了,就有如失去初衷丧失动力

晕眩意识到人需要休息的重要性  
需要调整生活作息保持身心健康  
必须要退一退学习放下繁琐  
寻找内心的平静和人生方向  
以致更好面对生活中的挑战

休息为了走更长远的路,  
宁静才能认清前面的路.  
有了身体健康才能实现理想  
以免违背那从天空来的异象.

亚基帕王阿、我故此没有违背那从天空来的异象。徒26:19

尤秋松牧师 共勉之 16/4/2023

后记:于8/2/2023家中晕眩倒下有感.



# MESSAGE from Rev. Richard Leow

Saya ingin kongsiikan salah satu berkat yang saya terima dari Methodist Church of Malaysia Pastor School di Port Dickson Methodist Centre pada 11-14 April 2023.

Pemulihan Luka Peribadi dari petikan Firman Tuhan di Lukas 6:27-36.

Tiga kebenaran diulang sebanyak tiga kali dalam Lukas 6:27-36:-

1. **Mengasihi** orang lain.
2. **Perbuat baik** terhadap orang lain.
3. **Memberi** kepada orang lain.

Ianya juga perbuat kebenaran tersebut kepada orang yang tidak baik kepada kita. Harus perbuat demikian terhadap kepada mereka kerana kita adalah anak-anak Tuhan. Walaupun kita juga penuh dengan luka tapi Tuhan tetap mahu kita tetap melakukan. Kasihi musuh, kasihi org berdosa, yang tidak mengasihi kita. Tuhan mahu kita jadi lain daripada yang lain. Ini adalah perintah Tuhan. Bertindak buat sesuatu yang baik kepada mereka. Kerana Tuhan kata mengasihi musuh kita.

Ajakan dari Yesus untuk capai kepada mereka: berkati mereka yang kutuk kamu. Berdoa untnk orang yang mendera kita. Erti berkati disini : berkata baik mengenai orang itu, puji orang itu. Seperti Raja Daud terhadap Raja saul. 1 Petrus 3:9. Kalau kita melakukannya, kita akan mendapat pahala.

Ajakan ke dua : berdoa bagi mereka. Doa mendatangkan kasih. Tapi halangan kasih ialah mengampuni. Roma 5:5. Ada orang berdoa, ampuni saya kerana saya tidak dapat mengampuni, tapi sekira teruskan berdoa, doa buka pintu untuk kita mengampuni. Kita harus terus menerus mengampuni untnk kebebasan kehidupan. Kerana orang yang luka kita itu akan kawal dalam fikiran, hati dan hidup kita. Mengampuni mereka kita akan bebas dari kawalan itu.

Tampar pipi mu, bagi yang sebelah lagi. Mana keadilannya? Tuhan ialah keadilan. Seperti Yusuf dlm Perjanjian Lama. Keadilan adalah milik Tuhan. Tindakan kita pula haruslah perbuatan baik terhadap mereka. Tuhan akan mengadili dan menghakimi, ini mengingatkan kita jangan tidak adil terhadap yang lain. Kuasa Tuhan juga mampu mengubah semua yang buruk kepada kita untuk diubah menjadikan baik bagi kita. Sekiranya tampar pipi itu bagaikan orang rebut kemuliaan kita, sebelah pipi lagi itu bagaikan kita bagi dia kemuliaan lagi. Yesus mampu memberi kita kasih untuk mengasihi kita dan untuk orang lain dari kita mengasihi org itu.



REV. RICHARD LEOW  
Associate Pastor  
Canning Garden Methodist  
Church

Selanjutnya ialah Tuhan mahu kita terlibat dengan orang yang tidak dapat memberi balik kepada kita apa-apa kerana mereka amat miskin. Adalah Perintah dari Tuhan. Sekiranya kita ingin dapat balasan, Yesus kata kita akan dapat hadiah, seperti dalam Lukas 6:38.

Kita tidak boleh kata kita tidak mahu terlibat lagi dengan orang yang melukai kita, kerana Tuhan tidak demikian kepada kita yang sangat banyak melukai Tuhan. Lihat kisah Yusuf dan Esau. Esau mengampuni Yusuf. Muka Esau bagaikan muka Tuhan. Tuhan bekerja dalam jiwa Esau yang dilukai oleh Yusuf.

Jangan takut kegagalan. Kerana Tuhan bekerja didalam keberanian tindakan kita: **Mengasihi** orang lain. **Perbuat baik** terhadap orang lain. **Memberi** kepada orang lain.

Demikian kita akan dipulihkan dari semua luka-luka peribadi kita. Amin. Penyampaian ajaran dari Lukas 6:27-36 ini adalah oleh Asiri Fernando Ajith.

# HOLY WEEK 2023 AT CGMC

~ Philip Ho

We began with a special Palm Sunday weekend. Our main Shekinah Sanctuary had been refurbished as our 30 year old air conditioner and ceiling boards needed replacing, and this was done over a 6 week period from mid-February to the end of March.

We had also been sending out invitations to church members who had been attending online services for the past 2 years to return to attending in person worship services.

Praise the Lord we had a good turn out of 437 people worshipping in person for the ***Palm Sunday weekend*** and the children came to wave Palm Leaves during worship too, together with our flaggers. Pastor Andrew preached from Matt 16:13-28 on ***“The Messiah must suffer and be killed”***.

During the Holy Week itself, we had ***morning reflections from Monday to Friday at KMH*** at 6:30-7:15 am. Zoom was also made available. After the sharing by a PCT member, we were given time to meditate and reflect and then we gathered in groups of 2-3 people to share and pray together.

On Monday Leonard shared from Luke 23:32-34 and emphasised how Jesus said ***“Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing”***. He also contrasted the two thieves who were crucified with Jesus and how they responded to Jesus differently. It is never too late to acknowledge Jesus as Lord, as long as we still have breath.

On Tuesday Lai Yin shared from John 19:25-27 on ***The God who sees***. She mentioned how Jesus showed care and concern for his mother Mary and entrusted her to John, the disciple he loved.

On Wednesday Pastor Andrew shared from Mark 15:1-39 on ***The Centurion***. He highlighted the centurion who executed people on a daily basis and who had been with Jesus from the time of the trial to his death on the cross. He was able to observe how Jesus reacted and faced death and his conclusion when Jesus died was that he was truly the son of God.



Antonio Wee Photography

On Thursday Philip shared from John 19:28-34. He drew our attention to the fact that even though Jesus had the power to step down from the cross but he stayed there out of obedience to God the Father and because he wanted to complete his mission to die on the cross for our sins. At the end he said ***“It is finished”*** to signify that the penalty for our sins had been replayed, the believers in Christ had been redeemed, and we have been reconciled with God.

On Friday Alan shared from Luke 23:44-46. When Jesus died on the cross, the ***curtain of the temple was torn*** signifying that we have bold access to the throne of grace through faith in Jesus, who is our High Priest.

We were also blessed to have Bishop Jeyakumar to come and preach at our Maundy Thursday and Good Friday night services. Both services were well attended and during the Good Friday service we even had to use plastic chairs as the pews were fully utilised.

Bishop Jeya preached on ***“The Mighty Cross”*** (1 Cor 1:17-31) on Maundy Thursday. God uses the apparent weakness of the cross to demonstrate His power. Jews demanded miracles and Greeks rely on human wisdom but the cross is the stumbling block for them. We too must not place our faith in Jesus only when God performs the miracles we want Him to do.

Bishop Jeya then continued with ***“The Victorious Cross”*** (Colossians 2:6-15) on Friday where we were reminded that we have everything we need in Christ. We were also reminded that we are either progressing in our spiritual walk or we are backsliding. We cannot be stagnant Christians. Many people stayed back to be prayed for after the service.

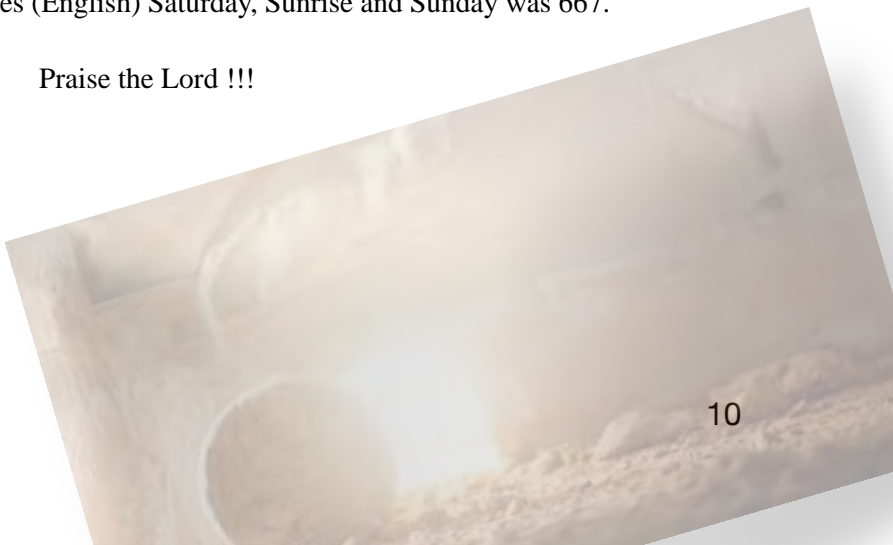
On Holy Saturday we had a ***half day of prayer*** in KMH from 7 am to 5 pm where members could drop in to pray for whatever duration they wished to. Then at the 8 pm service Pastor Andrew preached from Matthew 17:1-8 on the Glory of Jesus. We were taught about the implications of the transfiguration and how the Glory of Jesus will give us Hope, will change our world view, and will motivate us to listen to Him. We also had baptism and transfer of membership into CGMC.

On Sunday morning we had Sunrise service in the concourse. Pastor Andrew preached from Matthew 28:1-10 on the ***“Four Markers for Easter Proclamation”***.

Later on Easter morning our lay leader Dr Gill preached from John 11:25-27, 20;11-16 on ***“How Great is our God”***. He touched on God’s creation of life, the great “I Am”, and Jesus, the people around Him and the events around His death and resurrection. We were reminded to celebrate Jesus Daily, to be devoted to Jesus, and to share Jesus by the power of the Holy Spirit. We also were blessed by the Youth choir who sang beautiful renditions of “Bless the Lord O my soul”, “How Great is our God” and “How great thou Art”

Our total attendees for Easter weekend services (English) Saturday, Sunrise and Sunday was 667.

Praise the Lord !!!



# Palm Sunday

1 APRIL 2023

WELCOMING JESUS INTO OUR HEARTS AND  
REAFFIRMING OUR WILLINGNESS TO FOLLOW HIM

## FLAGGERS *Welcome*



JOO LEE & AMY



### USHERS

WAI PING, TERESA,  
KAR LENG, VALENTINA

CGMC Family Focus



Jesus' Disciples Must Die To  
Self In Order To Find New Life

REV DR ANDREW TAN



### HOLY COMMUNION

DR S S GILL, REV TAN



### MUSICIANS

BACK: JOSHUA, MELVIN, JUSTIN  
FRONT: RACHEL, NICOLE



### WORSHIP TEAM

SONYA, WERN SZE, KEN-WYE, MIKE



### FLAGGERS & KIDS

Dancing to "Hosanna in the Highest", "Holy Forever" and "How Great is Our God"

Amy, Irene, Joo Lee  
Emma, Jayden, Joel, Josiah, Caleb, Hannah,  
Helen (Joy not in picture)



### ROUSING COMEBACK!

437 came back in person for  
Palm Sunday weekend services,  
including members who last  
attended before the pandemic!

Photos by Antonio Wee & Yew Mun Khean

8 Apr 2023

# Holy Saturday & Baptismal Covenant Service



Type to enter text

MYF Choir led by Wern Sze Gill: How Great Is Our God



## The Glory of Jesus

**Rev Dr Andrew Tan**

The glory of Jesus will give us hope, change our worldview, and motivate us to obey God.



**Child Baptisms:**  
Abigail Cheng, Jonathan Cheng  
**Received into membership:**  
Oh Saw Pheng, Susan  
Lim Lay Ying, Michelle

MEMBERSHIP

Photos by Antonio Wee

9 Apr 2023

# Easter Service



MYF Choir led by Wern Sze Gill: Bless the Lord, Oh My Soul



## How Great Is Our God

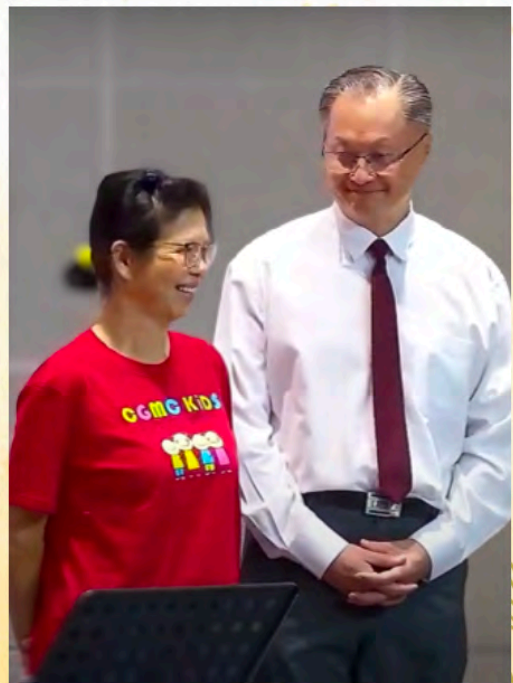
**Dr S S Gill**

Christ is Risen!

- Live life victoriously
- Be devoted to Jesus
- Share Jesus

**INTRODUCTION**  
**ASSISTANT PASTOR**

**Pastor Dr Cheah Sene Kar** and his wife Mee Li, are both actively involved in the church. Dr Cheah also holds the position of Cell Group Coordinator and serves as a Zone Leader.



# Pastor Andrew and Anna Celebrate their 40th Wedding Anniversary

~ Wern Sze



**Greeting guests with fist pumps as the handsome couple walk down the aisle**



**Daughter Caryn and husband Andrew, with their sons, Micah and Jeremy travel back from the US to join in the celebration**



**Son David and wife Debbie who are no strangers to CGMC, join in the procession**

Rev. Andrew Tan and his beloved wife Anna celebrated 40 years of marital bliss recently with a wedding anniversary service attended by more than 300 family members and guests on 11 December 2022 at CGMC Ipoh.

The celebrations started at 3.30pm with a joyous service led by Rev. Timothy Ong who guided the couple in their renewal of vows, followed by a heartfelt message given by Rev. Hwa Jen. Speeches and a cake-cutting ceremony followed thereafter, and guests were later treated to a sumptuous tea hosted by the happy couple.

Together with their children David and Caryn, and their spouses and grandchildren, they testified of God's faithfulness and goodness in their marriage and family life. It is evident that the presence of God has always been in the centre of their marriage, and their devotion to God and to each other is a true inspiration to all who know them.

Congratulations once again to our beloved Pastor Andrew and sister Anna! May God continue to bless your marriage and your children and grandchildren with love, peace and happiness!



**Debbie and Andrew join the CGMC music team in leading workshop and giving glory to God**



**Anniversary cake**



**Grandson Micah does a splendid job reading the scripture flawlessly; kudos to mom Caryn for excellent coaching**



**Rev Timothy Ong leading the couple in their renewal of vows, this spoken with 40 times more affection and devotion !**



**The happy couple giving the inside scoop of their early days during courtship and ministry**



**A picture with the whole family after the cutting of the beautiful anniversary cake**



**Rev. Hwa Jen shares the message at the happy occasion**



**Officially 40 years married !!!**



Family picture at the photo booth



With friends and family from near and far



Reception photo table



**Reception table**



**Guest enjoying the tea reception at the concourse**

# Betong roadtrip

~ Dr Chang CK & Page

Rebecca: "Hi I'm back in Ipoh, to do my scheduled medical check-up".  
 CSK : "Oh, when did you get back"  
 Rebecca : "Oh, I drove back yesterday".  
 CSK : ".....alone?...".

So, when it was time for her to return, we followed Aunty Rebecca back to Betong Learning Centre (BLC) on Wednesday, 26<sup>th</sup> April 2023. We, being Wan Ching, Kevin, Joy, Rita and Peter (Kevin's parent), David Seow, Page and I.

The drive to Betong, Thailand and immigration procedures are relatively painless, provided you bring along your valid passport, car registration card, car insurance (can get on-line) and of course are the driver of your own car. The whole journey, door to door (well kinda) took approximately 3 hours.



Aunty Rebecca works closely with the Betong Christian Church and upon hearing of her return, with her entourage, Pastor Weerachai and his wife Pastor Niam very kindly insisted on hosting us for dinner. We were treated to a sumptuous authentic Thai dinner at the church premises and had a nice chat talking to and for some of us, catching up with old friends.



We excused ourselves soon after as we had scheduled a trip the next day to Aiyerweng Skywalk. So we went back to BLC washed up, turned in and set the alarm for -----4am!

Trust me, you have to if you want to catch the sunrise. We travelled by tuk-tuk for about an hour and we were rewarded with views that only God could have painted.



After our return to BLC and breakfast, it was time to visit the Lahu Church and the Hmong Church. We went to visit the kids who were part of Happy Kids. We first visited the Lahu Church and saw their new church building. Wan Ching and Page were the gang leaders, while the rest assisted. And very soon, the children were engaged in games and origami.

The Lahu Church extended their hospitality and Benjama, the helper and translator had us stay for a very Lahu lunch. Delicious! Most of the kids in Lahu goes to the Chinese School but don't speak the language well. So they need a Happy Kids Chinese teacher to help them.



Then it was off to the Hmong Church where we had a lovely chat with Palin, Happy Kids teacher in Jantar and Jaruk Susu villages among the Hmong Community and her husband Keng who is the Chairman of the Hmong Church in Jantar. Wan Ching and Page brought out their "weapons" and had the children engaged in no time, whilst the adults chatted!



We had a short time of fellowship, prayer and sharing at the end of the day. We each took turns sharing our experiences of the day. We then prayed for Auntie Rebecca and the ministry, her partners in Betong, the Happy Kids workers and for the kids in the villages.

During our conversation, Auntie Rebecca mentioned that April 2023 marked the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Betong Learning Centre, and so we decided to hold a small Anniversary Lunch party on Friday 28<sup>th</sup> April 2023, hosting the various people Auntie Rebecca has been partnering throughout the 10 years.

And so - To Arms!

Chief Chefs - Rita and Rebecca,

Sous Chef - Peter,

Assistant market procurer - Wan Ching,

Head porters - Kevin and Chang,

Chauffeur - Page,

Host/General aide - David.



At lunch, Aunty Rebecca shared her journey, experience and thanksgiving in the 10 years she has been at Betong. We had a lovely time of prayer and fellowship with Pr Weerachai, his wife Pr Niam and church worker Chalao from Betong Christian Church, Palin together with her husband Keng and Benjama, to name a few.



The Thai people are generally warm, friendly and hospitable. They welcomed us with open arms and warm hearts making us feel right at home. Aunty Rebecca is working hard at the BLC, but currently she is alone at the centre. She is looking for someone to work alongside her to continue this Ministry. She welcomes those who would like to experience and see what it is like to be in Ministry at the BLC. It is not something that can be fully explained in words but can be experienced working alongside her.

What else is of interest at Betong? Well, there is Thai food, fried ice-cream, goreng pisang, yu char koay, wanton mee, macadamia nuts, mini pineapples, red rice, black rice, marketplace to name a few. Want to know more? Do visit Aunty Rebecca at the BLC. Aunty Rebecca says she welcomes small groups of below 10 to stay in BLC for family retreat/kids ministry. Please inform her in advance.

May God continue to bless, protect and prosper Aunty Rebecca in this Ministry.

Shalom

Chang SK/Page Chang



## READING THE OT, focusing on the books of Kings & Chronicles

~ Paddy Teh

**I was secretly pleased to see my pre-teen grandson reading the books of Kings. He was relishing the palace intrigues: the battles, the bloodshed, the violence and the victories (a male thing?). It was a good start to read the Bible on his own. I pray though that with time and maturity, he will glean more lessons about God than military manoeuvres from the books of Kings.**

This is my prayer too – that with time and maturity, I will read the books of Kings and Chronicles with an insightful knowledge and understanding of God's character. More importantly, with that knowledge and understanding, come a deep and profound awareness of and dependence on God.

From my reading of Kings and Chronicles, I learn that God is

- a) a covenant-keeping covenantal God
- b) a jealous God and,
- c) an intergenerational God.

### A COVENANT-KEEPING COVENANTAL GOD

To me, “covenant” is an old-fashioned, sacred word and in my simple explanation of the word, I take it to mean an “agreement” or a “promise” between two people or parties.

God is a covenantal God because of His magnanimous love and grace. God's love is beyond human comprehension and description. All I know is because of God's boundless love, He wants a close relationship with us (I suspect He makes covenants with us to keep the link between us alive).

In the books of Kings and Chronicles, God initiated and established a covenant with David (called a unilateral covenant). He promised David that the southern kingdom of Judah would be only under a single Davidic dynasty.

God kept His promise (Ezekiel 12:28). God did not lie (Titus 1:2). His promise to David stood the test of time (some 400 years by rough calculation), accentuating His sovereignty, faithfulness and integrity. Even when Jehoram turned to evil ways and God was deeply grieved, He didn't allow David's household to be destroyed because He had “promised to maintain a lamp for him and his descendants **forever**” (2 Chronicles 21:7)

(For comparison and interest, check out the northern kingdom of Israel where God did not make such a covenant. Except for Jeroboam who passed the throne to his son, Nadab, the following kings were not linked by blood).

Remembering that a covenant is an agreement “between two people or parties”, God's people needed to honour their side of the agreement (Deut 7:9b). David honoured with his faithful obedience. Many of us have claimed God's promises in our lives but how many of us have willed ourselves to be intentionally obedient to Him. How resolute am I in keeping my side of the covenant? I ask these questions not to judge anyone but to check myself.

### A JEALOUS GOD

The word “jealous” conjures a triangular love scenario, and how one party is so determined to keep someone/something all to him/herself.

God is a jealous God because He treasures us as His people and always desires to have an intimate relationship with us. I like to use the expression “holy possessiveness” to describe God's jealousy. God loves His children greatly and does not want to lose us (to satan). He wants His children's absolute attentiveness, dedicated devotion and wholehearted worship of Him. He wants us to acknowledge and accept Him as the absolute authority and stable staple in our lives.

From the books of Kings and Chronicles, I learn that God abhorred idol worship and always wanted His people to harbour a “holy hatred” for it. Idols were attractive distractions that drew people away from God – made them forsake God’s Word (Rehoboam 2 Chronicles 12:1, 13) – lured them to carnal cravings (Abijah, 1 Kings 15:3).

The expression “did not do right in the eyes of God” was used to describe kings in Judah who strayed away from God (eg. Ahaz, Manasseh, Amos and Jehoaz).

Like many of you, I have been asked to identify the “idols” in my life. It is a useful exercise that can be more meaningful if we extend it to include three soul-searching steps of

- a) remembering how God was provoked to anger because of the Israelites' idol worship
- b) remembering how I had grieved God with my “idols” and,
- c) remembering why Jesus died for my sins.

Until and unless I know who my God is to me, what He has done for His people since Genesis, and what He has done for me, it will be very hard for me to work at eradicating my “idols” intentionally.

Josiah, in realising that Judah was spiralling away from God, purged the altars of idols and consecrated the nation to our Lord (2 Kings 22 & 23; 2 Chron 34 & 35). Hezekiah called the people to “return to the Lord”, “submit to the Lord”, “serve the Lord” (2 Chron 29 & 30)

What steps will I take to demolish my idols?

What steps will I take to make God the only God in my life? (Exodus 20:3-4; Mark 12:30)

## AN INTERGENERATIONAL GOD

The books of Kings and Chronicles confirm to me that our God is an intergenerational God.

David, a man after God's heart, felt strongly the sacred responsibility to pass on his faith to Solomon and his descendants (Read 1 Kings 2:2-4). This was because David, from young, was taught to acknowledge and revere God's sovereignty, and to have a rock-solid connection with God. David bared his heart and soul to God in times of trials and triumph. He trusted only God (otherwise how could he have challenged Goliath in the Name of the Almighty God?). In humility, David saw God as his shield, rock, deliverer, strength, refuge, hiding place. He held on tightly to the perfect and powerful Word of God.

God was a big “influence” in David's life and because he had tasted personally that the Lord is good, he bequeathed the most precious legacy to Solomon and his descendants. He passed on to the generations to come a loving and trustworthy God – a God who desires His people's reverential obedience.

The books of Kings and Chronicles made numerous references to “fathers”. David's descendants were recorded as doing right or evil in the eyes of the Lord according to what “their fathers had done.” These references strongly stress that fathers shouldered the God-given responsibilities of being the spiritual heads of their families (a timely reminder to dads to bequeath God and His Word to the next generation!)

This brings to mind my father-in-law passing on the spiritual legacy of a “family altar”.

My father-in-law took his role as the spiritual head of the Teh household seriously. He held a family altar in his home every Friday night, where family members gathered to sing hymns (in Hokkien), read the Bible, share and pray.

When I was younger, I didn't catch the significance of a family altar. I realise now that although it is a physical act of a family united in worshipping, reading the Word and praying, it has strong spiritual implications. The family altar is an important act to invite Jesus to be the LORD of our family and home. It is giving Jesus the honour of being the head of the Teh clan – a truly precious spiritual legacy to remind all of us that Jesus is Lord of our lives and we are to hold on to our faith.

I am glad to write that this spiritual baton is being handed down three generations after our patriach. When our children were young, we had family time every night before they went to bed. Today, I see this in my children's families. They have Devotion with their children before bedtime. I pray that my grandchildren will pass this spiritual inheritance to their children.

This is a godly legacy that we have been privileged to inherit. It is a timely and timeless “gift” from the patriach of the Teh clan. Like many in the family, my prayer is that in passing down a family altar, our God is the biggest “influencer” for many generations to come.

The books of Kings and Chronicles teach me that God is a covenant-keeping covenantal, jealous and intergenerational God. Undergirding these characteristics is God's unfailing love and immense grace to us. All He desires of us is our humble, steadfast obedience to Him.



# CL retreat 2023 (Teluk Bahang)

~ Dr Philip Ho



## *Revisiting cells with a Wesleyan perspective*

(by Bishop Emeritus Wee)

75 adults and children from CGMC journeyed to Bahang Bay Hotel for the Cell Leaders' Retreat on 29 April till 1st May.

The arrivals trickled in on Saturday afternoon as there was heavy traffic coming from Georgetown through Tanjung Bungah.

After dinner (which was a bit chaotic as the hotel did not seem to have enough staff to handle so many guests), we gathered and worshipped together and then we were introduced to the speaker, Bishop Emeritus Wee, who was Pastor Andrew's room mate in seminary over 40 years ago.

The teaching was divided into 4 sessions, each followed by group discussions in zones to discuss how we can apply what we have learnt.

### 1. How does your soul prosper?

There are many different types of groups and each type serves a different purpose. Ministry groups focus on service and ministry. Information groups focus on conveying information around a curriculum, like a bible study group. Affinity groups include people with common passions or hobbies.

***A cell group is a transformation driven group.*** The focus is on *stimulating life changes* and to *share experiences of God* in the life of the members. In order to achieve this aim, the group must engage in regular ***prayer*** over one another, receive ***words of exhortation*** (advice and reproof) as well as to ***watch over one another in love.***

Francis Asbury said that while bible study and exposition is important, the most profitable exercise in a cell group is an inquiry into the state of the heart. Therefore the class meetings were confined to christian experience with singing and prayer at the beginning and end of the meeting. This was the key element that led to revival.

Perhaps our church can expand on our accountability time to include more details on how God is speaking to our members, how God is working in their lives, and what struggles they are facing in putting their faith into daily practice. Then we can pray over one another with a more specific purpose.

## **2.The porch, The door, The kitchen.**

After a nights rest (unfortunately some people had noisy or stuffy aircons), the next session had a strange title. Bishop Wee explained that the *porch represented repentance*, the *door represented faith* and the *kitchen represented holiness*.

We must recognise that sin does not only refer to acts of sin but it includes sinfulness in our inner being. But the Christian experience does not end with repentance alone. Faith is needed to enter the door, by recognising that Christ has already done everything that needs to be done in order for us to be forgiven of our sins and reconciled with God. *We are meant to take on the image of God and to strive for holiness*. A true believer grows in faith and sanctification. We are to be dead to sin and alive in Christ.

Our aim is to find *Christian perfection*, where we use all our experiences to allow God to build us up, resulting in *inward holiness*. This will be manifested by a *right heart, right thinking, right words and right actions*.

A mature Christian needs to be able to *feed himself* by daily personal devotion, prayer and meditation.

## **3. Another look at the role of the cell leader.**

Revival depends on preachers as well as class leaders.

A class leader who is dull or inactive will result in a languid lifeless class.

A class leader who is *alive to God and faithful in his office* will have a class that is lively and spiritual.

A class leader must be able to *reprove with courage* though with *gentleness and love*.

A Christian must first fulfil the *Great commandment* to Love God and Love our neighbour, followed by the *Great empowerment by the Holy Spirit* before we can go out to fulfil the *Great Commission* to be Christ's witnesses.

A leader must have the *holiness of heart and life*.

A class leader was expected to meet with members once a week and *enquire how his soul prospers, to advise, reprove, comfort or exhort* and to make a report to the ministers and stewards of the society as to the progress of the members.





#### **4.Keys to life changing cells.**

Heb 10:24-25 in the KJV says to “*provoke*” one another to love and good works. A provocation should result in a *reaction* so that *change will result*.

Our aim is to see *transformation in the lives of our members*. For this to happen, *planning and organisation* prior to the meeting is a basic necessity. Members should know the structure of the meeting and what to expect.

We need to cultivate *self awareness*. This needs an honest evaluation of the spiritual health of the group as well as the individual members.

Groups need to be *hospitable* to new members and seekers.

Members must take *personal responsibility* for their faith and take an interest in *helping each other grow* in faith.

There must be a *desire and expectation* to be changed by *God’s grace*. Good intentions alone do not always result in good change. Many people need a nudge in the right direction as we often lack discipline to strive for holiness without the encouragement and exhortation of others.

Members must *make a commitment* to show up. Being a member of a cell group means being supportive of all the activities of the group. By doing so we give as well as receive and we grow in faith and holiness together. This needs commitment not only in terms of time, but also to open up, *to be vulnerable*, to *confess to one another* and to *encourage one another*. Only then can we *pray over one another* meaningfully and not superficially.

#### **Social activities**

We also had a lovely time of activities, and the bible charades was a hit. Standout performances included Wern Sze (prophet of Baal), Khai Kit (Abel murdered by Cain), Leonard (Adam’s rib taken to form Eve), Mun Khean (Cripple man), and many more.

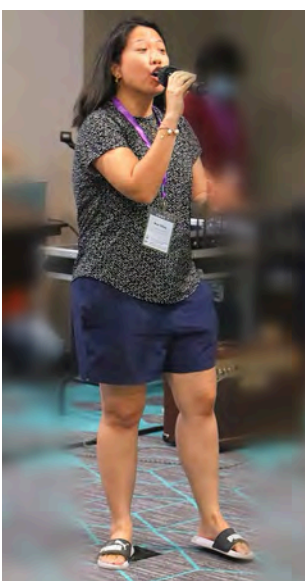
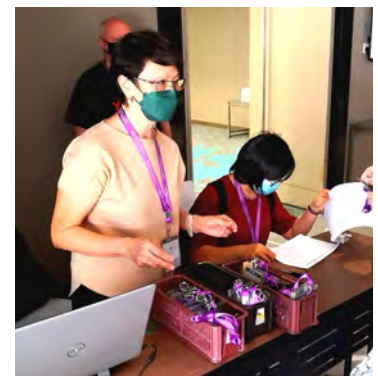
The children did not miss out as they were blindfolded and walked with instruction from their parents from one end of the hall to the other. We also had a tennis ball balancing walk and an activity that tested our memory of numbers as group members passed the value of Pi to 12 decimal places orally to the end of the line. Some of the answers were so far off.

During free and easy the pool was full of CGMC families, including our Pastor Andrew who was swimming laps back and forth.

We had a really good time interacting with one another during the games as well as over meal times.

#### **Conclusion.**

Hopefully all these lessons will sink in and find their way into our cell groups as we share the vision with our members and finally we all move towards *life transformation* within all our cell groups. Don’t be surprised when your CG leader asks “How does your soul prosper over this past one week”? Come prepared to answer honestly and openly and we shall all see revival within CGMC.



# The language of God

(By Francis Collins)

~ Dr Philip Ho

## The language of God

The author of this book is Francis Collins, PhD, MD, who is the head of the Human genome project which mapped out the entire DNA sequence of human beings.

In this book he describes how he went from an *Agnostic* (I don't know) to *Atheist* (There is no God) to a *Christian believer*.

While decoding the DNA sequence, he said that we are learning the language in which God created life. We are gaining more awe for the complexity, beauty and wonder of God's divine and sacred gift.

Often people think that they must make a choice between science and the bible, but both can be the truth. *Science's domain is to explore nature. God's domain is in the spiritual world*, a realm not possible to explore with the tools and language of science. It must be examined with the heart, mind and soul- and the mind must find ways to embrace both realms.

Science is a reliable way to understand the natural world and *how it exists*, but it is powerless to answer the questions of "*Why did the universe come into being?*" and *What is the meaning of human existence?*".

When Collins started treating patients (he was an atheist at that time) he was struck by terminally ill patients whose faith provided them with a strong reassurance of ultimate peace despite terrible suffering.

His journey of discovery brought him to the book "Mere Christianity" by CS Lewis and he was taken in by the *difference between humans and other creatures*. Humans have a *Moral Law* written in their conscience, which gives altruistic ability and a universal concept of right and wrong (though admittedly some choose to disobey these innate tendencies) unlike animals which only have self preservation as the goal.

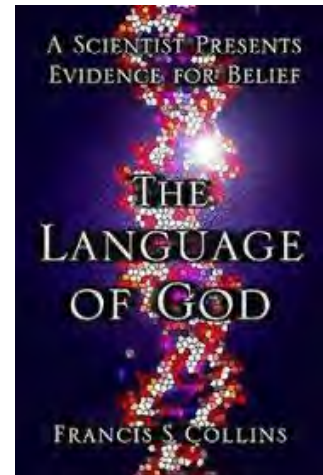
What about all the harm done in the name of religion? *Man is sinful* and many of the acts done in the name of religion are not condoned by God but are *acts done by misguided people* professing to be champions of the faith.

Why would a loving God allow suffering in the world? God has given *free will to humans* and as a result of free will the world in its fallen state bears the consequences of the sinful acts of man. Also God can work through adversity and we can experience spiritual growth through suffering.

Can a rational person believe in miracles?

A miracle is an event that appears inexplicable by the laws of nature and so is held to be supernatural in origin. One problem is when people claim miracle status for an everyday event for which natural explanations are readily at hand. This will reduce a person's belief when genuine miracles happen. *In order for the world to avoid descending into chaos, the natural laws are the expected norm, and miracles will be uncommon.*

If we conclude that there is a higher being (God) who made the laws of nature then it would stand to reason that God himself would be able to intervene when He sees a need. *Miracles should have a purpose*, on great occasions, at heart ganglions of spiritual history and not for individual benefit.



Scientists are constantly stumbling upon new discoveries about our infinitely vast universe, and the unimaginably minute subatomic particles that make up matter. The more we discover, the more complex our universe actually is and scientists marvel at how great the architect (God) is, because the probability of these happening by chance is so extremely low.

The **big bang theory** is that the universe began as an infinitely dense, dimensionless point of pure energy (singularity). The Genesis narrative describes the universe as empty and void and God created light by commanding it. Science also agrees that nature could not have created itself.

After the big bang, the universe expanded at a precise rate, which if at a greater or lesser rate by one in a million, stars and planets could not have been able to form. The existence of the universe as we know it rests upon a knife edge of improbability. The nuclear force seems to be finely tuned for carbon to form, which is critical for life forms on earth.

We either conclude that **our universe occurred by chance**-the exact combination of the speed of light, the strength of nuclear forces, the force of gravity and electromagnetism-(more than one in a million) **or that it reflects the actions of a creator** (God).

Science has managed, by measuring the decay and transformation of uranium into lead, potassium into argon, and strontium into rubidium, to estimate the age of our earth to be **4.5 billion years**. Only single cell organisms appear in sediments older than 550 million years. **Science is still unable to determine how the first living organism appeared**. From 550 million years fossil records show a sudden appearance of a great number of diverse aquatic invertebrates (the **Cambrian explosion**). About 400 million years ago plants appeared on dry land followed by land animals. Dinosaur fossils appeared 230 million years ago and suddenly went extinct 65 million years ago, possibly due to an **asteroid collision** with earth that caused their complete demise due to severe sudden climate changes and ash in the environment.

Homo sapiens appeared 195,000 years ago.

Darwin wrote “The origin of species” and “The Descent of Man”. He postulated that all living species are descended from a small set of common ancestors, by the process of natural selection. Variation within a species occurs randomly, and the survival or extinction of each organism depends on its ability to adapt to the environment. Darwin himself considered himself to be Agnostic at certain points in his life (he lost his religious beliefs upon the tragic death of his favourite daughter) and Theistic at other times. The concluding sentence of Origin of Species says “**There is grandeur in this view of life, with its several powers, having been originally breathed by the Creator.....**”

In 1944, it was shown that DNA transferred inherited characteristics and in 1953 the double helix structure with a series of chemical compounds was discovered.

As a scientist, Collins does not see these discoveries as contrary to his beliefs in God as the creator, but **increases his awe and marvel at God’s immensely intricate and complex creation** and how it becomes **even more improbable that all this can happen without God** as the master planner.

As a consequence of the human genome mapping, we found several interesting facts.

1. About 20,000 protein coding genes were present, almost the same as in a fish or a bird or even a worm! **Our complexity is not in the number of separate instruction packets but from the way they are utilized.**
2. At a DNA level, all of us **humans are 99.9% identical.**

From a creationist perspective, such similarities do not disprove a creator but could simply demonstrate that God used the same design principles over and over again, just as an architect may use the same template to build different buildings.

In past history, St Augustine (400 AD) commenting on the Genesis narrative says God is outside time and not bound by it (2 Peter 3:8). Regarding the duration of the seven days of creation, he says ***“What kind of days these were, it is extremely difficult, or perhaps impossible for us to conceive”***. We need to remember that Genesis is a poetic description rather than a scientific or literal historical account. ***Genesis answers “Who” and “Why” as compared to science which tries to explain the “How” and “What”***.

An example of how devout believers, using misguided literal interpretations of the bible to refute scientific discoveries happened in the 17th century. Galileo, using telescopes came to the conclusion that ***the earth revolved around the sun and not vice versa***. Some priests attacked him saying his findings were heretical, quoting Psalms 93:1 and Psalms 104:5. Galileo was tried and remained in house arrest for the remainder of his life even though he remained a believer to the end. In the 21st century we now know that our earth is but a planet in the solar system and that our solar system is but one of many in the universe. The Pope finally issued an apology 359 years later in 1992. Galileo had said “I do not feel obliged to believe that the same God who endowed us with sense, reason and intellect has intended for us to forgo their use”.

Present day atheist academics like Richard Dawkins proclaim that an acceptance of evolution in biology requires an acceptance of atheism in theology. Atheism played a minor role in human history until the 18th century when it began to flourish. Some people conclude that science by itself promoted atheism, but this cannot be true because there were prominent scientists like ***Sir Isaac Newton who was a firm believer in God, and wrote more works on the interpretation of the Bible than even his works on mathematics and physics***.

Atheism flourished during the French Revolution more as a result of the French Royal family and the church which was viewed as being harsh, self promoting, hypocritical and insensitive to the needs of the common man. Sigmund Freud, another atheist, wrote that belief in God is just wishful thinking. ***Dawkins’s definition of faith is “blind trust in the absence of evidence, even in the teeth of evidence”, which definitely does not describe the faith that many Christians have***. While rational argument can never conclusively prove the existence of God, serious thinkers from Augustine to Aquinas to CS Lewis have demonstrated that a belief in God is intensely plausible.

The term ***Agnostic*** came about in 1869 when Thomas Huxley, who considered himself as opposite from those who claimed to have special knowledge (gnosis). An agnostic, is one who would say that the knowledge of God’s existence simply cannot be achieved. To be well defended, agnosticism should be arrived at only after careful consideration for and against the existence of God and not a “cop out” option to appear open minded but not willing to make a concerted effort to discover the truth.

***“Creationist”*** implies the general perspective of one who argues for the existence of a God who was directly involved in the creation of the universe.

***Young earth creationism (YEC)*** refers to a group that believes in the literal reading of Genesis 1 & 2 to mean that God created the universe in ***six twenty four hour days***. Based on these assumptions, they believe the earth must be less than 10,000 years old and that all living creatures were individually created by God. They claim that carbon dating is flawed and that evolution is a lie. YEC advocates are serious about their faith in God and worried that modern science will displace a reverence for God in society. By attacking science, YEC widens the chasm between science and spiritual worldviews, which ***brings damage to the faith and to genuine seekers of God***. Children are faced with a choice to either believe in God or in Science as though they are not compatible with each other.

Certain portions of scripture (especially the New Testament) are written as ***eyewitness accounts of historical events*** and for a believer, these ought to be taken as the writer intended-as descriptions of observed facts. However, other parts of the bible (Genesis 1&2, Job, Song of Solomon, Psalms) have a more ***lyrical and allegorical flavour***, and do not carry the marks of pure historical narrative. St Augustine considered the Genesis creation narrative had more the feel of a morality play than an eyewitness report. When we read the bible we must read the scripture according to the category of writing it was intended to be.

**Intelligent Design** theory started in 1991 by Phillip Johnson, a Christian lawyer from University of California in Berkeley. It has 3 propositions.

1. Evolution promotes an atheistic worldview and therefore must be resisted by believers of God.
2. Evolution is fundamentally flawed, since it cannot account for the intricate complexity of nature.
3. If evolution cannot explain the irreducible complexity, then there must be an intelligent designer involved somehow.

Intelligent Design remains a fringe activity with little credibility within the mainstream scientific community. The sincerity of the proponents of ID can hardly be questioned—they are devout believers but it is a “God of gaps” theory with insufficient scientific basis.—inserting the need for supernatural intervention in places that science cannot explain yet. Unfortunately as science advances, some of these gaps have been proven to be natural, and this can do damage to the faith of people who hinge their beliefs on these gaps alone.

**Theistic evolution** is the dominant position of serious biologists who are also serious believers. They believe that **God, who is not limited in space and time, created the universe out of nothingness**. Despite massive improbabilities, the properties of the universe were precisely tuned for life because of the **Creator God who is the designer**. God also created the natural laws which allowed the process of evolution and natural selection to provide the diverse flora and fauna that we observe. **Humans are unique** in ways that defy evolutionary explanation and point to **our spiritual nature** and the **moral law** within us. In the fullness of time, God created humans with a new kind of consciousness (God breathed life into Adam) which knew God, which could make judgments of truth, beauty and goodness. A society called **BioLogos** advocates the Theistic evolution worldview.

In his journey to discover a personal faith, Collins grappled with questions about God. Now that he has come to the conclusion that we have a creator, what is God’s character? God must be **holy and righteous**, since the Moral Law calls us in that direction. But we become more aware of the widening gap between our imperfect nature (sin) and God’s perfection. **We humans cannot by ourselves reach God**. We need a bridge between our sinful selves and a holy God. This is salvation by grace. God, seeing our predicament, came to us in the form of His son, Jesus. Jesus, fully human and fully God, is the only way whereby our sins can be cancelled and we can be reconciled with God. Prayer is not, as some seem to suggest, an opportunity to manipulate God into doing what you want Him to do for you. Prayer is our way of seeking fellowship with God, learning about Him, to align our will with His, and this is possible through the merits and death of Jesus on the cross for us.

The 4 gospels were written within the lifetime of the eyewitnesses and details about Jesus’ life and teachings are clearly recorded. Also the most important event, Jesus’ death on the cross and His subsequent resurrection and appearance to numerous people who not only testified to what they saw and experienced but were willing to give up their lives to pursue the new purpose they discovered when they put their trust in the resurrected Jesus. **You and I can only find redemption if God does it for us and God did it by becoming man, Jesus, with a mission to save us from our sinful nature**. The mystery of how God could become human and how Jesus resurrected to life after death cannot be explained by science as it is a miracle which only God could perform.

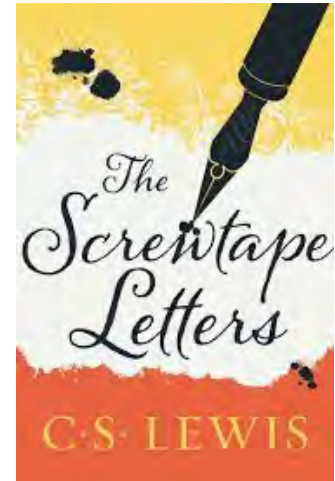
**Each person must carry out his or her own search for spiritual truth**. If we seek God sincerely He will reveal the truth to us, but the implications of the presence of God and our eternal destiny are so important that **we cannot leave it as an unanswered question in our lives, or to procrastinate to make a decision** on what we believe and what direction our lives will take. Collins does not try to convince you of his beliefs, he simply shares his own stands which he has arrived at after his own journey of seeking the truth and invites the reader to embark on a journey to discover God by examining the scriptures and taking a step of faith.

# The screwtape letters

(By C.S. Lewis)

~ Dr Philip Ho

This is a classic book which I have read in the past but did not really understand, so I shall attempt to read it again. It is written in an unusual fashion, as a series of letters written from a senior devil (Screwtape) to an apprentice devil (Wormwood) on how to trick and tempt the new Christian whom he has been assigned to stumble. The way to read this book is to see the pitfalls the evil one can use to draw us away from a strong faith and relationship in the Lord. It is extremely difficult to summarise this book so what I have done is to **write down my own thoughts** on what lessons I have learnt from reading this truly unusual book.



1. Do not fall into the trap of thinking that the bible is outdated, irrelevant, or out of touch with real life in the modern world. Christianity has stood the test of time because it is based on the **word of God which is everlasting**, and believers enjoy a **living relationship with God**. Christianity allows believers to **search, question and think**, and does not require believers to be blind puppets.

2. Do not go to church and judge the other members of the congregation by their appearance, mannerisms or what you perceive of them. We are cautioned by Jesus not to judge others (Matt7:1). **Do not allow yourself to feel "holier than thou"** based on whatever acts of piety we have done. Remember that we are all **sinners saved by grace alone**.

3. Learn to be tolerant of the people in your own home. **Speak kindly without being sarcastic or harsh**. The people at home spend the most time with you and you are exposed to their habits day in and day out, and vice versa. It is so easy to get irritated and annoyed. We need to cultivate the fruit of the spirit in our lives to be **patient and kind** starting with our own household.

4. Prayer is not a **repetition of words from memory** without meaning and contemplation. Prayer is to be **directed to God** and not on trying to achieve a certain feeling. Do not allow our minds to wander from God while we pray. Prayer is **aligning my thoughts to God's will** and not trying to ask God to fulfil my requests.

5. We need to have an eternal perspective in life. **This life is only temporary** and we must use our limited time wisely to **prepare for eternity**. Even during the second world war (this book was started in 1941), amidst war atrocities, many people found a personal faith in God because trials and tribulations awaken us from our comfortable slumber when times are good and we are caught up in the moment of enjoying our material wealth and comforts.

6. We must not allow ourselves to be **crippled by fear and anxiety** of things which could happen to us or our loved ones but to **trust that God** has a plan for us in His infinite wisdom.

7. We should not attribute everything bad that happens around us to spirits (it is sometimes as a result of natural laws of the fallen world) but we should not deny that they exist either. The bible is clear that **our battle is not with flesh and blood** (Ephesians 6:12) but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.

8. Believers can expect to go through **mountaintop and valley experiences** in their lives. It is a journey of faith that almost all Christians go through. It is important to recognize this and not know that if we persevere in our faith journey, these times of trials will make us stronger and God does not **test us beyond our abilities** (1 Cor 10:13) and will provide a way out so that we can endure it. We are obedient to God despite having free will, as a result of God's work within us.

9. During trough periods be careful not to succumb to previous habits or temptations to drink excessive alcohol, have immoral sexual relations, bad tempers, lashing out at others, or to question the genuineness of our conversion experience. Have an **accountability partner or group** that you can rely on for intercession and encouragement when you are down. (James 5:16). A Christian must belong to the **body of Christ** which is the church.

10. Do not live a double life. We cannot be **Christians on Sunday** and while attending cell groups and become a secular person with **secular ambitions on weekdays** at the office. 1 Corinthians 15:33 reminds us that **bad company ruins good character**. Be watchful about who we spend most of our time with and how our secular friends' values and opinions may influence ours. **Are we changing them or are they changing us?** We need a stable and consistent quiet time to keep us **anchored in our faith to be a witness** for Christ in our workplace.

11. We must embrace **joy in our lives** (Phil 4:4) as a gift from God and enjoy **humour and laughter**, but always keep away from obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking which are out of place and improper for God's holy people. (Ephesians 5:4)

12. It is dangerous for a believer who continues with the weekly church attendance and outward appearances of piety, but has **lost his spiritual connection with God** in his daily life. Like Samson, who did not know that the Lord had left him, we may not be aware that we go through the **habitual actions without true devotion**.

13. I must learn to **enjoy simple pleasures** like reading a book, listening to music or enjoying a stroll in nature without the pressure of trying to impress others. Also **do not procrastinate** to do something that God impresses on you. If we keep putting off doing something we hope to do someday, that day may never come.

14. Be watchful against false humility. This happens when we say and act as though we have a low opinion of ourselves but actually **secretly pat ourselves on the back for being humble**. Being humble also is **not the same as having low self esteem** or denying your strengths or gifts. If you are gifted by God in a certain area, do not be proud, for it is a gift, but do not hide it either. **God's gifts are meant to be used in service for Him**, and all glory should be given to God as we celebrate our gifts.

15. Do not be caught reliving the past- your mistakes, your sins, your regrets. Ask God to teach you lessons from the past but do not dwell on it. Also do not live with worry and anxiety over fears of what the future holds. (Matt 6:34). **We must live in the present, enjoy and praise God for His provisions today, and commit our past and our future to the Lord.**

16. Be careful of church hopping. There is no "perfect" church. We must learn to accept one another as brothers and sisters in Christ who are **all in the process of being made into Christ-likeness**. None of us have arrived yet. Just as we all have children who have different characters and qualities but love them all, **God loves all His children**, even though we worship Him in different ways. But be watchful to attend a church that uses the **Word of God as the authority** and not traditions or catch phrases of modern day prosperity gospel preachers.

17. Gluttony of excess is easy to identify but **gluttony of delicacy** is more subtle. We can be enslaved trying to search for the best tasting food, the most exotic holiday destinations, the most jaw dropping experiences **in the effort to impress others and not to miss out on what others have**, that we forget our main purpose which is to **appreciate God's blessings as they come** and not to compare with others.

18. Sex is meant by God to be enjoyed within the confines of a **monogamous marriage**. It is a gift from God but not to be misused and sexual desires should not be **misguided to become lust** for other partners. In a marriage, there can be times when the feeling of "being in love" may not be strong, but being **one in flesh** means we develop a mature form of love whereby we journey in life together as life partners, **accepting each other's unique character and building a family together**.

19. God's love for us is **Agape Love**. No strings attached, no secret motives. God loves us and so He offers us grace. God demonstrated His love for us by sending Jesus to die for our sins even when we were still sinners. (Romans 5:8).

20. We should resist following the world's standards in **objectifying beauty**- by putting undue emphasis on the **physical attributes** of ourselves and the people we meet. We should keep healthy as our bodies are the temple of God, because the Holy Spirit resides in us (1 Corinthians 3:16), but we should not become **obsessed with fitness exercise and dieting** to achieve bodily proportions which the media promotes. We should also not make assumptions about people based on their appearances but genuinely get to know them.

21. **Nothing in this world actually belongs to us**. We may be granted use of these "possessions" for a temporary period. Our money, our cars, our houses, our jobs, our clothes will eventually fade away and we cannot bring them with us when our time on earth is up. We should be careful not to put too much emphasis on accumulating these "possessions" but instead build our relationship with God as this will prepare us for eternity. **Time is a precious commodity** which we have been entrusted with, **so use it wisely- it is a limited resource** and we never know how much of it we have left.

22. A suitable life partner is one who will **support you in your endeavours**, as you journey in life together, to encourage each other in your faith journeys. **Marrying the wrong partner can lead to a life of regrets** and be detrimental to one's spiritual walk with God.

23. **Jesus is the son of God**, who came to die for our sins. **He is not merely a good teacher, or a good historical figure**. The evil one will plant doubts in our minds to rationalise and consider the possibility that the apostles were mistaken or made up stories. But there were over 500 people who witnessed the risen Christ (1 Corinthians 15:6) who risked their lives to testify to what they saw and to follow Jesus.

24. **We must resist Spiritual Pride**. This can happen when we fill our minds with complex theological arguments and recite so many verses from memory that others compliment us for it. Then we may start looking at others with **an air of achievement**, and may even view people from other churches as being less well taught in the word, or that **our church is better** since the programmes are more interesting or the attendance is better.

25. We need to embrace a **balance between old and new** within our church services. Old practices are familiar and help us to focus on our worship of God. But if we only rely on old practices we run the risk of it becoming **monotonous**. New worship songs, if carefully chosen, can bring a **fresh perspective to congregational worship** but it should not be pursued at the expense of losing **golden meaningful hymns**.

26. In a marriage **open communication is very important**. The couple needs to discuss **feelings and expectations** openly without being judgemental. **Do not sweep issues you face under the carpet** by disguising such actions as **doing it out of love**. This may only postpone the issue which if left to fester may cause one to harbour ill feelings towards each other in the long run. There is a place and time for placing your partner's needs above your own out of love **when the situation requires it** but doing so **all the time may cause imbalance and bitterness** to grow in the marriage. Do not get caught up in a situation where each partner tries to outdo the other by appearing "Unselfish" but not speaking what they really feel.

27. God may answer our prayers with "Yes", "No" or "Not yet". If we didn't receive what we prayed for it may be because **God in His wisdom has a better thing in mind for us**. (Jeremiah 29:11)

28. God is preparing us for **our eternal home**. While we can pray for the safety and health of our loved ones, it is the **condition of their spiritual walk** which must take the highest importance in our intercession.

29. Anxiety can lead to fear, and fear can lead to irrational actions which cause us to lose our faith that **the Lord is truly in control** of our lives and our situations. This was especially true in the 1940's as rumours surfaced that Germany was winning the war and that England would be defeated.

30. ***Fatigue and false hope*** are a dangerous combination. A person who is suffering from a terminal illness needs comfort and support, emotionally and spiritually, to be assured of salvation, and eternal rest when the time comes. If those around him keep on giving false hope, that person can lapse into severe depression when the reality sinks in that his condition is worsening. We need to cultivate the skill of speaking the truth in love, and pointing others to our ***eternal hope*** which no illness, no accidents, no misfortune can take away from us.

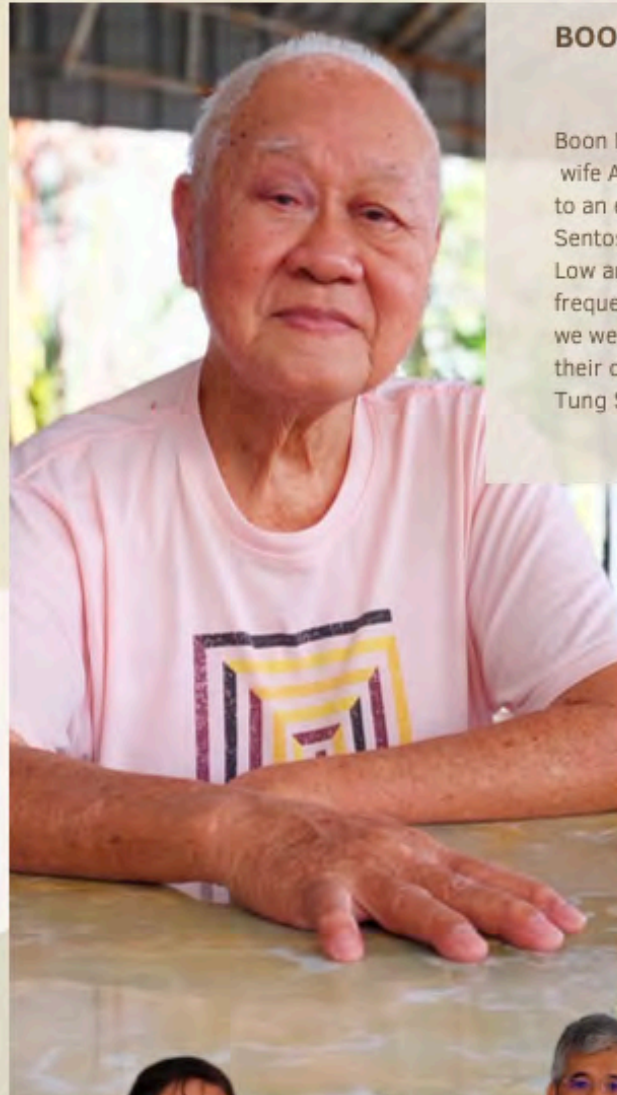
31. At the end of the book, the Christian dies in a bomb blast. But in that moment, he sees God and the heavenly hosts welcoming him. He has remained faithful and will receive eternal rest in the Lord. The devils are devastated because they have lost all opportunity to turn Christian away from his faith. This is the crux of the book, that we ***must persevere to the end*** no matter what the circumstances, to ***fight the good fight, to finish the race, to keep the faith***, so that we will receive the ***crown of righteousness***. (2 Timothy 4:7-8)



# Remembering our seniors

~ Joy Leong

## REMEMBERING OUR SENIORS



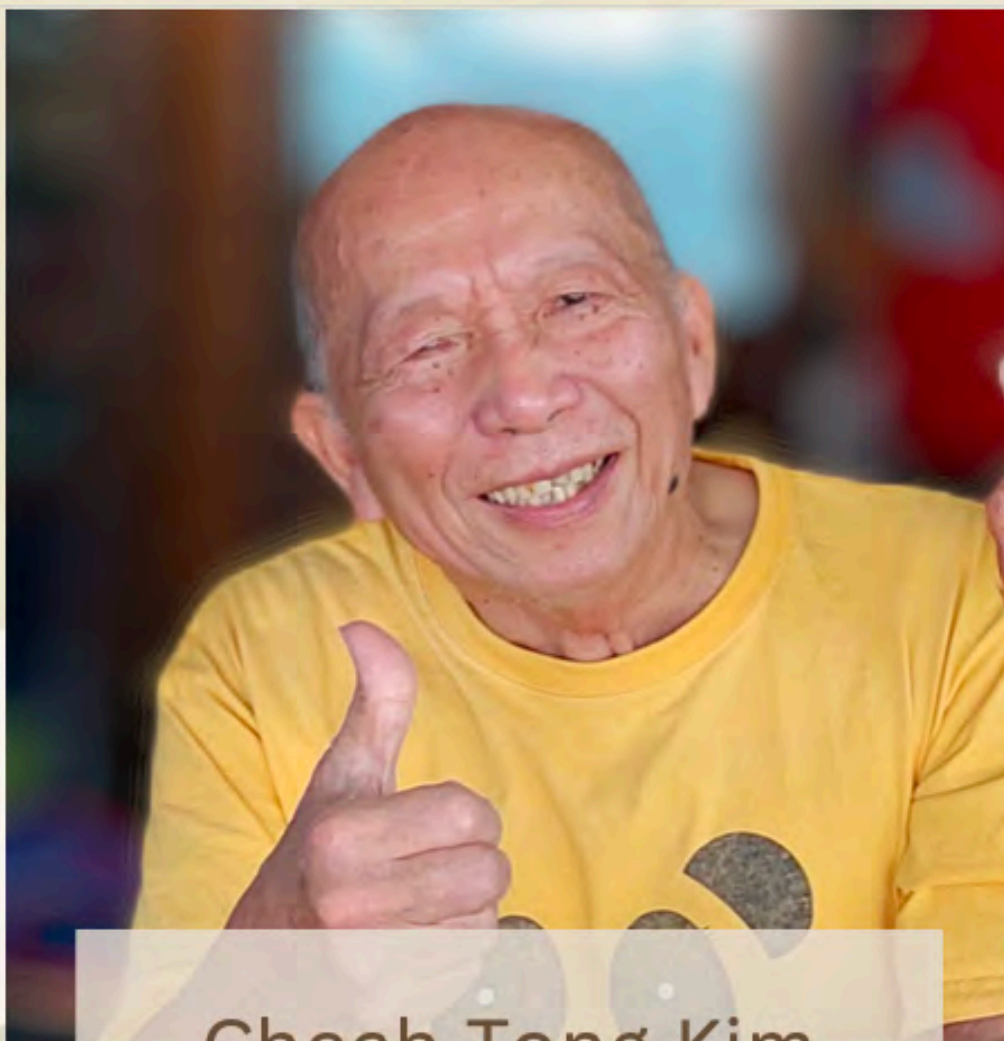
### BOON MENG & ANN LOW

Boon Meng was a Chef. He and his wife Ann, now 86, have relocated to an elderly care home in Taman Sentosa. Their sons, Pastor Ronnie Low and Pastor Stephen Low, frequently pay them a visit. Just as we were about to depart, Mei Leng, their daughter, and her husband Tung Sean came by with food!



Phan Siew Hong & Joy Leong

## REMEMBERING OUR SENIORS



## Cheah Tong Kim

Tong Kim, aged 77, represented Malaysia in two events at the 1964 Summer Olympics. Despite being visually impaired in one eye and relying on a cane for mobility, he maintains a positive attitude. He receives care at an assisted living facility located in Kampung Simee.

Tong Kim's only living relative is his sister who lives in Canada, and due to distance, they are unable to visit each other. Although he would like to attend Saturday night services, it is a complicated procedure to request permission to leave the facility, and he lacks means of transportation.

Phan Siew Hong & Joy Leong

# REMEMBERING OUR SENIORS



## AW TEIK HIN & JOYCELYN AW

Teik Hin is 94, mobile and alert, but he misses his wife, Swee Im, who passed away in January. With only 15% vision remaining, he requires assistance to carry out his daily activities.

Teik Hin's sister Joycelyn is at an elderly care home just a two-minute drive from his. We played a recorded message from Joycelyn assuring him that she loves him and is praying for him.

Phan Siew Hong & Joy Leong

# REMEMBERING OUR SENIORS

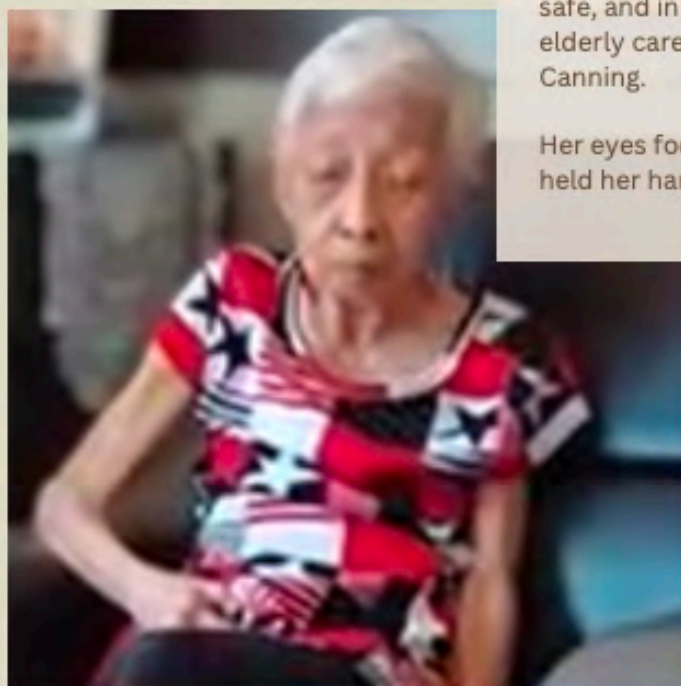


## **NANCY HEW**

Nancy 86, was a teacher. She is so cheerful. Singing "Rock of Ages" with her was uplifting!

She starts her day with some gentle physical activity. When asked how she manages her hair, Nancy told us that the home organizes a haircut every three months.

Nancy sends a friendly greeting to Amy Chong Lai Fong. (Amy, if you happen to be in Pasir Puteh, come and see her).



## **SNOWENE CHONG**

Snowene Chong is 80 and no longer able to speak. She is comfortable, safe, and in good company at a cozy elderly care facility in Taman Canning.

Her eyes focused briefly on me as I held her hands in mine and prayed.

Phan Siew Hong & Joy Leong

## 信仰见证

~ 谢惠红口述, 陈美珍笔录



谢惠红老姐妹，今年86岁。2002年接受耶稣基督做个人的救主。之前是儿子先信主，儿子很希望爸爸和妈妈一起来信靠耶稣。2000年，老姐妹的丈夫病重入院，教会牧师探访及传福音给他，他愿意接受耶稣基督成为个人的救主，并于当年受洗归入主的名下。虽然丈夫信主了但老姐妹觉得她不需要信靠耶稣。然而上帝没有放弃她，很奇妙地在一次机会 她来教会参加主日崇拜，而且连续四个主日不间断参加主日崇拜，上帝的灵感感动她决定接受耶稣基督成为她个人的救主，不久后就洗礼归入主的名下！

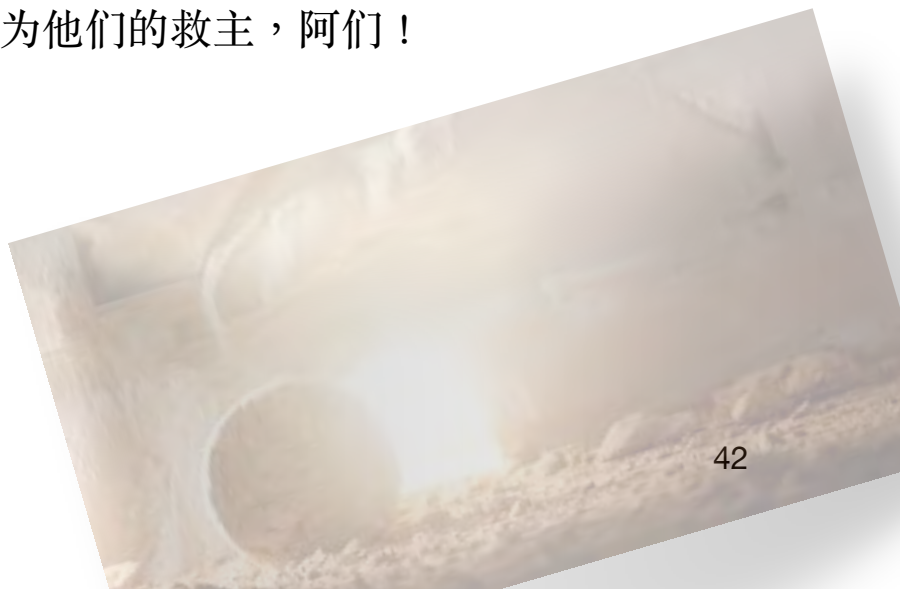
信主后老姐妹没有停止过参加主日崇拜和小组。她没有受过教育，不识字，但是她渴慕上帝的话，上帝使不可能的事成为可能！祂赐老姐妹聪明智慧竟然会读圣经，祷告，也会 唱诗，让只懂广东话的她会讲简单华语。好学的她从 YouTube 学习华文赞美诗歌，而且还唱得标准又美妙，真是奇妙啊！

老姐妹常常经历上帝的信实与同在，有一次她跌倒伤到背部，本来打算去照x光，但是在去的前一天她不住地祷告，她经历到主耶稣伸手抚摸她受伤的部分，非常奇妙她完全得医治，不痛了也不必去照x光！哈利路亚！赞美主！另外一次是2021年她病了，原本以为是胃痛，后来全身发黄，她入住中央医院，经过了详细的检查，医生才确定是膀胱结石，就以镭射方式给她治疗，治疗后她也完全痊愈了！她感谢主的医治和保护，因为不是其他复杂的病症！

老姐妹有一男一女，儿子甄志坚是个爱主的弟兄，他孝顺父母，爱家人，也热心参与教会聚会与活动。他煮得一手好菜，又很好客，偶尔还邀请教会弟兄姐妹去他家品尝美食，深得大家的爱戴。2015年的某一天志坚弟兄载女儿去吉隆坡国际机场送她出国到澳洲去，回家后突然感到不适，在送往医院途中安息了！当时他才53岁，这突如其来的消息令家人深感悲痛！老姐妹出席了儿子的守丧礼拜，虽然内心非常不舍，但是她坚强面对，她坚信儿子安然回到上帝的怀抱里，所以心里有平安！主耶稣所赐的平安乃超过我们所求所想！

每个主日她是第一个来到教堂的会友。86岁的她还能够自己驾车来教堂。她常常带着喜乐的心，遇到弟兄姐妹总是开口赞美主，颂赞见证上帝的恩典！每次唱诗敬拜赞美时，她一定举起双手赞美神，听道时她总是回应“阿们，阿们”。崇拜结束后她会买食物带去疗养院探望那里的老姐妹老朋友。前阵子她还会开车载老朋友去吃美食，近来觉得大家年纪都大了不太方便，因此得空时就去探望她们，真是一位充满爱心的神儿女！

结束访谈时老姐妹背了两段圣经节：“要常常喜乐，不住地祷告，凡事谢恩！”（帖前5:16~18）“你要尽心，尽性，尽力，尽意爱主你的上帝，又要爱邻舍如同自己！”（路10:27）我们的教会很蒙福有一位这么爱主，常常见证主恩的姐妹，希望上帝兴起更多忠心，见证荣耀祂的弟兄姐妹，愿主的名被高举，吸引更多人来相信接受耶稣基督成为他们的救主，阿们！



## MY THANKSGIVING STORY

~ Paddy Teh

When I was diagnosed with cancer,  
my world wobbled.  
I sank into a sea of denial -  
I plunged into a pit of tears,  
draped with unknown fears.

**THEN** -----  
I knelt in helplessness,  
I pleaded for healing  
and God, with love unfailing,  
healed me physically.

**BUT** - oblivious to me,  
slowly, surely and steadily  
He began renovating my heart.  
He discarded the stubborn, stoney bits  
and began building in me  
a malleable heart of flesh and faith.

God firmly put into my "new" heart  
a desire to delight in and obey His Word.  
His Word which shows me His ways,  
teaches me His paths,  
guides me in His truth,  
gives light to my eyes,  
brings joy to my heart,  
revives my soul,  
preserves my life,  
sustains me.

His Word, sweeter than honey  
revealing to me His likes and dislikes,  
actually -  
His heart to me.

(what the Word is to me is heavily  
adapted from Psalms 19 and 25).



He lovingly put into my "new" heart  
a longing to lean on Him alone  
to turn to Him for my sins to be atoned,  
to learn from Daniel and Hezekiah  
to trust Him when calamities strike  
but also, to give Him time to answer my prayers  
and not to badger Him with "my" solutions to my anxieties  
but to humbly give Him time and space to be God Almighty.

God patiently put into my "new" heart  
the need to be understanding  
forgiving  
compassionate  
by learning to "look" into the hearts of others  
not judging countenances  
shuttered silences  
behaviours  
uttered words and wordiness.  
He cautioned me to be slow to speak,  
ready to listen.  
Only then am I able to relate to people  
for Him.

I needed an illness  
to enable me  
blur, blur me  
to discover God's purpose  
while I am still on earth.

Thank you Lord,  
for preserving my life for 11 years since the diagnosis.



# My Journey since I came to know Christ

~ Ps Cheah Sene Kar

I came from a pagan background. I spent my primary and secondary schooldays at St. Xavier's Institution, Penang (a missionary school), where I learnt that Jesus was the God of the Christians. I went on from there to study medicine at University of Malaya and after graduating I started my medical practice. It was then that the question of "Life and Death" began to stir my heart and forced upon me the question of "What happens to me when I die?". Eventually, I found the answer in Christ, for whoever believes in Him has eternal life.

After many years of soul searching, I was finally convicted when I was 50 years old. Coming to faith at that age gave me a sense of urgency to catch up and recover the years that I lost not knowing God. That sense of urgency compelled me to take some drastic measures. As a result, I gave up my daily newspapers only to keep updated once a week. I also stopped the subscription to my favourite magazine, the National Geographic Magazine and I stopped watching TV except for an occasional movie. With the time that I saved, I read the Bible and related books.

In 2015, I was baptised. 4 years down the road, I was appointed as a Cell Leader. 3 years after that, I was appointed as a Zone Leader and 9 months later, I was appointed as a Cell Group Coordinator. Today, I stand before you as your Pastor.

It may sound to you as if I am boasting. In fact, I intend to boast but only to boast in the Lord. I want to direct your focus not on my personal achievements but on the power and the workings of the Holy Spirit in and through me. It was God who convicted me. It was God who guided and led me every step of the way. It was God who enabled and equipped me to do all the things that I did. It is all about God. Every aspect of my life is about God. Apart from Him I can do nothing.

As God led and guided me along this journey there were many junctions along the way where I had to make decisions for myself. This is a matter of divine sovereignty and human responsibility. At every junction where I had to make a decision, I said "Yes" to God. Although there were times when I hesitated and even thought of saying "No" but eventually I said "Yes". Otherwise, I would not be where I am now.

God's will does not change. If it is God's will for CGMC to have an additional pastor, then His will will come to pass no matter what my decisions were. The only difference is that the new pastor would have been someone else if I were to have said "No".

I realised that there are eternal consequences to the decisions that I make. There will come a day when I will meet Jesus face to face. I will need to give an account of myself to Him then and stand before Him to be judged. I can imagine Jesus opening the Book Of Life, then looking at me and saying, "I have called you and asked you to do My will and this is what you have done.". At one extreme, Jesus may say to me, "Go away from Me. I do not know you!". And at the other extreme, He may say to me, "Well done good and faithful servant. Come and share your Master's happiness.".

With these two thoughts in perspective, my choice of following God's leading and obeying Him is no longer an option. I hope my testimony has impacted you one way or another.

God bless.

# Snacks or Brunch

A F T E R   S E R V I C E



concourse

## OUR MISSION STATEMENT

To **DISCIPLE** every member into Christian maturity and to be effective in the service of God.

To **EVANGELIZE** the city of Ipoh and to set up congregations in strategic areas.

To **TOUCH** a needy community with God's transforming love and justice.

To **SEND** Christian workers into the harvest fields and to be involved in missions.