

CALVARY NEWS

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The Secret of Successful Living— Fruit Bearing

By Senior Pastor Prince Guneratnam

“I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful. You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me” (John 15:1-40).

There are at least three things you can do with your life. Firstly, you can waste it.

This is depicted in the parable of the Prodigal Son. Jesus said, “Not long after that, the younger son got together all he had, set off for a distant country and there squandered his wealth in wild living” (Luke 15:13). He wasted his life. **Secondly, you can spend it.** In the parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus (Luke 16:19-31). Jesus said, “The time came when the beggar died and the angels carried him to Abraham’s side. The rich man also died and was buried. In hell, where he was in torment, he looked up and saw Abraham faraway, with Lazarus by his side” (verses 22-23). Lazarus, though poor materially, had obviously made the right investments whilst the rich man made only earthly investments without considering that one day he would meet his Maker who would ask him what he did with his life. Jesus said, “But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal” (Matthew 6:20). **Thirdly, you can invest it.** In the parable of the Talents (Matthew 25:14-30), Jesus commended the two servants who put the talents given to them to work and gained more. The tremendous spiritual truth in this parable is that you are to be a faithful steward of all your God-given talents.



You must decide how you want to live your life.

The secret to living a fruitful life is to know your God-given identity—who you are and why you are here. That was Jesus’ secret of success. Jesus knew why He came, where He came from and where He was going. “Jesus knew that the time had come for him to leave this world and go to the Father...Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God” (John 13:1, 3). Similarly, knowing who you are as a Christian and your reason for

being will help you lead a fruitful life. In chapter 15 of the Gospel of John, Jesus used a picture of a branch to describe a Christian because it typifies the Christian’s identity in relation to Jesus Christ, the Vine. You are a branch and you are here to bear fruit.

Understanding the following four facts about the branch will help you lead a fruitful life.

Firstly, the branch is dependent. It is of the vine but it is not the vine. You, as a Christian, are dependent on Christ. You must draw from His life,

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**SENIOR/
EXECUTIVE PASTOR**
Datuk Dr Prince Guneratnam



**SENIOR
ASSOCIATE PASTOR**
Datin Dr Petrina Guneratnam

Introducing the 2003 Heads of Departments/Ministries




Departments

		EDUCATION & Calvary College			
MISSIONS	PASTORAL CARE	Students' Ministry	Carpenter's Workshop	MUSIC & CREATIVE ARTS	
Associate Pastor Peter Ong	Associate Pastor Timothy Ong	Associate Pastor Steven Kum	Associate Pastor Richard Yun	Associate Pastor Christopher Lee	
					
					
Assistant Department Head Assistant Pastor Susan Tan	HOSPITALITY Assistant Pastor Raymond Yong	Royal Rangers & Missionettes Jim Guneratnam	Calvary Nursery Care Vivia Teh	Christ's Ambassadors Adrian Lee	MEMBERSHIP Kiang Teck Chin <i>Chairperson</i>

Church/Extended Ministries

ASIAN INSTITUTE OF MINSTRIES Associate Pastor Steven Kum <i>President</i>	CALVARY LIFE MINISTRIES Pam Lee <i>Director</i>	CALVARY COMMUNICATION Jim Guneratnam <i>Director</i>	CALVARY PRAYER TOWER Karen Seah Lee Peng <i>Coordinator</i>	CALVARY CARING MINISTRY Yow Kit Yen <i>Coordinator</i>
				
				
CALVARY SUNSHINE HOME Chew Siew Keng <i>Home Supervisor</i>	CALVARY CHURCH PRESS Michael Eng <i>Administrator</i>	CALVARY BOOK CORNER Monica Chang <i>Administrator</i>	CALVARYLAND Winslow Wong <i>Administrative Manager</i>	

Language Ministries

	BAHASA MALAYSIA Assistant Pastor David Seah
	CHINESE Belinda Ho
	FILIPINO Kay Lim



LG leaders interacting over the icebreakers in Calvary Church Ampang...



...and the Calvary Church Damansara Perdana premises

Life Group leaders celebrate!

The Life Group (LG) leaders came together over two Saturdays at the Ampang Satellite Church and the new Calvary Church Damansara Perdana premises respectively to celebrate and to give God the glory for blessing them and their LG members.

The leaders were given the opportunity to know one another better through the icebreaker. They evidently enjoyed picking one another's brains over the "Quickie Quiz" and Senior Associate Pastor Petrina gave away prizes for the two winning teams. The presence of Senior Pastor Prince Guneratnam and the Associate Pastors was an encouragement to all the LG leaders.

Senior Pastor reminded the leaders that the recent spate of world events are undeniably end times signs that serve to emphasise the truth in the Bible. Each leader was challenged to testify, take heed and be patient in the ministry until the Lord returns. He also shared on the Church's expansion plans and exhorted all to continue to pray for the Church in this respect before he concluded in prayer for all the leaders.

Senior Associate Pastor Petrina Guneratnam praying for the faithful leaders



Senior Pastor Prince Guneratnam encouraging the leaders



Worshipping the Lord at Calvary Church Damansara Perdana premises

Another highlight of the programme was the testimonies that were creatively presented by seven LG leaders. These leaders differed in personalities and lead different LGs, yet their testimonies point to the powerful reality of a God who touches and changes lives.

One Chinese LG leader who is a homemaker, shared how a seemingly unimportant visitation to a ten year old girl led to the salvation of souls from four generations of the girl's family. Her parents were saved, then her grandparents and most recently, her great grandmother who is over 90 years old gave her life to Jesus!

For the newer LG leaders, the testimonies presented also provided

practical tips and lessons in trusting and believing God. The leaders were much encouraged by the wonderful sense of unity and purpose in the LG ministry through the sincere sharing of each testimony. They have ended the year with much to thank God for and are expecting a greater blessing and growth in the coming year ! 🙏

If you have a desire to serve the Lord with your giftings and talents, there are ample opportunities in the LG Ministry.

For more information on how you can get involved, please call the Pastoral Care Department @ **03-2099 7135** or **03-2099 7136**.

Figuring out how to put up their tent!



The Rangers & Missionettes

enjoy the great outdoors!

By Jim Guneratnam

The Royal Rangers Annual Camp was held at the Forest Reserve Institute of Malaysia (FRIM) from 14 to 16 November 2002. Forty-eight Rangers and Commanders together with 12 Missionettes from the Friends club and their Sponsors, who were specially invited for the camp, spent three days and two nights camping in tents and enjoying the great outdoors.

The activities for the camp included a visit to the FRIM Museum, a nature hike, games, cooking and various camp crafts. The highlight of the concluding night was a campfire with the theme, "Hawaiian Night" and a BBQ. We praise God for blessing us with excellent weather throughout the camp but especially during the campfire.

The various programmes and activities built on the camp theme, "Favour with God and Men". Assistant Pastor David Seah ministered each night on developing a deeper relationship with God. Praise God for the three who received salvation and the six who rededicated their lives to God during the camp. The morning devotions were shared by Councilman Lim Sew Hock and Assistant Pastor Susan Tan. As part of the Royal Rangers programme, the camp provided for the spiritual, physical, mental and social needs of the Rangers and Missionettes. All went home looking forward to the next year's camp! 🏹



Dressed up for "Hawaiian Night"

Assistant Pastor David Seah ministering in the night sessions

CW 2J (Age 13) Graduating Class Retreat

The CW Graduating Class learns to shine for Jesus!

By Felix Chang and Lydia Pathmanathan

Thursday, 28 November 2002

9am

All the 19 boys and 13 girls met at Calvary Church Damansara Heights. Associate Pastor Richard Yun briefed us on the Retreat rules and instructions before he prayed for us.

9.25am

We boarded the bus and were on our way!

11am

We stopped at a fishing village at Pasir Panambang for an educational tour. We saw cockles being transferred from a fishing boat onto an area for washing. Some of us bought dried foodstuff and prawn crackers.



12.30pm

Lunchtime! We had a picnic lunch at Bukit Melawati, on top of a hill surrounded by beautiful scenery. The chicken wings were delicious! After lunch, we got to know one another through an icebreaker game and were divided into four teams—red, yellow, blue and green.

1.45pm

Finally, we arrived at our destination—De Palma Inn. After settling into our chalets, some of us went for a swim and had an exciting game of water polo!

6.30pm

Dinnertime.



7.30pm

Our first night session began. Retreat speaker, Assistant Pastor Susan Tan, shared a powerful message asking us to trust our parents because they are the ones who will lead and guide us to live in the light to shine for Jesus. We need to draw close to God and to understand the purpose of our salvation. Praise God that 25 of us rededicated our lives to God at the altar after confessing our sins to God and asking Him to do a deeper work in our lives.

Friday, 29 November 2002

7.30am

Rise and shine! Most of us did not sleep till 4am because we were talking and having fun.

8.30am

We had our breakfast.

9am

Pastor Susan shared a devotional thought with us. Even though we were tired and sleepy, God woke us up to listen to His Word and we were amazed by His power and grace! Pastor Susan and the teachers prayed for us and we felt God's presence with us.

12.30pm

Lunchtime!

1pm

We had a treasure hunt and we ran around the resort trying to find clues to help us find the "treasure". Most of us swam and played water polo.

6.30pm

Dinnertime.

7.30pm

After worship, Brother Adrian Lee, the other Retreat speaker, shared another powerful message. We learnt that we should be the light of the world and shine for Jesus but we cannot do it without the power of Jesus in us. God was so merciful to us. He showed us His love through His presence. We wanted more of Jesus in our lives. All of us responded to the altar call. Pastor Susan, Brother Adrian and the teachers prayed for us. The Lord touched us all. His presence was so real and powerful and we cried. We thank God that Yap Hon Ken was baptised in the Holy Spirit. After the altar call, each team presented a skit. There was much laughter and we had such fun.

After supper, we went back to our chalets for more fellowship. Most of us were tired and this time, went straight to bed!

Saturday, 30 November 2002

7.30am

Rise and shine!

8.30am

We had our breakfast.

9am

Brother Adrian shared a devotional thought with us.

12.30pm

Lunchtime! After lunch we started to pack up. While we were doing this, we thought about what God had done throughout the Retreat. He gave us good weather. He was with us and He has done a great and mighty work in our spiritual lives. He has drawn us closer to Him. Our friendship with one another also grew. We thank God for Pastor Susan, Brother Adrian, Teacher Yee Yuet Hoh, Brother Edwin and our Retreat chaperones, Brother Edmund and Sister Helen Read for being such a great blessing to us.

1.30pm

Time to check out and head for Christ's Ambassadors service at Church! And we were blessed there too! 🙏



Calvary Youth explore the Paya Indah Wetlands Sanctuary



By David Tan

A day filled with wonder and fun awaited a bunch of 80 youths as they set out on their journey to the Paya Indah Wetlands Sanctuary on 26 October 2002. Upon arrival, the youths were ferried to the "Rumah Melayu Terengganu" to experience the sights and settings of the traditional Malay home.

The day was filled with exciting activities, such as biking, "kayaking" and boat paddling. There was even a centre for batik painting. Some youths and even Associate Pastor Steven Kum, tried their hand at it. There were also other attractions such as horseback riding, a crocodile lake which is home to 15 of the reptiles and a hippopotamus lake where four hippos resided. The wetlands also claims to be a habitat for a wide variety of birds, fishes and plants.

Most were tired by 4pm when they boarded the bus for home but glad that they had gone for the trip. It was definitely an eye-opening experience for all. Praise and glory to God for a safe and wonderful outing! 🙏

Filipino Life Groups hold a Thanksgiving Service

The Filipino Life Groups held their Annual Thanksgiving Service on Sunday, 24 November 2002 at Calvary Church Ampang at Wisma Central.

To celebrate what God has done among the Life Groups, the Filipino Choir rendered two songs in Tagalog and English, Senior Pastor Prince Guneratnam's message, "God's Will Is To Bless" was very appropriate for the occasion. God has put His name on us and we too are called to bless others.

Thirteen received awards in recognition of their completion of the ICI (International Correspondence Institute) courses and five for attending the My Faith class. In 2002, five were baptised in water and four received Church membership. These served to encourage others to also be involved.

Senior Pastor and Senior Associate Pastor Petrina Guneratnam presented the Coordinator, Kay Lim, with a bouquet of flowers to thank her for her faithfulness and dedication to the Filipino Ministry. Later, both Pastors joined in



The 13 who completed ICI courses this year the celebration lunch.

Twelve members testified how God has been faithful to them and their families and how they have been blessed by attending the LG. On hearing these encouraging testimonies, Associate Pastor Timothy Ong, of the Pastoral Care Department, felt that the decision three years ago to start three LGs was indeed a wise one as it has benefited many in their spiritual and individual development. 🙏

Diligently studying the schedules!



Praise God for these committed participants who came for practices not just on Sunday afternoons but even on weekdays whenever required.

The preparation



Senior Pastor praying for all the participants at one of their practices



Christmas is JESUS

24 December 2002

7.30pm & 10pm

Dewan Wawasan

Menara PGRM

Calvary Church reaches out to the city of Kuala Lumpur

By Audrey Kum Photographs by Kenneth Hiew & Audrey Kum

In the busy-ness of the season, many lose sight of the simplicity and peacefulness of Christmas. Many people leave Jesus out of Christmas for a variety of reasons. This year, Calvary Church presented a musical, "Christmas Is JESUS" as a means to reach out to our loved ones and friends who do not know the One—Jesus—who is the reason for the season.

As with all our other musical presentations over the past 18 years, whether for Christmas or Easter, the Calvarites must be commended for giving their time and talents to bring the Gospel to our city. On hot Sunday afternoons when it is nap-time for the majority of us, 100 adults and 60 children who made up the choir, the 50 members of the Dance and Drama ensemble and 57 members of the Worship Orchestra, faithfully came together to practise. In productions of this scale, many more people are involved, from those who direct to the technical crew and stage managers.

Praise God for parents who encourage their children from a young age to be involved in the work of God. They patiently ferry their kids to and from practices and presentations and some participate as a family. Praise God too for those serving as ushers, altar workers, security and grounds personnel,



Backstage—dedicating themselves for service just before the curtain goes up



The presentation



Associate Pastor Christopher Lee conducting the Calvary Worship Orchestra which provided live music



Carollers welcoming the children who had their own programme



intercessors and those helping with parking facilities. Only in heaven will we be able to see the far-reaching effects of all this commitment!

This year, for the first time, we held two presentations on one night at Dewan Wawasan in Menara PGRM. Children aged four to nine years had their own programme at Dewan Pulau Pinang.

Teams of carollers stationed at the main



entrance, the lift foyer and the Dewan Wawasan foyer, greeted all who came, with Christmas carols, preparing us for a time of worship before the presentation began.

If the audience was expecting to see the characters in traditional costumes, they must have been surprised. Joseph, Mary and the shepherds, among others, were all in modern-day dress—trench coats, jackets, T-shirts of various shades of blue and black jeans! Visually, it seemed that we were witnessing an event set in the 21st century. However, the Christmas story portrayed in this manner still succeeded in bringing across the message of the Father's gift of love through His Son, Jesus.

In one scene, there was a man in Jerusalem whom God promised would see the Messiah before he died. While this man, Simeon, watched every



An agile Isaiah!



Simeon finally sees the Messiah



child that entered, wondering each time if that was the One, there were others who went to the Temple seeking answers from God. Some faced dead ends, some lost hope because friends did not keep their promises and some felt abandoned and ignored. To these, and to those present in the audience, the narrators boldly proclaimed that Jesus, the Hope of mankind, would reach down in His love to anyone who would readily acknowledge Him as Saviour and Lord of their lives.

Senior Pastor Prince Guneratnam, when giving his Christmas message, told the audience that when God created man, the first thing He did was to bless them. He explained that with these three blessings

The purpose



Senior Pastor Prince Guneratnam sharing the Word



found in Genesis 1:28, man has all he needs to succeed in life and live victoriously.

The first blessing, "Be fruitful and multiply," speaks of God's will for man to enjoy marriage and children.

The second blessing, "Fill the earth and subdue it," tells us of God's intention for man to govern and to take charge of the earth as God's steward.

The third blessing, "Have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth," indicates that God has blessed man to be the head and ruler of the earth. However, man disobeyed God and sinned and became slave to sin, the world and to the devil.

He then shared the good news that Jesus is God's plan for man's salvation. Jesus blessed many during His ministry on earth and went about doing good. Before He ascended to heaven, His last act was to bless the disciples. Jesus still blesses today if we let Him into our hearts.

At Senior Pastor's invitation, many in the audience left their seats and headed to the altar to receive Christ and His blessings.



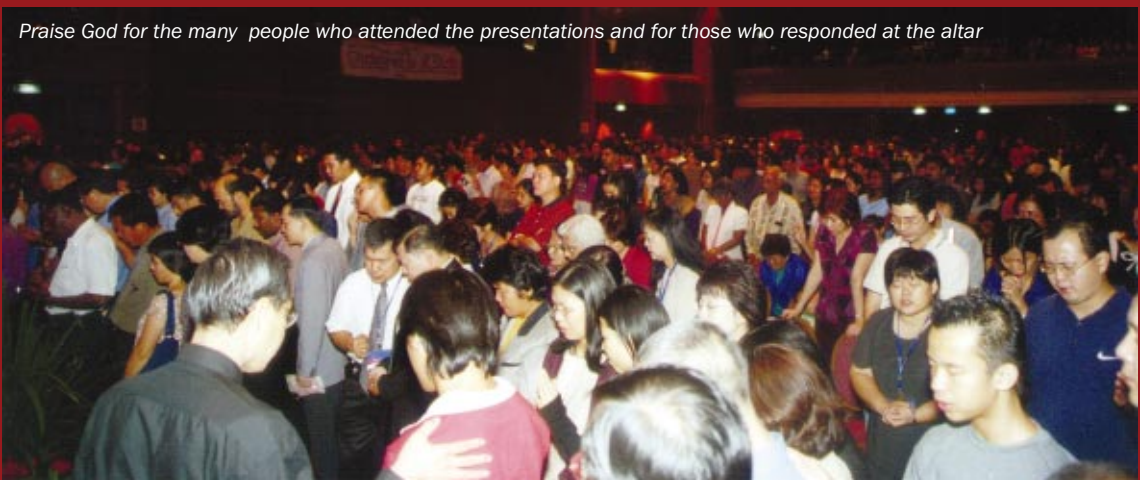
We thank God for the wonderful response at the altar during both presentations! We praise Him for giving us the privilege to share His love with these precious people! 🙏



Associate Pastor Steven Kum and the participants wishing everyone a "Blessed Christmas"



Praise God for the many people who attended the presentations and for those who responded at the altar



The audience in the overflow room and in the gallery



Our Senior Pastor, CFM Chairman, Datuk Dr Prince Guneratnam addressing guests of honour, Prime Minister, YAB Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and Datuk Seri Dr Siti Hasmah, other dignitaries and representatives of various embassies and religious organisations who attended the function on 25 December 2002

Christian Federation of Malaysia (CFM) hosts Christmas reception at Calvary Church

The guests listening to Christmas carols presented by the singers and musicians from Calvary Church conducted by Associate Pastor Christopher Lee



The Prime Minister greeting the senior citizens and other invited special groups



Senior Pastor greeting Vaphilingam, President of Hindu Sangam with Harcharan Singh, Chairman of the Sikh community looking on



Left to right: Rt Rev Tan sri Dr Lim Cheng Ean, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and Datuk dr Prince Guneratnam



Left to right: Dato' Rosie Tan, our Senior Associate Pastor, Datin Dr Petrina Guneratnam and Datuk Seri Dr Siti Hasmah

The Men and Women combine their prayers

By Audrey Kum

Something powerful happens when the people of God pray. On Saturday, 30 November 2002, 125 men and women set aside time to worship and to seek the Lord corporately at the Combined Men's and Women's Prayer Rally. Senior Associate Pastor Petrina Guneratnam shared some thoughts on prayer that afternoon. She turned our attention towards Jesus, a great example of one who prayed. "Jesus recognised the importance of prayer," she said. He rose early to pray—a sacrifice that He made in order to seek the Father.

Jesus certainly understands what it is to have a demanding schedule. Multitudes daily came to hear Him and to be healed by Him (Luke 5:15-16). Jesus knew that without communion with God, He would be "running on empty". The signs and wonders that He did were preceded by prayer. Pastor Petrina shared an interesting observation of the way Jesus prayed. He spent much time praying long prayers to the Father in private but His prayers in public were very short. She noted that these days, many do the reverse!

Besides praying alone, Pastor Petrina emphasised the importance of praying with our families and with others. Prayer strengthens relationships. She illustrated this with a diagram of a triangle with God on the top and various combinations of people forming the base. She pointed out that as these, husbands and wives, parents and children, siblings, relatives, friends,

Darshan Singh Sidhu

Mekand Kaur

Shereen Wong moderating the interview



became so severe that he could not sleep at night. He went for a medical check-up but they could not find anything wrong with him. The pain persisted and finally at the advice of Church friends, he went to the "Institut

Darshan shared that his life has changed as a result of what he went through. He used to put God second but now, God comes first in his life. He had been smoking for more than 30 years and could not give up the habit but this



Group prayer in groups of three

employers and employees, moved closer to God through prayer, they would automatically move closer to each other.

She concluded with a reminder that prayerlessness is not a weakness but a sin because it is telling God that we can live our lives independently without His help.

Darshan Singh Sidhu and his wife Mekand encouraged us with a wonderful testimony of what God can do in our families though the power of prayer. Mekand was in Australia with her children when she had a dream that Darshan was very ill and knew that she had to go home immediately. Back in Malaysia, Darshan was experiencing pain in his arm in April. The pain

Jantung Negara" (IJN). While they were doing the angiogram, his breathing stopped and he vomitted blood. He was afraid and thought that his time was up. He was unconscious for two days and when he woke up and saw his children Jack and Pam, he thought there must be something very wrong with him for them to fly back from Australia. He was scared as the three patients in the ward with him did not make it. He prayed to the Lord to give him a second chance. God heard his prayer and the prayers of the many who prayed for him. By the time he went for the heart by-pass operation in July, he was not afraid. He thanked God that he recovered very fast!



Praying at the altar

time God has helped him to stop smoking. He calculated that he spent about RM42,000 on cigarettes and he had to spend another RM43,000 to recover his health! Now, he tells people not to smoke. Mekand had been praying for many years for Darshan and she thanked God that He answered her prayers.

The choir made up of members of the Men's and Women's Ministries sang aptly, "Join your hands with mine, let our faith combine for in prayer there is nothing impossible..." Indeed, God works miracles when His people pray. 🙏





Sin and salvation

By Earl Creps

“Man was created good and upright; for God said, ‘Let us make man in our own image, after our likeness.’ However, man by voluntary transgression fell and thereby incurred not only physical death but also spiritual death, which is separation from God.”

“Salvation is received through repentance toward God and faith toward the Lord Jesus Christ. By the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost, being justified by grace through faith, man becomes an heir of God, according to the hope of eternal life.”

Sin has a bad name. Even using the word seems to imply ignorance and bigotry in contemporary culture. It's fine for an individual to have strong feelings about values, but it is definitely not fine to “impose” those preferences on others.

Despite these objections, moral sensitivity does seem to be hardwired into the human soul. While no culture has cornered the market on personal standards, every person has the ability to sense when things are not right. Anyone who did not believe that on September 10 was converted on September 11. Individuals who lose this ability are considered sociopaths. Sin is for real.

Three realities of sin

To appreciate how God can rescue us from this force, we need to understand what it is and what it does. Three complementary views of sin help us grasp the scope of its destructive nature.

Legal: Sin as crime. God has established certain “laws” of conduct (e.g., the Ten Commandments) and we commit sin by disobeying them. In this sense, transgressing God's law is a spiritual “crime” that incurs punishment. This may be the most widely held view both inside and outside the church.

Indeed, we have all “fallen short” of the character of God ([Romans 3:23](#)). The Bible uses the metaphor of sheep to describe us as wayward and self-willed. And that's the point—my stepping over the boundaries God has provided for my welfare and peace of mind says that I have decided to replace Him as the sovereign of my

life. One commentator describes this as living as though God does not exist. The offense is not just in the deed, but in the rebellion it represents. Our deeds reveal who we are, fallen beings mired in selfishness and exploitation.

Relational: Sin as alienation. The peace and joy that flow from knowing God intimately are simply unavailable when we demand control of our lives. This breakdown with our Heavenly Father distances us from Him and makes the human race the ultimate dysfunctional family.

Jesus illustrated this with a story about a young man who demanded his inheritance prematurely and used it to abandon his family for a life of self-gratification ([Luke 15:11-32](#)). With everything he could ever want in hand, he walked away, preferring control over a pittance to a fortune gained by loyalty.

Alienation leads to deprivation. The young man started off feasting with rented friends but ultimately found himself feeding with the pigs. Eventually the consequences of our separation from God will catch up with us as well. If I refuse to be reconciled to Him, He will allow my condition to become permanent in the form of eternal separation.

Volitional: Sin as slavery. The self-centered life promises freedom but delivers the opposite. One of the most destructive aspects of sin is its ability to dominate us, to take away our choices, our volition.

Sin is much more than discrete deeds such as holding up a convenience store. The Bible also describes it as a dark force that controls our hearts and reinforces our selfishness. In its most overt forms, it manifests itself as addiction, violence or injustice. Paul describes this bondage in stark terms: “The sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so. Those controlled by the sinful nature cannot please God” ([Romans 8:7,8](#)). Ironically, the more I grasp for freedom, the stronger the chains that bind me. Sin and self-centeredness feed on each other.

If sin can be an act of transgression against God, a state of alienation from God, and a form of

spiritual slavery, where do we turn for hope? The good news of the gospel is that there is salvation larger than our sin!

Three realities of salvation

God's love for us is so profound that He simply refuses to abandon us in this condition. We can know this because He sent His Son Jesus to bring us "salvation" in many forms.

Let off: Salvation as pardon. Sin and judgment have a cause and effect relationship. In His mercy, the Father sent Jesus to pay the price for all our violations of His divine law. **First John 2:1,2** describes Him as "the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world."

By dying on the cross as a substitute for us, Jesus has made it possible for God to extend a full pardon to all those who trust in Him.

This is the essence of forgiveness. God supplies it by grace, giving us what we need rather than what we deserve. We receive this gift by giving up on our self-governance (repenting) and reaching out to God with whatever faith we have. Any believing heart will find forgiveness in God through Christ.

Coming home: Salvation as reconciliation. Our Heavenly Father recognizes that personal alienation is a recipe for heartbreak. He is grieved by the distance we maintain from Him, and, like the father who was deserted by his son in Jesus' story, God longs for us to return home.

The wayward son's road trip did not prove to be permanent. He came to his senses and returned home. Instead of confrontation, his father ran to meet the son, clothed him, fed him, and invited the rest of the family to celebrate his return. Alienation was at an end!

It also ends in Christ. Faith in Jesus allows the Father to "adopt" us into His family as His own sons and daughters (**Ephesians 1:5**). Even our alienation from other people can be healed in Christ as He becomes "our peace, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, by abolishing in his flesh the law with its commandments and regulations"

(**Ephesians 2:14,15a**). On the cross, Jesus demolished the walls of human alienation as well as the sin barrier that separated us from our Father in heaven. When my faith meets God's grace, He receives me with the same joy as the father who welcomed home his rebellious son.

Set Free: Salvation as deliverance.

All of the things we do to take control of our lives, to gratify our wants, are subtle forms of slavery. These bondages are so severe that rescuing ourselves from them is impossible. The power of sin is so great that Paul cried out, "What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death?" (**Romans 7:24**).

He went on to answer his own question: "Thanks be to God—through Jesus Christ our Lord! ... Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death" (**Romans 7:25 through 8:2**).

Jesus has come to break the power of every kind of darkness that holds the human heart captive. In Christ, God "has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves" (**Colossians 1:13**). Jesus' death on the cross has broken the power of sin and His resurrection has provided us a new life of freedom and peace.

Pardon releases us from the guilt of sinful deeds. Reconciliation restores our broken relationship with God and others. Deliverance frees us from bondage to sin's power. All of this is possible because of the Cross and is available to us by faith. "How shall we escape if we ignore such a great salvation?" (**Hebrews 2:3**). 📌

Earl Creps is director of the Doctor of Ministry program at Assemblies of God Theological Seminary in Springfield, Mo.

This is the third in a series of eight monthly articles on the 16 Foundational Truths of the Assemblies of God, written by faculty of Assemblies of God Theological Seminary for the Pentecostal Evangel

Precious Jewels

On 10 November 2002, Senior Pastor Prince Guneratnam had the joy of dedicating four babies to the Lord at Calvary Church Damansara Heights. Praise God for parents who recognise the importance of giving their children to the Lord!

Kimberly Foong Yar Lee

Parents: Thompson & Rachel Foong



Chester Looi Mun Ho

Parents: Looi Wing Wah & Wendy Lim



Amanda Soo Wei Xuan

Parents: Soo Tong Hui & Janis Lim



Karsten Yap Wei Jun

Parents: Yap Tze Khong & Leng Hui Peng



strength and abilities just like the branch whose survival hinges on the vine. Jesus said, “I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full” (John 10:10). Paul said, “I can do everything through him who gives me strength” (Philippians 4:13).

Secondly, the branch has the ability to receive the nutrients from the vine and the responsibility to use and give what it receives. You, as the branch, can receive what Jesus, the Vine, supplies. Jesus said, “I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me, you can do nothing” (John 15:5).

Thirdly, the branch is a beneficiary. Everything that the branch has is an inheritance. The branch has no ability to do anything on its own. Similarly, the Christian inherits blessings and gifts. The Bible says, “Praise to God and father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ” (Ephesians 1:3). Your inheritance is not based on merit but on your relationship with Jesus Christ. You are heirs and joint-heirs with Christ (Romans 8:17). Through Christ, you have the power to become everything you can be. You are the beneficiary of His blessings. Paul says in Philippians 4:19, “And my God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus.”

Fourthly, the success of the branch is from the vine. The vine promotes and gives the branch success and victory. The apostle Paul said, “But by the grace of God, I am what I am, and his grace to me was not without effect. No, I worked harder than all of them—yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me” (1 Corinthians 15:10). Paul recognised that he was a branch and that when he yielded to the Vine, he experienced success and victory by the grace of God.

The purpose of the branch is to bear fruit. A Christian who has a strong relationship with Jesus, the Vine, will bear the following fruits:

1. The fruit of holiness

Holiness is the beauty and character of God displayed in your daily life. “But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves to God, the benefit you reap

leads to holiness, and the result is eternal life” (Romans 6:22). You do not produce it on your own. If you do, you are producing the piety of the Pharisees (Matthew 5:20).

There are two aspects to holiness—negative and positive. The negative aspect speaks of purification—putting off the Adamic nature. “Since we have these promises, dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God” (2 Corinthians 7:1). “But now you must rid yourselves of all such things as these; anger, rage, malice, slander and filthy language from your lips. Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator” (Colossians 3:8-10).

The positive aspect speaks of what a Christian can and must do.” Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience” (Colossians 3:12). Holiness is to the inner man what wealth is to the outer man. If holiness is only found on the outside, it is hypocrisy. God has invested His holiness in you. You need to work it out and become what He wants you to be. Be a branch and bear what the Vine is capable of producing through you.

2. The fruit of godly Christian character

The branch depends on the Vine to produce godly Christian character. “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law” (Galatians 5:22-23). The world has substitutes for these fruits. They may have happiness but they do not know the joy of the Holy Spirit. They may be able to sleep (with medication) but they do not have peace. Jesus says, “Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid” (John 14:27). They have lust (eros) but they do not know Agape love. You are the branch and when you rely on Jesus, the Vine, you will be able to produce the fruit of the Spirit.

Paul says, “Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed—not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence—continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose. Do everything without complaining or arguing, so that you may become blameless and pure, children of God without fault in a crooked and depraved generation, in which you shine like stars in the universe” (Philippians 2:12-15).

3. The fruit of giving

The fruit tree never gets to eat its own fruit. Instead, others eat of the fruit. As the branch, you will be a blessing and a witness to others. The early Church was a giving church. “All the believers were together and had everything in common. Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as they had need” (Acts 2:44-45). No wonder the Church grew rapidly.

4. The fruit of praise, testimony and thanksgiving

When you worship God and testify of His goodness, you are bearing the fruit of praise and you become His witness. This is the life of the branch. The Bible says, “... therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise—the fruit of lips that confess his name” (Hebrews 13:15). The Holy Spirit will empower you to live this kind of life. “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:8).

Do you know your identity? You are the branch and Jesus is the Vine. Life in Christ will bear fruits. Let us be fruit-bearing believers. 🌿

All Bible quotations are taken from the New International Version.

There is a follow-up to this message:
“The Secret To Fruit Bearing Is Abiding”
in the next issue of
Calvary News.

The Calvary Church Staff wishes you all

A Blessed 2003!

May you be fruitful in every good work to the glory of God!

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