



“ All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realms because we are united with Christ.
Ephesians 1 : 3 (NLT) ”

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KAMPONG KAPOR METHODIST CHURCH
(Bishop Bickley Memorial)

March - May 2016

IN & INVOLVED
about the church, along the streets, and across the seas

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Our Sunday Worship Services
English : 8.00am, 9.30am & 11.30am
Peranakan : 11.00am
Mandarin : 2.00pm
Tamil : 5.30pm

Pastors' Message



Rev Gabriel Liew, Rev Kenneth Huang

Moving further into 2016, we will want to continue growing to be



IN & INVOLVED

about the church – fulfilling our part

along the streets – looking at, and out, for others

across the seas – going and doing missions



We can do so as we seek to always genuinely love our Resurrected Lord Jesus, enjoying true relationship with Him, as well as true ministry for Him.

And even if we “muff-it-up” once in a while, as we will do so just as the early disciples did in their relationship with Jesus and in their ministry for Him, the Resurrected Lord Jesus will always be there to provide us direction, sustenance, pardon and purpose for our lives, as we allow Him to call us to account and to restore us to relationship and to ministry.

Just as the Resurrected Lord Jesus did for Peter and the other disciples, as recorded for us in John 21.

Our continued prayer for all of us at KKMC then is that the favour of the Lord will be upon us and to bless the work of our hands (Psalm 90:17), to the honour and glory of His Name!

Thanks be to God!

Rev Kenneth Huang & Rev Gabriel Liew



Photo of the statue at the shore of the Sea of Galilee depicting the restoration by Jesus of Peter to relationship and to ministry

Featured Sermons from

The Holy Week Services



Rev Dr Chiang Ming Shun and his wife Po Lin

The Holy Week Services this year looked at the importance of faith, hope and love in a fallen but redeemed world. Over three nights from 21-23 March, Rev Dr Chiang Ming Shun gave insights into how we can live in faith, hope and love.

KK Focus summarises the three sermons here. You can listen to the full sermons at <http://www.kkmc.org.sg/#!sermons/gwltm>

Rev Dr Chiang Ming Shun, is both the Lecturer in Church History and Chaplain to TRAC Methodist students at Trinity Theological College. He has been a Methodist pastor for over 15 years and from 2000 to 2005, he was pastor at KKMC, his home church. He is now an Elder attached to Ang Mo Kio Methodist Church. Rev Chiang is married to Po Lin, who sings in the KKMC Choir.

The Importance Of FAITH In A Fallen But Redeemed World

Bible Texts: 1 Corinthians 13 and Hebrews 11:1-6

When the apostle Paul wrote to the church in Corinth, he devoted a significant part of his first letter to the concept of love, and he ended by writing, "So now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love."

As we enter into Holy Week, I want to talk about these 3 things: faith, hope and love, and what they mean to the Christian.

We start with faith, and my text is Hebrews 11:1-6.

¹Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. ²For by it the people of old received their commendation. ³By faith we understand that the universe was created by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things that are visible.

⁴By faith Abel offered to God a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain, through which he was commended as righteous, God commending him by accepting his gifts. And through his faith, though he died, he still speaks. ⁵By faith Enoch was taken up so that he should not see death, and he was not found, because God had taken him. Now before he was taken he was commended as having pleased God. ⁶And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw

near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.

What is faith? Let me start by saying what Christian faith is not.

Today there are two misconceptions about what faith is.

The first misconception is that faith is blind. A blind faith is when you believe in something for no other reason than because you want to.

However that is not faith because faith is not blind.

Faith must be based on some evidence. This evidence does not have to be conclusive or unassailable. It cannot be conclusive, otherwise it is a proof. With proof, you don't need faith.

You need some evidence for faith. But no matter how small the evidence, it must be compelling and convincing enough, otherwise why believe?

It could be hearsay evidence. Somebody you trust told you something. It could be the testimony of a friend, or an expert. It could be the evidence of your senses or your observation of the world. It could be documentary evidence, something you read. It could be the evidence of past experience, or reason.

You must have some reason, some evidence to have faith.

Hebrews actually defines faith in

relation to hope. This passage in Hebrews says, faith is what gives our hopes assurance that they are real. Faith is what gives us conviction about things we can't see.

Without faith, hope is nothing. You may hope for heaven, for resurrection, but unless you believe in the God who raised Jesus, your hope is nothing but optimism.

So you must have some foundation for faith. Faith is not without substance.

The second thing faith is not is unquestioning. Christian faith is not unquestioning. You can have doubts and questions. You can dissent.

I believe the Bible is infallible in all that it affirms. Then the question is, "What does the Bible affirm?" My understanding and interpretation of the Bible is NOT infallible. I might be wrong. Christians disagree all the time. That's why there are so many different churches.

We all disagree a little on how to approach the Bible, what we think it says, what our priorities and practices should be. Some of these disagreements go back hundreds of years. Some of these disagreements are really insignificant, but they are blown up all out of proportion.

We have some doubts and questions and disagreements, but we have the same faith in the fundamentals. Churches know what the historic faith is, even if they want to say some of it

is outdated and irrelevant today.

We affirm together in the Apostles' Creed or the Nicene Creed whether we are Roman Catholic, Orthodox, or Protestant and we believe in what those statements assert.

We cannot be a Christian and an agnostic at the same time. We cannot be a Christian if we question and doubt so much that we no longer believe in any part of the historic faith.

Faith is not unquestioning, but if you doubt everything, you have no faith. This week is a good time to reflect and ask ourselves what we believe, what we doubt. I encourage you to talk to the pastors about doubts, to clarify what the Christian faith is.

What then is the Christian faith based on?

Our faith is based on a transforming encounter with God. This encounter may be a major event or it may be many moments. It may come suddenly, dramatically, or it could be gradual, a long journey. But the result is a turning to God and a firm trust in Him.

And we can only come to believe and trust in God when we have encountered Him in such a way that it transforms lives. That is our evidence for faith, the personal witness of God at work in our lives, in the lives of friends, in the lives of other Christians.

How do you know it is God? The Bible will tell you who God is.

We have the evidence of the Bible, which shows the impact God had on so many people. Tonight's passage in Hebrews is the beginning of a list of people through the ages touched by God.

You know, despite the efforts of many, the Bible has not been disproved.

Josh McDowell was an agnostic who inspected the evidence against Jesus to disprove Christianity. He ended up converting to Christianity because he found so much evidence for the faith. He wrote a book, *Evidence that Demands a Verdict*. Josh McDowell is now an evangelist with over a hundred books to his name.

Lee Strobel was a journalist with The Chicago Tribune newspaper, and an atheist. He was irritated that his wife became a Christian so Lee Strobel spent two years trying to prove that God didn't create people; people created God. Like Josh McDowell, Lee Strobel ended up concluding that God exists and Jesus is his unique son. Lee Strobel wrote *The Case for Christ*, and *The Case for Faith* and several other books. He is now a Christian apologist with his own TV show and website.

And of course you may have heard the story of how the academic C S Lewis became an atheist in his teens, and later found Christ again.

No matter how reluctant we may be, when we meet God, we are changed.

The Bible says,
"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come." 2 Corinthians 5:17

"It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me." Galatians 2:20

C S Lewis' faith greatly influenced his life and his work, and he wrote the books in The Chronicles of Narnia series. Our faith as Christians makes us who we are, not perfect people, but not the same as before.

Unfortunately, there are people in the church who have not had a life-transforming encounter with God. They may have been in church a long time. They are in church because this is where their family and friends are. This is a good place to network and make contacts.

These people know a lot about the church. But they don't know God. They don't read the Bible. They don't search after God. Because they haven't encountered God, these people don't have changed lives. They cling on to past hurts, bitterness and unforgiveness.

If you have not encountered God, or if you do not allow Him to transform you, you will not have faith. There is

no foundation for a faith. Without faith, how do you trust God?

The good news is that it is never too late to meet God. You have to want to meet Him, and when you do, then you can have faith in Him. The Bible says that people who seek God will surely find Him.

"You will seek me and find me, when you seek me with all your heart." Jeremiah 29:13.

Matthew 7 and Luke 11 both say *"Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you."*

And here tonight in Hebrews 11, *"whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him."*

It's the person who wants to know God to whom God reveals Himself.

If you don't want to know God, or look for Him, then you won't find Him, because God doesn't force Himself onto you. God loves us, but He doesn't force us to love Him. He doesn't compel us to have faith.

That is why men and women of old in the Bible were commended for their faith, and they received approval for their faith, it says here in Hebrews 11. The rest of this chapter in the Bible goes on to list Old Testament characters, heroes and heroines, who had faith.

Tonight's passage has 2 such persons of faith.

Hebrews 11:4 says that God accepted Abel, and will reward his faith.

Hebrews 11:5 insists that Enoch pleased God. The point the Bible makes here is that without faith, you cannot begin to please God. (Hebrews 11:6)

The British theologian Bishop N.T. Wright said, "Unless you have faith, unless you really believe that God exists and that He does indeed want people to seek Him, and will reward them lavishly when they do, you can't actually begin to worship Him."

What if you haven't had a transforming encounter with God? What if you want more faith?

Hebrews tells us that there is the example of people of faith. Read about people of faith in the Bible. Go talk to people of faith today. Go talk to the pastors.

I hope you will all take to heart Proverbs 2:3-5:

³yes, if you call out for insight and raise your voice for understanding,
⁴if you seek it like silver and search for it as for hidden treasures,
⁵then you will understand the fear of the Lord and find the knowledge of God.

The Importance Of HOPE In A Fallen But Redeemed World

Texts: 1 Corinthians 13, Romans 5:1-11
 Do you remember where you were that night on 9/11? I remember I was here in KKMC. We had just finished a Disciple 1 class, and Tanguy came up to me and said he just got word that a small Cessna passenger plane had crashed into the World Trade Centre North Tower in New York. On the way home, I had BBC Radio on and it wasn't a Cessna. I got home just in time to see the second plane hit the South Tower.

Since then terrorism has become a part of life all over the world. We had our own Jemaah Islamiyah (JI), in Singapore. We all have had to adapt. Shoes off at airports, no liquids or gels.

This afternoon, there was a notification on my phone that there were 2 explosions at the Zaventem airport in Brussels. BBC reports that there was an explosion in the Brussels metro system.

The world changed after 9/11.

It's not just war and terror. The world was already in a bad shape.

Years ago I watched a horror movie by Al Gore, *An Inconvenient Truth*. It was scary. It was on global warming but there were some scientists who claimed that it was a myth that humans are causing global warming. It is entirely a natural and cyclical

event. These sceptical voices are mostly silent now.

I read that we have come to the point where individual efforts will no longer be able to make a difference in climate change. I still recycle my paper, glass, plastic bottles and cans but does it look like our world is getting better? What are we supposed to do?

Last night after the service, Pastor Kenneth drew my attention to an article in The Straits Times about youth shunning religion today. The article says,

"National University of Singapore political science undergraduate Bertrand Seah, 21, grew up Christian in a Methodist school environment, but began doing his own research on religion in junior college."

Like the other youth The Straits Times spoke to, Mr Seah said he believes in a "rational" approach. "I don't think I need divine guidance to make a right or wrong decision. Reason alone can guide such decision-making," he said.

Experts said the relative stability of a country also means there is less concern about the future because the present is "non-threatening". When this is the case, there is less incentive to look to religion for divine intervention or for security.

Maybe the present in Singapore is non-threatening, but I think Bertrand Seah and these experts all miss the point. Christianity is not just there for divine guidance, divine intervention or security.

Christianity is all about grace. And because God has given us grace we have peace and we can have hope. These are the 3 blessings Romans 5 says we have as Christians.

Our text for tonight is Romans 5:1-11.

¹Therefore, since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, ²through whom we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand; and we boast in our hope of sharing the glory of God. ³And not only that, but we also boast in our sufferings, knowing that suffering

produces endurance, ⁴and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, ⁵and hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.

⁶For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. ⁷Indeed, rarely will anyone die for a righteous person — though perhaps for a good person someone might actually dare to die. ⁸But God proves his love for us in that while we still were sinners Christ died for us. ⁹Much more surely then, now that we have been justified by his blood, will we be saved through him from the wrath of God. ¹⁰For if while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son, much more surely, having been reconciled, will we be saved by his life. ¹¹But more than that, we even boast in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.

In tonight's passage, the apostle Paul says that we have been justified by faith. Justified is a technical term. It means that God no longer sees us as sinful. Because of our faith, God justifies us; He sees us as righteous people.

We still sin and when you look around, Christians get it wrong a lot of times, but God chooses to consider us blameless because of our faith.

And since we have been justified by faith, as Christians, we have 3 wonderful blessings.

- 1 peace (verse 1)
- 2 access to this grace in which we stand (verse 2a)
- 3 the hope of the glory of God (verse 2b)

Let's look at these in turn.

1 We have peace. But note it is not the peace of God, but peace with God.

When we talk about the peace of God we refer to a subjective feeling of friendliness and tranquility or calmness that we can have because we have been accepted by God. It is something you feel.

But here Paul is referring to an objective state of peace. Peace between God and

man. You don't have to feel it but it's done. God's holy anger against sinners has created a rift between God and humans but that gulf has been bridged. God has made peace with us.

2 Access. Now the word 'access' here in Greek can mean being able to approach someone important. We use the word 'access' similarly in English – we say we have access to the Prime Minister.

So we would expect Paul to say we have access to God. But Paul does not say we have access to God. Paul writes instead that we have access to grace. We stand in grace, it says here in verse 2.

The word 'Grace' is used to summarise the state Christians are now in. We are not just forgiven. We are brought into a state of favour with God. This is grace.

3 The third blessing is the one that is most important to Paul here - rejoicing or boasting in the hope of the glory of God. Real joy in real hope.

What Paul means is that we have the hope of some day experiencing God's glory. Experiencing God's glory is more than just feeling His presence, or seeing Him at work. It is having a share in God's own eternal character. What we lack today, we will one day have.

Do you feel that you are not nice enough, not good enough as a person, not loving enough, not wise enough, not joyful enough?

What we lack today, we will one day have.

But Paul moves abruptly in verse 3 and writes that we can boast in our suffering. How can we boast in suffering? Who wants to suffer? What purpose could suffering possibly have?

It develops our Christian character. In verses 3 and 4, Paul shows how a godly response to suffering can spark a series of virtues that lead to hope.

Now see clearly that Paul is not saying that we should rejoice because of suffering. Only a crazy person would rejoice because of suffering.

If we look beyond them to what God has in store for us, we can still rejoice in the midst of evil and pain and suffering.

That's our choice. We can choose to endure suffering, to allow it to produce character. Or we can turn bitter or angry. Or we can give up.

I say to you, don't do that. Don't turn bitter. Don't give up because then you will have no hope.

That is why in Romans 5:5 we read that hope will not disappoint us. Douglas Moo, the Blanchard Professor of New Testament at Wheaton College Graduate School, says that a more literal translation would be, 'hope will not put us to shame'.

Why do we have confidence that hope will not disappoint us or put us to shame?

The answer is here in verse 5. It is love.
"...hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us."

God sent his son Jesus Christ to suffer and die for people who had rejected Him. We humans probably would die only for someone we love, someone we hold dear.

But God's love is greater than our love. God shows His love for us not only on the cross, but through the Holy Spirit which we are given. It is the Holy Spirit which makes us deeply aware of God's love that is poured into our hearts.

This is a beautiful paragraph in Romans 5 because of one little word in Greek: *eti*.

Eti in the original Biblical Greek that the New Testament is written in means 'yet' or 'still'.

"...while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly." verse 6

"...while we still were sinners Christ died for us." verse 8

We are weak, not in body but in our soul.

Are we good people? Are we doing all

the good we can?

That's the weakness Paul is talking about.

And that is where *eti* comes in – while we were still weak, while we were still sinners, while we were still enemies of God, He drew us to Him through the death of His Son.

That is where all hope lies. Hope lies in the grace and love of God. Nowhere else.

There is a wonderful sermon by James van Tholen with that title – *Where All Hope Lies*.

He preached it as he was dying from cancer. He said, "I find it unfathomable that God's love propelled him to reach into our world with such scandalous grace, such a way out, such hope. Let me tell you, there's no hope anywhere else – I looked. There is no hope in this world apart from that scandal... You learn that when you face death..."

The sermon was published in *Christianity Today* magazine in May 1999.

James van Tholen died a year and a half after that. James van Tholen's hopes were not that he would not die. We all die.

His hope was that there is a better tomorrow and a better world because of God's love for us. It is not just a hope for this life. It is hope beyond this life.

The British theologian Bishop N.T. Wright says that, "Faith is looking at God and trusting him for everything, while hope is looking at the future and trusting God for it."

All that is going on in the world now reminds us that our hope for this world and the future lies in God.

The guilty past has been cancelled, the glory of the future is assured, and here and now the presence and power of the Spirit of God secure to believers all the grace they need to endure trial, to resist evil, and to live as befits those whom God has declared righteous.

That is my hope for you, that you will

stand in the grace given you to endure trial and suffering, to resist evil and to live as befits those whom God has declared righteous.

The Importance Of LOVE In A Fallen But Redeemed World

Text: 1 John 4:7-21

⁷Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. ⁸Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love. ⁹God's love was revealed among us in this way: God sent his only Son into the world so that we might live through him. ¹⁰In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. ¹¹Beloved, since God loved us so much, we also ought to love one another. ¹²No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God lives in us, and his love is perfected in us.

¹³By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit. ¹⁴And we have seen and do testify that the Father has sent his Son as the Savior of the world. ¹⁵God abides in those who confess that Jesus is the Son of God, and they abide in God. ¹⁶So we have known and believe the love that God has for us.

God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them. ¹⁷Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness on the day of judgment, because as he is, so are we in this world. ¹⁸There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear; for fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not reached perfection in love. ¹⁹We love because he first loved us. ²⁰Those who say, "I love God," and hate their brothers or sisters, are liars; for those who do not love a brother or sister whom they have seen, cannot love God whom they have not seen. ²¹The commandment we have from him is this: those who love God must love their brothers and sisters also.

When I was preparing this sermon, I used an excellent commentary by Bishop N.T. Wright. So some of the points are his, and I will be quoting from him also.

In the Bible passage, the word 'love' or some form of it, occurs about 28 times in these 15 verses.

Love is at the very heart of the letter written by the apostle John. Everything John writes before leads up to this chapter. Everything in the next chapter solidifies what John has to say about love.

What is John saying here?

Earlier in 1 John 4:3, John made the point that Jesus is the Messiah and the Messiah has indeed come in the flesh.

At that time, there were some people who were teaching that the Messiah, God's anointed one, was a spiritual being. A spiritual being wouldn't have to eat or drink or sleep or do any physical thing. A spiritual being didn't have to die.

John was saying that Jesus came from God and became flesh, a full human. In coming in the flesh, Jesus reveals the love of God.

God's love is revealed in His sending Jesus, His son, into the world to be the sacrifice to atone for our sins. We won't have to be punished for our sins. Jesus took all the punishment on Himself.

That is love, not that we loved God, but that He loves us. It is this love that changed the world, not 9/11, not terrorism, not global warming. There is a force in the world now more powerful than anything - God's love.

The Greek word for this is *agape*, an unselfish, giving love, centred on the other person.

That is the love we should have for one another.

Look at verse 12, "No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God lives in us, and his love is perfected in us."

What does this mean?

If you turn to John 1:18, the same John who wrote tonight's passage says almost the same thing there,

"No one has ever seen God; the only

God, who is at the Father's side, he has made him known."

No one has seen God, but Jesus has made Him known.

Similarly then, tonight's passage, 1 John 4 means that people don't really know who God is until they see Him in the lives of Christians. That is how God's love is perfected in us, when we reveal it to others.

That's how important love is. The world can only see what God is like when they see His love in us.

These days we like to say that in a secular society, faith must be private.

I am reminded of the story of 2 builders.

One builder had a little plot of land off to one side where he worked everyday. He was building a beautiful house for his family. It was quite plain on the outside, but the inside was fabulous.

There was marble, and gorgeous inlays. It was a palace, but only the builder and his family would see it.

The second builder worked in the public square, with many others erecting a new building. They all had their tasks, hauling the pillars into position, sorting out stones for the mosaics, carving the stone and wood. They were building a grand cathedral, a house of beauty and awe, a building that would last a thousand years, a sign of God's love and power, and anyone could come and see and be humbled.

Just like Jesus came in the flesh to reveal God's love, so our love for others must also be in the flesh; it must be real in the world. It cannot just be in words that you say. It is love in action that others can see and know that God is at work.

That is why right at the end of this passage, John says if you say you love God, but you hate your brothers and sisters, then you are a liar. Brother and sister here mean your Christian brother and sister, fellow Christians, people in the family of God, the Church.

If you can't love the people you see, how can you love God whom you have

not seen?

How can we love all sorts of people, even the people who are mean to us?

We can do this because the verse on our church's stained glass window says, *"Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit."* Zechariah 4:6

God's Spirit is in us and so we are able to testify that the Father has sent His son as the Saviour of the world. This is a big task. It is something you have to do everyday, quietly. It will be your life's work.

Today, Wednesday, 23 March 2016, is the 87th birthday of Sir Roger Gilbert Bannister. Sir Roger was a doctor and neurologist, and later the Master of Pembroke College in Oxford. But he is better remembered for being the first man to run a mile in under 4 minutes. In 2004, on the 50th anniversary of his run, Bannister was interviewed by the BBC and asked if his run was his proudest achievement.

Bannister said no. He said the forty years he spent as a neurologist and researcher, when he introduced new procedures and made new discoveries, were the years he was most proud of.

We all look for one glorious moment to shine, but what is more significant and important, is the daily slog and work we do, especially that work of bringing God's love into the world.

This is what the Christian faith is all about: the belief that in Jesus the Messiah, the one true God has revealed Himself to be love Incarnate. And those who hold on to this belief as their faith and hope, must in turn reveal that love to the world.

As Bishop N.T. Wright puts it, "Love must be the badge that the Christianity community wears, the sign not only of who they are but of who their God is." Unfortunately, you know we fail at that too often.

I once had to speak to this person in church. I invited him into my office and we talked, and he was happy and eloquent. But then I said, "Actually I had a written complaint from a visitor who said he had an argument in the

church carpark with someone with so many children, with this particular car. And I said, it sounds a bit like you. So I want to ask you, did you leave the Sunday church service to go out and scratch this person's car?"

Immediately this fellow started coughing and stammering. He couldn't meet my eye, looking everywhere, coughing.

That's a reality in church life. There are people like that, people like me. I am sure I have scared away people from church. I have not always shown love. It shouldn't be like that with us.

But we have to keep at it, keep learning, keep trying, keep getting better at it. The world is watching.

I recently had dinner with 2 friends who are senior police officers. One is a Methodist at Ang Mo Kio Methodist Church. The other guy was telling me how there was a big internal squabble going on, emails flying left and right. But then the Methodist guy sent in a calm, very helpful email to everybody, and that just changed the whole tone and showed the way ahead. It stopped the squabble.

That's how we must interact with the world. Not using the world's methods or tactics, but acting in the love of God. Christians need to think about how we should respond to situations as loving people of God.

That may sound like a big task, but we should have no fear in loving and revealing God's love.

Verse 18

"There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear; for fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not reached perfection in love."

There is another chapter in the Bible that describes also what love is: 1 Corinthians 13. Right at the end of the chapter, Paul talks about a future world of love. He says there are 3 things in the present which point to that future world:

Faith, which looks at God and trusts Him for everything,

Hope, which looks ahead to God and

what He will do in the future,

and Love, the greatest of these 3 things.

Why is love the greatest of these?

There is a 19th century hymn, Gracious Spirit, Holy Ghost by Christopher Wordsworth which goes, *Faith will vanish into sight; Hope be emptied in delight; Love in heaven will shine more bright; Therefore, give us Love.*

Faith will vanish into sight – when we see God, we don't need faith any more.

Hope be emptied in delight – in the world to come, all the promises we hope in will come true; we won't need to hope any more.

Only love shines more brightly. We will love more completely and more perfectly in the presence of God. That is why love is greater than faith and hope, because it spans the world.

N.T. Wright says,

"Love is the way of life in the new world to which, by grace, we are bound. We need to learn it here and now.

It is the grammar of the language we shall speak there. The more progress we make in it here, the better we shall be equipped.

Love is God's river, flowing on into the future, across the border into the country where there is no pride, no jostling for position, no contention among God's people.

We are invited to step into that river here and now, and let it take us where it's going."

Love is the way of life in heaven.

And it is the Christian life on earth. You show up everyday to serve God, to live as a Christian, to bring God's love into the world.

You may ask me, how can I love God more?

To get into a deeper relationship with God, you have to talk to Him more, pray more. You have to find out more about Him. You can hear what others

who know Him better have to say, or the best way is to read what the Bible has to say about Him.

Everything you need to know about God, He has already written down for you.

Reading the Bible. Praying. You do this everyday and you will know God better everyday, and love Him more.

And one other thing you can do:

surround yourself with the right friends.

The friends you have around you will help you be a better person, or they will drag you down. My wife and I are blessed with great friends whom I trust with my life.

Surround yourselves with the right people, that is, brothers and sisters in the household of God. People who will

love you and help you love better, who will grow with you, with whom you can show the love of God to the world.

Editor: Rev Dr Chiang mentioned that Bishop NT Wright is his favourite theologian. NT Wright was the Canon Theologian of Westminster Abbey, the Bishop of Durham, and now Professor of New Testament and Early Christianity at St Andrew's University in Scotland. The KKM library recently acquired the N. T. Wright for Everyone Bible Study Guides. Do look up N.T Wright's books and see for yourself why Rev Dr Chiang enjoys his writings.

New Lay Ministry Staff *Timothy Tan*

Jessinta Tan

Timothy, 57, joined KKM on 1 February 2016 and will be overseeing the Discipleship & Nurture, Library, Family Life and Children/Youth ministries. He's also involved in courses like Serving with Joy and Marriage Preparation, besides helping out at Homework Centre on Thursdays.

► Timothy and his family. L-R Eudora, Elsie, Evangelin and Timothy



When and how did you become a Christian?

I was born again at the age of 12 on 25 December 1971. Fear gripped my heart when I was in Primary 5, having suffered a rather serious injury that required 15 stitches. The unpleasant experience set me thinking what would have happened if I had died as a result of the accident. It was my second brother who introduced me to a small village church that he was attending in old Chai Chee at the beginning of 1971. I first joined the Sunday School. Unfortunately, I was linguistically challenged. I was about to drop out of the church when I accidentally kicked a bench that a youth leader was resting on. He later introduced me to the English Youth Fellowship when he realised that I couldn't speak nor understand Mandarin. That started the journey that led to my conversion on the Christmas morning of 1971.

When and how did you receive a call to ministry?

God's call for me to serve was nothing as spectacular as that of the Apostle Paul. It was a very gradual process which started when I was in Secondary 1. There was a burden then to start a Christian Fellowship in the school. With a few fellow students, we started meeting once a week in school. Later on, we found a Christian teacher who was keen to be our advisor. On her advice we hooked up with Scripture Union. I was also being groomed to lead in the Youth Fellowship (YF) starting with taking care of setting and putting away the chairs before and after the Youth Fellowship meetings. By the time, I was 17 years old I had already served in various capacities in the YF.

It was during my National Service (NS) that I was challenged to consider serving fulltime in Christian Ministry. A Trinity Theological College (TTC) student, who was doing his field education with the church, noticed my gift in teaching. The desire to serve became stronger when I began to notice that the YF was struggling to survive with many of the pioneers leaving the fellowship. Yet I brushed it aside, often telling God that I wasn't a suitable candidate.

Six months before I completed my NS, I was once again challenged to serve fulltime. In an attempt to convince myself and others who think God is calling me into Christian Ministry, I put a little challenge to God. Looking back many years later, I felt that it was really a silly and bad move!

I got hold of an application form from Singapore Bible College (SBC). I applied for the Diploma in Theology programme, which would take three years to complete. Why did I do that? I had wanted to return quickly to serve in the YF. There was a requirement to pay \$10 as part of the registration process. Instead of forking out the money, I told everyone that if God wanted me to enter fulltime ministry, He will provide the registration fee. Then, God sent me \$10 through a Christian Military Officer who told me that he felt prompted to hand the money to me! The man later understood that he was actually God's instrument.

Throughout the days of my theological education in SBC and later at TTC and even right up to this day, God is still affirming His call for me to serve in fulltime ministry.

How long have you served as a pastor/ministry staff and in which church(es)/organisation(s)?

By the grace of God, I've served slightly over 32 years in Christian ministry. I served in Barker Road Methodist Church for 15½ years, first as a Church Worker and was later promoted to Lay Ministry. I then moved on to serve in two Presbyterian churches as a Preacher for four years and an Ordained Minister for eight years. Later, I spent four and a half years serving as Parish

DO YOU HAVE A NICKNAME?

If you like *Soon Kueh*, I hope you'll like me too! This nickname was given to me by my primary school classmates.

FAVOURITE VEHICLE:

My dream car - and it shall remain only a dream - is the Bat Mobile as featured in the movie *Batman*.

MOST INTERESTING JOB I HAD:

Working 6 months as a Uber Driver

I'M HAPPIEST WHEN:

Someone comes up to me and gives me a word of encouragement.

I'M PROUDEST OF:

Christians who live the walk and not the talk.

Leader in Faith Methodist Church.

In-between the years, God blessed me with a Bachelor of Divinity from Trinity Theological College and a Post Graduate Diploma in Counselling from Singapore Bible College.

What are the hindrances that you've encountered in your journey as a pastor/ministry staff and how did you overcome the hurdles?

I don't see the bumps in my journey in Christian ministry as hindrances. I see them as challenges and building blocks. The greatest challenge was to gain the confidence and respect of believers in my attempts to shepherd them, especially when they feel that I've taken over the place of someone whom they love very much.

Respect can't be forced. It has to be earned. By God's grace, I worked quietly and patiently to slowly extend pastoral care. I worked hard at listening and talking less in order to have a strong feel of their heartbeat. Did I win over all the critics? I don't think so but by God's grace, I know that there are some who were won over by the time I finished my term in the church.

Another challenge that I encountered was when attempting to make changes within the church. Changes make people uncomfortable. But when I was brought in to effect change and to strengthen the pulpit ministry, I had to ensure that changes were carried out faithfully with God's guidance, wisdom and strength. On many occasions when I felt extremely challenged, God graciously drew my attention

not only to Scriptures but also the many lessons that I had learnt during my time in Barker Road Methodist Church.

Which scripture speak a lot to you about your time in ministry?

John 14:27 says, "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid." (NIV) This verse has pulled me through challenging times in my journey to serve God.

Please recount an experience or two in which the Lord has used you to make a difference in someone's life or within a community.

God let me play a part that saw the church relooking their mission's policy. Before I left the church, they had begun to make changes in their mission's policy. It was a joy to see the church commissioning a missionary, who was going to the field fully funded.

I wouldn't dare claim that God used me mightily to make a difference in someone's life. But I did have the privilege of playing a minor role in giving hope to a fellow brother in ministry. By God's grace, the church considered my suggestion and gave the brother an opportunity to serve. He's still in ministry and doing well in the church.

WHAT I FEAR MOST:

Saying or doing something that will hurt people.

MOTTO, PERSONAL MANTRA OR FAVOURITE QUOTE:

To keep me humble and in my place, I'm constantly reminded of this: "If I think I'm good and great, there are many more who are better and greater than I."

MY FAMILY:

I've three beautiful women in my life - my wife and two daughters.

THE TOP 3 HIGHLIGHTS OF MY LIFE:

1. Marrying my wife.
2. The birth of my two daughters.
3. Ordination as a pastor in the Presbyterian Church.

WHAT I LIKE BEST ABOUT WORKING AT KKMC SO FAR:

Seeing the "hands-on" attitude of members and leaders has been the most exciting aspect of my time in KKMC.

FAVOURITE MEMORY:

How I told my wife to take three days to think it over after she rejected my marriage proposal. This memory never fails to make me smile.

FAVOURITE FOODS:

I'm not much of a foodie. I can be easily satisfied with a plate of chicken rice with breast meat or even fried rice with just eggs.

WHAT I HOPE TO ACCOMPLISH AT KKMC:

My hope is that God will find me faithful in my service at KKMC. I'll have the honour of playing a part in the spiritual journey of God's children in this church. I'll be a good team player in supporting the pastors.

FAVOURITE HOBBY OR PASTIME:

I enjoy watching good English, Cantonese and Korean dramas.

PEOPLE WOULD BE SURPRISED TO KNOW THAT:

I'm afraid of dogs and cats! No offence to members who love the animals.

FAVOURITE SONG, SHOW AND BOOK:

- Be Still My Soul, a hymn written by Katharina von Schlegel in 1752 and translated by Jane Borthwick in 1855. It's based on Psalm 46, first part of verse 10. This hymn is very special to me as it always raises my dampened soul in times of difficult challenges.
- West Wing, a drama series about the ugly side of politics. This drama shows how people with diverse views work together, how each deals with issues that affect them personally and sometimes causes them to temporarily lose sight of the bigger picture. The dialogue can be rather blunt and brutal, and truth does hurt whether it be said with tenderness or in anger.
- Doing Church as a Team (1998), a book written by Wayne Cordeiro. I was deeply inspired by the book that I tried out its principles during my short tenure as a pastor in Presbyterian churches. In helping to rebuild the church leadership, I got the leaders to read the book together with me. It helped to provide a common basis in our discussion on leadership renewal and how the church can work together as a team.

BEFORE I DIE, I WOULD LIKE TO:

... have the opportunity to see the Alps and to see my daughters marrying not just godly men but men who'll love and cherish them deeply.

DISCIPLE



BECOMING DISCIPLES THROUGH BIBLE STUDY

A 34-week study of the whole Bible

..... that brings you through significant portions of the Scripture daily;
 featuring a group discussion each week based on careful preparation;
 drawing on the work of scholars to aid the group's understanding of the Bible;
 calling on individuals to submit themselves to examination by God's Word, to put themselves under the power of God's Word, and to be changed by God's Word.

Next Run
August 2016

IF YOU MAKE MY WORD YOUR HOME YOU WILL INDEED BE MY DISCIPLES.

~ John 8:31 (TNJB) ~

In this verse, Jesus challenges those who would be His disciples: Take up residence in my teaching, He says. Spend time with me, He says – long enough to feel at home with me. Jesus also includes a promise in the challenge: ...to make a home in my word, He says, is to find shelter, comfort, peace and joy in my way. The nature of discipleship, Jesus says, is like the lifetime of labour it takes to establish a place of growth and nurture, refuge and redemption, trust and hope. In the end, becoming a disciple, like making a home, is its own reward.

DISCIPLE also offers us a challenge

and a promise. The challenge is to see the regular, in-depth study of the Scripture, designed to develop biblically nourished individuals who're committed to discipleship, as the foundation for all congregational ministry. The promise is that those who study the Scripture will, with the help of the Holy Spirit, experience a power that changes priorities and redirects lives.

DISCIPLE guides small groups of individuals to focus on examination by the Scripture, to place themselves under the power of God's Word, and to be transformed by His Word. This process is not meant for a few

groups, but ultimately for every adult and every older youth in a congregation, generation after generation.

Transformation is central to the challenge and the promise of making DISCIPLE Bible study the starting point for ministry. If we desire a way of life – as individual Christians and as a faithful community – that is transformed by the way of Christ, then studying the Scripture is an essential move. For everyone!

(extracted and adapted from DISCIPLE Implementation Resource)

Jane Long (8am Service)

I knew about DISCIPLE through our church's bulletin announcement.

Why did I join?

- I've been a church-going Christian for a long time, reading through the whole Bible a few times and serving as a Sunday School teacher, but I didn't have the depth of knowledge.
- I wanted to study the Bible more thoroughly and learn what it means to be a disciple of Jesus Christ.
- I had no time to join any night classes.

I found out that the course consists of:

- 34 lessons, held weekly from 7.30pm to 9.45pm, for about 11 months with breaks in-between.
- Daily assignments (independent study and preparation) using a Participant's Manual, except on the day of meeting.

After having pondered for about a week, I finally made the commitment to take up the course.

There were 13 of us in the class, excluding the two facilitators, Pastor Kenneth Huang and Mr Poh Zhi-Hui. It was a pleasant surprise to find that the participants, both young and old,

came from all three services.

The well-structured study format covered a short video presentation on the book of the Bible that we were studying the week before. Later we were divided into discussion groups of two to four in each group. After a 10-minute break, we had to change our seating arrangement as a way of getting to know everyone in the class. This would help us to affirm the spiritual gifts that we've observed in each member at the end of the whole study. We ended the class with prayer requests and blessing each other according to 2 Corinthians 13:14: "May

the Grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.”
The last two lessons were held back-to-back on a Saturday. It was a time of appreciating one another in the class, helping to identify the spiritual gifts of each member, and having a ‘last supper’ together. We placed much importance on affirming each other’s gifts.

How did I benefit from the course?
- I’m now aware of and I understand

Andrew How (9.30am Service)

I would like to share my experience and my perspective regarding the DISCIPLE programme.

Greater Bible knowledge

I’ve been participating in Bible study programmes for the past seven years or so. The difference between DISCIPLE and those programmes is that in the former, you cover almost the entire Bible from Genesis to Revelation within nine months. It focuses on the main themes of the Bible and gives a great contextual overview. Due to the nature of my work, I’m inclined towards learning concepts and how different things relate to one another, and DISCIPLE provides a perfect overview for me. It gave me a clearer perspective of the details and interpretation of the Bible.

Daily application to my life

A main focus of DISCIPLE is to understand the differences between worldly attitudes and views of life

Erwin Wong (11.30am Service)

Enrolling in DISCIPLE requires a massive commitment. There were daily reading assignments, ranging anywhere from one to about 10 chapters. On some days, there were questions to answer, and trust me, these are questions which force you to think long and hard.

So that went on for six days. On the seventh day, we gathered as a group for about two and a half hours. Guided by facilitators, we watched a video and spent the session discussing questions, topics, issues and reflections based on

the link between the Old and New Testaments.

I was able to meet and get to know people, especially the young ones.

- I was encouraged and motivated by the weekly sharing and praying in a small group. For instance, one of the course participants couldn’t join us physically due to health concerns, yet she could be with us through prayer.
- I received help in my personal study of the Bible and preparation to teach in Sunday School. I’ve learnt, used



called ‘Our Human Condition’ and how to view things and live with Godly wisdom which we call ‘Marks of Discipleship’.

This is useful because it guides me in how I look at things, how I prioritise my activities, how I deal with people in the workplace, how I interact with others and how I should live as a disciple of Christ.

All these are learnt through lessons from our study of the Bible (personally and as a community), video presentations by prominent Christian thinkers and theologians, as well as discussions led by our facilitators.

Fruitful fellowship

The course participants were from a wide range of age groups – from younger adults to mature members – and everyone contributed to active discussion and a better understanding of the lessons. We weren’t able to solve all the problems



what we’ve viewed in the video and read during the week. We had a total of 34 such weeks.

I signed up for the course rather apprehensively because of the heavy commitment over a period of nine months. But knowing that it would surely do me a lot of good, I decided to register for DISCIPLE, with the support and encouragement of my wife Johanna.

One of my main goals was to acquire a greater knowledge of the Bible. Despite spending my foundation

and shared with others helpful Bible study methods – the Sensory method (using the five senses); Theological Bible Study method (what the passage tells us about God, human, and the relationship between God and human being); Depth Bible Study (or onion peeling) method (layer by layer – what’s the original message to the people of that time? What’s the message in present time? What’s the message for me?)

Praise the Lord!

in the world or find easy answers to dealing with them, but through prayers among group members, we know that all things are in God’s hands. Pastor Kenneth and Zhi-Hui guided us through difficult and sometimes deep theological questions.

We supported each other by praying for one another throughout the year.

One of the biggest lessons for me is finding the discipline to complete the weekly homework (which involved quite a bit of reading) and finish the course. While it was challenging at times, I managed to make the course a matter of priority, although I had to miss a few classes over the course of the year.

If you’re interested in the DISCIPLE Bible study course, just take the first step to commit it unto the Lord and let God do the rest in overcoming any challenges of enrolling in the year-long programme.

years as a young Christian in Sunday School and in Boys’ Brigade, my Bible knowledge was still rather weak (but this was mainly due to my lack of diligence during classes back then). DISCIPLE has addressed this shortcoming for me.

Reading almost the entire Bible from front to back enabled me to get a clearer picture of Biblical history from the Old to the New Testament. It enriched my readings of God’s Word by adding context to passages whenever I read them now. I’ll constantly ask questions such

as, "Who wrote this? To whom is it written to? What's the purpose?"

I've received a better understanding of what Christian discipleship is. I've learnt how, despite being in this world rife with sin and apathy towards doing good, we can still work towards displaying the various 'Marks of Discipleship', thereby striving to be the best followers of Jesus that we can be.

We've read a lot of the Bible, we've learnt how to undertake Christian discipleship with Jesus as our leader,

and we've been affirmed of our spiritual gifts. Now, how can we synergise these towards our service in the church, in our community, and in the world? Perhaps one of the main takeaways from this course is learning how to do that.

Aside from the personal spiritual growth that I've experienced, I also gained a community of support from the new friends whom I've made.

I've learnt so much from my facilitators and fellow classmates, and I've been inspired by the very

honest sharing of their lives. We pray for each other throughout the week and we check in on each other over WhatsApp as well.

I would strongly encourage you to consider signing up for the next run of DISCIPLE. It's a huge investment in terms of time and effort - I still remember very clearly trying hard to keep awake reading Leviticus and Job - but if you just allow God and His Word to do a work of transformation in your life, I know - and you know too - He will!



We Are LifeGroup Michelle Boen

LifeGroup has always been a very special family to me. My first experience of LifeGroup began when I joined the Youth Ministry back in 2008. Eventually I came to be part of the "We Are" LifeGroup. In late 2014, "We Are" LifeGroup made a decision to shift our regular Sunday LifeGroup sessions to a Friday evening session to enable our members to serve in other church ministries on Sundays.

Change was and still is difficult. Holding LifeGroup on a weekday was a greater commitment as it meant giving up precious time that could be spent with family, friends or doing work. Since our LifeGroup had members in National Service, polytechnics, local and overseas universities and our leaders who are working, meeting became a big challenge due to conflicting schedules. Some sessions saw more people than the discussion table could fit. However, there were days where only a few were present. Although I would admit that seeing few members at LifeGroup was discouraging, I am continually encouraged by Matthew 18:20, "For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them". Indeed, whether the numbers are small or big, God is always with us.

Over the past months, LifeGroup has become an important part of my week. Despite facing trials and difficulties each day, ending my week with LifeGroup continually reminds me that I have a family praying and encouraging me on. The wisdom and advice from fellow members encourage me, and remind me to seek strength from the Lord in all circumstances. Although



I admit that some weeks I feel like giving LifeGroup a miss, Hebrews 10:25 constantly reminds me to not "give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another".

I have truly come to understand the power of a LifeGroup. The LifeGroup is not just a group of believers, but a family of Christian brothers and sisters who bear one another's burdens (Galatians 6:2) and build up one another (1 Corinthians 14:26). I've also learnt that making a commitment to put aside time for LifeGroup is not easy. However, when we learn to trust and commit our time to Him, He blesses us abundantly in these times.

"We Are" LifeGroup members are: Dorothy and Sherwin (leaders), Deborah, Hui Ping, Jade, Luther, Marissa, Michelle, Othilia, Paul and Rachel.

Seniors Trip to Vietnam

9 - 13 Mar 2016

Lim Geak Kim

From the start of the journey, God's presence was felt. A total of 30 seniors from KKMC, with some relatives and friends, left on a trip to Vietnam. Our first stop was at Dalat, located in Lam Dong province in the Central Highlands of Vietnam.

We met at the airport and soon we were on board SQ184, ready for takeoff. As the plane taxied on the runway, two popping sounds were heard. No one paid any attention to the sounds and no one was alarmed. The plane continued to cruise on the runway. After 40 minutes, passengers were beginning to appear curious and concerned that the plane had still not taken off. At this point, the plane stopped and soon the Captain's voice was heard over the sound system. He explained that a team of engineers was on their way to inspect the plane. He apologised for the inconvenience caused and the inevitable delay. Twenty minutes later, the Captain's voice was heard again announcing that for our safety, we had to change planes.

After a long walk to another departure lounge and another wait of about 40 minutes, we finally boarded another SQ plane for Ho Chi Minh (HCM) Airport. This time, the plane took off smoothly and we were airborne and relieved to know that we were finally on our way to Dalat.

Because of the delay in departure time, we would have missed the connecting domestic flight from Ho Chi Minh Airport to Dalat. Again by God's grace, the connecting flight was delayed and we managed to catch the plane. We reached Dalat safely, without our luggage, however. God was testing us, His children.

Being a small town, there are no traffic lights on the Dalat roads. Traffic was lighter compared to the heavy traffic in HCM City. However, even in Dalat, crossing the roads requires some courage and trust in God.

One place of interest that we visited in Dalat was a coffee plantation that produced a brand of coffee called luwak coffee. Here civet cats are reared

in captivity and fed with only the best and fleshiest coffee beans and fruits. Their digestive enzymes ferment and break down the proteins. The beans harvested from the faeces supposedly create a coffee that connoisseurs claim is "rich, slightly smoky with a hint of chocolate", making it one of the best coffees in the world.

We left Dalat early in the morning of our 3rd day, fully rested, well-fed and contented. As we travelled the long distances to the various tourist spots listed on our itinerary, we were reminded of God's grace and His presence through prayers, a testimony and hymns led by the Chairman of the Seniors' Committee, Tan Bie Guan. It is said that nothing happens by accident. And so we were blessed that our tourist guide in Dalat named Hung is also a Christian and blessed with a beautiful voice. He could reach the high notes without any effort. He sang several hymns in English as well as Vietnamese folk songs and when he sang "You Raise Me Up" our spirits soared to the heavens with him. The time on board the coach throughout the trip was a time of fellowship, fun and laughter as jokes were made and witty repartee exchanged among seniors on board. Nary a dull moment was experienced.

When we reached HCM Airport, our tour guide Anna was there to welcome us. And welcome us she did with her warm and beautiful smile (perfect teeth!) and easy-going nature. She spoke good English and we could easily understand when she explained the history of Vietnam, as well as the various tourist sites, which we visited throughout the remaining 2.5 days.

Of all the sites visited, the most meaningful was the visit to the Cu Chi Tunnels. It is a stark reminder to mankind that wars will always bring with it tremendous loss of lives, great sorrow, pain, anguish and widespread devastation. The only 'good' that surfaced was the resilience that we saw in the Vietcong who fought against the Americans who had invaded their land. The Americans were armed with great firepower and chemical warfare, of



▲ Lim Geak Kim, 2nd from right.
L-R, Hock Seng, Molly, Mary, Kim and Evelyn

which the Viet Cong had little or none. Instead their ingenuity, determination, courage, creativity and love of their motherland inspired and motivated them to fight for country and survival. The Americans finally left Vietnam defeated and with a great number of American lives lost. Till today, both sides bear the deep scars and painful memories of the war that was fought.

One other site of natural beauty and interest was the Prenn Waterfalls. As time was short, those who were interested to see them had to take a roller-coaster ride to get there. Thankfully, because of our age and the fact that it was late in the evening with fewer young guests around, the ride was smooth and non-terrifying, unlike what we would expect of roller coaster rides. The few that went on and survived the ride found it enjoyable. Unfortunately, time was too short for us to sit and gaze in wonder at the beauty of the waterfalls as they cascaded down the mountainous slopes with lush vegetation all around them.

Good times fly by only too fast and soon we were all boarding flight SQ183 to make our way home. It is doubtful that anyone would rate the trip as "poor" or "unsuccessful" especially if the increased weight of our luggage bags and extra hand carriers were anything to go by.

Kudos to Tan Bie Guan and Peter Quek, founder of Odyssey Travel, for the more than comfortable lodgings, very delicious meals and spacious coach from which we could enjoy the scenery and fellowship.

Mandarin Ministry Chinese New Year Visitations

Over the Chinese New Year (CNY) period, the Mandarin Ministry has made it a tradition to visit families of our church members. This year, many of our younger members joined the visitations for the first time. The visitations were times of mutual encouragement. Below are some testimonies from the visiting teams.

It was a really great experience for me to be able to join the CNY visitation.

I was particularly inspired by Auntie Lian's passion for God. Although she did not say much, I was given the opportunity to view and listen to the message she recorded on her 90th birthday 10 years ago. She is indeed a faithful follower of her Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

David Koo



▲ Victor, Sally and David (right) with Auntie Lian

▼ YaTing and AnQi with MM Ng Fook Kah



Victor Ng

It was heart-warming to visit the home of Eric and Alice Ho (Kate Ho's parents). They are a unique couple who are young in their Christian faith. Eric received Christ during the Alpha Weekend Retreat last October. Their eagerness to learn and grow in their faith is indeed an encouragement to many of us. Thank God for them!

On the 7th day of Chinese New Year, Victor and I visited Kar Keat's parents, Mr and Mrs Lim. Over the years, Uncle Lim and Auntie Lim have become close friends of the Mandarin Ministry. They often make special effort to come for our special services and activities whenever they were invited. They are wonderful people who are kind to us and never refuse our invitations.

On 24 February this year, Mr Lim Chin Guan (Kar Keat's dad) was called home by the Lord. We say "called home" because Ps Gabriel led Uncle Lim to Christ two days before he was lifted to glory. Although we as the body of Christ feel sorry for the loss, we nonetheless rejoice with Kar Keat for his dad's salvation. The sweet memories and friendship with Uncle Lim will always stay in our hearts. Our prayers and blessings are with Kar Keat and his mum as they move on in life with God's grace and strength.

Sally Ng

▼ Sally with MM Lim - Kar Keat's parents



▲ Eric & Alice Ho (back row) with Sally, Victor and David
► Visitation Team with Mei Jiao & Fei Zhou

I met brother Fei Zhou and his sister for the first time when I joined the Mandarin Ministry CNY visitation team. Brother Fei Zhou is in his mid-30s and is currently wheelchair-bound as he had a fall a while ago. I was very encouraged and blessed by Brother Fei Zhou's sharing. A certain church had helped him pen his testimony and he gladly gave us a copy. Before we left, Brother Fei Zhou requested us to pray for and bless his printed testimony so that many will be blessed by it. We did that. May the Lord's blessings be on Brother Fei Zhou and Sister Mei Jiao.

We also visited the home of 吴爸爸 and 吴妈妈 (Mr and Mrs Ng Fook Kah). They shared with us many of their personal stories, such as their happy marriage and family due to the grace of God. Before leaving that house, Gracia Ng played beautifully on the piano as we sang a few worship songs together, praising and thanking God for His love for us.

Initially, I thought the CNY Visitation was for us to bring joy and blessings to the homes we were visiting. In actual fact we were the ones blessed as we listened to their sharing of God's grace and faithfulness in their lives.

Chen AnQi

张雅婷

2月9日大年初二在爱心使者 Victor 叔叔和 Sally 阿姨带领下开始了那天的探访。对于那天的探访我充满了期待，因为这是我第一次参与探访，感恩主耶稣给予我这么宝贵的机会。

我们首先来到了玉兰阿姨的家，玉兰阿姨热情地迎接我们，我们向玉兰阿姨拜年祝她新年蒙恩蒙福，身体健康！玉兰阿姨请我们品尝种类丰富的新年饼和自制萝卜糕，同时也接二连三地迎来了给玉兰阿姨拜年的亲戚朋友，屋子顿时充满了欢声笑语和彼此的祝福，大家都沉浸在节日的欢乐中。

然后我们接着拜访了非洲弟兄和美娇姐妹，走出电梯就看到在走廊的另一头等待我们到来的非洲弟兄和美娇姐妹，Sally阿姨关心地问起他们的近况，他们喜乐地分享近况为主做见证，非洲弟兄还以诗歌《除祢以外》回应神。哈利路亚！感谢主赐予他们平安喜乐的心，在安琪姐妹的祝福祷告过后，我们又继续前往吴爸爸和吴妈妈家。

吴爸爸亲切的称吴妈妈为老妈，我们一起向吴爸爸和老妈拜年，然后听他们讲故事、讲历史、最宝贵的是数算神的恩典。神的喜乐充满着我们每一个人，我们一起用诗歌赞美我们的神！求主祝福恩膏吴爸爸一家！傍晚时分，我们依依不舍地离开了吴爸爸的家。

这次新年探访我又一次经历了从神而来的爱。感谢赞美主！我们爱，因为神先爱我们！祝主内的每一位弟兄姐妹新年蒙恩蒙福！



Mandarin Ministry *Kite-Flying Outing* 12 Mar 2016

顾虹：家庭营的风筝活动在我们的破冰游戏后，在欢声笑语中乘坐着巴士来到我们放风筝的地方。我们按小组分配，每个人都有属于自己的风筝，大家可以按照自己的想象力来描画自己的风筝。接下来就是我们在蓝天白云绿草场奔跑的时刻了。虽然这次的风筝没有飞到我们预期的高度，但这依然是个很开心的一次户外活动。大家一起谈笑风生，一起协调动手，一边欣赏着神所造的美丽风景。这是一个充实美好的一天。

感谢神保守这次的风筝家庭营从头到尾平安地结束，也谢谢策划这次活动付出时间和精力的小伙伴们。



Teagan: It was an enjoyable trip for me and my mum. The fun started in church even before we left for Marina Barrage for kite-flying, with the ice-breaker session where we got to know more names to the faces we meet during the church services!

After the ice-breaker games, we proceeded happily for the kite-flying outing, chatting and laughing in the bus as it took us to Marina Barrage. When we reached our destination, we broke up into our respective LifeGroups, with each one of us given a kite to decorate according to our own preference and imagination. Following that, it was time for a carefree run under the blue skies and green grassfields.

Even though the kites did not fly to our desired height, we had a great time. Amidst the chatter and laughter, everyone lent a hand to help out whenever needed, as they enjoyed the beauty of God's creation together. This was indeed a beautiful and fulfilling day.

We thank God for His protection over this kite-flying outing, and we also thank our brothers and sisters in the organising committee who gave of their time and energy to plan this outing.

Lay Hwa: The ice-breaker games held in church saw three generations playing games together. It was a good time of fellowship. At the Marina Barrage, we found that flying kites was difficult but some elderly members had a lot of fun just trying to get their kites off the ground. It was a good outing.

Mandarin Ministry 王奔翔的个人见证 Testimony of Wang Ben Xiang

在遇见基督之前，我的生活是：我是一个很内向自卑的人，当别人和我说话我都会沉默不语也不好意思说话，这使得我非常困难地去交朋友。我对自己的生命也没有什么目标，只能过着懒散且漫无目的的生活。

后来促使我寻求上帝的原因是：我在启发营中非常简单地认识了朋友，并且当我来到教会我觉得这里的所有人都非常地友好。所以，我想寻求上帝，希望祂可以使我变成一个乐观积极向上且充满自信的人。

于是：我融入教会，和更多的人交流，并且在这里有许多比我年长的弟兄姐妹，我可以从他们这里学到更多未

来我所需要的社会经验。

当时的我：对于自己的评价就是所谓的“心宽体胖”，所以这使我变得非常自卑，对于任何事的态度就是——我做不到，并且当时我根本就不知道也不会去想我自己能做到什么事。

现在的我：寻求了上帝，我知道现在我需要努力，并且我们应该不要为自己的不足之处而感到自卑，现在我会去想，不足之处也是我们所要挑战的，我们需要去克服它，让不足之处成为我们的成功之处。

Before I met Jesus Christ, I was an introverted person who also had an inferiority complex. When people talked to me, I would remain silent, too embarrassed to speak. This made it extremely difficult for me to make friends. As for my life, I had no goal, living an aimless, lazy life.

What caused me to seek God is this: at the church Alpha retreat, I made friends very easily. Also, I found that everyone in church was very friendly. Therefore, I decided to seek God, hoping that He would change me into an optimistic, motivated and confident person, like the people I met in church.

Hence I joined the church and socialised with more people, hoping that from amongst the brothers- and sisters-in-Christ

who have more life experience than me, I could learn from them the lifeskills to equip me for the future.

In the past, I felt I was plump and ugly, so I had low self-esteem. The attitude I had when facing any situation was — I cannot do it. Moreover, at that time, I did not know what I could do and did not even bother to think about what I could do.

The person I am now: after seeking and knowing God, I now know I need to work hard. I also realise we should not let our shortcomings discourage us. Now I feel that we should face our challenges and overcome our limitations with God's help, turning these weaknesses into strengths.

Testimony of Michelle Chua 蔡晓文的个人见证

I was one rebellious girl in my teenage years. I would sneak to the toilet for a smoke in between classes, my speech was filled with expletives and worse, I even stole my mum's Rolex watch and sold it.

It was in 20 January 2001 that I came to know the Lord and understood that God had created me for a purpose and that He had my life all planned out. I attended a youth meeting a week later and in response to the message that was preached, I offered my life to God for His use and God delivered me from my smoking habit - no shaking, no withdrawal symptoms. I didn't even have to go cold turkey

在我青少年时，我是一位叛逆的女孩。我会在上课之余溜进厕所吸烟，脱口而出的言语字子都是粗俗的。然而最糟的是我偷了我母亲的劳力士去卖。

2001年1月20日，我信靠了主耶稣也了解到主耶稣创造我是有意义的，并且把我的生命都已规划好了。隔了一个星期后，我参与了青少年事工会议并在听完讲道后，我做了回应。我把我的生命献上做为蒙神喜悦的活祭。当我做这样的回应时，神立刻释放了我，使我脱离了吸烟的恶习——最奇妙的是，我没有突然戒烟时的痛苦！

and I was delivered! Just like that!

Henceforth, I began my walk with the Lord daily and He transformed my life from the inside out. People would comment, "Hey, I can't tell you were like that before!" and that brings me joy! I really am grateful to God for saving me!

Now, I have been serving full-time in a well-known Evangelistic ministry for 8 years. If God can turn my life around and use a wretch like me, He most definitely can turn your life around and use you!

就这样脱离了！

从那时起，我每日忠心地事奉主耶稣而祂也改造了我的生命。当我朋友对我说“你和以前不一样了，你有改变了”的时后，我会感到很庆幸也很感恩神救了我并赦免了我的罪。

现在我在著名的宣教部全职事奉神已有8年了。如果神能使我的生命有了180度的转变并且使用我，祂也必定能为你一样这么做！

刘玮的个人见证 Testimony of Liu Wei

在我遇到基督耶稣之前，我没有生活目标，我不知道活着是为了什么。我只追求一时的快乐，我的自制能力很弱。我总是有负面的情绪和思想。面对困难的时候，我总是想着放弃，我常常感到非常地孤单、寂寞。

有一天我被朋友带来了教会。那时候，我对基督耶稣的了解非常少。当我踏进教会的时候，我感受到了前所未有的平安和温暖。那一次，我对耶稣产生了好奇心，我开始想要拥有那种安全感。

于是我去教会的次数越来越多。后来，我接受了耶稣为我生命的救主。我接受了洗礼，参加了查经班，参加了团契，听了许多关于上帝的道，参加了教会的服侍。我对上帝爱世人有了更深入的了解，我越来越相信这个世界上真的存在着一位爱世人的救主。虽然我的肉眼看不见

祂，但是祂对我的爱却是真实地存在。我对上帝有了渴慕的心，我想要跟随祂。

当时，我的想法、性格、行为都有了很大的改变。我渐渐地对自已的行为有了约束，我常常心里有个声音会告诉我该怎么做，什么是对的，什么是错的。我的负面情绪和想法渐渐地有所减少。我变得开朗了一些，对某些事物的固执的想法也改变了。我很平安。

现在我依然对上帝有渴慕的心，我依然相信这位救主是真实存在的，并且我愿意选择继续跟随祂。虽然负面的情绪和想法还是会经常出现，但是我清楚地知道上帝是爱我的，我唯有抓住上帝。因为这位上帝使我的软弱变刚强，使不可能变为可能，使没有变为丰裕。上帝拯救了我，我知道了我原本的身份，我知道我有盼望。

Front row (L-R): Michelle Chua, Liu Wei and Wang Ben Xiang at their baptism on 27 March 2016 with Mandarin Ministry leaders.



Tamil Women's Retreat

Metilda Joseph

A WIFE OF NOBLE CHARACTER WHO CAN FIND? SHE IS WORTH FAR MORE THAN RUBIES.

Prov 31:10

As Christian women, we must be aware that we have a vital role to play in building a good family and a healthy society.

By the grace of our Lord, we had the Women's Fellowship retreat on Saturday 7 Feb 2016 at The Unfailing Light. Seventeen women and a few children attended the retreat. The programme started with an opening prayer by Metilda Joseph, followed by singing, prayer time, a skit, testimonies, a sermon, games and a health talk. Rev Judith Vethanbu shared a meaningful sermon on Isaac, son of Abraham. She highlighted the generosity and magnanimity of Isaac even to his enemies so that he was blessed with grains even when the



CHARM IS DECEPTIVE, AND BEAUTY IS FLEETING; BUT A WOMAN WHO FEARS THE LORD IS TO BE PRAISED.
Proverbs 31:30

land was experiencing a famine.

Dr. Priya Samuel gave a helpful talk on women's health.

The retreat helped us to refocus on looking after our inner beauty and not just the outward appearance.

Tamil Ministry All Night Prayer

7 Feb 2016
D.Joseph

Our Lord Jesus Christ was a man of prayer. Before every major event in His earthly life, He prayed to the Father. If our Lord prayed overnight during His earthly ministry, should we not pray also?

ONE OF THOSE DAYS JESUS WENT OUT TO A MOUNTAIN SIDE TO PRAY, AND SPENT THE NIGHT PRAYING TO GOD.
Luke 6:12

As it was the long Chinese New Year break, we did not expect many prayer warriors to turn up for the Tamil Ministry's all night prayer meeting, but we were surprised and encouraged by those who attended.

The evening started with a bible test from the book of Deuteronomy. After the test, Brother Kovil Pitchai led an energetic worship session. We all felt the presence of the Holy Spirit. We prayed for Singapore, India, all the nations and their leaders, missionaries and the various ministries in our church.



Pastor Rev. Isaac Raju delivered an encouraging sermon from John 2:1-11 "Jesus changes water into wine". The transformation of water into wine at the Wedding at Cana was the first miracle attributed to Jesus in the Gospel of John. The sermon comforted us and helped us to increase our faith in God. The faith assured us that God would meet all our needs. He would not leave

us and He would not forsake us.

After the sermon, we had a short tea break with refreshments to keep us warm.

This was followed by many people taking turns to share their testimonies, which strengthened our faith in God. Finally, Pastor Rev. Vethanbu led us in prayer for our personal needs. The

all night prayer session ended with a benediction by our Pastor.

We are thankful to KKMC'S Tamil Ministry for organising the all night prayer. It is wonderful to know that KKMC is encouraging its members to lead healthy prayerful lives. Every year, the Tamil Ministry conducts two all night prayer sessions.

Tamil Ministry Gospel Sunday

B. Sudhakar

The Lord gave us a vision and command to share the Gospel to the unreached. To fulfill our vision, the Tamil ministry organises Gospel Sundays twice a year. We have also been involved in sharing God's love among Indian brothers in Jurong, Tuas and the Woodlands area.

KKMC Tamil Ministry held its first Gospel Sunday for this year on 13 March 2016. Prior to the service, we sought God's presence and His abundant grace through our 24-hour prayer chain, where at least one person would be praying every hour for 24 hours. Though heavy rain on that day deterred some of the guests we had invited, our Lord did open another door by filling our church sanctuary when our pastor and church members invited the brothers who had gathered around

Jesus proclaimed,
GO INTO ALL THE WORLD AND PREACH THE GOOD NEWS TO EVERYONE.
 Mark 16:15

the church to seek shelter from the wet weather.

Thank God many people responded to the altar call and accepted Jesus Christ as their personal Saviour.

We collected feedback forms from them for follow-up. We saw our Lord Almighty's abundant blessing and presence on this Gospel Sunday. Join us in giving thanks to God for His marvelous works.



Tamil Mission Sale 2016

Rubia Jacob

They sold whatever they owned and pooled their resources so that each person's need was met.
 Acts 2:45

In the book of Philippians, the great missionary Paul wrote to the church in that city to thank them for the support for his ministry. In Philippians 4, Paul told the church that he knew it was God who takes care of him. Yet God used the people of Philippi to be the agents of the provision. Paul thanked them for their part in the ministry. Because of the gifts of Philippian believers, Paul said that God would put the fruit of his own ministry to the account of the church in Philippi (v.17).

The mark of a great church is not its seating capacity but its sending capacity. (Mike Stachura)

Mission is really a partnership. God considers those who contribute financially to ministry to have a share in that ministry (3 John 8). To show our partnership in mission, KKMC Tamil Ministry organised a mission sale on Easter Sunday, 27 March 2016, to raise funds for the missions work of KKMC in India.



Members of KKMC Tamil Congregation supported the mission sale by selling some sweets and snacks bought in from India and Sri Lanka, homemade sweets, crafts, dolls, dresses, bags and other household items. The members of the English congregation also took part in this mission sale by contributing used electronic goods and other gifts.

All praise and glory belongs to God. Through this sale, the KKMC family showed their team effort, unity,

**BE SHEPHERDS OF GOD'S FLOCK
 WATCHING OVER THEM NOT BECAUSE
 YOU MUST, BUT BECAUSE YOU ARE
 WILLING, EAGER TO SERVE.**

1 Peter 5:2



The Tamil Ministry also extended the Easter Mission Sale to the English congregations by setting up tables with Indian snacks on 20 March 2016.

dedication and full involvement towards the mission work.

I want to especially highlight and show our appreciation for the KKMC Tamil Ministry children and their parents who motivated them to participate in this sale.

On behalf of the KKMC family, I would like to express my gratitude for those who were involved in the mission sale through their participation, support and prayer.

Kindergarten Updates

New Girls' Uniform

The start of a new year in 2016 saw a change in the girls' uniform. The new uniform made the girls look neater and exudes a certain girlish charm.

Mini Molly — National Library Board Minibus Library

On 8 January 2016, the children had a visit from Mini Molly, the National Library Board (NLB) minibus library. This is the kindergarten's second year of collaboration with the NLB. The children were exposed to a variety of books to inspire a love for reading. Children were encouraged to borrow books from the library and our teachers assisted in the borrowing process.

Bible Story Time

The children always look forward hearing Bible stories told by Pastor Anil from the Tamil Methodist Church in Short Street. He comes once a week and he never fails to keep the children's attention and focus. We are grateful for Pastor Anil's ministry to our children.

Chinese New Year Celebrations.

One feature of the KK Kindergarten is the celebration of different festivals throughout the year. With children from different races and cultures in the KK Kindergarten, these festivities are opportunities to appreciate and enjoy the diversity of each child's heritage. We celebrated Chinese New Year with the traditional lion dance. The children had a lot of fun when they were given the chance to hold the lion's head and taught the dance moves. The celebration was capped with children enjoying authentic Chinese New Year goodies brought by parents.

Field Trip to Act 3 Academy

On 9 February 2016, 70 of our children from the Nursery to Kindergarten 2 levels went on a field trip to the Act 3 Academy. There, they had hands-on activities and story-telling based on the book "Fly Hat Fly". The children were able to articulate their thoughts and express themselves in creative ways.

Little Green Dot

The Little Green Dot is a project organised by Tetra Pak Singapore and supported by the National Environment Agency (NEA), where Kindy 1 and 2 children are taught to recycle used beverage cartons (UBCs).

On 22 January 2016, Little Green Dot facilitators from Global Indian International School came to give a talk. The children were told how to Rinse, Flip, Flap, Flatten (3"R"F) the UBC before depositing them in the UBC recycling bin that was provided. The children were encouraged to bring used beverage cartons from home and deposit them into the Little Green Dot recycle bin which is left in the social hall. Parents were also prompted to join their children in taking an active role in this recycling programme.

End of Term Party

Having worked hard for the first term, our children, teachers and parents came together on Friday, 11 March for an end of term party. Through games, songs and food, the children had a lot of fun interacting with their peers and adults.



Feed The Hungry

6 Mar 2016

Kelvin Goh
On behalf of The Bridge LifeGroup

In line with our Church's mission to be a blessing to the community **along the streets**, our LifeGroup stepped forward to serve the migrant community around KKMCC. We handed out food, gospel tracts, and also gave the migrant workers postcards and Polaroid photos which they could send home to their loved ones.

It was a good opportunity as well to speak with the migrant workers and find out their hopes, dreams and concerns. We learned of their tough lives at the construction sites and of the challenges of being away from their families. Some of them asked about the gospel and a handful of them were interested in finding out more. We saw a few of them attending the Tamil service after consuming their food.

We feel that the migrant workers are just like any one of us. They too have aspirations and want to provide a better life for their family. They are not just workers but people in need of



A migrant worker looking happily at a Polaroid photograph of himself. Note pads and envelopes were made available for those who wanted to send the photos back to their families.

God as well. Hopefully, though what we did was just a simple gesture, we showed them just a little bit of God's love and grace.

Walking Along the Streets

Gabriel Liew

The Outreach and Social Concern Committee shared God's love with the ladies at Desker Road by distributing dinner to them on Friday, 5 Feb and Holy Thursday, 24 Mar 2016. This is in line with our Wesleyan tradition: "Outcasts of men, to you I call, harlots and publicans and thieves; he spreads His arms to embrace you all." UMH 342 v. 4.

On 5 Feb we celebrated the Chinese New Year with them by giving them mandarin oranges.

Ms Lily Bok wrote, "It was raining heavily when we visited the sisters at Desker Rd. We greeted them with Mandarin oranges and food. They were touched by our gesture seeing that we were all soaked to the skin. We gave them gospel tracts and we prayed that they would get to know Jesus. I was moved to see a man squatting in the alley and reading the wet tract I had given him earlier. I also gave tracts to passers-by at the alley."

On Holy Thursday, 24 Mar, the team gathered in church to celebrate Mr Ying Yoke Kong's 84th birthday before we went to invite the ladies at Desker Road to our Good Friday and Easter services. We told them that Jesus loves them so much that He died for them on Good Friday and rose again on Easter Sunday. We invited them to our church services.

Please contact Pastor Gabriel if you would like to join us in this special ministry.



The Team for CNY



The Team for Holy Thursday

Break Prejudices, Create Understanding

Gabriel Liew

Mr Necmettin Eskici, Director of the Turkish Cultural Centre (TCC), is a beloved friend of KKMCC. He regularly joins us for events like the Hymn Festival and Christmas Day service. Rev Kenneth Huang and some church leaders have also attended a few friendship dinners and Iftar (breaking of fast) organised by him.

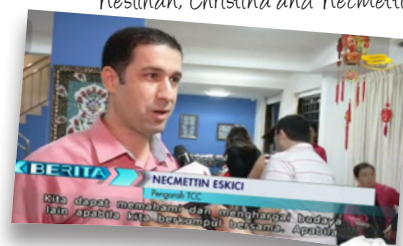
Necmettin invited Alan, Christina, Linette Soon and me to the Lunar New Year celebration at TCC on 20 February 2016.

I enjoyed that evening very much. The sharing of their homecooked food and stories was a good bonding experience. I found the TCC people sincere and friendly. I learnt that Islam is about embracing and being inclusive.

The TCC children sang a few Chinese New Year songs in Mandarin. Someone played a Chinese instrument. The evening ended with "lo hei" to signify our friendship and unity. We were presented with oranges.



(L-R) Gabriel, Linette, Alan, Neslihan, Christina and Necmettin



Necmettin interviewed by Suria

Necmettin spoke from his heart and this is his speech:

Dear friends, *Xīn nián kuài lè!* (Happy CNY!)

Welcome to TCC's CNY celebration! I hope you have enjoyed our mini CNY programme.

*This event might be small but very significant. Today, we live in a world where people are separated from one another. Even neighbours do not greet each other. Unfortunately, social media replaces face-to-face relations. In that sense, gatherings like this one become very important. This is how we can **break prejudices, create understanding**, and feel closer to our fellow friends and neighbours.*

In TCC, we believe in diversity, inter-cultural engagements, dialogue and understanding. We believe that we are part of the society we live in. A society is like parts of a body. If one part of the body is hurt, the rest of the body will suffer.

We must understand and appreciate the other segments of the society to have a harmonious and happy community. We strongly recommend that our community learn, understand and engage in local cultures.

Joy increases and sorrow diminishes when shared. We wanted to join our Chinese friends on their happiest and most important festival. We also celebrate Hari Raya and Hari Raya Haji with our Muslim friends. This is how we feel that we belong to Singapore.

With that, I would like to thank our ladies for preparing the scrumptious Chinese and Turkish dishes as well as our kids for their great performances. I think they have deserved a 'hongbao'!

Thank you for being with us tonight and hope to see you in future events.

Nián nián yǒu yú! (Abundance for the New Year)

I am very grateful for the kind hospitality I received from my Turkish Muslim brothers and sisters. They were so welcoming! And they appreciate and seek to understand and learn the good in every culture. I pray that KKMC will seek to be like Jesus in the religious and racial space and to **do our part** in making this world a better place for our children and our children's children.

A Reflection on the Talk by the Most Rev William Goh on “Inter-Faith Relationship – Peace Making & Bridge Building”

Poh Zhi-Hui

At the TRAC Board of Outreach & Social Concerns (BOSC) Annual Dinner on 31 March 2016, the Archbishop of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Singapore, the Most Rev William Goh, shared on the topic, “Inter-Faith Relationship – Peace Making & Bridge Building.”

Archbishop William Goh framed his exhortations and perspectives in the context of TRAC's (and more broadly, the Church's) work in outreach and social concerns. For the Christian, the social work that we engage in flows from the conviction that God is love and we are called to serve all without distinction. For the Christian, good works are an expression of faith – without faith (in Christ), there can be no Christian good deeds. The goals of Christian social work are very different from humanitarian work. Both seek to alleviate human suffering in its various forms. But Christian social work has as its ultimate goal that people find God. This goal must not be confused with conversion – Christian social work does not seek to convert people, but it seeks to make known and offer God's love to people. If the Christian's social work flows from the conviction that God is love and has as its goal making known God's love to people, then it has to be done sensitively. Without sensitivity,

whatever work we do may be mistaken and “perceived negatively” as “aggressive proselytising” by non-Christians.

Inter-faith relationships when engaged in properly, rather than undermining the Christian's witness, ensures that the good works of the Church are received by non-Christians as gifts of God's love and bear fruit (instead of being viewed with suspicion and rejected). Archbishop William Goh shared that engagement in inter-faith relationships with sensitivity (and, I think, integrity) requires four elements: recognising brotherhood; recognising that which is common; recognising distinctiveness; and dialogue.

A critical point stressed by Archbishop William Goh is that while there are

theological grounds to recognise the brotherhood of all humankind (with God as the Creator of all) and the common truths in other faith traditions (since there can be only one truth and all things true and holy are of God) – and these give us the basis for mutual respect and starting points for dialogue – there must never be a denial of the distinctiveness of all religions. To deny the distinctiveness of any religion is to disrespect them. Recognising the distinctiveness of religions is to affirm that Christianity is distinct from other religions. To recognise distinctiveness is to also realise that just as a Christian's faith is shaped by his experiences and the tradition (i.e. way and interpretation of life) of the church he is in (whichever his denomination), the faith of an adherent

His Grace Archbishop William Goh together with KKMC members



of another religion is shaped by that person's experiences and religious tradition. A person's experience can be interpreted, but it cannot be disputed. Christian charity recognises that others have also encountered religious experiences that we may not understand, and we cannot force our interpretation of their experiences on them – just as we do not expect them to force their interpretation of our experiences on us.

An Encounter With

Taoism

Chiang Ming Cherng
Chairperson, Family Life

What is Taoism? Is it a religion or a way of living? What are its origins and beliefs? How is it different from Buddhism?

Being born into a Christian family, I was ignorant of the beliefs and practices of other religions. With the world becoming more torn apart by militant religions preaching hate and segregation, I feel that it is important for us to connect with people of different faiths in love and understanding so that by our love, all people will know we are disciples of Christ. Therefore, when Master Wei Yi from the Taoist Federation, a friend of KKMC, invited KKMC and other members of the Inter-Religious Organization (IRO) to celebrate the Lunar New Year with a lunch on Wednesday, 10 February 2016, I was excited to join in.

The lunch was held in the Taoist Federation's premises at San Qing Gong, a temple in Bedok North Avenue 4. Representatives from other religions were also present, and KKMC was represented by Rev Gabriel Liew, Mdm Lau Kan How (Church Archivist) and myself.

The celebration started with a lion dance to dedicate the Sacred Hall of Da Luo, which houses a grand three-storey shrine built in 2011 to reflect the hierarchy of Taoist deities.

I took this opportunity to find out more about Taoism and the deities represented in the shrine. One of the priests, Master Adrian, patiently explained the various deities, beliefs and practices of Taoism to me.

Master Adrian pointed out to us that

Much conflict and division (which is also clearly seen among Christian denominations) can be attributed to misunderstandings, often arising from an imposition of one's interpretations on others and a lack of dialogue in seeking to understand the other. Dialogue at the comfort level of the persons involved aids us in building relationships. And the humble attitude that seeks to understand the other guards us against false assumptions

or hasty judgments which may escalate into conflicts.

The framework of brotherhood, commonality, distinctiveness and dialogue for inter-faith relationships is helpful as we think about our Christian Outreach and Social Concerns efforts, and as we consider and engage in peace-making and bridge-building as a critical component of proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom of God.



Tossing "yu sheng" with representatives from the Taoist, Sikh and Baha'i faiths at our table



The delegation from KKMC with Master Wei Yi, second from left; Lutheran Bishop Terry Kee; and Mr Harbans Singh, Sikh representative on the IRO Council, extreme right

the shrine has three levels. The top level has three deities known as the Three Pure Ones, the highest Gods in Taoism:

Yu Qing Yuan Shi Tian Zun (The Jade Pure One, The Celestial Worthy of Primordial Beginning); Shang Qing Ling Bao Tian Zun (The Supreme Pure One, The Celestial Worthy of the Numinous Treasures); and Tai Qing Dao De Tian Zun (The Grand Pure One, The Celestial Worthy of the Tao and its Power).

It is believed that Tai Qing Dao De Tian Zun manifested himself in various forms, one of which was Laozi, the founder of Taoism. It is also believed that Laozi wrote Daodejing, a philosophical text that forms the basis of Taoism, some time around the 6th century BC. Daodejing may have had some influence on Buddhist philosophy when Buddhism arrived in China later.

I later found more information on the San Qing Gong's homepage: <http://www.sqg.com.sg/>

What stood out for me was the warmth and hospitality of the priests and hosts, who were very down-to-earth and had no airs about them, making me feel very welcome and at ease.

After the dedication ceremony, about 100 people partook in the lunch that was prepared by one of the Taoist members. Before lunch was served, there was the traditional tossing of "yu sheng" where we wished each other blessings for the Lunar New Year.

At the end of the event, I had made several new friends from other religions and went away with a better understanding of a few other religions. Through such better understanding, we can be more mindful of the beliefs of others so that we will not be disrespectful but be able to share the love of Christ graciously and humbly.

With KKMC's continued participation at such events, I hope that Christianity would not be seen as insular and exclusive. Instead, may we show clearly that Jesus' love is for all.

Trackers Reflections

TRACKERS is a three month long full-time discipleship course organised by the Board of Youth Ministry in Trinity Annual Conference. There are three main phases of TRACKERS: the lecture phase, the missions phase, and the musical outreach phase.

Luther Yap joined the TRACKERS Programme at the beginning of this year. Luther reflects on his journey and believes that not only has he grown spiritually and musically, he has also developed a deeper understanding God's faithfulness and sovereignty. He shares:

On the spiritual and intellectual front, the theological lectures in TRACKERS provided me with the context to understand and evaluate biblical ideas. Rev Dr Gordon Wong's lecture on Biblical Interpretation showed me how to read scripture more effectively by looking at historical background, co-texts, and repetitions. Rev Raymond Fong's lecture on The Story showed me the main biblical themes that provided an effective framework to sort biblical ideas while Rev Dr Chiang Ming Shun's lecture on Church History helped me understand the origins of Protestantism better and made sense of the Christian denominations today. In light of such ideas, I feel I am better equipped to read and interpret the bible. I believe this will have positive implications on how I lead my LifeGroups in the future.

Unfortunately, the largest distance in the world is between the head and the heart. TRACKERS revealed many aspects of my life that I had tried to hide. Pastor Joseph's Father Heart of God provided a Lockean framework to evaluate the influences that we had in the past that could have influenced the way we thought about things presently.

In the mission trip phase, I was assigned to the team going to Cebu, Philippines. In the course of the trip, God showed me what it meant to carry His compassion for the broken, for the lost, and for His Kingdom.

I had brought along the cross puzzle given out during Kampong Kapur Methodist Church's 122nd Anniversary. This was an evangelism tool to illustrate how Jesus has conquered the grave. I decided to bring the cross puzzle with me the day we went to a local hospital to pray for the sick.

While at the hospital, I noticed a boy around my age who had come into the hospital the previous night due to a head injury. His father, influenced by drugs, had an argument with the family and hit this boy's head with a steel rod. This boy, as the oldest son, was worried sick about his family, and was unable to forgive his father. My heart went out to him. I took out the cross puzzle and shared the gospel with him, telling him how Jesus has the ability to forgive sins, and how God is able to change his



▲ God used the song "More" in the musical outreach phase.

father. Beyond praying over the head injury, we prayed for reconciliation in his family and for forgiveness. I gave the cross puzzle to him without hesitation, hoping that it would be a good reminder of Christ in His life. May he forgive his father one day.

After a spiritual high from the mission trip, I experienced 'reverse culture shock' upon returning to Singapore and I felt myself spiralling into depression. Then I committed everything to God, telling Him about the inadequacies I felt about myself – physically, intellectually, socially, and emotionally. I kept asking God, "Is there more?"

After praying, I felt led to turn that weak and broken prayer into a song entitled "More". A fellow Tracker had shared her struggles with me in days prior, so I sent "More" to her, hoping that it would speak to her in some way. She agreed to sing the song for a recording. In both times that she sang the song, she was crying. It meant so much that someone cared for me and understood how I felt. She is just another human being; how much more does God love and understand me! At the end of the song, I told her that even amidst the brokenness, the fact that we can sing this already shows our relationship with God – this is the most precious thing in the world.

The song "More" was used for the musical outreach phase. The day before the musical, I felt that "More" was not just a personal prayer – it was an intercessory prayer. During a rehearsal in the sanctuary, two drops of water suddenly fell onto my keyboard, and another drop of water fell on my sleeve. I looked up, and it didn't seem like the roof was leaking, and neither was it raining. The lyrics I had written seemed even more real then — "As the tears well up in my eyes, I feel these tears trickling from the sky". It was about going beyond the hurts that I faced to focusing on the hurts that other people faced, and how God's heart went out to those who hurt. That night, I finally understood: I was still experiencing these hurts so that I can

understand how the pre-believers are feeling, and feel the burden to bring them back to Christ.

Two books, the devotional “Joy Beyond Agony” by Jane Roach and “Crazy Love” by Francis Chan brought my attention back to Christ. All my trials seemed negligible compared to the physical, emotional and spiritual pain that Jesus had to bear on the cross. I decided I ought not to dishonour Him by bearing the shame and guilt that He had already taken on the cross. All things of this life, ultimately, pale in comparison to the weight of glory that I have in Him. It was with this perspective that I wrote a song in response “Weight of Your Glory”, with special influence from 2 Corinthians 4:17. I should just live my life completely for Christ with joy – this probably is what Pastor Kenneth Huang meant by understanding what it means to make God my number one priority. My identity in Christ should transcend all aspects of my character, values and priorities, as I seek to see things from God’s

perspective. The arrangement of “Weight of Your Glory” was eventually played as the postlude of the Easter Sunrise service in KKMC this year.

The journey through TRACKERS allowed me to look at music from a very different perspective. I had been trapped in a bubble of thinking that church music revolved only around scores and hymns, because I had only ever played in traditional services and read from the scores in the hymnal. During TRACKERS, I was exposed to many interesting aspects of music that I had never paid close attention to before. I hope to be able to use these gifts in KKMC, or wherever God calls in the future.

Overall, I thank God for the opportunity to go through TRACKERS in this season of my life, so that I could realign my will to His and to see things from His perspective. God is indeed sovereign, and I will take up the cross daily to follow Him as His disciple.



▲ Game played in the YWAM base during a Youth Fellowship



▲ Agape Mission team to Cebu - Luther is 4th from right

More

The shattered mirror, shards in my fist
The blood of my brokenness poured out
The pile of work, failing arguments
The blankness of the page that shows my heart

The group of friends, endearing warmth
Ten thousand miles from the corner that I own
The round of drinks, another night
The pain suppressed will always come again

Pre-Chorus

As the tears well up in my eyes,
I feel these tears trickling from the sky

Chorus

Is there more to my fears and inhibitions?
Is there more to the situations I face?
Is there more that you see in me that I never see in myself?
Is there more to your love for me?

Bridge

I love you and I need you, though I know I don't deserve you
I love you and I need you forever, forever

Weight of Your Glory

How could you love so much to die for me?
You were nailed and beaten
Humiliated and rejected
Forsaken and abandoned

Through distress and pain of this life
I learn more about your pain
That you have borne on Calvary
And the love that overcame

It is you I seek and long for
I will take this heavy cross
Yet with immense joy and victory
I'll take this journey to the cross

Pre-Chorus

You are sovereign Lord
So in joy and trials I'll sing

Chorus

Gloria in excelsis deo
Gloria to the Risen King
I praise you as your child
And see the weight of your glory fall

Bridge

Ultimate, infinity
Everlasting God beyond
Justified by your blood
I can only be in awe

Ordination of Rev Pisut and Pastor Panya

At the closing service of the Mettakij Church Association 11th Annual Meeting held on 16 March in ChiangMai, Thailand, four pastors were ordained by Bishop Dr Wee Boon Hup.

Among the four were our Lahu pastor, Rev Pisut Khongsukthara who was ordained an Elder, and Pastor Panya Khajornsantichaikul who was ordained Deacon. Rev Pisut serves as the coordinator of the Lahu work and is also the pastor of the Water of Life Methodist Church. He has been serving with us since we started the Lahu work in 1998. Pastor Panya is the pastor of Payakorngdee Methodist Church, moving into the village in 2004 to pioneer church planting work.

Rev Kenneth Huang and Mr Lyndon Gan represented KKMC at the ordination service.

KKMC's goal is to help the local Lahu churches become mature indigenous churches with local leadership and local funding. To this end our Lahu pastors play a



Pisut's ordination as Elder



Panya's ordination as deacon

critical role. Our mission trips also contribute to the growth.

Please continue pray for the Lahu ministry and those involved. Prayerfully consider going on a

short mission trip as well. Please contact lyndon@kkmc.org.sg if you want to find out more on how you can be part of the Lahu ministry or other missions work.

Why and How I am involved in Missions

On 26 March, some 50 members attended a missions seminar to learn from our veteran missionaries, Patrick and Yin Heng Tan, and Ajit and Kim Hong Hazra. Between the four of them, they have around 120 years of missionary experience. They shared about the WHY and HOW of being In and Involved, Across the Seas.

As part of this missions seminar, three of our church members shared their experiences of being involved in Missions. These three, Teresa Kuek, a working mother of three, Chong Shuling, a married doctor, and Kegan Ang, a young working adult, have been regularly participating in short mission trips. Their testimonies are summarised here.

Teresa Kuek

I always had a desire to participate in mission trips but I had many excuses – juggling three kids, working full time (and feeling guilty most times), taking care of aging parents, not enough leave, no money, etc.

In 2002, I remember Edmond Looi, then chairperson of the Children's Ministry, sharing that God had

spoken to him to bring the Primary 6 kids on a mission trip in 2003. He was trying to encourage adults to join him. I jokingly told him God had called him but not me.

At that time, my very real and valid reason was that I did not have enough leave. I had 10 vacation days for the whole year. And with three kids, that was

really, really insufficient.

The proposed mission trip was six days of which 4 were working days. So simple math meant I would have 6 days of leave left for the entire year if I went for the mission trip. I struggled to surrender that 4 days. I failed to see God's perspective – that He is a great God who can do far more and beyond.

Then there was another call in 2003, and this time it was to conduct a Vacation Bible School (VBS) for the Lahu children during their school holidays in April 2004. I finally said yes to giving up the 4 days of leave. And when I did, I began to see how great God is. I had been praying but also had been doing my part in talking to my boss to increase my days of leave to 14 days. Well, God was greater than that. In November 2004, I was told I would be given 18 days for the year 2005. God is no man's debtor and He gives far beyond what we can imagine. (God gave me a raise too, so that took care of the "no money" part!)

As for the guilt I felt, I had to get my family's blessing. My husband Derrick said if God had called me, dare he say no?

So my first mission trip was in April 2004 – to conduct a VBS for about 140 kids, ranging from 4 to 16 years.

The weather was burning hot and the place was truly rustic. I remember cleaning and mopping our sleeping quarters to no avail. We finally gave up and just accepted the situation. In fact, we forgot about

it once we met the truly hospitable people and ate their delicious food.

I think we went with the expectation that we were going there to bless the children and the people there with our programmes and materials. But God showed us that we had to truly depend and rely on Him as many a time, we had to improvise and change our programme. We saw God working in us. We saw the people and the children who were hungry to hear what we had to share about God. I returned from that trip, truly in awe of God and feeling and knowing that I had received much more than I had given.

Subsequently, I made two trips in 2005, in April for Vacation Bible School and for the children's annual mission trip in November. Thereafter, I made many more trips.

Why did I make repeated trips?

I had been convicted earlier that we cannot do much on one mission trip as we were barely scratching the surface. It is when one makes repeated trips, that relationships develop and we see continuity in God's work. When we first started going to the local schools, we just conducted English and science lessons, shared testimonies and shared a little about God. It was after our fourth trip or so that we received a very warm welcome from the teachers of the school. And on our last trip, we were given the freedom to share the full gospel story and give an invitation for the students to learn more at church. It is a privilege to be planting seeds in God's Kingdom.



◀ Teresa's first mission trip, Easter 2004
▲ Clockwise from top: Teresa, Ghin Ee, Nathana and Ee Wah at the children's ministry trip in Dec 2015



▲ Shuling treating a baby on her first mission trip in Dec 2006
▼ Shuling teaching the body parts in English during the children's ministry trip in Dec 2015

Chong Shuling

I work as a paediatric emergency physician in KK Hospital Accident and Emergency department. My role in the short mission trips usually uses my vocational skills as a doctor.

My first trip up was in 2006 – I went with excitement and the plans to raise health care standards. I learnt quite early on that doctoring in the village context is actually a lot more difficult than I had previously thought. Coming from a tertiary institution where blood tests and X-rays are easily obtained, I soon realised that even diagnosing a patient accurately was sometimes a challenge, let alone instituting definitive management to treat the medical problem. So from an academic point of view, the ability to help sick people get well (and consequently the satisfaction from it) was not what I had expected it to be – most of the consults ended up being symptom management.

But God has shown me that the contributions of a doctor (and likewise other professions, I believe) is not necessarily in what we think we can do or what we think that we are good at.

Firstly, I learnt that God can use a doctor to bless the Lahu people, not necessarily in curing their ailments or in super medicines. Sometimes a touch or a kind word could go further than I thought. It brought people into the church – it brought them one step closer to the

local missionaries who themselves now had a chance to know these villagers better.

Secondly, God showed me that being a doctor also facilitated building a trusting relationship with some of the missionaries who were willing to share their own confidential medical information with me, either for prayer or for a second opinion.

Thirdly, God showed me that a doctor can add value to a missions team. On the recent P6 discovery trip, I saw for myself how impressionable and excited the children and youths are. By involving them in practical duties – as pharmacists arranging and dispensing medicine, triage nurses taking blood pressure measurements – I learnt that God can use me to show them how we can contribute practically on the mission field with our lives and skills. In fact, appreciating the power of prayer over medicine was a journey we embarked on together with the young people as each patient would be prayed for after the consult.

Can I encourage you to think about joining a missions team? God can use our vocational skills in many more ways, sometimes in ways we cannot imagine! But yet we believe that a willing vessel can be used for His glory on the mission field, and as a channel of blessings to the mission field, to the missionaries, and to the Singapore team as well.

Kegan Ang

I guess I'm standing here sharing because I've been on quite a few mission trips. To date, I have been on 9 mission trips to Lahu over a period of 10 years.

But there was a time I was a serial mission tripper.

Back in 2004, some of my friends went for the December Lahu mission trip. They had lots of fun. So when they got back, they told us stories about the kids, the carolling, the food, the river and all the other cool things.

But 14-year old me listening to their stories thought,

"Meh. That's not my thing."

"Why would anyone want to sleep in houses that can't shield you from the cold wind or eat food that is low in meat content and high on the spicyness scale, and worst of all, bathe without hot water?"

It just didn't make sense to me to bathe without hot water.

Despite those thoughts, I went for my very first mission trip, the Youth Mission Trip in December 2005. I went mostly because my friends were going.

And I remember it being pretty fun, and cold. I bathed about once in 3 days, but other than that, I didn't really remember much of it anymore.

My second trip was even less memorable but something kept me going back for more.

And as time passed, I got used to the conditions in the village. I got more familiar with our interpreters and the villagers, and the village way of life. I observed more and asked more questions about what goes on in the village.

Gradually, I realised that I wasn't just going for mission trips for the fun anymore. I think I have found 3 reasons for me to make time for mission trips:

The first is a personal reason. I go for mission trips because it's a break from our usual busy Singaporean city lives. Worshipping God in the village, among people who lead materially simple lives; worshipping God from the mountains to the valleys. It's just a whole different worship experience.

Of course the lack of phone reception is a major plus point for some of us. (Trust me, it's awesome.)

But every time I go on a trip, I am reminded without fail how great God is.

My second reason is the chance to see God work in and through the team that goes up each year.

I've seen villagers who have been physically healed, who have been provided for, who have been freed from their sense of guilt, their helplessness, the frustrations of their physical limitations, their oppression under their idols, and much more.

And I've seen people from our team experience God

in new ways and have their lives changed as a result of their encounters with God on the trip. People whose faith in God's power have been strengthened through healings brought about by the laying of their own hands. People whose trust in God's plans were enhanced through watching God provide. People whose prayer lives changed because they realised the reality of the spiritual battles. People who discovered how far they had fallen away from God.

And every time I go on a trip, I am reminded that God's work is greater than any work we can do with our own hands.

My third and most important reason is because there is a need.

We go up to the villages year after year, but still there is much work to be done. Youths who take drugs, broken families, children who yearn for attention, disputes within the church. We don't go up to the villages year after year just to paint walls and teach English. We go up to the villages year after year because the people there need the Lord. The people there need God to heal their hearts and their land.

And every time I go on a trip, I am reminded that God's heart reaches beyond just our own country and comfort zones to the rest of the world. And I think this is the most important point and challenge that I would like to bring across with this sharing.

There are people out in the villages who need to know God, who need to know God's ways, who need to know God's heart. And there are people here in this church who can show them just that.

God is not just my God. He is not just your God. He is not just the God of Singapore. He is the God of this whole world.



▲ Kegan painting the church on his first mission trip in Dec 2005
▶ Kegan with Lahu child at Payakorngdee Village in Dec 2015



The Crucifixion Of Jesus

Was God Fair?

Leong Kwok Thye

Luke 23:32-43 (NIV)

³²Two other men, both criminals, were also led out with him to be executed. ²⁴When they came to the place called Skull, there they crucified him, along with the criminals – one on his right, the other on his left. ³⁵Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing...” ³⁹One of the criminals who hung there hurled insults at him: “Aren’t you the Christ? Save yourself and us!” ⁴⁰But the other criminal rebuked him, “Don’t you fear God,” he said, “since you are under the same sentence?” ⁴¹“We are punished justly, for we are getting what we deserve. But this man has done nothing wrong.” ⁴²Then he said, “Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.” ⁴³Jesus answered him, “I tell you the truth, today, you will be with me in paradise.”

Rom 3:23-24 (NIV)

²³for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, ²⁴and are justified freely by his grace through faith through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. ²⁵God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement through faith in his blood...

The Reason For Jesus' Crucifixion

In the passage above, the apostle Paul explains the reason for the crucifixion of Jesus, the Messiah and Son of God. In v.23 he simply states man's spiritual condition – he is dead to God because of sin. In v.24 - 25a, he goes on to explain that God by His grace has freely vindicated the sinner. He has done so by making Jesus pay the penalty for man's sin by His own blood.

Was God Fair?

One question that is often asked is, “Was God fair?” in allowing a convicted criminal to enter into His kingdom simply on the basis of a confession in his dying moments? This question comes across from persons with three concerns. Firstly, there is the moralist who feels that by questioning the fairness of God he can continue living the life he prefers without a sense of guilt. Secondly, there is the enquirer who is concerned with the fate of departed loved ones who had not known Jesus. Finally, there is the opportunist who would like to live a life without commitment and still enter paradise simply by calling to God at death's door.

Was God fair? From a biblical perspective, God was more than fair to the criminal who acknowledged him as the Christ. Jesus addressed this in the parable of the workers in the vineyard in Matt. 20:1-16. A landowner needed workers to help him to harvest his vineyard. Some started work at the sixth hour, others at the ninth hour and still others at the eleventh hour. At the end


of the day, the landowner paid every worker the same wage. From a secular viewpoint, the parable does not make any sense. Paying wages without regard for hours worked is unreasonable and untenable. It encourages laziness and would run the business into bankruptcy. Philip Yancey, in his book *What Is So Amazing About Grace** points out that the message of the parable was not about reward for work, but about grace.

The penalty for sin is death. As all have sinned, all deserve to die. Jesus paid the penalty for sin by His death on the cross. The criminal was assured of a place in paradise because of Jesus' vicarious death. We are saved by grace, not because of our works.



Our Response

There is little merit debating the morality of Jesus' assurance of salvation to the criminal crucified alongside Him, whether loved ones who did not know Jesus should be condemned, or whether we deserve life with God in eternity if we delay Jesus' offer of salvation. These matters are under the jurisdiction of the Creator.


The issue we need to address is that of our own standing before God. He was not fair to His own Son in order to be fair to us. We would not be fair to Jesus if we reject the offer of salvation He paid for us at the cost of His own life. Elizabeth C Clephane's hymn, *Beneath the Cross of Jesus*, is a moving tribute to Jesus for His sacrificial death on our behalf.



BENEATH THE CROSS OF JESUS
I FAIR WOULD TAKE MY STAND –
THE SHADOW OF A MIGHTY ROCK
WITHIN A WEARY LAND;
A HOME WITHIN THE WILDERNESS,
A REST ALONG THE WAY,
FROM THE BURNING OF THE NOON-TIDE HEAT.
AND THE BURDEN OF THE DAY.

UPON THAT CROSS OF JESUS
MINE EYES AT TIMES CAN SEE
THE VERY DYING FORM OF ONE
WHO SUFFERED THERE FOR ME;
AND FROM MY SMITTEN HEART WITH TEARS
TWO WONDERS I CONFESS –
THE WONDERS OF REDEEMING LOVE
AND MY UNWORTHINESS.



I TAKE, O CROSS, THY SHADOW
FOR MY ABIDING PLACE;
I ASK NO OTHER SUNSHINE THAN
THE SUNSHINE OF THY FACE;
CONTENT TO LET THE WORLD GO BY,
TO KNOW NO GAIN OR LOSS,
MY SINFUL SELF MY ONLY SHAME,
MY GLORY ALL THE CROSS.

*Note: Philip Yancey is one of the most perceptive and provocative contemporary Christian writers. KKMC Library has an excellent selection of Yancey's books.