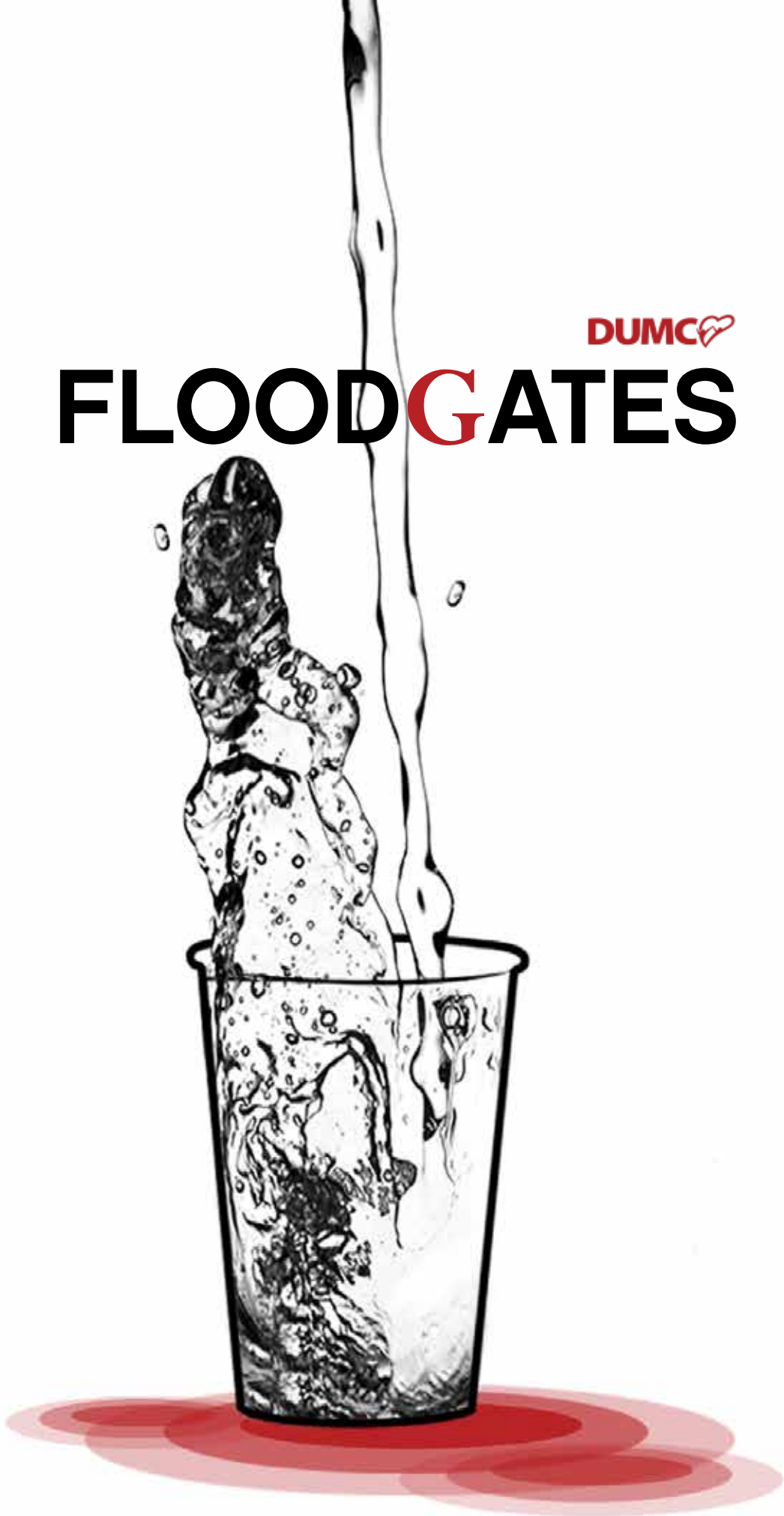


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May to August 2021

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Damansara Utama Methodist Church

Dream Centre, 2 Jalan 13/1, Seksyen 13,
46200 Petaling Jaya, Selangor, Malaysia

T +603.7958 7388 **F** +603.7958 3787

E general@dumc.my    dumcMY

W dumc.my

The church office is closed on Mondays.

FROM THE EDITORIAL TEAM

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

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

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

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

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

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

Message From Senior Pastor

PAIN IN THE MIND

By Chris Kam, Senior Pastor

We have crossed the 16-month mark after the first MCO in March 2020 and the severity of the pandemic is not only unabated, but increases in ferocity with the new virus variant, throwing the world into yet another tailspin. We have been encouraged and exhorted to keep our heads up. But the economic challenges, physical distancing with those important in our lives, and the missing leisurely routines we enjoy to unwind and stay sane with, have taken a toll far greater than we had anticipated. It is like a dent in world history when everything seems to come to a surreal pause. This is not an easy time for anyone to go through and added on to that, it is closer to home now that we are experiencing for ourselves the loss of those close to us during this time. The loss through succumbing to COVID-19 or other illnesses, is compounded by the fact that we are not able to be there to share and stand with those in their grief and suffering.

These are real pastoral issues that we grapple through with our members – why some get healed and others do not, even when we have persistently prayed. It is not unique to this period of a devastating pandemic, but in every situation when the answers elude you. Attempting to write on a subject like this sobers me to realise that I do not really have

the answers either. How do we wrestle with this? Why do bad things happen to good people? Why is there so much suffering in the world? How can we be honest and real with each other about our doubts and what do the Scriptures have to say about this?

I have decided to touch on this as a reflection point to help us navigate through this. I am not attempting to give you an answer, but a framework on how you can work this through. Fresh in my mind is the home going of Pastor Ravi, a dear friend and colleague, who succumbed to COVID-19. He was the second colleague to pass on, with the first one barely over a year ago due to her heart condition. All these were happening within the period of this pandemic, including two other dear friends, although they succumbed not to COVID-19 but cancer. It pained our hearts not being able to be present at their funerals with their families due to the lockdowns.

Different people process this differently depending on the season of their life and the theology they carry. By theology I do not mean the academic study of it, but the belief system they have built based on their understanding of what Scriptures say about suffering and the blessings of God. Their

understanding, or the lack of it, can make or break their faith for them. I have spent time with individuals and groups to process and grieve through this so that we can be honest with ourselves. I have spent time reflecting, not because I needed to address the church from a theological perspective, but also that I may share it experientially and reflectively as well. Grief is still gripping me on and off, and I am glad in some sense that I can feel and be human.

I read recently an article written by John W. Yates III. He was a research assistant to the late Rev John Stott, a world-renowned Anglican

preacher, evangelist, author and theologian. He gave me an insight into how we can wrestle with this

like Stott. This is what he wrote: *"In an age of sound bites and Twitter feeds, many Christian leaders are so busy trying to keep up with current events that few of us take time to stop, to study, and to struggle for the sake of teaching God's people. All too often, we take a side and stick to it without the discipline of listening or questioning our instincts. The thin veneer of our discipleship is showing cracks as a result. In this complex and constantly changing world, we do not need more commentary. We need more pain in the mind. John was willing to endure this pain, not just in the quiet of his study, but also in the company of others. He understood that the work of preaching and teaching requires the steadfast suffering of careful thinking."*

Two phrases that came out powerfully for me in this article were "Pain in the Mind (PIM)" and "Biblically Balanced Christianity (BBC)". The question we struggle most with in any situation is "Why?" But an equally important question we must ask is "What?" We may never get the answer to the "Why?", but we may get some answers to the "What?" – "What can I learn and what is God saying to me through this?" The "Why?" question may lead us to conclude humbly that "I

don't know" and it will remain a mystery on this side of earth, but rest assured that God's ways and thoughts are higher than my thoughts (Isaiah 55:8-9).

I have mentioned before in a sermon: "It's OK not to be OK, but it is not OK to remain that way." The "What?" question will take us further on the path of discipleship because we do not stop contending with the "Pain in the Mind" but come honestly before God and grapple with His Word and the quiet still voice within, learning how we can journey better in this life. The "What?" question will lead us to think biblically, the way Stott described as BBC, looking at the whole counsel and biblical context of God in a balanced manner without an overemphasis of our favourite

verses at the expense of hard biblical teachings.

I want to encourage you to sit down with your Bible and a journal, and begin having a conversation with yourself and the Holy Spirit. In one such moment, God anchored me in **2 Corinthians 5:6-10** ⁶ *Therefore we are always confident and know that as long as we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord.* ⁷ *For we live by faith, not by sight.* ⁸ *We are confident, I say, and would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord.* ⁹ *So we make it our goal to please him, whether we are at home in the body or away from it.* ¹⁰ *For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each of us may receive what is due us for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.*

Twice Apostle Paul reminded us of the confidence of hope we have in Christ. The other side of death on earth is not death but the eternal glorious life and it is a far better life. The current life is a life lived by faith and Paul did not hang on dearly and tightly to this earthly life but loosely, because he said he preferred to be with the Lord. So, what is the ultimate purpose in this life and beyond?

"I don't know" and it will remain a mystery on this side of earth, but rest assured that God's ways and thoughts are higher than my thoughts"

Isaiah 55:8-9

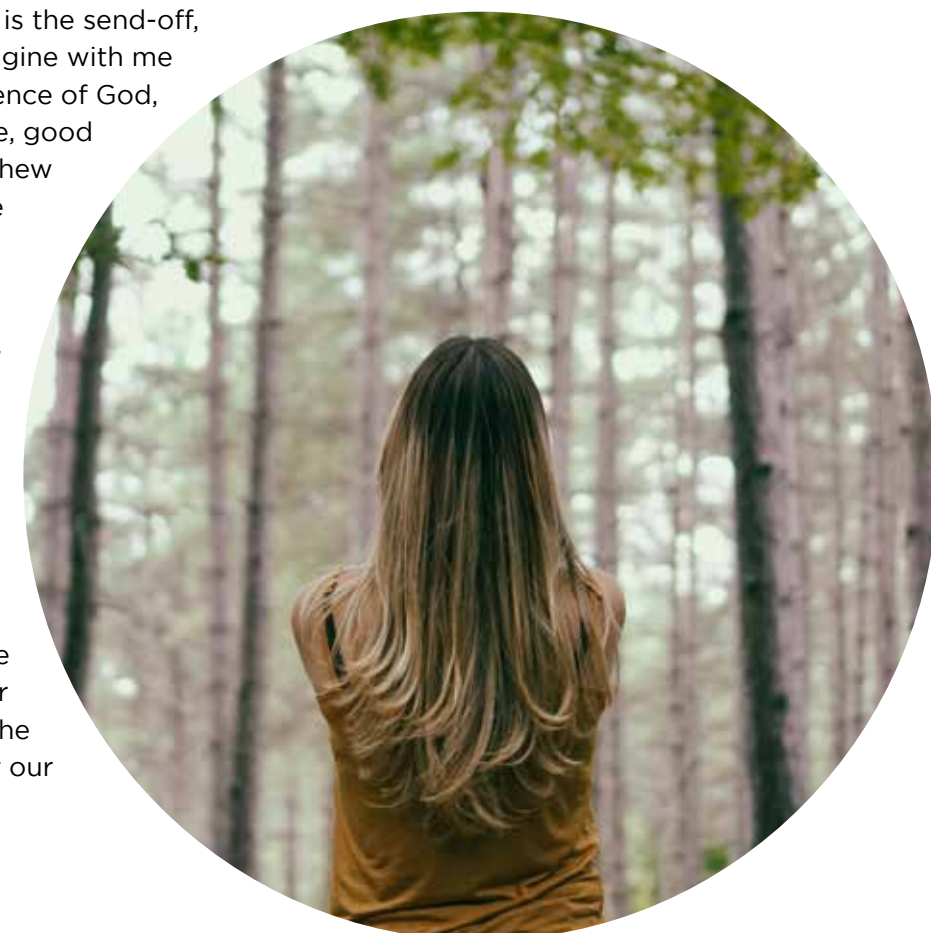
To please Him, meaning a life of obedience and intimacy with Christ. And the final reminder is that what we do on earth matters, because we will be called to give an account of our life. We are to be stewards of what has been entrusted to us.



In my journal are scribbles of my private thoughts including those that are pains in my mind. I humbly confessed before God that I did not know the answer, and neither can I tell others I know the answer, but I will continue to trust in Him that He knows best. He is omniscient and I am not, obviously. Who am I to say that life will be better here? Who am I to say my time is not yet up when to God it is? God does not need me, and He does not owe me an

answer. All I deserve is His just wrath and all I need is His mercy. Everything I do and own, they are all because of His grace and privilege extended to serve Him. I think, with all these questions, when it is my turn to ask God one day in the next life, I will likely in the Presence of His Awesome glory say, "No question." Because He will be much more than enough for me in His overwhelming glory. (Revelation 21)

The memorial of Pastor Ravi was such a grand send-off by the Boys' Brigade in their regalia and formality. I jotted down in my journal, "If this is the send-off, imagine the welcome!" Imagine with me our welcome into the Presence of God, hearing Him say "Well done, good and faithful servant!" (Matthew 25:21,23) This reminded me of the life verse God gave to me when I was a young Christian about 36 years ago: **James 4:14** *"Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes."* The "What?" question reminded me to live my life well because life is short. May the pain in our mind inspire us to live life the way God directs us, not for our glory but for His. Amen!



GOD MOMENTS

By Vera Tay, DUMC Missionary in Cambodia

Reflections on my 1st anniversary as a missionary in the midst of Covid-19.

Today, the world has changed dramatically and many things have happened for which there are no precedents that we can normally follow. At this point, we have been living with the pandemic for 12 months.

While we now live with uncertainty, Jesus said **(John 14:27)** *"Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid."* Jesus gives us the steadiness to continue living with hope and joy.

Every year, I will seek God for a verse. It has helped me walk and converse with God and to know Him better. Some years I did not seem to have a word from God. In those times I would continue with the previous year's verse. This happened in 2019 and



2020. I did not hear God giving me a verse that would resonate with my heart. So, it was John 14:27 for three years running for 2018, 2019 and 2020. Little did I know how much I would need to learn to operate in the peace of God for decision-making, that defied my logical mind. God was teaching me His ways.

I had to learn to move in the peace of God that at times was contrary to the human ways of success, profitability, productivity and intelligence. *'For the wisdom of this world is foolishness in God's sight. As it is written: "He catches the wise in their craftiness", and again, "The Lord knows that the thoughts of the wise are futile."*

(1 Corinthians 3:19 and 20)

Yet when we follow Jesus, He is the same yesterday, today and tomorrow. God is Love. Jesus gives eternal life and is that not the desire of man?

LESSON 1

Know WHO To Follow

In September 2020, I preached to 40 CMS University students and their pastors. I challenged the youths "How are you changing the world?" Matthew 5:13-16 – How are we Salt and Light for Jesus?

Salt does two things. Firstly, it enhances taste by releasing the natural flavour of food and secondly, it preserves food from perishing. I felt that God was saying that He has called us to impact the community where He has placed us and for me that was Cambodia. We are to show kindness and to encourage the heart and to glorify God. We do this because Jesus is the reason and He set the example. The second purpose of salt is to preserve life. Jesus is our Saviour, Jesus is faithful. Are we faithful to share the Good News and to point to Jesus? When people see us, do we reflect His character? Are we fulfilling our purpose?

After that event, I wrote to Senior Pastor, Chris Kam -

"I will say that God is good and in spite of the chaos and the foreign culture surrounding me, I am at peace here. I am sure of my calling to be in Cambodia for this season. There is a joy and satisfaction that can only be found when you are in the centre of God's purpose for your life. I pray and hope that every Christian will have the opportunity to experience this, and I do not mean that you have to be a missionary to encounter this. You just have to be obedient to God's call and to step out."

I am reminded of my human frailty and my limited understanding of the Kingdom in Heaven. What is the value of the salary that I gave up or the so-called luxuries that I enjoyed compared to what is in store in heaven? Being the human beings we are, we are short-sighted, and we live for the temporal. Our senses struggle to invest for the eternal. We preach about exchanging temporal currency for that of eternal value and it is usually limited to our cash and assets. And even in this we are conflicted. Do we really know how to lay up treasure in heaven?

God prompted and told me that I had not given up anything. I merely exchanged it for the joy and peace that I am experiencing. The joy and peace are not because the circumstances of my life are perfect in Cambodia, but I experienced them nevertheless in spite of the challenges surrounding me.

Jesus knew that there would be chaos and fear. COVID-19 is changing the world and I do not think we will ever be able to go back to the "normal" we used to know, but following Jesus does not change. Now, more than ever, we need to fulfil our purpose as salt and light, to give the world hope and life. Jesus was the answer 2000 years ago and now, more than ever, the world needs His salvation. If you want to know how to live your life in this new era caused by the pandemic, why not





develop a close relationship with Jesus? Can you not trust the one Person who sacrificed His life for you? Are you prepared to follow when He tells you how?

LESSON 2

Know HOW To Follow

COVID-19 has shown that everything in the world is foolishness.

1 Corinthians 1:20, 21 and 25 says ²⁰ *Where is the wise person? Where is the teacher of the law? Where is the philosopher of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?* ²¹ *For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not know him, God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe.* ²⁵ *For the foolishness of God is wiser than human wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than human strength.'*

Man's manuals are no longer relevant, but the Bible still holds the truth. Do you need wisdom for this era? Why not read the Bible? Better still, study it. It is the blueprint. Stepping out in uncharted waters has drawn me closer to God. It has caused me to go on my knees to cry out to Him and to read His Word like never before. As I adjust to life in Cambodia, even some of the simplest things that I have taken for granted in Malaysia require prayer. Actively following Jesus requires faith yet in the same breath it will give us clarity and confidence. Are you still hesitant?

LESSON 3

Know WHAT To Follow

During Christmas 2020 and in February 2021 (which was my 1st year anniversary and my birthday month) I was extremely home-sick. I was longing to go home to Malaysia. I just missed everything Malaysia - the good, the bad, the ridiculous - but most of all I missed my family and friends. I missed my church, I missed you. It was during those moments that the tears flowed. I wept. Then I felt that God misses us too. Maybe, just maybe, my home-sickness was a fraction of the pangs that our Heavenly Father feels, to be separated from us, His children. He wants us back by His side in Heaven, our home, where we belong with Him. Therefore, Jesus would pay any price; no price was too high. Not even humiliation, suffering and death on the Cross would God allow to separate us from Him; all because of the Love of our Heavenly Father.

I think I have caught a glimpse of the depth of the Father's love for us. God has invited me into His inner chambers. Deep is our Daddy's love for us. My acceptance by God makes me righteous. I am held lovingly in the palms of His hands.

So, when God calls you, it is out of love. Step out. Do not confuse faith with foolishness. There is only obedience.

SABBATH REMINDS US OF WHO WE ARE

By Debbie Loh, PJN 3



Getting a Permanent Resident card or citizenship in a different country is not just about a change of passport and address. It is a shift into a whole new way of life inside that country's laws and unspoken rules.

For example, if you move to the United States, you will need to get used to driving on the right lane. If you move to the United Kingdom, you will need to be accustomed to having "dinner" at midday, and having an Oyster Card in your pocket for public transport.

The Sabbath an Affront to Restless Productivity

The Law of Moses given from Sinai marked a clean separation for Israel from their former life. Israel was called out of Egypt, from being a messy, disorganised mass of slaves to becoming a new nation belonging to the Creator of Heaven and Earth.

These laws would set up their national life—who they worshipped, how they worshipped, how they were to treat one another, how to live without getting decimated by disease—and mark them as a unique nation, God's nation.

One of the most insistent laws was the Sabbath, where God commanded Israel to rest.

Why was the Sabbath so significant?

Old Testament teacher Walter Brueggemann describes the life of slavery in Egypt to be a life of "restless productivity". The people of God had been slaves in a workaholic culture that knew no rest. Pharaoh ordered that they worked continuously, with increasing intensity. And if they asked for a holiday or time off, it was a sign of laziness, resulting in them being given even more work.

Life in Egypt was endless, mindless, restless productivity to satisfy Pharaoh's ambition to keep Egypt on top of the game as the superpower of the Ancient Near East.

(That does not sound too different from the kind of life we live today, does it?)

The command to rest through the Sabbath, which is one full day of setting aside one's work, was a radical shift that was counter-intuitive to what Israel, and the rest of the world then, was accustomed to.

The Sabbath was a day of worship and rest, where they would come away from their work to enjoy God and one another. It was a day they turned fully toward God and one another to just be.

They would not be defined by what they produced or achieved. They would be defined by their identity as God's Beloved.

The people of ancient Israel, before the time of Jesus, could not grasp this. They trampled on the Sabbaths. They ignored them, or made them items on their holy to-do list, without actually allowing the life of God to permeate them through.

The Lord of the Sabbath Reinstates Sabbath

Jesus Christ reinstated this ancient truth, as we see in the Gospel accounts. He, being the Lord of the Sabbath, said that,

"The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath."

Mark 2:27 (NIV)

The Sabbath was commanded not as a holy Key Performance Indicator (KPI) for you and me to tick off. Sabbath was commanded because humanity is so much more than the demands of what we do.

We are not defined by our careers, or our projects. We are not defined by our productivity and work-performance. But we are defined as God's Beloved.

On the Sabbath, and Christians do this on Sundays, we gather before God to worship Him and hang out with one another—to just be God's Beloved.

The Spirit of God writes His Laws on our Hearts

2000 years ago, on Pentecost, God fashioned a new nation, a new people—the church! And this time not by the giving of laws but by the giving of His Spirit.

Jeremiah 31:33 (NIV) foretells this event: *"This is the covenant I will make with the people of Israel after that time," declares the LORD. "I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people."*

Today, the Spirit enables, empowers us, the Jesus people, to be Sabbath people, people who know God and bask in Him.

Rest is a Provision Given by God, Not a Luxury to Earn

The word "rest" can conjure different feelings in our workaholic culture of meritocracy—but mostly of guilt. Undeserved rest is laziness, and deserved rest is a reward for hard work.

The biblical worldview shows us that resting is a crucial part of the rhythms of life. It is a basic necessity, a provision from God for His human creatures through His commands. It is not a reward to be earned.

If we think that rest is something to be earned or deserved, we have been hoodwinked! As the restored people of God, rest is given back to us as something rightfully ours.

As Walter Brueggemann points out through the Exodus storyline, the workaholic culture of the world takes pride in busyness, to the point of exhaustion. To be busy is to be important. Having "no time to rest" is to be in high demand. "Busyness" is a KPI of our worth in this world.

But is our productivity where we put our identity, security and trust?

What is Rest?

There are two ways our culture views rest. In the first, resting is merely a temporary shutdown for the sake of better work productivity. **Rest is for the sake of work**—to work better. Rest is for recovering from the wounds of the battlegrounds of work and when we are done, we leap straight into the fighting ring again.

In the second, resting is an extravagant feast after a long marathon of endless, punishing work. Resting is that big fat carrot that the horse is pursuing. In this view, resting is the reason for work—**we work for the sake of rest**.

For the Christian, rest is for the sake of God. Work is also for the sake of God. We worship God in both rest and work. **Rest and work are for the sake of God.**

Sabbath Rest

Resting is a daily activity. We rest while we nap, take breaks or sleep throughout the week.

The Sabbath rest is one where we as God's children firmly set aside a day in the week to worship God, soak in His Word and fellowship with our brothers and sisters in Christ - to be turned toward God and anchored in Him and His people once again.

Many of us have often felt the tug in our heart to rest, and spend time with God. It is right for us not to silence it with more productivity, out of the guilt that stems from the extreme meritocracy of the world that requires us to earn our Sabbath. Instead, we need to heed the voice of the Spirit who has written God's way into our hearts.

"Let us heed the Sabbath. For Sabbath reminds us of who we are — God's people."

Reflections were prompted by the writings of **Walter Brueggemann (Sabbath as Resistance)**, **Marva Dawn (Keeping the Sabbath Wholly)** and **Eugene Peterson (The Contemplative Pastor)**.

Scripture references:
Deuteronomy 5:12-15, Jeremiah 31:33, Mark 2:27, Acts 2:1-4

LET GO & LET GOD

By Sarah Lye, PJS2



We are still going through the Covid-19 pandemic, and we have been told that the lockdown of the country will continue until the situation improves, or when more than 80 percent of the population have been vaccinated. We do not know how much longer this lockdown will continue as the number of Covid-19 cases is still very high – at this point of writing, it is up to 9,000-10,000 per day! How much more we need God's grace as we mourn the death of our beloved Lead Pastor for the Tamil Congregation, Pastor Ravi. It is a sombre reminder of these tough times.

How then can we as Christians respond to such unprecedented situations? It is not going to be easy as it will be a long journey to walk in faith and trust in God's goodness, mercy and grace for our lives as we journey with Him.

There are 7Cs that we can appropriate for our lives:

Commit everything to God.

We should commit our lives, our hearts, our plans, our desires, and everything to Almighty God. This includes our work, our ministry, our family and church - we are supposed to commit them to the Lord! What more our beloved nation, we trust

in God's sovereignty that He will take our country out from this pandemic in His time.

Psalm 37:5,6: says *"Commit your way to the Lord; trust in him and he will do this: He will make your righteous reward shine like the dawn, your vindication like the noonday sun."*

Committed to God – be fully committed to God in your walk.

Do not be entangled by the snares of the evil one or his temptations but walk wisely. **Galatians 5:1** says *"Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage"*

(KJV). This means that we are not to hold back anything from God – not even our shame, our sins and our reproach, but leave them at the foot of the Cross. For Jesus has paid the price for all of us. So what we need to do is to stay committed to God, stay connected closely with Him and not wander away or be distracted by world's temptations.

3 Cast your cares on God.

We can surrender all of our worries, cares, disappointments, pain, frustrations, needs and sorrows to our Abba Father who

cares for us. **1 Peter 5: 7** notes “*Cast all your anxiety on Him because He cares for you*”. Do not carry the weight of burdens but have a simple faith in this awesome God!

4 Concentrate on God.

Fix our eyes on God. Focus on God and not on the temporal things around us that do not last. Do not waver in our faith but trust in God. Seek Him earnestly and He

will never leave us nor forsake us. **Proverbs 3: 5,6** says “*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*”

5 Control your thoughts.

Be careful about what you are thinking. It is easy to read negative news but if you also think negatively, you will draw negative strength to yourself. The Bible emphasizes on thinking the right thoughts. **Philippians 4:8,9** says “*Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is*

lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.” So when you control your thoughts, you are keeping them in the right position instead of allowing the negative thoughts to control you!

6 Control your tongue.

The moment you let negative or provoking words come from your mouth, they will do more damage than good. Moreover, the Bible in **Luke 6:45** says “*A good man brings good things out of the*

good stored up in his heart, and an evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in his heart. For the mouth speaks what the heart is full of”. Hence, we need to be careful with what we say or confess!

7 Control your actions.

Do the right thing in the eyes of God. Do what honours God for we are to be more like Christ each day. **Exodus 15:26** says “*He said, “If you listen carefully to the Lord your God and do what is right in his eyes, if you pay attention to his commands and keep all his decrees, I will not bring on you any of the diseases I brought on the Egyptians, for I am the Lord, who heals you.”*”

Deuteronomy 12:28 says “*Be careful to obey all these regulations I am giving you, so that it may always go well with you and your children after you, because you will be doing what is good and right in the eyes of the Lord your God.*” When we do the right things in the eyes of God, we honour Him and He will honour us back in due time. **Psalms 37:5** says “*Commit your way to the Lord, trust in Him also*”.

How then do we let go and let God?

1. Realise that you are human and not a super-hero. God is the SUPER-HERO and He deserves all the praise for all the works that He is doing, He has done and the future works that He will be doing.
2. Submit yourself to God. **James 4:7** says “*Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.*”
3. Allow the Word of God to renew our mind and do not be conformed to the patterns of this world. **Romans 12:2** says “*Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.*” Make room for the Holy Spirit to minister and speak to us.
4. Pray and trust God that He will work on our behalf even if we cannot see the light at the end of the tunnel. God is always at work although we may not see the results.
5. Obedience. Obey what the Lord says even when it may seem impossible. Have faith in God, for the battle belongs to God. God is our Commander-in-Chief. We are to follow what He says and obey, for obedience is better than sacrifice. **1 Samuel 15:22** says “*But Samuel replied: “Does the Lord delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as much as in obeying the Lord? To obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed is better than the fat of rams.”*”

In conclusion, as we fix our gaze upon the Lord each day and be renewed in our faith daily, we learn to let go and let God reign in our situations even when we are in the most challenging times. The moment He instructs us, we need to fully obey Him and He will make our paths straight as we submit to Him in all our ways.



HOW “Safe” IS SAVING GRACE?

By Alex Tung, PJN

PART 2

Change of Mind That Results in Change of Action

In the previous article of this series, we discussed how God’s grace – a unique and distinguishing element of Christianity – is being radicalised. Through the hyper-grace fallacy, the Christian concept of grace has been stretched to an extreme end by proponents of antinomianism. As a result, congregations are drawn away from living repentant lives and instead deceptively taught that once they accept Christ and become a Christian, they no longer need to obey any laws and can live wholly unrepentant sinful lives and still be assured of their salvation.

The previous article also left us with this dilemma:

*“My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me.
I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one will snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; **no one can snatch them out of my Father’s hand.** I and the Father are one.”*

John 10:27-30

*“**It is impossible** for those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, who have shared in the Holy Spirit, who have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the coming age and who have fallen away, **to be brought back to repentance.**”*

Hebrews 6:4-6a

On one hand, John 10:27-30 claims that once we have accepted Christ and follow Him that we will never perish and that no one can snatch us out from God’s protection, but on the other hand Hebrews 6:4-6a suggests that if we fall back into sin after we have been enlightened through Christ, that it would be impossible for us to be brought back to repentance.

Having debunked the hyper-grace doctrine as an unbiblical interpretation of grace, we can appreciate that grace does not absolve us from obeying His laws – but would that mean that we would need to live perfectly repentant lives in order to retain our salvation? Is it possible that grace alone is insufficient to guarantee our salvation – or is this not even a valid question?

Before we consider whether grace guarantees our salvation or whether our salvation can be forfeited, it is first important to understand what repentance truly means.

More Than Turning from Sin

The generic understanding of the word “repentance” comes from the Greek word “metanoia” which translates to English as “turning away from sin”. Whilst Christians generally equate their understanding of repentance to simply mean turning away from sin, the bible actually defines repentance differently. According to the bible, the accurate definition of repentance is to “change one’s mind” – and not a generic change of mind, but rather specifically a change of mind in how we recognise Christ. It is on this biblical definition of repentance that our salvation is grounded on.

In the Book of Acts, Luke records as follows:

*“Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Messiah.” When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, “Brothers, what shall we do?” Peter replied, “**Repent** and be baptized, every one of you, **in the name of Jesus Christ** for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.*

Acts 2:36-38

***Repent, then, and turn to God,** so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord, and that he may send the Messiah, who has been appointed for you—even Jesus.*

Acts 3:19-20

Notice how in these verses that Peter’s call is specifically for his audience to change their minds about Jesus (i.e. to repent) rather than merely turning away from sin (i.e. metanoia) as a means of salvation. There is an order here that Peter is sequencing: firstly, change your minds about Jesus

and accept Him as Lord (i.e. repent), and thereafter live a repentant life that is turned away from sin (i.e. metanoia).

(Repentance = Faith) > Metanoia

It would be helpful to understand repentance and faith as two sides of the same coin for they are inseparable. If a person is repentant, he would have changed his mind from rejecting Jesus to accepting Jesus; and having accepted Jesus as his Lord, he would have gone from being faithless to faith-full in Jesus. In contrast, it would be inaccurate to describe repentance and metanoia as being two sides of the same coin as these can, though unlikely, be separated – a person could (albeit unlikely) turn away from sin without necessarily changing his mind to accept Jesus as Lord. Metanoia is an inevitable by-product and an outward expression of repentance, not repentance itself.

In understanding that the true meaning of repentance is a change of one's mind about Jesus and placing one's faith in Him, unrepentance then is the opposite; more than merely continuing with a sin-ridden life, being unrepentant would mean that a person continues to refuse changing his mind about Jesus. Being unrepented means that he opts to ceaselessly reject Him. This incessant stubbornness and continual rejection of Jesus would eventually incur God's wrath, as explained by Paul in the Book of Romans:

*But **because of your stubbornness and your unrepentant heart, you are storing up wrath against yourself for the day of God's wrath**, when his righteous judgment will be revealed. God "will repay each person according to what they have done." To those who by persistence in doing good seek glory, honour and immortality, he will give eternal life. But for **those who are self-seeking and who reject the truth and follow evil, there will be wrath and anger***

Romans 2:5-8

For this reason, when Jesus says to "repent for the Kingdom of God is at hand", He does not necessarily mean that we are to turn away from sin in order to "qualify" for salvation. Rather, He means that we are to change our minds about Him, accepting Him as Lord and putting our faith in Him, as a means of salvation. With this understanding of what Jesus means when He calls for repentance, consider these verses:

*In those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the wilderness of Judea 2 and saying, "**Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.**"*

Matthew 3:1-2

*From that time on Jesus began to preach, "**Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.**"*

Matthew 4:17

*After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. "The time has come," he said. "**The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!**"*

Mark 1:14-15

Saved by Grace, Not by Deed

On this biblical understanding of repentance, we can now appreciate how repentance is an unavoidable prerequisite to salvation – a person cannot be saved by Jesus if he does not first change his mind and recognise Jesus as Lord. That said, it is equally vital to also recognise that repentance is not something we do in order to earn our salvation. No one can repent and be saved unless God first offers that salvation; our ability to repent is made possible only because it was preceded by an offer of salvation from God.

*"**No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws them**, and I will raise them up at the last day.*

John 6:44

This extension of God's offer for salvation and repentance is the prime expression of God's grace – and it is through this grace we are saved. Without changing our minds about Jesus and had we not elected to put our faith in Him, we may turn away from sin (metanoia) as much as we want and still remain unsaved, unrighteous and unjustified. Our salvation is made possible only by faith (via repentance) and not by our action of turning away from sin (metanoia).

Justificatio Sola Fide

Of the Protestant Reformation's five foundational guiding principles (i.e. the five solas), the principle of sola fide, or "by faith alone", asserts this point exactly. Sola fide confirms that good work alone is not a prerequisite for salvation; rather it emphasises that it is our faith and faith alone (and not our deeds) that gives us our salvation. The price to be made right of our transgressions and to be made just by God can only be fully fulfilled by our faith once we are in acceptance of God's grace – which He offers to us through repentance.

In Paul's letter to the Ephesians, Paul sums up God's work for each person's reconciliation to Him succinctly. In Ephesians 2:8-9, Paul makes two things

clear – firstly that we are saved through our faith and not by any works we have done, and secondly that our salvation through faith is only made possible by God’s grace which He gifts to us.

*For **it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— not by works**, so that no one can boast.*

Ephesians 2:8-9

Can I “Lose” My Salvation?

In considering whether a person can “lose” his salvation, we need to start with forming the question correctly. Unlike things like keys, gadgets or other tangible items which we can misplace (and therefore, “lose” them), salvation is intangible and cannot be misplaced in that same way. Bearing in mind that salvation is a gift from God (which is offered to us freely and which we cannot earn but only accept through our choosing to have faith in Him), the only way salvation can be taken away from us is if it is revoked by the same God who offers it.

On this note, let us consider what the bible has to say on whether or not God could or would rescind His promise of salvation:

*For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that **whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life**. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. **Whoever believes in him is not condemned**, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because they have not believed in the name of God’s one and only Son.*

John 3:16-18

*As far as the gospel is concerned, they are enemies for your sake; but as far as election is concerned, they are loved on account of the patriarchs, **for God’s gifts and his call are irrevocable**.*

Romans 11:28-29

Evidently where God had promised us eternal life, it is a promise of eternity and would not be annulled. As such, once a person has repented and received God’s grace and salvation, the only way he would “lose” his salvation is if God withdraws His offer, breaks His promise and revokes

His guarantee. And given that this will not happen, we can therefore be assured that as Christians our salvation cannot be lost.

*For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, **nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.***

Romans 8:38-39

The “Once Saved, Always Saved” Doctrine

Does this mean that since God’s promised salvation is irrevocable, that we are free to do as we please and still be guaranteed of our redemption? No, it does not – notwithstanding that biblical evidence assures us that God’s promise for salvation will not be revoked, it does not mean that our salvation is guaranteed regardless of how we live our lives (that would be hyper-grace and antinomianism right there). Having the assurance that God will keep His promise of salvation and eternal life to all who repent does not absolve us from keeping to His laws and living a life that is reflective of our repentant state.

To be sure, the “once saved, always saved” doctrine (OSAS) does have its merit, but whether or not it is wholly valid and biblical depends largely on how we define it. In some definitions, OSAS is interpreted as providing humanity a license to sin whilst remaining fully assured of their salvation – to that extent, their doctrine of OSAS is faulty and unbiblical. Still, others understand OSAS to mean that if a person has truly repented, then even if he does sin in his repentant state, God’s grace remains sufficient to assure him of his salvation. On this latter understanding of OSAS, it is starting to look more like the “Perseverance of The Saints” doctrine (POTS). It seems that the clincher of whether or not a person’s salvation remains assured when he sins after accepting grace is predicated upon the person’s state of repentance.

It is thus clear that whether or not a person “loses” his salvation is not dependent on whether or not he continues to sin after he has been saved. Being saved (or rather, being justified by God) is only the first part to his assurance of salvation – how he was saved and what he does after being saved (which may seem like two separate questions but are actually the same) also determine his continued redemption.

There remains more to unpack between the two doctrines of OSAS and POTS in order to appreciate how true repentance plays a role in guaranteeing our salvation. This, as well as the question of how one should live having been saved by grace, will be considered in Part Three of this article in the next issue of Floodgates.

¹The five solas of the Protestant Reformation are (i) *sola scriptura* (“scripture alone”); (ii) *sola fide* (“faith alone”); (iii) *sola gratia* (“grace alone”); (iv) *solus Christus* (“Christ alone”); and (v) *solī Deo gloria* (“glory to God alone”)

EMBRACING JOY AMIDST THE PANDEMIC

By Pastor Dato' Dr Daniel Ho, Founding Senior Pastor

The pandemic has certainly and unexpectedly hampered us from gathering for in-person meetings in church for quite an unprecedented period. This inability to meet face-to-face has put a huge dampener on our hearts and spirits. We are social beings made by God for personal relationships and human interactions. Ultimately, it is in relating to one another at a personal level that gives meaning, value, worth and fulfilment in life.

In light of the challenges of being hemmed in and isolated from one another, how can we bridge the gap so that we remain in touch and human? How can we ensure that we do not allow such isolation and deprivation to produce in us loneliness and weariness of the soul? If we do not handle this well, this can sometimes degenerate into despair, despondency and depression if we are not careful. What are some things we can all

encourage one another daily, as long as it is called Today, so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness." We are told to make it an everyday habit and to do it now, today, and not tomorrow or the day after.

Moreover, we are also warned here about sin's deceitfulness. Sin has a way of turning us inwards, in self-absorption, where we sometimes say to ourselves that nobody cares for me or loves me. That even God has forgotten about me or abandoned me. This is where sin has subtly deceived us! We must break out from such self-preoccupation and go out to relate and interact with others. Go and encourage at least one person daily if possible. The word "encourage", which derives originally from French, comes from "en" and "courage" and it is "to give or put in courage". It is to comfort or put strength

This global pandemic has truly disrupted and redefined our lives and ushered in a new reality. Life will probably not return to where we were before. More than a new normal, this new reality is an ever-changing landscape which we will have to get used to. For example, the way this Covid virus and its variants are evolving these days will become endemic in society, much like the other flu virus, and we will just have to live with it and deal with it as we go along. Possibly a booster jab whenever we need much like the flu jab.

"But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called Today, so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness."

Hebrews 3:13

do to help one another and lift up our hearts and spirits?

Firstly, the need to be proactive to reach out and encourage one another. Do not wait for someone else to come alongside you to encourage you but you take the first initiative. In fact, **Hebrews 3:13** says, "*But*

into someone else. And when we do that, we become encouraged ourselves in the process. That is the power of encouragement! The benefits are mutual.

These days, I try to call up at least one person daily to share and to encourage each other and then to pray

together at the end. Like this pastor I called up the other day who just had his Covid vaccination and had slight unusual swelling in his eyes. The call was a divine appointment from God and that prayer time together was sheer joy for me. On another day, it was a call with a couple in the United Kingdom and another in the United States. We were unbelievably blessed with these couples' time earlier with us in DUMC. How delightful it was to share and pray for one another! And the amazing bonus is that with the technology today we can call one another anywhere in the world for free. Let us all together make it a daily habit and the blessings all round will be unbelievable.

Secondly, it is to show love and compassion to one another. The Bible tells us: *"This is what the LORD Almighty says: 'Administer true justice; show mercy and compassion to one another..."* (Zechariah 7:9). We are not only to administer true justice, to be doing all that is just, right and fair, but also to show mercy and compassion. Compassion is a distinctively Christian word because in Scripture we see God revealing Himself in this manner: *"Yet the LORD longs to be gracious to you; he rises to show you compassion. For the LORD is a God of justice. Blessed are all who wait for him!"* (Isaiah 30:18). We see this

reflected in Jesus as well: *"When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd"* (Matthew 9:36). And Apostle Paul proclaims, *"Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort..."* (2 Corinthians 1:3).

Compassion is more than empathy. It is not just sympathy but an



action word. It is both an understanding of the person's pain or struggle and a desire to somehow alleviate that pain or struggle. Right now, many are going through much heartache and pain in this pandemic. There have been massive job losses, pay cuts and businesses shuttered or struggling to survive resulting in much poverty and hardship.

Never in the history of Malaysia would we ever imagine that a day would come when we will witness the "white flag movement" across our nation. The

deprivation and poverty is real. We may sometimes think that it has been hard on us. But there are many out there who are much worse off than we are. People are genuinely struggling and suffering from a lack of food. It is so good to see fellow Malaysians from all backgrounds rallying together to help one another.

Many churches across the country are likewise doing that. Besides DUMC's church-wide efforts, many individuals and cell groups in DUMC are quietly doing that too on their own. This is truly commendable. Lately, DUMC is offering free food daily in Dream Centre for the community. And to see people of all races and from all walks of life, including foreign workers, coming by to collect the ready-packed food and bottled water and to be able to pray for some of these is such a blessing, privilege and joy. May we all continue to show compassion and the love of Jesus to people all around us.

Thirdly and finally, learning to give thanks at all times. Apostle Paul instructs us *"to give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus"* (1 Thessalonians 5:18). It is not to give thanks for all circumstances but in all circumstances. We do not give thanks for the evil or

wrong that has created the circumstances but we can still give thanks in spite of these circumstances. God is in control and He is dealing with our heart and moulding us with a right attitude and a healthy perspective in life in spite of the unfortunate things that might have happened.

Indeed, there are countless things to give thanks to God for: our life, health, strength, family, friends, relationships, the cell group, church, neighbours and neighbourhood and the nation. Also, for God's amazing provision and protection. A heart of gratitude and thanksgiving produces a joyful demeanour and a healthy and positive attitude regarding life and well-being. More than that, when we are thankful, we rub off on one another that thankful spirit and joy as well. Thankfulness and joy are indeed contagious. Also, you will never find someone who is thankful grumpy and grouchy. So, let us all do it together *"for the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit"* (Romans 14:17).

When we do these three things, we would have embraced joy in the midst of this pandemic and also would have transmitted a joyful spirit to others as well. Let us infect one another with joy in these challenging days and time.

A heart of gratitude and thanksgiving produces a joyful demeanour and a healthy and positive attitude regarding life and well-being.



New Life Care Centre - Trusting In Our God Of The Impossible

Compiled by Lynn Foo, Floodgates writer

As Lighthouse CG from PJN4 started praying and seeking God for an IMPACT Project to embark upon, they soon came to shortlist a few possibilities. With the thought to go somewhere they had never been, and to do something they had never done before, and led by the Holy Spirit, they finally came to a decision with New Life Care Centre in Port Dickson.

New Life Care Centre (NLCC) was founded in 2007 by Reverend Paul and Reverend Katherine. The centre is currently home to 33 children and youths ranging from ages 4 to 17. Most come from dysfunctional families where the parents - often single and poor - are unable to provide an environment that could nurture these children well. It is the vision of NLCC that these children grow up to be valuable assets to society whilst having a firm grasp of the gospel.

After conversations and discussions with NLCC, Lighthouse CG identified 2 key needs. The first was that the girls' hostel needed repairing, maintenance and a new coat of paint. The roof was leaking and the overall physical state of the building would benefit from some renovation. The second area was in character-building and educational training for the children and youths.

As they began to seek quotations for the repair works, their 'lion' now came in the form of RM26,000 that needed to be raised. It was a big and seemingly impossible amount! It was during this time that another CG (God Dreamer from PJN6) came in to also work on this project. The fund-raising started in June 2021, and at the time of writing (in about 1 month), they have successfully raised RM 21,000. They truly experienced God moving and working in their midst as they put their trust and faith in God, the Provider!



God also placed different people who were skilled in different areas to slowly but surely rise up to fill any gaps - such as accountants, trainers, educators and others.

As word of their project got around, another CG, Sycamore Tree from PJN1, also joined hands to run the educational and Bible-based character-building training. They have since begun their first introductory session with the children at NLCC which was filled with much enthusiasm, energy and laughter.

As Yew Yi (the CG leader of Lighthouse) reflects on this project, he truly saw the hand of God moving through all that they were doing. As they relied on His wisdom, God brought in resources and talents that were humanly impossible. Yew Yi's key takeaway is that though fear is real, it is only through uncertainties that one's faith can be built. He shares how he was encouraged as he saw God working through each cell member in their own personal lives as they experienced the faith-stretching for themselves, discovering the privilege of serving together and taking ownership of the project.

HE HAS NOT FORGOTTEN YOU

By Toh Joon Sim, PJN5

“¹⁵ Can a mother forget the baby at her breast and have no compassion on the child she has borne? Though she may forget, I will not forget you!¹⁶ See, I have engraved you on the palms of my hands; your walls are ever before me.”

Isaiah 49:15-16

Genesis, the Book of Beginnings. I have read this book in the Bible many times, but the narratives within had been just stories of long-forgotten people and nations, totally unrelated to me and my life. However, through the systematic four-fold learning approach of the Bible Study Fellowship (BSF), the book of Genesis has now become much more than that for me. The book of Genesis has become a lifeline for me of sorts during one of the darkest and most depressing seasons of my adult life. Let me tell you my story...

My challenge began well before the Covid-19 global pandemic hit our Malaysian shores. It was after GE-14 when the new government had to address the country's ailments by cutting back and reassessing many of the old government-funded projects, in some of which my former company had stakes. As a result, my company started retrenchment exercises from the third quarter of 2018. I survived the monthly retrenchments for over a year, but the news finally came for me that I would be one of the retrenchment candidates in September 2019. Then, in 2020, the Covid-19 pandemic hit Malaysia and everything came to almost a grinding halt and many people lost their livelihoods in the lockdowns. And the rest is pretty much history.

Back in 2019, I was studying the Book of Acts with BSF, and God used the lessons to prepare me for the impending retrenchment

and assured me that He would be with me. At the end of that study year in May 2020, I shared with the BSF ladies during Share Night that though I was still jobless, with savings running low, and potentially faced with a forfeited mortgage, I was nonetheless still hopeful in an “Unstoppable God”. The Covid-19 situation after that did not improve, and the job market got even worse. There were many nights when I cried desperate tears, pleading with God for help, and questioning His love and care for me, wondering if I had been forgotten by God. My faith and hope in Him wavered and seemed like tipping over many times, especially when the rejection letters came repeatedly, which made me almost despair of life itself. But the study of Genesis helped me through 2020 and I made it into 2021. It kept my hope on Him, fragile as it may have been on many occasions during that period. Notwithstanding my lack of faith, the stories from the book became for me a lifeline which God the Master Weaver wove together, securely tying myself to Him, and God refusing to let go even when I at many times doubted His faithfulness and goodness.

During that period, many well-meaning brothers and sisters encouraged me to seek alternative work opportunities. I wrestled with God over this matter, but He remained silent throughout. It was one of the hardest periods I had ever gone through in all my adult life. I wrestled, I cried, I pleaded, seeking His direction on what to do. Was

I hearing Him or was I **not** hearing Him correctly? Had He forgotten me? Or was this a consequence of my sins of omission/ commission for which I was now being punished? Doubts and fears for my future plagued me regularly. I was depressed, helpless and restless. Having lived a mostly sheltered and affluent life before this period, being in lack was a very new experience to me and it was indeed an extremely bitter pill for me to swallow. Anyway, coming back to my study on Genesis, as we studied the lives of Noah, Abraham, Isaac and then Jacob, all that I seemed to hear from God was clearly **“WAIT and TRUST ME!”** Additionally, I also took heed of the patriarchs' wives not trying to “help God along” which could have resulted in complications, heartaches as well as some really messed-up circumstances! So, I learnt to rest, waited on Him and willed myself to let go and let God...

Through the years of Bible study with BSF, I have had the privilege of learning and experiencing at first-hand the reality of His unchanging attributes as a good and faithful Father and a Promise-Keeper. His never-changing character learned through the pages of the Bible began to sink into my conscious mind and into my heart. Through these truths about Him, the storms in my heart calmed and my hope gradually found its anchor in His Promises and eventually He kept my doubts at bay. I also began praying His words and promises into my dire jobless situation, which in turn changed my outlook

*He Has Not
Forgotten You*

to perceiving things in a more 'heavenly' perspective. I was no longer on a wild roller-coaster ride caused by my fluctuating feelings!

Finally, in late January 2021, a job offer came through and I rejoined the work force. Sixteen months had gone by and I was absolutely grateful that I was still alive, with a roof over my head and more importantly with a stronger faith grounded in God's unchanging attributes and promises. I also noticed a calmer disposition in me and a deeper belief in Whom I trusted. I

can also testify to one of the last few lessons in Genesis (Gen 47, BSF Lesson No.28) where we learned that there were indeed blessings in scarcity and loss. And what would these "blessings" be, one may inquire? Well, the period of scarcity (from having no income nor any government support)

and loss (having lost my means of livelihood, for such a long period) helped remove my many life-excesses, misplaced priorities, and most importantly the very strong-willed and stubborn reliance on self, replacing them with what truly matters and is important in life: life everlasting with our amazing Creator, a life lived dependent upon a good and faithful God. He is a personal God who pursues me relentlessly despite my many flaws, so that I can live a fruitful life in trust, surrender and dependence on Him who will never forget me, fail me or let me go!

Truly, it is not by our own might nor by our strength that we shall prevail and succeed in life, but it is the Lord who will give us success in all that we undertake.

As I resumed my working life in early 2021, fear of not being able to deliver my work responsibilities weighed heavily on my shoulders. But the wise and gentle Holy Spirit reminded me of the real source of my abilities. Truly, it is not by our own might nor by our strength that we shall prevail and succeed in life, but it is the Lord who will give us success in all that we undertake. This fact has made me acutely aware of my need to abide in Him as I begin a new chapter of my life. To remain rooted in Him, the true Vine and Source of all my abilities, wisdom

and capabilities to carry out my work responsibilities well. I am humbled by all that He has taught me in this past year and a bit. There is no longer the pride and need to out-perform and compete with others to get ahead in the rat race. There is only the one life He gave me to

serve Him for the benefit of others as well as for His glory and good pleasure. Yes, life is indeed uncertain, unfair and often 'throws lemons' at us, but I have seen God's firm and strong hands on my life's journey, and I anticipate that He will still be there for me, ahead of me in the future too, and therefore I can confidently sing of His faithfulness and love all the days of my life! Where He goes, I will follow indeed. Amen!

THE POWERFUL COMBINATION

By Khoo Seng Kiong, PJN4



I have been married to a very capable wife for 17 years now and God has blessed us with three amazing kids.

The early part of our marriage had its ups and downs like most marriages. No one taught me how to become a good husband or a good father. I used common sense and tried to figure out how I could get better to build this special family. As I built mileage on my marriage and fatherhood, I needed to make a choice. I could continue using common sense and try navigating family life on my own and just take them to church every weekend - "business as usual", doing what I had been doing earlier. OR I could jump-start my marriage and fatherhood by being more involved in the church. I chose the path to jump-start. I am thankful that DUMC became a catalyst by giving me the much-needed boost in both my Christian walk and my family life. In 2010, Senior Pastor Chris Kam started "Father's Club" to help us fathers grow in the area of effective fathering. That was such an

amazing vision from our Senior Pastor. The goal was to put together the imperfections of grandfathers, fathers or single men and merge them with the perfect Father, who is in heaven. That is a powerful combination. Father's Club has now evolved into Men Alive that we know today. That seed sprouted into many positive forms and impacted many lives including mine. One of the many things I took away from Father's Club was the concept of a Mentoring Accountability Group (MAG in short).

A MAG is not about coming together and doing bible study week-in, week-out. It is about a group of men coming together for the common objective of keeping each other accountable and encouraged. Who says men are quiet? Put a group of golfing buddies or football fans together and see the passion of their discussion! Likewise, putting a group of like-minded men with Christ in the centre brings about good fruits. Being in a MAG allowed me to grow deeper in the Lord with my fellow brothers and, like iron sharpening



iron, honing our skills to be better fathers and husbands. Besides that, I know I can count on my MAG, who can and will pray alongside me in my times of trouble. One example I can think of was Father's Day in 2018. My wife had delivered our third child and my baby son had so many challenges after birth. I recall sitting beside the incubator on Father's Day watching my son crying non-stop. I felt so helpless and my tears were flowing as well. There was only one thing I could do, which was to pray and ask for prayer support. My CG and my MAG rallied in prayer.

After 100 days, we could celebrate some milestones and miracles. We then had a celebration with the family, my CG and my MAG. Jason and Winslow represented my MAG to celebrate the breakthrough.

Time flies and this year we celebrated our 10 years anniversary as a MAG together.

We had a good time catching up and celebrating the birthdays of two of our members at the same time.

It has been an amazing journey with my group of like-minded brothers and I look forward to the many more years the Lord has in store for us.



It is written in **Psalms 133:1**, "*How good and pleasant it is when God's people live together in unity. And it is so true!*"

The impact of DUMC and my MAG allowed me to mature in the Lord in an amazing way. I could personally feel God's hand upon the lives of me and my family as I allowed God to do His amazing work. Over the years I have been given the responsibility to lead a CG and recently the honour to be a Zone Leader. The dynamics of my family life improved by leaps and bounds with Christ being in the centre. We have our family altar every night where we will huddle together as a family to sing praises, share our devotionals and pray together. The decision not to go down the path of "business as usual" was certainly the right one and this required obedience and intentionality, wanting to be a better father.

Thank you DUMC, and thank you Senior Pastor Chris Kam for your passion and vision to see MEN being made Alive in Christ. To God be all glory, honour and praise. Thank you.



WALKING WITH MEN OF GOD

By Paul Sebastian, PJN4

I first came to DUMC in 2001 after God had spoken to me during a work trip that "If you want to grow, you must go". "Go" meant to leave the comfort zone of my home church and friends. I was torn between obeying God and my own comfort. Yet that urging was so strong, I had to heed it. The very moment I made the decision, I knew I needed to look for a church. It took me about six to nine months of church-hopping before I found where I belonged - in a DUMC Young Adults cell group.

Today, it has been nearly twenty years since I came to DUMC and the journey has been a great learning journey in the Cell Group, Dew Crew, Children's Church, MenAlive, and the men who have walked with me in confusing times, in difficult times and in good times. They have taught me what it is to be a Christian man, husband, son and father. One key thing I have learned is that a man becomes a man when he takes responsibility for himself and those around him. I have learned to be firm in leading with peace and patience, when times are difficult, and also allow others to lead according to their own pace.

I thank God for the men who walked with me, carved out time from their own lives to meet with me weekly, being real yet having fun at the same time. They taught me that knowing the Word of God is important, but even more important is knowing the God of the Word. I have learned how to endure and to be patient with myself. Learning to be obedient to God, and having them walk alongside me through difficult times when I had health issues, was one of the most difficult things to do.

During that difficult time, it was hard to

accept that there was no known cure for my health condition. It seemed very final. My condition affected me not just on the skin and in my joints but also in my self-esteem and image. It mattered to me when people gave the "look". It led me to be a recluse during the worst periods of my condition so that I could avoid being questioned by people who meant well. I knew I needed help so that I could get out of it.

My ever-supportive wife encouraged me to seek help from Pastor Chris. He carved out time to speak with me once a month over six months, and from there I received the help that I needed and encouragement to join the Men's Ministry. I knew I could not be a recluse and sit back in church. I knew that I needed to be in community and to be in service despite the circumstances.

The community or ministry that God led me to serve in is a very important place to "work out" my salvation. It helps me process the daily living in His Word. I recognise we need this community called the church to not only receive the support we need, but to also to give the support others need, and we cannot do this by our own strength. In all the interactions with my brothers, I have grown to realise that we all need God to empower our relationships with one another and with the community that we reach out to. God works in our lives when we are truly dependent on Him. As Pastor Chris regularly quotes 'it takes a village to raise a child', I would also say it takes a village to keep building our lives upon God's love and firm foundation so that we will not be shaken.



THE LORD'S WORK AND HIS TIMING

By Dorcas Teoh, PJS2

15 May 2021: The testimony that I am going to share is about my in-laws and what our Lord has been doing in their midst.

Those who know your name trust in you, for you, Lord, have never forsaken those who seek you. Sing the praises of the Lord, enthroned in Zion; proclaim among the nations what he has done.

Psalm 9:10-11

My father-in-law is 94 years old and he is a patient who started dialysis two years ago.

Some time at the end of April, my father-in-law became weak. During one of our dinners with them, my mother-in-law complained that my father-in-law had been sleeping in during the day, getting up early in the morning at about 2am and had been waking her up. After dinner, as usual, we prayed for him, asking God to let him sleep through the night. After we prayed, we left the house. A few days later, during my morning devotion, I felt that I should find out whether my father-in-law had been sleeping well. However, I did not dare to ask, so I asked my husband, Beng Hock, to call his mom. After a couple days, he told me that his dad had been sleeping well. I was so happy, I thought, "God you are working, and you wanted me to know."

The following week, my father-in-law started to complain about having pain in his lower back; he could not move on his own because he was weak. My mother-in-law had to get different people to go to their house to help turn, or shift my father-in-law. Over that week, many people were called to help: my husband, sisters-in-law and even my children. I was busy during that time, so I visited him only on Saturday, 8 May. I asked whether he was in pain, he told me that he was. Then, I laid hands and prayed. This time, I felt that I needed to pray in Hokkien. So, I mustered up my courage to pray in Hokkien, asking Jesus to remove his pain. After praying, as

usual, I did not dare to ask how he was, even when I thought that I should. I saw my father-in-law close his eyes tightly, trying to sleep, so I left. My husband went to visit them after that. That morning, he went to the hospital to get some medication for his dad's back pain. When he wanted to put on the medicated patch for his dad, his dad told him, "No need." He explained that he was not in pain anymore. My mother-in-law then told Beng Hock, "Dorcas came earlier, laid hands and asked Jesus to take away the pain, and Jesus took away the pain." That afternoon when Beng Hock told me, I was so thrilled. I shared with my Cell Group (CG), telling them that we would be going to visit them the next day to celebrate Mother's Day. We asked them to pray for God to lead us. Although I knew He was working, I did not know what to expect or what we should be doing. The feeling was like knowing that He is working, but wondering how we should work with Him.

The next day, we went over to my in-law's. After dinner, I was anticipating and asking God in my heart, "Are you going to put the words in my mouth or do I have to figure out what to say?" Then, I started to ask my father-in-law whether he was in pain. He said that he was not. "Do you know that Jesus took away your pain?" I asked. He replied, "Yes." I then asked whether he remembered saying the sinner's prayer. He has actually said the sinner's prayer twice. The

first time was in the Chinese church. However, after going to church that one time, my mother-in-law was upset with him and did not allow him to go to church. As a result, he has not been there since. The second time was led by Beng Hock. However, both times after the sinner's prayer, everything remained the same. Therefore, we were not sure about his salvation. At that time, we had been asking God about it. That evening before we went, my CG member, Amy, prophesized and sent me the WhatsApp message below:

Hi Dorcas, the Lord gave me a word for you and Beng Hock about his father and about you. He said salvation for your father-in-law is at hand. He said, "I broke through his heart of stone with my healing. I healed more than just his pain. I healed his heart." The Lord says to you to be bold and speak salvation unto him. He also said that now is the time to step boldly into His power. He wants all His children to go out and minister. Lay hands on the sick, speak words of knowledge and prophecy. Speak words of salvation. Take up the mantle of power He has given his church on the earth. Take up the authority He gave you when He overcame death on the cross. Go forth and do great things for His glory.

After I reminded him of the sinner's prayer, I asked whether he knew that after that prayer he became a Christian and that he belonged to Jesus? He said, "Yes." Hallelujah! We were so happy, that we kept on talking without fear or "pantang". We told them that after he finished his journey on earth, he would go to heaven and we would all meet. He nodded his head, then we continued to share about what heaven was like according to the Bible, and they were both so excited. I became so bold that I asked my father-in-law, "Do you want to go?" He said "Yes." Then, I turned to my mother-in-law, "How about you, do you want to join us?" She said "Yes." Beng Hock took the opportunity to ask her whether she wanted to be a Christian. She smiled and pushed away his hand. Although she did not accept Jesus that night, I knew it is just a matter of time, His time. It had never been easy to share with my mother-in-law about Jesus, she used to just walk away, but on that day the atmosphere was different.

On Tuesday, I felt that the Holy Spirit wanted me to go and pray for my father-in-law before I headed to work. As I stepped into the house, I told my father-in-law that Jesus asked me to come and pray for him and he replied, "Jesus is so good." I wanted to just give thanks, but my mother-in-law came and asked me to pray for his right hand. She showed me the bruise on his arm, his whole arm was a purple-black color.

The dialysis port was on that hand. Before that, it was on his left hand, however, after some time, it got clogged up. Then they started to put a tube in his neck, that also got clogged up. They then started to use the right hand. It did not look good at all according to the doctor. I then prayed that the bruise would be gone in Jesus's name, and that this port would be good for dialysis. Two days later, the bruises were all gone, hallelujah! Praise the Lord!

Yesterday, I had a long chat with my mother-in-law. She told me that she has been thinking a lot and was very worried. She was worried about my father-in-law's decision, whether the rest of the children would be upset. Furthermore, when he passes on, if the funeral was conducted the Christian way, the rest of the children would be angry.

I know my God is working and I need to work with Him when He gives me the opportunity to join Him. I do not know what to expect regarding my brothers and sisters-in-law's reaction, I just have to surrender that to Him. Our God is good and faithful, His goodness is always running after me. For more than 25 years, I have been praying and hoping for their salvation, I cannot thank Him enough for what is unfolding. I will continue to pray and seek Him and

work with Him. I will exalt His name and give Him all glory and honour!

I know my God is working and I need to work with Him when He gives me the opportunity to join Him.



A TRANSFORMED LIFE

By Mabel Teo, KL

My new beginning 14 years ago was almost like the transformation of a caterpillar into a butterfly - initially with limited movement, then in total darkness, and eventually a breakthrough.

14 years ago, my arrogance, self-pity, lack of self-control and wilfulness led me to do things my own way. I left Singapore and sought my own self-adventure with no respect for the One above. I had a choice even though many had warned me against it. Because of my disobedience, I experienced painful separation yet I learned valuable lessons along the way. All along, when God looked at me, He would have shaken His head in disbelief. Amazingly, His grace continued, caring for me and protecting me from harm. When He finally knocked some sense into me, I relented. He redeemed what sin had destroyed. This time, I was to make an impact on others going the same way I did. He took my failure and turned it into something good. I then realised God was at work even when I was not aware of it.

This time around, this new beginning brought peace to me, and knowing that He was in control of the many challenges ahead of me made surrendering less risky.

This new beginning is different as it has brought reunion with my family. In this new beginning, God sees beauty through my ugliness. There is no judgement of my past; He is just being with me alongside my struggles. Only my God can do such a miracle to bring about a complete change in my life. Even in the midst of the chaotic pandemic, I see God's work in my life, making things possible, although I must confess, there were times of stress, anxiety and worry. God, what if?

Through His sovereign plan, my social visa was renewed for just RM100 after a year's expiry and I could legally return on 24 May, 2021. However, Malaysia's Covid cases spiked, and my compulsory quarantine increased from two to three weeks with the cost increasing too, from S\$2K to S\$3K. I was worried, but thankfully, it was provided for by my two supportive daughters, uncle and a generous friend.

My KL apartment is in the midst of being sold with even the co-owner having gone missing. But in the meantime, God has given me a tenant to help service my bank loan. My sister has offered her place while I wait for my two-room flexi-apartment to be ready in the second quarter of 2022.

God provided Uncle with a stay-in helper to cook and see to his daily needs. Online provisions and food ordering will not be a problem. I have embarked on teaching some students and an Orang Asli mother online. Most important of all, this new beginning brings a blessed joyful gift of a long-awaited grandson in June promoting me to Grandma-hood.

Although things may not work out the way I want, I declare God's will to be done, not mine. He has seen me through thus far, He will continue to do so. Being fearful and worried would show that I doubt His faithfulness and trust upon my life.

***In this new beginning,
God sees beauty through
my ugliness. There is no
judgement of my past;
He is just being with me
alongside my struggles.***

I leave now with fond memories of the many friendly Malaysians I have impacted and vice-versa. This is something Singaporeans rarely have the chance to experience. I am thankful that, despite of my inadequacies, I had the opportunity to serve with the Golden Club and the W2W Women's group and even teach the OA children at Carey Island. My most memorable event was the 2019 Christmas Choir.

I believe wherever God has placed me He has a greater and more wonderful plan for me as I continue to be obedient and be ready to fly high for His use. Our God is not only loving, trustworthy, and faithful (believe me!), but also powerful, on top of being an incredible God in Whom you can trust. I do not deserve eternal life. I do not deserve His unconditional love.

I do not even deserve His amazing grace. YET my Lord offers them to me and to anyone who goes to Him. Is He not a wonderful God?

DUMC CONGREGATIONS & MINISTRIES

CONGREGATIONS

ENGLISH

Pr Chris Kam
english@dumc.my

BAHASA MALAYSIA

Pr Eddy Marson
bahasa.malaysia@dumc.my

CHINESE

Pr Dr Ling Shui Nyuk
chinese@dumc.my

NEPALI

Adrin Sant
nepalese@dumc.my

MYANMAR

Pr Sarah Aye
myanmar@dumc.my

TAMIL

Sarah Krishnan
tamil@dumc.my

FILIPINO (Fellowship)

Peter Lim
filipino@dumc.my

YOUTH

CHILDREN'S CHURCH

Pr Jonathan Yeoh
children@dumc.my

NEXTGEN

Pr Terry Yeow (Teens)
nextgen@dumc.my

Pr Sara Leong (Campus)
nextgen@dumc.my

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS MINISTRY

Thomas & Cynthia Lim
ism@dumc.my

ADULTS

MEN ALIVE!

John E
men.alive@dumc.my

WOMEN2WOMEN

Stella Hoh
w2w@dumc.my

COMMUNITY

BREAKTHROUGH DRUG REHABILITATION CENTRE

Pr Samuel Krishnan
breakthrough.rehab@dumc.my

CITIZENS NETWORK FOR A BETTER MALAYSIA

cnbm@ces.org.my

EXCEL TUITION CLUB

Yuen Ting Ai
excel.tuition@ces.org.my

GOLDEN CLUB

Rupert Ling
general@ces.org.my

FOODBANK

Tan Hong Looi
foodbank@ces.org.my

S.T.A.R YOUTH (Ministry for Intellectually - Challenged Youth)

Tracey Chan
micy@ces.org.my

STREET MINISTRY (Ministry to the Homeless)

Jerry Teo
street.ministry@ces.org.my

URBAN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Sophy Lim
urban.community@ces.org.my

YOUTH EXCEL SERVICES (Football Coaching)

Pr Samuel Krishnan
yes@ces.org.my

FIRST TOUCH

CONNECTORS

Pr Alex Tan
connectors@dumc.my

SECURITY

Pr Adrian Chong
security@dumc.my

USHERS

Pr Alex Tan
ushers@dumc.my

MISSIONS

CROSSFIELDS

Pr Kelvin Yong
missions@dumc.my

FAMILY

FAMILY LIFE MINISTRY

T C & Jean Lau
family.life@dumc.my

PREMARITAL COUNSELLING

Bob & Ruby Chee
pmc@dumc.my

MARRIAGE

Adrian Chen & Susan
marriage.course@dumc.my

PARENTING (Children)

Ronnie & Ivy Khoo
Dennis Ngai & Joo Wei
parenting.children@dumc.my

PARENTING (Teens)

Vincent & Lily Wong
parenting.teens@dumc.my

WEDDING PLANNING

weddings@dumc.my

COMMUNICATIONS & MEDIA

DEW CREW

Huong Yew Yi
dew.crew@dumc.my

FLOODGATES (Church Magazine)

Petulia Lun
floodgates@dumc.my

CREATIVE ARTS

Darren Ong
creative.arts@dumc.my

RESONATE (Worship ministry)

Gabriel Ngui
resonate@dumc.my

OTHERS

FORERUNNERS

(Intercessory Prayer Ministry)

Pr Chris Manivannan
forerunners@dumc.my

TADIKA JUARA CERDIK

Lily Tan
general@dreamacademy.edu.my

**LOVE GOD.
SERVE PEOPLE.
MAKE DISCIPLES.**

We are DUMC.

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

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