





# MANNA

True Jesus Church ISSUE 52 JUL-SEP 2007 **Spiritual Renewal**

How God Called Me to His True Church  
**Be a Constant Gardener for God**  
**The Ladder of Faith**

# MANNA

Jul-Sept 2007

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## Spiritual Renewal

“The goal of Manna is to inspire believers to live an active faith through mutual encouragement and the study of biblical truths.”

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Dear Reader,

As you may have noticed, this is the second issue of Manna published since the October-December 2005 issue. Though there was a gap in publication, with God's guidance we are moving forward.

We received some comments in the past year concerning the welfare of Manna, and they reminded us that we don't receive much feedback from you in general. We want to know what you think of Manna.

You can drop us an e-mail at [manna@tjc.org](mailto:manna@tjc.org) or leave your comments on specific issues of Manna, both past and present, at the e-library website (look under Magazines):

<http://ia.tjc.org/elibrary/Landing.aspx>

The e-library is one of the projects that Literary Ministry has been working on. It has a lot more to offer than previous issues of Manna (see page ?? for more information). We hope you will make use of its many features.

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### You Can Do Your Best

While we may serve God in different ways, there are some things we can all do to serve God at our full potential.

*translated from Holy Spirit Monthly*



# The Doors Of Salvation Were Opened For Our Father

Vuthy and Ha Nol-Mantia—San Jose, California, USA

On July 10th, 2005, at the age of 59, Frank Mantia would be born again, not of his mother's womb, but of the redemptive blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. Vuthy and his wife Nhatha ("Ha") were blessed to witness their beloved father's baptism just two months before he passed away. They write this testimony in loving memory of their dear father and brother in Christ.

They were an odd father and son pair plodding arm and shoulders hooked into the waves. Vuthy is a tall and slender young man of Cambodian descent, while his father, Frank, was a shorter, Sicilian man with a rounded, hefty figure. Frank's wife, Joyce, nervously watched as he

staggered into the water. It was a warm and sunny day in Boston, but the Atlantic Ocean was frigid all year round, and about the last thing doctors would advocate to a cancer patient in Frank's condition, was to go for a dip.

But thank God, the baptism was performed without difficulty. Frank came up from the waters, gazing momentarily into the heavens with both hands lifted in praise to the Lord. Father and son walked leisurely back to the shoreline bearing gleaming smiles, while the chorus sang hymns in melodious harmony with the rolling ocean tides. We are so blessed to forever keep the memory of this day.

## ITALIAN FATHER, CAMBODIAN SON

Frank Mantia was born in Parlemo, Sicily on March 22, 1946. Vuthy Nol was born 26 years later in Swwhy Seasapon, Cambodia on March 6, 1972. They would both cross the oceans to the U.S. with their families at age 9, settling in the Boston area of Massachusetts.

One afternoon in November, 1983, Vuthy and his friend were playing hooky from school because they didn't have the five dollars required to go on a class field-trip to the Museum of Science. The two boys came across a produce market where burly men were tossing piles of pumpkins into the dumpster. The idle boys asked if they could help. When they had

finished the job, brash little Vuthy went inside to talk to “the Boss.” “Hey Mister, can I have a job?” The Boss looked at the skinny kid. “Yeah, you can come take out the trash and I’ll give you some money.” So that’s how Vuthy met Frank and landed his first job.

Frank and Joyce grew fond of Vuthy, and several months later, the Italian and Greek couple would bring this 11-year old Cambodian boy into their home and raise him as their own son. Vuthy would have opportunities and privileges that few Cambodian immigrant children were afforded. He was the only one of his five siblings to attend college and further receive an advanced degree in Social Work.

Vuthy would make both his biological and adoptive parents proud by becoming a community leader and counselor to other Cambodian immigrant families coping with depression and post-war trauma.

By God’s grace, Vuthy came to know our Lord Jesus Christ in October of 1999. It was a casual invitation by one of our members to a Bible study that resulted in a life-changing experience with God. No one in his family would have guessed that, five years later, Vuthy would dedicate himself to become a pastor.

God had bestowed on Vuthy blessings upon blessings, but what he wanted more than anything else was that his family could also come to church and experience the same joy in the Lord. His parents had given so much of themselves, and the greatest gift that Vuthy had to offer in return was the hope of salvation promised by our Lord.

We were blessed to witness this hope turn into reality for our dear father Frank near the end of his life. He had been

battling cancer for over 7 years, and was brought in and out of the hospital countless times before finally surrendering his soul to the Lord.

**Satan had come for him that early morning, but God had mercy and prevented the Devil from taking his soul.**

### THE STRUGGLE WITH DEATH

It was Saturday, January 8th, 2005, and Joyce, Vuthy, and I were all gathered by Frank’s bedside in the Massachusetts General Hospital. His bone marrow counts were a disheartening 90% cancer cells to only 10% normal cells. On top of that, the doctors discovered a new strain of bacteria in his blood that his weakened immune system could not possibly fight off.

Frank’s condition was so poor that the doctors made sure to recite him his “Death Rights”...if he wished to be kept on a breathing machine, if he wanted shock treatment should his heart fail, if he wanted to donate his organs, etc.

Hearing this grim reality left us in shock and silence. Another team of doctors came into the room to examine Frank, so Vuthy and I retreated to the visitor’s lounge area.

It had been a long and exhausting day beginning at twilight with a frantic 911 call and an ambulance rushing Frank to the emergency room. Frank had awakened from bed that morning gasping for air and yelled for help. He gave us quite a fright when we came into the room—his face was pale as a cadaver and he couldn’t utter any words, so we

thought he might be having a heart attack. His condition finally stabilized at the emergency room, and he explained what had happened in his bedroom that morning.

He had a supernatural encounter with two spiritual beings. He discerned that one of them was God, but sensed that the second figure, whom he referred to as the “other guy,” was evil. He remembered questioning God why he still felt pain in his body if he was in God’s presence. God did not answer, but Frank soon realized that it was the “other guy” who possessed control over his pain.

The vision dispersed as Frank, suffocating and pale, called out for help and startled us out of bed. Frank understood that Satan had come for him that early morning, but God had mercy and prevented the Devil from taking his soul.

### EXPERIENCING WHAT IS RECORDED IN THE BIBLE

Vuthy and I returned to Frank’s room shortly after the doctors had finished examining him and again sat in silence. Terribly saddened by the prospect of Frank dying before receiving Christ, all we could do was tearfully pray that God would once again have mercy on his soul. Frank broke the silence and said matter-of-factly, “Vuthy, you remember when we went to church that time, and you guys were chanting...I felt like wind and fire was going right through me.”

Vuthy jumped up off of his seat saying, “Why didn’t you tell us? You know how long we’ve been praying for you?” Frank was taken aback by Vuthy’s reaction. “I thought what I was feeling was strange, you know...so I didn’t say anything.”

## TESTIMONY

Vuthy then grabbed the Bible and showed him the passage in Acts where the Holy Spirit came down on the Day of Pentecost and people felt a rushing wind and saw tongues of fire. Frank was amazed to see what he had felt in church several months ago being described exactly in the Bible.

Vuthy continued to explain the importance of receiving the Holy Spirit with regards to salvation and taught him how to pray for the Holy Spirit by saying “hallelujah”. We then all prayed together in the hospital room. After prayer, Vuthy continued to explain the biblical importance of receiving baptism in the name of Jesus Christ, and not the “Father, Son, and Holy Spirit” like he had been baptized as a boy in the Catholic Church.

To our amazement, Frank was convinced and declared at that moment that he wanted to receive the true baptism once he got well. Even Joyce, who was born into the Greek Orthodox Church, was excited for him and agreed that he should get baptized once he recovered. Frank’s eyes moistened, as he understood how much God really loved him and was reaching out to him.

In the span of one hour, God had miraculously turned our hopeless tears of sorrow into hopeful tears of joy. Vuthy and I left the hospital with a peaceful heart and were truly grateful for God’s love and mercy, for God had this day spared our father’s life and given us a great glimpse of hope for his salvation.

**S**ix months later, on July 10th, 2005, our wedding anniversary, our father Frank was baptized into the Lord Jesus. He continued to battle cancer, and had bad days and better days, but God gave him grace sufficient for each day. The last time Frank was well enough to attend church for Sabbath service, God blessed him with a beautiful vision—Frank saw the Lord Jesus in His glorious light walk right through the chapel door.

Frank will be fondly remembered for his storytelling, funny jokes, and bright

smile. Although he is deeply missed, we can look forward to the day when this odd father and son pair will be walking together again, through the Gates of Heaven. ★





# How God Called Me to His True Church

Daniel Awutey—Hahoe, Ghana, Africa

I was formerly a member of a church called the Twelve Disciples Church. My conversion to the True Jesus Church was an amazing event for which I will always be thankful.

## DRIVEN OUT OF MY FORMER CHURCH

One Saturday in 1991, January 19th to be precise, the pastor of the Twelve Disciples Church told me that he wanted me to be in charge of the church in West Africa, and that meant that I would need some supernatural powers. He asked me to sleep under a cross that night, and he would wake me up at 2 a.m. to send me to the Densei River in the eastern part of Ghana to receive the “powers.”

I slept very soundly that night. At 9 a.m. the following morning, I was awakened by the ringing of a bell. It was the bell calling all the members of the church to gather.

Much to my surprise and bafflement, the pastor ordered the elders of the church to drive me out of the premises in five minutes.

When I asked for the reason, he explained that during the night, two angels appeared to him in a vision, tied him up, and flogged him. In fact, the garments he wore that morning had bloodstains on them. He said that the angels warned him not to touch me or have anything to do with me because God had prepared me to work as a minister in a certain true church in the town. At that

time, I did not have the slightest inkling what this true church was about.

## THE DREAM OF THE TRUE CHURCH

Later in the day, I visited my parents at their residence. It was a tense situation, as the pastor had created a high level of enmity between me and my parents. Nevertheless, I spent some time resting in their house. As I lay down in my parents' house, I had a dream.

I was taken to a place beyond my ability to describe. There was a very big throne, and someone was sitting on it. I could only see his back. A rainbow was around his head. Then I heard a strange voice from the throne, which was like this



## TESTIMONY

sound of many waters. I could not comprehend that language.

Suddenly I saw a dove coming out of the throne towards me. It put three separate rainbows on my head, waist and feet. I then saw myself on a very high mountain. I saw a very old man there, the ruler of the mountain, who spoke to me. His voice was like the sound of many waters, like the first voice I heard. The ruler of the mountain also spoke to me and his voice was like the sound of many waters, like the first voice I heard.

He had a staff and a scroll in his hand. He removed my shirt and put on a new white garment on me. He also fastened my waist with a yellow belt, and he gave me his pair of shoes to wear on my feet. He then handed me the staff and scroll that were in his hand and he ordered me to eat the scroll. As my mouth touched the scroll, I began to understand the sound that came out of his mouth. The ruler of the mountain then told me I had to go back to my town to look for the True Church.

As I turned to go, I saw a large billboard that had an inscription in French—"Veritable Jesus Eglise" (True Jesus Church) and "Samedi – Samedi – Samedi" (Saturday – Saturday – Saturday). The inscriptions were surrounded by shimmering stars. At that point, I woke up from the dream.

### PART OF THE TRUE CHURCH

The next day I went out to look for the True Jesus Church and I actually found it. It looked exactly like the structure I had seen in my dream. Even the way the members behaved coincided with what I saw in the dream.

Four months later, I was baptized in the name of Jesus into the true church. During the baptism I saw that the water was full of blood. From the day of my baptism, my body started to heal itself from the effects of a serious accident I had many years earlier.

One day in 1978, I had been walking in the jungle with my father, who was a tree cutter. In Ghana they burn the trunk after the trees are cut down. While I was walking, I fell into a pit. Under the pit was a charcoal fire and it melted my feet and burned my lower body. I became unconscious and woke up three days later in the hospital.

The doctor said that they needed to cut off both of my legs because of the severe burns. But God touched the doctor's heart to make an announcement for help. The President of Ghana visited me in the hospital, and offered to pay all the medical bills. I spent three years in the hospital and my health was poor, but my legs were not amputated. The doctors told me I would have to live with four problems: severe migraines, epilepsy, blindness, and the inability to have children.

I suffered with all these problems until I was baptized in TJC. Now many years later my body has healed completely, even though I still bear scars from the severe burns. I thank God for healing me and blessing me with four children.



Two weeks after the baptism, I had a dream in which I saw a hand carrying the words "ETERNEL" (eternal) and I heard a voice asking me to read what I saw. When I tried, I felt my tongue fall into my stomach.

The voice then told me to repeat the word "Hallelujah." As I did, I felt that my tongue rolled back into my mouth and I started praying like the other members. I woke up from the dream and began to pray. I realized I was filled with the Holy Spirit and was praying in tongues.

I have been so joyful ever since and I thank the Lord for revealing His true church to me. Now I'm a full time worker and enjoy every minute if it. I no longer live for myself but for the Lord who saved me and gives hope for eternal life.

Praise and thank God! ★



# Amazing Grace—Wondrous Healing

*Claire OuYang—Hillsborough, New Jersey, USA*

Four years have passed since my baptism on April 27, 2003. Looking back, it still feels like it was just yesterday. Before my baptism, I was like any other lost sheep, not knowing where I really was headed and what lies at the end of this road. I am blessed, for the Great Shepherd found me and led me back to His fold. Yet, the road we trod wound through a dark valley of the shadow of death before He led me into warm sunshine again.

With each recounting of this testimony, I feel God's grace in greater magnitude. Nevertheless, I feel inadequate still to fully convey the great mercy shown to me. Here, I again tell of the wondrous deeds of God towards

my family, for I have learned that no knowledge in this world surpasses the knowledge of understanding God's amazing grace.

## THE SALVATION GRACE OF GOD CAME UPON MY FAMILY

My husband was the first in our family to hear of the gospel. I saw and marveled at the change in him after his conversion. He used to be headstrong and argumentative. But, after a period of listening to the teachings of the Bible, he was transformed into a gentle person who was willing to give way, and in all things, he acted according to the biblical standards. That God was able to cause such a great

change moved me and in 2003, we both decided to receive baptism.

At that time, we felt thoroughly content with our lives. Little did we imagine what a difficult trial awaited us, perhaps targeted at our ignorant complacency.

Our daughter turned 15 that same year. Unbeknownst to me, my husband prayed to God for another child! His wish was granted, and a month after our baptism, I became pregnant at the age of 43. An amniocentesis confirmed that the baby would be a boy, which made us all very happy.

Then, the trial came.

### GOING THROUGH THE VALLEY OF THE SHADOW OF DEATH

In September, when I was in my 25th week, a routine ultrasound revealed the presence of a tumor the size of a fist. The doctors suggested an immediate removal by surgery. My husband and I had no idea what was going on, and our only concern then was that the baby should not be affected.

The hospital had never had a patient who needed a tumor removal during pregnancy, so more than ten specialists from different disciplines were called to attend to my case. I myself never had any major illness, so it never crossed my mind that this surgery was a high-risk one. I thought that since I was already baptized into the Lord, I would just entrust everything to Him.

A biopsy of the tumor cells revealed that I was in Stage 3 of colon cancer. Being an optimist, I was actually glad that it was not the terminal stage, and was not too worried. However, my husband was devastated. People around us were baffled: Did they not recently get baptized? Why would God allow a pregnant woman to be plagued with cancer? Everyone seemed to have some doubt about our faith and spirituality.

The brother who introduced the gospel to my family, brother Chen, stuck with us throughout our whole ordeal. He encouraged us that

*No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it. (1 Cor 10:13)*

That is so true. God is indeed a faithful and righteous God. Besides, “children are a heritage from the Lord, the fruit of the womb is a reward” (Ps 127:3). We got this child after we had believed in the Lord—surely God would not simply end my life this way.

### EXPERIENCING GOD IN THE MIDST OF SUFFERING

By God’s grace, the surgery safely removed the biggest tumor without impacting the fetus. The doctors told me that because the cancerous cells were spreading quickly, they wanted to do a C-section as soon as the baby was viable, in November. So the baby was delivered pre-maturely. He was tiny but in every way, he was as healthy and active as any full-term baby.

As the cancerous cells spread, I began to have difficulty consuming any food. Whatever went in was thrown up within minutes. My weight plunged from 120 lbs to 80 lbs. In December, the results of a CAT scan showed that the cancer had spread to my liver, spleen and other organs, and chemotherapy was the only option available.

I started on my first course of chemotherapy in January 2004. Thank God, my first few sessions of chemotherapy went very smoothly. I suffered nausea and hair loss, but there were no other side effects.

*Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. (Phil 4:6, 7)*

God truly listens to our requests. By the time I was on my second course of chemo, I no longer suffered any accompanying discomfort, and my weight even began to increase steadily.

When the second course of chemo ended, a PET scan was done on me. I was cancer free! Even the chemotherapist and oncologist rejoiced with me, for they were also Christians. To all of us, we were definitely witnessing a miracle.

God—the source of all goodness

Bro. Chen asked me if I had moments of feeling troubled all this time when I was in and out of the hospital. Seriously, I would say no. For I firmly believed that God was with me the whole time.

This sickness helped me see my past folly. During the ordeal, I remembered the sins I committed in the past. In prayers and tears, I would plead for God’s forgiveness. Each time, I received great peace and comfort.

**I myself never had any major illness, so it never crossed my mind that this surgery was a high-risk one. I thought that since I was already baptized into the Lord, I would just entrust everything to Him.**

When I was in the hospital, my husband and I would recite Psalm 23 every day, and each time, we would be filled with tears. In the past, I always thought I was luckier than most people. After this incident, I realized that all good things in life are granted by God’s grace.

There is simply no such thing as sheer luck. I thank God for this precious lesson.

Step by step, God led me to His fold. He first guided my husband to know Him. Throughout my illness, my husband never once thought of abandoning me but took great care of me, looking into every single possible detail. The brothers and sisters across the various churches in the US prayed for me while I was undergoing treatment. Clearly I have received abundant grace!

**M**ore than a decade ago, my husband and I watched the movie *Silkwood*. Towards the end, the female lead sang a song that touched us both very much. It was not until our conversion that we found out that song was “Amazing Grace.” It was as if God had prepared us to be chosen.

*I once was lost, but now am found,  
was blind, but now I see! ★*





# A Beautiful Thing

Adapted sermon by HH Ko—Heidelberg, Germany

**There are many beautiful things in the world. Sometimes, beautiful things occur in poetry and in song. Beautiful things often happen in peace and harmony. But a beautiful thing recorded in the Bible wasn't like this.**

After two days it was the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread. And the chief priests and the scribes sought how they might take Him by trickery and put Him to death. But they said, “Not during the feast, lest there be an uproar of the people.” (Mark 14:1, 2)

This was a horrifying moment. The authorities at the time, the chief priests and scribes, tried to capture Jesus. They wanted to arrest Jesus, but dared not to. Later, Judas Iscariot agreed to betray Jesus to the authorities (Mk 14:10-11). The twelve disciples spent three years with Jesus. They were chosen and trained by Jesus. Yet one of them betrayed Him.

We may tolerate the fact that the chief priests and scribes schemed to kill Jesus, but when we see that Judas

betrayed Him, it is quite horrifying. After spending three years with Jesus, he should have had some emotional ties with Him. Jesus continually showed His love to the disciples; yet we see Judas.

Within this terrible environment, we see a beautiful thing.

*And being in Bethany at the house of Simon the leper, as He sat at the table, a woman came having an alabaster flask of very costly oil of spikenard. Then she broke the flask and poured it on His head. But there were some who were indignant among themselves, and said, “Why was this fragrant oil wasted? For it might have been sold for more than three hundred denarii and given to the poor.” And they criticized her sharply. But Jesus said, “Let*

*her alone. Why do you trouble her? She has done a good work for Me. For you have the poor with you always, and whenever you wish you may do them good; but Me you do not have always. She has done what she could. She has come beforehand to anoint My body for burial. Assuredly, I say to you, wherever this gospel is preached in the whole world, what this woman has done will also be told as a memorial to her.”*  
(Mark 14:3-9)

Many beautiful things have come and gone in history. But this beautiful thing is passed down with the gospel.

Why is this thing beautiful?

### **SHE DID UNTO JESUS**

“But Jesus said, ‘Let her alone. Why do you trouble her? She has done a good work for Me’” (v. 6). It was a beautiful thing because it was done unto Jesus. It was a beautiful thing done on Christ.

Many people work hard for their own goals. Some begin with one dollar and become influential business leaders. Some begin with a few books, and through hard work become famous or receive the Nobel Prize. Whether in business or thoughts, these are beautiful things.

But no matter how virtuous, influential, or great people are, they disappear. Because this world will pass. Even if a name remains in humanity forever, humanity will come to pass. Without humanity, great figures are nothing. But a beautiful thing done on Jesus will remain forever, because the Lord is everlasting.

In the Old Testament, the Israelites willingly sacrificed. But they had to bring the offering to the tabernacle. If they simply offered the calves in their own houses, that would not count. The first

**Even if a name remains in humanity forever, humanity will come to pass. Without humanity, great figures are nothing. But a beautiful thing done on Jesus will remain forever, because the Lord is everlasting.**

step is to bring the sacrifice to the tabernacle, to the priest.

All of us have a heart to offer. We all want to do beautiful things. But we have to remind ourselves, are we doing it to Jesus? This woman put the perfume onto Jesus. We know that the body of Christ is the church (Eph 1:22-23). What we do unto the church, we do unto Christ.

We also do it unto brothers and sisters (Mt 25:45-46). What we do to the smallest brother, we do to Jesus Christ. But do not forget your own family. Our homes are also the body of Christ. The Bible tells us if we do not take care of our family, we are worse than the unbelievers. The body of Christ is the church, the brothers and sisters in church, and our own family. We must treat Jesus right. It is a beautiful thing to do unto Jesus.

### **SHE GRASPED THE OPPORTUNITY**

#### **She did all she could**

“She has done what she could. She has come beforehand to anoint My body for burial” (v. 8). She did what she could. We all love God. No one will say “I do not love the Lord.” But do we love the Lord with all our might? It is a problem of degree.

This was a beautiful thing because she did everything she could. She may not have had a great quantity of perfume. But her quality was beautiful. How do we know that she did all she could? Verse three records she broke the alabaster flask.

Many times when we serve God, we do it in portions according to our considerations, and not with all our might. Why did the woman need to break the flask? If she hadn't broken the flask, she could have controlled how much to give to Jesus. Perhaps she could have anointed Jesus again later. But this is not doing all you can. She offered everything she had without reservation. She was willing to sacrifice this perfume.

She gave it all to Jesus.

In the book of Acts, Ananias and Sapphira did not sacrifice their all; they secretly held some back. We all love God, but how much do we love God? We should not save anything for ourselves. This woman broke the flask without reservations.

We see that she offered the perfume at the right occasion. “For you have the poor with you always, and whenever you wish you may do them good; but Me you do not have always” (v. 7). Sometimes, opportunities are fleeting. This was not the only perfume in the world. Even though the perfume may have been expensive at the time (costing a year's wages), every girl owned one because it was used at the time of marriage.

Every girl owned a flask of perfume, but only one flask was poured on Jesus. Jesus only died once, and perfume can only be used once. She used the whole flask of perfume on Jesus. This was perfect timing.

### **She had a watchful heart.**

Sometimes, we lose the chance. Mark 16:1-6 records how three women who loved God wanted to anoint Jesus' body. These women often supported Jesus financially (Lk 8:2-3). They used their own savings to support Jesus; they were well to do. Their spices and perfumes weren't less costly than the woman's. But Jesus had no use for them. Jesus had already resurrected—their perfume had become useless. After the time has passed, no matter how expensive or how great the perfume, it is all in vain.

God gives us the opportunity. But we must have a watchful heart to sacrifice.

If this woman was the Mary who sat before Jesus (Jn 11:2), then she truly understood Jesus' word. While her sister Martha was busy preparing food for Jesus, she quietly sat before Jesus to listen to the word (Lk 10:38-40). And she took it all in. Listening to the word of God is a blessing promised in the Old Testament.

*"Yes, He loves the people;  
All His saints are in Your hand;  
They sit down at Your feet;  
Everyone receives Your words."  
(Deuteronomy 33:3)*

This is the perfect description of Mary. She sat at Jesus' feet and received instruction. This was done by one whom God loves.

Mary kept the word in her heart. Only those who have the word of God can truly hold on to the opportunity. The opportunity is there for everybody, but do we know how important it is? Our lives are just like this. While we live, do we serve the Lord? Does Jesus use us? If not, our chance will pass (Eccl 12:1).

In our lives we have many opportunities to do good. We can help the poor

every day, and even if we spend all we have, we cannot help everyone. We only have a few chances to do unto Jesus. Like Mary, we must hold onto the truth and grasp the opportunity with a watchful heart. When the time passes, we could buy a ton of perfume and it would be useless. While we're still healthy and have strength, do it unto Jesus.

While you're young and can still do so, honor your parents. Don't wait until your parents have passed away and say, "I should have treated them better." At home while you still can, love your husband, love your wife. And in church, brothers and sisters should love one another.

When the opportunity passes, we have nothing. It is a beautiful thing to take the opportunity.

### **SHE LET JESUS SPEAK**

The most beautiful part of this beautiful thing was that Mary was quiet. Mary offered to Jesus. It had nothing to do with other people. Yet they were indignant, and even called her wasteful. "For it might have been sold for more than three hundred denarii and given to the poor.' And they criticized her sharply" (v. 5).

The men not only showed their anger, they rebuked Mary. The environment was quite harsh. But Mary remained silent. In her silence she overcame the others' anger. She knew that she was offering to God.

We may think that those who are silent will be taken advantage of. Many kids cause trouble because they want attention. Those who are quiet and have peace in their hearts are often forgotten.

But when you do unto Jesus, it will not be forgotten. Jesus knows everything. He knows it. If you do not speak, Jesus will speak for you. It is worthless to stand up for ourselves. In verse six Jesus says, "Leave her alone. Why are you bothering her?" Jesus knew that the people were not worried about Him. They did not really care for the poor; they cared for their own interests. Jesus knew they were all hypocrites. How valuable were the words He spoke for Mary!

Don't be afraid. As long as you're doing a beautiful thing unto Jesus, let Jesus speak for you.

Moses did so. God was with him (Num 12). Moses spoke to God face to face. And jealousy came from his older sister who loved him when he was a baby, and his older brother who spoke for him. We may be able to withstand criticism from others, but it is harder if it comes from our own flesh and blood.

**We only have a few chances to do unto Jesus. Like Mary, we must hold onto the truth and grasp the opportunity with a watchful heart.**

But Moses didn't speak. He was attacked by his own brother and sister, but God spoke for him. And the Bible records that Moses was "very humble, more than all men who were on the face of the earth" (Num 12:3). He was humble and gentle. In his great time of difficulty, he said nothing. But God said something. God rebuked his brother and sister. Complaining for yourself is useless because it might raise opposition against

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you. Then your beautiful deed won't be beautiful anymore.

You have done it unto Jesus. You have offered your all. You were close to Jesus and were able to seize the opportunity. You have done so. Since you have done so, say nothing. Because what you have done is right. You must overlook what other people say.

The external factors were quite terrifying. The Pharisees and the priests wanted to kill Jesus. Judas was about to betray Jesus. Within that feast were unhappy and angry people.

But this was a beautiful thing—because Mary had peace in her heart, she overcame the obstacles of the world. So take a deep breath. That perfume from 2000 years ago is still fragrant within your heart.

This is a beautiful thing. ★

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## Spiritual Renewal

An essential part of life is the spirit. For Christians, our spiritual life reflects our level of faith. While we know the importance of maintaining our faith, we still experience moments of despair and weariness. Even David, a man after God's heart, experienced such feelings:

*From the end of the earth I will cry to Your  
When my heart is overwhelmed;  
Lead me to the rock that is higher than I.  
Psalm 61:2*

But David knew how to draw close to God during these times—he cried out to God to guide him to a higher place. Likewise, we must rise from our spiritual lows by relying on God and His Word.

The theme articles remind us that renewal is possible by first turning to God. But renewal cannot be sporadic—we must constantly evaluate and maintain our spiritual life. We also need to remember where we truly belong. When our spirit is constantly renewed, we will glorify God and be an example to others.



# Returning to God—the Essential Step to Spiritual Renewal

Lawrence Q. Wong—Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA

*As the deer pants for the water brooks, so pants my soul for You, O God. (Psalm 42:1)*

These words of David reveal a growing void weighing upon his heart. There was a void left in his soul because he felt distanced from God. David knew that he would not be complete again until he was once again nestled within the presence of God.

Reading through Psalm 42, we discover that the key to spiritual renewal is God Himself; specifically, a return to Him. This is a process requiring our active pursuit. The onus is on us to initiate the process.

## RETURN TO GOD—FINDING PEACE FOR OUR SOULS

*Thus says the Lord: "Stand in the ways and see, and ask for the old paths, where the good way is, and walk in it; then you will find rest for your souls. But they said, 'We will not walk in it.'" (Jeremiah 6:16)*

God reminds the people, through Jeremiah, that they are walking upon a path that is far from His will, and as a result their souls are weary. To find rest for their souls, they have to return to God. Pursuing a thorough understanding of the Scriptures is the beginning of the trajectory back to God.

## THEME

Often, after we have spent a considerable amount of time at spiritual convocations, we find our souls calmed down. Regular prayers and Bible reading also bring the same soothing feeling to our souls. These are times when we taste the beauty of seeking after the kingdom and righteousness of God first, before anything else (Mt 6:33). These are times when we actually return and rest in God.

The Israelites had forgotten their God and all that He had done for them. Judah and Jerusalem were ignorant about the Word of God and instead loved the world. God sent them counsel in the hope of correction, but it was all in vain. God reminded them through the prophet Jeremiah that if they walked upon the path where the good way was, they would be at peace and their souls would find rest.

Therefore, “let us search out and examine our ways, and turn back to the LORD” (Lam 3:40).

### EXAMINING THE LIVES WE LEAD

The attitudes and intentions of a person are apparent through the kind of life he or she leads. That is why we have to soberly consider the direction we are heading and to test and examine our ways.

We all have the freedom to do whatever we want and to live the life that we want to live (1 Cor 10:23). But not everything that we could possibly do is beneficial and according to the will of God. Every so often, we may have veered off the course that God wants us to be on. The more time that we spend on that course, the further away we will be from God. Moreover, the more time that we spend away from God, the less our life will

**The bottom line is, there is only one thing that truly matters—whether we have lived our life for God. Every other accomplishment or desire pales in comparison.**

be lived for Him and doing the things that bring Him glory.

The life of Solomon is a good tool for reference when checking in on ourselves. In his lifetime, Solomon sought and received everything he possibly could, except one thing—God. We need to constantly search and examine our way and consider his words of reminder (Eccl 2:11; 12:13). The bottom line is, there is only one thing that truly matters—whether we have lived our life for God.

Every other accomplishment or desire pales in comparison.

By what standards should we use to check on ourselves? One key criterion is to be in the Lord (Col 3:17). If the path we choose is in the Lord, then the things that we do and the things that we seek will be exclusively for God. If we realize that we have squandered opportunities by diverging from the will of God for our own desires, we need to turn around and go back to the Lord (Lk 15:13, 17).



## RELYING ON THE HOLY SPIRIT

As we advance through life, many situations remind us just how weak we really are. And while we are in this world, we cannot remain righteous and holy without constantly renewing ourselves towards God (Hos 6:3). At times, it may get to the point that we are on the verge of forsaking our faith and God by giving in to temptations and weakness.

The Holy Spirit, which is given by God, is stronger than any weakness or temptation. It will never leave us hanging and it will always be before us, but we must continually abide in it (Jn 15:4). This is, however, a reciprocal relationship—the Holy Spirit will always help us, but we must do our part too.

When we consider Jesus Christ, He prayed constantly: in the early mornings, and late into the nights (Mk 1:35; Lk 6:12). That process allowed the Holy Spirit to continually embolden Him with the power of God, and the glory of God was manifested every time He taught the people or when the sick came to Him.

The Holy Spirit gets us through all adversities, no matter how tough or hopeless they may be. All things are possible through God and He is able to offer guidance in any situation (Mk 10:27).

The Holy Spirit is like a fire whose power cannot be understood until it is fanned and grows into a mighty flame. Its light can then be seen and its power felt. We can then have the strength and the boldness to stand up for our faith (Acts 1:8). Spiritual renewal occurs each time we put God first in our lives and when we are able to fight the temptations before us with righteous acts.

As a new creation, we must develop into a person who is able to be an ambassador for God at all times. As long

**The Holy Spirit is like a fire whose power cannot be understood until it is fanned and grows into a mighty flame.**

as we live in the world and within the domain of Satan's influence, we will feel the effects of his work and we have to stand firm with faith. We have been chosen by God to represent and uphold His Word in this world. And with this Word comes the power and strength needed to break the bonds that keep us from salvation.

When the dust settles, the only significant question is whether we have endured and rekindled our spirits toward the almighty God. ★



# Be A Constant Gardener for God

Lois Kuo—Baldwin Park, California, USA

I have always loved gardens. I enjoy picking and eating the fresh herbs, vegetables, and fruits that my parents grow in our backyard. When life is hectic and stressful, I can always depend on leisurely strolls through the Botanical Garden on campus to clear my mind and lift my spirits.

Since I was a child, flowers have brought so much joy and beauty to my life, but it was not until I grew up that I understood that behind each flower is the labor of a diligent gardener.

Unfortunately, I have never been very successful at growing plants or at keeping them alive. But there is much more at stake when we neglect to tend to the spiritual garden within each of us. . .

In the spiritual realm, our heart is the soil and we are the gardeners assigned to its care. The garden of our heart requires as much attention and preservation as a real, physical garden does. Just like a physical garden, a carefully cultivated heart will not only be filled with abundant life but also benefit others by producing many times what was originally planted there.

*But other seed fell on good ground and yielded a crop that sprang up, increased and produced: some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some a hundred. (Mk 4:8)*

As we know from the parable of the sower, the quality of our heart's soil makes a vast difference in whether we

can please God and edify others. As we become spiritually mature, it is important that we also yield thirty-, sixty-, or a hundredfold to provide nourishment for others. I believe that all of us aspire to be this type of fruitful garden for God.

Let's take a look within. What does God see when He looks in you? Do what we produce bring joy to God and to others around us? Or do you feel that your garden is helplessly overgrown with your own desires and pleasures of this world?

No matter what state our inner garden is in, it is never too late to make the determination to dedicate our hearts for God's purpose and take the steps necessary to replant and maintain its spiritual health.

## BUILD A FENCE

Wherever we go each day, we fill our hearts with what we see, think and experience. Different people we meet along the way plant good or bad seeds within us. Media also leave a long-lasting impression on our hearts, be it images or messages. It's not fair to God if we fill our hearts indiscriminately all day and expect Him to clean out the accumulated junk for us at the end of the day.

Instead, let us guard our heart carefully and jealously for it is one of the few things in the world that is solely our own. Be aware of what enters, because the Bible tells us that its contents affect the quality of our lives. "Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it spring the issues of life" (Prov 4:23). Since God is faithful to forgive our sins when we confess, let us in turn strive to be faithful by not allowing sin to enter so freely. Pursuing holiness, purity, and righteousness to be more like Him touches His heart and is the first step to building a close relationship with Him.

So build a fence around your heart. In a "garden enclosed," the influences of the outside world will not be able to drown out the Word and the Holy Spirit's attempt to help our gardens flourish.

And only inside a "garden enclosed" can you find the most fragrant garden imaginable:

*...an orchard of pomegranates with pleasant fruits, fragrant henna with spikenard, spikenard and saffron, calamus and cinnamon, with all trees of frankincense, myrrh and aloes, with all the chief spices." (Songs 4:12-14)*

A garden contains such wonders when it is not of this world. By shutting itself away from the rest of the world, the

garden can attract others with its scent, beauty and lushness.

At this point, you may be thinking: There is no way that I can be completely cut off or isolated from the rest of the world! This is true. God wants us to live among the world, as our Lord Jesus did, but we must be different. Gardens left to run wild lose the power to attract because there exists no difference in them to be admired.

Because we are different, it is inevitable that we will meet those who mock our values and standards. However, many actually want, and wait, to see whether we have something to offer them that is different and better than what they have already found in the world. If we persist in maintaining the beauty of our heart's garden, our entire lives can be a living testimony used to lead others to God.

**If we persist in maintaining the beauty of our heart's garden, our entire lives can be a living testimony used to lead others to God.**

## PULL OUT THE WEEDS

The longer a garden is neglected, the more time weeds have to firmly root themselves. Even if there are good crops, weeds that grow beside them become intertwined with them, making the weeds even harder to completely pull out.

Any weed we don't pull out jeopardizes our holy work and good deeds. Therefore, we need to weed out the sins that try to enter every day. As we reflect on God's word and develop the

habit of carefully examining our heart, it becomes easier to spot the weeds before they sprout. This is a duty that we must perform faithfully throughout our entire lifetime as our heart's caretaker.

What about the weeds that have been rooted in our hearts long before we put up a firm fence? These sins require more than a cursory prayer before bed to be removed. One must spend a long time in prayer in order to dig down to the root of the weed. Then, it is time to pull out the weed by truly repenting and figuring out how to change.

Pulling out resistant weeds can be very painful. However, such discipline is a demonstration of our faithfulness to God. Don't expect these deeply-rooted sins to be removed overnight. Often, we recognize our sins and understand the need for change but do not know how to fully rid ourselves of sins that have been abiding in our hearts for so long. Even thinking about the numerous times we have struggled with sin and lost can be enough to discourage us.

Yet, do not despair! No matter how long the process, God is always by our side helping us. He is the Great Gardener, who planted His truth within us in the first place. Under His watchful eye, the seed of truth will not be choked, no matter how much the weeds may threaten to overrun the garden.

*Being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ. (Phil 1:6)*

God has the ability to weed out the most defiant of sins but first we must be willing to part with our sin and ask for His help.

## THEME

God knows all of our foolishness and none of our sins are hidden before Him. Even so, He waits for us to want to change first. Place your “trust in Him at all times. Pour out your heart before Him; God is a refuge for us” (Ps 62:8). Tell Him of each sorrow. Tell Him how you struggle with the sin. Tell Him of your desire to change. If we place our faith in Him, He will advise us on how to remove sins that we do not know how to get rid of.

God is the best gardener. In His wisdom, He knows whether it is better for us to have more sunshine or more storms at any given point in our life. While we may crave endless sunshine, let us remember that difficulties are also given by God to wash away impurities in our hearts. When the storms have passed, our gardens will be more spiritually healthy and beautiful in His sight.

### **MAINTAIN A CONSISTENTLY BEAUTIFUL GARDEN**

After continuously producing crops, even the best soil can become depleted of nutrients if not fertilized. When we serve God continuously without cultivating, we also become devoid of spiritual nutrients.

A physical gardener would let the ground lie fallow until the soil has recovered, but this not something we can afford to do in our spiritual lives. Time does not stop for anyone. As life continues, new responsibilities are added to us. We meet people day to day, and our actions at that time either glorify God to them or not. We cannot say, “Please wait while I recover!” Missed opportunities are missed. Relationships with our families and friends can suffer if not constantly maintained.

Therefore, we need to learn how to renew ourselves while bearing fruit

**Maintaining a beautiful spiritual garden takes constant effort and does not end until we finish our journey here on earth.**

continually. The secret lies in the continuous watering of His Word. God can create in us a clean heart and renew a steadfast spirit within us (Ps 51:10), but we need to open up the Bible and accept that nourishment for ourselves.

In addition, continually bearing fruit is linked to being continually found in the

house of the Lord. “Those who are planted in the house of the LORD shall flourish in the courts of our God. They shall still bear fruit in old age” (Ps 92:13-14). Keeping the Sabbath and maintaining fellowship with spiritual friends are ways to refresh and fertilize our hearts as we work side by side for Him.

Maintaining a beautiful spiritual garden takes constant effort and does not end until we finish our journey here on earth. Until that day, let us keep looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith (Heb 12:2). He has begun the work for us and He is the one who will sustain us to the end.





# Moses Hid His Face

Patrick Wong—Houston, Texas, USA

Moreover He said, “I am the God of your father—the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.” And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look upon God. (Ex 3:6)

Exodus 3:1-6 gives a detailed description of how Moses was called by the Lord to lead His people out of Egypt. When the Lord introduced Himself as “the God of your fathers—the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob,” Moses trembled and hid his face, because he was afraid to look upon God (Ex 3:6; Acts 7:32).

He knew exactly who the God of his fathers was. His immediate response to God’s appearance was a reflex; it was a testimony to the reverence he had towards God. This heart of reverence was present before God entrusted him with the task of leading the Israelites out of

Egypt. The same reverence did not dwindle even after he became a great worker of God.

Albeit a short episode, this account of Moses’ attitude towards God holds important teachings for us believers today.

## MAINTAINING FAITH IN A FOREIGN LAND

In the time of Moses, the Egyptians were very corrupt and their ways displeased God. They dealt shrewdly with the Israelites and inflicted them with heavy burdens. By the grace of God, Moses was saved and was able to survive in the palace.

He was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians and was mighty in words and deeds (Acts 7:22). He excelled in the foreign land. Yet, he never forgot his Hebrew identity. When an occasion arose,

he defended and avenged his countryman who was oppressed by an Egyptian.

Daniel and his friends were placed in a similar situation. Although they learned the language and literature of the Chaldeans, they were determined not to defile themselves and resisted all things that contradicted their faith. No foreign culture was able to penetrate their God-fearing hearts.

Many of us may have been born and raised in a foreign country that is not the birthplace of our parents. We learn the culture of the country and adapt our lifestyle accordingly. Do we forget that we are “a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people” (1 Pet 2:9)? We have a precious identity as Christians and therefore must not forsake this important status, wherever we live. We have to be like



Moses, who did not forsake his Hebrew identity in the foreign land.

The advances of technology such as TV and Internet have become a significant part of our life. These temptations grow stronger by the day. If we have no self-control, it is very easy for us to drift away from the righteous path and become like Esau, who sold his birthright because he wanted to satisfy his fleshly desire. Afterward, he was rejected from receiving the firstborn's blessing even though he sought it diligently with tears (Heb 12:16-17).

Therefore, when we are surrounded by the temptations of the world, we must rely on Him and follow His teachings so that we can survive in the presence of tares (Mt 13:24-30) and shine in this world of darkness (Mt 5:13-16). We must remain undefiled, like the lily

**Being able to discern good and evil and proactively do what pleases God is the most important spiritual survival skill in a world full of corrupted practices.**

among the thorns of the world, for that is what the Lord desires (Song 2:2).

### THE CONTINUATION OF FAITH DOWN THE GENERATIONS

God introduced Himself to Moses as “the God of your father.” Who is our God? What can we do so that God would say to our children, “I am the God of your father”? Have we put the faith of our children at risk? Do we want our God to be our children's God? Will our children carry on the faith after we have passed on?

As parents, we are willing to provide the best to our children. We do our best to give them family warmth, nutritious food, good clothing and a premium education. Many even go further and sacrifice both time and money for their children to learn additional skills to enrich their lives.

Unfortunately, some have neglected the importance of religious education and pursue worldly gifts for our children at the expense of the development of their faith. God has commanded us to look after the faith of our children (Deut 6). We need to produce not just offspring, but godly offspring (Mal 2:15). We have the responsibility to bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord.

Being able to discern good and evil and proactively do what pleases God is the most important spiritual survival skill in a world full of corrupted practices. The concept of “freedom” has allowed much evil to creep even into the Christian system of values.

Under the pretext of “only God is the Judge,” all kinds of wrong-doings contrary to the Bible are condoned. Some examples include homosexuality, divorce, and adultery. It becomes increasingly difficult to stand up for biblical truth. Having a strong foundation in the truth cannot be further emphasized.

### ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

As parents, we understand the importance of having good divine workers in the future. We are willing to invest our



## EXHORTATION

resources and send our children to enrichment lessons, such as piano classes, in preparation for service to the Lord in the future. In cases where such lessons are available only on Saturdays, we must not be tempted to forsake religious education classes for our children so that they may acquire these additional skills.

To serve God, one needs to have the correct motives and attitudes. God is willing to use us because we love and fear Him, not because we possess great talents. The Lord requires a heart near to Him (Mt 14:8-9) and we need to walk humbly with Him (Mic 6:8; Jas 4:6). Our labor would be in vain if we play the piano or sing hymns beautifully without knowing why we do so. We cannot praise God if our love for Him does not even exist.

Paul said in Romans:

*For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God. (Rom 10:2-3)*

**Knowledge of the Scriptures will equip us for good work. If we are well equipped, we will naturally be honorable vessels for God's use.**

During the time of Paul, many devout Jews were very zealous in serving God. However, their sacrifice was in vain because they ignored God's righteousness

and even boasted about their works and talents.

Paul also explained in 2 Timothy what is most crucial for serving the Lord:

*Therefore if anyone cleanses himself from the latter, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified and useful for the Master, prepared for every good work. (2 Tim 2: 21)*

*All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work. (2 Tim 3:16-17)*

Knowledge of the Scriptures will equip us for good work. If we are well equipped, we will naturally be honorable vessels for God's use.

When Moses heard the voice of his father's God, he trembled and hid his face. The main goal of religious education is to develop this fundamental God-fearing attitude in our children's minds so that God becomes the center of their life. Gifts and skills for our Master's use will eventually follow.

Moses hid his face before God. His was a great lesson in reverence. May we all learn and cultivate this same reverence, wherever we are and in all that we do. ★

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# You can do your best

Translated from *Holy Spirit Monthly*—Issue 330



*Do not wait until some deed of greatness you may do. Do not wait to shed your light afar. To the many duties ever near you now be true. Brighten the corner where you are.<sup>1</sup>*

This hymn is one of my favorites. The theme of this hymn not only expresses the purpose of service to God, but also sets the direction for daily living. As long as I faithfully attend to my duties, use my talents well and grab hold of opportunities to serve, I can do my best at all times and in all of my services to God.

Here are some practical steps to take towards putting forth our best for God.

## UNDERSTAND GOD'S WILL AND YOUR SPIRITUAL GIFTS

When Paul was on his way to Damascus to persecute Christians, God's bright light from heaven shone on him, thus beginning his calling. After Paul understood that the Lord Jesus is the True God, he immediately asked, "What shall I do, Lord?" And at once, God instructed him on what he ought to do and showed him the direction of his work (Acts 22:6-21).

Paul understood that God's will was to have the gospel preached afar to gentile lands. He dedicated his whole life to this goal. Moreover, he made good use of his spiritual gifts to accomplish the work that was entrusted to him.

To work for the Lord, you must first understand God's will and what spiritual

gifts God has given you. Ask yourself, "Is there anything that I can do to glorify God and benefit man?" The possibilities are countless: praying continually, giving thanks in all circumstances, being friendly to others, staying optimistic at all times, working hard in your academic studies, offering your wealth and time to the Lord...

## BELIEVE AND OBEY THE LORD WHOLEHEARTEDLY

During the reign of King Jehoiakim, Judah was destroyed by the Babylonian king, Nebuchadnezzar. Many were taken into captivity. Daniel and three of his friends were among the captives. They resolved not to defile themselves with the practices of the Chaldeans.

God gave them knowledge and wisdom so that they were assigned important positions by King Nebuchadnezzar. When Nebuchadnezzar was troubled by a dream that he could not even recall, he unreasonably sought to kill the wise men and diviners if they could not interpret his dream for him.

In order to interpret the king's dream, Daniel and his three friends pleaded with God for mercy and revelation. God answered their prayer and Daniel was able to interpret the king's dream. By that, their lives were spared and they glorified God's name in a gentile country (Dan 2:14-49).

On another occasion, Daniel's three friends stood firm in refusing to bow down to worship the gold image made by King Nebuchadnezzar. Though they were thrown into the blazing furnace, they were not harmed. Instead, they won respect and affirmation from the king (Dan 3 16-30). Daniel and his friends were not afraid of powerful threats from high authority because they had the almighty God as their reliance.

When Ahab was the king in Israel, he did evil in the eyes of the Lord by joining his wife, Jezebel, in worshipping Baal and corrupting the nation's faith. God sent the prophet Elijah to Mount Carmel to demonstrate God's glory to the people, that they might understand that the Lord is the only true God.

If we put ourselves in Elijah's shoes, it's probably not easy to stand up against four hundred and fifty of Baal's prophets. He did as God instructed, and fire was sent from heaven to burn up the offering he offered. By relying and obeying, Elijah brought the hearts of the people back to God (1 Kg 18:16-46).

We know of many biblical examples and testimonies of God's power and

blessing. We too can experience these great works. As long as we are synchronized with the Holy Spirit and always seek God's glory, we will receive God's promise—because with God all things are possible (Phil 4:13; Gal 5:25-26; Mt 19:26).

### TOTAL SUBMISSION TO THE LORD

During the wedding that took place at Cana in Galilee, Mary, Jesus' mother, saw that the wine was running low. She told Jesus and also asked the servants to do according to what Jesus said. The servants' obedient actions changed water into good wine, allowing the crowd to enjoy the banquet and give glory to God (Jn 2:1-11).

Think about a time when you were faced with an adverse situation. How did you react? Did you fully submit yourself to God and wait quietly for God's plan, or did you grumble and complain? Did you entrust all things to God, or did you forsake the truth?

We can learn from Mary's conscientiousness—as soon as she found out what others needed, she brought the matter to God and believed that the Lord would provide a perfect solution.

### TO DO GOD'S WORK IN DUE TIME

Opportunities sometimes strike but once. Mary of Bethany seized hold of a great opportunity to please God by pouring a pint of pure nard, an expensive perfume, on Jesus' feet (Jn 12:1-8). Peter and John preached the gospel whenever and wherever they could, even amidst threats and hindrances from the Sanhedrin (Acts 4:1-20). Paul and Silas, when imprisoned, still prayed and sang hymns to God. In

the end, the two of them led the jailer and his household to be baptized into the Lord (Acts 16:16-34).

We ought to apply our faith to our daily lives. There are many things we can do. We can serve the Lord in our speech, actions, and conduct. As long as we hold a heart of reverence to God and a heart of love to men, we can surely glorify the Lord's name.

Remember now your Creator in the days of your youth, Before the difficult days come, And the years draw near when you say, "I have no pleasure in them." (Ecclesiastes 12:1)

As long as we hold a heart of reverence to God and a heart of love to men, we can surely glorify the Lord's name.

### FULFILL OUR CHRISTIAN DUTIES

Jesus said, "You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain . . . these things I command you, that you love one another" (Jn 15:16-17).

God's command for us can be simply summed up in one word: love. Love is the driving force that brings about much good. From simply being thankful in all circumstances to taking good care of ourselves, from lending a helping hand to seeing others' merits and giving appropriate praise and assurance, we know that love is the key ingredient. Love generates many great and small deeds.

### GIVE PRAISE TO THE LORD

The apostles always gave the glory to God for the miracles they performed. After being healed by Peter at the gate named Beautiful, the crippled man jumped to his feet, walking, leaping and praising God (Acts 3:1-10).

God guides all things and we are merely His servants. We ought to give praise to God and not steal God's glory. When we finish our duties and complete all we are entrusted to do, we should only say, "We are unprofitable servants. We have only done what was our duty to do" (Lk 17:10).

### POSSESSING THE RIGHT ATTITUDE IN SERVING

#### **Do not be arrogant. Accept advice.**

When Rehoboam became the ruler of Israel, he rejected the advice of the elders to lighten the workload on the people, and increased their load instead. Rehoboam's decision brought forth the Israelites' rebellion against him (1 Kg 12:1-19).

King Uzziah became proud after God granted him power over surrounding lands. Rejecting the advice of Azariah the priest, he entered the temple of the Lord to burn incense on the altar of incense. Because of his action, God inflicted him with leprosy until the day he died (2 Chr 26:1-21).

#### **Be humble in our service**

What is important before God is not the significance of the work itself, but rather our attitude in serving Him. When God tested Abraham by asking for his beloved son Isaac as an offering, Abraham raised no questions and uttered no complaint. Early the next morning Abraham got up

and saddled his donkey. He took with him two of his servants and his son Isaac. When he had cut enough wood for the burnt offering, he set out for the place God had told him to go (Gen 22:1-18).

During the process, Abraham's attitude in attending to God's command, and his trust in God, won His favor. God then promised to bless him and his descendants.

*"He who is faithful in what is least is faithful also in much; and he who is unjust in what is least is also unjust in much."*  
(Lk 16:10)

#### **Follow God's will and work together in unity**

The success of a project in church relies heavily upon close coordination among all fellow workers (Gal 5:15; Phil 2:2). No



matter what type of work we take up, other than good planning, putting God's will as the center and having godliness as the guiding principle are the keys to successful completion of any project.

We can observe and find out what type of talent is needed in our local church and ask God for that particular talent. Then we can further cultivate our ability and spirituality through various

**We must be willing to suffer for the Lord and train ourselves in godliness so that our spirituality may grow.**

### **Put in your best effort and pursue spiritual cultivation**

When serving the Lord, we ought to be hard working, have an attitude of endurance and have a sense of responsibility (2 Tim 2:15). In addition, we must actively pursue spiritual cultivation because serving the Lord starts with spiritual cultivation. Holy work and spiritual cultivation are inseparable (Lk 10:41-42).

Take the choir as an example. When we practice in a choir, we no longer sing for the sake of singing and we do not practice for the sake of performing on stage. Instead, we participate in choir to remind ourselves to seek further improvement to our spiritual cultivation.

Singing hymns is a way to express our gratitude towards God; thus, we should sing with our life and sing out of love. When we sing in this manner, we will be able to show our thanks to God, and at the same time, touch the hearts of the audience.

### **Pray for spiritual gifts**

We should set high standards and expectations for ourselves. Otherwise, we will surely slacken. We must be willing to suffer for the Lord and train ourselves in godliness so that our spirituality may grow.

training seminars and prayers. Everyone with a willing heart to serve can serve.

### **YOU CAN DO IT!**

*Moses has the staff; Aaron can speak;  
Samson has the donkey jawbone; David has the sling;  
Dorcas has the needles; Paul has education;  
Mary has the pure nard; Everything is to serve the Lord!*

These are the lyrics from a children's hymn describing how biblical characters loved the Lord. These characters include men and women, young and old. They all have one thing in common—everything is for the Lord!

Man can only find value and meaning in life when he serves the Lord (Gen 2:15; Lk 1:75; Rev 14:13). In the process, we learn to give thanks and repay His love as we understand more of God's grace and love for humanity. ★

<sup>1</sup> Hymns of Praise (True Jesus Church, 1993), No.219.



# Contemplations of an Aspiring Prudent Wife

SL—New Have, Connecticut, USA

Weddings are such happy occasions I wish I were invited to more weddings! It's one of a few events that is filled with lots of pretty things: flower arrangements, ingenious use of fabrics and creative decorations, lots of gourmet food (by my standards) and, of course, lots of happy people with lots of good wishes.

Many people spend years dreaming about their ideal wedding day, and a lot more money actually planning and materializing those dreams. Unfortunately, a considerable proportion of such people haven't spent half as much time preparing for what happens after saying "I do."

But why should that be the more important consideration? The fact is, marriage is not about wedding days. It is about going through banalities day after day and a considerable amount of ups and downs of different sorts. More significantly, you have to go through all of these as one united entity with another person, someone who has lived his or her life completely apart from and differently than you.

Being one who did not exactly prepare myself for what happens after saying "I do," I confess that I haven't memorized a single pointer on "how to be a good Christian wife"—though I

suspect self-help versions of such are out there on bookshelves. I have, however, noted quite a few biblical verses about the prudent wife over the years of sermon listening and Bible reading. I reckon I should at some point rehearse some of these teachings, and for various reasons, one being that prevention is better than cure, I should do it early in my marriage rather than later.

## **MARRIAGE—AN EQUITABLE RELATIONSHIP FOR BOTH HUSBAND AND WIFE**

The Bible has a lot of direct descriptions of the virtuous woman or the prudent wife.



Interestingly, the number of admonitions for the man and husband do not match up proportionately.

In the Old Testament, there are almost no explicit teachings about how to be a good husband. The New Testament does provide a few clear guidelines for the Christian husband. In his epistle to the Ephesians, Paul tells husbands to “love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her” (Eph 5:25), and that they “ought to love their own wives as their own bodies” (Eph 5:28).

To love another person as yourself and to even give yourself for her is not an easy thing. Adhering to such a principle in everyday life requires an enormous amount of love and self-denial. This is no easy task. It is no wonder that if a woman really finds such a husband, she ought to submit to him as the church submits to Christ (Eph 5:22, 24)! On this count, I suppose feminists who quibble about this issue of submission can relax and breathe.

Actually, the many explicit teachings the Bible gives to the woman are not aimed at us becoming docile and passive. It’s about fulfilling our side of the equation without losing our identities or selves. With moderation and wisdom, we will thus gain a position on par with our husbands, but in a different capacity, playing a different role.

The whole Bible is about God’s love. This statement sounds simplified, but it is true. The husband has a lifetime to learn to love his wife as Christ loves the church and gave up His life for her. The principle is given, and the details are up the individual to work out according to his unique situation. One lifetime may not even be enough for such a difficult lesson.

As for the wife, much as there are explicit statements in the Bible, these

specifics are definitely not unbending restrictions. Instead, they are open to interpretation and modifications depending on the stage of life she is in and the mores of her society.

### THE PRUDENT WIFE IN THE BOOK OF PROVERBS

The Book of Proverbs is an all-time favorite book of wise sayings. It is a good place to begin searching for tips about how to be a good wife. Chapter 31 of Proverbs is almost entirely devoted to a break-down of the things that a prudent wife would do for her husband, children and herself.

A prudent wife is a rare find; her worth is far above the rubies (v. 10). She’s definitely worth a second glance, in fact, a close reference, for anyone who wants to be a good wife by biblical standards.

#### On doing good for her family

The prudent wife is one whose husband trusts her, for she does him good and sees that he has no lack of gain (v. 11, 12). This sounds easy because wives naturally want good to come upon their husbands. Yet, we know that the best intentions do not always necessitate the best outcomes. This is where wisdom and prayer come in prominently.

Wisdom is acquired when one reflects and learns from experience, both from one’s own and others’, and from a good, contemplative relationship with God. “Every way of a man is right in his own

eyes, but the Lord weighs the heart” (Prov 21:2). Self-reflection plus reverent prayers go a long way in a wife’s role as a support for the husband’s walk in life and with God.

After years of marriage, husbands and wives tend to become calibrated in their views about a lot of things. Sometimes such a merge may not necessarily be a good thing. Being the one closest to her spouse, who can freely communicate with the husband, the wife should be the one to signal the red alert if the husband’s views are not in accordance with biblical principles.

It is therefore imperative that the prudent wife stay prayerful, maintain a close relationship with God, and try to be objective. There are enough couples in the Bible that collaborated and incurred God’s displeasure; we don’t need more of those.

A prudent wife is one who works hard for her family (v. 13-19). Whether she is a full-time wife or mom, or has a career, she works towards having her family well-provided for. In today’s complex society, I would say that refers not only to physical sustenance like making sure the family has healthy meals; it probably also involves emotional and mental providence for the family. Being there when the children and husband need a firm and feminine support is crucial to their psychological well-being and growth.

**To love another person as yourself and to even give yourself for her is not an easy thing. Adhering to such a principle in everyday life requires an enormous amount of love and self-denial.**

### On self-improvement

She does not “eat the bread of idleness” (v. 27). The idle mind likes to wander—often in trivial, and sometimes in undesirable, directions. One of the favorite activities of an idle mind is gossiping and poking one’s nose into things that are really none of her business.

**Marriage needs two to work. It is a blessing to even have someone to walk life’s path with, so we should strive to make it a pleasant journey.**

When a woman forms a habit of gossiping, it is pathetic. She who has an idle mind is unlikely to be one who can “open her mouth with wisdom” nor have “the law of kindness” on her tongue (v. 26), since gossiping will never improve one’s mind or spirit.

A prudent wife should bring a good name to her husband (v. 23). A gossipy wife will never succeed on that one. Perhaps her husband is known in the gates, but alas, he definitely prefers to be unknown than to be known for having a gossipy wife!

### On public displays of displeasure

One of the things a wife needs to know (or learn) is that she should avoid embarrassing her husband in front of others. I have seen a lot of women who complain openly to others about their husbands, even in their presence.

Sure, we have our complaints. No man is a perfect husband. But, at the very

least, in the presence of others, we should not publicly show our disdain or displeasure. After all, we made the choice to become his wife. As the old saying goes, “do not air dirty linen in public.” Instead of encouraging improvement, public displays of annoyance or dissatisfaction may get habituated and spiral into further self-fulfilling prophecies we have about our husbands.

It is common in today’s world to see wives with better education or greater earning power than their husbands. It is especially important that the more able wife does not flaunt her “superiority” in front of others. Marriage should be founded on mutual respect, so the same goes for the husband on this issue.

### On caring for herself

“She makes tapestry for herself; her clothing is fine linen and purple” (v. 22). At first glance, this verse may appear to contradict an oft-cited verse from 1 Peter 3:3, 4:

*“Do not let your adornment be merely outward . . . or putting on fine apparel—rather let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God.”*

But a closer reading reveals a caveat: a woman’s adornment should not “merely” be outward. Of course, inner beauty is more important than any form of outward beauty. But, inner virtue and outward beauty do not necessarily preclude each other.

It is also ridiculous to infer that the presence of one indicates the absence of the other or that there is any natural relationship whatsoever. These two can definitely co-exist happily and, with all

sympathies, an absence of both in one person is possible as well.

The modern-day equivalent of the woman who makes tapestry for herself and wears fine linen is not the one who wears top designer labels or expensive clothes. Caring for and grooming oneself is the result of self-respect and discipline, not vanity. Being able to care for oneself is the basis of being able to go on to love others.

### THE PRUDENT WIFE—A PERPETUAL WORK IN PROGRESS

Proverbs 19:14 tells us that a prudent wife is from the Lord. No one is born a prudent wife. From the side of the woman, it is something she can learn to become. From the perspective of a man, it is something that he can pray about and choose wisely.

Marriage needs two to work. It is a blessing to even have someone to walk life’s path with, so we should strive to make it a pleasant journey. As life continuously springs surprises on us, working out a beautiful life together requires lots of patience and diligence. May all aspiring prudent wives-to-be find their husbands praying and working hard to be great husbands too!

# *Reflections* on the 2nd National Adult Theological Seminar *part I*

*Therefore say to them, “Thus says the LORD of hosts: ‘Return to Me,’ says the LORD of hosts, ‘and I will return to you,’ says the LORD of hosts. (Zech 1:3)*

This week has been one of the most rewarding days off I have had in a long time. Along with 60-plus other brothers and sisters, I spent seven days at Garden Grove church in California attending the 2nd National Adult Theological Seminar (NATS). Reading from the seminar programs I couldn't help but notice the days were long and the schedule was packed. But after seven 12-hour days, I must say I am more refreshed and energized than when I came. Now, I am going home with a deeper appreciation of and gratitude for God's grace and love, His constant care and protection of His church, His prayer and exhortation of church unity and brotherly love in our lives, as well as a refreshing understanding of the power and necessity of the Holy Spirit in church development and growth.

Among many blessings I received in the seminar, I rank the chance to taste the sweetness and joy of prayer the biggest reward. While I pray daily for various reasons, I rarely spent an hour a day in communicating with God. In NATS, the program provides plenty of opportunity for students to kneel before God for long hours. Thank God for His grace, I was able to have quality prayers and experience peace and joy in the Lord after only one day of long prayers. I now can understand why Peter said to Jesus after His transfiguration, “Lord, it is good for us to be here” (Mt 17:4).

From lectures and discussions, I learned about deeper relations between prayer and God's power in our spiritual journey and servitude. The following two examples left me with the deepest impression:

Exodus 17:9-11 records “‘Tomorrow I will stand on the top of the hill with the rod of God in my hand.’ ... And so it was, when Moses held up his hand, that Israel prevailed; and when he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed.” Careful studies of this event led me to a truth that I was not aware of: the deciding factor of the Israelites' winning or losing was not whether Moses prayed or not. It was linked to whether Moses raised God's name and relied on His authority in his prayer.

Many members believe, because we are God's chosen people, when we pray to God during our needs, God will incline His ears and grant us what we ask. However, reality is often far from this perception and believers are puzzled by the frequency of unanswered prayers in their lives. The answer to this question lies in Zechariah 1:3, which says “Therefore say to them, “Thus says the LORD of hosts: ‘Return to Me,’ says the LORD of hosts, ‘and I will return to you,’ says the LORD of hosts.” Whoever wants his prayer answered by God, he must first examine his deeds, return to God and follow His teachings. ★

*Michael Young—Irvine, California, USA*

# *Reflections* on the 2nd National Adult Theological Seminar part II

Thank God! Attending the National Adult Theological Seminar (NATS) with people close to my age brought a wonderful feeling to me. Be it group Bible study, testimony sessions, discussing experiences of our lives or sharing prayer reflections, we could easily understand each another and reached a resonance. Therefore, I deemed this opportunity to attend NATS an extra blessing upon the abundant daily blessings from our Lord Jesus Christ.

Prayer sessions were the focal point of this NATS. I remembered that I was a bit nervous at the first NATS. I was afraid of not having enough time to study for the test and having no time for a shower. Moreover, I was concerned about the cleaning duty assigned to me. Therefore, I was not able to concentrate on prayer wholeheartedly. I felt much more comfortable this year since I knew how to manage my time better, so I was able to put aside my worldly affairs and focus on seeking for the fullness of the Holy Spirit in my prayers.

On the second day of NATS, one sister privately shared with me a vision in her prayer. In the vision she saw Jesus turn His back to the congregation while we were praying. That meant that our prayers were not pleasing to God. I immediately sensed it was a warning to us! I started to exam myself very thoroughly. The following class was a lesson on the book of Haggai. The preacher happened to mention that if the Lord turned His back to us, we must have turned away from His teaching first; and whenever we repent and return to Him, He will return to us (Mal 3:7).

Thank God! Because of the encouragement of God's word, we all prayed to God and asked for His cleansing and mercy. On the third day, two sisters had a strong sense in their prayers that God was pleased with our prayers and fellowship. Praise the Lord! In the first prayer session on the Sabbath day, I also experienced the abidance of the Lord personally: in spirit, I felt the presence of the Lord. Our Lord, who is filled with enormous wisdom and love, was not far from my side. Even though it was just a short few seconds, such a moving feeling had suddenly strengthened my faith and filled me with great joy.

Besides praying for the fullness of the Holy Spirit, we also joined in interceding for others. We experienced "sowing in tears and reaping in joy" when the person we interceded for received the Holy Spirit.

The lessons from the book of Acts reminded us once again that the development of the True Jesus Church should fully rely on God's Spirit and His truth. We should not emulate other churches nor depend on our own wisdom to plan holy work. The first step is to lead the whole congregation through prayer and walk according to the truth. In addition, with strong fellowship and good coordination of our talents, our church will be prosperous and our members will not be scattered.

The main theme of Leviticus is "holiness." This once again clarifies the basic criteria God asked of His chosen people. We need to deal with our transgressions carefully and pursue the very essence of holiness. Then we are able to offer ourselves as living sacrifices. When offering living sacrifices, we need to pay attention to God's instructions: skin the sacrifice, cut it into pieces, wash the inner parts and offer the head, etc; otherwise, God will not be pleased with our offering. Moreover, we have to be aware that this world is now full of lust and desire for material things. As Christians, we need to go against worldly trends and live a pure life without the addition of "honey" (desire for luxury). Thus, when we encounter any persecutions in the future, we shall be able to overcome them. Take heart!

Elder Ho from the International Assembly not only taught us the glory and mystery of the church from the book of Ephesians, but also shared his precious personal ways of spiritual cultivation. Regarding Bible reading, he said he will often read out loud the epistles of Paul in order to listen to Paul's teachings, and in the four books of the gospel, he listens for the voice of Jesus. Whenever he does not understand what is written in the Bible, he meditates upon them time after time and asks the Holy Spirit to guide him. He takes to heart whatever he learns.

Regarding prayer, he prays every morning. He will read the book of Psalm first before he prays in order to emulate the

child-like heart of David as he cried out for the Lord. David deeply believed in God's mercy and His unceasing love (Lk 11:13). We should pray to God with the same attitude, and we will find our prayers not burdensome. But whenever the desires in our flesh start to work, we need to fast and pray. We have to rely on the Holy Spirit in order to kill the desires of our sinful nature and not allow them to rule over us. Be alert all the time, and only then can the Holy Spirit be continuously filled within us and allow us to enjoy peace and joy as children of God.

During these intense classes, the preachers often added "salt" (some humor) to make the lessons more enjoyable. This way, it made the learning much easier and more impressive.

Praise the Lord for His mercy! It is hard to describe how much I have gained from this NATS. We are deeply grateful to

those from the training department for their thoughtful planning, their implementation of the regulations, and their loving care. We also thank those from the Garden Grove church for their labor in hosting this event. Hopefully, we can all bring back to each local church what we learned and let more people share the benefit of this grace.

As I returned to Houston, I still could not get over the intimate feeling of the fellowship between the brothers and sisters. I hope we will remember each other in our prayers. I am looking forward to going to the 3rd NATS, where we will be able to gather together once again in front of Jesus' feet to enjoy His wonderful mercy and to praise His holy name.★

*Hsiu-Lan Lee—Houston, Texas, USA*



# The *Ladder*

The road of faith that leads to the Savior can be represented as a ladder. The whole length of the ladder stretches from the ground and reaches to the farthest heavens. Because of its length, you are not able to see the very top end—for it is up among the clouds and your view is blocked by these clouds. “Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen” (Heb 11:1). You just have to believe that at the end of this ladder, the Lord Jesus is waiting patiently for you.

At the start of the climb, you are given an empty sack, labeled “the sack of burdens.” This sack is to contain all the burdens and challenges you will face as you progress on this ladder of faith.

As you climb the ladder, there are times you feel that the going is easy. It does not seem like you need to exert much effort at all. Yet at other times, you may feel it is almost impossible to even continue the climb. You take one step ahead but no sooner than you do, you slip back down, and end up at a lower rung than before. You may start to think of giving up, for you know that the higher up the ladder you go, the harder the fall will be, if you fall.

As you continue on this journey of faith, you may take some time out to reflect upon your journey so far. Looking around, you see that of those who started out on this ladder of faith with you, only a few of them are left still climbing. Desperately, you look around for the ones who are missing.

# of Faith

You then realize that they have slipped or fallen off the ladder. Some are wandering aimlessly at the bottom of the ladder and some are badly bruised from their falls. Your heart reaches out to them because you can see their lack of motivation and courage to return to this journey of faith. Some of them even seem to have completely forgotten about this ladder or have hardened their hearts to turn away.

Whatever it is, you must continue the climb, as no one can do it on your behalf. You may be blessed with people who are there for you, to offer support and encouragement during times when you feel too tired to go on. Nevertheless, you have to reach the top of the ladder yourself. You need to find the motivation from inside of yourself, for those around you may not always be there.

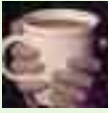
Going up further, you may find that each step gets harder and harder and your sack of burdens gets increasingly heavier. What do you do? The decision is yours. God does not force anything upon you. You could choose to let yourself slip down the ladder because you are too scared to try any more. Or, you could reach out to Jesus.

Do you cry out to Jesus when you feel you cannot carry on? Do you cry out when you have lost all hope? Do you ask Him to carry your burdens as you feel your heart is going to break? Do you pour your heart out before Jesus?

As you pray to the Savior for help, His reply is always clear. He is always beside you. At the very beginning, he was at the bottom of the ladder with you. He has been with you ever since. He was the voice in your heart urging you to carry on, that all your effort and tears will be worth it. All that is needed of you is to reach out and open your heart to Him.

Once you open your heart to Him, the journey on this ladder of faith does not seem as daunting as before. The higher you climb, the stronger the hope in you grows. You will hear a voice saying, "You are almost there, my child. Just keep going."





Manna is looking for certain types of articles, or article genres. Each genre constitutes a different subject matter and writing approach. If you are planning to write an article (regardless of topic), please try to adhere to one of the genres below.

### Christian Living

A *Christian Living* article gives practical biblical guidance on real-life issues and how to use Jesus' teachings in our daily lives. Article length: 1500-2000 words.

### Bible Study

A *Bible Study* explores a passage or character from the Bible and draws out the teachings for readers to apply to their lives. Article length: 2000 words.

### Doctrinal Study

A *Doctrinal Study* examines an aspect of True Jesus Church beliefs and may present it in comparison to other beliefs. Article length: 2000 words.

### Exhortation

An *Exhortation* encourages and admonishes the reader in different aspects of the Christian faith. Article length: 1500-2000 words.

### Testimony

A *Testimony* recounts an experience in the Lord that will encourage and edify the reader. Article length: 1000-1500 words.

### Creative Writing

*Creative Writing* pieces include poems, parables, or short stories that illustrate a biblical teaching or idea. Keep in mind as you're writing: how will this edify the reader?

#### SUBMISSION INFORMATION

Please email electronic files of articles (Word, Wordperfect, ASCII text) to [manna@tjc.org](mailto:manna@tjc.org), or send hardcopy and disk to:

**Manna**  
**General Assembly of True Jesus Church**  
**314 S. Brookhurst St, #104**  
**Anaheim, CA 92804 USA**

Please direct any questions to [manna@tjc.org](mailto:manna@tjc.org) or  
Phone: +1-714-533-8808  
Fax: +1-714-533-8878

In your submission, please include your name, mailing address, email address, and telephone number even if you wish to remain anonymous.

# Call For Articles

## Author Guidelines & Editorial Calendar

### Issue #55

**Theme: What Really Matters**

**Articles due: October 1, 2007**

This theme will address what our priorities should be, according to the Bible. Articles should cover how we find God's purpose for us, and practical guidelines for accomplishing our purpose. This applies to all members, from adults to children and teens as well. Today, our lives are full with work, school and other activities. Do our ambitions cause us to compromise our faith? Do we leave God our leftovers? Even when serving God, we need to determine whether the work we do is what God wants from us. Articles should address how we can integrate God into our school-life and work-life.

### Issue #56

**Theme: In the World, Not of the World**

**Articles due: January 1, 2008**

This theme addresses how believers can live as separate from the world, yet still be able to go into the world. How do we obey these seemingly contradictory commands from Jesus? Articles should cover how to reach out to others without conforming to them, and how to befriend others without trying to convert them all the time. Use examples from the Bible of people who were able to live in the world and yet not be of the world (Joseph, Daniel). How should members view politics and trends?

### Issue #57

**Theme: Holidays**

**Articles due: April 1, 2008**

This theme will address principles and guidelines for members to determine whether we should or should not celebrate certain holidays. Articles should separate the truth from tradition, and give facts on the origins of different holidays (Halloween, Christmas, Chinese New Year etc). The focus for members should be on what God wants from us, not what we want. What can we learn from the religious feasts God established in the OT? To what extent are our actions on a holiday considered celebrating it? What are the biblical truths regarding holidays and religious holidays?

*In your submission, please include your name, mailing address, email address, and telephone number.*

## GENERAL WRITING GUIDELINES

### CONTENT

- Content should be biblically sound and adhere to biblical principles.
- Article should be organized and have a logical flow of thought.
- The main point or teaching of the article should be clear to the reader.
- Readers should be able to apply what they have read to their daily lives.

### GRAMMAR/STYLE

- Use active instead of passive voice.
- Write concisely.
- Use concrete words and ideas instead of abstract concepts.
- Use "plain old English" instead of obscure, academic language.
- Use the NKJV version when quoting Bible verses.
- Use American spelling, if possible.
- Adhere to the IA Style Guide, except for He/Him when referring to God/Jesus.



# True Jesus Church

## Articles of Faith

### Jesus the True God

The One True God was manifested in the flesh. He is the Lord Jesus Christ, who died on the cross for the redemption of sinners, was resurrected on the third day, and ascended to heaven. He is the only Savior of mankind, the Creator of the heavens and the earth, and the only True God.

### Holy Bible

The Old and New Testaments of the Holy Bible are inspired by God and are therefore the only authentic scriptures which testify to the Truth.

### Church

The True Jesus Church was established by our Lord Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit (the Latter Rain) and is the revival of the True Church of the Apostolic Days.

### Salvation

Salvation is given by grace through faith. However, it is necessary to rely on the Holy Spirit to pursue holiness and to keep the biblical teachings of honoring God and loving humanity.

### Baptism

The Baptism of Water is the sacrament for the remission of sins and for regeneration. The baptist must already have received baptisms of water and the Holy Spirit. The baptism must be immersion in natural, living water and must be administered in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ, with the candidate's head facing downward.

### Foot Washing

The Washing of Feet is a sacrament which enables one to have a part in the Lord and teaches mutual love, holiness, humility, service, and forgiveness. The sacrament of the washing of feet must be performed in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ to all newly baptized members. Mutual washing of feet may be practiced when necessary.

### Holy Spirit

The baptism of the Holy Spirit is a prerequisite for entering heaven; speaking in tongues is the evidence of having received the Holy Spirit.

### Holy Communion

The Holy Communion is the sacrament to commemorate the death of the Lord Jesus Christ. It enables us to partake of the flesh and blood of our Lord and to be in communion with Him so that we may have eternal life and be raised on the last day. This sacrament should be held as often as possible. Only one unleavened bread and grape juice should be used.

### Sabbath Day

The Sabbath Day, the seventh day of the week (Saturday), is a holy day, blessed and sanctified by God. It is to be observed under the Lord's grace for the commemoration of God's creation and redemption and with the hope of eternal rest.

### Judgment Day

The Lord Jesus Christ will descend from heaven on the Last Day to judge all people; the righteous will receive eternal life, while the wicked will be eternally condemned.

## TRUE JESUS CHURCH CONTACT INFORMATION

For additional information on the True Jesus Church, contact us or visit us on our website. We look forward to hearing from you!

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