

AG TIMES

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God of Covenant



By Rev Dominic Yeo

We have now crossed the halfway mark of 2017. For some of us, the last six months have seen a great deal being accomplished in our families, ministries, and other areas of our lives. For many others, accomplishment is not the word we would use to describe our circumstances. Though we openly rejoice in what God is doing in the lives of our brothers and sisters, we silently wonder why God isn't working in our lives.

"Lord, how much longer must I wait?"

"When is this promise going to come to pass?"

"God, have you forgotten me?"

In this world of instant gratification, we cannot expect God to perform in the same manner, delivering instant answers to our prayers. If you've uttered these words in times of prayer, take heart that He is the God of Covenant. God is no cosmic bellhop but He's a Promise Keeper!

In Leviticus 26:9, God reveals three aspects of his nature as the God of the Covenant.

"I will look on you with favor and make you fruitful and increase your numbers, and I will keep my covenant with you."

First, He looks at us with favor. Many of us use the worldly practice of "currying favor" to turn a situation around. Know that God doesn't operate this way. Our position in Him is not earned, nor can it be lost if we slip up. When mistakes happen, choose to use them to grow into new levels of spiritual maturity.

In addition to favor, we can be assured that God watches over us. His eyes know our coming in and going out. He understands what we are going through. He also has a plan for every situation. All He needs is for us to trust that He has the best timing and plan for us.

Second, He enables us to be fruitful. Perhaps a lot of effort has been put into an endeavor. Despite investing every possible resource, there are no results. In times like these, it's tempting to detach from God and declare Him unfaithful.

Friends, don't be led by feelings. Be led by the truth of God's Word and what He has put in our heart to do. Remember that God is the one who gives the increase (1 Corinthians 3:6). Remain connected to the source (God) and trust that He will enable us to bear fruit (John 15:5). Remain faithful. Draw new strength from the Lord and His promises to make us strong for difficult times (Habakkuk 3:19).

Third, He keeps His promises. In the context of this verse, the word "keep" is active, an assurance that God is at work. His promises are in progress even in times when we cannot fathom what He's doing or see what's being done.

Matthew 6:33 reveals a powerful principle for us to keep: to seek first the kingdom of God and know that He is at work doing the adding, providing, and fulfilling. While we may not understand why His promises have not come to pass, seek first His kingdom, His heart – not our own plans or purposes. Even if we have been faithful in waiting, kick it up another notch – have faith to keep waiting!

Where God is concerned, His covenant with us is unbreakable. Therefore, do not walk away, frustrated that it is taking too long for a promise to come to pass. Let the remainder of 2017 be a time of strengthening by putting our faith in the God of Covenant!

守约的神

2017年已经过去了一半。有些兄弟姐妹在过去的六个月里已在家庭、事工等方面成就了很多。然而，有大部分沉默的一群也许在迫切地思索“主啊，还要等多久？”、“它会实现吗？”、“神是否忘记了我？”

如果你在祷告中曾说过这样的话，神要提醒你，祂是守约的神。我们生活的世界能让人瞬间得到满足，因此我们也同样地期待神瞬间回应祷告。然而，神并不是宇宙侍者，而是守约者！

在利未记26:9，神向我们显示祂作为守约的神的三个方面。经上说：“我要眷顾你们，使你们生养众多，也要与你们坚定所立的约。”

首先，神眷顾你。很多人喜欢奉承人以得到好处或别人的眷顾。然而神眷顾我们不需要我们付出努力。我们在祂心中的位置是不需要赚取的，也不会因为我们所犯的过错使我们失去神的爱。不过，当我们犯了错，我们必须从过错中学习，好使我们的属灵生命更加成熟。

除了拥有恩宠的位置，我们也能确定神的眼目在我们身上。祂眷顾我们，不论身处何地，神的眼目都时时看顾。祂了解你所经历的，但祂有个计划而你必须相信祂在你身上要按着最好的时机成就计划。

第二，神使你果实累累。也许你投入了很多精力、时间和金钱。也许你尽了一切努力，你的情感和资源已经贫乏了，而过去的这几个月什么也没有得着。这时，你很想离开神，并宣称祂不是信实的，然而，与其被自己的情感所牵引，你应该让圣经中的真理和神放置在你心中所为祂做的一切带领你。

要记得，使一切生长的是神（林前3:6）。当我们持续地与源头（神）连接，我们就会结果（约15:5）。要保持信心，从神那儿得着新的力量。祂应许在艰难的时刻使你刚强（哈3:19）。

第三，神坚定守约。“守”的词义一般被人看作被动的，但是在这里，它是主动的词义，因为神仍在工作以实现祂的承诺。就算在我们无法理解或想象的情况下，神的应许仍在成就中。

马太福音6:33揭示了一个我们应该遵守的原则，就是先求神的国，并明白神做一切加添的工作——为祂的应许加添供应，并实现应许。也许你不明白为什么应许还没有实现，先寻求祂的国，祂的旨意，而不是你个人的意愿或目标。你一直信实地等待着，很好。现在，更上一层楼，加添你的信心吧！

在神看来，祂与我们的约是不能背弃的。不要因为你等待了太久仍未看见应许的实现而放弃。今天就做出对的选择归在神的约之下。当你将今年的下半年放置在我们守约的神手中，你将充满更多信心和盼望！

TOGETHERNESS - AG CHURCHES

Amazing Life Testimony of an ex-HK Triad Leader

By Tina Chen, Trinity Christian Centre

TCC's Chinese Ministry invited Brother Teddy Hung to share his amazing life testimony at one of our biggest evangelistic events.

On May 14, 2017, the Chinese Ministry had the pleasure of hosting Brother Teddy Hung. The largest evangelistic event to-date. 2,530 people came to the Sanctuary to hear his amazing life testimony.



The crowds queuing to enter the Sanctuary



Ps Christina Onn addressing the crowd

Held on Mother's Day, the event started with a tribute to mothers. The worship team sang "Where Has the Time Gone?" to commemorate the sacrifices these mothers have made for their families. The audience was filled with tears. Pastor Christina Onn blessed the mothers with words of comfort and encouragement.

Taking the stage, Brother Hung shared candidly about his past. Fourteen years ago, he was the most influential gang leader in Hong Kong. Though this brought fame and wealth, women and power, it all came at a terrible cost. Drug-trafficking, gambling, match-fixing – all these operations destroyed countless lives. Seeing his influence over the community, over 50 pastors attempted to share the Gospel with him. Viewing Jesus as the enemy of his life, Brother Hung quickly sent each pastor away, sometimes resorting to threats of violence.

Seeing how drugs destroyed the lives of many, he was consumed with guilt and began to suffer from serious depression and insomnia. Despite seeing the best doctors, his condition became worse. One day, out of sheer desperation, he picked up a Bible and challenged Jesus to do the impossible. "If you can let me have a good sleep, I will trust you." Instantly, he fell asleep and upon waking, Brother



The congregation responding to altar call

Hung started to recognize how powerful Jesus really was. Receiving Jesus into his life and filled with the joy of the Lord, he started smiling, something his gang brothers had never seen before.



Brother Teddy Hung and his interpreter ministering

Though he had accepted Jesus into his heart, it would take seven years for him to change his lifestyle. When his businesses started to lose money, when his gang brothers and mistresses started opposing his new life, he would lose his temper and curse Jesus. When businesses were forced to shut down, he contemplated suicide as a way to escape from God.

In that moment of hopelessness, God showed him the finality of life after death by taking him to heaven and hell. That became the turning point in his faith. Brother Hung finally understood what God wanted him to do: commit to the transformed life so that he could lead his gang brothers to Christ.

"The change in Brother Hung was so dramatic. So were his experiences with God, especially when he was healed from insomnia. When he talked about his encounter in heaven and hell, I too believed that heaven and hell are real. That's why I

chose to receive Jesus into my heart."

– Tan Poh Heok Bazi

"When I heard Brother Hung's testimony, especially about his experience with heaven and hell, I knew I had to receive salvation. Now, I am willing to follow Jesus."

– Lin Xinhua

Filled with new conviction, he disbanded the gang, went to Bible school, and partnered with several pastors to establish Victory Church – a place dedicated to sharing the Gospel with gang members and helping them to become disciples of Christ. As witnesses to Brother Hung's journey of transformation, many close to him also came to salvation: former mistresses, gang brothers and even his own children.

"Though a Christian for many years, my family still cannot understand my faith in God. This is something that discourages me. When I heard of how Brother Hung's family and mistresses came to receive Christ, his experience encouraged me to keep living out my faith. That is why I decided to go to the front to rededicate my life to God."

– Tng Chiew Hia

Having left everything behind to follow Christ, Brother Hung's life was also a reminder to every believer to walk the talk, adding credibility to the Gospel by committing to the transformed life.

We thank God for the opportunity to help 26 people make decisions for Christ. We are also grateful for all Trinitarians who serve together, ensuring that the event ran smoothly. May the Chinese Ministry keep moving forward and expanding so that many more can hear the Gospel.

Only with God's Provision and Faithfulness

By Rev Tay Hey Tong, Grace Christian Centre

Grace Christian Centre's move from the old worship location (Woodlands 11) to the new location at Nordcom 1 on April 24, 2017 told of God's provision and faithfulness.

By God's divine leading, we shifted from using one light industrial approved unit situated at #06-01 Woodlands 11 to two approved units by the Urban Redevelopment Authority (URA) at Nordcom I industrial area, Gambas Crescent, for a greater expansion of God's Kingdom. We thanked God that we were able to raise \$110,000, with the help of some churches and members of our congregation. It was really a milestone for us. That was our fourth shift, from a place in Choa Chu Kang to the Woodlands Cineplex, to an apartment in Marsiling, and subsequently to Woodlands 11 and finally to our present location at Nordcom I.

During a service in January 17, we felt God's powerful and refreshing anointing upon us as we prayed for the church to move to Nordcom I. We interpreted it as a sign of God's confirmation for us to lead the church to move out from Woodlands 11 to our existing location.

By faith, we started to raise more funds from our congregation and gathered a few other churches to help us raise \$111,000. We told the congregation that we had to step out in faith to move out from where we were, although we were quite comfortable worshipping there, we needed to move out because our landlord, from time to time, through his agent, told us that he would sell away his industrial unit, which we rented from him. According to him, if he managed to sell his unit, we would have to shift out in three months.

We were not very comfortable with the short notice period given because we would not have sufficient time to find a new location and seek official clearance from URA. Furthermore, we wanted to move to be able to impact and bless a new community. Our approval from URA to use the premises at Woodlands 11 for church activities would expire on April 28, 2017. In view of all these, we felt that God would have us to shift to a new location, which He would provide.

By His grace, He had provided two adjoining units at Nordcom I, which we felt comfortable with because Sembawang is an area that we still had not evangelized. It would be a great opportunity to evangelize there and grow the church. Hence, Nordcom I, here we come! Do pray along with us that we will be able to grow well as a church, both qualitatively and quantitatively, as we embark on a new journey of God's leading for a greater glorification of Christ's name, Amen!

Photo credit: Grace Christian Centre



Our congregation at Woodlands 11



Our first youth service at Nordcom 1



Swimming pool at the roof top of Nordcom 1 with our youths and children



Our service at Woodlands 11

 ETERNAL LIFE ASSEMBLY PRESENTS

Stories Used With Permission. Written and Directed by DWAYNE LAU. Songs Composed and Written by DAPHNE JUNE LAU



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Joint-Coaching Event between AG Singapore and Global Leadership Summit

By Rebecca Yong Mun Ching,
Emmanuel Assembly of God

"Everyone wins when a leader gets better," a key take-away from this ministers' coaching with Dr Bill Hybels - A joint event organized by AG Singapore and GLS.

Imagine a city that has every institution in the community functioning at the highest of levels. This city has universities, hospitals and churches that are extremely well-led. Their police department is honest, with no corruption and is well-run. So is their government. Can you imagine living in such a city? People will move in thousands into a city like that.

Dr Bill Hybels shared this at our recent pastor's coaching session defining what the Global Leadership Summit (GLS) is attempting to do. GLS's real dream is to try to improve the performance and the spirit of every sector in every city. Their dream is an enlarged vision to see every sector, city and country get better by helping individual leaders get better at leading. It was with this dream, as well as a heart that strongly believes that leaders can get better, that set Dr Bill Hybels on a course of developing every leader.



Guest Speaker Rev Bill Hybels

Here are some key takeaways from our time with Dr Bill Hybels at the pastor's coaching session.

The best of the best leaders are people who have developed all the skills necessary to lead from the top downward e.g. vision casting, team building, problem solving, inspiring and motivating, developing values and building leadership culture etc. They've not only learned these skills but practices them at a very high level.

These same leaders have also learnt how to lead laterally which means they have very high levels of EQ where they are able to influence and lead people. They have also learnt how they can lead upward and, most importantly, they know how to do self-leadership – putting the right amount of challenge on themselves.

They are disciplined learners, readers, and growers. They show grit and determination when they need



Empowering time



Gathering in worship

to fight through something. This is a well-rounded, deeply experienced, multi-skilled leader. Romans 12:8 says that when you've been given the gift of leadership, lead with all diligence. This means that you pay the price to grow as a leader to get better.

Can leaders get better? Dr Bill Hybels devoted the last 25 years of his life in GLS believing that leaders can absolutely get better. Leaders can get better rather rapidly and inexpensively. You can help your leaders get better by simply setting aside 45 minutes every other week to have them watch a good video on leadership topics and have a conversation about the video, asking them "Do you agree with it?" or "Do you apply it?" Or have your leaders read a good leadership book and set aside time for the leaders to come together and share what impacted them the most and why, while you highlight some key leadership principles from the book itself.

Another great way to develop leaders is to give them a small responsibility, one that lasts 5 to 6 weeks. This gives them an opportunity to lead a team of people across departments to get something done. In this way, you will build a leadership development



Dwelling in the presence of the Lord

culture. It is important for us to understand that what God treasures the most in this world is people. And if God would entrust what He cares most to your care and for you to lead them, you ought to lead them well. You need to help leaders get better because people have been entrusted to them. You've got to put them through leadership development and help them grow in their leadership. Everyone wins when a leader gets better.

Everyone ought to serve with his spiritual gifts. Leadership is at its very best when you are living out Ephesians 4:11-12. You need to help people find out the gifts God has given them, that when supernaturally activated, gives them the thrill of God using their life.

It is your role as pastors and leaders to equip other leaders and volunteers, as well as help them to find their giftings and direct them to the right ministry. When people serve with their spiritual gifts, it will give them meaning that just mere vocation will never give them.

Can you imagine a church completely organized around these spiritual gifts? A church that is being led by people with leadership gifts, taught by people with teaching gifts, administrated by people with administrative gifts, cared for by people with shepherding gifts etc?

When you help people find their giftings, and show them how they can use it effectively, this can transform your church!

Photo credit: Cherie Ong



CELEBRATING 40 YEARS OF REACHING, TEACHING AND KEEPING BOYS AND GIRLS FOR JESUS CHRIST

ROYAL RANGERS SINGAPORE (RRSG) HAS BEEN MAKING AN IMPACT ON THE LIVES OF CHILDREN + YOUTHS FOR THE PAST 40 YEARS. FROM A SINGLE CHURCH IN 1977, THE MINISTRY GREW TO BE AN ASSEMBLY OF GOD NATIONAL OUTREACH PROGRAM IN 1984 AND IS CURRENTLY IN OVER 15 CHURCHES ISLANDWIDE.

RRSG HAS BEEN FOCUSED ON DEVELOPING THE TOTAL CHILD - PHYSICALLY, MENTALLY, SOCIALLY AND SPIRITUALLY. EVEN WITH TODAY'S CHANGING SOCIAL LANDSCAPES AND ATMOSPHERE, RRSG IS BUILDING UPON ITS LEGACY AND POSITIONING ITSELF TO BE A RELEVANT AND EFFECTIVE TOOL FOR CHURCHES TO MENTOR FUTURE SERVANT LEADERS FOR GOD'S KINGDOM.

AS WE LOOK BACK AT THE MILESTONES OF THE MINISTRY, LET IT BE A TESTIMONY TO GOD'S FAITHFULNESS AND BLESSINGS IN THE LIVES OF THE LEADERS, CHILDREN, YOUTHS, FAMILIES AND FRIENDS WHO HAVE JOURNEYED WITH US.



A MAN NEVER STANDS SO TALL AS WHEN HE STOOPS TO HELP A BOY.

JOHNNIE BARNES
Founder of
Royal Rangers



AFTER SEEING A BROCHURE OF THE PROGRAMME, CMDR STEVEN TEO GATHERED A BUNCH OF YOUTH LEADERS AND FORMED THE FIRST EVER ROYAL RANGERS SINGAPORE OUTPOST IN BETHEL ASSEMBLY OF GOD.



GRADUATES OF AN IN-HOUSE LEADERSHIP PROGRAMME RAN BY CMDRS STEVEN TEO AND NICHOLAS CHOO. THESE LEADERS WORE A T-SHIRT WITH THEIR SELF DESIGNED RR LOGO AND WERE TRAINED IN DRILLS AND VARIOUS SKILLS SUCH AS SONG LEADING AND CAMPING.



THE FIRST POW-WOW CAMP WAS ORGANISED FOR ALL ROYAL RANGERS IN SINGAPORE.



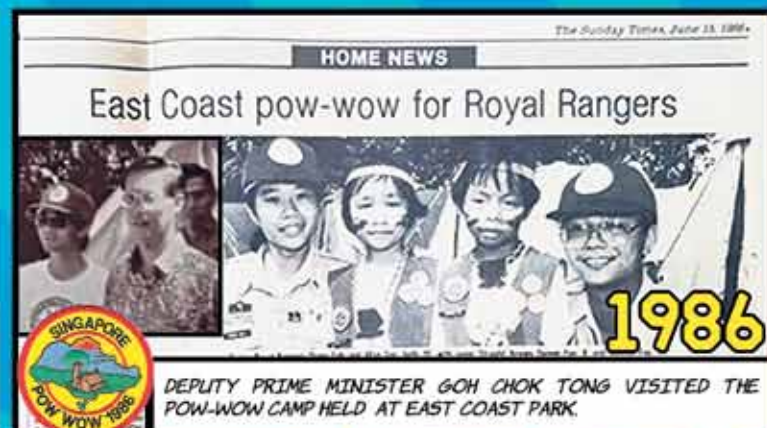
SINGAPOREAN ROYAL RANGERS ATTENDED THEIR FIRST CAMPORAMA IN GOSFORD, AUSTRALIA.



THE FIRST BATCH OF LEADERS TO ACHIEVE THE LEADERS MEDAL OF ACHIEVEMENT RECEIVED THEIR MEDAL FROM THE LATE US NATIONAL COMMANDER JOHNNIE BARNES.



THE FIRST NATIONAL TRAINING CAMP FOR SINGAPORE AND MALAYSIAN LEADERS WAS CONDUCTED ON PULAU TEKONG WITH US CMDRS JOHNNIE BARNES, FRED DEEVER AND AUSTRALIAN COMMANDERS.



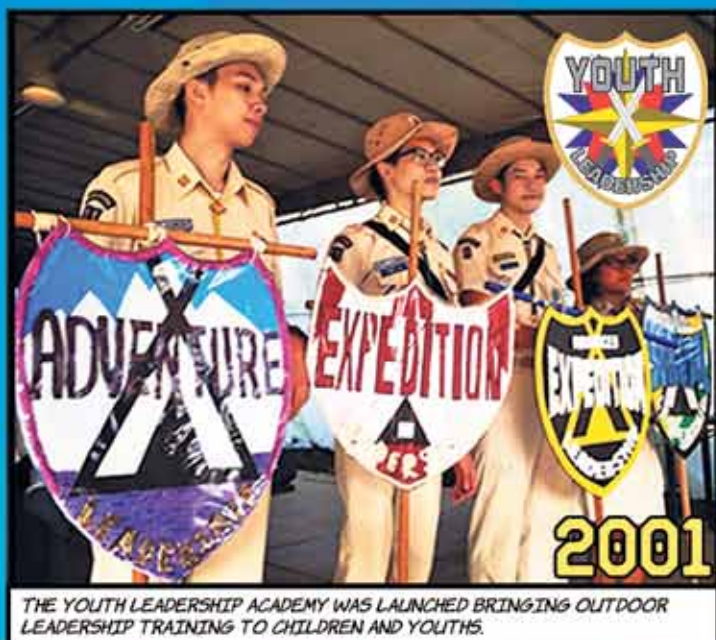
DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER GOH CHOK TONG VISITED THE POW-WOW CAMP HELD AT EAST COAST PARK.



THE FIRST SINGAPORE CAMPORAMA WAS HELD AT SENTOSA SCRIPTURE UNION CAMPSITE.



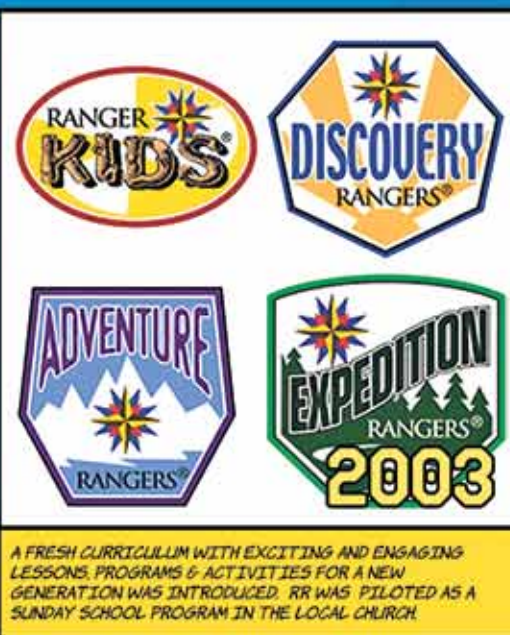
CMDR BARNABAS LOH STARTED THE FIRST HEARING IMPAIRED OUTPOST IN SINGAPORE UNDER OUTPOST #1



THE YOUTH LEADERSHIP ACADEMY WAS LAUNCHED BRINGING OUTDOOR LEADERSHIP TRAINING TO CHILDREN AND YOUTHS.

SINCE WE SET UP AN OUTPOST, CHURCH MEMBERS RALLIED TOGETHER TO SERVE THE MISSION OF REACHING, TEACHING AND KEEPING BOYS AND GIRLS FOR CHRIST. CHILDREN HAVE DEVELOPED A KEEN SENSE OF BELONGING AND IDENTITY, ALLOWING THEM TO GROW AND REACH OUT TO THEIR COUSINS AND FRIENDS TOO.

PASTOR BERNADETTE FAN,
Senior Pastor of The Harvest Force (Outpost #23)



A FRESH CURRICULUM WITH EXCITING AND ENGAGING LESSONS, PROGRAMS & ACTIVITIES FOR A NEW GENERATION WAS INTRODUCED. RR WAS PILOTTED AS A SUNDAY SCHOOL PROGRAM IN THE LOCAL CHURCH.



RRSG'S FIRST RECIPIENT OF THE NATIONAL YOUTH ACHIEVEMENT AWARD - GOLD. CMDR NEAH YONG CHIAN RECEIVED THE AWARD FROM HIS EXCELLENCY, DR TONY TAN KENG YAM, THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SINGAPORE.



RRSG ORGANISED KIDS@PLAY (AN EVANGELISTIC EVENT) WHICH SAW OVER 4000 CHILDREN ATTENDING AND 508 DECISIONS FOR CHRIST MADE.



LEADERS FROM RRSG RAISED \$25 000 FOR THE PURCHASE OF RELIEF SUPPLIES AND TO INITIATE THE REBUILDING OF HOMES AND CHURCHES AFTER THE EARTHQUAKE AND TYPHOON HAIYAN HIT REGIONS OF BOHOL, PHILIPPINES.



RRSG "BALIK KAMPLING" WAS HELD AT ST JOHN'S ISLAND IN CELEBRATION OF SG50.



RRSG HELD THE 8TH SINGAPORE CAMPORAMA WITH OVER 1000 ATTENDEES INCLUDING DELEGATES FROM MALAYSIA, PHILIPPINES AND GERMANY.



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TOGETHERNESS - AG COMMUNITY

General Council 2017

By Calvary Assembly of God

On May 25, 2017, ministers and delegates from The Assemblies of God of Singapore convened at Trinity@Paya Lebar for their Annual General Meeting.

"I will look on you with favor and make you fruitful and increase your numbers, and I will keep my covenant with you" (Leviticus 26:9). Those were the words spoken over the body as Rev Dominic Yeo, the General Superintendent, opened The Assemblies of God of Singapore's Annual General Meeting with a short exhortation.

Now, while most people assumed an annual general meeting to be a routine and mundane event inundated with numbers and business matters, our time together as an assembly was one filled with renewal and purpose.

A gathering made up of fellow believers from different churches across the nation to worship and to seek God with one heart and spirit is a testament to the unity that is found within the Assemblies of God of Singapore. Rev Dominic Yeo's recollection of his time of ministry in the Assemblies of God of Japan and the greetings they sent further strengthened the fellowship the Assemblies of God has both locally and internationally.



General Superintendent Rev Dominic Yeo addressing the congregation

After a time of praise and worship, Rev Dominic Yeo encouraged the assembly to remember the God of the covenant and to continue serving Him faithfully. It was a great reminder about a God who not only watches over His people but one who enables us to be fruitful and to increase in numbers. A truth that resonated with the hearts of the assembly was that God was a God who keeps His promises. This means that instead of passively 'keeping' His promises, God is actually 'accomplishing' them actively in the lives of His people. Our response therefore, should not be one of strife but one of seeking God and His righteousness and trusting that He will do the adding (Matthew 6:33).

The assembly was not just encouraged by the Word, but given the opportunity to see the fruition of that adding as they rejoiced together when



When the Church gathers to worship God



The new EXCO receiving prayers



Lifting up our hands to praise His Name

different candidates were presented with their respective credentials. Of the candidates, 14 were presented with their Exhorters credentials, six with their Licensed credentials, and five with their Ordained credentials.¹ Alongside the presentation of credentials, three ministers were also presented with life membership in honor of their faithful service as Assemblies of God ordained ministers over the last forty years. They are Rev Dr David Lee Foh Fatt, Rev Dr Andrew Ong Chuan Leong and Rev Peter Tay Eng Hoe. Praise God for the continuation of the legacy that He is establishing within The Assemblies of God of Singapore!

When it came to the business session of the AGM, with an attendance of 153 voting members, the assembly voted and affirmed our new EXCO for the coming term:

General Superintendent:
Rev Dominic Yeo

Assistant General Superintendent:
Rev Simon Ang (newly elected)

General Secretary:
Rev Tan Hock Cheng (newly elected)

General Treasurer:
Rev Mark Poh

Committee Members:
Rev Chia Beng Hock
Rev Calvin Lee
Rev Robert Lum (newly elected)
Rev Gerald Tan (newly elected)
Rev Dr Emily Tan (newly elected)

Several updates were also presented to the assembly during this time. These include the relocation of the AG office, the upcoming 90th anniversary celebration of AG Singapore in the year 2018, and the Next Gen initiative that seeks to build future generations.

Truly, there is no better time to be in the kingdom of God than in the latter days! "Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit," says the Lord Almighty." Zechariah 4:6

¹ The five who received their Ordained credentials will be presented with their credentials by the AG Exco in their respective churches.

TOGETHERNESS - AG COMMUNITY

Life Membership and New Credentials

Life Membership	
Rev Dr David Lee Foh Fatt	
Rev Dr Andrew Ong Chuan Leong	
Rev Peter Tay Eng Hoe	

Ordained Ministers	
Sim Kim Poh, Andy	Grace Assembly
Tey Kok Leong, Scott	Grace Assembly
Teo Chun Boon, Isaac	Sembawang Assembly
Lim Lily	Trinity Christian Centre
Lee Seow Toon, Vincent	Live For Eternity Church

Licensed Ministers	
Eu Kok Leong, Timothy	Calvary Assembly
Lee Soh Wan, Amy	Centre of New Life
Tay Boon Yong, Alvin	Emmanuel Assembly
Yeo Yong Boon, Chadrick	Eternal Life Assembly
Chng Li Chen, Janice	Trinity Christian Centre
Teo Kian Teck, Kelvin	Trinity Christian Centre

Exhorters	
Yew San Ho	Bethel Assembly
Ong Navin	Centre of New Life
Ting Yang Chung, Jason	Centre of New Life
Lim Jianxiong, Peter	Grace Assembly
Tan Kok Lin	Grace Assembly
Wang Zixuan	Grace Assembly
Zeng Lixin, Sharmaine	Grace Assembly
Derek Anthony	Harborlight Church
Lim Han Hui, David	Hope Church
Goh Kok Hiong, Gary	Paya Lebar Methodist Church
Ng Teoh Kok, Dave	Sembawang Assembly
Tan Gim Soon, Desmond	Sembawang Assembly
Wong Ming Hing, Steven	Trinity Christian Centre
Ng Soo Tiang, Angeline	Zion Gospel Mission

Photo credit: Ps Patrick Toh



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How to Ruin Your Teen for Life?

By Ps Isaiah Fadzlin, Faith Assembly of God

Are there times where parents and church leaders unknowingly hurt our growing-up teens and how can we be aware of our mistakes? Ps Isaiah shares his insights.

As a pastor that has been leading youths for more than a decade, and a parent of three daughters, I have often been asked “How to connect or lead teens better?” I’ve pondered the many possibilities of how I could’ve done better leading teens. Before I share some of these tips, let me just share some of the things that would totally wreck your relationship with them.

In the world of teens, the most important factors are acceptance and trust. They want to feel like they belong and they want to be trusted. Acceptance means to be loved and cherished for who they are, so they won’t need to be who they are not. Sadly, in search of acceptance, they give up being themselves and become someone they are not, so that they can be accepted among their friends. Trust, on the other hand, is them telling you that they believe that you have their interests in mind. Knowing these two factors are important in the life of a teen, let me list down some things that would make a teen not want to trust you and not feel that they belong with you.

Teens hate to be compared with other teens. In media and movies, we often see scenes where a parent would compare their child’s results with their relative’s children. In the mind of a teen, the moment you start comparing, it means that he or she is not good enough for you which makes them think that they don’t belong.

Teens hate to be embarrassed in front of their friends. The trust factor is tested when we embarrass them. I am not talking about something like challenging them to sing in front of a group of people, rather, I’m referring to revealing their faults and weakness among friends and family. I am not saying that we don’t confront their issues if there are issues, but we should do it in a safe environment, rather than calling them out on it in front of others.

Teens hate double standards. The most common reason that results in many Christian teens leaving a youth group or church is their families. They see two behaviors at play every day. A behavior of their parents in church and another behavior of them at home. The double standards that they see from their parents before them on a regular basis creates an obstacle in their mind that faith is only for show. In history, we saw how the father of the communism, Karl Marx, became an atheist due to the behavior of his parents. I have said many times to parents, as well as reminded repeatedly that our actions will produce a reaction from our children. Whether the reaction is positive or negative, it all depends on the actions we are sowing into them. The sowing and reaping principle does not only apply to our offerings to God but also in our actions to our kids.

Teens hate people breathing down their neck. The problem with us being too overly protective and controlling will only cause teens to be ever more protective of the secrets that they conceal. In the minds of the youths, your behavior shows a lack of respect and most of all a lack of trust. Teens want to be “believed” and in return they will give you the access to their “trust”. Trust isn’t given but earned. We need to earn that trust by believing in them and standing with them.

After sharing some thoughts on what teens hate, I would like to give 3 tips that I believe will help us build our teens to last rather than ruin them for life.

1. Being Real

Teens are not looking for the perfect pastors, leaders, Mums or Dads. In fact, it is the opposite. They are looking for those who are “REAL” and not fake. What do I mean by real? It means someone who is genuine, sincere and vulnerable. Willing to reveal your weaknesses and quick to apologise for your mistakes. I remembered once where I caned my second daughter thinking that she did something that we warned her not to do but only to find out that the information given was inaccurate but I had already caned her! I brought her in front of my

wife and asked her to forgive me for making that mistake. At that moment, she looked at me and said “It is ok, Daddy!” My action to be vulnerable to her and accountable to my wife led her to still trust her “Superhero”— me! We are called to uphold truth in our home and ministries but being real will help us keep them rather than lose them.

2. Being Reliable

Teens are looking for people who are reliable. They need you to be there not only at the best moments of their lives but also at the worst moments that they are going through. They are not looking for instruction but friendship with their pastors, leaders and parents. If they cannot find the support there, they will look elsewhere. Three out of four teens that committed crimes at a young age showed that they did not have reliable support to point them in the right direction, so they looked for other options to fill that void. They are looking for a place where they can share, discuss and be listened too instead of being nagged at and shunned away. They don’t need you to be there for them 24/7 but they need to know that you will be there whenever they need you, and you will be consistent to lead them into the right path.

3. Being Realistic

Teens want you to be realistic with them. As pastors, leaders and parents, we always want them to achieve more and become amazing, talented and super spiritual beings. In our attempt to challenge them to become these beings, we forget that they are ultimately still in their teens. What do I mean by that? We need to keep on expecting them to reach higher, but we must leave room for them to learn and make mistakes. It is in the process of learning from their mistakes that they will learn to trust the leaders they are serving through the response that they receive.

I believe there are more ways to connect and build up our teens rather than to ruin them for life. If you think that you might have done it wrongly, let me remind you of the story of me caning my second daughter. Sometimes, all we need is to be vulnerable and humble ourselves in front of them. Apologize for our mistakes openly. I pray that this short article will bring healing between pastors and their teens, parents and their teens, as mentioned in Malachi 4:6.



Ps Isaiah Fadzlin is the Associate Pastor at Faith Assembly of God. He oversees the Community, Amplify (Youth & Young Adult of Faith AG), HOD of Next Gen and the EXCO of the church. He has been in full-time ministry for more than 15 years. He is married to Carol and together they have 3 beautiful daughters.

TRAINING

Parents with Special Needs Children Share Their Hearts

AG Times has the privilege to speak to three parents from our churches about their journeys with their special needs children. Hear their thoughts and as a community, let us learn how to be a better support to them.



Lee Kah Heng (KH),
Moriah Assembly of God

Kah Heng and his wife, Ruby was married in 1989 and they have two children. Their first child is a son and he works with CAAS and his second child is Lynette, a special needs child. Kah Heng has been working in the semiconductor manufacturing industry since 1987 and Ruby used to work in a bank. She has stopped work since 1996 to be a full-time homemaker attending to Lynette. Lynette has cerebral palsy (quadriplegic) which affects her speech, brain function and four limbs.

a) What were the initial struggles with your child?

KH: It took us almost a year after Lynette was born before we realized that her development was not normal. Our pediatrician told us to be patient when we found her growth to be slow and the size of her forehead to not be growing at a normal rate. We were devastated when she was diagnosed as quadriplegic. We kept asking ourselves repeatedly why it happened. Ruby stopped work and I become the sole breadwinner. As Lynette grew taller and bigger, we had to put her in a pram or carry her around. People began to look at us differently and wondered why my child couldn't walk or talk. We were also too focused on Lynette and at times, our son was neglected.

LN: Kai was born in Beijing and at aged three he started attending an international Nursery but had many challenges assimilating into the school culture. During that time, he had a speech delay as well as social communication impairment. This affected his ability to express himself and understand others, as well as contributed to a lack of emotional awareness of other people's feelings and needs. Compared to his peers, he did not have the required attention span for effective learning and was slow with reading and writing. We wrestled with his many other behavioral issues at home and social settings. His distress often escalated into meltdowns including long crying spells, temper tantrums, and aggressive outbursts toward others. We struggled with knowing what to do and were often perceived as overly permissive or just plain ineffective. All these led to increased conflicts within the home and in our marriage.

ML: Our daughter Min-shan was diagnosed with Autism with mild cerebral palsy. She turned blue in the nursery room a few hours after birth, and we do not know till this day if that was the cause of her disability. It is pointless to ponder over "How it happened?" "Why it happened?" because we know that we just have to trust God and move on. We have left those questions at the feet of the Lord. God knows best. From the ages of one to four, Min-shan had been slow in her developmental progress. For example, she turned her body on her own at about one year old, sat up at one and half years old and only started walking at four years old. We worked hard on her physical movements and exercises and when she finally walked, we rejoiced greatly over this developmental milestone. However, when speech did not come on at age five, the psychologist then confirmed she has autism, which affected her speech, and other cognitive and social developments. It was disappointing to us as we thought we had overcome the hurdles..."What? Another hurdle? And a bigger one?" Oh God, where is this leading us to?" were the questions that went through our minds.

b) How did you manage these struggles?

KH: It took us time to get over it and accept the fact that Lynette is a special child. We desperately sought treatments and divine intervention (at that time we were not saved). We went to the temple and consulted a spiritual medium. Each time, Lynette cried when we brought her to see the medium and she saw the chanting. We embarked on western therapy programs conducted locally and got to know other parents with similar situations and joined the parent support groups. We tried to balance our time to be with our son so as not to neglect him. Deep inside our heart, we desperately wanted to see a miracle for Lynette.



Lawrence Ng (LN),
Trinity Christian Centre

Married in 2001, Jen and Lawrence had their son, Kai in 2004, who was diagnosed with Autism around the age of three. After they were married, the couple answered God's call to serve in China for eight years, and then to Australia for four years. The couple was actively serving in Trinity Christian Centre since their youth and has returned to Singapore for about three years. God has given an opportunity to Jen to teach in an international school, impacting many foreign families with special needs. Lawrence was a human resource management practitioner and a professional counsellor. He had given up his career to be the main caregiver to Kai, while building a business as a weight management coach as well as reaching out to families within the special needs community.



Tong Mei Leng (ML),
Grace Assembly of God

Mei Leng has been a real estate salesperson for the last nine years. She is married to Eugene Chan, a retired RSAF pilot, currently a lay leader with missions (Indonesian Ministry) in Grace Assembly of God. He is also the full-time caregiver to Min-Shan. They have three adult children and Min-Shan is their middle daughter. She attends day center at Eden Adult Centre under the Autism Resource Centre.

LN: We attended a cell group for young parents to seek help but it didn't help as it made us feel that we were ineffective and lousy parents when we compared ourselves to the standards set by the Christian literatures. We not only doubted ourselves as parents, we felt as though we might have failed as Christians. I was frequently hitting my son in rage under the guise of not "sparing the rod". We eventually stopped serving in church. This was in stark contrast to before, where my wife and I were actively serving in the Children Ministry in addition to my active involvement in the worship ministry. Despite seeking pastoral prayers and support, we were quickly spiraling downward. My wife was sinking into depression. I was stressed at work and was increasingly angry. Honestly, we were not managing our struggles very well.

ML: We saw how the Lord did his "little by little miracles" and turned Min-shan from a floppy, hypotonic baby to a walking little girl, and this gave us the assurance that God will walk with us in this formidable task to tackle autism and the challenges it presents. Having a child with special needs is not an easy road to travel. Min-shan has to be taken care of by someone all the time, she is non-verbal and does not have much of independent life skills. At times, the overwhelming sensory sensitivities to noise and sight can result in meltdowns. Daily we commit her to the Lord, and a constant prayer we pray with her before she goes to bed is "God, grant Min-shan the fruit of the Holy Spirit of Love, Joy, Peace, Longsuffering, Gentleness, Goodness, Faith, Meekness and Self-control." We have often received feedback from outsiders that Min-shan displays a genuine smile and joy and we know that can only come from the Lord. She has taught us the joy of acceptance and contentment and trusting in our loving God daily.

c) What support did you turn to?

KH: One day, my sister invited us to Lighthouse church in Tampines where we witnessed miracles with people walking without the walking aids they had brought along. We were immediately stuck with what we had seen and wanted very much for miracles to happen to us, specifically for Lynette. We went back to Lighthouse several times and we got to know a lady friend with a special child like us in Lynette's school and she attended Moriah AG.

We were invited to Moriah AG in October 2000 and we felt very welcomed and comfortable with the people in the church. Lynette no longer behaved like when we had first brought her to the spiritual medium. We really felt peace for the first time in our hearts and I clearly remembered that the late Pastor Alfred Yeo told us that God had a purpose by giving us a special child.

Given Lynette's condition that she may cry suddenly at times, and that she was wheelchair bound, Moriah's brothers and sisters had given us great support and encouragement to take care of Lynette. We attended Moriah regularly and even went to the Bible classes conducted after church services.

Lynette's physical condition limited our travel pattern to attend cell group (CG). The whole CG took the trouble to relocate from Bishan to my place at Bukit Batok. There were 12 people in the cell including us. The cell members helped us to grow spiritually. We were baptized in 2008.

My wife and I have been serving actively in the ushering ministry for about 10 years. On usher duty days, as we are unable to be on time in the morning, the usher ministry gladly accommodated to our timing. Last year, in October, my wife joined the music ministry, singing hymns and worshipping God.

For Lynette's condition, we have total faith in God's Word (Matthew 19:26) that with God, all things are possible. The miracle will come one day and Lynette will be restored. Amen.

LN: I was hesitant to go to church after returning from Beijing to Singapore for good. Eventually we went back to Trinity Christian Centre under strong persuasion from my wife. Both my wife and I grew up in this church since the days of our youth.

Before we completely released Kai into the children's service, we spoke to the Children Ministry's pastor. She was empathetic and did not dismiss our apprehension. She assured us that she would work closely with us to support Kai and she did. Despite the fact that there were more than 50 children in a single service, she kept a keen lookout for Kai. When Kai's behavior needed addressing, she didn't single him out but corrected the behavior of the group. We were contactable by phone if Kai had a meltdown. While Kai did have a violent meltdown after the service at the playground, the parents of the kids who were hurt were not hostile but continued their friendship with us.

The recent most concerning inevitable process was his transition from the Children Ministry into the Youth Ministry. We spoke to the pastors in charge. Again, they displayed no disdain but empathy and acceptance. They encouraged us to attend the service together with him to help him feel comfortable. They wanted him to attend the youth camp, which was a three-day-four-night camp away from home. That was scary for us as Kai had never left home, nor had he shared rooms with strangers. However, with enormous trepidation, we sent Kai for the camp. Kai's camp leader, roommates and group dynamics were carefully handpicked to best accommodate his needs. I was allowed to attend the camp as a volunteer to provide support toward Kai should the need arise. And it did arise when Kai suddenly became upset and ran away just when the service began. The pastor was quick to inform me. When I got there I was comforted to see my senior pastor already there attending to Kai. He was actually about to preach to the group of 500 youth campers on stage. However, his decision to be there reminded me of Jesus leaving the 99 sheep in search for the single lost sheep. I was personally very moved because my senior pastor had been my youth pastor when I was just an adolescent in the Youth Ministry.

After the camp, Kai cell group's leader was again carefully selected to suit his personality, someone calm and mature. So far, Kai has assimilated smoothly into the worship service and into the cell group. He enjoys attending service and texting his fellow cell group members and friends from the Youth Ministry. No meltdowns thus far (phew!). On his spiritual life, Kai is growing in his Bible knowledge and understanding of God's love, which is equally important.

Over the years, we have more downs than ups in parenting Kai and coming to grasp with Autism. God has taught us a lot and changed us through the years. The story of the prodigal son is a good illustration on how I was once a prodigal, but God has progressively changed and molded me to become the embracing father to demonstrate the heart and character of the heavenly Father, both to Kai and to others around.

Through it all, we have experienced God's faithfulness and grace which is more than sufficient for our daily use. God taught my wife and I teamwork, and continually reminded us to uphold each other's interest. We progressively learned to never blame each other but to encourage and promote each other's wellbeing.

ML: We are thankful to our church and extended family for extending their encouragement and acceptance. Min-shan was welcomed in the kids' church though she made noise and could not participate in most of the activities, but the embracing acceptance of the teachers and the kids was heartwarming. We know deep down many brothers and sisters are praying and still praying for us. We can rest assured in our band of prayer warriors to cover us in prayer when we need the reinforcements in moments of despair and need.

We also have tremendous support from groups of parents with special needs kids through the *Whatsapp* chat group, such as HOJ (Hope of Journey) group, ASD group - and within the groups, a sub-division into "prayer support group" among the Christian parents. Oh! Such a privilege to have these "special" parents rallying to provide emotional, moral and most important of all, prayer support. We have witnessed wonderful testimonies coming from these fervent, persistent and faith-filled prayers. All glory to our God who hears us even in our softest whispers to Him.

TRAINING

The Value of Christian Grandparents in Our Children's Lives

By Rev Jack Theva, Itinerant Minister

What values could our Christian grandparents bring to their grandchildren? Rev Theva sheds some light on this topic.

Grandparents have a unique and wonderful position to influence yet another generation, passing on good Christian values to them when walking, sitting, and lying down with them (Deuteronomy 6:7).

Building bonds with grandchildren takes a lot of time and energy so grandparents have to invest their lives into these young ones.

Plant Seeds of Faith

2 Timothy 1:5 says that the seed of faith was first sown by Timothy's grandmother, Lois and his mother, Eunice. All of Timothy's accomplishments in the faith were possible because of his grandmother and mother. They taught and guided him to solidify his faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

So grandparents have a very important role to play in the lives of their grandchildren.

Family Support

Grandparents can be the steady hand to render assistance to their working children when there's illness or when unwelcome problems affect the family or there is separation or divorce. Some children end up in a single-parent situation. In supporting the grandchildren, the grandparents give their children time to work out the problems in their lives or in their marriage.

Grandparents' support is so vital in such situations and prevents the grandchildren from crashing emotionally.

The most prevalent need today is supporting the busy working parents who are juggling parenting, family, work and church ministry.

Spiritual Support

I believe that grandchildren need to be taught many values like courtesy, politeness, love, kindness, forgiveness, prudence, purity, honesty, truthfulness, modesty and proper language, etc. If parents are already teaching these values, we as grandparents can complement and reinforce what the parents are doing.

Christian grandparents have to live godly lives before their grandchildren. Many things are caught

and not taught. It is through our lives and examples that we earn the right to be involved in their lives. They will observe us and imitate us, so it is important that we live right and imitate Christ. We can only teach them when we have a relationship with them and earn their trust.

Building Relationship

As a grandparent, I would like to also spend quality time with all my grandchildren. I need to build relationships with each of them, to hear them speak and to let them speak about themselves, their friends, everyday school life, their ambitions, their dreams, their fears, etc. Sometimes they speak gems of wisdom. But most of all, I enjoy the banter and humor. They laugh so easily, they are so easy to please and they are great learners.

Honesty and Transparency

Next to the parents, grandparents are possibly the greatest influence that grandchildren will have. They will see our faults and imperfections and as such, we need to show our human side and admit when we are wrong. We need to apologize when we have wrongly accused or judged them. If we readily admit our shortcomings, the grandchildren will realize that we are also imperfect and they will learn to admit their own wrongs.

We must also not say one thing and do another otherwise we will be labeled as hypocrites.

Helping to Shape and Mold Young Lives

As grandparents, we can help to shape and mold our grandchildren's lives into what God would have them be. We should have the capability to instil and impart the fundamentals of the Christian faith into their hearts and minds. They need to learn about salvation through Jesus Christ, His birth, death, resurrection, water baptism, healing, Holy Spirit, second coming of Christ, etc. We can use the Bible, videos and books to teach such truths.

Creating Precious Memories

Creating precious memories that will last a lifetime is my priority. Bringing my grandchildren to the museums, Botanical Garden, Science Centre, airport or library, builds up memories in their minds. The times we have with them, will serve as a great time for reflection as they grow up in the future.

Overseas holidays with the grandchildren are especially great for bonding. I treasure such trips with them because three generations travel, live and eat together, drive around and play together

for several days. What wonderful memories for the young minds!

Even simple events like sleepovers at the grandparent's home, is a highlight and an exciting event for many of them.

Legacy

As grandparents, it is our heart's desire to leave a small inheritance for each of our grandchildren as a blessing. Proverbs 13:22 says: *"A good person leaves an inheritance for their children's children."*

We regard all our grandchildren as treasures. They are gifts from God to their parents and also to us, as grandparents. So we pray often for them that they will walk, love and serve God with their whole heart. I know that God has only good and wonderful plans in store for all of them (Jeremiah 29:11).



Rev Jack Theva has been in ministry for more than 45 years. He has served in "Tent Making" ministry for many years and was in full-time pastoral ministry for 24 years. He has been serving as an itinerant minister for the last four years.

Passing our Christian Heritage to Second Generation Christians

By Ps Terence Ong, Centre of New Life

What does it mean to pass down our Christian heritage to the next generation? Ps Ong shares his thoughts.

My parents were first generation Christians who came to Jesus in their teens. Having no living experience of a Christian family, their vision of family life was anchored simply by Joshua 24:15 "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."

And so I grew up literally living and breathing church life and ministry. I was already serving in the children's ministry at 12 years old. Despite fervent denial to many who asked if I would follow in my father's footsteps, I, actually did become a pastor. From a socio-biological standpoint, I would be a second generation Christian. My parents, some would say, did well to pass on the "Christian Heritage" to me. If they are right, the pressure is now on me to ensure the Heritage continues and at least one of my kids turns out to be a pastor!

But what is a Christian Heritage? And can it be 'passed down' the generations like a family inheritance? To better understand what it means to pass the Christian Heritage to the next generation, let us first secure a foundational truth.

Understanding the Work of God in Each Generation

"God has no grandchildren, only children" was a phrase I heard proclaimed often through the church pulpit. The phrase is significant because it challenges the idea that one generation can pass any 'Christian Heritage' to another. It conveys a singular truth that God does not leave the generation of children to some 'fathers' he appoints, but undertakes the work to become our Father Himself.

Regardless of religious background, each child in each generation must as it were, be 'born again' of the Spirit¹. The Scriptures testify that God Himself is at work to 'be our God' and to 'make us His people'². Central to the Gospel of Jesus is that He has risen and is at work through His Spirit in each generation ensuring that we are not just participating in the religion of our parents, but that we are participating in a living relationship with God as our Father³.

Despite my parents' best efforts to pass on the Christian Heritage, I myself had to meet God through Jesus Himself⁴. I myself by His Spirit had

to respond to His question to me "who do you say that I am?"⁵ Without this living encounter with the risen Jesus Himself made possible by the Spirit, I would only be a product of my parents and their religious convictions. Any "Christian Heritage" that we speak about would be a God-less, man-made construction.

Let it thus always be true that God has no grandchildren, only children.

But what does this mean for us as parents? If God is devoted and responsible for making all of us His own children, what responsibility, if any, do we have as one generation to another?

Understanding How God Works in Each Generation

In God's economy, each Generation is given the responsibility **to be co-workers with Him** for the next Generation. The Scriptures both Old and New testify that parents are responsible for the instruction of the children in God. Paul's instruction to parents to "... bring them [children] in the discipline and instruction of the LORD" (Ephesians 6:4) is an echo of an earlier and more fundamental exhortation from God to Israel to pass the knowledge of God to the next generation in Deuteronomy 6:7-9.

A closer look at Deuteronomy 6:4-6 helps us understand what it means to be co-workers with Him.

Verses 4-5 details WHAT we are responsible to pass on - the knowledge of God that He is One and our vocation as human beings to be united in Love with this One; and Verse 6 helps us understand HOW God sees us working with Him.

In verse 6, we hear the phrase "and these words... shall be on your heart". The priority of verse 6 'be on your heart' to verse 7 'you shall teach' is fundamental. We are to pass on the knowledge of God not by **doing the work of teaching** but **by being living examples** of people who live in reverent love of God. This is the paradigm by which we then read in verses 7-9 "You shall teach them diligently to your children... when you sit... when you walk... when you lie down and when you rise." The truth of verse 6 is clarified by the axiom "we teach what we know, but we reproduce who we are."

In God's economy, it is by our daily living in relationship with God that we 'teach'. It is by our own

devotion to God as Father, through the obedience that arises from knowing His Son Jesus that we - as one Generation of God's children, enabled and empowered by His Spirit to 'pass our Christian Heritage' to the next generation. For precisely this then, I am ever grateful to God for my parents - for allowing us children the privilege of participating in their life with God in Christ, in good and bad times, in and out of season.

There is no greater privilege we have been given than to 'pass our Christian Heritage' to the next generation. Let me exhort us by the Spirit, to be faithful in this work God our Father has so graciously bestowed upon us through the knowledge of Jesus His Son. To God be the glory, great things He has done and continues to do from generation to generation.



Ps Terence is husband to Brenda-Mae and a father to four boys. He is presently holding the office of Senior Pastor at Centre of New Life. Outside of pastoral ministry, he enjoys playing with the boys and learning together with them - how to live Gospel-shaped lives fully engaged in present-day culture. He is passionate about the local church - as witnesses of God's New Creation through their life in communion with Jesus of Nazareth, as crucified Messiah, risen Lord and coming King.

¹ See Jesus' conversation with Nicodemus in Gospel of John 3:1-8

² Both in Moses (eg. Deut 29:10-13, Deut 5:3), and also the Prophets (eg. Jeremiah 31:34)

³ John 1:12-13; 20:17, 20-23

⁴ Acts 17:24-27

⁵ John 6:65 cf. John 6:44

TRANSFORMATION

Building Your Family Altar: Is the Ark of God in your Home?

By Tanya Sahni Singh, Grace Assembly of God

We should build an altar of God in our house.

The Ark symbolizes the presence of God. Wherever the Ark was, God's presence was always there.

Exodus 25:22 says, "There, above the cover between the two cherubim that are over the ark of the Testimony, I will meet with you and give you all my commands for the Israelites".

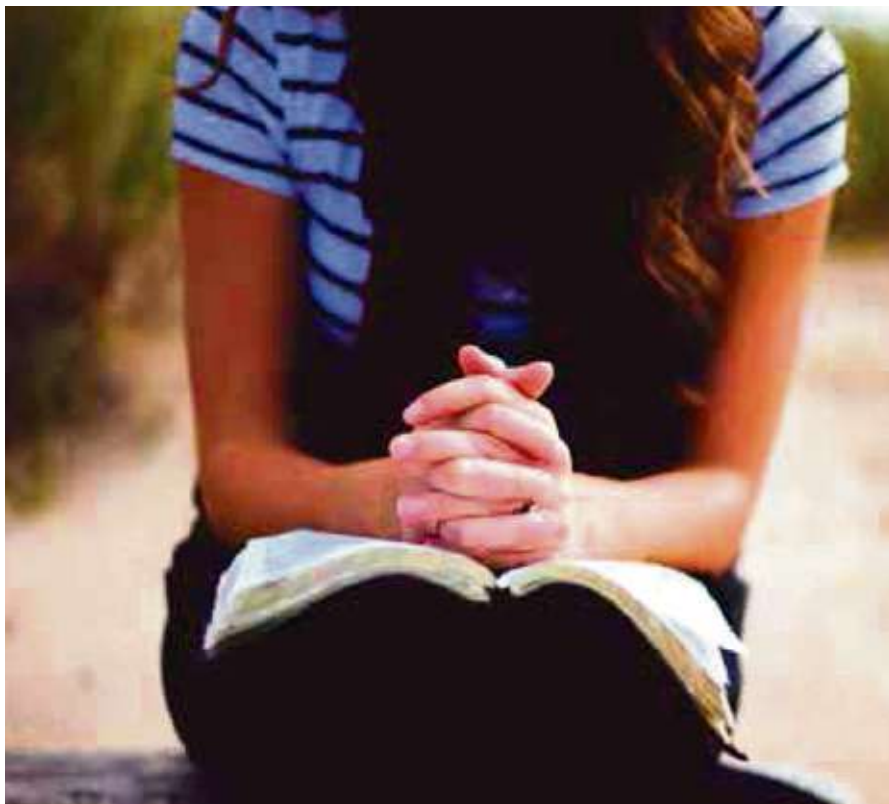
The Ark of the testimony represents the Word of God. So if the Word of God is proclaimed in your family, then your family has the Ark of God with them.

God blesses everything in the house. Obed-Edom had the Ark in his home for three months and God blessed him in every way.

2 Samuel 6:11 says, "The Ark of the Lord remained in the house of Obed-Edom the Gittite for three months, and the Lord blessed him and his entire household".

There will be peace in your home even when we face stress and difficulties. After David became king, he had many difficult times and fought many wars. But ever since he moved the Ark to his palace, God gave him peace and rest.

In 2 Samuel Chapter 6, David was bringing in the Ark of the Lord into the city of David. In the opening lines of chapter 7 the Bible tells us that God gave David rest and peace.



My testimony

I came from a non-Christian religious family background and my mother accepted Christ before I was born, so we were raised as Christians. Becoming a Christian in my family was looked down upon. Many of the congregation members were from poorer backgrounds. Our church was in a rented hall of a school building. Stray dogs, cats, and even rainwater came right in during our services.

I was baptized at the age of 11 in the sea where people stood on the shore and watched as if I was being murdered by a bunch of people. Relatives hurled insults at us and said that I would never get married, and if I did, I would be married to a poor rickshaw driver because I insisted on marrying only a Christian.

Against all odds, my mother, my sister and I made sure we built our family altar and called on the name of God. The altar I speak of is not a physical altar but it is a spiritual altar that we make to the Lord when we pray as a family in agreement, when we read and proclaim God's Word and worship Jesus. We also opened our home for God's Word to be ministered to people.

I suffered from Psoriasis, a skin condition that there was no cure for, but could only control by medication. I tried all kinds of medication but nothing worked. So, I decided to stand on the Word wholeheartedly and took the following scripture for myself by faith.

James 5:14 "Is any one of you sick? He should call the elders of the church to pray over him and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise him up. If he has sinned, he will be forgiven."

The healing was not instantaneous but after some months, I discovered that I was completely healed and there has been no trace of Psoriasis for the past 25 years now.

We prayed, and both my sister and I were married to Christian men who are not only well-placed in their careers but love the Lord and are serving in a church. Our relatives had nothing more to persecute us with and after witnessing God's faithfulness in our lives they gave up on calling us names. They were silenced after seeing what the Lord had done in our lives. And they now look to us for prayers for their own lives and challenges.

What must we do to receive peace and rest within our homes, relationships and families?

Dear brothers and sisters, bring the Ark of God into your home and give it the highest place. Build your altar in your family and proclaim the Word within your walls at all times. God's Word must lead us. Whatever we do, before we begin, pray and be driven into your decision by the God's Word. You may not be able to see a solution to your situation right away but as you dwell on God's Word it will be a light unto your feet and a lamp unto your path (Psalm 119:105). I pray that we all give God's Word the highest place of honor in our hearts and receive the blessings of the Ark of God as it dwells in our homes and in our families.

(This article has been edited for AG Times purposes. It was first printed in Grace AG's bulletin April, 2017)

God is My Family's Savior

By Russell Lye, Trinity Christian Centre

My 82-year-old mother was, as they say, a hard nut to crack.

She lived a very hard life, her character toughened when she was young. At the age of five, she started cooking for the entire family. At seven, she had to manage household chores while helping out on the family farm and selling its produce at the local market. She continued to work hard even after marriage, taking care of four children while supplementing the family income as a laundress.

World War II was also a significant part of her youth. One day, an air raid released bombs on their neighborhood, dropping and exploding all around them. My mother and other children in the neighborhood ran for their lives. In the chaos, they were separated and she found shelter in a temple. She prayed to the deity, promising her devotion if she survived. When bombing stopped and the dust cleared, she was the only one among the children who survived the raid. Attributed her survival to the deity's protective power, she pledged her loyalty to worship it.

This lifetime of hardship made her a woman of strong character. Once she reached a decision, she's not easily persuaded to change her mind. That included her perspective on Christianity.

In time, my two elder sisters and I accepted Christ and started attending church. My mother was very unhappy about it. To her, it was a rejection of our Chinese roots and betrayal of her devotion to the deity. Moreover, her self-reliant nature made it impossible for her to understand what we meant by our "need" for God. Every time we shared the Gospel or invited her to church events, she would reject us. Year after year and prayer after prayer, we were met with rejection after rejection.

Seeing my carecell member's parent's receiving salvation was a mixture of joy and discouragement. I couldn't help but question God because my mother remained stubborn and unyielding. "God," I cried, "when will my mother ever receive You into her life?"

I clung on to Acts 16:30-31, the passage where Paul and Silas told their jailer to, "**Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved – you and your household**". God's promise was that me and my household will be saved. I pressed on to pray for my mother's salvation.

In December 2015, our carecell was led to plan a Care Event specifically for our elderly parents, to bless them with a time of activities and togetherness. Eagerly, we made plans and prayed over our parents and the event. With every rejection, our eagerness



Carecell event which my mother attended

dwindled. Despite all the effort we had put into planning, it looked like we would have to scrap the event. Our carecell leader was not dismayed. Filled with *Relentless Belief*, he said the event would continue even if only one *oikos* agreed to come.

Encouraged to press on, we persevered with planning, praying, and re-inviting our parents. Indeed, our God can turn any situation around. Four of our parents came for the event, including my hard-nut mother. I was surprised and happy that she agreed to come. Although most of us spoke limited Cantonese, God enabled us to share the meaning of Christmas and the bridge illustration to our guests in their preferred dialect. I was delighted when my mother also agreed to come for the Chinese Ministry's Christmas presentation: *One More Day!* All I wanted for Christmas that year was for my mother to accept Jesus into her life. Imagine my disappointment when she didn't.

Though she said nothing about Christmas, my mother started telling my eldest sister and I about the testimonies her friends would share about Jesus – testimonies that were shared with her some time before the Care Event. My sisters and I were very encouraged to see that her attitude about Christianity was beginning to soften.

Almost a year later (November 2016), while preparing for business trip, my sister texted for me to come over because my mother was not feeling well. I put aside my preparations to visit her and as we were talking, she suddenly said she will receive Christ in future. I couldn't believe my ears!

My mother explained that, for months, she suffered a swollen, infected finger that refused to heal, even

after being treated with medication. Remembering the testimonies her friends had shared, she asked Jesus to heal her finger. Days later, her "untreatable" finger started to heal. She had personally experienced God's divine goodness and wanted to devote her life to Him!

My sister and I were so delighted. We told her not to wait longer and accept Christ that very moment. She agreed! I thank God for the privilege to lead her in the sinner's prayer. The seeds we have sown all these years finally bore fruit – the "tough nut" had been cracked! Although my mother is not able to attend church because of her health, my sister and brother-in-law continue to share Jesus to her.

Having witnessed my self-reliant mother respond to the love of Jesus, I truly believe that all the hard nuts in our life can be touched by Him. All God asks of us is to remain faithful by working together to reach our *oikos*. Together, we can reap the reward of seeing our loved ones accept Jesus in their lives!



My mother accepting Christ

TRANSFORMATION

We Serve a Powerful God

By Ev Johnnie Tan, Healing Ministry
– Jesus Power House

Photo credit: Ev Johnnie Tan

In March 2017, God displayed His glory in Jakarta during our time of ministry there.

Salvation

There were two sisters who came to me. They brought their elderly aunt. The aunt had problems with her brain, walking and some other complications too. One of the sisters also had breast cancer. The church pastor, along with the leaders and myself, prayed for them. We declared specifically for all the cancer cells to stop growing, stop multiplying, stop spreading, die and diminish from the body. We commanded the good and healthy cells to produce. We thank God that the two sisters received Jesus as their personal Lord and Savior. The pastor led them in the sinner's prayer to receive Jesus. We also encouraged their aunt to go for medical check-up and also to go for a scan, believing that God will touch her.

Healing

People were bringing the sick to us for prayer. We first led them to Christ – the great physician. We then took time to pray for those who came.

This young girl of about five years of age had a skin allergy. Her skin looked like the skin of an elderly person. Every time when she ate chocolates or



Skin allergy causing the itch and scratch marks



The father and the son receiving prayers

certain types of food, her skin would itch and she would scratch her skin. This young girl was attending the tuition class in this small church. When I was there in February this year, her mother came to see me requesting for prayer. I prayed for the young girl. When I returned in March, the leader of the church showed me the picture of her skin. They told me that her skin dried up and started to peel off and new skin was forming. The leader had also brought chocolate for her to eat, and she did not feel itchy at all after eating the chocolate. I prayed for this young girl again and believed that God will bring complete healing upon her and new skin will be completely formed.

I encouraged the pastors and leaders to open the altars in church for healing ministry during Sunday services and also on the weekdays. I believe strongly that God wants to use this church as a healing centre where He will move in signs, wonders, miracles and healing. By starting in this informal time of ministry to the sick, God's power and grace will flow through to all the church services and meetings. My heart is really burdened for this church and I am committing myself to help them to develop and grow in this area of ministry.

Young man with autism

A young man suffering from autism came in to the church. His development is like that of a 10 year-old child. He went to school and was bullied by his classmates until he had to stop schooling. His father brought him to us for prayer. The pastor provided some words of encouragement and counseling to the father. Then we asked God to touch him and work a miracle in his life.

For all the Lord has done in this trip, we give all glory and honor to Him!

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Correction:

It has come to the attention of the AG Times that "Dominic Poh" mentioned on the article "Boldness from God to Evangelize", Page 18 under Transformation of Issue 031, May-Jun 2017, is in fact "Dominic Toh".