

church

THE CHURCH IN SINGAPORE

times

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From The Elders' Room...



How quickly time passes, we are now in June 2017! As we look back with thanksgiving to the Lord for seeing us through 2016, we look forward with anticipation of His leading in this year, ever onward, ever upward.

We started 2017 with the book of Jonah. Many a time, we only remember how Jonah was swallowed by and kept alive in the stomach of a whale for three days and three nights. This book is in fact more than this. It tells us God is full of mercy, ever ready to give men a second chance to return to Him. Many readers miss this crucial point. As we recall how many times we also ran away from what God had called us to do; how many times we thought we could hide in “the lowest parts of the ship”; how many times, despite all our futile attempts to run away, He brought us back to where He wanted us to be even if we had to be kept “in the deep” for a while, we rejoice that He did not give us up.

In the Gospel of Mark which we are pursuing, we see our Saviour-King who “did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many” (10:45). He came to free men from the bondage of sin. In each account of His healing and His encounters with His opponents, He shows us He is the sovereign Lord over all things and all circumstances. No longer are His believers bound by man-made rules and regulations of religion.

Many followed Jesus; some for personal motives, like healing from their infirmities; some for learning from Him, “for He taught them as one having authority” (1:22); and others like the scribes and Pharisees, “so that they might accuse Him” (3:2). This should trigger us to question our reasons for following Him. Are we following for personal gains like riches and power, or

are we following to catch others for not keeping the rules and regulations we have set and “the tradition of the elders” (7:5), or are we following to learn of Him?

In the early chapters of Mark, we see how quickly and assuredly the disciples answered the Lord’s call. To some like Peter and Andrew who were already His disciples, it was a call to service: “Follow Me, and I will make you become fishers of men” (1:17); to others like Matthew (Levi), it was a simple “Follow Me” (2:14). They immediately left all in answer to His call. What a contrast to Jonah! Let us examine how we are responding to His call to give of ourselves for Him and His service. May we immediately leave our “nets” and follow Him!

In leading His followers, the Lord equipped them for the service. He taught them by setting examples. They saw how He had compassion on those who earnestly sought Him, like the leper who asked for cleansing: “Then Jesus, moved with compassion, stretched out His hand and touched him, and said to him, ‘I am willing; be cleansed.’ ” (1:40-41) We too can learn that we need to be compassionate to others.

The Lord also taught His disciples through parables which served a two-fold purpose – to set forth deep and important truths and to test the reality of their interest. Many heard and did not pursue further. Praise the Lord for a group of followers, mainly His disciples, who were earnest inquirers seeking to learn the meanings of the parables! To them He gladly explained the deep and important truths behind the parables. As we come to Him each day, may we too be earnest inquirers of His purpose for our lives.

As earnest inquirers, we need the desire to learn of Him. These days there are all kinds of teachings, all

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claiming to be Bible-based. These teachings and practices at first glance may seem biblical but they cannot stand up to close scrutiny. They are man-made rules and regulations to spirituality. We can be caught in the web of deception.

As the psalmist said in Psalm 119:11, “Your word I have hidden in my heart, That I might not sin against You”, we need to constantly and conscientiously read the Word. Unfortunately, many of us do not realise how privileged we are. Millions of Christians do not have this easy access to the Bible and are persecuted. But this has not deterred many from enjoying the Word. Determined to hold on to the Word of truth, they memorize verses and some even the entire Bible. Their persecutors can take away the Bible from them but not the Bible in them. Whilst we praise God for such encouragement, we must feel ashamed if we do not avail ourselves of this wonderful privilege. Let us encourage each other to go into God’s Word so that we will “no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting” (Eph 4:14).

In June, we held a Children’s Camp locally, and a Youth & Young People Conference and an Adult Retreat at the Le Grandeur Palm Resort, Johor. We were able to encourage the participants to persevere in their walk with the Lord though the way is not always smooth. It is by loving and encouraging each other in His love that we can cheer each other on. “We love Him because He first loved us” (1 John 4:19).

As we love Him, we are motivated to love others and

so obey His charge to “go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you” (Matt 28:19-20). In response to this call, we hold monthly gospel meetings and had a special gospel meeting on 14 April 2017 (Good Friday). There will be two more such meetings, on 9 August (National Day) and 25 December (Christmas Day). Although the number of new brothers and sisters is not big, we thank and praise God for them. We need to pray much for we, as the church, are in a spiritual battle to bring souls into God’s kingdom.

We are thankful to the Lord for a group of brothers and sisters who reach out to saints who have been unable to join us in our meetings for personal reasons, be they sickness or weakness (physical or spiritual) or others. At the same time, when the opportunity presents itself, the brothers and sisters also preach the gospel to those around. This is done on the second Sunday of each month. The results are encouraging; not just to those visited but also those visiting. “The harvest truly is plentiful, but the labourers are few. Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into His harvest” (Matt 9:37-38). Let us continue to uphold this service in prayer, and if the Lord calls us, let us answer Him!

Finally, may we constantly seek to follow the Lord closely and hearken to His call: “Go home to your friends, and tell them what great things the Lord has done for you, and how He has had compassion on you” (Mark 5:19).

Truth Column

Witnessing

“For you will be His witness to all men of what you have seen and heard”; “And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent the Son as Saviour of the world” (Acts 22:15; 1 John 4:14).

To witness is to go and tell men what we have seen and what we know. We need not say what we do not know or be lengthy; we just need to be simple and concise. Once we have believed in the Lord, we can testify of Him.

Before His ascension, the Lord Jesus Himself commissioned His disciples: “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you” (Matt 28:18-20). The apostle Paul said, “Now this I do for the gospel’s sake, that I may be partaker of it with you” (1 Cor 9:23). Sinners are blinded to God’s eternal purpose, enslaved by sin and unaware of how tragic their end will be. If we testify of the Lord fervently, more can see the meaning of life and partake of the gospel with us.



The significance of witnessing

The Lord Jesus said, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” (John 3:3) The significance of witnessing lies in ushering men into God’s holy kingdom of light. Men have sinned and left the true God, but He overlooked the times of ignorance and now commands all men everywhere to repent (Acts 17:30). We testify to lead men to repent, turn to the true God, be reconciled with Him and be saved from perdition: “But you are a chosen generation, a royal

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Youth Camp – 20-21 November 2016

The overnight camp at the meeting hall was organized to help the Primary Six students get acquainted with the older youths. It was also an opportunity for the youths to come together to bond through games and hymn-singing. Altogether, 33 youths (including nine Primary Six children) and 15 serving ones participated in this camp.



A time to enjoy the Lord together!

The camp started on Sunday afternoon and ended on Monday afternoon. The youths were put into groups to help the younger ones mix with the older ones. Besides ice-breaker games, the youths had an enjoyable time barbecuing, shooting short videos together, and playing “Bubble Bump” (an indoor football game in which each of the players put on a large plastic bubble). Of course, we also had a wonderful time together worshipping God through prayers and hymns.

Thank the Lord that the youths could spend some time together and got to know one another better. May all of them be joined and knit together in love as they grow up in the church life!



And a time to enjoy a game of Bubble Bump together!

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priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvellous light”; “The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance” (1 Pet 2:9; 2 Pet 3:9).

Whom we witness to

Let us look at some examples from the Bible: “Go home to your friends, and tell them what great things the Lord has done for you, and how He has had compassion on you”; “He [Andrew] first found his own brother Simon, and said to him, ‘We have found the Messiah’ (which is translated, the Christ). And he brought him to Jesus”; “Philip found Nathanael and said to him, ‘We have found Him of whom Moses in the law, and also the prophets, wrote—Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph’ ” (Mark 5:19; John 1:41-42, 45). Therefore we should also testify of Jesus to our families, relatives, friends, colleagues, neighbours etc.

What we should witness of

The Bible records that the apostles testified so: “We ... preach to you that you should turn from these useless things

to the living God, who made the heaven, the earth, the sea, and all things that are in them”; “And daily in the temple, and in every house, they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ”; “Immediately he preached the Christ in the synagogues, that He is the Son of God”; “This Jesus God has raised up” (Acts 14:15; 5:42; 9:20; 2:32).

The main content of our testimony is the true God who created the universe, and His Son Jesus Christ whom He sent to the earth to save the world. To redeem and save men from eternal judgement and perdition, the Lord Jesus shed His blood, died and has been resurrected. There is no salvation in any other, and all who believe in Him will not perish but have eternal life (Acts 4:12; John 3:15).

Conclusion

We have met Jesus, believed in and accepted Him as our Saviour. Since we have received salvation from sins, God’s forgiveness and peace, we must bear witness of our wonderful Saviour. Do not feel ashamed. Paul said, “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation” (Rom 1:16). We can invite our gospel friends home, as Cornelius did (Acts 10:24), or to the church’s gospel meetings. Please pray immediately, light up the fire of the gospel and testify to them so that they also may partake of the gospel. Amen!

Church Service Retreat #1

- 4-7 December 2016

The theme of the inaugural Church Service Retreat was "Our Service for His Kingdom". The goal was to encourage fellowship amongst saints from various service groups, namely, audio, adult, bread-breaking, children, elderly, gospel, usher, visiting, youth and young people, and others. The programme for the participants comprised group-based activities, presentations, and also a time for personal spiritual reflection. The three main focus areas were: (i) Personal; (ii) Service Group; and (iii) The Church.

The first focus area on 'Personal' allowed participants to spend time to reflect on their Christian journey. This was achieved through completing a 120-question survey for a personalised assessment, after which participants were encouraged to share their personal thoughts. This enabled group members to appreciate the challenges their peers were facing in their secular lives, and helped us to know how we could pray for and support one another.

For the second focus area on 'Service Group', participants went through biblical passages related to church service, such as "Jesus washing His disciples' feet" and "The Good Samaritan", and answered a list of guiding questions. These passages showed how the Lord Himself set the example of serving others. The parable of the Good Samaritan further emphasised loving our neighbour, a spiritual prerequisite when serving others. Every group was given the opportunity to present what they had learned and enjoyed from the passages. In fact, the presentations served as an opportunity for our talented saints to showcase their creativity through various presentation styles from drawings to choral speaking and even skits! Another activity was for group members to pen down words of encouragement for their fellow co-workers. It was indeed truly reaffirming!

For the last focus area on 'The Church', participants got to hear encouraging testimonies from two elderly saints on how the Lord had faithfully kept them in their service throughout these years. In closing, many felt the need to re-consecrate ourselves to the Lord and to the service that He had put us in. Many saints gave feedback that they thoroughly enjoyed and gained much from the retreat. Thank the Lord that our spiritual gifts and labours in our respective service areas are collectively used for the building of the church and to bring many to God's kingdom. In short, where there is love, there is unity! Let's look forward to the next Church Service Retreat in December 2017!



Bonding through a time of fun and games.

This was the first time we attended the church conference. Quite beyond our expectations, it turned out to be an eye-opening, exhilarating and rejuvenating experience for us. Through the activities and interactions, we got to know some saints better (we usually did not have the chance to do so due to our family and work commitments). Also, the testimonies of some of the saints, especially on their love and longsuffering, encouraged us. Indeed, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity (Ps 133:1)! Praise the Lord!

Bro James Lim & Sis Alice Phua

I was blessed to be with the saints in the service retreat and experienced how good and pleasant it was for brethren to dwell together in unity. The workshops and activities were useful in identifying my strengths and areas in my service and walk with the Lord that needed improvement. The best part was the bonding with the saints. I got to know many of them much better through the fellowship. May the Lord bless the church! May we shine for Jesus with our love for Him and for one another!

Sis Mildred Coyuco

This was my very first retreat and I enjoyed it greatly. I learnt a lot from the sharing by the brothers and sisters. As we bond together as a family through games and activities, I am thankful to the Lord for His church and for His salvation. Most importantly, I feel that after this retreat, I now have a closer personal relationship with God.

Sis Michelle Kee



A skit on the parable of the Good Samaritan.

Adelaide A. Pollard (1862-1934)

“But now, O LORD, You are our Father; We are the clay, and You our potter; And all we are the work of Your hand.” (Isa 64:8)



“It really doesn’t matter what You do with us. Lord, just have Your way with our lives ...” This simple expression, prayed by an elderly woman at a prayer meeting one night, was the source of inspiration that prompted the writing of this popular consecration hymn, in 1902. From that time to the present, it has been an influential hymn in aiding individuals to examine and submit their lives to the lordship of Christ.

The author of this hymn text, Adelaide Addison Pollard, was herself experiencing a “distress of soul” during this time. It appears that it was a period in her life when she had been unsuccessful in raising funds to make a desired trip to Africa for missionary service. In this state of discouragement, she attended a little prayer meeting one night and was greatly impressed with the prayer of an elderly woman, who omitted the usual requests for blessings and things, and simply petitioned God for an understanding of His will in life. Upon returning home that evening, Pollard meditated further on the story of the potter, found in Jeremiah 18:3-4: “Then I went down to the potter’s house, and there he was, making something at the wheel. And the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hand of the potter; so he made it again into another vessel, as it seemed good to the potter to make.” Before retiring that evening, Pollard completed the writing of all four stanzas of this hymn as it is sung today.

Pollard was known as a remarkable, saintly woman but one who lived the life of a mystic. She was born on November 27, 1862, at Bloomfield, Iowa. She was named Sarah by her parents, but because of her later dislike for this name, she adopted the name, Adelaide. After an early training in elocution and physical culture, she moved to Chicago, Illinois, during the 1880’s and taught in several girls’ schools. During this time, she became rather well-

known as an itinerant Bible teacher. Later, she became involved in the evangelistic ministry of Alexander Dowie, assisting him in his healing services. She, herself, claimed to have been healed of diabetes in this manner. Still later, she became involved in the ministry of another evangelist named Sanford, who was emphasizing the imminent return of Christ. Pollard desired to travel and minister in Africa, but when these plans failed to materialise, she spent several years teaching at the Missionary Training School at Nyack-on-the-Hudson. She finally got to Africa for a short time, just prior to World War I and then spent most of the war years in Scotland. Following the war, she returned to America and continued to minister throughout New England, even though by now she was very frail and in poor health.

Pollard wrote a number of other hymn texts throughout her life, although no one knows exactly how many, since she never wanted any recognition for her accomplishments. Most of her writings were signed simply AAP. “Have Thine Own Way, Lord!” is her only hymn still in use today.

Have Thine own way, Lord,
Have Thine own way;
Thou art the Potter,
I am the clay.
Mould me and make me
After Thy will,
While I am waiting,
Yielded and still.

Have Thine own way, Lord,
Have Thine own way;
Search me and try me,
Master, today.
Whiter than snow, Lord,
Wash me just now,
As in Thy presence
Humbly I bow.

Have Thine own way, Lord,
Have Thine own way;
Wounded and weary,
Help me, I pray.
Power, all power,
Surely is Thine,
Touch me and heal me,
Saviour divine.

Have Thine own way, Lord,
Have Thine own way;
Hold o’er my being
Absolute sway.
Fill with Thy Spirit
Till all shall see
Christ only, always,
Living in me.

(Extracted from www.womenofchristianity.com)

The Lord Jesus Has Not Forsaken Me

Thank the Lord, I got to know this Saviour because my mother was a Christian who testified to me how she believed in the Lord and got saved. When I was one, she fell seriously ill. One day, a colleague told her about Jesus and she accepted Him as her Saviour in sweet simplicity. She read the Lord's Word diligently, but my father tried very hard to hinder her. However, she did not give up her faith out of fear, for she knew whom she had believed and was certain He was the true God who gave eternal life.

Praise the Lord, as my father was a sailor who was seldom at home, his objections were futile and my mother could continue trusting in the Lord. This should be the Lord's arrangement and blessing! Because she loved the Lord and was under His care, I was also blessed and grew up under His care and grace, for which I am really thankful!

When I became a working mother, my life got very hectic. Gradually I put aside the Lord and His will, and my spiritual life weakened. Although I still attended Sunday meetings with my husband and three children, my attitude was lukewarm. Oh, I had really fallen short of the Lord's great love!

The beginning of 2008 marked the turning point of my physical and spiritual lives. I discovered a lump on the left side of my neck, but as it was neither painful nor itchy, I dismissed it. However, when it did not subside even after half a year, I got anxious and went to see a doctor. He urged me to go for a detailed check by a specialist at the National University Hospital urgently. After the specialist had extracted some blood from the lump for examination, he inspected my throat and found that my tonsils were swollen. Upon his advice, I had them removed urgently a week later, in end July. The surgery was a success and I was discharged within a day.

The examination of my tonsils showed third stage cancer cells. I was very shocked by this news. Though I seemed to accept the fact calmly, deep within I was really fearful, worried and shaken. At this moment, the Lord's words came to me: "Daughter, in whatever situations, I will be with you and preserve you." I was comforted and peace descended upon my heart immediately. The doctor said I must go through radio-therapy and chemotherapy to inhibit the spread or recurrence of the cancer cells. So beginning from August, I underwent a total of 43 radio-therapy and seven chemotherapy sessions.

During the treatment, my body was really weak. I had neither strength nor appetite, and it was difficult even to speak. My flesh was sorely tried and tormented, but my heart was filled with the Lord's words. He comforted me, upheld me by His hands, strengthened me and let me experience His presence in my innermost being. With the support of my family and the prayers of brothers and sisters in the church, I successfully finished the whole treatment

in two months. Thank the Lord, at the check-up a week later, the doctor said I had made good progress, only needed to pay attention to my diet and go for regular check-ups in future. The Lord has had mercy on me, restored my health gradually and brought me into the ninth year of recovery, testimony to His great love and unfailing faithfulness.

"If we are faithless, He remains faithful; He cannot deny Himself." (2 Tim 2:13) Although I had been faithless and irreverent, the Lord did not forsake or forget me. He still loves me, upholds me by His hands, heals me and delivers me from sickness into health. Hallelujah! I am really grateful, and I give glory to our Lord Jesus Christ and Father God from the bottom of my heart! Amen!

Sis Lui M.W.



Announcements & Prayer Items

Gospel Meeting

Date : 9 Aug & 25 Dec 2017
 Time : 10.30am
 Venue : Meeting Hall

Date : 2 Sep, 7 Oct, 4 Nov & 2 Dec 2017
 Time : 7.30pm
 Venue : Meeting Hall

Church Service Retreat

Date : 3-6 Dec 2017
 Venue : Kings Green Hotel
 28, Jalan Tun Perak
 75300 Melaka, Malaysia