

MAY 2015

WITNESS



A publication of Christ Methodist Church

EXPLORE

Our ZUMBA ministry
Cardboard testimonies

MEET

Samuel Choo
Earl Tan

HEAR ABOUT

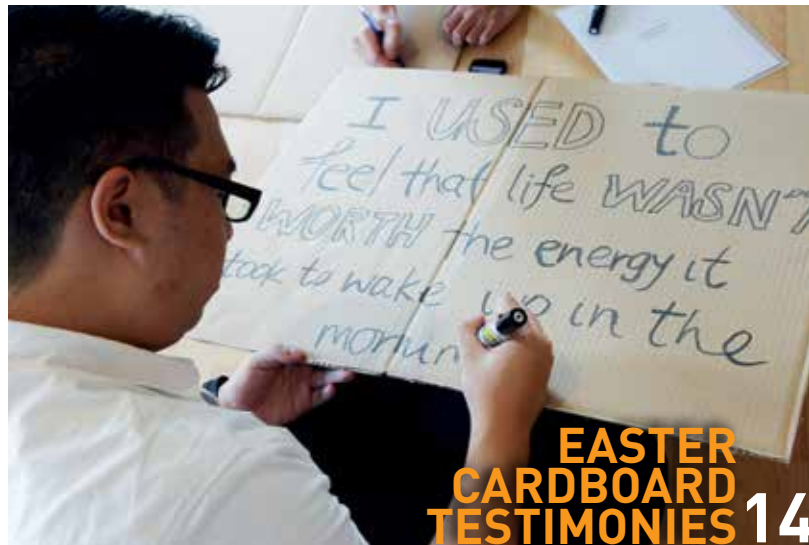
Adventures in New Zealand
A miracle baby

GOD IN MY LIFE

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EDITORIAL

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Witness is a magazine of Christ Methodist Church.
The views expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the official news of CMC or The Methodist Church in Singapore.

A WORD FROM THE EDITOR

ELENA MAY GUDGEON



Over time I've met many people who have journeyed from simply knowing about God or contemplating the mystery of Him to actually experiencing the reality of His power and presence in their lives. Quite a few of them came to my attention through being involved with putting this magazine together. (Join me! Together, we shall tell all the stories to all the people! Yes!)

Stories of real-life encounters with God today have a power similar to biblical stories and the accounts of Jesus' life. When they enter someone's consciousness in tandem with scripture they create a fuller portrait of our living God.

WITHOUT CONSTANTLY HEARING CURRENT ACCOUNTS OF A DAY-TO-DAY RELATIONSHIP WITH OUR CREATOR, HE WOULD BE THE GOD OF ABRAHAM, ISAAC AND JACOB, BUT NOT ANY OF US.

As a kid, before becoming fully aware that God could be experienced, I visited a few different churches and copied adults when they did things. When they mumbled prayers, or made the sign of the cross, or knelt down, or sang hymns, I did the same, and enjoyed the super holy 'feeling' it gave me. I grinned inside at the thought of God being pleased with my spiritual maturity. He must have been facepalming up there because that's like a little girl dressing up in her mother's outfit and believing that presents a convincing argument to show she is mature enough for home ownership!

The only way we truly mature spiritually (and in life) is through relationship. Once I became aware of His presence at age 12, and started talking to Him, reading His words for me, and hearing others share their experiences of Him, I began to understand and recognize Him more. He is intensely personal, and insanely zealous for me. He

likes me. He wants to be present in my daily routine, to help me discover delightful things, and to advise me on how to maximize the resources I have in order to be a blessing to others. He wants to be the big, strong father every little girl needs to make her feel safe and cherished.

May the stories in this issue inspire you to trust Him as a Father who knows what He's doing in your life, and to seek intimacy with Him in spite of whatever challenging circumstances you may be facing right now. **W**

To submit feedback, story ideas or testimonies to this magazine, please email elena.gudgeon@cmc.org.sg.



A WORD
FROM YOUR
PASTOR

“DO YOU GLORIFY GOD WITH YOUR LIFE?”

BY PASTOR BARNABAS CHONG

Those were the last words of the father of contemporary Christian music artiste, Carman. At the end of the day, we all want to be able to say, “I have sincerely done my utmost to glorify God in my life”. And our loved ones and friends should be able to

agree and say that you and I have indeed glorified God in our lives. We should spend our time on earth making Him known to others at every opportunity, and declaring His wonderful works.

On Easter Sunday this year, through a very special ‘Cardboard Testimonies’ presentation on stage at our 8.30 and 10.30am worship services, we were blessed to read over 40 condensed stories of how God touched and changed the lives people in our church family. It was a moving display of how good and kind God is. Since then, others have shared their mini cardboard testimonies on our Facebook page too.

I’m sure there are plenty more victories which haven’t been shared yet. I encourage you to take the time to write something down and let us re-tell your stories on our website, our magazine and through social media, so that many more people out there become aware of how involved God is in the lives and personal situations of his creation. May they want to know Him for themselves!

This is what church is all about – we exist to glorify Him, to know Him and to make Him known! And to continually make Him known, we must keep on walking with Him, worshipping Him, growing in the knowledge of His Word and serving Him with gladness in our hearts.

Worship without service is selfish, inward-looking and constipated. It is like a pool of stagnant water and after a while, it stinks. However, when worship results in an outflow of ministry and service, it gives life like a river and our ministry brings healing, cleansing and refreshing. That’s what we want to see in CMC – followers of Christ who are passionate for God and loving the community! We do not want to merely talk the walk but also to walk the talk.

May our desire be like the psalmist in Psalm 40:3,

“HE PUT A NEW SONG
IN MY MOUTH, A HYMN
OF PRAISE TO OUR GOD.
MANY WILL SEE AND
FEAR THE LORD AND
PUT THEIR TRUST IN
HIM.”

Yes, let’s worship the Lord with our lives each day and sing new songs to Him. As we bring our praises to God, may everyone around us see and fear the Lord and put their trust in Him! ^w

SEEKER SENSITIVITIES

Was there ever a time in your life when you were desperately looking for someone?

When you're separated from your child in shopping center, or from your companions while traveling overseas, you feel something in your gut. Something's amiss. You can't just keep doing what you were doing – you have to stop and put all of your effort into seeking the lost person, because you know it would be a disaster if they can't be found by nightfall.

Have you ever felt that way about God?

When you could feel in your gut that something was amiss and that no earthly thing or pursuit could ever remedy it? When you needed so desperately to hear from Him, receive help and comfort, and be convicted of His reality? Maybe you were attending church, maybe not. Maybe you prayed, maybe you didn't. But your heart was searching.



It may not have felt very comfortable, but that season of searching was spiritually a very healthy place to be. It meant that you missed Him.

While it's true that He is with us all the time and everywhere, we can also allow Him to slip out of our consciousness, just like a distant relative that we never see. And that absence becomes so familiar we don't even realize what's missing.

“YOU WILL SEEK ME AND FIND ME WHEN YOU SEEK ME WITH ALL YOUR HEART. I WILL BE FOUND BY YOU,” DECLARES THE LORD, “AND WILL BRING YOU BACK FROM CAPTIVITY.”

~Jeremiah 29: 13-14

“Aren't his children always in his presence? Yes and no. Yes... in the sense that God is omnipresent and therefore always near everything and everyone. ... He is always present with his children in the sense of his covenant commitment to always stand by us and work for us and turn everything for our good.

But there is a sense in which God's presence is not with us always. For this reason, the Bible repeatedly calls us to 'seek the Lord ... seek his presence continually.' God's manifest, conscious, trusted presence is not our constant experience. There are seasons when we become neglectful of God and give him no thought and do not put trust in him and we find him 'unmanifested' – that is, unperceived as great and beautiful and valuable by the eyes of our hearts.... His face – the brightness of his personal character – is hidden behind the curtain of our carnal desires. This condition is always ready to overtake us.”

~ John Piper, founder and teacher of desiringGod.org and chancellor of Bethlehem College & Seminary in Minnesota.

Most of us have experienced both being missed by someone we love, and also not missed. We know when we are not missed. We ache when we are forgotten. When you read Genesis 6, Isaiah 50, Hosea 11 and so many more, you see a Father's heart aching because of children who have turned away and forgotten him.


He gave up everything in order to personally come here and make reconciliation possible.

So let's look for Him and spend time with Him and not give any more excuses why that's not possible. It

IS possible. Somehow we always manage to make time for our hobbies and other indulgences. Why not Him?

It's not just about fulfilling the Christian duty of going to church on Sunday. It's a relationship.

Would simply going to your significant other's home and saying hi once a week be enough to build a flourishing relationship or a healthy marriage? No. They'd probably be quite disappointed with that level of commitment.

We can do better. Let's at least try? 

FACETIME WITH GOD

Take long walks or drives alone, to contemplate God and admire his creation.

Read or listen to His word in the early morning, to start the day in His company.

Speak praise or even shout thanksgiving to Him while mopping a floor. (Yes! Why not?)

Talk to him while in the shower. (He's ok with it, really.)

Write down new things He has taught for the day.

Give up a lunch or dinner hour here and there in the week to fast and pray.

Listen to the songs and artistes you admired as a young Christian and belt out those old tunes!

WELCOME TO THE FAMILY!

CHRISTMAS 2014
20/21 December

BAPTISM BY IMMERSION

Miss Naomi Suqing Martel
Daughter of Mr & Mrs Timothy Martel

Master Aidan Teh and Miss Ava Teh
Children of Dr & Mrs Jonathan Teh

Ms Winnie Ho
Mr Joshua Kooh
Ms Candice Lee
Mr Aloysius Lim
Mr Albert Loh
Ms Dimiyati Herlambang Manasta
Mr Wil Ng
Mr Michael Soh*

Ms Linda Tay
Mr Teoh Tee Hien
Mr Stanley Wong
Mr Wilfred Wong*
Ms Angeline Yip

*Reaffirmation of Baptism

BAPTISM BY SPRINKLING

Miss Chloe Ang
Daughter of Mr & Mrs Ang Taur Alec

Miss Emma Chng and Miss Ava Chng
Children of Mr & Mrs Chng Sing Yong

Miss Annabelle Goh
Daughter of Mr & Mrs Jerry Goh

Miss Sarah Anne Leung
Daughter of Mr & Mrs Bernard Leung

Master Alden Loh Kar Kuan
Son of Mr & Mrs Albert Loh

Miss Faith Loh, Master Reuben Low, and Miss Rebekah Low
Children of Dr & Mrs Low Sher Guan

Miss Amelie Teh
Daughter of Dr & Mrs Jonathan Teh

Master Ethan Thia
Son of Mr & Mrs Christopher Thia

Master Caleb Teo
Son of Mr & Mrs Luke Teo

Mr Edwin Seah
Ms Gladys Teng

RECEIVED INTO MEMBERSHIP

Ms Sandra Cheok
Ms Chew Chien Way
Ms Vicky Chew
Mr Ivan Ho
Ms Winnie Ho
Ms Susan Lee
Mr Aloysius Lim
Mr Albert Loh
Ms Dimiyati Herlambang Manasta

Mr Wil Ng
Ms Anne Phan
Mr Edwin Seah
Ms Linda Tay
Ms Gladys Teng
Mr Teoh Tee Hien
Mr Christopher Thia
Mr Wilfred Wong
Ms Angeline Yip

TRANSFERRED MEMBERSHIP

Ms Gladys Hong
transferred from Glad Tidings Church

Ms Lim Ai Wah
transferred from Calvary Baptist Church

Ms Khuan Wai Shir and Mr Wong Kar Seng
transferred from Damansara Utama Methodist Church, PJ

Ms Serene Lim
transferred from Paya Lebar Chinese Methodist Church

Mr Clarence Lin
transferred from Pentecost Methodist Church

EASTER 2015
28/29 March

BAPTISM BY IMMERSION

Mr Howard Fang
Mr Gary Koh
Mr Kuah Wee Chong
Ms Lily Ng
Mr Sidney Suen*

*Reaffirmation of Baptism

BAPTISM BY SPRINKLING

Miss Julianne Foo and Miss Olivia Foo
Daughters of Mr & Mrs Foo Piao Zhou

Master Luke Seow
Son of Mr & Mrs Seow Chow Wei

RECEIVED INTO MEMBERSHIP

Mr Alec Ang
Mr Howard Fang
Mr Koh Chee Wee
Mr Gary Koh
Miss Samantha Koh
Mr Kuah Wee Chong
Mr Michael Ng
Mr Sidney Suen

TRANSFERRED MEMBERSHIP

Mr Cheok Cheng Leong
transferred from Marine Parade Christian Church



CMC organizes Baptism & Membership sessions twice a year, typically in the weeks leading up to Easter and Christmas. If you would like to be baptized into the faith or sink your roots in our community as an official member of the church, look out for registration announcements around Oct/Nov 2015.



WON'T LET GO

“The Lord himself goes before you and will be with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you, Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged.”

Deuteronomy 31:8

BY **AMY LOH**

The simple thought of going on a family holiday excites me, but even greater excitement comes with planning an itinerary that is cheap and good for the whole family!

We never go on fixed group tours because we love road trips that allow us to

discover new things together, and moreover I get such satisfaction from those 6 to 12 months spent working out the details. For our trip in November last year I planned venues for our wedding anniversary photoshoot, loads of visits to markets with fresh produce, adrenaline rush activities for the boys and a rental car with space huge

enough to transport our music and dance equipment, which we decided we wanted to bring along.

We don't have the luxury of going on family holidays every year, but we had committed to saving up enough to holiday together the years that each of our children finished their PSLE. Our destination

this time was New Zealand, and we were going there for wonderful three-week long summer vacation.

The views there were simply breath-taking! Mountains and rivers, glaciers and green pastures cried out the glory of God! No words could express our awe over such beauty which only a good God and a loving Father would give to His children. Within hours, New Zealand had become our family's favourite travel destination of all time.

On the 9th day of the trip, we went horse-riding in the beautiful town of Glenorchy. The journey took us through glacier-fed rivers with stunning mountainous backdrops that were used in



The Lord of the Rings movie trilogy. Magnificent views of the snow-capped mountains and crystal clear rivers left me speechless! Everything reflected the glory of God. Even if I did not declare my praise for His beauty and kept silent in awe, the stones and rocks would have cried out! (Luke 19:40)

This was the first time our whole family could go on a ride together. I had been unable to ride a horse on our previous trips because of a recurring condition I have called cervical spondylosis (sometimes known as “arthritis of the neck”). This time I finally could, and I felt both grateful and nervous.

The ride began comfortably, at a slow walking pace, with all of us on our own horses one behind another in a line, and the two experienced guides riding in front of and behind our family. I was enjoying every moment of it until I realized that my horse was picking up speed and starting to gallop. We had opted for a walking pace ride! Faster and faster it went, and before I knew it he was out of control! Suddenly I felt like I was in the midst of filming a battle scene out of some epic movie, and while everything became so surreal

for a moment, I was also deeply aware that this type of danger could possibly cost us our lives.

Because of the rough jolts from my running animal, my helmet had slipped down over my head and was covering my eyes. I could barely see, and didn't dare let go of the reigns lest I fall. I could only feel the earth vibrating with what sounded like an army of war horses that seemed to have come from nowhere. (We would later find out that about 20 horses had wandered away from the ranch to follow their “friends” who had started galloping – the horses we were riding apparently stirred their excitement and “summoned” their fellow horses to follow suit.)

It wasn't too long before I could feel myself falling from my horse. My heart was pounding and in the midst of my helplessness, I feared the worst for my family. *Were they all going at this speed? Had anyone fallen off and gotten trampled?*

Right then, I heard a still small voice say to me “I won't let you go, but you MUST let go of the reigns now!” This reassurance and command repeated itself over and over again, until, in the midst of



all the confusion, I realized I had to make a choice. I was definitely sliding off the horse but was so afraid that if I allowed myself to fall, the horse would then topple down and crush me. Yet that same soothing voice was now instructing me exactly which way to steer and how to make that fall.

With a mixture of fear, desperation and doubt, I finally let go of the reins and made what felt like the most graceful fall ever, landing unhurt on ground which had no rocks. I got on my feet and ran towards my younger son, Andre, who was lying on the ground motionless, bleeding from his mouth. At that moment I thought I was going to lose him.

It turned out that Andre's bleeding was only due to bites from his teeth on his tongue and lips. He was also in shock after being dragged for possibly hundreds of meters on his helmet-covered head by his horse. I later also found out that my husband Kevin had been flung off his horse at high speed, but did not sustain any injuries from his fall. My elder son Aaron had jumped off his horse instead of clinging to it, a decision which probably saved his life. He only suffered foot injury as his angels must have pushed him off gently. My daughter Karrie Anne had stayed on her horse, and I only learned later that her horse had thundered past the fallen Andre and would have killed him if it had come any closer.

I hadn't been able to see any of this because my helmet had been over my eyes the whole time. I think it might have been too much for a mother's heart to bear if I had seen it all happen in front of me. Without a doubt, God knew me and how I would have reacted, so He provided a temporary 'blackout' of my own senses and forced me to totally depend on His Holy Spirit's leading. I give thanks and praise to my heavenly daddy for preserving our lives, and showing our family the reality of Psalm 91. We are forever grateful for His amazing love.

“So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.”

~2 Corinthians 4:18

After we had all calmed down and had time to reflect on the incident, I realized how similarly we react to life's other challenges. When we

cannot see what lies ahead, we hit the 'panic button' and then it becomes doubly hard to put our faith into action. Though we may say we believe that God's plans are never to harm us (Jeremiah 29:11), in those moments we forget this biblical promise and instead allow fear of the unknown to cripple us.

But the beautiful truth is that though we may forget daddy God, He is faithful and will never let us go. He promises to go before us and cover us under the shadow of His wings, never leaving us nor forsaking us (Psalm 91). In the midst of the chaos that scary day, God's presence had quieted my fear, brought peace and given me enough confidence to let go of my reigns. He is truly a God of miracles; all-powerful and capable of rescuing us from the most dangerous, impossible situations to safety, if we choose to let Him take control.

God loves us too much to allow harm to befall us without good reason. Yes, we faced danger as a family, but through this experience, we were affirmed of our love for one another, and also realized how much we had

been taking one another for granted. Not to mention how much we were taking daddy God for granted!

Unforeseen situations, sometimes involving suffering, pain or strife, happen every day of our lives. Though we cannot change our circumstances, we can choose to respond by putting our hope and trust in God every step of the way, rather than in ourselves. God's plans may not always be what we favour, but rest assured that they will always be in our

favour. We who walk in His will can always overcome, but if we choose to cling to self-sufficiency, we will never be able to experience that amazing love. Oh what a pity!

We need to let go of things that hinder us from receiving all that has been lavished upon us (1 John 3:1). That means we need to empty our lives of self in order for Him to work mightily in us and through us. And even if that step feels scary, remember, He is always holding on to you and will never let you go.



AMY and her family are very musical and have ongoing songwriting projects together

WON'T LET GO

Amy Lob@ONEKids Ministry

Written 3 Dec 2015 in Queenstown New Zealand

Based on Psalm 91

Who know what lies ahead or where the path may go
Who can tell that I would fall, get hurt or still stand strong?
You alone, only you alone
You said you'll lead me in all your ways, no harm will overtake
You promised that you will keep me safe, under your mighty wings

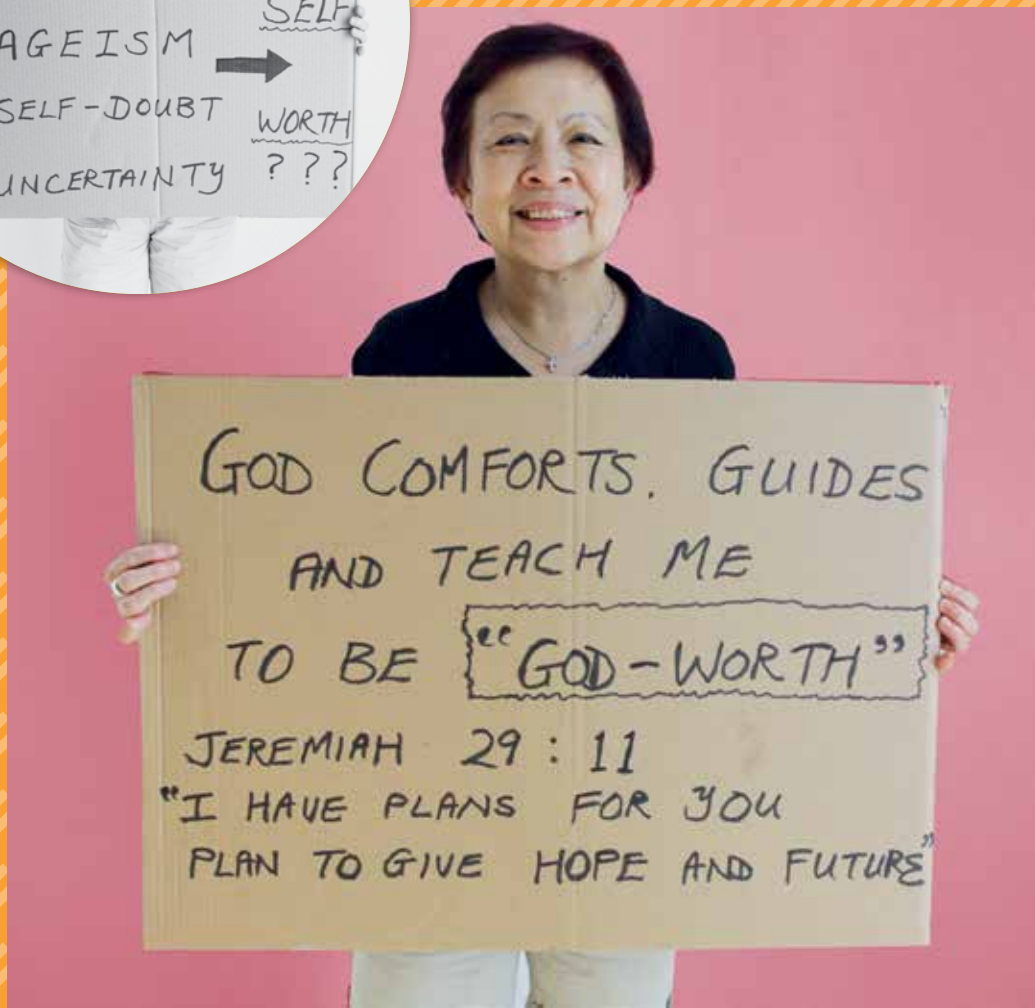
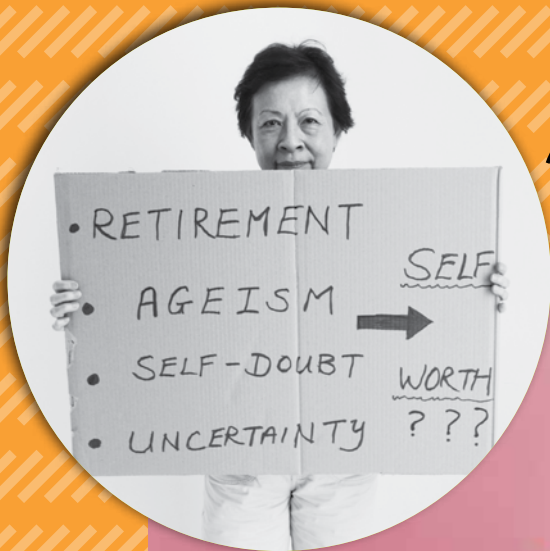
**Hold on, hold on, I'm holding on, never let you go
Hold on, hold on, this love it won't let go.**

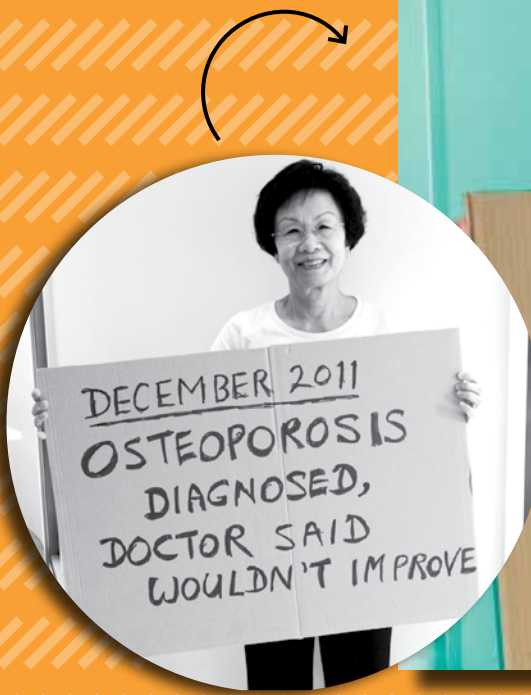
You're the anchor of my soul
In you I stand secure
This love it won't let go

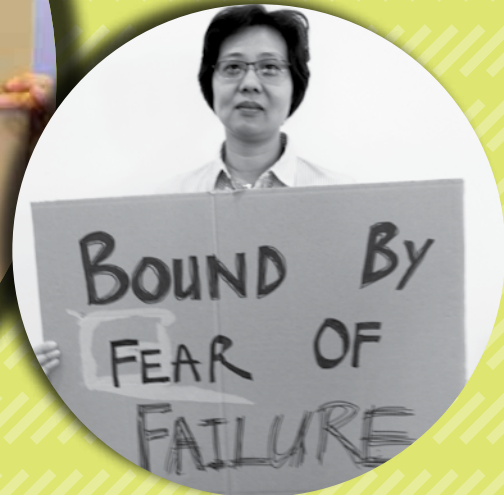
EASTER CARDBOARD

On Easter Sunday this year, 45 individuals from our church shared condensed versions of personal stories attesting to the reality of God working in their lives. They wrote down carefully selected words on two sides of a large piece of cardboard, and presented this on stage for the congregation to read, live, at our worship services. We are unable to print all of their wonderful testimonies here, but you can watch a video recording of the event on www.cmc.org.sg.

TESTIMONIES







IT'S MORE THAN JUST ZUMBA!




BY POH AI LIN



Following our move back to the new CMC church building in June 2014 and in line with the church's vision to be 'passionate for God and to reach out to the community', the MiCC (Moms in Christ Connect) ladies decided to be proactive in our effort to share God's love with our neighbours and friends, especially those who have not come to know and accept the Lord.

Absolutely clueless except for the leading of the Lord, we decided to embark on Zumba Fitness – marrying healthy dance and aerobic fitness with God-centred fellowship and fun.

God was amazing in meeting our needs every step of the way – from providing us with a beautiful new auditorium and ladies with a big heart to serve the community, to a Zumba instructress who was more than happy to teach us at no charge – absolutely FOC!

Our first Zumba session was held on 1 July 2014 and we have been growing since. We see an average of over 30 ladies participating in our weekly Tuesday morning sessions. Over the months, we have witnessed God's magnificent hand at work in the lives of many of these ladies and are so encouraged by His faithfulness and goodness. We have learnt that as humans, we can only make the plans but it is God who ultimately directs and establishes our path (Proverbs 16:9). 

LIVES TOUCHED AND HEARTS TRANSFORMED



ADELE LOW 
Zumba Instructress

Adele is a godsend! This spritely, pint-sized but super gung-ho mother of 5 boys (aged 4 to 16 years) had just received her Zumba certification and was looking for a place to hone her skills. God led her to us because He knew how much we needed one another. Adele had attended church for a brief season as a teenager, but stopped when she got married and kids came along. She believes that being invited to be involved with this project was part of God's divine plan to bring her back to Him.

"Teaching Zumba in CMC and interacting with Christian moms here re-ignited my love for God after all these years," she shared. "I feel the love of God by just spending time with these ladies, and I receive great spiritual support and encouragement through their counsel, prayers and gifts of devotional books. As I shared my life's struggles with them, they pointed me

to Christ and it is in Him that I now find comfort, peace and direction," she said.

Adele confessed that she used to be temperamental, easily angered and very explosive, but as she walks with Jesus daily, she finds herself calmer, less irritable and able to let go of things. She trusts God completely now in all circumstances, big and small, and goes to Him in prayer for everything.

"It is my prayer that my husband and children can see the change in me, know of God's goodness in my life and be led to accept Him as their Lord and Saviour one day," she shared. "I want my entire family to know Christ and come to church."

She thought that by volunteering at CMC she would be blessing others, but now she finds herself on the receiving end. "I have gained so much more from God than I could ever give."

ROSALIND KOH 
Retired school teacher

Rosalind was invited to our Zumba sessions by her neighbour, who is a friend of one of our church members. This active 'granny' who loves to dance and keep fit decided to give Zumba a go since she had time to spare. Little did she know what God had planned for her.

God had actually led Rosalind to Zumba for the purpose of helping her grandson, Timothy, who has Asperger's Syndrome. Through the Zumba group, Rosalind met a Christkidz teacher who later invited Timothy to Sunday School. His confidence and self-esteem grew through the love and patience of the teachers at Christkidz, and he now enjoys coming to church to fellowship with others and learn God's Word every Sunday.

It was also through a Zumba connection that Rosalind found professional help and counselling for her autistic grandson. "God sent me the right people at the right time to help in my situation. He is truly amazing. The immense warmth and sincerity of heart from the ladies here convinced me that it is God who has planned all this. I see Jesus in them."

JUDY ZHANG 
Chinese tuition teacher

Judy was brought to the Zumba fellowship by her neighbour, who is a CMC worshipper. Before joining the group, she knew of the existence of God but was just not too sure or willing to commit to a life with Jesus. But as she spent time weekly with the Zumba folks, she felt prompted to attend church services more regularly. She has since accepted Christ.

"I see the love of God here and am drawn to this one big, happy family of Christ," she shared. "Through their love and concern for me, I too have become more caring towards others. I want to bless others now because I have been blessed."

WINNIE LIM 
Hairstylist

Winnie was introduced to Zumba by her friend whose mother attends the CMC Hokkien Service. She candidly shared that her original intention of participating in Zumba was to "lose weight and look pretty". She was also suffering from insomnia before she started being involved, but is now able to sleep through the night like a baby!

Physical benefits aside, Zumba has led Winnie to see a new side of the Christian faith and community. "This is now like a second home to me," she said. "The people here are all so friendly and genuine in showing their care and concern."

Winnie cannot put a finger on it but adds that somehow, something has changed within her since Zumba. She now has a more positive outlook of life and is more at peace with herself. Coming to church seems to have influenced her to want to be a happier person as she sees joy in the ladies there.




HIS WAYS ARE NOT OUR WAYS

When God placed Zumba in our hearts, little did we know why and for what purpose except that it was a good way of exercising and getting to know our neighbours better. But as we followed His leading, He unfolded His grand plan, little by little.

You see, with God, it's all about people, relationships and reconciling hearts back to Him. It's never just about the program, activity, building or venue. The Zumba exercise

fellowship is merely a platform to reach out to the lost, broken, unchurched and those seeking the peace and love of God.

Through it all, the MiCC team has been more blessed than we could ever bless. How true when God says in His Word, "it is more blessed to give than to receive (Acts 20:35). When you see the hand of God at work first hand and experience the joy of others who come to know of God's love, you know that He is pleased. And that's really all we need to know and work towards moving forward. 



AI LIN is a founding and active member of the Moms in Christ Connect (MiCC) Fellowship which now helms Zumba. To find out more about this fun-loving group of ladies, email ailin_poh@hotmail.com.



A NEW LIFE

BY TIMOTHY WONG

My son Kefa Benjamin Wong is 9 months old now. But a year and a half ago, my wife, Kim and I were told that conceiving a child by natural means would be very difficult because I had been diagnosed with oligozoospermia.

Oligozoospermia is a condition of having a low concentration of sperm in the semen, and it is generally classified into mild, moderate and severe. My condition was diagnosed as ‘severe’, and my sperm also had low motility, which meant that the sperm moved very slowly.

The specialist recommended that we opt for In Vitro Fertilization (IVF) – a process of fertilization by manually combining an egg and sperm in a laboratory dish, and then transferring the embryo to the mother’s uterus.

We were not eligible for a substantial government grant as my wife had reached the age of 40 two months earlier. The first round of IVF

would cost us between SGD \$10,000 and \$12,000, half of which could be paid for via Medisave and the other half in cash. But we were informed that the chances of successful conception per round were only between 10 and 15%.

The funny thing was that months earlier, God had let us know through his Holy Spirit that He would bless us with a baby boy. Moreover, that same week, a lady from our church weekly group had shared with us her vision of my wife with a young boy. We held on to these promises with whatever faith we had. I had also earlier made up my mind not to doubt or be offended with God as I have done in the past. This period was a true test of that decision.


The specialist had arranged an appointment for us with the IVF centre on 8 January 2014. However, one month before this appointment, in December 2013, my wife

missed her period. She was pregnant! It was also her last period window before the 8 January appointment. God had fulfilled His promise!

To put everything in context, this testimony is just one of many in a journey of three and half years where God really proved Himself to be amazing in our lives. In 2010, I was chronically depressed (had been for two decades), chronically overweight and chronically unemployed. I had failed academically and vocationally for the past 20 years.

In 2015, I am depression-free; have been gainfully employed for four and a half years; and have seen the miraculous hand of God provide a wife, a job, a flat and now a son.

Some would say it was my faith in God that brought about this breakthrough. The truth is that I had no faith; I had no strength whatsoever to dig myself out of that pit. It was God’s faith and strength, His relentless pursuit of me that stirred my heart and renewed my mind with the will to overcome. It was not easy; I still fell, I still failed, and made mistakes. But so immense is God’s faithfulness and love that slowly but surely the broken places were mended and my life has changed forever.

Truly with God, even the impossible becomes possible. 

TIMOTHY works as an Admin and Accounts Executive with our church, and enjoys watching his son wake up every morning with an unbelievably cute smile.



SAYING YES TO FULL-TIME MINISTRY

BY PEARLYN KOH

When you see him on stage leading worship, praising God with confidence and conviction, you think, **he's a natural!** Or when he is amongst congregation members, talking and laughing with them, you think, **he's definitely a people-person!** Yet he says, "None of this is natural for me."

Meet Earl Tan, 45, Christ Methodist Church's new Executive Director. He is no stranger to CMC though, having attended this church since he was 14. But still, he thinks there is something most people do not know about him.

"Even though I am on the platform often, I am actually an introvert. A quiet and shy person. But God tends to use us in areas we are most uncomfortable with. I always say, God, I am limited, but please use me."

And so he answered the call to serve full-time again at CMC after a three-year hiatus. Full-time ministry work is no new ground for Earl, having served on staff working with CMC care from 2009 - 2011. He had to return to his business as needs arose, but he continued serving as a lay leader for the church until recently.

"I felt a calling in 2014 to return to full-time ministry," he said. "I asked myself what I wanted to do for the next 20 years or so of my life, and what started off as a feeling turned into prayers – I prayed for a deeper conviction and more willingness."

The process of clarifying and confirming this call took time. Earl spent nine months

thinking carefully about expectations, a change in pay and a change in lifestyle, whilst seeking the counsel of church leaders and friends. Only then did he broach the subject with Pastor Edmund de Souza. This led him to being hired as the Executive Director of CMC in February 2015.

"Ha Ha, it does sound like a huge title, but essentially, my responsibility is to help facilitate and integrate the different ministries to fulfill the long-term plan of the church," he shared. His day-to-day duties include troubleshooting in operational, audio-visual and building issues and different areas of the various ministries.

2015 is also a year of focusing on worship in CMC. "Our church will be more intentionally exploring aspects of worship related to intimacy with God," he explained. We want to encourage our church family to seek and experience God – including supernatural aspects of God – in our personal lives as well as in our families and church ministries. When we face negative circumstances that cannot be overcome, we have to walk in the 'supernatural realm', relying on His Word and His Holy Spirit, rather than our own ability. These are the two wings we really




need in order to be able to fly."

His own high moments in life include watching God move supernaturally. "I am motivated when I see people being changed by God," he shared. "It really encourages me when I see how God changes lives throughout the 12 weeks of the Alpha Course. It's also exciting to see how CMC has developed a real heart to reach out to members of the surrounding community."

The lows in his life have been watching persons he cared about struggle through tough situations without realizing or accepting that God is always there for them to hold on to and help.

What does he do when he needs a little morale booster? "I run. I watch Korean dramas, Japanese anime, and a lot of sci-fi. Oh and food! Good food is THE morale booster for me when I am down!"

If you ask me, it is the love of God flowing from him that makes this self-proclaimed introvert a people-person. Instead of simply saying thank-you and good-bye to this faceless name after we ended our phone interview, Earl kept reminding me "When you see me in church, please come and introduce yourself and your family to me!"

Indeed God moves and God changes us when we move in obedience to Him. 

KEEN TO EXPLORE FULL-TIME MINISTRY?

If you have sensed a calling to full-time Christian ministry in your life, but have not yet spoken to anyone about it, feel free to chat with Earl (earl.tan@cmc.org.sg) or any of our pastors about your options, preferably on a weekday.



PEARLYN, wife of a loving husband, mother of two lovely daughters, just started attending CMC in March 2015 with her family after being away from Singapore for five years.



NEW ON STAFF
**SAMUEL
CHOO**

BY WIL NG

PSST! RUMOUR HAS IT THAT WE HAVE A NEW YOUTH WORKER IN CHURCH!

He's been faithfully serving as chairman of our church's youth ministry for about 3 years so he's a familiar face to many, but we saw this as an opportunity to get better acquainted.

Hi! Please introduce yourself!

Hey! I'm Sam Choo. I am a few weeks into my new role as Youth Ministry Executive in IGNITE. I've been blessed to do what I love.

You look really young! How old are you really?

Haha, I'm 25 now. I do still drink milk in the evening.

Do we know your family?

You might know my parents – Choo Lye Heng and Susan, who used to attend CMC. They now pastor at New Life Vineyard. I have elder siblings, Shawn and Sabrina, who are both married and have families. I am the youngest Choo, so they used to call me “baby Sam”. When I was young, my home was always a place to do church. Care group, prayer and

ministry gatherings were commonplace growing up. I witnessed ministry happening in my own living room.

My first lessons on being a shepherd were watching my dad in ministry. I observed his prayer life and his care for people – it never looked like an organization to me, it was always him dealing with individuals, couples and families. I caught my passion and the intolerance for inaction from mom. If you see any fire and energy in me, that would be her.

My eyes were opened to the hurt experienced both by the people and those in ministry and God was preparing and expanding my heart. So I'm pretty convinced that God set me up for full-time ministry from the beginning. Sneaky.

Who are you dating?

My partner in crime is Samantha Koh. She loves her family, baking, carbs, books, and thankfully, also IGNITE. She is the disciplined, organized and well-tempered one in the relationship. She keeps me from charging full speed ahead of God. Between both our families, the niece/nephew count is currently at five. The kids keep us sharp and train us in the fruits of the spirit.

What's your role in the church team? Is Elena still around?

I have taken over Elena's role (informally referred to as “youth worker”), and am shepherding IGNITE youth ministry in partnership with Pastor Shaun Chong. Elena is now our church's Communications Executive, in partnership with Kevin Wang, our Media Executive.

What was your first experience with God?

I was always a church kid and for most of my childhood it was a secondhand faith. But I started getting real about my relationship with God in secondary school. I had a really difficult time adjusting to teenage student life in ACS. The experience combined with timely words from mentors and one Youth Camp night session – God used those critical months to reveal His love and sense of destiny for me. While I was confused about my identity and grappling with issues of value and significance, I understood that God was pursuing me. I've been walking in that since.

What inspired you to work with the youths?

I love youth ministry. There's so much energy and a huge sense of potential when you

work with young people. At the same time, it's a big mess of distractions and emotions. Expectations on them are high – to score well, to rank higher, to fit in, to be a good person, to impress. And now these standards can be defined for them by anybody, even someone on the Internet. At that age, I spent almost three hours a day practicing to be as good as a Hillsong drummer. I could spend an entire day out in town looking for a checkered shirt I saw on someone famous (this is still possible for me now). Whatever the expression, whether pushing themselves academically, stuck on a computer game or spending lots of time on church activities, all our young people are passionately pursuing something.

How do you think God is moving among our youths today?

God has given every one of our youth a divine purpose (Jeremiah 29:11) and a spirit of power, love and discipline (2 Tim 1:7). He sees the youth of CMC of stepping out to face the giants of fear, comfort and indifference because of their faith in God, just like David. This generation is called to set the example for believers in speech, conduct, love, faith



and purity (1 Tim 4:12). In loving the community, our youth could very well change the atmosphere of schools and households from the inside out. So we partner with the Holy Spirit in capturing and refocusing their attentions and hearts to the One who purposes them.

I believe with all my heart that this is the mandate on our youths and the responsibility for those of us He has called to shepherd and to challenge. Our success is not how many youth we keep in our programs, but how many youth we send out to the community – fueled by their identity and relationship in God, guided within His boundaries and equipped to ignite change. Youth ministry is hard work and a tall order, but I'm glad that I have a part to play together with the Holy Spirit, our church leaders and all our volunteers. It's an amazing ride, no place I'd rather be.

If you could change one thing about church today, what would it be?

We start giving everybody hugs. Every Sunday at the service welcome time. It'll last for 10 minutes and can't be stopped.

What do you think parents really need to know about the youths today?

God sets the highest standard for our youths, both in character and academics. By teaching our youths to put God first, we set the expectation for them to be great disciples in their school life. Our youths need to know that their church and family are partners. We both want, and more importantly, God wants our youth to be amazing examples of Jesus followers, in every area of their lives. These will be young people that make their friends wonder: How come they're so different?

What are your favourite bible verses?

For youth ministry:

“Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith and in purity.”
- 1 Tim 4:12

For myself:

“But if I say, ‘I will not mention his word or speak anymore in his name,’ his word is in my heart like a fire, a fire shut up in my bones. I am weary of holding it in; indeed, I cannot.”
- Jeremiah 20:9

I also love David and Peter's lives. 



WIL NG

Wil is co-founder of IT business solutions company The Shipyard Pte Ltd. (www.theshipyard.sg) and also serves as mentor to a youth care group at CMC.



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HUGE THANKS to everyone who put in so much hard work preparing for this event (and those who shopped hard too!). Together we managed to raise over **\$26,000** for our church rebuilding fund!

Here are some highlights from that memorable day.





A decorative graphic for the 85th anniversary. It features a central circle containing the number '85' in a stylized font. Below the circle, the word 'YEARS' is written in a smaller, sans-serif font. The entire graphic is set against a background of geometric, Art Deco-style lines in gold and dark blue.

85

YEARS

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