

# Pastor's Word

## *Turning Blue*

A few weeks ago I was involved in a 3-car accident along the PIE on my way to Church which caused a traffic jam. It was so unexpected. I was shocked. The lady who crashed into my car was in a daze. She didn't know what to do in an accident. Whereas the other driver whose car I bumped into calmly explained what steps to take. Within 2 minutes of the accident a man appeared to help the lady. Later, I discovered that the man was with a motorcar workshop and he got the lady's car towed away. The damages sustained by my car was not extensive but I would not be able to

afford the costly repair. Thanks to our government regulations which required all vehicles to be insured I got it repaired rather quickly. So my car turned blue, which is also the Advent colour.

## *The Season of Advent*

It is so important to be prepared for the unexpected. The Church is in the season of Advent. Advent points us to the coming of Christ, not just Christmas. Are you busy preparing for Christmas - buying gifts, decorating your home? The important question is, are you prepared for Christ? Many Christians are prepared to spend money on gifts for some loved ones, a good friend or an important person. What about the One whose birth we are celebrating? I challenge you not to spend more than your gift to Jesus. Like the wise men who presented frankincense, gold and myrrh to the infant Jesus, use your Christmas Offering envelopes to express your worship to Christ whose birth we celebrate. Let the Spirit of

Christmas move you to store your treasures in heaven.

### *From JCC to BLC*

The other unexpected thing that happened to me was my assignment to Bedok Lutheran Church with effect from 1st January 1997. I did not expect to be affected by the reassignment of pastors due to the vacancies in Mas Kuning Lutheran & JCC Chinese section. My family is still not totally willing to go to Bedok. In four years we have settled down in the JCC Family. We feel belonged and at home. We've got used to traveling from Pasir Ris to Church. I've been very involved in planning for JCC in 1998 and the signs of a challenging and rewarding ministry are there. So I thought my ministry is going to grow further in 1998.

We will leave you with a heavy heart in spite of the fact that Bedok is closer to Pasir Ris and our old friends are there. It's been a privilege to serve you. You have made me grow in the ministry. It has not always been easy. No place is - for those who seek to do the will of God. But you have made our sojourn meaningful and worthwhile. Your support has been most encouraging. Your prayers have lifted us up when we were down. Your love has touched our lives. You will always remain a part of us wherever we may be.

### *A Divine Move*

It is with great confidence that I commend Pastor Martin Yee to your prayers and support as your shepherd. He is truly a humble servant who is able to care for the flock of God in JCC. Just remember the lesson in Mt 13:54-58. We can be proud that the Lord has called one man among us to become a full-fledged pastor. The advantage of a centralized Church like the Lutheran Church is the opportunities for a stronger congregation to help a weaker one.

Didn't the Apostle Paul say "Our desire is not that others might be relieved while you are hard pressed, but that there might be equality. At the present time your plenty will supply what they need, so that in turn their plenty will supply what you need" (2 Cor 8:13-14). This biblical principle applies to the supply of pastoral need as well as to financial need. We remember that it is for the same reason that I was assigned to JCC to meet the pastoral need in 1994. We are really one big Lutheran Family. I believe this is a divine move.

### *My Prayer for You*

I leave with the same convictions as the Apostle Paul who said,

*I thank my God every time I  
remember you. In all my*

*prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.*

*It is right for me to feel this way about all of you, since I have you in my heart...And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless until the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ - to the glory and praise of God.*

- Phi 1:3-7, 9-10

The Lee family wishes you

**A Blessed  
Christmas!**

With Love &  
Prayers,



*Pastor Fredric Lee*

## MY TRIP TO THE HOLY LAND

(23<sup>rd</sup> Nov – 3<sup>rd</sup> Dec)

*John Lee*

It was a wonderful opportunity.

It was an inspirational and eye-opening experience.

It was a tiring journey.

The above statements give you a fair idea of what a trip to the Holy Land would hold out for you if such an opportunity knocks at your door and you grab it.

Make a trip to the middle of a desert in a modern-day “camel” (with at least 4 wheels and the comfort of air-conditioning) and then taking a cable-car (a real one) ride to the top of a mountain in search of the Ruins of Masada, an ancient fortress which occupies an entire mountaintop near the southeast coast of the Dead Sea and was the site of the Jews’ last stand against the Romans after the fall



**A swimming pool in Masada**

of Jerusalem in AD 70. It is not far away from the Dead Sea.

You may have heard much about the extreme salinity of the Dead Sea and it being the lowest point on Earth. Well, how about taking a dip in it to have a real feel of its buoyancy and then cover yourself from head to toe with the mud from its shores to test out the therapeutic claims about it? (Alternatively, you can buy Dead Sea Mud from the shops.)

After a salt-water cum mud treatment that makes you look at least ten years younger, your energy will be perked up and you will want your tour guide to show you the way to the Dead Sea Scrolls. It can actually be found in the museum in Jerusalem, but a trip to Khirbat Qumran on the northwest shore of the Dead Sea to see one of the sites in the Judaeian wilderness where the scrolls were discovered will fill you with awe as you contemplate how the discovery could have been possible if not for a touch of miracle.

You have enough of the lowest body of water (the Dead Sea). Now move on to the lowest river in the world, the Jordan River, which spans three countries as it flows southward from Syria across Israel into Jordan. It even traverses the Sea of Galilee before draining into the Dead Sea. You may be interested to know that water from River Jordan is a collector's item. If you

should have the chance of visiting the River, do not forget bringing along an empty bottle. Consider also a baptism there if you are not already baptised.

The Sea of Galilee (680 feet below the Mediterranean Sea) is of course famous for

its biblical associations. It is really just a lake, about which so much of the life of Jesus was passed. It was also bordered by nine cities during the time of Jesus. A cruise across the lake is memorable as you take in the view of Golan Heights, the Mount of Beatitudes,

etc. It extends your geographical perspective whether you read about the events surrounding the "sea" in the Bible or you think about the political incidents of today in the Middle East. On one of the days, my fellow pilgrims and I had a communion service conducted by Rev. Nelson in the middle of the Sea of Galilee. It added to the memorability of the day.

Wow! It seems that I can go on and on to fill page after page of The Vine with just brief descriptions of my experience on the Holy Land over ten days with places of great interest including the Mt of Temptation, Mt Tabor (The Transfiguration), Mt of Olives, Excavations of Meggido (Josh 12, Joshua's conquest), Roman Theatre, Jericho, Caesarea, Old City walls of Jerusalem, Via Dolorosa, Garden Tomb of Jesus, the



Sepulchre, Nazareth, Bethlehem, Holocaust Museum, ... (The list goes on.)

Obviously, I have to curtail this story in print and continue it with you on some other fellowship occasion. In fact, at each stop during the tour, the guide was very generous with his commentaries such that the moment he finished, there would be no time left for strolling on your own to digest the information or take photographs. So it was a hard decision for each of the pilgrims to decide the trade-off between absorbing the commentaries to the fullest and keeping records by taking photographs.

A word of thanks must surely be given to our Lord Jesus Christ for his blessings. While just about one month before my trip, I had thought of cancelling it because of a sudden onset of backache, the backache did not return to bug me throughout the trip. (I feared the worst; it turned out otherwise.) However, my son Benedict whom I thought would have no problem at all because he was fit and healthy, succumbed to diarrhoea. (I expected the best of him; it turned out not so.) Nevertheless, with treatment and good rest at night, he was well enough to travel during the day unhindered. Furthermore, we returned to Singapore on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of December without facing any insecurity despite the apprehension some people might have when reading about

happenings in the Middle East. After my return, Bro. Yock Meng asked me if I had been stranded as he had read about strikes in Jerusalem. Well, praise God that it did not happen at the time we left the city for Singapore!

From all this, I see a message God has for us. He has His way which always turns out beautifully according to His will, not according to our own understanding. **IN ALL MATTERS AND IN ALL SITUATIONS, HE WANTS US TO HAVE FAITH IN HIM, YET NOT TAKE THINGS FOR GRANTED. TRUSTING HIM WITH HUMILITY, HAVE CONFIDENCE BUT NOT COMPLA-**

**CENCY.** From a human point of view, it is a delicate balance indeed!

Both my son and I have enjoyed the trip to the Holy Land very much. We have gained a lot of insights that would be impossible with just dry readings of books and magazines. Thanks be to God!

*My arm started to hurt me and I asked the doctor to examine it. After studying a medical book for fifteen minutes, he asked, "Have you ever had that pain before?" I said, "Yes." He said, "Well you got it again."*



# THE GRACE & GENEROSITY OF GIVING

2 Corinthians 8:1-9; 9:6-15

These two chapters (8,9) form the practical culmination of the apostle's teaching for the sorely divided and disorderly yet highly gifted church which had responded to the corrective letter (1 Corinthians) he had written about a year previous to the second.

In the first two chapters of this personal and most intimate of his epistles, there is the consolation of the God of all comfort for and through His servants and children.

Then in chapters 3 and 4, the further assurance of the confidence and competence of the ministers of the New Covenant bestowed by the Lord ...

Chapters 6 and 7 present a heart-stirring and challenging account of the apostle's experience, and Christ-like example bearing out his God-breathed teaching (1 Cor 2:13).

It is only as this is fully grasped that we may, with the believers at Corinth, enter into the supernatural nature of the contribution of the church in chapters 8 and 9 – in the exemplary

generosity of the churches of Macedonia in their giving.

They were remotely removed from any affluence or the salubrious conditions of good government, but in extreme poverty and out of the most severe tribulation, they were able with overflowing joy and even beyond their ability, to contribute in rich generosity their gifts to the more needy church in Jerusalem, plagued with famine and persecution.

## The Sovereignty and Sacrifice of



## Grace (2 Cor 8:9)

This is truly the key-verse, 'For you know the grace (*Charis*) of our Lord Jesus Christ that though He was rich yet for your sakes He became poor (*epitochouseu*, he became completely destitute: the only occurrence of the verb in the New Testament) so that you through His poverty (*ptochos*, total destitution: see Phil 2:5-8) might become rich.'

We find this beautiful word, grace (*charis*) seven times in chapter 8 and thrice in chapter 9 (8:1, 4, 6, 7, 9, 16

'thanks', 19; 9:8, 14, 15 'thanks').

### The Source and Scope of Grace

All of beauty, holiness, health, strength and love is found in the word, as diametrically opposed to ugliness, sin, sickness, weakness and hate.

In 8:1 '...the grace of God given to the Macedonian churches' in most difficult circumstances, creating sufficiency and strength, as the apostle described his own experience (2 Cor 12:9, 10 'My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.') And he went on to testify 'Therefore, I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses that Christ's power may rest in me. That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then am I strong.')

The extraordinary fullness of joy overflowed in the generosity of their giving even beyond their ability! They had on their own initiative pleaded with Paul for the privilege of sharing in this ministry to the believers at Jerusalem (8:2-4).

### The Sowing and Gathering in Grace and Generosity (9:6-11)

Here is the reminder: generous giving in grace is never grudging and is compared to generous sowing which will result in a generous reaping. He who sows sparingly is like the reluctant giver or the one who gives not willingly from the heart but under

compulsion.

'For God loves the cheerful giver (9:6, 7). And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.'

Here is the comprehensiveness and completeness of abounding grace! It is the Lord Himself who in grace – 'has scattered abroad His gifts to the poor: His righteousness endures forever (quoting Ps 112:9)' See Hosea 10:12. It is He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food and who will also supply and increase the store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of righteousness.

### The Service of Supply in Surpassing Grace (9:12-15)

Generous sharing with those in need is the proof of sincere love (8:8 also) and the obedience which practically accompanies the confession of the gospel of God's love in holistic outreach.

It is the practical evidence of the surpassing grace given by God to His people. Not only will there be heartfelt thanksgiving but continuing prayers in fellowship (14).

'Thanks (*charis*, grace) be to God for His Indescribable Gift (*dorea*, free and gracious gift: as in Rom 5:15, 17)!

*Abridged from article written by Dr Benjamin Chew, IMPACT/Oct-Nov 90*

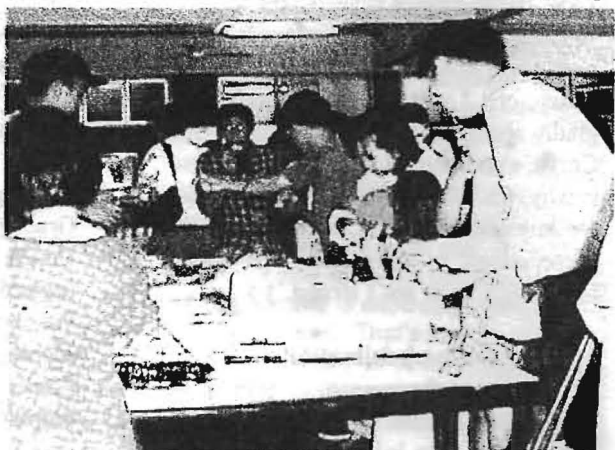
# How Much, Then, To Give?

To give a figure is to impose the very legalism that the New Testament denigrates! Some principles, though, may help:

- Recognise that your income comes from God, and belongs to God. 'Living by faith' is clearly for all Christians, and not solely for 'full-time Christian workers'.
- Start by giving away something consistently and regularly. Perhaps to begin with 10%.
- Live according to what you need and not according to what you want. (Consider how much money would be set free for others – and God!)
- Determine need not according to the expectations and wants engendered by the non-Christian world. Instead, work out a level that is adequate for your particular needs, taking into account not just your 'social class', but a world perspective.
- Allow your day-by-day attitudes and actions to be guided by the biblical principles of contentment and generosity.
- Community is key. To survive the

intense pressures imposed by 'the world' (and that may include fellow-Christians who fail to understand) you need the support of fellow-pilgrims who are also open to taking the risk of stepping out into the adventure of faith. Pray for at least one other person to join you – to talk, pray, weep, laugh and experiment with.

- Our primary motivation is to demonstrate that God is the provider and owner of all that we have, and to witness to the world, the new way of living and giving



which Christ brings.

Martin Luther in the sixteenth century was right "There are three conversions necessary: the conversion of the heart, mind and purse."

Are you fully converted?

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# SYDNEY, BRISBANE AND GOLD COAST MY HOLIDAY DOWN UNDER



It was the first day of the school holidays and we were off to Australia for holidays. This is not a report of my holiday Down Under but rather a testimony of how God has been present in my life. We chose this particular period for traveling because we wanted to avoid the heat and flies of the Australian summer. We had also prayed for good weather so that we could enjoy all the rides at SeaWorld and MovieWorld.

Our tour began at Sydney, which was cool most of the time. The view of the Blue Mountains was beautiful. After that, a short internal flight brought us to Brisbane. When we reached Brisbane, the coach driver there said, "It was going to rain but I stopped it!" That joke remained in my mind. As I looked back, we did not encounter any rain during our whole stay in Australia. In Brisbane, we heard news of bush fires raging over in Sydney, even near

the Blue Mountains. But we were not even aware of it or affected by it.

After our enjoyable stay at the Gold Coast, we headed back to Brisbane. At

Brisbane airport, on the day we were supposed to fly back to

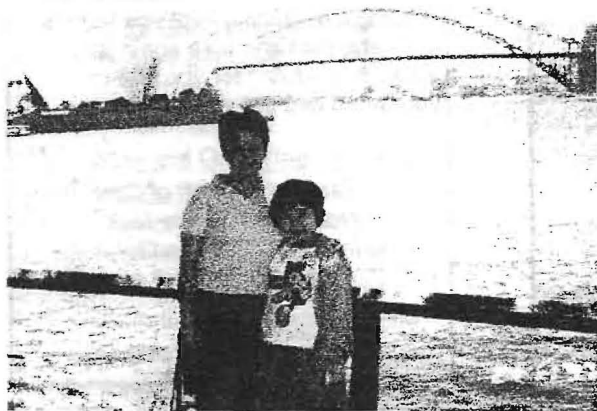
Singapore, we were informed that the flight was overbooked. The airline was to provide us with meals and accommodation for one night's stay at Brisbane. We gladly accepted the offer because we had wanted to extend our tour in the beginning but the agents told us that it was not possible even if we were willing to pay more for it, but now God has provided it and also paying us to stay. In all, the cash compensation we expect would amount to about \$1,900, which make



Debra's trip free of charge.

## TREASURER'S FOOTNOTE:

Even as I reflect on the above events and the current events in the newspapers, I marvel at how God is showing me that what I wrote in my letter to you to encourage tithing and faithful giving,



that nothing is impossible with God.

**Firstly**, God can provide you with money from nowhere as in the compensation from the airlines. **Secondly**, my example of the COE drop was not realistic when I said that the COE drop by \$1000. Indeed, God showed that the COE can drop to \$50, which is a \$64,000 savings. If anyone said that my example was fatuous then God's example certainly isn't.

I hope that if you are still considering whether God can keep His part of the deal, your doubts will have been stilled by these events.

*May the Lord help you to give faithfully and cheerfully.*

*Martin Cheah*

### **DAILY BREAD**

*December 8*

*Monday*

### **FOR SINNERS ONLY**

Praise God that He has not withdrawn His offer of forgiveness for sin! This good news, however, is for sinners

only. Many people, though, don't see themselves as sinners in need of salvation. They make excuses like these:

- My good deeds outweigh my bad.
- I'm not as bad as some people.
- Usually I'm a good person.

Their shortcomings, they feel, don't jeopardize their standing before Almighty God.

Imagine a citizen being brought to trial for several charges of shoplifting. It would be useless for that person to appeal to the judge by saying, "Don't forget, my good deeds outweigh my bad." "I'm not as bad as many others." "Most of the time I'm a law-abiding citizen." The offender must be judged according to the offense, not according to previous good deeds. If justice is to be done, someone must pay, and that someone should be the offender – unless another is allowed to bear the penalty instead. That's exactly what Christ in love did for sinners, which we all are, "for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." (Rom 3:23)

Has false reasoning kept you from the One who died and rose again for you? If so, He's waiting for you to admit your need and put your trust in Him.

*Salvation is a gift of God  
Not earned by any task;  
He freely cleanses and forgives  
All sinners who will ask.*

**READ : Romans 3:9-28**

# filial piety

A CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVE

by MARTIN YEE

The teaching and practice of filial piety undergird much of oriental Confucian cultures especially those of the Chinese and Koreans, and is an important cornerstone of their ethical teaching. For the Chinese, the term filial piety encompasses a broad range of practices, beliefs and concepts - it is not simply honoring the parents by the children.

Ancestor worship is the spiritual part of this system and since Christian children cannot participate in such worship, they are often perceived to be unfilial by their unbelieving parents. This article seeks to address this issue headlong.

Christians do not reject filial piety wholesale as an ethical practice but will not accept the religious or spiritual elements relating to ancestor worship. This principle was expressed strongly by the Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 8, where he affirmed part of what the Corinthians believed in but firmly rejected other parts which contradicted biblical teachings. This is done in two important manners:

- (i) with proper knowledge and understanding of the prevailing culture and
- (ii) rejection is done in a loving manner, not with arrogance or air of superiority.

This article will outline the Christian teachings first, then the Confucian understanding.

## The Biblical Teaching

It may surprise some critics, but the Christian Bible does contain an abun-

dance of teachings both in the Old and the New Testament admonishing children to honor their parents. Examples:

\* Children are to honor their parents. This is enshrined in the fifth commandment (Exodus 20:12 and Deut 5:16). Interestingly, the word "honor" is in Hebrew the verb *kabad* which also means "to make heavy". Thus, children are not to treat their parents lightly or in contemptuous manner. Honoring parents was widely recognized as a virtue in the Jewish society and it was repeatedly emphasized in Jewish writings. If children of believers did not honor their parents and were rebellious and self-centered, they would not be able to learn about their relationship with God which had been the centre of their parents' lives. Consequently, they would not inherit the promise of God for they do not know the Lord. This command provides a solid family structure for God's covenant community. The fulfillment of the promise of God can only be fulfilled if parents taught their children and the children honored their parents.

\* Children are to revere or fear (Hebrew *yara*) their parents (Lev 19:3)

\* Children who curse (Hebrew *qalal*) their parents are severely punished (Lev 20:9)

\* Children who are stubborn and rebellious, who will not obey their parents and who live a vile and drunkard life are to be severely punished (Deut 21:18-21).

\* Children who dishonor their parents are to be cursed (Deut 27:16).

\* Children are to support their parents financially and not give "pious" excuses (Mark 7:8-13). In other words, Christians cannot excuse themselves saying, for example, "I need money to give to the church tithe so I cannot give any money to my parents".

The Apostle Paul emphasized the importance of honoring our parents. In Ephesians 6:1-3 he wrote, "Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. Honor your father and mother - which is the first commandment with a promise - that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on earth" (NIV). First of all, children are to obey/to submit/to listen to (Greek *hupakouo*) their parents (Ephesians 6:1 and Colossians 3:20). For Christians the motivations to honour their parents are as follows:

1. It is their Christian commitment "in the Lord".

2. It is the "right" and proper thing to do

3. It is the commandment of God - Paul here quoted Exodus 20:12.

4. It has God's promise to it - the commandment comes with a promise for those children who honor their parents. God promised:

- \* their well being

- \* they will live long

## The Confucian concept of Filial Piety (Hsiao)

It may be important for Asian Christians to understand the key Confucian concepts of filial piety so as relate or dialogue intelligently with their non-Christian friends or relatives. The first of this is "ren" or benevolence which is

regarded as the source of all virtues. What makes human beings human is "ren". The will of the "Tien" for any community is to practise a lifestyle of benevolence "ren". "Tien" is believed to be the transcendent creator and source of mankind and morality. Filial piety or "hsiao" is the first step towards actualizing "ren" in a person.

Filial piety is considered the first principle of heaven, the ultimate standard on earth, the norm of conduct for the people. The people need to follow the pattern of heaven and earth. The Chinese worldview is influenced by the value of Tao Te. Tao is the relationship of self with the cosmos and Te is the relationship with humanity. Filial piety combines these two, seeking selfhood and cosmic harmony. Chinese society has been rooted on this doctrine of filial piety.

Filial piety is regarded as the starting point of moral practice. Ancestor worship is thus rooted in the ethics and spirituality of filial piety. The Book of Rites (10:45) states "As the people are taught filial piety and brotherly love at home, with reverence toward the elder and diligent care for the aged in the community, they constitute the way of a great king; and it is along this line that states as well as families will become peaceful". Therefore, for thousands of years, the Chinese people thus enjoyed their family life, religious life, social life and political life - all involving directly or indirectly the practice of filial piety.

The Classic of Filial Piety states: "Therefore to be without love of parents and to love other men (in their place) means to be a 'rebel against virtue'.... it is filial piety which forms the root of all virtues, and with it all enlightening studies come into existence".

# filial piety

A CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVE

## The Confucian practice of filial piety

Filial piety in Chinese culture has its practical outworking as well. The Chinese society emphasizes the integrity of household relations, treats the family as the foundation and the basic unit of society. The relationship between parents and children are of prime importance. Filial respect and love towards one's elders are required even after they have died. The religious aspects of filial piety are also evident. It involved paying respect to the deceased and to remote ancestors. The solemnization of rites in ancestor worship as well as funeral rites for the deceased parents are important. (In this aspect Christians must be extremely careful, as Scriptures clearly forbid anything to do with praying or sacrificing to the dead or spirits. (See Deuteronomy 18:10-12; 26:14; 32:16-18)

With respect to marriage, it is held to be inviolable with some exceptions; example, where there is a failure to bear children. The purpose of procreation and continuity of the family line is an important facet of filial piety. Parents are to see to it that their children are properly married and thus arranged marriages are common. The young couple has the obligation to produce offspring as soon as possible, especially sons. Mencius said "There are three things which are unfilial and having no posterity is the greatest of them".

As to the horizontal brotherly relationship, filial piety is also emphasized between elder and younger brothers. The younger ones of course are to respect their elder siblings with submission.

Chinese take pride in sharing the same household with several generations of the same paternal line staying together "under one roof". The extended family is encouraged. In the Chinese community, kinship was formed through marriage arrangements. Clans such as the Yee Clan Association were established through blood relationship or common surname. Villages were established based on regional relationship in which one was born and bred. The village chief as an elder was often sought for arbitration in cases of intra family disputes.

Teachers and tutors were also highly respected, ranked next to the father in status. This was an extension of filial piety.

The modern Chinese society has however been undergoing transformation due to rapid urbanization and accompanying erosion of traditions. The extended family system is declining. Filial piety as a practice or virtue has been progressively neglected or simply ignored by the younger generations.

## Conclusion

As can be seen the humanistic or ethical aspect of filial piety is not in conflict with the Bible which is God's Word to Christians. Honoring and obeying our parents is indeed a command of God with promises attached. But we need to distance ourselves from the religious practices and philosophies which may be inherent in Confucian filial piety. Pray for wisdom if you are confronted with difficult decisions. But be obedient to the prompting of the

Holy Spirit and God's Word. A really filial thing for a Christian to do is to pray for, share the Gospel and honor your parents. Soli Deo Gloria - To God only be the glory. Amen.

Acknowledgements of reference:

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# YOU MAKE THE DIFFERENCE

We can't spell CH\_RCH

We can't spell YO\_TH

We can't spell VOL\_NTEER

We can't spell ED\_CATION

We can't spell \_SHER

We can't spell N\_RSERY

We can't spell CHOR\_S

We can't spell B\_ILDING

We can't spell M\_SIC

We can't spell S\_NDAY

WITHOUT

SO, DO YOU KNOW HOW IMPORTANT  
YOU ARE TO THE CHURCH?

# The Man

YOU MUST KNOW

The history of Christianity in South East Asia took a new chapter when this man anchored his ship in this region during the 19th Century. He also turned the "Great China" upside down during the Revolution Period, Nationalist Movement and facing the invasion of Japanese. He feared no one and obeyed no one. He was considered the most colorful character of all time, an evangelist who inspired any people he met. Nevertheless, many influential people hated him, but none was able to put him down. This man was none other than John Sung. He was also known as the "Apostle Paul of the East".

He was born in Fukien Province, and converted during the Hinghwa Pentecost in 1905. Upon returning from the States after completing his doctorate and Theological studies, he surrendered his life to God. He formed the Preaching Band with Andrew Gih and the Bethel Bands for a number of years. As the result, many eyes were opened, hearts were melt and lives were surrendered to Jesus Christ.

Years have passed yet his story continues to remain a challenge to many Christian. How could a "sinner" excel for God? What is the secret to be a dynamic servant of Jesus Christ?

John Sung's life was like many of us. There were not many differences except for three distinct characters he had. The secret to Dr. John Sung's lasting success was the hours he spent every day on his Bible. Day and night, he was in the Word of God. He would use the night lamp to read the Bible as there was no electricity. Once, Dr. Sung commented that every word of the Bible has a meaning, a spiritual meaning, even the numbers. No word of Scripture, or phrase, is there just by chance. "If we wait before the Lord, the Holy Spirit will reveal to us the meaning". Sometimes John had to wait on his knees all day to find the meaning of one word or phrase. "Then it would come in a flash like lightning revealing great sweeps of scenery, opening up great vistas of truth". Indeed, there is no shortcut to

experiencing the power of God than just soaking in His Word day and night.

Another secret of Dr. Sung lasting success was the thorough work he did with seekers. He did not only preached sermons three times a day, but he would have altar call each time. He challenged the people to confess their sin, and restore the relationship with God again. He would say: "Will you forgive this person? Will you return the money you stole? Do you hate in

would pray for the seekers after he left them. John had hundreds of prayer requests, even thousands, on prayer blanks and carried them with him in two big suitcases. He would pray fervently for these people even while preaching three times a day and having many interviews, besides hours with the Word. Sometimes, he would weep and groaned in agony of soul praying for people. Indeed, he had a great spiritual passion, even an obsession, which is to be coveted.

Will you forgive this person?  
Will you return the money you  
stole? Do you hate in your heart?  
Raise your hand if you will...

your heart? Did you steal from your government, parents, wife and husband? Raise your hand if you will" There was a widespread response and many tears during his pulpit sermon. Many sinners found a new life after their confessions. Their lives were never the same again only by confession and repentance which restore our privileges as the children of God.

Lastly, John never passed his day without praying for hours. He

Then, what are we waiting for? In order to be a dynamic Christian, one needs to seek and depend on God alone. Hours of waiting on Him in prayer, hours of filling with God's Word and battle against our flesh ("starve our flesh" as Rev. Lawrence Khong said) will enable us to be a dynamic servant of God. Are we willing to spend this hour? "No gain without sacrifice". May God help us!

BY Anthony Loh