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SALTSHAKER



TRINITY
Methodist Church

MICA (P) 257/07/2007



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Will You Pray Together?

By Rev Bernard Chao

Many years ago, while serving as a Boys' Brigade officer, I felt the need to rally my fellow officers to pray together. The grand total of officers present - out of the full strength of about 10 officers and helpers - at the first prayer meeting? Two. At the second meeting, that attendance was halved. One solitary soul - yours truly.

Over the years, as I minister to both youth and adults alike, I have been reminded time and again that for many Christians, prayer is something they recognise as important - if not critical - to their lives, but they usually also admit in the same breath that it is something they do little of.

How is your prayer life?

As a young teenager, I was greatly inspired and nurtured by Andrew Murray's book, *The Believer's Prayer Life*. In the first chapter addressing the sin of prayerlessness, he poses a question:

"A minister's business is to train believers for a life of prayer. How can a leader do this if he himself understands little about the art of conversing with God and of receiving from the Holy Spirit each day from heaven abundant grace for himself and for his work? A minister cannot lead a congregation higher than he is himself. He cannot with enthusiasm point out a way or explain a work in which he himself neither walks nor lives."

Do you know the "art of conversing with God"?

Murray's question has become a daily reminder and challenge especially in the last seven years of my life.

His question is a challenge to all Christians, and not just to Christian ministers. If we accept our partnership in ministry as the "royal priesthood" (1 Peter 2:9), then each of us shares in the business of training new believers in the life of prayer. It presupposes that we know and live a life of prayer ourselves.

If we are truly the people of God, we are a people who have been restored into relationship with God. Prayer is the ongoing expression of our relationship with God.

Prayer is much more than a spoken word, a verbal request. It is walking with Jesus, step by step. It is trusting Jesus moment by moment. It is listening to the Father's voice, heartbeat by heartbeat. It is submitting to the Spirit, breath by breath. It is acting in obedience, day by day. It is loving people, one by one.

The one who prays speaks of God in this way:-

"He lets me rest in green meadows; he leads me beside peaceful streams. He renews my strength. He guides me along right paths, bringing honor to his name. . . . I will not be afraid, for you are close beside me." (Psalm 23:2-4,

On 3 February 2008, the Sunday prior to Lunar New Year, TMC's Chinese Ministry (CM) held a Chinese calligraphy session after the Mandarin service to draw fellow brothers and sisters in Christ into a closer fellowship. It was an opportune time for all the members participating in the programme to soak in the festive mood and get to know one another better.

While the younger generation enjoyed themselves with their raw, earnest and sometimes irreverent attempts at dabbling in Chinese calligraphy, some among the older generation, on the other hand, revealed "hidden talent". When the masterpieces were finally pinned up and displayed on stands, one could see who the true experts were!

Much laughter was heard as comments were made on the various pieces of calligraphy. In all, it was simply a good time for the members of the ministry to grow in friendship while revelling in the Lunar New Year spirit.



fullness of Him who fills everything in every way" (Ephesians 1:23) and that we must be "built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ."

Do we want the world to see Christ presented in all His glory, in all His fullness? We must then be the people who desire unity in the faith, who hunger to attain the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

Beginning from April this year, the pastors have started and have been leading a church prayer meeting on the first and third Wednesdays of each month called The Connection. We invite the family of the faithful here at TMC to join us as we enter a season of repentance, renewal and revival.

Will you pray TOGETHER?

The Connection

Every 1st & 3rd Wednesday of the month
 • 8pm-9:30pm • TMC Sanctuary

Come and pray together as a church as we learn to wait upon the Lord, to seek and watch Him, to pursue His purpose and plans for us, to let Him transform us, our families, our church, and our community.
 Come and pray. Together.

New Living Translation)
The life of prayer ought not to be alien to the people called Christians. It is our birthright as those born again in Jesus.

Christians, by definition, pray.

I know that many of us genuinely want to pray. But we struggle. You do not need to struggle alone.

It is easier to pray with others.

It is easier to learn about prayer with others.

It is easier to learn how to pray when we pray with others.

Throughout the book of Acts, we are told that the early church "joined together constantly in prayer" (Acts 1:14), and that God empowered the church mightily with His Spirit and boldness when "they raised their voices together in prayer to God" (Acts 4:24-31).

Throughout the history of the people of God, God has done amazing things when His people pray together. He unites them. He strengthens them. He heals them. He speaks to them. He reveals to them. He inspires them. He loves them. He emboldens them. He acts powerfully through them.

It is the picture of the church in unity – in spirit and in body; there is something powerful when the followers of Christ join in prayer to the living God and are of one heart and mind. The fullness of Christ will burst forth!

That is why Paul teaches us that the church is the body of Christ, "the

HOLY WEEK

By Eugenia Koh

"The other gods were strong; but Thou wast weak;
They rode, but Thou didst stumble to a throne;
But to our wounds only God's wounds can speak,
And not a god has wounds but Thou alone"

Edward Shillito

Yet another Good Friday and Easter has come and gone, and yet another week of Holy Week services.

As a people of God, we were reminded once again of the cross, and what it truly means for us as Christians. Indeed, the cross has lost much of its morbidity, and has become too much of a fashion symbol. Be it "bling" diamond crosses that match our outfits or beautifully-crafted crosses on top of churches, the cross is no longer a jarring object, one that creates discomfort and uneasiness, one that is a symbol of death.

It was therefore an apt message by our Assistant Pastor Rev Bernard Chao on Good Friday, on how the cross is not a fashion symbol. Indeed, while Christ had beckoned us into His embrace when he hung on the cross, it is also a reminder for us to go forth. The cross should always be a reminder of the death of Christ, stand as a symbol of God's forgiveness, love and grace, and a command for us to likewise forgive and love. While it can definitely adorn our outfits, we must not forget the reason we carry this cross around. May it be more than an accessory, and instead a reminder for us to extend God's love especially in the tough and trying situations we may encounter.

This message of us living as true Christians, as recipients of grace and hence instruments of the same grace and love rang through the Holy Week services. While many may feel inadequate to be instruments for God, Rev Dr Daniel Koh encouraged the congregation to shake off those inadequacies. In his Maundy Thursday sermon titled "Cocky Claim, Shaky Rock", Rev Koh illustrated how despite the fact that each of us are imperfect like Peter - as impatient, as prideful and as boastful - God will embrace and can use us as His instruments if we are willing.

And as we celebrated on Easter Sunday the resurrection of Christ, we remember once again the victory that we have as Christians. Too often we find ourselves trapped in the routines of life, and live each day without seeking to make a difference. Yet Easter reminds us afresh of the victory we have in a risen Christ, and how we as Christians should rightfully lay claim to the abundant life, to living with vibrancy and joy, to living out God's purpose and call.

And what is God's fundamental purpose for us? It is first to "come and see", to taste of His goodness and His reality, and subsequently to "go and tell". The Easter message as delivered by Bishop Dr Robert Solomon

challenged us afresh to taste and experience God's goodness and reality, and then to step out to pay attention to those who have yet to know our dear God, and to share His goodness.

Aptly, we also celebrated with joyous hearts the baptism of some of our brothers and sisters in Christ including David Tan, Grace Lee, Ang Swee Ning, Mah Shuo and Graeme Greenaway. The baptism service was simple, yet wonderful and heartwarming, as we welcomed into the family of God our brothers and sisters!

Indeed, just as yet another Good Friday and Easter has past, let us sit back and reflect on whether we have met with Christ, and how we can continue to journey with Him with the same excitement as when we had first met Him. Have we been transformed by His love and grace? Are we living out the abundance that we can experience in Him? Let us not grow cold towards the message of the cross, but instead meditate on the all-familiar yet deeply convicting message of the cross. It is my prayer that as we have celebrated yet another Easter Sunday, we have not remained the same, but continue to be changed by the power of the cross and the resurrection.



THIS IS MY STORY, THIS IS MY SONG

BY NOELLE YONG

What do you get when you gather a group of youths, fresh out of school after their 'O' or 'A' Levels, for two whole months?

Different stories of how God has made an impact in their lives.

This year, seven youths from TMC embarked on this Journey of Faith - TRACKers.

Initiated by the TRAC Board of Youth Ministries in 2007, TRACKers, held in January to February each year, is a programme catering specifically to youths aged 16-23. Youths who have a longer holiday after completing their 'O' or 'A' Levels (or National Service) and are seeking to deepen their relationship with God are encouraged to participate.

The first phase of the programme comprises lecture or workshop sessions about fundamental issues such as salvation, discipleship, prayer and intercession, inductive Bible study skills and the Lordship of Christ among others. The second phase is that of equipping the youths and culminates in a mission trip. Skills and lessons learnt from before are put into practical use when the teams plan for and embark on their respective missions.

Each TRACKer has his/her own story to tell; Saltshaker takes a look at the seven from TMC.

INTAJ INDIA

TRACKers was a time for me to learn more about God and His character... During the mission trip, I learnt that God can use us to be a blessing to others - no matter how small or weak we are. Each small action done in love can be a blessing that is much appreciated by others. It was also wonderful to see God's hand working in a different country. I came to know a God-fearing man who inspired me not to be afraid of death and to be a living testimony.

Jared Koh



BANGALORE



Through TRACKers, I have truly grown in my walk with God. I have learnt what it means to be blessed and to be a blessing to others. I was able to step out of my comfort zone to do things that I had never felt comfortable doing before. These included leading devotion and going on a mission trip. I have experienced the joy of giving and I have realised that there are other means of blessing others beyond just the material. We can even do so by merely spending time with them! I have learnt to love those whom I would on other occasions not make the effort to love and to accept them for who they are because they are God's creation and He loves every one of them. Just as God loved us, we should love others in the same way.

Guo Xiaorong



BAM AID CO.



CAMBODIA PHNOM PENH

The highlight of TRACKers would definitely be the mission trip. It was through the mission trip that I grew spiritually and emotionally. There were many ups and downs during the trip that put the team's and the individual's faith to the test. The one thing that really struck me was how the missionaries in Cambodia actually gave up their lives and the comforts of their own home countries, laying it all at God's feet to join the mission field in Cambodia. It came as a mega encouragement to me as I was struggling with spiritual dryness during that period. I felt that God could never be that real in my life. While interacting with them and hearing their testimonies of how God was working in their lives and the lives of the Cambodians, I suddenly realised how much God wanted to be a part of my life and for me to surrender to His will. Indeed, the Lord could be as real to me as He was to these missionaries. He opened my eyes to see that these missionaries were once youths - just like me. Yet because they desired the Lord, He drew close to them thus changing their lives so drastically.

Christabel Reena David

THAIPOSTLES



THAILAND CHIANG MAI

Through the mission trip, I saw how God works in ways we cannot see.

God managed to touch one man's life and he was saved during the revival meeting which was led by Jolyn, a fellow TRACKer. I felt that it was very amazing because God does not just work through Pastors or very strong Christian adults. He can also work through youths who have not had a lot of experience in preaching.

The healing session was the first

time that I prayed so fervently with much zeal and faith. I applied what I learnt from the devotion in which I shared that we should not always try to impress man but what is most important is our faith in God. As long as we have this in mind, God will definitely work in and through us. The whole TRACKers experience has indeed been a life-changing one and I have no regrets joining this programme. To God be the glory!

Dionne Hoe



SIEM REAP

I am a young believer who did not know much about God. I do not come from a Christian family and have never attended Sunday school. I felt unsure of calling myself a Christian because I only started attending church regularly in 2006 and have very little knowledge of the Bible. I joined TRACKers because I wanted to build my foundation in Christ. The lessons taught by various pastors were extremely enlightening and I learnt many truths about God through the Bible.

During the mission trip, God taught me how to discern His voice from my own and taught me the importance of prayer. I know that God is listening to every single word I pray – even those that I mumble! Prayer is our most powerful weapon, not our last resort. Use it. Many times, I found myself unsure of the visions I saw during intercession but during the mission trip to Phuket, many of them came true and it made me grow to trust God more.

Where do I go from here? My life belongs to God and I will go wherever He leads. I know that my life is in His hands and even through trials he is moulding me to fulfill the greater purpose He has for me. I have faith that He only has plans to prosper me and not to harm me. I would like to share the love of God with the people I meet just as how God first loved us. I would like to thank the church for their support in our fundraising efforts and prayers. They meant a lot to us. Joining TRACKers was the best way to spend my time after the 'A' levels.

Magdalena Koh



PHANG NA

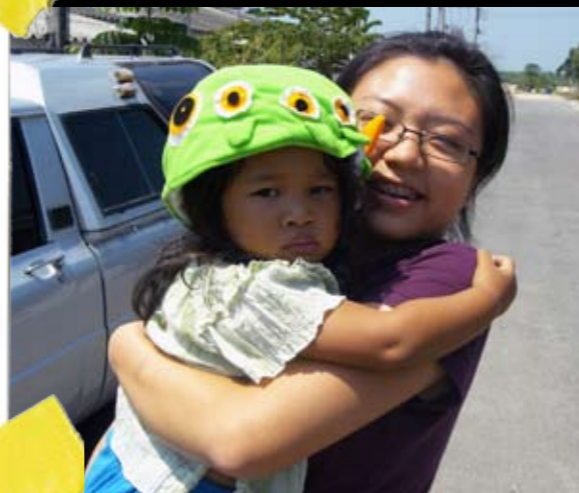
THAILAND

SIP SOONG

These two months in TRACKers has been an exciting journey – a journey of faith, a journey of discovery and a journey of learning. It has deepened my relationship with my Heavenly Father. I have encountered Him in a very deep and personal way. TRACKers has not only equipped me with the word of God but has also taught me the importance of prayer.

What impacted me the most during this entire course is that God really speaks! I admit that despite being a Christian for so many years, I had never truly experienced God speaking to me - He probably did but I just wasn't listening. TRACKers taught me how to listen to God's voice. Many times in the past, when I prayed, I did not humble myself before Him to seek His direction for my life. I struggled with hearing His voice. My prayer life was dry and I realised that I was not growing and maturing in Christ. But praise be to God, through our intercession sessions, God was so real and spoke so powerfully to me. He gave me visions for the mission trip. If you were to ask the whole of Sip Soong (my team), I'm sure everyone would attest to how powerfully God spoke to us.

Celestine Wee



TRACKers has been a journey of faith that has taught me many things about God and about myself. I learnt how important it is to have faith in everything I do. In Hebrews 11:1, we read that "Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see."

During the mission trip, our plans had to be tweaked countless times as many things did not go as planned. Through this, God revealed to me how important it was to put all my trust in the plans He has for me. I've come to understand the importance of having faith in all that we do; nothing is too difficult with God by our side. These two months of TRACKers has strengthened my faith as a Christian. I have seen how God answers prayers and works in His own amazing ways! It was truly a period where I opened my eyes to God's awesome power in my life.

Samantha Yong



PASTOR BERNARD



By Cheryl Sim

IN HIS OWN WORDS

The Rev Bernard Chao joined TMC from Aldersgate Methodist Church as Assistant Pastor in January 2008. Saltshaker interviewed him as well as his wife, Ai Jin, to find out more about Pastor Bernard and his family:

Saltshaker (SS): Hi Pastor, could you tell us briefly how you were called into the pastoral ministry, and what you were doing before you became a pastor?

Pastor Bernard (PB): I was a litigation lawyer for some five years before I entered full-time Christian ministry. In 2000, I was praying and thinking about the future and seeking the Lord about what direction I should take in my life and career – uppermost in my mind was how to progress in my legal profession and how to grow my involvement in church ministry or community work through the Boys' Brigade (where I was an active BB Captain) or through other forms of public service.

On 17 June 2000, I penned in my journal a cry to God, "Lord, you have placed me in many positions of influence but where indeed is your focus and direction? ... Where will you lead?"

Shortly thereafter, on 22 July 2000, at the Young Methodist Leaders' Conference, God spoke deep into my heart and told me simply that I was secretly "frightened of service" and that He was calling me to serve Him full-time. In the subsequent months, this initial call was affirmed in prayer, through church leaders and my pastors and confirmed as a specific call to preach His Word, and to enter the pastoral ministry.

SS: Having spent a few months here, how has TMC been similar to or different from Aldersgate Methodist Church so far?

PB: TMC is different from Aldersgate in that God makes all of us unique, but we are similar because we are one family in Christ. TMC has also been similar in its warm welcome to me and my family. We appreciate that.

SS: What is life like as a Pastor? And what is its greatest or most fulfilling aspect? What is the most challenging?

PB: It is fantastic! It is a wonderful thing to walk in obedience to God's call upon my life. It is a privilege when brothers and sisters

in Christ open their lives to allow me to minister with them. The most fulfilling thing is to walk, preach and act in faith. That is also the greatest challenge. Let's do that together!

SS: Lastly, what are your interests and hobbies?

PB: (I like) reading good books, movies, and running. I also love ogling at model aircraft and Gundam toys. I love kayaking, sailing and archery but have had little opportunity for them recently.

IN HER OWN WORDS

SS: Hi Ai Jin, welcome again to TMC! How has your family been settling in?

Ai Jin (AJ): Definitely very well. It didn't take Elijah and Emma very long to settle down and enjoy their Sunday school. Their caring teachers made a great difference!

SS: Tell us about Elijah and Emma!

AJ: Elijah is four years old, loves to smile and has many creative ideas in his drawings. Emma is two and she enjoys following what her brother does at the moment. Both love to dance and sing.

SS: When did you first meet Pastor Bernard?

AJ: Erhhh... I think it was 17 January 2000.

SS: What drew you to Pastor Bernard and how would you describe his personality?

AJ: I don't think it was his looks that drew me to him. He is Christ-centred, knowledgeable, genuine, has integrity, eloquent... I am most thankful because he is thoughtful and always willing to suit me.

SS: What is life like as a pastor's wife? What is the most fulfilling thing about it, and what is the most challenging?

AJ: It means I cannot afford not to keep up with my spiritual life. And I think that's also the most fulfilling thing.

SS: What are your interests and hobbies?

AJ: Oh, I used to do a lot of sports, but stopped when I was expecting Elijah. Running, racket games, canoeing... I love to read as well.

CD Reviews



D1062 Amy Grant / Greatest Hits

It's been 27 years since Amy Grant, the undisputed godmother of contemporary Christian pop, debuted on Word Records. From then until now, Amy has sold over 25 million albums, acquired 24 Dove Awards, 5 Grammys and paved the way for crossing over to mainstream radio. This 80-minute 'Greatest Hits' picks up where 1986's 'The Collection' left off, culling radio material from the 'Lead Me On', 'Heart In Motion', 'House of Love', 'Behind the Eyes' and 'Simple Things' albums (along with a few fun add-ons).



D1063 Experience His Presence

From some of today's best worship artists and songwriters comes a powerful selection of songs representing the best of a new generation of Hosanna! Music. Featuring Paul Baloche, Kari Jobe, Don Moen, Brian Doerksen, Ross Parsley and Jonathan Stockstill, 'Experience His Presence' will bring listeners into a place of deeper worship with God. From energetic praise songs like "Hosanna" and "My Saviour Lives" to worship anthems like "All the Earth" and "Revelation Song" to the stirring "Let The Church Rise" and intimate "Holy God", this album will become a worship favourite for years to come.



D1061 Steven Curtis Chapman / This Moment

This is Steven Curtis Chapman's 17th album. Although not unlike his past albums, after a 3-year absence from the Christian music industry, this new album is warmly received. Chapman typically writes out of themes straight from his life, and this applies to 'This Moment'. This is an album about enjoying the God-given time we're blessed with, a message set up in the opener "Miracle of the Moment," challenging us to let go of regrets and embrace the present. These blessings are then carried into other everyday examples, from motherhood ("One Heartbeat at a Time") and watching our children grow ("Cinderella") to God's continuous care ("You Are Being Loved") and sharing his love with others ("Something Crazy").



D1064 Michael W. Smith / The Best of Michael W. Smith

An impressive thread of praise and worship runs through the career of Michael W. Smith. So it comes as no surprise that the Provident Platinum series has decided to release this ten-track collection of hits including "Secret Ambition", "Give It Away", "Breakdown" and more.



D1065 Heart of Worship - The Passion

Inspired by the film 'The Passion Of The Christ', this Double CD features a collection of amazing worship songs which overflow with thankfulness for Christ's suffering and crucifixion.

CD Reviews



D1066 Steve Kuban / Pearl Of Great Price

This album is a compilation of the music that the Lord has given to Steve Kuban over the years, which God has used to touch the lives of many people world-wide. It includes his new song "Pearl Of Great Price" as well as 4 new songs for Steve's 'Jump For Jesus' album.



D1069 Graham Kendrick / Do Something Beautiful

Many only know Graham Kendrick as the guy who wrote the classic worship anthems "Shine Jesus Shine" and "Knowing You." That's enough to establish a gifted worship leader, but Kendrick's influence is far more extensive in his native UK, with more than 300 songs to his credit. Kendrick has a decidedly British worship sound, similar to Matt Redman and Tim Hughes, but with less modern rock verve. There are several duets in the album. He duets with Hughes for "Your Love, Your Mercy," and Darlene Zschech in "There is Hope So Sure", an Irish-influenced ballad. In contrast, "Make a Joyful Noise" has a joyous Latin flavor while "In You We Live" has a more Caribbean feel. There's also "The Twenty Ninth," an impressive spontaneous Scripture meditation sung straight from the pages of the Psalms, creating a beautiful worship atmosphere.



D1070 Kids' Praise Company / The Best of Kids' Praise Co.

The Kids' Praise! Company gang is back just in time for the latest fun filled praise and worship party under the Son! This 11 song compilation is power packed with some of the biggest praise songs ever, performed by kids for kids! Now every little worshipper can have a copy of their very own 'The Best of Kids Praise! Co!'



D1067 Steve Kuban / Come Holy Spirit

Join Canadian worship leader Steve Kuban in this electrifying live worship recording which focuses on the power and refreshing of God's Holy Spirit. Sing, dance, celebrate and worship with the congregation of Crossroads Cathedral, and you will be refreshed over and over again!



D1068 Kristy Starling / Kristy Starling

This debut release from Kristy Starling is a beautiful statement of faith and inspiration, featuring a mix of new songs and covers of Christian classics. Tracks include "Broken", "Must Have Been Angels", "Something More", and many others.



BEYOND THE LUCK FACTOR

By Dr Fu Dunyi

THE LUCK FACTOR

In his research study on the “luck factor”, Professor Richard Wiseman, University of Hertfordshire, set out to examine why some people are always luckier than others. His research eventually revealed that lucky people are more relaxed and open, and therefore see what is there rather than just what they are looking for. In the process, lucky people are able to generate good luck via four principles - they are skilled at creating and noticing chance opportunities, make lucky decisions by listening to their intuition, create self-fulfilling prophecies through positive expectations, and adopt a resilient attitude that transforms bad luck into good.

These findings on the elusive “luck factor” have triggered me to reassert my long-held view that Christians are always the winners and the happiest people on earth whatever the circumstances. Imbued with the wisdom of biblical principles, Christians can transcend the elusive “luck factor” by living a resilient life with a higher sense of purpose beyond the mere routines of daily living (A Resilient Life, Gordon MacDonald).

TRANSCENDING THE LUCK FACTOR

Godly happiness and success in life come from obedience to the timeless Word of God. God told Joshua to remain faithful with His word, “Then you will be prosperous and successful ... for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go” (Joshua 1:6-9). True happiness is attained by obeying the biblical principles so faithfully that they become second nature.

The wonderful truth is that every Christian has the potential to enter into the joy and peace of God. This is because the Christian life is a supernatural life according to God’s way, not man’s ways. “All a man’s ways seem innocent to him, but motives are weighed by the Lord. Commit to the Lord whatever you do, and your plans will succeed” (Proverbs 16:2-3).

God speaks to us through the Bible which contains words of encouragement as well as words of warning. It is important to appreciate both in our walk with Christ. “Whoever gives heed to instruction prospers, and blessed is he

who trusts in the Lord” (Proverbs 16:20). Jesus said, “He who believes in me... out of his heart, will flow rivers of living water” (John 7: 38). The imagery of rivers of living water refers to the way in which God’s truth is communicated. Getting right with God opens the floodgates of God’s inexhaustible resources. God lavishes His resources on us “according to the riches of His grace” (Ephesians 1:7).

In the face of life’s challenges, it’s wise to remember that ultimately God always wins. And since His plans are always in the victory lane, it’s infinitely wise to listen to God’s promptings instead of pursuing our own agenda. King David knew that joy centred in the unchanging God, no matter the circumstances, was greater than any material gain: “You have filled my heart with greater joy than when their grain and new wine abound” (Psalm 4:7).

The following are exemplary biblical principles overflowing with the glorious riches of God that transcend human comprehension:

LISTEN TO GOD FOR GUIDANCE

To succeed in the race of life, we must put God at the centre of our lives and be thankful for what He has given us. It is in the state of solitude and silence of being connected with the Holy Spirit that we can listen patiently to His promptings.

“We have been created to be in a listening relationship to God. As we draw near to God, we begin to hear His voice and receive affirmation, encouragement, correction, and direction to our lives” (Disciplines of the Holy Spirit: How to Connect to the Spirit’s Power and Presence, S Y Tan & D Gregg). Jesus said, “I am the good shepherd.... My sheep listen to my voice, I know them, and they follow me” (John 10:14, 27). The Bible often refers to human beings as sheep. Like sheep, we are easily distracted and susceptible to group influence. We would rather follow the crowd than the wisdom of the good shepherd. Clearly, our challenge in life is to be able to listen to His voice and follow the direction of the good shepherd. Centuries earlier, King David knew the truth of Psalm 23:1: “The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not be in want”.

WE REAP WHAT WE SOW

Those who are selfish and think only of themselves are sowing seeds that will produce a harvest of misery in themselves and in others. On the other hand, those who love God and care for others are sowing seeds that in

time will yield a harvest of joy. “A man reaps what he sows. The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction; the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life” (Galatians 6:7-8).

Sinful choices create their own kind of unintended consequences. King David never fully recovered from the consequences of his sins of adultery and murder. They plagued him, his family and his kingdom till the end of his life and even beyond. Herein lies the profound lesson: We reap what we sow. However, it is noteworthy that it was during the darkest moment of his life that David atoned for his transgressions by writing a number of psalms known as the “penitential psalms” of which Psalm 51 is especially significant. David wrote, “Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions. Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin” (Ps. 51:1-2). By this psalm, David committed himself entirely to God who immediately forgave him and made him a man after God’s own heart.

WE “LIVE BY FAITH”

The apostle Paul reminds Christians that they “live by faith” (Galatians 3:11). This faith is “the gift of God” (Ephesians 2:8). Faith unlocks the door to the supernatural resources of God. When Christians by faith are filled with the Holy Spirit, He guides us (John 16:13), empowers us (Micah 3:8; Acts 1:8), sanctifies us (Romans 15:16; 2 Thessalonians 2:13), bears witness in our lives (Romans 8:16; Hebrews 10:15), comforts us (John 14: 16-26), gives us peace and joy (Romans 14:17), gives discernment (1 Corinthians 2:10-16 ;1 John 4:1-6), bears fruit in and through our lives (Galatians 5:22, 23), gives us spiritual gifts for the building up of the Body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:3-11), illuminates our minds with insights into the mind of Christ (1 Corinthians 2:12, 13; Ephesians 1:16, 17), reveals to us the hidden things of God (Isaiah 40:13, 14; 1 Corinthians 2:10, 13), gives us God’s marvellous love (Ephesians 3:17-19) and gives us peace of mind and heart (John:14:27).

GROWING IN THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

The growth and maturing of the fruit of the Spirit in the life of a Christian takes time, much like physical growth. “When the Holy Spirit controls our lives He will produce this kind of fruit in us: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law” (Galatians 5: 22, 23). Through the qualities of the fruit of the Spirit, a Christian can experience the joy of supernatural living by drawing on the inexhaustible, supernatural resources of God. “My God will meet all your needs according to His glorious riches in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:19). The fruit (result) of the Spirit denotes the many-sided character of righteous life of a godly Christian.

TRUST GOD, BE STILL, AND PRAY

Writing to the Christians in Philippi, the apostle Paul said, “Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:5-7). Psalm 37:7 says, “Be still before the Lord and wait patiently for Him.” Keep praying. In His time, God will answer. Jesus said, “If you believe, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer” (Matthew 21:22).

SOAR LIKE AN EAGLE

The prophet Isaiah referred to God’s people as eagles that would soar by riding on the wind of God to enjoy the experience of supernatural life empowered by the Holy Spirit (Isaiah 40:31). Clearly, every Christian is blessed with God-given capacity to develop the resilient spirit of an eagle to weather adversity by living in a God-pleasing way. “Delight yourself in the Lord and He will give you the desires of your heart.” (Psalm 37:4). In 1 Thessalonians 5:16, Christians are taught to “Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God’s will”.

LOVE NEVER FAILS

Mother Teresa said, “We cannot do great things on this earth; we can only do small things with great love.” Love is God’s greatest gift to us. Psychologists agree that man’s greatest need is to love and be loved. No barrier can withstand the mighty force of love. “Love never fails” (1 Cor 12:8). “Let us love one another, for love comes from God ... Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in him” (1 John 4:7, 16). The two greatest commandments are, “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength. The second is this: ‘Love your neighbour as yourself.’ There is no commandment greater than these” (Mark 12:29-31). Jesus links the two giving primacy to love for God with philanthropy, or love for man, flowing from it.

Our eternal destiny depends on our choice: God’s way or man’s ways. Let us converge with God’s way and choose God’s path of victory. Spurred by the wisdom of biblical principles with which God has blessed him, every Christian has the God-given capacity to soar like an eagle to experience the joy of supernatural living with a higher sense of purpose.



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FIVE LOAVES AND TWO FISH



TMC FUND RAISING DINNER
Orchard Hotel 1 August 2008

*Take my five loaves and two fishes
Do with it as you will
I surrender*

*Take my fears and inhibitions
All my burdens, my ambitions
You can use it all, to feed them all*

~ (lyrics by Corinne May)

*Matthew 14:20 tells us - "They all ate and were satisfied, and the disciples
picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over."*

All our gifts and talents, no matter how small they seem, can be multiplied
by God for the Glory of His Kingdom. Come join us in offering our five
loaves and two fish for the TMC Fundraising Dinner 2008, and experience
God's divine providence!

For more information, check out the Info Centre
or call the Church Office @ 6282 4443.



5+ 2 = 5,000 Remainder 12
C123, C456, BB, GB, CSL
1/8 = 60

Do these numbers and letters make any sense to you? No? Let me take you through them one by one.

5+ 2 = 5,000 Remainder 12

Many of us know the story. One day, a great multitude of people followed Jesus and his apostles into the desert. They consisted of the sick, the weary of heart, and the curious. They followed Jesus into the desert hoping for miracles or simply just to understand.

As night approached, there was no food for the people. But, Jesus blessed the five loaves and two fish belonging to a boy and asked God to do a miracle.

More than 5,000 people were fed.

Not only were the people fed, the apostles collected more than 12 baskets of leftovers.

Hence, 5+2 = 5,000 remainder 12.

That took place more than 2,000 years ago. What has that got to do with us?

Plenty.

God has given us a brand new church building. Much much more than 5 loaves and 2 fish. We stand at the threshold of His promise to TMC when we embark on the redevelopment of the church building.

FIVE LOAVES TWO FISH

TMC Fundraising Dinner

By TMC Fundraising Dinner Committee

We need to follow Jesus' example and ask God for a miracle. We need to ask God to use TMC to feed and touch the lives of those in our neighbourhood (5,000) and beyond (remainder 12).

C123, C456, BB, GB, CSL

You have heard numerous times, either from the pulpit or from TMC members, about Contact123 (C123). This is the IT Centre at Serangoon North, run by a team from TMC.

Have you heard of Contact 456 (C456)? This is a joint effort with two other churches to run an elder care centre that is in the planning stage.

We see the Boys' Brigade (BB) and Girls' Brigade (GB) led by some of our members on certain Sundays.

TMC members are also involved in the Prison Fellowship Ministry, teaching students from Chen Su Lan (CSL)

Methodist Children's Home, supporting missions in Cambodia and many other areas. The harvest is plentiful but the labourers are few.

1/8 = 60

However, we still carry the burden of the redevelopment efforts; we are still about \$4.4 million short. The other way of looking at it is that we have raised \$8 million. Hallelujah!

Many of us have given abundantly in faith. Thank God for each and every one of you. We trust God to provide the balance.

To help raise more funds, TMC will be holding a 60-table dinner at Orchard Hotel on 1 Aug 08.

Hence "1/80=60".

The Fundraising Dinner provides a platform for TMC to ask our friends, colleagues, business associates, and anyone outside TMC to contribute to our church redevelopment project.

The dinner is only a small part of His plans. He wants our hearts. He wants each and everyone in TMC to step forward to be involved in the various ministries to bring about the 5+2 = 5,000 remainder 12.

Come support the dinner by attending it, selling tickets, contributing towards the auction.

But more importantly, come forward and serve in the C123, C456, BB, GB, CSL and more!