

A photograph of a man kneeling in a field, his arms raised in prayer towards a sunset sky. The scene is framed by a blue, textured border.

God who  
calls you is  
faithful.

1 Thessalonians 5:24

# FOREWORD

Greetings in the name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

My heartfelt thanks go to the members of the TRAC Board of Evangelism for their prayerful effort in putting this edition together.

It is always a joyful experience to hear of how God worked in the lives of people He called into the fulltime ministry and it is most heart-warming when these testimonies come from persons who are my co-labourers in the ministry.

As members of the church see their pastors and learn from their teachings through sermons, Bible studies and their written works, they may easily miss the most important point: what makes their pastors respond to the call for fulltime ministry? Was it a one-off heart-warming experience, a failed struggle to resist, a path of miracles, a personal decision to respond to the shortage of labourers in the Lord's harvest field or what was it that made them say, "Here I am, Lord, send me?"

As the President of TRAC, I have the opportunity to interact with our pastors. In every sharing, the desire to have them announce to the world "WHY" has burned within me, hence the search for God's endless works in them. The harvest is indeed plentiful and the labourers are few. As I looked through the testimonies of my fellow co-workers in Christ, I cannot help but feel deeply humbled each time the Great commission of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ knocked on the heart and an obedient response was made.

To my fellow colleagues, I pray that you will continue to hear our Lord Jesus who has promised saying "... And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age" (Matthew 28:20, ESV). To my dear brothers and sisters in the Lord, I pray that your hearts may be warmed through your reading of these testimonies.

For those who are probably struggling to respond to the call to the fulltime ministry, do not be afraid and do not resist. "He who calls you is faithful" (1 Thessalonians 5:24, ESV) and He will be "with you always, to the end of the age."

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all (2 Corinthians 13:14, ESV).

In the Joy of the Master's Service,  
Rev. Dr. T. Jeyakumar  
President, Trinity Annual Conference  
The Methodist Church in Malaysia  
31 October 2020

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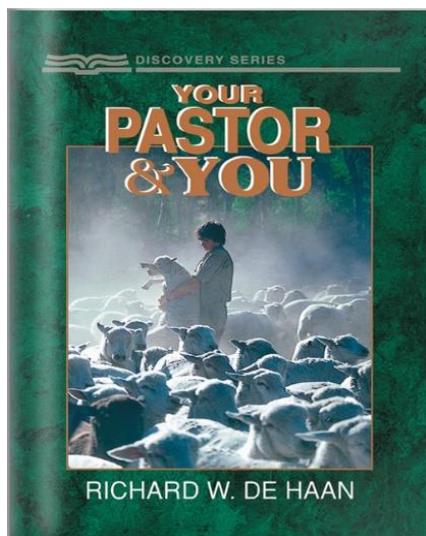
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## Your Pastor and You

By Dr Richard W De Haan

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*(Recently, a small booklet entitled "Your Pastor and You" by Richard W. De. Haan was given to me. After reading through it, I felt that the message had to be shared with the church for many like me, have not given much thought to the pastoral ministry and what our relationship with our pastors should be like. Besides that, those of us who have been with the church long enough would have heard all kinds of comments regarding the pastors, whether negative or positive. In almost every church there seems to be at least one group who, although making favourable comments about the pastor, cannot refrain from also publicly pointing out his shortcomings. Because of this, many pastors, are waging a difficult and discouraging battle. It is my prayer that an excerpt on this booklet written by Richard W. De. Haan will be used of God to give us insight into the proper relationship between the pastor and his congregation, and that it would help to foster harmony and love in the local church)*



Although the work of a pastor can be most satisfying and rewarding, it also involves extremely difficult, discouraging, and disappointing experiences that can sap the energy and frustrate the efforts of even the most dedicated servant of God. It is not only the work of preaching, the calling and the administrative duties that tax the energies and endurance of a pastor but the physical weariness and nervous exhaustion that can result in strained relationships between him and his congregation. When there's misunderstanding and opposition involving honest differences of opinion and earnest convictions on the part of respected members, he feels the pressure of his position

most greatly. The inability to please the very ones he loves the most, and the disappointment of being opposed by those he was depending on for moral support - these are the things that prompt him, on occasion, to throw up his hands in despair.

In many churches it seems that the pastor just cannot do anything right. No matter how sincere he may be or how hard he tries, there are always some who stand ready to find fault and criticize. Someone has described it this way.

*If the pastor is young, he lacks experience; if his hair is grey, he's too old for the young people.*

*If he has five or six children, he has too many; if he has none, he's setting a bad example.*

*If he preaches from notes, he has canned sermons and is dry; if his message is extemporaneous, he isn't deep enough.*

*If he caters to the poor in the church, he's playing to the grandstand; if he pays attention to the wealthy, he's trying to be an aristocrat.*

*If he uses too many illustrations, he's neglecting the Bible; if he doesn't include stories, he isn't clear.*

*If he condemns wrong, he's cranky; if he doesn't preach against sin, they claim he's a compromiser.*

*If he preaches the truth, he's too offensive; if he doesn't present the 'whole counsel of God,' he's a hypocrite.*

*If he fails to please everybody, he's hurting the church and should leave; if he does make them happy, he has no convictions.*

*If he drives an old car, he shames his congregation; if he buys a new one, he's setting his affection on earthly things.*

*If he preaches all the time, the congregation gets tired of hearing just one man; if he invites guest ministers, he's shirking his responsibility.*

*If he receives a large salary, he's mercenary; if he gets a small one, they say it proves he isn't worth much anyway.*

Even though he is doing his very best to shepherd the flock faithfully, longing for the rich blessing of the Lord on his ministry, there is always someone who finds fault, opposes him behind his back, or publicly denounces his actions.

To help church members understand the calling and role of the pastor, De Haan points out the three things said about John the Baptist as found in John 1:6-8, *"There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. This man came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all through him might believe. He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light."*

Three facts can be drawn from these verses regarding John the Baptist:

He had human limitations - he was "a man."

He had divine authorization - he was "sent from God."

He had a heavenly commission - he came "to bear witness of the Light."

These same characteristics mark every God-sent pastor today.

The man of God ("There was a man...")

All ministers are also men who are restricted and hampered by the very same human limitations as everyone else. This truth, however, seems to be so easily forgotten when making our demands on their lives and ministry. As a result, too many people in our churches are expecting too much and continually criticizing their preachers. As a man the pastor can't possibly be proficient in all things, nor can he do everything to perfection. He's going to have his failings and shortcomings simply because God sees fit to use a man. We should then pray for the pastors instead of criticizing them. If however, you just can't keep your complaints to yourself and you must talk to someone, talk to God. And while you're at it, pray for him. If anyone who needs the prayers of God's people today, it's the man who labours in the pastorate. The pastor not only faces the temptations of his own sinful nature and the world but also the criticism of unsanctified church members and the hatred of sinners. Because of this, he is a special target of Satan's fiery darts. So pray for him, help and encourage him - just as you appreciate a "pat on the back" for a job well done, so also your pastor welcomes the expression of thanks and the assurance of your moral support.

Divine authorization ("A man sent from God.")

While it's true that the pastor is just a man, it's a fact that those who have a genuine calling are men sent from God. Many would have to admit that their attitude, actions and words would have been much different toward their pastors if they had been told that God had placed them in the churches for a definite purpose. As such, they deserve the respect and honour - not because they're better necessarily, but rather in consideration of their heavenly calling. If only congregations would pray for their pastors and show respect for them as men sent from God, many problems could be avoided. The church would have a better image in the community, and the children would have a more favourable attitude toward the work of the gospel. It's your duty as faithful parents to cultivate respect in the minds of the small ones for those who are sent from God to serve as under-shepherds of the flock.

Heavenly Commission ("to bear witness of the Light")

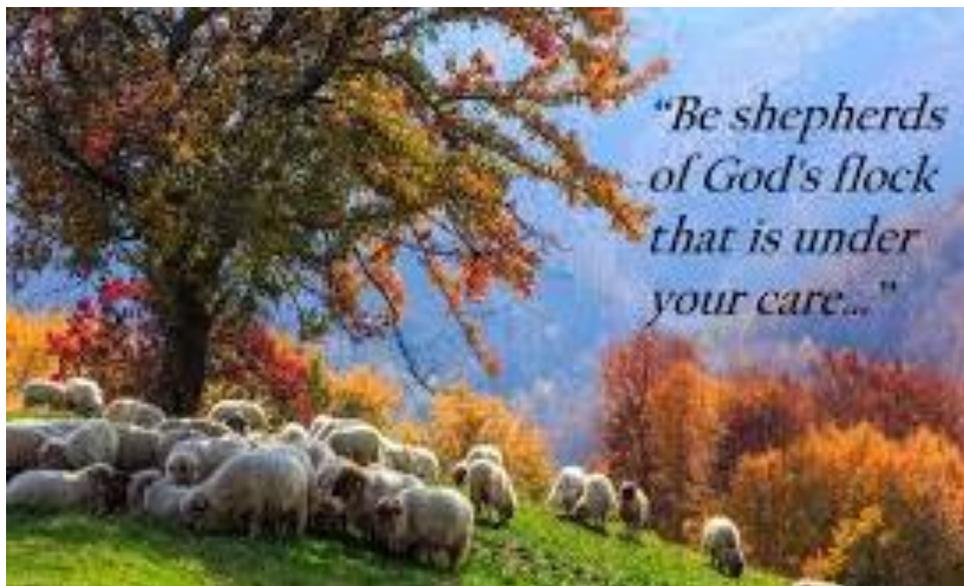
Like John, the calling of the pastor is to bear witness of the Light. And this gives us the answers to our questions about the activities of the pastor. Expounding the Word must take priority over everything else in the life of those called "to bear witness of the Light."

Whenever you find a church with a born-again, dedicated pastor who gives himself faithfully to prayer and to study and ministry of the Word, you'll discover a spiritual, vibrant, and growing assembly of believers. But when a congregation places such exacting demands on its leader that he must officiate at every committee meeting, attend all fellowship functions, and be active in a myriad of civic affairs to the extent that his life of prayer and Bible study is interrupted, you'll find a lethargic, lukewarm or cold, dead church. It's possible for a church to have numerous activities, meetings, clubs, projects and many "wheels going around" without really doing anything as far as its intended work is concerned.

Make certain your pastor isn't burdened down with administrative and civic obligations to the extent that his spiritual life suffers and the ministry of the Word does not remain central in his life and in the church. Remember, the spiritual tone of a congregation is keyed to its pastor.

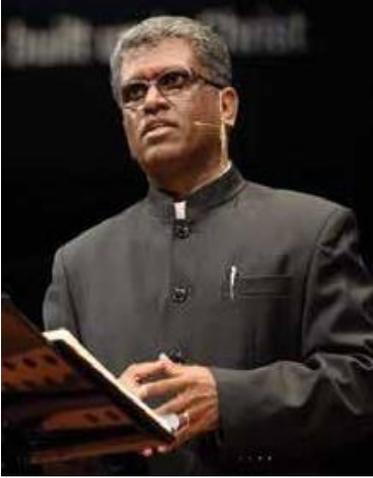
So, when you are asked to do something for which you're qualified and time and circumstances allow, don't say, "Let the pastor do it; that's what he's getting paid for." Rather, do your part and help the man "sent from God" so that he can more effectively "bear witness of the Light."

The pastor and the church need you. And together you can do great things for God.



# How God Changed My Heart

*By Rev Dr T Jeyakumar, TRAC President*



In January 1982 my non-Christian friends and I chose to join the Boys' Brigade (BB) which met in Wesley Methodist Church Melaka compound, adjacent to our school. On the first Saturday in the BB, the Captain shared with us during the devotion hour about a God who loved us so much. That was entirely new to me. I had grown up thinking that God was always looking to see if I would make mistakes and He looked forward to punish me. For the first time I was hearing something to the contrary. Though a proud follower of my faith then, I borrowed a Bible from a friend to read it for myself. I was not raised in a Christian family and I was active in practicing the faith I was raised up in at that time.

I read the Bible for about nine months. While I was reading it I realized I was being changed inwardly. My family and friends noticed that transformation in me. In fact, it was they who noticed the change in me first. Reading the Bible made me conscious of my sins, it answered questions that I had and it was changing my life without me quite realizing it. Looking at Jesus in the Gospels I realized that GOD was a loving GOD. Jesus' teaching that God was my Father attracted me to God because I was looking for a father figure ever since my father died when I was 12. Till today to be able to see God as a Father and call God my "Father" is the greatest privilege for me. So, at the age of sixteen, on the 1<sup>st</sup> of November 1982 I gave my life to Christ convinced that Christ was the way, the truth and the life and that He alone could change my life completely.

When I came to Christ three committed Christian men from our church, together with my Pastor, became involved in my life to help me grow in Christ. One of them introduced me to the Navigators follow-up materials and took me through them. Having to memorize Bible verses and learning the basics of Christianity was the best thing. Many of the verses that I still remember are verses that I memorized then. Another person led me to read one Christian book after another. Every time I asked a question he seemed to have a book to lend to me to find the answers. The third person opened his home to me and my friends. He patiently answered our many questions that we had about life, sexuality, studies, church, Christianity, etc. And that was a great help for us,

and particularly to me.

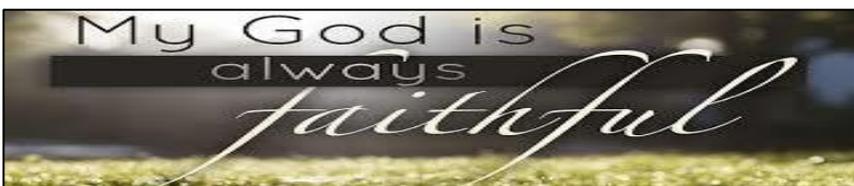
As a teenager besides going to church and being a member of the Boys' Brigade, I grew up reading A. W. Tozer, E. M. Bounds and many biographies. I began to learn to pray and fast as a Christian and disciplined myself to read the Bible daily before going to school in the morning. Tozer inspired me to take up Bible reading and worship of God seriously. Bounds instilled in me the need to pray and recognize the power of prayer.

In early 1984 I felt God calling me to be a pastor. I struggled with that call. I was not sure that I was a suitable person to answer that call. There were times I doubted. There were times I wanted to run away from that inner prompting. My Pastor asked me to wait for two more years before I considered any form of training to be a pastor because I was really young. He asked me to continue with my studies. It is an advice I would give to any young person seeking to confirm his calling to the fulltime ministry. Again, my Pastor and the three men came alongside to help me discover that call. They taught me to wait on God and seek His call through the Bible. After much waiting and praying, and with the godly men assuring me that they too sensed God calling me, I applied to join the seminary only in 1986.

While the Seminary interviewed and accepted me, the Board of Ministry rejected me. Only 25 years later I found out the reason for the rejection: that I was too Charismatic in my theology. However, in 1987 I reapplied to the Board of Ministry and I was then accepted (hopefully not because I had become less charismatic).

I basically went to the seminary knowing that I would never be worthy of that call from God but I had the conviction that HE who called me was faithful and HE would empower and enable me. The four years in the seminary were formation years. Those years equipped me spiritually and academically.

I am just so glad God called me to be a pastor. Today it is a joy to have served God for 29 years after graduating from Seminari Theoloji Malaysia. There have been ups and downs. Notwithstanding those challenges, there is nothing else that I would want to do than serve HIM, my God and my Lord, faithfully in the fulltime ministry.



## How God Called Me into Ministry

*By Rev Dr Andrew Tan Kok Khoo, Canning Garden Methodist Church, Ipoh*



I accepted Christ when I attended the MYF Retreat, TMC, Penang, in January 1973. I was then 15 years old. In December the same year, I attended the Methodist Boys' School Christian Fellowship (MBSCF) Retreat, and I heard a message on making a commitment to the ministry from Isaiah 6, "Here am I Lord, send me." Six weeks later, at the MYF Retreat which Rev. Hwa Jen conducted, I made a dedication "Here am I Lord, send me." What I meant was that if God should call me into ministry, I would be willing to submit to the call. I was

then baptized on 14th April 1974. I grew in my faith through my involvement both in the MYF and SCF.

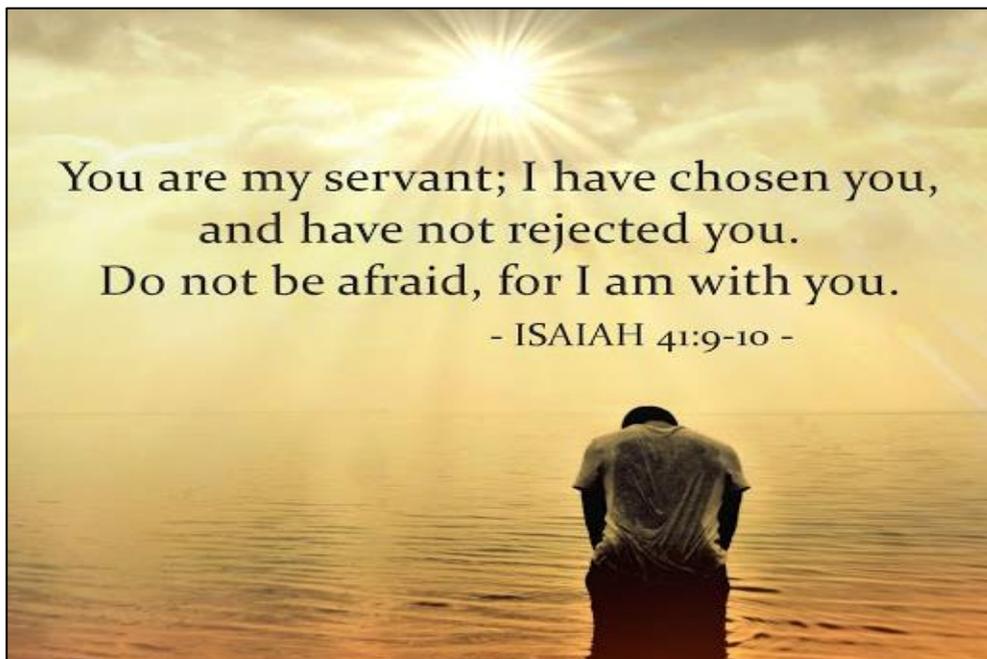
After I finished my SPM, a Youth Worker came into our church who had an impact on me when he led the youths in the study of the Bible. When I went back to MBS for my studies in Form 6, I was greatly involved in the SCF. My involvement ranged from witnessing, leading Bible studies, personal counselling, visitation, leading devotions and prayer meetings, planning the SCF programs, etc. It was during those years that I recalled my earlier commitment and wondered if God could be calling me into ministry.

I decided then that I should consider that possibility carefully. So what I did was to spend my time in a Christian drug rehabilitation centre. There I could think through my decision and discuss the issue with the same Youth Worker who was then looking after a church and a few drug addicts undergoing rehabilitation. One of the most important factors for my decision was the gifting God has given me.

The last day for my application to the local universities came on 20th March 1978. That morning's devotion caught my attention. The prayer for that morning was "Lord help me to obey you and to look to you in times of crisis." I felt the Lord had spoken, and I did not apply to the local universities. Instead, I applied to a Bible college.

Later, when I looked back at the decision, I saw how the Lord had been leading me. One night on 14<sup>th</sup> April 1976, during a prayer meeting, the Lord addressed Himself to me in a prophetic utterance, "You are my servant. I have chosen you." But at that time, I took it lightly, thinking that all Christians are God's servants.

One day in September 1978, a group of ex-MBSCF'ers were up Penang Hill for a one night's stay. I had misplaced my Bible earlier, and so I borrowed one. As I sat down for my devotion, I recalled the prophetic utterance which was found in the book of Isaiah but I had no idea which chapter or verse. I prayed that the Lord would show me that verse, and I opened the Bible to start reading only to find it a few verses down my reading, in Isaiah 41:9.



You are my servant; I have chosen you,  
and have not rejected you.

Do not be afraid, for I am with you.

- ISAIAH 41:9-10 -

That night I had to file in my application to the Bible College. I had to give my date of baptism. I was quite amazed to find my date of baptism to be the exact date when the Lord called me to be His servant. It gave me a sense of assurance that God had really called me. That was especially so because the prayer meeting was a casual event, and I was on the verge of returning home. I had not expected anything.

Soon after that, God continued to speak, assuring me that He would always be with me, and that He had given me His Holy Spirit. I studied in Malaysia Bible Seminary and continued in Trinity Theological College, completing my studies in 1983. After that I was posted to serve as pastor in the TRAC churches. They included WMC, Kampar, in August 1983, CGMC, Ipoh, in January 1988, WMC, KL, in August 2002, EMC, PJ, in January 2011, and then to CGMC, Ipoh, again in January 2018.

## **A Father's Decision.**

QUESTION: What is the most important decision a father can make in life?

ANSWER: His decision towards the Lord Jesus Christ.

*By Rev Henry Yong Wei Choong, Wesley Methodist Church, Kepong*

When a father becomes a Christian he opens the door to the church and the door to eternal life to all his children who come after him. He exposes his children to the life and teaching WITHIN the local church. That I believe is the most important decision a father will ever make.

My father, Yong Chok Chan, returned to the Lord when I was 12 years old. Though he did not have much money nor material possessions he left behind two very important treasures for his wife and six children.

The first treasure he left behind was an "INTACT FAMILY" to help cushion the family members from any economic upheaval.

The second treasure he left behind was a "LIVING CHRISTIAN FAITH" to sustain the family members through the various issues in life that they might face.

All six children embraced the gospel and embraced each other until today. The families are still intact today and the Christian faith is still living today in them. Truly how important a father's decision concerning Jesus Christ, the Son of God is. It has both temporal and eternal blessings for generations to come.

My father, a Hainanese, with my mother became Christians under the influence of Methodist Missionaries, Dr. Gunna and Wava Teilmann, who at that time were the Pastor and wife of Wesley Methodist Church, Kuala Lumpur, 1949-1955 and Ipoh from 1956 onwards. My father and mother were their cook and house keeper in both towns for many years. The children of both families played and grew up together and had remained family friends ever since. Dr. Gunna Teilmann helped officiate my elder sister, Mabel Yong's, wedding at Wesley KL in 1961 and also spoke as a family friend at my wedding, Henry's, in Kampong Kapor Methodist Church, Singapore in 1979. After the successful launching of the Samaritans of Selangor SOS from Wesley Methodist Church Kuala Lumpur they went on to start the Samaritans of Singapore SOS in Singapore - a crisis telephone services for people in distress. In 1976 Dr. Gunna Teilmann was my lecturer on counselling at a theological seminary in Singapore.

My parents were members of the Chinese Methodist Church in Kuala Lumpur, Ipoh and Ampang. The CAC President and later Bishop of the Methodist Church, Rev. CN Fung encouraged my parents and family to be part of AMPANG CHRISTIAN CENTRE, THE METHODIST CHURCH, the nucleus of the new church in Ampang New Village in 1957, which was a protected area. Though initially I attended the Sunday School in Wesley Methodist Church Kuala Lumpur, I eventually grew up through the ranks of the IMYF and MYF of the Ampang Chinese Methodist Church. As such, 80% of who I am, my values and world views were moulded by the church.

The English-speaking youths were under the good influence of missionaries from the Overseas Missionaries Fellowship, whose headquarters was located along Ampang Road. The senior lady Missionary who mentored me for many years was the late Ms Margaret G. Hollands. She was the first person to affirm my calling, "Henry, you have a pastor's heart." In 1969 the Campus Crusade for Christ, under David Hock Teh, was invited to our church to train the youths in evangelism. After a personal faith crisis, I responded on my knees saying 'YES' to the questions found in "Have you heard of the 'The Four Spiritual Laws?'"

I became a 'born again' Christian when I was President of the Methodist Youth Fellowship in 1969. I then sought help and followed up with The Navigators, Malaysia. I asked the National Director, Paul Hensley to come and teach our youths. He said, "No, you come over and I will train you and you go back and train others!" He personally trained me on a weekly basis. For a little less than two years, I led a small group of youths from the Ampang MYF, teaching them the Four Spiritual Laws as well as how they could visit others and share that to the people in the Ampang Community. It resulted in a revival among the English-speaking youths in Ampang Chinese Methodist Church.

In 1971 at the Keswick Convention at Bukit Bintang Girls' School, I responded to the full time ministry, challenged by the speaker, Dr Alan Redpath. There was a stir as about 10 to 12 men responded that night. Dr. Alan Redpath's final instruction was "Tonight before you go home, go and inform another person of your decision." That night, on my way back I rode my Honda Cub motor bike up UK Heights and I knocked at the door of a regular guest speaker, Tony Gordon and told him about my decision. It was about 11.30pm. I left after prayer and receiving some counsel from him.

In 1974, after working at the SMR Labs at the Rubber Research Institute for two years, I went for theological training in Singapore to establish a firm Biblical foundation for my calling. In the same year, a personal Covenant was established with God whereby He

would be my personal Jehovah Jireh, the God 'Who will Provide' or the God 'Who will see to it all'. God faithfully provided and I began a life-long practice of tithing since I started work in Kampong Kapor Methodist Church Singapore in 1978.

I must testify that God is faithful. He has journeyed with me, provided for my needs and blessed my family and me with so much. I am thankful as I recognize that He has His reasons and purpose for posting me to different churches throughout the country. The table below indicates the names of churches I have the privilege to serve:

**TABLE 1: METHODIST CHURCHES I HAVE SERVED IN (1978-2020)**

Kampong Kapor Methodist Church Singapore (1978- June 1980)	Butterworth Wesley Methodist Church (1992 - 1994)
Fairfield Methodist Church Singapore (July 1981- June 1983)	Klang Wesley Methodist Church (1995 - 2000)
Bentong Christ Methodist Church (July 1983 - 1989)	Sitiawan Wesley Methodist Church (2001 - 2013)
Mentakab Wesley Methodist Church (July 1983 – 1989)	Segamat Wesley Methodist Church (2014 – December 2016)
Kulim Wesley Methodist Church (1990 - 1994)	Kepong Wesley Methodist Church (August 2018 – Present)



Photo 1 Rev Henry Yong's Ordination Service for Deacon in 1987 in the Methodist Church in Malaysia. Bishop C.N. Fung, President Dr, Denis C. Dutton, wife Araya Yong, Mother Loke Soo Lan, Sister Jenny Yong, Phyllis Yong and her children, Jimi Yong.



Photo 2 Rev Henry, Araya and Praise Yong in 2020 Chinese New Year at Wesley Methodist Church Kepong

## Calling Into Full-Time Christian Ministry

*By Ms Aileen Khoo Hooi Ai, Trinity Methodist Church, Petaling Jaya*

(Note: This testimony is reproduced, with permission, from **Berita TRAC** 2009 - Vol 34 - No 2)



We know her as Aileen Khoo but her friends in her younger days knew her as Hooi Ai, (meaning the grace and love of God) the name given to her by her grandfather Mr. Tan Mah Ku, a lay missionary. This is her story. I recall Ah Kong (Grandpa) made his annual travels from Penang up north to Southern Thailand, crossing over to Kelantan and down South to Singapore and then back home again. The journey took him away from home almost a year each time while grandma stayed home to sew bridal dresses to help with finances.

Educated in Light Street Convent from Kindergarten up till Form 5 I acquired the Roman Catholic tradition. But my parents Mr. Khoo Hock Seang and Mdm. Tan Chye Lian made sure I was grounded in Methodist roots. Sunday School was not an option. At the Chinese Methodist Church Madras Lane Sunday School I witnessed the birth of Trinity Methodist Church Penang. Dad, a civil servant had to move from Butterworth to Bukit Mertajam. It was then that we saw the birth of Wesley Butterworth, BM, Kulim circuit. My sister Eveleen and I were 'dragged' along after attending Sunday School in BM in the morning to go to Butterworth in the afternoon and then to Kulim at night to be the organists. We were only in primary school then.

Having a father who was the District Officer had its advantages. We stayed in a large bungalow by the beach in Butterworth. The MYFers from Trinity Penang used it for their retreats. I watched with envy their activities and fun. I could not wait till I was eligible to be a member. On my 12th birthday I signed up as one. The next year I got elected as Librarian, a task which shook me so much that I was sick for nearly a year. After gaining some confidence, I was elected outreach chairman. I remember Mr. Khoo Cheok Sin who was the MYF Counsellor cycling to my home to teach me my responsibilities. His brother Khoo Cheok Peng was MYF President then. It was a matter of time when I became President of MYF, a position that I valued greatly. The church was my second home and our home was our second church.

It was soon after my Form 5 exam that my family made our annual trip to Petaling Jaya. It was to send my father to Melbourne on a Colombo Plan for studies. We stayed with Mr. & Mrs. Khoo Oon Soo every time we went to PJ. On that visit, Mrs. Khoo Cheng Hoe, the mother of Mr. Khoo was there and she asked what I wanted to do with my life. She asked "Why not Trinity Theological College". I said I didn't want to be a pastor. I disliked preaching, marrying, and burying. She then went through with me the numerous possibilities of ministry. As she spoke I got more and more excited. The rest of the story you know. I celebrated my 18<sup>th</sup> birthday at Trinity Theological College.

Upon graduation I was invited to go to Ipoh (Perak District) as Christian Education field worker. Back then the church had just become autonomous and did not have the means to employ a full time person other than pastors. But before I could start packing there was a crisis at Alor Setar Wesley Methodist Church. The pastor had to leave suddenly because of his work visa. He was from Indonesia. Bishop Yap Kim Hao asked me if I would hold the fort as supply pastor for 3 months. Since it was only for 3 months I thought I could manage. But the 3 months dragged on to 9 months. Rev. Ronnie Goh was the District Superintendent and he was most encouraging. It was a small church made up of largely young professionals. The average age of the members was 35. Church visitation was done on bicycles. Twice a month I travelled to Kangar to conduct services. I don't want to name names for fear of missing out some. But you know who you are and I thank you for contributing greatly to my growing years in the ministry.

At age 23 I made my way to Perak and worked with Rev. Ng Ee Lin and then again with Rev. Ronnie Goh at Wesley Methodist Church, Ipoh. I covered Kampar, Teluk Intan, Sitiawan in my mini-minor car as Christian Education Director / Field Worker. I was there three and a half years before I was awarded the Crusade Scholarship to study at Scarritt College, Nashville Tennessee. I did my graduate studies in Christian Education and Church Music Education. It was the summer of 1978 that I got an invitation from Dr. Joe Hale, then the General Secretary of the World Methodist Council to be the 2<sup>nd</sup> International Hostess in Lake Junaluska. Since then I have never seen a more beautiful place. I told stories of Malaysia and the Methodist Churches to groups that went there for conferences and retreats.

Upon graduation I was invited to join Trinity Methodist Church, Petaling Jaya, in June 1980. Rev. Ng Ee Lin came to me while I was seated at the large table in the wide corridor one day during break at an Annual Conference in the Methodist Centre, Port Dickson.

He said that Mrs. Sheila Dharmaratnam their Christian Education Worker was leaving for home in Singapore and they needed someone. Would I be willing to take over? I did not know that when I said yes, I would be saying yes to 28 years. My interest in music helped me in the production of Trinity's numerous musicals and tours. The handbells choir toured as far south as Singapore. We were the first handbell Choir in Malaysia. (and even in Asia, I can safely claim). Bible Study is the heart beat of any church. The DISCIPLE program has taken root and is growing numerous church leaders and teachers. Among the many happenings in our church, one exciting thing which happened was the way the Disciple Through Bible Study Program stirred desire and interest of church members to go deeper into the Word of God. It is a joy to see this DISCIPLE program taking root and spreading so effectively to other churches and even to the Roman Catholic churches.

My stay at TMC took me to even wider areas of experiences. In the ecumenical front I was involved with the Council of Churches and the Christian Conference of Asia especially in Women's Work, CE work and designing worships for their assemblies. For many years I was secretary as well as a member of the Accreditation and Resource Commissions of ATESEA.

As member of the Faith and Order Commission of WCC I attended their Assemblies in Stavanger, Norway and Budapest, Hungary. Also, I participated in the World Evangelism Congress in Jerusalem of the World Methodist Council, and Hans Rudi Weber Participatory Bible Study in the Ecumenical Institute in Bossey, Geneva.

I also taught Christian Education and Church Music as well as helped with the Choir at STM's 3 campuses, in Brickfields, Sentul and Jalan Gasing.

At Annual Conference level, since day one I was involved with the Board of Christian Education under the late Rev. Larry Cheah, Mr. Ernest Lau and later when Malaysia separated from Singapore under Ms. Jeanette Hui and Rev. Philip Chan, finally becoming moderator for the 1985-88 quadrennium. The Board of Christian Education oversee work in Audio Visual Aids, Bahasa Malaysia translation program, Archives & History, Worship and Music, Library, Literature, Sunday School materials and Youth Development. The main project we carried out was the production of the Integrated Program Syllabus for Christian Education.

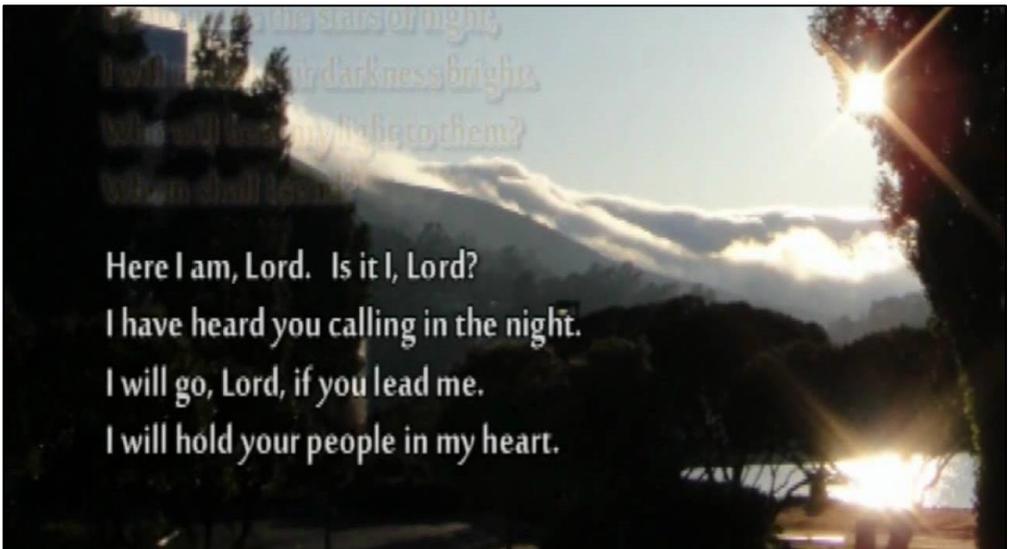
I was also moderator of Council of Christian Education in the same quadrennium. We successfully conducted a Church Management Seminar held in the Hokkien Chinese

Methodist Church, Jalan Hang Jebat, KL.

When the Board of Archives and History became a separate board I moved from the Board of Christian Education to the Board of Archives and History under Mr. Sam Goh. I dropped archive work to moderate the Board of Worship & Music for 1993-96 quadrennium. We organized 2 ritual writing workshops and a choir festival. I continued to serve as member when Rev. David Loo became the moderator.

My interest in archive work brought me back as moderator for the 2001-04 quadrennium and at the same time member of the Council of Archive & History. We had intensive training programs and projects.

Quadrennium 2005-2008. I moderated for the Council of Archives & History. We organized the Oral History Workshop in Sitiawan, among many other programs. I have retired from my job at Trinity Methodist Church P.J. but have not from ministry work. My friends have asked me what my plans are for retirement. The nice thing about retirement is that I don't have to make plans; I don't have to watch the clock or count the days. Every day can be a Sunday, or a Monday and every day a holiday! There is a line from the musical Paul & Co. based on Paul's 2<sup>nd</sup> Missionary Journey which goes like this "When you don't know where you're headed and no path to you is clear" then you've got to simply wait for the voice you need to hear." So I am waiting for God's direction.



## The Lord Prepared All Things...

*By Rev Joshua Hong Kee Soon, Trinity Methodist Church Petaling Jaya*



In September 1982, I began my theological studies at the Trinity Theological College (TTC), Singapore. I graduated in June 1986 with a Bachelor of Divinity.

The journey to embark upon my theological training took me almost 9 years before I finally submitted to the Lord's will.

Around August 1973, I attended a youth camp held at the old Port Dickson Methodist Centre. There for the first time, I heard the challenge to go into full time ministry. With tears in my eyes, I went to the front to indicate my willingness to obey God's call to enter into full time ministry.

After the camp I was in a dilemma to obey God's call. Firstly, my older brother had decided that he wanted to quit his job to pursue theological studies. My mum gave her blessings and so off to TTC my brother went. Secondly, I had just begun my Lower Six studies and my mum was placing her hope on me to finish my Form 6. My mum also said, "One pastor in the family will be good enough." So my plans for theological studies had to be shelved.

I completed my Form 6 but was not able to enter the local university. I then furthered my studies at TAR College to pursue a professional course with the Institute of Chartered Secretaries and Administrators, London, which I completed in 1979. I did not pursue the Chartered Secretary path but instead went on to be a secondary school teacher in a Chinese private school in Klang. God used my experience as a teacher to prepare me for the ministry in the years ahead. During that time as a school teacher, I worked at my teaching and presentation skills. I also broadened my language skills, especially in Bahasa Malaysia and oral Mandarin.

In the meantime, I got involved and was immersed myself in the life of the local church, the Klang Chinese Methodist Church (KCMC). I was involved in the Sunday School; I was also involved in the weekly personal evangelism and regularly attended the prayer meetings. I was also active in the Methodist Youth Fellowship. Soon, by virtue of the fact that I was Youth President, I had to attend the LCEC meetings. Again, I see that all those involvements were preparations by the Lord for my ministry in the days ahead.

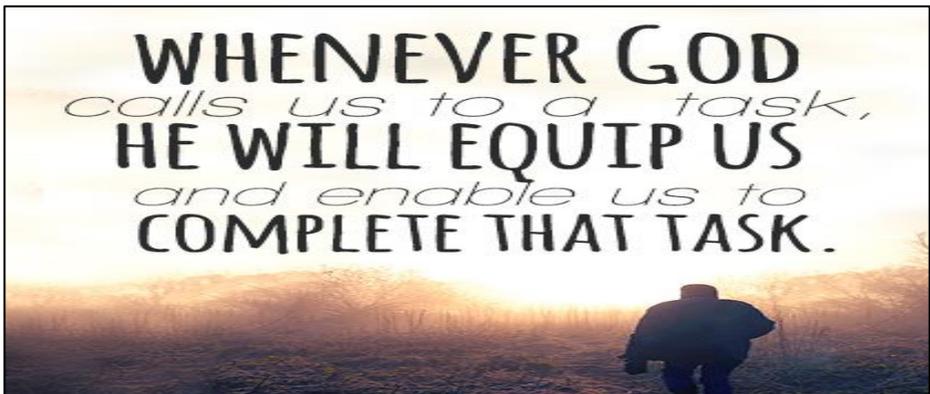
I also hung around my pastor when the opportunity presented itself to me, for the purpose of learning what a pastor's life entailed and to be of help to him in any way I could.

I thank the Lord that my home church KCMC held annual revival and missions rallies. I recall that one of the things the speaker did on the last night of the meetings, was to challenge the youths to give their lives to the Lord, to answer His call to go into full-time ministry. Again I would raise my hand and would go forward to kneel at the altar railing, indicating my desire to give my life to the Lord's purpose. Youth camps were also used by the Lord to give opportunities to youths to dedicate their lives to serve the Lord.

I had my financial responsibilities to fulfil before I could leave everything and obey God's call. I had to pay for the instalments of my motor-bike. When I studied in TAR College, I had taken a loan from the Methodist Church – the Joint Crusade Scholarship/Loan Fund. I had contracted to settle the loan in three years' time. I felt it was improper of me to leave my debts to be settled by my mum or my eldest brother or by my guarantor. I undertook to settle all those debts.

The other matter holding me back was that I felt that I did not have a very deep knowledge of the Bible and I had not read up sufficiently. However, a missionary couple told me that I just had to embark upon the journey into theological studies by faith. Theological training is a process. What is important is my daily prayer life and my earnest reading of God's word. God will train and equip me along the way.

Through the revival meetings and missions rallies, the Lord saw to it that I was reminded of the commitment that I made in August 1973. I cannot recall how many times I had said, "Yes", and the tears I had shed.



Finally, in June of 1982, at a missions rally, when I was again challenged to give my life to the Lord, I decided that that was it. I must stop trying God's patience. That evening I once again gave my life to the Lord. I was then about 27 years old. I approached my pastor, the late Rev Peter Hsu, and shared my concerns and my decision. I cried in his presence and he counselled and assured me that the church would undertake to sponsor my studies at TTC Singapore. I also spoke to some leaders in my church, seeking their counsel and advice and they all encouraged me and gave their blessings.

Eventually, my mum gave her blessings for me to pursue my theological training. The double joy was that my youngest sister, also received mum's blessings. And so in September 1982 both my sister (Janet Hong Cheng It) and I went to TTC to pursue our theological studies and together we graduated in June 1986.

Looking back, I can only say that the 9 years were years of training and preparation for me. God prepared my mum to release three of her children into full-time ministry. God prepared the church to support both my sister and me so that we could pursue the call of God in our lives. All praise and thanks to the Lord God Almighty who counted me worthy to be his servant.

I want to close with these words from Isaiah 6:8, "*Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, 'Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?' And I said, 'Here am I. Send me!'*". As I have heard this voice of the Lord, and obeyed him, though it was over a 9-year period, I pray that as you read this testimony, you also will be reminded of your pledge which you might have made some time ago in your life. May the Lord use every circumstance in your life to prepare you for His call, and that you will respond and fulfil that call in His timing. God bless.

**Isaiah 6:8 Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?" And I said, "Here am I. Send Me!"**

# Breaking Free and Finding True Joy, Peace and Hope In Christ

*By Rev Paul Santosh Christie, Trinity Methodist Church Petaling Jaya*



Almost any name of a person will immediately bring to mind something about that person. It's an Asian cultural tradition and background. People who know us well will definitely have some form of picture about us, whether it is positive or negative. To those who know me well, they will call Paul or Paul Christie, but many don't use or know my middle name 'Santosh'. The name 'Santosh' could mean 'happiness', 'joy', 'satisfaction' or 'contentment'. Reflecting on my name, the question that came to mind is this - did I truly have a joyful life? Was there true joy in my life? Am I satisfied with my life? More than thirty years ago, in my late teens, I did not have that

true joy in my heart. I was crying out internally for joy, peace, hope and freedom.

A life that is distressed, broken and lost will definitely cry out for liberation and breakthrough.

This is the concise testimony of my life. I was born into a Christian family - the second child to my parents – and I was baptized into the Christian faith at the age of nine. During my childhood years, my siblings and I attended Sunday School at the Tamil Methodist Church in Brickfields, the church that my parents attended. Honestly, at that time, I felt that going to church was just a normal weekend routine. Since my parents were Christians, I thought I was a Christian. There was no personal conversion, commitment or strong belief in Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour.

In my schooling days at Methodist Boy's School, Kuala Lumpur, I attended chapel services on Wednesday mornings and also Bible Study classes, taught by a very devoted and dedicated Christian teacher whom I remember as Ms. Ng. The Boys' Brigade (1st KL Boys' Brigade Company) under Wesley Methodist Church, Kuala Lumpur did fascinate me but I was never really committed to the organization due to the distance from my house to the school.

Soon, I stopped attending church due to various circumstances and unpleasant experiences. My interest was diverted somewhere else. My spiritual life took a turn and started to take a dive. Eventually, I stopped reading the Bible. I stopped praying.

Boredom took over. Was there true joy in life? I was going through a series of rebellion against God, and my parents, especially my father. I was truly struggling in my life, living in a state of total confusion, and definitely without internal joy and peace. There was even a moment when darkness shrouded my mind and an evil thought came to me which made me think of ways to end my life. Such darkness affected me emotionally and spiritually. Very soon, it affected my performances in my studies and sports.

When I was preparing to pursue my tertiary studies and career, my father asked me to work with him first in the family printing business because he needed help to move the business forward. Only after that would I be able to pursue my studies. Working for my father was indeed challenging as he was a strict and demanding person. Nevertheless, I did learn about the business world through helping him - how to close deals fast, and how to be shrewd so that you would not be conned in a dog-eat-dog world. It was during that period of my life that I started to behave the worst. That was because of the pressure and demands in the business, and also the rough and tough people whom I encountered. I learnt to be tough and street-wise. That led me to live a double life.

What do I mean by double life? With my loved ones and relatives, I seemed like a good person living up to my name "Santosh" – they would praise my parents for having such a good son. On the contrary, I had developed characteristics and habits due to the environment I was in. But, one thing I can say, I thank God that I did not consume drugs in my life although I met some people who were from the "underworld".

There seemed to be more downs than ups, no joy, no peace, and no hope at all. What joy was there in a life shrouded by darkness? In addition to that, my health became worse when I developed bad eczema with rashes on my body. I felt terrible. There were rashes on my face, arms, legs and body. Whenever I slept, without knowing, I would scratch the itchy rash so hard that it would bleed. I had to go to the government hospital for treatment after treatment. It was really bad and I was disgusted by it. In fact, some said to me, "You no more leng chai la". What made me feel worse was that I had to immediately stop eating my favourite dishes - lala, siput, crabs and other kinds of food that could cause eczema and rashes.

I became a frustrated and angry person, my spirit was down, and I was seeking for peace to calm my mind, my soul and my body. I decided to join another religion or a sect, thinking that a particular deity or religion would help me. Actually, there was a strong rebellion against God. I was disappointed with Jesus Christ for not blessing me with happiness and peace in my life, but instead, had caused more unhappiness, misery and confusion. In addition, I read books on astrology, numerology and palmistry

thinking that all those books, teachings, and worship of deities would help me find true inner peace and hope in life. Actually, there wasn't any peace, hope, nor solution to the confusion and struggles I was going through.

My mother prayed daily that one day I would be a changed man. She even encouraged me to pray and read the Bible, and that I would return to God and believe in Him. But one thing I discovered later in my life is that in all my difficulties, trouble, pain and rebellion, God had been patient with me. His amazing grace was evident in my life. I was reminded, during my seminary days, by Bishop Emeritus Dr Hwa Yung who was then the principal of the seminary, that all of the trials and tribulations were part of God's will and purpose for my life, in preparation for what was to come later.

In the middle of 1991, something happened in my life. I had a strange dream. In that dream I was struggling. There was a bright light, and in that bright light there was a voice. It was repetitively saying something like this: "You'd better obey Me. If you do not obey, you will be punished and you will die forever in fire."

When I woke up, my whole body was drenched in sweat. My pillow and some parts of the bed were wet with sweat. I thought I was sick and having high fever, but no. I was actually struggling with God in that dream. Day after day, I was thinking about the dream and that voice. I needed to know the source of the voice and the interpretation of that dream. The following Sunday, I felt compelled to attend a church near my home. I was struggling whether to go or not to go. I felt ashamed within me that I was not worthy to enter the church or stand before God. Nevertheless, I went. During the worship, everyone was filled with joy and singing out loud, but I had no joy. I was the only one in that room who was very quiet, with head bowed low, and standing as still as a rock. I was an observer, looking at the people's joyful expressions, their emotions of love, their passion towards Jesus, and their warm fellowship with one another. I wanted to leave immediately for I felt out of place.

But all was not lost. Why? During the sermon, as I was listening with my head bowed, my heart was pierced like a knife going through my body. The preacher gave a strong message about Jesus Christ and what Christ had done for our sinful lives by dying on the cross. Through His death and the resurrection from death, we have true peace and life. Jesus fulfilled the mission of God by dying in our place on the cross. Apart from Jesus Christ, there is no one who can give true joy, peace and hope. I felt that God was speaking to me directly. That night, I couldn't sleep, I was thinking about the dream, the voice, the message, and I came to realize the mess that I had made in my life. I cried

the whole night and did not know what to do. I was afraid to call on the Name of Jesus but God knew what I was going through.

One Sunday morning, my parents decided to attend a Methodist church near home. Since, they were members of the Tamil Methodist Church, they decided to attend the Tamil Methodist Church in Ulu Klang. So, I decided to follow and went with a broken heart, yearning for God to forgive my sins. After the service, I asked the pastor to pray for me, and after a few months, I was led to surrender my life to Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour. Miracle after miracle happened, I thank God that:

- My eczema was healed – no more rashes all over my body.
- My bad habits stopped.
- My weak and undesirable habits were removed.

It was a breakthrough! Indeed, I experienced true joy, peace and hope after I had repented of my sins, and believed in Christ as Lord and Saviour, and decided to follow Him. That led me to read and study the Bible intently, to pray persistently and to participate in the life and ministry of the church.

After two years of being involved in the church life, I heard the call of God to go into the pastoral ministry. Interestingly, that call came when I attended a renewal meeting at the Chinese Methodist Church, Ampang, in the early 1990s. At first, I ignored the call. I was sceptical. As time went by, that call became clearer and was confirmed through His Word, through the pastors, and through the church as a whole.

Because of the language barrier in the Tamil Methodist Church, with the assistance and counsel of then TRAC President, Rev. Ng Ee Lin, I was asked to join TRAC and was received into the membership of Wesley Methodist Church, Kuala Lumpur in 1994. From then onwards, by God's grace, I was accepted by both the pastoral and lay leadership of KL Wesley to be a pre-full-time ministerial candidate before entering the seminary. I'm grateful to the pastors and the church for the support shown to me.

In my life, if it had not been for God's intervention and the gospel message, I wouldn't be here as a pastor today. These are some examples of clear evidences of God's presence in my life:

- I escaped three wild dogs that had chased after me when I was 10 years old.
- I was not badly injured when I fell off a moving school bus three times during my school days.
- I did not end my life or take drugs which could have ruined everything.

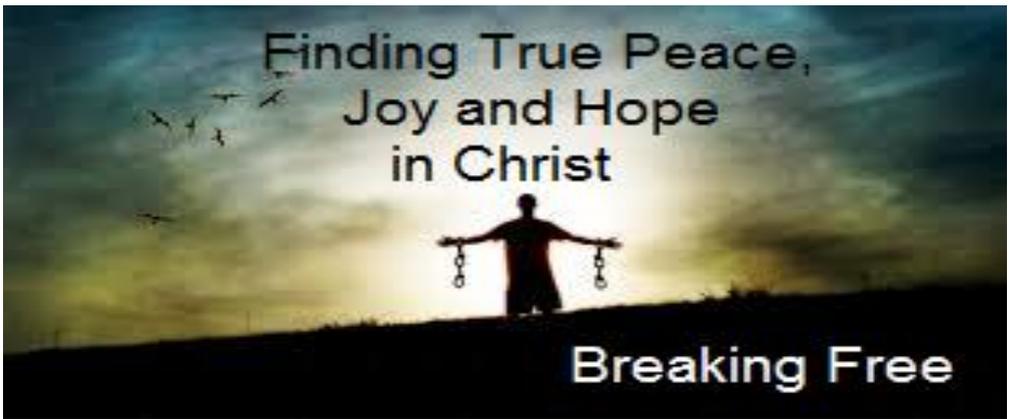
- The painful eczema was healed.
- I nearly got killed in a road accident when I suddenly dozed off while driving.
- The dream, the prayers of my mother and others, and God's powerful living Word that transformed my life.
- Although it was difficult for him, my father accepted God's call upon my life to go into full-time ministry and he released me from working with him in the printing business.
- I was accepted into full-time ministry at KL Wesley and then as a student at Seminari Theoloji Malaysia.
- I had great support from the Methodist Youth Fellowship, the 1st KL Boys Brigade Company, the Setapak Parish group and many others.
- I have been blessed with Gladys my wife, who complements me and also struggles alongside me in the ministry.
- I have the presence and assurance of fellow colleagues, church members (from the churches that I had pastored) and the conference, who were there for me and my family when we needed them most in 2008 when my third son passed away.
- I have spiritual mentors who faithfully pray for me and guide me.

Firstly, I can fully testify that Jesus is the One who heals, restores and renews life. He is the One who can take the shattered, scattered fragments of your life and put them back together again. He is the One who can forgive our sins, reconcile us to Himself and create us anew.

Secondly, if your life is in a total mess, if you are broken, hurt, sick, confused and without true joy, then be assured that Jesus is the One who is able to save you. In Christ alone, there is hope for those who come to know Him and believe in Him. The Bible says, "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son." (John 3: 16-18)

When we believe in Jesus Christ, we will not be condemned but we will receive God's gift of eternal life. We will have a right relationship with God. It is Jesus who died for you and me on the cross in order to save us from our guilt and from the power of sin and death.

Thirdly, only in Jesus Christ there is real joy and peace in your heart. He said, "...in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world." (John 16:33)



Jesus is the One who gives peace to those who are lost, lonely, broken and troubled. No matter what you are going through, Jesus is there to comfort you; He is there to encourage you; He is there to strengthen you.

Lastly, knowing Jesus Christ and believing in Him as Lord and Saviour is the greatest joy and assurance in our life. Why? He is with us, guiding, leading, and taking care of us every moment of the day. He is with us in any kind of circumstances: in sickness, in earthquakes, in poverty, in riches, in birthdays, in marriage, in the birth of a child, and even in death. And, He is with us now, tomorrow, at the time of death (cf. Revelation 21:3-5), even at the end of the world. He is with us in eternity. Therefore, we don't need to fear about the future or where we are going because Christ is with us all the way.

In Christ alone, we will find true joy, true peace, true hope, and we will experience the power of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

This is the greatest joy!

This is the assuring peace in our hearts!

This is the blessed hope we have today, tomorrow and forever.

"May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit." – Romans 15:13

"Long my imprisoned spirit lay, Fast bound in sin and nature's night;  
Thine eye diffused a quickening ray; I woke, the dungeon flamed with light;  
My chains fell off, my heart was free, I rose, went forth, and followed thee.  
My chains fell off, my heart was free, I rose, went forth and followed thee."

- Charles Wesley, 1739

## Faith ...Passing It On

*By Rev Joshua Khong Chee Leong, Wesley Methodist Church, Taiping.*



The hymn "I Come to the Garden Alone" has a special place in my heart. It is a beautiful hymn, written by C. Austin Miles in 1913. Songs remind us of our loved ones and we feel connected to them when we hear them. "I Come to the Garden Alone" has a special place in my heart for two reasons. It connects me to God, and it connects me to my aunt; Winnie Roland Lim. Some events leave deep imprints, and they remain fresh because of their impact and influence in our lives. I was eleven years old when I met auntie Winnie for the first time. She came to visit us at our farm in Rawang with uncle Wai, an old family friend.

As dusk fell, I hastily chopped the last batch of firewood. Dinner was almost ready. As the farm was not connected to power grid, we often had dinner whilst there was still light. There was a glowing golden light at the horizon as uncle Wai's old Toyota Corolla pulled into our farm. Uncle Wai is dad's old buddy, and he often visited us at the farm. Uncle Wai brought a guest with him, auntie Winnie. The first impression I had of auntie Winnie was that of an old-school missionary teacher. Auntie Winnie wore her hair in a braided bun, dressed in a pastel floral dress, bespectacled...she had the air of a serious no-nonsense teacher. The truth is, she was exceptionally good with children. She was a gifted storyteller. Although we met her for the first time, we were drawn to her immediately. She exuded a genial warmth and familiarity; and connected with us instantaneously. She loved to sing and dance, and we sang simple Sunday School songs at our first meeting. That memory of her has remained fresh with me, precious memories of a remarkable godly woman. Little did I know then, that she would have a deep and lasting impact on my life; leaving behind godly footprints for my siblings and me.

Auntie Winnie's visit to our farm in Rawang was guided by a dream. She dreamt of my dad and his big family of seven children. In the dream she saw us at the bank of a turbulent river with dangerous violent waters. And she heard God's voice saying, "Winnie, take care of Fred and his family." Auntie Winnie was our dad's widowed sister-in-law, and they had lost touch for many years. Auntie Winnie answered God's call in the dream; and through uncle Wai she faithfully traced us to our farm in Rawang. Auntie Winnie's dream about us was my first encounter with God, the fatherly heart of God,

who watches over His children. Every time, I address God as “Abba, Father” I am reminded of that amazing episode that happened in my family.

When auntie Winnie was given that dream, our family was struggling with the harsh reality of imminent homelessness. We moved to Rawang and started a farm at the kind and generous invitation of dad’s friend. Two years earlier, our dad’s business failed, and he was declared a bankrupt. His friend had a durian orchard in Rawang, and he generously offered his land for dad to use, in return for keeping an eye on the durian trees. Dad started a fish farm, raising “soon hock”, the marble goby fish. The marble goby is a slow growing fish; hence, we supplemented our income with pig, chicken and duck farming. In unexpected turn of events, dad’s friend had to sell his land. That was a big blow for us. Dad was a bankrupt; hence, the money invested into the farm was borrowed from relatives. We had not recovered our investment in the short two years, and as a result we landed in greater debts, and a seemingly dead-end. It was at that time, our Abba Father, who had been watching over us... instructed auntie Winnie in a dream, “Winnie, take care of Fred and his family.”

We moved in with auntie Winnie, at her Mountain House, as we affectionately call it. She lived alone with her huge collection of guinea pigs and rabbits, Jippy (her Labrador) and Simon (her famous pet python). In the evening after dinner, auntie Winnie tutored us “Little House on the Prairie” style. We sat at the big table together and auntie Winnie would guide us with our studies and homework. We missed out on our studies and were lagging behind. We had little time to spare for our studies and homework in the two years we were living at the farm; with endless farm-chores and that caused us to be physically exhausted. It was customary for auntie Winnie to round up the evening at the study table with bible stories and prayers. Thus, began our new life in Kuantan...and our spiritual journey under auntie Winnie’s discipling and mentoring. We were taught to take the Lord’s Day seriously. Every Sunday, auntie Winnie packed us into her green Morris Minor for Sunday School and Sunday Service. Church became a part of our lives.

Auntie Winnie roped me into teaching Sunday School when I was 14 years old. She was the Sunday School Superintendent and I assisted her with Sunday School when I was in Form 2. She taught us from a young age that to love God was to serve God. Auntie Winnie was a remarkable spiritual mentor, imparting godly values and habits through her example and daily practices. She laid a solid foundation for us. We were not merely “table grace” Christians, only giving thanks for our food. We were taught to order our daily lives with God in the centre; reading God’s word, applying God’s word

in our lives, and honouring God in our conduct and speech. Auntie Winnie was an avid reader, and she introduced me to the joy of reading. One of her proudest moments was my ordination, serving God in the Methodist Church.

She loved to write poems, and she continued to journal and wrote poems until the last part of her 84 years of her earthly journey. Cancer ravaged her body but her spirit was indomitable. She never complained and she embraced each new day with joy and cheer. She left instructions for me to conduct her wake and funeral services. We sang songs and we danced; those were things she loved to do with her loved ones. Every time she visited us, she sang and danced, and told bible stories ...with her grandnieces and grandnephews. Ruth and Sarah have fond memories of those precious visits.

Passing on the faith...I have learned many valuable lessons from a remarkable godly woman. Firstly, the value of leaving godly footprints for the next generations. Secondly, teaching them to love God is to serve God. Thirdly, living our lives as godly examples speak louder than our words. Auntie Winnie did not know Ron Hunter or the D6 movement which came later. The way she lived out her life is exactly what is taught in the D6 movement we know today. Passing on the faith, discipleship and mentoring, start from home

I am grateful for the godly impact and influence auntie Winnie's discipleship and mentoring had on my siblings and me. What I have received, I pass on now to Ruth and Sarah, our daughters. She lived a faithful life of loving God and His Church. She showed my siblings and me, "To love God is to serve God." Answering God's call to serve as a Methodist pastor came naturally for me. She planted the seed in me when I was a little boy. Growing up, I witnessed her spending sweet hours with her God. She carried out that cherished daily activity with delight and joy.

I come to the garden alone while the dew is still on the roses,  
And the voice I hear falling on my ear, the Son of God discloses,  
And He walks with me and He talks with me, and He tells me I am His own;  
And the joy we share as we tarry there, none other has ever known...

This song always reminds me of auntie Winnie who took such delight and joy in the intimate presence of the Lord. The Father and child intimacy was so much an integral part of her life. The godly imprint of a person's life continues to leave its influence and impact on those near to us. FAITH...PASS IT ON!



Auntie Winnie & Joshua Khong with Godly Smiles

# God's Call Upon My Life (Matt 6:33-34 & Luke 4:18-19)

By Rev Buell Abraham, Trinity Methodist Church, Sg Buloh



I was born to a pioneering Methodist family. **That did not make me a holy or a good person.** Why, I mention this is because, in the eyes of God whether I am pastor's son, a king's son or a postman's son, it makes no difference. We all have sinned and fallen short of the Glory of God and need repentance. At the foot of the cross, all of us who are sinners stand on level ground. I stress on the word "All" because we all need Jesus in our lives. 'He is the Way, the Truth and the Life. No one goes to the Father except through Jesus.'

Since my birth till 1<sup>st</sup> Dec 1990, I had various infirmities – epilepsy, tonsillitis, stomach alignment, and sinus and speech impairment. Within 25 years God healed me of them all.

On **15<sup>th</sup> September 1990**, I went to England hoping to be an accountant. I arrived in a town named Huddersfield and as a Christian, I went seeking for a Church to worship. It was on a Saturday and I walked around the town but could not find a single place of Worship or a Church. So, I went back to the hostel in despair and prayed to the Lord.

The following morning, I walked down town and to my surprise, I saw the Huddersfield Mission Methodist Church. I walked passed that road on Saturday several times but did not see the Church. **Till today, I still wonder why.** I realized that if I had seen the Church on that Saturday, I would not have prayed that night. God wanted to show me that there was power in prayer, the importance of prayer and also wanted me to focus my all on Him. He wanted me to depend upon Him fully and not rely on my own self effort. All glory, power and praise to His glorious name who was, is and is to come.

On **1<sup>st</sup> December 1990**, I saw snow for the first time in my life while reading the Bible. It was then that the Lord Jesus spoke to me from Matthew 6:33-34. 'Seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all things shall be added to you'. I asked the Lord, why I should seek Him. I was not worthy. But the burden in my heart grew stronger as I wrote these words in my note book, "I want to be a pastor". After writing it down, I cried and asked the Lord, "why me?" He spoke again from Matthew 6:34, "Therefore, do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things.

Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.” At that moment I really could not see what the Lord was trying to tell me but then, the passage of Matthew 6:33-34, never left my mind till this very day.

One of the things I expressed to God was that I wanted to make a trip to Jerusalem and then only I would decide. I spoke those words in prayer. From then on until 23<sup>rd</sup> June 1999, God on numerous occasions impressed the calling upon my heart but I just ignored the Lord and persisted on thinking of going to Jerusalem.

On 23<sup>rd</sup> June 1999, I was taking a video of a Hindu wedding ceremony. At that very precise moment God prompted strongly in my heart to serve Him. There was an intense burning sensation in my heart. Immediately I drove my car to my Church and spoke to my Pastor Rev. Ricky Ho and he said those words which till today I’m not able to forget. **“I am so excited that you want to be a pastor.”** He told me to pray and get back to him in two months’ time. He told me to spend time alone with God and to hear His voice. I spent about two months alone with God but nothing happened. I concluded Jesus didn’t need me anymore.

On **26<sup>th</sup> September 1999** after a Church Service, my uncle invited me for a lunch. At that meeting with him, he asked me to take him to the airport on 8<sup>th</sup> October 1999. As usual I agreed and then asked him where he was going. He was very reluctant to say. He had never been that way before. He said that it was top secret. I told him that I would keep his secret. After a lot of persuasion, he told me that he was going to Jerusalem. I was very excited and filled with overflowing joy. I immediately told him that I would like to join him on that trip. He said that it was costly, and that I would not be able to afford the trip. He immediately asked me if I could pay RM500 and I had the money and paid him right away. On 8<sup>th</sup> October 1999, I was on my way to Jerusalem even after much objections from my family regarding that trip. My dream of going to the Holy Land had become a reality.

God spoke to me again and very clearly on the **14<sup>th</sup> October 1999** at the Garden of Gethsemane. Jesus spoke in my heart, “Haven’t I fulfilled your wish? Now you shall serve Me.” He also provided me a wife whom I met in Jerusalem.

Then Jesus spoke to me from Luke 4:18-19. Jesus gave me instructions as found in the verse, **“the Spirit of the Lord was upon me, He has anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor and has sent me to heal the brokenhearted.”** Those instructions He placed upon me were to proclaim liberty to the captives, to give sight to the blind, to free the oppressed and to proclaim the Word of God. We must be obedient to God’s Will.

## **The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me because He has anointed Me....**

- to preach the gospel to the poor
- to heal the brokenhearted
- to preach deliverance to the captives
- to recover the sight of the blind
- to set at liberty them that are bruised
- to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor

**Luke 4:18**

Knowing-Jesus.com

When I returned to Malaysia, I gave up my job. At that time, I was at the peak of my career. Many said that I was crazy, some pastors even tried to stop me but the Lord helped to stand firm and He has not failed to take care of me and my ministry till this day.

When I entered STM, God kept reminding me from Luke 9:62, 'Jesus said to me, "No one, having put his hand to the plow, looking back, is fit for the Kingdom of God." I then completed my studies at STM. Many said I would not have made it, even through the 1<sup>st</sup> semester of the 1<sup>st</sup> year because, I was a weak student. But God's Word always encourage and sustain me, as in Matthew 6:34, "Therefore, do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble." Jesus never changed His plan and purpose for me. All may change but Jesus never, Glory to His Name. (Hebrew 13:8)

God also provided me with a helper in His ministry. I met my wife in Jerusalem. When we returned to Malaysia many were against our marriage, but God cleared every obstacle. I believe He has given me a wife and a heart for the orphans and widows as mentioned in James 1:27. My wife also has the same heart for the ministry of Jesus Christ. We have to be in a vital relationship with the Lord so that God's Will for us will be fulfilled.

The Lord's calling upon my wife and me have been the same ever since we met in Jerusalem. My wife to be spoke at the Sea of Galilee, these precious words, "I know will go home with a greater blessing from Jesus." The second word she spoke was in the Hotel in Jerusalem and it was "Praise the Lord Hallelujah". She preached a sermon.

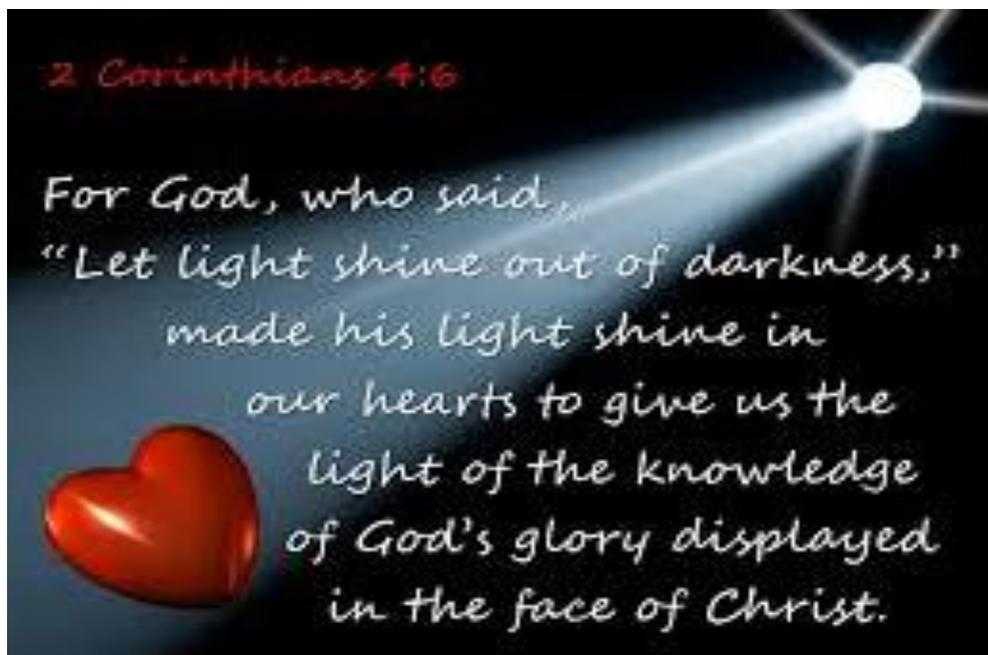
That day I recorded the whole message, I play it regularly to refresh my soul. Today the Lord says “God must increase and we must decrease”. My wife and I will serve God. A prayer for my family is that my son Joel whom God has blessed us with, would one day in the near future hear God and serve Him whole heartedly.

In conclusion, I believe that my calling for full-time ministry was not my decision but the Lord’s. We must all commit our lives to Jesus. Spend quality time with God and not man. Pray daily without ceasing and fervently unto the Lord our Maker and Creator – who called us out of darkness into His marvelous light, so we can be His sons & daughters forever and ever.

Thanks be to God. In The Name of The Father, The Son and The Holy Spirit. AMEN

Moses did not feel adequate for the task when God called him, but the Lord reassured him (Exod. 3–4).

“And who is sufficient for these things?” asked Paul (2 Cor. 2:16); and his answer was, “Our sufficiency is from God” (2 Cor. 4:5–6). When God calls you to serve, He does not ask you to be adequate; He only requires your availability.



# “All The Way The Father Leads Me”

*By Rev Lucy Lee Siew Sieng, Living Stone Methodist Church*



In 2001, I was working in Singapore, earning Singapore dollars. I established good relationships and rapport with my superiors and colleagues and the working environment was excellent.

I would go home to Johor Bahru to serve in my home church and be involved in a para church ministry every weekend. I was able to serve faithfully and consistently and I was contented with my life.

One day, my pastor asked me whether I was keen to serve in the church as a Youth Worker. The ministry would involve helping the students who were studying in the secondary school opposite the church. At that moment, I told my pastor that I needed time to pray and seek the Lord's leading. My pastor asked me how much time I needed. Just for the sake of giving a quick answer to my pastor's question, I replied, "Six months." My pastor then said, "That is too long." I thought to myself ... "I have to end this conversation as soon as possible." so I quickly replied, "One month!" My pastor agreed to that one month for my reply.

When I went back home, I did not really give much thought to what my pastor had suggested. But the moment I was back in Singapore for work, I kept thinking about it. The thought of serving as Youth Worker kept playing in my mind day and night. I shared that with my superior who was also a Christian. He encouraged me to go ahead and grab the opportunity to serve in the church.

Despite my superior's encouragement, I still didn't know what to do. My thoughts were all tangled and conflicted. I kept asking myself everyday - what was it that I was looking for in my life? Was I looking for comfort and contentment like where I was then or was I seeking to fulfil what the Lord had planned for me?

At that time, the voice of the Lord became more audible to me, on a daily basis. That went on till the day I said to the Lord, "Ok, I will go as you lead."

The moment I had that conviction in my heart, I called my pastor and said, "Ok, I am coming to serve as a Youth Worker." When I put down the phone after talking to my

pastor, the active voice of the Lord also stopped. That day was exactly 30 days after I had met with my pastor.

Life as a Youth Worker was challenging physically yet I am thankful for the opportunity to serve as a Youth Worker in the church because I had many occasions to witness how God works among His people.

I found it extremely fulfilling when I was able to journey with the Youths in dealing with the crossroads in their lives and to see the transformation in those youths which ultimately brought about changes in the lives of the entire family for the better.

Later, when they got to know God personally, we witnessed changes in them. They had come to know God as their creator, and believe that Jesus died for their sins. They came to know and love the Lord and out of that love obedience flowed. The most important thing was that they found meaning in life through Jesus Christ.

They were the same people who before knowing God, found it meaningless in studying. They were also the ones who initiated the burning of the school office and had gang fights in shopping malls. They lived to have fun but after knowing God, and in the later part of their lives, they were the ones who helped victims of snatch thefts on public roads. Their focus had changed from self-gratification to putting others first before self.

We didn't see big groups of youths flourishing in the church, but instead there was only a handful of them coming to the church and they turned up when they liked. However, as time went by, I was very encouraged when those few became regulars.

I am convinced that it was the Lord who brought about the transformation in them. He opened their eyes and enabled them to see clearly and touched their hearts so that they could have a deeper understanding on the meaning and purpose of life.

I thank God for the privilege to serve Him and His people through that group of youths. Through that ministry God also opened my eyes to see and gave me the opportunity to experience the living God who performs wonders.



## The Unseen Leading Hand of God

*By Rev Shearn Sya Seng Shen, Trinity Methodist Church, Penang*



I grew up as a nominal Christian and accepted Christ at a Methodist Youth Fellowship (MYF) camp when I was 19. What followed was a hunger and thirst not only for God and His Word, but also His community. I served in the different ministries of the church, particularly in the youth, music, and drama ministries of KL Wesley. They became my primary focus even as I continued pursuing my Information Technology (IT) degree (which I honestly had no interest in), to the point where my mom described my home to be

my hotel. Church was where I could be found most of the time when I wasn't in class or asleep.

Upon getting my degree about 3 years later, I remember feeling a despairing sense of aimlessness as I went from interview to interview looking for a random IT-related job. I had to go through that motion because it was expected of me. It was during that time when my sister (Shaan Sya) and other mentor figures (Susan Tan, Ronald Yap) at different, uncoordinated occasions, asked why I had not considered full-time ministry. As I pondered their words, I was dumbfounded to realize that it was a no-brainer question for me. I recalled how I had occupied myself with up to that point – IT studies and a few part-time and full-time jobs seemed to pale in significance and meaning when compared to church ministry. For once in my life, I was excited to picture myself doing something for a living.

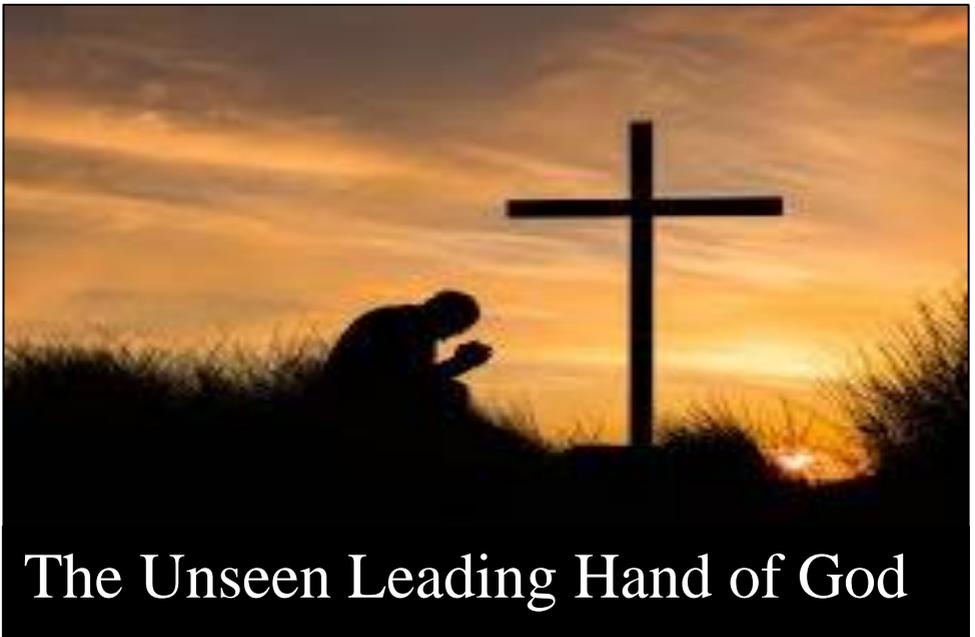
My pastor back then, Rev. Andrew Tan, sat down with me together with a few other young people from KL Wesley (including Jonathan Chan and William Kwong) and we explored the prospect of me entering full-time ministry.

Upon counsel, I started working as a Pre-Ministerial Staff in KL Wesley to explore and confirm this calling. It was an internship role that included exposure to pastoral work and assisting the music director. A year later, it was clear what the next step for me was – a theological foundation in seminary. I applied to Seminari Teoloji Malaysia (STM) and began my Master in Divinity (MDiv) the following semester in 2009.

Part of seminary assignment included exposure to ministry outside my home church. In my final year, I became aware of the problem of a critical lack of Trinity Annual

Conference (TRAC) pastors across many TRAC churches. I sensed God telling me that I could be part of the solution as a theologically trained person who had been called to full-time ministry. In response, upon graduation, I joined TRAC as an itinerant minister at the end of 2011.

It's been over 8 years since that decision, with many ups and downs in both my personal and ministry life. I've served in different parts of the country, from the northern to central to southern and back to northern districts (as of writing), and gone from being assistant pastor to pastor-in-charge to associate pastor. I've conducted funerals and weddings, went through times of learning, and teaching, even tears and laughter. It's been difficult, as well as rewarding. But the one thing that has stuck with me since I answered the call is that it has never once been insignificant, nor meaningless.



## The Unseen Leading Hand of God

I know that, comparatively, my experience of the pastoral ministry thus far, is absolutely miniscule compared to most of our TRAC pastors. But for what it's worth, I have arrived at the following conclusion: the pastoral ministry is not about me. It never was, and it never will be. My prayer, thus, is for God to be glorified in all the highs and the lows (and all the successes and fumbling) for however long He continues to call me to the task.

## In HIS Time...

By Rev Wong Mun Wah, Wesley Methodist Church, Johor Bahru



This testimony is to testify God's faithfulness in His leading, guidance and provisions as He called me into the pastoral ministry. It is an account of how God brought His will and purpose in me to pass. It is entirely His doing, and my involvement in this surely was His enabling. It is also my hope that this testimony will be an encouragement to all who are called to trust in Him, knowing well that He who began a good work in us will surely carry it on to completion for the glory of His name.

### a) Tasted the Goodness of God

In the early years of coming to faith in my early twenties, I tasted God's goodness and faithfulness in my life. I remember vividly how God helped me secure a job even in the midst of an economic crisis in the late 90s. He also helped me find my purpose and fulfilment in life as I began to learn to walk with Him. As a response to God's love and faithfulness to me, I desired to serve Him. But, due to my shyness and low self-esteem then, I did not integrate into the church community where I was baptised and that was in Kuching, Sarawak, let alone participate in the ministries of that church.

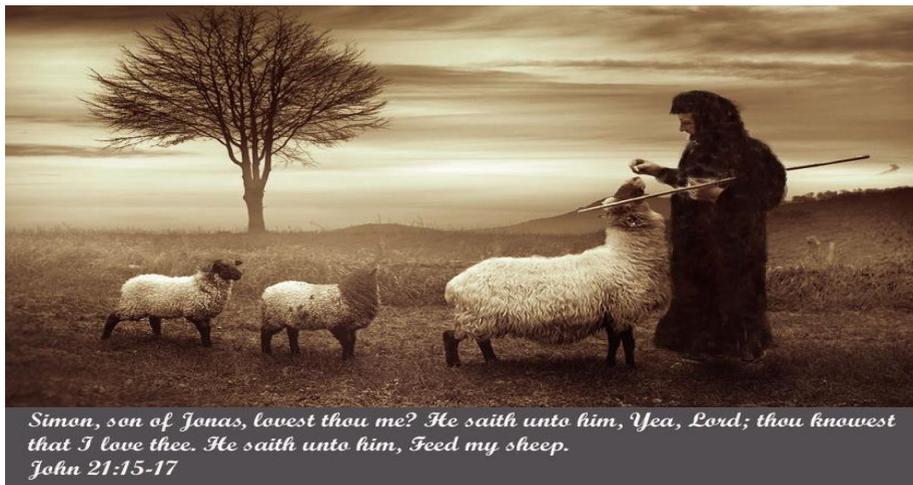
### b) Began to Serve

Years later, after my wife, Wooi Ling, came to Christ through the ministries of Wesley Methodist Church Penang, God helped both of us integrate ourselves well into the communal life of the church. He opened doors for us to serve. I started off as a PA personnel, serving behind the scene, though I had no clue how a sound system functioned; while Wooi Ling served in the church school. Since both Wooi Ling and I desired to serve God and honour Him with our lives, we sought to experience God in a way that we studied about in our care group. It was a book "*Experiencing God,*" by Henry Blackaby.

### c) Surprised by God's Calling

Some time in 2003, God answered our heart's desire by speaking to us through some scripture passages. Two of these scriptures passages were specifically related to God's calling to serve Him. The first was from 1 Chronicles 23:28-31 with regard to the duties of the Levites serving in God's temple; while the second was from John 21:15-17, the three-fold charge Jesus gave to Peter as he restored the latter's faith: - "Feed my lambs; Take care of my sheep; Feed my sheep."

Both of us were puzzled with those scripture passages given to us, not knowing and understanding what God had in store for us. We kept them closely in our hearts. In my effort to understand God's message for me, I focused on the scripture passage from 1 Chronicles, thinking that God perhaps intended for me to serve as a church's caretaker, in view of the fact that the church caretaker then was already in his old age.



#### **d) Learned the Ropes of Ministry**

In the subsequent years, God opened my eyes to see the realities of the spiritual realm through many life experiences between 2003-2005. Through His guidance, I began to learn the power of prayers, engaging in spiritual warfare and ministry of deliverance.

#### **e) Experienced Personal Revival**

In April 2005, I began to experience personal revival, having a deep hunger for God's Word, waking up in the wee hours just to read Scriptures and to pray. It was a very refreshing and enlightening experience. God's Word suddenly has become so alive to me! Little did I know that God was actually preparing me for deeper ministry involvement.

Towards Oct/Nov of that year, God did a new work in Wesley Penang as some leaders were led to deliver a few Hokkien-speaking families from the power and bondage of darkness into God's glorious kingdom. It was a period of intense spiritual warfare, but many of us experienced God's power in and through us.

Being a bilingual person, I volunteered to help in this new-found Hokkien ministry together with Wooi Ling. It was in this Hokkien ministry that God expanded my horizon and sharpened my ministry skills. In November 2006, God further led me into the

preaching ministry with the invitation and encouragement by the late Pastor Tan Har Yong. It was a very exciting, yet humbling experience. With Wooi Ling's full support, I had an inextinguishable zeal to do God's work. The joy and fulfilment arising from doing ministry was simply beyond description of words.

With the affirmation from church leaders and members then that the second part of God's calling - "*Feed my lambs; Take care of my sheep; Feed my sheep,*" came to my mind. I began to ponder the possibility of God calling me into the pastoral ministry.

#### **f) Walked Too Fast Ahead of God**

At the point when I began to look forward to serve God full time, the reality of my financial commitments suddenly became a big burden to me! So, I took things into my own hand and began to explore ways to expedite the repayment process. I went into the share market, justifying that it was meant to settle my outstanding financial commitments as soon as possible so that I could pursue full time vocation of serving God at the soonest. It turned out to be a disaster! I was distracted from Bible-reading. I suffered loss, both financially and spiritually. Relented and repented, I learned a valuable lesson of not going too fast ahead of God, but to trust in God's provisions and to obey His timing.

#### **g) Critical Factors Converged – No Turning Back!**

In 2008, realising the huge responsibilities entrusted to a preacher, I began to pursue part-time theological courses, under the program of theological education by extension (TEE) conducted by STM.

The following year, all the critical factors converged, making God's calling to a full time vocation as sure and certain. Wooi Ling initially had some reservations of me entering full time ministry, but gave me her blessing after she herself received assurance from God. My pastor then, Rev. Hwa Jen, gave me his support too upon knowing of my intention to serve God full time. He and the local church, Wesley Penang, stood solidly behind me and my family, providing us not only financial assistance that we needed, but also journeying with us through prayer support. At the same time, the remaining outstanding car loan was generously waived by the company that I served, and the housing loan was successfully refinanced. As it turned out later, the rental from the unit we rented out, was just enough to service the housing loan during my study in STM.

January 2010 marked the milestone where God in His own way and in His own time saw me enrolling in STM for a time of equipping, moulding and preparation for pastoral ministry.

All was brought to pass for the glory of God. Amen!

# God's Calling in Inexplicable Ways

*By Pr Robert Khaw Hock Pang, Subang Methodist Church*



I came from a pagan background. I worshipped idols. I practised ancestral worship. I grew up having stolen things, bitterly hating certain relatives, forging my father's signature, fighting in school, and questioned derisively, "Where is God? Show me where God is, and then I will believe Him." The list of the wrongs I did is far longer than this short paragraph.

There were moments when I had an inkling that what I did, especially the secret ones, were wrong even though they benefited me. I didn't know then that such things were part and parcel of what is called "sin" in the Bible. And I didn't realise that sin is ultimately against God, and God alone.

I was living much for myself. Then one day, a school friend persuaded me to attend a Christian youth meeting. I obliged him because he was my friend, and he was gently persistent. I felt awkward at the meeting. I didn't know the songs they sang. I wondered how they could pray for people, although they were not their immediate relatives. But I could see they were a friendly lot and they were sincerely caring for one another. During another youth meeting (15/8/75), a Christian missionary, sister Seaward preached the gospel. I cannot recall all the details. But this one thing I remember. I stepped forward when the invitation was extended to all who wanted Jesus to forgive them of their sins. After I received Jesus as my personal Lord and Saviour into my heart, I felt a heavy burden being lifted and I experienced joy and peace in my heart like never before.

However, life was not blue skies and everything nice. There were ups and downs. Wilderness and mountain-top experiences. Falling into temptations and rising up again. There were also inexplicable moments. One such moment was God's calling for me to be a Pastor. To be sure, I didn't aspire for such a vocation. In the past, I had just made myself available to serve God when approached, to be a Sunday school teacher, editor of the church newsletter or Cell Group leader.

Then, strange as it may seem, it was during a prolonged downcast season of my life that I felt both the urge and urgency to complete several modules of TRAC Local Preacher's Licence (LPL) Course by 2003. Prior to that, I had procrastinated for many years. Looking back, it was most unusual. I have no explanation, except to say that

God was not finished with me yet. He was still working in my life. I didn't think too much about the LPL making one eligible to be a Pastor. I just helped out my former Pastor Cho Hui when given the opportunity to preach or serve in the local church leadership. Out of the blue, I received an email from him toward the latter part of 2004, enquiring if I would consider being a Pastor! At that time, I was in Melbourne, accompanying my wife who was doing her post-graduate course.

Now, the thought of being a Pastor made me feel like running away from the church! I wouldn't know if I could cope with such a heavy responsibility. I had no experience. I felt inadequate. One day, I read Matthew 9:36. This verse is about Jesus having compassion for the sheep without the shepherd. "Am I to run away?" "What about the sheep?" "How could I abandon the flock?" Those questions pricked my conscience. I then felt a tug in my heart for the flock. It was only later that it became clearer to me that that was God's call for me to serve in the pastoral ministry. Meanwhile, as I was in a dilemma I sought counsel from the Senior Pastor, Ian Hawley of Swanston Street Church of Christ (renamed Cross Culture Church of Christ) on the pastoral matter.

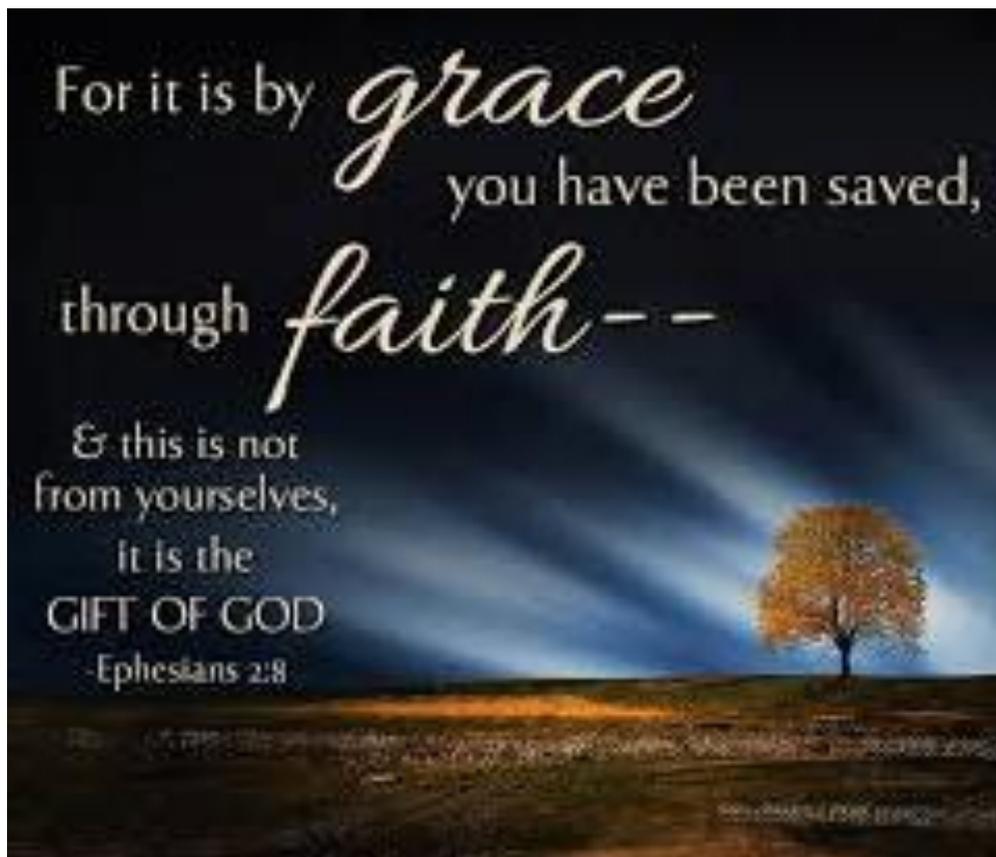
Upon my return to Malaysia (2005), I met up with my fellow church leaders, who supported and prayed for me. It was important that my wife had earlier given her blessing too. I finally responded to God's call with much fear and trembling. That was why I requested to understudy Pastor Cho Hui for a year (2006) first and he kindly agreed.

Then in 2006, I made myself available to serve as Pastor on a part-time basis, while intentionally not seeking employment elsewhere. I was thinking that as a beginner, I had better go to the baby section of the swimming pool first, before going to the deep end of the waters (full-time capacity). That was my journey leading to TRAC's appointment as the part-time Approved Supply Pastor for the year 2007 at the 31st Session TRAC (18- 21/11/06) in Kuantan.

As I look back, I can say that God is faithful regarding His promises to help, equip and encourage, despite the challenges that come with God's calling. I thank God for our TRAC President, Rev Dr T Jeyakumar, who arranged for two helpful training sessions (Dr Bill Lawrence and Rev Dr Gordon Wong) to coach Pastors to preach sharp or better. I thank God too for the faithful band of intercessors, who continue to hold up my weary hands as it were, and who constantly pray for the life and ministry of the church. Needless to add, my wife is my best 'critic' and encourager, who at times stayed up late to keep company with a lonely and tired preacher working on his sermons!

Before I end, I recall a couple of unforgettable incidents in my early years as a Pastor. I met two old friends separately at different times. When they learnt that I had become a Pastor, they laughed! I also laughed with them. I cannot but agree that I am one of the most unlikely persons to be a Pastor. Firstly, I was born and bred in the infamous place called Jelutong in Penang. Secondly, I knew only too well what a wretched sinner I was – saved only by the grace of God (Rom 7:24-25; Eph 2:8) – I am ever mindful of the privilege and honour that God has chosen me to be a servant of His in the pastoral ministry, together with my fellow Pastors.

Soli Deo Gloria!



# Testimony of Conversion and God's Call to Ministry

*By Pr Chris Kam Teck Wang, Damansara Utama Methodist Church*

## Testimony



I was born into an idol-worshipping family from Yong Peng, Johor. There is no known Christian in my entire family line. My family was steeped in ancestral and idol worship. I was taught at an early age to pay homage to those gods and I remember taking the responsibility to offer daily prayers and incense to them. I was deeply religious (at least in form) at a young age and had often followed my parents to temples during festivals. It was all part and parcel of the cultural and religious heritage of my family. Having mediums at the invitation of my father to the family altar was an occasional affair. As such, I became familiar with spiritual reality as I had witnessed those religious observances from young.

My first exposure to Christianity was through the local Anglican mission school where I started my primary education when I was 7. My earliest memory of the Christian faith was the fun I had and the presents received in Sunday School.

At the age of 15, a classmate brought me to the Youth Fellowship (YF) and I was actively involved in that organization for the next three years. By the age of 17, I was asked whether I wanted to be baptised by my Pastor and it was then that my faith was challenged to a deeper level. Prior to that I was not aware of any particular occasion when I had committed my life to Jesus, but because of that challenge for baptism, I knew the time had come for me to make a stand with my faith in spite of the opposition from my father for baptism.

Just after I was baptised, I left for Kuala Lumpur to do my pre-University course in Taylor's College. The year in KL strengthened my faith even more as I got to know more friends in the college Christian Fellowship. I landed in Melbourne the year following to pursue my tertiary education in Electrical Engineering at Monash University. The 6 years in Melbourne saw my Christian life growing in leaps and bounds. I was actively involved in the varsity Overseas Christian Fellowship (OCF) from day one. I

was a committee member by the second year and the Chairman of the local chapter of OCF in the last 3 years of my course. Another major turning point was my failure in the third year of the course. It was during that year the Lord challenged my priorities and ambitions in life. I was facing the prospect of returning home without a degree and God showed me where my real “treasures” were. Upon repenting, I was graciously allowed to complete my course in another college and ever since then God has constantly reminded me of His calling. I knew that someday I would be serving Him in full time Christian ministry.

### **Conviction of God's Call to Ministry**

While in Australia, I responded to an “obedience call” during a Mission Conference. It was a call to obey the Lord whatever and wherever He called me to and I was not to lose that focus while living in the materialistic secular world in the days ahead. That local church, Clayton Church of Christ Fellowship (CCCF), was instrumental in introducing me to a church community life. It was a church with a diverse cultural group of people in the congregation, and I got to know many Australian families. Thankfully, the call of OCF then was never to neglect our involvement in the local church. Whilst serving actively in OCF, I was active at the same time in CCCF, leading worship, teaching and preaching occasionally. The greater call of OCF then was to grow students in their faith and to challenge them to go back to their home countries and contribute actively to the local church there. I never lost sight of that calling and although the prospect of returning was daunting, I was determined to meet the challenge of a reverse culture shock due to the six years being away from home. It was interesting how the Lord prepared that path for me by sending me to the Philippines to serve for three months at the Far East Broadcasting Company (FEBC) as an engineer serving in the radio broadcasting ministry. I was exposed to a whole new world of mission and there I saw the joys and struggles of many missionaries. I was drawn to the challenge of Asian mission and was casually invited by the head of FEBC to return if I should sense the call someday. Having been in Manila for three months, I realized KL was a great place to live in. The reverse culture shock expected was watered down.

I returned home to Malaysia from the Philippines and worked as a sales engineer in a computer firm. Because of the possibility of full-time ministry, I was very careful about my career ambition, knowing full well that if I wanted to seek God's will, I had to serve Him in the ministry of the Church. When my wife married me that was something both of us were aware of. In fact, that was the condition placed on my poor fiancé then, that she must be open to that possibility for me. I am very thankful to have a supportive wife. Both of us served actively in the OCF and were best of friends while in Australia. We had even encouraged each other to remain true to God's calling as she was also one

of the many students who had responded to the “obedience call”. When we got married, we made DUMC our home church.

For eight years after my graduation, I was in secular employment. During those eight years, two offers came in from CCCF in Melbourne to take up the position of tertiary pastor for university students. It was during the second offer (at the seventh year of my secular employment) that we knew God’s timing for that obedience call was forthcoming. Migrating to Australia had always been an option open to us since returning home. The prevailing thought then was, if God wanted anyone to go, He would open the door. We then submitted the application forms and waited to see if the door would open. My wife and I knew the fallacy of that approach as our chances were very high as young Australian graduates. We told the Lord that if He wanted us to go, He would have to literally drop the forms into our hands. We would not apply by our own volition. Having encountered the “forms” dropped into our hands twice, we thought we should not ignore that.

We went to Australia for an interview with my former Church and were accepted for the position. But I did not have God’s peace as I had always felt that it was God who had called me back to Malaysia after the 3-month mission trip to the Philippines. When we came back, we shared that with our LCEC in DUMC. I shared with them that if it was the Lord’s will for us to go, I would like DUMC to be the sending church as we could not foresee ourselves staying long term in Australia. It was during that time that the present position of Care Group Director was offered to me and I knew it was something that God wanted me to do. So in Dec 1993, I resigned from my secular employment and went full-time with DUMC in Feb 1994.

I was then the third staff member in the church, preceded by a Youth worker and a secretary. The church was about 300 strong then. By then, I was a Cell Leader and my role as Care Group Director was to study the Cell Church system and implement it in the church. None of us, including the leaders had much clue as to what the Cell Church was all about. Two months after coming on board, the leaders and I went down to Singapore to attend our first Cell Church Conference in Faith Community Baptist Church. For the next five years, I doggedly attended the annual conference, learning and implementing the system as I went along. The rest is history as I experience God’s hand in growing DUMC. Praise God for an amazing journey of 26 years, experiencing His faithfulness both in my family and church.

# God Has a Wonderful Plan for Our Lives

*By Pr Jonathan Yeoh Tai Huat, Damansara Utama Methodist Church*



“God has a wonderful plan for your life” was a phrase that I had shared with my fellow mission team members who were leaving for Cambodia in 2009 for a short mission exposure trip. I had yearned to go on a short-term mission trip to Cambodia for 5 years, but each time I had to cancel due to work commitment. Hence, I was excited about making the trip in 2009. Right from the start we were each experiencing various obstacles, either at work, at home in our personal lives. There was a sense of discouragement among the team members. I remember sharing with them that phrase that soon became the team’s tagline

each time we encountered an obstacle during our preparations and throughout the trip. That helped to cheer everyone each time.

On my final night in Cambodia, I was feeling restless and could not sleep when I heard a voice (which I knew to be the voice of God’s Spirit) telling me to take a walk outside. In the cool of the night on the streets of Phnom Penh, the voice asked me what I saw around me. I replied I could see lots of children running around some half-dressed, ragged people. Some were sleeping on cardboards on the streets. God then reminded me that being the Country head of a Chemical business for a Multinational Chemical business was the final milestone in my life plan since I was about 20 years of age. He reminded me that each milestone in my life was achieved before the targeted year including that final milestone to be the head of an organisation. Indeed, I was given a letter of commendation by my employer just before my trip, in recognition of my contribution made in steering the business positively from the end 2008 and through 2009 despite the Financial Crisis.

He then asked me a question “What else do you want in life? “ My answer was “God, I was not able to see beyond this final milestone, but whatever comes, my life is in your hands. You need to show me.” God’s answer was “I have called you to be a father to the fatherless, a ministry to children. Will you be willing to give of your life to serve me?” I replied “Yes” God’s reply was “I will show in due time when and where you are to go.”

Barely 4 months after that, my employing organization had a re-organization and I found

myself being offered a Voluntary Separation Scheme. I was confused at first, but contacted my Missions Pastor, Pr. Ling, who prayed for me over the phone and told me to trust in God to lead the way. When he prayed for me, I felt the Holy Spirit telling me to trust in Him. He said "I will show you in due time where to go."

The weeks that followed were a time of rest and seeking God for fresh directions. Sure, there were questions at times of "Why or what is happening?" But God was ever patient each time with me, restoring my spirit man.

One morning in April, during my quiet time, He spoke saying again "I have called you to be a father to the fatherless, to reach out and minister to children. I will show you in due time." My reply was "I have always been involved with children ministry and yes, if that is what You desire of me please teach me how to be a father to the fatherless. Teach me to love as You, God the Father loves. Give me the heart to love like yours."

He re-affirmed the call, during a missions camp as the pastor prayed for me during a prayer session.

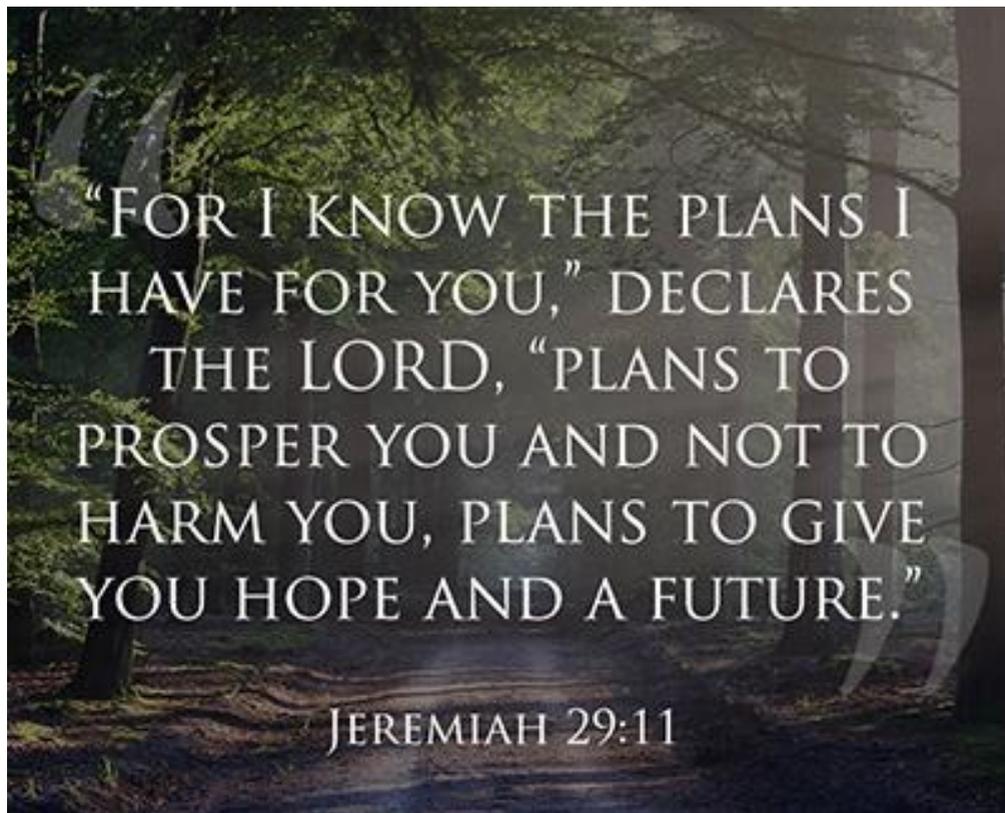
In September 2010 together with my spouse we met with Pr. Daniel who formally invited me to take up the position of pastor in the Children Church, as the incumbent pastor was relinquishing her post due to personal reasons. I asked for some time to pray over the offer. At the same time my new employer, had made me an offer to lead the entire company's operations in Malaysia as the Group Managing Director.

It was a truly dream job for anyone in the industry. But deep inside, I sensed that God had a better plan. I asked for some time to pray and think over the offer. One morning during a business trip whilst praying in my hotel room and putting the options before God, seeking for directions, I heard the beeping on my mobile just as I finished praying. On picking up I saw a text message from my wife. The message said "It is not enough to just know the will of God but it is wanting to do the will of God that really matters. Truly God wants us to walk this journey of faith in this season of our lives." I knew that it was God's confirmation for me.

Upon my return, I turned down my employer's offer despite several requests from the Executive board with revised offers because I know now that God has a wonderful plan for my life, which is to serve Him full time in a ministry to children.

It has been almost 10 years since that day, and as I look back, each year has been a

tremendous experience in walking with the Lord in His ministry and witnessing what He can do when we surrender all that we have to Him in humble obedience. Now I know what it must have been like when the boy gave the Lord his 5 loaves and 2 fishes. The 5 loaves and 2 fishes in the hands of the Lord fed the 5000 men with 12 baskets full left over. I have since gone on to complete the first part of seminary studies as well as witnessed how God has grown the children ministry here in DUMC. Soli Deo Gloria!



Yes, there have been many challenges in my life and ministry since then but through it all I continue to see God's faithfulness in enabling me to go through the challenges. Without fail I would cling on to Him in prayer until He sees me through each storm. I continue to look forward to serve God in my ministry, ministering to children and family and wherever He leads me to in the years ahead. This I believe is my call in this season of life. I know that the Lord is faithful and will enable me to fulfil my call. Truly God has a wonderful plan for our lives, but we need to first obey and trust Him. Soli Deo Gloria!

## **The Touch of The Lord is So Real!**

*By Pr Tan Moy How, Damansara Utama Methodist Church*

I was studying in Melbourne, Australia, and during the first few days at college I befriended some Malaysian students. They invited me for lunch at their rented flat. At the dining table before the start of the meal, they did a strange thing. They gave thanks for the meal. It was a new experience for me. Later, I found out they were Christians. They were extremely helpful. They assisted me in my college orientation. They also helped me look for a nearby room to rent. They went the extra mile by sourcing for me second hand furniture. I was deeply touched. I was able to settle in smoothly to my college life because of their kindness.

Those Christians invited me several times for meals at their flat. I grew quite close to them since they were my only friends in Melbourne. Over the course of time, they invited me to a bible study called “Investigating Christ’s Claims.” Those studies involved five sessions. At the end of the fifth, and final session they invited me to accept Jesus into my life. I did not fully understand the whole idea of eternal life, but because I did not want to lose their friendship, I agreed to pray the Sinner’s Prayer. One of them by the name Kong Ming led me in the prayer. As I was praying, following word for word, I felt my heart beating faster than normal. There was a sense of warmth, and a stirring of internal excitement, likened to not being able to sit still. I was tearing up at the end of my prayer. That night something life changing had transpired. I accepted the Lord on April 12, 1985.

Kong Ming followed up with my spiritual growth and several months later I went round the college grounds trying to witness for Christ to strangers. It was a terrifying experience in approaching a total stranger to share my faith. I remember I stammered very badly when I started with the first few strangers.

All the time we went in pairs. There was once when I was alone in the Engineering building, which was seven floors high. I went up and down the full length of the building’s escalators twice. On the third time I spotted an Asian girl. I walked up to her gingerly, and started the conversation by asking her permission to conduct a survey. She obliged. I courageously continued to ask if I could share my testimony of how I became a Christian. At the end, I blurted out and asked whether she would like to believe and receive Jesus as Lord and Saviour. I nearly fainted when she replied affirmatively. There and then I led her in the Sinner’s Prayer.

By the end of this year I will be in my 22<sup>nd</sup> year of pastoral ministry. It took me five years to decide when approached to be a Zone Pastor. It was over a number of meals with Pastor Daniel Ho.

Prior to my coming on board as a Pastor, I was a Technical Consultant in a multinational corporation. Being in the forefront of the information technology industry, often requires me to travel to be at forefront of the latest software developments. Having learnt the latest technological updates I would then have to impart and transfer that knowledge to my corporate customers, not only in terms of the know-how, but also to be hands on. Constantly, I had to be on my toes.

Though doing financially well, but spiritually it was at maintenance level. I felt something was missing, there got to be more than these in life. Each time when I attended DUMC's leaders or prayer meeting, it was the left-over time that I gave to the church. I was tired and uninspired in the daily treadmill of life. After much thought, prayer and working things through with my wife, Foong Lin, we decided to trust God to take the next big leap. Incidentally, this is the longest period of time that I have devoted to a fulltime ministry, because when I was in the computer line I changed jobs averaging two years once.

I still recall vividly when I went into my General Manager's room, and tendered in my resignation. Even without seeing the content of the letter, he popped this question spontaneously and candidly, "Are you going to Microsoft?" At that time there were only two information technology leaders, it was either Microsoft or IBM. The IT industry was booming at that period. I answered straightforwardly, "No, I've resigned to be one of the pastors in a church." Unlike him, he took a long pause of a good fifteen seconds. He was lost for words. He could not have counter offered with a bigger pay package because he was going "against" the Almighty. No way could he win. No regrets in my decision. It is such an honour and privilege to serve Him!

**SERVING GOD**  
is not a burden,  
but a  **blessing.**  
Not an obligation,  
but a  **great opportunity.**

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A recent family photo of Pastor Tan Moy How together with wife Foong Lin and children.



# Experiencing God's Faithfulness

By Rev Lester Lim Mu Siong, Wesley Methodist Church KL



I remember God calling me into pastoral ministry from the very first day that I stepped into a church. It was my cousin who brought me to WMCJB for church service on one Sunday in September 2004. At the service, my heart was deeply touched and I had a strong conviction that one day I would be like the pastor who was standing at the pulpit preaching, even though, at that time, I didn't know the nature of the work of a pastor. Furthermore, at that time my English was so bad that I did not even understand the sermon that was being preached by the pastor. The desire to become a pastor and to serve God full time

remained deep in my heart even after a few years. John Wesley called this the "inward call." It is an inner experience of God's call at the particular time when the person realizes that God is leading him to enter into the pastoral ministry. But having an "inward call" itself is not enough, because sometimes people may misinterpret this "inward call" experience, meaning, the 'feel' of one's calling may have come from that person's own desires. Therefore, the church has to evaluate, judge and confirm whether that person has the gift for pastoral ministry. Wesley called this the "outward call".

From 2009-2011, I worked in WMCJB as an Office Administrative Assistant. During that time, the church was able to assess me to see whether I was suitable for pastoral ministry. I want to thank God that I received tremendous support from pastor, leaders and church members, and they affirmed my calling into full time ministry and sent me to Seminari Theoloji Malaysia for my theological training from 2012-2016.

The decision to enter into full time ministry wasn't difficult for me. In fact, it was very easy for me to respond and obey God's calling. The reason is because I have experienced the greatness of God's grace, and love for me. Therefore, I am willing to serve him as an act of gratitude."

Over the past few years in pastoral ministry, I have experienced joy in serving, but at the same time, I have also experienced various challenges, struggles, difficulties, and at times I even felt discouraged. Due to these factors, there were times:

- I doubted my competence for pastoral ministry.
- I thought I was not capable and wished that I could be better.

- I asked myself whether I could finish well and serve God to the end with all the difficult and challenging tasks that I was facing?

But because of the “inward call” and my personal experience of being touched, I was very certain that I was called and chosen by God to enter into the pastoral ministry, so it helped me to persist, persevere and rekindle my dedication to serving God as a pastor, no matter how tough the ministry is. With God’s help, I am prepared to face whatever unpleasant circumstances and challenges. I resolve not to quit the ministry so easily and disobey God, but instead I will continue serving and be faithful to the call He has made upon my life.

The two Bible characters whom I can relate and identify with are Moses and Gideon. Both of them were called by God to leadership roles but both considered themselves to be unworthy. They denied their calling due to lack of confidence. But God promised them and said, *“I will be with you.”* (Exo. 3:12; Judg. 6:16). As they believed in God’s promise and they obeyed. God was faithful and He helped them to overcome difficulties, defeated their enemies, and accomplished great things through them.

Likewise, in my ministry I have experienced the Lord’s calling and he has been providing me with sufficient grace, wisdom, strength and ability to fulfil the tasks that he has entrusted to me, helping me overcome difficulties and challenges, and has been sustaining my ministry. Therefore, although there were moments when I felt inadequate or unworthy whilst serving as a pastor, I was never in despair because of God’s promise to be with me. I am motivated to soldier on and willingly allow myself to be used by God and to give of my best in serving Him.



## Trusting In His Leading

*By Rev James Ong Joo Ern, Whispering Hope Methodist Church /TRAC National Youth Director*



There was no special revelation or divine encounter which led me to the full-time ministry in the Methodist Church. The only defining event took place 19 years ago at the quadrennial Youth Quake in Sitiawan. I was 14 years old then.

I recall, it was one of the nights when Rev. Sivin Kit spoke and at the end of his message, he gave the invitation for all who would answer the call to full-time ministry. I responded and stood up to be prayed for. I still had to finish my secondary school before I could pursue my theological studies. Ever since that fateful day, I was poised to enrol myself at a Bible college as soon as I had graduated from secondary school.

I wish I could tell you that I had put in my very best efforts into my studies, but the opposite was true, I almost squandered away my whole secondary school years. On hind sight that was definitely a mistake. I regretted for not putting more effort and focus on my studies. I did excel in two subjects and they were English and Bible knowledge. Hence, with form 5 done, I had to face the reality of making the next life decision – tertiary studies.

Since, I was so determined to go into full-time ministry in my secondary school years, one would think that I would have had my mind set on this. But that was not to be, because I became very uncertain of Bible college. I also had another dilemma, I was not interested in any of the popular fields of studies. I thank God that I had the opportunity to participate in both Jeremiah School and National Service, it was through those 2 events after form 5 that gave me time to seek God for direction. With the help of my parents and brother, I finally settled for a Degree in Hotel Management, majoring in Food & Beverage and Culinary.

From my entry into college to my first job as a chef, much had taken place. From being actively involved with both the local church and TRAC national youth events to falling far from God. God remained faithful, abounding in steadfast love towards me. He showed that through the different mentors and friends during that period, guiding me each step of the way, allowing me to make the mistakes so that I might learn from them.

All that I experienced and went through helped me realise that truly, apart from God I can do nothing.

I would be lying if I said that I've never once thought of abandoning this call. There were countless occasions when I wanted to give up not only the pursuit of a full-time ministry but my faith altogether. By God's grace, He sustained me, through the help of both peers and leaders of the Church, encouraging and admonishing me in the faith.<sup>1</sup> There were times of doubt, but having people who love God journeying with me in such times of questioning certainly helped me to make the right decision to pursue my theological studies.

I've asked myself before: *Is this really it, did I make the right decision?* To second guess my decision of leaving a growing career in culinary and education, to my realisation, was only human. That is why faith in Christ is needed, for one cannot go into a full-time ministry without first having surrendered his life to the Lordship of Christ. Faith is a peculiar thing; it requires both trust and surrender. I definitely had to learn to surrender the security and comfort I had with my good paying job and my idea of a "good life" and to trust the Lord to be my provider and security. Initially it was hard, every human-rational in me was against the idea, as I contemplated either: a) abandoning the plan for full-time ministry or b) a bi-vocational approach. But when I realised how much God loves me and would even demonstrate that love by giving His only Son for me; anything less than my whole life for Him would be an insult. Since Jesus died for me, then to not trust Him wholeheartedly would be foolish. Indeed, the matter of first importance for the apostle Paul must also be the same for me.

Although this is only my third year in ministry in the Methodist Church, I am certain that God who has begun this good work in me will also grant me the grace and strength needed to finish it. I know – contrary to popular belief – that the pastoral life is not a lonely one, because I have the Holy Spirit in and with me, and I have good Christian brothers and sisters running alongside me in this marathon.

### ***Gloria in excelsis Dei***

<sup>1</sup> To: My parents; Tay Hui Cheng (Youth Councillor – Wesley Sitiawan); Dr. Herbert Tan; Rev. Sivin Kit; Rev. Christopher Rao; Rev. Ting Moy Hong; Steven Foong; Christopher Sam; Rev. Ronald Yap; Dr. Ong Meng Chai; Canon Steven Abarrow; Khong Mei-Xin (my Wife)

## Fulfilling God's Call Upon My Life

*By Pr William Kwong Cheng Ho, Faith Methodist Church, Cheras*



I grew up in a Christian family and I am a second generation Christian. My parents are members of Wesley Methodist Church, KL. I attended Sunday School there and joined the 1<sup>st</sup> KL Boys' Brigade. Though I was born into a Christian family, the Sunday School teachers taught that one has to accept Jesus Christ as personal Lord and Saviour. At age 12, I wondered what I was doing with all the church activities which included bible quizzes. It was then that I started searching and asking questions about God, the rituals that were carried out in church, the teachings and validity of other religions.

It was a searching process of 2 years and God placed many good people around me. Through the Boys' Brigade, I accepted Jesus into my life at 14. It wasn't an easy process then because there were still many questions left unanswered. But God steadily granted answers day by day and also changed my heart day by day.

I was usually bullied in school and because of that, I developed an aggressive attitude that made me retaliate in anger. I was not forgiving and held a lot of bitterness especially against the bullies. Though I was involved in many activities, they didn't mean anything because I was trying to keep myself occupied and also I wanted to do things on my own in my own way. But God transformed my life. I learned to love and forgive because God first loved me and has redeemed me on the cross.

After completing SAM at Taylors' College, I furthered my studies in the University of Adelaide, Australia and graduated with a degree in Finance and Investments. It was a tough struggle in my university days. In the first 2 years, God broke down my pride and humbled me. I battled failure, depression and suicidal thoughts. It was very difficult to go on in faith and it really tested my trust in God. But God placed godly brothers and sisters around me. As I persevered by faith, He restored and moulded me to be who I am today.

Overseas Christian Fellowship (OCF) played a big part in my university years and it was through those university days that God chiseled me to be who I am today. God placed many godly brothers and sisters in Christ who guided and supported me. Upon

graduation, through time spent in searching, reflection and prayer, God directed me home.

On returning home, I worked in a bank for three and half years. It was interesting learning in the corporate world with all its structures and movements. I could have stayed on as it was comfortable and doable, but it was difficult to see myself doing that for the next 30 years. After a while, I decided to change jobs because I was looking for a job that dealt more with people. In the midst of the change, I took the opportunity to go for missions for 2 months straight at Long Lamai, Ulu Baram, Sarawak. It was a step of faith because I had no job waiting for me when I returned.

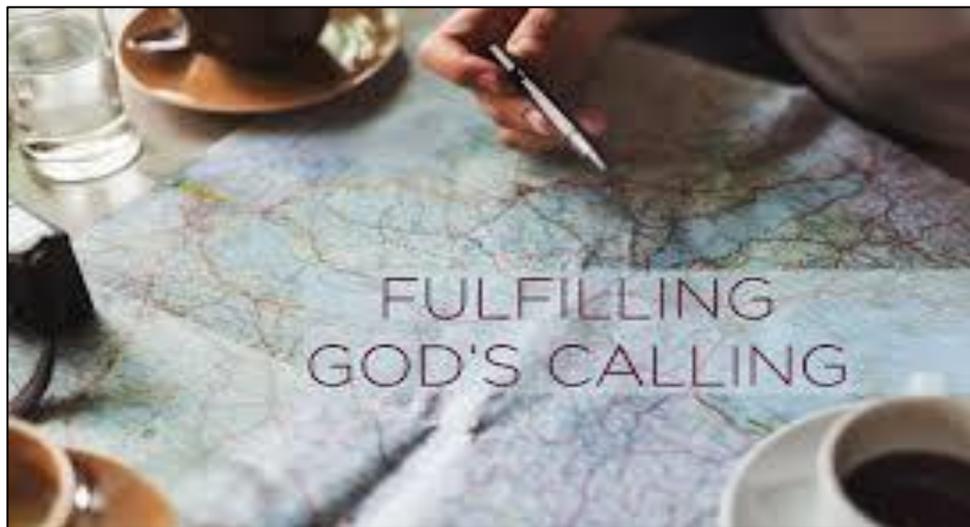
It was a whole year of planning, praying and waiting on God regarding the mission trip and at the same time, I sought advice and did research on full-time ministry as a youth worker. Rev. Andrew Tan and Dr. Herbert Tan shared their experiences of their struggles and also God's faithfulness. Many talks with my parents also helped guide the possible paths and options. One of their advices was to set time markers. The suggestion was to commit 3-5 years to God and when the time marker comes, seek God again. God can say, 'continue on in full-time ministry', or God can also say, 'Thank you for what you have given during this period.'

Upon returning from the mission trip, I applied for jobs in the corporate sector and also to the church as there was a vacancy for a youth worker. I made myself available and asked God to lead the way. It was not an easy decision to make. God showed me the needs and the health of the youth ministry in KL Wesley. I then chose to become a youth worker in KL Wesley. It was not a sudden calling that just came out of nowhere. Growing up in Youth/MYF and Boys' Brigade, I have seen many seniors, peers and juniors leaving after form 5. After returning from university and entering the working world, many just do not turn up in church any more. The situation still isn't looking too good even today.

My passion has always been for the youth ministry and the worship and music ministry. Being heavily influenced by OCF, I realize that many individuals' life-defining moments are during their time as youths. There is a burden for the youths, that they may know God more and have their lives changed through Him. Seeing lives changed and youths having the help and support that they need during such crucial times are some of the things that make me smile.

At KL Wesley, it was a steep learning curve as I learned to lead the youth ministry and build its foundations. Preaching, teaching, counselling, events management were

things that I had to quickly learn. I was very blessed to learn from many good church leaders and also learnt from some difficult moments dealing with difficult and discouraging leaders. There were the joys of seeing youths grow in their faith and have their lives transformed, and then become leaders and mentors for the youths, and serving faithfully in church. I am proud of them as they continue God's good work. There were also the sad moments when the youths went to another church, or when they left the faith and church.



While working as a youth worker, I studied and completed the Masters in Christian Studies part time at STM. After 7 years as a youth worker, I decided to continue on in full time ministry. KL Wesley was so generous and gracious to fully fund and provide for all my fees and living expenses for both part-time and full-time studies and I am very grateful to them. At STM, I was exposed to the various areas of ministries and specialized fields through the STM Field Education practical. I had the privilege to visit and preach in churches and interned at DUMC for my 2 months practical. In the 2 years, God also helped me to improve in certain biblical areas and to reflect on my past 7 years as a youth worker. I was able to reflect on the strengths as well as the areas I had to improve on. I completed Masters in Divinity in STM in 2018.

With guidance and taking a step of faith, I joined TRAC in 2019. I am currently serving in my 2<sup>nd</sup> year (2020) as pastor at Faith Methodist Church, Cheras.

I thank God for His continual faithfulness and guidance.

## How God Changed Me and My Family

*By Pr Jonathan Chan Kian Wing, Wesley Methodist Church, Kuala Lumpur*



This is a story of a life forever changed by God. I am the youngest of three siblings in a staunch Buddhist family. I was born and raised in KL as one who learned filial-piety and believed in multiple Chinese deities and prayed to ancestors who had passed away. I was taught to believe that these deities and ancestor would bless us with “something” if we performed the rituals that were expected of us and that we live in peace with everyone. My family and I did all these under the guidance of my paternal grandmother.

At school, I was one of the four Chinese boys in the entire standard one level. I was also the smallest in size among the four and was often the target of bullies who wanted someone easy to make fun of and to push around. Obviously life in primary school life was miserable. When I realized that if I managed to score 4A’s of 5 in my UPSR, I could apply to another school and be free from those bullies (hopefully forever).

So UPSR came and went. I only scored 3A’s of 5. Nonetheless, my father and I made the attempt to apply to well-known schools in KL: Victoria Institution, Methodist Boys’ School KL (MBS) and St John’s Institution. The results came back and I was devastated to know the applications were rejected. I cried myself to sleep that night thinking I would have to put up with the bullies for another five years. Without my knowledge, my father had made another attempt at the application. He brought the application personally to the education department and to MBS. That was how I was accepted into MBS.

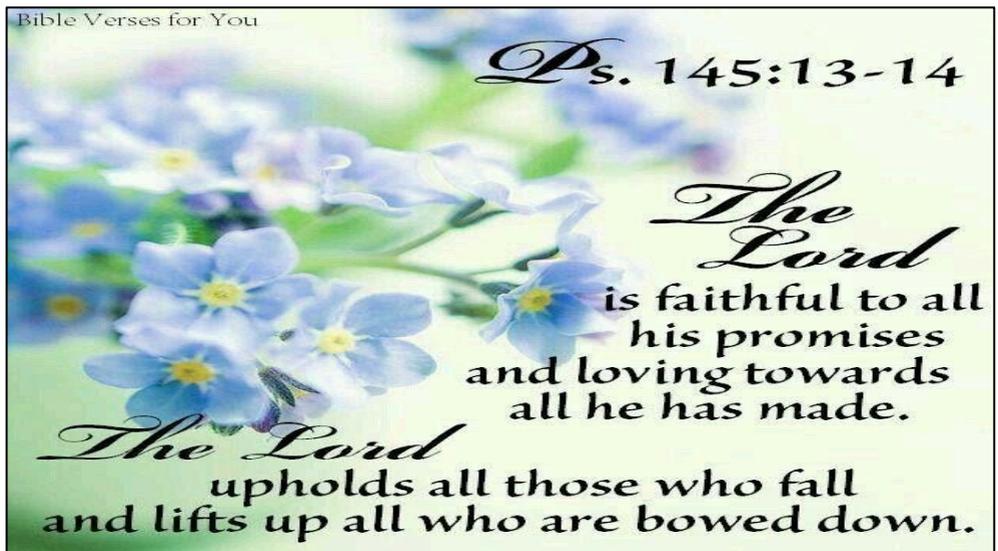
Soon after settling into class (though I was two-three days late), a group of seniors in smart blue uniform caught my attention. They were showcasing their brass band and foot drill. It was the Boys’ Brigade (BB). I went home and told my parents I wanted to join them. I became a BB Boy from that Saturday onwards, and attended BB meetings in the church next to the school – Wesley Methodist Church KL.

It was through Bible studies that I learnt about Jesus and I was encouraged to be obedient to the Word of God. Six months later, my mother told me that I had changed. Things that my parents could not change in me for years, the BB did in months. About the same time, my second sister joined the Girls’ Brigade and they were meeting in the building opposite where the Boys’ Brigade had their meetings. My parents soon

realized it was the values that were taught during bible study that had brought about changes in me. They decided to find out more and we began attending church as a family on Sundays.

Three months later, my mother told me, "Your daddy, sister and I are getting baptized. Do you want to join us?" I thought for a while and said, "Maybe you all go ahead first." I wasn't sure if Jesus was the answer or if He would make any difference in my life then. It was September.

December came, and I was asked the same question again. At that time, I reflected on the past three months of how my family members had been changed. It struck me that there were no arguments, no fights, no disruptive controversial issues. The home has become a haven of peace! It is the work of the Holy Spirit! So, I decided to get baptized and I have never regretted that decision. In fact, it was the best decision I had ever made!



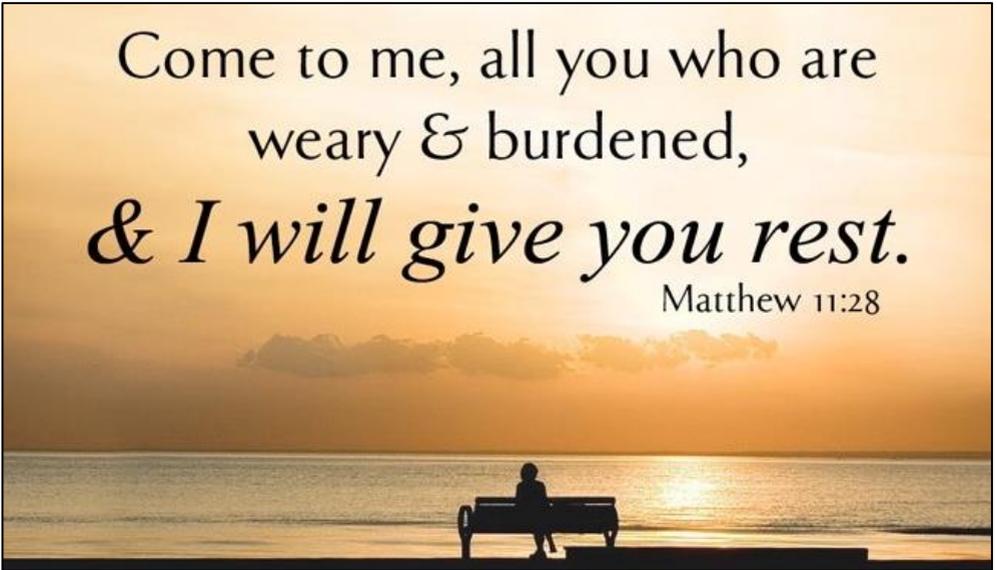
From that year onwards, I developed in a way that wouldn't have been possible without His intervention. Through the Boys' Brigade, I learned leadership and organizational skills, developed my interest in music, made life-long friends, and was integrated into the church through my interest in music by serving in the worship team. And through the worship team, I met people who would eventually become my mentors. I became part of a small group that helped me grow spiritually and we held each other accountable for our spiritual growth.

Today, I am serving as a pastor in the same church where I was saved. I'm married to a friend I met in church back when we were in Sunday School (She also became a Girls' Brigade Officer); and we have a son who just turned two recently. I can say with confidence that my life is fulfilling, not because we don't have problems but because God is involved in my life and He guides me through every challenge. He allows these challenges in my life to develop me into the man He wants me to be – like His Son, Jesus Christ. He has been there for me through every challenge and I know He will continue to be there. I won't be where I am today if it weren't for His saving grace through the many godly people He placed in my life.

If you are reading this story and have not yet decided to receive Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and Saviour, or have not considered the offer of eternal life through Jesus; or you might be a Christian but your relationship with the Lord is lukewarm, I want to encourage you to commit your life to Him. It may sound risky. But it is worth it. I'm not saying this as a pastor. I am saying this as the 13-year-old boy who was raised in another faith but who got to know Jesus, decided to give my life to him and found that it was and still worth it – even after 20 years and counting. I'm sure I'm not the only one who trusted Jesus and wasn't disappointed. Thousands of people in the Klang Valley and around the world have found Jesus to be true and trustworthy. How about taking that first step like I did?

Come to me, all you who are  
weary & burdened,  
& *I will give you rest.*

Matthew 11:28



# **Panggilan Tuhan Kepada Saya Untuk Melayani Tuhan Sepenuh Waktu.**

*Oleh Rev Richard Leow Kok Khuen, Gereja Methodist Canning Garden, Ipoh*

## **Kehidupan Saya Sebelum Panggilan Tuhan**



Saya berasal dari sebuah keluarga yang sederhana, berbangsa Cina dan bukan keluarga Kristian di Bidor, Perak. Semenjak kecil, saya memasuki Sekolah Kebangsaan dimana Bahasa Malaysia diutamakan dalam semua buku-buku teks. Walaupun ibubapa saya sangat sibuk bekerja, mereka tetap ketat dalam peraturan etika kehidupan. Saya merasa tidak ada kebebasan dan terkongkong dibawah kawalan yang ketat oleh ibubapa.

Semasa berusia 16 tahun, saya telah melarikan daripada rumah dan mencari kerja di Kuala Lumpur demi untuk mendapat kebebasan. Namun, kebebasan tersebut telah mengakibatkan saya terikat dengan pelbagai perbuatan dosa sehingga saya terasa tiada keinginan untuk meneruskan dengan kehidupan lagi.

Dalam keadaan terdesak, ada seorang Pastor Gereja Cina OMF, datang dan mengajak saya ke gerejanya di Kampung Serdang Baru, Selangor untuk mendengar kebenaran firman Tuhan. Saya bersetuju kerana setiap kali saya melalui gereja tersebut, saya dapat melihat dan merasai perasaan yang damai didalam hati saya. Pada suatu hari setelah habis ibadah mereka, Pastor minta seorang pelatih Campus Crusade for Christ Malaysia untuk mengkongsikan sebuah buku Empat Hukum Rohani kepada saya. Dengan iman, saya percaya semua dosa-dosa yang saya akui kepada Tuhan Yesus, telah diampuni oleh Tuhan Yesus, lalu saya membuat keputusan untuk mengikuti Tuhan Yesus Kristus selamanya. Ketika itu saya berusia 19 tahun.

## **Bagaimana Tuhan Memanggil Saya Untuk Melayani Dia Sepenuh Waktu.**

Pendidikan saya dari Sekolah Kebangsaan di Pekan Kecil dalam Bahasa Malaysia, telah membuat saya hanya fasih dalam Bahasa Malaysia dan sama sekali tidak fasih

dalam Bahasa Cina. Saya bergumul mengikuti ibadah dan pengajaran rohani di Gereja Cina.

Apabila saya mengadu kepada paderi mengenai pergumulan saya, Pastor berkata kepada saya bahawa buat sementara waktu, masih belum ada lagi banyak Gereja Bahasa Malaysia yang berdekatan, kecuali di Sabah dan Sarawak. Dia minta saya berdoa kepada Tuhan mengenai keluhan saya. Lalu saya mengadu serta mengeluh kepada Tuhan kenapa tidak ada pengajaran kebenaran Firman Tuhan dalam Bahasa Malaysia kerana saya tidak faham Bahasa Cina dan Bahasa Inggeris.

Perasaan yang saya dapat rasakan seolah-olah suatu jawapan daripada Tuhan, iaitu sekiranya begitu berat beban saya mengenai kepentingan pengajaran kebenaran Firman Tuhan didalam Bahasa Malaysia, maka pergilah melengkap diri untuk mengajar kebenaran Firman Tuhan didalam Bahasa Malaysia. Saya memberitahu Pastor mengenai beban saya dan dia memberi beberapa alamat Seminari Alkitab untuk saya memohon. Malangnya semua Seminari telah menolak permohonan saya kerana saya tidak mempunyai kelayakkan Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (SPM). Ketika saya hampir berputus asa dengan penolakan permohonan oleh Seminari demi Seminari, akhirnya terdapat sebuah Pusat Latihan Alkitab Baptis di Tawau, Sabah yang sudi menerima murid yang habis pelajaran Darjah Enam. Syukur kepada Tuhan saya telah diterima kerana saya memiliki Sijil Rendah Pelajaran (SRP). Ketika itu saya berumur 21 tahun. Setelah dilatih selama 2 tahun, saya ditugaskan di sebuah gereja untuk melayani dan saya telah melayani gereja tersebut selama 3 tahun.

Ketika berusia 40 tahun, saya telah melayani di Gereja Methodist, saya mendapati bahawa untuk menjadi seorang Paderi sepenuh, seseorang itu haruslah mempunyai pendidikan Theologi Sarjana Muda. Semasa saya berumur 43 tahun, barulah saya boleh mohon diperakui dan disahkan oleh Konferensi dan Pentahbisan oleh sekumpulan Paderi yang bertugas. Saya telah ditahbiskan ketika berusia 45 tahun. Pengesahan Konferensi yang membuat saya berminat untuk menjadi Paderi Methodist, kerana pengakuan dan pengesahan tersebut membuat saya diperiksa dan dipimpin secara rapi oleh Konferensi, maka perjalanan kehidupan saya sebagai seorang Paderi akan terjaga dan tidak menyimpang atau terpesong. Mengenang kembali, sungguh ironik sekali kerana ketika muda, saya tidak suka dikawal dan inginkan kebebasan. Akan tetapi semasa dalam pelayanan rohani yang penuh dengan godaan dan

pencubaan, saya lebih suka dikawal dengan rapi, dijaga, dididik dan diberikan tunjuk ajar. Sebenarnya saya tidak tahu apa pun, apa yang saya sangka, saya pandai dan tahu lebih banyak, rupanya sungguh amat sedikit sahaja. Untuk menghadapi pelayanan, dalam keadaan hati yang terbuka untuk belajar dan mempunyai banyak guru, walaupun demikian belum lagi habis saya belajar, tetapi apa yang dipelajari ialah untuk berubah dan digunakan dalam kehidupan saya supaya berjaya menghasilkan buah.

Apa yang saya telah belajar dari semua pengalaman kehidupan saya didalam Tuhan bermula dari kepercayaan pada Tuhan Yesus, bertumbuh di Gereja yang bukan bidang budaya bahasa saya, atau latihan di Pusat Alkitab. Harus ada guru, terus menerus belajar, jangan sama sekali berhenti belajar, belajar semua perkara, baik perkara kecil mahupun perkara yang mendalam dan besar. Siap sedia dididik oleh Tuhan dalam semua perkara melalui semua guru-guru baik di Sekolah Alkitab mahupun semasa melayani di Gereja dibawah seorang Pastor sebagai guru.

Jangan mementingkan diri sendiri dan jangan mencari keuntungan wang, belajar menjadi puas dalam kasih karunia yang Tuhan telah berikan. Belajar prinsip-prinsip kehidupan daripada Firman Tuhan dalam Alkitab. Banyak lagi perkara yang perlu dibelajar untuk terus menerus menjadi pengikut Tuhan Yesus yang taat setia dan melayani dengan rajin dan baik. Itulah yang memberi hikmat untuk saya bertahan sampai ke hari ini. Kini tahun 2020, saya sudah berumur 53 tahun. Sekian, Puji Tuhan.



# Keputusan Yang Tepat

## Bagaimana Menjawab Panggilan Tuhan

Oleh Pr Eddy Marson Yasir, Gereja Methodist Damansara Utama



Saya dilahirkan pada tahun 1976 di sebuah desa terpencil di Sabah dan membesar dalam keluarga Kristian. Ibubapa saya aktif melayani sebagai pelayan Tuhan di gereja. Kehidupan bergereja telah membentuk pola pemikiran saya. Minat terhadap pelayanan gereja sudah bertapak dalam hati saya sejak usia remaja lagi. Saya terlibat dalam kegiatan gereja seperti pelayanan muda-mudi, musik, memimpin pujian dan lain-lain.

Semasa menunggu keputusan Peperiksaan Sijil Pelajaran Tinggi Malaysia (STPM) pada tahun 1986, saya terlibat aktif di gereja lokal. Setelah mendapat keputusan STPM, saya mendapat keputusan yang baik dan layak untuk melanjutkan pelajaran ke peringkat yang lebih tinggi. Saya telah memohon di beberapa pusat pengajian Tinggi seperti UPU, ITM (UiTM sekarang) dan Maktab Perguruan untuk menyambung pelajaran. Dalam proses mengurus pengiriman borang-borang permohonan ini, ada satu persoalan yang selalu timbul dalam fikiran saya adalah, 'apakah pemberian terbaik saya kepada Tuhan?' Pertanyaan ini timbul apabila saya selalu mendengar lagu-lagu rohani dan salah satu judul lagu kegemaran saya adalah, 'Giving my best'. Saya mula bertanya kepada diri saya; apakah pemberian terbaik saya sedangkan saya tidak memiliki apa-apa. Pertanyaan ini selalu mengganggu fikiran saya sehingga saya susah tidur malam.

Di dalam sebuah acara Kebaktian Kebangunan Rohani (KKR) yang diadakan di gereja kami pada waktu itu, terdapat salah satu sesi ibadah, di mana pengkotbah pada waktu itu mengutip ayat dalam Roma 12:1 "Oleh itu, saudara-saudaraku, aku menyeru kepadamu, demi belas kasihan Allah, supaya mempersembahkan tubuh badanmu sebagai korban yang hidup, yang suci dan diterima oleh Allah; itulah ibadah yang wajar." (AVB). Ketika mendengar firman Tuhan ini, saya membayangkan seperti pengkotbah itu sedang bercakap dengan saya seorang. Firman ini betul-betul menusuk hati saya sehingga saya merasa resah. Oleh itu, saya cepat-cepat menemui Pastor gereja kami untuk mendapatkan nasihat dan pandangan tentang pengalaman yang baru saya alami itu. Saya masih ingat dengan jelas, Pastor tersenyum dengan lebar sambil berkata, "Tuhan sedang memanggil kamu melayani Dia sepenuh masa". Saya tidak faham apa yang dikatakan oleh Pastor tersebut, malah membuat saya keliru akan tujuan hidup

dan masa hadapan saya. Saya tidak pernah bermimpi untuk menjadi seorang pastor. Oleh kerana keinginan untuk mendapat kepastian, saya menjumpai seorang pensyarah di sebuah sekolah Alkitab yang tidak jauh dari kampung. Setelah mendengar penjelasannya, beliau meyakinkan saya bahawa saya memang dipanggil Tuhan untuk melayani sepenuh masa. Hamba Tuhan ini kemudian menjemput saya menyertai satu program lawatan misi sekolah Alkitab itu, dengan tujuan untuk mendedahkan kepada saya tentang misi dan pelayanan sebenar. Pengalaman ini telah benar-benar mengubah paradigma saya tentang panggilan itu. Secara diam-diam saya membuat keputusan untuk melayani Tuhan sepenuh masa.

## ***PERSEMBAHANKU (Roma 12:1)***



<sup>1</sup>Karena itu, saudara-saudara, demi kemurahan Allah aku menasihatkan kamu, supaya kamu **mempersembahkan tubuhmu** sebagai persembahan **yang hidup, yang kudus dan yang berkenan kepada Allah**: itu adalah ibadahmu yang sejati. (Rm. 12:1)

Cabaran seterusnya adalah bagaimana cara meyakinkan keluarga saya tentang panggilan ini? Saya takut mereka tidak akan merestui keputusan ini. Ketakutan ini menjadi kenyataan setelah berita ini akhirnya diketahui oleh ibubapa dan adik-beradik saya. Semua mereka tidak bersetuju dan membantah keras usulan itu, kecuali bapa saya. Saya masih ingat, apabila abang kedua saya yang saat ini telah dipanggil Tuhan, sangat marah kepada saya kerana enggan mengirim ketiga-tiga borang permohonan yang sudah lengkap diisi ke pusat pengajian tinggi. Walhal borang itu telah saya sembunyikan kerana saya sudah bulatkan hati untuk melanjutkan pelajaran ke sekolah

Alkitab (Seminari). Keputusan ini sangat mengecewakan keluarga saya. Lagipun, sebagai anak bongsu, mereka mempunyai harapan yang sangat tinggi agar saya dapat mengubah masa depan keluarga kami kerana melihat pencapaian pelajaran saya yang baik ketika itu. Walau bagaimanapun, saya bersyukur kerana tidak akur dengan semua tekanan yang cuba menghalang saya untuk melanjutkan pelajaran ke sekolah Alkitab pada waktu itu.

Akhirnya, pada tahun 1998, saya telah diterima untuk melanjutkan pelajaran di Seminari Theologi Malaysia dalam program Bachelor of Theology (BTh). Dengan anugerah Tuhan, pada tahun 2001 saya berjaya menamatkan pengajian di STM dan kemudian tahun 2002 dilantik menjadi pastor sepenuh masa di SIB Seremban. Di sinilah bermula lembaran baru dalam kehidupan sebagai pastor sepenuh masa sampai hari ini. Mendirikan rumah tangga pada tahun 2004 dan diberkati dengan lima orang anak. Sekarang saya bersama keluarga melayani di DUMC, khususnya Gereja Bahasa Malaysia.

Sebagai kesimpulan dari kesaksian singkat ini, satu perkara yang saya ingin nyatakan bahawa saya tidak pernah menyesal memilih untuk melayani Tuhan. Malah, saya sangat bangga kerana telah membuat keputusan yang tepat. Tidak ada perkara yang lebih manis dan indah selain bekerja di ladang Tuhan. Semua peristiwa suka-duka, pahit –manis dan jatuh-bangun dalam pelayanan telah membentuk keperibadian saya. Justeru, saya boleh bertahan dalam pelayanan bersama keluarga sampai hari ini adalah kerana anugerah Tuhan.

Nasihat dan dorongan saya untuk generasi muda hari ini, adalah jangan pernah menganggap panggilan Tuhan ini sebagai sesuatu yang remeh atau 'pekerjaan' yang kurang hebat jika dibanding dengan pekerjaan sekular lainnya. Secara peribadi, saya sangat bangga dapat menyahut panggilan Tuhan menjadi seorang pastor diusia muda. Tidak ada yang lebih 'memuaskan' dan 'mulia' selain melayani Raja diatas segala raja, dan Tuhan diatas segala Tuhan – kerana melayani Tuhan adalah satu kehormatan dan keistimewaan yang tidak semua orang mendapatkannya! Haleluyah, segala kemuliaan bagi Tuhan Yesus yang telah mempercayakan saya panggilan kudus ini. Saya akan terus berlari sampai ke garis akhir demi menyelesaikannya panggilan yang mulia ini. Segala kemuliaan dan hormat hanya bagi Tuhan kita Yesus Kristus. Amin!

# Kesaksian Panggilan Hidup

Oleh En Edward Lee Kit Siang, Pelajar Seminari Theologi Malaysia



Samuel sedang berbaring di tempat tabut Allah di dalam Bait Suci Tuhan. Lalu Tuhan memanggil Samuel, dan Samuel menjawab, "Ya, aku ada di sini," lalu dia berlari kepada Eli dan berkata, "Ini aku, Tuan memanggilku?" Jawabnya, "Aku tidak memanggilmu. Berbaringlah lagi." Lalu pergilah Samuel berbaring.

Tuhan memanggil Samuel sekali lagi. Maka bangunlah Samuel lalu pergi mendapatkan Eli seraya berkata, "Ya, aku ada di sini, bukankah Tuan memanggil aku?" Tetapi Eli berkata, "Aku tidak memanggil, anakku; tidurlah semula." Samuel belum lagi mengenal Tuhan bahkan firma Tuhan belum pernah dinyatakan kepadanya. Kemudian Tuhan memanggil Samuel sekali lagi, buat kali ketiganya.

Samuel pun bangunlah, lalu pergi mendapatkan Eli seraya katanya, "Ya, aku ada di sini, bukankah Tuan memanggil aku?" Maka mengertilah Eli bahawa Tuhan yang memanggil anak itu. Lalu Eli berkata kepada Samuel, "Pergilah berbaring. Nanti, jika Dia memanggil engkau, katakanlah, 'Ya Tuhan, berfirmanlah, hamba-Mu ini mendengarkannya. Maka pergilah Samuel berbaring di tempatnya. Tuhan pun hadir dan memanggilnya seperti yang sudah-sudah, "Samuel! Samuel!" Jawab Samuel, "Berfirmanlah, hamba-Mu ini mendengarkannya." (1 Samuel 6:3-10 Alkitab Versi Borneo)

Cara panggilan saya semestinya tidak sama seperti yang berlaku kepada Samuel. Tuhan tidak memanggil saya ketika saya tengah tidur dan saya memuji Tuhan kerana itu. Jika anda terdengar suara dan mendapati tiada orang yang memanggil, pastinya anda akan ketakutan. Namun begitu hakikatnya adalah Tuhan memanggil setiap daripada kita sesuai untuk rencana-Nya dan saya percaya Tuhan telah meletakkan benih panggilan untuk melayani Tuhan dan gereja-Nya di dalam hati saya 10 tahun yang lalu ketika saya masih bekerja di ibukota Malaysia. Saya mengendahkan panggilan tersebut kerana kurang pasti lagi tentang panggilan yang Tuhan inginkan untuk saya. Setelah beberapa tahun menyembah Tuhan dan bertumbuh dalam sebuah gereja di Kuala Lumpur, saya berpindah ke sebuah pekan kecil di Perak yang dikenali sebagai Sitiawan. Ini disebabkan oleh tuntutan pekerjaan.

Perpindahan dari ibukota ke tempat yang terpencil merupakan suatu kejutan bagi saya.

Saya mula bertanya adakah saya telah mengambil keputusan yang salah untuk datang bekerja di pekan yang kecil ini. Tetapi kini saya pasti bahawa Tuhan tidak pernah salah alamat dan bagi saya keputusan untuk datang dan bekerja di Sitiawan adalah keputusan yang betul. Sitiawan merupakan padang gurun yang Tuhan gunakan untuk mempersiapkan saya untuk panggilan-Nya. Saya diajak untuk menyertai sebuah persekutuan kumpulan belia di Gereja Wesley Methodist Sitiawan dan sejak dari hari itu, saya telah menyembah Tuhan dan bertumbuh di gereja tersebut. Di bawah penjagaan Pastor Pangiran Baru saya dimuridkan untuk melayani pelayan Bahasa Malaysia. Pada suatu hari Pastor Pangiran berkata kepada saya bahawa saya mempunyai panggilan untuk melayani secara sepenuh masa. Beliau mencadangkan saya untuk memasuki seminari untuk mendalami dalam bidang Theologi (pengajian tentang sifat Tuhan dan kepercayaan agama). Saya teringat kembali akan panggilan saya sewaktu di gereja ibukota. Saya bergumul tentang ini untuk beberapa tahun lagi. Bimbang kerana takut jika ini bukan panggilan saya, bimbangkan kemampuan saya untuk menjadi gembala suatu hari nanti dan bimbangkan tentang kewangan untuk menampung segala perbelanjaan sewaktu belajar di seminari nanti. Saya memberikan alasan sama seperti Gideon dengan meminta Tuhan memberikan saya pengesahan yang lebih nyata lagi. Tuhan menjawab doa saya ini dengan cara yang luarbiasa sekali.

Pada suatu khemah keluarga gereja, Pastor undangan sewaktu kebaktian hari Ahad telah memanggil saya untuk datang ke depan untuk didoakan di hadapan seluruh gereja. Beliau berkata bahawa Tuhan telah memilih saya dan mempunyai panggilan untuk melayani-Nya. Saya berkata pada diri saya bahawa ini sememangnya perbuatan Tuhan kerana saya tidak mengenali Pastor tersebut dan beliau juga tidak mengenali saya. Disebabkan Pastor tersebut telah memanggil saya di hadapan gereja umum, keesokan harinya LCEC gereja dan beberapa jemaah yang lain datang berbincang dengan saya untuk menampung segala perbelanjaan dan yuran pembelajaran saya di seminari. Dengan begini saya akur dan percaya ini sememangnya panggilan Tuhan. Tuhan telah menjawab segala kebimbangan saya dan saya yakin dengan keputusan yang akan saya buat seterusnya. Seperti juga dengan cerita Samuel di atas, Eli telah membantu Samuel untuk mengenal pasti bahawa Tuhan yang memanggilnya. Begitu juga dengan jemaah Gereja Wesley Methodist Sitiawan yang telah membantu saya untuk mengenal pasti, mengesahkan dan meneguhkan panggilan Tuhan untuk saya. Kini saya adalah pelajar tahun 2 di Seminari Theologi Malaysia dan dengan Rahmat Tuhan saya akan menamatkan pengajian pada tahun 2022. Tuhan tidak memanggil orang yang sempurna untuk melayani tetapi melengkapi orang yang tidak sempurna untuk melayani. Segala puji, segala kemuliaan hanya bagi Tuhan. Amin!

## 回应蒙召与成长历程见证

文：黄俊民传道， 怡保卫理公会卫斯理堂

「… 我故此没有违背那从天上来的异象。」】（使徒行传 26：19）



### 回应蒙召的初期

二十六年前，一九九四年。

回想起那是充满甜蜜美好和多事之秋的一个回忆。

甜蜜，那是一段与主有亲密团契的甜蜜岁月，自从信主之后我就和主有著美好的关系，在主裡面的爱心和信心日长，领受主的力量事奉，心中火热传扬耶稣的福音，我几乎向我所有的亲友分享耶稣的福音。当时我的内心已经我清楚知道有上帝的呼召，虽然内心爱慕这善工我却不作声，那时候信主约三年了。

记得那时我的几位亲戚甚至因为我的热心和“疯狂”传扬福音的行为，以及我戒绝了所有的坏习惯，不再跟随他们寻那罪中之乐，觉得非常的惊讶，竟然在坊间谣传我是参加邪教才有那样的改变，令我啼笑皆非。不过，现在回想我的亲戚有这样反应也不是没有原因，因为在我信主之前是一个“拜拜的超级信徒”，而且我是一个乩童。

生命从此也进入多事之秋。那是我和我为她祷告十年之后才信主的太太玉莹，因我信主后无论在生活上和价值观上常常发生抵触和摩擦最多的一段时间，导致考虑进入全时间服事的呼召一再拖延，因我内心深深的期盼得到我深爱的妻子最大的支持和鼓励。

1997年，是我第一次公开立志奉献作传道人，那是在一位从香港来的牧师主领的特会，记得他当时是讲解《约拿书》关于约拿先知违背上帝命令逃离呼召的故事，当时我觉得自己就像约拿先知的不顺服，却没有像约拿先知般宁死在汪洋的不屈勇气，自知亏欠上帝和自责自己的不顺服和胆怯，一再推迟回应上帝的呼召，不过，我还是抵不住圣灵的一再催促，还是走到台前重新把自己再次奉献给上帝。

2001 年《第六届世界华人福音会议》在吉隆坡举行。在那大型奋兴布道会我也站在人群中接受差遣的祷告那是我第二次与主立约。

到 2008 年，我勉强尝试在教会裡面做部分时间的传道工作，不过，只维持了不到三年我又重回到商业世界裡却遇上金融海啸。那时我之前安排部分时间修读并完成了神学文凭课程。

一颗不顺服的心对上帝的呼召和赐予的异象似乎渐渐化成模糊遥远的旧记忆了。一晃十年又过去了，我个人称这十年为“尘封呼召的十年”。虽然如此，上帝就如祂没有放过任凭约拿先知，祂也没有任凭我，祂就像一位慈父般一直以无限的爱，耐心的等候和引领祂的儿女。

### 回应并完全顺服上帝的呼召

直到 2017 年的某个中午，我很意外接到一通电话，一把熟悉的声音要约见我，次日中午我准时赴约出现在时任三一年议会会长哲耶古玛牧师的办公室，我教会的前主任牧师，他以跟往常一样亲切却坚定的语气与我分享他从上帝领受关于我奉献全职事奉的事宜，在那一刻深知是我该顺服的时候了。这一次我和太太没有像之前般挣扎，太太玉莹也顺服上帝的旨意，给予我的决定完全支持，我心裡面非常的感恩。如今，我们满心欢喜的为上帝的国献上我们最好的力量，以表对主的大恩惠的回应。

虽然，过程一波多折，靠主的怜悯我至终顺服地回应这从天上来的异象，彷若听见使徒保罗说般引起我的共鸣：『…我故此没有违背那从天上来的异象。』（使徒行传 26:19）。祝祷每个上帝所呼召的人都顺服和回应并走上这蒙福之路。诚信所愿。



## 哭着来，笑着离开

文：陆永祥传道，八打灵再也卫理公会三一堂

我哭着来到这个世界，仿佛因失去什么而哭。



四岁时，家庭贫穷，父母于是离家到美国工作。童年开始，我性格变得孤立，内心开始筑起围墙。我和家人，尤其和爸爸的关系淡薄。爸爸常酒后闹事，家中几乎每天都争吵。

中学开始渴望爱情，我以为只要找到人给的爱，就能满足心灵的空虚。结果，爱我的人和我爱的人其实都不懂得爱。

爸爸在我 18 岁时，因忍受不了癌症的折磨而自杀身亡，大姐三度自杀被救，二姐生而消沉，妈妈活得空虚。我一直思考：为什么要活着受苦？生命有什么意义？于是，我精神开始困扰。

当时我意识到人生充满苦难，尽头就是死亡。因此，我开始计划自杀，希望早些结束痛苦。

2004 年 7 月，在出席大学讲师的讲座后，我在回应表上写道：如果有上帝，上帝会不会来帮我？我知道讲师是基督徒，所以如此问。

一周后，讲师和我约见，分享信仰。当我听到“耶稣为我们的罪而死”这句话时，我感觉腹中有一股莫名的暖流涌上胸口，感觉像被一种强烈的爱充满。当时不受控制地哭泣，并当场祷告接受主。

几分钟过后，仿佛有一个声音催逼着我，要我告诉所有亲友说我得救了。当天晚上回到大学宿舍，我开始向每一名电话簿里的亲友发短讯，说：我很开心，我今天信了耶稣！

这是我事奉的开始。

我是家族第一个信主的。信主后，陆续向家人朋友传福音。随后的一年，祖母、妈妈、大姐和 20 多位亲友也相继信主。

每当看见没有信主的人，我心中都十分焦急，恐怕他们会沉沦灭亡。因这份迫切感，我 23 岁时就加入一间神召会全职事奉。

三年后，因着上帝的安排而加入卫理公会，继续全时间事奉、念神学、成为传道人。

当然，过程中有许多挣扎、伤心和开心的时刻。篇幅有限，不能详谈。希望看见文章的你，也能够认真聆听圣灵的声音，按上帝的旨意来服事。

希望我们能以有限的人生，来分享上帝无限的爱，让更多人哭着来到世界，却能笑着离开。

我們若認自己的罪，神是信實的，是公義的，  
必要赦免我們的罪，洗淨我們一切的不義。

約翰一書 1:9



## 信主与蒙召见证

文：黄世铭传道， 檳城卫理公会卫斯理堂



我并非出生在一个拥有基督教信仰的家庭，所以在小时候不曾听闻福音。

我第一次接触福音是在 2007 年（我那时在念中四），有一个同学带我和另外几个朋友一起去参加兵如港浸信会的少年团契。我第一次与基督徒们一同唱诗，玩游戏，查经，觉得即有平安又有喜乐。自那次后，那位朋友并没有继续的邀请我们，所以就不了了之。几个月后，有另一个朋友送给我一本新约圣经，并叫我回家阅读。当天我回到家后，就开始阅读圣经。当天我花了数个小时一口气把马太福音和马可福音读完，结果深深地被

耶稣的事迹与教训打动，并在当时决定要相信这位耶稣。

神对我初次的呼召是在我当兵之时，那时我刚读完中五，18 岁。在当兵时，我热衷于参加基督徒团契，并且在团契中热心地服事。因为当兵的日期是从 3 月到 6 月，而刚好中六开课是在 5 月多，故凡有资格读中六的营员可以提早服完役。实际上，在还没入营前我已经报名就读其他学院，它的开课日期是 6 月多。可是基于许多同房的华裔朋友提早离开，故我也想借读中六之理由跟着提早离开。大约在离开兵营前两三个周，基督徒团契的团长（他亦是营员）来找我，问我可否留下来与他一同看顾尚留在兵营的基督徒营员（在当时无报读中六并将留下来的基督徒营员有很多是在兵营信主的初信徒）。我一开始拒绝他，并说出许多我必须离开的借口。过后有一天，在我整理衣柜时，主耶稣在约翰福音 21 章对彼得说的话突然在我的脑海回荡。“你爱我比这些更深么。”“你喂养我的小羊。”“你爱我么。”“你牧养我的羊。”“你爱我么。你喂养我的羊。”



「約翰的兒子西門·你愛我嗎？」彼得說：「主啊·是的·你知道我愛你·」耶穌說：「你牧養我的羊·」(約21:16)

等，似乎是神亲自对我说的话。我顿时觉得很羞愧，因为我虽然口口声声说我爱祂，可是我却不愿意留下来照顾初信徒们，并且只是顾着自己。因着神话语的感动，我决定留下来继续服兵役，以便可以留在基督徒团契帮忙及事奉。

在这之后，照顾神的羊群的感动一直留在我的心里，而且我心里一直有去读神学的负担。在神的开路和供应之下，我终于在 2016 年得以去神学院受装备。感恩神在过去一路的带领，荣耀归于祂。

# The Sound Mind Principle



Dear friends,

How can a person decide what is God's will for his life? Let me share with you what I have chosen to call "the sound mind principle" of Scripture.

In 2 Timothy 1:7 we are told, "God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind" (KJV). The sound mind referred to in this verse means a mind under the control of the Holy Spirit, renewed according to Romans 12:2: "Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is -- his good, pleasing and perfect will" (NIV).

The sound mind is the renewed mind. The sound mind principle involves the use of the renewed mind.

There is a vast difference between the inclination of the natural or carnal person to use worldly "common sense" and that of the spiritual person to follow the sound mind principle. The former depends upon the wisdom of man for understanding; the latter, having the mind of Christ, receives wisdom and guidance from God moment by moment through faith.

To help you determine God's will for your life according to the sound mind principle of Scripture, follow this bit of logic. First, consider these questions: "Why did Jesus come?" He came to "seek and to save what was lost." (Luke 19:10) Then, "What is the greatest experience of your life?" "To know Christ personally as my Savior and Lord." Finally, "What is the greatest thing you can do to help others?" The answer is obvious: "Introduce them to Christ."

A spiritually renewed sound mind tells me that the most important thing I can possibly do as a Christian is to allow the Lord Jesus Christ in all of His resurrection power to have complete, unhindered control of my life. Otherwise, He cannot continue to seek and save the lost through me.

Every Christian is under divine orders to be a faithful witness for Christ. Thus, every sincere Christian will want to make his God-given time, talents and treasure available to Christ so that his fullest potential will be realized for Him.

List, evaluate and compare the talents that God has given you in relation to your training, personality and other qualities, then from this, prayerfully make a list of the ways in which your life can best glorify God.

Through this prayerful exercise, the Holy Spirit will reveal His will for your life. But caution: The sound mind principle does not work unless certain factors exist.

First, there must be no unconfessed sin in your life. Be sure you have applied I John 1:9, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness" (NIV).

Second, your life must be fully dedicated to Christ according to Romans 12:1-2, and you must be filled with the Holy Spirit in obedience to the command of Ephesians 5:18. As in the case of our salvation, we are filled and controlled by the Spirit through faith, as we claim the promise of I John 5:14-15, "This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us -- whatever we ask -- we know that we have what we asked of him" (NIV).

Remember, just as the turning of the steering wheel of an automobile does not alter its direction unless it is moving, so God cannot direct our lives unless we are moving for Him. I challenge you to begin employing the sound mind principle today. Apply it to

the investment of your time, your talents and your treasure. This principle applies to everything you do in this life.

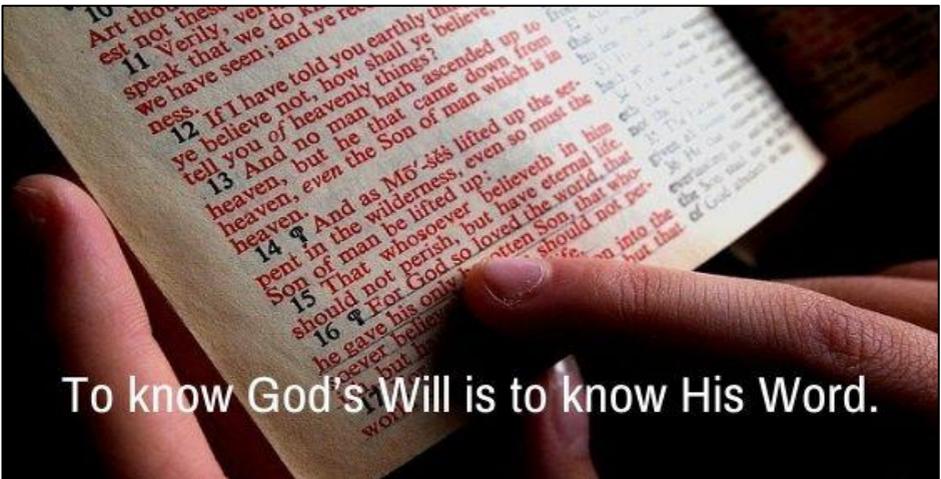
When you have applied this principle, confirmation of a decision may come in various ways. Usually, the confirmation is a quiet, peaceful assurance that you are doing what God wants you to do, with an expectancy that God will use you to bear fruit.

There is an urgent need for millions of dedicated, Spirit-controlled men and women to give most of their time, talent and treasure to helping reach our nation and the world for Christ -- now. Apart from such total commitment on the part of millions of Christians immediately, especially within the next few years, the opportunity to worship and serve our Lord may be lost to this generation and to many generations to come. Let us be about "redeeming the time, because the days are evil" (Ephesians 5:16, NIV).

Yours for fulfilling the Great Commission each year until our Lord returns,  
Bill Bright

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See [campuscrusade.com](http://campuscrusade.com) for Bill Bright's own materials.



To know God's Will is to know His Word.

# Would You Like to Know God Personally?

What does it take to begin a relationship with God? Devote yourself to unselfish religious deeds? Become a better person so that God will accept you?

You may be surprised that none of those things will work. But God has made it very clear in the Bible how we can know Him.

The following principles will explain how you can personally begin a relationship with God, right now, through Jesus Christ...

## *PRINCIPLE 1*

*God loves you and has a plan for you!*

The Bible says, “God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, [Jesus Christ], that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life” (John 3:16).

Jesus said, “I came that they may have life and have it abundantly” — a complete life full of purpose (John 10:10).

## *PRINCIPLE 2*

*Here's the problem: man is sinful and separated from God.*

We have all done, thought or said bad things, which the Bible calls “sin.” The Bible says, “All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23).

The result of sin is death, spiritual separation from God (Romans 6:23).

The good news?

## PRINCIPLE 3

### God sent His Son to die for your sins!

Jesus died in our place so we could have a relationship with God and be with Him forever.

“God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” (Romans 5:8).

But it didn't end with His death on the cross. He rose again and still lives!

“Christ died for our sins. He was buried. He was raised on the third day, according to the Scriptures” (1 Corinthians 15:3-4).

Jesus is the only way to God. Jesus said, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through Me” (John 14:6).

## PRINCIPLE 4

*Would you like to receive God's forgiveness?*

We can't earn salvation; we are saved by God's grace when we have faith in His Son, Jesus Christ. All you have to do is believe you are a sinner that Christ died for your sins and ask His forgiveness. Then turn from your sins—that's called repentance.

Jesus Christ knows you and loves you.

What matters to Him is the attitude of your heart, your honesty.

We suggest praying the prayer below to accept Christ as your Savior.

## PRAY NOW

"Dear God, I know I'm a sinner, and I ask for Your forgiveness. I believe Jesus Christ is Your Son. I believe that He died for my sin and that You raised Him to life. I want to trust Him as my Savior and follow Him as Lord, from this day forward. Guide my life and help me to do Your will. I pray this in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen."

**Did you pray this prayer?**

For more information, kindly contact:

(Please stamp your church address and contact number)

*This booklet by the Board of Evangelism is a compilation of testimonies from various members of the Trinity Annual Conference (TRAC), The Methodist Church in Malaysia, to bless readers.*

*Address: TRAC, 2 Jalan 5/39, 46000 Petaling Jaya, Selangor, Malaysia. Should you need to contact anyone, please get in touch with the church above or go to our website: <[www.trac.org.my](http://www.trac.org.my)>*



Trinity Annual Conference (TRAC)

2, Jalan S/39, 48000 Peraling Jaya, Selangor, Malaysia

+603-79542836 | [admin@trac.org.my](mailto:admin@trac.org.my) | [www.trac.org.my](http://www.trac.org.my)