



Lessons on Leadership from the Church in Antioch

Linda Tue

Among all the churches described in the book of Acts, two churches are outstanding: the church in Jerusalem and the church in Antioch. Luke took his time to describe these two churches. The church in Jerusalem had the honour for the obvious reason that the Holy Spirit came on the Pentecost and the church was first established in Jerusalem. However, why did Luke take time to describe the activities going on in the church in Antioch? I believe the hint is given in Acts 11:26: "The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch." It implies that the believers there were special enough that they were called a different name, in other words, they have got a different identity: Christians, that is, "the people of Christ."

The Establishment and Growth of the Church in Antioch

The city of Antioch was the capital of the Roman province of Syria. It was located strategically as a centre for trade and communication. The city was considered one of the centres for Jewish culture. The NIV Bible Commentary describes the city:

Antioch of Syria was founded about 300 B.C. During the first Christian century, it was, after Rome and Alexandria, the third largest city in the empire, having a population of more than 500,000. It was a melting pot of Western and Eastern cultures, where

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The church was flourishing with the grace of God. The believers in Antioch must have been unique enough that they earned themselves a nickname: Christians.

The Legacy of Past President Hsueh Yu Kwong

The demise of Rev. Hsueh Yu Kwong, former president of then BIOP (1966-70), marked us with both sadness and inspiration. The whole Seminary – board members, faculty, staff, students and alumni – gathered together during the Memorial Service held at Quezon City Evangelical Church last July 25, 2004. Rev. Henry Ang (batch '65) gave the message using Jesus' parable of to describe Rev. Hsueh as a "good and faithful" servant of the Lord. Mrs. Rosie Ang (batch '62) gave the eulogy as well as her own reminiscence of Rev. Hsueh. Two other alumni gave words of remembrance – Ms. Phoebe Lim (batch '65) and Rev. Carlson Chu (batch '88, '92). Rev. & Mrs. Ang and Ms. Phoebe Lim were all students during the time when Rev. Hsueh was the president of BIOP. They all described him as a person strict in leadership but kind in heart, fully devoted and willing to suffer for Christ (the motto of our Seminary). Rev. Chu, although a more recent graduate, had the opportunity to work with Rev. Hsueh at the SIM (Society of International Mission) East Asia Ltd., Philippine Chapter. He appreciated Rev. Hsueh's tireless efforts in doing mission.

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Changed Life

Doris Tan

I became a Christian when I was small and was baptized at twenty. At that time I did not truly understand the real meaning of Christianity and did not know how to have a “faith” relationship with God.

There were no changes in my bad attitudes, worst of all my violent anger—so destructive and dangerous—was uncontrollable; even my family lost their patience and gave up on me.

I tried so hard to change by my own strength but there was no change, I became so frustrated I even thought of ending my life. Until late one evening, I cried bitterly and spoke to the Lord from my heart, asking Him to free me from this bondage of sin. For the first time in my life I personally experienced and felt His unconditional love for me. From then on my life really changed; day by day He taught me how to trust Him. (II Corinthians 5:17)

Everything about Him became so interesting to me: listening to and reading His Words, praying to Him, doing His will and serving Him. Then I totally surrendered my life to Him.

Coming to BSOP never entered my mind, but I was prepared for God’s calling. God used pastors and others to encourage me to study in BSOP. I know I will go through many challenges, but in my heart I do believe that God’s grace is sufficient and I believe that I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. To God be the Glory!

A Heart to Serve

Francis Ang

I was assigned to read the biography of George Mueller during our Basic Doctrine Class. It never dawned on me that his life would become an inspiration in my walk with the Lord. Through his biography, God gave me the burden to help Filipino street children by providing shelter and livelihood projects and sharing the gospel full-time. Right after my graduation from college, God gave me an opportunity to serve Him in a Christian school. Through my service in this school, I have seen how God has been sustaining ALL my needs. I have also seen how God can make impossible things possible. And most of all, I learned to trust Him more and more for He did not leave nor forsake us in times of need. I was molded emotionally, mentally, and spiritually in my 5 years stay in this school. Without knowing that this is my stepping stone to a greater responsibility.

Last May 2003, my wife asked me if I still had the heart to serve the Lord fulltime. I was caught off-handed and this thought bothered me for days. As I pondered the question, doubts (such as “Am I really called?”) and fears (such as “How will I finance the education of my children?”) crept into my mind. But God had His own way of addressing them. I was able to read the book *Holy Ambition* which confirmed my calling through II Chronicles 16:9a “For the eyes of the

TESTIMONIES

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God’s Goodness

Eric Chan

“This is the way, walk in it.” (Isaiah 30:21 NASB) These are the words that God gave me in answer to my prayer, asking specifically for His word from the Scripture if He indeed is calling me to enter the seminary.

On April 30, 2000, God, according to His great mercy and grace, chose to save me through the death of my one and only son. Two passages, “The word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword...” (Hebrew 4:12 NASB) and “Give yourself to the Lord! Trust in Him, and He will help you” (Psalm 37:5 GNB), were inscribed on the penholder my son gave me before his death. The moment I read these words I felt that God was telling me something (I was a Buddhist at the time of my son’s death), and thinking my son would be pleased to have a Christian funeral service (many times he had expressed faith in Jesus because he studied in a Christian school) I arranged one for him, not knowing that God would use the message at the wake for me to hear His offer of salvation (Romans 8:28) along with the chance to see my son again, I readily accepted God’s gift of salvation.

Wanting to be sure that Jesus is the only way for me to have eternal life and therefore be reunited with my son in eternity, I bought my very first Bible to check if what I heard was indeed the truth (Acts 17:11). I started to read it until I

was able to finish both the Old and New Testaments in time for my son’s 100th day death anniversary. I began to realize that I was truly a sinner and all my good deeds were like filthy rags in God’s sight (Isaiah 64:6), and only through God’s grace and by faith in Jesus’ redemptive work was I put right in God’s sight (Romans 1:17). Realizing how great the love of God is (Romans 5:8) for everyone who will believe in Christ, I began to have the burden to share the Gospel of Salvation and wanting to be properly equipped to correctly handle the word of truth (2 Timothy 2:15). I began to desire to enter the seminary, but my financial situation and family responsibility caused me to struggle for almost a year.

Sometime in April 2003, through prayers and petition, God gave me His word through Isaiah 30:21. Trusting His word, I decided to enter the Biblical Seminary of the Philippines initially taking one subject, then two the next quarter. On the third quarter of that school year I was about to take three subjects, but started to experience many problems. I decided to just take two subjects that quarter. Thank God that through His grace and my two professors, and fellow students who constantly prayed and encouraged me in the midst of my trials, I was able to finish last school year 2003-2004.

Thinking that the worst of my troubles had pass, instead, right after the summer conference (April 2004) of my local church (Grace Gospel Church), where I had the opportunity to serve as counselor, my problems began to get worst to

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FACULTY ON THE MOVE

- ☞ Dr. Joseph Shao spoke at the Commencement Exercise of the Bandung Theological Seminary; he also taught a course from August 18 to 23, 2004. On August 27 to 29, he visited Davao Evangelical Church to conduct the BSOP Sunday. This coming November 11 to 14, he will be teaching Old Testament Introduction at the Reformed Evangelical Fellowship in Kuching, Malaysia.
- ☞ Prof. Jean Uayan (on Ph.D. study leave) was invited to attend the History of the World Christian Movement Conference held at Port Dickson, Malaysia, from August 7-10, 2004.

VISITING PROFESSORS

Ms. Linda Tue came from Canada and stayed for three months (June to August), teaching New Testament I (Gospel of Luke and Book of Acts) in the Mandarin Track. Dr. & Mrs. Xie Jian Bang conducted Sacred Music Seminar at the start of the school year in June, 2004.

There were four other visiting faculty for the second quarter: Dr. James Taylor III taught History of Missions in China from September 6-11; Rev. Doyle Carlblom, long time resident of Taiwan, taught The Gospel and Culture from September 14-18; Ms. Wei Yu Chin will be teaching Church History from September 20-October 22; and Prof. Chen Yong Kun will teach General Epistles on November 1-December 30.

Another Alumnae at Rest

BSOP lost another warrior when Peng Cheng Chua Su (batch '70) succumbed to prolonged illness at the age of 76 last July 25, 2004. Sister Peng Cheng, as she was usually called, had been a faithful servant of the Lord in her decades of ministry at Hope Christian High School, United Evangelical Church of the Philippines, Quezon City Evangelical Church, Gerizim Evangelical Church, and Christian Bible Church of the Philippines. BSOP conducted a memorial service together with CBCP last July 28, 2004.

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Lord move to and fro throughout the earth that He may strongly support those whose heart is completely His."

I was able to put my trust fully in the Lord regarding my finances through these verses:

"You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you...that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you." (John 15:16)

"And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for every good work." (II Corinthians 9:8)

"Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store barns, and yet your heavenly father feeds them. Are you not much valuable than they?" (Matthew 6:26)

(HSUEH, *Continued from page 1*)

Rev. Hsueh Yu Kwong was the first Chinese president of the Bible Institute of the Philippines. He was born on June 30, 1919 in Sitiawan, Perak, Malaysia. His secondary, collegiate and seminary education were all attained in China, and he served in the Nationalist Army during the Sino-Japanese War from 1938-1943. He taught and administered in different seminaries: Canton Bible Institute, Hong Kong (1951-1953); Bible Institute of the Philippines, Manila (1960-1970); Malaysia Christian Training Center (1973-1976); Malaysia Bible Seminary (1978-1981) and Kagoro Bible College, Nigeria (1981-1982). Aside from teaching in seminaries, Rev. Hsueh was also involved with the Campus Evangelical Fellowship of Taiwan from 1971-1973 and acted as Area Representative of SIM from 1983-1996. He also spoke in countless meetings and conferences throughout Asia. May he rest in joyful glory in the bosom of our Heavenly Father, and may we all follow his footsteps as dedicated and faithful servants of the King of Kings.



Alumni News

Ptr. Arthur Yap (batch '01) has been appointed Director of the Davao Evangelical High School, starting June, 2004. Congratulations!

"So do not worry, saying, "What shall we eat? Or What shall we wear?" (Matthew 6:31)

"But seek first the kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself." (Matthew 6:33-34)

"Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you." (Hebrews 13:5)

As I was asking the Lord for a clear revelation of His purpose for my life, He was indeed very gracious. I felt more burden and God sent His heavenly ambassadors (my pastor-friends) everyday until I was fully convinced that He really wants me in His ministry

To God be the Glory!

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Greek and Roman traditions mingled with Semitic, Arab, and Persian influences. The Jewish population is estimated to have been about one-seventh of the total population and had vested rights to follow its own laws within its three or more settlements in and around the city.

Antioch was a multicultural city because of its location and its political and commercial importance.

The church in Antioch might have been established as early as after the Pentecost when Jews from everywhere were visiting Jerusalem at the time. When the Jerusalem church elected seven deacons, there was "Nicolas from Antioch, a convert to Judaism" (6:5). However, the action in Antioch picked up when some Jewish believers went there when the Jerusalem church was persecuted because of Stephen. When most of the Jewish believers only spoke to the Jews about Jesus, some Jewish believers from Cyprus and Cyrene began speaking to the Greeks also (11:20). Apparently so many believed in Jesus and joined the church that the Jerusalem church sent Barnabas to Antioch to check out the situation (11:21-22). When Barnabas saw the work of God, he was delighted and he sought out Saul (later called Paul) from Tarsus to help in teaching and equipping the believers in Antioch. Within a few years, the leadership in the church in Antioch was established:

In the church at Antioch there were prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen (who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch) and Saul. (13:1)

Just as the city was multicultural, the church leadership was diverse. It included a wealthy Jew such as Barnabas, a former Pharisee such as Saul, Simeon who was likely a black

man, Lucius who was also from North Africa, and Manaen who was brought up with Herod, maybe a Jew or even an Idumean, who might have had political influence and was well educated.

The church was flourishing with the grace of God. The believers in Antioch must have been unique enough that they earned themselves a nickname: Christians. It might have come from their regular worship and ongoing proclamation of "Christ." When people might have called them "Christians" with the intention to mock them, the name stayed with the believers. They were no longer just a group of Jews, but they had a new identity apart from the Jews. The name "Christians" fittingly described whom they were—the people of Christ.

The Outreach of the Church in Antioch

Often people think of Paul's missionary journeys when they think of Antioch. However, when the Jewish believers had a hard time breaking from their own cultural barrier and God had to grant Peter a heavenly vision (10:9-16) that one should not call impure whom God has sanctified, the believers at Antioch began evangelising the Greeks before Saul even got to the city. It might have to do with the multicultural environment of the city, that the believers seemed more open to other races. Enough Gentiles turned to Jesus Christ that even the Jerusalem church got wind of it and sent Barnabas to look into it.

The Antioch church was open to God's direction. The intentional mission journey was initiated by the Holy Spirit when the church was praying and worshipping (13:2). When the Holy Spirit called Barnabas and Saul for the particular task, the church obeyed, prayed with

fasting, laid hands on them, and sent them off. From then on, Antioch became the home base of Paul's missions in Acts. Paul would always start his trip from Antioch. At the end of the first journey, Luke recorded:

... they sailed back to Antioch, where they had been committed to the grace of God for the work they had now completed. On arriving there, they gathered the church together and reported all that God had done through them and how he had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles. And they stayed there a long time with the disciples. (14:26-28)

It showed the accountability within the church. When Paul and Barnabas went on their mission trip, the church was behind them. When they returned, they reported what God had done and shared the result with the church.

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the extent that if I used my logical reasoning I would surely have given up and never to enter the seminary again. But praise God, through faith in His goodness and faithfulness, I remembered the words He gave me before I entered seminary last 2003, "This is the way, walk in it" (Isaiah 30:21). Knowing that God never changes (James 1:17) and remains faithful, that He would not allow me to be tempted beyond what I was able (1 Corinthians 10:13), I finally decided to reenter the seminary. It was then that things started to lighten up.

Now, even as I continue to face my trials and problems, yet knowing that "God's grace is sufficient for my weaknesses" (2 Corinthians 12:9), I can face the world with joy in my heart, knowing that He has His eternal plan and purpose for me. (Ephesians 1:4; Romans 8:37)

