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TRINITY
Methodist Church

MICA (P) 158/09/2010



What's So Merry About Christmas?
圣诞，快乐吗？



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Shaking Salt

What's So Merry About Christmas? 圣诞, 快乐吗?

Enraged, he sits back down to work on his proposal and finds himself too agitated to carry on. "What's the big deal about Christmas anyway? What's all the fuss about?" he growls. Just at that point, Vincent's phone began to ring. It's his son, Benjy.

An old lady

Her knees are giving her trouble again.

"Aiyah... so painful!" grunts old Auntie Loh. "I really ought to go and see that specialist," she mutters.

Painfully, she makes her way from her bedroom to the kitchen to make a cup of tea.

As she does so, she overhears her neighbour's children pester their mother. "I want a Captain America toy for Christmas!" cries the boy. "I want a Barbie doll!" screams the girl.

Auntie Loh shakes her head and sighs. "The children these days," she says to herself.

Every festive occasion now seems like open season for children to just clamour for more gifts and toys. For a moment, she wonders why people buy toys during Christmas.

Isn't Christmas about giving? She wonders but isn't sure as she isn't a Christian and no one has ever told her what Christmas is really about. As she sips her tea, she wonders what time her son Vincent is going to come home from work.

He works too hard, she thinks to herself.

A busy executive

Vincent is stressed. He has a very important presentation to win over a prospective new client. The new client is a multi-national company with plenty of funds for its marketing budget. Vincent desperately needs to get this contract or his advertising agency will face serious financial problems by the end of the year.

Outside his office, his staff members are decorating the office for Christmas. They are having a good time. Soon, their loud laughter begins to penetrate Vincent's anxious thoughts, and he feels rage slowly but surely rising in his belly. He stomps out of his office and shouts, "Keep the noise down! And get back to work!"

A young boy

Benjy almost shouts over the phone. "Dad, dad! I got a hundred marks for my Chinese test! What are you going to get me for Christmas? You promised..." he says.

Benjy worked really hard to make sure he aced the test. He can barely wait for Christmas. Benjy is a Gundam fan and hopes his father will remember that and get him a new Gundam robot set. He's over the moon. He loves Christmas. To him, the season's all about presents.

What's the big deal?

Is the only reason for Christmas to be a merry time because of presents? Really, what's the big deal about Christmas? Many people don't actually know.

If you are asking these questions yourself, come find out at our Advent and Christmas services.

Without someone to tell them, to share with them, to witness to them the reason for Christmas, the relevance of the Christmas message, the reality of Christ, how would they know?

If you already know the answer, look around. See if there is someone in your family, in your neighbourhood, in your office, in your life, who is asking. Invite and bring them to our Advent and Christmas services. (please turn to page 31)

Let's all discover the true meaning and real joy of Christmas this December!

一位老太太

"哎呀!...好痛!", 罗大妈疼得哎了出来。她的膝盖又给她的麻烦了, 心想: "我真的应该去看看专科医生... .."。她忍痛地从卧室走到厨房。正在泡茶时, 她听到邻居的孩子缠着他们的母亲, "这圣诞, 我要美国队长玩具! 我要芭比娃娃!"

罗大妈摇了摇头, 叹道: "现在的孩子... .." 如今每逢佳节假日似乎都成了孩子们大声疾呼要更多礼品、玩具的季节。片刻, 她想知道为什么人们在圣诞期间购买玩具。圣诞节不是关于给予吗? 因不是基督徒, 从来没人告诉她圣诞节真正的意义, 所以她不肯定。当喝着茶, 她不经好奇儿子, 家明今晚几点会回家。想着, 他的工作太辛苦了。

繁忙的行政人员

家明很有压力。他有个计划必须向他的新客户呈现, 赢得他们的心。这新客户是一个有大量资金用于其行销的跨国公司。家明迫切需要得到这个合同。如不, 他的广告代理公司将面临严重的财务问题。

他的办公室外, 员工们正为圣诞节兴高采烈地装饰着工作场所。不久, 他们的响亮笑声开始渗入家明焦虑的思维。怒火慢慢地由腹而生, 他跺着脚到办公室外, 喊道: "小声点! 回去工作!"

他愤怒地继续准备计划书, 但发现自己太激动而无法继续下去。"圣诞有什么大不了? 何必如此大做文章?", 他很生气地喃喃自语。这时, 家明的电话响起, 是他儿子, 小强。

一个小男孩

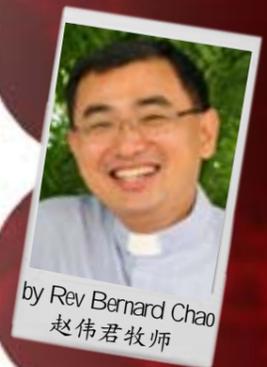
小强几乎吼进听筒, "爸爸, 爸爸! 我华文测验得了100分! 你会买什么给我做圣诞礼物? 你答应... .."。小强为了确保这次能得好成绩, 非常地用功。他迫不及待等到了圣诞! 小强是机动战士钢弹迷, 并希望父亲记得买套新的钢弹给他。他欣喜若狂。他喜欢圣诞节 - 这是个收礼物的时候!

有什么大不了?

礼物是圣诞唯一欢快的原因吗? 真的, 圣诞有什么大不了? 很多人实际上并不知道。如果你自己也提出这些问题, 来卫理公会三一堂的基督降临期和圣诞崇拜吧!

如没有人告诉他们, 与他们分享, 见证圣诞节真正原因, 圣诞信息的相关性, 基督的现实, 他们又怎么会知道呢?

如果你已经知道答案了, 看看四周, 是否你的家人、邻居、同事, 生活中, 有谁有疑问。邀请他们到我们这季节的崇拜。今年的12月, 让我们一起发现圣诞真正的喜悦与真谛!



by Rev Bernard Chao 赵伟君牧师

A Prayer for the Season of Advent



by Woon Wei Tuck

Almighty God,

This is certainly a time filled with anticipation, marked by smiles and excitement. And as we eagerly await and prepare for Your coming once again, we thank You for leading us beside still waters, and for restoring our souls.

We thank You for the very gift of faith that prompts our prayers, and for the living Christ whose presence in the world, and in our hearts, makes it all worthwhile.

While we might be filled with the joy of the season, for some it is a heartbreaking time of the year, with painful memories and not much promise. For others, it is a time of anxiety and dread brought about by stresses of poverty, alcohol, and relationships gone sour.

Some lie critically ill in hospital under the darkness of cancer, stroke or Alzheimer's disease, or threatened by illness, the cause of which they do not know.

Give them a full measure of Your presence, O God. Be especially close to those who cry to You in the gloom of despair, the immobile, the house-bound, and those facing a sad or lonely Christmas season with no family or few friends to celebrate with.

Fill us too with the strength and grace of Your presence. Let compassion and mercy prevail in the minds of all Your children, and restore human dignity to all who need Your tender touch.

Take Your love where we can't or won't reach, and be with those who help the sick, who care for them, who care for others – a care often unrewarded, a care beyond what is expected.

Let Your love so prevail in the life and ministry of our church (TMC) that each may count the other precious. Make this a place of grace. Place in our steps a lightness, a dance of hope, to carry us through another unfolding of time.

Finally, most gracious God, we pray the words of old. Peace on earth. Peace on earth. O God, bring it soon. Bring it to this world as it has never known it before – to each and every one of us, to our hearts and our homes.

In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.



从一个遭遇想起。。。。。

10月11日嘉韵的妈妈告诉我，嘉韵8号钢琴的成绩达不到水准，不过关。

当时我可以了解一个作母亲失望的心情，但更重要的是不能让孩子有受挫不振的痛苦感觉，因为很多时候失败是有原因的。所谓失败是成功之母，若能从失败中去探讨失败的因素，加以弥补和磨炼必定有成功的机会。

圣经也常常鼓励我们，箴言3: 5-6你要专心仰赖耶和华、不可倚靠自己的聪明。在你一切所行的事上、都要认定他、他必指引你的路。撒迦利亚4: 6他对我说、万军之耶和华说、不是倚靠势力、不是倚靠才能、乃是倚靠我的灵、方能成事。

许多时候我们作事都是靠自己的聪明、才干、地位权势，完全把神的话与圣灵的带领，当着是次要的。只是一味按着自己的计划拼命去做，等到遇见困难时才甘愿回到上帝的面前。其实耶和华向我们所怀的意念是赐平安的意念。不是降灾祸的意念（耶29: 11-13）

by Rebekah Goh
曾淑芬

问题是我们身为祂的子民，我们是否专心寻求祂呢？

当我们遇挫折或失败时，千万要小心，不要只看到自己的错或阻扰而忘记了我们创始成终的真神上帝。别让挫折、失败成为我们与上帝之间的拦阻，更不可让恶者有机可乘，使我们抱怒上帝。约伯所受的苦楚，他的遭遇除了上帝，没有人可以理解，也唯有上帝是他的依靠（哥前10: 13）你们所遇见的试探、无非是人所能受的、神是信实的、必不叫你们受试探过于所能受的。在受试探的时候、总要给你们开一条出路、叫你们能忍受得住。约伯记并非只是一本面对苦难的书而是从中让我们从患难中更认识上帝。清楚去看到神的信实公义与祂的真实。

保罗是神的忠仆，他所受的刑罚，所付出的都可以从他的书信中看到，就因为他的遭遇，他切实地经历了神的同在，他甚至在牢狱中还能写信勉励弟兄姐妹，身体被捆锁，心境却因明白神的心石，有神的同在而安逸自由（彼得前书）主耶稣道成肉身，神的儿子放弃了天上的荣位，他所走过世上的路是非常的坎坷；人子没有枕头的地方（路9: 58）拿撒勒人厌弃耶稣（可6: 1-6）祂是无罪却为世人背负了所有的罪，

以至于在申初被钉十字架时上帝离弃了祂（可5: 34）也许您会说祂是神的儿子，有超人的能力但不要忘记耶稣会伤心，会哭，也会痛是100%的人，所以我们没有任何的借口不学习祂的顺服与谦卑。

人生的路程或许不顺利，难以预测。2012年可能会比较不乐观，可别忘了我们有一位垂听祷告，愿意帮助我们，深爱着我们的全能上帝。

罗马书5章2-5节
我们又借着祂，因信得进入现在所站的这恩典中，并且欢欢喜喜盼望神的荣耀。不但如此，就是在患难中也是欢欢喜喜的；因为知道患难生忍耐，忍耐生老练，老练生盼望；盼望不至于羞耻。因为所赐给我们的圣灵将神的爱浇灌在我们心里。

从嘉韵这件事我们不仅学习到要勇敢去面对挫折，凡事先祷告，寻求上帝的带领，也知道谦卑地倚靠神，进一步地了解上帝的爱。她的心意，更加地认识上帝是那位满有怜悯慈爱的主。

嘉韵的母亲也明白了一个道理，培育孩子除了知识上的增长，生活物质上的供应，更重要的是把孩子带到神的宝座前。让他们伸手牵着主的手，一步步地走向神所为他们预备的目的地；用神的话来喂养每一个正在成长中属灵的生命。

弟兄姐妹，愿主耶稣的恩惠常与你们同在。靠着得胜的主，重重难关，重重过，且过得更丰盛。

靠着神一味着2012

Ushering In 2012 with the Lord

Jiayun had failed her grade 8 piano exams, her mother told me.

When I heard that, I understood her mother's disappointment. But regardless of how we as parents feel, it is important not to let a child suffer long-lasting feelings of defeat as a result of failure.

There are many reasons for failure. Episodes of failure are really building blocks for future successes. And success can come about if we can identify the reasons for our failures and remedy our weaknesses.

The Bible encourages us in Proverbs 3:5-6, which says: "Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight." Zechariah 4:6 says, "...Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit," says the LORD Almighty."

Often, we march ahead with our own cleverness, competence and status to achieve greatness, leaving God's Word and His Holy Spirit trailing in the wake. We bury our heads in our own plans and are content to raise our hands to the Lord only when we meet with difficulties. But God wants only peace for us, not suffering (Jeremiah 29:11). The crucial question is whether we will seek Him with all our heart.

When we meet with trials or failures, we should be careful not to be fixated on our mistakes lest we forget our Creator. Defeats and failures ought not to become obstacles that come between God and us. Neither should they be occasions for the evil one to capitalise on should we blame God for our predicaments. No one understood Job's sufferings but God on whom Job relied.

"No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to us all. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it (1 Cor 10:13). Job is not just book about suffering. It is a book through which we, in our own sufferings, learn to recognise God, His faithfulness, justice and truth.

Paul, a faithful servant of the Lord, suffered punishment. It is clear from his letters that he sacrificed much. What is even clearer is that his

sufferings led him to experience the presence of God such that he was able to write letters of encouragement to his fellow brothers and sisters in Christ. Although his body was in chains, his heart was free with the knowledge that God was with him. Paul understood the Lord's heart. "Foxes have holes and birds have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head." (Luke 9:58). The people of Nazareth took offence at Jesus. (Mark 6:1-6)

Perhaps you might say that Jesus was God's Son and had supernatural powers. But do not forget that Christ wept. He cried. He could feel pain. He was fully human. As such, we have no excuse not to learn from His attitude of submission and humility.

Our journey on earth may not be smooth-sailing and is unpredictable. The year 2012 may bring its own disasters. But our omnipotent and loving God listens to our prayers and is ever-willing to help us.

"Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we boast in the hope of the glory of God. Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us." (Romans 5:1-5)

From Jiayun's story, we can learn to face our failings with courage, and in humility to bring everything before the Lord in prayer. In so doing, we will increase our understanding of God's love and compassion.

I am pleased to say that Jiayun's mother also learned a lesson in nurturing her child. Besides providing material comforts for our children, what is even more important is to bring our children before the Lord and to encourage them to hold the Lord's hand as He leads them to the place He has prepared for them. We should feed every growing child with God's Word, to help him grow in the Spirit.

Brothers and sisters, may the Lord's grace be always with you. Lean on our victorious Lord, and through life's obstacles, discover the abundant life in Him.

Letters to God revealed



by
Justina Alexus Lee

I'm currently pursuing a Diploma in Nautical Studies with a mind to becoming a professional navigation officer in the future. Nautical studies is a specialized three-year programme, which covers subjects such as astronomy and sea navigation skills, including a year-long attachment at sea.

It wasn't easy getting admitted into this course. There were thousands of applications and only sixty applicants made it. I remember my interview with the school's lecturers and directors as being extremely nerve wrecking! Also, because the nautical industry is a male-dominated one, my choice of studies was also met with much disapproval.

As I write this, I am currently on a year-long attachment with a commercial ship. Although it has already been five months since I first embarked on this attachment, I remain continually amazed, humbled and grateful at how God has taken care me - and is still doing so - all this while.

When I first boarded the ship in May, I was both excited and afraid. As I was to be the only female cadet officer on board, there were also issues relating to my safety in the company of an entirely male crew. This attachment would also take me away from my family and my friends for at least six months at first, which is the longest time I have been away from them.

However, the Lord provided me with a fatherly figure in the form of the ship's chief officer and master, and the company of very friendly fellow crew members, who helped make my transition fairly comfortable. I was busy of course, as we were calling in five different ports in seven days. I was exposed to several types of duties, including painting, chipping the rust and cleaning the tanks. Although I barely had time to rest each day, my schedule was always fun and exciting.

Where can I go from Your spirit? Where can I flee from Your Presence? If I go up to the heavens You are there; if I make my bed in the depths, You are there. If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there your right hand will hold me fast.

Psalm 139:7-9

After my first “honeymoon” month, however, life changed drastically. There was a change of chief officer and master, and everyone’s lives took a turn for the worse. The new master proved to be a very bad-tempered and irrational man. He had very high expectations and made unreasonable demands of people. He would perpetually yell at me for being too slow in my work, disrupt my conversations with other crew members and threaten to lodge complaints against me for no reason.

I felt traumatised and utterly helpless. I pleaded with God to give me strength as I was so tired of facing this man every day. What about the next five months ahead? My crew members did their best to console me as they knew that I was facing much hardship. One of them, Bosun, would comfort me by preparing specially-cooked meals for me and taking me out to fish. Even that however, was short-lived, as the new master would intervene and prevent me from interacting with my friends.

It was truly a dark period for me. My days on board became lifeless as I was confined to my cabin after work, and was barred from speaking with my friends. I was extremely lonely. Being at sea also meant that I could not contact my family or friends for support. I kept praying for strength and wisdom to know how to handle my circumstances and for God to work a miracle, but I was growing more exhausted each day.

After a few weeks, the ship suddenly received news that there would be another change of chief officer and master. I was so overjoyed that I broke down in tears. God had heard my cries and had answered them. I was finally able to be free from my oppressor.

Right now, I am actually on board my second ship. Life is a lot less stressful and my new crew members are very friendly. God has sent another female crew member to be my companion. I am also blessed that this new ship will have the opportunity of going to dry-dock, which is a rare experience for trainee cadets.

Looking back at the last five months, I can’t help but give thanks to God. From the time of my admission to the Nautical Studies course, to the experience with the unreasonable ship master, to this new ship, God has been with me at every step. Even though I had at times neglected Him, He did not neglect me. He stuck by me. I understand now that God has planned this attachment experience for me, both the comfortable and harsh periods, to grow me and show me that He is faithful to me and that He is working in His time, even though I may not see it. All that I need to do is to trust in Him and to rely on Him.

Let’s Hear It Again

Nehemiah 4:1-23 - Facing Opposition

This is from a sermon preached by Timothy Yong on 3 July 2011, Youth Sunday.



by Timothy Yong

When was the last time you encountered opposition when you wanted to live for Christ or when you wanted to do something for Him? For example, have you ever been laughed at for using the Bible as an authoritative guide for daily living? Or have you ever been called a “Holy-Moley” for not scolding vulgarities and telling others to do the same?

Expect to be mocked as a Christian. It’s part of the enemy’s strategy! Sadly, many of us are unable to handle much mockery and criticism. We go “undercover” at the slightest opposition. We make such good “undercover” Christians that when close friends or colleagues discover that you are a Christian, they exclaim: “Huh, you Christian ah? I didn’t know leh!”

Chapter 4 of the book of Nehemiah describes Nehemiah and the Jews in the midst of rebuilding the wall of Jerusalem. They were seeking to please the Lord, and what they were doing was in accordance with God’s will for Israel. Yet, they were being mocked and criticised, and even had their lives threatened, for their rebuilding efforts. How did Nehemiah and the Jews cope with opposition?

1) Face opposition with prayer

Nehemiah’s first response to opposition was prayer. When Nehemiah prayed, he poured out his heart to the Lord. We need to go before God in full surrender about how we feel when we face opposition. In our vulnerability, God can use that opportunity to teach us to how to respond. Through his time with God, Nehemiah saw the obstacles and opposition as hurdles to be overcome in order to complete God’s work.

If we desire to have the mind of Christ, we will need to keep in close contact with God. The truth is that we would rather spend most of our time trying to figure out our own solutions to problems than to pray about them! When we do that, we will always make decisions based on what we think is best. That is human wisdom. What happens then is that we miss out on God’s wisdom and insight which He desires for everyone to have. In 1 Corinthians 2:10-16, Paul tells us that God has revealed true wisdom to us by His Spirit.

Oswald Chambers once said: “Prayer does not equip us for great works. Prayer is the greater work.” It is the way that the life of God in us is nourished. We often treat prayer simply as a means of getting things for ourselves, but the biblical purpose of prayer is that we may get to know God Himself.

2) Deal with discouragement

While Nehemiah prayed, the Jews did not stop rebuilding the wall. The Jews were making good progress in spite of the opposition! However, people started to hear how the enemy was planning to attack them. There was widespread discouragement and fear. The Jews experienced three types of loss: loss of physical strength, loss of vision and loss of security. How then did Nehemiah deal with the people’s discouragement?

(a) Unify your efforts

The people were initially scattered over Jerusalem as they built the wall. But Nehemiah grouped them together according to families and gave each one a common goal – to protect each other. He rallied the people towards the same goal.

I wonder how many of us are working against one another rather than giving the mutual support and encouragement that we all need. There are many things that keep us from working together as we should, but whatever they are they need to be resolved and worked through.

(b) Direct your attention to the Lord

In verse 14, Nehemiah said: "Don't be afraid of them. Remember the Lord, who is great and awesome." The phrase "Remember the Lord" sounds good, but how do we do it? We can begin by remembering what the Lord has said in His Word.

3) View opposition as opportunities for God to mould us

When we face obstacles and opposition, we tend to question God. We may even start to think God is punishing us for our sins. Romans 5:1-5 tells us that opposition and trials happen in our lives for a purpose.

Going through the trials of life does not automatically make us people with godly character. Obstacles and trials can reveal the shallowness of our character, but that in itself does not make us any better. What makes us better will always depend on how we choose to respond. If we choose to submit our will to Christ in difficult times, Christ will work in us and through us.

There was a group of women in a Bible study class who were studying the book of Malachi. As they were studying chapter three, they came across verse three which says: "He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver..." This verse puzzled the women and they wondered what this statement meant about the character and nature of God.

One of the women offered to find out about the process of refining silver and report her findings at their next meeting. That week, this woman called up a silversmith and made an appointment to watch him at work on the pretext of satisfying her curiosity about the process of refining silver.

As she watched the silversmith, he held a piece of silver over the fire and let it heat up. He explained that in refining silver, one needed to hold the silver in the middle of the fire where the flames were hottest so as to burn away all the impurities.

The woman thought about God holding us in such a hot spot. Then she thought again about the verse, that He sits as a refiner and purifier of silver.

She asked the silversmith if it was true that he had to sit there in front of the fire the whole time the silver was being refined. The man answered that yes, he not only had to sit there holding the silver, but he had to keep his eyes on the silver the entire time it was in the fire. If the silver was left even a moment too long in the flames, it would be destroyed.

The woman was silent for a moment. Then she asked the silversmith, how do you know when the silver is fully refined? He smiled at her and answered, "Oh, that's easy. When I see my image in it."

If today you are feeling the heat of the fire, remember that God has His eyes on you and will keep watching you until He sees His image in you.

"Father, we believe, that all trials are under your care and that all things work for the good of those who love You. Take away from us fear, anxiety and distress. Help us to face and endure our difficulties with faith, courage and wisdom. Grant that these trials may bring us closer to You, for You are our rock and refuge, our comfort and hope, our delight and joy. We trust in Your love and compassion. Blessed is Your name, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, now and forever. Amen."

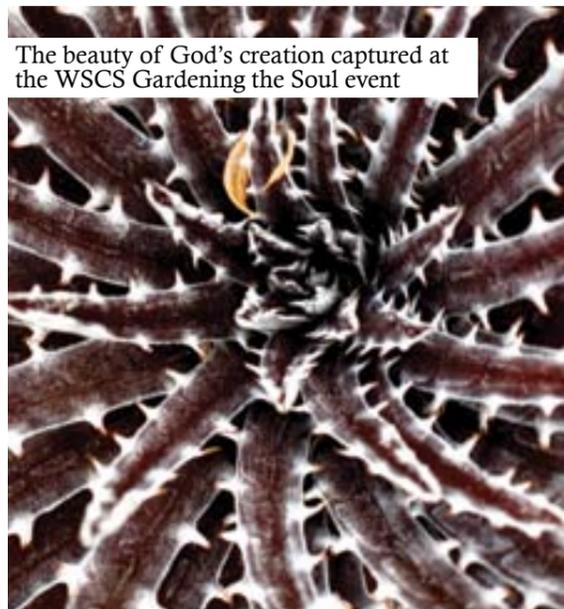


in & about
TMC oct/nov 2011

Dedication of leaders



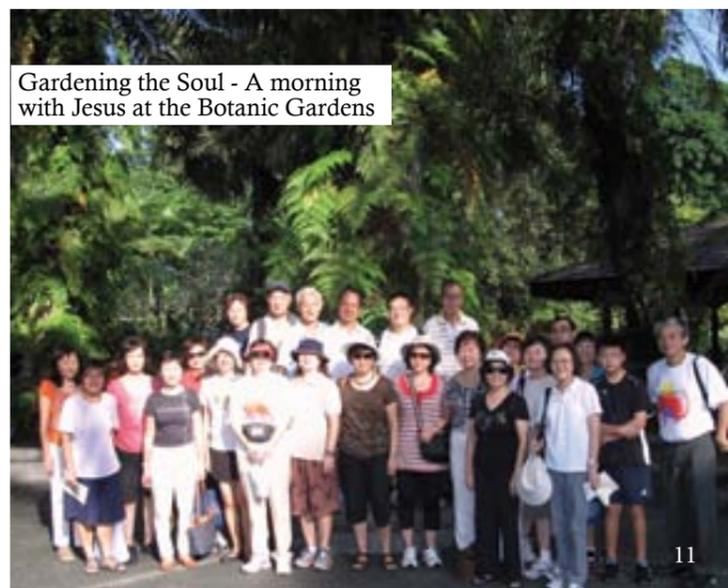
Treasure found - and all for a good cause!
WSCS As Good As New Sale for Missions



The beauty of God's creation captured at the WSCS Gardening the Soul event



Glowing Years Ministry visit to the Sun Yat Sen Nanyang Memorial Hall



Gardening the Soul - A morning with Jesus at the Botanic Gardens

In some of TMC's small groups, small group is about...



By Vinita Jayaram

connect with one another

connect with one another



preparing Holy Communion elements together



Bible study



Singing



Prayer and accountability



Outreach



Humour, encouragement, love and a healthy dose of emotional support

The term small group is definitely not new to many of us in TMC. However, the experience of being in a small group may still be a mystery to some. A Small Group is a community of believers who have committed themselves to meet regularly for these purposes: fellowship, discipleship, service and outreach.

The Small Group Ministry (SGM) coordinates and assists small groups in their formation and growth. As much as many think that small group is just about a group of believers in a circle doing bible study, those who are already in one know otherwise. The SGM website is a testimony of the plethora of activities and experiences that different small groups have. If you want to learn more about small group and what it means, visit the SGM website (<http://www.tmc.org.sg/smallgroup.html>) to find out more! Head to Overview to learn more about the purpose of small groups in TMC. Interested in joining a small group? Simply head to Directory. Click on the small group names to learn more about each small group. Maybe you'll find a suitable small group for yourself!

Answers to last issue's What's New on the TMC Website Quiz:

1. Lights, needy, underprivileged
2. Connect, community
3. Contact, volunteer
4. Befrienders, SLEC (St Luke's Eldercare Centre), Yumcha

Thinking about joining a small group?

Do contact Mr Lee Park Ming at parkming@tmc.org.sg. You may also make enquiries by calling the church office at 62824443.

A Warm



By EK Khoo

Seniors' Welcome

The Seniors' Small Group came about when Park Ming (Lay Executive Staff of TMC whose portfolio, among his other duties, includes Small Groups and Missions) spoke to me one day about starting a Small Group for the Seniors in our church. I was hesitant at first because it has been a long time since I last led a Small Group. One evening at dinner, after my return from a holiday at Fraser's Hill in Malaysia, Park Ming announced that he had scheduled the Seniors' Small Group to meet on 27 August 2010.

There are seven of us. The youngest is 63 years old and the oldest is 92. We meet at the Nathaniel Room, Level 3 of TMC fortnightly on Fridays from 10 am to 12 noon. Once in a while, we have a guest speaker and we learn new insights about the Word of God.

The gospel of John is our main focus. However, at times, we are caught up in our frank discussion and open sharing where references to other passages of the Bible are made to substantiate what are discussed or shared. The exchanges of personal experiences are God-centred and the Holy Spirit is always present to teach and guide us.

At the time of writing, a member of our Small Group is in Mongolia on a mission outreach. We await her return to share with us how God uses her in touching the lives of the Mongolians.

I, for one, am learning and blessed by the sincerity and openness of the group. I am sure everyone in the group is also blessed as we continue to seek His Face and His Will. Although we are small in number, we are a big family that praises God in all His glory. We celebrated our first anniversary on 26 August this year with a simple lunch.

May the good Lord continue to lead and guide us as we humble ourselves before Him and to learn more about our impeccable and incomparable God.

Praise The Lord.

If any Senior wishes to join us, please contact Linda, our co-ordinator, at 97382566, or Park Ming at the Church Office, Tel: 62824443.
More about small groups at TMC can be found at www.tmc.org.sg/smallgroup.html. Or contact Park Ming at Parkming@tmc.org.sg, Tel: 62824443

Just



Walk Across the Room

Just walk across the room.

You can't miss her because she has very colourful hair - fashionably-streaked and cropped short to complement a petite frame. Josephine Lim usually sits near the vending machine in the Plaza, at a table with a frilly tablecloth. Her friend, Doreen Chay, will be close by.

My first encounter with them one Sunday morning was heartwarming.

Josephine has stopped work by choice and currently enjoys an active lifestyle with yoga in the morning and volunteering in church. She also manages to fit in pipa lessons.

Doreen is equally active. She used to live and breathe the hotel trade, travelling extensively in a regional role in sales and marketing, until she was dealt a terrible blow. Her husband Jim met with an untimely death during the course of his work in Thailand. Life went into a tailspin. Doreen realised then that she needed to put back the pieces of her life. She quit her job in May this year to spend quality time with her daughter Celine, family members and friends, a decision that she has not regretted. With more time on her hands, she now pursues her interests in oil painting and photography. Equally rewarding is the firm friendship that she has forged with Josephine.

They met formally when their mutual neighbour Cynthia brought them together for the Alpha course.

Soon after, they started "church hopping" and at the same time, began an earnest search on the internet for the "right" church. Attracted by the timber structure of the building, they ventured into Trinity Methodist Church. Both Doreen and Josephine felt the warmth of TMC and fitted right into the 8.45am service.

During our short conversation, several members of the congregation came by to chat and took photographs of us with their smartphones. The camaraderie was infectious.

It was an eye-opener to experience what author Bill Hybels meant when he gave simple steps pointing people to have faith and to "Just Walk Across the Room".

What have you done today to engage with someone in church - a visitor or a neighbour?

How have you made time to hold someone's hand, to share a kind word, express concern, extend a welcome? Just walk across the room to engage someone and God will do the rest.

"Commit everything you do to the Lord. Trust Him and He will help you." Psalm 37: 5

By Rose Tan

Know TMC's

LOCAL CHURCH EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (LCEC) 2011-2012

The LCEC has many functions in the local church under the Discipline of the Methodist Church in Singapore, which governs our principles, practices and procedures. These functions include but are not limited to:

- having oversight of and responsibility for the administration, organisation and programme of the church;
- initiating and executing the planning process, establishing objectives, adopting goals and programme plans, authorising action, determining policy, providing ongoing and regular evaluation and review of the mission and ministries of the church;
- making proper and adequate provision for the financial needs of the church, etc.

Pray for TMC's LCEC officers to grow in Christ-likeness, and do think about how you could serve God with them in their respective ministries. Let us remember that we all serve the One who "emptied himself...and became obedient" (Philippians 2: 7- 8).

Patricia Yong
President, WSCS

Dianna Khoo
Pastor-in-Charge and Chairperson,
Nominations



If flowers are a girl's best friend, then these two ladies share a best friend. Dianna's favourite flower is the foxglove and Pat's is the rose. Won't they make an eye-catching arrangement together?

The **Women's Society of Christian Service (WSCS)** aims to help women grow in their knowledge and experience of God, as well as challenges them to respond to God's love in various forms of ministry.

The **Nominations Committee** nominates officers and members of the LCEC.

Victor Seah
Coordinator, Glowing Years
Ministry & Church Archivist

Rev Peter Goh
Pastor



Aperture, shutter speeds, exposure, composition, AI Servo may be unfamiliar jargon to many readers. They trip off the tongue of these avid shutterbugs. Get some pointers from Peter and Victor some time and you'll be improving on your snapshots in no time at all.

The **Glowing Years Ministry** encourages caring, sharing and mutual support among seniors so that all may grow in spiritual maturity together.

The **Church Archivist** keeps historical records up to date, preserves local church records and historical materials.

Terri Koh
Coordinator, Youth Ministry

Rev Bernard Chao
Pastor



When Bernard and Terri trade ideas on ministering to youths, you can be sure of an exciting debate. While Bernard has traded his advocate's robes for a pastoral role, Terri continues to argue cases in court while "pastor"-ing her young charges in Youth Ministry.

The **Youth Ministry's** vision is to see TMC youths grow into God-loving disciples who carry on the disciple-making process. The Youth Ministry meets for lessons and workshops as well as games and activities. They also join small groups for bible study and sharing.

Judy Yip
Honorary Steward

P Sathia
Honorary Steward



Stalwarts of TMC, Uncle Sathia and Auntie Judy as they are affectionately known, are familiar faces in and about TMC.

Honorary Stewards are members of the LCEC who have given faithful service and have reached the age of 70

VK Kengadharan
Chairperson, PPRSC &
Third Lay Delegate to TRAC

William Goh
LCEC Chairperson
& First Lay Delegate to TRAC

Albert Yeo
Lay Leader & Second Lay
Delegate to TRAC

Tan-Ang Poh Kit
Associate Lay Leader

Khor Tong Hong
Chairperson, Governance

They are a healthy trio who run together regularly. Good practice for these gents who have assumed new roles in the LCEC and have a marathon to run in leading the troops at TMC.

The **LCEC Chairperson** leads the LCEC in fulfilling its responsibilities.

The **Pastor-Parish Relations and Staff Committee** is not part of the LCEC. It looks after all matters with regard to the appointment of pastors and staff employed by TMC.



Lay Leader functions as the primary lay representative of the laity in the local church.

Lay Delegates to the Trinity Annual Conference (TRAC) report to the LCEC on the actions of TRAC, and together with the pastor, interpret the actions of TRAC.



Poh Kit and Tong Hong both love to sing, have musical families, and have taken the same Hippocratic oath. No prizes for guessing which profession they share then!

The **Church Governance Committee** ensures that the church complies with the requirements of the Code of Governance for Charities and Institutions of a Public Character issued by the Charity Council in 2007.

Lim Sue Yien
Recording Secretary

Tricia Tong
Coordinator,
Communications



Sue and Tricia have known each other since they were babes in their mothers' arms. From play-acting in self-spun kungfu and princess stories when young, to becoming travel buddies and housemates in adulthood, these two like nothing more than to have scones and tea.

The **Recording Secretary** keeps an accurate record of the LCEC and Local Conference meetings.

The **Communications Committee** advises and assists committees and organisations of the church with their communications, and helps to accomplish effective communications throughout the congregation and with external parties.

Kelvin Tan
LCEC Vice-Chairperson and
Chairperson, Missions

Gary Low
Chairperson, Property



Which dialect group typically likes or nee (yam paste), roast goose, and porridge with a variety of condiments? It's the Teochews of course, which Gary and Kelvin are proud to be associated with ... as well as with food of all types.

The **Missions Committee** seeks to raise awareness about how worshippers can be involved in, and recommends plans for world evangelization, adopting unreached people groups and other missions-related concerns.

The **Property Management Committee** manages, supervises, oversees, cares for, maintains and repairs all property of the church.

Ong Hon Yuh
Chairperson, Finance

Woon-Chew Kim Ling
Coordinator, Children's Ministry
& Chairperson, Kindergarten



Colleagues who work in the same bank, Hon Yuh and Kim find time to lunch with each other despite their busy schedules, to catch up on the goings-on in the bank as well as to exchange pointers on church ministry.

The **Finance Committee** organises and administers the financial resources of the local church.

The **Children's Ministry** aims to ground each child in the foundations of the Christian faith through Sunday classes for pre-school through to Primary 6 children.

The **Kindergarten's** aim is to nurture pre-schoolers in every aspect of their development by providing a stimulating, safe and happy learning environment with an emphasis on the Christian faith.

Paul Ng
Chairperson,
Outreach & Social Concerns

Richard Seng
Associate Lay Leader



Paul, who is now a retiree and a busy granddad, used to work with a tyre company. Richard, who is a long way from retiring, "burns" tyres - Oh yes, he loves cars but alas, he presently drives a "school bus".

The **Outreach & Social Concerns Committee** drives TMC's efforts to give attention to the social, financial, educational and spiritual needs of people in society such as needy families, underprivileged children and the mentally ill.

connect with one another

connect with one another

Keegan Ong
Coordinator,
Mandarin Ministry

Robert Yeo
Treasurer & Associate Lay Leader



They're the comeback kids. After a break from the LCEC, Robert and Keegan – both Hokkiens – are back to take up the positions which they left. As they say, there is no retirement from God's service.

The **Mandarin Service** is held at 11am in the Sanctuary on level 1. It encourages worshippers to bring their loved ones, relatives and friends who are Mandarin-speaking and wish to know more about Jesus Christ.

The **Church Treasurer** is responsible for maintaining the financial records of the church and making financial reports to each LCEC meeting.

Lee Hui Ling
Captain,
Girls' Brigade 55th Coy

Patricia Tan
Chairperson,
Worship & Music

Sim Cher Khee
Coordinator,
Prayer & Intercession

It is perhaps not surprising that the LCEC consists of these educators who teach in a local university, polytechnic and secondary school. Isn't it a nurturing attitude that motivates leaders into God's service as they seek to help other Christians grow in their discipleship?

The **Girls' Brigade 55th Company** is a joint effort between Serangoon Garden Secondary School, the Girls' Brigade and volunteers from TMC to teach and train girls into Christian womanhood.

The **Worship and Music Committee** assists and enables worshippers to understand the meaning, purposes and practices of worship.

The **Prayer & Intercession Ministry** rallies the church to pray for both corporate and individual needs.



Colin Yip
Coordinator, Small Groups

Lim Choo Siang
Captain,
Boys' Brigade 47th Coy



Despite his stern exterior, Choo Siang is a hit with the young men in the 47th Company of the Boys' Brigade. Ask Colin nicely and he might show you a photo of himself as a young boy in his boys' brigade uniform.

The **Small Group Committee** coordinates the small group programme and structure, and promotes small group ministry amongst all worshippers for spiritual growth and nourishment.

The **Boys' Brigade 47th Company** is a joint effort between Serangoon Garden Secondary School, the Boys' Brigade and volunteers from TMC to teach and train boys into Christian manhood.

Koh Shuwen
Coordinator, Hospitality

Caroline Lim
Chairperson,
Witness & Evangelism



People who work in statutory boards and in the civil service are (unfairly) known for their dull and straight-laced approach towards life. Not Shuwen and Caroline who are both such warm and friendly people that they suit their LCEC roles to a "T".

The **Hospitality Ministry** seeks to provide a welcoming engagement with first-time visitors to the church, and helps regular visitors integrate into our fellowship and ministries.

The **Witness & Evangelism Committee** works to make evangelism an ongoing priority ministry of TMC to win people to a profession or a renewal of faith in Jesus Christ.

Hum Sin Hoon
Chairperson,
Discipleship & Nurture

Woon Tai Keat
Assistant Treasurer



Wa Gong Ga. If you recognised this phrase, you're Hainanese like these two who can hold a decent conversation in this dialect. Contrary to popular belief, the Hainanese are famous not only for chicken rice. If you would like to know what else they're renowned for, get to know these guys.

The **Discipleship & Nurture Committee** gives attention to lay training, stewardship, and, where applicable, church school and small groups.

Andy Chew
Third Reserve
Lay Delegate to TRAC

Timothy Yong
First Reserve
Lay Delegate to TRAC

Yip Fook Yoon
Second Reserve
Lay Delegate to TRAC

Though Andy supports Liverpool FC, Timothy supports Manchester FC and Fook Yoon supports "good teams", they are united in their goal to watch football avidly. Tennis and cycling are also sports common to all, although Fook Yoon emphasises that he *used* to do these exercises.

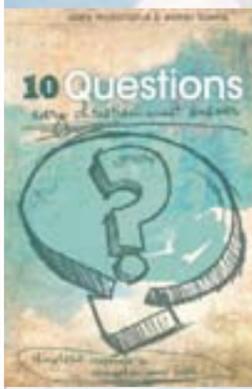


connect with one another

connect with one another

Books TO GIVE AWAY THIS Christmas

A WAY TO REACH OUT TO YOUR FRIENDS & FAMILY THIS CHRISTMAS



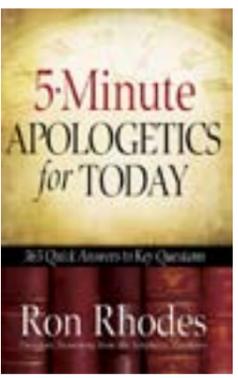
10 Questions Every Christian Must Answer
by Alex McFarland & Elmer Towns, \$17.50

There will be times in our Christian walk when we will face questions about our faith - from friends and colleagues - which we might not have ready answers to.

Becoming a Christian does not mean that all the questions that we or others may have about Christianity are instantly answered. But not having knowledge about certain issues can dampen your faith and rob you of the joy that comes from confidently sharing it with others.

10 Questions Every Christian Must Answer provides young and old Christians alike with the responses to the toughest conversations regarding one's inward faith as well as the outward expression of it.

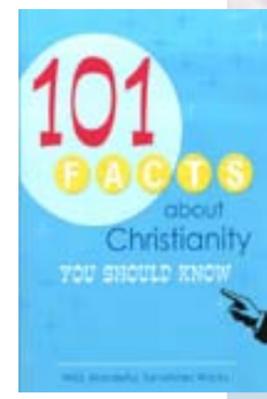
Written by respected scholars Elmer Towns and Alex McFarland, readers can be sure the content of this book is backed by sharp minds, deep thinking, and the unchanging Word of God



5 Minute Apologetics For Today
by Ron Rhodes, \$23.50

If you have ever found it hard to talk to others about your faith or had a friend who asked you a spiritual question which you had no clear answer to, this book will help you find the right words to answer those questions and defend your faith with confidence.

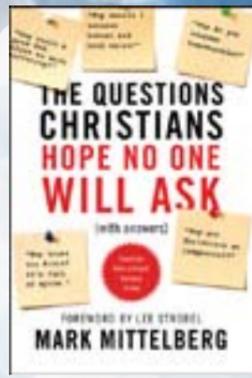
Through short, five-minute readings, Rick Cornish gives you powerful yet humble words to speak persuasively with friends, co-workers, and family members about your faith with a sense of clarity and purpose. Important topics such as world views and Jesus' resurrection are clearly for easy reference. Learn how to explain difficult spiritual concepts with confidence in just five minutes a day.



101 Facts About Christianity You Should Know
by Rebecca Currington, Susan Duke & Matthew Kinne, \$12.50

Christendom is filled with people, places, and events you should know and here are 101 brief summaries to bring those key facts to life. The 101 Facts About Christianity You Should Know covers the early church through the 21st century, featuring key people, places, events, songs, and books that have helped to shape Christianity into the way we know it today.

These easy-to-read entries provide examples to learn from while the bonus facts and scripture sidebars cover information that is useful for personal or group readings.



The Questions Christians Hope No One Will Ask
by Mark Mittelberg, \$23.50

Have you ever encountered a question about your faith that became a conversation

killer because you could not answer it? People these days are raising difficult, penetrating questions about faith, God, and the Bible because they are desperate to know God.

Based on an exclusive survey of 1,000 Christians, The Questions Christians Hope No One Will Ask presents compelling, easy-to-grasp answers to 10 of the most troubling questions facing Christians today. The questions include everything from the existence of heaven to the issues of abortion and homosexuality, as well as the question of whether evolution eliminates our need for a God and is meant to help every Christian answer these difficult questions.

Do you hear what I hear?



by Terry Koh

One's a Mariah Carey song about her longing to see her love at Christmas. The other's a tune by British 80's pop stars Wham! about pain and heartbreak during this special season.

What these two chart-toppers, Carey's All I Want for Christmas is You and Wham!'s Last Christmas, have in common is that they've become all-time Christmas classics.

They were the two most popular Christmas songs in the United Kingdom last year according to Wikipedia. Carey's single was also recently dubbed "a modern holiday classic" by Billboard.com.

So what's happened to the traditional Christmas carol?

As we move into the season of Advent, you would be hard-pressed not to find Christmas songs being played on the local airwaves and in shopping centres, accompanying you as you figure out your next Christmas purchase.

It's unavoidable that songs about Christmas have become less about the birth of Christ, and more about romantic human love and the warm, fuzzy feeling of Christmas. That is unfortunately, a consequence of the commercialisation of Christmas which dominates our modern society.

As Christians however, we have a responsibility to turn the tide against Christmas commercialisation, because the significance of Christmas to mankind cannot be overstated. We should not allow ourselves to become spiritually dulled toward the miracle and mystery of our Creator becoming man for the salvation of the world even amid all the Christmas feasting and gift-giving.

In that light, the Saltshaker invites you to read about the stories behind the creation of some of the original "Christmas songs". We hope that these stories will inspire you and strengthen and encourage your faith. You can also use these stories to start a conversation with your friend about the true Reason for the season.

O LITTLE TOWN OF BETHLEHEM (Words: Philips Brooks, 1835-1893; Music: Lewis Redner, 1831-1908)

Written by the American preacher, Philips Brooks, O Little Town of Bethlehem was conceived in 1868, three years after Brooks' trip to the Holy Land.

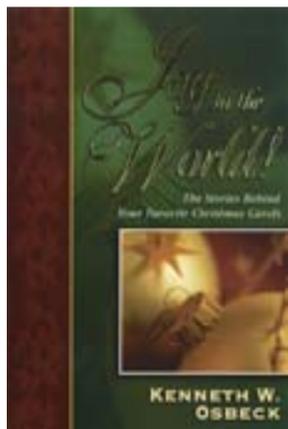
The experience of spending Christmas Eve in Bethlehem and worshipping in the Church of Nativity left a such deep impression in Brooks' heart that when he was searching for a Christmas carol for his children to sing in their annual Sunday School Christmas programme, he drew on his memory of his time in Bethlehem and completed the writing of the carol in one evening.

The words of the carol were then put into a simple melody by Lewis Redner, Brooks' organist and Sunday school superintendent, so that the children could sing it easily.

Redner had struggled with composing the tune. But on the evening before the Sunday school Christmas program was to be presented, Redner suddenly awakened from his sleep and quickly composed the tune which we know today. Redner had always insisted that the tune was a gift from heaven.

Likewise, the baby boy in Bethlehem's manger was more than a gift to Joseph and Mary. Two thousand years later, that baby is still a gift of life to you and me.

"No ear may hear His coming, but in this world of sin, where meek souls will receive Him still, the dear Christ enters in" - O LITTLE TOWN OF BETHLEHEM



JOY TO THE WORLD (Words: Isaac Watts, 1674-1748; Music: George Handel, 1685-1759, arr. Lowell Mason)

The most jubilant of carols, Joy to the World was written by the "Father of English Hymody", Isaac Watts. He is credited as being the writer of more than 750 hymns, many of which are still being sung today, such as O God, Our Help in Ages Past.

His inspiration for the carol came from Psalm 98:4-9 which reads: "Shout joyfully to the LORD, all the earth; break forth in song, rejoice, and sing praises. Sing to the LORD with the harp, with the harp and the sound of a psalm, with trumpets and the sound of a horn, shout joyfully before the LORD, the King. Let the sea roar, and all its fullness, the world and those who dwell in it; let the rivers clap their hands; let the hills be joyful together before the LORD, for He is coming to judge the earth. With righteousness He shall judge the world, and the peoples with equity."

Psalm 98 had been written as a psalm of thanksgiving to God for His protection over the Israelites and anticipates a time when God's kingdom will be established on earth.

Similarly, Watts had intended that the carol, originally entitled The Messiah's Coming and Kingdom, draw a similar parallel of God's kingdom being established on earth through Jesus Christ, whose single sacrifice would be good for all time, and for the salvation of all men.

Even while we are here on earth, let us be joyful as we look forward to a future time when there shall be a new heaven and a new earth, where God's dwelling place is among us and where He will dwell with us. Indeed, He will wipe every tear from our eyes, and there will be no more death, or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.

"Joy to the earth, the Savior reigns! Let men their songs employ; while fields and floods, rocks, hills and plains, repeat the sounding joy, repeat the sounding joy, repeat, repeat, the sounding joy." - JOY TO THE WORLD

IT CAME UPON A MIDNIGHT CLEAR (Words: Edmund Sears, 1810-1876; Music: Richard S Willis, 1819-1900)

Another carol with American origins, It Came Upon A Midnight Clear may be less familiar to some of us. It was written by Edmund Sears during the period of the American Civil War, when there was much fear and concern about the gold rush in California, industrial revolution in the North and slavery in the South.

Amid these tensions, Sears sought to stress that with Christ's birth, God's peace would prevail on earth, just as the angels had said. Man would be reconciled with God, with man and with himself.

Likewise, war and strife are still rampant in our world today. Even within our personal relationships, there is tension, distrust and suspicion. But God's promise of reconciliation is far greater than this. Is there someone you wish to be reconciled with today? May the words of this carol be an encouragement to you as you start the journey of reconciliation.

"For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." Isaiah 9:6

HARK! THE HERALD ANGELS SING (Words: Charles Wesley, 1707-1788; Music: Felix Mendelsohn, 1809-1849)

All good Methodists would know the writer of this carol, Charles Wesley, who was the brother of the founder of Methodism, John Wesley.

Written in the eighteenth century, the original tune of Hark! The Herald Angels Sing is not the one which we know today. As Wesley was a sombre man, he had requested for a solemn tune to accompany his lyrics. The current version we have today is an adaptation of Mendelsson's cantata which was composed in 1894 to commemorate Johann Gutenberg's invention of the printing press.

The carol is essentially biblical doctrine condensed in song, which is typical of Wesley's hymns. The first verse speaks about the gathering of angels at Bethlehem to herald the miraculous birth of Christ, followed by the truth of the Virgin birth, Christ's deity and manhood, His mission of salvation, and the transforming power of Christ in our lives.

The late Eric Routley, a noted English hymnist, observed in his book, Hymns and Human Life: "These [Wesley] hymns were composed in order that men and women might sing their way, not only into experience, but also into knowledge; that the cultured might have their culture baptized and the ignorant might be led into truth by the gentle hand of melody and rhyme."

"Mild He lays His glory by, born that man no more may die. Born to raise the sons of earth, born to give them second birth." - HARK! THE HERALD ANGELS SING

The story of Christmas, is not a story after all. It is a reality and a truth. Let us hold fast to this reality of God, and the promise of eternal life. Let us remain faithful to what we have been taught from the beginning and remain in fellowship with the Son and the Father, so that when Christ returns again, we will be full of courage and not shrink back in shame.

Loving God,
Help us remember the birth of Jesus,
that we may share in the song of the angels,
the gladness of the shepherds,
and worship of the wise men.
Close the door of hate and
open the door of love all over the world.
Let kindness come with every gift
and good desires with every greeting.
Deliver us from evil by the blessing
which Christ brings,
and teach us to be merry with clear hearts.
May the Christmas morning make us
happy to be thy children, and Christmas
evening bring us to our beds with grateful
thoughts, forgiving and forgiven, for Jesus'
sake.
Amen.

-- Robert Louis Stevenson



Keen
to read more
about the origins of
other Christmas carols?
Then visit the SKS book table in
December to purchase Kenneth
W. Osbeck's "Joy to the World
- The Stories Behind Your
Favourite Christmas
Carols".

实龙岗北大树下六一事件

还记得那天傍晚六点多从公司回到组屋下的停车场，眼见所有的车位都被捷足先登，我惟有驾到隔座的停车场，还好那里的停车场有好多个空着的车位就随意泊了车。

在回家途中，正当我走到大牌146 的大树下时，看到一群不同种族、不同年龄层的男学生在谈天说笑。他们就如一般孩子没有特别起眼之处。我也不经意地走过他们所处之地。

当我越过他们，约两公尺后，追随而来从空中飘来的是一句名词“基督徒”杀那间有把声音很肯定、很清楚、很有把握向我内心说：“停下来！走过去！”这时我内心被圣灵感动。降服于圣灵下知道这是圣灵的敦促，心里也不大敢消灭圣灵的感动。

我便转回头，走到他们当中，向着他们八个人，我问道：“那句基督徒的名词是谁说的？”当中有一个年纪比较大的举起手来，我借此机会与他们谈论，打铁趁热继续探讨他们是否有兴趣知道耶稣的故事！感谢神！他们一口同声都说“要”。

那时日本大海啸恰恰刚过不久，人心惶惶，仿佛世界穷途末路也。世界末日就在眉肖，这群小男生都言之色变。这是上帝安排的上好时机。

我就开始讲述耶稣为何方神圣，更是注重耶稣贵为神的儿子，降世为人，救赎全人类，免死于永火里。若要得救，就必须接受主耶稣为个人救主。接着圣灵继续带领我，遵守指示，断然邀请他们接受主耶稣为他们个人救主。

真是太美妙了！必然是上帝收割的时刻到了！八位当中有四位举手，愿意接受主耶稣。接着我带领他们做决志祷告。

前后不到一个小时。我看到了上帝的大能。上帝大爱充分显现就在这一刻。我想到天国里众天使已大摆宴席。大事庆祝欢乐。这群小孩过后追随我走到我的组屋。似乎舍不得离我而去。

回到家，刚踏入家门，小女儿好奇地问道：“爸，刚才我看到你停泊车子在隔座祖屋，为什么这么久才到家？”我心里在想，这是我人生里多么有意义的45分钟。

实龙岗北树下六一事件

一音：听见声音停下来

一感：圣灵感动

一顺：顺服的心

一动：一个行动

一种：撒种

一割：收割

圣诞节即将来临，愿大家对圣灵的带领加倍敏感，不要错过这个把耶稣介绍给他人的好时机。

A Whispering in the Trees

Once again, all the parking lots at my block had been taken up. It was about 6pm as I parked my car in the adjacent HDB carpark.

As I walked home, past the big tree rooted at Block 146, I saw a group of schoolboys of different races and ages talking and laughing together. They seemed like the average boys-next-door and there was nothing about them which particularly caught my attention.

I had walked past the schoolboys and was about half a metre away when I heard a word cut through the leaves - "Christian".

At that very moment, a clear and confident voice spoke within me: "Stop and go back!"

So that's what they call a "Holy Spirit moment". Having no desire - or courage - to quench the Spirit's prompting, I surrendered to His call.

I turned around, walked back to the group of eight boys and asked: "Did someone say something about a Christian?"

One of the older boys raised his hand. I took the chance to strike while the iron was hot and asked if they were interested to know the story of Jesus Christ. Thanks be to God, they all gave a resounding "yes".

It so happened that this incident took place at about the time that Japan was suffering from the after-effects of the tsunami, making it seem like the end of the world for many, including these school boys. It was God who had timed my encounter with this group of boys.

I told the boys simply that Jesus Christ is God's Son sent to the world for our redemption. If we are to be spared from an eternal fire, we have to accept Christ as our Saviour. Obeying the Spirit's leading, I then invited the boys to receive Jesus as their Lord and Saviour.

It was truly a miracle! Clearly, the Lord had decided to reap a harvest that evening. Four of the boys accepted the invitation to receive Christ into their lives, and I led them in prayer to cement their decision.

I witnessed God's mighty power in that entire episode which took less than an hour. He manifested His great love at that moment. I believe that all the angels in heaven were busy preparing a banquet to celebrate this good news.

The school boys followed me right up to my block of flats, reluctant to let me go home.

When I eventually reached home, my daughter asked curiously: "Dad, I saw you park your car at the neighbouring carpark. Why did you take so long to get home?"

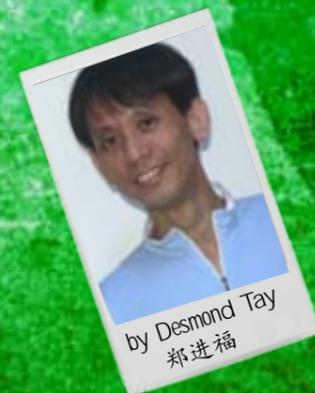
I thought to myself: "I have just spent the most meaningful 45 minutes of my life, hearing a whispering from the trees."

As the season of Christmas approaches, I hope that we will all be even more attuned to the Holy Spirit. Let us not pass up any opportunity to introduce a person to Jesus Christ.

Listen and be touched by the Spirit.

Act with a surrendered heart.

Sow the seed and wait for the Lord's harvest



by Desmond Tay
郑进福

The Christmas season is an ideal time to host a party.

It can be an open house for friends and neighbors, an elegant dinner, or a casual buffet.

However you choose to host it, no Christmas party would be complete without a variety of desserts such as cookies, candies, sweet pastry tarts and fruit cake.

It's a shame that fruit cake is not quite a popular dessert here. With its two key ingredients, rum and butter, it ought to be a hit.

In the early eighteenth century, fruit cakes were luxuries for special occasions like weddings and Christmas.

"Making a rich fruit cake in the 18th century was a major undertaking. The ingredients had to be carefully prepared. Fruit was washed, dried, and stoned (taking the pits out) if necessary; sugar, cut from loaves, had to be pounded and sieved; butter washed in water and rinsed in rosewater. Eggs were beaten for a long time, half an hour being commonly directed. Yeast, or barm from fermenting beer, had to be coaxed to life. Finally, the cook had to cope with the temperamental wood-fired baking ovens of that time.

No wonder these cakes acquired such mystique..." (Alan Davidson, *The Oxford Companion to Food*)

Thankfully, baking a fruit cake can be much simpler. If you have a large enough kitchen, you can even invite a few friends to participate in a pre-party bake-out.

Ingredients:

- 1/8 cup chopped candied cherries
- 1/8 cup chopped dried mango
- 1/4 cup dried cranberries
- 1/4 cup dried currants
- 2 tablespoons chopped citron mixed peel
- 1/4 cup dark rum
- 1/2 cup salted butter
- 1/4 cup brown sugar
- 1 egg
- 1/2 cup all-purpose flour
- 1/4 teaspoon baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 2 tablespoons milk
- 1/4 cup honey
- 1/4 cup chopped walnuts
- 3 tablespoons dark rum



by Gek Khee

Have A Fruitful Christmas

Directions:

1. Soak cherries, mango, cranberries, currants, and citron in 1/4 cup rum for at least 24 hours. Cover tightly, and store at room temperature.
2. Preheat oven to 325 degrees F (165 degrees C). Grease a 6x3 inch round pan with butter, and line with parchment paper.
3. In a large bowl, cream butter and brown sugar together until fluffy.
4. Beat in egg. Whisk flour, baking soda and cinnamon together.
5. Mix honey and milk into butter and sugar.
6. Stir in soaked fruits and chopped nuts. Scrape batter into prepared pan.
7. Bake in preheated oven for 40 to 45 minutes. Cool in the pan for 10 minutes, then sprinkle with three tablespoons rum.

So what should one drink with fruit cake?

Not soft drinks and juices, which are sweet, as fruit cakes have a strong liquor and sweet flavour combination. An excellent complementary beverage would be Earl Grey tea (without sugar) or mild/floral green teas like Long Jing or Fujian Woo Long. I am biased against eating anything with a strong coffee like espresso but you may enjoy the combination.

Fruit cakes can be eaten on their own. But if you're in the mood, a more decadent variation would be to spread a morsel of light sour cream or salted butter before you pop a slice into your mouth.

And if you really must have a cold drink with fruitcake, make it glass of fizzy mineral water like Perrier.

Enough said. Let's eat.



GOD'S MASTER WORKS

A Concerto in 39 movements

As the Master composer unfolds His concerto in 39 movements, it is a symphony for the soul.

Listen and be soaked in the beauty of this concerto.

Appreciate its highs and lows; the peaceful interludes and the thundering crescendos.

More details at www.tmc.org.sg/highlights.html#gym

Coming to Trinity Methodist Church
this January 18, 2012, 10am-12pm,
and every 3rd Wed of the month thereafter

Organised by Trinity Methodist Church, Glowing Years Ministry (GYM)

DEVOTIONS AT YUM CHA AND ST LUKE'S ELDERCARE CENTRE

www.tmc.org.sg/osc.html

Theme : How to handle life's challenges

Dates at

Yum Cha / SLEC

10 am Devotional Topic

4 Jan / 26 Jan	How to handle one's disobedient heart
1 Feb / 23 Feb	How to handle one's inferiority
7 Mar / 29 Mar	How to handle one's temptations
4 Apr / 26 Apr	How to handle one's depression
2 May / 31 May	How to handle one's worries
6 Jun / 28 Jun	How to handle one's anger
4 Jul / 26 Jul	How to handle one's loneliness
1 Aug / 30 Aug	How to handle one's discouragement
5 Sep / 27 Sep	How to handle one's greed
3 Oct / -	How to handle one's fear
- / 25 Oct	How to handle one's loose tongue
7 Nov / 29 Nov	How to handle one's dishonesty
5 Dec / 27 Dec	How to handle one's unforgiveness



Christmas Eve Celebration, 24 Dec

6:30 - 8pm

A party for all ages, with food, balloon sculpting, games, face painting and more!

8 - 9:30pm

Pageant, skit and carols

圣诞节前夕庆祝会, 12月24日

下午6.30 至 8时

一个老少皆宜的派对, 有美食、气球雕塑、游戏、脸部彩绘、等等。。。

晚上8 至 9.30分

短剧与报佳音

Christmas Day Service, 25 Dec, 10am

Numerous gifts to buy, long queues at the malls, no parking lots, traffic jams...

What's So Merry About Christmas?

圣诞节崇拜, 12月25日

破费买礼物, 各商场大排长龙, 没有停车位, 交通阻塞。。。

圣诞, 快乐吗?

EVENTS

Every Friday, 8 pm
Healing Service

Every Saturday, 7 am
Men at Prayer

Thurs-Sun, 1-4 Dec
Youth Camp
<http://www.facebook.com/pages/TMC-Youth-Ministry/194806094431>

Fri, 2 Dec, 2-5pm
Adventure Outing for
Contact 123
<http://www.tmc.org.sg/osc.html>

Wed, 7 Dec, 4 Jan, 10 am
Yum Cha is an opportunity for people to come together for fellowship. Contact Victor through the church office or at vseah@singnet.com.sg
www.tmc.org.sg/osc.html

8-14 Dec
Youth Ministry Missions Trip
www.tmc.org.sg/missions.html

Sat, 10 Dec, 4-7pm
Glowing Years Ministry Christmas Dinner

Sun, 11 Dec
Reception of New Members

Fri, 16 Dec
Youth Ministry Chef event

Sat, 24 Dec, 6.30 pm
Christmas Eve Celebration
Sun, 25 Dec, 10 am
Combined English services
Mandarin service
www.tmc.org.sg/xmas2011.html

Thurs, 29 Dec, 26 Jan, 10 am
St Luke's Eldercare Visitation & Devotion (10 am). Special Christmas and Lunar New Year devotions on 29 Dec and 26 Jan respectively. With our partner, Bless Community Services, we are reaching a wider community for Christ at SLEC in Serangoon. More about SLEC at www.slec.org.sg. Contact Victor through the church office at 6282 4443 / vseah@singnet.com.sg to visit SLEC with TMC.
www.tmc.org.sg/osc.html

Sat, 31 Dec
Supper by the Glowing Years Ministry after Watchnight Service

7-8, 14-15 Jan
A Portrait for a Home. Studio snapshots for charity. Register in the Plaza. More details at www.tmc.org.sg/highlights.html

Sat, 14 Jan, 2pm
Seminar on 'Caring for the homebound and hospitalised' conducted by Rev Peter Goh
www.tmc.org.sg/highlights.html

Wed, 18 Jan, 10am – 12pm,
and every 3rd Wed of the month
God's Master Works -
A Concerto in 39 movements
Glowing Years Ministry bible study fellowship (open to all) led by Rev Peter. Overview of the entire Old Testament. www.tmc.org.sg/highlights.html#masterworks

Wed-Thurs, 28-29 Jan
Youth Ministry Leaders' Retreat

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stock.XCHNG (www.sxc.hu)
All-free-download.com

Printer

Lithographic Print House Pte Ltd

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Further details on TMC's events can be found at www.tmc.org.sg