

# ASIAN BEACON

YOUR CONTEMPORARY CHRISTIAN MAGAZINE

# THE ARMOUR OF LIFE



*A special Tribute  
to Steven Teo  
4.10.1969 - 10.4.2017*

**Superbug Buster • You Have To Abort The Baby! •  
Lifted To Clouds Of Glory! • Left In A Home •  
The Marathon Woman • My Straying Sons •**

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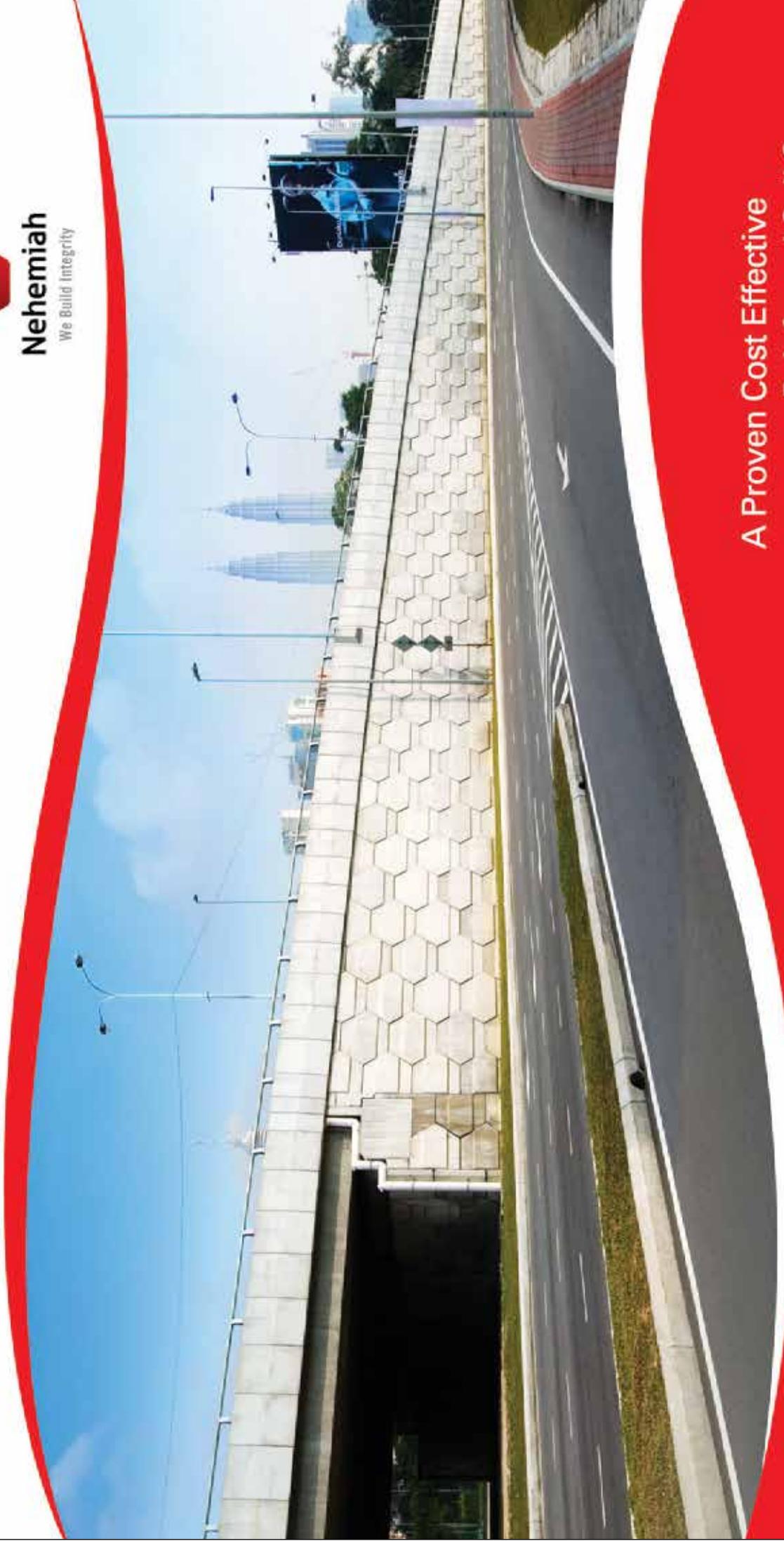
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# Editor's Note

Life is precious, isn't it? We wake up daily to news that is affecting our world – challenges, problems, compromises, conflicts, terrorism and people. We work diligently to perform well in what we do by using our strength. But some issues in life require a different kind of strength when we know that we are not up against flesh-and-blood enemies. They require putting on the armour of life to be able to resist that kind of enemy in the time of evil. We are up against evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world, and against mighty powers in this dark world. We're up against evil spirits in the heavenly places. Scripture says that after we have prepared everything, we are to stand our ground, putting on the  belt of truth and the  armour of God's righteousness. For  shoes, put on the peace that comes from the Good News so that we will be fully prepared. Hold up the  shield of faith to stop the fiery arrows of the devil. Put on salvation as our  helmet, and take the  sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. And finally, pray in the Spirit at all times and on every occasion.

When our human strength fails in resolving life's issues, turn to God for divine intervention and appointment. Meanwhile, read the inspiring stories featured within. You may just find God's unmerited favour as you flip the pages.

Goh Chee Beng



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#### PERSAUDARAAN ASIAN BEACON MALAYSIA

19-C, Jalan SS22/19, Damansara Jaya,

47400 Petaling Jaya, Selangor, Malaysia

Tel: (603) 7725 4109 • Fax: (603) 7726 1740 • Hp: 012-3931 453

Email: [aboffice@asianbeacon.org](mailto:aboffice@asianbeacon.org)

#### PERTH REPRESENTATIVE

Tek and Goldie Chong - Email: [tekchong@iinet.net.au](mailto:tekchong@iinet.net.au)

#### DESIGN & LAYOUT

Twentyfivecents Creative Solutions

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#### PRINTER

Thumbprints UTD SDN BHD

Lot 24 Jalan RP 3, Rawang Perdana, Industrial Estate,  
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Lifted To  
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# Eulogy for Steven

**A**s a colleague, Steven was committed to the mission and team. As a friend, he was thoughtful and supportive. As a disciple, he daily treasured Christ's gift of second chances. Steven's enthusiasm for everything he put his hands to was undeniable. That's because he saw possibilities. If hope is the ability to see that which is unseen, then Steven was indeed a man of hope. May his testimony of hope live on in all of us who knew him.

**Charmain Sim**

**Y**ou shocked us, Steven, by leaving us so suddenly at the prime of health and perhaps the happiest phase of your life! It didn't seem so long ago that you took Agnes to visit me for fellowship and prayer and a simple early lunch near my house. It was clear that you both were truly committed to each other. You gave me the privilege to walk along with you a little in both your personal life and your ministry in *Asian Beacon* as an *Asian Beacon* long-time advisor, a much older friend and retired pastor and an 'interdenominational Seminary and Christian NGO man'.

I thank you for the unfailing, professional, 'gentleman's image' I have of you in all our encounters and relationships – from our then monthly Exco meetings, AB functions, dinners, road shows and the personal delivery of the regular ( and extra ) consignments of the magazines using your own car! Not forgetting how you helped me change a punctured car tyre and many other courtesies rain or shine, including your frequent offers to fetch me for AB functions or otherwise!



**4.10.1969 - 10.4.2017**

I remember your fortitude and your steadfast Christian values with which you faced the challenges of the economic downturn. With your personality, qualifications, experience and obvious gift in public relations, I have no doubt you would have done very well in different circumstances – including, doubtless, your passionate contribution to AB. Still, as you moved on in Christian service, you graciously kept us all in touch (we were even supposed to have an AB fellowship Appreciation Dinner with you!)

Praise Him! We will still dine in the presence of the Lord. It may be sooner than we know for some of us as He sovereignly decides! So it's not a goodbye but until-we-meet-again in His presence!

**Rev. Loh Soon Choy**

I met Steven Teo through *Asian Beacon*. I found him handsome, well-built, yet shockingly self-effacing! His life blessed mine through his transparent acknowledgement of failings and failures, coupled with profound thankfulness to Jesus for permitting him to serve. I last met Steven over lunch on March 30, 11 days before he left us. He knew much remains to be done for Jesus in our hurting, fractured land. But Steven's mission ended abruptly on April 10 in

New York...Through Jesus, we shall meet again; until then, though, much remains to be done.

**Rajen Devadason**

**W**e will always remember Steven when we travelled with him and the AB team to Penang for our retreat and promotional tour to different towns. He was so hardworking and enthusiastic, lugging the heavy magazines around. We needed a strong cheerful man to do that job! He served faithfully and joyfully in very tough circumstances.

**Tek & Goldie Chong**

**S**teven Teo suddenly passed away on April 10 at the JFK International Airport when he was catching his flight back to Malaysia after his meeting with his new-found ministry, Operation Christmas Child. It was unreal and heartbreaking. Steven had been such a prominent figure in his term with *Asian Beacon* and was such a loss to friends in ministry, leaders and pastors whom he had formed great relationships over the years.

At his recent wake service on April 23, leaders and friends spoke of his charm, friendship and passion in serving God. A beautiful love story read by his beloved wife Agnes, whom Steven left behind with son DikSan, brought sobs but tender smiles of a beloved father and husband whose memories will be cherished forever. Steven will always be in our thoughts and our hearts here at *Asian Beacon*.

**Patrick Leong**

# Life Changing Education 2017/18



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## Asian Beacon AGM on March 25, 2017



LEFT: Former *Asian Beacon* Chairman Dr Ong Hwee Keng exhorting attendants at the AGM to pass on the legacy of the literature ministry from one generation to the next through skillful writing. The AGM held at the *Asian Beacon* office commenced with a welcome address by Chairman Tan Yoke Tee, followed by opening prayer by former Chairman Teoh Cheng Hock. RIGHT: *Asian Beacon* members pose with the elected Exco 2017/2018.

## Asian Beacon Strategy Planning Session At Swiss Garden Hotel, Kuala Lumpur, on February 4, 2017



Great things in store for *Asian Beacon*... participants of the session.



*Asian Beacon* Chairman Tan Yoke Tee welcoming participants at Swiss Garden Hotel, Kuala Lumpur.



Dr Oliver Ho facilitating the session and sharing valuable insights on the Blue Ocean Strategy for the *Asian Beacon* framework.

# Writers' Moments on April 20, 2017



Both young and experienced writers gathered at the *Asian Beacon* office to brainstorm contents for the magazine. Many shared ideas on the relevant reading material for readers. The young writers highlighted hot topics that are not being adequately addressed by the community at large.



Bridging the gap... Ng Kuan Yew, 19, exchanging tips with Dr Lim Poh Ann (left), former editor of *Asian Beacon* and a regular contributor.



Young and old share a love for writing.



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Datuk George Ting, a long-time associate and supporter of *Asian Beacon*, making his closing remarks. His philosophy on keeping life simple – “Don't complicate things. Be God-fearing and keep life balanced. Impart knowledge and share with others.”



The gathering was graced by Dr Chong Kwong Tek, popularly known as Tek Chong, and his wife, Goldie, who writes the Dear Goldie column for *Asian Beacon*.

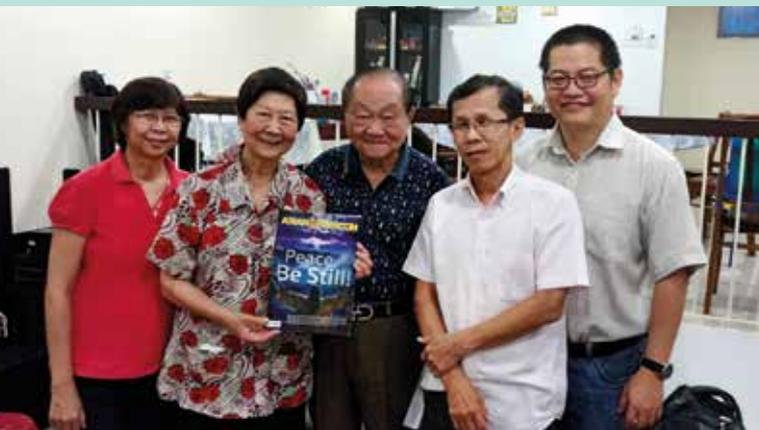


## New Look, Fresh Enthusiasm

*Asian Beacon* proudly presents its transformed office, injecting a sense of life, belonging and professionalism. The needed facelift was completed within a span of one month from April to May 2017 through a collective effort by the new Exco.



## REVIVED



Goldie holding the first issue of *Asian Beacon* (Volume 48 No.1 December 2016/January 2017) after an 18-month absence. From left to right: Loke Che Ching (Treasurer), Goldie with her husband, Dr Chong (both former editors and founder), Ah Beng Goh (current Editor) and Tan Yoke Tee (Chairman).



Delivery of the revived issue on January 18, 2017.

# WITHOUT PRAYER, WORSHIP IS MEANINGLESS

By Patrick Leong



**S**OME YEARS BACK, I posted on my Facebook page this statement about the intrinsic, cause-and-effect relationship between prayer and worship.

In my early years as a believer serving in the worship ministry of a church, I thought that worship revolved around music, songs, musical instruments and the whole AV technology to produce the ambience and sound that create a “heavenly experience”.

We are great at being functionally efficient! The stage looks good and the songs from various genres appeal to men and trends. But in the end, our worship may simply be spiritually dysfunctional and carries no power or presence, which in turn benefits no one.

Though all this engineering does enhance the overall worship experience in the eyes of men, we must not be carried away but remain central to the posture of what worship is all about – His presence and reverence. And that posture is only found in and through prayer.

How true Scripture is when it says in Matthew 15:8-9, “These people honour me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. They worship me in vain, their teachings are but rules taught by men.”

## PERSONAL WORSHIP

Before we think we can cross the finishing line of a marathon, we’d be a fool to overlook every single aspect of what it takes to compete. Likewise, before we think we can lead worship on a corporate level, we’d better first learn how to worship in a personal capacity.

Without prayer, worship is meaningless. You see, prayer cultivates an internal condition that ovulates a coalition in expression to produce praise even before the formation of words in thought or a spoken utterance.

Crude as the phrase “ovulates a coalition in expression” sounds, it is almost a perfect explanation for the internal condition to reach maturity, which then charges up our entire inmost being to produce praise.

One of the distinct features of such a coalition happening is the tremendous sense of warmth and love that overwhelms your heart, naturally bringing you to the point of tears in awe of and in deeper intimacy with Him.

Perhaps this is a glimpse of what David, the man after God’s heart, felt in his intimacy with God as related in 1 Samuel 13:22. David’s many psalms are a spectacular portrayal of his intimate relationship with God.

Finally, worship is the embodiment of one’s personal intimacy with God through prayer, which evolves into

creative expressions through praise. After all, the reason for worship is for us to reflect internally the worth of God and who He is to us. And from the inside flows our true worship. Not from our ideas and ideologies, formation of templates and structures, themes, branding, duplicating or adopting other worship cultures and trends which are all cleverly engineered by men but impoverished in spirit.

Prayer cultivates the condition that produces the capacity within us to worship, which is liberating, exhilarating and truly captivating. Without prayer, worship is meaningless. ✚



**Patrick Leong** is a singer, songwriter, producer and worship leader at Grace Assembly PJ. He is also the Secretary of *Asian Beacon*.

# SUPERBUG BUSTER

## LAM SHU JIE



**I**N AN AGE WHERE CHILDREN, AND even adults, are fascinated by superheroes, whether on screen or in real life, we now hear of superbugs. They too seem to want their place on the world stage.

But what are superbugs? No, they are nothing super in size. In fact, they belong to the microscopic world. But do not underestimate their powers. For 'normal' down-to-earth beings like us who might never even get to peer into their world, let us consider Alexander the Great, the conqueror of empires, who was allegedly conquered by a mosquito!

Superbugs are bacteria that have survived man's use, or rather, misuse of antibiotics on them. We hear more and more of people dying because they have lost the battle to these microbes. Medical and scientific fraternity has termed this growing health crisis as a "slow-motion tsunami". Nicola Smith of *The Telegraph*, UK calls it "an impending Armageddon".

### **SUPERBUG BUSTER**

(Drum rolls) Enters Malaysian 'star scientist' superheroine, superbug buster Dr Lam Shu Jie.

Who could imagine that anyone so lovely, soft-spoken and gentle could wage war, even if it's in the test tube? Her doctoral research at the University of Melbourne – that promises to wipe out superbugs without antibiotics – has been hailed as a significant breakthrough that could change the face of modern medicine. She was recently among only 10 people who received China's Ministry of Health's prestigious Award for "Illustrious Young Overseas Chinese" for her development of SNAPPS.

Her baby, SNAPPS – structurally nano-engineered antimicrobial peptide polymers – directly destroys drug-resistant bacteria without harming healthy cells. She patiently explains that her creation of the star-shaped molecules, each with 16 or 32 arms, is like "putting together small blocks of Lego". What a humble understatement of years of painstaking slogging in the laboratory!

BY GOH BEE LEE



Scientist at work.

### **CHRISTIAN JOURNEY**

Shu Lam, as she is popularly known in international circles, was born in Batu Pahat, Johor, where her family used to worship at Gereja Grace Batu Pahat. She became a Christian in Sunday School when she was only 11. Shu Lam, 26, left home and country to study Chemical and Biomolecular Engineering at the University of Melbourne. Due to work opportunities, Lam now lives in Sydney and worships at the Sydney Chinese Presbyterian Church, where she actively participates in a cell group and women's ministry, serving the church within her capacity.

"I'm blessed to have parents with a strong faith who were constantly encouraging and praying for me to have a close walk with God," shares Lam. Her dad, a pediatrician who passed away suddenly in 2015 just about a year short of seeing her success, would buy her Christian books and share lessons from his theological studies so that she would grow in her understanding of her faith.

"Mum is the prayer warrior in the family who constantly supports us in prayer even though we are apart. Both my parents were great testimonies of how God has transformed their lives. I look up to them as role models in terms of walking closely with God," says Lam.

She speaks of a time during her tertiary studies when she allowed study and work to become the focus of her life. "But God spoke to me and I now realise He should be the centre of my life. He leads and guides me every step of the way. Everything I do is for the glory of God." That was exactly how she ended her acceptance speech in Beijing recently.

### **PAIN AND JOY**

Her choice to work in research has led her down a path of struggles, sacrifice and perseverance. Her delicate work with polymers meant that she often had to be in the lab at 4 a.m., working diligently through long hours and often skipping meals. Weekends were like normal workdays.

"I faced a real challenge in June 2015 when Dad passed away suddenly in Malaysia. I had to leave my work behind, so there was some anxiety about that. But I knew family had to come first." Her beloved father, Dr Lam Pan Nam, had been her strong support and main source of motivation throughout her studies and research. Lam went through a trying time. While work piled up in Australia, the filial daughter took a three-month break to help settle some family matters.

At the end of the dark tunnel however, there was that light when in September last year, her research on her little 'stars' was published in the prestigious journal, *Nature Microbiology*. She took the scientific world by storm and was hailed as a bright new star herself.

### **A WONDERFUL SISTER**

Shu Lam is the second of three daughters. Her elder sister, Harvard-trained Xin Jie, now lives in Oslo. The sister remembers their childhood with fondness and pride.

"Shu Jie is the best sister one can have. She is one of the kindest, most considerate and humble people I know. I can never forget how she would save for me her only packet of snack or tidbit from school, just because she knew it was my favourite. I am truly fortunate to have her as a sister and friend," confides Xin Jie.

Both Xin Jie and their mother, Seet Poh Chou, a school-teacher-turned-housewife, let us into the secret of Shu Lam's success. "Since young, she has shown diligence, determination and focus far beyond her age." These are the qualities which the world now knows that have kept her going despite all obstacles and challenges.



At the “Illustrious Young Overseas Chinese” award ceremony in Beijing, China.

“Though she has not been the loudest or most vocal at church gatherings or youth fellowship events, Shu Jie’s faith in God has always been strong,” continues her sister.

## HUMBLE AND UNASSUMING

When asked how celebrity status has changed her life, the unassuming Lam says simply, “Besides having a couple more emails to reply to and engagements and interviews that I need to attend to, I do not think my life has been affected that much. I am still doing what I have always been doing, that is doing the best I can in the role I am in now. I wish though that Dad is around to share our joy.”

She instantly stands up and bows when the Chinese former Minister of Health, Gao Qiang, who calls himself her ‘fan’, pays tribute to her work. Not one to snatch the glory, she quickly shares it with her mentors, Professor Greg Qiao, Professor Neil O’ Brien-Simpson and her team of researchers.

## SCIENCE AND FAITH

Does she think there is a problem for a scientist to believe in God?

In humility, she says, “No. The deeper I delve into research, the more I realise how great God and His creation are. I am amazed by the intricacies of His creation. And through a greater understanding of how things work, such as our anatomy, and why they are designed to work that way, I really marvel at God’s thought process behind His creation. It’s awesome how He has

made us such that everything falls into place. So, contrary to popular belief, I think the more I know about science, the greater is my connection with God.”

Does the fact that she is a believer make a difference?

“I know that I have God to rely on and that He will lead me through every step of the way. Without God, I wouldn’t have been able to battle the many challenges and circumstances I’ve faced in research and in life,” the scientist concedes.

## STILL A MILLENNIAL

With such an old head on her young shoulders, she still identifies with the Y-generation. The whole world before her as her oyster, one wonders what this young, talented and successful

person has to say to her generation.

What does she think of the ‘curse of the age’ – modern social media? She does not scold or lecture the generation that is mostly bent over their electronic gadgets. On the contrary, she wisely accepts the fact that social media is now well-entrenched in the daily lives of modern society. One can almost imagine this young lover of good food might check out Facebook for the best eating places!

“I think a lot of the negative stigma is associated with how people misuse or over-rely on it. But I do think that when used appropriately, social media helps to connect and build relationships. It can also be a tool for business and thought leadership.”

Wisdom indeed.

She is grateful for modern technology that has been crucial to the success of her research.

Shu Lam believes that scientists in this age have been able to take advantage of cutting edge technologies to achieve more than what their counterparts could do in the past.

To the young and the brave, she has this to say:

“Keep an open mind. Be willing to step out of your comfort zone. Embrace continuous learning and development. Very often, failure is part and parcel of our learning process. We can all contribute to help solve the many problems faced by mankind.”

Salute. We wish you well, Dr Lam Shu Jie. May you continue to reach for the stars. 🌟



Shu Lam with her parents.

# ABORTING DESTINY BY HANNAH YEOH

**T**WO YEARS AFTER I GOT married, I asked the Lord for a baby and when He answered our prayers, we began searching for a name for her. We decided instantly that the name must reflect who the child is – a beloved gift from God.

That’s essentially what a child is in the womb of a woman – a beloved gift from God. The Word of God affirms the value of every life formed:

**Psalm 139: 13-6**

*For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother’s womb.*

*I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well.*

*My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place, when I was woven together in the depths of the earth.*

*Your eyes saw my unformed body; all the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be.*

Some girls or women abort because of medical reasons; some abort because of rape. In some countries, there are legal provisions to deal with such circumstances. I must admit that I don’t know enough to write about these difficult situations.

However, I do want to address those instances when people abort out of convenience. They regret the wrong timing of the pregnancy or the inconveniences the baby would bring to their lives. Those are the reasons for most abortion cases.

**ABORTION IS ILLEGAL**

When I was first elected, I was informed that one unknown medical clinic in the vicinity of colleges registered an average of 20 abortions per week. That is for ONE clinic. Per week. Because abortion is illegal, it is difficult to ascertain the actual numbers.

*“An estimated 2.5 million teenagers in developing countries end their pregnancies by undergoing abortions performed by unskilled persons or in unsafe conditions, or both. Hard*

*data on abortions in Malaysia is limited. However, there are reports of an estimated 90,000 abortions annually, with about five deaths due to unsafe abortions”.* Read more at <http://www.thestar.com.my/lifestyle/health/2013/05/19/family-planning-saves-lives/#Mblw0uJYs405Utuq.99>

Ninety thousand lives aborted! What about unwanted babies? In a parliamentary reply on baby dumping cases in Malaysia for the short period of three years from 2013 to 2015, more than 300 cases were reported. Convenience takes priority over the value of these young lives. And we have yet to venture into child abuse or neglect cases. Those numbers would be equally alarming.

**ABORTION IS MURDER. IT IS SPIRITUAL.**

The Bible records the birth of Jesus and how Herod was determined to destroy the young ones in Matthew 2.

*<sup>13</sup> When they had gone, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream. “Get up,” he said, “take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you, for Herod is going to search for the child to kill him.”*

*<sup>16</sup> When Herod realized that he had been outwitted by the Magi, he was furious, and he gave orders to kill all the boys in Bethlehem and its vicinity who were two years old and under, in accordance with the time he had learned from the Magi.*

There is a similar story during Moses’ time, recorded in Exodus 1:<sup>15</sup> *The king of Egypt said to the Hebrew midwives, whose names were Shiphrah and Puah, <sup>16</sup> “When you are helping the Hebrew women during childbirth on the delivery stool, if you see that the baby is a boy, kill him; but if it is a girl, let her live.” <sup>17</sup> The midwives, however, feared God and did not do what the king of Egypt had told them to do; they let the boys live. <sup>18</sup> Then the king of Egypt summoned the midwives and asked them, “Why have you done this? Why have you let the boys live?”*

Why is abortion a murder? Because God has a plan for every child conceived. The enemy does not want these lives to achieve their destinies, for every plan that God has for each child is fitted into God’s grand salvation plan for mankind.

Ninety thousand abortions annually are mass destruction. That is like wiping out 90 schools with a thousand kids each year or about 376 aeroplanes with passengers. Malaysian Christians need to see this and understand the weapon or stronghold that is used by the enemy to resist salvation.

Fighting abortion requires spiritual warfare. Prayer intercessors must stand in the gap. School teachers must push for proper sex education. Parents need to parent. Don’t allow the Internet to do it for you. Senior pastors and youth pastors must boldly proclaim that abstinence is cool. True love waits. There is no such thing as safe sex.

Consider this – don’t abort, choose adoption. There are many couples waiting to adopt and to provide a home for the child. I may not understand all the challenges or the circumstances but I know God can make a way if you decide to do the right thing by not proceeding with abortion.

If you have committed abortion, or you have encouraged someone to abort her baby, or you have decided to abort your baby, run to the cross. Tell Jesus how you feel. Tell a trusted Christian friend about it, confess that sin of terminating (or intending to terminate) life in the womb and be on the road to recovery. There is forgiveness at the cross. There is power in His blood to wash you clean. There is healing in His Name. 🙏



**Hannah Yeoh** is the Speaker of the Selangor State Legislative Assembly and State Assemblyman for Subang Jaya, Selangor. She was first elected into public office in the 2008 General Elections at the age of 29. In 2013, she was elected as the Speaker of the House, making her the first woman and youngest Speaker in Malaysia. She obtained her Bachelor of Laws from University of Tasmania. She is married to Ramachandran M. and they are the proud parents of two adorable girls, Shay Adora Ram and Kayleigh Imani Ram.

# YOU HAVE TO **ABORT** THE BABY!

*Margaret's heart sank upon listening to the possibilities.*

BY GOH CHEE BENG

**T**HE YEAR WAS SEPTEMBER 1974.

"Congratulations, you are going to be a father!" the doctor broke the news to Abraham.

"That is one piece of good news," said Abraham as he turned to his smiling wife.

"O really, I am pregnant!" Margaret exclaimed with joy on her face.

The young couple were thrilled to learn that Margaret was pregnant with their first child. For weeks, Margaret had morning sickness and vomiting, a typical symptom of pregnancy. The visit to the clinic that day confirmed their guessing game. A couple of weeks later, Margaret had rashes and swollen lymph nodes behind her ears and down the side of her neck. A fairly high fever invaded her body too. After various tests, the obstetrician confirmed that Margaret had Rubella (German measles).

"Margaret, it is better to abort the baby now because the Rubella is quite strong," urged the obstetrician.

"What, I don't want to abort now," Margaret responded in a shocked tone.

"The second test showed the Rubella titre is very high and extremely



Abraham & Margaret's Wedding photo (1973)

detrimental to the foetus," the doctor explained. "It will be crazy not to abort now as the baby could be deformed, disabled physically and intellectually," the doctor continued.

Margaret's heart sank upon listening to the possibilities.

"And one more thing, the baby

could have brain damage resulting in being blind and even deaf," the doctor emphasised further.

By now, Margaret was in total shock and did not know what to do. From the age of 14, Margaret has tried to live her life as a journey one must travel with a deep consciousness of God. She had gone through challenging times, and Margaret could not and would not agree to the termination of a precious little life inside her.

Was Margaret fearful and anxious throughout those months? How would she cope? Did she have what it took? She prayed fervently, passionately to God for whom nothing was too difficult and all things were possible. Over the months, faith and peace arose within Margaret as fear left. Her mother was a medical doctor practising in Singapore. She suggested having the baby there, where she could call upon the best obstetrician, paediatrician and other specialists that might be needed to attend to the baby and Margaret. In April 1975, both Abraham and Margaret made the trip as the baby was due on May 31. However, on April 22, 40 days prior to that date, Margaret went into labour.



Abraham & Margaret with their firstborn, Mark (1975)

At approximately 2.45 p.m., their first child, whom they named Mark Anand<sup>1</sup>, was born. He was blue and not breathing. As the staff desperately worked to stimulate and assist the 5lb 8oz-newborn to breathe, Margaret pleaded with God, “O God, let my son live and not die!” His lungs were underdeveloped. Her prayers were answered after what seemed an eternity. The baby was rushed to the neo-natal intensive care unit where he was put in an incubator for 14 days. Most of his organs were still immature.

Being heavily jaundiced, the baby had two complete blood transfusions. Hospital visits were a regular feature over the next 12 months. The baby managed to recover. He looked normal and was able to see and hear! Having been oxygen deprived at birth, Margaret was concerned about possible inflammation of the brain that could affect his learning abilities. She spent time with him as a toddler, teaching him the alphabet and numbers. Within several months, both Abraham and Margaret were relieved to observe that Mark was a quick learner! The only symptom of the traumatic pregnancy and the baby’s premature birth was slight hand tremors when Mark engaged in fine motor tasks.

Three years later, in the middle of 1978, Margaret experienced God’s assurance from her regular early

<sup>1</sup> Mark (warrior, defender) Anand (joy, happiness)

morning devotional time that God had protected her first baby while in the womb. Margaret was then pregnant with her third child.

In 2000, Margaret pondered over two scripture verses with regards to Mark’s destiny which say: “Before I shaped you in the womb, I knew all about you. Before you saw the light of day, I had holy plans for you. A prophet to the nations – that’s what I had in mind for you. God put me to work from the day I was born, the moment I entered the world He named me. He gave me speech that would cut and penetrate, He kept His hand on me to protect me.”<sup>2</sup>

Mark was a lawyer, and in obedience to God’s call, founded Kingdomcity in 2006 and is leading that church in multiple nations, continuing to impact thousands of lives.

God has a precious specific plan and purpose, filled with hope and a good future for each human life He creates. The Bible says, “I know what I’m doing. I have it all planned out; plans to take care of you, not abandon

<sup>2</sup> Jeremiah 1:5, Isaiah 49:2

you, plans to give you hope and a future.”<sup>3</sup> We have no idea what God has in store for each life, but we have no right to rob anyone of his/her destiny. God is the source of every good and perfect gift and as we trust in God with all our hearts, obey His voice and His Word, acknowledge Him in everything, God will guide us through life. Life is not only about us, but seeded in each life are generations to come.

Margaret’s verdict on life – choose life so that you and your children will live.<sup>4</sup> And make sure you tell your children, and your children tell their children. Do not let this message die out.<sup>5</sup>

It is God who creates and gives the breath of life, and only He has the right to determine its end. What grows has life! Babies grow from stage to stage in the mother’s womb for 40 weeks.

Celebrate and choose life. 🎉

<sup>3</sup> Jeremiah 29:11

<sup>4</sup> Deuteronomy 30:19b

<sup>5</sup> Joel 1:3



Family photo, 2017: Margaret and Abraham (seated together in the middle row), Mark (standing in the middle back row)



Majestic Abba, Mount Aspiring



No Fear, Jollie River

## LIFTED TO CLOUDS OF GLORY

**J**EFFRY LIM'S PARENTS HINGED their religious piety in various Chinese deities but he was a pious follower of one Chinese religion and spent hours of meditation and dedicated himself to its teachings.

He was a professional photographer for over 20 years, majoring in aerial, industrial, offshore and marine photography but in 2015, he lost his job unexpectedly. Depression began to cave in. "I have been doing this job for 20 years, and suddenly lost the job," said Jeffrey. "It is like a surgeon losing a hand. You don't know what to do, and seriously, I wanted to die." That was his weakest moment. He also struggled to control his temper. His unemployment began to affect his relationship with his wife. Jeffrey confessed he was egoistic and miserable under such circumstances. "I was also under medication for my depression," Jeffrey shared. With no job and income, the family faced uncertainties in life until his wife, Mei Ling, decided to go to church one day.

"Why do you want to go church again?!" Jeffrey fired.

"I am bringing Zachary to the children's church as well," replied Mei Ling.

"No need to go, can?" insisted Jeffrey. However, their son who had been following Mei Ling to church



always looked forward to attending the children's church. "Daddy, I want to go church," Zachary said.

Mei Ling occasionally played sermons and worship songs at home, which Jeffrey disliked. "We fought because of this, and I told her not to play them loudly." When Jeffrey did not allow Mei Ling to go to church, she relied on live stream on the Internet to listen to the sermons.

One morning, while doing her routine housework at home, she heard a strange song playing over the Internet radio station on TV. "I heard a very soothing music, which sounded like a Christian hymn. I have never heard it on the jazz station before," Mei Ling recalled. She thought it was strange for a jazz radio station to play an instrumental gospel music. She wanted to listen to instrumental jazz music while doing housework. Mei Ling

walked closer to the TV to check the description on the screen. There was none.

Then, she heard some background voices saying "Jesus, Jesus" while the soothing music was playing. It was 10.30 a.m. Mei Ling was surprised. "How can ASTRO make a mistake on a broadcast station? If it is not a mistake, this must have been meant for me," she thought. Mei Ling texted her friend about the encounter she had that morning. She asked, "Can Jesus reach us like that?" Her friend replied, "It was reported that Jesus appeared to many people in their dreams one particular night and at the same time. Mei Ling, it is possible." For Mei Ling, her encounter was too supernatural to explain!

Soon Jeffrey started to accompany his son to the children's church almost every week. He would stay behind and watch the children sing worship songs and do activities. One fine afternoon, while having lunch with his family at the church's cafeteria, a pastor asked if he could join them at the same table.

### A NEW LIFE

"I don't normally have my lunch here at this hour," said the pastor. The pastor started a friendly chat with Jeffrey and his wife. They talked about Jesus and the gospel messages among other things. The pastor found out that Jeffrey



Melodious, Stone Hut Stream

BY GOH CHEE BENG

was not a believer yet. Jeffry shared openly about his struggles with work and family. Towards the end of the long conversation, the pastor asked Jeffry, “Do you want to pray to believe in Jesus?” Jeffry answered, “Ok, yes.”

“We prayed until my tears flowed. I didn’t know why as I am a strong person,” Jeffry said. “When we were praying, I felt the noise around me (from the crowded cafeteria) was filtered out. I could only hear the pastor’s voice. I could feel something very light inside me after I prayed.” It was indeed a remarkable encounter for Jeffry.

With his new found faith, Jeffry persisted with no prospect of job in sight. His passion for aerial view photography had never waned and he prayed to God for guidance and direction during his most difficult time. Later, Jeffry discovered that he had accumulated many travel points from his extensive work traveling over the past many years. He managed to convert the travel points into three air tickets to New Zealand. Jeffry began to make a dream trip to kill two birds with one stone — to capture the aerial view of landscapes of New Zealand and to have a family holiday. With some extra money his debtors had unexpectedly paid him and a small loan, Jeffry traveled to New Zealand with his family.

### SOARING HIGH

For 23 days, Jeffry embarked on his adventure to take aerial shots of the landscapes of New Zealand’s South Island. On the chartered plane, he discovered the abundant beauty of the sea, air and land of New Zealand’s majestic mountains, fascinating geographical terrains, stunning aerial views and colours of topography that were unique, pristine and rarely seen by the public.

His aerial photography caught the attention of the New Zealand High Commission in Kuala Lumpur. As part of its celebration of 60 years of friendship between New Zealand and Malaysia, the High Commission supported Jeffry’s photo collection through the Aspiring New Zealand photo exhibition held at the Bangsar Shopping Centre on April 25, 2017.

“It’s great to see Jeffry representing Malaysia on the world stage. His photos have previously been featured in National Geographic and more recently, two photos from his Aspiring New Zealand collection won prestigious awards at the International Photography Award (IPA) in New York,” said YB Brigadier-General Khairy Jamaluddin, Youth & Sports Minister who officially launched the exhibition.

Aspiring New Zealand featured over 50 large images of New Zealand’s

rarely seen landscapes inspired by Jeffry’s travels around the country in 2016.

For Jeffry, every picture he snapped tells a story.

The photo titled “Majestic Abba” shows Mount Aspiring on New Zealand’s South Island. It is Jeffry’s favourite photo as he shared the reason, “I dreamt about the word ‘Aspiring’ one night and decided to search for this place. This photo reminds me that prayer works. As the plane approached the mountain, it was covered by clouds. No choice but had to ask the pilot to turn back. So as we turned back, I prayed and waited. As I looked back to have another glance at the mountain, I noticed the clouds suddenly moved away, and we could see the sunlight beaming through the clouds. Then I requested the pilot to turn back towards the mountain and took the breathtaking beauty of the mountain.”

After the New Zealand trip, Jeffry and Mei Ling underwent water baptism. They removed all their former religious paraphernalia from their home before Christmas last year. “Mei Ling and I felt better, fresh and clean after water baptism. We sensed that the chains were broken, and we could sense God’s presence in the home,” said Jeffry. 🙏

# Left In A Home

Jia Huai understood later it was her mother's love that had placed her there.

BY GOH CHEE BENG

**A**S THEY WERE WATCHING A TV programme about children living in a home for children, Jia Huai's mother asked, "Jia Huai, you want to live in that place or not? Very nice, fun and can have many friends there." The eight-year-old girl replied, "I don't want."

For some time, Jia Huai's mother had wanted to put her in a home. One day, when Jia Huai returned from school, her mother said, "Come, I want to take you somewhere." Jia Huai followed, not knowing where she was going. When she got there, she found out it was a home for children and felt uneasy and anxious.

"Jia Huai, we see this place first,

alright?" her mother said calmly. They went around the home and then her mother said, "Jia Huai, you try to spend a night here and see how, ok?" Jia Huai had no choice. She cried but remained steadfast as she watched her mother leaving the home. The next day, Jia Huai did not return to her own house. Her mother visited her weekly. The weeks passed and Jia Huai slowly adapted to her new home. She made friends and was well cared for.

Later, Jia Huai understood it was her mother's love that had placed her at the home. Her mother discovered she had cancer when Jia Huai was only two years old. Their world crumbled further when Jia Huai's father left them.

They then moved to Shah Alam where Jia Huai's mother worked hard daily to put food on the table while battling cancer.

## "I WANT TO DIE"

"Once when I was riding on my mom's motorcycle when I was six years old," Jia Huai says, "she suddenly shouted in Mandarin, 'I want to die! I want to die...!' " The quick-thinking six-year-old told her mother, "I don't want to die and I am scared of pain. You send me home first and if you want to die, you die yourself."

When they got home, Jia Huai took her mother's house keys, opened the door and locked herself in the house,





leaving her mother outside. Her mother could not go anywhere and through the window, Jia Huai saw her pacing up and down, smoking away for the next one hour. Her mother never attempted to take her life after that incident.

Three years later, her mother passed away when Jia Huai was nine. By then, she had stayed in the children's home for a year.

Jia Huai has never really known her father since she was only two when he left them. "I have totally forgotten about him," Jia Huai says. "I don't want to see him and I don't need anything from him because of what he told Mom before she died."

Jia Huai explains, "Mom wanted to see him before she died but he told her that if she wanted money, just tell him and not to use that tactic to make him come to see her. Then, he told her he wouldn't give her a single cent. He thought she wanted to find an excuse to get money from him."

By the grace of God, Jia Huai has since learnt to forgive her father after learning about God's love for her.

### **"NO-PARENT CHILD"**

Jia Huai remembers her years at the home fondly. The Home Manager took the children for getaways where they swam, fished, camped and watched movies. She even went on a Star Cruise once. But there were tough moments as well, especially during her school days. She didn't want her schoolmates to know she was from a home but they found out because the school bus stopped in front of the home.

Every time she got off the school

bus, her schoolmates would poke fun at her. Jia Huai endured the daily taunts and on one occasion, someone stuffed some trash into her school bag! In the classroom, she was labelled as a "no-parent child" by some of her classmates.

Today, Jia Huai is no longer ashamed to let others know she was raised in a home. Instead, she is grateful to SHELTER for raising her and giving her all the support she needs. She is now pursuing a degree in Media Culture & Communication, majoring in Public Relations at IACT, and will complete her studies in September 2018.

Her tertiary education is made possible through scholarships from universities that recognise and support SHELTER. She also works part-time whenever she can to meet her financial needs. SHELTER continues to provide her an allowance and assigns a staff to guide and help her.

"I've never had any fear of my future because in my years in SHELTER, I've seen my seniors sent to colleges and getting work placements," says Jia Huai.

Jia Huai says she has received much and wants to give back. "I am one of the 25 climbers of SHELTER Charity Climb 2017, and I want to help to provide other kids with quality education," she says. The 25 climbers will climb Mount Kinabalu at the end of July 2017 and though she has never hiked the mountain before, she is willing to go through the rigorous training and preparation.

Some of us may have had a similar

journey like Jia Huai's. Whatever our journey might have been, it takes courage to overcome painful past memories, and faith in God to turn the "Where is God when it hurts?" to divine appointments.

"God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks in our conscience, but shouts in our pains," wrote C.S. Lewis. Are you in this situation right now? There is hope. Philip Yancey wrote, "Hope allows you to believe that even when hope falls down and the worst has happened, still hope has not reached the end of the road. Hope can stand up and continue."

For who hopes for what he already sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait eagerly for it with patience and composure.' 🙏

1 Romans 8:24-25



BY CARISSA GAN

**I**T WAS 2 A.M. WHEN THE EAR-splitting crash jolted Emily Lim out of her sleep. A large rock had shattered one of the window panes and the shards shone like little teardrops all over the floor. Her heart pounded wildly in her chest as fear settled over her. Those men were back again, and they were fuming. The merciless loan sharks to whom her father owed a huge sum of money were crowded outside the humble home she lived in with her mother and younger brother.

The angry mob couldn't care less about stirring a riot in the middle of a school night. They barged into the house and screamed at her family, loud enough for all her neighbours to hear. As usual, her father was nowhere to be seen. The men threatened her mother that they would prostitute Emily to pay off the mounting loans that her father had accumulated. They spewed more threats before storming out.

"I was only 16 at the time and the next morning, I had to endure that walk of shame to school because my neighbours would stare and gossip," said the beautiful Malaysian model-turned-actress as she recalled the traumatic incident that happened many years ago. "My family got into trouble with the loan sharks because of my father's gambling habits. My mother went into bankruptcy because of my dad."

From then on, money played a very important role in her life and governed most of her major decisions. In her desperate attempt to rescue her family from debt, Emily was convinced that financial security was the solution to everything. Little did she know that God was about to change her perspective.

## THE BACK STORY

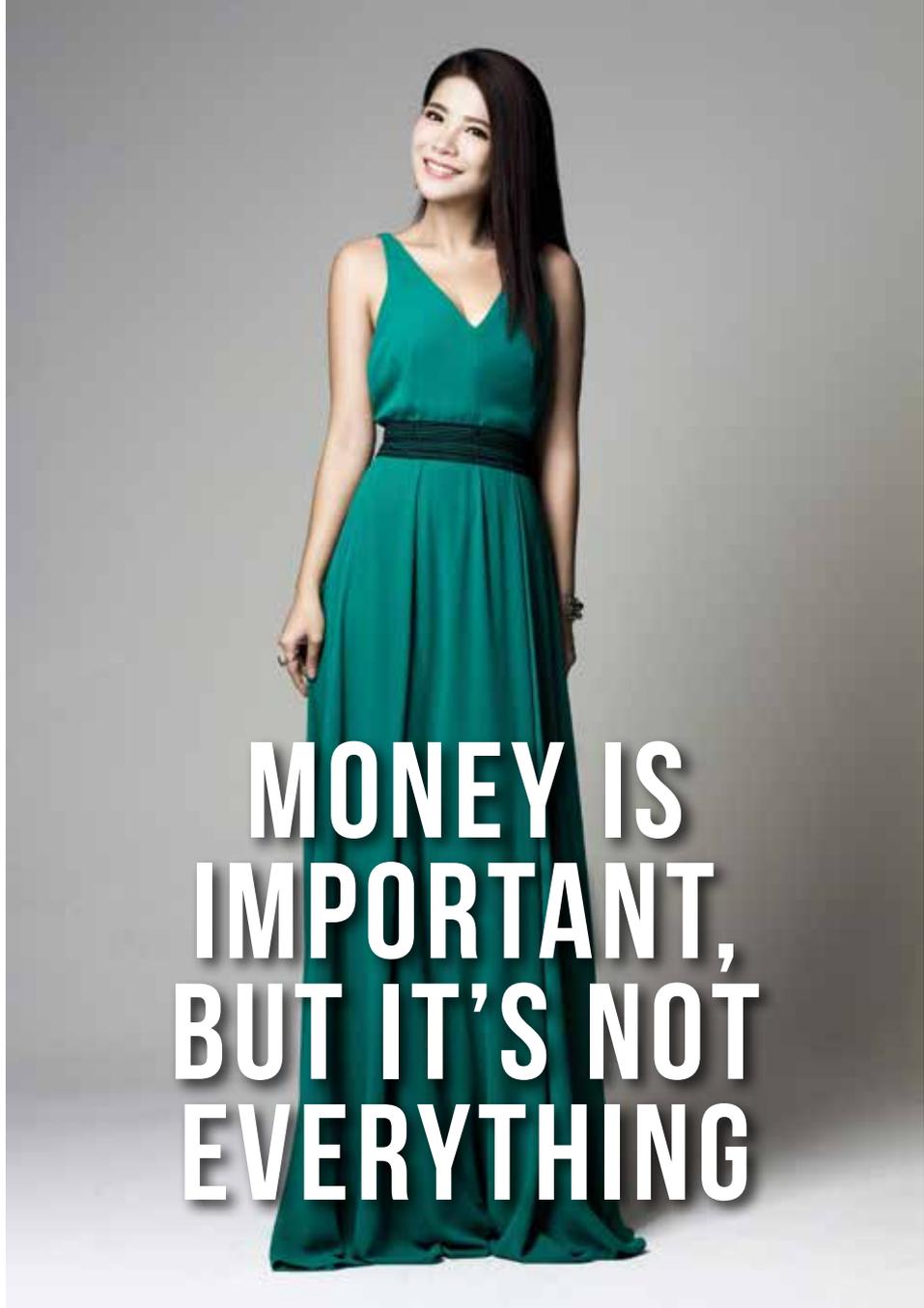
Emily and her brother grew up in Malacca under the care of their mother who single-handedly raised them in between babysitting and catering jobs. When Emily was a little older,

she helped her mother clean hotels, and at age 13, she started working at restaurants to contribute to the household income.

"My mother's a very hardworking lady and she would do everything to support us," Emily said. "But my dad was always absent whenever we needed him."

Her father's addictive gambling had propelled the family into debt, leaving them to the mercy of cruel loan sharks. To make things worse, he was never around.

Emily described her childhood as something out of a gangster movie, with loan sharks attacking her house in the middle of the night, painting profanities on the walls, bombarding her family with threats and smashing the windows. One morning after an unpleasant visit from the loan sharks,



**MONEY IS  
IMPORTANT,  
BUT IT'S NOT  
EVERYTHING**

Emily walked to her school with her head hung low. She could feel her neighbours' eyes boring holes into her as they stared and gossiped. It crushed her self-esteem as a teenager.

At 18, she moved to Kuala Lumpur to pursue a degree in marketing and human resources, hoping to be a businesswoman one day. She took on a part-time job at The Coffee Bean to support herself and her family, juggling both school and work on her busy schedule. That was when the need for a car arose, so she began saving up for a humble little Kancil.

Unfortunately, despite being bumped up from a janitor to a barista, her meagre income barely covered the car's down payment, so she ate nothing but plain roti canai drenched in curry for a whole year to save enough for the down payment.

Two years later she was offered an internship at an engineering firm and found a huge improvement in her salary.

“Even though I didn’t know God at the time, He still provided for me,” Emily smiled.

She continued to work at the engineering firm after graduation, but the salary wasn’t enough to pay off the mounting debts that the loan sharks had pegged on her mother. Mrs Lim was in bankruptcy because of her husband.

“I had no interest in the entertainment industry, because what I actually wanted was to climb the corporate ladder,” Emily shared. “But when I saw the advertisement for the Miss Astro Chinese International Pageant in 2005, I had my eyes pinned on the prize. I joined just so I could settle the debts.”

Thus began the next phase of her life.

### ENTERING A NEW WORLD

Emily emerged as the first runner-up and managed to pay off the loan sharks with the prizes she won.

However, that wasn’t enough. Even with the debts paid off, her corporate salary wasn’t enough to pull her mother out of bankruptcy anytime soon. So, when the opportunity arose to do TV commercials, Emily had only one focus: the pay.

She had to go through numerous castings like any other budding talent in the entertainment industry, but she pressed on because she was hungry for a quick solution to the financial situation that was eating her up.

“A lot of the decisions I made were based on money, which honestly led me nowhere,” she sighed. “Slowly, it made me very materialistic. I didn’t know what was good for me anymore. I guess I was blinded. I attended countless castings and finally got a big break in a TV commercial for Ajinomoto. Soon, I got other roles, including that big Dove campaign in Thailand.”

From commercials, her career slowly branched out into acting. She met Malaysian actor Alan Yun on the set of *My Kampong Days* and their relationship took off. They have been dating ever since. As a Christian, Alan brought her to church with him and one year later, Emily made the bold decision

to accept Christ as her personal Lord and Saviour.

### FINDING SECURITY IN CHRIST

“I think I enjoy taking a slow journey with God. After a year of knowing Him, I decided to be baptised,” she said enthusiastically.

“I may have been the one who brought her to Christ, but she’s the one who brought me to know Him more deeply,” Alan smiled, proud of his girlfriend’s progress. “The pace that she’s achieved and the things that she knows now... it’s really something I would admire for a young Christian. The hunger in her is something all Christians should have – the fire for God.”

They laughed, explaining that as a new Christian, Emily always had so many questions about God’s nature and the Bible. She directed all her enquiries to Alan, who encouraged her to join a Bible study group at the church. Emily went faithfully every week and her knowledge of Scripture increased significantly.

Over time, one of the greatest lessons she learned was not to rely on financial security for comfort, but to seek refuge in God’s arms instead. She shared how God blessed her with the opportunity of attending a three-month acting course in Los Angeles back in 2013, even though she didn’t have the funds to pursue the course at the time.

“I’d always dreamed of studying abroad. So when the opportunity came up, I grabbed it without even thinking about the cost. When I realised how much it was going to cost me, it was too late because I’d already signed for it, so I panicked,” she said. “But God was good and He provided the funds on time. At the end of each month, I was able to pay my fees. I was never in lack. I studied acting in Universal Studios and God made sure that I had the best of everything – the best teacher, the best course mates, even the best accommodation!”

Rent was extremely expensive in Los Angeles. Most people paid over \$1000 for a tiny shoebox of an apartment. But God provided Emily a generous landlord who allowed her to stay at his spacious home at an affordable rate, and knowing that she was on a super tight budget, he

bought her dinner nearly every night. She offered to do his laundry and clean the house, but he wouldn’t let her. In addition to his kindness, he refused to accept her rent at the end of each month. Eventually, she made him take a portion anyway. Because of God’s grace, Emily was blessed with a wonderful experience in Los Angeles.

That was just one of the many incidents when God swooped in and reminded her that she didn’t need a lot of money in her bank to feel confident about her future. All she needed to do was to have faith in Him, and He would carry her through.

Smiling, she said, “Money once played a very important role in my life. I thought it could settle everything. But it was a wrong perspective, and after coming to Christ, God taught me that money wasn’t a tool to be worshipped. So I’ve learned that money isn’t everything – God is.” 🙏

## FIVE THINGS YOU DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT EMILY LIM:

- 1 SHE'S INTO KICKBOXING, HIKING AND ROCK CLIMBING.
- 2 SHE IS NOT A FAN OF ROTI CANAI (BAD MEMORIES), WANTAN MEE AND CHICKEN RICE.
- 3 WHEN SHE'S TIRED, SHE'LL SLEEP ANYWHERE, ANYTIME.
- 4 SHE OWNS A STUFFED WINNIE THE POOH THAT SHE SLEEPS WITH EVERY NIGHT
- 5 WHETHER IT'S A DAY OUT AT THE MALL OR A QUICK TRIP TO THE NIGHT MARKET, SHE'LL PREP HERSELF TO LOOK HER BEST.



# 生命因上帝的爱而美丽

## Emily林佩琦

BY JOYCELYN LOH

# 她

是一位专业演员又是营养师。可是，有谁会想到总是以靓丽外表示人的Emily林佩琦曾因荷尔蒙严重失调，演艺事业因此跌入谷底？单亲家庭长大的Emily自幼就有到国外留学的梦想。可是为了帮助家里的经济，尽快还清所有的债务，便于2005年参加了Astro国际华裔小姐选美比赛，开始了她的演艺生涯。“进入娱乐圈是许多女孩子所追求的梦想，可是我本身从来都没有想过要进入演艺圈。”

### 这世界真的有上帝吗？

Emily分享到自己的父亲是非常急性子的人，乃是属于高风险一族，不仅有赌博倾向，还会做出许多生意的投资。最终，欠下大耳窿一屁股债，离开了他们的家。“自从爸爸离开了家后，大耳窿依然三不五时就找上门要我们还钱。那些记忆片段想必是我这一辈子都无法忘记的。还记得15岁那一年，大概凌晨

3、4点，大耳窿砸坏了我们当时所租下的排屋里的一面落地玻璃，结果整个社区都被吵醒了。第二天走路上学时，听见了邻舍们的指指点点，让我感到非常沮丧和百般无奈。”

处在这样的生活窘境，让Emily从10来岁就开打工，例如周末或是假期就到酒店做清洁工作等。尽管那个时候的她在天主教的学校求学，但她承认自己的心里是刚硬的，不接受上帝，因为她认为如果真的有神，那么就不会发生这些事情了。

上了大学的Emily曾为了购买一部车成为其代步工具，以便求学和打工，就去咖啡厅当工读生。为了存钱，整整一年的时间，每天放工后的晚餐就只吃印度煎饼（Roti Kosong）。她的坚持果然让她在一年后成功购买了一辆本田车。

然而，家里所面对的经济压力，还有生活中所承受的困扰，让Emily决定参加Astro国际华裔小姐的选美赛。从选美比赛中赢得的奖金，也让Emily还

清了大耳窿的债务。原以为终于雨过天晴之际，母亲却被起诉，需要申请破产。这对当时原本计划好于毕业后，就开始在一家建筑行上班的她，简直就是晴天霹雳。

“当时我简直要疯了，以为终于可以债务自由了，却又发生了这样的事情。那个时候，有一间建筑行在我的实习完毕后，就向我发出邀请，让我在毕业后到他们那里上班。可是，老板知道那一份工作的薪金没有办法让我还清家里的债务，让母亲早日脱离破产的情况，因此建议我去娱乐圈闯一闯，万一失败了，公司仍然为我保留一席之地。”

凭着亮丽的外表、模特儿的身形，2008年可以说是Emily事业的巅峰期。除了模特儿的工作以外，她也开始了演艺的生涯，于2009年认识了Alan袁锦伦，随后更成为了恋人。身为基督徒的Alan，在2010那年每个星期都带Emily去教会参加聚会和崇拜。“我是一个非常理智的人，再加上我的成长环境，



我并不是在第一次去教会就相信耶稣。反而，在我每个星期去教会听道、读圣经认识神的一年后，我才决志接受耶稣基督成为我的救主。”

**生命中最有价值的，并不是眼睛看得见的金钱，而是看不见的耶稣基督**

然而，生命有时并不是一帆风顺的。Emily在2010年时，身体因负荷不了在剧中担任领衔主角的压力，还有成年累积下来的不良饮食习惯而发出了紧急信号。“因为身体荷尔蒙失调，我的经期停了，脸上长满了痘痘，甚至身体也出现了非常严重的水肿状态。这样也导致许多导演都说这是我的演艺生涯里的一个黑点。”在许多人看来，这件事乃是Emily演艺生涯中的一个黑点，可是对她而言，这是生命中的转折点。

对于一位在经济上极度缺乏、成天被大耳窿找上门，甚至母亲一度被大耳窿恐吓以女儿作为债务利息，很自然地，她生命中的安全感都建立在金钱上。

“因着荷尔蒙失调、身材臃肿，让我与许多工作和机会擦肩而过。当时我没有工作、没有收入，而且还有庞大的债务，但是我仍然为着这些事情的发生而感谢上帝，因为我知道所有的事情都在上帝美好的时间和安排中发生的。如果没有发生这些事情，我就没有办法经历神，我的一生就只会是盲目地追求名利和地位，也学不会感恩。”

因着健康亮起了红灯，也让Emily明白到其实我们需要善待自己的身体，也珍惜那么一个独一无二的自己。正因如此，她开始修读营养学，以便调理自己的身体，继而成为营养师。“以前当模特儿时，为了满足商家要求的理想身形而养成了不良的饮食习惯。举例来说，让自己饿肚子等，当中也见过许多非常不正当的偏激减肥方法。相信许多现代的女孩子也一样想要美好的体型，但是要知道，上帝的创造是美好的，我们应该拥有的是健康的身体形象。”Emily相信成功不一两天的事，是由汗水和努力累积的。她也鼓励时代的女性应该

更多运动和维持良好的饮食习惯。

当Emily的健康状况开始恢复后，许多的工作机会也陆续回到她的生命中。靠着上帝的恩典，Emily甚至有机会于2012年信而受洗之后，到了美国洛杉矶的Universal Studio完成了一项演艺的课程。“我从小就有到国外留学的梦想。可是因为我家庭背景和文化的关系，尽管我考获优异的成绩，还是没有办法圆梦。但是，上帝是信实的！祂为我为所预备的，都是上好的福分。祂让我能够在整个课程中，从学费、住宿、交通、学习和得着等等经历祂的信实和祝福。我甚至还能够有机会向我的同学传福音，带他们上教会，而且见证他们生命的改变。”

看似温室里的小花，其实却是坚韧的小草。Emily的成长过程让她有许多放弃的借口，然而靠着神的恩典，还有坚持不懈，她决定要在职场上，还有日常生活中成为上帝美好的见证。✝️



# TOP 3 FITNESS TIPS

Living your best life as God intends it to be includes taking good care of your body. It is never too late to start! I would like to encourage you by sharing my top 3 fitness tips. **BY HAZEL LOKE**

## 1

### EXERCISE

*She clothes herself with strength*  
(Proverbs 31:17a)

#### STRENGTH

SIMPLE DAILY TASKS, such as carrying groceries, require strength. Strength training helps build stronger bones and increase muscle mass. Functional training is important as we gradually lose calcium and muscle mass after the age of 30. A 30-minute session, two to three times a week, is all you need.

#### CARDIOVASCULAR

A HEALTHY HEART runs the body well. Build your heart's stamina to efficiently carry oxygen and nutrients to the body's tissues and expel carbon dioxide. Switch up your daily exercise regime with walking, jogging, swimming or cycling.

#### FLEXIBILITY

LIKE A RUBBER band, muscles get stiff from long hours of sitting or inactivity. Always start your workout sessions with basic warm-ups and dynamic stretching to increase your blood circulation and range of motion. Stretching also helps to regulate breathing and releases muscle tightness to prevent injuries.



## 2

### FOOD INTAKE

*Everything is permissible for me, but not everything is beneficial.*  
(1 Corinthians 6:12a)

BE MINDFUL OF what you put into your body. Maintain a balanced diet consisting of wholesome foods rich in carbohydrates, protein and healthy fats. Carbohydrates are essential for brain, lung and muscle functioning; a deficit results in tiredness, slow recovery after exercise and brain fog. Protein is required for muscle repair and healthy hair and nail growth. Healthy fats keep the body warm and lubricate joints.

For vitamins and minerals, consume leafy vegetables and fruits of various colours as these are the nutrition 'nuts and bolts' for healthy bodily functions. Drop fanciful diets – they never work in the long run!



*Beetroot Pasta*



*Grilled chicken and French beans*

## 3

### REST AND RECOVERY

*Return to your rest, my soul, for the Lord has been good to you.*  
(Psalm 116:7)

AFTER ALL THE hard work you have put into your workout sessions, you need to rest and allow your body to recover from microtrauma. While getting sufficient sleep is very important, foam rolling is one of the best recovery methods – it is akin to self-massage using a foam roller to release muscle tightness and increase blood circulation.

So, put away your gadgets and spend time meditating on the Word of God as you continue on your fitness journey! 🧘



*Breakfast of scrambled eggs, bread and fruits*

**Hazel** is a fitness trainer who runs a fitness centre in Petaling Jaya, Selangor.



# THE MARATHON WOMAN

BY GOH CHEE BENG

**I**N TODAY'S HECTIC WORLD, WE TEND TO MISS A lot of things. Flowers, beautiful sceneries and the likes pass us by unnoticed.

Not for Cynthia Low who hails from Seremban, Negri Sembilan. This mother of two adults and grandmother of four runs three nursing convalescent homes and a baby-mother care centre. However, her hectic schedule did not stop her from taking up running, which has turned into competing in marathons!

Cynthia, 62, started running with weekly jogs two years ago as part of her regular exercise. "As I jogged, I noticed the details of so many things along the way since running is much slower than driving. I found time to reflect and appreciate what I saw."

Within a short two years, Cynthia graduated from casual jogging to competing in several long-distance runs last year, an amazing feat considering that she could not even run 100 meters without fainting during her school days.

To run long distances, Cynthia started training by walking and gradually moved to jogging two to five kilometres.

Her first run was the 22-km Skyhawk Nature Run in Malacca in January 2016. Her fellow runner, who is a seasoned marathon runner, came to know about her participation and told her some horror stories of long-distance running without sufficient training. Before this run, Cynthia had only two weeks of intensive training!

"My trainer told me to run behind him during training, to start slow at my comfortable pace and never overtake him as I would burn out and perhaps quit," says Cynthia. This advice made sense as running behind her trainer would help him to assess her strengths and weaknesses.

During training, she learned to be patient and not be intimidated by runners who were ahead during a competition. She also learned that a runner must run at his/her own tempo, gradually building up speed. What matters

most is crossing the finishing line.

In 2016 alone, Cynthia Low competed in eight long-distance runs, ending the year with a full 42-km marathon in Chiangmai, Thailand.

Cynthia continues her passion for long-distance running this year by competing in the 10-km Police Run Shah Alam and 10-km KL Marathon. She has signed up for a few more marathons for the rest of 2017, including the 10-km Bakuteh Run, 21-km Firefighters Night Run and 21-km Highway Challenge.

When asked what motivates her to continue running at her age, she says, "To run in a marathon, one must run with determination the race ahead. It is taxing on the body when you're doing it. Nothing comes easy. For example, halfway through the marathon, I would wonder why I'm running when I can be enjoying myself or relaxing. So, I have to refocus and remind myself why I signed up for the run."

"I love the feeling of 'wow' when I'm reaching the finishing line and the joy of crossing it. I feel the sense of joy and satisfaction after each run. Never underestimate your capability to run in a marathon. Start slow, learn along the way and you'll improve with practice. There are always other runners who are better but a marathon is not about who finishes first. We are not there to beat or compare ourselves with others but to encourage one another on. In a run, we are actually running against ourselves."

Marathon reminds Cynthia of running the race of God<sup>1</sup> with endurance. She observes that in every marathon, everyone runs but runners who finish within the qualifying time will get a medal. All runners are required to be disciplined in their training. They do it to win a prize that will fade away, but we believers run for the eternal prize. Therefore, let us run every step with purpose.<sup>2</sup> 🙏

1 Hebrews 12:1

2 Philippians 3:24-26

# Metamorphosis: Pain, Passion and Purpose

PHOTO CREDITS: NATASHYA KHOO

When over 450 women came together in one place, exciting things happened, as in the case of the ESSENTIAL2017 All-Women Conference on March 17-18. With exciting activities and a great line-up of real women sharing their unique stories of growing in faith, many were inspired to live more fulfilled, faith-filled lives. **BY ANNA TEOH**

## BECOMING A WOMAN OF FAITH

"I didn't bring you to Uganda to be paralysed by fear, but for a purpose." Marilyn Skinner tells the story of how God took her on a journey of choosing obedience over convenience after marrying her missionary husband, Gary Skinner, at 18.

"Faith has enemies and friends. Among its enemies are fear, which renders faith powerless; and blessing, which rids us of our need for God. Faith's best friend is the fire, trials we face in life which serve to strengthen us."

Marilyn shares how in the first decade of their mission in rescuing war child soldiers, hope seemed bleak – yet she and her husband persisted. Today, after 32 years in Uganda, the Watoto Childcare Ministries that they established cares for more than 3,000 Ugandan children orphaned by HIV/AIDS. The couple also leads Watoto Church with over 24,000 members.

"What is the secret to miracles? Persistence. God uses ordinary women who step in to meet needs, and who are passionate and persistent. As women offaith, at the end of our lives, it would be an honour for our tombstones to read, 'She never gave up'."



## CAN A WOMAN SAVE A NATION?

"Think big, because God is big!" A petite young lady who came to Malaysia for work to support her family back home at the age of 16, her dream then was to own a mobile phone, just like her friends. But God had much bigger plans for Pr Sarah Aye.

She shares her story with heartfelt conviction, of saying "yes" to God at every step of the way, trading excuses for His promises. And in just seven years, her cell group has grown from 10 people to the dynamic Myanmar congregation at DUMC, with a regular attendance of 800 members today. Her life is a true testament that God can use any one of us. If we only believe,

God will give us the resources.

"If you can't?" said Jesus. "Everything is possible for one who believes." – Mark 9:23

## A CHRIST-CENTERED WOMAN IN THE WORKPLACE

The marketplace is where many young women today spend their time. At the Women@Work workshop, one of 10



Faith has enemies and friends. Among its enemies are fear, which renders faith powerless; and blessing, which rids us of our need for God. Faith's best friend is the fire, trials we face in life which serve to strengthen us.



available for conference attendees to choose from, conversations were thought-provoking and animated. The forum discussion with Eileen, an International Policy Analyst; Rosie, mother of two and owner of a recruitment firm; and Lai Ling, a partner in a law firm, covered various challenges faced by working women. A few nuggets of wisdom:

**EXCELLENCE** | Your work has intrinsic value, because it is for God. Your work is a reflection of your value system. In everything you do, represent God. Seek not to please people, but God.

**GRIT** | In the early years, you have to put in the hours to prove yourself. Your calling is sometimes birthed

and crystallised through hardship. Start small and finish well.

**PROFESSIONAL BOUNDARIES** | Be tactful and diplomatic. Be clear on what you will not compromise on, for example, Sunday mornings for church.

**JUGGLING WORK AND HOME** | Seek help from those around you. Work-life balance/integration can be achieved when your compass is pointing to the True North.

**DEALING WITH FAVOURITISM** | Where is your identity? Remember, you are a child of God.

**LOVING PEOPLE** | We represent God's justice. The marketplace is our place to reach out.

Put God, not yourself, at the centre of your work. We are the alternate community that the world looks at to represent Christ.

**WHAT IS YOUR STORY?**

What has God given into your hands, and what can you do with it? Are you often caught up in what's happening daily that you forget you are in the middle of a story?

Stella Hoh, who leads the Women2Women (W2W) movement, recaps the conference with a timely reminder for all women to write their stories for themselves – to surrender their pains to God and allow Him to transform them into passionate women with a purpose in Him. 🙏

Essential is one of the avenues used by the W2W movement in DUMC to reach out to women, providing a platform for them to come together to learn and connect with other women.

# MY STRAYING SONS

BY ONG JUAT HENG

One day some 22 years ago, when our eldest boy, Joshua, was about four years old, he said, “Mummy, I don’t want Jesus in my heart.” As a young, fiery mother, I shot, “WHAT?! WHY DON’T YOU WANT JESUS?!” My little boy looked at me innocently and said, “I want him to come out of my heart so I can hug him.” Phew...

I heaved a sigh of relief. All was well.

When our second boy, Joseph, was seven years old, he had a dream. He told Joshua about it who excitedly told me, and I still remember Joshua's words clearly, "Mom, Joe had a wonderful dream last night." And Joseph told me about his dream of heaven, what he saw there, that he met Jesus and he knew straightaway that man was Jesus, etc.

I heaved a sigh of joy, praising God for giving Joseph the dream. All was well.

Then came James, born with a melody on his lips. When he was about two, he would climb on to our small plastic orange chair, raise his hands in the air, close his eyes and belt out, "I worship you, Almighty God, there is none like you..." When he was eight or nine years old, he attended a children's prayer conference organised by NECF Malaysia and during a prayer session, he fell to the floor and saw a vision of heaven.

I heaved a sigh of thanksgiving to God for working in his life. All was well.

Fast forward many, many years today and I still heave a sigh. Many sighs, in fact but they are more like ... "Haiyoh, why are they like this now?" You see, over the years, I've watched with deep concern, almost alarm, as their exuberance for God wane and withered.

## TURNING COLD

From their teen years to college to the present, I watched their hearts gradually become cool to the things of the Spirit. Slowly, questions and doubts about what they have been taught in church crept into their hearts and froze their fervour. Is God really real? Can the Bible be trusted? Is there really life after death? Did we really come from Adam and Eve? Are Adam and Eve even real? ...

Going to church eventually became a non-priority, and when they do show up for Sunday Service, it's "to see friends and have lunch with them" (their words). That's their instant reply when I asked them why they go to church.

No, they were not bragging, certainly not in the it's-good-to-be-bad way; they were being honest. If

## "... there must come a time when the soul searching turns into surrender."

there's anything I have learned about our millennials, it's that they hate hypocrisy.

As I watched them slide away, I began to do a lot of soul searching – where did I go wrong? am I the cause? what have I done? what HAVEN'T I done? Perhaps I should have been a better mother. Perhaps I should have spent more time with them and less time on housework. Perhaps I should have been gentler, godlier. Maybe I should have not been so busy with church activities and spent more time praying with them instead. Maybe I should have been a better wife to their father, gentler, more submissive...

## INTO ETERNITY

Now, why am I so fixated on my children's spiritual state? Like any regular parent, I want my children to be smart, successful, good looking, talented, athletic, popular, etc. etc. But more than anything, my chief desire for the trio has always been that they have a relationship with Jesus because success, talents, good looks and the like are temporal and fleeting. But their relationship with God lasts to eternity; it goes on forever and ever.

During my soul searching, I made this observation – there are good godly Christians who have devoted their lives to raising their children in the ways of God but whose children have wandered far away; and there are lukewarm Christians who don't care much about spiritual matters but their children are walking rightly with God. It seems as if what we parents do doesn't matter.

Of course there are godly parents whose children have grown up to follow Jesus but can we guarantee how our children will turn out?

I looked into the Bible and found some 'comfort' in the accounts of great men of God whose children did not turn out well. The sons of the mighty prophet Samuel "did not walk in his ways; they turned aside after dishonest gain, took bribes and perverted justice". (1 Samuel 8:3) David had many children and some were downright bad. Adam and Eve had a godly son in Abel and a murderer in Cain. Are some children "bent" towards evil? I wonder.

But there must come a time when the soul searching turns into surrender. After all, I can't turn back the clock and undo my wrongs. All I can do is to come humbly before God, confess my shortcomings, ask Him for forgiveness and entreat Him to impart wisdom and grace to be a better mother.

To parents whose grown-up children are walking well with God, give Him praise and glory, for it really is His gracious hand upon their lives.

To parents like me whose children need a spiritual zap, let us release them to God. Pray that He will continue to reveal Himself to them and that they will personally experience Him. Indeed, there are no second-generation Christians – our children need to encounter God for themselves.

And let us hope. Yes, hope that they will come around to know and have a vibrant, intimate relationship with Jesus. Our youngest son, James, just returned from the US for the summer break. Before he left last year, he was far, far away from God. We sent him to Messiah College to do a double degree in Musical Theatre and International Business. Two days after his return, I asked him how he was spiritually, whether he was "alive". He said yes, and expressed much gratitude for studying in a faith-based college. I see sparks of revival in his life and I continue to pray and hope for the other two boys.

I don't know how they will finally turn out, even after all my prayers and efforts because I'm a firm believer of free will. But this I know – God hears my prayers, He loves my children far more than I do and He knows what to do. On that I rest. 🙏

*(P/S: I have permission from my sons to share this story.)*

# AN EXTREMELY

**I**N MY STORY “LONG LIVE THE MISSIONARIES”, I mentioned Ursula Kohler and Irene Neville, who came to Serdang as missionaries in 1952. They had spent time studying Chinese until they could read the Chinese Bible.

Upon their arrival in Serdang, they were unpleasantly surprised to find that the locals in the new village could not read Chinese or speak Mandarin; their lingua-franca was Hakka. Another round of learning began. They engaged a teacher at 50 Malayan cents an hour to teach them to read the Bible in Hakka. I remember Ursula mentioning a young man who had taught her to read the Bible in Hakka but he was a hardcore atheist, totally unmoved by the words of Scriptures despite her long and hard prayers for him.

FERNE BLAIR, the Canadian missionary who came to Serdang in the 1980s, used to inquire about Mr Chen, Monica’s father who lived next to the church. I remember Mr Chen was hostile to the church although all his children were believers. Some Serdang folks identified him as the teacher who taught the missionaries to read the Bible in Hakka. He later regretted teaching the missionaries and became hostile to the church. It could be that there were two teachers, one teaching Ursula and Irene, and another teaching Ferne Blair. Whichever the case, I didn’t think much about the Hakka teacher since he was either a hardcore atheist or hostile to the church. Ursula told me she and Irene prayed very hard for their Hakka teacher. If it was Mr Chen, I wouldn’t want to tell her since he was still hostile to the church at the time of my visit to Ursula.

To continue this story, I have to tell my story. I was baptised by Elder Henry Philips of The Life Chapel (TLC) in Petaling Jaya in 1974 when I was a student at the University of Malaya. At that time, TLC met on the first floor of a shop lot. After finding out that I studied agriculture, Elder Henry said to me, “Don’t try to come back to TLC. Never be attracted to the bright lights of the city here. Where God sends you to work after your graduation, you serve God there. If there is no church where God sends you to, you come back to see me. TLC will help you to plant a church there.”

After my baptism, I was on fire to serve the Lord. I actually pledged to

BY DR ONG HWEE KENG

God to do what Elder Henry had urged me to. I was psychologically prepared to live and serve God in a rural area since I was studying agriculture. However, when I graduated, I was sent to work at the headquarters of an agricultural research institute situated next to the then Agricultural University in Serdang.

I was in a dilemma. Serdang was neither a city nor a rural area. Riding my motorcycle, I would reach TLC from Serdang in half an hour. If I went back to TLC, Elder Henry might say, “You have come back to the bright lights of the city!” So I decided to take my bike for a survey of the area. I soon found out that the most densely populated area was Serdang Baru, the second largest new village in Malaysia then. Once, I rode so deep into the village that I got lost. While trying to come back to the main road, lo and behold, I found this little church named Serdang Baru Christian Church (SBCC). The rest is history.

I stayed with SBCC for 37 years. Many things happened and one day, it dawned on me that I had fulfilled my pledge to God. I was retired and no longer gainfully employed. It was time to let younger people take over.

One day, while sitting in my living room and staring at my bookshelf, I spotted a paperback book. It was “The Christian Workers’ Commentary on the Whole Bible” by James Gray. It had turned yellowish. On its inside front cover was a type-written note dated

Oct. 6, 1974. It was my baptism gift from TLC on my unforgettable day.

So, 40 years after my baptism, I returned to TLC, armed with my baptism gift. To everyone who asked me why I had come to TLC, I showed my book. I was now well-qualified to be a senior citizen, so naturally I joined the Senior Members’ Fellowship (SMF) of TLC. At the SMF, whenever there was an invited speaker, there would be a subsequent group discussion based on the topic that day. At one meeting, there was an 80-year-old brother named Wong Pak Leong in my group. Upon learning that I came from Serdang, he talked incessantly about Serdang Baru. No matter what question the group leader asked, he would turn to me and talk about his Serdang days! Finally, the leader had no choice but to ask him to keep quiet and talk to me privately later!

This is what Wong Pak Leong told me: “I was a 17-year-old student when Ursula Kohler and Irene Neville came to Serdang Baru in 1952. I studied at the Confucian High School in the morning and the nearby Methodist Afternoon School in the afternoon. So I know both Chinese and English languages. But I was influenced more deeply by my Chinese education than my Western one. I had some knowledge of the Bible but only in my head and not in my heart. My parents were Hakka and I grew up in a Hakka *kampong* near Serdang. With my background I was recommended to earn some needed money by teaching two missionaries, Ursula Kohler from

# LATE ANSWER

Switzerland and Irene Neville from Australia, to read the Bible in Hakka. I did that only for money. In those days, 50 cents an hour was very good money for a youth like me.

“They always prayed for me and urged me to become a Christian by accepting Jesus as my personal saviour. I never wanted to oblige them. I often had to work in my family rambutan cum star fruit orchard. In the isolation of the orchard full of trees, members of CPM (Communist Party of Malaya) would come to brainwash me. I would not say I was a communist, but my sympathy lay with them. I disliked what the British were doing in Malaya and I thought that the Christian churches were helping to fulfill the British agenda because the Bible taught people to obey the authorities of the day.

“The so-called new villages were settlements to keep the Chinese under control since the British suspected them to be either communists or communist sympathisers. The scheme was planned and implemented by General Briggs. We were rounded up within a fenced area. Food was rationed and entry and exit needed special passes. I was hunted down by a Special Branch officer and was on the point of being detained for interrogation when the Serdang MCA (Malayan Chinese Association) chairman came to my aid. He asked the Special Branch officer how this young man could be a communist when he was always helping out in the clinic run by two foreign nurses in the local church.

“You see, I am the Chairman of Serdang Branch St. John Ambulance and he is my Secretary. Further, he is teaching the two foreign ladies in the church how to speak Hakka!”

The Special Branch officer decided to close the file on me, after confirming I was indeed teaching two missionaries in the church. He had himself also attended a mission

school and was a self-confessed Christian. Probably he mistook me to be a Christian too! So my part-time job with the church not only earned me money but also saved me from potential detention.

“After I finished Senior Middle Three, I continued my studies at Nanyang University in Singapore. Upon graduating from Nanyang University, I was a confirmed hardcore atheist with a socialist mindset. But to make sure my children are bilingual like me, I sent them to English mission schools. To my shock, all of them became devoted Christians. When they started working, I was very upset to discover that they gave one-tenth of their earnings, not to me but to their church! They frequently prayed for me and invited me to go to church. But I never showed any interest, until I retired at 55 years of age. My children challenged me to go to church and see for myself that Christians were not what I thought.

“One day after my retirement, I decided to follow my children to Full Gospel Tabernacle (FGT), where there were many old boys from Bukit Bintang Boys’ School. True enough, I realised that Christians were not what I thought. By that time, nobody, including myself, had any animosity with the British as coloniser. I began to read the Bible, and my spiritual insight was heightened when I read about Christ’s saying that His Kingdom is not of this world. I realised that this world is in a mess. Neither communism nor capitalism means anything. There is corruption everywhere in the world. It is a matter of degree. The world is evil due to the sinful nature of every man. There is eternity and I need salvation. Finally, I accepted Jesus as my personal Saviour and Lord, at a late age of 57. I was baptised by Rev. Eu Hong Seng who soon became my spiritual leader. After some time, I moved to stay in SS2 area in Petaling Jaya, and going to FGT became

inconveniently far for me. Rev. Eu then graciously recommended me to attend The Life Chapel (TLC) in Petaling Jaya, where there are many retired people like me in the Senior Member Fellowship. I have been a regular worshipper in TLC ever since.”

After listening to his testimony, I said to him, “Don’t get me wrong. Just take it as a joke. When you get to heaven one day, Ursula and Irene will ask you, ‘What took you so long?’”

He laughed and said, “You must remember it is very difficult for a hardcore atheist with an anti-colonialistic mindset to believe in God. In fact, I later realised how difficult it was for Ursula and Irene to literally survive in Serdang in those days. People hated the British for keeping them in detention in the so-called New Village. I had believed that the British government supplied the clinic with medicine to the foreign nurses so that they could provide the free medical care for the locals. I was wrong. It was provided by China Inland Mission that collected donations from Christians. They actually worked under hostile circumstances but they persevered and won the hearts of many locals for their care and concern.

Anyway, to answer that question, I will say, ‘It is better late than never!’”

As we bade goodbye that afternoon at TLC, I asked myself whether I would have met Ursula and Irene’s Hakka teacher if I had not returned to TLC. Irene went to be with the Lord in 1988. Ursula was called home in 2012, without knowing about Pak Leong’s conversion. If Pak Leong was 17 years old in 1952 and came to Christ at the age of 57, the year of his spiritual birth must have been 1992, four years after the home-calling of Irene Neville. I got to hear Pak Leong’s testimony only in 2015.

Was it God’s way of telling me that He had answered the missionaries’ long and hard prayers, even though it had seemed very late? 🙏

# 7 WAYS TO BE NICE TO YOUR EYES

## REDUCE EYE STRAIN FROM ELECTRONIC DEVICES



**The 21st Century has seen a surge in eye-related health issues due to increased exposure to laptops and mobile phones. Here are seven simple tips to take care of your precious sight.** **BY JOANNA LEE**

**1** Reduce blue light emission from your device – blue light can harm our retinas in the long run and disrupt our sleep patterns. Install free blue-light filter software, such as f.lux: for desktops or Twilight for mobile phones.

**2** Blink often – use the 20:20:20 rule – every 20 minutes, look at an object 20 feet away for 20 seconds to prevent eye strain.

**3** Let there be light! Switch on the lights while looking at the computer or mobile phone to reduce strain from the light coming from the screen. Contrast between the screen and the room's lighting can strain your eyes.

**4** Use anti-glare screens or wear anti-glare glasses to reduce glare from the computer and even wall surfaces reflecting into the eyes.

**5** Big is better – increase your font size to reduce eye strain.

**6** Stop looking at the mobile phone or laptop screen about one hour before you sleep.

**7** Eye see the eye doctor – go for regular eye examinations to detect issues and get advice on how to take care of your eyes.

***Protect your God-given sight. 🙏***

# ESCAPING FROM THE DEBT WEB

By Joanna Lee

**MY CREDIT CARD DEBT WAS GETTING** out of control. I knew I needed help for the long term, not just another rescue. The thought of being forever trapped in the vicious cycle of getting into snowballing credit card debts, of living paycheck to paycheck and having my shrinking savings spiralled me deeper into depression. With tears in my eyes, feeling wretched, I reached out to text my mentor, Josh, for Crown Financial's contact number as he had spoken highly about the transformation he had gone through via MoneyLife, a course on financial management based on biblical principles. I spoke with Yoke Tee of Crown Financial and he said there was a class that very night. I signed up immediately and prayed hard to never be found in the same sinking situation again.

The first lesson was about having hope for my financial situation. I loved the story of Ernest Shackleton's dogged determination to make sure all his men survived diseases while waiting for rescue in the wretched, bitter climate of the Antarctica after their ship had sunk. That story lent me some courage to drop a small anchor of hope somewhere in the deep ocean of frustrations. Initially, I found having hope hard to swallow because it had been a long journey of being in and out of debt. The shame of it all can be quite debilitating but I persevered and prayed to go through the process to root out old habits. There's really no other way but to look up when you're truly down.

## MONEY LESSONS

The engaging course materials each week began to dismantle old thoughts as I came face to face with Scriptural truths. There was no magic. Only the painful realisation of where I had gone wrong. The poverty mindset. The hoarding of things caused by a fear of lack. All these wrong beliefs were roots to the behaviour which I had to deal with. What the Word says about "the truth shall set you free" is real. I was so glad to see how Scriptures can be applied to daily financial decisions through Yoke Tee's sharing of his and others' financial testimonies. I actually marvelled at him and his wife's commitment to be faithful stewards of His money in their tracking of finances. That gave me an insight that true wealth isn't about having lots but being faithful stewards over what we have in order to live meaningfully and serve others.

What I've learned from MoneyLife isn't only about money but how our finances are tied to our calling and our personalities. It doesn't take rocket science to see that personalities that are less structured (ahem, the creative type) have a challenging time tracking and keeping to self-discipline. But I found that it's really a mindset issue as well. The pain of living in debt reminded me how much I wanted to get out of this "jail". I didn't want to be numbered among the 47 percent of young adults in Malaysia living with serious debt issues, with many facing bankruptcy. I really

wanted to overcome. By His grace, today, I am able to live on less than half my income, which means I can whittle down my debt figure by about 70 percent in less than half a year. It has really been a joy seeing the credit card statement's amount shrink while I surrender my fanciful desires. I feel as if God wants me to learn that we need to do our part to manage things while trusting Him for the future.

## TOTAL TRUST

One of the challenges I faced during that period was that there were completely no open doors for extra income. I had experienced God's miraculous provisions many times in the past, with jobs that paid the exact amount that I had owed. This time around was different. It was as if He really wanted me to go through the desert period (with a very 'deserted' wallet) to find out what exactly the root of my issues was.

I discovered that the only way to save if I didn't have extra jobs was to discipline my own spending. It turned out He wanted me to work on my own self-control! What an amazing, wise (and humorous) Father we have. After that period, there was one offer for an extra job that came along, an answer to our small group's prayers. That helped pay off more of the debt.

I was also touched by hearing testimonies of how restored relationships through the power of forgiveness and restorative steps even brought about financial breakthroughs. I worked through my own issues with God as well. Yoke Tee's discipling us through the small groups and giving us creative "homework" also helped challenge me to think of entrepreneurial ideas and at the same time, increased my desire to trust wholeheartedly in the Holy Spirit's guidance in my daily life.

MoneyLife has given me practical tools to undo and rebuild my previous foundational beliefs about money based on His word. I haven't really got everything down pat. I still struggle with self-discipline. But through the lessons and ensuing months of learning how to manage my expenditures, I've been blessed with a sense of hope that as long as we never give up overcoming, we will find victory over our circumstances. I'm thankful for my small group's sharing of their thoughts and insights, which has also provoked my own. This has been a most encouraging channel through real life testimonies pointing to His love and His desire for us to venture out to become wiser and stronger for His kingdom.

**MONEYLIFE is an in-depth 10-week biblical personal finance study. This study can be conducted through online meeting or small group study. Course fee: RM200 per person. For registration, contact 0163238044 or email [tanyoketee@gmail.com](mailto:tanyoketee@gmail.com)**

# THE CRISIS OF TRUTH

by Anna Teoh



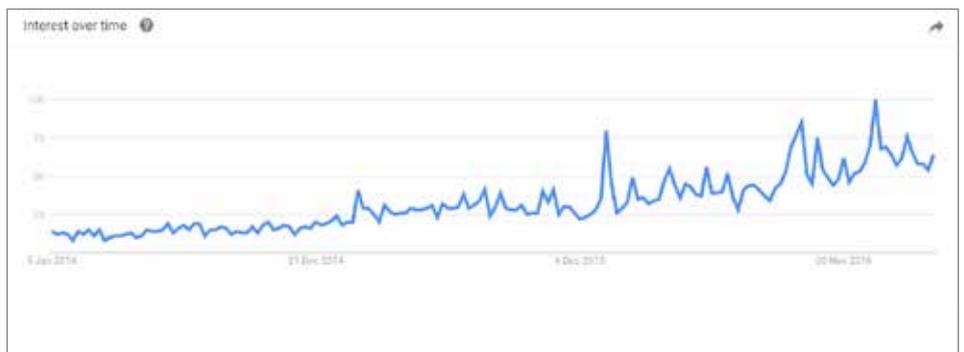
**W**E LIVE IN a world where truth has become a thing of the past. The

Oxford Dictionary named **post-truth** as Word of the Year 2016, a worrying reflection of the disposition of our generation to blatantly ignore the truth, to stay oblivious to the obvious – and to choose, either consciously or subconsciously, to make judgments based on feelings rather than objective facts.

Google Trends reveals Malaysians' increasing interest in viral content (see screenshot on the right), giving our attention to frivolous, unverified contents circulating rapidly on the Internet.

We are a society distracted and overwhelmed. We prioritise appeal to the masses, have fewer concrete moral absolutes, and loosely consider versions of the truth as shaky benchmarks upon which to make decisions. We build our houses upon sand. And if we do not pause to test the pillars of what we believe in, it is only a matter of time before we find ourselves crumbling under the pressures of daily life.

The apostle Paul instructs us to put on the Armour of God, the first piece of which is the Belt of Truth – girded tightly, buckled on confidently, with a



*Number of Google searches for the term "viral" in Malaysia, Jan 2014-March 2017*

snug fit around the waist.

Truth is a light that shines on the crevices of our hearts. It is a mirror with no distortion, silently revealing to us who we really are, graciously giving us an accurate view of our own strengths and weaknesses, gently urging us to acknowledge our sins and insecurities.

Truth shows us our insufficiency on our own. It points us towards our utter, desperate need of a Saviour. It suggests that perhaps our greatest vocation in this lifetime is to seek and to find the source of truth Himself. Jesus says, "I am the way, the truth, and the life."

Truth is the straight path that beckons us to walk upon it. It is the compass that guides our daily choices; it wields control over our thoughts and speech as we conform our wills to its ways. It is a path narrow and at times lonely; such is the unlikely road that paves the way to eternal life.

In a post-truth economy, what is scarce is of high value. So, diligently

pursue the truth of God's Word; hold it close, never let it slip away even for a moment. As a loose belt is ineffective, a loose grip on truth is also useless. Truth is what holds your entire armour together as you stand firm to fight the battles of everyday life – unpredictable, exhilarating, bittersweet.

You do not change the truth; it changes you. 📖



**Anna Teoh** writes digital advertising copy, and professes a love for beautiful charts. She believes in the power of the pen in bringing people together. Born and bred in Malacca, she enjoys rainy mornings and long walks on the beach.



# 7 STRESS BUSTERS

BY JOYCELYN LOH

**1 EXERCISE** | Exercising regularly helps you to release stress and promotes health. You can start with walking around the park or some other simple stretching exercises.

Proverbs 24:5: *"A wise man is full of strength, and a man of knowledge enhances his might."*

**2 ENOUGH SLEEP AND REST** | Eight hours of sleep and rest will reduce your stress. So, turn off your TV earlier, dim the lights and give yourself time to relax before going to bed.

Psalms 62:5: *"Yes, my soul, find rest in God: my hope comes from him."*

**3 BALANCED DIET** | Stress levels and diet are closely related. Research shows that fish with high levels of Omega-3 fatty acids helps in reducing the symptoms of stress.

3 John 1:2: *"Dear friend, I pray that you may enjoy good health and that all may go well with you, even as your soul is getting along well."*

**4 RELAX AND BREATHE** | Breathing exercises are something that everyone can do at any place and any time. Take 3 to 5 minutes to breathe in and out slowly. Deep breathing oxygenates your blood and clears your mind.

Psalms 23:2-3: *"He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, he refreshes my soul."*

**5 LAUGH** | Laughter releases endorphins that improve mood and decrease levels of the stress-causing hormones cortisol and adrenaline. So, laugh out loud!

Proverbs 17:22: *"A cheerful heart is good medicine, but a crushed spirit dries up the bones."*

**6 DO SOMETHING YOU ENJOY** | Take some time to do something you enjoy – having a cup of coffee, gardening, reading, hanging out with friends, etc.

Ecclesiastes 8:15: *"So I commend the enjoyment of life, because there is nothing better for a person under the sun than to eat and drink and be glad. Then joy will accompany them in their toil all the days of the life God has given them under the sun."*

**7 LISTEN TO MUSIC** | Research shows that listening to soothing music can lower blood pressure, heart rate and anxiety. Of course, you can always play music that you can sing at the top of your lungs as well!

Psalms 59:16: *"I will sing of your strength; I will sing aloud of your steadfast love in the morning. For you have been to me a fortress and a refuge in the day of my distress."* 🎵



# WOUNDED SOLDIER

BY CHRIS KAM

**I**N MY 23 YEARS OF MINISTRY AS a pastor, I have recognised that the unseen inner emotional wounds are sometimes deadlier than physical wounds. All physical wounds eventually heal, leaving behind nothing more than an unsightly scar. We know our physical wounds are healed when there's no longer any pain when we press on them. Our body is a miraculous creation of God that heals itself.

Emotional wounds are a different story altogether. It can remain with us for the rest of our lives. The wound opens up or closes, depending on our receptivity for help. Some wounds never fully recover until we die. The worst part of emotional wounds is that

they will be inflicted on other people, causing even greater wounds. In some sense, they are "transferable". Decent-looking men or women may carry inner wounds, passing unnoticed until they rear their ugly heads. Inner wounds are inflicted in so many different ways and can even cripple a person for life.

## THE DEEPEST CUT

Nothing hurts a person more than unkind words. The tongue has great power. King Solomon said, *"The tongue has the power of life and death, and those who love it will eat its fruit."* (Proverbs 18:21)

Unkind words maim a person for life so much so that the wounds caused in the human soul become like

tuning forks resonating to anything that will bring out the hurt in us. The Enemy takes cognizance of that and uses it to his full advantage in going against everything our Heavenly Father treasures – people like you and me.

In the battle field, the Enemy has a simple strategy – to wound or maim a soldier so that it takes another one to care for him. The army's fighting strength diminishes at least two-fold every time a soldier is wounded because it will take a healthy one to attend to the wounded and carry him off the field. Now, that is a powerful strategy. In fact, some weapons are designed purely to maim and wound as they leave a lasting crippling effect on the rest.

How is this worked out in reality?



## The battle field of spiritual warfare is in our minds. That's why our minds must be held captive by God and His Word.

be held captive by God and His Word.

Church leaders today are often preoccupied with tending to the hurts of fellow Christians through counselling and prayer so much so that they are crippled in effective ministry to the lost. There are many wounded disciples of Jesus Christ and it will take one or more healthy Christians to tend to the one wounded Christian. This is not an issue as it is the ministry of the Church to bring about healing and wholeness. But when the Enemy continues to fester the wounds, opening them before they are fully healed, that's when it becomes a problem.

### UNDIVIDED BODY

Our challenge often is not from without, but from within. That's why Christians are exhorted by our Lord and the apostles to love one another. In fact Jesus prays for us about this (John 17). The community of God is called to build up one another and the best strategy the Enemy can deploy is to cause Christians to hurt one another. Apostle Paul warns the Church against *"quarreling, jealousy, outbursts of anger, factions, slander, gossip, arrogance and disorder."* (2 Cor. 12:20)

He speaks strongly against lawsuits among fellow believers without exhausting the avenue of Christian mediation (1 Cor. 6:1-8) and the creation of factions within the Church (1 Cor. 3). He abhors those who disunite the Church by false doctrines and encouraging *"unhealthy interest in controversies and quarrels about words that result in envy, strife, malicious talk, evil suspicions and constant friction between men of corrupt mind."* (1 Tim. 6:4b-5a)

It reminds us to remain united and loving in the face of the Enemy's onslaught. The Greek army's phalanx formation, a densely-packed line of heavily armed infantry soldiers, is a good illustration of how we can stay undivided. The phalanx is formidable as a battle field formation that is almost impenetrable. The vulnerable part of the group is the members within the

formation. There must be complete trust of the person behind you!

Let's keep vigilant as a Body of Christ so that we do not allow the Enemy to cast suspicion on one another. The Enemy knows he is powerless with a frontal attack because Christ has nullified his power through the cross. His strategy is to cast discord among God's people. If we recognise that strategy, then we can overcome the Enemy by simply practising what God commanded: *"And this is his command: to believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and to love one another as he commanded us."* (1 Jn 3:23)

Hence, one of the most powerful weapons of spiritual warfare is love. Without love, we are a resounding gong or clanging cymbal (1 Cor. 13). We are nothing and we gain nothing. Out of the triad of Faith, Hope and Love, the greatest of these is Love. (1 Cor. 13:13).

We must recognise that loving and liking can be mutually exclusive. We may not necessarily like a person, but we are commanded to love. We hope that we can eventually like too, but we don't have to be prevented from loving.

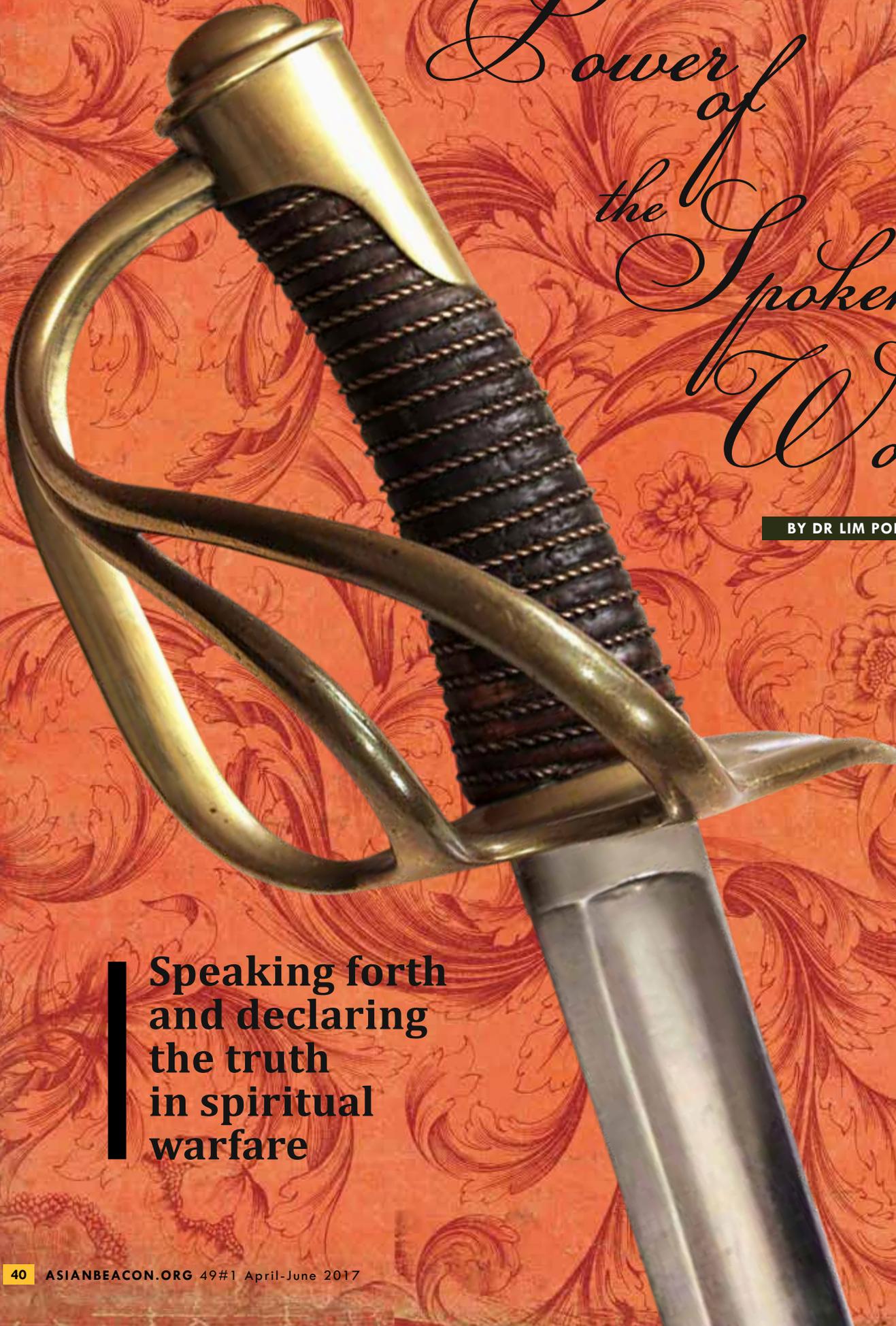
So as disciples of Jesus Christ, let's keep ourselves emotionally healthy and spiritually strong by loving one another. It starts from our own household. 🏠



Chris Kam is currently the Senior Pastor of Damansara Utama Methodist Church (DUMC) and was instrumental in the transitioning and development of DUMC as a Cell Church. Married to Stella, they have three growing sons, Ian, Shaun and Ashton. An electrical engineer by training, Pastor Chris is passionate about people and training them to achieve their potential in life. Inspiring, equipping and modelling are the three key words in his vision.

The Enemy will wound as many as he can so that Christians will be distracted to tend to the wounded and not be involved in the battle out there for the souls of men and women in the kingdom of darkness. Counselling and ministry for Christians keep the Church busy in tending to the wounded. Broken relationships, hurtful words, unkind actions, etc. are all weapons of spiritual warfare. When the Enemy gets the man, he gets the whole family and the Church springs into action, deploying precious resources for counselling and ministry to what could have been avoided in the first place as disciples of Jesus Christ.

The battle field of spiritual warfare is in our minds. That's why our minds must



*Power  
of  
the Spoken  
Word*

BY DR LIM POH ANN

**Speaking forth  
and declaring  
the truth  
in spiritual  
warfare**

**I**N SPIRITUAL WARFARE, WE EMPLOY DEFENSIVE weapons such as the helmet, breastplate and shield, which merely protect us and keep our enemy at bay. While having a solid defence is good, we must not forget to take the offensive. We must learn how to wield and thrust the weapon of offence – the Sword of the Spirit – which is the Word of God (Ephesians 6:10-18).

How did Jesus overcome the devil when He was tempted in the wilderness? He countered Satan's lies by proclaiming the truth found in God's word. Physically, he was at His weakest moment after a 41-day fast when Satan tempted Him (Matthew 4:1-11).

There were three different attempts by Satan to make the Son of God fall. He challenged the Son of God to:

- Command the stones to turn into bread.
- Jump down from the highest point of the temple.
- Fall down to worship the devil in exchange for all the kingdoms of the world.

For each of Satan's temptations, Jesus overcame the attacker with the Word of God. Jesus rebuked Satan by quoting three times from the book of Deuteronomy:

- Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord (Deut. 8:3). Jesus refused to obey the devil's instructions to turn the stones into bread.

- You must not test the Lord your God (Deut. 6:16). Jesus resisted the devil by not jumping down from the temple.

- Fear only the Lord your God; you shall worship him (Deut. 6:13). Jesus overcame the temptation of power by refusing to worship the devil.

Even as a boy, Jesus had a firm grasp of Scriptures. His parents found him sitting in the temple, learning from the teachers and asking them questions beyond his age (Luke 2:46). Later, after His resurrection, while talking with two believers who were walking towards Emmaus, He confidently referred to the ancient Scriptures concerning Him, beginning with Moses and all the prophets (Luke 24:25-27).

In the second temptation, Satan even quoted Scriptures: "Throw yourself down and God will send angels to bear you up." But Jesus withstood Satan's suggestion by saying, "You must not test the Lord your God." So, we too must not allow Satan to twist Scriptures. We must know how to **rightly handle** the Word: "Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (2 Timothy 2:15).

These temptations happened before Jesus embarked on His ministry. Even so, we have to be proven faithful before we are called to do God's work. Like Joseph, we have to demonstrate our ability to overcome trials and testings before we are given the honour of serving Him.

Jesus knew exactly how to wield the Sword of the Spirit when faced with each of the devil's temptation. If Jesus needed the Word to be victorious against temptation, how much more we, weak mortals, need to be well-equipped with knowledge and understanding of Scriptures.

Let's examine another occasion that illustrates the power of speaking forth and declaring the truth. The disciples were surprised that the fig tree had dramatically withered away as a result of Jesus' curse. The Master then took the opportunity to teach his disciples the importance of faith and how to

release that faith by **speaking to the mountain**.

Jesus told them, "Have faith in God" (Mark 11:22). He seemed to be telling them, "You may think that the mountain (obstacle or problem) you are facing is insurmountable but nothing is impossible when you have faith."

"Truly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, 'Be taken up and thrown into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that what he says will come to pass, it will be done for him" (Mark 11: 23).

Apart from having faith, there is a need to declare the truth or expected outcome – **speak to the mountain**. We must speak out what we believe is true and in accordance with God's will.

For positive results, our tongue must align itself with our belief. "Death and life are in the power of the tongue and those who love it will eat its fruit" (Proverbs 18:21).

On another occasion, Jesus exercised spiritual authority by rebuking the evil spirit in the demon-possessed boy: "You mute and deaf spirit, I command you, come out of him and never enter him again" (Mark 9:25b).

To be effective in the spiritual warfare, we need **faith**. As we diligently study God's word, our faith (shield that protects us from Satan's arrows) is strengthened. We know our **rightful position** in Christ – that Satan had already been defeated by Jesus at the cross. "He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him" (Colossians 2:15).

Believers need to know that we are stronger than the evil one because He who is in us is greater than he who is in the world (1 John 4:4). And when we submit ourselves to God and resist the devil, the evil one will flee from us (James 4:7).

Thus, we need to constantly embrace the fact that Satan is already a **defeated** foe. We do not fight for victory. We merely **enforce** the victory that Christ has already won for us.

Every believer needs to declare: "I am a conqueror and victorious. I am reigning with Jesus, seated in the heavenly places with Him. Satan is defeated and has no power over me." (Romans 8:37, Ephesians 2:6).

While praying and believing are important, we must also boldly confront evil by proclaiming the truth.

In spiritual warfare, being on the defensive is good. But we have to go on the **offensive** as well – declare the truth found in God's word.

The stakes are high in spiritual warfare. What is at stake is the eternal destiny of lost souls. The devil – the commander of the powers in the unseen world – is the spirit at work in the hearts of those who refuse to obey God (Ephesians 2:2). We do not wrestle against flesh and blood but against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places (Ephesians 6:12).

As God's kingdom advances, it meets with resistance from the kingdom of darkness. For lost souls to be freed from the grip of evil, God's servants have to be decisive in overcoming the forces of darkness. We must declare the truth in accordance with Scriptures in order to withstand evil. 🙏

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**Dr Lim Poh Ann** is a medical practitioner. He is the former editor of *Asian Beacon* (Dec. 2008 – Oct. 2011). He can be reached at his Facebook page, [www.facebook.com/AskDrLim](http://www.facebook.com/AskDrLim), and blog, *Porridge for the Soul*: <http://bit.ly/1ijiXHp>

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# PUTTING ON YOUR FINANCIAL ARMOUR

BY RAJEN DEVADASON



**A**LL CHRISTIANS SHOULD appreciate the importance of donning the full Armour of God, which Paul wrote about at length in Ephesians chapter 6.

Interestingly, Bible scholars are divided as to whether there are six or seven parts to this vital armour. Their confusion arises from the wording of Ephesians 6:18a, "And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests."

Verses 14 through 17 list the six readily identifiable parts of the Armour

of God, namely the Belt of truth, the Breastplate of righteousness, the Readiness that comes from the gospel of peace, the Shield of faith, the Helmet of salvation, and the Sword of the Spirit.

Regardless of whether you think there are six or seven distinct parts to that armour, do not get bogged down in pedantic hair-splitting. What is of greater importance is recognising and metaphorically cladding yourself with all of God's armour for your spiritual defence and advancement.

I also hope that when it comes to

equipping yourself and your family for robust financial defence and consistent economic advancement, you will put on what I believe to be the full financial armour of an intelligent, proactive individual.

As a Christian financial planner who aims to serve both believers in Jesus Christ and non-Christians in an even-handed way, please allow me to outline for you the three dimensions of an integrated financial plan.

They are Wealth Protection, Wealth Accumulation and Wealth Distribution.

I use the mnemonic PAD (which stands for Protection, Accumulation and Distribution) to help me remember those vital dimensions. I'll elaborate on all three at the end of this column.

But before I do so, here are two salient points for Christians wanting to integrate their Christ-centred beliefs with holistic financial planning.

**First, I recommend 'covering' every personal action concerning wealth-related Protection, Accumulation and Distribution with prayer.**

Proverbs 3:5-6 teaches us to: "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to Him, and He will make your paths straight." Common sense tells us that if we Christians are to submit ALL our ways to God, then that covers every small, medium and big aspect of life.

Interestingly, the Bible makes it clear that money isn't one of those 'big' aspects. Yes, in our day and age, we spend an inordinate amount of time fixated on money – how to get more of it if we think we don't have enough; and what to do with it if we are fortunate enough to have a reasonable amount. And, yes again, we do need to learn how to manage it intelligently, but only because it is a tool that should be wielded well.

You see, money – our tool – must never be allowed to become an idol or god to us. The biblical prohibition against serving money (mammon or material things) is clear. In one of the best known portions of the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 6:24), Jesus told us: "No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money."

For those who have fallen into the folly of elevating mere money to an idol, please take a breath and figuratively step back to better appreciate the truth that money is mere stuff! As such, it is NOT worthy of excessive allocations of our limited, finite lifetime supplies of attention, focus and energy. Only Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the world who died for us on a cruel cross and then rose again, the Creator of the universe (or multiverse, if you prefer to think

in quantum splitting terms), and the Second Person of the Trinity, is worthy of our utmost devotion.

In light of this BIG TRUTH, we would be wise to be smart about the way we handle our money on Earth. Money has no role in heaven but it is necessary for our short lives here and now.

**Second, the Bible makes it clear that how we handle money here has repercussions on our rewards or responsibilities in the afterlife.**

One standout Scripture illustrating this is Matthew 25:29, near the end of the famous parable of the talents (or bags of gold) where Jesus declares the key teaching point of that parable:

"For whoever has will be given more, and (he) will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what (he has) will be taken from (him)."

To better understand this I need you to momentarily hold two opposing ideas in dynamic tension. One: ***Money isn't that big a deal, so don't squander your precious life chasing after it.*** Two: ***How we manage our money in this ephemeral earthly life affects what we receive from – and get to enjoy later throughout Eternity with – Jesus.***

Bottom line: When we don our full financial armour, we focus on meeting the economic requirements of a well-planned earthly life that somehow mysteriously carries over into more important aspects of our eternal life with Jesus.

In closing, regardless of your personal belief system, these are the strategies, actions and relevant financial products for each of the three dimensions of an integrated financial plan:

**WEALTH PROTECTION.** Use life insurance and general insurance policies to shift some of the economic risks of living in an imperfect world from yourself to a robustly capitalised insurance company; also utilise the power of diversification within the next dimension of our financial armour (Accumulation) to enhance our armour's overarching protective shielding.

**WEALTH ACCUMULATION.** Save money in safer asset classes such as

cash and low-risk bonds; invest money in higher-risk bonds and risk-on asset classes such as equities, investment real estate and alternative investments, which include commodities; minimise speculative activities and leave unwise gambles to the foolish who doom themselves to financial mediocrity or worse yet, catastrophic failure.

**WEALTH DISTRIBUTION.** Write a will to articulate your preferences, desires and convictions for distributing your assets when you are no longer on Earth and won't need them anymore; and, possibly, set up trusts to safeguard assets from rapacious relatives and to protect young, immature or naïve loved ones, and also to fund causes and charities you care about. (I have curated a shortlist of causes – secular and Christian – that will birth snowballing benefits to the world, possibly for centuries, which I freely share with those who believe in doing good today and in leaving legacies tomorrow.)

The entire process of strengthening your personally-crafted financial armour can be nurtured and transformed into a multi-decade meaningful and extremely fun adventure. So, I hope you have lots of fun learning, tinkering and experimenting even as you use Earth's currency as an effective tool. As your proficiency in handling money grows, I trust you will scrutinise your heart so that you never ever allow money to metastasise into a false god. 🙏

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**Rajen Devadason, CFP,** is a Securities Commission-licensed financial planner, professional speaker and author. Read his free articles at [www.FreeCoolArticles.com](http://www.FreeCoolArticles.com); he may be connected with on LinkedIn at <https://www.linkedin.com/in/rajendevadason>, email at [rajen@RajenDevadason.com](mailto:rajen@RajenDevadason.com) and at [Twitter @RajenDevadason](https://twitter.com/RajenDevadason)



# 5 Work-life Essentials for a healthy hectic balance in life:

BY HENG WEI YEE

1. Plan your days ahead so that you have time to do what you need to do and not deal with it later as it comes.
2. Me-time. Avoid activities that are tiring you out. Recreation brings leisure and relaxation. Take some time off to recharge.
3. Get some rest! We should rest when it is time to rest.
4. Learn when to say "No". Offer help only when you know you are able to handle it.
5. Exercise! A walk in the park, and stretching to a sweat will re-energise the body.



## ARMOUR OF GOD

### EPHESIANS 6

IMAGES © ERIC CHEW

#### THE BODY ARMOUR OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

Righteousness is being honest, good, humble, and fair to others. It means standing up for weaker people.

#### THE HELMET OF SALVATION

Put on the Helmet of Salvation by believing that Jesus Christ died for your sins and rose again.

#### THE SHIELD OF FAITH

Faith is being sure that God will keep His promises. Faith in God protects you when you are tempted to doubt.

#### THE BELT OF TRUTH

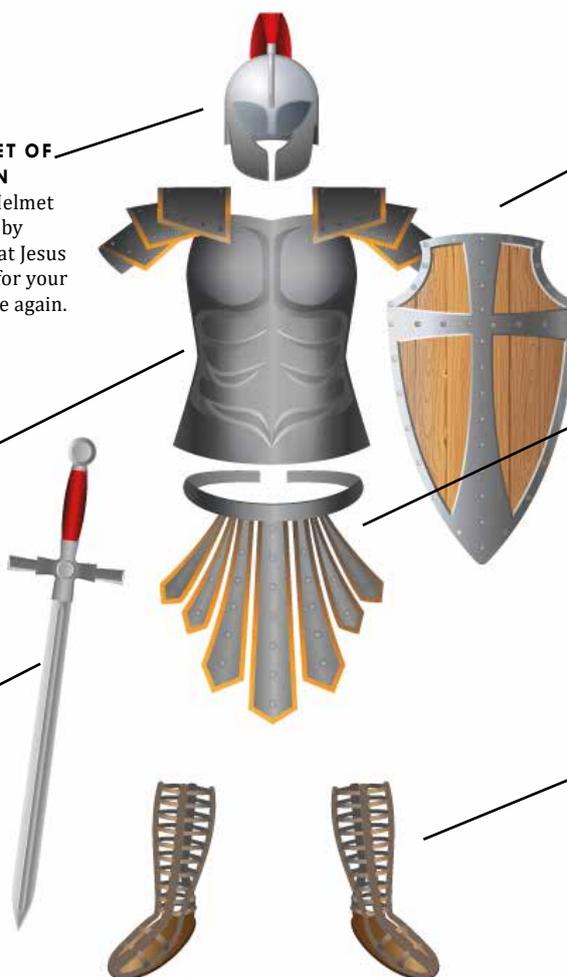
Truth keeps us from giving in to world's beliefs. Compare your beliefs & action to the truth of the Word of God.

#### THE SWORD OF THE SPIRIT

God's Word is our offensive weapon. When we tell others what the Bible says, the Holy Spirit helps people see their bad thoughts and actions, and makes them want to be forgiven.

#### SHOES

The Gospel of Peace is being right with God and being contented in troubled times. Peacemakers are blessed.



# Dear Goldie



Dear Goldie,

I read in your blog\* that unity is so important when you and your husband minister together. I find it very difficult to work together with my husband in our business. We are both professionals and we have our own ways of doing things, different ways of thinking, etc. Our characters are also very different. We both insist we are right, resulting in a lot of conflicts. The Bible tells wives to submit to husbands but is that applicable in this modern day when women are equal to men in education, intelligence, capability, etc.?

*Uncertain wife*

DEAR UNCERTAIN WIFE,

Let me share with you a letter I received from a wife after she read my blog about my experience of ministering with my husband in unity.

"Thank you for sharing on your blog about the lessons you learnt being in unity with your husband during ministry. Today my husband Joe taught at my study group and because of your article, I was very mindful to keep the unity so that God would use us. There were several occasions during the meeting when Joe asked me to do something and I didn't want to but I held my tongue from refusing and did it.

After the meeting I wanted Joe to stay back for lunch because one of the ladies had ordered her lunch but didn't turn up at the last minute. I asked him to have her lunch so it wouldn't be wasted but he didn't want to. So I got angry at him but didn't insist he stay. Thank God he didn't stay because I was then able to have a one-on-one time with a lady who has been attending the meeting regularly and lead her to the Lord. God had arranged this divine appointment because all those who said they would stay for lunch couldn't stay. So it was just the two of us. The lesson I learnt is don't get angry, resentful or insist on my way. I shouldn't get upset when things don't go my way. God may have a better way!"

Now let me tell you my own recent experience.

Tek and I were invited to speak at a church camp in Kuching in April. He was keen to go but I wasn't, the reasons being we had just finished our trip to Malaysia and we would be going to

London for a family reunion in June. I said it would be too tiring to plan another trip: booking flights online, planning our itinerary, preparing the talks, etc. All these were very stressful.

I told Tek he better tell the church we couldn't go so that they could get someone else. Over the days, I repeated my feelings, telling him he would have to book his own flight (which he has never done before), go alone or get someone else to go with him. I told him emphatically, "I will not go just because you want me to but only if God tells me." And I did ask God to speak to me but He didn't.

Much to my chagrin, Tek did nothing. But more than that was my concern: "How can God bless this project when we are not in unity?" Finally one day, I heard him make a call to Kuching. He was in another room, so I didn't hear what he said. While he was speaking, I suddenly heard God say to me, "You go." When he finished his call, I didn't want to tell him what God had said. I still let him think I hadn't changed my mind. Finally in the afternoon, I told him.

The result? Surprisingly, my resistance turned to willing agreement. There followed no stress about any of the issues I had feared. The topics, content, resources of the talks came flowing, flights booked without hassle, stopover in Kuala Lumpur programme decided, etc. God truly keeps His promise that when we are in unity, He will bless (Ps.133).

Not only did I learn this well-tested principle again but another important principle was confirmed: it pays for

me to submit to my husband. To have harmony in the home, God has assigned different roles to every member. The husband is the head and the wife is to submit to his leadership. This does not mean blind obedience as many have misinterpreted. Normally the best way to come to agreement is by discussion and consensus – because both are intelligent, capable and see things from different viewpoints, but when there is a deadlock, the husband should have the casting vote and the wife should submit.

God will honour her decision and give His blessing. In my case, because I was reluctant and unsure, I asked God to speak to me and He did, so that I would change my mind willingly and graciously.

As I was writing this, I checked with Tek, "What did you tell the Kuching church on the phone?" He laughed, "I said we were coming." He knew all along I would obey God. So to summarise what you should do: obey God's written principles and when in doubt, ask Him for clarification and confirmation. 🙏

*Goldie*

\*[www.deargoldie.com](http://www.deargoldie.com)

**Do you have an issue you need advice on?**

Write to *Asian Beacon's* Goldie Chong at [aboffice@asianbeacon.org](mailto:aboffice@asianbeacon.org) for her godly counsel. You can also visit her new blog [www.deargoldie.com](http://www.deargoldie.com).

*Selected questions may be featured in this column. If you leave an email address, you will have your question answered, whether it's published or not.*



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**TANGS**

A magnifying glass with a black handle is positioned over a document. The lens is focused on a specific paragraph of text. The text inside the lens is larger and clearer than the surrounding text on the page. The text reads: "By looking at what is below the soil surface may be your clue to achieving better yield and this is what **Hi-KayBio** is all about, Perfecting Soil Harmony and Optimizing Yield." The words "Perfecting Soil Harmony and Optimizing Yield" are in a light green color, while "Hi-KayBio" is in red and green.

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Level 17, PJ Tower, No. 18 Jalan Persiaran Barat, Off Jalan Timur, 46050 Petaling Jaya, Selangor Darul Ehsan, Malaysia.

Tel: +603-7957 7644 Fax: +603-7957 7670 Email: enquiry@agrifert.com.my

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