

the Vine multi media ministry

http://www.labour-in-love.com/Vine_Page1.html



Believe, Baptised & Saved
by John Lee



Cambodia Mission 0217
by Charlotte Sam



Happy New Year
by Alicia Wong



The Vine Committee

Editor:

Alicia Wong

Writers this issue:

John Lee

Alicia Wong

Charlotte Sam

Clement Tan

Jeremy Chua

Joyce Tan

Michael Christian

Photos:

Martin Cheah

Chin Yew Neng

Cover Photo:

Mission Team to

Cambodia trip 0217



**Brother
Martin
Writes**

Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, spend a year there, buy and sell, and make a profit"; whereas you do not know what will happen tomorrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away. - James 4:13-14.

"If you fail to plan, you are planning to fail!" - Benjamin Franklin.

Is there a dichotomy between the two quotations? Is James advocating not making any resolutions or plans? In Luke 12:24, Jesus said, *"Consider the ravens: They do not sow or reap; they have no storehouse or barn, yet God feeds them. How much more valuable are you than the birds!"*

Many are the plans in a person's heart, but it is the Lord's purpose that prevails. – Proverbs 19:21

Commit to the Lord whatever you do, and he will establish your plans. – Proverbs 16:3

Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. – Philipians 4:6

So do we need to plan or live life free like the birds?

From the verses above, it is clear that man must make plans but it will only succeed if it is according to God's will. So we must submit our plans to the Lord and pray for His direction and blessings on our plans.

In 2018, JCC have two plans which will be launched soon. One is the **Koinonia** (Christian fellowship) Lunch on the last Sunday of each month where lunch will be distributed at \$3 per packet by assigned Cell Groups. Hopefully, the people will then sit together and have a fellowship lunch at level one. The second is the **Kampong Spirit #1** project, where a team of 3 or 4 volunteers will visit one of the 15 selected households in the neighbourhood to have lunch with them and build bonds of friendship. We bring these 2 plans before the Lord and pray for His blessings and favour.

Martin Cheah

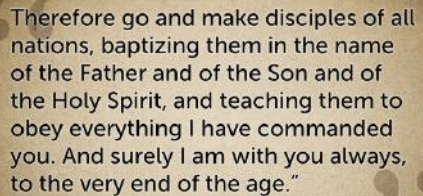
Believe, Baptized and Saved

Congratulations to the more-than-a-dozen brothers and sisters who professed their belief in the Lord and were baptized in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit in December 2017.

The importance of baptism cannot be underestimated, for it was Christ who personally gave the unequivocal command in Matt 28:19-20.

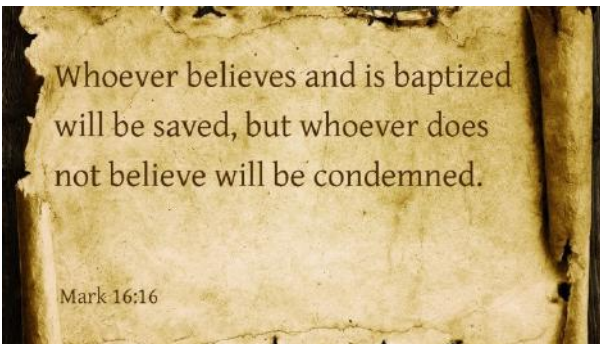
Note that there are two parts in the command; the first part is about baptism per se and the second part is about teaching all to obey the command of the Lord.

In obedience to God's will, Jesus himself was baptized in the River Jordan by John the Baptist to fulfil all righteousness. The enormity of the event and the moment was powerfully reinforced by the descent of the Holy Spirit and the voice of the Father. (Matt 3:13-17)



“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

MATTHEW 28:19-20



Some Christians quote Mk 16:16 and wonder about whether baptism is indeed necessary for salvation.

Recall that the Pharisees asked Jesus whether the Jews should pay taxes to Caesar. It was a risky question to answer **YES**

or **NO**, because either way the Pharisees would have something up their sleeves to catch Jesus in His words. (Mk 12:13)

This is but one illustration of how certain questions can be difficult to give a straightforward YES or NO as answer, because either way may be open to misinterpretations; so it is with the question on whether baptism is necessary for salvation.

If I answer YES, I expect to be bombarded with these examples:

- A person accepted Christ by faith and was on his way to church to receive baptism when he met a fatal accident.

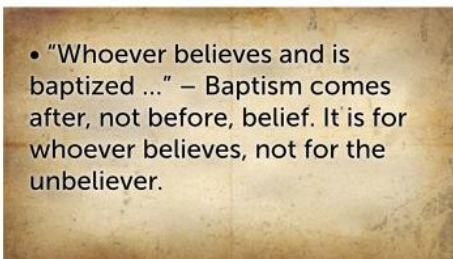
- A person accepted Christ by faith on his deathbed and died before his pastor had time to arrange a baptism for him.

Wouldn't the two persons be saved by grace through faith alone? If not, it makes a mockery of Eph. 2:8. If yes, does it not affirm that baptism is non-essential?

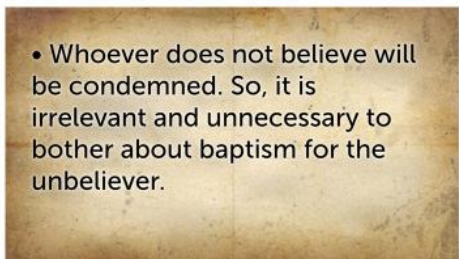
If I answer NO, I risk being labelled as thoughtless in my attitude towards this Holy Sacrament which is without doubt a profound command since it was pronounced by our Lord Himself.

The emphasis on the importance of believing is without doubt in Mk 16:16. However, the importance of baptism is certainly simultaneously underscored by Jesus' explicit mention of it closely in tandem with belief and salvation.

Jesus' instruction that "Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned" can be properly understood as follows:



• "Whoever believes and is baptized ..." – Baptism comes after, not before, belief. It is for whoever believes, not for the unbeliever.



• Whoever does not believe will be condemned. So, it is irrelevant and unnecessary to bother about baptism for the unbeliever.

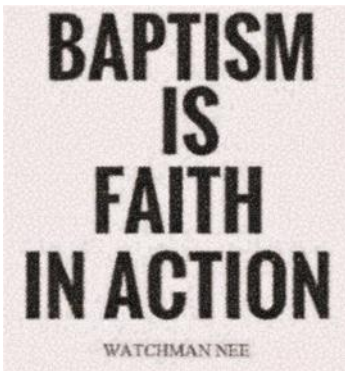
Remarkably, Jesus also pronounced these words as recorded in Jn 14:15, "If you love me, keep my commands."

As Christians, we profess faith in Christ, the faith that gains us salvation by God's grace. What are we to make of our faith if we have no love for Christ and what are we to make of our love for Christ if we can freely choose to ignore His command on baptism?

As Christians, it is our duty to study God's Word, and within God's word is this very command on baptism from the Lord Himself. Whatever your first thought is on the necessity of baptism for salvation, you must be honest to yourself with your reason. You may not disclose your reason to men, but God knows your thoughts.

In your study, meditate on these two scenarios:

- A loved one who received Christ and wanted to be baptised but was thwarted from it not by his own election before passing away. You are convinced that God is fair and that the loved one is saved by his faith.
- A friend claims to have received Christ by faith and been a Christian for years, regularly attending church; yet he gives scant respect to the Lord's command on baptism. Does his rejection of baptism attest to the state of his faith, or to a lack of understanding of God's Word because nobody in his church tells him about the solemnity of the Holy Sacrament?



Receiving baptism is an act of obedience. Not receiving baptism in defiance is an act of disobedience. However, not receiving baptism because of involuntary circumstances is entirely different.

"Baptism is an outward expression of an inward faith," Watchman Nee, Author

Alternatively speaking, baptism testifies outwardly of a person's faith commitment. Therefore, a rejection of baptism may bring into question the state of the person's faith.

It is not infrequent that we find in the Gospels Jesus answering questions with questions. Here is one instance:

Jesus was in the stern, sleeping on a cushion. The disciples woke him and said to him, "Teacher, don't you care if we drown?" He said to his disciples, "Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?" – Mk 4:38, 40

Someone may be afraid of baptism and worried about his salvation. This question crops up in his mind: "Is baptism really necessary for salvation?"

The following imaginary dialogue is worth pondering for the person to personally find his answer to the question.

Questioner: Do I need to be baptised in order to be saved?

Jesus: Do you believe?

Questioner: Yes, I do.

Jesus: Do you read Mk 16:16

Questioner: Yes, I do.

Jesus: Does anyone or anything prevent you from receiving baptism?

Questioner: No

Jesus: **Why are you afraid of not being saved? Go (obey my command) and be baptized, and you will be saved.**

“ We ought to regard the sacrament of baptism with reverence. An ordinance of which the Lord Jesus Himself partook, is not to be lightly esteemed. An ordinance to which the great Head of the Church submitted, ought to be ever honorable in the eyes of professing Christians. ”

J.C. RYLE, THEOLOGIAN AND ANGLICAN BISHOP

It is safe to say that you can be sure of your salvation if you believe and are baptized.



Baptism is seriously much more than a symbolic sacramental rite. Christians are baptized in the name of the Father, of the Son and of the Holy Spirit:

- For the forgiveness of sins (Acts 2:38)
- As an act of initiation into one body of Christ (1 Cor 12:13)

If you believe, but something is holding you back from abiding by the Lord's command on baptism, pray to break down barriers to your decision on baptism.

If you do not believe, then the second part of Mk 16:16 is conclusive. Any mention of baptism would be pointless to the unbeliever.

John Lee

Baptism and Transfers @ Dialect Service on 24th December 2017



PROJECT KAMPONG SPIRIT (PKS 1)



A briefing was held on 21st Jan to let JCCians know what to expect when they go out on PKS 1 on 4th Feb.

May God go with us!



FEAR NOT!

“Perfect Love casts out all fear!”

1 John 4:18

I was struggling with several thoughts about what to do in 2018. I guess we all do at some point in time every year. Questions like, “What do I want to do for God? Do I want to continue in my current job? Should I spend more time with family and friends? Should I take up a new course or be bold to take the step to volunteer by helping others? Should I take a step back, pray and let God heal me first and see where the path leads me this year? I want to exercise more and stay active? What is holding me back that I am procrastinating to find the answers? Fear to let go and take that step of faith? The list goes on and questions pop up over and over again. I am still searching for a few more answers and had a clear idea on some other matters. Let’s continue to pray for guidance and direction in our lives.

I received a media link message recently through the Abundance Care Group on “How to face the giants in your life” by Pastor Benny Ho. It was a down-to-earth message where he highlighted a few points and shared about fears in our lives. He said that we experience fears about our future, our health and our jobs. Also, we fear being alone, rejected and embarrassed. He said the evil one uses intimidation to paralyze us.

I will quote the five points here for all of you who have not seen this message of over 3 minutes. He said:

- 1) **Guard Your Eyes** – Watch what you are looking at.
Are you focusing on God or your circumstances? Fear traps us as we focus on our problems, but we should look at God instead.
- 2) **Guard Your Ears** – Be careful who you listen to.
If you listen to the wrong people, you will exchange your faith for their fears.
- 3) **Guard Your Mind** – Remember the right things.
To overcome fear, we must fill our minds with the powerful things that God has done in our lives. Trace the hand of God in our lives and remember it.
- 4) **Guard Your Heart** – Be confident of God’s provision.
When fear threatens to strike remember:
 - a) *Do what you know.*
 - b) *Use what God has put in your hands.*
 - c) *Stick to the faithful old sling and stone.*

- 5) **Guard Your Back** – Cut off the roots of your fears.
There is only one way to put an end to crippling fear i.e. by applying the truth of the Resurrection to our lives.

What are some Goliaths in your life? Pastor Benny said that we all have fears that haunt and accuse to make us miserable and deficient in our lives. They rob us of courage and cause us to live in a constant state of fear.

He said that in Christ, we do not need to be afraid. We are no longer bound in fear, but in the security of Jesus Christ. He is our victory, courage and confidence. Amen!

When I searched the web, many writings indicated that “Fear Not” was mentioned over 80 times and in some content, written and expressed in different ways such as using the words “Do not be afraid”. This means that God knows that we will encounter fears in our lives. Fear is very real and we will face it somehow.

So, let’s read about it and know what fear is all about. God did give us many pointers from the Old Testament to the New Testament about having fear in our lives. He also gave us hope and His Love to help us battle these fears, knowing that we need Him and we cannot do it alone.

Let’s fix our eyes on Jesus for His wisdom and strength to recognise our fears and we will not hurry through to meet the fears but be brave to see them face-to-face with Him by our side. Amen!

Fear God more and we will see our fears diminishing in size and volume. Pray so that we can see how the fears are affecting our lives and making its way to impact our decisions and actions. So, “Fear Not!” and let God walk with you.

*“The fear of the Lord leads to life, and whoever has it rests satisfied, he will not be visited by harm.”
 (Proverbs 19:23)*

“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, all those who practice it have a good understanding. His praise endures forever!” (Psalms 111:10)



Mission Exposure Trip to Cambodia, 8 – 11 December 2017



Yellow reminds us of heaven. God loves us and wants us all to be with him in heaven.

The dark bead reminds us of sin. Because we have all sinned, we cannot be with God.

Red reminds us of the blood of Jesus. Jesus took the punishment for our sins by dying on the cross.

The clean bead reminds us that when we believe in Jesus, we will be made clean from sin. We now can have a relationship with God and will one day be with him in heaven.

Green reminds us that it is important to grow in our relationship with Jesus.

It all began on the first Sunday in November 2017. 17 people have since met weekly to pray and prepare for the December mission trip to Phnom Penh in Cambodia.

The threefold mission was to deliver:

1. Children's Christmas outreach program
2. Sunday School program
3. Caroling at church members' homes



As co-leaders, Tony and Jiemin were unfazed by a team with many who are first-timers in mission-trips.

JOY : Jesus, Others, You

Mark 10: ⁴⁵“For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

JOY has been the team's mantra, from preparation to delivery. While each of us knew we had some God-given talent, we lived through the weeks knowing we were never going to be fully prepared. We were just ordinary, truly time-poor folks who were meeting weekly while juggling secular commitments and for some, multiple meetings after each Sunday service. Yet through it all, we have been reminded not to displace our focus on the “task list” and “checklist”, but to encourage one another

in joyful giving. Above all the DO-ing, each of us knew instinctively we will receive far greater blessings from our Cambodian charges.

With the preparation alone, the team saw many firsts, from pulling handicrafts together to learning songs and carols in English and Khmer. On top of faith and faithfulness, a blend of conscientiousness, resourcefulness and specialization saw the enterprising team through.



The colorful Gospel bracelet (top right) supported the message for the Christmas outreach program. Each bracelet was handmade with lots of love and palm sweat!

1 Corinthians 12: ⁴ There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them. ⁵ There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. ⁶ There are different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God at work.

Confidence

Hebrews 10: ³⁵ So do not throw away your confidence; it will be richly rewarded. ³⁶ You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what he has promised.

The mission-trippers were not the only ones with the jitters. Feelings of inadequacy mount with change as the constant – the only constants were the scheduled airport departure and arrival times. We were changing plans and tactics on the fly. From delivery of songs, games, crafts, skit to messages, ‘play it by ear’ was the order of each moment. Starting out with measly portions, we can now marvel at how Jesus had fed thousands in one sitting and still had leftovers.



The establishments visited by the team included the Kandal Community Centre (by Pastor Moses), LCC Krus Church with its Life Centre in Kampung Chhnang (by Dara and Reverend Daniel), and LCC City Church with its Rainbow Hostel in downtown Phnom Penh. In each of these, starting a church was not the primary focus. Preaching the gospel was important, but paving the way to show Christian love in practical ways was essential. Trained local church workers embarked on community projects to improve livelihoods by imparting life skills from literacy to farming.

Each project has limited scale and reach because the ‘harvest is plenty but workers are few’. Persevering at what they do, the pastors and church workers have grown their ministry from sustenance projects to regular cell groups and even church services. Only God can charter us through the unknowns and make His calling known to each person, family, community and village.

At Sunday service in Krus Church, it was the first Holy Communion for most of the mission-trippers in a Cambodian church.

Following their family baptism the week before, the Lims marked a milestone on 10 December 2017 with their first ever Holy Communion! The team rejoiced with Henry and Bee Teng, and their charming and witty princes - Darren and Malcolm.



One flock, one shepherd

John 10: ¹⁶ I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd.

On Saturday afternoon, hordes of bicycles rode through the sandy paths to Krus Church. Headed for the Christmas outreach, the riders mostly looked far too small or too short for their bikes.



On Sunday morning, our team arrived at Krus Church to children who had been waiting since or even before 7am, the usual Sunday School time.



They showed up in school uniforms that were handed down, too tight for their growing bodies, and may not have been laundered in a while. They also showed up in pajamas, and some carried and piggybacked their siblings on their small frames.



THEY SHOWED UP.

The Lord rounded up His flock. The sheep recognized and heard His voice. The sheep pen at Krus Church remains open

for sheep that may have been slow to reach or distracted on the way to it.

Will you be there to receive the sheep when they show up? | ☺



Charlotte Sam

FUN FACTS

~600

years of age in 17 mission-trippers

XYZ

Multi-generational team from JCC

225

kids from 2 to 12 came to the Christmas outreach



My call to missions in Indonesia was in the early 1990's but that 'call' had no affirmation to a specific place or people group. As I began to be more and more exposed to the Unreached People Group movement, I was burdened for the Sundanese people group of West Jawa.

In July 1996, together with a group of Bible college students, I went on my first mission trip to Indonesia. The itinerary of the trip was to visit and minister to fellow believers in towns and villages in West Jawa. Upon our arrival at a village, the elder kindly and thoughtfully requested that we kept a low profile when ministering to a handful of believers and that encounter was to me a challenge to bring the Gospel to more of the people there who had not heard of it. That evening, while taking a stroll through the village, I prayed and sincerely asked the Lord if this was where He wanted me to be.

Although, my passion and burden for the 'Unreached People Group' of Indonesia increased, I still did not have that clear Divine indication as to where it should be.



was in January 1997.

Then in the late 1996, I received a facsimile which highlighted the plight of a Children's Home in the island of Nias and my first response, after reading the needs of the underprivileged children, was to throw it away because, to me then, that Niasan community had already received the Gospel of Christ. Evidently it did not happen and my first trip to the island

As I sat next to our interpreter and listened to the stories of the many young children who were in our midst, a deep sense of compassion developed within me.

After the one-week trip, I came to know a Christian community in Nias who professed to be believers of Christ and yet were involved in the occult. Next, they had a large number of underprivileged children who did not have their daily needs met and had no proper education. Their opportunities to a brighter future were bleak. But it was the plea



of a leader that gave me a different perspective to my call into missions. He said that many of these underprivileged children were sent to the local non-Christian orphanages.

I had a clear grounded view of the mission field and yet I was perplexed. Jesus said to his disciples: ***'Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes, and look on the fields...'*** **John 4:35b**. My struggle was that even though the Lord showed me the underprivileged children (*the field*), I had my eyes down for the fear of committing to the unknown, sacrifice of the separation with family and convenience to a comfortable lifestyle.

The book of Hebrews says, ***"Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen"*** (**Heb 11:1**). It was this faith in Jesus that eventually led me, in the month of June 1998, to make that firm decision. What followed it was like participating in a track-and-field event (the hurdles), staggering out of the block only to realize that I had never run this race before. Tomorrow's Hope is almost in her 20th year and I am still knocking down the hurdles. In a conversation with a friend pertaining to the faith and the mission, he abruptly suggested, in his atheistic view that I should now focus on my life. What then is my life? Years ago, in Nias, while watching the plane, with my family on board, take off, I had questions but with no answers. The separation from my family has always been difficult and what more to live in an unfamiliar society. I watched the plane until it was out of sight and when I turned back towards the vehicle, three pairs of teary eyes were gazing at me. In the eyes of the three orphans, who had accompanied me, I saw compassion. Immediately I was again reminded of my purpose in missions but the overwhelming joy within me was that My God had answered my prayer, and He is still doing it to this present day.

To my atheist friend, lovingly I told him that my life is in the hands of Christ Jesus. To serve the underprivileged children and to give them a brighter hope in life is a demonstration of my faith in Christ. But more importantly, by living out in faith, God is drawing me closer and closer to Him. It is not what I am doing for Christ but what He is doing in and through me.

"Not that I have already obtained it, or have already become perfect, but I press on in order that I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus." (**Phil 3:12**)



Michael Christian

Dialect Ministry Christmas Outreach Activity

Wednesday, 20th December 2017



A pioneer citizen receiving his prize for winning a game

It was not Christmas Day yet. Never mind that it was also a weekday that was not a public holiday. Nevertheless, Christmas celebration came early for more than 50 of us in JCC.



Many in attendance were senior citizens or pioneer citizens, with some in wheelchairs. It was a delightful occasion to witness no lack of energy in the singspiration and praise, and in the attentiveness when Deacon Peter shared the Christmas story. It was also admira-

ble that even those using mobility aids were sprightly as they participated in the simple games that were played.

As the year 2017 drew to a close, with the joy of Christmas in the air, it was fitting to give thanks and praise to God for a year of great blessings to the Dialect Ministry as

the membership grew and the energetic body life belied the age of our elderly brothers and sisters in Christ when they cheerfully worshipped Jesus and formed fellowship bonds with one another.

There is a Chinese saying “旁观者清”, which means that the spectator sees more of the game. Indeed, I am writing as a spectator and I see more of the active ministry work by the DLT throughout the year – in outreach efforts, in doing visitations, in spiritual service to the “grandpas and grandmas” (the respectable seniors, or golden-agers) and in engaging them with meaning activities that they enjoy.



God’s provision by His grace has enabled the Dialect Ministry to flourish. This Christmas Outreach activity was possible because the Dialect Team wanted it to happen, to share Christmas joy with Dialect members, their family, relatives and friends.

The event 2017 may be over, but the fruitfulness of 2017 will extend into 2018. This is assured to God’s faithful servants and their faithful dialect-speaking sheep.

Hallelujah!
John Lee

CHANGES IN THE ADULT CELL GROUP MANAGEMENT

6th Jan 2018 – The Adult Cell Group leaders met up with the new HOM, Ronnie Lim.

Ronnie charted a new course for the Adult Cell Groups and all this will be revealed around March 2018.



In the meantime, pray for Ronnie that God will give him the wisdom and vision as he presents his proposals to the English Council for approval.

My Journey from Doubt to Belief

(Baptised on 17th December 2017)

Grace and peace to you from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ!



My baptism on 17th December 2017 has been a very precious and memorable event personally. It took me almost twenty-one years to make the final decision to recognise Jesus Christ as my Lord and Saviour. Jesus is the best gift of my life. I am also glad to have become a part of this greater family at JCC.

I accepted Christ in early January. As you might have heard from Rev. Anthony in July or August, although he did not mention my name, my aunt had wanted to tell my parents about my decision for Christ and my grandma had offered to let me stay at her place if my parents decided to kick me out of the house because of my conversion in faith.

I came from a traditional Buddhist family. The elders in my family are either Taoist or Buddhist. As such,

growing up, I was very accustomed to those beliefs and practices even though I do not really understand them.

During the start of my volunteering journey in grassroots, I met this sister who is a member of JCC. Back in 2014, she started inviting me to evangelistic events in the church. However, because of our differences in religious views, we often debated about what was the “true religion” and wanted to prove each other wrong. I remembered how I used to make her so frustrated during our arguments that she cried and did not want to converse further. But to me, little did I know that it was the start of meeting Jesus when He decided it was time to make Himself known to me.

Since then, I got approached by a lot of Christians doing evangelistic outreach at MRT stations, shopping malls, bus interchange, etc. I would be stopped by them and they would ask me if I were a Christian. I would of course reply in the negative and they would converse with me further about the tree of good and evil, eternal life through Jesus Christ and so on. Very often, they would invite me to leave my particulars with them so that they could invite me to their services. I would leave fake contact details or ignore their attempts to contact me. I just was not ready at that point of time, but I continued to meet up often with this sister and she helped me to clarify my doubts and questions about Christ. From time to time, I would meet Reverend Anthony in youth evangelistic events and pose him questions as well.

Late last year, my grandpa passed away after suffering a stroke and cardiac arrest, coupled with lungs and kidney complications. Growing up, he was very dear to me because he was my caregiver when I was still a child as both my parents worked. While I struggled to cope with the loss of a close family member, I was struck with another bad news just a few months later. During my pre-enlistment medical check-up with CMPB, they detected an abnormality in my heart and referred me to a heart specialist. I underwent some tests and I remembered clearly that night when they infused a drug into me as part of the medical assessment. I was told that the drug might cause cardiac arrest although the chances were low. After messaging my friends and family at night, I stayed up a little and started reading encouraging bible verses and started praying unknowingly. Morning came and the test results returned with a positive.

I was diagnosed with Brugada Syndrome – a disease that causes an increased risk of cardiac-related death. It does not have an available cure. This news changed my entire life. My scholarship to become a Fire and Rescue Specialist with SCDF was immediately affected and I was told to return the pay-outs and allowances they had given me, which had accumulated up to about \$60k with interest, although it was none of my fault or within my control.

I was confused and lost at that point of time. I didn't know who or what I could count on. I isolated myself from others to give myself some time to address the different issues and trials. During this time, all that truly remained was my family and this faith that my sister introduced to me. I began reading up the bible more frequently, doing devotions from ODJ, and told Reverend I wanted to meet up with him to learn more about this person called Jesus.

I started meeting Reverend at least once a week and went to the chapel every single day to pray. Literally, I would spend at least an hour in the chapel praying till the point that I have become best friends with the caterpillars in the

church roof garden. At that one point of time, I just decided to open the door of my heart where Jesus was knocking for the past twenty years and I told Reverend that I was ready to accept Him in one of our 1-to-1 mentoring sessions.

Acceptance of Christ was a relief to me but at the same time I needed the support of my family. I have dropped hints at several occasions asking my mom what she would think if I ever convert to become Christian. Each time, she would flatly reject that, and our conversation would somehow turn cold. I did not dare to confess that I have accepted Him into my life and secretly studied the bible through the mobile application.

Over the months, I continue to pray each day, visiting the chapel and meeting up with Reverend for bible studies. Things did not seem to change, and it went on for many months. But I did not realise that God has already started to put His Plan into actions. After accepting Christ, my outlook in life changed.

I began volunteering with Pioneer Generation Office and Institute of Mental Health. I met many people who are in worse circumstances than me and I tried to bring joy and comfort to as many people as I can. I volunteered in the day and came home to spend the evening with my family for several months. I was also called to respond to several emergency cases around the location of the Church; cases of cardiac arrest, stroke and seizures which I received via the SCDF's MyResponder application. As a certified Community First-Aider, I rushed to resuscitate the casualties, sometimes in the midst of our Sunday services. Some of them were reunited with their families but often I would pass by and see new wakes being held at those void-decks or multi-purpose halls. I would sometimes question God why He did not save them, but I believe that in His plan, there is always a greater purpose not known to me. And I continued serving, believing that perhaps that is my calling from God, responding to distress calls and assuring the families who needed someone to be there to hold them.

After a while, I realised a change in my character too. I used to be impulsive, selfish, hot-headed, and not a very understanding person. After these months, I would not say I am a perfect person, but I think I have made improvements to self and how I treat others. Because He first loved me, that's why I am able to love others – even strangers whom I meet along the way.

My aunt learnt about my new faith through my cousin, and wanted to tell my parents about it because she thought it was not really a good idea to keep it from them. And so, the time has come for me to confess my faith to my parents. In the night before I confessed, I continued to pray for God's help, knowing that things could really get bad between my family members if I did not

handle the situation well. When I finally confessed, I broke down, not because my mom said “okay” but because finally that tension and suspense were broken with the help of God. It was something I did not expect, because my parents were so resistant to the idea of me converting into other faiths. And when I finally did open my mouth, they accepted it right away. Praise to Jesus!

And the big day (of my baptism) finally came when I said “I do” at this very place. Through all, I have learnt how to be patient with God, because He will never forsake anyone. Days may seem dull and nothing seems to be making sense, but I stand here today to testify that God is working – so there’s no need to be too “*kan chiong*”. He loves all of us and wants every man to be saved. Know this in your heart regardless if it rains or shine.



Today, I am serving in Singapore Civil Defence Force for National Service. Although I did not become a Fire and Rescue Specialist, I have found peace and joy at where I am posted to and continue to mentor youths in my capacity. I am often deployed to exercises and events; hence, I may not be able to attend many of the church services, but I am still one with everyone here in prayers and spirit.

I thank everyone who have constantly prayed and cared for me. I also thank God every day for keeping me close to Him and have this chance to share my story with everyone here. I have trusted Him with my family and with my life, how about you? Will you re-commit yourself to Him and trust Jesus in all that you do and in all circumstances? Will you allow Him to take your hand and to guide you through 2018 and beyond?



As Proverbs 3:5 states: Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding.

Have a blessed year ahead!

Jeremy Chua Han Xiang

HAPPY NEW YEAR! - 2018

It is January, the beginning of a new year. Yay! New beginnings. New hopes for the future. Predictions for the coming year are made. Everybody is asking everyone if they have made their new year resolutions. Yes, even my instructor in the gym posed that question. Two students shook their heads and yes, yours truly is one of them. It is not that I had never made a new year resolution. I did – for a few years. Then I realised that I do not have a habit of sticking to it and I would usually forget what was the particular resolution I had made in the earlier part of the year. Even if I had jotted my new year resolutions down, I would forget where I had placed them. Knowing how forgetful I am of the past and present, I decided to stick to something more practical – build memorial stones, something that was practiced even in the olden days and still going on today.



From time immemorial, man has been using stones to mark significant life passages – from birthstones to gravestones, diamond rings for engagements and weddings, monuments to great people...just to name a few. Have you wondered why stones are such perfect materials for the job? They are durable, which symbolises a sort of permanence that reaches beyond our short human life spans. They are beautiful too. Even when years have passed and the stones are weathered, there is still beauty in them.

Joshua 4:5-7

“Go over before the ark of the Lord your God into the middle of the Jordan. Each of you is to take up a stone on his shoulder, according to the number of the tribes of the Israelites, to serve as a sign among you. In the future, when your children ask you, ‘What do these stones mean?’ tell them that the flow of the Jordan was cut off before the ark of the covenant of the Lord. When it crossed the Jordan, the waters of the Jordan were cut off. These stones are to be a memorial to the people of Israel forever.”

God knows that we do need tangible reminders of our encounters with him. No matter how life changing an event may be, our memories are imperfect. We can even forget to pass it on to our children, our mentees or the next generation. That is why God instructed Joshua to build a memorial of stones, to be a visible reminder that He would lead His children across a sea of obstacles for generations to come. In Deuteronomy 6:12 Moses issued a final warning to Israel just before they entered the promised land, *“be careful that you do not*

forget the LORD, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery.” It is important that we do not forget and allow the secular world to dictate our values.

Reflection

Instead of making a new year resolution, I invite you to join me in building our memorial stones. We can start by recalling an instance in which God miraculously cleared the way or showed His presence. Next, think of what memorial ‘stone’ you can put to remind yourself of God’s work. It can be a literal rock, a photograph, a dent in your car or a note from someone. Then build your memorial rock somewhere, on your desk or display shelf, to serve as a reminder of God’s power to intervene in your life. Share your story. Keep a clear memory of what God did for you. Keep on sharing your stories so that you never lose your own sense of awe and wonder of what God has done in your life. Maybe through the sharing, God may be glorified in ways we could not see and a spiritual heritage is passed on.

If you are currently facing a challenge, look at the memorial stone you had made and ask God, the one who parted the deep and flowing waters, to reveal His presence and power. I pray that you too, can draw strength and encouragement from your memories of God.

Alicia Wong

The Leftovers

In the story of Judges 7:5-8, *Gideon counted these men, and found that there were only three hundred of them, while all the rest bowed down on their faces to drink. The difference between them was that the three hundred were earnest men, of one purpose; not turning aside from their aim even to drink, as the others did. Then, too, they were watchful men, always ready to meet their enemies.*

So Gideon, at God's command, sent back to the camp on Mount Gilboa all the rest of his army, nearly ten thousand men, keeping with himself only his little band of three hundred.

These 300 men were the Leftovers from an original army of 32,000 men. Men want to have a big army of soldiers to fight battles, but if God is doing the fighting, then 300 is more than enough.

28th BB COMPANY CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION



This year, instead of celebrating Christmas by ourselves, we invited old Boys, as well as siblings and friends of our Boys to join us. It was held on 30 December 2017 in MPH1. More than 20 old Boys, siblings and friends came.

We shared with them the story of Jesus' birth using carols, and a game



modelled after the TV game show, Don't Forget To Remember. Chaplain Rev Anthony shared a message on the true meaning of Christmas, titled **The Greatest Gift of All**. The evening ended with a birthday celebration, and dinner fellowship during which we got to know our guests better.



We thank GOD for this wonderful opportunity. It was

probably the first time for many of our guests to step into a church or to hear the Christmas story.



probably the first time for many of our guests to step into a church or to hear the Christmas story.

CLEMENT TAN