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FLOODGATES

GEARING UP...

FLOODGATES

October - December 2019

Message From Senior Pastor

1-2	IMPACT2020 - A Different Spirit
Events	
3	IMPACT2020 You.Me.theNations
Features	
4-7	Stories Of People -
	Building Through Community
	Excel Services (CES)
8-11	What Happens When We Serve God
12-17	Frontliners For Christ
18-25	The Story Of Ruth
Message From Founding Senior Pastor	
26-28	A Brief Moment In Time
DUMC Stories	
29-30	Reflection Of God's Heart
31-32	No Excuse Not To Share!
33-35	Am Back Home
36	God's Plan For Me

37 DUMC Congregations & Ministries

Damansara Utama Methodist Church

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The church office is closed on Mondays.

From The Editorial Team:

We are living in an era of constant change, and we witness something new every day, to the point that we may be numb to it. Nothing surprises us anymore. With instantaneous information available through social media, and the constant bombardment of "news", today's generation can be overwhelmed by what used to be considered "unusual" or "shocking" in times before, and begin to believe that this is "acceptable" and "normal". But it should not be "acceptable" nor "normal".

Romans 12:2 tells us "Do not conform to the pattern of the world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is – His good, pleasing and perfect will."

Floodgates was created to be a vessel, a platform where we can publish articles and testimonies to bless and inspire God's people towards Godly renewal of the mind mentioned by the apostle Paul, and which will stand out from the daily bombardment of confusing and possibly unhelpful "information".

In Floodgates, we, as a Church, the Body of Christ, can share stories and bear witness to God's amazing grace and give Him the glory. Also, we can remind ourselves that we are nothing without Jesus, that we would just be part of a dying world and hopeless.

On the cover, "G" is at the centre of the title, Floodgates, just as we need to place God at the centre of our all. Our name Floodgates originates from Malachi 3:10 **"Bring the** whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this," says the Lord Almighty, "and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that there will not be room enough to store it."

Father God, may we all, children of God, be blessed when the "floodgates of heaven pour out..." and be reminded that the presence of God in our lives is the blessed life.

IMPACT2020 A DIFFERENT SPIRIT

by Chris Kam, Senior Pastor

As you enter into the new year of 2020, what comes to mind as faith stretching? As I am challenged to think of something I have never tried, do something I have never done and go somewhere I have never been, I am reminded immediately about some people in the Bible. How many of you remember these names in the Bible? Shammua, Shaphat, Igal, Palti, Gaddiel, Gadi, Ammiel, Sethur, Nahbi or Geuel. These were the leaders of the different tribes of Israel. It probably would not have rung a bell for most of us. But I am sure you have

heard of these two other names: Joshua and Caleb. They were part of the twelve spies who were sent to spy on the Promised Land. All of them reported it was indeed a land flowing with milk and honey, with evidence of the fruits. But all except two, Joshua and Caleb, were afraid to take God at His word for His promises because there were giants in the land. These two men stood up above the rest to challenge them to have greater faith in God. (Num 13-14)

Having been promised a new land that was fertile and fruitful, and having confirmed it through the spies, there was still the doubt whether God could deliver because of the fear of what they saw in the natural. Indeed, the fact of the matter was that there were powerful giants in large fortified cities (Num 13:28-29) but Caleb, with such confidence in the promises of God, took to heart that it would be the Lord who would fight for them. *Then Caleb silenced the people before Moses and said, "We should go up and take possession of the land, for we can certainly do it." (Num 13:30)*

Our natural eyes see the obstacles and hindrances, but our spiritual eyes will see the Lord's hands at work as in the case of Prophet Elijah in 2 Kings 6:17 when God opened the eyes of his servant to see a hill full of horses and chariots of fire surrounding them. The Israelites should have known by then



Our natural eyes see the obstacles and hindrances, but our spiritual eyes will see the Lord's hands at work... that all spiritual battles are fought and won by the Lord. They experienced this when they were vastly outnumbered and outpowered by the Egyptian army. *The Lord will fight for you; you need only to be still.*" (*Ex 14:14*)

What are these giants in our lives? First, they are our own inadequacies – no talent, no resource and no skill. We are simply not good enough. Second, we believe it when others say we are not good enough, or we are immersed for too long in an atmosphere that is not faith-building. Third, we lack the passion or will to want to do anything beyond our circumstances because we have been too comfortable and certainly do not want to rock the boat.

Unfortunately, the lack of courage caused the entire population of Israel to suffer. Those aged twenty years old and above did not have the opportunity to enter the Promised Land, except Joshua and Caleb. They were to wander in the wilderness for 40 years until everyone had died before the next generation was permitted to enter. Our decisions have a direct impact for the next generation. What we do, or not do, carries an impact for our children. This is a sobering thought, that our desire to blend in with the norm where radical Christianity is not the main course has a devastating result on the next generation.

The big idea is that we are to be different from the world, to break away from the pack.

What then is the challenge? To have a different spirit! (Num 14:24) *"But because my servant Caleb has a different spirit and follows me wholeheartedly ..."* What is this different spirit? Different bible versions translate it in different ways: different attitude (NLT), different kind of man (TLB), isn't like the others (CEV), was different (ERV). The big idea is that we are to be different from the world, to break away from the pack. This involves three things:

First, we are to be purpose-driven; not our purpose, but knowing what God has in store for us. This would need us to keep in step with His Spirit (Gal 5:25). Having a different spirit means to see God's purpose in spite of the giants.

Second, it is to have a confidence that God will fight for us because He has said so. *"My Presence will go with you." (Ex 33:14) "...for we can certainly do it." (Num 13:20)* It is not a spirit of self-reliance but a deep dependence on God.

Third, we are to be passionate in following God wholeheartedly. There should never be 'lukewarmness' in the life of a Christian and there should be no faltering and hesitation in our Christian discipleship because our whole life is a preparation for what God has in store for us. I am sure that Caleb did not come to that level of faith in a short time. The Lord had groomed him over the years as he stayed on course in being faithful to God.

So, the challenge to you in the coming years of IMPACT2020+ (the plus sign is to help us understand that it is a lifelong challenge) is to embrace a different spirit as you embark on this amazing journey to the Promised Land. This different spirit can only be possible when we keep in step with His Spirit: *Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. (Gal 2:25)*



by Pr Kelvin Yong, Missions Pastor

Events

It has always been my heart's desire to see the whole church mobilised for missions in our communities, in this nation and to the nations beyond Malaysia. Missions is a core DNA of our church and when Pastor Chris shared about the idea of IMPACT, my heart resounded with what was shared. It is apt for us to step out in faith and obedience to where God wants to take us as we celebrate DUMC's 40th Anniversary in 2020.

In order to support the goal of IMPACT, we have set up a task force that has been working hard the past few months, to prepare what is necessary to ease for us the process of reaching out. They will continue to do so throughout this year and the next, working to stir the hearts of all members for missions. We have prayed together and identified the specific churches and ministries that we would like to partner with, and I believe that God will do a powerful work in the places that our cell groups will visit, as well as in our hearts.

The purpose of this initiative is not so that we perform our duties in our respective projects for the sake of doing so, but my prayer is that we will catch the heart of God for the world, and partner with Him in the amazing work that He is doing. Our missions mandate is to commission and send one percent of our members as full-time workers to the mission fields. We are currently far from that goal. Perhaps by the end of IMPACT, there will be some among us who will be challenged to a full-time calling in missions. Let us stay prayerful and open up our hearts to whichever way God is challenging us personally.

We are currently at the Academy phase of IMPACT. This is a crucial time for us as we prepare for the coming years. The Academy is aimed at equipping us and our respective cell groups for the work that is ahead. We will be giving every participant the training and practical tools that we can use as we sow and minister to those we are reaching out to. We have run 30 Academy sessions so far, and 2,000 people have signed up for them. I encourage those who have not yet signed up to do so soon as it will be a huge blessing to you and God's people.

Please remember to pray for our missionaries, and the churches and ministries that are faithfully serving God in the hard places that they have committed themselves to. Talk about the IMPACT project in your cell group and sign up together to go where God has placed in your hearts. Finally, it is appropriate for me to invite everyone to step up in the way that we minister. Be prayerful in every aspect, be prophetic in our ministry, and be practical in our giving to God's people.

God bless you.

Pr Kelvin Yong Missions Pastor, DUMC by Rakesh Kumar, CES Writing Team

STORIES OF PEOPLE

Building Through Community Excel Services (CES)

SIMON

From Jailbird To An Inspirer Of Hope

Simon Khew is a very friendly person. At first glance, one would not suspect the darkness of his life in the past. But getting to know him and his story quickly revealed a past life of unhealthy habits and the stigma they brought. For three decades, his world was all about drugs and prison. He started smoking cigarettes at the age of 14. Marijuana became the poison of his choice at the age of 17 while working at Singapore's Keppel Shipyard. Later, while in Japan he picked up heroin. Sin begets sin, from ecstasy pills to gambling, and then into trouble with the law. He found himself retreating to Malaysia when things just got worse. His jail stints steadily increased, putting a strain on his relationship with his family, especially disappointing his ageing mother.

After many tears and heartaches, his family managed to get him enrolled at Breakthrough Drug Rehabilitation Centre (BDRC) run by CES. Before coming to Breakthrough, Simon was a staunch Buddhist. He did not care much about Jesus Christ or the Bible. At Breakthrough, he experienced a personal encounter with Christ for the first time. The Word of God became the vehicle for his road to recovery as he metamorphosed from a hard, broken man into someone who has grown to love Christ and His people selflessly.

Now that he has successfully gone through the rehabilitation program, he can look back with relief at the mess that he has chosen to leave behind. Simon is now leading a disciplined life. He is currently a member of staff at BDRC, giving back to the community, helping the many who come. He himself is an inspiration to other students going through the programme at the Centre, journeying with them and encouraging them to change. By God's grace, he is able to not only encourage the brothers in the Centre; he has also been restored to his family, especially in his relationship with his mother. He has indeed found salvation and is living in the continuous grace of Christ. A verse in Acts 4:12 reminds him that it is only because of Christ that he is alive and restored: 'Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved'.

Repaired, Rebuilt, Raised Up And Restored (Isa 58:12)

Engaging in a whirlwind of activities for Jensen Wong is a normal Friday occurrence - from organizing the bakery team, baking bread and cakes, doing kitchen work, to whipping out dishes for dinner and later ushering students for worship while he plays the guitar. He shoulders numerous responsibilities as a staff member of the Breakthrough Rehabilitation Center (BDRC).

Six years ago, Fridays were his stairways to a drug-fuelled heaven. Often, he used methamphetamine (ICE) and ecstasy to reach his 'paradise' with the help of some psychedelic or techno music. This was the experience of many in his shoes! Jensen got involved in drugs as a means of escapism from the depressing realities that were rooted in his relationship with his father.

"My father was always busy working, having no time for me. Whenever he was at home, it was to either scold me or hit me for the slightest mistake I made," Jensen said. He sought solace in multiple types of drugs, moving from ketamine to ICE.

Jasmine, his sister, was the only Christian in the family, and seeing that he was in trouble, she got in touch with Pastor Samuel (Sam) Krishnan of BDRC and enrolled her brother there.

> Overwhelmed by his sister's concern and the Pastor's guidance, a change of heart took place within Jensen, and he accepted Jesus as his Lord and Saviour. He changed from being a normally shy person to a person who explored new territory like taking up baking, playing football and leading in worship. With this change came a new set of responsibilities as Jensen became a staff member after completing his two-year programme. His transformation was so evident that it enticed two of his cousins with similar issues to sign up for the programme in Breakthrough. Now the family is restored. There is a new found peace and hope for a bright future.

JENSEN

Game Over, Life Begins

James Ng was a bright soft-spoken young lad and had all he needed as an average teen: understanding parents, decent school and an intelligent mind. If only his smooth ascent to a successful adulthood was not interrupted by an unhealthy addiction to computer games.

Sadly, James, then 15, disconnected himself from the real world when his addiction to computer games made him skip school and lose interest in everything else. His studies suffered and skipping meals led to the deterioration of his health. In desperation, his mother went to the police station to seek advice where she was informed of Breakthrough which would be able to help her son. Contact was made and a plan was hatched.

Taken from home by BDRC's leader, Pastor Sam, James was brought to the centre to begin a new season in his life unbeknownst to him. It was there that he was introduced to the concept of a loving God. Shortly after, a change of heart began as God took centre stage, and James surrendered his life fully to God. James felt an indescribable peace even through the turmoil of his parents' separation.

On the academic front, as James had been suspended from his previous school, he began the search for a new school. Most were unwilling to accept him. Devastated, James brought his frustration to God. "I cried out to God so that I would be able to go back to school again," he said. His desperate voice was heard when a door was opened for him at Frontier Learning Centre (a private school). His life began to get better. He explored new interests as he acquired new skills at the Centre such as baking, cooking, hiking, running and music. He also learned to play the guitar and piano. With God's help, James scored 9As in his Cambridge IGCSE exam. He is currently completing his A levels with a desire to pursue medicine. JAMES

When We Serv



e God? by Sarah Lye, PJS2



Our church is celebrating its 40th anniversary in 2020. We are all really excited and gearing towards next year's theme which is IMPACT2020. At the same time, some of us may be apprehensive as we still do not know what we can do or how we should act in order to make an impact on people's lives. However, we are encouraged to have a consistent conversation with God: to listen to Him, to know what God is saying to us personally and to tell Him about our fears and concerns. We are challenged by Senior Pastor Chris Kam to do three things to chase the lion in preparation for IMPACT2020:

- Think of something that we have never tried
- Do something that we have never done
- Go somewhere we have never been

All this requires faith in the Lord and of course we need to be determined and courageous to do so because we are being pushed out of our comfort zone. We need to be always prayerful so that we can engage with the Lord on a daily basis. We need to be doing the right thing, being at the right place at the right time/season.

Serving God requires us to use our gifts/talents that He has given us so that we can be a blessing to the people around us. Serving God also means that we need to carve out time to do what God wants us to do. When we serve God, we need to surrender and give our best to Him. We would have to sacrifice something in order to serve Him. It could be our time, our finances, our hobbies, family or loved ones.

What happens when we serve God?

Serving God enables us to know, discover and develop our spiritual gifts. There are many kinds of spiritual gifts. "There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God at work." (1 Cor 12:4-5 6)

When we serve God, we will experience His joy and peace that comes from being obedient to Him. We will feel His peace comforting us because we know that we have obeyed God in what He has required

Serving allows us to go beyond our comfort zone. us to do. We will also experience joy when we serve Him. There is joy in serving the Lord. There is also heartache when we serve God. This is because serving God means we are to deal with people and managing people can be challenging. Thus, we need to depend on God's grace to sustain us each day. But rest assured that God's grace is immeasurably sufficient for us. "But he said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.' Therefore, I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me." (2 Cor 12:9)

"Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms. If anyone speaks, they should do so as one who speaks the very words of God. If anyone serves, they should do so with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen." (1 Pet 4:10-11)

When we serve God, we become more and more like Jesus. We are supposed to be more humble, graceful and forgiving. That is the nature of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Serving God also paves the way for us to experience miracles. Serving God is never easy. When we face trials or challenges in the midst of serving, we need to be immovable and steadfast, knowing that God will carry us through and we will receive breakthroughs and miracles in God's timing. "Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving." (Col 3:23-24)

Our faith will be tested and will increase. Serving allows us to go beyond our comfort zone. And when we are out of our comfort zone, our faith will be put to the test and will increase as we continue to trust in God in the midst of uncertainties and unprecedented challenges. "Therefore, Hebrews 10:24-25 says: "And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching."

my dear brothers and sisters, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labour in the Lord is not in vain." (1 Cor 15:58)

When we serve God, we do not do it on our own. We work together as a team. Hence, we are surrounded by fellow Christian brothers and sisters who can help and encourage us to follow Jesus. Hebrews 10:24-25 says: "And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching."

Serving God is good for our soul as it helps build our confidence and strength. Serving also encourages our devotion in using our gifts and stirring up our passion. We do not look at ourselves only but we look to the interests of others. "Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others." (Phi 2:3-4)

There are many biblical examples where God uses His ordinary people to accomplish His purpose. For example, God raised Moses to bring Israel out of slavery. God's hand was upon David's life – David killed a giant and became a king. Saul who used to murder Christians was changed by God dramatically. Saul, who is also called Paul from then on, preached the gospel to many people around him. Eventually, Paul became a history maker in the Christian church. There are many other heroes of faith like Joseph, Rahab, Joshua, Caleb, Daniel, Esther, etc.

God is looking at two things: our heart/ availability and our obedience. When we surrender to God our desires and avail ourselves to Him, we will be obedient to our calling, i.e. to do what He wants us to do. The end result is we will be able to see the impact we are making in due course!

Deuteronomy 11:11-15 says: "But the land you are crossing the Jordan to take possession of is a land of mountains and valleys that drinks rain from heaven. It is a land the LORD your God cares for; the eyes of the LORD your God are continually on it from the beginning of the year to its end. So, if you faithfully obey the commands I am giving you today—to love the LORD your God and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul- then I will send rain on your land in its season, both autumn and spring rains, so that you may gather in your grain, new wine and olive oil. I will provide grass in the fields for your cattle, and you will eat and be satisfied."

In summary, God promises that when we faithfully love Him and serve Him with all of our heart and soul, He will bless and enable us to chase the lion in our lives. So, let us go forth and be ready to be used by God as a vessel to serve the community and make an impact for the glory of God! Let's chase the lion for Him!



FRONTLINERS *For Christ*

by Natalia David, PJN6

DUMC has always been a body of Christ that strongly believes in discipling and growth through discipleship. Discipleship is the teaching of godly values while modelling and guiding others towards living in righteousness as followers of our Lord Jesus Christ. Discipleship equips us with God's Word, prayer, doctrine, worship, encouragement and service. In addition, it is about the relationships we build with one another. These relationships are developed through devotion, care, and by encouraging each other towards Christ-likeness in our everyday lives.

DUMC's First Touch Ministry is an example of these Christ-like values of discipleship. Mark 10:45 says "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many", what more we who are called to be co-heirs with Christ. "Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers." (Galatians 6:10). We have all been called to serve.

First Touch consists of three ministries: Ushering, Connectors and Security. These are the frontliners, the first to meet and welcome the people of God as they enter the church grounds and walk towards the presence of God. Many who have chosen to serve have experienced how "a good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you." (Luke 6:38).

ALICIA LIM WAI WEN – PJS1, is a twenty-three-year-old with two younger brothers. She lives in Bukit Tinggi, Klang and has been in DUMC for six years now. She is a student at Monash University and is in her fifth year studying for a double Bachelor's Degree in Medical Bioscience and Pharmacy.

I joined the ushering team in my second year in DUMC. There was no specific prayer involved since it was solely my choice to serve. Interestingly, I chose to serve in this ministry because I thought the red jackets worn by our ushers, prior to the current generational trend of a simple understated black t-shirt that says 'Ready To Serve', were guite cool, nice and looked fun to wear as the ushers moved about during their duties. They reminded me of the fashion statement often made by cabin crews since I had always wanted to try out for a job as a flight attendant. I asked a few people on the team about their experience of serving in the ministry and also watched my then NextGen leader who was part of the team. Everyone I encountered spoke with excitement and gave lots of encouragement making me feel welcome. It gave me a sense of belonging and an increasing urge to be a part of the team.

Since then, I have been approached to serve as a Team Leader, which I did not agree to right off the bat since it meant more responsibilities and a higher level of commitment. Living in Klang and having to rely on my parents for transport, it was difficult for me to make a decision when I had a lot to consider. After praying and committing the matter to God, my Team Leader placed me on probation for the position. God, in his faithfulness, began to put things into place for me. I was able to start driving to church accompanied by my younger brother. I found I had more free time and my brother joined the team as well to help out with some of the responsibilities. At this point I knew there were no more excuses. There was no more running away and in obedience to my call, I agreed to become a Team Leader. God knows what my abilities are and that His plans are greater. Since taking up this leadership role, I have learnt many valuable skills that are not only applicable in church and in my studies, but also in my work place as I took up a part-time job. I find myself a lot calmer and able to adapt faster in new environments. My prayer life has improved, and there was a maximum push in my relationship with God as I have had to pray for every detail and decision during the weekend celebrations to ensure everything runs smoothly.

ALEX TUNG – PJN1, works as a lawyer and has been serving in the ushering ministry since 2008, shortly after DUMC moved into its permanent home at Dream Centre.

As part of DUMC's relocation, there was a call for volunteers to step up and step into many roles. My CG members and I heard the call and chose to answer it in obedience. Since then I have volunteered in many ministries over the years but have always retained ushering as one of the ministries I choose to serve in. My motivation to serve in this ministry a decade ago remains my motivation to serve today and that is the pursuit of humility.



I think that pride is a malignant sin and I believe that it is the first sin of man. This most dangerous sin, if left unchecked, can be and will be a catalyst to many other sins. Hence, I am convinced that it is vital to keep one's ego in check and for me, being able to humble myself to serve others as an usher helps me to keep a close walk with God. I am a long way from being able to consider myself 'sufficiently humble', a term which in itself stands as an oxymoron. Until then I am convicted that the ushering ministry remains an avenue to pursue humility and to serve others which is in line with the life of Christ as well as part of the five core habits and tagline of DUMC.

MAH PEAK HOAY – KL, is a Contracts Director. She is married with three daughters and has been attending DUMC for the past seven years.

I attended a volunteer preview session three years ago but I did not seem to fit into any of the ministries listed during the preview. Someone suggested that I should try out in the Connectors ministry. To me it seemed like a good place to start volunteering since there was no preparation work to be done. I thought all I had to do was to turn up, prepare the space, and serve the visitors who came by - which was what I did easy peasy lemon squeezy! In the beginning, I served mainly in the food and beverages team, but began to slowly engage in conversations with the visitors. And I knew it was not going to be as easy as the first look. Many of the visitors were easy-going and friendly; however, there were some who either posed hard questions or were facing personal issues with Christians and/or churches. Those were the times I would find myself having to dig deep for wisdom and discernment as well as discovering an increasing need to be sensitive to the leading of the Holy Spirit during a conversation. When I first decided to volunteer, I did not pray about it in the traditional sense since it was a straightforward decision to serve. But when I was asked to lead our team this year,



I asked God if there was any reason I should not take it up. There were no thunderbolts or impressive lightning strikes, neither was there an audible reply from God. Instead there was a comforting and deep assurance within me that *IT* was the right thing to do at the right time. In a natural sense, being a connector did not seem like the right ministry for me since I am not naturally a 'talker' and most times I find it hard to speak off-the-cuff if not for the Spirit's leading. One defining moment happened a few months after I started serving. We were still occupying the visitor's lounge at the time, now turned into our amazing Village Coffee. It was a seemingly routine moment when Senior Pastor Chris Kam came over to talk to a group of visitors. After a while I felt a change in the atmosphere, heavy with the awesome presence of God. The very place seemed to guieten down as the Senior Pastor led two of the visitors to the Lord. The following week, he led another visitor to the Lord. Those were eye-opening experiences for me, to see how God moved in such a powerful way even in a ministry as simple as serving visitors. I am now convicted that we all have our own little part to play in serving the wider family of God.

CARMEN LAW BEE PING - PJS2,

describes herself as an ordinary person who comes from a suburban area in which the gospel was hardly heard. Never in her wildest dreams did she think that she would be a follower of Christ. She was brought to DUMC by an acquaintance and accepted Christ eight years ago when she started her journey with God.

I was someone who could never find my own worth. I felt insecure and inferior to others in everything that I did. I battled low self-esteem. After attending DUMC for eight years, I was disappointed that I was still not serving in any ministry. I watched the people around me serving and wanted to do the same. So, I prayed. I asked God to use me. I told Him that He knew my strengths and weaknesses and that He had





made me for a purpose. I prayed in line with DUMC's tagline. I had the will to serve and was desperately looking for my fit. There was one CG meeting where Pastor Daniel Ho was supposed to be visiting but I could not make it because of work. But at six o'clock that very day, work was cancelled and I was allowed to go home. It was something that rarely happens in the company I work for but that day God moved a mountain and I was able to attend CG. The things shared that day spoke into my life. Another amazing thing happened that night. One of the Connectors Team Leaders invited me to join the ministry. She noticed that I was a natural 'talker' as I was speaking to Pastor Daniel and the CG members. She said that this strength of mine would be useful in the ministry since it was a gift to be able to connect with others. Since I enjoy talking to people, I agreed. I started out with serving the food and beverages and then slowly moved on to engaging with the visitors. This has strengthened my faith. Through my desperate searching, God has worked in mysterious ways. Since I started serving, I find myself being more proactive, full of God's guidance, more thoughtful towards others and find myself wanting to give my best to serve the family of God. I am so thankful to my Leader for recognizing my potential and for extending the invitation to serve.

THOMAS KWAN SIEW HONG - PJN6,

works as a consultant and account manager in the IT industry. He was born into a Christian family and environment and has been attending DUMC close to three years now. In his downtime he loves outdoor activities and sports.

I attended the BMEW early this year. I had a chance to speak to some of the pastors who were there. I was approached by both Pastor Gilbert Tan and Pastor Adrian Chong who head the Resonate Worship Ministry and Security Ministry respectively when they asked me if I was interested to serve in any ministry. At that moment, I was open



and listened to them as they explained about the ministries that they were leading which gave me some insights and an opportunity to weigh my options. In the end, I decided on the Security Ministry since it was an area that I had never served in before and I thought it would be interesting to try out new things. I did not really pray about my decision to serve in the Security Ministry but I felt peace in my heart and comfort with my decision when I agreed. I am the type of person who feels nervous and anxious in an unfamiliar place or doing things I have not done before. With my security team members and the new things that I was doing, I knew I was in the right ministry. Last month, I had the opportunity to serve during DUMC's Myanmar 10th Anniversary Celebration where they had expected a big crowd. I remember it was a Tuesday night and started at 11 p.m. We carried out our security duties and were just making sure everything was in order. It was a hectic night as there were loads of buses ferrying our Myanmar friends and visitors for the celebration. Once the celebration started, some of us headed back into the Main Hall. The worship started and I was amazed by it. Everyone in the hall was jumping, praising, and dancing to the praise and worship. Even though I could not understand any of it in their Myanmar language, I could still sense the overwhelming presence of God during their worship time. I was truly blessed by the experience of being able to witness the Myanmar celebration and to be able to serve them through this ministry.

done on a nonchalant whim. Pastor Adrian Chong, who heads the ministry, was my former CG Leader and I had known him and his family since my school years. Due to this close bond, when he asked me if I would like to help out in the Security Ministry my response was "Hey, why not? It's not like I'm doing anything else." That was the best nonchalant decision I have ever made. I am naturally an introvert as you can see from my pastime favourite activities and cringe at the thought of socialising. The Security Ministry was perfect since I loved blending into the background unseen and that was what we usually do in our ministry. God was gracious when I went into this ministry, He really knows me best. Often times I felt out of place and uncomfortable around other people but here in my team, I was part of this wonderful community of amazing individuals that treated me like their own and always knew how to have fun. I have encountered a few difficulties with people while serving; I have been scolded, glared at, and told off in the famous Asian way of finger-pointing. I even had someone telling me that I needed to go out for prayer just because I was doing my 'job' while serving. These sticky situations, those moments of refining fire from God have moulded me and helped to build my character and faith. My team members are always there to encourage and support me. I have time and again felt truly blessed as I serve every weekend and am thankful that a moment of nonchalance has turned into moments of fulfilment as I serve the body of Christ.

NATALIA DAVID - PJN6, is a

Physiotherapist by profession and works with the special needs community. In her down time she enjoys reading classics (her favourite being Sherlock Holmes), playing video games with her younger brother, and watching Korean dramas.

I first started serving in the Security Ministry two years ago. It was not something I prayed about as it was mostly "We aren't spiritual consumers but spiritual contributors." – Craig Groeschel, Co-Founder & Senior Pastor, Life Church.

THE STORY OF RUT IIIII FOUR LESSONS FROM THE MOABITE WOMAN

by Alex Tung, PJN1

The Book of Ruth is one of the Five Scrolls (along with the Song of Songs, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes and Esther) which form the third section of the Hebrew Bible. This compilation of five scrolls is referred to as Ketuvim (Hebrew for "the Writings") and is traditionally read publicly in the synagogues by Jewish communities.

Adopted into our Bible today, the Five Scrolls form five relatively short books and the Book of Ruth finds itself sandwiched between the Book of Judges and the Books of Samuel. The Book of Ruth serves as a useful historical guide in setting out the transition from where the Book of Judges ends to where the Books of Samuel begin. For this reason, the Book of Ruth starts with a recapitulation of "In the days when the judges ruled..." (Ruth 1:1a) and ends with a genealogy tracing the unbroken ancestral line to King David (Ruth 4:18-22).

Whilst the Book of Ruth is a short book comprising merely four chapters, with its lengthiest chapter being only 23 verses long (in comparison, the Book of Psalms has 150 chapters and its chapter 119 having 176 verses), the lessons to be gleaned from the character of Ruth are substantial and weighty.

SUMMARY OF THE RUTH STORYLINE

The Book of Ruth is written like a play and can roughly be structured into 4 acts with each scene therein narrating a milestone in the life of Ruth and those around her.

ACT 1

Scene 1: Introduction to the Elimelek household and their emigration from Bethlehem to Moab in search of greener pastures. Both sons of Elimelek (Mahlon and Kilion) marry local Moabite women and by the end of this scene, all three men (Elimelek, Mahlon and Kilion) have passed away and the three widows are left to continue the story.

Scene 2: Naomi pleads with Orpah and Ruth to remain in Moab while she returns to Bethlehem as she believes neither Orpah nor Ruth would have a future in Bethlehem. Both Orpah and Ruth are reluctant but after Naomi's incessant appeals, Orpah finally obliges but Ruth insists on remaining with Naomi wherever she goes.

Scene 3: Naomi returns to Bethlehem with Ruth accompanying her. Naomi's re-entry into Bethlehem causes a stir and the Judean folks can hardly recognise Naomi. Naomi renames herself Mara (which means "bitter").



Scene 1: Ruth gleans for barley and wheat in fields belonging to Boaz. Boaz notices Ruth but does not recognise her. He enquires of her identity from his workers and once he recognises her to be Elimelek's widowed daughter-in-law, he extends extra grace and favour to her.

Scene 2: Ruth returns home and tells Naomi of her encounter with Boaz; Naomi is overjoyed and explains how Boaz is their family's guardian redeemer.



Scene 1: Out of concern for Ruth's wellbeing and future, Naomi plots a plan for Ruth to seduce Boaz to secure someone to care and provide for her. Ruth 1:19-22

Ruth 1:1-5

Ruth 1:6-18

Ruth 2:18-23

Ruth 2:1-17

Ruth 3:1-5

ACT 3

Scene 2: After a night of revelry, Boaz falls asleep on the threshing floor and Ruth meets him there. Instead of seducing Boaz, Ruth acknowledges Boaz as her family's guardian redeemer and formally offers herself for marriage. Boaz discloses that there is another guardian redeemer who has priority over him, whose consent Boaz requires before accepting Ruth's proposal. Before dawn, Boaz sends Ruth back with additional provision of barley.

Scene 3: Ruth returns to Naomi and narrates to Naomi what had transpired in her conversation with Boaz the night before. Naomi is convinced that Boaz will do the needful soon.

ACT 4

Scene 1: Boaz arranges for a meeting with the guardian redeemer who has priority over him. Their meeting at the town gate was witnessed by elders and other Judean townsfolk. At the meeting, the other guardian redeemer formally surrenders his priority and allows Boaz to buy all the property left behind by Elimelek, Mahlon and Kilion as well as to acquire and welcome Ruth and Naomi into his household.

Scene 2: Boaz and Ruth are married and the Lord enables Ruth to conceive. Ruth gives birth to a boy who is named Obed and the women of Bethlehem rejoice with Naomi for her blessings of a guardian redeemer and an heir to the family.

Ancestral lineage to David: a genealogy of the family line of Perez is drawn out to evidence the unbroken lineage from Perez down to Boaz and Obed, and onwards to David.

> The story of Ruth may seem to have but a simple plot with no unexpected twists or turns, but the lessons that can be extracted from this slim book can fill a whole month's worth of devotion material. Here are four lessons from the study of this book which the author finds worth highlighting:

Ruth 4:18-22

Ruth 3:6-15

Ruth 3:16-18

Ruth 4:1-12

Ruth 4:13-17

LESSON 1: FROM BETHLEHEM TO MOAB, NOT GREENER PASTURES

In the days when the judges ruled, there was a famine in the land. So a man from Bethlehem in Judah, together with his wife and two sons, went to live for a while in the country of Moab. The man's name was Elimelek, his wife's name was Naomi, and the names of his two sons were Mahlon and Kilion. They were Ephrathites from Bethlehem, Judah. And they went to Moab and lived there.

Ruth 1:1-2

The Book of Ruth opens with Elimelek making what must have been a very difficult decision to move his family from Judah to Moab because of the famine that had struck Judah. While it is notable that this story was set during the days when the judges ruled Bethlehem, i.e. a time of instability, immorality and idolatry, to move out of Judah (which was God's Promised Land to His people) to Moab remains cringe-worthy and unthinkable (see Judges 17:6 for a better portrayal of how dismal Judah must have been at this point of history).

For context, Bethlehem (or rather Judah) was a divine sanctuary and God's Promised Land for all His people – and the likely reason God had allowed a famine to strike Bethlehem was because of its people's own unfaithfulness, and God had chosen to discipline them by sending this famine (refer Deuteronomy 11:16-17, Leviticus 26:18-20 and Amos 4:6-9). Moab, contrastingly, is regarded as a place of filth and wickedness – Psalms 108:9 refers to Moab as God's washbasin, i.e. where the residue of dirt, grim and waste settles down and collects.

For Elimelek to move his household out of Bethlehem (which means "House of Bread" in Hebrew) to Moab (i.e. a garbage dump) on the sole basis of economic pursuit is then thoroughly unwholesome. Major life decisions, such as Elimelek's decision to emigrate to Moab, cannot be based entirely on such materialistic considerations. Even if food, wealth and worldly success were to be readily available in Moab, Moab was a place of filth and wickedness and would certainly be a hindrance to raising a wholesome family. Moab's notoriety should itself have been a deterrent to Elimelek's decision but Elimelek, motivated by the lure of materialism, gave in to what he thought would be greener pastures.



LESSON 2: FROM MOAB TO BETHLEHEM, RETURN TO THE PROMISED LAND

But Ruth replied, "Don't urge me to leave you or to turn back from you. Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay. Your people will be my people and your God my God. Where you die I will die, and there I will be buried. May the Lord deal with me, be it ever so severely, if even death separates you and me." When Naomi realized that Ruth was determined to go with her, she stopped urging her.

Ruth 1:16-18

Most studies on the Book of Ruth would likely have some exposition on Ruth 1:16 – and rightly so. Ruth 1:16-18 forms the crux of the central theme of the whole book, i.e. the theme of loyalty. In these verses, we see Ruth's response to Naomi's plea urging Orpah and Ruth to stay on in Moab while she returned to Judah. Out of familiarity, Ruth should, like Orpah, have found more confidence in the gods of the Moabites. Ruth was, after all, raised in Moab and had practiced idolatry until she married into Kilion's household. At the end of verse 15, we see Naomi trying to reason with Ruth, pointing out that like Orpah, she should go back to "her people and <u>her gods</u>" (emphasis mine). But instead, Ruth surprisingly chose to put her trust in Naomi's God - see verse 17 where Ruth wilfully subjects herself to Naomi's God saying "May <u>the Lord</u> deal with me" (emphasis mine).

It may seem odd that a woman born and raised in Moab would place more faith and confidence in the Lord (the God of Naomi, of Judah) rather than her own more familiar idols. Perhaps we can speculate that over the approximate 10 years of being in Elimelek's household, Ruth had been somewhat positively influenced by the household's faith (albeit a faith of questionable depth). From the little that Ruth had come to know of the Lord, she must have felt more confident in worshiping this God rather than her own, which led to her exemplary display of loyalty and love to return to Bethlehem with Naomi.

Another school of thought teaches that Ruth herself is able to trace her own ancestral heritage back to Bethlehem, the Promised Land. Genesis 13:10-11 recounts Lot's choosing a plain "of Jordan set out towards the east" when he and Abram parted ways. Modern day Moab is located east of the Dead Sea in what is today west-central Jordan. Genesis 19:36 further recounts Lot's oldest daughter having a son who she named Moab, i.e. the Moab who is the father of the Moabites. Lot's descendant, now in the person of Ruth, was reversing Lot's decision and returning to the Promised Land from where Lot originated. In that sense, Naomi was not the only one going home – Ruth was too.



LESSON 3: INTEGRITY AND HONOUR OVER SCHEMES AND SEDUCTION

One day Ruth's mother-in-law Naomi said to her, "My daughter, I must find a home for you, where you will be well provided for. Now Boaz, with whose women you have worked, is a relative of ours. Tonight he will be winnowing barley on the threshing floor. Wash, put on perfume, and get dressed in your best clothes. Then go down to the threshing floor, but don't let him know you are there until he has finished eating and drinking. When he lies down, note the place where he is lying. Then go and uncover his feet and lie down. He will tell you what to do."

"I will do whatever you say," Ruth answered. So she went down to the threshing floor and did everything her mother-in-law told her to do.

When Boaz had finished eating and drinking and was in good spirits, he went over to lie down at the far end of the grain pile. Ruth approached quietly, uncovered his feet and lay down. In the middle of the night something startled the man; he turned—and there was a woman lying at his feet!

"Who are you?" he asked.

"I am your servant Ruth," she said. "Spread the corner of your garment over me, since you are a guardian-redeemer of our family."

Ruth 3:1-9

Studying this portion of Scripture, it can be acknowledged there is some debate over the seemingly inappropriate schemes and plans Naomi had for Ruth. As this point of the story, Boaz has already been identified as a guardianredeemer of the Elimelek family (though not the first-in-line) and the story has also established a semblance of romance brewing between Boaz and Ruth. Whilst some commentators are careful not to infer any indecency from this passage, most find it acceptable to deduce that Naomi's instructions to Ruth hinted towards some form of sexual immorality. Consider the use of terms like "uncover", "feet" and "lie down" (all of which in the original Hebrew contain overtly sexual connotations) and the circumstances surrounding their encounter -(i) Naomi had played to Ruth's physical attractiveness, putting on perfume and her best clothes; (ii) Ruth had approached Boaz under the cover of the night and after Boaz has had sufficient to drink and was in "good spirits";



(iii) Ruth decided to meet Boaz on the threshing floor which was infamous for prostitution; and (iv) Ruth left before daybreak under the cover of darkness to avoid anyone recognising her. Based on Naomi's instructions, the location, circumstances and timing of this plan, it would be reasonable to conclude that Naomi was planning for Ruth to seduce Boaz into marrying her.

Nonetheless, Boaz remained a faithful man of God and Ruth (surprisingly too, given Moabites are considered immoral people) chose to approach the subject of marriage with great honour and respect. Instead of carrying out Naomi's plans to seduce Boaz (assuming the speculation above is correct), Ruth was quick to refer to him as her family's guardian redeemer and asks for him to spread the corner of his garment over her. To spread one's corner of the garment is a respectful idiomatic way of Ruth making a marriage proposal to Boaz, much in the same way God had spread the corner of His garment over the Son of man by means of entering a covenant with him (see Ezekiel 16:8). Notwithstanding, all the conditions seemed right for Naomi's seduction plan to be a success. Nonetheless, both Boaz and Ruth (more credit to Ruth as she initiated this turn of events) opted to conduct themselves honourably - an act which certainly found favour in God's eyes.

LESSON 4: THE BLESSING OF AN HEIR TO THE JUDEAN LINE

So Boaz took Ruth and she became his wife. When he made love to her, the Lord enabled her to conceive, and she gave birth to a son. The women said to Naomi: "Praise be to the Lord, who this day has not left you without a guardianredeemer. May he become famous throughout Israel! He will renew your life and sustain you in your old age. For your daughter-in-law, who loves you and who is better to you than seven sons, has given him birth."

Then Naomi took the child in her arms and cared for him. The women living there said, "Naomi has a son!" And they named him Obed. He was the father of Jesse, the father of David.

Ruth 4:13-17

At the close of Ruth's story, Ruth is blessed with her first offspring. We should note that over 10 years of marriage before Ruth was widowed, she did not bear any children and (omitting Orpah) if Ruth had not produced an heir, Elimelek's family line would come to an abrupt end. It is also interesting to note that verse 13 provides that "the Lord <u>enabled</u> her to conceive" (emphasis mine) which suggests

Features

that the conception of this child was as a result of God's intervention. As such, Ruth now joins the ranks of many other women of the Bible, all of whom became pregnant through the Lord's enablement – think, for example, of Sarah who gave birth to Isaac, Rebekah who gave birth to Jacob and Esau, and Rachel who gave birth to Joseph and Benjamin. Like Ruth, all these women were barren until the Lord intervened.

In addition to considering this blessing from Ruth's perspective, we should also consider it from Naomi's. Not too long ago, at the start of this book, a tragic scene had been set with Naomi coming back into Judah after having lost her husband and both her sons. Her emptiness had caused her to become bitter at her misfortune (see Ruth 1:20-21). At the closing scene, however, a euphoric scene is set with the same women who caused a stir during Naomi's return from Moab now rejoicing with Naomi at her newfound blessings. Having lost her husband and both sons, Naomi finds herself now blessed with a guardian redeemer and a grandson.

FINAL THOUGHTS ON THE CHARACTER OF BOAZ

Reading the Book of Ruth as a whole, we see the common theme of loyalty playing in symmetry throughout the book. At the beginning of the book we see how Naomi's loss of Elimelek, Mahlon and Kilion was followed by a great act of loyalty on the part of Ruth in deciding to remain with Naomi, and now at the end, Ruth's loyalty is reciprocated by the family's guardian redeemer Boaz in his willingness to continue the legacy of Elimelek's lineage and to care for Naomi and Ruth.

Whilst the Book of Ruth hardly makes any reference to "God", God's hand is nonetheless at work throughout Ruth's story. This is most apparent from the persona of Boaz in his capacity of a guardian redeemer who chose to use his position, wealth and authority to raise the widows Naomi and Ruth from their anguish. This story of Ruth then is one of redemption, of how one woman's loyalty and steadfast integrity was rewarded with redemption through the character of Boaz. In the same way, God has a guardian redeemer for each and every one of us in the person of Jesus who is loyal and ever willing to offer us salvation having paid the price for our sins – and we need only to accept.



A Brief Moment In Time

by Pastor Dato' Dr Daniel Ho, Founding Senior Pastor



Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes. (James 4:14)

WHAT IS LIFE?

A brief moment in time and space in history! Like what Apostle James says, "You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes." How true but also how important!

Just a couple of Sundays ago I attended the funeral service of a former classmate of mine. Thankfully I saw the obituary the night before. So, after preaching in a church that Sunday morning I dashed off to pay my last respects to a dear friend and *kampung* mate. I was told that he had been to DUMC before with his family but I did not have the joy and blessing of meeting him and his family of four children. The funeral service was conducted very meaningfully by Full Gospel Assembly Kuala Lumpur. I was then asked to pray for the family at the end. Never to miss an opportunity, I seized that occasion to share a few

words (several words in fact!) with the family, relatives and friends gathered. I have not seen some of these friends from my hometown for some 50 years. Let me share briefly a slightly edited version of what I said. It was not just relevant for the people then but it is equally important for us all to ponder over in every season of our life.

As I bid goodbye to my friend, there are three crucial things I reflected upon.

Firstly, at such a time it reminds all of us about mortality in life. We are all mortal beings with a limited shelf-life. There is a beginning and an end. No one lives forever. Whether we are a prince or a pauper, a soldier or a statesman, death levels all of us one day, some day. The Bible says, "The length of our days is seventy years – or eighty, if we have the strength..." (Psalm 90:10). Because of the advance in medical science some of us may live a bit longer, but not very much longer. Some of course much shorter. Whatever it is, it's not an issue of how long we live but how well we live. Otherwise the life of our Lord Jesus Christ would be something we should all mourn about. But no! His 33 years turned the world upside down or rather right-side up. That is why it is important that we should all confront this reality in life. There is a mortality of life we must all face honestly.

Secondly, there is the brevity of life. In a twinkling of a moment 68 years of my friend's life was over. I still remember playing baseball with him during schooldays and he was a really solid and strong player. He could hit the ball further than anyone of us could and whenever he was batting those of us who happened to be on the other team will have to take many steps backwards to retrieve the ball. Such was the strength of the man. 68 years of life may seem



"...it's not an issue of how long we live but how well we live."

Message From Founding Senior Pastor

reasonably long but it is really short in the light of eternity. In fact, a speck in the whole of eternity. Though so tiny and insignificant we are amazingly made in the image of God (Genesis 1:27). We carry God's creativity and God's glory (cf. Psalm 8:5). How we handle this image of God in us in this brief moment of time is so critical for all of life and eternity. In fact, God has set this sense of eternity in our hearts to which we must all really think about and respond to (cf. Ecclesiastes 3:11). In other words, life is short and time is precious.

Thirdly and finally, as we ponder on the mortality and brevity of life, this must surely propel us to focus on the urgency of life. The huge majority of us gathered there that afternoon at the funeral service were all in our sixties and seventies. The runway of life left for many of us is so much shorter than the runway we have covered. Hence, we must pause at such a time to examine the meaning of life because as Socrates, one of the greatest Greek philosophers, says, "An unexamined life is not worth living." So, we must ask the big questions of life like: "What is the meaning of life? Why am I here and where am I going? What is truth (if there is) and where is it to be found?" Without confronting the purpose of life and the destiny in life, we will just be floating along on auto-cruise and may just miss the point in life altogether sadly.



Truth is not a set of beliefs or doctrines but is found in a person, the Person of Jesus Christ who says, "I am the

way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me" (John 14:6). So, when we know Jesus we know the truth and have the truth. We will then discover our purpose and destiny in life in the process. What a revelation and a deal! This is what

Without confronting the purpose of life and the destiny in life, we will just be floating along on auto-cruise and may just miss the point in life altogether sadly.

Jesus comes to offer: eternal life which starts right here when we commit our life to Him. What a bargain and a blessing!

Now that we have, by the grace of God, discovered the truth in Jesus we must with equal urgency share this Good News of the Lord Jesus Christ with as many people as possible - with our good old friends, neighbours, colleagues, classmates and loved ones.

Our passion for the glory of God, which every Christian should have, must be equally reflected in our burden for the lost because in a brief moment of time everything shall be over for all of us too. May we have the joy, blessing and privilege of bringing as many along with us as possible to heaven so that together we may celebrate and enjoy the glories of heaven. It has always been important to me to spend the last few hours of a year meaningfully. Usually I spend the 31st December nights in church to thank God for the year that has been and to welcome the new year in prayer. So on that night last year, I went for what we usually call the Watchnight Celebration. I understood that our Senior Pastor had decided to have a Covenant Renewal for 2018/2019. However, I was totally unprepared for what was to come at the Covenant Renewal Service.

When we entered the Sanctuary, the ushers gave us the Wesleyan Covenant Renewal leaflet. I read through the Covenant Renewal prayer that we would be praying together during the service. These words caught my eyes and made me feel very uncomfortable. They said: "Put me to doing, put me to suffering, let me be ..." It further said, "... see that you do not lie to God", and, "You have given to the Lord your hearts, you have opened your mouths to the Lord, and you have dedicated yourself to God. With God's power, never go back."



Reflection of God's Heart

My initial reaction was - "How could Senior Pastor ask us to make such a pledge?" The inner responses of my heart were fear and doubt. I feared I could not see those pledges through. I doubted that I would be able to "deny myself to please Christ" every time. I did not dare to say those pledges to the One who matters so much and disappoint Him. Would I be found lying to the Lord? I could not say honestly to God that I was willing for Him to "put me to suffering". As the service progressed, the message the Lord had for me was: "I love you immensely!" and that "I am in control". Somehow, those messages calmed my turbulent thoughts. Perhaps faith like a very, very small mustard seed had begun to form in my heart. I found myself ready to make those pledges as we moved into saying the Covenant Prayer. I remember whispering the pledges to the Lord with fear and trembling that night.

The year 2019 started with a lot of changes to my schedule. I made new commitments and began doing things that I had not been doing. By the end of January, my journal recorded that I was very unhappy - unhappy that I had to commit myself to all the new schedules, do all these new things I had not done before. I wrote in my journal that I felt trapped into situations that I did not like to be found in. Yet, somehow God helped me to continue doing those things that did not please me but pleased the Lord.

As I write this I am into the third quarter of the year. I can say that the things I did not like doing have become a rhythm of my life. Doing things that I will not naturally do does not mean I will be unhappy. I have grown to enjoy them and embrace the new roles I find myself in. In fact, this year 2019 has been one of the best years of my life. Pleasing the Lord is becoming pleasing to me. The joy of ordering my life after God is so sweet it causes me to thirst for more. I came across these words written by Brennan Manning in his book **Souvenirs** of Solitude:

"Shalom, be at peace. I understand your fears, your failures, your brokenness. I don't expect you to be perfect. I have been there. All is well. You have My love. You don't have to pay for it and you can't deserve it. I expect more failure from you than you expect from yourself. You only have to open and receive it. You have to sav yes to My love - a love beyond anything you can intellectualize or imagine."

This is what the God who loves me immensely says to me and He has certainly been in control of my life.

By Gabriel Wong, NextGenNO EXECUSENO EXECUSE

Hi, my name is Gabriel Wong. I am 13 this year and I am from NextGen. If there is one thing I would like to share about, it would be our calling and purpose from God. Matthew 28:19 says: "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." This verse literally says that God puts us on this earth to share, preach and make disciples of the gospel to everyone, like EVERYONE. Now that sounds tough but with God, NOTHING is impossible! Why share? Because it is good news! Take for example, people my age share about how good the boba is from a certain store. For moms, it might be recipes and for dads, for dads, it could be football match results. If sharing all these things is so easy, then why not the gospel? Jesus says "if you love Me, you will keep My commandments." The Bible also says that we are called to be witnesses. Too young to share? WRONG! It is never too young to share the gospel. I am going to share my own experience about sharing the gospel.

Last year, during Chinese New Year, I went back to Miri, Sarawak. One day, my dad, my sister, two younger cousins (aged 8 and 11) and I felt bored staying in the house and decided to go to a recreational park that has some outdoor sports, a mini water park and a waterfall in it. Because it was in the middle of the jungle, we had to drive far out from the city. It was a 45-minute drive and we were very bored.

Apparently the Holy Spirit nudged my dad to nudge me to share the gospel with my younger cousins. I was thinking "Like that also can ah?" and I was very worried and did not want to but I did. I started off by telling the story of creation, the fall of man, the birth of Christ, the life of Christ, the crucifixion of Jesus and the resurrection of Christ. I was so worried that they would not understand anything but both of them paid attention to all I had said. He told me that the story sounded familiar and that he had heard it when he was in kindergarten. To my surprise when I challenged them to say the sinner's prayer, my 8-year-old cousin accepted Jesus, in the car!

Too young to share? WRONG! It is never too young to share the gospel.

I want to encourage all of you to be courageous and when you feel that nudge, do the right thing and share. Even if you get rejected, that is all right because you know that you did the right thing by planting seeds. Sharing the gospel will not be easy and it may cost you in losing friends, getting a bad reputation or even getting mocked by people, but that is exactly what Jesus did and that is what I want to do as well.

Being a Christian means to proclaim God's glory to ALL the nations. To start off, we could get out of that comfort zone, stop going to church for the wrong reasons, stop being stagnant by not exercising our faith in God and instead go out there to share the gospel to anyone, anywhere, anyhow. 2020 is here, stop giving lame excuses, it is time to wake up and go make an impact in someone's life today.

PJS1 by Steven Ho.



accepted Christ when I was 15. Then, with God's favour, I was granted a place in a local university. Not only that, God gave me a dream job after I graduated. However, when I started working, I began to backslide. My career became the most important thing in my life. I began to indulge in worldly pleasures. I succumbed to peer pressure as it was not very cool or fashionable to be a Christian in the construction industry where I worked. In no time, I started to quit church and subsequently I quit God.

After working for eight years, I ventured out on my own. Despite having walked out on God and living a colourful life of sin, my business prospered. Everything was going well until my wife had a cancer scare three years ago which prompted me to pray to God for forgiveness and asking Him to intervene in my wife's situation. The following Sunday after the shocking news, I attended church with my family for the first time in 22 years on 6 November 2016. My wife sought a second opinion and I thank God that further tests have confirmed that the growth was not cancerous. After coming back to God, I started to read the Bible and spend time with Him. When I read the first five books of the Bible, I learnt that God had introduced many laws to the Jewish people to set them apart from the people around them. This gave me the inspiration that likewise my company should be set apart and should be different from other companies in my industry. Since everything that I have belongs to God and I am only a steward, my company should be used to glorify Him.

So, we stopped all practices that did not honour Him. All business deals were above the table and we started to walk away from clients or business deals that demanded questionable financial considerations. However, God is good and faithful. He continues to bless us with projects and even more than we have ever had before. From this experience, I learned that God truly honours those who honour Him.

Last year our company, started our corporate social responsibility program. We began setting aside a budget every year for this purpose. We donated money to old folks' homes, homes for abused and special children, and orphanages. This did not take up much of my time and effort as I only needed to identity the correct organisations and then write out and sign cheques.

This year, on 1 January, I asked God for direction on what I should pursue for the year 2019. I was reading Job 31 on that day and He told me clearly what to do:

¹⁶ "If I have denied the desires of the poor or let the eves of the widow grow weary, ¹⁷ if I have kept my bread to myself. not sharing it with the fatherless ¹⁸ but from my youth I reared them as a father would, and from my birth I guided the widow ¹⁹ if I have seen anyone perishing for lack of clothing, or the needy without garments, ²⁰ and their hearts did not bless me for warming them with the fleece from my sheep,



It was clear as day. God asked me to continue to meet the needs of the poor, the orphans and the widows BUT I had to get involved on a personal basis instead of just writing cheques to organisations. So, I started to partner with Shelter Home and they referred me to families with financial needs. Shelter Home is a Christian organisation which provides homes for abused and neglected children. We started with one family and currently we have five families under our care. All these families have their own specific issues and needs. Most of them do not have their dads or husbands around; some are sick and cannot work and some of the kids no longer attend school because they cannot afford to do so. The only common thing about all these families is that they are poor.

With the help of a volunteer from our Tamil church, we began to put some of these kids back in school. We also managed to sponsor and send some abused children to Shelter Home and these kids will have the opportunity to meet Jesus there. We helped a family to start a small food business so that they can be self-sufficient. We also go to hospitals to visit and pray for them as most of them are sickly. We provide them with food aid every month and got them registered with my company's panel doctors as most of them earn less than RM1,000 per month per household.

In short, we became their personal friends and mentors. We are only a phone call away from them. Some of them have asked me why I am helping them, then it becomes easier for me to share Jesus with them. Since we started interacting with them this year, in the space of ten months, some of them have asked me for Bibles. Some came to attend DUMC Tamil church and recently some of the kids came for the DUMC Boys Brigade.

In the month of May this year, I was invited by Brother Lam from my CG to accompany him to prison for ministry work. Initially I wanted to go in just to have a look and experience what prison was like. I did not expect that initial visit to become a part of my routine monthly schedule. By serving in this ministry, God has opened up my eyes to have compassion and love for the prisoners. Let us not forget that Jesus came for them too and everyone deserves a second chance in life. I find fulfilment in being able to minister to them, pray with them and also help them in any way possible, like bringing in Bibles and reading glasses to them. Some have even asked me to contact their loved ones to convey messages to them.

The life I am living now is a far cry from my past where I lived a selfish life of pleasure and sin. If anyone were to ask me why I am doing all this now, I will tell them that this is because I have personally experienced and tasted God's love, goodness and faithfulness and this births a motivation and desire to live a life that pleases Him. Hebrews 13:16 says: "And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased."

At the end of the day, I am the one who actually profits the most in serving. Not only do I get to know and appreciate our Heavenly Father better, I am able to find meaning and fulfilment in life by serving the poor, the needy and the prisoners. Serving is no longer a sacrifice because serving ultimately edifies me.

Thank You and God Bless.

GOD'S PLAN For Me

grew up knowing very little about Jesus. One day, there was a group of three people distributing pocket-sized Bibles in front of my school. I was curious, I took one Bible and opened it. Unfortunately, the first verse I saw was "everyone is a sinner". At the tender age of 15, I was annoyed and thought "what could I have possibly done to be categorized as a sinner"! I closed the Bible, returned it and walked away.

I used to pray to many gods when I faced life challenges; asking for answers, guidance and peace. I was lonely, hopeless, lost and helpless. I did not know what my life-purpose was and life was just a day-to-day affair to me. I was spiritually weak.

My friend, Carol Ong, who is a Christian, came to me when I was going through a heart-breaking situation three years ago. After listening to my story, she told me that she could not be with me all the time as she was busy with her life. I understood and knew that eventually I would have to stand on my own. But she encouraged me to pray to God and taught me how to start and end a prayer. Carol convinced me that it was God's plan to lead me to her and assured me that Jesus would be there for me!

From that day onwards, I prayed to Jesus whenever and wherever I had emotional attacks. One day, I had a panic attack. Many WHYs, WHATs and HOWs came across my mind and I could not stop it! But Jesus calmed me down instantly and asked me to wait patiently. He gave me peace and led



me out slowly from a broken relationship. My life started to change; I went to Carol for more stories about God. By invitation from Sharon Ng, I attended Alpha to explore further the Christian faith. During the Alpha Weekend away, I encountered the presence of God so strongly like the sun shining upon me. I felt so hot and I was sweating in an air-conditioned room. On 10 October, 2017, I accepted Christ, witnessed by Carol Ong.

I was then introduced into my current CG by Charmaine Chin. My CG members helped me as a young Christian to learn more about my Heavenly Father, Jesus Christ. Their support and encouragement have helped me in my faith journey.

God's love is real, and He blesses me abundantly in my journey of seeking faith. During BMEW, He revealed to me my inner wound that I was not even aware of. He healed me and led me to move on from the past. Praise the Lord for the breakthrough, to leave my baggage behind and step forward boldly.

My life is not purposeless, I know God has a plan for me and I am now under training. I am now spiritually stronger because God will be there for me. Thank you, Jesus, for Your grace and love, I am not alone now, and I am home. Amen.

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We are DUMC.

A church for all generations –an exciting community of families, senior citizens, young adults, teenagers, and young children, doing life together.

Our primary purpose is not to make nice religious Christians. Our purpose is to build passionate disciples of Jesus Christ.