

church

THE CHURCH IN SINGAPORE



times

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From The Elders' Room...



How time has flown! It has been three months since we last wrote from the Elders' Room and much has happened.

We have seen the Lord's blessings on us, individually and corporately as the church. We have seen from Paul's Epistle to the Philippians what a joy we can experience when we are in Him. Paul could joy in his suffering, joy in his serving, joy in his believing and joy in his giving. By his living always in the presence of the Lord he can say, "I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content" and as such "can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" (Phil 4:11, 13). We can learn from Paul as we too can determine and endeavour to live each day in the Lord's presence. Assuredly, we can, for "my (our) God shall supply all your (our) need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus" (v 19).

It is indeed wonderful that following Philippians we are now pursuing Paul's Epistle to the Colossians. In it we read of Paul's joy for the saints in Colosse "since we (he) heard of your (their) faith in Christ Jesus and of your (their) love for all the saints; because of the hope which is laid up for you (them) in heaven" (1:4-5). It is with this same care and concern for them that he wrote to them warning them of the influence of the Colossian Heresy, which emphasized special knowledge and denying Christ as God and Saviour. Despite the fact that he had never visited Colosse at all, he could love and care for all of them.

These days there are many things that will distract us from God. The most recent fad of Pokemon Go has taken the world by storm. Many, and this includes Christians, have been so attracted and addicted to it that they forget what is happening around them. In fact, one can say that some Pokemon Go players have been so focused on the game that they have become a danger both to themselves and to others. If only we as Christians are as focused on Christ and living His life in us!

Then there was the euphoria of one Joseph Schooling's

winning Singapore's first Olympic gold medal. Many, especially his parents, shared his joy. He could achieve what he did because he was focused on his objective – not just to participate in the Olympics but to win an Olympic gold medal. He set his target and he pursued it with all his heart from around six years old. What perseverance!

We can learn from these two incidents the virtue of being focused and being single-minded. If in secular pursuits one can be focused and single-minded, we, as Christians, should and need to be so much the more in our following of Christ.

From Paul we can learn to keep our focus always on Christ, the Head and the Preeminent One, and not be distracted by other doctrines. In these last days many will come and tell of the revelations they have received; thus leading many astray. We have heard of the preaching of the gospel of prosperity: how by believing on the Lord we will prosper financially. We have heard of messages of ultimate reconciliation when even Satan will be saved at the end of the ages. We have even heard that there are those who teach the correct way of praising and worshipping the Lord to the exclusion of all others. May the Lord give us the spirit of wisdom and discernment and to heed His warning through Paul: "Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ" (Col 2:8).

To be able to do this, we need to commit ourselves to Him by submitting fully to His will. At the same time, we need to seek to learn of Him and from Him. By speaking to Him, we keep in constant contact with Him; and in reading His Word, we allow Him to reveal to us His will and purpose for us.

The past months have also been months of much activity for us all. We had the Children's Camp from June 8 to 10. The theme for the camp was "Run the Race". The children were encouraged that they all need to run this

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race to gain the prize – Christ. Praise the Lord for the hard work put in by the serving ones which saw many children attending the camp. They enjoyed themselves thoroughly while God's Word was planted into them.

The month of June also saw the youths and young people having a camp in Le Grandeur Palm Resort in Johor from the 15th to the 18th. The theme of the four-day camp was "The Christian Hope". The campers were reminded that as Christians, we have such a blessed hope, the hope of Christ's return. Many were encouraged to recommit themselves to the Lord and prepare for His return.

As a natural sequence to these two camps, the serving ones will be having a Service Retreat from December 4 to 7 at the Le Grandeur Palm Resort, Johor. We are looking to the Lord to remind us Whom we are serving and why we are serving. At the same time, we want to use this time to exhort, encourage and strengthen each other as we serve Him in our different capacities or roles. Those who would like to serve and have not done so are strongly encouraged to attend the

retreat. The fellowship with the present serving ones will be richly rewarding. In the process, we are sure they will realize their calling and be willing to step forward to serve.

We have our regular gospel meetings on the first Saturday of each month. This is indicated in the church table calendar. There will also be a gospel meeting at 10.30am on Monday, December 26, which is a public holiday. Do remember the gospel meetings in your prayers. May the Lord bless the preaching of His gospel of salvation and bring many unsaved relatives and friends to Himself!

For the Lord's Day meetings we are pursuing the Epistle of Colossians now and Philemon after that. May the Lord grant us much revelation and wisdom as we fellowship on His Word and may we be strengthened by His Word to walk in the way that will count in His eyes!

Finally, may we "be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding", that we may "walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God" (Col 1:9-10)!

Truth Column

Consecration

Generally, people associate consecration with the offering of money and possessions, e.g. tithes and funds for various purposes. Consecration certainly includes such offerings, but God first accepts a man's consecration of himself before accepting the offering of his possessions. "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service." (Rom 12:1) Presenting one's body means consecrating one's whole being to serve God. One who has received the Lord's grace, mercy, salvation and love cannot but consecrate one's all to Him. Consecration is the basic experience of serving God.

The bases, meaning & purpose of consecration

Love is a basis of consecration. "Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her" (Eph 5:25). He loved us so much that He sacrificed His life for us. When we are touched by His love, we cannot but willingly consecrate ourselves to serve and follow Him. "For the love of Christ compels us, because we judge thus: that if One died for all, then all died; and He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again." (2 Cor 5:14-15) "Compels" can also be translated "constrains tightly". In the past we lived for ourselves, now we are saved, constrained by His love, have a change in our lives and consecrate ourselves to live for Him who died for us and rose again.

Another basis is the Lord's legitimate right. He has purchased us, not with gold and silver, but with His own blood (Acts 20:28). He has paid a high price, given His life, shed His blood on the cross and redeemed us with His guiltless blood. We are no longer our own, we belong to Him; we no longer have the right, He has the right. His redemption work shows not only His love for us but also His right over us. Consecration is based on transcendent love and legitimate right, so we must consecrate ourselves to Him.

Consecration means a change in sovereign right: "Or do you not know that ... you are not your own? For you were

bought at a price" (1 Cor 6:19-20). The Lord Jesus has bought us at a high price, He is our Master with the sovereign right. We were our own masters, but now we must acknowledge and accept His sovereign right, and submit to Him as our Master in everything.

The purpose of consecration is to serve God, to be ready to wait on Him. It is not about offering things to God but being acceptable to Him, for it is He who lets us serve Him. Not everyone can consecrate himself, only he who is saved and belongs to the Lord can consecrate himself to serve God.

The life, practice and attitude of consecration

Consecration is an attitude of letting God be Master over all details of our lives. It is not a one-off action but a way of living for life: "doing the will of God from the heart, with good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men"; "for if we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord"; "you serve the Lord Christ" (Eph 6:6-7; Rom 14:8; Col 3:24).

How do we live for the Lord practically? "A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his master" (Matt 10:24). We are His disciples and servants, He is our Teacher and Master. He has set the example and we must follow. For the Father's will, He overcame the enemy, the world and all human ties, e.g. He said, "Why did you seek Me? Did you not know that I must be about My Father's business?"; "Who is My mother and who are My brothers?"; "For whoever does the will of My Father in heaven is My brother and sister and mother" (Luke 2:49; Matt 12:48, 50). His words seemed harsh, but actually He honoured and lived for God.

The Lord Jesus also declared, "He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me"; "For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it" (Matt 10:37-38; 16:25). This is the true meaning of a life of consecration. May the Lord grant us grace to learn to consecrate ourselves and live for Him! When we live a life of consecration and serving God, naturally we will offer Him our money and time, and our service will proceed from partial and general consecration to full and specific consecration. Amen!

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Elderly's Outing – 11 May 2016

The outing started with prayers and singing of this beautiful and touching song:

Lord, give me a heart to live for You;
Forsake all things in the world,
Think no more,
Give me strength that I fall not,
To finish the last few miles;
Whenever and wherever,
Keep me, oh Lord!

After breakfast had been served in the hall, the 95 participants set off to Sentosa for the S.E.A. Aquarium, a first visit for most of us. As it was not a public holiday, there were not many visitors, so moving about was a breeze.

First we watched a 3D movie about typhoons. The awesome power of the elements reminded us of God's coming judgement and the shaking of heaven and earth. Praise God that only His kingdom is unshakeable and is forever (Heb 12:28; Matt 6:13)!

Then we saw all kinds of marine creatures, from tiny jellyfish to huge sharks and stingrays, many of which we could not even name. How awe-inspiring that Adam could name all the animals brought to him (Gen 2:19-20)! After almost three hours enjoying the wonder of God's creation, we returned to the hall for lunch. Everyone was filled with joy. Thank the Lord for His wondrous leading!

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Paul said, "For if I do this willingly, I have a reward; but if against my will, I have been entrusted with a stewardship"; "So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver" (1 Cor 9:17; 2 Cor 9:7). He also commended the churches of Macedonia: "that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded in the riches of their liberality. For I bear witness that according to their ability, yes, and beyond their ability, they were freely willing" (2 Cor 8:2-3). Hence we must learn to practise consecration cheerfully. Only such an attitude is an acceptable sacrifice to God.

Conclusion

In the church, let's learn to consecrate ourselves cheerfully by presenting our bodies, money and time, and progress from partial and general consecration to full and specific consecration. May God be glorified in the church through Christ and the consecration of the brothers and sisters!

Children's Camp – 8-10 June 2016

Praise the Lord for the camp where over 150 children aged five to 12 years and serving ones had a wonderful time together! The theme was "I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus" (Phil 3:14). The burden was to show the children that in our Christian race, God's team is the winning team and that disciplined training, with help from God's word, the Holy Spirit and fellow believers, is required. It is important that we "run freely" without encumbrances by confessing our sins and seeking God's forgiveness.

The message "Running with Jesus" was delivered through a lively combination of praise and worship, Bible stories, skits, games, art and craft and several mini sport competitions. The gospel was preached on the first day to welcome the children to Jesus' team. We praise the Lord that many were receptive and willing to join Jesus' team and follow Him.

The story of Elijah encouraged the children that God understands and strengthens His people whenever they are exhausted and feel like giving up. Daniel and his three friends served as a good example of those who, despite danger, held on unswervingly to their hope, stood firm in their faith and eventually received the crown of life from God. On the last day, the children impressed their parents with their recitation of Bible verses and hymn-singing.

We give heartfelt thanks to saints who prayed for the camp. We also give thanks and glory to the Lord for blessing us abundantly. We pray that the children will be proud and confident of being children of God. May the Lord continue to strengthen them as they run this heavenly race, and bless them with obedient and loving hearts towards Him! Let's all persevere in this race till the day He comes!

"Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God." (Heb12:1-2)



Let's press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God!

Youth & Young People's Conference

– 15-18 June 2016

“This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which enters the Presence behind the veil” (Heb 6:19).

Thank the Lord, about 80 saints attended the conference which had the theme “The Christian Hope”. The brothers shared about the certainty of our blessed hope and living it out practically by bearing fruits and doing good works as we prepare for the Lord's second coming.

Sharing

Our hope is ETERNAL, Certain and Incorruptible. Since our hope cannot be seen, it is eternal (Rom 8:24-25; 2 Cor 4:18). All things visible are temporary and uncertain, but things invisible are eternal, certain and incorruptible, for God is our Guarantor (Eph 1:13-14).

Christ has assured us He will come quickly and everyone will see Him in a personal, visible and physical manner (Rev 22:20; 1:7). 2 Peter 3:9 says, “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.”

“Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.” (Luke 12:40). Knowing this, we must be patient in holiness and godliness, and not forsake the assembling of ourselves together (James 5:7; Heb 10:25). Since our Lord will come at an unexpected time, we need to encourage one another constantly and do His will to hasten His return (2 Pet 3:12).

Although Christ will come at an unexpected time, He has given us six signs of His return: the great tribulation; false christs and prophets with signs and wonders deceiving the elect; the anti-Christ; the saving of Israel; signs from the heavens; and most importantly, the preaching of the gospel in all the world (Matt 24:5-30; Rom 11:26). From Jerusalem, the gospel has spread to Europe, America, Australia, Africa and Asia. Very soon, it will be preached throughout all nations. Then our Lord will return, hallelujah!

But do we TREASURE THIS HOPE? Or have we LOST OUR HOPE? Have we been deceived by this world that Christ will delay His coming again? Colossians 1: 3-10 urge us to hold fast to this hope and build up our faith and love so we can walk worthily, be fruitful in every good work and increase in the knowledge of God.

Our heart is the root of our problems: a hardened heart that the word of God cannot enter to bear fruit; a heart that cannot endure hardship; a heart that loves the world (Matt 13:18-23; 2 Tim 2:3-12; 4:10). Only a heart with good ground can



May we treasure and live out our hope of glory!

be fruitful. We need to hear and do God's word (James 1:22). We should arm ourselves with the mind to suffer hardship and not despise God's salvation, like Esau who despised his birthright and lost the blessing (1 Pet 4:1; Heb 12:16-17).

We should not be deceived, for there is no other way to inherit the blessings and hope of God except by faith, as shown by our forefathers (Heb 11:2). No one who retreats from walking in faith because of friendship or hardship in the world will enter the kingdom of God.

Since we have a living hope inspiring us to press on to the goal to gain the prize, let us be fruitful in good works, for we are God's workmanship created for good works (1 Pet 1:3; John 15:1-8; Eph 2:10)! Let's march forward and renew our faith and hope with these steps:

1. Repent of our sins that cause us to lose hope;
2. Appreciate who and what we are in Christ;
3. Be excited about God's plan for us;
4. Establish a personal walk with God;
5. Be a person after God's own heart;
6. Do God's will in our daily life.

The Lord has given us everything we need to do His will and live a fruitful life. Only be strong and courageous to choose His way, live out this living hope and eagerly wait for His appearing!

Bro Pang C.H.

Albert Benjamin Simpson (1843-1919)

Simpson was born to a very godly family. His father's strictness about daily Bible-reading and praying made him feel that religion was extremely tedious and wearisome. When he was 14, over-exertion and long-term stress took such a toll on his weak constitution that he was told to stop studying or risk death. Knowing he was not saved as yet and fearing he might die before he had had the chance to receive salvation, he dared not sleep and asked his father to pray for him. God's light shone on him through a book which he had read that said the first most important thing one should do was to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, without which all works, prayers, tears and resolutions would be in vain. And recalling John 6:37: "the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out", Simpson immediately knelt before the Lord Jesus, prayed and asked for forgiveness with a true heart. He received not only salvation but also healing. When he was 17, he was called by the Lord to serve and he started to preach.

Three key spiritual turns

The first turn in Simpson's life was being reconciled to God through the Lord Jesus at the age of 14. The Lord led him out of darkness, he accepted Him as his personal Saviour, the Holy Spirit entered him and he was born again. By 21, he was serving the Lord faithfully. His preaching of justification by faith was always full of anointing and power. But he did not know much about deeper spiritual experiences and soon faced daily struggles, a sense of failure and the lack of spiritual power in service (Rom 7). He knew about Isaiah 32:15: "Until the Spirit is poured upon us from on high, And the wilderness becomes a fruitful field, And the fruitful field is counted as a forest", but its reality was proving elusive. His fruitful field had died up abruptly, making him very lonely and afflicted.

The second turn was when Simpson sought the filling of the Holy Spirit and re-consecrated himself fully to the Lord in 1874. After his proclamation to lay aside everything, take up his cross and follow the Lord, the joy of the Holy Spirit filled him mightily. God accepted his consecration and let His life and glory dwell in this temple. He saw that sanctification and perfection was not by his own efforts; his holiness was the Christ in him. Then he wrote the hymn:



Once it was the blessing,
Now it is the Lord;
Once it was the feeling,
Now it is His Word;
Once His gift I wanted,
Now, the Giver own;
Once I sought for healing,
Now Himself alone.

In 1881, Simpson experienced the third turn when the Lord brought him into the blessed fullness of Christ, into that rest for the people of God (Heb 4:9). At a meeting in Chicago, a brother testified that he had originally hoped to get Moody's help but he saw the Lord Jesus Himself. Henceforth he would need no other than Jesus and urged all to go to Him. These words touched Simpson deeply. He took a train home, shut his door, knelt and waited before the Lord until He filled his heart. Thank God, he was filled with joy, peace and satisfaction because he had seen Jesus, his All in all.

Jesus only is our message

The Lord gave Simpson Matthew 17:8 for his first sermon in Louisville: "When they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no one but Jesus only." He told the congregation he did not want to be an apostle bringing them new revelations or explanations of new doctrines; when our eyes saw no one but Jesus only, we would see new revelations of the fullness of the gospel. Then he penned this marvellous hymn:

Jesus only is our message,
Jesus all our theme shall be;
We will lift up Jesus ever,
Jesus only will we see.

Jesus only, Jesus ever,
Jesus all in all we sing,
Saviour, Sanctifier, and Healer,
Glorious Lord and coming King.

Simpson had been plagued by various illnesses, but in the light of the Bible, he realised and experienced healing and full salvation by the Saviour of his spirit, soul and body. His health improved greatly and he was able to labour tirelessly for 35 years, to the marvel of many. Indeed,

*Jesus only is our Healer,
All our sicknesses He bare,
And His risen life and fullness,
All His members still may share.*

(Reference: "The Hymnists and Their Hymns (Volume 1)" by Newman Sze, Testimony Publications; Hymns 475 & 159 in *Selected Hymns & Songs.*)

(I) The Lord Jesus Is My Salvation

When I was young, my parents worshipped idols and my elders told me Christianity was a foreign religion that did not acknowledge our ancestors. So from young, I greatly resisted Christianity and had no interest in the Lord Jesus Christ at all.

I was happily married with a daughter and two sons until I contracted a strange illness (now I know it is obsessive compulsive disorder, but not 33 years ago). I kept washing my hands and feet, and would even wake up in the middle of the night to do so! Moreover, I kept doing the same housework even after I had done it many times. This illness made me very unstable emotionally. I often punished my children for minor matters, and my daughter (who has passed away in an accident) especially bore the brunt of my anger. I was so miserably tormented that I felt afflicted, fearful and helpless!

One day, as I passed by my neighbour's door, I saw that their idols had been removed. Then I learned that the whole family had believed in the Lord Jesus. At that moment I thought, "A huge disaster will surely befall this family for abandoning their faith." But after some time, nothing untoward happened to them. They had Bible-study meetings in their home every Wednesday. Occasionally when I passed by, they would invite me to join them, but I would always give excuses to reject them.

To relieve my frustrations, I played mah-jong frequently. One day, my mah-jong partners were busy, so I had no choice but to return home. As I passed by my neighbour's house, I got curious and asked, "What are you doing?" They gladly invited me into their home. The moment I stepped in, a very pleasant feeling of warmth which I had never had before flowed into my heart. From deep within, I sensed that this feeling was just what I needed. I did not know then, but now, after believing in the Lord, I know it was the peace of God. When I got home I told my son, "Mommy wants to believe in Jesus." He replied right away, "Me too, me too!"

On that Sunday, we went to a church meeting with our neighbours and we accepted Jesus as our Saviour. Thank the Lord, on that same day, a pastor came to our house to remove our idols. At first my husband strongly opposed our conversion, but when he saw that we had the Lord's peace and joy and that I had been healed of my illness, he too believed in the Lord Jesus the following year. Oh, I am so full of thanks and praises for the Lord, all glory be to Him!

Sis Naomi Tong

(II) The Lord's Love Is Unfailing

I come from a comfortably-off family. When I was young, I liked to gaze at the sky and wonder how high it was and where man came from, but I was never able to get any

answers. When we moved to a house near a cathedral, the chimes on Sundays piqued my curiosity, so I went there secretly. By and by I came to look forward to their meetings. But when my mother found out about it, I was forced to stop.

When we moved again, my thirst for the truth was not quenched. I still wanted to know more about Jesus, but I kept it from my mother. A classmate later recommended me a Christian meeting place and I went a few times, but eventually stopped. I said to myself then, "If the Lord Jesus is real, may He manifest Himself to me!" At that time I recalled how, when we were young, our teacher would tell the class to hide under a table should an earthquake strike. As I had never experienced one before, a thought suddenly crossed my mind: "If the Lord would let me experience an earthquake, I would believe in Him."

As if in answer to my wish, an earthquake did actually come to pass not too long after. Our house shook and the door bolt fell off. My father yelled, "It's an earthquake!" We rushed to the ground floor for safety. This incident was etched in my heart as it confirmed to me the existence of God.

After some time, I went for an outing with some classmates. We passed by the church's meeting hall and heard people singing, so we went in to join them. Seeing their joyful faces and hearing their testimonies about the Lord Jesus gave me a deeper understanding of Him. I learned that He was the Saviour and Redeemer. But I was still undecided about receiving Him as my Saviour.

One night, I saw myself in a place that was pitch dark. I felt frightened and instinctively cried out, "Oh Lord Jesus, save me!" Suddenly there was a bright light, and a mighty hand stretched forth to pull me out of the darkness. I awoke and realised it was a dream. The dream opened my eyes and affirmed to me that Jesus was indeed the Saviour and Redeemer. Straightaway I believed in Him. Thank the Lord, He did not forsake me but has accepted me. Amen!

Sis Wong K.C.



Announcements & Prayer Items

Gospel Meeting

Date : 5 Nov & 3 Dec 2016
Time : 7.30pm

Date : 26 Dec 2016
Time : 10.30am

Venue : Meeting Hall

Service Retreat

Date : 4-7 Dec 2016
Venue : Le Grandeur Palm Resort, Johor