

## *Lessons in Missions from the Word and*

### *Notable Missionaries*

#### **Introduction**

**The early church in the Acts of the Apostles set an impeccable example and pattern for us in church growth** and gospel missions. Ministry includes strategic missions with the word and the gospel preached beyond our shores as well. Remember the inexorable command of Acts 1:8, *“But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.”* The book of Acts reveals the vitality of the 1<sup>st</sup> century church and its vibrant faith. It maps out the master plan for local missions and worldwide gospel work of the Holy Spirit in the time of the NT church and its believers. **It gives us insight into strategic church planning, health and growth.** It is the infallible record of the growing pains of a God centred and Christ driven church in a persecuted Roman world. It is pregnant with rich and valuable lessons for us today, expectant with application for the local church.

There are faithful men who are committed to gospel preaching and outreach in the bygone era and one of them is the Prince of preachers. In a sermon delivered April 27, 1856 at New Park Street Chapel, Southwark, on behalf of the Baptist Missionary Society. Charles Spurgeon said,

“The subject of gospel missions. We feel persuaded that all of you are of one mind in this matter, that it is the absolute duty as well as the eminent privilege of the Church to proclaim the gospel to the world. We do not conceive that God will do his own work without instruments, but that, as he has always employed means in the work of the regeneration of this world, he will still continue to do the same, and that it becomes the Church to do its utmost to spread the truth wherever it can reach the ear of man. Our doctrines, do not lead to apathy and sloth, and have always proved themselves to be eminently practical; the fathers of the mission were all zealous lovers of the doctrines of the grace of God; and we believe, the great supporters of missionary enterprise, if it is to be successful, must always come from those who hold God's truth firmly and boldly, and yet have fire and zeal with it, and desire to spread it everywhere.”

The priority and order starts from home and Jerusalem is to be given the **gospel first, then worldwide evangelisation**. From Jerusalem, missions were started and progressed from there to other nearby countries in a geographical manner. Charity begins at home, so must the missions of the church. The church grew from the epicentre of Jerusalem as their base and spread outwards to the surrounding cities, Judaea and Samaria (i.e. Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand, Cambodia, Country X Australia etc to us) How did they do it? What was the missionary strategy and the efforts of it? The latest statistics tells us that about 18% (including the Roman Catholics) of Singaporeans are Christians. There is a mission field right here at home, just as there are outside our own country with about 500,000 mainland Chinese working or studying here. What shall we do in gospel witness in our vicinity, office, school or camp? Firstly, let us study the examples and strategy of the local church in Acts 6:1-8. There are five salient factors that can be gleaned here.

### **Reorganisation of the Church**

Firstly, there was a **re-organisation of the church** to give it the rightful personnel combination for maximum missionary enterprise. Seven godly, Holy Ghost filled and prudent men were chosen out of a church of a few thousand to carry out certain administrative responsibilities. Out of these seven, two became preachers or evangelists, Deacons Stephen and Philip. This is vital as many have been reached with the gospel message by their spiritual firepower through preaching of the gospel and the teaching of the word.

There should **be proper management of the church with committed personnel serving according to the nature of their gifts**. People should serve in areas when they are gifted by God and co labour therein with pastor effectively (1 Pet 4:9, 10). Following the apostles of old, preachers and pastors today should not be burdened by many administrative duties but to give quality time to prepare to preach the Word, pray with others and counsel, comfort and care for the people. **Preaching and Prayer are the priorities followed by People and Paperwork.**

If one is not careful, our vision can become blurred and we tend to forget that our primary calling is to **preach Christ**, teach the word and fervently **pray for the saints**. Then after the two important priorities, **people** and **paperwork** (i.e. administration) as in verse 7. The widows are neglected in their distribution of relief. It is important that the church do not neglect people (especially the afflicted, the lonely or depressed) in the ministry and proper administration as well. So deacons were appointed for the task of needful administration in the

church as the church continued to grow in Jerusalem. These are the ingredients of church growth to local and foreign missions together.

### **Fervent Prayer**

One of the most meaningful ways to serve in missions is **to be fervently praying for and supporting financially those in the missions field and those who serve faithfully**. We need zealous prayer warriors before the throne of grace daily. It is active work with God's blessings that bears fruit. It is vitally important. Being trained as an ex military officer during NS and in the Reserve, we are acquainted with the importance of logistics supporting a whole battalion in the battle field, it is not glamorous, but absolutely necessary. It is behind the scene work, not appreciated sometimes and often taken for granted. Yet it is the powerhouse, the support base to launch further missionary endeavours. 2 Corinthians 1:11 says, *"Ye also helping together by prayer for us, that for the gift bestowed upon us by the means of many persons thanks may be given by many on our behalf."* It bears fruit (Jn 16:24) and it is desired by all God's servants all the time especially. There was a prayer warrior in Colossian church. His name is Epaphras who could possibly be the pastor or one of the key founding leaders. What he did was recorded for us in Colossians 4:12, *"Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ, saluteth you, always **labouring fervently for you in prayers**, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God."* Paul himself fervently prayed for missions in Philippians 1:4 *"Always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy."* You can be a vital part of local missions by fervently praying for the missionaries, salvation of your loved ones and friends and those who are reaching out to the lost in foreign fields.

There are good reformed missionaries in the 18th and 19th century and here is one of them with his own rules for living with godly discipline while serving in Burma (Myanmar) :

### **Adoniram Judson. Rules of Holy Living**

*(Adapted from A Memoir of the Life and Labors of the Rev. Adoniram Judson by Francis Wayland. In Two Volumes. Boston: Phillips, Sampson, and Co., 1853)*

The rules of living which follow are copied from a paper in the handwriting of Dr. Judson. They are inserted here for the sake of illustrating the earnestness with which he strove after personal holiness, whilst engrossed with the labors of his missionary calling. He well knew that no external services could purify the heart;

that this work could be done in no other way than by practically subjecting the whole soul to the commandments of Christ.

Rules adopted on Sunday, April 4, 1819, the era of commencing public ministrations among the Burmans; revised and re-adopted on Saturday, December 9, 1820, and on Wednesday, April 25, 1821.

1. Be diligent in secret prayer, every morning and evening.
2. Never spend a moment in mere idleness.
3. Restrain natural appetites within the bounds of temperance and purity. "Keep thyself pure."
4. Suppress every emotion of anger and ill will.
5. Undertake nothing from motives of ambition, or love of fame.
6. Never do that which, at the moment, appears to be displeasing to God.
7. Seek opportunities of making some sacrifice for the good of others, especially of believers, provided the sacrifice is not inconsistent with some duty.
8. Endeavor to rejoice in every loss and suffering incurred for Christ's sake and the gospel's, remembering that though, like death, they are not to be willfully incurred, yet, like death, they are great gain.

Re-adopted the above rules, particularly the 4th, on Sunday, August 31, 1823.

Re-adopted the above rules, particularly the 1st, on Sunday, October 29, 1826, and adopted the following minor rules :

1. Rise with the sun.
2. Read a certain portion of Burman every day, Sundays excepted.
3. Have the Scriptures and some devotional book in constant reading.
4. Read no book in English that has not a devotional tendency.
5. Suppress every unclean *thought* and *look*.

Revised and re-adopted all the above rules, particularly the second of the first class, on Sunday, March 11, 1827.

God grant me grace to keep the above rules, and ever live to His glory, for Jesus Christ's sake.

### **The Word of God faithfully preached**

**The faithful and anointed preaching and systematic teaching of the holy Word is an integral part of church based missions:** The feeding of the word through the

Sunday Schools, Neighbourhood Bible Class, fellowships, prayer meeting, home visitation and the hospital visits. These are all avenues of church growth and gospel missions. Some have testified of their coming to Christ during Sunday School or Vacation Bible School meetings (i.e. so good to see Sally and Dickson in church after the VBS last month). **Do not despise regular evangelistic efforts in gospel sowing, watering and reaping.** When my wife and I came from Life BPC to minister to the congregation of Maranatha BPC 18 years ago, it was small and struggling with about 20 people and things were not going well initially. We pressed on with preaching, teaching, visitation, prayer, evangelism and discipleship and by the mercies of God, together with committed key leaders and the members in outreach and discipleship, the church grew steadily and continues to, with each passing year to what it is today including the Chinese service and overseas missions. All glory to God alone!

**The preaching of the Word from the pulpit and reverential worship on the Sabbath must take pre-eminence in the church** and we must continue steadfastly as in Acts 5:42 *“And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ”* I heard from a member that he shares with his children the same message on Sunday for family worship. This is laudable and augurs well for the continued growth of the covenant families with in the church.

### **Faithful Discipleship & Evangelism**

**Frequent street and home evangelism and visitation in the local context is necessary for the continued growth of the church.** The quarterly Gospel Sunday is a good example and our tracting in our neighbourhood in Tampines (workers' dormitory), Loyang, Simei, Pasir Ris, Sengkang and Punggol on Saturday and Sunday are also a case in point. Regular follow up and BS with new contacts and young believers are crucial for church health and growth and God will give the increase in the fullness of time. Consider the following as useful pointers why a church should have a church based evangelistic and discipleship programme. Our missionary and her wife Rev. George and Bessy are faithful soldiers of Christ labouring among the Kannada people and building up a core group of believers in CBPCI today.

**The biblical art and science of making and nurturing disciples is our responsibility too** (2 Tim 2:2). From Christ to Paul to Timothy to faithful men and to others also, that is the pattern of spiritual multiplication. There is place for proper follow-up and commitment of young Christian in the church. The apostles

had John Mark for help with this important work as mentioned in Acts 13:4, *“So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed unto Seleucia; and from thence they sailed to Cyprus.”* Many times, they returned to the same place. The reason is to follow up on the younger believers in Acts 14:21, 22, *“And when they had preached the gospel to that city, and had taught many, they returned again to Lystra, and to Iconium, and Antioch, **Confirming the souls** of the disciples, and **exhorting them to continue in the faith**, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.”* **This is necessary to build up, edify and exhort and strengthen the saints in their faith.** Believers have a vital role in the follow-up as well. Jesus spent two days with the people and Samaritan woman in John 4:43. The purpose was to build them up in their faith. The disciples have been with Jesus for a long time of meaningful association before they were sent out to serve. Mark 3:13, 14 says, *“And he goeth up into a mountain, and calleth unto him whom he would: and they came unto him. And he ordained twelve, that they should **be with him**, and that he might send them forth to preach.”* Jesus spent quality time to deepen relationships through purposeful interaction and to equip and build them up spiritually.

Church based evangelism and missions should be viewed as a proper response to a heavenly call. It is first a duty because it is a command given by our Lord, not a suggestion. A clear clarion call to Christian action (Matt 28:18-20) not an optional proposal. We are under instruction from the Lord of Hosts to bring the message of hope and redemption to those who have not heard the gospel according to the sovereign will of God. Be alert and be faithful stewards and obey the Lord with joy and alacrity (Act 13:52) to the spiritual benefit of souls eternally.

**It is a honour to be heralds of manifold grace of God.** What would you think of the ambassador sent by the head of a country to represent him in another country? It is a great prerogative for the person selected for the job. We are all ambassadors of God (2 Cor 5:20) sent on a heavenly mission to proclaim a glorious message of eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord (Mark 5:19). As heavenly ambassadors, we are to be committed witnesses for Christ. One day, we have to report back and account for our actions at the Judgment Seat of Christ (2 Cor 5:10; Rom 14:12). Let us be faithful spiritual diplomats of heaven and carry out our gospel tasks honourably.

The Apostle Peter puts it this way in 1 Peter 3:15, *“But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear.”* We are always to be ready to give an answer (apologia) a defence of the hope that is in us. That

requires readiness and alertness. That behoves us to be watchful for opportunities of witness and gospel in our office, camp, school and home and even in public places when it arises. We never know when opportunity knocks. So be ready at all times to answer the call of duty and fulfil it to the saving of some, God willing.

The work of conversion is not instantaneous and is not dependent on our efforts alone. Know that God is sovereign and we need to pray, to persevere and to wait upon the Lord patiently. Family visitation, counselling and hospital calls are part of missions too. Many waited for years to see the conversion of their friends and parents. It took many years before Pastor's father and mother accepted Christ as their personal Lord and Saviour and were baptised in Kim Tian Church in 2005 and are still attending the Chinese service today. Elder Daniel Tau's mother, Sally Tan's grandmother, Fong Choon Chiak's mother and many Chinese workers were saved recently after much prayer and outreach. Heed Psalm 27:14, *"Wait on the LORD: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the LORD."* Our labour is not in vain in the Lord (1 Cor 15:58).

Often we are fearful to share for the fear of embarrassment, rejection and other repercussions. We should not be afraid of nor be ashamed of the gospel (Rom 1:16) or what people will think of us. Give a tract to the attendant each time you pump petrol for your car and talk to the taxi driver or a colleague or friend or neighbour about Christ. Look at the example of the Apostles Peter and John in Acts 4:20, *"For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard."* **We need a dauntless and prudent spirit, not a spirit of fear or timidity** (2 Tim 1:7) a valiant spirit to speak out the truth in love and meekness. **Pray for holy boldness and godly discretion for the sake of the gospel.**

### **The Need to Trust and Obey**

**The vital thing in local missions is obedience and faith in Christ. It is living a life of surrender and sacrifice** (Lk 9:23, Rom 12:1, 2). It is important to note that true missions will result in changed lives finally – evangelical repentance will bear fruit in the hearts of men. Those who are saved will demonstrate it with the forsaking of sin, obedience and consecration to God. Our lives may be the only gospel that some will read. 2 Corinthians 3:2, 3, *"Ye are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men: Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the*

*living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart."* Going to preach in China is great challenge in the 19th century but one man Jonathan Goforth did it by God's help and here are his life rules for our edification :

### **Seven Rules for Daily Living by Jonathan Goforth**

The following rules for daily living were made by Dr. Goforth in 1894 and written on the fly-leaf of his Bible : (Adapted from *Goforth of China* by Mrs. Rosalind Goforth. Appendix p. 355-356)

1. Seek to give much -- expect nothing.
2. Put the very best construction on the actions of others.
3. Never let a day pass without at least a quarter of an hour spent in the study of the Bible.
4. Never omit daily morning and evening private prayer and devotion.
5. In all things seek to know God's Will and when known obey at any cost.
6. Seek to cultivate a quiet prayerful spirit.
7. Seek each day to do or say something to further Christianity among the heathen.

Dr. Goforth lived up to these rules there is not the least doubt. He surpassed them. His love for the Bible is well known. His Bible was always open and he took every opportunity to read it. Even after becoming blind, he had a Chinese read to him at least twelve chapters a day. His loyalty to the Bible as the Word of God and his defense of the fundamentals of the Faith have been outstanding in his career.

"He was a man of prayer and through prayer and Bible study has sought to know God's Will. It was this love for Bible reading and communion with God that gave him the power to move audiences to a conviction of sin and repentance. At all times he kept "self" in the background and relied wholly on the power of the Holy Spirit to take of the things of Jesus and reveal them unto his hearers. 'Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit' -- 'But ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you' -- have ever been his battle-cry. Though Dr. Goforth's preaching contained a stern denunciation of sin and would in no case tolerate compromise with sin, he has always been very tender in dealing with sinners." Rev. Allan Reoch.

## **A Burden for the Vast Harvest Fields**

Sound the glorious gospel truth abroad  
Carry the Word of our risen Lord  
Sing of his mercies and his grace,  
Tell of his pardon to a sinful race.

Comforts resign and pleasures all,  
Forsaken to heed the Master 's call  
Finding real purpose and joy in life,  
Amidst a world of terror and strife.

All praise to God who open doors,  
To depraved, weak and penitent poor,  
Rescuing sinners with gladdened sound,  
Proclaiming liberty with lost sheep found.

Lord of the reapers, hear our plea,  
While the harvest fields are ripe for thee,  
Thine is the love through the night,  
That those believing shall have light.

*Jack Sin*

(Composed in 2004 as we advanced the gospel into  
Thailand and beyond)

## **Conclusion**

The early church has certain priorities and preaching Christ is one of them and that was the main reason for their rapid growth. It was a disciplined life of corporate worship, fervent prayer, responsible service, fellowship, holiness, sanctification and Christian piety just like Adoniram Judson and Jonathan Goforth. There are crucial elements of local and foreign missions that we need to be mindful of. We need to be part of the global ministry of the church support local and foreign outreaches with the resources, talents and gifts endowed by God and by the mercies of God, watch and witness these churches and outreaches grow to the glory to God in these last days.

Jack Sin

+++++

### **MBPC June 2011 Missions Trip — Ministry at CBPCI**

The mission team returned on last Monday with pleasant memories of a beneficial and spiritually invigorating mission trip to CBPCI for their 6<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. Thank God for safety, good health and strength and a meaningful trip for Ian and Isaac Chia, Yee Ding Yang, Pastor and Angie Sin.

About 70 came for the English 6th Anniversary Service where 1 adult and 5 children were baptized and 6 transferred their membership and the word was preached on *Toward a Christ-Centred Maturing Congregation*. We visited the home of Drs. Mary and Krishnan as she had an accident and was recuperating at home. She was encouraged to see us and Ian Chia shared the Word of God to minister to the family. She came to the service with a walking stick.

One of the highlights of the trip was the one day VBS where about 50 children came and were taught the word by Ian Chia and singing of hymns, songs by Angie Sin, games and craft by Yee Ding Yang and the final gospel challenge given by Angie Sin. Yee Ding Yang had a special treat for everyone with his Polaroid camera where he took photos of the children and gave it to them and he gave a good testimony of his salvation at the Kannada service. Little Isaac helped to distribute the goody bags and took photos as well.

We also visited and ministered at the Vathur Village Church now called New Covenant BP Church about 45 minutes from Covenant BP Church India were Pastor Babu's ministry is. It has grown to about 50 members and is recently facing a serious challenge and the organisation (from which it was originally linked to but no more now) wanted to take back the church building which was co-shared after almost 10 years of hard work in building the church by Pastor Babu. Do pray for wisdom for Pastor Babu to resolve this amicably and to seek proper compensation and to be able to move up and build up a reformed church under the BP umbrella if it is the will of the Lord. Pray for pastor Babu as he translates the Shorter Catechism into Kannada and teach both children and adults the doctrines of grace.

We had two covenant academy night lectures on *The Doctrine of Infant Baptism and the Appraisal of the Charismatic Phenomena* where an average of about 30

attended each night and good questions were asked on these subjects. Bessy, Praven and Rani are ever faithfully serving the Lord with their gifts and talents be it in cooking or driving or sharing the word with children. During our thanksgiving session, Rani shared of how she was touched by the messages and the morning devotion (which we had every morning) on Isaiah 6:1-8 on *The Calling of Isaiah* as the Lord laid upon her heart to serve Him. Two other persons indicated their desire for full time theological training for the ministry.

The Kannada service had their first baptism of a lady who came to know Christ through our ministry where Rev. Dr. George and Pastor Babu followed up on her. We can see her sincerity of faith in the way she answered the questions asked to him. We had a staff meeting on the final night where we evaluated, prayed and planned for the future direction for Covenant BP Church, Bangalore India as the Lord leads us.

God willing a mission team will go up in mid December 2011 for the pre-Christmas programme and those who are interested to come, please let Angie Sin know soon. We had witnessed a vast harvest field where the gospel is preached in the midst of spiritual darkness and the light of Christ shone from His church to the saving of souls and the gathering of the flock of God. Why should a person hear the gospel twice or thrice when another have not even heard it once? It is our prayer that more will come and the seed of the gospel sown will fall on good ground and bear forth much fruit in due season.

*Jack and Angie Sin*

+++++

### **Mission Trip Testimony**

Never did it cross my mind that I will travel to India and to serve God together with the mission team. I always thought to myself, "What do I have to offer?" and "I am sure someone else can do more than me.". But the Lord used Pastor Jack, Sister Angie and Lee Jing Jing (my beloved girlfriend) to encourage me to join the mission trip to India last June 2010. How amazing is He whose plan is higher than mine. Thereafter, the Lord convinced me that everyone will have something to offer! LOVE. That is what we all have as believers have and that is the best thing we can offer. Love brought me back to India again this June. Praise the Lord.

This year, work has been very hectic and it did not seem possible to be away from work considering the fact that I had took a period of long leave not long ago. As a young chap in my department, I am often told that I should work hard and strive to do more to have a bright future. In Singapore's pursuit of economic success, many people have suffered. We are losing precious time to serve Him. When Pastor Jack approached me in March 2011, the Lord moved me to join the mission team. I thank God for giving me the courage to take the step to sign up. I shall be in the world but not with the world in its worldly pursuits, for what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?

Last year, I had not written my testimony as I am not one who is good in writing. And I regret not doing so. I thank God that this time round, He has given me the determination and discerning mind to put away worldly pursuits and to spend time to write my testimony. I pray that by sharing how God placed me in India, God will grant you the desire to want to take part in the next mission trip. The opportunity is always there, twice a year in fact! Thus, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.

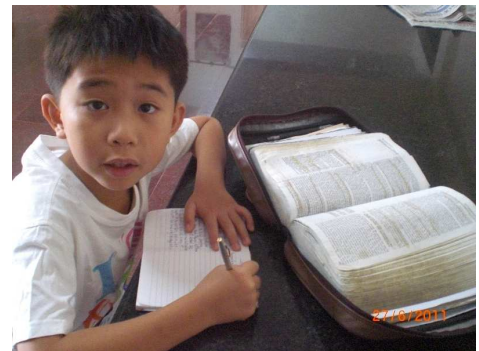
*Yee Ding Yang*  
Philadelphia BP Church

+++++

**Thanksgiving from Diary by 9 years old,  
Isaac Chia**

**Thank God for .....**

Food to eat  
Water to bath and drink  
Bed to sleep in  
Friends to make with  
Health in this mission trip  
Some were baptized  
The church  
The 50 children who came for the VBS



The 70 people who came for the service

#### **Day 4**

We had porridge and Milo for breakfast. The devotion was as usual. We prepared for the VBS. We folded the craft and had a time of prayer. We had lunch. After that, we started the VBS. Aunty Angie taught the singing and daddy told the story of the lost sheep. We did art and craft. Uncle Dingyang led in the games. We had roti kosang for dinner.

#### **Day 5**

We had cereals with milk for breakfast. We had morning English service. We sang a song item at the church. Pastor Jack preached and some were baptized. We also had Holy Communion. We had fellowship lunch. In the evening, we had the Kannada service. We had fried noodle, naan and chicken for dinner.

+++++