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witness



A publication of Christ Methodist Church

EXPLORE

The world of apologetics

MEET

Maestro Rupert Lim
Maestro Kenneth Tan

SEE

CMC blessing her
community!

LOVE IN ACTION

In this ISSUE



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EDITORIAL

CMC Communications Chairperson
Pearly Quah

Editor
Elena May Gudgeon

Layout Artist
Christine Teo (First Printers)

Pastor-In-Charge
Edmund de Souza

Christ Methodist Church
597 East Coast Road
Singapore 429082
Tel: 6345 3934
www.cmc.org.sg

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A WORD FROM THE EDITOR

ELENA MAY GUDGEON




A couple of years back, too few of us had ever taken the time to consider what we could do to become more connected with the people in the neighbourhoods around CMC. Church was the place we gathered on weekends to worship our God and serve one another, and then we went home. The first Hands & Feet campaign in August 2014 was a major catalyst in changing that perspective.

We were challenged to gather in groups and plan ways we could intentionally bless or 'surprise bless' people in our vicinity. Suddenly church wasn't just about gathering at 597 East Coast Road anymore. It was about bringing friendship and joy, a helping hand, and material needs to communities

outside of our meeting venue, regardless of the cost. Suddenly the weekly social media camera roll included photographs of visits to homes in HDB estates, soup kitchens, construction sites; and 'random' giveaways at playgrounds, food centers, shopping malls and carparks.

And it looks like the Hands & Feet initiative is here to stay. Not just as an annual church-organized campaign, but as a grassroots movement that many of us are happy to be a part of all year long, every year. Why confine it just to August when we could be sharing our God-given resources all the time? What's one less sushi meal with our friends, and one less expensive pair of shoes in our closet anyway? What could

a wonderful Japanese meal and a new, well-made pair of shoes mean to someone for whom these are unaffordable luxuries? Or for someone who will be alone at home this Christmas?

There are so many ways we can bring the light of Christ to those who need to see a little sunshine through the (ahem) haze. Let's not wait 'til next August. Surely there's something we can do this week! 

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



A WORD
FROM YOUR
PASTOR

TIME, LOVE AND TENDERNESS

BY PASTOR DAVID GWEE

Our family has a six year old guinea pig. In people years, he's about 60-70 years old. Recently, he was ill, and the vet said we had to administer eye drops 6-7 times a day, so my wife Dawn brought him with her to office so that she could give the eye drops. On

a day when she was not going to be in her office, I brought him to my office instead, gave him the eye drops, and fed him with vitamin C and a medicine mixture. I had to take him out of his cage, put him on some old newspapers and carefully use a needleless

syringe to squirt the mixture into his mouth, as the vet had prescribed.

Some people may ask, "Why go through so much trouble for just a guinea pig?" After all, it's not a dog or even a cat. Well, we believe in responsible pet ownership. In Genesis chapter 1, the bible says that God gave human beings dominion over every living creature. It means that we have to take care of animals, even if they cannot repay what we have done for them.

How much more than animals then, should we care for other people? No matter who they are, they are made in the image of God. There are those who need our help and cannot pay us back. But we cannot refuse to help. Sometimes we are skeptical about those who ask our help – we wonder if they are tricksters or conmen. But unless we know for sure, isn't it better to err on the side of good and help out anyway?

On occasion, people walk into our church and ask for money. This usually happens on weekdays, and when it does, one of the pastors will talk to them to find out how we can help. (Yes, pastors do work on weekdays!) Many of these people asking for

financial assistance have been in trouble with the law or with loan sharks. We almost always err on the side of good and give them a small sum of money to help them tide over the day, advising them to get a job as soon as possible. Are there conmen and tricksters among them? We don't know. But we do know that the Lord has blessed us and that we should not withhold help from those who need it.

What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save them? Suppose a brother or a sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to them, "Go in peace; keep warm and well fed," but does nothing about their physical needs, what good is it? In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.

~ James 2: 14-17

So friends, let us be kind, considerate, compassionate and generous, especially to those who cannot repay. In so doing, we will please God. [W](#)



INTRODUCING RUPERT LIM

**HALLELUJAH!
WE NOW HAVE A
WORSHIP DIRECTOR
AT CMC!**

**HERE'S A LITTLE
'INTEL' WE'VE
GATHERED TO
HELP YOU START A
CONVERSATION WITH
HIM.**

WISDOM ACCRUED

57 years

HERITAGE

Rupert's parents and grandparents are Peranakan ("Love that ayam buah keluah!") and "full-fledged Methodists."

They were members of Geylang Methodist Church and later Pentecost Methodist Church, where Rupert grew up and still has relatives.

PROGENY

Daughter, Ashley, 16. Son, Ethan, 13. "Ashley is creative and loves to draw, sing, and dance. Ethan is musical but more practical (like my wife) and academic."

SIDEKICK

Met his lovely wife Mei Ling in Cornerstone Community Church and married in April 1996. She worked full time at Cornerstone for 21 years and left in July this year to join her husband in worship at CMC.

SCHOOL DAYS

"ACS forevermore!!!" (Rev Malcolm Tan was his classmate.)

MUSIC MATTERS

Started learning violin at the age of 10, and later joined his school orchestra and the Singapore Youth Orchestra. His first job was playing with a quartet that entertained guests at the old Intercontinental hotel on Cuscaden Road. "It was so enjoyable that I stayed for 5 years. Then I started my own group and we played at the Hyatt hotel for another 5 years."

CALL TO MINISTRY

Felt a prompting to commit to full-time ministry while attending Tung Ling Bible College in the 80s, but carried on with his music

career until the prompting returned more strongly years later, when he was about 35. "I struggled so much with that decision because I was doing really well in my career and our group was becoming recognized in the local music scene, playing for government dignitaries and all that. To be honest, at the time my main goals in life were to be recognized as a musician, to buy a nice landed property and to drive a Jaguar!"

BARGAIN BASEMENT

So he bargained with God, "Give me one more year in the music scene?" Promptly after that year was up, God spoke to him again, but he bargained for 6 more months. "You know, those 6 months were the most miserable time in my music career. Somehow, everything just didn't work out, and it was a clear signal that God was asking me to move out of the professional music business."

CHURCH PIONEERING

Rupert left his comfortable salary to help pioneer Bedok Christian Center, which is today's Cornerstone Community Church, toggling between leading cell groups, directing the worship ministry and everything in between (logistics, ushering, missions, Christian education, etc.). "My dad thought I was crazy, and had the 'do you know


what you're getting yourself into?' talk with me, because as staff in a start-up church I had to take a major salary adjustment." With a new marriage and kids on the way, he admits those initial years were not easy.

RELATIONSHIP

He enjoys looking out for God in the little things, like praying for great parking spots, and it's helped him learn to live a life of thanksgiving. He especially appreciates how God answers his unspoken desires. "Once, about 3 years ago, I was reminiscing past missions experiences and wishing I could have at least one missions experience in India, because I'd never been there. Within weeks of that fleeting thought, I was told they needed me on a team to Hyderabad. On another occasion 2 years ago, I found myself missing Myanmar, a mission field I had been overseeing 12 years ago. Within a month, Cornerstone Myanmar started a bible school there and asked me to lecture in it! In life there are many such special moments that inspire worship and we sometimes miss them because we're too preoccupied with the setbacks in life and asking God for big things."

EXPRESSIONS

Though a gifted violinist

and music director, Rupert is more inspired by the heart of the worshipper than music itself. "I remember visiting Cornerstone's Telugu Indian worship service, where they play and sing all worship songs with similar rhythm and fast tempo – their worship music doesn't slow down to a meditative pace at all! But what captivated me was how these congregants were really caught up in worshipping God. I've been to other countries where the churches do not have sound systems or music instruments; where it's so warm everyone is perspiring – but the worshippers seem oblivious to these things because they are too preoccupied with expressing love for God. And I look forward to the day when every person who comes to church in Singapore just wants to tell God how much they love Him." 

If you would like to say hi to Rupert and welcome him to our community, take his family out for a nice makan, or invite him to a music jam just for fun, you can introduce yourself when you see him on Sundays, drop him an email at rupert.lim@cmc.org.sg, or call him at our church office 63453934 during weekday office hours.



LOVE ABOVE LANGUAGE

BY PEARLYN KOH

**"I come to the garden alone
While the dew is still on the roses
And the voice I hear falling on my ear
The Son of God discloses.**

**And He walks with me, and He talks with me,
And He tells me I am His own;
And the joy we share as we tarry there,
None other has ever known."**

This song kept ringing in my head as I entered the front gate of Kenneth Tan's house, or rather, garden. It was almost like a nursery: rows of potted plants neatly lined on the floor, and labels of the various plant names peeping out from lush leaves, vibrant

flowers and winding stems of the many greens that filled up every nook and cranny of the garden.

Kenneth's love of botany is well known in CMC but on this occasion I was visiting his home to learn more about his involvement in our church's Hokkien ministry, which is puzzling to some as he is not a native speaker of the dialect. Against a therapeutic backdrop of trickling water from his indoor koi pond, Kenneth started telling me the most amazing story.

"It was Easter Sunday more than 20 years ago. As the sermon was going on, I heard a voice saying to me 'go see the pastor'." Kenneth initially dismissed it as a distraction.

But the next morning, as he was getting ready for work, he heard the voice say again, "See the pastor."

This time round, he decided to follow that prompting and drove to church, squeezing with some difficulty into the only (small, tight) parking space available that day. A church secretary informed him that the pastor who preached the day before was not in the office right then. Only Mr Alvin Teh, our dialect ministries coordinator (affectionately known by his flock as 'moo shi' – pastor), was in.

As he spoke no Chinese dialect at all, Kenneth took a moment to contemplate whether or not to speak with

this Chinese pastor, whom he had never formally met before. But he decided that he would, since he was already there and had taken all that trouble to park the car in that tiny lot!

As they started talking, Pastor Alvin stood up and exclaimed, "It's you!" in Hokkien.

"I was stunned by that sudden reaction. He explained that he and his ministry leaders had been praying for more volunteers to step up – more specifically, for a pianist to serve the Hokkien congregation," said Kenneth. At that point, the Hokkien worship service had already been running for two years with no dedicated musician to help them. Being a professional pianist, Kenneth was just the right fit for the job!

"Pastor Alvin asked me if God had spoken to me. That was the moment I knew this had to be a divinely appointed encounter. I was immediately convinced to serve in this ministry," said Kenneth.

"The music part was easy. Hokkien worship songs are very catchy and I was able to sight-read and play all the songs quite quickly."





Becoming acquainted with the language and communicating with the congregants was a little harder, although right from the beginning, everyone was very nice to me. Those who could spoke English with me to help me settle in, because they knew I couldn't speak Mandarin or Hokkien. To improve my Hokkien, I wrote words down in my own phonetic spelling and then clarified with the members what the meaning of each word was. My Hokkien vocabulary gradually expanded over the years, and eventually I was able to

give personal testimonies in Hokkien too!"

Kenneth is not the only one in his household serving the Hokkien congregation. "After I got Parkinson's disease, I approached my daughter, Jin, for help to play for the Hokkien congregation," he shared.

"At first I rejected the idea because I didn't speak Hokkien!" Jin said, joining us halfway through the interview. "But as I went back to my room, I heard a voice clearly saying to me, 'You've got to help!', and so I did!"

Jin has since been serving the Hokkien congregation as a pianist for the past two years.

As a sort of musical interlude to our interview, Kenneth urged his daughter to play for us on their grand piano, clapping each time she finished playing a song. "That's a cool shirt you're wearing Dad, is it from Desigual?" she quipped, as she re-joined us at the dining table. I found their relaxed father-daughter repartee very heart-warming. As we continued the interview, Kenneth's wife, Irene, served us a fresh homemade

traditional Peranakan kueh kueh, and we spent a good amount of time chatting with the whole family.

"There is another little thing I would like to share," said Kenneth, just as we were wrapping up the interview. "One morning as I was leaving for a health check-up, I received a call to help out in a performance for a seniors' meeting that same day. I was really keen to help, so I told the caller about the health check and said I would try to rush and make it after my doctor's appointment. But when I reached the polyclinic I saw that it was super crowded and I didn't think I would make it in time. I thought to myself 'If I leave now and skip the health check, I will have to fast from food all over again for the rescheduled appointment – I'd rather not.' So I prayed asking God for help.

"There were at least seven people before me. But somehow, as the queue numbers kept changing, nobody stood up to go in. They must have missed their turn! So before I knew it, it was my turn and I went in and got my tests done. As I

left the polyclinic, there was a taxi waiting just outside and I made it in time for the pre-event music practice. How amazing is that?"

As I wrote this story, fondly recalling everything I had heard and witnessed in Kenneth's beautiful garden home, I was reminded of this verse:

"Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and obey it"

~Luke 11:28



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.



HANDS & FEET 2015

A COMMUNITY BLESSINGS INITIATIVE BY CMC



In August this year, as part of our 85th Church Anniversary celebrations, many of our care groups made a concerted effort to demonstrate God's love in various neighbourhoods through a variety of kind deeds, some of which are captured here in pictures and little stories. The month of celebration is over, but the memories created by these encounters still linger and remind us to carry on our acts of kindness daily. [w](#)





"This was my first time participating in the Hands & Feet initiative, and I didn't really know what to expect. I didn't know if I would mess up and make myself look like a complete fool in front of strangers, or how the people we were giving drinks to would react, but it was actually easier than I expected and people were really nice to me, even when they rejected my offer of a free drink."



The best part of the experience was when the people realized what we were doing and smiled at us. I feel that one of the best things in life is making people smile, and I hope that the people who received free drinks from us that day will be inspired to do acts of kindness to others too."

~ Evan Sim, Secondary 1



“Generally, we have no issues praying with our CG members, church friends or those who asked us to pray for them. But for a complete stranger whom we’ve just knocked on the door to deliver groceries?

During our Hands & Feet initiative this August, our group knocked on the door of a man who was cautious at first, and queried where we are from and how we identified him for groceries delivery. After chatting, he opened up about the multiple chronic and life threatening health issues he is facing, and how it seems to him like he and his wife are under a curse. As he shared, he was emotional and Siew Lee was at that moment prompted by God to pray for him. She didn’t say anything right then but seconds later, our team mate Jennifer said ‘we’ll pray for you’ and Siew Lee took the opportunity to ask if we could pray for him right there and then. To our surprise, he agreed and we prayed for him. He later shared that he believed in Jesus Christ but has not been able to go to church due to his health issues.

It is heartening to know that we have been able to bless someone. Getting out of our comfort zone and routine truly opened our eyes to the needs in the community. We are still praying for those whom we met, and for continuing outreach efforts in the Marine Parade community.”

~Yip Siew Lee, Jennifer Chan and Bob Neo, Church mates



“I didn’t think just handing out groceries was that big of a deal. Some of the first few residents we visited didn’t appear to be really needy and I was quick to dismiss them. I guess I was skeptical. After we finished visiting the units on our list, my team mate Gladys asked if we wouldn’t mind trying one more time to knock on the doors that did not open to us on our first round.

I followed her, albeit reluctantly as I was a little tired. I don’t think it’s by chance that we went back because one particular resident opened his door for us and invited us in without us even asking. Through him I learned that there are some individuals and families that genuinely need our help. After that day I decided to try and get his contact number as I wanted to refer his case to our Social Concerns and Christian Outreach ministry. I hope to be able to check back with him once in awhile.”

~ Colin Wang, Young Adult



OPEN MINDS, HUMBLE HANDS WILLING HEARTS

BY CHEW CHIEN WAY



The Young Adults care group, WAH (which stands for "Walking Alongside Him"), is no stranger to serving the community. As a group, they had visited construction sites to distribute fresh fruits to the workers there, as part of last year's Hands and Feet campaign.

This year however, with some new members in their midst, the group wanted to do something different, and expose themselves to another perspective of community outreach. At the suggestion of one of their members, Audrey Tham, they ended up visiting Willing Hearts, a non-profit organisation that supports the underprivileged and marginalised in Singapore.

"I had visited the Willing Hearts centre a few times and was really excited to share this experience with my CG. Putting together this experience was really simple. Willing Hearts didn't require much coordination with us – all we had to do was sign up at their website. As I understood it, the experience would involve chopping vegetables, scooping



"It is most often where he chooses to place us and what he needs us to do that matters and makes a difference to the world around us, rather than it just being about what we want to do ourselves."

~ Edwin Seah

food in an assembly line, packing boxes of food and delivering them to the needy, so that's what I told my CG," explained Audrey.

This seemed manageable enough for everyone, and they enthusiastically signed up to serve together. But as it turned out, God had other plans for this group. Many other groups of volunteers were already involved in food production work that particular Saturday morning when they arrived, so WAH CG members were assigned by the organisation to other roles. "I expected a soup kitchen with a production line of people doing different things to produce packets of food. What I did not expect was that volunteers would be called upon to help clean the

kitchens too, as well as tutor under-privileged kids!" shared CG member Keith Huang.

For many in the group, these tasks lay beyond the boundaries of their comfort zone. But everyone gamely rolled up their sleeves and stepped up to the work.

LEARNING TO TEACH

Kenneth Wong and young sisters Raena and Elisa Tan were assigned to tutor some of the kids at Willing Hearts. This was a completely new experience for all three of them.

For Kenneth, the toughest part of this tutoring experience was getting the students "to understand the test questions and the step-by-step logical flow to arrive at the answers".

He had not expected the kids to be so interested in learning, and was most gratified when the kids were able to understand and apply their minds to the questions asked.

For 14-year-old Raena and 11-year-old Elisa, being tutor for a day was a similarly gratifying experience. Said Raena, "It was actually fun! I was assigned a student who was keen to learn. She was not strong in her studies, but she was super attentive as I was teaching her. I felt very touched that she was so cooperative and never once complained about having to do so much work. These kids are so appreciative even though they have little. I should learn to appreciate my tuition teacher more!"



Elisa had a slightly more challenging time because her student wasn't too keen on studying, but she eventually managed to find a creative way of engaging her charge. "I had to entertain and coax her for very long. She wasn't interested in studying or doing her work and kept walking around. I ended up 'bribing' her with a break for every math question she did. The experience definitely taught me to be more patient!"

MANY HANDS MAKE CLEAN WORK

Everyone from the CG who had participated that day shared in the task of cleaning a section of the kitchen, before breaking out into smaller groups to tackle various other assignments. Kenneth and a few others helped with dicing raw potatoes and peeling onions to prepare for the following day's lunch, while Chan Pao Yin, Gladys Teng and a few others scrubbed the oily grime off the interiors of two large kitchen steamers. Meanwhile, Tay Wei Jun and Keith assisted with the delivery of the packed lunch boxes to drop-off points around residential blocks.

Gladys very candidly shared that she had not been mentally prepared to wash and scrub huge kitchen steamers with bare hands.



"We were only given a small metal sponge and it felt like such a daunting task. Greasy, soapy water was dripping onto my hair while I was at it and I really wished I had a shower cap! But ultimately it was so rewarding to see everyone hard at work together with the aim of contributing towards better food hygiene for the less fortunate."

GIVING AND GAINING

At the end of the day, as much as the CG contributed to Willing Hearts and the beneficiaries that the organisation serves, the group gained so much from the experience too.

Like Raena and Elisa, Pao Yin found it to be an eye-opener. "A lot of effort and time goes into preparing food for the needy, from washing and preparing ingredients to cooking and delivering

meals. A lot of helping hands are needed in the process and I believe anyone can participate. The most rewarding part for me was knowing that I was indirectly contributing to making someone's life better through simple acts of service."

For Wei Jun, the experience was a humbling reminder to appreciate what he already has. "During my period of unemployment, I remember feeling helpless and lousy at every meal time where I had to spend money to buy food or pay the bills, knowing that I was depleting my savings. On reflection, I realise that my struggle was temporary compared with these needy families that depend on the charity of others for sustenance. I have decided not to take for granted the blessings I have been given, and to share what God has given me with others."

SO WHAT WORDS OF WISDOM DO THE MEMBERS OF WAH CG HAVE FOR THOSE UNINITIATED TO SERVING THE COMMUNITY?

"My greatest take-away from this experience is to take more time out of my day-to-day schedule and seek ways to further contribute to the community God has placed me in."
~ Edwin Seah

"Start small. A small act of kindness can go a long way to blessing someone else. It is a lot easier to do things as a group than as an individual, so get friends to join in!"
~ Keith Huang

"You don't need to have special skills or talent to help someone. Anyone is able to help somewhere, somehow. Just make the time and effort."
~ Chan Pao Yin


"Just do it! You never know what lessons God has in store for you!"
~ Raena Tan

"There are abundant opportunities to serve in any community, so perhaps start with something you feel especially passionate about. Going together with someone or as a part of a group also helps battle the uncertainty and nervousness that some of us have about doing something new."
~ Tay Wei Jun

"Firstly, pray about it, and then talk to a few people or some CGs who have already done it to get some ideas on how you can serve. Be mentally prepared to get your hands dirty and serve the community with a willing heart."
~ Gladys Teng

"Get up, go out!"
~ Elisa Tan

Looking ahead, the group will definitely be doing something like this together again. CG leaders Audrey and Keith were very encouraged by their members' responses before, during and after the activity. "God is capable of giving us a willing heart to serve. People can truly surprise you about how much they are willing to serve and help – even if you think they are not willing!" they shared.

Indeed, God has a plan and purpose for each one of us, and we need only open our minds, humble our hands, and have willing hearts to heed His call. 



CHIEN WAY is a lifelong Eastie who loves to eat, travel and bask in the company of her two nutty dogs, Toby and Ariel.

ABOUT WILLING HEARTS

Willing Hearts is a secular, non-denominational and non-affiliated charity that aims to improve the lives of the underprivileged and marginalised by providing them with their "daily bread" and to help them become useful members of our society. Its beneficiaries include the elderly, the disabled, low-income families, children from single-parent or otherwise poverty-stricken families, and migrant workers in Singapore. Services provided by Willing Hearts include a soup kitchen that prepares, cooks and distributes about 4,500 daily meals to the needy, 365 days a year; tuition services for needy primary school children; and bereavement services.

As the organisation is run primarily by volunteers who are supported by a small team of full-time staff, they are constantly on the lookout for additional helping hands. For more information and to volunteer, please call Mr Tony Tay at 6476 5822, email willingheartssingapore@gmail.com, or visit their website at www.willinghearts.org.sg

Their Soup Kitchen is located at:

11 Jalan Ubi Blk 6, #01-51
Kembangan – Chai Chee
Community Hub
Singapore 409074

HE KNOWS OUR NEEDS

BY MERGIE P GUILLEN



My family did not have much money when I was growing up. By the time I turned 13 years old, my father was very reluctant to continue paying for my education.

“Girls do not need to study so much,” he told me one day. “Once you get married you will be at home all the time, so no point to study,” he told me.

I wanted so much to continue from Primary School to Secondary School, so I tried talking to my mother but she was not able to help me. That night I cried so hard. I didn’t know what else to do so I went to my backyard garden and looked up at the sky and talked to God. I didn’t know much about God then, so it was a very simple, childlike and desperate prayer. “I need help,” I said. “I want to continue studying but nobody can help me. Only you can help me!”

That night after I fell asleep, I saw Jesus in a dream. He walked out from a beautiful sunrise towards me, and then he walked past me. I felt the desire to follow after him, so I said “Lord I want to follow you”, and then followed him. He walked into a house, and I followed him in by jumping in through a window at the side. I approached where he was sitting and bowed low to Him. He tenderly put his hand on my head, as if he was accepting my worship, and then stood up and walked out of the house back into the bright sunrise. Right then my desire to follow Him intensified by 100 times. “Don’t leave me here, I can’t

survive, I need you!” I cried and cried. Then suddenly I woke up.

One week later my uncle who lived in the city visited us and had a long talk with my father. He offered to pay for me to finish studying at secondary school. I remembered the desperate prayer I had said in the garden that night, and the intense dream I had afterwards, and realised that this was Jesus answering my prayer.

With my uncle’s financial help I was able to finish secondary school and make it all the way to university. I took night classes at a university in the city, while working at my uncle’s house during the day in order to pay for my own studies. It was a hard struggle but it really taught me to lean on God and trust Him to strengthen and guide me. After 4 years I graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Commerce with a major in Accounting. I was so happy that I had reached my goal, with God’s help, and three days after my graduation someone hired me to work in an accounting and auditing firm. It was a very

busy, high stress job, but I accepted it as what I needed to do in order to survive.

Sometime later, my sister Nenette shared that she felt something hard growing inside her chest, so I brought her to a government hospital for a check-up and my worst fears were confirmed – it was breast cancer. The doctor scheduled her operation for a week later, and we went there without having told our parents because the news would have devastated them. They didn’t have the money to pay for her long-term treatment. Neither did we, but at least I had the assurance of Jesus in me.

I was asked by a nurse to make payment for the cost of the operation before they brought her in. That was almost all the money I had. While we were waiting outside the operating theatre, I asked my sister if she had accepted Jesus Christ as her personal Lord and Saviour. She said yes, so I encouraged her to pray and ask God for healing. She didn’t know how to and just kept quiet and looked at me, so I said, in faith, “I believe God will heal you. He will remove the

growth in your breast.” I was trying to reassure her, and also myself.

After the nurse brought her into the operating theatre, I went into a restroom, closed the door and shouted to God for help because I was so scared and desperate. “Lord my sister is now lying on an operating table, please help us! I don’t have any more money to pay for chemo therapy after this operation if she needs it. We need a miracle. Help us!”

As I cried for help, I heard a voice that seemed far away say “Don’t worry.” I opened the restroom door and looked outside, but there was nobody around. Through a glass window I could see my sister still lying on the operating table, but the doctor was not doing any surgery. He seemed to be pressing the area and checking for something. I didn’t know what was going on, but awhile later they brought my sister back out without having done the surgery and she told me the doctor could not find the growth inside her breast at all! He had asked my sister to decide whether he should cut open half the breast to look for the growth because it



Mergie's employer and former ward, Mdm Fock Siew Lan and her mother.

seemed to have disappeared, but she decided not to.

I was in shock! I hugged her and cried and gave thanks to God for answering my prayer. I couldn't believe that Jesus had given my family such a big and immediate miracle, because I'm just an ordinary woman, not especially knowledgeable about God's word or promises. In fact, even though my family is Catholic, we have never had a bible in our house, so I am not used to reading the bible. I have only talked to God every night since I was young.

After this amazing experience, I decided to surrender my life to God completely, and get to know Him more intimately by

studying His Word. Though I continued to encounter a lot of challenging circumstances and faced the temptation of pursuing material wealth, I was convinced that only God could provide for my true needs (1 Chronicles 29:11) and I was determined to keep my life free from the love of money and be content with what I had. He has promised to never leave us or forsake us, so what could I ever lack? I can now say with confidence "The Lord is my helper, I will not be afraid. What can mere mortals do to me?" (Hebrews 13: 5-6)

A few years later I applied for work in Singapore as a domestic helper. I went to the agency to collect my ticket with no money in

my bank account at all, and went to the airport. As I was being interviewed by the immigration officer, I prayed in my heart asking for God's grace and help to make it to Singapore. The flight was at 3.30pm and the officer finally let me in at 3.20pm. I boarded the plane just as they were closing the waiting room gates. I was so relieved that God had answered my prayer.

The agency in Singapore picked me up when I arrived in Singapore, and from that point onwards it was really a hard struggle, and I prayed hard every day and night asking God for help. I waited one month to be employed and then the breakthrough came when my agent sent me to work in Madam Fock

Siew Lan's family. I am so blessed because she is such a kind and understanding employer. For 10 years I looked after her mother, who then passed away in 2007, but even after that my caring employer has allowed me to stay and continue working in her home.


One Sunday many years ago, my employer's friend, Mrs Pee See Hua, brought me to CMC because it is near our home in Dunbar Walk. I was introduced to Grace Fellowship, and since then I have been attending and serving as an usher at the 8.30am traditional service before spending the rest of Sunday morning with the ladies at Grace Fellowship, serving as a worship leader.

In 2004, my employer encouraged me to join a water colour painting course conducted by Mr Cheng Yoke Khoo at CMC. During that course I developed a passion for art, and was encouraged by my employer who told me I have a talent for it. This is natural because I come from an artistic family – both my father and brother are artists. With the support and encouragement of my employer, one year later I decided to enrol in a painting night course at the Nanyang

Academy of Fine Arts. I'm still painting today, by borrowing library books to look at the artwork of others for inspiration and to help me develop my own style. I am very thankful for this gift that God helped me discover through CMC, and I know that He must have had a purpose for giving it to me, so I'm now praying for ideas and opportunities to use my love for painting to help others.

In 2011, it was my joy to be baptised in CMC, and now in 2015 it is my joy to be able to share with you about my journey with God so far.

From all I have gone through I can see that He really loves me. He answered my prayers and guided me to reach my goals. Even though I was poor, I did not need to worry because God provided for all my needs.

No matter how rough the road gets in life, let us always give thanks to God. He has a plan and a purpose for our life, and a destiny only He can see. If we stay close to Him we will be able to experience the warmth of his bright sunshine piercing through the dark clouds of all difficulties. 



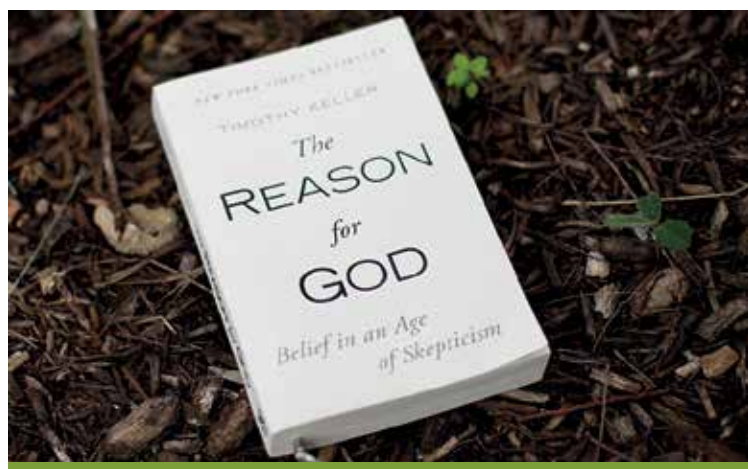
MERGIE is from the Philippines and is currently a member of our international ministry, Grace Fellowship.

UNAPOLOGETIC ABOUT APOLOGETICS

BY WIL NG

When I was an atheist, I used to have fun talking to Christians about God. Or rather, I used to have fun trying to convince Christians that they truly believed in a load of rubbish. I thought the Christian faith was like a little bubble that would burst if you examined it a little too closely, or asked too many difficult questions about it. So I enjoyed testing Christians with questions like: “How can you prove the existence and nature of the Christian God?”, “How can you prove that Jesus is God?”, “How do you know that your Bible is legitimate?” and “If God is so good, then why is there evil and suffering?”

I admit, back then, it would have been impossible to argue me into becoming a Christian. Even if someone did provide me with a logically valid answer to all four of the questions above (nobody did), I would probably have held on to my fundamental atheistic worldview. After all, becoming a Christian is about living a life in relationship with God and goes beyond



simply knowing that God exists. (Jas 2:19)

Even after I had accepted Christ for myself and had attended church and bible study courses for a couple of years, I still felt unprepared to answer those difficult questions. Instead of being the difficult atheist, it became my turn to be the shifty Christian who would quietly slink away when it came down to having to explain and defend my faith to non-believers.

While talking about God to skeptics, critics, and non-believers can sometimes be difficult, we must not forget

that our God is also the creator of math, science, and logic. Since He created us to have rational and logical minds, He must have also intended us to use our minds fully in rationale and logic to love and seek His ways! (Matt 22:37)

Defending our faith isn't new to Christianity; the apostle Paul himself had to defend the gospel repeatedly before the crowds, religious leaders, and authorities (Acts 22-24). This practice of dealing with the critics and criticisms of the Christian faith is more commonly referred to as apologetics.

While apologetics helps us understand the rational and logical arguments for our beliefs, it goes beyond simply winning an argument. The challenge for a true disciple is to help the harshest critics examine their own deep-seated assumptions and resentments. This requires the disciple to be humble, caring, and sincere even as the critic tries to make the disciple appear to be an overzealous religious bigot.

Many difficult questions in life cannot be simply dealt with a cold-hearted rational answer. Someone who asks “If God is good, then why do good people suffer?” may have just lost a loved one and still be trying to cope with the loss. As we defend our faith, we also need to help others deal with their own hurts and agonies in order to make disciples of Christ.


Learning more about apologetics can help us strengthen our faith in Christ. We should never have to suspend logic and mind

when we step into church or listen to a sermon. To the contrary, we should take the time to learn, analyse, study, and critique our own beliefs and assumptions. Instead of waiting for a casual critic to point out our own lack of understanding and intellectual laziness, we must be passionate about discovering the truth that can satisfy both the human mind and spirit.

Apart from the apostle Paul himself, there are many well-known Christian apologists from whom we can learn from. Ravi Zacharias, Timothy Keller, and CS Lewis are exemplary examples of individuals who have devoted their lives to helping people deal with difficult questions of the faith.

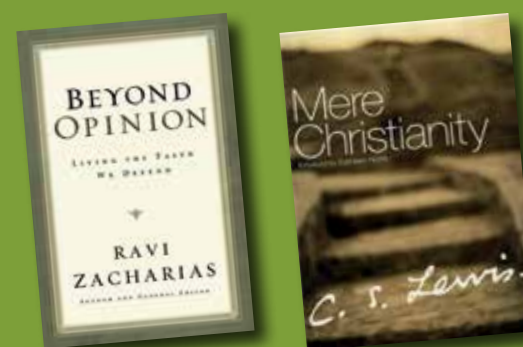
While most of us will probably never be as good as Paul in making his case

for Christ, we should at least be sufficiently prepared to deal with the more common questions. We should not cower away from opportunities to dispel the notion that Christianity is an illogical belief in God. Instead, we must be prepared to use such opportunities and conversations to minister to, and share the gospel with others.

CMC's Witness & Evangelism ministry chairperson, Andrew Wee, also conducts apologetics courses once in awhile (of which I am a beneficiary!) and works with our care groups to equip our members in this important area of discipleship. If you are keen to participate in a course or invite him to your care group some time, please email or call him at andrew6262@gmail.com / 97426262. 



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.



If you're interested in learning more about apologetics, here are some books that can get you started:

- The Reason for God: Belief in an Age of Skepticism, by Timothy Keller
- Beyond Opinion - Living the Faith We Defend, by Ravi Zacharias
- Mere Christianity, by CS Lewis



Do you desire **FINANCIAL WISDOM?**

“Yours is the mighty power and glory and victory and majesty. Everything in the heavens and earth is yours, O Lord, and this is your kingdom. We adore you as being in control of everything. Riches and honor come from you alone, and you are the ruler of all mankind; your hand controls power and might, and it is your discretion that men are made great and given strength.”

~ 1 Chronicles 29: 11-12 (TLB)

Little known to many, the Bible actually has more to say about money and possessions than any other topic. The scriptures contain over 2,350 verses dealing with money and 18 of Jesus’ 38 parables are related to financial matters. Money and the proper managing of it is certainly something close to our Father’s heart.

The Crown Biblical Financial Study is a 10-week course which teaches practical, day-to-day financial principles based on God’s word. It offers Godly wisdom to financial freedom – a release from the bondage of debt, greed, dishonesty and corruption. Many lives have been strengthened spiritually, marriages healed and families restored through the application of this study.

Crown’s teaching stems from the fundamental principle

that everything belongs to God – we are mere stewards. As stewards, we need to know how God wants us to spend His money and use it wisely for His Kingdom’s purposes. True financial freedom is knowing that God owns it all, finding contentment with what He provides, and being free to be all that He created us to be.

The Crown Biblical Financial Study offers solid bible-based teachings on how to tackle financial challenges and come up with a plan to eliminate debt, save and invest. It also covers other relevant topics such as honesty, giving, work, budgeting and sowing into eternity.

Many in CMC who attended the course in 2015 have since reaped the benefits of its practical and effective approach to handling money.



Alan Yong, Retiree

"Although I am not unfamiliar with budgeting, saving and spending plans, the 10-week journey together with course participants has deepened my awareness of dealing with money and possessions – God's way. It has reminded me to be a good and faithful steward of His possessions. It has also changed my perspective on money and giving."

Albert Loh, Sales & Marketing Manager

"The course has taught me to focus my eyes on Jesus, the provider of everything in my life – even the financial aspect. It has driven me to understand the biblical aspect of money. Now, instead of focussing on what money can do for me, it has shifted my perspective to how the Lord wants me to use His money."

Fera enda. M, Domestic Helper

"The Crown study taught me how to manage my money wisely. My relationship with God has improved as a result and I feel much more contented. Today, I pause before making decisions concerning money and I bring everything to God in prayer first. I am now calmer and have more peace whenever a money situation arises. I now write down all my expenditure so that I can see clearer and am able to control my income and expenses better."

Eddie Kooi, Business Owner

"The study helped me change the way I operate my business. I learnt that God owns my business and He is in control."

Kingsley Neo, Businessman

"I dislike reading but when I was preparing for the course, I read everything. It is a miracle for me! In the study, I realised that my relationship with God is the most important thing in my life. My only regret is that I did not embark on this study 12 months earlier when I had the opportunity."

Chin Tze Wei, Business Consultant

"During the course, I managed to reduce my 30-year housing loan to 8.5 years, and then down to 7 years. I realised the interest portion was horrendous. I now plan to reduce my housing loan every 6 months."

Peggy Kuo, E-Commerce Specialist

"The course has completely changed my perspective on finances and my attitude towards money. By transferring all my wealth and assets to the Lord, I was immediately freed from worrying about my financial burdens. I now understand that we are just God's stewards and that our Lord blesses us abundantly. By acknowledging that we are the managers of God money, I am now more diligent in managing and evaluating each financial matter and decision."

Winifred Khong, Doctor

"I became less anxious about money because the course taught me that while we can do everything humanly possible, it is God who is ultimately in control of our past, present and future."

Lawrence Kwok, Accountant

"I learnt how to use money wisely from a Christian standpoint. I also found myself drawing closer to God as a result of the study. I was in the midst of doing my tax return during the course – it helped me be crystal clear and honest in all my financial declarations."

DHM, newcomer to Grace Fellowship who joined just to learn what the Bible has to say about money

"I learned how to manage my money before God. My heart changed because I now feel I have enough – that my salary is enough – and I put God in all my decisions. As a result of the study, I try to help the poor by giving food to the woman who sweeps the road every Saturday morning."

NEW COURSE STARTING IN 2016!

CMC will be conducting the Crown Financial Bible Study course in the 1st quarter of 2016. Dates and registration details will be made available in church and online Nov-Dec this year. For further queries, please email Elaine Shu at shusukping@yahoo.com.sg

CHRIST METHODIST CHURCH 85TH ANNIVERSARY FUNDRAISING GALA DINNER

85 YEARS OF HIS GLORY AND GRACE

In conjunction with our 85th Church Anniversary weekend celebrations, CMC members and friends came together at the Tang Plaza Marriott Plaza Hotel ballroom on Saturday 30 August for a memorable dinner and art auction, which raised a total of **\$294,429** for our church building fund.



Not only did our former pastor Leslie Quahe fly back to Singapore from Thailand for this event, he also contributed an original art piece for auction!

Church members Andrew Wee, Angelia Foh, Chua Wee Kiat, Chloe Cheng, Eng Keng, Junie Foo, Rowena Too, Serene Chee, and Yap Beng Huat also contributed art pieces.

Quality tableware manufacturers Luzerne and Landex also collaborated with water colour artist Ng Woon Lam to donate an SG50 Golden Jubilee Platter from their collection.





A big thank you also to Reverend Dr Gordon Wong for gracing our event as Guest of Honour; our sister churches Ang Mo Kio Methodist Church, Cairnhill Methodist Church, Faith Methodist Church, Bedok Methodist Church, Christalite Methodist Chapel, Covenant Community Methodist Church, Living Hope Methodist Church and Methodist Church of the Incarnation for sponsorship support; corporate sponsors First Printers, Daiya Engineering & Construction Pte Ltd and K2LD; and all CMC members who helped or attended and gave so generously to this fundraising initiative. We couldn't have done it without you!



A THRILL OF HOPE

THE WEARY WORLD *rejoices*



A CHRISTMAS CONCERT

Featuring Aubrey Suwito and Friends

Treat your friends to a jazzy Christmas concert featuring Aubrey Suwito, a multiple award winning songwriter, producer and music director from Malaysia who will be performing together with his sister, Juwita, and their wonderfully talented band of friends.

8PM //

WEDNESDAY, 16TH DECEMBER 2015

THURSDAY, 17TH DECEMBER 2015

**CHRIST METHODIST CHURCH
SANCTUARY**

FREE ADMISSION



Ken Chung



Juwita Suwito



Aubrey Suwito



Patrick Leong



John Thomas