



# in FOCUS

Equipping God's Workers With God's Word For God's Work



## Six Spiritual Examples For Growing Through Change

Jay Hallowell

**M**y eyes are struggling to focus on these words on my computer monitor even as I type them. It has only been one week since I picked up my new glasses with progressive lenses from my optometrist. She told me it would take two weeks for my eyes to adjust to having different areas of the lens to look through for distance, intermediate, and close-up vision. The intermediate part of the lens is supposed to be specifically for computer work, at least when my eyes have adjusted. But, it doesn't seem to be working today. So, I wonder if I should continue to use the new glasses. I must use them in order for my eyes to adjust. But, I also need to see these words on the monitor clearly, for which my old single lens glasses work better. This change is frustrating and time-consuming for me, and is likely to result in a headache.

As I write this, we do not yet know who will be the new president of the Philippines. We do not even know if one will be proclaimed, accepted, and inaugurated by June 30. But we know that the government will continue to make changes that will impact our lives. On my calendar for next week is a trip to the immigration office simply because of an administrative change they are making to stop using only paper for alien registration but to begin using

smart cards, whatever those are. All wonder what changes the new government may bring to the economy and many other areas of our lives.

Allan Chua recently identified four main subcultures within the Chinese community in the Philippines. These are "the TDKs (or tai-diok-kah)" (relatively recent arrivals from mainland China), "the Chut-See-Ah (Half Breeds)", "the Silent Scions" (who quietly exercise their wealth from exclusive subdivisions), and the majority, "the GIs (Genuine Instik)".<sup>1</sup> It is clear that the younger GIs, who often prefer Tagalog as a language and have many other Filipino and modern values, along with the TDKs, are bringing changes to the Chinese community in the Philippines. Groups like Tsinoy.com and Kaisa para sa Kaunlaran are trying to lead the Chinese community into greater integration and involvement in Filipino society.

Change, whether personal, in government, or in society, is inevitable. But that has always been true. It has been said that the only thing that doesn't change is the truth that "Things always change". Fortunately, part of the good news of scripture is that God uses change to help us grow to become more like Him. Here are six examples of how

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God used change in the lives of his people.

**Endure like Nehemiah.** Nehemiah gave up a responsible government post in the palace of the king of a superpower to go rebuild a provincial city that had been destroyed in a war. In his book he describes how he handled change after change, problem after problem, by enduring with God's help. Nehemiah is a wonderful model of faithfulness, persistence and patience, discipline and hard work, and commitment and sacrifice. God used the changes to help Nehemiah grow and used Nehemiah to rebuild Jerusalem, both physically and spiritually.

**Detect like Daniel.** Daniel was kidnapped by a powerful army and taken to a far away country, where he was forced to serve in the government. He was an intelligent young person, "showing aptitude for every kind of learning."<sup>2</sup> His willingness to learn while remaining firm in his loyalty to God helped him to advance to a high and powerful position. He is a wonderful example of how change can help us be teachable, humble, develop a servant heart, and learn to listen.

**Relate like Ruth.** Ruth was widowed at a young age, left childless, and then moved to another country with her mother-in-law where they had no property, business, or close family able to support them. None of us would like to experience such changes. Yet Ruth related so well to her mother-in-law that her mother-in-law's friends considered her better than seven sons!<sup>3</sup> Are you struggling with people from a

different sub-culture or another culture? Follow Ruth's example and make at least one good friend from that group. Ruth is a great example of love that featured openness, involvement, appropriate initiative, fellowship, and accountability.

**Enjoy like Jeremiah.** Jeremiah seemed to have little to enjoy as he watched his people refuse to change their allegiance back to God and then experience a brutal invasion from a heartless army. But, he wrote a letter in Chapter 29 to the exiles whom that army captured and relocated. In that letter he wrote that they should settle down after the changes and to enjoy the ordinary things God will bring. Surely if such exiles can enjoy God's blessings in the midst of such changes, perhaps we also can learn to see the humor and joy in change.

**Accept like the Apostle Paul.** Paul was willing to accept almost any change, as long as he was able to preach the gospel.<sup>4</sup> He recognized that most changes are not that important in the end, at least in comparison to the good news about what Jesus Christ has done, is doing, and will do! So, he demonstrated the kind of acceptance, respect, understanding, and flexibility that will also help us learn from and cope with change.

**Depend like David.** Which of us would want to be like David? Having been called by God and anointed as king, King Saul stole years of David's life by forcing him to flee to the wilderness in order to save his life. These changes forced him to miss family, leave the family agricultural business, and endure much hardship. He

hated the changes, including missing the water of his hometown.<sup>5</sup> But, these changes were a necessary part of his training to be a good king. What did he learn from God? He learned that he could depend on God, or, as the Bible put it, "find strength in the Lord."<sup>6</sup> David's faith in the midst of desperate changes in his life continues to inspire us.

So, I am trying to learn from the Lord what he wants me to learn from the changes in my eyes, change in the government, and changes in society. Changes are not to be dreaded. Change can be a tool that God can use to make you more like him. I have arranged the six paragraphs preceding this one to spell out E-DREAD. Let us let the first 'E' stand for 'End': E (end) the DREAD of change by Enduring like Nehemiah, Detecting like Daniel, Relating like Ruth, Enjoying like Jeremiah, Accepting like the Apostle Paul, and Depending like David. God doesn't change. But, He wants to use change to change us to be like Him.

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<sup>1</sup> Chua, Allan, "Exploring the Chinoy Subculture", TSINOY NGA - 05/09/2004, <http://www.tsinoy.com/roots/TsinoyNga.cfm?ID=688>, accessed May 27, 2004.

<sup>2</sup> Daniel 1:4 NIV

<sup>3</sup> Ruth 4:15

<sup>4</sup> See, for example, 1 Corinthians 9:19-27, Philippians 4:11-13, and much of the book of Acts

<sup>5</sup> 1 Chronicles 11:17

<sup>6</sup> 1 Samuel 23:16, 30:6; 2 Samuel 22:33, 40

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**FACULTY ON THE MOVE**

☞ Dr. Shao’s ministry for this summer included: teaching “Post-exilic Theology” at the Faith Bible Seminary from June 8 to 18, 2004 and speaking at the Mid-West Summer Conference from July 1 to 4, 2004. Dr. and Mrs. Shao represented the Seminary in attending the 80th grand birthday celebration of our founder, Elder Henry Co See Cho, in Singapore last June 19-20, 2004.

**ALUMNI AT CALIRAYA**

This summer the Alumni Retreat was again held at Caliraya Recreation Center from May 3 to 5, 2004. There were fifty alumni with 23 children who enjoyed fellowship, recreation and the much-sought after book sale.

**Q1 Theological Education by Extension (TEE)**

Gerizim Evangelical Church	<i>1 Timothy</i>	Prof. Dennis Yam
	<i>Spiritual Formation</i>	Prof. Jay Hallowell
Quezon City Evangelical Church	<i>Comparative Religion</i>	Dr. Chiu Eng Tan

**ON THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST**

Jean Uayan

(Continued from last issue.)

Should he bring up the role of Mary in the passion of Christ, I would caution her about the scenes that are not in the Bible and show her what the CCC, *Lumen Gentium*, and CFC teach and how this is not following Scriptural teachings. I would also point out that the movie is admirable for focusing on Christ rather than on Mary, for only through Him and Him alone are we saved made right with and able to stand righteous before God.

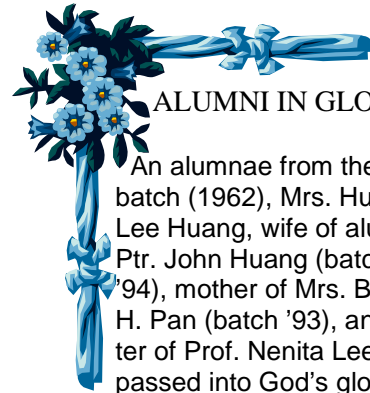
One last thing that I would emphasize is that Jesus Christ is not hanging on the cross anymore. *The Passion* shows only one side of the coin. Filipino Catholics preponderate the dead Christ over Jesus the

risen, victorious Lord. Christians must not worship Jesus Christ merely as a Savior who underwent indescribable torture and agony; they should worship Him as the Lord and King who came out of the empty tomb and had forty days of intimate fellowship with His disciples on earth. Today, through the Holy Spirit, He continues such fellowship with all who belong to Him in truth and in deed. As Calvin aptly put it, “For Saint Paul tells us that if we ‘know the fellowship of his sufferings’ [Rom. 3:10 b; 8:17] we shall also understand the ‘power of his resurrection’ [Phil. 3:10a]; and that while we are ‘participating in his death’ [Phil. 3:10c], we are also being prepared for sharing his glori-

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**Alumnus Ordained**

Congratulations to Ptr. Tony Cheng who was ordained on July 18, 2004 at the United Evangelical Church of the Philippines during their 75th Anniversary.



**ALUMNI IN GLORY**

An alumnae from the third batch (1962), Mrs. Hui Bee Lee Huang, wife of alumnus Ptr. John Huang (batch '94), mother of Mrs. Beata H. Pan (batch '93), and sister of Prof. Nenita Lee, passed into God’s glorious presence last June 16, 2004. She has been serving the Master faithfully for more than 40 years: first in Tacloban Christian Church, then as staff here at BIOP/BSOP, and most recently at The Living Christian Church in Cebu City. BSOP sent three representatives to conduct the Memorial Service on June 18, 2004. May the Lord of Comfort be with the whole family and may her testimony of service give glory to our Almighty God.

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ous resurrection.”<sup>23]</sup>

Note: This paper serves as a guideline for understanding Catholic teaching on Christ’s death and its subsequent effect for the believer. It can also help Evangelicals know how to talk to Roman Catholics/ other Evangelicals about the film and help in evaluating the movie without prejudice against Gibson and the Catholics. At the same time, I hope it can strengthen our faith and theological stance.

#### Endnotes

[1] According to John Piper, the word comes from the Latin meaning “suffering.” See his book *The Passion of Jesus Christ* (Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway Books, 2004), 12. Christians need to read this book (and others like it) which gives not merely the “how” or the “who” but most importantly, the “why” of Christ’s death.

[2] Sad to say, one Southern Baptist pastor in Colorado, based on reading about but having not seen the movie itself, while rightly advising caution about endorsing the film without theological discretion, yet reasoned without adequate historical knowledge that to do so would be to forget what the Roman Catholics did to the Anabaptists, for “her hands are very bloody from the saints who have gone before us.” Gary Fore, <gryl@plainstel.com>, “A Southern Baptist Pastor’s Concern about *The Passion of Christ*,” Private e-mail message dated 18 February 2004, obtained by Larry John Sy and passed on to Donna Muñoz, 29 February 2004.

[3] Jon Meacham, “Who Killed Jesus?” *Newsweek*, 16 February 2004, 44.

[4] Now the undersecretary of the doctrinal congregation, he previously taught theology for 20 years and served as theologian for the U.S. bishops’ conference for seven years.

[5] Mel Gibson’s “Passion”: On Review at the Vatican,” *Zenit News Agency*, 9 December 2003 (newspaper on-line); available from <http://mail.emc.com.ph/Conferences/0000D197-80000003/029DC381-000F5672-029DC38F>; Internet; accessed 9 March 2004.

[6] I am using the definitive edition based on the Latin “Edition Typica.” *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (Manila: Word and Life Publications and CBCP/ECCCE: 1994).

[7] *Catechism for Filipino Catholics* (Manila: ECCCE and Word and Life Publications, 1997).

[8] Richard McBrien, *Catholicism*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1994), 441-446, 1077-1121.

[9] Ludwig Ott, *Grundriss der Katholischen Dogmatik (Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma)*, ed. James Canon Bastible, trans. Patrick Lynch, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (Freiburg: Verlag Herder, 1952; Cork: The Mercier Press, 1955; Rockford, Illinois: Tan Books and Publishers, Inc., 1974), 212, 407-412.

[10] John Calvin, *Calvin: Institute of the Christian Religion*, 2 volumes, trans. Ford Lewis Battles, The Library of Christian Classics, Volume XX and XXI, ed. John T. McNeill (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1960), 507-511/1430-1448.

[11] “Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions/*Nuestra Aetate*,” *Vatican Council II, Volume I: The Conciliar and Postconciliar Documents*, new rev. edition, ed., Austin Flannery (Northport, NY: Costello Publishing Company, 1996), 740-742. The statement reads: “Even though the Jewish authorities and those who followed their lead pressed for the death of Christ, neither all Jews indiscriminately at that time, nor Jews today, can be charged with the crimes committed during his passion . . . the Jews should not be spoken of as rejected or accursed as if this followed from holy Scripture.”

[12] CCC § 1066-1076 and §1322-1419 deal extensively on the meaning of liturgy, the mass and the Eucharist.

[13] Council of Trent (1562) Doctrine on the Sacrifice of the Mass, c.2 quoted in CCC §1367.

[14] Council of Trent (1562) Decree concerning the Most Holy Sacrament of the Eucharist, c. 4 and Instruction on the Worship of the Eucharistic Mystery, S.C.R. *Eucharisticum mysterium*, 25 May 1967 in *Vatican Council II*, 100-105.

[15] *Eucharisticum mysterium*, 104; Council of Trent (1562) Decree concerning the Most Holy Sacrament of the Eucharist, c. 8.

[16] I don’t have access to the Latin or French word, but in English this word means “express willingness, give permission, agree.”

[17] In discussing Mary’s (and the other Mary’s) presence near the cross, Raymond E. Brown, who has carefully studied the Gospel accounts, points out: “Although ‘his mother’ is mentioned in [John] 19:25 with the other women as standing near the cross, she does not become a protagonist until 19:26, where she is joined to the beloved disciple.” He further said, “. . . the significance of this episode lies in the new relationship between the mother of Jesus and the beloved disciple, not in symbolism attached to Mary through the history of interpretation.” See *The Death of the Messiah: From Gethsemane to the Grave: A Commentary on the*

*Passion Narratives in the Four Gospels*, Volume Two, The Anchor Bible Reference Library, ed. David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1994), 1013-1026.

[18] Could Gibson, who is not totally in agreement with Vatican II, be attempting to use this scene to dispel the image of her giving consent to Christ’s sacrifice?

[19] Could Gibson, who is not totally in agreement with Vatican II, be attempting to use this scene to dispel the image of her giving consent to Christ’s sacrifice?

[20] Piper, 20-21.

[21] Leonardo De Chirico has written a most helpful article entitled “The Blurring of Time Distinctions in Roman Catholicism” which pinpoints the crux of the matter as the Roman Catholic Church employing the “epistemological art” of “convergence of opposites” and “removing the boundaries between *hapax* [once and for all] and *mallon* [for evermore] . . . [thus resulting in] the removal of demarcation lines between event and process, between definitive and progressive aspects of Divine action, between Christ and the church . . . A *hapax* that is violated gives rise to disruptive rifts in the very fabric of the Christian faith. An extended *mallon* produces ‘add-ons’ that are Scripturally unsustainable in the economy of faith.” This prolongation of time (*hapax* turned *mallon*) is applied to incarnation (resulting in the church as mediator, its magisterial authority, apostolic succession, the co-redemptrix role and veneration Mary); the representation of time in the Eucharist; and the dynamic time of revelation. See *Themelios* 29/2 (Spring 2004): 40-46.

[22] For a harmony of all Protestant Catechisms, see Joel R. Beeke and Sinclair B. Ferguson, eds., *Reformed Confessions Harmonized* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books, 1999), 76-78.

[23] John Calvin, *Golden Booklet of the True Christian Life*, trans. Henry J. Van Andel (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1952), 46.

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